

A Study of Speaking Skills of Grade 10 Students at Government High School in Myittha Town of Myanmar

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the speaking skills of Grade 10 students at a government high school in Myittha Town, Myanmar. This research employed a documentary and qualitative approach, with data collected from two sources: interviews with five Grade 10 teachers and a review of textbooks, theses, academic journals, and related documents. Additional tools included interviews, focus group discussions, and tests. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, as well as pre-tests and post-tests.

The findings revealed multiple challenges hindering students' speaking skills. These included a lack of qualified English teachers, weaknesses in syllabus management, underutilization of educational resources, ineffective management of government scholarships, and students' limited understanding of traditional teaching methods. The study also identified difficulties faced by teachers in their daily teaching practices, which further impacted students' learning.

Analysis showed that both teachers' and students' attitudes played an important role in the classroom learning process and the broader educational system. To address these challenges, the study recommended enhancing teachers' academic qualifications, teaching effectiveness, and ability to integrate multimedia technology. Strengthening teacher training and adopting modern instructional methods were highlighted as key strategies to improve students' English-speaking skills.

This research contributes to understanding the current state of English teaching in Myanmar's government high schools and offers practical recommendations for improving language education.

Keywords: Speaking skills, Grade 10 students, English teaching, Government high school, Myanmar

Introduction

The English language has become the most widely spoken language in the world in the 20th and 21st centuries. It also becomes a second language in international



communication. The English language is a compulsory subject in university studies worldwide. Most universities worldwide have included English as one of their major subjects or the language of instruction. (D Nunan, 2003) Today, language plays a crucial role in effective communication across various social, political, economic, educational, and religious contexts. Human beings can easily understand the emotions, beliefs, and ideals of each other through language. Effective communication and mutual understanding of people in daily activities cannot be attained without language.

There are many languages in the world, but only a few languages, such as English, Chinese, Russian, Italian, and Spanish, are spoken by people as global languages in international forums. Among them, the English language has become more popular than other languages in global communication in the modern day. Over 60 nations in the world use English as an official language and have a dominant place in a further 20. It is also dominant in all six continents. (Thuy Nguyen, Nguyen, 2005)

Many books, newspapers, academic forums, science, airports, air traffic control, technology, medicine, diplomacy, international competition, music, and Advertisements around the world use the English language widely. Furthermore, over two-thirds of the world's scientists and three-quarters of the world's mail are written in the English language, and all the information in the world's electronic retrieval systems 80% is stored in English.

It can understand the importance of the English language in the world by seeing the above-mentioned scholars. For it is true because Facebook is international news. Furthermore, there are four skills in the English language. They are speaking, listening, writing, and reading. People in the world have to use these skills in communication in daily life. Among them, speaking is the most important in daily communication, such as economic, social, political, and religious dialogue and education affairs. People can exchange knowledge, ideas, wisdom, and beliefs through speaking. People cannot communicate without speaking.

As regards the importance of speaking in daily communication, Nurmala Yusni Fegriyanti said, “Every person needs to communicate with others through speaking. Speaking plays an important role in making social interactions with other people to gain information. Thus, every person must have good speaking skills. (Nurmala, Febriyanti, 2024.) It is very helpful for people if they can speak English very well with foreigners. Furthermore, it is more useful for educators and interpreters who can apply it in daily life. English is a tool for both native and non-native speakers because it is used for education purposes, career development, economics, and communication.

English is an important weapon of speakers in native and non-native speakers and is always used for academic purposes, career advancement or investments, and

traveling abroad easily. As we know, English communication is important in the world today because it is widely used in English as a tool of communication with other people. Learning a new language, usually one learn to listen first, then to speak, to read, and finally to write. To be an expert student should have good speaking skills.

Moreover, students often respond to the teacher only when called upon, and the learning atmosphere is individualistic. This mostly happens in class, even in the speaking class. The students only speak English when the teacher asks them or talks to them; in those circumstances, they speak in their mother tongue again. And the teachers often ask only one student, so it feels like an individualistic situation, and the other students will not say anything in English because they are not asked by the teachers. Furthermore, students do not get any chances either in the classroom or outside to speak English.

