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THE APPROACH FOR ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT TO DEVELOP SIRIWAT WITTAYA PRIMARY STUDENTS' ENGLISH COMPETENCY

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Abstract:

Today, one of the primary goals of many schools in non-native English-speaking countries is to improve their students' level of English Competency. Many different approaches are used for this goal. In this study, one of these approaches, Action Learning Management Development (ALMD) Approach has been examined to study the present state and desirable state in academic management approaches to develop Siriwat Wittaya Primary students' English Competency. A survey was conducted at Siriwat Wittaya School to determine the applicability of ALMD to increase English Competency of Primary students. The questionnaire was applied to 2 administrators and 12 foreign teachers who teach their subjects in English in Primary at Siriwat Wittaya School. The results were analyzed in SPSS program. Mean, standard deviation and PNI analyzes were performed for each stage in the ALMD both for the present state and the desirable state. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the writing skills' priority need were high. According to the results of the analysis and the feedback from the teachers, it was revealed that some changes should be made in the ALMD approach. Because of this need, Project-Based Development (PBD) approach has been developed. The proposed PBD Approach consisted of 5 stages; need analysis (analyze and present problems), projects (set and agree on mutual goals), action plan (set joint diagnosis strategies and environment), action (develop and implement joint action plans) and evaluation (examine the results of action taken, revise strategies and leave participants self-supporting). There are some features that are not found in ALMD such as need prioritization and dynamic development. As a further study, the approach is planned to be tested with wide application through broad participation of Primary foreign teachers.

Keywords: Academic Management Approach; Action Learning Management Development; English Competency; Project-Based Development.

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1. Introduction

As stated in National Education Act (NEA) 1999, education means the learning process for the growth of individuals and society by transferring knowledge and cultural continuity. Academic progress of one's knowledge inherits from the environment, society, and other learning and supporting factors which make everyone to learn continuously throughout life (Thailand -

National Education Act, 1999). Lifelong education is very important for Thai people to develop themselves individually and transferring Thai society into a learning one. While progressing fully to one's potential, it is also important to keep the unique cultural identity which makes Thais so special and it is also the reason Thai survived throughout the history.

Educational management must develop Thai people into a complete human being, including the mind, the intellect, the knowledge and the morality. The ethics and the culture of coexistence with others lead Thai people to live happily (Thailand - National Education Act, 1999). One reason, and the most important, for educating people, it has to make pupils happy individuals in life. At schools, students study in the classrooms with friends from different backgrounds and they learn to live together peacefully.

Thailand emphasizes using language correctly. The knowledge and skills to work and maintain a happy life (Thailand - National Education Act, 1999), especially living in a globalized world. The world is like a small village and the medium of communication is English. Thus, we need to teach our pupils good English skills so that they should be able to communicate fluently in English with great confidence.

Thai students spend twelve years studying English in primary and secondary schools, but the results are questionable. When compared to people in neighboring countries, Thais' English proficiency is relatively low. The 2010 Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) showed that Thailand ranked 116th out of 163 countries (Noom-ura, 2013). The Netherlands topped the list with an average score of 100 out of 120, followed by Denmark and Singapore with the average scores of 99 and 98 respectively. The international average score was 80 but the Thai average score was 75, which was a little higher than the average scores of Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Myanmar, but was trailing far behind other ASEAN countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. On the 2011 report, the Thai average score was still the same, 75 (Test and Score Data Summary for TOEFL, 2011-2012) (Noom-ura, 2013).

Upon examining the English-language classes, many researchers pointed to a few main factors contributing to the failure of English-language teaching-and-learning: unqualified and poorly-trained teachers, poorly-motivated students, learners of mixed abilities in overly large classes, and rare opportunities for student exposure to English out of the classroom (Dhanasobhon, 2006).

The Act has made it possible for the public and private elementary schools and secondary schools to offer the IP (Integrated Program), EP (English Program) and MINI EP programs never before officially and legally allowed to do so. Having more opportunity and time to expose to the language in class and with native speakers, children who attend these programs will hopefully have higher proficiency in English. Despite complaints about the quality of native speaker teachers in some schools, educators still believe that there are more advantages than disadvantages for having these programs. Parents are normally satisfied with the fluency of their children even it costs them more. Supported by the international programs in many universities in Thailand these IP and EP programs have become more and more popular (Dhanasobhon, 2006).

