

English-Speaking Class's Challenge in Aviation Students After COVID-19

อุปสรรคการพูดภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียนของนักศึกษาการบิน หลังสถานการณ์

การแพร่ระบาดของโรคโควิด-19

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Abstract

Speaking skill is regarded as an indicator of language proficiency. It is believed that a learner who can speak an English language fluently is as a proficient learner of English language. This article revealed the most challenges of English-speaking class in aviation students after they have been learning through online class since 2019. As a result, there are many difficulties occurring on online learning. It is also reported that after coming back to onsite classrooms, the English proficiency of students has been desperately dropped. There are various challenges, for example; the deterioration of speaking and classroom participation, motivation to participate, the mocking of other students, lack of confidence, however, the greatest challenge is the lack of classroom interaction. Besides, a prolonged period of time in online learning also affects their concentration and proficiency in learning.

Keywords: English speaking class, Speaking challenges, Aviation students

บทคัดย่อ

ทักษะการพูดถือเป็นตัวบ่งชี้ความสามารถทางภาษา เป็นที่เชื่อกันว่าผู้เรียนที่สามารถพูดภาษาอังกฤษได้คล่องแคล่วนับได้ว่าเป็นผู้เชี่ยวชาญในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ บทความนี้แสดงให้เห็นถึงอุปสรรคการพูดภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียนของนักศึกษาการบิน หลังจากการเรียนออนไลน์ตั้งแต่ปี พ.ศ.2562 ซึ่งสิ่งที่เกิดขึ้นคือปัญหามากมายที่เป็นอุปสรรคต่อการเรียนรู้ เมื่อกลับเรียนมาเรียนที่ในชั้นเรียน ศักยภาพในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาลดลงอย่างเห็นได้ชัด โดยอุปสรรคที่เกิดขึ้น เช่น ขาดความมั่นใจในการพูด หรือการมีส่วนร่วมในชั้นเรียน ขาดแรงจูงใจในการมีส่วนร่วม ถูกเพื่อนร่วมชั้นเรียนล้อเลียน ขาดความมั่นใจในตนเอง อย่างไรก็ตามอุปสรรคที่สำคัญที่สุด คือ การขาดปฏิสัมพันธ์ในชั้นเรียน นอกจากนี้การเรียนออนไลน์เป็นระยะเวลานาน ๆ ส่งผลกระทบต่อสมาธิในการเรียนอีกด้วย

คำสำคัญ: การพูดภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียน, อุปสรรคในการพูด, นักศึกษาการบิน



Introduction

In the late December 2019, a new pandemic appeared rapidly dreadful throughout the world. In Thailand, where the pandemic had hit dramatically, Thai school campuses were temporarily on lock down and educational associations from various countries had deeply tried to cope with such serious pandemic situations (Hayat, Keshavarzi, Zare, Bazrafcan, Rezaee, Faghihi, Amini and Kojuri, 2021). Even though, Scudellari (2020) and Somsathan Sanjaiporn (2021) indicated that COVID-19 would have changed the lifestyles of people. The situation would never be the same as before 2019.

In the meantime, the operation of onsite teaching has been on-and-off, Thai government has recommended and alternated an idea of distance learning with online teaching. Although online teaching is not a new perspective, it is still an obstacle for many students (Schneider and Council, 2021). There are many learning challenges through online access that students are facing, such as the limitation of online resources, Internet service, and learning environment. However, one of the greatest challenges is that students are insufficient in online learning resources, which includes classroom interaction. Whereas Barrot et al. (2021) also supports that the findings have shown, the learning environment has been the following challenge for students need to hurdle, particularly the distraction at home, for instance; noisy environment, limitation in learning space and facilities. These are particularly major problems for students. These challenges would possibly cause massive problems in language acquisition, especially in speaking skill. (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

English as a Foreign/Second Language (EFL/ESL) learners are evaluated by the ability of their success based on how well they have

their spoken language ability (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). After learning online for a prolonged time, non-native speakers are facing with negative side effects. Those mentioned challenges has been occurring to all classrooms, Students have been uncertain to speak or participate in the classroom. While schools and universities have astonishingly confirmed that students dramatically drop their participations and interaction after COVID 19 obstructs onsite teaching.

Speaking skill definition

Definitely, one of the most crucial skills in language learning is speaking. Individuals who learn a language are referred to as the speakers of that language (Ur, 1996). While Nasiri and Pourhosein Gilakjani (2016) agree that speaking is significant for people interaction. It is the way to communicate ideas and messages orally to listeners. However, many academicians define “Speaking” as follows:

According to Chaney (1998), speaking is the process of making and sharing meaning by using verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts. Additionally, Oxford Dictionary (2018) defines that “speaking is the action of conveying information or expressing one’s feeling in speech”. While Brown (1994) and Burns & Joyce (1997) advocate that “speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking”. These descriptions are expressed fully in meaning as speaking is an interactive ability for learners to produce language and share opinions,

ideas, and emotions. This means comprehensive communication is an interactive process for collaboration between persons that includes producing, receiving, and processing information.

