

THE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILL OF NON-ENGLISH MAJORED STUDENTS AT TAY DO UNIVERSITY IN VIET NAM

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is said to be an indispensable subject which partly contributes to the success of learning English and daily communications. However, students have to face with lots of factors that can affect to their speaking fluently. Therefore, the study is conducted to find out some effective ways to help students speak smoothly. The participants are eighty-five non-English majored students at Tay Do University. The questionnaire and interview are used as the instruments to collect the data. The result of this study will point out the ways in teaching and learning to help students improve their speaking, especially fluency in speaking English skill.

Key word: *speaking, non-English majored students, university*

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Nowadays, with the development of the international relationship among countries, learning English, especially learning English speaking is playing a more and more important role in the world. People use English for communication and discussion for the world forum and in different aspects of life. In Vietnam, English speaking is also very essential for work place. Thus, learning English speaking has become more popular than ever.

However, there are still some problems about the teaching and learning English speaking, particularly at Tay Do University (TDU), there is a fact that the English majors, especially the non-English majored students at TDU have a poor English speaking skill. They spend a lot of time on learning grammar, writing, reading and seem to ignore speaking. The majority of non-English majored students are passive in their speaking. Furthermore, they feel reluctant to get involved in the speaking activities in class. Therefore, their English speaking skill is often low and very few of them can communicate in English fluently.

Obviously, it is high time for teachers to choose the appropriate teaching methods to solve the problem. This study will explore the reality of teaching and learning English speaking of the non-English majored students at TDU and suggest some main ways which include the methods of strengthening the teaching of English speaking to help students enhance their English speaking skill. Only in this way, students who are learning English speaking can learn it well so that they can communicate in English perfectly.

In order to help students at TDU, especially the non-English majored students improve English speaking skill, the study "The effective ways to improve speaking skill of non-English majored students at Tay Do University" is carried out. It is expected to help students of Foreign Languages Department at TDU, especially the non-English majored students improve their fluency in English speaking in order to get a brighter future.

The significance of study

The research is conducted to help the non-English majored students recognize some ways that can help them improve their fluency in speaking skill. Through the research results, they realize that applying effective ways has some positive effects on speaking fluently.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of speaking

There are several definitions on speaking presented in language learning methodology.

“Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information.” (Burns & Joyce, 1997). 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. Or according to Revell (1979), “Speaking is an exchange process between people, of knowledge, of information, of information, of ideas, of options, of feeling, so there must be concept, ideas, in the fellow speakers of what they are going to say.”

Speaking is one of the four basic language skills which students need to acquire deeply and widely (reading, writing, listening and speaking). It is the means through which learners can communicate with others to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions, intentions, hopes and viewpoints. In addition, people who know a language are referred to as ‘speakers’ of that language. As Rivers (1981) argues that, “Speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing in our communication.”

In addition, speaking is the delivery of language through the physical organisms. In the process of speaking, we create sounds using many parts of our body, including the lungs, vocal tract, vocal chords, tongue, teeth and lips. Speaking includes two ways: formal and informal. Informal speaking is typically used with family and friends, or people we know well. Formal speaking occurs in business or academic situations, or when meeting people for the first time.

Many language teachers consider speaking as the most effective means of gaining a fluent reading knowledge and correct speech as the foundation for good writing. Those teachers also argue that during all the life one shall probably talk more than one write. Therefore, to a language teacher, teaching speaking well is often a valued issue.

From the above definitions and explanations of speaking in second language and foreign language studies, the definition of speaking is summarized as the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a various context to express ideas, opinions, or feelings to others by using words or sounds of articulation in order to inform, to persuade, and to entertain that can be learnt by using some teaching learning methodologies.

Definition of fluency in speaking

Fluency in English speaking means speaking easily, reasonably, quickly and without having to stop and pause a lot. Becoming fluent in speaking can take many years. Good speakers communicate and get their message across smoothly, even though they may make mistakes about grammar, pronunciation and word choice. Communication is the most important part of speaking and it is important to communicate your ideas as naturally as possible.

