

Anxiety on English Speaking in Classroom of Year Four Students at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University, Lao PDR

ความวิตกกังวลในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียนของนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 4 คณะอักษรศาสตร์

มหาวิทยาลัยสุภานุวงศ์ สาธารณรัฐประชาธิปไตยประชาชนลาว

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to study the anxiety on English speaking in classroom and the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking of the fourth year students at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University. It was a quantitative study and the participants were the 36 students in fourth year from department of Foreign Language, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University. The instrument was a questionnaire, consisting of 22 items about anxiety on English speaking and the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking. The Mean and Standard Deviation used SPSS Program to analyze the data. The findings of the study reveal that the students have problems in English speaking during class because they get nervous when speaking English as shown in the items of advice and self-report, answering their teachers' questions have the Mean of 4.00 and S.D of 0.87 and students feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other friends in class, with the Mean of 3.97 and S.D of 0.87, students worry and make mistakes and are afraid that their classmates will laugh at them, with the Mean of 3.96 and S.D of 0.87. The study also finds that the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking in classroom is that students are anxious to speak English in class, because they have a lack of flexibility of words, concerning their ideas, with the Mean of 3.89 and S.D of 1.30. Also, students have a lack of words and experience in pronunciation, with the Mean of 3.86 and S.D of 0.96. Moreover, students are afraid of making mistakes in grammar and structure of sentence, with the Mean of 3.61 and S.D of 0.96.

Keywords: anxiety, English speaking

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยคือเพื่อศึกษาความวิตกกังวลในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียน และสาเหตุของความวิตกกังวลของนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่สี่ คณะอักษรศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสุโขทัยวังศ งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้เป็นแบบเชิงปริมาณ โดยมีกลุ่มตัวอย่างคือนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่สี่คณะอักษรศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสุโขทัยวังศ จำนวน 36 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือแบบสอบถามที่มีข้อความเกี่ยวกับความวิตกกังวลและสาเหตุหลักของความวิตกกังวลในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ จำนวน 22 ข้อ ข้อมูลที่ได้ถูกนำมาวิเคราะห์หาค่าเฉลี่ยและค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐานโดยใช้โปรแกรม SPSS ผลที่ได้แสดงให้เห็นว่านักศึกษามีปัญหาในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียนเพราะมีความวิตกกังวล ค่าเฉลี่ย 4.00 และค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน 0.87 นักศึกษารู้สึกกังวลในการพูดต่อหน้าเพื่อนร่วมชั้นเรียนค่าเฉลี่ย 3.97 ค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน 0.87 นักศึกษากังวลที่จะพูดผิดและถูกหัวเราะโดยเพื่อนร่วมชั้นเรียน ค่าเฉลี่ย 3.96 ค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน 0.87 งานวิจัยยังพบอีกว่าสาเหตุหลักของความวิตกกังวลคือนักศึกษาขาดความยืดหยุ่นในการใช้คำศัพท์ ค่าเฉลี่ย 3.89 ค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน 1.30 และนักศึกษายังขาดทักษะในการออกเสียง ค่าเฉลี่ย 3.86 ค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน 0.96 ยิ่งไปกว่านั้นยังพบอีกว่านักศึกษากลัวในการพูดผิดโครงสร้างไวยากรณ์ ค่าเฉลี่ย 3.61 ค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน 0.96

คำสำคัญ: ความวิตกกังวล, การพูดภาษาอังกฤษ

Rational and Background of the study

English is used as a global language that has played an important role in communication around the world. Nowadays, English is called an international language and it is also the second language of many countries. Therefore, we can realize the importance in communication of this language. When we know English, we can come to and communicate with the citizens of most countries without any confusion in expressing our feeling and thinking. English language has played an important role in communication. Since the 1960s, Lin mentioned that, the faster growing industrial trades from countries in the Asian-Pacific region have promoted English learning to catch up with worldwide internationalization. Many non-English speaking countries have taken steps to promote their English education as a means of improving national productivity and increasing their ability to compete internationally. English language is necessary in the fields of science, technology, education, tourism and business. Thru, in the present are the important of acquiring the language undeniable. It is important that

students master and communicate English language in order to be able to prepare themselves for their future, make an effort and contribute to the development of the country. Nevertheless, most students have difficulties in communication with others in English (Wan, 2010: 189).

