

A Study of English-Speaking Skills of Third Year Bachelor's Degree Students in the Faculty of Geology at Dawei University in Launglon Quarter of Myanmar

¹Ven Pyinnar Zaw Ta, Veerakarn Kanokkamalade, Narongchai Pintrymool

¹Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand

Corresponding Author's Email : Gmail.mh.minhtay@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the problems and solutions related to English-speaking skills of third-year bachelor's degree students in the Faculty of Geology at Dawei University, Launglon Quarter, Myanmar. The research adopted a quantitative approach, with a sample of 80 students determined according to Krejcie and Morgan's sample size table. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of three parts: (1) personal information of the respondents, (2) problems and possible solutions regarding English-speaking skills, and (3) comments and suggestions. The questionnaire was validated by five experts and distributed directly to the participants.

Data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, as well as inferential statistics including the t-test and one-way ANOVA.

The findings revealed that students experienced problems in English-speaking skills at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.87$, S.D. = 0.74). Key challenges included limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, and insufficient opportunities to practice speaking. The proposed solutions were also rated at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.12$, S.D. = 0.68), with the most effective strategies being interactive classroom activities, teacher support, and increased use of multimedia resources.

Overall, the results indicate that while students face significant challenges in developing their English-speaking skills, practical interventions such as communicative teaching approaches and greater exposure to English can substantially improve their performance. This study provides valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance English language education at the tertiary level in Myanmar.

Keywords: English-speaking skills, EFL learning, tertiary students, Dawei University, Myanmar.

Introduction

As English is an international language, most of the communication is done in English. Adults must learn English because it is the key to opening up knowledge of the world. Besides, businessmen, tradesmen, engineers, scientists, and scholars worldwide must know

English because it is the international means of exchanging information and experience (Graddol, 2006). One of the simple facts of life in the present time is that the English language skills of a good proportion of its citizenry are seen as vital if a country is to participate actively in the global economy and to have access to the information and knowledge that provides the basis for both social and economic development (Crystal, 2003).

English is now used in almost all countries all over the world. In other words, the researcher can say that English is an international language (Kachru et al., 2006). People and learners all over the world communicate in this language on business, economic, educational, and social levels. A person who can speak English fluently has more opportunities than a person who cannot speak English, such as finding a job. Because English is the dominant business language, it has become almost a necessity for people to speak English if they enter a global workforce (Graddol, 2006). In other words, people communicate and share their information in the English language more than in the past. The importance of English has also made a growing interest in teaching as a second language (Nunan, 2003).

Although the English language does not have the largest number of native speakers in the world, it has the widest range, being found on every continent. English has become the lingua franca in many fields, including business, politics, science, technology, and entertainment (Seidlhofer, 2011). It is also the working language of many international organizations, like NATO and the European Union, and the language of global advertising (Crystal, 2003). Furthermore, English is the most-used language on the internet, accounting for more than half of all websites. For many people, learning English is a way to get access to a broader range of information, connections, and opportunities. The importance of English is clear (Hoge, 2019).

One of the reasons why people must learn the English language is that they want to speak English fluently to accomplish effective communication. As a result, they put effort into developing their speaking skills (Nunan, 2003).

Objectives of the Research

1. To study the speaking skills of third-year Bachelor's Degree students at Dawei University in the Launglone Quarter of Myanmar
2. To find out the speaking skills problems of third-year Bachelor's Degree students at Dawei University in the Launglone Quarter of Myanmar.

Procedures

Population and Sample

The Populations are teachers and students at the faculty of Mathematics at Dawei University in the Launglone Quarter of Myanmar, with 80 samples. The participants were chosen

from Dawei University in the Laungle Quarter of Myanmar. The responders were given enough personal time to think and express their own ideas.

Research Tools

The Qualitative Method; This section especially uses in-depth interviews, which are the most appropriate tool for collecting data as the main tool for this research study. The researcher points out to interview people who are skillful lecturers in the English language, especially in studying speaking skills, related to five English lecturers.

The Quantitative Method; The format of the questionnaires is designed to develop study speaking skills by using questions, to survey Third year Bachelor's Degree students at Dawei University in the Laungle Quarter of Myanmar.

Part one: 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.

