

DESIGNING A SUPPLEMENTARY ENGLISH SPEAKING MATERIAL FOR THE 10TH FORM STUDENTS AT THAI NGUYEN HIGH SCHOOL

Nguyễn Quỳnh Trang¹, Duong Cong Dat^{2*}, Vu Kieu Hanh³

¹University of Medicine and Pharmacy - TNU, ²University of Education - TNU,

³University of Agriculture and Forestry- TNU

SUMMARY

Nowadays, the importance of acquiring English communication competence, especially speaking skill is more and more asserted in education and training. Within the context of teaching English in Secondary School at present, it is really a challenge for teachers to meet the needs of their students' speaking. At Thai Nguyen High School, the students have learnt English for 4 years before entering the School but their speaking abilities are not good enough to catch up with the speaking requirements in English 10.

Therefore, the survey investigated a hundred students of the 10th form at Thai Nguyen High School to find out their needs in learning speaking skills. Besides, personal observation and interviews were applied to collect more data for the analysis. Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, the researcher has proposed a supplementary speaking syllabus to meet the students' needs at High School.

Keywords: *English speaking, syllabus, 10th form students, speaking activities, Thai Nguyen High school.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays English becomes more popular than ever before. It is spoken all over the world and appears in all spheres of human life. It is considered a bridge connecting country with country, culture with culture. It is a language of economy, education, entertainment, sports, etc. Although English is an international language, learning and teaching English is a complicated process which is responsible for developing four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing skill. All of these skills are important, but speaking seems to be more important.

Like all language skills, speaking is also a crucial factor to second language acquisition. From observation and informal talks with English teachers and school students, it is found out that at first, all beginners have a desire to learn English and to speak English as fluently as native speakers do; however, as time passing by they find themselves facing many difficulties that prevent them from gaining successful interactions. For 10th form students at Thai Nguyen high school, these

problems have been detected as: (1) Students speaking abilities in Vietnamese are low and mixed as some of them come from mountainous areas and are ethnic people, some of them do not have good background education. (2) Students are not motivated enough because some topics and situations are strange and not interesting to them, some tasks are not suitable with their speaking competence. (3) The time allowance is not enough for them to practice using the target language and the language they have learnt in authentic situations, which prevents them from developing speaking skills in the real world. (4) And some students find it difficult to make their talks lively and persuasive even when they think their vocabulary and grammar is not the question. Therefore, the analysis of the above-mentioned reality indicates that it is necessary to design a supplementary speaking syllabus for the 10th form students at Thai Nguyen High school to help them develop their speaking skill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Penny Ur (1995) [4] speaking seems intuitively the most important and people who know a language are referred to

* Tel. 01255.985.333; Email: ntdatn@gmail.com

as speakers of that language as if speaking included all other lands of knowing. It contributes an important part to improve other students' skills such as listening, reading and writing and makes them better at communication. Good speaking also means that the speakers have a large volume of both theoretical and social knowledge, which will help them more confident and better at reading and writing. In other words, when speaking skill is in progress, other skills also become better.

Moreover, good speaking is said to be a good source of motivation for students. According to Byrne (1990) [1] students' motivation is enhanced if they have a sense of progress. When students get high motivation, they will get progress in their study Harmer (1998) [3] also says that whatever kind of motivation students have, it is clear that highly motivated students do better than ones without any motivation at all.

Scrivener (1995) [5] discusses that when we speak we need to work on two things. One is accuracy - getting everything correct. But the other is fluency - speaking at a good speed and communicating easily with other people. It is very important to practice that as well as working on reducing mistakes in class. At the time fluency is the focus, instant correction is less appropriate and could interfere with the aim of the activity. The teacher needs to be clear about whether her main aim is accuracy or fluency and adapts her role in class appropriately. Scrivener (1995) [5] also states that achieving success in a task using English is a huge achievement. It is much more important to work first on getting the message across than paying attention to using accurate language.

