



**DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING SKILL AMONG 6th - GRADE
STUDENTS THROUGH ART-BASED ACTIVITIES AND SELF-EXPRESSION
TECHNIQUES AT A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN PROVINCIAL AREAS
OF THAILAND**

SGT. NICHANAN CHOTIRAT

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Naresuan University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Education in English
2025**

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Thesis entitled “Development of English-Speaking Skill among 6th -grade Students
through Art-Based Activities and Self-Expression Techniques at
a Private School in Provincial Areas of Thailand”

by Sgt. Nichanan Chotirat

has been approved by the Graduate School as partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Education Program in English of Naresuan University

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Title	DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING SKILL AMONG 6th - GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH ART-BASED ACTIVITIES AND SELF-EXPRESSION TECHNIQUES AT A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN PROVINCIAL AREAS OF THAILAND
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ABSTRACT

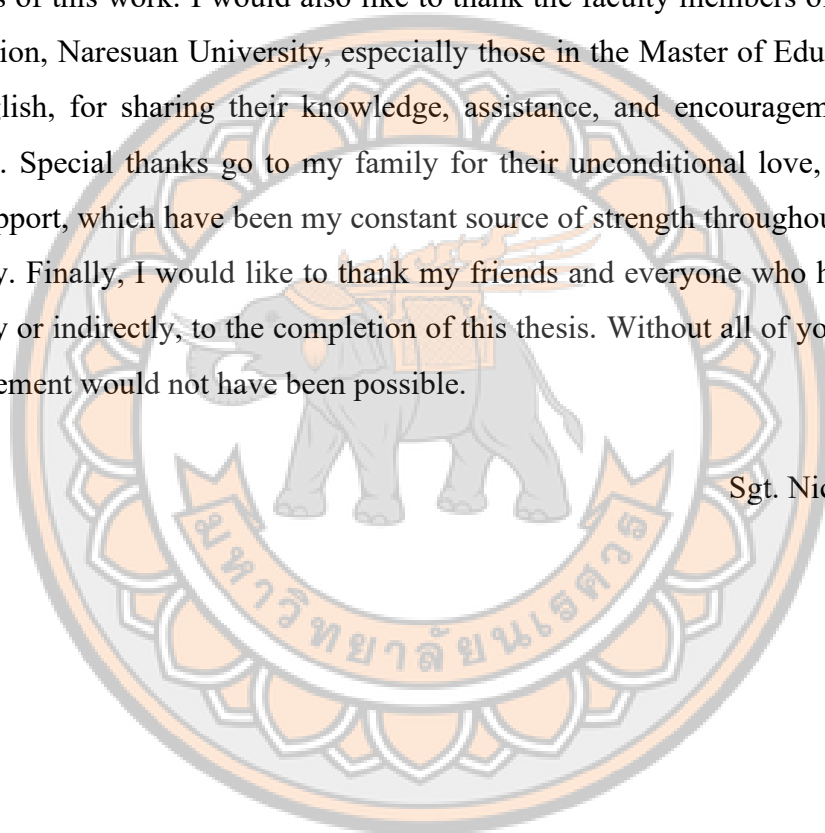
This study examined the development of English-speaking skills and self-expression among sixth-grade students through art-based learning (ABL) at a private school in provincial areas of Thailand. The research aimed to explore students' experiences with self-expression in English-speaking and to investigate how engagement in ABL activities contributed to the enhancement of their oral communication skills. Ten students were purposively selected and participated in four sessions conducted over ten weeks, each integrating artistic creation with English-speaking practice. The sessions addressed the themes of hobbies, holidays, favorite dishes, and the environment, and included activities such as visual self-portraits, storytelling through pictures, role play, drama, and photo or digital art narratives, using materials including paper, pencils, colored markers, colored pencils, crayons, and drawing paper.

Data was collected through students' artwork and reflection activities, in which students evaluated their own work and shared their experiences. The findings indicated that ABL promoted students' ability to express themselves in English, enhanced their confidence in speaking, and facilitated the development of oral communication skills. This study demonstrates that integrating artistic activities into language learning can provide meaningful, learner-centered opportunities that foster both creativity and linguistic competence.

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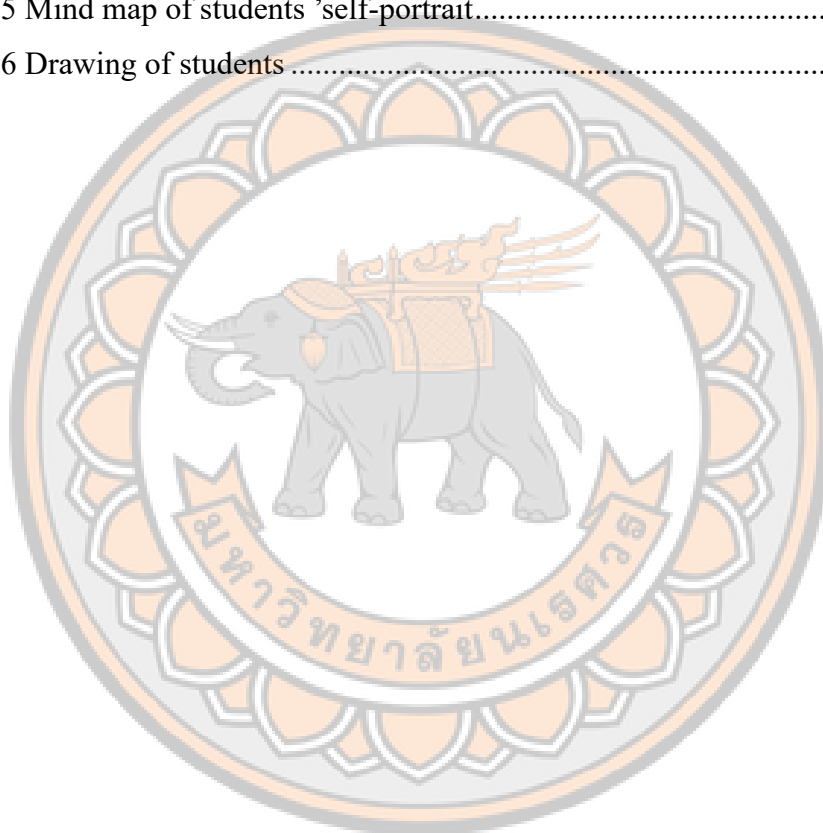
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance of Study

In the era of globalization, English communication skills have become an indispensable component of education systems worldwide. As nations engage in economic, technological, and cultural competition, proficiency in English is regarded as a crucial competency for accessing academic knowledge, advancing professional opportunities, and participating in the global community. In addition, English serves as a lingua franca in many international contexts, enabling individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds to communicate effectively. The four core English skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing are all essential. However, English speaking skill is often considered the most challenging, particularly for learners of English as a second language (ESL) (Phisutthangkoon, 2024). This is because speaking requires real-time language processing, including the ability to organize ideas, select appropriate vocabulary, apply grammatical knowledge, and respond immediately in interaction. Moreover, speaking performance is strongly influenced by cognitive, emotional, and social factors such as anxiety, self-confidence, and interactional competence.

Despite the global importance of English-speaking ability, many learners continue to face difficulties in developing this skill, particularly in specific educational contexts such as Thailand. In Thailand, English language education has long been incorporated into the national curriculum, reflecting its importance for international communication and national development. English instruction begins at the elementary level. However, despite years of study, many Thai students continue to experience difficulties in communicating effectively in spoken English. This gap between prolonged instruction and limited speaking ability highlights a critical issue in language education. Students often struggle with pronunciation, fluency, and the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently. Common challenges include anxiety about making mistakes, limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, insufficient

opportunities for speaking practice, and limited exposure to authentic communicative contexts. These factors significantly hinder the development of English-speaking skill, particularly in spontaneous and interactive situations.

A key contributing factor to these difficulties is the traditional approach to English language teaching in Thailand. This approach tends to emphasize grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills rather than communicative competence. While these components are essential, an overemphasis on form often results in the neglect of speaking practice. As a result, students have limited opportunities to develop English speaking skills in meaningful contexts and often become passive learners. Previous studies have indicated that many students hesitate to speak, rely on filler words, exhibit a low speech rate, and experience stress when required to communicate orally (Suping & Chopra, 2024). Consequently, their English-speaking skill remains underdeveloped, and English is frequently treated as a subject for memorization rather than as a practical communication tool.

These limitations suggest that the issue is not only linguistic but also related to how students are encouraged or not encouraged to express themselves through language. Self-expression plays a crucial role in the development of English-speaking skill. It refers to learners' ability to communicate their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and identities through spoken language. Effective speaking is not limited to linguistic accuracy but also involves the ability to convey meaning clearly, confidently, and personally. Self-expression enhances learners' confidence, motivation, and willingness to communicate, which are essential components of speaking development.

However, opportunities for self-expression are often limited in traditional Thai classrooms. Conventional teaching practices tend to rely heavily on rote memorization, grammar drills, and examination-oriented instruction (Salim, 2025). As a result, learners may become passive and reluctant to speak, especially in situations that require spontaneous language use. Without meaningful opportunities to express their own ideas, students may struggle to develop both confidence and fluency in speaking.

Therefore, there is a need for instructional approaches that not only develop linguistic knowledge but also actively promote self-expression and meaningful

communication. Art-Based Learning (ABL) has emerged as a promising approach to enhance both English speaking skill and self-expression. This approach integrates various forms of arts such as visual arts, drama, music, storytelling, and movement into the teaching and learning process. ABL is grounded in the belief that artistic expression supports cognitive, emotional, and social development, while also enhancing learners' ability to construct meaning through language.

ABL provides a supportive and engaging environment for developing English speaking skills. It offers a multisensory and inclusive learning experience that accommodates diverse learning styles and encourages active participation. In the context of English language learning, ABL enables students to practice speaking through activities such as role-play, performance, improvisation, and visual storytelling (Suryanto & Kurniawan, 2021). These activities require students to use spoken language in meaningful contexts, thereby improving fluency, pronunciation, and communicative competence while reducing anxiety.

Furthermore, ABL strongly promotes self-expression, which is essential for speaking development. When students are encouraged to express their own ideas, emotions, and experiences, they become more engaged in the learning process. Activities such as drawing followed by oral presentations or dramatized role-play allow students to describe and interpret their work using their own words. These practices foster confidence, fluency, and a willingness to communicate in a low-stress environment. In addition, ABL promotes collaboration, empathy, and a positive classroom atmosphere, which further support effective communication.

Given these potential benefits, it is important to explore how Art-Based Learning can be effectively implemented to support students' speaking development in real classroom settings. This study focuses on 6th-grade students, who are at a critical stage of language and cognitive development. At this level, students are increasingly capable of abstract thinking and emotional expression, making them well-suited to an approach that integrates both language learning and creativity. Strengthening English speaking skills at this stage may provide long-term benefits for students' academic achievement and future communication.

Accordingly, this study adopts a qualitative research approach to gain an in-depth understanding of how Art-Based Learning supports students' self-expression

and speaking development. Rather than focusing solely on measurable outcomes, the study explores learners' experiences, emotions, interactions, and creative outputs within a real classroom context. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how students develop English speaking skills through meaningful and expressive activities.

In conclusion, this study aims to investigate the role of Art-Based Learning in promoting self-expression and enhancing English speaking skills among 6th-grade students. By examining students' experiences, perceptions, and spoken performance in an ABL context, the research seeks to contribute to the development of more effective, engaging, and learner-centered approaches to English language education in Thailand.

Research Questions

1. What experiences do 6th-grade students encounter with self-expression in English-speaking skill through art-based learning activities?
2. How do 6th-grade students use art-based learning to develop their English-speaking skill through art-based learning activities?

Purpose of the Study

To explore self-expression in 6th-grade students' English-speaking skill through art-based learning.

To explore development in 6th-grade students' English-speaking skill through art-based learning.

Scope of the Study

1. Participants

The participants are selected by purposive selection technique at a Private School in Provincial Areas of Thailand. The Participants are ten 6th-grade Thai students, which is the whole number in a private school.

2. Scope of content

Self-Expression

Self-expression in language learning refers to the ability of individuals to communicate their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and personal identity effectively through language.

Art-based learning

Art-based learning is method that integrates various forms of art (e.g., visual arts, drama, music, dance, and storytelling) into the educational process. In this approach, art is not simply a subject of study but a method of engaging students in meaningful learning experiences. Art-based learning emphasizes the creative process and allows students to explore their learning through hands-on, expressive, and often interdisciplinary activities.

3. Scope of duration

The duration of this study span was over 20 hours a period of 10 weeks. Data was be collected through various art-based activities aimed at enhancing self-expression in English-speaking. The study was conducted in phases, each with specific goals and activities.

The entire study took 10 weeks to complete. This includes ample time for students to engage in the art-based activities, and for the researcher to gather and analyze data thoroughly. While the study was designed for 10 weeks, there was flexibility built into the timeline. Depending on school schedules or any unforeseen disruptions, the researcher may extend the timeline slightly (up to 12 weeks) to ensure comprehensive engagement with the activities and complete data collection.

Operational Definitions

1. Self-Expression

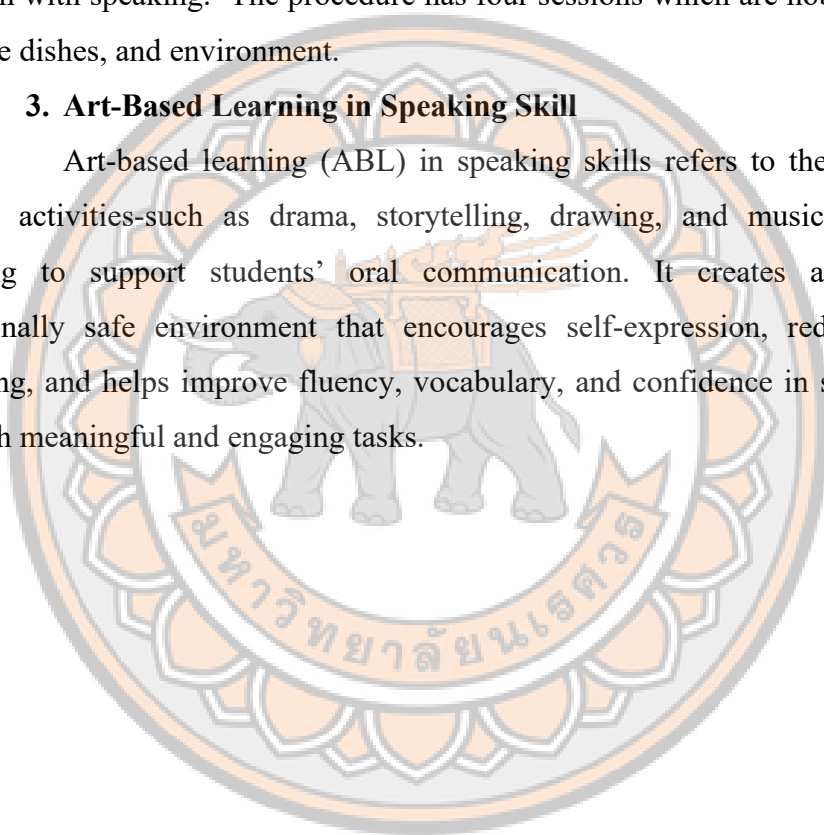
Self-Expression refers to the process of conveying Thai 6th-grade students or ESL students' inner thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and identity through various forms of artistic activities. It is a fundamental aspect of human communication that enables students to express their unique perspective, connect with others, and engage in personal reflection.