English language can be used for communication with native-speakers and non-native-speakers in the worldwide, especially in the education section. All university students need it for their studies in order to search information and obtain knowledge; therefore, a lot of the universities throughout the world need to include English language as one of their educational tool requirements. English is often used as the medium of instruction in higher education. On the other hand, obviously the fact of the day-to-day process of teaching and learning of the English language also related to many interrelated with social and political uses. People's demands toward English in many countries in the world make English language a key factor to become the international language that spreads quickly (Khader& Mohammad, 2010: 181).

Nowadays, speaking English is a great problem for students who study English. However, there are many reasons that cause this problem such as student felt that the lack of confidence to speak as the result of not knowing what to say. Some students might report that they have limited words or vocabulary to used conversation, while others might tell the teacher that the topic of conversation is not interesting. Also, there are many benefits of people who can understand and be able to communicate in English, such as the opportunity to communicate or work with people from other countries. Therefore, English has been taught in many schools nowadays. However, learning English is not very easy for all learners especially for the students who learn English as a foreign or second language, such as in Laos (Souriyavongsa & Lai Mei (2013 :181).

Regarding to Lao PDR, it is one of Asian countries that English has been taught as a foreign language in school and institution of education; specially in higher education institution. For a long period of time, Laos was used by English resided in Laos such as Souphanouvong University which is one of the five universities in Lao PDR, which was officially established in

November 2003 to develop human resources in eight northern parts of Laos. The University consists of six faculties such as the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Architecture, the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, the Faculty of Economics and Tourism, the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Languages (Abidin, Souriyavongsa, & Lai Mei, 2013: 181).

The Faculty of Languages is one of the six faculties of Souphanouvong University, which specializes in Languages. It covers English teaching and course development to upgrade students' knowledge and helps solve their study problems because the students are not confident enough to speak English, and they are worried about making mistakes, losing face and being criticised. They are not only unmotivated to express themselves, but also shy to pronounce and they cannot think of anything to say. It is difficult for many students to respond when their teachers ask them to say something in English because they might have fewer ideas about what to say, which vocabulary to use, or how to use the grammar correctly. Therefore, the researcher was interested in how to solve those problems and decided to conduct a study on speaking. The ultimate aim of this study was to identify the ways to help students who are studying at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University to become enthusiastic to speak English.

Purposes of the study

The purposes of research are:

1. To find out students' anxiety on English speaking of fourth year students at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University.
2. To study of the main cause of fourth year students' anxiety on English speaking in classroom at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University.

Scope of the study

1. Population

The population was the 36 students in year 4 from the Program of English, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University.

2. Content

There are 36 questionnaires with 22 items and the researcher spent a week to get the information for this study. In the questionnaire, there are two parts:

Part one is about students' anxiety on English speaking and part two is about the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking in class.

Methodology

1. Population

The population in this study was the year four students from the Program of English, Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Languages, Souphamouvong University. There were 36 students including 13 females. The whole population was used as the sample group, which means all of the students in year 4 from the Program of English, Department of Foreign Languages were selected to be the sample group because the sample group had fewer than 100 participants. So, the Purposive Sampling Technique was suitable to apply.

2. Research Instrument

To study the student's anxiety in speaking English in class, questionnaire was used a tool and explained below.

The questionnaire was adapted based on Horwitz & Cope (1986: 125). There were 33 items, focusing on the students' anxiety on a foreign language classroom. Thus, it was adapted based on Horwitz & Cope, and for 22 items, the researcher focused the item that supported speaking anxiety. There were 2 parts: Part 1 was about students' anxiety on English speaking with 10 items and part 2 was about the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking in class with 12 items. The data was calculated based on the five scales of score level of Likert: (5) meaning **Strongly agree**, (4) meaning **Agree**, (3) meaning **Undecided**, (2) meaning **Disagree** and (1) meaning **Strongly disagree**.

Data Collection

First, the researcher got the suggestion letter from the Dean of the Faculty of Languages and then brought the questionnaires to the supervisor to check. Next, the questionnaire was translated from English to Lao Language to enable the sample group to understand clearly.

After that, the researcher asked the 36 students who are in year 4 to fill in each questionnaire within 30 minutes before it was brought back to analyse. Finally, the researcher collected all of the questionnaires and carefully checked the answers.

Data Analysis

After collecting the questionnaires from the sample, the researcher carefully checked the students' answers to make sure that they were correct because the researcher had to bring the corrected data to analyze to find the main cause of anxiety on speaking English of year 4 students at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University and then sent to the advisor to check. After that, the data was analysed and calculated in percentage using Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS) Program. The data analysis was based on Mean and Standard Deviation (S.D) that were also analysed.