Objective of the Research

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the speaking skills of Grade 10 students at a government high school in Myittha Town, Myanmar
2. To find out the solutions to the speaking skills problems of Grade 10 students at the government high school in Myittha Town, Myanmar

Research Methods

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of teachers and students from the Faculty of Mathematics at government high schools in Myittha Town, Myanmar. A total of 70 participants were selected as the sample group. The respondents were given sufficient time to reflect and express their own ideas. Among them, five key English teachers from government high schools in Myittha Town were chosen as informants for in-depth interviews to provide qualitative insights. This methodological approach combined both quantitative and qualitative data collection to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Research Tools

Qualitative Method

The qualitative part of this study focused on in-depth interviews, which were identified as the most suitable tool for data collection. The researcher interviewed five experienced English teachers from government high schools in Myittha Town,

Myanmar. These teachers, who specialize in teaching speaking skills, provided valuable insights into classroom practices, challenges, and strategies for improving students' English proficiency.

Quantitative Method

The quantitative part employed structured questionnaires designed to assess the speaking skills of Grade 10 students at government high schools in Myittha Town. The questionnaires included items that measured students' attitudes, challenges, and levels of proficiency in English-speaking skills. The data collected from students were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, along with pre-tests and post-tests.

Research Findings

The findings of this study integrate both quantitative and qualitative results, offering a comprehensive view of the factors influencing students' speaking skills. Insights from teachers and students collectively highlight the existing problems and point toward practical solutions for enhancing English language education in Myanmar's high schools.

1: Personal information of the participants

This questionnaire involved the background of the personal information of the participants. Demographic details include male, female, gender, age, English subject, and academic year of the students.

2: A Study of English-Speaking Skills

This section is specifically intended to address the research questions of the study. The investigation focused on speaking skills and utilized a Five-Point Likert Scale to collect data from 70 students at government high schools in Myittha Town, Myanmar. The scale consisted of five response options: strongly agree, agree, moderate, disagree, and strongly disagree. The criteria are provided as follows;

Rating for the five-point Likert scale

Rating Score	Interpretation of the Score
5	Strongly agree
4	Agree
3	Moderately
2	Disagree
1	Strongly disagree

3: According to the questions used for asking the students about the ways to improve their study speaking skills.

This section is to find out the ways to improve speaking skills for Grade 10 students by studying speaking skills through authentic material that they have encountered. Therefore, this section is especially aimed at using the questionnaire, by using a Five-Point Likert Scale to measure the 70 Grade 10 students, consisting of five choices of the criteria provided as follows;

Accordingly, the mean value of data derived from each statement will be investigated as follows;

The results of the average means are classified into five levels:

- 1) The average 4.50-5.00 means Very high
- 2) The average of 3.50-4.49 means a high
- 3) The average 2.50-3.49 means medium
- 4) The average of 1.50-2.49 means low
- 5) The average of 1.50-1.49 means very low

4: Opinions & Suggestions about the Improvement of study speaking skills.

Data collection

The steps to collect data consist of two methods are as follows:

Primary Data

Primary data is collected from the target group of the previous research study, consisting of 70 students, by answering the questionnaires. The researcher makes up the questions, suggestions, and opinions about the problems of English speaking and the ways to solve them to improve the problems of English-speaking skills. Especially, in in-depth interviews, the researcher has emphasized those teachers in English subjects.

Secondary Data

Secondary data is collected from documentary surveys such as academic books, theses, and journals; these sources are used to support information in this study. The documentary survey is provided as guidelines to amplify the research.

Data analysis

The data analysis of the research study is to analyze the data from the respondents. The data from the completed questionnaires were collected and analyzed by computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Meanwhile, the data from the in-depth interviews were analyzed separately as follows.

Analysis of data from the questionnaires

To analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire, the following

- The results from questionnaires of the students' background information, such as gender, age, and grade, were calculated by frequency and percentage.
- The students' opinions on the problems of English speaking were analyzed by using the arithmetic mean and standard deviation.
- Cronbach's alpha was employed to ascertain the reliability of the response for the items that use a five-point Likert Scale.

Results

This research objective 1 described the summary finding result of objective one. Summarizing all the results by SPSS version, the table showed the mean, standard deviation, and level of 30 statements, which were the objective of this research. The average of means in the table or objective one was 112, and the SD was 26.1, and then the level of problems was very high because most respondents agreed with the statements of objective one.