Today, 2019, the EP schools are still very popular because the need for fluency in English still exists. Running an EP school in Bangkok with qualified and trained teachers and motivated students, our program gives opportunities students to expose themselves to English within school premises, not only in classrooms but also outside the classroom.

Communication is one of 8 Cs of 21st Century Skills. So, students need to have strong communication skills to survive in 21st Century. With the world becoming a small village, everyone needs to communicate with one another using English. School Uniqueness for SiriwatWittaya School states that students are able to use English fluently for communication in their daily lives. Students at all levels learn and practice English with native speakers through our school environment. As a result, students can use English to communicate with foreigners fluently. However, after listening to some English teachers of Primary section, they revealed that some students still have problems in English competency referring to MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) results where students scored lower in English than the average.

Academic management is a significant task that could assure everything in place, therefore, administrators and teachers can do their job to the best of their capabilities, with the lowest pressure and difficulties at schools. It also facilitates performance of all parts, who have responsibilities in teaching and learning, to be highly productive.

Because of the aforementioned reasons, the researcher is going to study the papers, concepts, theories and research related to academic management that play the most important role in boosting students' language competency. Researcher would like to study approaches for academic management to develop SiriwatWittaya Primary students' English Competency.

1.1. Research objectives

1) To study the present state and desirable state in academic management approaches to develop SiriwatWittaya Primary students' English Competency.
2) To propose the appropriate academic management approach to develop SiriwatWittaya Primary students' English Competency.

1.2. Literature Review

Langer (2000) states that teachers' professional lives like coordination among teachers, commitment to teaching and caring about students have positive effects in students' writing and reading, they did better in their language skills.

Moon (2005) says that students learn language well when they attempt to use it to communicate. When they communicate, they might make mistakes which is a sign of active learning. These mistakes give us evidence that children of both first and second language learners are not only imitating what they hear like parrots, but they are trying to understand how language system works.

Cowdray (2013) talks about education in primary schools that it should be fun, satisfying and rewarding. So, teachers should focus on important elements of the subject when they make

classroom resources, supervise activities and deliver lessons to students, pinpoint objectives for students, make helpful assessments of children's learning, and keep records of their achievements, progress and difficulties, be confident that they are making a difference in students' learning and involve in PLC with other teachers in selecting objectives, activities and delivering exciting lessons.

Goeller (2018) shows how affective curriculum, instruction and assessment work can help students overcome school, career and life challenges. With clear steps, school leaders can improve their institutions and keep a culture of ongoing and collaborative learning. School leaders can bring students, teachers and parents around an essential focus to help students to do better at schools and get ready for life.

According to Casanovas (2005), academic management allows the management of curricula, student enrollment, distribution of curricula and assessment.

For Juston (2012), academic management deals with the strictness of curriculum, pedagogy, and faculty rules and regulations. They may even do the job of certification, assessment, and requests.

Bentley University (2019), defines academic management as being responsible for overall strategy, administration, and management of academic programs and services.

According to Thorpe (1990), managers experience "learning how to learn" through Action Learning Management Development's six stages;
1) entry (analyze and present problems)
2) contracting (participate in setting mutual goals and agree on mutual goals)
3) diagnosis (setting joint diagnosis strategies and setting environment to support learning)
4) action (joint action plans developed and implemented)
5) evaluation (examine the results of action taken and revise strategies)
6) withdrawal (participants left self-supporting)

2. Materials and Methods

- This study is quantitative descriptive research (with questionnaire and open-ended questions).
- Step 1. Determining the present state and desirable state in academic management approach to develop SiriwatWittaya Primary students' English Competency. The informants are two administrators and twelve Primary foreign teachers at SiriwatWittaya School English Program in Bangkok. The Instruments for collecting data is a questionnaire. Data Analysis: Mean, Percentage, Average ($\bar{x}$), Standard Deviation (S.D.), Content Analysis
- Step 2. Proposing the appropriate academic management approach to develop SiriwatWittaya Primary students' English Competency. The informants are an academician or expert of academic management, an academician or expert of English Competency, and the Director of SiriwatWittaya School. Data Analysis: Average ($\bar{x}$), Standard Deviation (S.D.), Modified Priority Needs Index: PNIModified

3. Results and Discussions

The present state and the desirable state results of the questionnaire are shown in Table 1. Questionnaires were formed from the tasks in 6 stages of ALMD approach.