The data was calculated based on the five scales of Likert (1982):

Level of Score	Meaning
5	Strongly agree
4	Agree
3	Undecided
2	Disagree
1	Strongly disagree

Based on table 1, students get nervous when speaking English, especially when giving advice and self-report, answering questions and this has the Mean of 4.00 and S.D of 0.874 because students have not prepared their answers in advance and feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of their friends and it has the Mean of 3.97 and S.D of 0.879. They also worry about making mistakes and are afraid that others will laugh at them, with the Mean of 3.69 and S.D of 0.963.

Table 1: The results of students' anxiety on English speaking

No	Items	Mean	S.D
1	You are embarrassed when speaking English, especially when giving advice and self-reports.	3.83	0.910
2	You feel trembled when you know that, you are going to be called to answer a question.	3.78	0.989
3	You feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of others in class.	3.97	0.879
4	You get nervous when the teacher asks questions, which you have not prepared in advance.	4.00	0.874
5	You get nervous and serious when your teacher asks a question.	3.63	1.018
6	You are trembled when you know that you are going to be the first person to give various reports.	3.79	1.098
7	When you speak English, you are not anxious to answer questions, offer reports and do activities in the classroom.	3.28	1.186
8	You do not worry about making mistakes when you speak English or Lao with your teachers.	2.61	1.153
9	You always feel that other students speak English better than you do.	3.33	1.309
10	You are afraid that other students will laugh at you when you speak English.	3.69	0.963

Table 2: The results of the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking

No	Items	Mean	S.D
1	English speaking makes you more anxious than reading, writing and listening.	4.08	0.806
2	You are very anxious to speak English because you do not know many words.	3.86	0.961
3	You feel unconfident when speaking English in the classroom, such as when guidance on self-reporting and other talks.	3.59	1.307
4	You worry about speaking English because you are afraid of making mistakes in grammar and structure of sentence .	3.61	0.964
5	You are nervous and worried when speaking English because you have lack of flexibility on words and concerns of ideas.	3.89	1.306
6	You worry about speaking English because you cannot pronounce correctly.	3.47	0.971
7	You are nervous about speaking English because you rarely use social media to listen to English.	3.11	1.166
8	You are anxious to speak English because you dare not speak in public.	3.58	1.079
9	You are excited about speaking English because you do not have any experience in talking in English.	3.61	1.128
10	You worry about speaking English because you do not have any ideas to talk.	3.64	0.899
11	You feel unconfident and worried about speaking English because you are not skillful and so might become embarrassed.	3.72	1.111
12	You are nervous while speaking English because you are not brave enough and have lack of presentation skills.	3.64	1.125

From table 2, it has shown that students lack flexibility on words and concern of ideas, with the Mean of 3.89 and S.D of 1.306. Students do not know many words. They have a lack of experience, pronunciation problem, with the Mean of 3.86 and S.D of 0.961 and they are afraid of making mistakes in grammar and structure of sentence, with the Mean of 3.61 and S.D of 0.964.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the main finding shows that the fourth year students were anxious to speak English in class at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University, Academic Year 2017 because they were nervous when speaking English, such as when they were giving some advice, making self-reports, and answering questions. They were also nervous when giving an answer to a question which they did not prepare in advance. Moreover, they felt very self-conscious about speaking English in front of their friends in class and were afraid they would be laughed at.

The finding also indicated that speaking English made the students worried because they had a lack of flexibility on words, concern of ideas, and an anxiety of speaking English. They could not talk about something and also they did not know many words. Furthermore, they do not have enough experience and they do have pronunciation problems. As a result, the students were afraid of making mistakes on grammar and structure of sentence, and rarely used social media to practice speaking and listening.

Discussion

This study aimed at studying on students' anxiety on English speaking and the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking in classroom of year four at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University. Therefore, the finding of the study can be discussed below.

