Speaking English problem of Thai Student of Junior high school student at Hadsaithong School

Madeena Dalai[1], M. Sofian Hadi[2]

Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, Indonesia
Email: madeenah081@gmail.com

Abstract

This qualitative study aimed to identify the problems faced by students in learning English speaking at Hadsaithong School in southern Thailand, the factors causing these problems, and the solutions that students use to overcome them. The study included 10 high school students, 5 males and 5 females in Grade 9. Internal factors such as motivation, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, shyness, anxiety, and self-confidence were identified as challenges, along with external factors such as the learning environment, teacher motivation, facilities, and lack of opportunities to use English in daily life. The methods students use to solve their English-speaking problems include learning through YouTube, asking English teachers to use English in class, asking fluent friends for help, or ignoring the problems. .

INTRODUCTION

English is considered a foreign language in Thailand, but it has become increasingly vital in the global world as over 2 billion people, or one-third of the world's population, use it to communicate (Al Nakhalah, 2016). Encouraging the Thai population to improve their communication skills in English is crucial as it is an essential tool for attaining knowledge and building a career. However, only a quarter of the population in Thailand uses English at a basic degree. The English education system in Thailand faces significant challenges, where students are unable to use English effectively in daily life, resulting in poor performance in exams and tests.

While some Thai students have had exposure to English through their parents, who work for the government and are sent to work abroad, others are fortunate enough to come from wealthy families that can afford to send them to study abroad. However, most Thai students lack the opportunity to gain experience in English correctly. Moreover, Thailand has tried to increase the ability to use the English language for many years, but the results have not yet met the desired level. The ability to speak English is the largest problem for Thai students, and it is the most important skill that they need to master (Musliadi, 2016).

The importance of English in Thailand is well recognized by the government (Ritthirat & Chiramanee, 2014), which has made several policies to teach English at each level of education. However, the process of teaching and learning English in Thailand still faces significant challenges such as the lack of basic English skills, including

vocabulary, grammar, and speaking. Most English teachers focus more on grammar than speaking, which results in students being shy and afraid of making mistakes in English.

Speaking skill is of great significance for people's interaction, where they speak every day (Nordquist, 2020). Encouraging students to communicate in English requires using the language in real communication and asking them to speak. EFL learners should comprehend how words are divided into different sounds and how sentences are stressed in specific ways. Grammatical competence can help speakers apply and perceive the structure of the English language correctly, which leads to their fluency.

In conclusion, the writer intends to conduct action research entitled "English speaking problem of Thai students at junior high school at Hadsaithog School." The study aims to identify the challenges that Thai students face while speaking English and to develop strategies to improve their speaking skills (Sultana & Jamin, 2021). After examining the background of the study, the writer identifies the following problems among English-speaking Thai students at Hadsaithog School: 1. The students have issues speaking in English because they do not practice the language, despite studying it. Society does not offer enough support to encourage students to speak English. 2. Students lack the motivation to learn English because they do not recognize the benefits. 3. The teaching methods used to teach English are often uninteresting, leading to a lack of enthusiasm among students (Yarmi, 2019).

This research study focuses only on the English-speaking problem among junior high school students at Hadsaithog School, Trang, Thailand, during the academic year 2020/2021. Based on the background and limitations of the problem, this study will examine the following research questions: 1. What are the speech-related issues that Thai students face in junior high school at Hadsaithog School?, 2. What is the best approach for solving these problems?,

This research aims to answer the above research questions by: 1. Identifying the problems that junior high school students at Hadsaithog School face when speaking English. 2. Determining the most effective method for solving these problems. Overall, this research serves as a reference for future studies on the English-speaking problems among students in junior high school, while providing practical solutions for students and teachers alike.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Thai Education System

In Thailand, the children will start their first level of education when they are three years old. The students are in the early grades of education until they are six years old. After studying for three years in early grade, students will entrants to study in Grad 1 until Grad 6 this level we called primary level, the student will learn in this level for six years and then continue three years of lower secondary or Grad 7 until Grad 9

after that student graduate from Grad 9 in this section after students graduated Grad 9, they have to decide between the academic stream or opting for the vocational stream. Students who enter the academic stream usually intend to the university. While students who interested in vocational schools offer programs that prepare students for employment depending on their studies.

2.2 Speaking

Speaking is a result of a skill that falls into two main categories: preciseness and deftness. Accuracy consists of the use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation through activities, fluency considers the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously. Derakhshan (2016:44) From the statement previous, it can conclude that there are skills that can make speaking with accuracy and precision by learning grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

According to Gert and Hans in Efizal (2012:127) speaking is a way for people to show and have a conversation with others orally. Irawati (2014:26) state speaking is an activity to create saying by words and sentence.