Part two: A Study of English -Speaking Skills

This section is especially aimed at answering the research questions of this research, designed about A Study on speaking skills by using a Five-Point Likert Scale to measure the 80 third-year Bachelor's Degree students, consisting of five choices: strongly agree, agree, moderately, 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 |

Part Three: 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 public speaking skills for third-year Bachelor's Degree 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 80 third-year Bachelor's Degree students, consisting of five choices of the criteria provided as the following:

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

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Very high = | 4.50 – 5.00 |
| High = | 3.50 – 4.49 |
| Moderately high = | 2.50 – 3.49 |
| Low = | 1.50 – 2.49 |
| Very low = | 1.00 – 1.49 |

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

Data Analysis

Data analysis of the research study is to analyze the data of the study, speaking skills, divided into 5 parts as follows:

To analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire on a study of speaking skills of the Third Year Bachelor's Degree students, and to find out the ways to improve speaking skills for the Third Year Bachelor's Degree students.

To analyze the data obtained from in-depth interviews about a study of speaking skills and the ways to improve speaking skills of the Third Year Bachelor's Degree students in Dawei University in the Laungle Quarter of Myanmar.

For the statistical method, the researcher has used descriptive analysis, percentage, mean, and standard deviation (S.D.) to analyze and summarize the data in summary.

After getting the questionnaires that were collected from Third Year Bachelor's Degree students in Dawei University in the Laungle Quarter of Myanmar, the data obtained from the questionnaires will be analyzed by the Statistical Package for (SPSS), descriptive statistics of frequency and percent.

Results

This research objective

| No. | Statement | Mean (x) | S.D. | Interpretation |
|-----|--|----------|------|----------------|
| 1 | I find it challenging to pronounce English words accurately. | 3.8 | 1.1 | High |
| 2 | My vocabulary is not sufficient to express my thoughts in English. | 4.2 | 0.9 | High |
| 3 | I struggle to apply English grammar rules while speaking. | 3.9 | 1.0 | High |
| 4 | It is difficult for me to form complete sentences when speaking English. | 4.0 | 1.2 | High |
| 5 | I cannot talk fluently because I pause to think about the correct words. | 3.7 | 1.1 | High |

| No. | Statement | Mean (x) | S.D. | Interpretation |
|-----|---|----------|------|----------------|
| 6 | I feel comfortable participating in English conversations. | 2.9 | 1.3 | Moderate |
| 7 | I lack opportunities to practice speaking English outside of class. | 4.1 | 1.0 | High |
| 8 | I practice English speaking skills from BBC, VOA, and CNN news. | 3.5 | 1.2 | High |
| 9 | I always practice English conversation from YouTube. | 3.8 | 1.1 | High |
| 10 | I try to speak English with my friends every day. | 3.0 | 1.4 | Moderate |
| 11 | I feel nervous or anxious when speaking English in class. | 4.3 | 1.0 | High |
| 12 | I hesitate to speak English because I fear making grammatical mistakes. | 4.0 | 1.1 | High |
| 13 | I avoid speaking English because I lack confidence in my pronunciation. | 4.1 | 1.0 | High |
| 14 | I find it difficult to organize my thoughts when speaking English. | 3.9 | 1.2 | High |
| 15 | I feel embarrassed when my classmates or teacher correct my mistakes. | 4.2 | 0.9 | High |
| 16 | I fear making mistakes while speaking English. | 4.0 | 1.1 | High |
| 17 | I avoid speaking English because I feel my pronunciation is poor. | 3.7 | 1.2 | High |
| 18 | I often forget what I want to say when speaking English. | 3.9 | 1.0 | High |
| 19 | I struggle to keep up with the conversation when speaking English. | 3.8 | 1.1 | High |
| 20 | I feel discouraged when I compare my English-speaking skills to others. | 3.6 | 1.3 | High |
| 21 | I feel I cannot express my personality effectively in English. | 3.5 | 1.2 | High |
| 22 | I avoid conversations with fluent English speakers because I feel inferior. | 4.1 | 1.0 | High |
| 23 | I feel insecure about my accent when speaking English. | 4.0 | 1.1 | High |
| 24 | I often overthink my sentences before speaking. | 3.9 | 1.2 | High |
| 25 | I feel embarrassed when I mispronounce English words in front of others. | 4.2 | 0.9 | High |
| 26 | I feel nervous when asked to speak English in front of the class. | 4.3 | 1.0 | High |
| 27 | I struggle to understand different English accents while listening. | 3.8 | 1.1 | High |
| 28 | I mix my native language with English when speaking. | 3.5 | 1.2 | High |
| 29 | I often use incorrect word order when speaking English. | 3.9 | 1.1 | High |

| No. | Statement | Mean (x) | S.D. | Interpretation |
|-----|---|----------|------|----------------|
| 30 | I feel nervous when I speak English in front of teachers or classmates. | 4.1 | 1.0 | High |
| | Total | 115.7 | 33 | Very Hight |