Fillmore’s (1979) emphasizes the first kind of fluency as “the ability to fill time with talk... a person who is fluent in this way does not have to stop many times to think of what to say next or how to phrase it.” As Fillmore goes on to show, this fluency will depend on a range of factors including having quick access to and practiced control of many of the language’s lexical and syntactic devices, being to decide readily when it is appropriate and efficient to use them, as well as having familiarity with interactional and discourse schemata.

Fluency is the ease and flow of the student’s speech in comparison with native speakers. Consequently, they elaborated a four-point fluency rating scale with corresponding descriptors. The four levels are (1) halting, slow speech, noticeable breaks between words, seems to require much effort; (2) speech is uneven, some noticeable breaks between words, seems to require effort, occasionally halting, tend to but not necessarily have slower speech rate; (3) relatively smooth and effortless speech but rate of speech is slower than native or perceptibly non-native; and (4) relatively smooth, native-like rate of speech. The use of fluency as a criterion for measuring speaking has been criticized because it often wrongly considers a native speaker’s fluency as ideal, i.e. uninterrupted by pauses, hesitations and false starts.

Also, oral fluency is understood to imply a communicative competence requiring an ability to formulate accurate and appropriate utterances of more than one sentence in length. Oral fluency requires the ready availability of the communicative competence for the formulation of appropriate utterances in real time, involving a strategy for the elaboration of sentence structures, as well as the selection and insertion of lexical items. Individual sentences must be integrated into connected discourses.

All of these views of fluency have led to the development and wide acceptance of definite evaluation devices which could be used as a frame of reference, with the exception of the criterion of speed rate.

The importance of fluency English speaking skill

Zaremba (2006) shows that while reading and listening are considered to be the two receptive skills in language learning and use, writing and speaking are the other two productive skills necessary to be integrated in the development of effective communication. Of all the four macro English skills, speaking seems to be the most important skill required for communication. Zaremba (2006) also explains that, "Speaking skill or communication skill is usually placed ahead of work experience, motivation, and academic credentials as criteria for new recruitment for employment."

Nowadays, speaking English fluently is essential for all learners of English as a second language. It is no more an issue of status however it is of supreme necessity for a good quality job and to flourish in one's career. A lot number of accomplishments in one's life are greatly dependent upon the way he conducts himself with the global customers and delegates, particularly in the international companies. With a job in a field of management, a highly qualify profile people also require a fluency in English. Another way, it is not just to leave an impression of stylishness however it is necessary to converse the important points in a smart way. Usually people are able to easily make their point work in their own goodwill if they are able to intermingle appropriately and present their points in an open platter.

Main factors affecting students' fluency English speaking

To help students overcome problems in speaking, it is necessary for the teachers to figure out factors that affect their fluency in speaking. Students' fluency in speaking can be affected by the factors that come from linguistic causes (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and listening comprehension), psychological causes (fear of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, lack of motivation) and other causes (learners' strategies, speaking environment, practicing time and students' background knowledge).

Linguistic causes (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and listening comprehension)

Vocabulary

Liu & Jackson (2008) claim that, "lack of vocabulary was regarded as a main obstacle for the spoken communication English learners." Without a sufficient understanding of words students cannot understand others or express their own ideas. Learning vocabulary is very important for the students who learn English as a foreign language. Knowing a word implies knowing many things about the word: its literal meaning, its various connotations, its spelling, derivations, collocations, frequency, pronunciation, the sort of syntactic constructions into which it enters, the morphological options it offers and a rich variety of semantic associates such as synonyms, antonyms, homonyms.

That is why everybody who learns English or a certain language should know the words. Rich vocabulary can support them in speaking when they are communicating to people. If they do not know the meaning of words, they will not be able to speak, write and translate anything in English.

Grammar

Richards (2008) states that, "Our knowledge of grammar helps us find the appropriate chunks, and the speaker also assists us in this process through intonation and pausing." The use of appropriately grammar helps to avoid misunderstandings, to speak fluently and to help the other person get the message easily. Therefore, grammar is essential in learning a language. In fact, structures of grammar help learners make up their speaking correctly. By learning grammar, learners can express the meaning in the form of phrases, clauses, and sentences. Moreover, grammar not only plays an important role in creating sentences or utterances but also plays the key role in speaking fluently. In effect, with grammatical structures, learners are able to speak in a smooth or a

skillful way in expressing their ideas without difficulties. To conclude, focusing on learning grammar will help learners speak English well.