Table 1: Survey results

No	Questions	Skills	Present State		Desirable State	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Do you analyze problems of students' English Competencies in the following 4 skills to the management?	listening	3.36	0.84	4.57	0.51
		speaking	3.43	0.94	4.50	0.65
		reading	3.29	0.91	4.71	0.47
		writing	2.93	0.92	4.57	0.65
2	Do you present problems of students' English Competencies in the following 4 skills to the management?	listening	3.14	1.17	4.43	0.65
		speaking	3.29	1.07	4.43	0.51
		reading	3.14	1.03	4.50	0.52
		writing	3.00	1.11	4.36	0.63
3	Do you participate in setting mutual goals to develop English Competencies in the following 4 skills?	listening	3.64	0.84	4.64	0.50
		speaking	3.57	0.94	4.57	0.51
		reading	3.79	0.80	4.64	0.50
		writing	3.43	0.94	4.43	0.51
4	Do you agree on mutual goals to develop English Competencies in the following 4 skills?	listening	3.86	1.10	4.64	0.50
		speaking	3.86	0.95	4.64	0.50
		reading	4.00	0.78	4.71	0.47
		writing	3.57	1.09	4.43	0.76
5	Do you set diagnosis strategies to develop English Competencies in the following 4 skills?	listening	3.57	1.16	4.64	0.50
		speaking	3.57	1.02	4.64	0.50
		reading	3.79	0.98	4.71	0.47
		writing	3.36	0.93	4.50	0.52
6	Do you set environment to support English Competencies in the following 4 skills?	listening	3.93	1.14	4.71	0.47
		speaking	3.93	1.21	4.71	0.47
		reading	4.07	1.07	4.79	0.43
		writing	3.79	1.05	4.64	0.50
7	Do you develop action plans according to diagnosis strategies to develop English Competencies in the following 4 skills?	listening	3.79	0.89	4.93	0.27
		speaking	3.71	0.99	4.79	0.43
		reading	3.86	0.86	4.93	0.27
		writing	3.71	0.83	4.79	0.43
8	Do you implement action plans to develop English Competencies in the following 4 skills?	listening	3.79	0.98	4.79	0.43
		speaking	4.00	0.96	4.79	0.43
		reading	3.93	0.83	4.79	0.43
		writing	3.71	0.83	4.71	0.47
9	Do you examine the results of action plans on students' English Competencies in the following 4 skills?	listening	3.57	1.40	4.57	0.51
		speaking	3.86	1.23	4.64	0.50
		reading	3.93	1.07	4.71	0.47
		writing	3.71	1.20	4.57	0.51
10	Do you revise diagnosis strategies	listening	3.50	1.23	4.57	0.51

	according to the results of action plans on students' English Competencies in the following 4 skills?	speaking	3.43	1.16	4.57	0.51
		reading	3.64	1.15	4.64	0.50
		writing	3.29	1.27	4.50	0.65
11	Are you left continuously self-supporting to develop students' English Competencies in the following 4 skills?	listening	3.86	1.17	4.86	0.36
		speaking	4.07	1.07	4.86	0.36
		reading	3.86	1.10	4.79	0.43
		writing	3.71	1.33	4.71	0.47

When the results in Table 1 are grouped by skills, the following Table 2 is obtained:

PNI is a computational method designed to prioritize needs.