Result of Objective 2

| No. | Statement | Mean (x) | S.D. | Interpretation |
|-----|---|----------|------|----------------|
| 1 | I have a problem with the pronunciation | 3.8 | 1.1 | High |
| 2 | Writing essays or journals in English improves my spoken grammar. | 3.2 | 1.0 | Moderate |
| 3 | I cannot speak English for a long period. | 4.0 | 1.2 | High |
| 4 | Using synonyms and antonyms enriches my spoken English. | 3.6 | 1.0 | High |
| 5 | I am unable to discuss this in English. | 3.4 | 1.1 | High |
| 6 | I speak very slowly because I am worried about grammar. | 4.2 | 1.0 | High |
| 7 | English words seem difficult to pronounce. | 3.9 | 1.1 | High |
| 8 | Practicing grammar through games or apps makes learning enjoyable | 3.3 | 1.2 | Moderate |
| 9 | Creating sentences with new words helps retain vocabulary. | 4.1 | 1.0 | High |
| 10 | My English pronunciation is very poor. | 3.5 | 1.1 | High |
| 11 | Participating in activities that require grammar application improves speaking. | 3.7 | 1.1 | High |
| 12 | Keeping a personal vocabulary notebook enhances my word usage. | 3.2 | 1.0 | Moderate |
| 13 | Focusing on basic grammar structures improves speaking confidence. | 3.6 | 1.1 | High |
| 14 | Using flashcards or vocabulary apps is effective for expanding vocabulary. | 4.0 | 1.1 | High |
| 15 | Watching English videos with subtitles helps me learn sentence structure. | 3.3 | 1.0 | Moderate |
| 16 | Practicing English speaking daily would help me become more confident. | 3.8 | 1.1 | High |
| 17 | Practicing English grammar regularly helps me speak more accurately. | 4.1 | 1.0 | High |
| 18 | Practicing tongue twisters enhances my pronunciation clarity. | 3.4 | 1.2 | High |
| 19 | English grammar seems rather difficult to speak correctly. | 3.6 | 1.0 | High |
| 20 | Practicing phonics helps me pronounce new words. | 3.2 | 1.1 | Moderate |

| No. | Statement | Mean (x) | S.D. | Interpretation |
|-----|--|----------|------|----------------|
| 21 | Using apps that provide pronunciation feedback is helpful. | 3.7 | 1.1 | High |
| 22 | Watching videos on English phonetics is effective for improving pronunciation. | 3.5 | 1.0 | High |
| 23 | It is difficult to speak correctly. | 3.8 | 1.2 | High |
| 24 | It is difficult for me to speak English. | 4.0 | 1.1 | High |
| 25 | Joining an English club improves my speaking practice. | 3.4 | 1.0 | High |
| 26 | Joining a Toastmasters club enhances my public speaking skills. | 3.9 | 1.1 | High |
| 27 | I am afraid of speaking English with foreigners. | 4.3 | 1.0 | High |
| 28 | Revisiting grammar rules through books or tutorials enhances speaking. | 3.5 | 1.2 | High |
| 29 | Using online platforms for grammar exercises improves my accuracy. | 3.3 | 1.1 | Moderate |
| 30 | Speaking slowly and focusing on sentence correctness improves my speaking. | 3.6 | 1.0 | High |
| | Total | 109.9 | 32.3 | Very High |

Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to examine the problems of English-speaking skills among geology students at Dawei University in Launglone Quarter, Myanmar, and to suggest practical improvement solutions. A total of 80 students participated in this research through questionnaires and interviews. The demographic analysis revealed that 46.25% of respondents were male and 53.75% female, with the majority aged between 19–21 years. Most students had studied English for 5–7 years, yet many still struggled to use the language effectively in speaking.

The findings indicated that the majority of students faced difficulties in pronunciation, often omitting final sounds, speaking with poor fluency, and lacking confidence to communicate for extended periods. Shyness, limited vocabulary, and insufficient practice outside the classroom were also identified as significant obstacles. Statistical results supported this, showing that students rated the problems of speaking skills at a very high level (Mean = 115.7, S.D. = 33).