Pronunciation

Hismanoglu (2016) states that, "Pronunciation is significant as it is a section of successful oral production or communicative competence." Learning to pronounce English words correctly can be one of the hardest parts of learning English. It is quite common for non-native speakers of English to mispronounce English words. This can lead to misunderstand or even some more serious consequences. What we should do is to try our best to learn more and practice more to improve our pronunciation. If the speakers have bad pronunciation, the listeners will be hard to understand. Fraser (2000) adds that being to speak includes a number of sub-skill of which pronunciation is by far the most important.

In addition, pronunciation involves in accent and intonation. In communication, when the speakers have different intonations, listeners will confuse because different intonations make a same sentence have various meaning. "Intonation in English might also convey a speaker's involvement in a conversation as well as a desire to take turn of talk or leave the conversation. Intonation is a significant feature in English." Brazil et al. (1980). In addition, everyone has their own voice. Accent usually reflects the place where a person comes from. The accent prestige theory suggests that people use a speaker's accent as a cue for judging characteristics of the accented speakers. Accent is also one of the main reasons why people have a hard time understanding each other, and thus many people strive to change their accent. There is a fact that people hardly can get rid of their accent. They just can actually change their accent a bit by studying another accent and imitating it.

Listening comprehension

Listening comprehension is a very basic skill one must have in order to be a good English speaker. Listening comprehension is the progression of understanding the spoken language. Rost (2002) describes listening comprehension as an interactive process in which listeners are involved in constructing meaning. Listeners understand the listening input through sound discrimination, previous knowledge, grammatical structures and both of other linguistic or non-linguistic tools. Speaking skills cannot be developed unless we develop listening skills. Students must understand what is said to them to have a successful conversation. Shumin (1997) adds that when one person speaks, the other responds through attending by means of the listening process. In fact, every speaker plays the role of both a listener and a speaker. Therefore, one is certainly unable to respond if he or she cannot understand what is said. It means speaking is closely related to listening.

Psychological causes (fear of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, lack of motivation)

Fear of mistakes

Robby (2010) informs that the fear of mistake becomes one of the main factors of students' speaking in English in the classroom. With respect to the fear of making mistake issue, and this fear is linked to the issue of correction and negative evaluation. In addition, this is also much influenced by the students' fear of being laughed at by other students or being criticized by the teacher. As a result, students commonly stop participating in the speaking activity. Therefore, the teacher should modify that is significant for teachers to convince their students that making mistakes is not a wrong or bad thing because students can learn from their mistakes.

Shyness

Paying attention to shyness is also quite important in order to help the students do their best in speaking performance in the classroom (Gebhard, 2000). Since speaking in front of people is one of the more common phobias that students encounter and feeling of shyness makes their mind go blank or that they will forget what to say. Some shy learners are caused by their nature that they are very quiet. Shyness is an emotional thing that many students suffer from at some time when they are required to speak in English class. This indicates that shyness could be a source of problem in students' learning activities in the classroom especially in the class of speaking. Therefore, paying attention on this aspect is also quite important in order to help the students do their best in their speaking performance in the classroom. Speaking in front of people is one of the more common phobias that students encounter and feeling of shyness makes their mind go blank or that they will forget what to say. This theory is also supported by the result of this research in which most students fail to perform the speaking performance at their best. As they say, their inability to show their ability in speaking is also

influenced much by their feeling of shyness. In other words, it can be said that shyness plays a vital role in speaking performance done by the students.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of tension, apprehension and nervousness associated with the situation of learning a foreign language (Horwitz et al. 1986). among other affective variables, anxiety stands out as one of the main blocking factors for effective language learning. In other words, anxiety influences students in learning language. The students' anxiety that will lead to stuttering, forgetting vocabulary and grammar structures, and even unable to express their opinion. The higher the anxiety, the lower the performance. Therefore, paying attention to this factor of learning should also be taken into consideration. The fact that anxiety plays a significant role in students' learning. Anxiety about speaking a certain language can affect students' fluency. It can influence the quality of oral language production and make individuals appear less fluent than they really are. This explanation suggests that teachers should make an attempt to create a learning atmosphere which gives students more comfortable situations in their learning activity.