2. Art-based learning

Art-based learning is a teaching and learning approach that incorporates the arts like drawing, painting, music, drama, dance, and storytelling into the classroom to help learners understand concepts, develop speaking skills, and express themselves creatively. It emphasizes learning through the process of creating and experiencing art, rather than just learning about art, as a subject making education more engaging, interactive, and meaningful. Art based tasks focus on combining art creation with speaking. The procedure has four sessions which are hobbies, holidays, favorite dishes, and environment.

3. Art-Based Learning in Speaking Skill

Art-based learning (ABL) in speaking skills refers to the integration of artistic activities-such as drama, storytelling, drawing, and music-into language learning to support students' oral communication. It creates a creative and emotionally safe environment that encourages self-expression, reduces stress in speaking, and helps improve fluency, vocabulary, and confidence in spoken English through meaningful and engaging tasks.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter looked at various literatures regarding communicative approach and Art-Based Learning approach as well as show a combination of these approaches in enhancing students' English-speaking ability. Art-Based Learning is helpful in enhancing students' engagement. When considering grammar studies curriculum, the teachers are recently working to help students engage in their learning and be useful in their life. The research question, how to study and compare 6th-grade students' English-speaking ability before and after learning through Art-Based Learning. The teacher explored the concept of ABL in grammar studies classroom through the following literature review. The teacher explored Art-Based Learning, student engagement, and combining all students with being critical thinkers for use in their education.

This study investigates the development of using Art-Based Learning on 6th-grade Students' self-expression in English-speaking skill and their opinions toward the use of Art-Based Learning. This chapter has 4 sections:

English-Speaking Skill in Second Language Learning

1. Definition and Importance of Speaking Skill

Speaking is a key skill in second language acquisition (SLA). According to Brown (2001), speaking is an interactive process involving producing, receiving, and processing information. It is not merely about using grammatically correct sentences but also about communicating meaning effectively in real-time situations. In ESL, speaking ability is a main measure of proficiency, reflecting both fluency and communicative competence (Richards, 2008).

Speaking is a fundamental skill in second language acquisition, particularly for young learners who are in the process of developing basic communication abilities. It involves the capacity to convey ideas, thoughts, and emotions through oral interaction in a meaningful way.

Speaking is not limited to the use of correct grammar or vocabulary alone, but also includes fluency, pronunciation, and the ability to respond appropriately during communication. As learners speak in real time, they must process language quickly, which makes speaking one of the most challenging skills to acquire in second language learning (Leong & Ahmadi, 2021).

2. Speaking of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Second Language Acquisition theories emphasize the role of meaningful interaction in the development of speaking skills. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) argues that learners acquire language when they understand input slightly beyond their current level ($i+1$). However, the Output Hypothesis proposed by Swain (1985) highlights that producing language (i.e., speaking) is also crucial for developing grammatical accuracy and fluency.

Furthermore, Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996) integrates both input and output perspectives by emphasizing the importance of conversational interaction. Interaction provides learners with feedback, opportunities to negotiate meaning, and chances to modify their speech, all of which are essential for effective language development. These three theories are mutually supportive: input supplies linguistic material, output allows practice, and interaction provides the context for meaningful use.

Recent studies reinforce these principles while highlighting additional factors influencing speaking development. For example, learners who engage in communicative and task-based activities demonstrate improved speaking fluency and confidence compared to those relying solely on passive input (Zhang, 2022). Task-based approaches encourage negotiation of meaning, aligning with Long's Interaction Hypothesis and promoting both fluency and accuracy (Ellis, Skehan, Li, Shintani, & Lambert, 2020).

Affective factors such as motivation, anxiety, and willingness to communicate (WTC) have also been shown to significantly affect speaking development. Low-anxiety, creative learning environments—including art-based and self-expression activities—enhance students' WTC and overall speaking performance by allowing learners to take risks and engage more freely in communication (Dewaele

& Li, 2020; Hafner & Ho, 2020). This approach is particularly effective for young learners, as it combines cognitive, emotional, and linguistic engagement.

In sum, the development of English-speaking skills in SLA is most effective when learners receive comprehensible input, have opportunities to produce language, interact meaningfully with others, and are engaged in supportive, creative learning environments.

3. Approaches to Teaching Speaking Skills

Traditional language teaching methods often emphasize accuracy and rote memorization. However, more recent approaches stress communicative competence and learner-centered activities. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) encourages meaningful interaction through real-life communication tasks, such as role-plays, interviews, and storytelling (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Additionally, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) provides learners with purposeful speaking tasks that mimic real-world use of language. These approaches have been found to significantly enhance students' confidence and fluency in speaking.

In provincial areas of Thailand, English language learning often faces limitations such as limited exposure to English outside the classroom, fewer learning resources, and traditional teaching methods.

Previous studies indicate that students in rural or provincial settings may have lower speaking proficiency compared to those in urban schools due to reduced opportunities for interaction in English (Darasawang & Watson Todd, 2022).

Therefore, innovative teaching strategies such as interactive activities, art-based instruction, and learner-centered approaches are necessary to support speaking development in these contexts.

4. Speaking Skill in Young ESL Learners

Young learners, such as 6th-grade students, learn best through interactive and experiential learning, where they can explore language through play, stories, art, and songs (Cameron, 2001). Research shows that incorporating creative activities, such as drawing, drama, and storytelling, encourages learners to speak more naturally and with greater self-expression (Wright, 2010).

Using art-based learning can create a safe space for learners to communicate without fear of judgment, supporting both language development and emotional expression.

Speaking is a critical component of second language learning, and its development requires both input and output opportunities in meaningful contexts. Especially for young learners, integrating art-based, creative, and interactive teaching approaches can significantly enhance their ability to express themselves in English. A supportive classroom atmosphere, coupled with engaging activities, plays a key role in overcoming psychological and linguistic barriers in speaking development.

At the primary level, particularly Grade 6 students, speaking skill development is essential as it builds the foundation for further language learning. Students who can communicate orally tend to show better overall language competence.

In classroom contexts, speaking activities provide opportunities for learners to actively use English rather than only receiving input. This active use helps reinforce vocabulary, grammar, and listening comprehension. Therefore, speaking is considered a central component in communicative language teaching approaches (Leong & Ahmadi, 2021; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2021).

5. Qualitative Assessment of Speaking Skills

Speaking is a core component of language competence and is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills to assess, especially in second language learning. Unlike other language skills such as reading or grammar, which can often be measured through discrete-point testing, speaking involves real-time processing, interaction, and spontaneous production. In recent years, qualitative approaches to assessing speaking have gained prominence as they provide deeper insights into learner performance, communicative intent, and contextual dynamics that are often overlooked in traditional, quantitative assessments (Fan & Yan, 2020).

Qualitative assessment refers to non-numerical, descriptive evaluation methods that capture the complexity and nuance of spoken language. These include observations, reflective journals, interviews, video recordings, open-ended rubrics, and peer or self-assessment. Rather than assigning a numerical score, qualitative assessment seeks to understand *how* and *why* a learner communicates in a particular

way, focusing on aspects such as confidence, fluency, creativity, interactional strategies, and expressive ability (Maulida et al., 2023).

Qualitative assessment emphasizes the process of speaking and the context of communication, making it particularly suitable for formative evaluation and for settings where self-expression and creativity are prioritized—such as in art-based learning environments.

6. Challenges in Qualitative Speaking Assessment

Despite its advantages, qualitative assessment is not without limitations. Common challenges include:

1. **Subjectivity:** Without clearly defined criteria, evaluations may vary across teachers or contexts, leading to concerns over reliability (Tsui, 1996).
2. **Time and Resource Intensive:** Conducting interviews, analyzing recordings, and giving detailed feedback requires significant teacher effort, particularly in large classrooms.
3. **Lack of Standardization:** In many educational settings, there are no formal frameworks for qualitative assessment, which can lead to inconsistency.
4. **Rater Bias:** Teachers' personal expectations or relationships with students may unintentionally influence assessment judgments.

However, these challenges can be mitigated through professional development, collaborative rubric design, and the use of triangulated data sources (e.g., combining student reflections with teacher observations and video analysis).

7. Empirical Studies

Recent research supports the use of qualitative assessment in speaking skill development:

1. Maulida et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study in Indonesian elementary schools using rubrics, observations, and interviews. The findings indicated that descriptive feedback improved students' self-awareness and fluency over time.
2. Firdausi (2024) explored authentic speaking assessments in senior high schools and found that tasks such as role-plays and storytelling allowed students to express ideas more confidently. However, implementation was challenged by time constraints and mixed-ability classrooms.

3. Lestari et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of aligning speaking tasks with real-world scenarios. Their study found that when students were asked to present personal stories, their speech became more fluent and meaningful.

These studies highlight that qualitative assessment enhances student engagement, builds confidence, and supports language development, especially when speaking tasks are authentic and relevant to learners' experiences.

8. Relevance to Self-Expression and Art-Based Learning

In contexts where self-expression is central such as through art-based learning qualitative assessment becomes even more valuable. Creative tasks such as storytelling based on drawings, dramatization, or personal narrative allow learners to use language meaningfully. Qualitative tools (e.g., video recordings, expressive rubrics, and teacher observations) can capture how well learners use English to express emotions, opinions, or ideas, even if their grammatical accuracy is still developing.

For young learners, such as 6th-grade students, this approach respects their developmental stage, encourages risk-taking in communication, and supports language as a tool for creativity and identity formation (Wright, 2010). Recent studies have shown that integrating creative tasks such as storytelling based on drawings, dramatization, and personal narratives enhances English-speaking skills while promoting self-expression and learner engagement (Yan, Zhang, & Dixon, 2022). These activities provide opportunities for learners to experiment with language in meaningful contexts, fostering both communicative competence and socio-emotional development.

In this context, qualitative assessment of speaking skills serves as a holistic and learner-centered alternative to traditional testing. By employing tools such as teacher observations, expressive rubrics, and video recordings, educators can capture how learners convey ideas, emotions, and opinions, even if grammatical accuracy is still emerging (Wicaksono, Ismail, Sultanova, & Abeba, 2023). This approach emphasizes real-life communication, creativity, and personal growth, and is particularly effective for young learners participating in innovative pedagogies like art-based learning. Qualitative assessment provides nuanced insights into learners'

expressive abilities, interaction strategies, and confidence in using English—dimensions often overlooked by conventional assessments.

Consequently, for studies focused on young learners, qualitative speaking assessment without numeric scores is especially relevant. By prioritizing student self-expression, learners are encouraged to explore their identity and creativity through English-speaking activities, while teachers gain deeper understanding of language development beyond mere grammatical accuracy.

Self-expression

1. Definition of Self expression

Self-expression is widely recognized in educational research as a critical component of student development, particularly in relation to identity formation, emotional well-being, and communication skills. According to Maslow (1943), self-expression is a vital part of self-actualization, the highest level in his hierarchy of needs, where individuals strive to realize their full potential. In the context of education, fostering self-expression enables learners to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and identities in meaningful ways (Chapman, 2005).

Rogers (1969) emphasized the importance of a student-centered learning environment that allows for authentic self-expression, arguing that learning is most effective when learners can relate content to their personal experiences. This is particularly relevant in language learning, where students often need opportunities to use language in ways that reflect their own identities and lived experiences (Norton, 1997). Research also highlights the strong link between self-expression and language development. For example, Kramsch (2009) notes that language is not merely a system of rules but a medium through which individuals construct and perform their identities. When students are given the freedom to express themselves in a second language, their communication becomes more authentic and personally meaningful, which can improve fluency and confidence (Cummins, 2001).

In younger learners, especially at the primary school level, self-expression is often facilitated through creative and play-based activities. Studies by Wright (2010) show that art, drama, and storytelling can serve as powerful tools for children to express their emotions and identities, particularly when they may lack the

vocabulary or confidence to do so through spoken language alone. In multicultural classrooms, encouraging self-expression also supports inclusivity and identity affirmation. As Gay (2010) argues, culturally responsive pedagogy values each student's background and perspective, which can be expressed through language, art, and narrative. By providing platforms for self-expression, educators can validate diverse identities and foster a more engaging and supportive learning environment.

Recent research further underscores the importance of self-expression in young learners' language development and overall growth. Studies have shown that encouraging learners to express their thoughts, cultural perspectives, and personal experiences supports learner autonomy, motivation, and identity construction (Zhao & Li, 2021). In primary language classrooms, activities such as storytelling, dramatization, and art-based tasks not only develop expressive language skills but also enhance social-emotional competencies such as empathy, resilience, and self-confidence (Lee & Gong, 2022).

Moreover, when learners are provided opportunities for self-expression in psychologically safe and supportive environments, their willingness to communicate and persistence in speaking tasks increases, contributing positively to long-term language development (Park & Kim, 2023). These contemporary findings complement the earlier theoretical claims, reinforcing that self-expression is fundamental to meaningful learning, identity formation, and communicative competence, particularly when learners are encouraged to convey ideas in authentic and personally relevant ways.

2. Definition of Self-expression with feeling

Self-expression, particularly the expression of feelings and emotions, plays a crucial role in a learner's personal and academic development. It enables individuals to communicate with inner experiences, understand themselves more deeply, and connect meaningfully with others. As Rogers (1969) stated, meaningful learning occurs when students can engage personally with the content, especially when they can express their emotions in safe and supportive environments.

In the context of child development, self-expression of feelings is closely tied to emotional intelligence, social skills, and well-being. According to Goleman (1995), helping children understand and express their emotions not only supports

mental health but also enhances their ability to learn. Children who are given space to articulate how they feel through words, art, movement, or music develop stronger self-awareness and empathy.

Art-based approaches in education have been widely recognized as effective tools for supporting emotional self-expression. Wright (2010) highlights those artistic activities such as drawing, painting, drama, or storytelling allow children to express complex feelings they may not yet have the verbal skills to articulate. In primary language classrooms, these activities enable learners to “speak through art” before they can fully verbalize emotions, creating a bridge to language-based self-expression. Recent studies confirm that expressive, creative tasks support not only emotional literacy but also social-emotional competencies such as resilience, empathy, and learner engagement (Lee & Gong, 2022; Zhao & Li, 2021).

In language learning settings, emotional self-expression becomes even more critical. Kramsch (2009) argues that language is deeply connected to personal identity and emotion. When students can express their feelings in a new language, it not only helps them internalize the language more deeply but also increases their confidence and motivation. Likewise, Cummins (2001) suggests that allowing learners to draw on their emotions and experiences makes language learning more authentic and empowering.

