

The Development of Listening-speaking Skill in English and Cultural Knowledge by Using Communicative Activities Enhance Ability of Hotel Receptionists: A Case Study of Amari Donmuang Airport Bangkok Hotel  
การพัฒนาทักษะทางด้านฟังพูดภาษาอังกฤษและความรู้ทางวัฒนธรรมโดยใช้กิจกรรมการสื่อสารเพื่อเพิ่มพูนความสามารถของพนักงานต้อนรับในโรงแรม :  
กรณีศึกษา : โรงแรมอมารี ดอนเมือง แอร์พอร์ต กรุงเทพฯ

♦ Sarinrat Sertpunya

Assistant Professor, Ph.D., Lecturer of Hospitality Industry and Culinary Arts,  
Hotel Major North Bangkok University, E-mail: sarinrat.se@northbkk.ac.th

ศรินทร์รัตน์ เสรีฐปัญญา

ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร. ประจำสาขาอุตสาหกรรมบริการและการประกอบอาหาร เอกการโรงแรม  
คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยนอร์ทกรุงเทพ

*Received: April 18, 2019 ; Revised: June 9, 2019 ; Accepted: June 10, 2019*

---

## Abstract

The purposes of this research were to compare the English listening – speaking ability and the cultural knowledge of hotel receptionists of Amari Donmuang Airport Bangkok hotel before and after being taught through communicative activities. The target group was 15 hotel receptionists working from January to February 2019 in Amari Donmuang Airport Bangkok Hotel. The experimental instrument was an English for Hotel Receptions Trainee’s book by using communicative activities. The data collecting instruments consisted of the listening – speaking assessing form and the cultural knowledge test. They were conducted before and after using communicative activities. The data obtained were analyzed by using mean ( $\mu$ ) and standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ).

The findings of this study were as follows: Learners’ listening – speaking ability was increased after being taught through communicative activities. Learners’ cultural knowledge was increased after being taught through communicative activities.

**Keywords:** Listening-speaking Skill in English, Cultural Knowledge, Communicative Activities

## บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อเปรียบเทียบความสามารถทางด้านฟัง พูดภาษาอังกฤษและความรู้ทางวัฒนธรรมของพนักงานต้อนรับในโรงแรมอมารี ดอนเมือง แอร์พอร์ต กรุงเทพก่อนและหลังได้รับการสอนโดยใช้กิจกรรมการสื่อสาร ที่ทำงานระหว่างเดือนมกราคม - กุมภาพันธ์ 2562 จำนวน 15 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการทดลองครั้งนี้ คือ คู่มือการฝึกอบรมหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับพนักงานต้อนรับส่วนหน้าของโรงแรมโดยใช้กิจกรรมการสื่อสาร เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล ได้แก่ แบบวัดความสามารถทางด้านฟัง พูดและแบบทดสอบความรู้ทางวัฒนธรรมโดยผู้วิจัยทำการวัดความสามารถทางด้านฟัง พูดและทดสอบความรู้ทางวัฒนธรรมของผู้เรียนก่อนและหลังการสอนด้วยกิจกรรมการสื่อสาร ข้อมูลที่ได้นำมาวิเคราะห์โดยการหาค่าเฉลี่ย ( $\mu$ ) และส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน ( $\sigma$ ) ผลการวิจัยสรุปได้ดังนี้ 1) ผู้เรียนมีความสามารถทางด้านฟัง พูดภาษาอังกฤษสูงขึ้นหลังจากได้รับการสอนโดยใช้กิจกรรมการสื่อสาร 2) ผู้เรียนมีความรู้ทางวัฒนธรรมของเจ้าของภาษาสูงขึ้นหลังจากได้รับการสอนโดยใช้กิจกรรมการสื่อสาร

**คำสำคัญ :** ทักษะทางด้านฟังพูด ภาษาอังกฤษ ความรู้ทางวัฒนธรรม กิจกรรมการสื่อสาร

## Introduction

At present, the hotel industry is an important industry that is to be able to bring a lot of money into Thailand and it is a business that facilitates various services for the tourists. Therefore, the service of the hotel is considered to be the key to impress the visitors. Since booking staying in the hotel until returning the room and leaving the hotel with the hotel receptionists being responsible for coordinating in order to provide guests with the most comfort and satisfaction. Therefore, the receptionists must have the ability to communicate by using English which is an international language effectively and able to listen and speak appropriately according to the context and situation more, it must also be able to interpret from the listener and interact with the language that makes the audience understand as well as increase cultural knowledge in the language which is considered to reflect the culture of each person (Byrne, 2015).

