

Improve English Speaking Methods for Thai Students

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Abstract

Globalization encourages people to explore the world more, as well as interact with each other between countries. This makes communication very important. Establishing communication is not easy so we need to improve skills and abilities, especially in English. This is because English is the language chosen as the international language used to communicate between countries.

The basics of English such as reading, writing, listening and speaking that we have learned from kindergarten must be developed to better master the English language. This is because we are in an era where English is a very important language for a better life. Also, because mastering the ability to speak English can make it easier for us in many ways.

Speaking proficiency is classified as one of the most fundamental but difficult productive skills among learners of English as a Second Language (ESL). Some major determinants of English speaking proficiency include knowledge of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary as well as self-confidence, practices, and exposure to the target language. English learners often face difficulties in expressing their ideas orally as they would not be able to refer to a dictionary or ask their teachers when speaking.

Keywords: Improve; English Speaking Methods, Thai Students

Introduction

Speaking has been considered as fundamental to human communication. The ability to communicate – to receive, process, store and produce messages – is central to human interaction and participation (McLeod, 2018:3). One's ability in delivering message through spoken language will determine the success of conveying message to the receiver. Through education, the language learners train their ability to communicate in such ways so the receivers will absolutely get the meaning the speakers intend to communicate. In the educational institution, communication skills are formally integrated in the form of language teaching and learning, especially in speaking skills. Besides, the modern world demands for the requirement of communication skills for the learners and the English teachers have to teach the ELLs the needed skills so that they will improve their abilities in speaking and perform well in real-life situations (Rao, 2019:8).

For many years, people taught speaking by having students repeat sentences and recite memorized textbook dialogues. Then, audiolingual repetition drills were designed to familiarize students with the sounds and structural patterns of the target language which learners are aiming to learn (Nunan, 2003:49). People supposedly learned to speak by practicing grammatical structures and then later using them in conversation. This routine, however, has raised questions among many educational practitioners regarding its appropriateness to be continuously implemented inside classrooms. Responding to the questions, Kayi (2006:58) criticized the past practice of teaching speaking that relied heavily on the explanation of grammatical structure by stating that today's world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students' communicative skills, because, only in that way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance. This view is in line with Richards (2005:9) that claims the emergence of communicative language teaching in the 1980s led to changed views of syllabuses and methodology, which are continuing to shape approaches to teaching speaking skills today.

Being able to speak to friends, colleagues, visitors and even strangers, in their language or in a language which both speakers can understand, is surely the goal of very many learners, Louma (2004:54). However, the repeated teaching and learning of speaking activities such as memorization of dialogues or repetition of drills becomes a habit in the school environment (Rao, 2019:8). This habit builds a foundation as the school teaching-learning values and beliefs which involved school members such as headmaster, school committee, teachers, students and parents. The school activities are the scenes that reflect the values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and rituals that build up the time as people in school to work together. Spoken English teaching tradition is the habitual activities implemented in junior high school curriculum engaging teacher and students' interaction in or outside the classroom. That is, the teacher has direct agentive roles to students in regards to the interaction that relies on the school rules, norms, and ethics generally accepted in the school (Mathur, 2014:143).

In learning a foreign language, most learners find speaking the most difficult skill to master because it needs oral communication that consists of both speaking and listening (Nunan, 2002). As speaking ability is considered to be one of the most important skills by language learners, society and education practitioners, the success of language learners in learning the language is often judged by their ability to which they can use their spoken English as well as communicate fluently in formal and informal interaction. The learner's ability in expressing their thoughts through spoken language is considered as the main goal in language learning. Leong (2017:34) affirms that language learners sometimes evaluate their success in language learning based on how well they have improved in their spoken language ability. However, teachers have not given many opportunities for their students to speak inside or outside the classroom. The teachers mostly tend to deal with text without giving their students

chances to develop their speaking ability. Not surprisingly, speaking is usually viewed as the most complex and difficult skill to master (Tarone, 2005: 485).

1. Teaching Speaking

Speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts" (Chaney, 1998:13). Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Despite its importance, for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues.

What is meant by "teaching speaking" is to teach EFL learners to:

- a. Produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns.
- b. Use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language.
- c. Select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper social setting, audience, situation and subject matter.
- d. Organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence.
- e. Use language as a means of expressing values and judgments.
- f. Use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency. (Nunan, 2003:25)

The material to be developed is about speaking skill. there are several explanations for developing this speaking ability. Include, Goals and Techniques for Teaching Speaking, Strategies for developing skills, developing speaking skill.

