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## Development of an English Speaking Skill Assessment Model for Grade 6 Students by Using Portfolio

Daruwan Srikaew<sup>a</sup>, Kamonwan Tangdhanakanond<sup>b\*</sup>, Sirichai Kanjanawasee<sup>c</sup><sup>a</sup> Ph.D. Student in the Department of Educational Research and Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330, Thailand<sup>b</sup> Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Research and Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330, Thailand<sup>c</sup> Professor in the Department of Educational Research and Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330, Thailand

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### Abstract

It has been found from language assessment that the results were lower in terms of reliability compared to other aspects. Therefore, the development of a reliable model on English speaking skill assessment is very important and it will hopefully bring about English language teaching improvement. The objectives of this research were to study the steps and the components of a portfolio on English speaking skill assessment as well as to develop the English speaking skill assessment criteria for grade 6 students. The research methods used include a review of documents and interviews of nine experts on English language teaching and language assessment. The data was analysed using content analysis method. The results found that the component of the portfolio on English speaking skill assessment for grade 6 students comprises three parts: 1) Introduction 2) Contents and 3) Assessment criteria. There are 7 steps in using a portfolio in assessment: 1) planning 2) preparation for students 3) evidence collecting 4) progress monitoring 5) improvement of performance 6) reflection and 7) displaying the works. The tasks involved in English speaking skill assessment include interviewing, oral presentation, storytelling, making picture description. Analytic rating scale was applied as scoring criteria on vocabulary, syntax, cohesion, pronunciation ideational function and fluency.

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*Keywords:* speaking skill, speaking skill assessment, portfolio;

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### 1. Introduction

English speaking skill is important for primary school students. It requires development alongside with other language skills so that students can use speaking in studying and communicating. Students should be assessed in

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\* Kamonwan Tangdhanakanond. Tel.: +6686 814 9388 Fax : +662 218 2801  
E-mail address: [tkamonwan@hotmail.com](mailto:tkamonwan@hotmail.com)

speaking using a performance instrument that provides students a chance to demonstrate their ability to participate in a conversation. Assessment activities should be authentic and exist in real life (Bachman and Palmer, 2010). Analytic rating scale should be used for scoring to increase the reliability of the assessment, which can provide clear information with benefits to teaching and learning development. Since 1988 portfolio has been playing its role in teaching and learning as an authentic assessment (Jamornmann, 1997). A portfolio is a systematic collection of students' work from their studying hours which can be used to monitor students' progress in knowledge, skills and attitudes. In a portfolio, an individual student records his or her learning progress. This is beneficial for student's further studying because it enables the teacher to provide feedback on student work with student participation in the assessment (Vavrus, 1990, cited in Cole and others, 2000; Barabouiti, 2012). Therefore, using portfolio in English language speaking skill assessment should support and develop students' English speaking skills. The objectives of this research study are 1) to examine the procedures and the components of the portfolio on English language speaking skill assessment for grade 6 students, and 2) to examine the tasks and the scoring criteria on English language speaking skill assessment for grade 6 students

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Speaking skill assessment

Communicative language proficiency comprises two parts: 1) language knowledge and 2) language strategies (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, 2010). The language knowledge includes organization knowledge (grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge) and pragmatic knowledge (functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge). Figure 1 illustrates Bachman and Palmer's (2010) model. Bachman and Palmer (2010) suggested that students should demonstrate language proficiency through a performance test. The tasks used in such an assessment should enable students to talk, to participate in a conversation, or to communicate in another context that exists in real life. In terms of appropriate tasks for primary school students, McKay (2006) delineated two types: 1) pure speaking activities, such as news telling, storytelling, picture talks, categorization tasks, oral presentation and other speaking-only genre 2) activities that listening skill and speaking skill are combined together, such as oral interview and question-and-answer tasks. A rating scale, sometimes referred to as a scoring rubric or proficiency scale (Fulcher, 2003) is commonly used to measure student performance on authentic oral language assessments. Concerning scoring criteria for written English language proficiency, Weigle (2002) presented his view on two types of rating scales, that are 1) holistic rating scale and 2) analytic rating scale. The definition of holistic assessment provided by Cooper (1977 cited in Fulcher, 2003) is:

any procedure which stop short of enumerating linguistic, rhetorical, or informational features of a piece of writing. Some holistic procedures may specify a number of particular features and even require that each feature be scored separately, but the reader is never required to stop and count or tally incidents of the feature.

