

A STUDY OF ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS OF BACHELOR'S DEGREE MYANMAR STUDENTS AT THE FACULTY OF BUDDHISM, MAHACHULALONGKORNRAJAVIDYALAYA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate and enhance the English speaking skills of bachelor's degree Myanmar students at the Faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalong-kornrajavidyalaya University. Here are the Two main objectives 1) To study the English-speaking skills of Bachelor's Degree Myanmar students at the Faculty of Buddhism in Mahachulalong-kornrajavidyalaya University and 2) To develop the English-speaking skills of Bachelor's Degree Myanmar students at the Faculty of Buddhism in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. In this research use a mixed-methods approach, the study included in-depth interviews with 10 key informants 3 lecturers and 7 students along with a questionnaire administered to 133 students. Students excelled in seeking speaking partners and using online media, while listening to teachers and media significantly aided their learning. Age and social status impacted proficiency, but gender, ethnicity, and prior learning experiences did not show significant differences. The study underscored the importance of mastering English for personal and professional development, facilitating effective global communication and cultural engagement. It is recommended that instructors leverage technology to create personalized learning experiences, incorporating immersive activities like role-playing and virtual debates to foster fluency and confidence in practical communication.

Keywords: English Speaking Skills, Bachelor's Myanmar Students, Faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Introduction

English is widely recognized as the global lingua franca, playing a central role in international communication, business, education, and diplomacy. Its widespread use across continents enables speakers of different native languages to interact effectively in academic and professional settings. For countries like Myanmar, developing English proficiency is essential for integration into global networks and for accessing a broader range of knowledge and opportunities. As Crystal (2003) notes in English as a Global Language, the dominance of English in international contexts has made it “the world’s first genuinely global language”

(Crystal, D., 2003). This global status underscores the importance of prioritizing English-speaking skills within national education systems to equip students for future success.

English-speaking skills have become increasingly important for Myanmar students in today's globalized world, where English serves as a key medium for international communication, academic exchange, and career advancement. Education plays a central role in developing these skills by offering structured learning environments, exposure to authentic language use, and opportunities for active communication. In Myanmar, limited access to English-speaking contexts outside the classroom makes formal education a critical space for speaking practice and skill development. Through well-designed curricula and supportive instruction, students can gradually improve their pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. As Penny Ur (1996) emphasizes in her book *A Course in Language Teaching*, "Learners learn to speak by speaking," highlighting the value of consistent, meaningful speaking activities in language education. By investing in effective English-speaking instruction, Myanmar's education system can empower students to participate more fully in both national and international spheres.

The aim of study is to improve Myanmar students' ability to speak English well and to communicate with other, and other nations in the world. However, students have many kinds of problems with regard to studying English in general field in English speaking particular by the time they are studying at MCU university. Half of Myanmar students who are studying at MCU cannot speak English accurately and fluently but they are better than ever before. Krashen also has found that students cannot utter English accurately and fluently because they hesitated to practice speaking English in classroom or practice English speaking outside of the class room through their shyness and anxiety. (Krashen, S. D., 1982) So, Myanmar students are afraid of speaking foreign languages and also afraid of making mistakes. As foreign language learners at MCU, some of Myanmar students still have difficult problems in speaking English because they are shy, lack of confidence, untrained well English yet in the class, and use their mother tongue most of the time. Based on these difficulties there have been no any research works on an improvement of English speaking skill of the third-fourth years Bachelor's Degree Myanmar Students at the faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. Therefore, the researcher will have an attempt to use a scientific method to study an improvement of English speaking skill of the third-fourth years Bachelor's Degree Myanmar students at the faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the English-speaking skills of Bachelor's Degree Myanmar students at the Faculty of Buddhism in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

2. To develop the English-speaking skills of Bachelor's Degree Myanmar students at the Faculty of Buddhism in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

Research Methodology

This study follows a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative aspect involves a structured questionnaire aimed at assessing the English speaking skills of Bachelor's degree Myanmar students at the Faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. The population consists of 200 third- and fourth-year students, and a sample of 133 students was selected using Taro Yamane's formula. For the qualitative aspect, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven students and three lecturers, providing in-depth insights into the challenges and strategies for improving English speaking skills.