According to interview with the majority of Amari's hotel management revealed that the receptionists should have high responsibility rely on the ability to solve immediate problems. The key is to have the ability to listen and speak English but the receptionists in most hotels often encounter problems with conversations with foreign customers and make it impossible to understand and interpret the words of customers.

Using of communicative activities may be one way to help learners to use language in such situations which is a very popular method of teaching English now because it has given importance to social and cultural factors. According to Kirpatrick's research studied Kirkpatrick (2015) found that the use of communicative activities is challenging and feasible because language teaching for communication allows students to create cultural knowledge of native speakers and learn about communication strategies that can be used to develop English communication abilities. In addition, the study of related research found that classroom activities that focus on communicative activities can help learners develop listening and speaking in English ability and knowledge of American culture including understanding the differences in culture as well. Therefore, learning the culture of native speakers is an important element in enhancing the sense of culture of native speakers and encourage learners to become interested in learning languages also create a positive attitude towards the culture of other peoples as well as allowing the learner to adapt to the culture of the native speaker when communicating by using that language. It is seen that the communicative activities not only promote cultural awareness and listening ability but also provides an opportunity for learning to real situation as possible in accordance with the needs of learners and: It is also helping learners to know the culture in the language and express themselves through various forms of communicative activities to create cultural knowledge of native speakers. Therefore, the researcher realized the importance of using the communicative activities to communicate along with providing cultural knowledge by inserting culture to develop communication capabilities especially the listening and speaking skills and cultural knowledge inserted in that language. For this reason, the researcher is interested in studying the use of communicative activities to develop listening and speaking skill in English ability and cultural knowledge of the receptionists in Amari Donmuang Airport Hotel Bangkok: This will be informed of the information which is a guide to improving English language teaching in increasing cultural knowledge and listening - speaking skill in English ability for the further benefit.

## Objective

This research objectives are as follows:

1. To compare the listening - speaking skill in English ability of the receptionists at Amari Donmuang Airport Bangkok before and after being taught by using communicative activities.

2. To compare the cultural knowledge of the receptionists at Amari Don Muang Airport Bangkok before and after being taught by using communicative activities

## Scope of Research

This research set the scope as follows:

1. Sample group

The sample group of this study were the receptionists at Amari Donmuang Airport Hotel Bangkok which worked between January - February 2019, totaling 15 people.

2. The variables studied

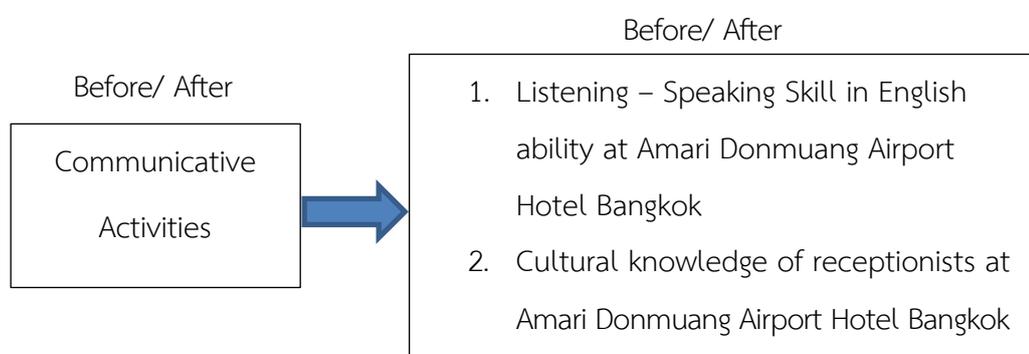
2.1 Independent variables include communicative activities

2.2 Dependent Variable include listening – speaking skill in English ability and cultural knowledge

3. The content of instruction

Consists of 5 units as follows: Unit 1 Social Communication Skills, Unit 2 Building guest relations, Unit 3 Front office personnel responsibility, Unit 4 Dealing with problems and compliant and Unit 5 Hotel information and tourist attraction

## Conceptual Framework



## Definition of Operational Terms/ Research Terms

1. **Communicative Activities** means English language teaching activities by emphasizing the use of language for communication according to the objectives of the learners' needs and interaction by allowing students to practice English language by giving situation through information exchange activities, conclusions from the data, role play and simulation which appears in the training step and the creation of language step.