In contrast, an analytic assessment is the reverse, namely counting or tallying incidents (Fulcher, 2003). Analytic rating scale determines each part of the tasks with limited answer characteristic. Rating guidelines for each individual part must be specified by clearly defining or providing the description for each part of the tasks. Most of the scales are classified into not more than four levels. This type of rating scale is easy to assess and reliable (Weigle, 2002).

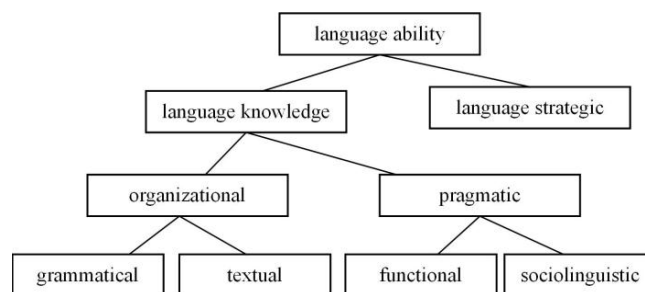


Fig. 1. Language proficiency model of Bachman and Palmer (1996)

## 2.2 Portfolio assessment

Portfolio refers to a purposeful collection of student works. It is used to present student works to others to show efforts, progress, or efficiency in specific tasks (Northwest Evaluation association, 1991 cited in Weigle, 2002). Moreover, portfolio is used by students as well as teachers in monitoring student progress, knowledge, skill and attitude (Vavrus, 1990 cited in Cole et al, 2000). Burke, Fogart and Begrad (1994) specified the three components of portfolio: 1) introduction which comprises cover, biography and list of learning objectives 2) collection of works, reflections and history of the works, and 3) rating scale for the portfolio and information on the assessment by teachers, peers and parents. Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000), described three steps for students to develop a portfolio: 1) collect the works assigned by teachers during classroom learning based on the learning objectives of each topic. 2) Select and revise best pieces for inclusion in portfolio, and 3) reflect on the learning process, revisions made to works, and the strengths and weaknesses of each of work.

## 3. Methodology

The methods used in data collection of this research are document review and interviews of nine experts. The experts are in the areas of English language teaching, education measurement and evaluation, and portfolio assessment. The research instrument for interviews was a structured interview protocol. Content analysis was used for data analysis. After data collection, the researcher presented the steps of portfolio development to five experts in education measurement and evaluation, and portfolio assessment to have the steps checked in terms of appropriateness and application possibility. Concerning the speaking assessment rating scale and tasks, seven experts on English language teaching reviewed them for appropriateness. Then, the scale was piloted by two raters who assessed ten grade 6 students on oral presentations about themselves. To ensure reliability between the raters, each rater was asked to listen to the recorded speaking of a student and rate using the scale developed by the researcher. They then compares and discussed the similarities and differences between their scores and the reasons for giving the rates as such. Each of the two raters finally assessed the recorded speaking. The scores rated by the 2 raters have been checked their assessing reliability using inter-rater reliability by finding Pearson' Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation.

## 4. Results

4.1 The components of the portfolio on English language speaking skill for grade 6 students are 1) introduction which comprises preface, table of contents, student's personal information, aims in learning and speaking English 2) contents, which comprises formative assessment results and summative assessment result including self-assessment, peer review, teacher's feedback and reflection, and 3) appendix, which comprises the rating scale and a recorded compact disc of a student's voice speaking English

4.2 The development of portfolio on English language speaking skill assessment for grade 6 students follows these 7 steps, (see figure 2):

4.2.1 *Planning*: teachers and students work together to specify the objectives of learning management using portfolio on English language speaking skill assessment.

4.2.2 *Preparation for students*: teachers provide students with the basic knowledge on English language skill assessment and rating scale used in the assessment. Students also practice self-assessment and peer review.

