

A study on the difficulties in teaching and learning english speaking to non-engl...

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A study on the difficulties in teaching and learning English speaking to non-English major freshmen at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry (HU') BY
datsY27101989 CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY OF STUDY PROJECT REPORT
TITLE: " A study on the difficulties in teaching and learning English speaking to non-English major freshmen at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry (HOI)"
Date of submission: 16/05/2013 Name: VO THI KIM COC Supervisor's Name: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Le Hung Tien Tutor's Name : Le Huong Hoa, M. A " I certify that this work is entirely my own and has not been accepted as part of a submission to another purpose elsewhere".

Signed: Word length: words ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS This study has been completed with the help and support of many people. Therefore, I am grateful to all of them. Most importantly, I wish to give my special acknowledgement to Mr. Le Hung Tien, my supervisor, who has made a significant contribution to the success of this research. He shaped me on the path toward being an independent researcher. I also would like to give my thanks for Ms. Le Huong Hoa, my tutor. Dear Ms. Hoa, thank you for your initial ideas of the research topic and your support during the time I was conducting the research.

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guidance helped me overcome difficulties while I was implementing the research. No acknowledgement would be completed without thanking my parents who always inspired me so much in finishing this research.

I also want to give acknowledgement to my friends who spent their time to help me analyze my paper and provide insightful comments. TABLE OF CONTENTS SUPERVISOR'S REMARKS Grade: Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Le Hung Tien ABSTRACT The research carried out under the title “ A study on the difficulties in teaching and learning English speaking to non-English major freshmen at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry’. The obstacles in teaching and learning speaking skill are surveyed in some selected classes and observed by the researcher. Interviews are also organized to get supplementary results for the questionnaires.

All the quantitative and qualitative methods are conveyed to get data for the research. As the result, teachers and students have different difficulties in teaching and learning speaking skill. In classes, the teachers surveyed meet difficulties with the large size of classes, students' low motivation, students' insufficient English competence, and so on while students meet obstacles such as difficult lessons, teacher's unsuitable teaching methods, and the worries of making mistakes. In summary, all the difficulties originate from objective and subjective reasons. The rationale of the study: Nowadays, English plays an important role in the society. The number of people English speaking is becoming popularly. Speaking skill is one of the inevitable skills in learning English. Penny Ur (1996: 120) noted, “ Speaking seems intuitively the most important in four basic skills”. In fact, through speaking, people can

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express their opinions, make social contact with others people, establish rapport. In some situation, we use English speaking to give instructions or to get things done. That is also a reason why today more and more people learn to speak English.

Most of the learners of English agree that the ability to express themselves freely in communication is the great importance for their future career, especially in modern societies where contacting with foreigners often occurs. However, there still exist many difficulties in learning and teaching English in Vietnam in general and at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry (HOI) in particular. Many Vietnamese learners can write and read English quite well but they cannot speak it correctly and fluently in real-life communication. Surely, there are many reasons for this reality.

After teaching the non-English major tudents especially freshmen at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry for some years, I have recognized some big obstacles which prevent English language teachers and learners in Vietnam from achieving their aims. These obstacles are: large and heterogeneous classes, students' low level of English language proficiency, students' low motivation and some others. Unfortunately, this is not only the situation in these universities but also the case for many other colleges and universities in Vietnam. This has given me the desire to conduct " A study on the difficulties in teaching and of Industry' 2.

Aims of the study: The research investigates the reality of teaching and learning English speaking skill to non-English major freshmen at Ho Chi Minh

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University of Industry. The main goal of the research is to identify the difficulties of teacher and students when they deal with speaking skill. 3.

Research questions of the study: 1 . What are the difficulties of teacher at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry when teaching English speaking to non-English major freshmen? 2. What are the difficulties of non-English major freshmen at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry when learning the English speaking? 4. The scope of the study:

Teaching and learning the English speaking skill is a wide field for research. In the scope of this study due to the limited time and knowledge, the study focuses on difficulties in teaching and learning English speaking to the first-year students of non-English major at HI-JI. 5. Methods of the study: To fulfill the above aims, the investigator has chosen both qualitative and quantitative methods for the study. Data for analysis are gained through the following sources: Survey questionnaires: this method is used to find out the difficulties the teacher and first-year students of non-English major at Ho Chi Minh

University of Industry when they learn and teach English speaking. The questionnaires are useful for getting data of the attitudes and behaviors of the teachers and learners when facing these difficulties. It is very convenient for the significant in getting more qualitative data by getting closer to the objects of the study. Moreover, observation done by the researcher is leading to more objective data and open new perspective of the study. 6. Design of the study: This minor study consists of two parts: Part A-

INTRODUCTION: states the rationale, aims, research questions, the scope, method and design of the study.