2. Principles for Teaching Speaking

According to Nunan (2003:27), there are some principles for teaching speaking. Some of which are described below:

1) Give students practice with both fluency and accuracy. At the beginning and intermediate level of studies, learners must be given opportunities to improve their fluency as well as accuracy. Accuracy means using the target language correctly and fluency is using language quickly and confidently. The teacher should not emphasize on any one aspect of speaking. Rather, students should get practice on both accuracy and fluency.

2) Use group work or pair work To improve students "speaking, they should be given enough opportunities to speak in class. According to Nunan also, Pair work and group work can be used to increase the amount of time that learners get to speak in the target language during lesson." In this way, the students will get chance to interact and practice the language with other students.

3. Goals and Techniques for Teaching Speaking

The goal of teaching speaking skills is communicative efficiency. Learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. To help students

develop communicative efficiency in speaking, instructors can use a balanced activities approach that combines language input, structured output, and communicative output.

1) Language input comes in the form of teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read outside of class. It gives learners the material they need to begin producing language themselves. Language input may be content oriented or form oriented.

a. Content-oriented input focuses on information, whether it is a simple weather report or an extended lecture on an academic topic.

b. Form-oriented input focuses on ways of using the language: guidance from the teacher or another source on vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar (linguistic competence).

2) In communicative output, the learners' main purpose is to complete a task, such as obtaining information, developing a travel plan, or creating a video. To complete the task, they may use the language that the instructor has just presented, but they also may draw on any other vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies that they know.

4. Strategies for Developing Speaking Skills

Students often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process. Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies—using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about language—that they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. These instructors help students learn to speak so that the students can use speaking to learn.

1) Using minimal responses

Minimal responses are predictable, often idiomatic phrases that conversation participants use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt, and other responses to what another speaker is saying.

2) Recognizing Script

Some communication situations are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges—a script. Greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations, and other functions that are influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts. So do the transactional exchanges involved in activities such as obtaining information and making a purchase. In these scripts, the relationship between a speaker's turn and the one that follows it can often be anticipated. Instructors can help students develop speaking ability by making them aware of the scripts for different situations so that they can predict what they will hear and what they will need to say in response.

5. Using language to talk about language

Language learners are often too embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand another speaker or when they realize that a conversation partner has not understood them.

6. Importance of learning spoken English

In today's modern world, learning spoken English has many advantages. English is fast becoming the international language of many fields, including politics, business and education. Not only is English used between native speakers and non-native speakers, but it is also used increasingly as a common language in interactions between non-native speakers.

When you are asked to make a lecture in English, you can put it to good use. When you need to make a foreign friend, you just try a little in other ways except for English. If you are skilled in spoken English, you can have more access to knowledge. For example, traveling abroad to know more western customs and culture personally, making friends with foreigners because you can communicate freely with them in English, enjoying more classic western plays, films and literatures and so on.

Having a good grasp of spoken English helps you to improve your chances of employment. These days, there are many foreign companies operating from China, and many Chinese-owned companies have trade links with foreign partners. These companies require speakers of English with sufficient language skills to ensure smooth business transactions.

Spoken English also provides the chances for you to communicate socially with people from many other countries. It gives you a window into other cultures, and other perspectives of the world. It also gives you access to foreign films, TV programs, music and news.

Therefore, spoken English is an important and fundamental tool in today's global village.

7. How to improve your oral English

7.1 Some effective methods to improve your spoken English.

One of the English teachers at our university got into a taxi one day, and as she talked with the driver, she noticed that he had very good spoken English, better, in fact, than that some of her students! "Where did you learn your English?" she asked. "Oh," he replied, "I never went to secondary school. I drive a taxi every day, but while I'm driving around, I listen to English radio stations. And if an English-speaking passenger gets in, I try my best to start a conversation with them. That's how I learn my English! "

There are many things which contribute to good spoken English, but an important question for you is this: to what extent are your attitudes similar to those of the taxi driver? Are you willing to try to start a conversation with an English speaker? Or do you feel as if "the cat did get your tongue"—that whenever you try to speak in English, your tongue won't behave itself and you can hardly make a sound?

How then can you improve your spoken English? How can you try to put your resolution to improve into practice? Here we will suggest some concrete things you can do on your own (for little or no money) to improve your English-spoken English in particular.

Listen to the radio, you could get up five minutes earlier and listen to the news in English. Try watching the news in English instead of Chinese. If you watch a movie and it has

subtitles, try taping a paper over them. Invite your English teacher to lunch! Find a friend who also wants to improve his or her English and have lunch or dinner together to speak English of course. Check out books, records, cassette tapes, and other materials in English from your local library. Look especially for books which have lots of dialogue in them. Read plays when you go to see English films, try not to read the Chinese subtitles.