4.2.3 *Evidence collecting*: students analyze their own ability in English speaking, specify the aim of learning, practice English speaking through teacher's specified topics, complete self-assessment, and obtain peer and teacher reviews. They also provide a review on their peer's performances.

4.2.4 *Progress monitoring*: teachers conduct formative as well as summative assessment. The teachers gave feedback so that students would improve their next performances.

4.2.5 *Improvement of performance*: students plan for the improvement of their performances taking in account the teacher's feedback.

4.2.6 *Reflection*: students reflect on their own performances and learning experiences obtained from learning management using a portfolio on English language speaking skill. They also note on strong points and weak points for self-improvement.

4.2.7 *Displaying the works*: students have their portfolio display to teachers, peers and parents. They also show their English speaking ability on school stage to parents, teachers and students in other classes.

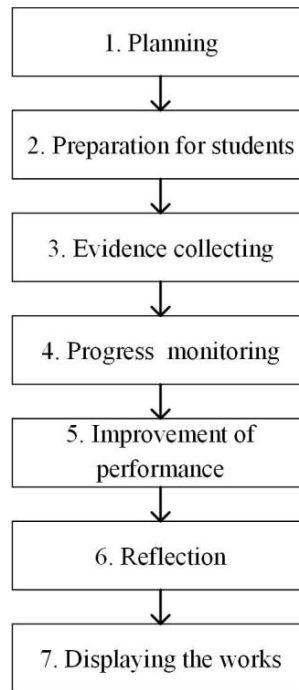


Fig. 2. The 7 steps for portfolio on English language speaking skill assessment for grade 6 students

#### 4.3 Tasks and analytic rating scale

4.3.1 Four tasks were used in the English language speaking skill assessment of grade 6 students, three of which were used for formative assessment including interviewing, presenting about themselves and storytelling. The only task used for summative assessment was making picture description.

4.3.2 The scope of analytic rating scale assessment covers vocabulary, syntax, cohesion, pronunciation, ideational function and fluency. The scoring system was 1-4 which represented no evidence, poor, moderate and good, respectively. The scores rated by the 2 raters have been checked their assessing reliability using inter-rater reliability by Pearson' Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation. It was found that the reliability for vocabulary, syntax, cohesion, pronunciation, ideational function and fluency are .923, .816, .928, .802, 1.000 and .826 respectively which regard high level reliability. Therefore, the rating scale was appropriate (Fulcher, 2003). The correlations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Inter-rater reliability on a speaking analytic rating scale

| Rater 1             | Rater 2    |        |          |               |                     |         |
|---------------------|------------|--------|----------|---------------|---------------------|---------|
|                     | vocabulary | syntax | cohesion | pronunciation | ideational function | fluency |
| vocabulary          | .923       |        |          |               |                     |         |
| syntax              |            | .816   |          |               |                     |         |
| cohesion            |            |        | .928     |               |                     |         |
| pronunciation       |            |        |          | .802          |                     |         |
| ideational function |            |        |          |               | 1.000               |         |
| fluency             |            |        |          |               |                     | .826    |

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

The research finding is the development of a procedure for the portfolio on English language speaking skill for grade 6 students. Based on a review of literature, the portfolio procedure consisted of seven steps, which include planning, preparation for students, evidence collecting, progress monitoring, improvement of performance, reflection and displaying the works. Students should be provided with age-appropriate, hands-on tasks for assessment. The tasks used in the English language speaking skill assessment of grade 6 students comprise four tasks, three of which were used for formative assessment including interviewing, presenting about themselves, and storytelling. The only task used for summative assessment was making picture description. These tasks enable students to talk, make conversation, and demonstrate their speaking ability in real life situations (Bachman and Palmer, 2010). The rating scale used to assess English language speaking skill using portfolio was an analytic rating scale. The scope of analytic rating scale assessment covers vocabulary, syntax, cohesion, pronunciation, ideational function and fluency. The scoring system was 1-4 which represented no evidence, poor, moderate and good respectively. The four level rating scale was found to be easy to assess and reliable (Weigle, 2002).

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