Part B- DEVELOPMENT: includes three chapters: Chapter I -LITERATURE REVIEW: provides theoretical background that is relevant to the purpose of the study. Chapter II -METHODOLOGY: presents the methodology of the study including the research context, methods of study, research design. Chapter III -FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: deals with the data analysis of two questionnaires designed for English teachers and non-English major freshmen to find out their difficulties in teaching and learning speaking skill.

PART S: DEVELOPMENT 1. 1.

Speaking Skill: 1. 1. 1 . Concepts of Speaking: Speaking is the productive, oral skill. Speaking consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning (utterances are simply things people say). According to Carter & David Nunan's book (2001 : 19), " speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information and it is often spontaneous, open-ended and evolving", but it is not completely unpredictable. Speaking is fundamental to human communication.

Different linguistics has different concepts of speaking but they are all agreeing with this idea. Brown also defines in her book " speaking as an process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information", (1994: 241). In Brown and Yule's opinions in teaching the Spoken Language book (1983: 236), " spoken language consists

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of short, fragmentary utterances in a range of pronunciation". Usually, there is a great deal of repetition and overlap between one speaker and another.

Speaker usually uses non-specific references. They also add that spoken language is made by using the loosely organized syntax, and non-specific words, phrases and filters such as Oh, well, uhuh, etc. A comprehensive discussion of the nature of speaking is provided by Bygate (1991: 59), who shows that in order to be able to speak a foreign language, it is obviously necessary to have micro-linguistic skills, that is, to understand some grammar, vocabulary and the rules governing how words are put together to form sentences.

However, these motor-perceptive skills, as Bygate calls them, are not sufficient since while producing sentences, we often have to adapt them to the circumstances. He then presents the second set of speaking skills: the interaction skills, which involve using knowledge and basic motor-perception skills in deciding what to say and how to say it, while maintaining the intended relation with others.

1. 1. 2. The Role and Status of Speaking in Language Learning and Teaching: As it was implied in the introduction, the skill of speaking has been recently considered by many methodologists a priority in language teaching.

Of all the four skills, Ur (1996: 120) concludes, speaking seems intuitively the most important. Most language learners, she adds, are primarily interested in learning to speak. Similar view is held by Nunan, who says that the ability to operate in a second language can be actually equated to the ability to

speak that language. Hedge (2000: 258) gives the evidence that speaking has recently obtained, at least from textbook writers, the attention it deserves: “ Learners need to develop at the same time the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, functional language and communicative skills.

Attention to the systems of language is crucial, but the development of fluency and contextual appropriate are equally important goals”. The reasons for learning to speak competently are formulated as follows: Learners may need the skill to establish and maintain relationships, to negotiate, to influence people. Speaking is the skill by which learners are assessed when the first impression is formed in Hedge’s book (2000: 261). 1. 2. Difficulties in Teaching and Learning to Speak English Skill: 1. 2. 1 .

Difficulties from Teacher: There is no learning without teaching. So as a tool of implementing teaching plans learning.

Quite a few researches have discussed the relationship between teacher talk and language learning. As Nunan (1991: 203) points out: “ Teacher talk is of crucial importance, not only for the organization of the classroom but also for the processes of acquisition. It is important for the organization and management of the classroom because it is through language that teachers either succeed or fail in implementing their teaching plans. In terms of acquisition, teacher talk is important because it is probably the major source of comprehensible target language input the learner is likely to receive”.

The amount and type of teacher talk is even regarded as a decisive factor of success or failure in classroom teaching. Moreover, to make the process of

teaching and learning effective, it is very essential to build a friendly, non-threatening classroom atmosphere which is created on the basis of a close teacher-learner relationship. Therefore, inappropriate teacher pedagogical practices through not only classroom teacher talk but also classroom teacher-learner relationship have also been seen as a major contributor to the difficulties in teaching speaking skill. 1. 2. 2.

Difficulties from Students: In speaking class, besides the active learners, some learners feel shy or afraid to speak or express their ideas, especially when students are being asked to give personal information or opinions. Maybe students fear to lose face in front of their classmates. Referring to this problem, David Nunan noted in his book (1999: 231), " In the recent informal survey that I carried out with colleagues, reluctance to speak on the part of student was seen as their biggest challenge". In the speaking activities, pronunciation plays an important role; it is the way for students to produce clearer language when they speak.