English speaking is a foreign language, it is a difficult skill to be.

taught and learned because the learner should be skillful in respects such as practicing vocabulary, correct pronunciation, and knowing about grammar. When the learners want to speak, they also should think about all those aspects. Haryudin and Jamilah (2018:8) Therefore, speaking is the most difficult skill because it will be in combination with the other skills. Thus, people will be worried when they need to speak English.

There are factors of English speaking, most experts refer to English speaking as a combination of all the other skills. The meaning of speaking is the way we express our emotions and feelings or our opinions through words.

Moreover, people have been studying how to speak English effectively is letting people speak freely without stuttering with grammar but focusing on communication between others if we attached to grammar, it could make the student to be worried about speaking English. Makena (2013:12) It means English speaking without a focus on grammar can make students more interested in speaking English.

According to Khemkhaeng (2010:4) states that speaking is the most important in a foreign language. It is an ability that requires the process of communication, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary improvement. Even though schools know the way for interesting students to learn English speaking but the problems of teaching and learning English in Thailand is still hard for Thai students.

METHODS

The research was conducted at State Hadsaithog Junior High School, located in 3 Grande, Trang, Thailand, during the academic year of 2022/2023. The study was collected data through two methods: Google forms and video calls. This research utilized a qualitative design, which is a process that entails obtaining data in the form of words, rather than numbers (Rahman, 2016). It aims to explore both individual and group phenomena related to a social issue. In this case, the focus is on the speaking abilities of junior high school students at Hadsaithog School and how they handle that issue.

Qualitative research involves studying the target group through observation, interviews, or questionnaires. It does not necessarily require analyzing statistical information or numbers. The research process begins with studying the situation or natural phenomena, and all information gathered is analyzed, leading to a conclusion in the form of a theory focused on the inquiry process of the research.

Although defining qualitative research can be challenging, it involves finding results through various methods, such as observation or questionnaires, without a specific theory or paradigm. In this study, the researcher used a questionnaire to gather information, with descriptive results reported in the subsequent section.

The study utilized a qualitative design to explore the English-speaking problem among Thai junior high school students at Hadsaithog School and how they can manage it. The researcher selected ten junior high school students from Grand 3 of Hadsaithog School in the 2020/2021 academic year.

The data collection technique used was a questionnaire because it was suitable for the research purpose, and the researcher found it easier to understand each case (Musliadi, 2016). The questionnaire was distributed, and respondents provided written answers. A questionnaire is a document containing questions designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis. There are two types of questionnaires: structured and unstructured. Structured questionnaires are closed forms of questionnaires, requiring respondents to react with "yes" or "no" or select from multiple-choice options. On the other hand, unstructured questionnaires are open-ended, allowing respondents to express their opinions completely.

In this research, the researcher utilized an open-ended questionnaire to allow for free response and collect students' opinions. The questionnaire was written in both English and Thai to allow for relevant responses in the students' preferred language. The researcher collected data from students through a questionnaire and video interviews to understand their English-speaking challenges. After grouping the issues into three levels, the researcher analyzed the data to identify the problems and disseminated the findings. The video interviews helped collect information on the students' opinions on learning English, the most challenging aspects, and the positive and negative impacts of English speaking, leading to specific problem identification

and resolution.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

The following section presents the results of the researcher's data analysis and discussion, specifically regarding the Speaking English problem faced by Thai students in Junior High School at Hadsaithog School. Thailand's people have diverse backgrounds and education levels, creating differences in learning English language skills. The researchers conducted a questionnaire via Google forms and personal interviews with ten students (five males and five females) from Grand 9 at Hadsaithog School. The results indicated that most students struggle with Speaking English skills due to the following factors:

Inclination and Aptitude in English: Many students find English to be the most challenging subject, citing difficulty in understanding grammar, lack of exposure to English outside the classroom, and the language's vast vocabulary size. Some students also fear being ridiculed by peers if they make mistakes.

Basic Vocabulary: Students commonly struggle with basic vocabulary and combining words into meaningful sentences. Additionally, students tend to think in Thai before attempting to speak in English.

Grammatical: Grammar is another challenge for students due to its complexity and lack of understanding. Many students dislike grammar despite knowing its significance.

Listening Skill: Students often feel discouraged when they cannot understand the teacher's spoken English.

Pronunciation: Pronunciation is another significant obstacle for students, as English sounds and accents differ from Thai. Many students avoid speaking English due to fear of mispronouncing words.