Moreover, creating environments that support emotional expression can help reduce anxiety, particularly in speaking activities. Language classrooms that incorporate art-based learning, such as role-play, storytelling, or emotional journaling, provide learners with expressive outlets that reduce performance pressure and encourage emotional honesty (Maley & Duff, 2005). Recent research further supports that integrating creative, expressive tasks in language learning mitigates speaking anxiety and fosters authentic communication, engagement, and confidence (Park & Kim, 2023; Wicaksono, Ismail, Sultanova, & Abeba, 2023).

From a psychological perspective, Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs places emotional expression within the domain of self-actualization highlighting that individuals must feel emotionally safe and understood to reach their full potential. Therefore, when students are encouraged to express their feelings, especially through creative means, they are more likely to feel valued, seen, and capable of growth.

3. Literature Review on Self-Expression and Thought

Self-expression is a vital aspect of human communication and personal development, allowing individuals to convey not only emotions but also thoughts, beliefs, ideas, and perspectives. In educational settings, supporting students' ability to express their thoughts fosters critical thinking, creativity, and a deeper connection to learning content (Rogers, 1969). When learners are encouraged to articulate their inner thoughts whether through spoken language, writing, or creative forms like art and storytelling, they become active participants in their own learning processes.

According to Vygotsky (1978), thought and language are closely interconnected; thought is internalized speech, and language serves as a primary tool for organizing and expressing thinking. Therefore, self-expression is not just a product of thought, but a process through which thought is formed, clarified, and shared. When students engage in reflective activities that require self-expression, they develop metacognitive awareness—the ability to think about their own thinking (Flavell, 1979).

Art-based learning provides powerful opportunities for students to express complex or abstract thoughts through creative means. Wright (2010) argues that artistic expression enables students to externalize internal thought processes that may be difficult to articulate verbally. Activities such as drawing, drama, music, and visual storytelling function not only as emotional outlets but also as intellectual tools that help students conceptualize and communicate ideas. Recent studies reinforce this, showing that creative expression in classrooms improves cognitive engagement, problem-solving skills, and the ability to communicate abstract concepts effectively (Lee & Gong, 2022; Zhao & Li, 2021).

In language education, self-expression of thought is central to developing communicative competence. Kramsch (2009) emphasizes that language learning involves more than grammar and vocabulary; it is about conveying meaning and constructing identity. When students are invited to express their opinions, tell personal stories, or reflect critically on issues, they engage with language as a vehicle of thought. This enhances fluency and empowers learners to use language with purpose and authenticity (Cummins, 2001). Recent research also highlights that tasks encouraging learners to express their ideas through debates, reflective journaling, or

visual concept maps promote both linguistic and cognitive growth, particularly in multilingual and multicultural classrooms (Park & Kim, 2023; Wicaksono, Ismail, Sultanova, & Abeba, 2023).

Moreover, encouraging the expression of thought in classrooms supports learner autonomy and deeper cognitive engagement. Freire (1970) criticized the “banking model” of education where learners are passive recipients of knowledge, advocating instead for dialogic learning, where students co-construct knowledge by articulating their own understandings. Self-expression through thought-based activities aligns with this philosophy, helping learners develop critical thinking, reflective skills, and agency in their learning process. Art-based and creative methods further expand these opportunities by allowing learners to explore complex ideas and perspectives in safe, expressive, and cognitively challenging ways.

4. Literature Review on Self-Expression and Individuality

Self-expression and individuality are deeply interrelated concepts that play a central role in educational development, identity formation, and communication. Self-expression allows individuals to convey their unique thoughts, emotions, beliefs, values, and personal identities to the world, while individuality refers to the characteristics that make a person distinct. In learning environments that value and support self-expression, students are more likely to develop a strong sense of self and become confident, autonomous learners (Rogers, 1969).

The importance of acknowledging individuality in education has been emphasized by humanistic psychologists like Carl Rogers (1969), who argued that education should create conditions where learners feel safe to explore and express their true selves. He believed that authentic learning occurs when students are permitted to express their individuality without fear of judgment. This form of expression fosters self-esteem, motivation, and personal agency.

In the field of language education, Bonny Norton (1997) emphasized that language learning is not merely about acquiring grammar and vocabulary; it is also about constructing and negotiating identity. When learners are given the opportunity to express their individuality through speaking or writing, especially in a second language, they begin to see themselves as legitimate users of that language. This promotes confidence, ownership of learning, and intercultural awareness.

Art-based learning approaches are particularly effective in fostering self-expression and individuality. Wright (2010) explains that the arts offer open-ended opportunities for children to represent their ideas and identities in personal and imaginative ways. Activities such as drawing, storytelling, drama, and music allow students to communicate not only what they know, but also who they are. These modes of expression support learners in exploring their interests, perspectives, and experiences, which might not surface through traditional academic tasks.

Moreover, educational theorists like John Dewey (1934) argued that the arts serve as a medium through which individuals interpret and express their experiences. He viewed art as a process of meaning-making that is deeply tied to one's sense of self and individuality. In this sense, self-expression through the arts is not merely an educational technique but a human necessity.

In multicultural or inclusive classrooms, self-expression supports respect for diversity and helps each student feel seen and valued. According to Gay (2010), culturally responsive pedagogy encourages students to draw from their cultural identities and personal backgrounds in learning, which not only affirms their individuality but also enriches the learning community. Recent studies reinforce that culturally responsive, art-integrated approaches allow learners to express identity and creativity, increasing engagement, emotional well-being, and agency in learning (Lee & Gong, 2022; Zhao & Li, 2021).

5. Self-Expression Techniques for Speaking Development

Self-expression techniques focus on enabling learners to communicate their personal ideas, experiences, and opinions freely. Examples include storytelling, role-play, personal presentations, and sharing opinions in discussions.

These techniques encourage learners to use English in meaningful contexts rather than memorizing isolated language forms. Research suggests that when learners are given opportunities to express themselves, they develop greater confidence, fluency, and willingness to communicate (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2021).

Self-expression also supports vocabulary expansion, as students attempt to describe their thoughts using their own language resources.

6. Conclusion

Self-expression in English-speaking is a multifaceted construct that encompasses not only linguistic accuracy but also the ability to convey personal ideas, emotions, and identity through language. The reviewed literature underscores that fostering self-expression in second language learners requires creating authentic, meaningful communicative contexts where learners feel confident and motivated to share their thoughts openly.

Qualitative approaches to assessing speaking skills are particularly effective in capturing self-expression, as they emphasize descriptive feedback, learner reflections, and holistic evaluation over numerical scores. Furthermore, incorporating creative pedagogies-such as art-based learning-can enhance learners' motivation and provide rich, engaging stimulus that support expressive language use.

Challenges remain in clearly defining and measuring self-expression due to its subjective and complex nature. However, existing studies highlight that focusing on learners' confidence, fluency, interaction strategies, and emotional engagement can offer valuable insights into their expressive abilities.

In summary, promoting and assessing self-expression in English speaking involves a learner-centered, contextualized, and reflective approach, which not only improves communicative competence but also supports learners' identity development and emotional growth. This foundation justifies the use of qualitative methods in investigating self-expression among 6th-grade students engaged in art-based English learning activities.

Art-Based Learning

1. Definition of Art-Based Learning

Art-Based Learning (ABL) integrates artistic activities such as drawing, painting, drama, music, and movement into educational contexts to enhance learning outcomes. This approach promotes creativity, emotional expression, and critical thinking, enabling learners to engage deeply with subject matter. In language education, ABL has been increasingly recognized for its potential to support language acquisition, particularly speaking skills, by providing authentic, meaningful, and motivating contexts for communication (Eisner, 2002).

Art-based activities refer to instructional approaches that integrate creative expressions such as drawing, storytelling, drama, and visual representation into the learning process. These activities allow learners to express meaning through both verbal and non-verbal forms.

Such approaches have been shown to increase student engagement and motivation because they create enjoyable and interactive learning environments (McLean et al., 2022). In addition, art-based learning can reduce learners' anxiety, which is particularly important for speaking tasks where students may feel nervous or hesitant.

By connecting language learning with creative expression, students are more likely to participate actively and communicate their ideas with confidence.

2. Theoretical Background of Art-Based Learning

Art-Based Learning is supported by several key educational theories:

1. Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983) suggests that learners have different strengths, including artistic and spatial intelligence, which ABL taps into to promote engagement and understanding.
2. Constructivist Theory (Piaget, 1950; Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizes active learning through experience and social interaction, which art activities naturally facilitate.
3. Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) highlights the importance of concrete experience and reflection in learning, processes inherent in artistic creation.

3. Benefits of Art-Based Learning

Art-Based Learning (ABL) is widely recognized for its positive impact on learners across various domains, including cognitive, emotional, social, and linguistic development. The integration of artistic activities into education offers several key benefits that enhance the learning experience and outcomes.

Research highlights several advantages of ABL in education:

- 1. Enhances Engagement and Motivation:** Art activities create enjoyable and stimulating learning environments, increasing learners' interest and participation (Catterall, 2009).

2. Supports Self-Expression and Emotional Development: Artistic tasks enable learners to express thoughts, feelings, and identity in non-verbal and verbal ways, enriching language use (Eisner, 2002).

3. Fosters Creativity and Critical Thinking: ABL encourages problem-solving and original expression, skills that are transferable across subjects (Hetland et al., 2007).

4. Improves Language Skills: Drama, storytelling, and visual arts provide natural contexts for practicing vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation (Liu & Han, 2018).

5. Accommodates Diverse Learning Styles: By integrating multiple modalities, ABL supports learners with varied preferences and needs (Gardner, 1983).

The integration of art into language learning, commonly referred to as Art-Based Learning (ABL) has gained increasing recognition as an effective method for enhancing speaking skills, especially among young learners. ABL encompasses a range of creative practices such as visual arts, drama, music, storytelling, and movement, which are employed not merely for aesthetic development but as a pedagogical strategy to deepen communication, motivation, and self-expression. In the context of second language acquisition, particularly English as a Foreign Language (EFL), art-based methods offer meaningful, student-centered learning experiences that support spoken language development in authentic and engaging ways (Eisner, 2002; Catterall, 2009). Recent studies confirm that art-based activities positively influence speaking fluency, willingness to communicate, and learner confidence in EFL contexts (Phuong, 2019; Nguyen, 2020; Park & Kim, 2023).

Importantly, ABL provides student-centered, meaningful learning experiences that allow learners to practice language authentically while exploring personal identity and creativity. By fostering a low-anxiety environment, art-based tasks encourage risk-taking in communication, enabling learners to experiment with language, express emotions, and develop confidence in speaking (Wright, 2010; Wicaksono et al., 2023). These qualities make ABL particularly suitable for young learners, such as 6th-grade students, who are still developing both linguistic abilities and capacities for self-expression.

For educators and researchers aiming to explore speaking skill development beyond conventional testing, ABL offers rich qualitative insights into learners' communicative growth, self-expression, and identity formation. By observing and analyzing learners' engagement in creative, expressive activities, teachers can assess progress in ways that reflect authentic language use, creativity, and personal development—dimensions often overlooked by traditional assessment methods (Lee & Gong, 2022; Zhao & Li, 2021).

4. Conceptual framework

This study is grounded in a conceptual framework that explores the relationship between Art-Based Learning (ABL), self-expression, and the development of English-speaking skills in 6th-grade students. The framework is informed by constructivist and communicative language teaching theories, emphasizing learner-centeredness, creativity, and authentic communication.

At the core of the framework is the belief that Art-Based Learning creates an engaging, emotionally safe, and creative environment that fosters student participation and openness. Art-based activities—such as drawing, storytelling, and drama—serve as meaningful tools for encouraging students to express personal thoughts, emotions, and ideas in English. This self-expression is viewed not merely as language production but as a holistic act of communication, involving identity, emotion, and creativity.

As students engage in these expressive tasks, they are provided with opportunities to speak English naturally and purposefully. Rather than focusing on mechanical language drills or rote memorization, students use language to communicate real meanings that matter to them. This process contributes to the development of key speaking skills, such as fluency, vocabulary use, confidence, and the ability to interact in a communicative context.

The framework assumes a non-linear and interactive relationship between variables. Art-based learning does not “cause” speaking skill improvement in a direct, measurable way. Instead, it creates conditions that support learner engagement, reduce anxiety, and promote authentic expression, all of which contribute to improved speaking performance over time.

In summary, the conceptual framework proposes that:

1. Art-Based Learning provides a creative and emotionally supportive environment.
2. This environment facilitates self-expression in English.
3. Through self-expression, students gain confidence, fluency, and vocabulary in speaking.
4. These processes are observed and interpreted through qualitative methods such as classroom observations, student work, and interviews.

This framework informs both the design and the analysis of the study, helping to interpret how and why art-based learning can support the development of speaking skills through self-expression.

This conceptual framework proposes that Art-Based Learning creates a creative and supportive environment that fosters students' self-expression in English. Through engaging in artistic activities such as storytelling, drawing, and drama, learners are encouraged to use spoken English in meaningful and personal ways. This process supports the development of speaking skills, including fluency, vocabulary, and confidence. The framework also aligns with qualitative research, allowing for in-depth exploration of how ABL enhances communication through self-expression.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore how art-based learning enhances self-expression in English-speaking among 6th-grade students. The qualitative approach was suitable because it allows for in-depth understanding of students' experiences, perceptions, and challenges that these data cannot be fully captured by quantitative methods.

This study followed art-based learning activities because the researchers wanted to focus on the self-expression in English-speaking skill in English as a second language students. In qualitative study the researchers attempted to understand a situation or series of situations.

In this chapter was explained the research methods to help to answer the research questions: what experiences do 6th-grade students encounter with self-expression English-speaking skill through art-based learning activities, and how do 6th-grade students use art-based learning to develop their English-speaking skill through art-based learning activities?

English-speaking

Research locale

This study was conducted at a Private School in Provincial Areas of Thailand. The school offers a dynamic and supportive educational environment that fosters both academic excellence and personal development. The school emphasizes a holistic approach to learning, where students are encouraged to express themselves confidently in both Thai and English.

Physically, the school is equipped with modern classrooms, creative learning spaces, and art-integrated facilities that support a variety of learning activities. These facilities are designed to stimulate curiosity, creativity, and collaborative learning among students.

Socially and emotionally, the school promotes a nurturing and inclusive atmosphere where teachers, staff, and students interact with mutual respect and understanding. The bilingual setting not only enhances students' language proficiency but also fosters cultural awareness and global perspectives.

Furthermore, the school environment encourages self-expression through art-based and student-centered learning. This approach provides learners with opportunities to build their confidence, particularly in using English for communication, while developing their individuality and emotional intelligence.

In sum, the environment at a Private School in Provincial Areas of Thailand plays a vital role in supporting students' growth academically, socially, and emotionally, creating a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

A Private School in Provincial Areas of Thailand implements a bilingual curriculum that integrates both the Thai National Curriculum and international teaching approaches to support students in becoming proficient in both Thai and English. The school aims to cultivate academic excellence, critical thinking, creativity, and global citizenship through a learner-centered approach.

