

## The results of organizing an English Camp for Thai Primary Students in preparation for ASEAN Community

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— *Review of* —  
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### Abstract

The purposes of this study were : (1) to study Thai primary students' vocabulary development through ASEAN songs in English Camp; (2) to compare the students' English proficiency by comparing students' scores before and after participating in the English Camp activities (3) to assess the students' satisfaction towards the English camp activities

The content of the ASEAN songs used in the English camp include currencies, capital cities, food, animal symbols, famous places, 7 professional jobs in ASEAN, and flower symbols in ASEAN.

The results showed that there were positive effects of ASEAN songs on the 60 students' vocabulary development. It was found that the students' average scores in the post-test were significantly higher than those in the pre-test scores at .05. According to the questionnaire on the students' opinions of learning English vocabulary through songs, the students revealed that they were satisfied with the English camp.

In conclusion, English camp activities are be designed to encourage and develop language learning. Songs can develop students' English vocabulary about ASEAN, and they also improved the students' attitudes in learning English through various experiences outside the classroom in preparation for ASEAN community. Besides, songs enhance content learning, language communication skills, and teamwork.

**Keywords:** English Camp, Learning English vocabulary about ASEAN, ASEAN songs, Primary students in local area

### 1. Introduction

Contemporary challenges to education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century include pedagogy, competencies and skills. As Thailand approached the ASEAN Community in 2015. English has become the official and working language for people across the member countries. As a result, it is necessary for primary schools to prepare their students with English skills, so that they can communicate with other people, and use English

as a tool for surviving in this fast moving region. Moreover, primary schools have to prepare the students for the ASEAN Community in terms of skills such as linguistic skills and knowledge about ASEAN and ASEAN member countries, and promote positive attitudes towards the ASEAN Community.

English Language Camp is an outside classroom activity which can promote the ASEAN Community, and give knowledge about ASEAN member countries. It provides an integrated approach to raise students' awareness of ASEAN, languages training (especially English and the language of neighboring countries), improve language skills, developing their potential, and push for comprehensive ASEAN studies. (which are basic knowledge about the 10 ASEAN member states).

Moreover, English camp can enhance a set of learning experiences, and increase responsibility for students' education. As Cone of learning adapted from Dale (1946), it presents that learners retain more information by what they "do" as opposed to what is "heard", "read", or "observed". English camp is a learning activity in which students learn by doing "experiential learning" or "action learning".

Beside, English camp can encourage cooperative learning and teamwork when students do camp activities together. English camp provides the opportunities for improving English language skills, knowledge and attitudes. However, there is still a lack of English camp model for inputting linguistics and basic knowledge about ASEAN for Thai primary schools. So, it is necessary to develop a model of English camp to support the needs of Thai primary students in response to ASEAN community.

Vocabulary is known as a key component to successfully developing communication and literacy skills (Belisle, 1997). It is crucial to language use and insufficient vocabulary knowledge of learners can lead to difficulties in second language learning (Asgari and Mustapha, 2011). Developing a rich vocabulary is, therefore, a top priority and an on-going challenge for both L1 and L2 instruction. Mastering vocabulary is one of the most challenging tasks that any learner faces while acquiring another language (Nyikos and Fan, 2007). Accordingly, approaches to the development of L2 learners of English have been proposed.

Listening to English songs was used as a strategy for students to remember newly learnt words (Saengpakdeejit, 2014). Music can be used in an elementary school classroom to benefit students' language development (Fisher, 2001) Almost all educators agree that songs are included among their most successful teaching tools. Many linguistic features that can help second language students are present in songs; they contain many common and short words. In a study of using songs to enhance learning in the EAP Classroom, Klassen (2013) reported that the lyrics are usually sung at a slower rate than words that are spoken, with more pauses

between the phrases. This provides easier recognition and pronunciation of new vocabulary and grammar forms. There is usually a repetition of vocabulary and structures. The high frequency lyrics allow for extra practice, without the boredom of a regular drill. Using music in second language learning is consistent both with linguistic and psychological theories. Songs encourage students and stimulate their preparation to learn.

The English songs used in English camp were used as a learning material for developing Thai primary students' English vocabulary. The vocabulary contained in the songs were mainly related to general stories about ASEAN countries e.g. currencies, capital cities, food, animal symbols, famous places, 7 professional jobs in ASEAN, and flower symbols. It is expected that after learning the songs, the students' vocabulary as well as their knowledge about ASEAN will improve.

## **2. The purposes of the study**

The purposes of this study were as follows:

- 2.1 To study Thai primary students' vocabulary development through ASEAN songs in English Camp.
- 2.2 To compare the students' English proficiency by comparing students' scores before and after participating in the English Camp activities.
- 2.3 To assess the students' satisfaction towards English camp activities.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Participants**

The participants of this study were 60 students from Grade 5 and 6 at Ban Khoksueng School, a primary school in Nakhon Ratchasima. They were selected through the purposive sampling method. The school director and teachers wanted to improve their students' English language proficiency and prepare them for the ASEAN community by organizing an ASEAN Camp for 2 days. All students had never learned about ASEAN in English before.