2. **Listening - speaking Skill in English ability** means the ability of verbal communication between two or more persons by interpreting from what the speaker wants to communicate and can interact with the English language that can be understood correctly according to the language function.

3. **Cultural Knowledge** means cultural knowledge that related to the communication of ideas, values, beliefs and attitudes, which are symbols of the group of native speakers who use English as their mother tongue by cultural knowledge expressions such as verbal and non-verbal which can be assessed from the cultural knowledge test that the researcher created.

4. **Hotel Receptionist** mean the receptionist who holds a bachelor's degree or higher and works in the front desk which are responsible for providing rooms and facilitating guests in the hotel which work at Amari Don Muang Airport Hotel Bangkok between January - February 2019

## Literature Review

In this research, the researcher had studied relevant documents as a basis for conducting research and have been divided according to the following topics as follows:

### 1. Communicative activities

Communication activities mean activities that allow learners to use content and language knowledge for communication that they have learned. Practice conversation in situations or situations that are set to be as close to reality as possible. The students will use the language to convey the meaning appropriately according to the situation and context in the society through various communication activities.

### 2. Using communicative activities in the classroom

The implementation of communication activities has set the steps for organizing activities according to the language teaching guidelines for Allen Susan (2016). The steps are as follows:

#### 2.1 Presentation of content and cultural tips (Presentation)

2.1.1 Content presentation step (Lead-in) The instructors present the language content according to the functions of different languages according to the language teaching guidelines for communication and insert cultural tips through context and situations.

2.1.2 Step to motivate learners (Elicitation) The instructor examines the learner's understanding by using questions to encourage learners to use the language when students

are able to interact. The instructor then began to teach or explain the language content for the learners to understand and use the questions or explain to the students the differences in the behavior of foreigners.

2.1.3 Explanation (Explanation) The instructors began to teach and explain the content in the form of methods of using meaning and culture that are inserted in the language according to the concept of passing through Baker W. (2016) which summarizes the method of providing cultural knowledge to enable learners to recognize cultural differences that affect the language and behavior of foreigners.

### 3. The role of teachers in communicative activities

#### 3.1 Role in teaching and learning activities

#### 3.2 Role in attitude building

#### 3.3 Role in knowledge seeking

#### 3.4 Role in skills

Teachers must have skills in many areas, such as having the ability to listen, speak, read and write the target language, prepare and organize communication activities. Assess the progress of learners and being a researcher in the classroom, etc.

### 4. Benefits of organizing communication activities

Cameron (2018) discussed the benefits of using language activities for communication as follows:

#### 4.1 Activities help to practice language

#### 4.2 Activities create motivation in learning languages.

#### 4.3 Activities help to learn language naturally.

#### 4.4 Activities help create an environment that promotes learning.

### 5. Listening - speaking skill in English ability

Campman (2015) said that listening is the ability to understand and evaluate the appropriateness of language. Which includes understanding the communication objectives hidden in the words that correspond to Crawford (2018), said that listening to foreign languages is meaningful in understanding the sound that is heard listeners will receive the words they hear as well as the rise and fall of the voice to interpret the meaning.

## 6. Related research

### 6.1 Research in abroad

Research related to communication activities, including research on the opportunity to receive the development of communication capabilities of Edward (2015) which aims to explore opportunities to have interaction of students learning English as a second language and to analyze the characteristics of teaching and learning activities and the interaction patterns that are related to communication ability. The research results indicated that each interaction model plays a role in the development of communication capabilities which teachers must be aware of this importance in order to develop effective teaching styles

### 6.2 Research in the country

Achara Wongsathorn (2017) studied the comparative study of English learning achievement of mathayom suksa 1 that students learned from using communication activities and studied according to the teaching methods of the teacher manual. The research results showed that students learned by communication activities had higher learning achievement in English than students learned from the teaching methods according to the teacher manual.

## Research methodology

### 1. The Population and sample determination

Population in doing this research were the receptionists at the Amari Donmuang Airport Hotel Bangkok who graduated with a bachelor's degree or higher that worked at Amari Donmuang Airport Hotel Bangkok during January - February 2019 totaling 25 people. Sampling were 15 people by purpose sampling which the front office manager considered the sample group for the researcher as appropriate.