Lack of confidence

Numerous researches have informed that learners with self-confidence are able to perform easily while learners who lack confidence are usually not able to develop their speaking skill. It is commonly understood that students' lack of confidence usually occurs when students realize that their conversation partners have not understood them or when they do not understand other interlocutors. In this situation, they would rather keep silent while others talk. In response to this, Nunan (1999) says that, "Student who lack of confidence about themselves and their English necessarily suffer from communication apprehension." This shows that building students' confidence is an important part of teacher's focus of attention.

There are the relationships between second language learners' anxiety, self-confidence and speaking performance. Students' feeling of stress, anxiety or nervousness may impede their language learning and performance abilities. It means that, "the higher the anxiety and confidence, the lower the performance."

Lack of motivation

Learners often complain that they cannot think of anything to say and they have no motivation from their friends, family and teachers to express themselves. Rivers (1968) believes that, "The learners have nothing to express maybe because the teacher had chosen a topic which is not familiar for them or about which they know very little." It is difficult for many students to respond when the teachers ask them to say something in a foreign language because they might have little ideas about what to say, which vocabulary to use, or how to use the grammar correctly. (Baker & Westrup, 2003).

Other causes (students' strategies, speaking environment, practicing time and students' background knowledge).

Learning strategies

Many researchers try to find out how learners learn something, what makes learners successful at learning than others. As Williams & Burden (1997) point out, that can only be answered by investigating learning strategies. Specific actions taken by the learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations". All things considered, strategy plays an important role in speaking fluently.

Speaking environment

If a person has a good speaking environment as in the foreign countries, more time to practice with foreigners. Hence, he or she has a chance to practice their oral English in a short time and they can speak smoothly, maybe just several months. That is why a majority of college students choose to study abroad. However, domestic students cannot own this perfect target language learning environment, which is an important factor affecting their oral English. In class, teachers of English are mostly native Vietnamese speakers; they cannot speak as native foreigners so students cannot learn a standard English.

Being limited time for English practicing

Practicing time is a crucial factor affecting the speaking process. Speaking is like any other skills, the more practice we get, the better we will be. Swain (1995) highlights the importance of learner output in the development of language skills, especially speaking skill. Textbook based learning is not enough to make student a fluent English speaker. Teachers will not correct students' mistakes every time; continuous corrections do not help them learn English. On the whole, students who want to be proficient speakers should spend suitable time on improving speaking skill constantly.

Students' background knowledge

Speaking in the foreign language has always been considered the most demanding skill to develop in the learners of the target language compared to such other skills as listening, reading, and writing. This is in part due to the fact that it involves more than simply knowing the linguistic components of the language. Of course, knowledge of the linguistic components such as vocabulary and grammatical structures seems essential but not sufficient. The factor which makes speaking distinct from the other skills is the speaker needs to have a quick access to all the relevant knowledge required to produce the appropriate language in relatively short lags of time.

Many studies have been done on factors influencing subjects' language learning. Some researchers have investigated the effect of background knowledge on improving language learning in general, and learning language skills and sub-skills in particular. Some specialists consider the role of schematic knowledge as a determining factor affecting and influencing language components especially comprehension. Brown and Yule (1983) define schemata as "Organized background knowledge which leads us to expect or predict aspects in our interpretation of discourse." They say that the listener uses two basic principles to relate the new information to his or her previous experience.

The role of the teachers in different stages of teaching speaking

Byrne (1986) states three stages of teaching speaking: the presentation stage (pre-speaking), the practice stage (while-speaking) and the production one (post-speaking). In each stage, the role of the teacher is different.

The role of teachers at the pre-speaking stage

In the pre-speaking, teachers brainstorm with their students about content, i.e., ideas, and form before students are asked to perform an oral production task. The purpose is to help students know what to talk about and how to say it when they perform the speaking task.