Research tools include a questionnaire with closed-ended questions, divided into sections on demographic information and strategies for improving English speaking skills, rated on a Likert scale. The reliability of the questionnaire was validated through a pilot test, targeting an alpha coefficient of 0.90 or higher. Interviews were guided by semi-structured questions, allowing flexibility for participants to elaborate on their experiences. Data collection involved administering the questionnaire to the selected sample and conducting audio-recorded interviews, with both quantitative and qualitative data analyzed using statistical methods and thematic analysis, respectively. Ethical considerations were addressed through obtaining approval from the Graduate School and ensuring informed consent from participants.

Research results

1. The problem of English speaking skills of Myanmar bachelor's degree Students at the Faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

Myanmar students face considerable challenges in developing English-speaking skills due to structural differences between the Burmese and English languages. Direct translation from Burmese often results in grammatical errors and unnatural sentence patterns, which hinder fluency and clarity. In addition, the influence of the native Burmese accent affects pronunciation, stress, and intonation, making it difficult for listeners to fully understand the speaker. These linguistic and accent-related barriers are compounded by limited access to English-speaking environments and lack of systematic speaking practice, reducing students' confidence and communicative effectiveness.

A study of the English-speaking skills of Myanmar bachelor's degree students at the Faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, based on 133

respondents, revealed that the average proficiency score was 4.53, classified as "excellent." Most participants were male (65.41%), aged 26-30 (33.08%), including monks, novices, and laypersons from different ethnic groups. Students performed well in finding speaking partners, using online media, and self-practicing. Factors such as age and social status significantly impacted proficiency, while gender, ethnicity, and learning experience did not show significant differences.

2. The solutions to develop English speaking skills of Myanmar bachelor's degree students at the Faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

The development of English-speaking skills among Myanmar students is essential for enhancing their personal and professional advancement. Proficiency in spoken English enables access to global communication, academic resources, and broader career opportunities. To achieve this development, instructional strategies should incorporate technology and interactive methods such as role-playing, virtual debates, and real-time speaking practice. These immersive approaches provide immediate feedback, encourage active participation, and gradually build students' confidence and fluency in real-world communication contexts. Such targeted interventions are crucial for fostering sustained improvement in students' English-speaking abilities.

Discussion of Research Results

The result of the research is found that. Overall English-speaking skills overall that very good. It may be because Myanmar students have a good foundational knowledge of English grammar, which enables them to speak English at a very high level according to their foundational grammar knowledge. This is consistent with the research findings of Phra Weerayut Utamapañño (Sarawan) has a study the topic on A study of English Speaking Skills for Oral Presentation of the Bachelor of Arts Fourth-Year students. comprises objectives: 1) to study principles of oral presentation among students in English-speaking classes; 2) to study the problems of English speaking to improve oral presentations of Bachelor of Arts fourth-year students in English of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University; and 3) to study the effective ways of solving the problem in English speaking of Bachelor of arts fourth-year students in English of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. The study is a mixed method between quantitative and qualitative ones in nature. The questionnaire is used for collecting quantitative data from 45 respondents and in-depth interview is used for collecting qualitative data from 5 key informants. Statistics including Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation (S.D) is used for analyzing quantitative data and a content analysis is used for analyzing qualitative data. (Phra Weerayut Utamapañño (Sarawan), 2017)

Findings found that a study of principles of oral presentation among students in English-speaking classes found that the MCU Bachelor of Arts fourth-year students' English speaking for oral presentation was generally high while considering each part in average the aspect of pronunciation was moderate, the aspects of vocabulary and English grammar were high, and the aspects of confidence and strategy use were moderate.

When considering each aspect, it was found that. Find a partner to practice speaking with that Excellence. It may be because Myanmar students have had good practice in speaking and listening to English, which allows them to converse with English-speaking counterparts at an excellent level. These research findings are consistent with the findings of Juarat Cherdchoopong has the study in the research topic on a Study of English Communication Problems in Listening and Speaking of Third-year Students Majoring in English at a Public University in Bangkok, intending to investigate the listening problems of English major students when communicating in English. To investigate the speaking problems of English major students when communicating in English. To investigate the factors contributing to English communication problems in listening and speaking. The respondents in this research were 64 third-year English major students who were studying at a public university in Bangkok. The instrument used for collecting the data was a closed- and open-ended questionnaire and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The findings of the research showed that the biggest problem with listening skills is students do not understand some idioms that foreigners use because of their lack of knowledge of the cultural background behind the English idioms, unfamiliar vocabulary in idioms, and not having been taught enough English idioms in classes. Moreover, the loss of self-confidence when students make mistakes and someone corrects their English is the most important speaking problem. Students found it difficult to improve their English speaking because of their fears about speaking. In terms of the factors contributing to English listening and speaking problems, anxiety was the most significant factor leading to ineffectiveness in listening and speaking. Students are nervous when speaking English in front of the class, which was rated as the most important problem. This research may help students improve their English listening and speaking weaknesses. In addition, lecturers can apply the findings and suggestions from the study to improve their English teaching and better understand the problems of students. (Juarat Cherdchoopong, 2021)