The curriculum is designed to meet the standards set by the Thai Ministry of Education while incorporating English as a medium of instruction in various core subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and English Language Arts. This bilingual framework not only enhances language acquisition but also ensures that students can apply their knowledge in both local and global contexts.

Participants

The participants were selected by purpose from at a Private School in Provincial Areas of Thailand. Participants were selected from 10 students at least 13 years old. Those selected students were the students who have basic English in school. Researcher talked about English-speaking in a second language about how they explored with their friends and teacher. An analysis of teachers' reports on 6th-grade students' English-speaking skills indicates that, although most students can speak English, they often lacked the confidence and are unable to effectively express their emotions, feelings, and personal identity." Especially since some of the younger children were expected to find it difficult to explore their feelings.

Inclusion criterion

1. Participants must be 6th-grade students enrolled at a Private School in Provincial Areas of Thailand
2. Students must demonstrate normal mental health status based on observation and preliminary mental health screening.
3. Participation must be voluntary, with informed consent obtained from both parents and teachers.

Exclusion criterion

1. If a student wishes to withdraw from the study at any point, the researcher permits the student to discontinue participation without any penalty.
2. If a student experiences discomfort or unhappiness during participation in the study, the researcher allows the student to withdraw from the study immediately.

Research instruments

To explore how art-based learning supports self-expression in English-speaking, multiple qualitative research instruments were used. These instruments were selected to collect rich and varied data about students' experiences, perceptions, behaviors, and spoken output in art-based speaking tasks. Below were the proposed instruments, rationale for each, and how they were used in this study.

Student Artefacts / Creative Outputs

To analyze how self-expression manifests in speaking: the content of speech, the linguistic features, expressive elements, emotional content, etc., using students' work connected to art.

Audio / Video Recording

To capture actual speaking behavior (accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, use of self-expression) for later analysis; to allow review of nonverbal cues, paralinguistic features.

A panel of three experts or qualified specialists in the field of English language teaching, particularly with expertise in teaching speaking skills, be invited to review and provide comprehensive feedback on all research instruments used in this study. Their insights ensured the validity, clarity, and appropriateness of the tools for effectively assessing the targeted skills.

Procedure

This section outlines the sequence of art-based learning activities that was implemented in the classrooms to encourage self-expression and improve speaking in English among 6th-grade students. The procedure was designed to scaffold the learning process from lower to higher support, gradually giving students more autonomy and expressive freedom.

Phase 1: Preparation & Orientation

1. Teacher Training & Planning

1.1 The English teacher and researcher collaborate to design art-based speaking activities (e.g., visual art projects, role-plays, drama, storytelling through pictures).

1.2 Prepare materials: art supplies (paper, markers, paints, collage materials, etc.), visual prompts (pictures, magazines, artwork), recording equipment (audio/video), rubrics, reflection journals.

2. Introduction to Art-Based Learning (15 minutes)

2.1 Greeting and Rapport, the teacher greets the students and introduces the lesson to create a friendly and relaxed learning atmosphere. This helps students feel comfortable, confident, and ready to participate in the speaking activities.

2.2 Explain to students what art-based learning is and how it is used in the speaking tasks.

3. Setting Norms & Comfort (15 minutes)

Establish classroom norms for speaking: encouraging risk-taking, respecting mistakes, supportive audience (peers), non-judgmental feedback.

4. Ice-breaking activities (30 minutes)

4.1 Warmup speaking games to build rapport and confidence (for example, describing colors, shapes, or feelings in pictures).

4.2 Teacher prepares a sheet with prompts like: “Find someone who has a pet.” “Find someone who likes pizza.”. Students walk around and ask classmates questions to complete their sheet.

Phase 2: Implementation of Art-Based Speaking Tasks

These tasks were conducted over a period of ten weeks, with each activity spanning 4–6 sessions that combined art creation with English speaking practice. The timeline allowed sufficient time for students to participate fully in the activities and for the researcher to collect and analyze data. Flexibility was built in to accommodate school schedules or unexpected disruptions, and the study was extended to twelve weeks when necessary to ensure complete engagement and thorough data collection.

The sessions consisted of four creative activities that integrated visual arts with English language practice. In the first session, students explored the theme of hobbies by creating a visual self-portrait and description. They used materials such as paper, pencils, colored markers, colored pencils, crayons, and drawing paper to produce symbolic pictures representing their personal interests. The artwork served as a foundation for discussion and description in English throughout the four-hour session.

The second session focused on the theme of holiday, in which students engaged in storytelling through pictures. They created a sequence of images using similar materials to visually narrate a story, which allowed them to explore narrative ideas and practice English description over the four-hour session.

In the third session, the theme was favorite dishes, and students participated in role play and drama based on their artwork. They created visual representations of their favorite foods using the same range of materials, which then served as the basis for performing role plays and dramatizations. This activity enabled them to express themselves creatively while practicing English communication during the five-hour session.

The fourth session emphasized the theme of environment, in which students created photos or digital art narratives. They used the materials to produce visual representations, including photographs or digital images, which provided a platform for discussion and description in English. This session allowed students to explore environmental concepts creatively while further developing their language skills over the five-hour period.

After each session, students engaged in reflection and feedback activities to consolidate their learning and deepen their understanding. During this time, the teacher prompted students to reflect on their creative process, the ideas they expressed in their artwork, and their use of English in describing or presenting their work. This reflection encouraged self-expression, allowed students to share their experiences, and supported the development of English-speaking skills while enabling them to evaluate their own artefacts.

Phase 3: Consolidation & Evaluation

1. Final Speaking Task

1.1 Students choose one art-based task they liked best (from the previous sessions) and design a more polished version (e.g. nicer artwork, more practiced speech).

1.2 Present to the class, possibly invite other classes or parents to view (optional), to increase speaking motivation.

2. Recording & Data Collection

2.1 All student presentations/role-play/descriptions should be recorded (audio/video).

2.2 Collect student artefacts (artwork, photos, digital work) plus their transcripts of spoken parts.

2.3 Conduct final interviews (semi-structured) with students to explore their perceptions of their own self-expression, confidence, and how speaking changed.

3. Feedback & Teacher Reflection

3.1 Teachers (and researchers) reflect on how students participated, what worked or did not, challenges encountered (materials, time, student shyness).

3.2 Possibly adjust or suggest improvements for future implementation.

Support and Scaffolding

1. Vocabulary & phrase banks provided before tasks.
2. Modeling and teaching examples.
3. Peer support (pairs/groups).
4. Teacher feedback focused on encouragement and expressive aspects.

Ethical consideration

This study involves human participants, specifically 6th-grade students, who are minors. Therefore, ethical issues must be carefully addressed to protect their rights, welfare, and dignity. The following ethical considerations guided the research process.

1. Informed Consent and Assent

1.1 Parental/Guardian Consent: Before any data collection begins, written informed consent was obtained from the students' parents or legal guardians. They provided clear information about the study's purpose, what participation involves, the benefits, any possible risks or discomforts, how data was collected, how long participation lasts, and how confidentiality was maintained.

1.2 Student Assent: Alongside guardian consent, students asked to provide assent affirmative agreement to participate in the research. The assent form and explanation age-appropriate and delivered in terms that students can understand (simple language, using examples). They said that participation is voluntary, they can refuse or withdraw at any time without penalty or negative consequences.

2. Confidentiality and Privacy

2.1 Information about participants (names, identities) kept confidential. Pseudonyms or ID codes used in transcripts, reports, and publications.

2.2 Data was stored securely (e.g., locked cabinets for physical artefacts, password-protected files for digital and audio/video recordings) accessible only to the researcher and supervisor.

2.3 Only aggregated data or quotations that do not reveal identity were used in thesis or publications.

3. Minimizing Risk of Harm

3.1 Because speaking tasks might make some students feel self-conscious or anxious, care took to create a supportive and non-judgmental classroom environment.

3.2 Teachers/researchers monitored students for signs of distress; if a student becomes uncomfortable, they may pause, skip or withdraw from that activity.

3.3 There are no physically dangerous activities planned; all art materials used were safe and non-toxic.

4. Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

4.1 Participation is voluntary. Students were informed that they are free to decline involvement in any activity (observations, interviews, recordings) without affecting their grades or standing at school.

4.2 Students can withdraw at any time during the study for any reason, and data from them removed if they choose.

5. Ethical Approval

5.1 The study protocol (instruments, procedures, consent/assent forms) submitted for review and approval by the Institutional Research Ethics Committee / Institutional Review Board (IRB) of [University / College] (or relevant body).

5.2 The researcher complied with all institutional, local, and national ethical guidelines, including the *Handbook of the National Policy and Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Humans* (Thailand) for research involving minors.

6. Respecting Children's Rights in Participation

6.1 Ensuring that students' voices are heard encourages participation, allows them to express themselves freely, and considers their comfort and preferences (in how they express themselves, e.g. via drawing, speaking, roleplay, etc.).

6.2 Use communication methods appropriate for their age (clear, simple explanations; interactive methods; visual aids) to ensure they understand what participation means.

6.3 Avoid coercion, undue influence, or pressure from teachers, peers, or parents to participate.

7. Data Use, Storage, and Dissemination

7.1 Data collected (audio recordings, video, interviews, artefacts) was used solely for research purposes (thesis, potential publications) unless otherwise agreed.

7.2 After the completion of the study and defense of the thesis, data was securely stored or destroyed in accordance with institutional policy.

7.3 Findings reported with honesty, no fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data.

These ethical considerations are essential for ensuring that this qualitative study is conducted in a manner that respects the dignity, privacy, and welfare of the young participants while maintaining the integrity of the research process.

Data analysis

The study used thematic analysis as the primary method for analyzing qualitative data. Thematic analysis is suitable because it allows the researcher to systematically identify, examine, and report patterns (themes) within data, making sense of students' experiences with art-based learning and how self-expression in English-speaking emerges from those experiences.

Kuhn's (2003) model for analyzing children's drawings was initially developed in the field of kinesiology to evaluate children's attitudes toward art-based learning activities in school settings and has been applied in research conducted in Germany. This method has been adapted to use the "draw and write" technique as a research approach (Horstman, Aldiss, Richardson, & Gibson, 2008; Reeve & Bell, 2009). According to Kuhn (2003), the main challenges in qualitatively analyzing and interpreting children's drawings can be grouped into four key categories: (1) distinguish the level of drawing talent, (2) conditioning of drawings by social and environmental conditions, (3) difficulties in interpretation due to disuse of the psychological interpretation, and (4) the uncertainty of the meaning of drawing.

1. Children exhibit varying levels of drawing ability, and therefore, qualitative analysis of their drawings does not aim to assess their artistic or iconographic proficiency.

2. The content depicted in children's drawings is influenced by the social and environmental conditions in which they live.

3. Adult evaluators may encounter challenges in interpreting children's drawings without applying established psychological criteria. However, in qualitative analysis, the interpretation of a drawing's content is conducted according to pre-determined guidelines. Evaluators focus primarily on describing the observable elements, which provides a basis for inferring underlying structures, such as the child's preferred activities.

4. While drawings consist of visible elements, their deeper “meaning” often remains somewhat ambiguous.

The research was analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing the coding process to be flexible so that codes could develop over time. This approach helped the research team reflect on their understanding of the data and track how interpretations became deeper and more refined as they engaged with the data.

Coding was used to analyze the context and answer the research questions. The research used Kuhn’s (2003) model for analyzing children’s drawings to evaluate children’s attitudes toward art-based learning activities.

Credibility

In this research on self-expression in English-speaking skill of 6th-grade students through art-based learning, the following strategies implemented to ensure credibility, with a special emphasis on triangulation. The study used triangulation (data, methods, investigators, theory) together with prolonged engagement, peer debriefing. This research aims to ensure that its findings are credible and trustworthy. These practices help ensure that what is reported truly reflects students’ experiences of self-expression in English-speaking through art-based learning, rather than being unduly influenced by researcher bias or by limitations of single data sources or methods.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The explore self-expression in 6th-grade students' English-speaking skill through art-based learning is a qualitative research study. The presentation of the research findings is classified into three sections as follows:

Part 1: The Participants' background

Part 2: Results of Research question one: To explored the experiences and challenges that 6th-grade students encountered with self-expression in English-speaking skills through art-based activities.

Part 3: Results of Research question two: To explored how 6th-grade students used art-based learning activities to develop their English-speaking skills.

Part 1: The Participants' background

Table 1 The Participants' background

No.	Age	Gender	Social Economic Status (SES)	Guardian's occupation		Personality
				Father	Mother	
1	12	Female	Medium	Owner Business	Doctor	Helpful
2	12	Female	Medium	Owner Business	Owner Business	Confident
3	12	Female	High	Owner Business	Doctor	Clam
4	12	Female	High	Owner Business	Owner Business	Happy
5	12	Female	High	Police	Owner Business	Confident

6	11	Female	High	Owner Business	Owner Business	Relax
7	11	Male	High	Owner Business	Owner Business	Happy
8	12	Male	High	Owner Business	Owner Business	Clam
9	12	Female	High	Owner Business	Owner Business	Helpful
10	11	Male	High	Owner Business	Owner Business	Happy

The participants in this study consisted of ten 6th-grade students aged between 11 and 12 years old. Among them, seven were female and three were male. In terms of socio-economic status (SES), most of the participants were from a high socio-economic background while two participants were from a medium socio-economic background. Regarding parents' occupations, most fathers were business owners, with one working as a police officer. Similarly, most mothers were business owners, while some were medical doctors. With respect to personality characteristics, the participants demonstrated a range of traits, including happiness, confidence, helpfulness, calmness, and relaxation. The most observed personality traits were happiness and confidence.

Part 2: Results of Research question one

What experiences do 6th-grade students encounter with self-expression in English-Speaking skill through art-based learning activities?

To respond to this research question. The study explored the experiences and challenges that 6th-grade students encountered with self-expression in English-speaking skills through art-based activities. Two main themes emerged from the analysis: experiences and challenges. (Table 2)

Theme 1: Experiences

The theme *Experiences* reflects students' engagement in self-expression and the development of their English-speaking skills through art-based learning activities implemented across four sessions: **Session 1 (Hobbies)**, **Session 2 (Holiday)**, **Session 3 (Favorite Dishes)**, and **Session 4 (Environment)**. The findings show that students experienced meaningful learning through personal expression and active interaction during these sessions. This theme aligns with Rogers' (1969) student-centered learning theory, which emphasizes that meaningful learning occurs when learners are personally involved and able to express their own ideas. Two sub-themes emerged from the data: *communication* and *relationship*.

Sub theme 1.1: Communications

The sub-theme *communication* emerged clearly through classroom observations across all four art-based learning sessions. During **Session 1 (Hobbies)** and **Session 3 (Favorite Dishes)**, students were asked to draw topics related to their personal interests and daily lives and then describe their drawings orally. These activities encouraged students to communicate in English by sharing familiar and meaningful content. One student stated, "*I usually talk about my emotion and my experiences.*" (Student 4). Another student shared, "*One art activity that make me feel confident in speaking English is drawing food.*" (Student 5).