### **3.2 Methods**

#### **3.2.1 Materials**

The researcher studied the practices for using songs as a tool for teaching vocabulary for primary students. Since the songs were aimed to teach vocabulary about ASEAN, the researcher had a list of topics concerning ASEAN which the students needed to know. The songs were composed based on Thai local and traditional lyrics. For example

#### ***Seven Professional jobs in ASEAN song***

*Come to sing and dance*

*Please come, please come*

*Come to sing, to sing, to dance and learn*

*Please come to sing, to dance and learn  
 Everyone comes to sing, to dance and learn  
 There'll be seven jobs that can work anywhere  
 In ASEAN, they can work, can work anywhere  
 DOCTOR, SURVEYOR, DENTIST, ENGINEER (x2)  
 NURSE, ARCHITECT, ACCOUNTANT work anywhere (x2)  
 You can remember, remember it all*

After that, two native English speaking teachers checked the songs' contents, test questions, and the questionnaire. The 20 test questions were used for evaluating the students' English vocabulary about ASEAN. Multiple-choice completion was the test type that was used for vocabulary testing. The examples are as follow:

- 1.....is the national food of Singapore.  
 a. Amok                      b. Nasi Lermak                      c. Nem                      d. Laksa
- 2 Phnom Pehn is the .....of the Cambodia.  
 a. capital city                      b. country                      c. flower                      d. monument

The questionnaire about students' opinions of learning English vocabulary through songs was also checked. Then, the researcher tried out the songs and taught the vocabulary to the students who were not in the sample group of the study, and revised the songs accordingly.

When the research instruments were completed, the songs were used with the sample students and the data was collected and analysed.

### ***3.2.2 The implementation of research instruments***

All materials were used with the students during the 2-day ASEAN camp conducted at Ban Khokseung school in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand. The objective of the song activity was to encourage students to learn vocabulary about ASEAN through English songs. The students did the pretest before starting the song activity. The 60 students were divided into 4 teams to participate in 4 bases on Day 1 and the other 4 bases on Day 2 . Each based focused on different topics.

*Day 1's topics:* 1) ASEAN emblem 2) currencies in ASEAN 3) capital cities in ASEAN 4) ASEAN food

*Day 2's topic:* 1) animal symbols in ASEAN 2) famous places in ASEAN 3) 7 professional jobs in ASEAN 4) flower symbols in ASEAN.

The steps in teaching vocabulary through songs were as follows.

- 1) The teacher sang a song and then students repeated it to the teacher.
- 2) The teacher pronounced, spelled the vocabulary, and explained the meanings of the difficult vocabulary several times.

- 3) The teacher asked the students to read aloud the vocabulary by themselves, both in pairs and groups.
- 4) The students sang the song together.
- 5) The teacher taught the students how to dance with songs, and students followed the teacher
- 6) The students sang and danced by themselves
- 7) The teacher asked students to play a song game.

After all the students had completed all bases, the students did the post test and questionnaire. The techniques of data collecting applied in this research are: (1) Observing the actions and taking notes during the teaching activities; (2) Measurement techniques using a test (3) Using the questionnaire to survey the students' satisfaction and opinions about learning English vocabulary through songs.

#### 4. The results

##### 4.1 The Observation

According to the observation by the researcher and the notes taken during the activity, the students were able to pronounce words about ASEAN, tell the meaning of vocabulary, read the specific words correctly, and know more about ASEAN. While the students were singing the songs, they felt relaxed, inspired, and motivated because of the teaching activities. This suggested that the students' English vocabulary and knowledge about ASEAN improved.

##### 4.2 The Test

The results of the tests administrated before and after learning through songs show that the average scores of the students' knowledge in the post-test were significantly higher than pre-test scores at .05.

**Table 1: The result of vocabulary test**

Test	N	$\bar{X}$ :	SD.	t*	P
Pretest	60	7.17	3.07	28.96	.000
Posttest	60	14.41	2.90		

\*Sig. .05

An experiment was conducted to find the effect of the songs about ASEAN on the students' vocabulary improvement. The scores of the pre and post-tests were compared. The pre-test and post-test results of students were 7.17 <14.41). The results indicate that the students' vocabulary had improved. Hence, using songs about ASEAN can help students improve their vocabulary.

##### 4.3 The Questionnaire

The data of the questionnaire on students' opinions of learning English through ASEAN songs and activities were analyzed by using mean scores. The findings were as follows.