The PNI is calculated as follows.
PNI = (Desirable State Point − Present State Point) / Present State Point

Table 2: PNI Analysis by Skills

Skills	Present State		Desirable State		PNI$_{modified}$	Rank
	$\dot{x}$	SD	$\dot{x}$	SD		
Listening	3.64	0.24	4.67	0.14	0.283	2
Speaking	3.7	0.26	4.65	0.12	0.257	4
Reading	3.75	0.29	4.72	0.1	0.259	3
Writing	3.47	0.3	4.56	0.14	0.314	1

According to Table 2 results, skills states are as follow:
- The present state of the skill with the best score is `reading` skill. Then comes the following: speaking, listening, writing. In terms of skills, the present state is high, which means that the teachers do most of the things about these skills in the present state. The teachers stated that they have done the least at listening and writing skills.
- The highest skill in desirable state is `reading` skill. Then comes the following: listening, speaking, writing. The high level of the desirable state means that the teachers have a high level of targeting of these skills. Teachers have aimed the most at reading skills.
- The highest PNI skill score is `writing`. Then comes the following: `listening', 'reading', 'speaking`. The higher the PNI score, the higher the priority of these skills. The highest priority is `writing skills.

3.1. New Approach: Project-Based Development (PBD)

The base of the PBD is the ALMD approach. Because ALMD recommends skill development by taking action. The ALMD approach for the development of talents is very adaptable to real life. It is inevitable to use the ALMD approach since PBD is also aimed at skill development.

However, as a result of the survey results and teacher feedback about the ALMD approach, some deficiencies were identified in this approach. Some of these are:
- The number of stages and the requirements for each stage is high.
- In order for a stage to start, the previous stage must be completed. Any error in any stage has a direct effect on all stages.

- The need for prioritizing the stages or skills is not foreseen. In fact, as a result of the analysis, it was found that the normal ordering of the stages and the priority ordering of the needs were different. For example, the second stage of the contracting stage according to the priority of the order degree is 5. Likewise, the prioritization of the English skills is different.
- Stages are static. Each stage and the steps to be taken in these stages have been determined. It is not suitable for modification and flexibility.
- Therefore, ALMD also needed to be revised with new techniques. In this context, regarding ALMD approach; The steps were simplified, made flexible-dynamic, prioritized the need, roles-methods-techniques were updated. In this way, the PBD approach was developed.

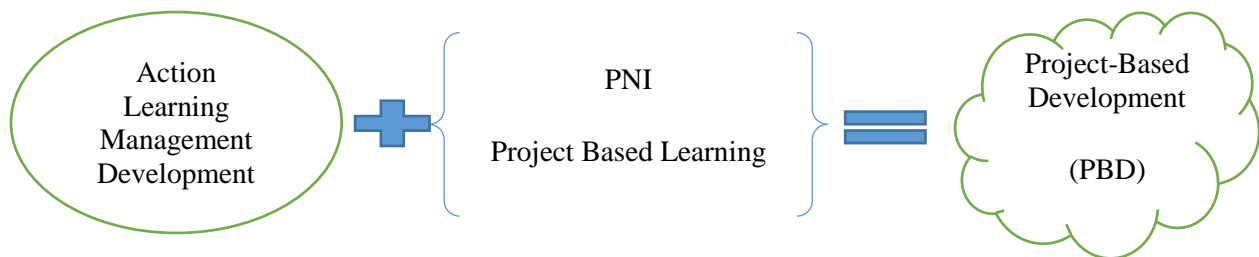The model of the new approach, Project-Based Development (PBD), is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Process of development of Project-Based Development (PBD)

3.2. PBD Stages

The corresponding stages in the PBD approach compared to the ALMD approach are shown in Table 4.

Table 3: ALMD – PBD stages

ALMD Approach	PBD Approach
Stage_1 Entry: Analyze and present problem	Need Analysis
Stage_2 Contracting: Setting and agree on mutual goals	Projects
Stage_3 Diagnosis: Setting diagnosis strategies and environment	Action Plan
Stage_4 Action:	Action
Stage_5 Evaluation: Examine the results of action and revise strategies	Evaluation
Stage_6: Withdrawal: Left self-supporting	

According to the Table 3:
- The PBD approach basically consists of only 5 steps.
- In PBD, the stages are not sequential. To start a stage, the previous stage does not have to be completed.
- Stages are in continuous development.
- The stages are not static. The number of stages can be increased and decreased according to the needs.
- The PBD approach is an approach to adapt to all kinds of new technologies.

- There is a continuous need analysis in the PBD approach. In the planning to be made, the priority of the needs obtained as a result of the analysis is of great importance. According to the results obtained from the PNI analysis in this study, since the writing skills and the entry stage had higher priority, the management first made planning and action related to them. Especially when there is a high number of needs, the importance of PNI analysis becomes more evident.