The result of Objective 2 presented a summary finding the findings of Objective 2. Summarizing all the results by SPSS version, the table showed the mean, standard deviation, and level of 30 statements that are objective two of the study. The average of means in the table or objective two was 121.3, and the SD was .28.3, and then the level of providing way was very high because most of the respondents agreed with the statements of objective two.

Conclusion

This study investigated the challenges faced by Grade 10 students in developing English-speaking skills at a government high school in Myittha Town, Myanmar, and proposed practical strategies for improvement. A total of 70 students participated, with data collected through structured questionnaires and interviews. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS with descriptive measures such as percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

Findings showed that most respondents were female (54.29%), aged 19–21 years (51.43%), and had studied English for 5–7 years (45.71%). In terms of language use, over half (54.29%) reported speaking English daily, while others used it less frequently.

The analysis revealed that students experienced very high levels of difficulty in English-speaking skills ($\bar{X} = 112$, S.D. = 26.1). However, proposed solutions, such as

interactive learning strategies and improved teaching methods, were also rated at a very high level of effectiveness ($\bar{X} = 121.3$, S.D. = 28.3).

Overall, the study highlights the severity of students' speaking challenges while emphasizing the strong potential of targeted interventions to improve English-speaking proficiency.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight several important implications for addressing English-speaking problems among students. First, the need for enhanced training for educators is consistent with the research objective of improving teaching practices to better support students' communication skills. Professional development programs can provide teachers with modern methodologies and tools that cater to diverse learning needs. This aligns with Richards & Rodgers (2014), who emphasize that updated pedagogical approaches are crucial for effective language instruction.

Second, the study suggests that resource availability plays a significant role in facilitating language learning. Access to textbooks, digital resources, and language laboratories not only provides students with practice opportunities but also promotes self-directed learning. This finding supports Nunan's (2015) assertion that adequate learning resources are essential for developing communicative competence.

Third, the results underscore the importance of interactive learning environments, such as group discussions, language exchanges, and technology-integrated activities. These approaches encourage active participation and improve fluency, which corresponds with the communicative language teaching framework (Littlewood, 2018), where interaction is central to language development.

Fourth, the implementation of tailored support programs, including tutoring, language clubs, and peer mentoring, was found to be an effective way of assisting students who struggle with English speaking. This finding is in line with Topping's (2017) research on peer learning, which shows that collaborative approaches enhance both confidence and performance in second-language acquisition.

Finally, the establishment of regular assessment and feedback mechanisms is essential for students to monitor their progress and identify areas requiring improvement. According to Brown & Abeywickrama (2019), continuous assessment and formative feedback are key to fostering learner autonomy and promoting sustained language development.

Overall, these findings are consistent with the research objectives of identifying causes of English-speaking difficulties and proposing effective strategies for improvement. They also correspond with prior studies, thereby reinforcing the validity of the results and offering practical implications for educators and learners alike.

Suggestion

The purpose of the Suggestions. Based on the findings from our study on of Speaking Skills of Grade 10 Students at Government High Schools in Myittha Town of Myanmar, we have developed a series of targeted suggestions aimed at enhancing the overall learning experience. These recommendations are designed to address the challenges identified in the research and to foster a more effective and engaging language learning environment.

The framework for Improvement. The following section outlines key suggestions derived from our study on Speaking Skills of Grade 10 Students at Government High Schools in Myittha Town of Myanmar. Aimed at educators, administrators, and policymakers, these recommendations are intended to enhance curriculum design, instructional strategies, and student support services, thereby creating a more effective framework for language acquisition:

1)Enhanced Training for Educators: Provide professional development programs for teachers to equip them with modern teaching methodologies and tools that cater to diverse learning needs.

2)Resource Availability: Increase access to learning materials, including textbooks, digital resources, and language labs, to facilitate more engaging and effective learning experiences.

3) Implementing interactive and communicative teaching approaches such as group discussions, language exchanges, and technology-integrated activities is highly effective in boosting student engagement and improving speaking skills.

4)Tailored Support Programs: Develop support programs for students who may be struggling, including tutoring sessions, language clubs, or peer mentoring initiatives to encourage collaborative learning.

5)Regular Assessment and Feedback: Establish a system for regular assessments and constructive feedback, allowing students to track their progress and identify areas for improvement.

By addressing these areas, Government High Schools in Myittha Town of Myanmar can significantly enhance the English language learning experience for its

Grade 10 Students, preparing them for better opportunities in both local and global contexts.

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