In **Session 2 (Holiday)**, students created drawings about places they had visited or wished to visit and presented them to the class. This activity promoted communication by allowing students to narrate personal experiences and imagined stories. A student explained, "*I like drawing because it allows me to use my speaking and imagination fully.*" (Student 9). These activities provided authentic opportunities for oral language use and encouraged students to speak in extended utterances. Figure 1

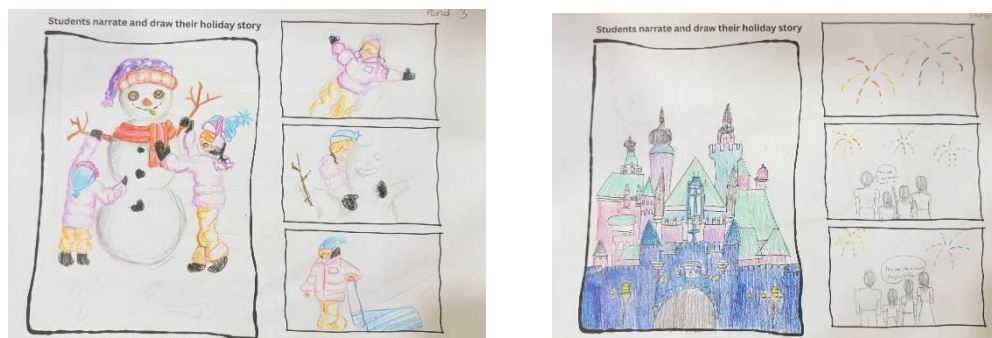


Figure 1 Students' artefact of Holidays

During **Session 4 (Environment)**, students discussed environmental topics through drawings and short presentations, which allowed them to express opinions and ideas beyond personal experiences. One student noted, *"I want to exchange ideas with my friends how to protect the environment"* (Student 7). This session demonstrated that art-based learning also supported students in using English to communicate ideas and viewpoints.

Overall, the sub-theme *communication* illustrates that art-based learning activities across the four sessions provided rich and meaningful opportunities for students to practice English-speaking. By engaging in communication that was connected to their own experiences and ideas, students demonstrated increased confidence, engagement, and self-expression in English speaking.

Sub theme 1.2: Relationship

The sub-theme *relationship* emerged from classroom observations of peer interaction and teacher–student engagement throughout the four art-based learning sessions: **Session 1 (Hobbies)**, **Session 2 (Holiday)**, **Session 3 (Favorite Dishes)**, and **Session 4 (Environment)**. The findings indicate that positive relationships among students and supportive interactions with the teacher played an important role in the development of students' vocabulary, sentence structure, and self-expression in English speaking.

During art-based activities, students frequently interacted with their classmates by sharing ideas, asking questions, and responding to each other's drawings. This peer interaction encouraged students to use English in meaningful and collaborative ways. One student stated, *"I learn new vocabularies from my friend"*

(Student 1). Another student shared, “*I have more confident to speak with friends.*” (Student 8). These responses suggest that peer relationships created a supportive environment that encouraged students to express themselves more openly.

In addition to peer interaction, feedback from the teacher played a crucial role in supporting students’ speaking development. During presentations and discussions, the teacher provided gentle guidance, vocabulary support, and encouragement, which helped students improve their sentence structure and confidence. One student explained, “*I can express my ideas better*” (Student 5). This supportive teacher–student relationship encouraged students to continue speaking and refining their ideas.

Overall, the sub-theme *relationship* highlights the importance of social interaction and supportive classroom relationships in art-based learning environments. By fostering positive peer relationships and constructive teacher–student interactions, art-based learning supported students’ self-expression and development of English-speaking skills in meaningful and collaborative ways.

Theme 2: Challenges

Although art-based learning provided positive learning experiences and supported students’ self-expression in English speaking, the findings also reveal that students encountered certain *challenges* during the learning process. These challenges influenced the depth and consistency of students’ participation in speaking activities. Two sub-themes emerged under this theme: *limitation of time* and *shyness*.

Sub theme 2.1: Limitation of time

One challenge identified in this study was the limited time allocated for art-based learning activities. The short duration of each session restricted opportunities for students to fully explore their ideas, complete their artwork, and practice English-speaking in depth. As a result, some students were unable to elaborate on their ideas or engage in extended oral interaction.

Classroom observations indicated that students sometimes rushed to finish their drawings and presentations within the available time. One student stated, “*I want more time to explain my picture*” (Student 8). Another student shared, “*I want more time to think and prepare speaking English*” (Student 10). These responses suggest

that limited time affected students' ability to fully express themselves and develop their speaking skills.

Sub theme 2.2: Shyness

Another challenge observed in this study was *shyness*, particularly among students who participated in art-based learning activities for the first time. Some students felt hesitant to speak English or present their artwork in front of their peers. This hesitation affected their level of participation during communication and presentations.

Several students expressed feelings of shyness when asked to speak in front of the class. One student stated, *"I feel shy when I speak English in front of my friends"* (Student 9). Another student explained, *"It is my first time to do this activity, so I am shy to speak English"* (Student 10). These quotations indicate that unfamiliarity with the activity and fear of negative evaluation contributed to students' hesitation in speaking.

Overall, the theme *Challenges* highlights that while art-based learning creates valuable opportunities for self-expression in English speaking, practical and emotional factors such as time constraints and shyness can affect students' participation. Recognizing these challenges provides important insights for improving the design and implementation of art-based learning activities to better support students' speaking development.

Table 2 Results of Research question one

Theme	Sub-themes
Experiences	Communication
	Relationship
Challenges	Limitation of time
	Shyness

Part 3: Results of Research question two

How do 6th-grade students develop their English-Speaking skill through art-based learning activities?

To respond to this research question. The study explored how 6th-grade students used art-based learning activities to develop their English-speaking skills. Two main themes emerged: positive emotions and identity achievement.

Theme 1: Positive emotions

The theme of *Positive Emotions* reflects students' emotional responses while participating in four art-based learning sessions: **Session 1: Hobbies, Session 2: Holiday, Session 3: Favorite Dishes, and Session 4: Environment.** These sessions provided meaningful and familiar contexts that enhanced students' emotional comfort and encouraged self-expression in English-speaking activities. Overall, students demonstrated positive emotional engagement during art-based learning, which supported their development of English-speaking skills.

Sub theme 1.1: Enjoyment

The sub-theme *enjoyment* highlights students' feelings of happiness, interest, and fun while engaging in art-based learning activities across all four sessions: **Session 1 (Hobbies), Session 2 (Holiday), Session 3 (Favorite Dishes), and Session 4 (Environment).** Students consistently described art-based English lessons as enjoyable and engaging, which positively influenced their motivation and participation in speaking activities.

Students expressed enjoyment when learning English through creative tasks. One student stated, "*I enjoy learning English through art.*" (Student 2). Another student shared, "*I feel enjoy and relax when I talk about holidays and food*" (Student 4). These quotations indicate that enjoyment transformed English-speaking activities from stressful academic tasks into pleasurable learning experiences.

Enjoyment played a significant role in increasing students' motivation and willingness to speak. When students enjoyed the activities, they were more likely to participate actively and express their ideas freely. One student noted, "*Drawing makes me feel energized and happy like in the picture*" (Student 3). as shown in Figure 4. This finding aligns with Dörnyei's (2001) theory of motivation, which

emphasizes the role of positive emotions in sustaining learners' engagement and willingness to communicate in a second language.

In summary, the sub-theme *enjoyment* demonstrates that art-based learning creates joyful and engaging learning experiences that support students' self-expression in English speaking. By fostering enjoyment, art-based activities motivated students to speak more confidently, participate actively, and develop positive attitudes toward English learning.

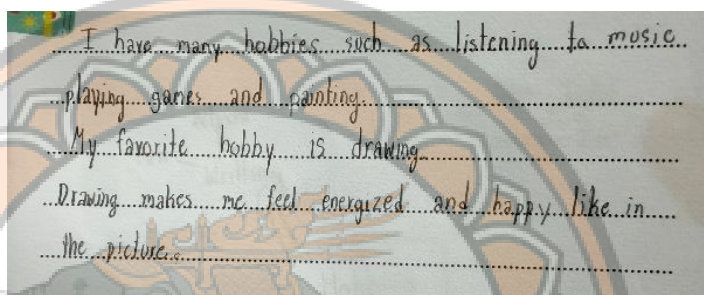


Figure 2 Description of students' self portrait

Sub theme 1.2: Calm

The sub-theme *calm* reflects students' emotional responses while engaging in art-based learning activities, particularly self-portrait drawing and self-related topics implemented in **Session 1 (Hobbies)** and **Session 3 (Favorite Dishes)**. During these sessions, students created drawings related to themselves before participating in speaking activities. The students reported feeling calm and relaxed while engaging in these activities, as the familiar and personal topics allowed them to draw from their own experiences. This process created a supportive and low-pressure learning atmosphere for using spoken English meaningfully. Figure 3

The act of drawing before speaking enabled students to organize their thoughts visually, which helped reduce anxiety and hesitation when expressing themselves orally. Several students explicitly mentioned that the drawing activities helped them feel calm while English-speaking. One student stated, "*It makes me feel calm and clam to speak*" (Student 9). Another student explained, "*I feel calm and relax*" (Student 10). Similarly, students in Session 1 and Session 3 reported that

familiar topics supported their emotional comfort. As one student noted, “Hobbies activity helps me feel more clam.” (Student 2), while another shared, “My favorite hobby is drawing because it makes my feeling chilled” (Student 2)



Figure 3 Students' artefact of favorite dishes

These quotations indicate that visual art and familiar content functioned as both emotional and cognitive scaffolds, helping students feel more secure and prepared to communicate. The calm learning atmosphere generated through art-based learning encouraged more natural and spontaneous oral communication. As students felt less pressure to speak perfectly, they became more willing to express their ideas in English. One student reflected, “*I can express my ideas better*” (Student 1). This reduced concern about making mistakes allowed students to focus on meaning rather than linguistic accuracy, which is essential for developing communicative competence (Richards, 2008).

Overall, the sub-theme *calm* demonstrates that art-based learning particularly through self-portrait drawing and familiar, self-related topics plays a significant role in reducing speaking anxiety and creating emotionally safe spaces for English communication. This calm learning environment supported students in speaking with less hesitation and greater confidence, thereby enhancing their self-expression in English speaking activities, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Sub theme 1.3: Relaxing

The sub-theme *relaxing* reflects students' feelings of emotional ease and comfort while participating in art-based learning activities across the four sessions, particularly **Session 2 (Holiday)** and **Session 4 (Environment)**. During these sessions, students engaged in drawing and presentation, which allowed them to approach English-speaking tasks without pressure. The students reported that art-based activities helped them feel relaxed and comfortable, creating a low-stress environment for oral communication.

Many students described feeling relaxed because they were given time to think and prepare through drawing before speaking. One student explained, *"I like drawing because it makes me feel calm, happy and relaxed"* (Student 3). Another student shared, *"I like to draw because it feels good and relax."* (Student 6). These responses suggest that art-based learning provided students with emotional space and preparation time, which reduced tension during speaking activities. Figure 4

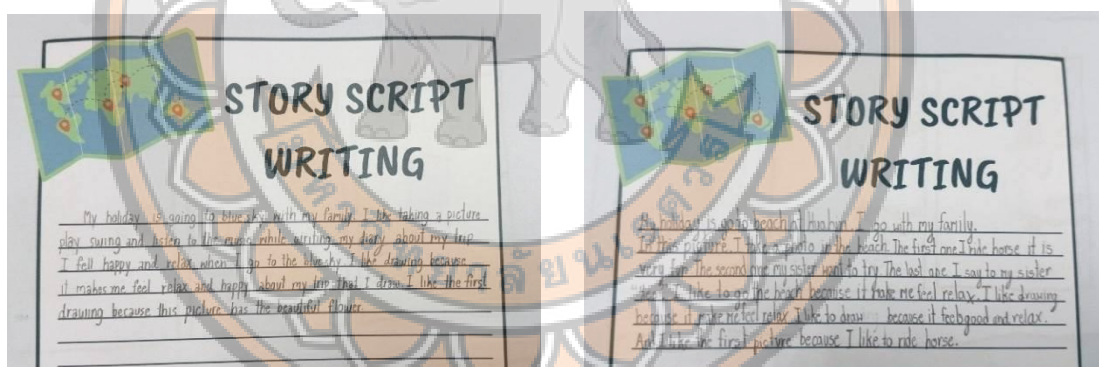


Figure 4 Students' story script of Holidays

The relaxed learning atmosphere reduced performance pressure and encouraged students to speak at their own pace. Students expressed that they did not feel rushed or forced to speak correctly. One student stated, *"I feel relax to speak"* (Student 9). This sense of relaxation allowed students to focus on communication rather than accuracy, supporting more fluent and natural speech.

Overall, the sub-theme *relaxing* demonstrates that art-based learning creates emotionally comfortable learning environments that support students' willingness to communicate and self-expression in English speaking activities. By reducing stress

and performance pressure, art-based learning enabled students to engage in speaking more naturally and confidently. (Figure 5-6)

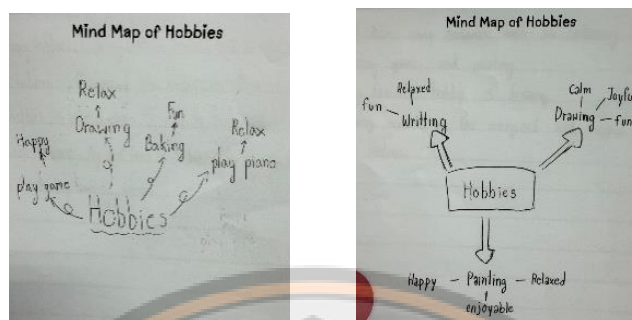


Figure 5 Mind map of students' self-portrait



Figure 6 Drawing of students

Theme 2: Identity Achievement

The second major theme, *identity achievement*, reflects how students used art-based learning to express their personal identities and develop a sense of ownership over their English-speaking skills. Through creative activities, particularly self-portrait drawing and personal topic-based artwork, students were able to connect language use with their sense of self. This theme aligns with Kramsch's (2009) view that language learning is not only a cognitive process but also a process of identity construction and meaning making. Two sub-themes emerged from the analysis: *commitment* and *individuality*.

Sub theme 2.1: Commitment

The sub-theme of *commitment* was evident in students' focused engagement with art-based learning activities. Students demonstrated strong commitment by investing time and effort in creating detailed drawings and preparing personal English descriptions related to their artwork. Classroom observations showed that many students carefully planned what they wanted to say, practiced sentence structures, and searched for appropriate vocabulary before presenting their work.

Several students expressed a sense of responsibility and effort toward their speaking tasks. One student stated, *"I draw it beautifully because I want to explain my picture well."* (Student 3). Another student shared, *"I practice my description before I speak in front the class"* (Student 2). These quotations indicate that when students felt ownership of their artwork, they were more motivated to prepare and use English meaningfully.