Students' Family Background: Students from poor families often lack access to private tutoring, which could help improve their English speaking skills.

Negative Attitude Towards English: Many students hold unfavorable opinions about English, believing it to be a challenging language to learn, despite having no experience with it.

The Difficulty of English Aspect: Most students find English subject challenging due to complicated grammar, vocabulary, shyness, and limited exposure to English outside the classroom.

Importance of English Speaking from Students' Perspective: Students understand the importance of English speaking for global communication, academic performance, job opportunities, and personal development.

Benefits of English Speaking from Students' Aspect: Students acknowledge the benefits of English speaking, such as increasing intelligence, expanding opportunities for travel and communication, and more.

Ignorance of Language is the Loss: The majority of students agree that ignorance of the English language is a significant disadvantage, as it could limit future opportunities.

Main Problems of English Speaking for Students at Grand 9: Students struggle with vocabulary retention, sentence structure, anxiety, and fear of making mistakes or being ridiculed by peers while speaking English.

In conclusion, Thai students at Hadsaithog School face several obstacles in learning English speaking skills. These results highlight the need for additional support and resources to improve English language education in Thailand..

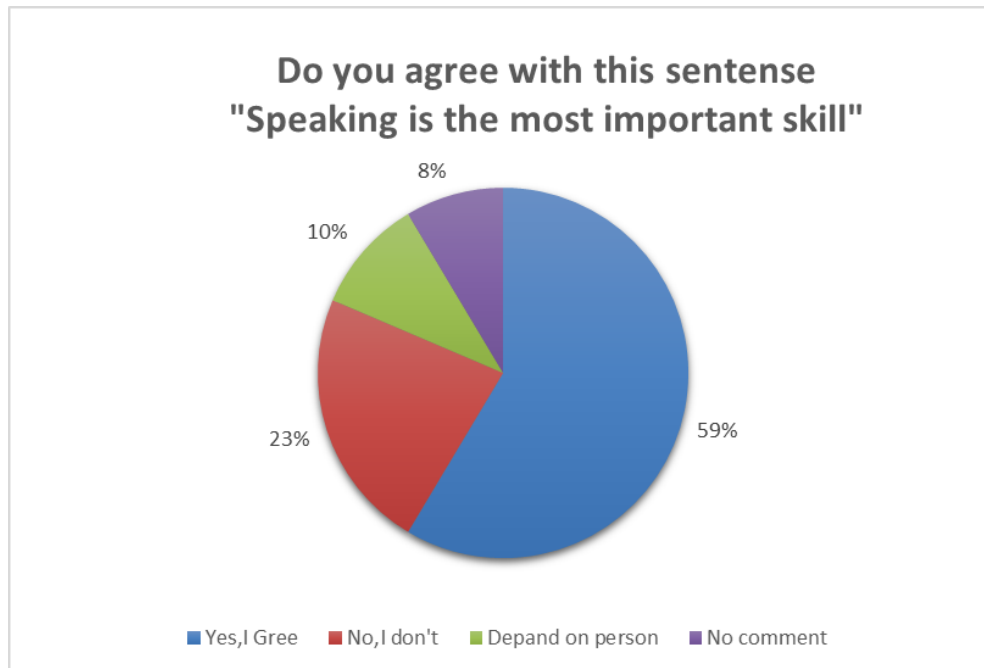**Figure 1: Survey result base from questionnaire**

Figure 2 : Relate between Grammar and English Speaking

CONCLUSION

A study conducted on students' English speaking skills found that they face difficulties in several areas, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and lack of confidence, motivation, and supportive environment. The primary factor identified was the challenging English environment in Thailand. Other factors include teacher practices that prioritize exam-centric material and grammar over speaking performance. The

study suggests that students can improve their speaking skills by practicing with various tools like movies, music, games, and following English influencers in Thailand.

Based on the research discussion and conclusion, the following suggestions are proposed for students, teachers, and future researchers:

For students: Students must comprehend the significance and benefits of learning the English language to motivate them to learn, students should maintain enthusiasm towards practicing and learning English, students must have a high level of motivation to learn English as an additional subject, and students should overcome their negative perception of English subjects.

For teachers: Teachers must encourage all students to continue studying and alter their mindset towards learning English, teachers should employ interesting teaching methods to facilitate the English learning process for students, and teachers must pay attention to the progress of all students, not just those who are skilled in English.

For researchers: The researcher hopes that this research will serve as a guide for future researchers interested in addressing similar problems related to English-speaking challenges in junior high schools..

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