In other words, teachers introduce and teach the subject that the students will be required to master. The teachers give something new to be learned and present it in such a way that the meaning of the new language is as clear and memorable as possible. The students listen and try to understand. At this point of the lesson, teachers are at the center of the stage. Therefore, teachers' time spending should be sensible so that students get enough time to practice themselves.

The role of the teachers at the while-speaking stage

In the practice stage, students engage in exercises and activities based on the subject taught in the first stage: this will be done with the guidance of teachers.

Besides, in while-speaking stage, the speaking activity itself is conducted through graded steps, starting from a 'game like' dialogue on directions (pair-work) and moving gradually to a communicative and realistic simulation (Crookall, 1984).

The students' turn to do most of the talking while teachers' main task is to devise and provide the maximum amount of practice, which must the same time be both meaningful and memorable. The teachers' role, then, is completely dissimilar from that at the presentation one. Teachers are like the skillful conductors giving each of the performers a chance to participate and monitoring their performance to see that it is satisfactory.

The role of the teachers at the post-speaking stage

In the production stage, students engage in exercises or activities based on the taught subject without the guidance of teachers.

The teachers take on the role of managers and guides. Students are given opportunities to use language freely. Sometimes students can make mistakes at this stage, but mistakes are insignificant. The more important is that students have chance to use language as they wish, to try to express their own ideas. Moreover, they become aware that they have learnt something useful to them personally, and are encouraged to go on learning. However, students will probably seem to teachers to lurch backwards and forwards rather than make steady progress. It will not be so easy for teachers to measure students' performance as it was at the practice stage, nor is there any easy recipe for success. So, what is needed is flexibility, tolerance, patience on teachers' part and, above all, an understanding of the learners' difficulties.

In short, teachers through speaking lesson should work as motivators. Their roles closely relate to three stages of learning. Whatever teachers doing in the classroom, are to encourage students to speak.

Some suggested ways in teaching English to improve speaking skill of non-English majored students at Tay Do University

Teaching English speaking can be challenging, problems seem to arise from all directions. However, this challenge can be overcome. The following are ideas and ways to spice up English speaking classroom and make lessons more interesting and effective. In addition, through these ways, students can think and speak smoothly.

Among the numerous benefits of using dramatic ways in a classroom, a lot of scholars believe they are entertaining, fun and useful to motivate students learning. Maley and Duff (1982) think that, "These activities should draw on the natural ability of every person to imitate, mimic and express himself or herself."

Repeat and Re-phrase (Recast)

"A recast, that is, the repetition of a student's utterance making changes to convert it to a correct phrase or sentence." (Lightbrown and Spada 2006). It may provide teachers with the opportunity to model how a sentence or phrase should be used without having to obviously highlight the students' errors.

The repeat and re-phrase technique are effective in classrooms because a student may know various vocabulary words and now know the ones that teachers are using. By using this technique, teachers expose students to new vocabulary that can be associated with the old to acquire a meaning. Students get benefits by both the repetition, as the source of learning new vocabulary, and the use of old vocabulary to form a re-phrased question in order to acquire a new and better understanding of the English language. This technique can be used during oral instruction given to the class or an individual student. It can also be applied during question and answer time in class, and is optimal for such a use as it provides students with an opportunity to better understand the question and answer it without help.

The repeat and re-phrase strategies are used in the classroom to promote, achieve, or ensure, understanding of a given topic, standard, or question. For example, if a student does not understand the question "What is the meaning of an adjective?" then the teacher can respond by either repeating, and/or if understanding is still not reached, re-phrasing the question to promote the student's application of knowledge. The question could be re-phrased as: "What does an adjective do?" this also helps with future questions as students will better understand the meaning of the posed question. Additionally, the repeat and re-phrase can be used to question for understanding by re-phrasing a sentence to check if students properly understood the meaning of a particular word or concept. For example, "The girl avoided the water." Used to teach the vocabulary term "avoid". Questioning for understanding could be phrased as: "If she avoided the water, then she has not get wet." The teacher can ask whether this is correct or not and students can better understand what the term means and its uses.

Cooperative groups

"Cooperative learning occurs when students work together in small groups to accomplish a collective task." (Slavin, 1980). When employed properly, cooperative learning can result in improved conventional academic achievement such as performance on standardized tests.