Sub theme 2.2: Individuality

The sub-theme of *individuality* highlights how students used art as a medium to express personal thoughts, preferences, and experiences in English. Through self-portrait drawing and topic-based artwork, students presented unique aspects of their identities, such as hobbies, favorite foods, holiday experiences, and environmental concerns. This opportunity to express individuality enhanced students' confidence, vocabulary use, and descriptive speaking abilities.

Students' spoken responses revealed a strong sense of personal voice. One student explained, *"My picture is about my real emotion, I usually talk about my feeling"* (Student 1). Another student stated, *"When I speak English during art-based activities I usually talk about my ideas"* *"Art activities help me show who I am"* (Student 5). These quotations demonstrate that students perceived their artwork as a representation of who they are, which encouraged more authentic and confident oral expression.

Overall, the theme *identity achievement* illustrates that art-based learning supported students not only in developing English-speaking skills but also in constructing and expressing their identities. Through commitment to their work and the expression of individuality, students demonstrated increased ownership, confidence, and meaningful engagement in English-speaking. These findings directly

address the research questions by showing how students experienced self-expression and how art-based learning facilitated the development of English-speaking skills through identity-focused activities.

Table 3 Results of Research question two

Themes	Sub-themes
Positive emotions	Enjoyment
	Clam
	Relaxing
Identity achievement	Commitment
	Individuality

Summary

In conclusion, the findings from observations, interviews, student artefacts, and audio/video recordings indicate that art-based learning effectively enhances self-expression in English speaking skills among 6th-grade students. The use of multiple data collection instruments strengthened the validity of the study and provided a comprehensive understanding of students' learning experiences. Table 4 and table 5

Table 4 Overview of themes, sub themes and codes including number of participants

Research Question	Themes	Sub themes	Code	Participants (Total 10 students)
Research Question One	Experiences	Communication	Confident to speak	10 (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)
		Relationship	Fun with friends. Fun to speak	9 (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,)
	Challenges	Limitation of time	Time	4 (1,6,8,9,)
		Shyness	Be shy, lack confident	4 (2,3,7,9,)
		Enjoyment	Enjoy. Happy, fun	10 (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)
Research Question Two	Positive emotions	Clam	Clam	7 (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,)
		Relaxing	Relax	9 (1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10)
		Commitment	Positive	10
	Identity achievement		thinking, do it better	(1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)
		Individuality	More confident, Who I am	10 (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study indicated that art-based learning activities effectively enhanced English-speaking skills among 6th-grade students by creating a supportive and engaging learning environment. The findings revealed that students demonstrated increased confidence and a greater willingness to communicate their ideas, emotions, and personal experiences in English. Through art-based tasks, students were able to produce simple yet meaningful English sentences to describe their drawings, paintings, and creative artefacts. The use of art provided concrete and age-appropriate learning contexts, which supported language use and contributed to the development of students' English-speaking skills.

Overall, the findings of this qualitative study highlight the significant role of art-based learning in supporting 6th-grade students' self-expression in English speaking. Emotional engagement, identity expression, and supportive classroom relationships emerged as key factors that fostered meaningful English communication. The results provide valuable insights into how art-based learning can support both linguistic development and self-expression among young learners in English language classrooms.

Summary of Research Findings

In response to the first research question, which investigated students' experiences and challenges in self-expression through art-based learning, the findings revealed that students generally experienced positive emotional responses, including calmness, relaxation, and enjoyment. These emotions played a critical role in reducing speaking anxiety and encouraging students to participate more actively in English-speaking activities. Art-based learning created emotionally safe and supportive learning environments where students felt comfortable expressing their ideas without fear of making mistakes. In addition, meaningful interactions with peers and the teacher fostered communication and relationship-building, which further supported students' confidence and engagement in English-speaking.

However, the findings also indicated that students encountered certain challenges during art-based learning activities. Limited instructional time restricted opportunities for extended speaking practice and deeper self-expression. Shyness, particularly among students who were unfamiliar with art-based learning, also influenced students' willingness to speak English. Despite these challenges, classroom observations suggested that students' confidence increased over time as they became more familiar with the activities and the supportive classroom atmosphere.

Regarding the second research question, which examined how students used art-based learning to develop their English-speaking skills, the findings demonstrated that art-based activities functioned as effective scaffolding tools for spoken language development. Drawing and creative tasks helped students organize their thoughts visually, connect language use to personal experiences, and communicate meaningfully in English. Students used art as a starting point for speaking, which supported vocabulary development, sentence construction, fluency, and confidence.

Furthermore, the findings highlighted the importance of identity achievement in language learning. Through art-based learning, students expressed individuality, demonstrated commitment to their work, and developed a sense of ownership over their English-speaking skills. This process enabled students to view themselves as capable users of English and supported the development of communicative competence beyond grammatical accuracy.

Discussion

Research Question One: Experiences and Challenges of Self-Expression in English Speaking

The findings related to the first research question indicate that art-based learning created meaningful learning experiences for 6th-grade students by supporting communication and positive relationships in English-speaking activities. Through drawing and presentation tasks, students were able to communicate personal ideas, experiences, and opinions in English. Visual art functioned as a scaffold that supported students in expressing meaning with greater clarity, reducing their concern about grammatical accuracy and increasing confidence and willingness to speak. This finding supports Rogers' (1969) student-centered learning theory, which emphasizes

personal involvement and self-expression as essential components of meaningful learning.

Across all sessions, students engaged in English communication with both the teacher and their classmates. The use of drawings as visual support helped students organize their thoughts and convey meaning more effectively. This supports Kramsch's (2009) view that language serves as a medium for expressing identity and meaning rather than merely a system of rules. In addition, the findings align with Cummins' (2001) argument that meaningful and personally relevant language use enhances fluency and communicative competence, as students demonstrated greater engagement and communicative confidence when speaking about familiar topics.

Positive peer and teacher-student relationships also played an important role in supporting students' self-expression. Interaction with peers encouraged students to exchange ideas, learn new vocabulary, and practice sentence structures in a supportive environment. Teacher feedback further supported students in refining their ideas and continuing to speak with greater confidence. These findings are consistent with Gay's (2010) concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, which emphasizes valuing learners' voices, perspectives, and experiences. By creating an inclusive and respectful classroom environment, art-based learning allowed students to feel socially and emotionally safe when sharing personal ideas. Similarly, Wright (2010) emphasized that creative and collaborative activities foster both language development and emotional engagement, particularly among young learners.

Despite these positive experiences, students also encountered challenges, particularly limited time and shyness. Time constraints restricted opportunities for deeper exploration, preparation, and extended speaking practice. This finding reflects concerns raised in qualitative assessment literature, which suggests that meaningful speaking activities require sufficient time for reflection, interaction, and feedback to fully support learners' expressive abilities (Tsui, 1996; Fan & Yan, 2020). In art-based learning contexts, time is especially important, as students need opportunities to engage in both creative production and oral expression.

Shyness also emerged as a challenge, particularly among students who were unfamiliar with English-speaking in front of others. This finding is consistent with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which emphasizes that learners must feel

psychologically safe before they can reach higher levels of self-expression and self-actualization. When students did not yet feel fully secure, shyness became a barrier to participation. However, classroom observations indicated that as students became more familiar with art-based activities and experienced a supportive learning environment, their confidence gradually increased. Over time, students showed greater willingness to speak and present their ideas, supporting Rogers' (1969) view that learning flourishes in psychologically safe classrooms.

Research Question Two: Positive emotions and Identity achievement through the Use of Art-Based Learning in English-Speaking Skills

The second research question focused on how 6th-grade students used art-based learning activities to develop their English-speaking skills. The findings indicate that students' speaking development was closely connected to their emotional experiences and their ability to express personal identity through language. In this study, art-based learning supported students' self-expression by fostering positive emotions and enabling identity achievement. Together, these two dimensions created favorable conditions for meaningful and confident English communication. The following discussion examines how positive emotions and identity achievement contributed to the development of students' English-speaking skills.

Positive emotions played a crucial role in supporting students' willingness to communicate in English. The findings show that art-based activities promoted enjoyment, calmness, and relaxation, which reduced anxiety and encouraged students to participate more actively in speaking tasks. These emotional conditions lowered students' affective filters, allowing them to speak more naturally and confidently, supporting Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. This finding also aligns with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which emphasizes that emotional safety and positive affect are fundamental conditions for learning and self-expression.

Among the positive emotions identified, enjoyment was particularly important in sustaining students' motivation and active participation. When students perceived English learning as fun and meaningful through art-based activities, they demonstrated greater willingness to engage in speaking. This finding aligns with Dörnyei's (2001) motivation theory and Catterall's (2009) assertion that art-based activities enhance engagement by allowing learners to connect learning content with

personal experiences. Wright (2010) similarly suggests that creative tasks encourage children to use language spontaneously and expressively. The findings of this study support these views, as students showed increased enthusiasm and participation during art-based speaking activities.

Calm and relaxing emotional states were also evident, particularly when students worked on self-related topics. Drawing before speaking helped students organize their thoughts, reduced pressure, and allowed them to focus on meaning rather than accuracy. These findings support Rogers' (1969) humanistic learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of psychologically safe and supportive learning environments in fostering authentic self-expression. When learners feel accepted and free from fear of judgment, they are more likely to participate actively and express their true thoughts and feelings. In language learning contexts, such calm and supportive conditions help lower affective barriers and promote meaningful communication (Krashen, 1982).

In addition, artistic activities promoted relaxation and reflective thinking, enabling students to process ideas more deeply and express themselves more freely. According to Eisner (2002), art-based activities create relaxed learning conditions that support expressive thinking. This finding aligns with Wright's (2010) view that creative learning environments reduce performance pressure and support expressive language use, particularly for young learners. Similarly, Maley and Duff (2005) argue that creative activities such as drawing and storytelling reduce stress and increase learners' comfort in speaking tasks. For young learners, relaxed emotional conditions are especially important, as anxiety can inhibit willingness to communicate (Cameron, 2001).

Beyond emotional support, art-based learning also contributed to students' identity achievement through commitment and individuality. Students demonstrated commitment by investing sustained effort in preparing their artwork and spoken descriptions. This finding supports Cummins' (2001) assertion that meaningful and cognitively engaging tasks promote deeper language development. Because the art-based tasks were personally relevant, students were more willing to organize ideas carefully and practice spoken English. Furthermore, students' commitment reflects Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, as art-based learning allowed

learners to draw on their visual–spatial strengths while simultaneously developing linguistic competence.

Individuality was another key aspect of identity achievement. Through art-based activities, students were able to express personal experiences, emotions, and perspectives in English. This finding aligns with Norton's (1997) concept of identity in language learning, which emphasizes that learners gain confidence and agency when they can express their identities through language. When students spoke about topics that represented who they are, they began to see themselves as legitimate users of English rather than passive learners. Moreover, Kramsch (2009) argues that language learning is deeply connected to identity and emotion. The calm emotional states observed in this study allowed students to express aspects of their identity through spoken English, supported by self-portrait drawings and personal-topic discussions.

Rogers (1969) further emphasized that learning environments that support individuality foster self-esteem, intrinsic motivation, and personal growth. By encouraging individuality through art-based learning, the classroom became a space where students felt valued and empowered to speak. As a result, students developed greater confidence, stronger ownership of their learning, and more authentic self-expression in English-speaking activities.

Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The research was conducted in a single educational context with a limited number of participants, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The qualitative nature of the study also relied on observations, interviews, and student artifacts, which may involve subjective interpretation. Furthermore, the duration of the intervention was limited, which may not fully capture long-term development in speaking skills and self-expression.

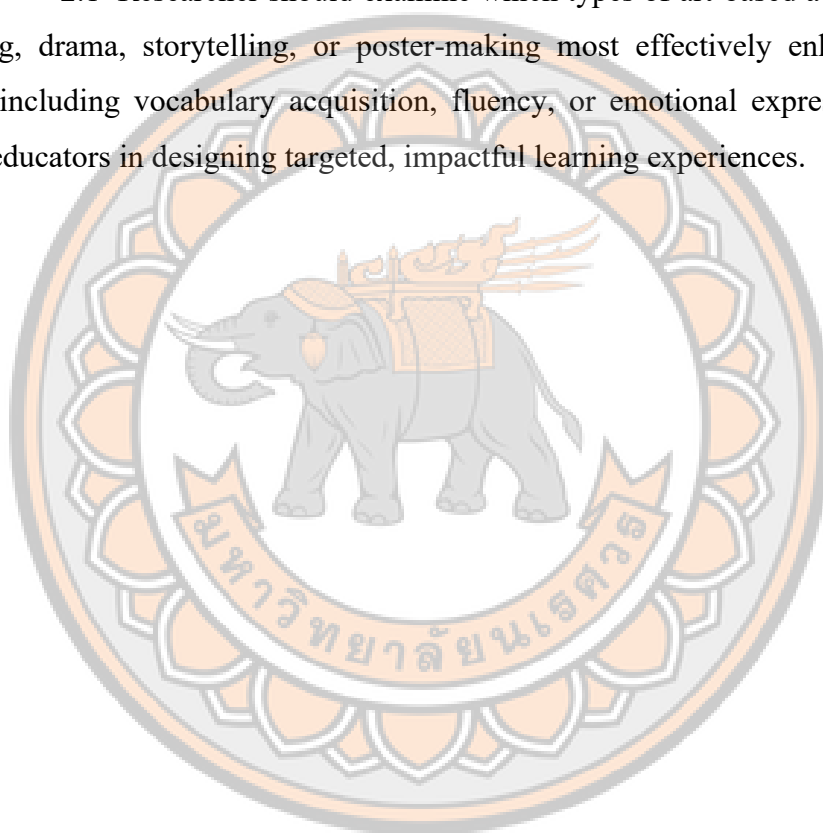
Recommendations

1. Implications

1.1 Students' socioeconomic background and existing language skills should be considered when implementing art-based learning (ABL) for self-expression. Activities should build on these foundational skills while encouraging creativity and meaningful communication.

2. Areas of Future Research

2.1 Researcher should examine which types of art-based activities such as drawing, drama, storytelling, or poster-making most effectively enhance language skills, including vocabulary acquisition, fluency, or emotional expression. This can guide educators in designing targeted, impactful learning experiences.