4.3.1 The questionnaire on students' opinions towards learning English vocabulary through songs revealed that the students had positive satisfaction at a high level. The results are as follow:

- 1) Learning about general ASEAN information through songs is 100%
- 2) Learning about ASEAN vocabulary through songs is 96.5%
- 3) Interest in the songs is 92.3%
- 4) Using songs for learning English vocabulary is 88.56%
- 5) Using songs for learning General ASEAN information is 96.15%
- 6) Their satisfaction of learning vocabulary about ASEAN through song is 96.15%

4.3.2 The questionnaire on students' satisfaction about English camp activities revealed that the students had positive satisfaction at very satisfied and satisfied level. The results are as follow:

Items	Levels of Satisfaction				
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	OK	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
1. Improving English language skills	46.15	53.85			
2. Getting basic knowledge about ASEAN	69.23	30.77			
3. Learning various activities	73.07	19.23	7.70		
4. Organizing interesting activities	93.30	7.70			
5. Timing	30.77	57.69	11.54		
6. Satisfying staff	92.30	3.85	3.85		
7. Applying knowledge to real life	61.53	34.62	3.85		
8. Setting Place	61.53	30.77	7.70		
9. Preparing equipment and materials	65.38	26.92	7.70		
10. Food and beverage	61.53	34.62	3.85		

The results also showed that most of the students wanted to join the English Camp again. They liked the activities and were very satisfied. They wanted to extend the duration of the English camp and wished to stay overnight for a campfire.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Learning vocabulary through songs about ASEAN

Based on the analysis of the students' test results, it can be described that the vocabulary of students had increased. The teaching technique that can help them to realize the concept of what it means to know the lexical item is memory and storage systems. Oxford (1990) suggests that memory strategies to aid learning can be applied through images and sounds, employing action with physical response and sensation. Songs provided the memory strategies for different students. Songs proved to be a very successful way for students to learn using visual, aural, kinesthetic, and tactile methods.

Besides, teaching new vocabulary through enjoyable songs made them memorize every words and recalls the content about ASEAN easier. This supports what Klassen (2013) pointed that is, there maybe more ways to use music for language development and sustained word study activities. The lyrics are usually sung at a slower rate than words spoken, with more pauses between the phrases. This provides easier recognition and pronunciation of new vocabulary and grammar forms. There is usually a repetition of vocabulary and structures. The high frequency lyrics allow for extra practice, without the boredom of regular drill. For example:

***ASEAN Emblem Song***

*ASEAN Emblem is comprised of  
Yellow sheaves of rice stalks  
On a round red backdrop bordered  
By a white and blue very big circle  
It is the ASEAN emblem  
Can you tell it to me again?*

The students recognized many new vocabularies such as emblem, sheaves, and rice stalks. They also the learned grammar forms of present simple statements and questions. The rhythm of this song is quite slow, so they could practice pronunciation at the same time. Thus, music can be used as a teaching tool in English for Academic Purposes in the classroom to improve secondary acquisition. Fisher (2001) showed that classroom teachers are also interested in the role that music can play in their instructions.

### 5.2 ASEAN songs

The students are familiar with the melody of the songs. Some of them used Thai traditional and local melodies. Thus, the students remembered them easily, even though some songs had a lot of content to remember. For example:

***ASEAN Greeting Song***

*Good morning ladies and gentlemen.  
Welcome to ASEAN. ( A - A - A - A - A - A )*

*SAWADDEE Thailand, Thailand, MINGALABA Myanmar  
SINJAO Vietnam, SOUSADAY Cambodia,  
NIHAO Singapore, GUMUATA Philippines,  
SABAIDEE Laos, SALAMAT SIANG Indonesia,  
SALAMAT DATANG Malaysia and Brunei*

From this song, the students could remember greeting words in ASEAN. Even though the greetings are new words, different languages and have many syllables, most of them can sing and remember them.

The use of songs is useful for English language instruction in that it helps the students get in the mood to learn, cheer them up, and have fun in learning ASEAN vocabulary. As a result, their English language skills improved. Furthermore, songs, as tools, can encourage and help the students learn in an enjoyable environment without making them feel under pressure of learning a foreign language. Ara (2009) and Harp (1988) believe that music complements reading instruction because language, especially that of children, has rhythm and melody.

Besides, this study indicated that music can enhance English vocabulary as well as ASEAN knowledge, culture, and self confidence. Thus teachers should integrate music into their literacy instruction.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the research finding, it can be concluded as follows:

1. The students could remember vocabulary about ASEAN from songs and games. The use of songs is useful for English language instruction in that it helps the students get in the mood to learn, cheer them up and enjoy in learning ASEAN vocabulary. As a result, their English language skills improved.

2. Furthermore, songs, as tools, can encourage and help the students learn in an enjoyable environment without making them feel under pressure of learning a foreign language. Ara (2009) and Harp (1988) believes that music complements reading instruction because language, especially that of children, has rhythm and melody.

3. Games have a significant influence in the development of memory, attention processes, verbal and numerical fluency, reasoning and creative skills (Garcia-Varcarcel, 2007; Albadalejo, 2001).

4. In addition, this study indicated that game and song can enhance English vocabulary as well as ASEAN knowledge, culture, and self confidence. Thus teachers should integrate games and songs into their instruction.



5. The English camp is an outside classroom activity that can encourage, develop and motivate English language learning as well as construct the students' attitudes through various experiences outside the classroom. Besides, it enhances content learning, language communication skills, and teamwork.

6. The English Camp model consists of studying social context, local area, English language instruction, and steps in organizing English camp. Moreover, the important things that must be taken into account in setting suitable activities are budget, location, period, campers, staff members, materials, and a support network or sponsors.

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