Watch for notices of English activities and join in whenever you can. Seek out lectures in English on topics of interest to you. Try to take notes—just for your own use. Learn the words to some popular songs (warning: don't depend on texts provided on Chinese channels or in Chinese magazines!)

Find books-on-tape in your local library. Listen while you are relaxing at home or while commuting if you have a Walkman. Watch for plays or dramatic performances given in English on campus—or get the student ticket for the public performances. Exchange taped messages with a classmate. Record a few minutes and then ask your classmate to respond later on the same tape.

Choose a famous person whose accent you admire, and if you can get recordings of him or her, imitate the way he or she speaks. Practice situations when you are alone, perhaps in front of a mirror. Imagine introducing yourself, disagreeing with someone's ideas, being interviewed or asking for information. If you can get someone to help, assign parts and do role-playing. Make friends with the exchange students on our campus they are here because they want cross-cultural communication. Communicate with them. Take part in a play in English—start out with a small part if you feel shy. Find a friend or two and agree to speak English at certain regular times—after a class together, at dinner every Tuesday, or riding home on the train.

Practice reading aloud—get someone to check your pronunciation and intonation, or record yourself on tape and analyze your own speech. Set goals of specific things you can work on improving ---for example, differences between words that contain “l” and “n” or “w” and “v”. Keep notes of words you often mispronounce and practice them.

If you have a chance to travel, take advantage of the opportunities to use English – airlines and immigration personnel, hotel and restaurant staff, fellow travelers and passengers. Visit a former English teacher either from secondary school or from a course you took at university. Teachers like to hear how their students are doing. Everyone knows that the only really effective way to improve on language skills is to use the language. In reality, however, we know that there are many reasons why people don't want to speak in another language – they are afraid of making mistakes, they can't express their real meaning easily, they are shy, they are afraid people will laugh at them. We all feel this way some of the time, but if you really want to improve your spoken English, try some of the suggestions we have made here. Once you try putting some of these ideas and principles into practice, the cat will have a very hard time getting your tongue!

7.2 How to speak more accurately

From a learner's point of view, the problem with English is that it is too rich in constructions and vocabulary, i.e.: There are numerous words and constructions which have similar meanings. Mistakes occur when learners remember half of one construction and half of another; they end up with a hotchpotch which is at best "incorrect but understandable" and at worst "nonsense". Choose English for use or recognition purposes only English people do not use every phrase and word in the English language. They have favorite phrases which they use time and time again. I recommend that when you are taught more than one way of saying the same thing, choose only one version to learn accurately for future use. Then store the other one vaguely in your mind for future recognition purposes only. At the same time you should avoid pitfalls. Native English speakers modify their language according to their situation, just as you would do in your own language. Unless you have constant exposure to English over many years, you cannot expect to do this. The trick therefore is to choose the best English for universal speaking purposes and to recognize other version of English, so you are not at disadvantages. By doing so, you will avoid misunderstandings and you will be able to judge the quality of another person's English.

Although a knowledge of the following is essential for understanding English (and possibly for some exams), I recommend you avoid them as much as possible when speaking in normal situation. Avoiding grammatical errors when speaking. Many students experience difficulties with the use of the present perfect, because the use of it does not correspond with a similar-looking tense in their own language. If it helps you, it is possible to avoid the present perfect altogether by using SIMPLE PAST + SPECIFIC TIME. (Zhanli Yang, 2014:334)

E.G.:

I have been to Beijing. (Time unknown)

I went to Beijing some time ago. (Exact time unknown)

I have just finished my homework. (Recent, but time unknown)

I finished my homework a short while ago. (Recent, but exact time unknown)

English is such a rich and versatile language, It is possible to say what you want to say in more than one way.

7.3 How to speak more fluently

Translation is a very difficult exercise—which is why professional interpreters make a lot of money. During a conversation, we don't really have time to translate what we understand. When you use translation to understand a foreign language, you don't develop the necessary reflexes needed to speak and understand fluently. In other words, you don't always need to translate everything to understand what is being said. Building up reflexes right from the beginning will help you later when your skills are good enough to participate in a conversation.

How do you communicate successfully when you only have basic language? It can be done! Don't rely on vocabulary and sentence structure alone. After all, what you probably want

most is to be understood, not to dazzle anybody you're your command of grammar. Here are a few tips to get you communicating right off.

Relax! No one is judging you except you! Look at each communication experience as an adventure. If you are relaxed, you will pick up on small details, body language, etc. That you might miss if you are writing your hands and sweating.