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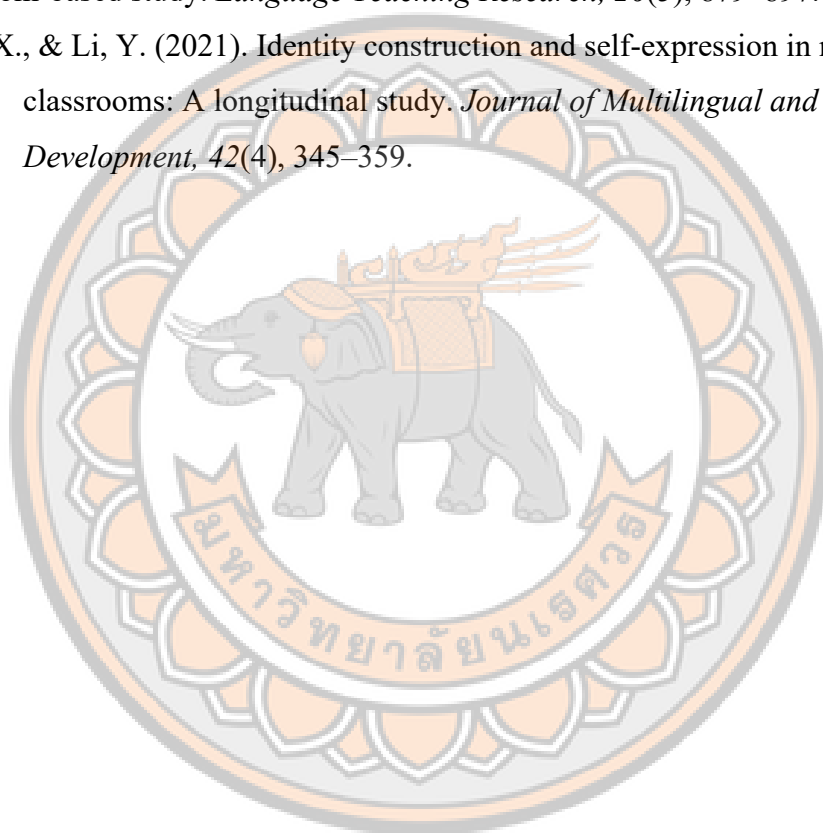
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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Student Artefacts / Creative Outputs Analysis Form

Research Title: Development of English-Speaking Skill among 6th -grade Students through Art-Based Activities and Self-Expression Techniques at a Private School in Provincial Areas of Thailand

Researcher: Nichanan Chotirat

Institution: Naresuan University

Student Name / ID: _____

Class / Grade: _____

Art-Based Activity / Task: _____

Date of Creation: _____

Description of Artefact

- Types of artefacts: (e.g., drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, mixed media)
- Brief description of the artefact:

.....

.....

.....

No.	Aspect	Guiding Questions	Notes / Examples
1.	Content of Speech	What ideas, opinions, or stories do the student express? Are they related to personal experience, imagination, or emotions?	
2.	Linguistic Features	How does the student use English? (Vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, fluency)	
3.	Expressive Elements	How does the student express ideas creatively? (Metaphors, descriptions, storytelling, artistic references)	

4.	Emotional Content	What emotions are conveyed in the speech? (Happiness, excitement, pride, uncertainty, etc.)	
5.	Connection to Art	How does the artefact support or inspire the student's spoken self-expression?	

Summary & Reflection

- Overall impression of self-expression through the artefact:

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.....

Notable phrases, words, or ideas in English:

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.....

Insights on improving speaking skills through art-based learning:

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.....

.....

Suggestions

.....

.....

Signature:

(.....)

Date:

Audio / Video Recording Form

Research Title: Development of English-Speaking Skill among 6th-grade Students through Art-Based Activities and Self-Expression Techniques at a Private School in Provincial Areas of Thailand

Researcher: Nichanan Chotirat

Institution: Naresuan University

Student Name / ID: _____

Class / Grade: _____

Activity / Task: _____

Date: _____

Recording Type: ☐ Audio ☐ Video

Recording Details

Item	Description / Notes
Device Used	
Duration of Recording	
Environment	
Participants	
Context of Recording	

Observation & Analysis While Recording

No.	Aspect	Guiding Question	Notes / Time Stamp
1.	Use of English	How does the student use English? (Vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency)	
2.	Self-Expression	How clearly does the student express ideas, feelings, or imagination?	
3.	Body Language & Gestures	How does the student use non-verbal communication? (Gestures, facial expressions, posture)	
4.	Emotional Expression	What emotions are conveyed? (Excitement, pride, curiosity, hesitation)	

5.	Interaction with Art / Peers	How does the student connect speech with artwork or interact with peers?	
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Post-Recording Reflection

- **Key observations and notable moments:**

.....

Strengths in self-expression:

.....

Areas for improvement or next observation focus:

.....

Additional comments:

.....

Suggestions

.....

Signature:

(.....)

Date:

Comments regarding to the Audio and Video recording form

Evaluated by Asst. Prof. Pornthep Katchamat

1. The form requests students' names, which could compromise anonymity and violate NU IRB protocols regarding participant confidentiality. The researcher should use coded identifiers such as "Participant 1," "Participant 2," or alphanumeric codes (e.g., "S01," "S02") instead of actual names to protect participants' identities.
2. The form provides checkboxes for both audio and video recording types, creating ambiguity about the actual data collection method. If only audio recording is used, observing body language and gestures (Item 3) becomes impossible. The researcher should specify one recording type that aligns with all observation aspects, or clarify how different recording types will be used for different purposes.
3. "Recording Details" section, items such as "Environment" versus "Context of Recording" lack clear definitions, potentially causing confusion for observers. The researcher should provide operational definitions or examples for each item (e.g., Environment = physical setting/location; Context = activity type/learning situation).
4. The "Observation & Analysis While Recording" section does not adequately address Research Question 2 regarding how art-based learning (ABL) activities develop students' English speaking skills. The form would benefit from incorporating detailed rubrics for each language skill component (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency) with observable indicators and proficiency levels to enable deeper, more systematic analysis.
5. The conceptualization of "self-expression" appears inconsistent between the "Scope of the Study" (in the research proposal) and the recording form. The researcher needs to clearly define and operationalize which specific aspects of self-expression are being investigated and ensure consistency across all research instruments.
6. Some observation items, particularly "imagination" under self-expression (Item 2), lack clarity regarding how they can be observed and assessed through recordings. The researcher should develop rubrics with concrete behavioral indicators and examples to guide observers in identifying and documenting these abstract concepts.
7. The form includes a "Notes / Time Stamp" column but provides no guidance on how frequently observations should be recorded or whether the observer should note every instance of a behavior or use interval sampling. Clear protocols for time-stamped observations would improve reliability.
8. Since this involves 6th-grade Thai EFL learners, clarification is needed on whether observers will record notes in Thai or English, and whether direct quotes from students should be transcribed verbatim or translated. What if the students speak in Thai? Does it count as the data?
9. The research question explicitly asks, "What experiences and challenges do 6th-grade students encounter with self-expression in speaking English skills through art-based learning activities?" However, the observation form primarily focuses on capturing positive experiences and behaviors demonstrated during ABL activities. There is no dedicated section or observational item specifically designed to identify, document, or analyze the challenges students face. The researcher should add explicit observational categories or guiding questions that capture difficulties such as: linguistic struggles (word-finding difficulties, grammar errors, pronunciation challenges), affective barriers (hesitation, anxiety, reluctance to participate), cognitive challenges (difficulty connecting art to verbal expression, conceptual confusion), or social obstacles (peer interaction difficulties, fear of judgment). Without systematically documenting challenges, the researcher cannot fully answer this research question.



(Asst. Prof. Pornthep Katchamat)

Assistant Director for Academic Affairs, NUIC

Date: 23 December 2025

6. Additional Recommendations for Improving the Research Instruments

To further enhance the quality and effectiveness of the instruments, the following improvements are recommended:

1. Develop a **descriptive qualitative rubric** focusing on self-expression (e.g., confidence, emotional expression, creativity) rather than grammatical accuracy.
2. Add a **student reflection sheet** after each activity with simple guiding questions.
3. Include a **teacher reflective journal** to document classroom atmosphere and student engagement.
4. Conduct a **pilot study** to test clarity, timing, and feasibility of the instruments before full data collection.

The research instruments are well-designed, clearly aligned with the research objectives, and appropriate for investigating self-expression in English speaking skills through Art-Based Learning. The instruments are effective in capturing students' authentic speaking behaviors, emotions, and creative expression in a supportive learning environment. With minor refinements, the instruments can be confidently used to collect rich, valid, and meaningful qualitative data.

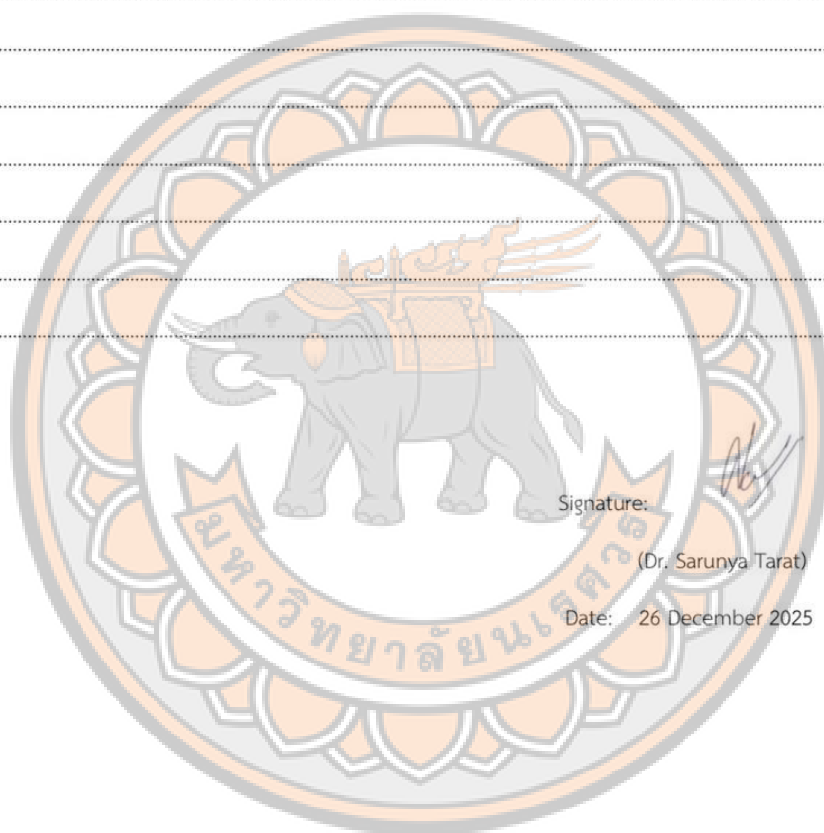
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(Dr. Thitaree Chanthawat)

6. Additional Suggestions

Please provide any further academic recommendations to improve the Student Artefacts analysis instrument to meet the standards of a master's-level qualitative study.

The instrument would benefit from a brief coding guide or analytic protocol that explains how artefacts are interpreted, and how spoken expression is distinguished from artistic output.



APPENDIX B

1. Tasks, Evidence and Activities

Session / Theme	Activities (Art-based learning)	Tasks, Evidence and Activities	Materials	Objectives
Session 1 Hobbies (4 hours)	Visual Self-Portrait and Description	<u>Hobby Talk</u> (15 minutes) 1. Teacher asks: “What do you like to do in your free time?” Students speak in short sentences, e.g., “I like painting because it makes me happy.” <u>Mind Map of Hobbies</u> (30 minutes) 1. Students list their hobbies, people involved, frequency, and emotions related to the hobby. 2. Students share ideas in pairs or small groups to practice speaking. <u>Draw Yourself Doing Your Hobby</u> (45 minutes) 1. Students create a visual self-portrait showing themselves engaging in a hobby. 2. Students draw a self-portrait or a symbolic picture that represents themselves. 3. Encourage creativity: realistic, cartoon, or symbolic style.	- A symbolic picture - Students’ artwork - Paper, pencils, colored markers, drawing paper, colored pencils, markers, crayons	- To enhance students’ speaking and storytelling skills in English through visual art. - To encourage creative self-expression by connecting personal experiences with illustrations. - To develop vocabulary and sentence structures related to holidays and experiences. - Students present their pictures and explore their self-expression or their English-speaking skill abilities.

Session / Theme	Activities (Art-based learning)	Tasks, Evidence and Activities	Materials	Objectives
		4. Students talk to a partner during the drawing about their ideas in English. <u>Guided Speaking</u> (30 minutes) 1. Students describe their self-portrait in English 2. Students prepare a short description in English of their artwork: colors, what it shows, why they chose certain elements. <u>Gallery Walk / Mini Presentations</u> (60 minutes) 1. Students present their self-portrait and description to the class. <u>Reflection Discussion</u> (60 minutes) 1. Teachers ask students about the activity, Prompts for speaking: •“How did drawing help you tell your story?” •“What challenges did you encounter while completing the task?” •“How does this activity help you express yourself in English?”		
Session 2 Holiday (4 hours)	Storytelling through Pictures	<u>Holiday Chat</u> (20 minutes) 1. Teacher asks: “What is your favorite holiday?” /	- a sequence of images - Paper, pencils, colored markers,	- To enhance students’ speaking and storytelling skills in English

Session / Theme	Activities (Art-based learning)	Tasks, Evidence and Activities	Materials	Objectives
		“What do you usually do during holidays?” 2. Students share short answers with a partner or in a small group. 3. Teacher writes key vocabulary on the board: vacation, travel, beach, festival, family, adventure, etc. <u>Holiday Story Mapping</u> (40 minutes) 1. Students choose a memorable holiday experience (real or imaginary). 2. Students Create a story map with these elements: - Characters (Who is in the story?) - Setting (Where?) - Events (What happened?) - Emotions (How did you feel?) 3. Students discuss their ideas with a partner in English. <u>Visual Storytelling</u> (60 minutes) 1. Students illustrate their holiday story in 3–5 panels or pictures. 2. Encourage creativity: comic-style, storyboard, or sequential illustrations.	drawing paper, colored pencils, markers, crayons	through visual art. - To encourage creative self-expression by connecting personal experiences with illustrations. - Students present their images and explore their self-expression or their English-speaking skill abilities.

Session / Theme	Activities (Art-based learning)	Tasks, Evidence and Activities	Materials	Objectives
		3. Students label important objects or characters in English (optional). <u>Oral Storytelling</u> (60 minutes) 1. Students narrate their holiday story to small groups or the class using their pictures. 2. Encourage: gestures, intonation, and eye contact. <u>Reflection Discussion</u> (60 minutes) 1. Teachers ask students about the activity, Prompts for speaking: •“How did drawing help you tell your story?” •“What challenges did you encounter while completing the task?” •“How does this activity help you express yourself in English?”		
Session 3 Favorite dishes (5 hours)	Role Play and Drama Based on Artwork	<u>Food Talk</u> (20 minutes) 1. Teacher asks: “What is your favorite dish?” / “How do you feel when you eat it?” 2. Students share answers with a partner or small group. 3. Teacher writes key food-related vocabulary on the	- artwork - Paper, pencils, colored markers, drawing paper, colored pencils, markers, crayons	- To develop students’ speaking and communication skills in English through art-based drama and role play. - To encourage creative self-expression by

Session / Theme	Activities (Art-based learning)	Tasks, Evidence and Activities	Materials	Objectives
		board: ingredients, taste (sweet, sour, spicy), cook, serve, restaurant, menu, etc. <u>Draw Your Favorite Dish</u> (60 minutes) 1. Students create artwork for their favorite dish. 2. Students include details like ingredients, presentations, and environment (e.g., home, restaurant). <u>Drama Planning</u> (40 minutes) 1. Students create a short role play scenario based on their artwork. 2. Students Use simple English sentences. 3. Students practice in pairs or small groups. <u>Rehearsing Scenes</u> (60 minutes) 1. Students rehearse their mini dramas using gestures, expressions, and props (optional: real or paper plates, utensils). 2. Teacher circulates to support pronunciation, sentence structures, and stage directions. 3. Students practice with a partner.		connecting favorite dishes with visual art. -Students present their role-play and explore their self-expression or their English-speaking skill abilities.