It is widely recognized that Bachman's model of communicative competence provides a potentially useful framework for the design of language syllabus. Students tend to learn more easily when they feel relaxed, and fun is

considered an important factor in successful language learning.' Consequently, it is advisable that not only the teacher but also the syllabus designer should help to make the learning process as relaxing as possible

SUBJECT AND METHODOLOGY

A hundred students in the 10th form and 5 teachers of English of Thai Nguyen High School are chosen to carry out the research. The students are the target subjects who need to be immediately provided with English skills because they bring with them different background of education. These students have learnt English for over at least 3 years, but they have not much focused on speaking. Therefore, their ability of English is not very good and they are not very interested in learning speaking. The researcher is in charge of teaching them English so the relationship between the teacher and her students is very good. It helps the researcher not only carry out the survey but also observe speaking lessons to see how appropriate the task for the students is and how the students do the task easily.

The data collected from questionnaire was synthesized and applied Microsoft Excel for calculating figures including frequency and percentages. These figures were coded into charts which is the underpinning base for analyzing.

Observation and interviews were to find out problems with speaking lessons and speaking tasks, and then they were studied to help select the content of the supplementary speaking syllabus for the students

FINDINGS

The survey questionnaire was administered to 100 students from the 10 form Thai Nguyen High School. They all have used the same course book "English 10".

The data of the students' social background, which was said to be related with their condition for learning English, indicates that the majority of students come from Thai Nguyen city, and they have learnt English since they were at grade 6.

Table 1. Students' interest in working in pair and group

	Very much	Much	Rather	Little	Not at all
Individual	0	20	36	30	14
With a partner	8	56	28	8	0
In a small group	52	28	14	6	0

Figure 1 showed students' interest in learning English and speaking English. It can be seen that, 41% of the students felt very interested in speaking English 21 % of the students had little or no interest in speaking English. The rest (38%) felt rather interested.

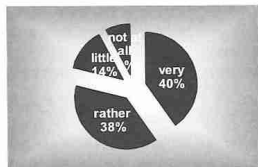
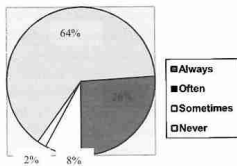
**Figure 1.** Students' interest in speaking English

Table 1 indicated students' attitude towards speaking activities that 20% of the students liked working individually much while 56% of them liked working in pair. Over half of the students enjoyed working in small groups. Only a few students (6% and 8%) said that they felt rather like working in pairs and groups. None of them thought they disliked these kinds of activities.

The data showed that most students found pair/group work beneficial in speaking lessons. They could exchange opinions, shared ideas, got help from friends. Only some of them did not find it helpful. 94 % of the students felt more confident and had more chance to share ideas, while 6% had the opposite idea.

As described in chart 2, about frequency of students' taking part in pair/group work in

class, 64% of the students said they always enjoyed working in pairs and groups 26% of them often took part in pair/group work. Only 2% of them did not like these activities.

**Figure 2.** Students' participation in pair/group work

Related to designing extra speaking activities, table 2 showed that more than half of the students agreed that it was necessary to design extra speaking activities to make the lessons more interesting and to give them chances to develop their speaking ability. The two important roles of extra speaking activities were strongly agreed by 36% and 40% of the students. There is a small number of students (8%) who disagreed the first role of these activities and few students disagreed with the second role. When answering about a waste of time and money, there were 50% (24% + 26%) of the students asserting that doing extra speaking activities was a waste of time and the teacher's money. They also added that they did not need speaking in doing tests. About a third of them did not give their idea.

Table 2. Students' attitude towards the need of using extra speaking

Do you agree with the following ideas	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea
Supplementary speaking activities are needed to make the speaking lessons more interesting	36	56	8	0	0
Supplementary speaking activities are needed for students to develop their speaking ability	40	54	2	2	2
Applying supplementary activities is a waste of time and money	6	8	24	26	36

DISCUSSION

It can be seen that the 10th form students at Thai Nguyen High School were familiar with doing supplementary activities in their speaking classes. Their attitude towards learning English ranged differently but many of them showed great interests in learning speaking accompanied with doing supplementary speaking activities in pairs/groups. Some topics in English 10 such as "People background, Special education, Technology, The mass media, Historical places, Typical/ Famous cities, The World Cup" are not much approved by the students. Game-like speaking activities on these topics should relate to the themes in current speaking exercises in text book, so that students either have knowledge about the topics in some ways, or offer students different types of the same topic. Some tasks in the students' textbooks are not appropriate and over the students' level. Some others do not provide enough information for the students to practice speaking. Anyway, a majority of students were aware of the benefits of pair/group work, of supplementary speaking activities.