3.3. The PBD Approach

The PBD approach is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Project-Based Development (PBD) Approach

PBD Approach consists of 5 stages.
- Need Analysis: needs analysis (PNI) is done, projects and needs priorities are decided.
- Projects: starting from the most priority project, the project objectives are decided.
- Action Plan: action plan is prepared for the projects chosen.
- Action: plans are implemented.
- Evaluation: results are evaluated. The results of the evaluation is re-examined in Need Analysis stage and the projects are decided again.

In the study, the projects which are decided as a result of Need Analysis according to the need priority are shown in Figure 3:
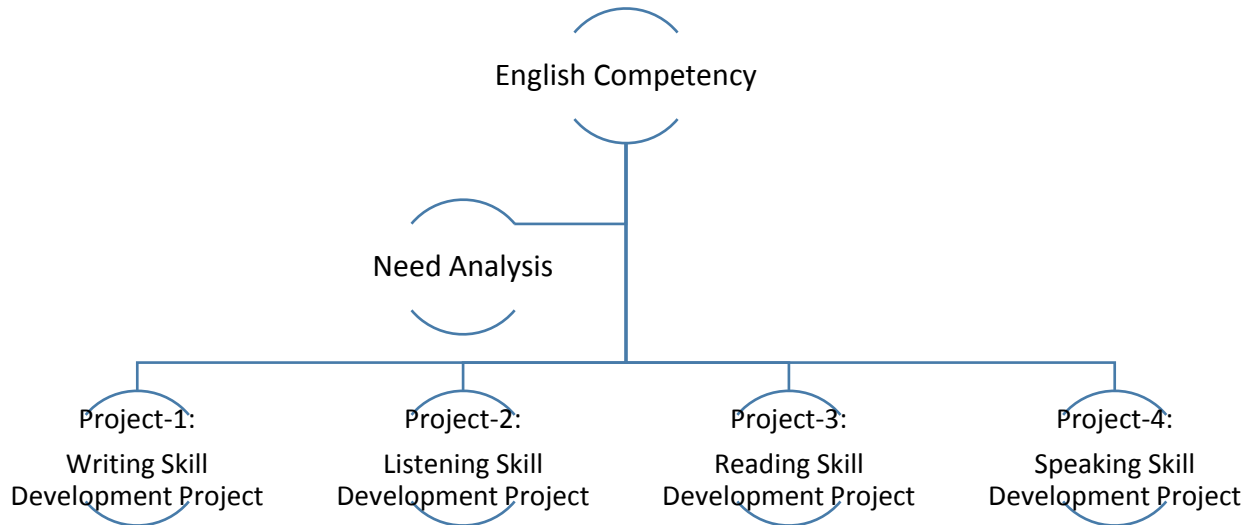
Figure 3: Projects order by Priority Needs

According to Figure 3, the most important projects are the development of Writing and Listening skills. These projects will be handled with priority and plans will be made in detail. Then the action will be taken according to the planning and the results will be evaluated.

Within the scope of this study, an action plan related to the writing skills development project, which is the first project in terms of need, has been prepared but the implementation and testing stages have not been carried out yet. The action plan for the first project includes the following actions:

- Action-1. Arrangement of a seminar for teachers by the university professors on `writing skills development`.
- Action-2. Writing skills development related materials (presentation, article, TED talk, video, etc.) collected and communicated to the teachers.
- Action-3. Arrangement of a workshop on `Writing skills development`.
- Action-4. Planning a story writing competition for students at the school and awarding the winners.
- Action-5. Measurement of writing skills scores at specific intervals

The next stage is the implementation of these actions to measure the results. The Action Plan implementation steps are repeated until the results reach the targeted level.

More than one action at a time can be implemented at the same time. Similarly, more than one Project can be handled at a time.