Myanmar students Use media from the internet that is excellent level. It may be because Myanmar students use the internet to study English, which enhances their knowledge and understanding of how to use online media to develop their skills. These research findings are consistent with the findings of Thasanee Keereesri research "Behavior in Using Social Media to Develop English Skills among Undergraduate Students of the Faculty of

Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Songkhla." The research aimed to compare the behavior in using social media to develop English skills between different majors among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Songkhla. The sample group consisted of 200 students from the Foreign Languages Department. Data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using basic statistics such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics, including F-test and t-test. The findings revealed that: (Thasanee Keereesri, 2019)

The majority of students exhibited behavior in using online media to develop their English skills at the highest level. Specifically, 87.5% and 84.0% of students communicated in English with international friends via Line, Email, or Facebook, respectively. When considering the behavior that students regularly engage in, the highest average was found in searching for English-related reports as assigned by their instructors.

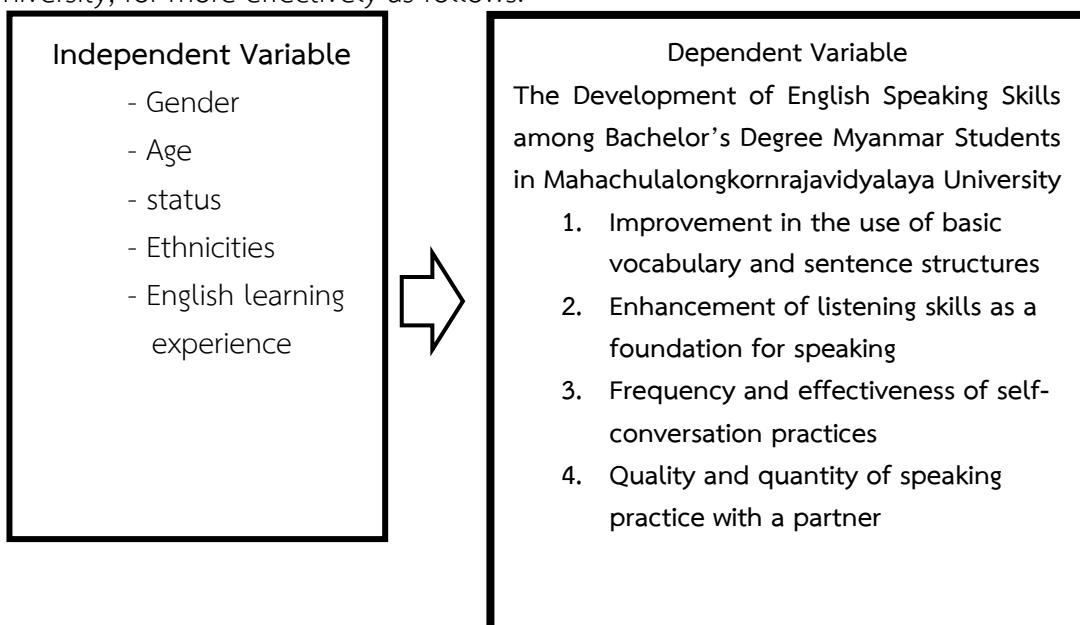
Practice basic vocabulary and sentences that are very good. It may be because Myanmar students have a foundation in learning English vocabulary and sentences through experiences and activities at the university, which has resulted in a very high level of language skills, as the research findings revealed. These findings are consistent with the research of Kanokwan Donkuanjao conducted research on "The Development of English Speaking Skills and Vocabulary Learning through Communicative Language Teaching Combined with YouTube Videos for Grade 12 Students." The objectives were to study the effectiveness of learning activities in developing English-speaking skills and vocabulary learning and to assess the English-speaking skills of students. The sample group consisted of Grade 6 students from Ban Khui Chueak Wittaya School, Kosum Phisai District, Maha Sarakham Province. The tools used for data collection included structured interviews and questionnaires. The data were analyzed using basic statistics such as percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The findings revealed that students had a very high level of English vocabulary knowledge from the activities, with 70% scoring an average of 4.70. Additionally, the students' communication skills in using English sentences were at the highest level, with an average score of 4.50. (Kanokwan Donkuanjao, 2022)