This technique optimizes personalized student learning time as each student can get personalized attention even if it is not given by the teacher. This is also helpful when the teacher is not supposed to be the focus of activities and instead can move from table to table and help as needed. It creates a community setting and gets students

into helping each other and learning from each other. Cooperative groups work because there are many ways to break students into groups that allow them personally catered lessons on their level.

The learning outcome of this strategy is that students are able to take in more information at one time while developing relationships and community amongst themselves. Additionally, by using this technique, students will learn from each other. Many times, youths are more prone to hear out their peers over adults. Naturally, this caters to those thoughts and allows students to take in the needed knowledge, but in a way that is more entertaining. Working in groups also provides the teacher with many new lesson options to keep the classroom engaging and motivating.

Simulation

According to Buckner (1999), "A simulation is an intensive, interactive experience in which the content and roles assumed by participants are designed to reflect what people encounter in specific environments." Therefore, simulations create an ambience in which the participants are involved in a personally meaningful activity.

A simulation activity is one where the learners discuss a problem within a defined setting. In simulation activities, the students are either playing themselves or someone else. Simulation activities are also interaction activities with various categories of dialogues. One category would be social formulas and dialogues such as greeting, parting, introductions, compliments, and complaints. Simulation exercises can teach students how to function in a social situation with the appropriate social niceties.

A simulation activity provides a specific situation within which students can practice various communication skills like asserting oneself, expressing opinions, convincing others, arguing eliciting opinions, group-problems solving, analyzing situations and so on.

Role play

Ladousse (1987) indicates that, "Role play is a communicative technique which develops a student's language, which promotes interaction in the classroom, and which increases motivation." He pointed out that role play encourages peer learning and sharing the responsibility for learning between teacher and student. He suggested role play to be perhaps the most flexible technique in the range of communicative ways, and with suitable and effective role play exercises, teacher can meet infinite variety of needs.

In addition, Kowalska (1991) believes that, "Role-playing develops learners' fluency in speaking. The wide range of language functions, for example apologizing, greetings, etc., is exercised more than in any other activities".

In another word, role play is a method for exploring the issues involved in complex social situations. The purpose of role play is educative rather than therapeutic and the situations examined are common to all. Family scenes, school situations and playground incidents provide opportunities for interaction and group discussion.

The main benefit of role play from the point of view of language teaching is that it enables a flow of language to be produced that might be otherwise difficult or impossible to create. Role play can also help recreate the language students used in different situation, the sort of language students is likely to need outside the classroom.

Audio-recorder

When teaching new English learners or proficient English speakers to use braille as their literacy tool, the use of the audio recorder is just as important. The use of an audio recorder during lessons is also recommended to help students remember what they learned. The recordings can support practicing reading in the new literacy medium between lessons.

Using recorder as a diary

The other suggestion for recording is to use the recorder like a diary or tape journals. In order to provide opportunities for talking about lives and expressing ideas to Japanese students, Foley (1993) used talking journals. The term "talking journals" refers to the recording of a diary orally using an ordinary tape recorder.

According to Foley (1993), talking journals provide opportunities for speaking English, and lessen anxiety toward this activity.

Fix a regular time each evening to spend a few minutes talking about the events of day. It works best if students imagine they are talking to one particular person, rather than to the microphone. Do not prepare in advance what are going to say. In fact, students' recording of their speech is not new. Register (1986) also proposes a way of using the audio cassette for improving oral skill.

Previous study

In this part of the study, some previous studies relating to this study will be reviewed.

Liu & Jackson (2008) claimed that "Lack of vocabulary was regarded as a main obstacle for the spoken communication English learners in China." During writing, the students have time to figure out the most suitable words and phrases but when it comes to speaking the words disappear and never come to their mind so the expressions may not be produced to say the intended meaning precisely. Liu & Jackson (2008) conducted a study concerning with Chinese learners' unwillingness to communicate oral foreign language anxiety. Their results revealed that (1) most of the students were willing to practice in interpersonal conversations, but many of them did not like to put themselves in a risk of speaking English in class. (2) More than one third of the learners felt anxious and feared being negatively evaluated.