To sum up, most students are not yet accustomed to speaking and listening, even when they have a great deal of grammatical knowledge or a wide range of vocabulary. Although the 10th form students at Thai Nguyen High School have chances to practice English speaking, they not yet made their conversations in English spontaneously and

naturally. From the above data analysis, it can be seen that there is a need of designing a supplementary material with various speaking activities to make the lessons more interesting and to give them chances to develop their speaking ability.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing findings, the study could be summarised as follows:

1. Most of the students are interested in speaking English even though their speaking level is not high enough. They enjoyed learning speaking through games, discussion, and conversations.
2. Using pair/group work in supplementary speaking activities helps students gain benefits in improving not only their speaking skills but also their ways of cooperating with friends to complete tasks successfully.
3. The strange and challenges of topics and tasks with a lot of new words in English 10 that are above the level of particular students at Thai Nguyen High School.
4. The students need to learn some other ways to make their talks lively and persuasive. For instance, they can use non-verbal languages.
5. With an aim to provide a better solution for the remaining situation of the 10th form students at Thai Nguyen High School, a supplementary speaking syllabus is proposed in this research. The syllabus is a combination of topical, skill-based and task-based syllabus.

CONCLUSION

In order to develop the students' speaking skill, the author of this thesis has reviewed relevant literature on needs analysis, syllabus design, speaking theories and speaking activities. Then, supplementary speaking activities among which some are simplified, designed and selected should be related to the themes in current speaking tasks in textbooks, so that students either have knowledge about the topics in some ways, or offer students different types of the same topic.

The research focuses on designing a supplementary syllabus for the 10th form students at Thai Nguyen High School. The

researcher hopes that with this syllabus the students will find English speaking lessons enjoyable, then the evaluation will be done to judge the usefulness and practicality.

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TÓM TẮT

THIẾT KẾ CHƯƠNG TRÌNH BỔ TRỢ NÓI CHO HỌC SINH LỚP 10 TRƯỜNG TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG THÁI NGUYÊN

Nguyễn Quỳnh Trang¹, Dương Công Đạt^{2*}, Vũ Kiều Hạnh³

¹Trường Đại học Y Dược – ĐH Thái Nguyên,

²Trường Đại học Sư phạm – ĐH Thái Nguyên,

³Trường Đại học Nông Lâm – ĐH Thái Nguyên

Ngày nay, việc đạt được năng lực giao tiếp Tiếng Anh đang ngày càng khẳng định được tầm quan trọng trong giáo dục và đào tạo ngôn ngữ Anh. Trong bối cảnh dạy Tiếng Anh ở các trường THPT hiện nay, đó là một thách thức đối với các giáo viên để đáp ứng nhu cầu nói của từng học sinh. Tại trường THPT Thái Nguyên, học sinh đã được học tiếng Anh 4 năm trước khi các em học cấp 3, nhưng khả năng nói của các em lại chưa đáp ứng được những yêu cầu của giáo trình tiếng Anh 10. Do đó, tác giả điều tra khoảng 100 học sinh lớp 10 ở trường THPT Thái Nguyên nhằm tìm ra nhu cầu học tập của học sinh đối với kỹ năng nói. Bên cạnh đó, tác giả cũng quan sát và phỏng vấn để thu thập thêm dữ liệu để phân tích. Dựa trên kết quả phân tích, tác giả đề xuất chương trình Nói bổ trợ để đáp ứng nhu cầu học tập của học sinh trường trung học phổ thông.

Từ khóa: Kỹ năng nói, chương trình, học sinh lớp 10, các hoạt động nói, trường THPT Thái Nguyên.

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* Tel: 01255 985.333; Email: ntdatn@gmail.com