Context is your friend. What is the subject, setting and situation? Use these to make intelligent guesses about what is being said. A lot of language can be eliminated when you consider context. You will feel much more comfortable and receptive if you remember that you don't have the entire Spanish language to consider at once.

Memorize clarifying questions. After you have proudly stumbled through a request for tickets at the train station, the clerk rattles off a long sentence about Vichy and Tuesday.

You may be a little unclear or have only understood a portion of what was said. Rather than staring blankly, have a list of memorized clarification questions such as, "Did you say _____?" and "Would you repeat that more slowly?" that you deftly use to move the communication forward. By employing these questions, you build on what you can say and understand instead of starting over with each utterance. Besides improving your communication in your school language, you improve fluently and feel confident and in charge.

Employ body language. Use gestures and facial expressions to accompany your words. Don't be afraid to be a little exaggerated. The person you are speaking to wants to understand and will be carefully observing and listening. As you become more proficient in your second language, you will rely more on oral exchange and less on body language, but there is no shame in supporting the language you can use when you are a beginner. The alternative is to wait until you are an intermediate speaker to have meaningful interactions, and this is far too long to wait.

7.4. Move your mouth

Do not confuse pronunciation of words with their spelling!

For example, "threw" and "through", although spelled differently, are pronounced the same. Also, identical letters or letter clusters in words do not always produce the same sound.

For example, the "ough" in "though" and "through" represents a different sound in each word. Learn to practice what you hear, not you see. Imagine a sound in your mind before you say it. Try to visualize the positioning of your mouth and face. Think about how you are going to make the sound. Listen to and try to imitate the speaker. In addition to listening for specific sounds, pay attention to pauses, the intonation of the instructor's voice and patterns of emphasis.

This can be just as important as the pronunciation of sounds. The English language has many different dialects, and words can be pronounced differently. It is important, however, that you pronounce words clearly to ensure effective communication.

Finally, you must practice what you are learning! Remember that you are teaching your mouth a new way to move. You are building muscles that you do not use in your own language. It is like going to the gym and exercising your body. Don't forget to exercise your mouth a little bit each day.

Knowledge from the Study

Undeniably English is an important language to learn. Speaking English fluently will benefit you in unimaginable ways. If you are still unaware of the advantages of gaining fluency in English, here we have listed some:



Fig.1 Knowledge from the Study

1. It increases your income

Business needs English. The world is speaking English and to be competent enough, you need to gain fluency in English. In the world of globalization, adding English to your language skills would be more rewarding than anything else. If you have the right balance of business skills and English fluency, you may get a promotion.

2. It improves your knowledge and understanding

This is one of the most important reasons to get fluent in English. If you are a learner and want to enhance your knowledge, you ought to learn English as it is the bridge that leads you to the vast world of knowledge.

All the literary masterpieces are in English. The latest research papers are published in English. So, if you want to gain knowledge, you need to learn English.

3. It improves your confidence and communication skills

Of course, you can communicate in other languages, but English gives you a certain confidence and you come out as a more impressive individual.

There are people who shy away from coming in public just because of the lack of fluency in English. This makes them socially very awkward. To spare yourself from any awkwardness, you must become fluent in English.

4. It creates an impression

It may sound snobbish, but it is the truth. English is a global language and in India, the one who has fluency in English is the one who earns respect in various areas like work and society.

5. It takes you places

The universal language, English, is spoken in every part of the world. Wherever you go, English would be the only language you can expect people to understand. It bridges the communication gap in every corner of the world. This is another advantage of gaining fluency in English.

6. It gives you influence, power, and friends

Social media is in English. All the leading websites and applications are in English. All the great novels are in English. If you are fluent in English, you will have influence, power, knowledge, and more friends.

Conclusion

We need more time to improve our spoken English and we should practice more. Spoken English plays an important role in English learning. And a good level of communicative competence is the final aim of English learning. How to cultivate and improve the learners' competence of spoken English has become the focal point. By using these methods, the learner can achieve his ideal goals. In conclusion, English is very important for life today, in addition to communicating between countries, English can also make it easier for us to find work, especially if we want to work abroad. The basics of English such as reading, writing, listening and speaking that we have learned from kindergarten must be developed to better master the English language.

This is because we are in an era where English is a very important language for a better life. Also, because mastering the ability to speak English can make it easier for us in many ways. Actually much can be done to develop and hone it. The first thing we can do is listen to English music. The second is watching movies in English. Some other things we can do next is using English in daily life, make friends with people who are good at English, join the event in English, reading English books, setting the language on the device with English, and the last is writing in English.

Without English language today, we cannot move our day-to-day life with ease in the up-to date world. English has a status of a second language in almost all the countries where it is not the first language. This means that we need to hone and develop basic English skills for a better life.

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