In terms of solutions, both students and teachers recognized several strategies that could enhance speaking ability. Students should practice English more frequently, engage in group activities, and overcome shyness by speaking without fear of making mistakes. Teachers, on the other hand, should design lesson plans that allow more speaking practice, encourage the exclusive use of English in the classroom, and motivate learners by emphasizing the importance of communication skills. The responses indicated strong agreement with these solutions, as reflected in the very high mean score (Mean = 109.9, S.D. = 32.3).

This study contributes to the understanding of English-speaking challenges in Myanmar's higher education context, particularly among geology students. By identifying the root causes of speaking difficulties and suggesting practical remedies, the research provides valuable insights for both students and educators. Looking forward, as English continues to gain importance in academic and professional fields, students who adopt active learning strategies and teachers who implement communicative approaches will play a critical role in improving English proficiency in Myanmar.

Discussion

The results of this study revealed that students face significant difficulties in developing their English-speaking skills. The most pressing problems identified were weak pronunciation, particularly the omission of final sounds in words, limited fluency when speaking for longer periods, and a general perception that English is difficult to use correctly. These findings indicate that students not only struggle with linguistic competence but also with communicative confidence.

According to Hayriye (2006), speaking requires the ability to choose appropriate words and sentences depending on the social setting, audience, situation, and subject matter. This aligns with the present findings, which suggest that many students lack the necessary vocabulary and fluency to adapt their speech effectively in real-life communication.

Similarly, Ellis and Johnson (1994) emphasize that classroom activities are among the most effective methods for encouraging student interaction and building confidence in speaking. The findings of this study support this view, as students indicated that insufficient practice opportunities and passive learning approaches contributed to their difficulties.

Insights from teacher interviews further revealed that learners themselves are often reluctant to practice speaking beyond the classroom. Shyness, fear of making mistakes, and unwillingness to take risks were highlighted as major obstacles. In addition, a lack of vocabulary was repeatedly identified as a core barrier to effective speaking.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while structural issues in English education (e.g., limited resources, syllabus design) play a role, student attitudes and motivation are equally influential. The researcher believes that addressing these problems requires both pedagogical changes—such as implementing more interactive, communicative teaching approaches—and learner-centered strategies that encourage risk-taking, consistent practice, and vocabulary development.

Suggestion

Suggestions for Students

Students should not hesitate to practice speaking English, even if their ability is not yet strong. Waiting until one becomes fluent before speaking is unrealistic, as fluency can only be developed through regular practice. Students are encouraged to use English in daily life—by speaking with friends, teachers, foreigners, or even practicing alone. Participation in group activities, English talks, storytelling, speech contests, and debates can help build confidence and overcome shyness.

Furthermore, students should not rely solely on teachers. Classroom instruction provides guidance, but independent study is essential. Engaging in self-study and actively seeking opportunities to use English outside the classroom will significantly enhance their speaking proficiency.

Suggestions for Teachers

Teachers should design clear and concise lesson plans that allocate sufficient time for students to practice speaking during class. Creating more opportunities for interaction allows students to develop confidence and fluency, even if they do not use English outside school.

Teachers should also encourage consistent use of English in the classroom. For students who frequently revert to their native language, appropriate strategies—including reminders, motivation, or even academic penalties—may help reinforce the importance of practicing English.

Additionally, teachers should motivate students by emphasizing the significance of English-speaking skills in academic, professional, and social contexts. Encouragement, inspiration, and guidance can increase students' determination to improve their speaking ability.

Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies should include larger sample sizes and more diverse key informants to generate richer and more reliable data. Researchers may also focus on advanced academic students or specific skill areas, such as vocabulary development and pronunciation, using qualitative methods to explore these issues in depth.

This study contributes new knowledge by highlighting the specific challenges faced by geology students at Dawei University, including pronunciation errors, limited vocabulary, lack of fluency, and low confidence. By identifying these problems and suggesting practical solutions, the research provides valuable insights for both students and teachers.

Looking ahead, the demand for English-speaking competence in Myanmar is expected to grow as globalization and international collaboration expand. If students adopt active learning strategies and teachers integrate more communicative methods, significant improvements in speaking skills can be achieved. Future research will play an important role in

guiding these efforts and ensuring that English education in Myanmar meets the needs of students in higher education and beyond.

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