Nam (2006) researched the use of a voice journal for the speaking practice of male students in the second year of middle school. She used the recording function of the computer to create an oral English diary. The results were as follows: 1) the participant paused or mumbled less during English speaking production; 2) he was able to use more English words; and 3) he used more general English verbs rather than the verb 'to be' after taking part in the voice diary practice. Although fluency improved, accuracy did not so. However, after the practice, the participant showed more confidence in speaking English. Nam (2006) pointed out that the use of voice journals could have a positive effect on fluency and increase speaking proficiency. She also suggested that keeping a voice journal helps learners to overcome anxiety and develop automaticity in English speaking.

3. RESEARCH AIMS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

3.1 Research aims

The aim of this study is finding out effective ways for students to improve their speaking skill in which the study focuses on finding the reality of non-English majored students in speaking skill and giving them suggestions for better communication. It is expected to change students' attitude on speaking English and let them find English speaking more interesting. It is hoped that non-English majored students at TDU can consider speaking English as their favorite.

Research questions

This study is expected to improve speaking skill of non-English majored students at TDU. It is undertaken with the purposes of dealing with the research questions:

1. Are there any ways to help non-English majored students improve speaking skill?
2. What are some effective ways to improve speaking skill of non-English majored students at Tay Do University?

Hypothesis

Most of non-English majored students at TDU believe that speaking skill is the most important and difficult. Based on the literature review and the research questions, it is hypothesized that there are some effective ways to improve students' speaking which are relevant to factors such as linguistic causes (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and listening comprehension), psychological causes (fear of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, lack of motivation) and other causes (learners' strategies, speaking environment, practicing time and students' background knowledge).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

The research is carried out to investigate some ways that students can apply to improve speaking English. The major approaches are ways that both students and teachers could use in their process of learning and teaching speaking English. The research is conducted at TDU with the collaboration of eighty-five non-English majored students. The data from the participants will be collected through the questionnaire for students, the interview for students and the interview for teachers of English. The collected information of these two instruments will be analyzed to show the effective ways in improving speaking.

Participants

The participants are eighty-five non-English majored students from classes of Technology, Pharmacy, Tourism, and Accounting at TDU. All students have studied English from 7 years to 13 years and they come from many different places. They all spoke Vietnamese as their mother language and English was considered as their second language. They are equal level.

Instruments

Questionnaire and paper interview questions are the instruments of this research. They are written only in English. Questionnaire is used to find out the problems of students in learning English speaking and some ways to help them improve their speaking fluently, because of its high reliability. Along with the questionnaire, paper interview is another helpful tool used for collecting information. By answering the questions on the interview, the attitude of students towards English speaking subjects could be revealed.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is about students' background, the attitude toward English speaking, the factors related to linguistics causes, psychological causes and other causes and students' opinions on the current teaching method and their expectations which can help teachers to satisfy their requirements and make them love speaking English more as well as enhance students' English speaking skill. Also, some ways to improve speaking skill are added. The following table is a short description of the questionnaire.

Table 1: The gist of questionnaire

Question/Statement	Summary of the question's/statement's content
From 1 to 8	Students' background
From 9 to 13	Linguistics causes
From 14 to 18	Psychological causes
From 19 to 23	Other causes
From 24 to 28	Students' expectations
From 29 to 34	Suggested ways to improve speaking skill

Interview

The paper interview for students consist of 6 questions which mentioned the attitude, problems of studying speaking and how about some ways improve their speaking fluently. Students could be free to share their ideas.

The paper interview for teachers consist of 5 questions which relate to current ways of teaching speaking and suggested solutions to teach English speaking better.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Speaking plays a vital role in learning English and speaking fluency is a goal for any second language learners. Doing this study, it is hoped that non-English majored students at TDU can improve their speaking smoothly with some effective ways. It is a chance to change students' attitude on speaking English and let them find English speaking more interesting.

The present study focuses on improving English speaking skill of non-English majored students at TDU. In fact, there are a lot of various ways to study English communication. It requires much time and effort. This study is carried out to find out the reality of teaching English speaking for the second year English majors and the effectiveness of TDU teaching method as well as offering some ways to help the non-English majored students at TDU enhance their speaking skill.

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