Practicing self-talk is highly beneficial. Myanmar students may have improved their English-speaking abilities by practicing on their own through various available media in their environment, which has led to their high level of proficiency, as shown in research findings. These findings align with the research conducted by Sawasaya Somnawattana on "The Development of Speaking Skills of Grade 10 Students through Collaborative Learning with Local Data." The study aimed to 1) compare the speaking abilities of Grade 10 students before and after collaborative learning with local data, and 2) explore students' opinions on this learning method. The sample consisted of 43 students from Grade 10/11 at Samut Prakan

School, selected through simple random sampling during the first semester of the 2021 academic year. Data were collected using questionnaires and English exercises and were analyzed using basic statistics, including percentages, mean, and standard deviation, as well as inferential statistics like t-test and F-test. The findings revealed that before the collaborative learning with local data, the average score was 2.68, while after the learning intervention, the average score increased to 4.02, showing a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level. In terms of content, reasoning, language use, fluency, time management, and personality, the results showed an improvement in content, with the average score increasing from 3.16 to 4.49 after the intervention, with a t-test value of 10.38. For personality, the average score after the intervention was 3.95. (Sawasaya Somnawattana, 2021)

Knowledge Gained from the Study

By using this figure, the researcher hopes to provide useful information for improving the speaking skills of Bachelor's Degree Myanmar students and for future studies on English language learning of Myanmar student in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, for more effectively as follows:



Students enhanced their basic vocabulary and sentence structure by engaging with speaking partners and utilizing online resources such as YouTube, with self-directed conversation further reinforcing these skills. Additionally, listening abilities developed through media exposure and teacher instruction played a critical role in improving pronunciation and overall speaking proficiency. Furthermore, regular self-conversation also contributed to increased confidence and fluency by providing a low-pressure environment for practice. Finally, consistent practice with speaking partners significantly strengthened communication

skills, particularly among students aged between 26-30 and monks, underscoring the value of interactive learning.

Suggestions of Research

1. Suggestions for Application

The researcher proposes the following suggestions to enhance the practical application of the research findings:

1.1 Integrating Practical Speaking Exercises: Educators should include speaking activities like role-playing, peer discussions, and debates in the curriculum. These interactive methods can improve students' confidence and fluency in English conversation.

1.2 Utilizing Multimedia Resources: The use of multimedia tools such as videos, podcasts, and language-learning apps can expose students to diverse accents and conversational contexts. These resources offer real-life practice, helping students improve both listening and speaking skills.

1.3 Creating a Supportive Learning Environment: Establishing a classroom atmosphere that encourages students to take risks and make mistakes in their language use without fear of judgment will build their confidence and promote active learning.

1.4 Customizing Instruction Based on Cultural Context: Tailoring the curriculum to reflect Myanmar students' cultural and religious backgrounds, particularly in the context of Buddhist studies, can enhance engagement and contextualize language learning.

1.5 Incorporating Technology-Assisted Learning Tools: Introducing technology-enhanced learning strategies such as speech recognition apps, virtual classrooms, and online discussions can supplement traditional methods and offer more opportunities for speaking practice.

2. Suggestions for Future Research

The researcher suggests the following areas for future research to extend the understanding of English language acquisition:

2.1 Examining Cultural Influence on Language Learning: Future research should focus

on how Myanmar students' cultural and religious experiences influence their English language acquisition, particularly in a Buddhist educational setting.

2.2 Investigating the Effectiveness of Various Teaching Methodologies: Research could

explore the impact of different pedagogical approaches, such as task-based learning or communicative language teaching, on improving English-speaking proficiency among bachelor's degree students.

2.3 Exploring the Role of Technology in Language Acquisition: Further studies could examine how the use of digital learning platforms and tools, such as AI-assisted language programs, enhances students' speaking skills and overall language proficiency.

2.4 Assessing Long-Term Retention of Language Skills: Conducting longitudinal studies

to monitor the retention of English speaking skills after graduation would provide valuable insights into the sustainability of language learning, as well as its effects on students' academic and career advancement.

2.5 Analyzing the Intersection of Language and Professional Development: Future research could explore how improved English language proficiency impacts students' professional opportunities and contributions to international Buddhist communities.

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