Speaking Class Challenges

Online learning has been tremendously used since the pandemic, of COVID-19 attacked everywhere all over the world. Especially in Thailand, there has been an obligatory policy for learners in all levels to stay and cultivate at their homes. Therefore, the learning environment has dramatically changed as well as English language learning environment (Chaya & Inpin, 2020). Yet, Somsathan and Sanjaiprom (2021) indicate that numerous studies report about how Thai students lack skills in online environment. This identifies that Thai learner have to undergo ineffective materials and poorly designed lessons which different from learning in the normal classrooms. Since there are many issues regarding the obstacles in the use of online learning at home during the pandemic crisis. The problematic issues in learning need to be resolved in a long-term solution (Scudellari, 2020). However, Charnbhumidol, Kraiwanich, and Kraiwanit (2020) reveals that there are 11.2% average learners, who prefer learning through online platform. This means the majority of Thai learners are likely to prefer face-to-face communication in onsite classrooms to learning online because of scant activities that create real life communication. There are also problems from learners such as the lack of classrooms as there are several scantness on online learning platform, for instance; they lack self-disciplined and the lack of motivation in study.

Several studies from researchers (Imsa-ard, 2020; Charnbhumidol, Kraiwanich, and Kriwanit, 2020) have pointed out that students

are not willing to study online, they prefer learning face-to-face. Furthermore, Tuan and Mai (2015) propose the problematic issues of speaking skill in the classroom such as the lack of topical knowledge, low participation, and the interference of mother-tongue use, respectively. Moreover, Yuh and Kaewurai (2020) reveal the main result of their studies that students are unable to use correct grammatical structures in sentence construction. Following with the lack of vocabulary and inability to understand and use vocabulary in different situations. Apparently, the use of the Thai language during the learning process of teachers and students is the basic challenge with irritating students from speaking other languages fluently.

In addition, effective classroom environment requires cooperation between teachers and students in communication in class, but students still lack opportunities to interact in the classroom. Yuh and Kaewurai (2020) reveal that when students are mocked by other fellow students, they lose their confidence. Therefore, one noteworthy trend is that schools, parents and government open up to a new mindset of promoting a classroom interaction approach where encouraging students to share their competencies and braveness of speaking other languages after they have been learning online for years.

Aviation students with English speaking learning challenges

As discussed previously, there are some challenges for speaking skill that learners and teachers are facing both in onsite classrooms and online. This article will address merely on the biggest challenge of all speaking learners of undergraduates, who enrolled for Aviation program. In aviation industry, English has been the most mediative language for many positions,

for instance; airport receptionist, ground staff, flight attendant, pilot or air traffic controller, etc. These mentioned job positions need proficiently English-speaking skill.

Apparently, Hayaramae and Worasurt (2020) state that it has never been easy to achieve mastery in speaking. In addition, aviation students are highly expected to perform all of English skill perfectly. As their speaking proficiency also enhance their opportunity to work in international organizations, and workplace environment, they need to be enthusiastic on their speaking to become proficient. Similarly, the difficulties of aviation students in mastery of English are lack of confidence and shyness in expressing their speaking. They are unable to deliver words correctly as well as they are also ESL learners, therefore, English speaking in daily life is quite not developed. These difficulties lead to the similar challenges to general English learners.

Previous Studies on English-Speaking Class's Challenges

Many studies indicate that there are some difficulties for online-based learning, for instance; Fatoni (et. al, 2020) and Azizi (2020) reveal that complaints on online learning are about network instability. The second frequent complaint is unilateral interaction. Last but not least, the third complaint was the reduced concentration. Many students comment on the difficulty of concentration on class for such a long period, while the delays occurred when wi-fi is not connected (Fatoni, et al. 2020). Which corresponds to Pham and Nguyen (2020), exclaim that the transition is smooth for some schools but also rough for others, especially those from developing countries with limited infrastructures.

While the findings of Putri, Purwanto, Pramono, Asbari, Wijayanti and Hyun (2020) reveal some issues and constraints in online learning. Limited communication and socializing, a higher challenge for special education needs and longer screen time were respectively big issues.

As many studies have mentioned about the learning challenges regarding to COVID-19 pandemic that most online students are facing with problems of learning environment at home. Barrot, Llenares and Rosario (2021) also reveal that the most challenge of online learning is learners' learning environment at home. They also investigate the serious impact on the quality of the learning experiences and students' mental health, for instance; their help-seeking, time management and technical aptitude enhancement.

Apart from the aforementioned studies, Hayaramae and Worasurt (2020) similarly confirm that Both aviation students and ESL students, encounter the same difficulties of English-speaking challenges. They need strategies and guidance for encouraging them to speak. They also suggest that role-play, small group discussion and singing are the activities to improve students' speaking skill in classroom activities. Those active activities should be emphasized on interaction between students and students in the onsite classroom.

Conclusion

After Covid-19 pandemic, the language acquisition of second language learners' behavior has changed desperately. They have less participation in English language class, while they tend not to communicate and answer all questions in the classroom. Since during Covid-19 circumstance, the government had obligated online learning into educational systems for schools and universities. This situation affects students

in Thailand directly since they have been slightly familiar with online learning environment. They are insufficient with discipline and motivation. These also cause the speaking engagement for students. Moreover, aviation students in Thailand are second language learners, English is not regularly used nor interested. When returning to the normal learning circumstance, students' behaviors in the classroom could not have been changed immediately. Learners, therefore, lack interaction in the classroom,

especially, in speaking, and conversation. However, students need activities that will enable them to interact such working in groups or pairs, role play, paired conversations, communicative game and questions and answer sessions that will enable them to overcome fear, develop confidence and improve their speaking skill. Apparently, enhancing students' English-speaking skill by using activities such as interactive activities, pair work and group-work dialogues/ conversation tasks is the potential approaches for students.



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