1. Students' anxiety on English speaking in classroom

From the research, it was found out that most of the students were nervous when the teacher asked a question which they did not prepare the answer in advance and this was in the Mean of 4.00 and S.D of .0874 because students had a lack of confidence and they were worried about making mistakes. They could not think of anything to say and they had only few ideas about what to say, and so they were often trembled when the teacher asked something in English, making them anxious and worried about grammatical and pronunciation mistakes. They were shy and afraid of saying the wrong words. They did not have much experience in talking to native speakers, so they felt scared. It was true that they were embarrassed and anxious when talking in English, especially when giving advice and making self-reports, with the Mean of 3.83 and S.D of 0.910 given that their presentation skills were not as competent as they should be and they hardly ever used social media to practice speaking and listening. Furthermore, they had very few ideas about what to say and this was because they were really shy to pronounce. They even had no experience in communicating, and were afraid that other students would laugh at them when they speak in English, with the Mean of 3.69 and S.D of 0.963. These students were overly fearful of their performance due to the perceived threat of failure and feel excessively burdened by competition with others to achieve good grades. Some students suffered from a condition known as fears faced by students from other towns and they got nervous and serious when answering a question the teacher asked. They felt very self-conscious about speaking English in front of others in class, with the Mean of 3.97 and S.D of 0.079.

The present study is relevant to the theory of Horwitz (1986: 125) saying that anxiety is part of human condition and it has a broad definition and anxiety is a negative way to present human feelings. When we are anxious, we feel nervous, worried, and fearful. We struggle, tremble, perspire, and our hearts beat quickly. In general, anxiety can be defined as a complex concept dependent upon not only on one's feelings of self-efficacy, but also appraisals concerning the potential and perceived threats inherent in certain situations and also anxiety in

general can be defined as the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system.

It also supports theory of Tobias (1986: 39) suggesting that anxiety is a negative way to present human feelings. When we are anxious, we feel nervous, worried, and fearful. We struggle, tremble, perspire, and our hearts beat quickly. In general, anxiety can be defined as a complex concept dependent upon not only on one's feelings of self-efficacy but also appraisals concerning the potential and perceived threats inherent in certain situations. By the result of the present study, the students were anxious and worried when they speak English, say something in English, and answering the teacher's questions. Although some students are good at speaking English because they have more experience speaking to native speakers and much exposure to learning English, many students are still worried when they say something in English because of a lack of practicing presentation skills.

2. The main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking in classroom

The finding supports the second objective of the present study. The researcher found that the main cause of speaking English and the main cause of students' anxiety on speaking English were because the students were worried when speaking English. That is to say, they were afraid of using the wrong vocabulary, concerns of the ideas, with the Mean of 3.89 and S.D of 1.306. Moreover, they did not know many words and they had very few ideas about what to say. They encountered grammatical and vocabulary problems with the Mean of 3.86 and S.D of 0.961. English speaking made them more anxious than reading, writing and listening. They had a lack of practicing speaking and presentation skills. Their pronunciation skills were weak, so they could not say anything. Therefore, these were the results with the Mean of 4.08 and S.D of 0.806. They hardly ever speak in front of many people which might cause embarrassment and so on, with the Mean of 3.72 and S.D of 1.11. Moreover, they did not know many vocabulary items, as many of them had problems concerning with the background of English knowledge. They had short-term memory for words and did not know much vocabulary and so often misspelt words, with the Mean of 3.86 and S.D of 0.961. They had a lack of courage, practice and presentation skills. Other problems were their lack of attention and being shy of

pronouncing, with the Mean of 3.64 and S.D of 1.125. The present study is related to the theory of Subaşı (2010: 43), who found 12 main causes of the students' anxiety on English speaking: (1) Limited vocabulary, (2) Inaccurate grammar, (3) Imperfect pronunciation, (4) Lack of active listening, (5) Fear of speaking in public, (6) Fear of expressing certain views, (7) Diminishing confidence, (8) Dominance of hesitation, (9) Lack of group skills, (10) Fear of making mistakes, (11) Lack of exposure practicing platforms and (12) Lack of fluency.

Further, it also corresponds with the theory of Suzan Hammad Rafada (2017: 60-61), who found 6 main causes of students' anxiety on English speaking: (1) Teachers' Role in Raising or Reducing Anxiety, (2) Lack of Vocabulary, (3) Weak Education at Schools, (4) Test Anxiety and (5) Peer Anxiety.

Recommendation

From the findings of the study on the students' anxiety on speaking English and the main causes of the students' anxiety on English speaking in class, the researcher would like to provide some future recommendations as shown below.

1. Future researchers should conduct a similar research and help solve such problems for improving students' speaking skills in the next year.
2. Teachers should help students overcome failures and anxiety and by encouraging them to become more confident in public speaking and learn from their own mistakes.
3. The next researchers should study more about anxiety in speaking English and try to find out other factors.
4. The factors that affect anxiety in other target groups should be studied.

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