### 2. The Research tool design

The tools used in this research are divided into 2 types as following:

2.1 The instruments used in the experiment was an English for Hotel Receptions Trainee's book by using communicative activities in 5 hours per unit totaling 25 hours. To create a Trainee's book that used communicative activities which have 3 steps as follows.

#### 2.1.1 The Presentation of content and cultural tips step

2.1.1.1 The import content step: the instructors offered language content according to the functions of various languages and included cultural tips related to the content of the course and the situation.

2.1.1.2 The motivate learners' step: The instructor examined the understanding of the learners by using questions when learners were able to interact, therefore teaching or explaining language content and using questions or explaining to learners the differences in culture and expression of native speakers in their culture.

2.1.1.3 The explanatory step, the instructor started teaching and explaining the content in term of forms, how to use, meaning and culture that were inserted in the language so that the learner is aware of the cultural differences that affect the used of English language and behavior of foreigners.

2.1.2 The Training Step: At this step, the learners practiced the language and culture knowledge that learned at the first step through communicative activities which may include Information exchange activities, activity for conclusions from information, role-play or using simulations activities which will be self-training, in pairs or in groups according to the appropriateness of content and language functions with the instructor as the instructor providing training at the beginning, explaining and guidance and being an examiner while the learners practiced until the learner have used language well therefore could join the activity in the next step.

2.1.3 The Language creation Step: Learners participate in the communicative activities that are assigned by the instructor to provide feedback to the learners upon completion of the activity.

After that, the researcher proposed 3 lesson plans to the language and cultural experts to consider and correcting again. Then the researcher had led exercises that focus on communicative activities to 2 native speaker teachers checked for accuracy, the appropriateness of the language and cultural differences and took corrective actions according to the advice of all 3 language and culture experts and 2 native teachers to be completely correct.

## 2.2 The instruments used to collect data include

2.2.1 Listening - speaking skill in English ability test as a group discussion, where the researcher assigns learners to interact in the roles and situations assigned to them which was adjusted from the holistic evaluation criteria of the International English Proficiency Test Center then brought it to the native teacher to check the accuracy, the coverage of the content used to teach and suitability. Then, three experts examined the correctness and then edited it

again before using it to test the ability of the sample group before and after the study by the researcher being the assessor.

As for the evaluation criteria for listening – speaking skill in English ability is divided into 4 criteria by dividing the scores according to the skill level into 5 levels. The researcher had led to 3 experts to determine the suitability

After scoring the listening - speaking skill in English ability, the researcher had determined the level of competence.

2.2.2 Test of cultural knowledge of native speakers is a test of cultural knowledge of individual learners which measures cultural knowledge in both verbal communication and gesture language use, consists of 77 major topics, a total of 20 items This test is made up of 4 choices, each test has 1 score. There are 1 correct answer, more than 1 answer or no answer is considered wrong 0 points in item.

The researcher created the test by studying from the cultural knowledge test of Chalinee Sukamintin (2001). Which will measure the cultural knowledge of native speakers in verbal communication and the use of gesture language to convey the meaning of native speakers. After that, the test was brought to 3 experts to consider and make corrections.

### 3. Conducting experiments and collecting data

This research model is a single group experiment (Pre – Posttest Design) as detailed in the following table.

**Table 1** Experiment to compare listening - speaking skill in English ability and cultural knowledge of learners before and after being taught by using communicative activities

Experimental group	T1	X	T2
	S2		X2

T1 means listening - speaking skill in English ability before learning, T2 means listening - speaking skill in English ability after learning, X means communicative activities, S1 means cultural knowledge before studying, S2 means cultural knowledge after studying

Data collection has the following steps.

1. Test listening - speaking skill in English ability and cultural knowledge of the target group before teaching by using communicative activities and by using the listening ability test on February 15, 2019.

2. Conducting teaching samples, the researcher conducted the teaching according to the lesson plan created. By teaching them according to the teaching process using English for Hotel Receptionists Trainee’s book by using communicative activities, 5 hours per plan, a total of 25 hours for a period of 5 weeks starting from 15 January - 28 February 2019

3. When teaching is done by using communicative activities, the researcher measured the listening – speaking skill in English ability and cultural knowledge of the target group after the study by using the same measurement form that was used before the measure on February 28, 2019

4. The researcher used the scores obtained from the measurement of listening - speaking skill in English ability and scores obtained from the test of cultural knowledge of learners before and after teaching and analyzing

#### 4. Data analysis

4.1 Find the mean ( $\mu$ ) and standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ) of listening - speaking skill in English ability scores before and after studying by using communicative activities by using SPSS / PC + for Windows computer program.