3.4. Comparison of ALMD and PBD

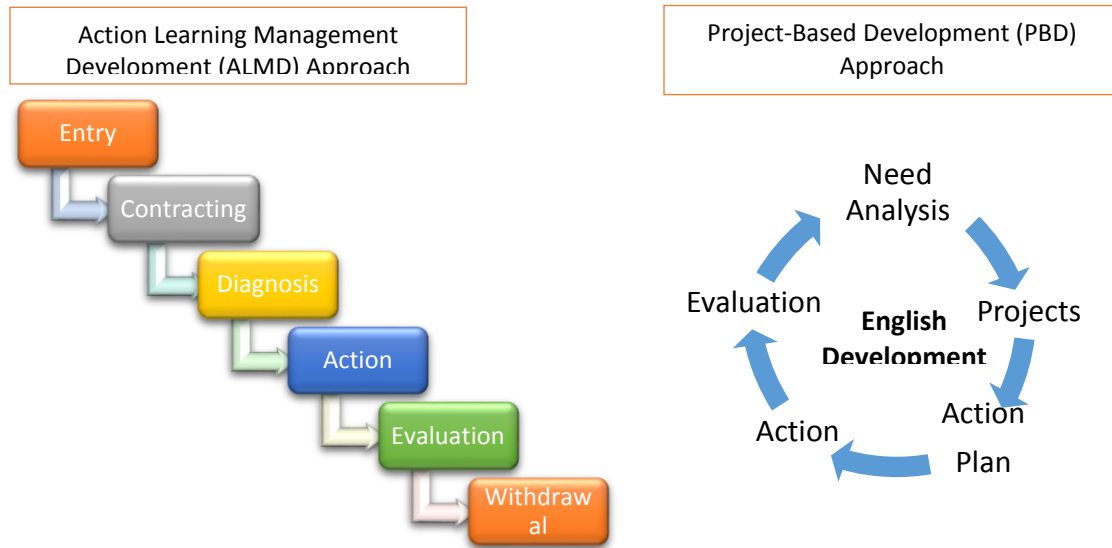The comparison of ALMD and PBD is shown in Figure 4 and Table 4.

Figure 4: Comparison of ALMD and PBD

Table 4: Comparison of ALMD and PBD approaches

Criteria	ALMD	PBD
Need prioritization (PNI$_{modified}$)	no	yes
Action-activity based	yes	yes
Skill-based	yes	yes
Stages	6	5
Stages' order	static	dynamic
Flexibility	no	yes
Adapt to new trends	no	yes

As can be seen in Figure 4 and Table 4;
- ALMD has no prioritization but PBD has.
- There is no project approach in ALMD but PBD treats all skills/needs as separate projects.
- ALMD does not have a cycle, there is a one-direction progress but there's a continuous cycle in PBD.

ALMD uses classical approaches but PBD uses modern approaches such as project-based learning.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of this research is to study the present state and desirable state in academic management approaches and to propose the appropriate academic management approach to develop SiriwatWittaya Primary students' English Competency in four skills; listening speaking, reading and writing. The six cycle of Action Learning Management Development, is used and suggested to develop students' English Competency, which consists of entry (analyze and present problems), contracting (participate in setting mutual goals and agree on mutual goals), diagnosis

(setting joint diagnosis strategies and setting environment to support learning), action (joint action plans developed and implemented), evaluation (examine the results of action taken and revise strategies), withdrawal (participants left self-supporting). Research processes are collecting data by questionnaire and analyzing data by using SPSS and Excel. According to the results of the PNI analysis, the procedures that should be performed in the Entry stage should be given the priority. Subsequently, the following steps should be taken in this order: 2) Evaluation, 3) Action, 4) Diagnosis, 5) Contracting, 6) Withdrawal. According to the results of the PNI analysis, the actions that should be performed regarding the `writing skills` should be given the priority. Then, in order, the listening, reading and speaking skills should be given the priority.

In this study, the PBD approach, which was developed in order to eliminate the identified deficiencies of ALMD, is explained.

The shortcomings in the ALMD approach, the lack of prioritization of the need, being the static (unchanging) and the lack of prioritization have been eliminated in the developed PBD approach. The stages have been simplified, made dynamic and the need analysis stage has been added. Since the PBD approach is in the process of implementation, it is not clear how much it can affect the English success of the Primary students. However, as a further study, it is planned to measure the success of students in Primary after using PBD approach. Also it is aimed to measure the effect of this proposed approach on the four English language skills of the students in Primary of Siriwat Wittaya School in the next stage. The results of this research will be useful for developing academic management to improve Primary students' English Competency in four skills.

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