If they pronounce wrong, no one can understand what they want to say. Howatt talked about this problem in Ronald Carter and David Nunan's book (2001: 14), " it was essential that the learner's pronunciation should be correct before moving on to texts". Besides that, the local accent is also another reason so that they need to practice the right pronunciation. They must follow a standard accent to pronounce exactly. " Another aspect of speaking that is particularly relevant for second language speakers concerns whether or not the speaking is planned or spontaneous" (David Nunan, 2001: 227).

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With speaking performance, students often have mistakes on grammatical points such as word using, tense and sentence structure because there are differences on structure, tenses, and word order between English and Vietnamese. Thus, to speak a language, one must know how the language is used in a social context” Richards & Renandya (2002: 206). Being influenced by the mother tongue, learners sometime cannot use word appropriately and speak English like native speakers because each language has its own rules of usage. That is the main reason preventing students’ ability of English speaking.

There are some situations happening in classroom. Teachers give students a topic to speak, but they cannot present the topic. The reason for this problem is that students do not have enough knowledge, vocabulary or they are not major in this topic. When students do not have idea to express the topic, it can be easy for students to feel boring in speaking class. Therefore, in order to improve the speaking skill, students not only understand the basic knowledge involving in many different fields but also have a large knowledge of vocabulary.

As Canale and Swain proposed, competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence, which reflect the use of the linguistic system and the functional aspects of communication, respectively’, Richards and Renandya’s book (2002: 206). CHAPTER II: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 2. 1 . Method context: . 1. 1 . Description of the English course for non-English major freshmen and its objectives at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry: The

study is conducted at Ho Chi Minh university of Industry. They must spend the first two years learning Basic English.

They learn integrated skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) in a 12 credit course in three semesters. Students learn the textbooks American Headway 1B, American Headway 2A, American Headway 2B. The aim of this course for non-English major freshmen is to develop students' communicative competence in English. After the course, students are expected to communicate in English at the intermediate level. Students will normally learn English to communicate with other people fluently after finishing their study at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry. . 1. 2. Description of the non-English major freshmen at HOI: Most of non-English major freshmen at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry must learn English from the first semester (at the beginning of the first year) to the second or third semester (at the end of the first year). They start at different levels of English and learn different majors such as Electrical, Electronic, Mechanical, Chemical Engineering, Environment, Information Technology, Business Administration, Finance and Banking.

Students who have a certain competence of English forget a part what they learned after the long time they prepared for the university entrance examination. 2. 1. 3. Description of the English teachers at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry: Most of English teachers teach English for non-English major students are from Faculty of Foreign Languages at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry. Most of them graduated from some institutions or universities of training teachers of English such as Ho Chi Minh University of

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Pedagogy, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, or other universities in Australia, Canada and English.

The qualification status of teaching contingent is that of the teachers are enthusiastic and active in teaching. The frequent meeting or discussions on how to improve the teaching and learning quality are held to get new ideas about changing teaching and learning methods as well as adapting materials appropriate to students. 2. 2. Methods of study: The study employs both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This is, according to WisJer. G (2001 : 138) “ a common approach”. Questionnaires are used as a kind of quantitative method of study to collect information from teachers and students.

The questionnaires include both closed and open-ended questions which give teachers and students chance to express their opinions on the difficulties of teaching and learning English speaking skill. Besides that, interviews and group observation are used to get quantitative data for the study. Their in-dept thinking noted during the interview will help the researcher have more sights looks into the study issue. Moreover, observations give a condition for the researcher to check whether the teachers and students do what they say in the lessons. . 3. Research design: 2. 3. 1 . Sample and sampling: The data of the study is collected from two main sources: survey questionnaires and interviews. The survey questionnaire is conducted among 1 5 teachers who have from 3 to 10 years in teaching English to non-English major students at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry. The questionnaires for non-English major students are delivered to 150 students learning in three groups. They are

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first-year students who re taking part in a second semester of their English course. 2. 3. 2.

Research Instruments: The data for the study comes from both a quantitative method called survey questionnaires, and two qualitative methods mainly interview and group observation. 2. 3. 3. Data analysis: Data analysis is not only the process of reading out the data collected but the process of interpreting data under the viewpoint and experience of the researcher. The analysis will bring a lot of suppositions in the research question into light. These results will be presented in forms of tables and chart that help to compare different viewpoints of teachers and students on the research problems.

CHAPTER III: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION This part will deal with the data analysis of two questionnaires designed for English teachers and non-English major freshmen to find out their difficulties in teaching and learning English speaking skill. BOOKS: 1 . Brown, H. D. (1994). Teaching by Principles: an Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy. Prentice Hall. 2. Brown, G. & Yule, G. (1983). Teaching the Spoken Language. Cambridge University Press. 3. Bygate. (1987). Speaking. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 4. David Nunan. 1999). Second Language Teaching & Learning.

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