4.2 Find the mean ( $\mu$ ) and standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ) of cultural knowledge scores before and after teaching by using communicative activities by using computer program.

### Results

**Part 1** Results of listening - speak skill in English ability analysis of the receptionists in the hotel before and after studying by using communicative activities.

**Table 2** Average ( $\mu$ ) and standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ) of listening - speaking skill in English ability scores of the receptionists in the hotel before and after being taught by using communicative activities.

	Number of students (person)	Full Scores	Average	Standard Deviation
Before studying	15	16	8.46	1.30
After studying	15	16	12.93	1.13

From Table 2, found that the receptionists had listening - speaking skill in English ability scores after studying by using communicative activities with an average of 12.93, the standard deviation was 1.13 which was higher than the listening – speaking skill in English ability scores

before studying by using communicative activities. The receptionists received an average score of 8.46, the standard deviation was 1.30 which corresponds to the hypothesis set.

**Part 2** The results of the analysis of cultural knowledge of the receptionists in the hotel before and after the studying by using communicative activities

**Table 6** The average and standard deviation of the cultural knowledge scores of the receptionists in the hotel before and after being taught by using communicative activities

	Number of students (person)	Full Scores	Average	Standard Deviation
Before studying	15	20	12.66	1.59
After studying	15	20	19.88	1.99

From Table 6, it was found that the receptionists had cultural knowledge scores after studying by using communicative activities with an average of 19.88, standard deviation equal to 1.99 which is higher than the cultural knowledge scores before studying by using communicative activities. The receptionists received an average score of 12.66, a standard deviation of 1.59, It showed that the receptionists who were taught by using communicative activities had cultural knowledge which corresponded to the hypothesis set.

## Research Result

From the analysis of the data, the results are as follows:

1. The Listening - speaking English ability of the receptionists higher after being taught by using communicative activities. (see table 2)
2. The cultural knowledge of the receptionists is higher after being taught by using communicative activities. (See table 3)

## Discussion

From the results of research, there are important issues that should be discussed as follows:

1. After being taught by using communicative activities, it was found that the receptionists had higher listening ability scores which showed that communicative activities have resulted in learners being able to improve their listening - speaking skill in English ability well. This research is consistent with the results of Hinkel (2018) which showed that the used of communicative activities was an opportunity for learners communicated with each other for

the purpose of using communicative activities. From research therefore found that communicative activities resulted in the learners developing their listening - speaking skill in English ability may be due to the following factors:

Firstly, communicative activities are diverse activities both information exchange activities and data summary especially using role play activities and using simulation which is an activity allows the learner to have a role in a situation that is as close to real life as possible within the classroom until able to develop English communicative skills effectively.

Secondly, in the teaching process by using communicative activities, it is important to practice the language of the learner. The learners practice using language content according to the instructor before solo training, double training, small group and large group training. Training in communicative conversation emphasizes repeated training in the language structure learned through a variety of communicative activities, whether information exchange activities or role play and simulation situations. The training process continues until the learner is confident to use the language. Therefore, in the creation language process, learners are motivated and confident to use the language in new situations as well.

Thirdly, communicative activities are activities that promote courage, dialogue of learners. Because one of the problems of developing English communication abilities is the learners don't have the courage to use the language including daring to practice speaking with foreigners therefore, communicative activities are held in a relaxed learning atmosphere, fun, friendly, contributing to the development of language ability. In particular, this activity has an important part in promoting the assertiveness of learners and affects the development of knowledge and ability in communication and learning in the language content increases.

Finally, before selecting the language content used to teach, the instructor has studied and researched various texts, including interviews with hotel executives and receptionists about topics that need to be studied with regard to suitability and necessity of situation that using the language close to the learner. So that the language content used to teach is an important part of motivating the learners. Learners are interested in learning because they are familiar and must be used in work. Therefore, it is considered the basis and good starting point for smooth teaching and learning and students can practice using the knowledge gained in real situations every day.