Session / Theme	Activities (Art-based learning)	Tasks, Evidence and Activities	Materials	Objectives
		<u>Present Role Plays/Drama</u> (60 minutes) 1. Students perform their role play to the class. <u>Reflection Discussion</u> (60 minutes) 1. Teachers ask students about the activity, Prompts for speaking: •“Which part of your role play was the most fun?” •“How did your artwork help you in drama?” •“What challenges did you encounter while completing the task?” •“How does this activity help you express yourself in English?”		
Session 4 Environment (5 hours)	Photo / Digital Art Narratives	<u>Environment Chat</u> (20 minutes) 1. Teacher asks: “What do you like about nature?” / “What environmental problems do you know?” 2. Students share answers in pairs or small groups. 3. Teacher writes key vocabulary on the board: pollution, recycle, trees, river, clean, protect, animal, climate, etc. <u>Environmental Story Mapping</u> (40 minutes)	- Photos or digital images - Paper, pencils, colored markers, drawing paper, colored pencils, markers, crayons	- To enhance students’ speaking and storytelling skills in English through photo or digital art narratives. - To encourage creative self-expression about environmental issues or nature -Students share their narratives orally with classmates and

Session / Theme	Activities (Art-based learning)	Tasks, Evidence and Activities	Materials	Objectives
		1. Students choose an environmental topic or a nature scene. Examples: cleaning a park, planting trees, protecting animals, or a memorable experience in nature. 2. Students Create a story map with: • Characters (people, animals) • Setting (forest, river, city) • Problem or event (pollution, conservation activity) • Solution or message (recycling, planting trees, caring for animals) 3. Students discuss their ideas with a partner in English. <u>Visual Storytelling</u> (60 minutes) 1. Students create a photo series or digital art illustrating their environmental story. • Options: take photos with a camera/phone, draw digitally, or combine photos and drawings. 2. Students include captions or labels in English for clarity.		explore their self-expression or their English-speaking skill abilities.

Session / Theme	Activities (Art-based learning)	Tasks, Evidence and Activities	Materials	Objectives
		<u>Narrative Writing</u> (60 minutes) 1. Students write short sentences or paragraphs describing each part of their visual story. 2. Students practice reading captions aloud to a partner <u>Oral Storytelling</u> (60 minutes) 1. Students present their photo/digital art narrative to the class. <u>Reflection Discussion</u> (60 minutes) 1. Teachers ask students about the activity, Prompts for speaking: •“Which part of your story was most meaningful?” •“How did creating visual art help you tell your story?” •“What challenges did you encounter while completing the task?” •“How does this activity help you express yourself in English?”		

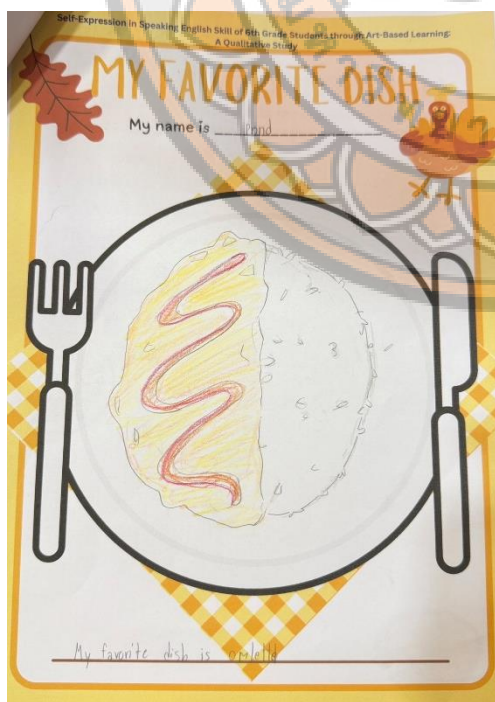
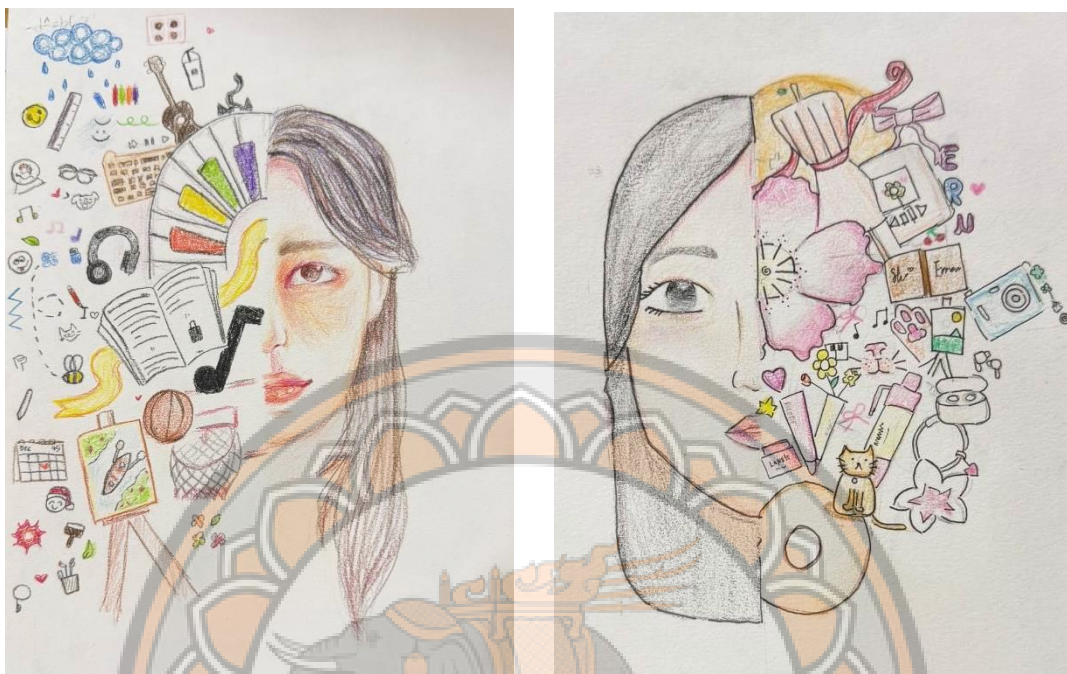
2. Reflection and Feedback in Art-based Learning

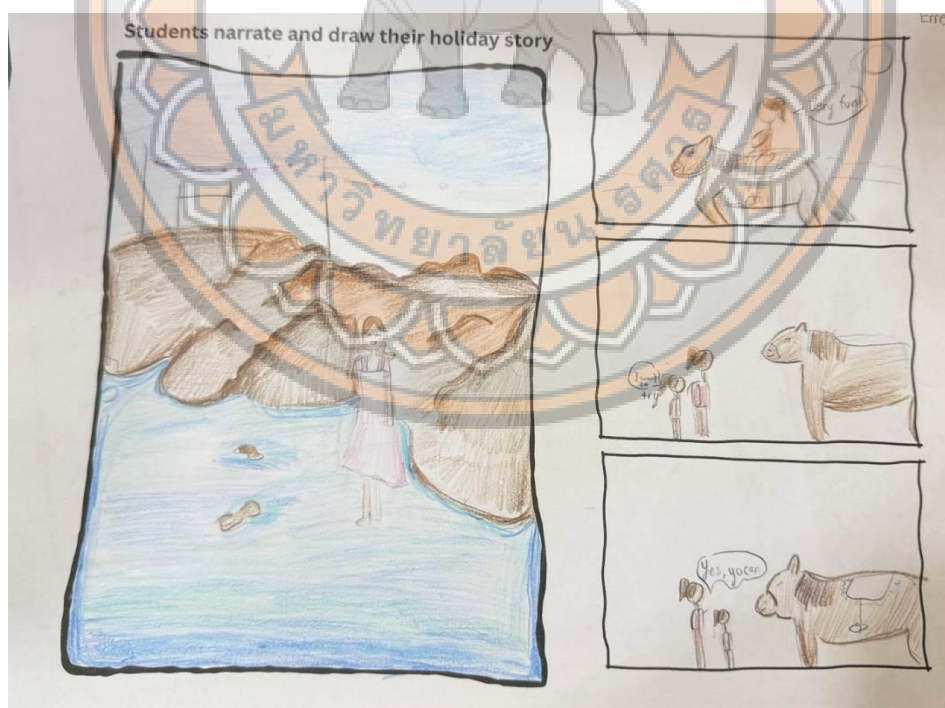
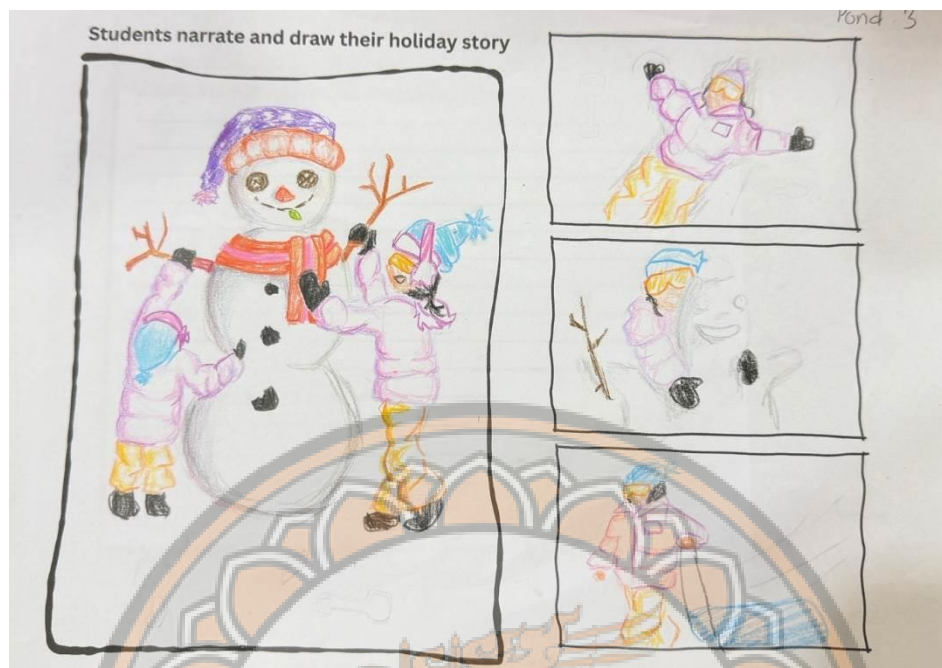
Session / Theme	Activities (Art-based learning)	Tasks, Evidence and Activities	Materials	Objectives
(1 hours)	Reflection and Feedback	1. Students listen/observe peer presentations. 2. Use a speaking rubric to provide feedback: what was strong (fluency, expressiveness, vocabulary), what might improve. 3. Students write or write a reflective journal entry focusing on how they felt expressing themselves, what they found difficult or easy, and what they want to improve.	Teacher Questions for Reflection and Feedback 1. What challenges did you encounter while completing the task? 2. How confident do you feel about expressing yourself in English after this activity? 3. What new skills or knowledge did you gain from this activity? 4. How has this experience influenced your approach to learning English? 5. In what ways do you think you have improved	Students will be encouraged to reflect on their own learning experiences, challenges faced, and strategies they found effective.

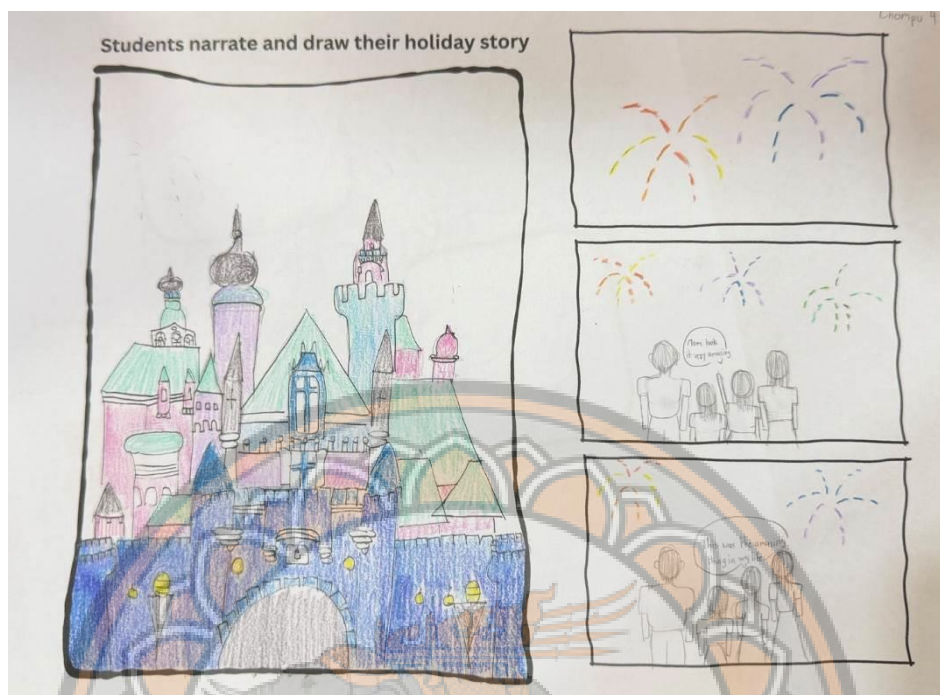
Session / Theme	Activities (Art-based learning)	Tasks, Evidence and Activities	Materials	Objectives
			speaking skill through this activity?	



APPENDIX C







APPENDIX D

Overview of themes, sub themes and quotation of participants

Research Question	Themes	Sub themes	Quotation of participants (Total 10 students)
Research Question One	Experiences	Communication	“I feel more confident in speaking English.” (5)
		Relationship	“I feel confident and fun to English with friend.” (8)
	Challenges	Limitation of time	“Time to do activities.” (8)
		Shyness	“My confident to speak.” (2)
	Positive emotions	Enjoyment	“I enjoy learning English though art.” (2)
			“I feel enjoy and relax.” (4)
Clam		“I enjoy learning English more.” (6)	
		“Hobbies activity helps me feel more clam.” (2)	
Research Question Two		“Art activity helps me feel relax.” (1)	
	Relaxing	“It makes learning English more fun and less stressful.” (7)	
		Commitment	“I can express my ideas better.” (1)
		“Positive thinking and enjoy activities” (4)	
	Identity achievement		“Art activities help me show who I am.” (5)
		Individuality	“Art activities help me tell stories I can’t tell (3)
		“Drawing activities help me feel more confident.” (3)	