2. After studying by using communicative activities, it was found that learners had higher cultural knowledge which showed that communicative activities contribute to enhancing cultural knowledge based on the findings mentioned above, it may be due to the following important reasons:

Firstly, the instructor provides cultural knowledge to learners by using a variety of methods, including using movies, explaining demonstrations, using questions, simulating the situation between the instructor and the native speaker especially the discussion with native speakers to compare the differences between Thai culture and foreign culture. Which can be seen that learners are given the opportunity to express their opinions on matters of interest making it possible to discuss with teachers until they can improve their listening -speaking skill in English ability better.

Secondly, the instructor studied from various textbooks, including interviews and observations of the receptionist's work to select the cultural topics that were used to teach for the benefit of most learners which considers the consistency with the language content and the interest of the learner. These are part of the motivation for learning and help motivate learners to become interested in discussing the cultural topics that are assigned to each lesson which will result in the ability to develop communication capabilities.

Third, cultural learning is considered a part of learning to improve communication competencies. In addition, learning culture does not only help learners understand other national cultures but also helps learners to have a positive attitude towards that nation which will result in an adjustment to the foreign culture in real situations.

In summary from the discussion of the results of all the above studies showed that teaching language using communicative activities is an activity that enhances listening - speaking skill in English ability of learners. Enabling the learner to communicate appropriately with the context and circumstances assigned by the various steps of the activity. Provides opportunities for learners to practice using language through a variety of activities and enhances cultural knowledge which has been inserted in the process of teaching and learning which makes the learners understand the culture of foreigners and results in confidence in communication as well as being able to develop listening – speaking skill in English ability better English respectively. If the learner has been taught continuously until he/she is proficient then the learner will be able

to communicate by using fluent English appropriately, naturally and consistent to the situation of communication better.

## **Recommendation/ Implication**

### **Suggestions for teaching and learning**

1. Before teaching, the instructor should add additional activities to prepare students for study. The instructor may use the questions as a guideline to lead the course and help motivate the learners to be active.

2. In discussing cultural topics, instructors should give students the opportunity to express their ideas fully, taking into account cultural facts and guiding students to see the difference between their own culture and foreigners in order to understand the behavior of foreigners only by not inducing or guiding students to see the disadvantages or disadvantages of their national or foreign culture.

### **Suggestions for further research**

1. Should study additional variables such as attitudes towards learning and motivation to study including attitudes towards the culture of native speakers etc.

2. Should use communicative activity to experiment with teaching a second language or other foreign languages such as French or German.

## **Acknowledgement**

This research was funded by North Bangkok University and would like to thank you Amari Donmuang Airport Bangkok for allowing the researcher to study the case and collect information from the hotel in doing this research.

## **References**

Achara Wongsothorn (2017). Hearing and comprehending. *English Teaching Form*, 28(3), 18

Allen Susan (2016) "The Presentation Stage, the Practice Stage, the Production Stage."

In *at the Chalk face*. Edited by Alan Matthews et al. London: Edward Arnold.

Baker W. (2016) *Foreign and second language learning: language - acquisition research and its implications for the classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Byrne (2015). *Teaching writing skills*. London: Longman.

Champman (2015). *The Communicative of English*. London: Longman group.

- Cameron (2018). Communicative emphasis of EFL/ESL textbook materials: an analysis of the language learning activities in Korean Junior high EFL and selected learning ESL textbooks. Thesis (PH.D.) - University of Kansas.
- Chalinee Sukamint (2001). Developing English project lessons to promote cultural knowledge. Master of Education Thesis, Graduate School, Chiang Mai University. (in Thai)
- Crawford (2018). Teach English: a training course for teachers: teacher's workbook. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hinkel (2018). Comparison of English learning achievement of Mathayom suksa one students from teaching methods using activities for communicating with teaching methods according to teacher manual. Master's thesis on education College Silpakorn University.
- Kirkpatrick, T. A. (2015). The role of communicative language teaching in secondary school with special reference to teaching in Singapore. RELC Seminar (Singapore, April 23 – 27)



Assistant Professor, Sarinrat Sertpunya, Ph.D., (Administration Education Chulalongkorn University, MA. (Tourism Management), Assumption University, B.Ed.(Secondary-Science) Chulalongkorn University, Lecturer of Hospitality Industry and Culinary Arts, Hotel Major, Liberal Arts Faculty, North Bangkok University.