

การสำรวจปัญหาและแนวทางการรับมือในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของ นิสิตคณะศึกษาศาสตร์

A SURVEY STUDY OF ENGLISH SPEAKING PROBLEMS AND COPING APPROACHES OF
EDUCATION FACULTY STUDENTS

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาปัญหาการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของนิสิตคณะศึกษาศาสตร์ 2) สำรวจแนวทางการรับมือกับปัญหาของนิสิตคณะศึกษาศาสตร์ 3) ศึกษาแนวทางการพัฒนาจากอาจารย์ผู้สอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อยกระดับความสามารถด้านการพูดของนิสิต ประชากรที่ใช้ในการวิจัยมีจำนวน 359 คน กลุ่มตัวอย่างประกอบด้วยนิสิตชั้นปีที่ 2 ถึง 4 จำนวน 101 คน (ความคลาดเคลื่อน 8.3%) ซึ่งเป็นนิสิตทุนโครงการเพชรในตม คณะศึกษาศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ ปีการศึกษา 2569 ที่ได้มาจากการเลือกกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบตามสะดวก (Convenience sampling) นอกจากนี้ยังมีการสัมภาษณ์อาจารย์ผู้สอนภาษาอังกฤษจำนวน 3 ท่านในฐานะผู้ให้ข้อมูลสำคัญ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัย ได้แก่ แบบสอบถามชนิดมาตราส่วนประมาณค่า (Likert-scale) 5 ระดับ และแบบสัมภาษณ์กึ่งโครงสร้าง ทั้งนี้ แบบสอบถามมีความเที่ยงตรงเชิงเนื้อหาอยู่ในเกณฑ์ที่ยอมรับได้ (IOC = 0.67 - 1.00) และมีค่าความเชื่อมั่น (Cronbach's alpha) เท่ากับ 0.89 สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา ผลการวิจัยพบว่า นิสิตประสบปัญหาด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษอยู่ในระดับมาก (M = 3.84)

โดยปัญหาด้านเนื้อหาและความคิดเป็นสิ่งที่ท้าทายมากที่สุด ($M = 3.88$) รองลงมาคือ ด้านภาษาศาสตร์ ($M = 3.83$) และด้านจิตวิทยา ($M = 3.80$) ตามลำดับ โดยมีไวยากรณ์ คำศัพท์ และการขาดความรู้ในหัวข้อที่พูด เป็นประเด็นปัญหาสำคัญ สำหรับแนวทางการรับมือกับปัญหา พบว่า นิสิตมีการใช้กลวิธีการแก้ปัญหาด้วยตนเองอยู่ในระดับมาก ($M = 3.72$) โดยมีการปรับตัวทางด้านภาษามากที่สุด โดยเฉพาะการเลือกใช้คำศัพท์ที่ง่ายและการเตรียมประโยคไว้ล่วงหน้า นอกจากนี้ ยังมีการใช้การเตรียมความพร้อมด้านจิตใจ การฝึกซ้อม การใช้ท่าทางประกอบ และการเตรียมเนื้อหามาใช้อย่างแพร่หลาย ผลการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพยังแสดงให้เห็นว่านิสิตอาศัยการพึ่งพาเทคโนโลยี การฝึกฝนซ้ำ ๆ และการใช้ภาษาที่เรียบง่ายขึ้น ในขณะเดียวกัน อาจารย์ผู้สอนภาษาอังกฤษได้เน้นย้ำว่า การพัฒนาการพูดให้มีประสิทธิภาพนั้น จำเป็นต้องบูรณาการความสามารถทางภาษาศาสตร์ ความพร้อมทางด้านจิตใจ และความรู้ในเนื้อหาเข้าด้วยกัน ผ่านการจัดการเรียนการสอนในชั้นเรียนที่คอยสนับสนุนและเน้นการสื่อสาร

คำสำคัญ: ปัญหาการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ แนวทางการรับมือกับปัญหา แนวทางการพัฒนา

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to (1) examine English-speaking problems of Education faculty students, (2) investigate coping approaches of Education faculty students, and (3) explore development approaches from English professors to enhance students' speaking proficiency. The population consisted of 359 students, and the sample comprised 101 second- to fourth-year students (8.3% margin of error) who are Phet Nai Tom scholarship students at the Faculty of Education, Srinakharinwirot University, in the 2026 academic year, selected through convenience sampling. Three English professors were interviewed as key informants. Research instruments included a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire demonstrated acceptable content validity ($IOC = 0.67 - 1.00$) and reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$). Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and content analysis. The results indicated that students experienced English-speaking problems at a high level ($M = 3.84$). Content and ideas posed the greatest challenge ($M = 3.88$), followed by linguistic ($M = 3.83$) and psychological aspects ($M = 3.80$), with grammar, vocabulary, and lack of topical knowledge as key issues. Regarding coping approaches, students reported a high level of self-directed coping strategies ($M = 3.72$), with linguistic adjustments most frequently employed, particularly the use of simple vocabulary and prior sentence preparation. Additionally, psychological preparation, rehearsal, and the use of gestures and topic preparation were commonly applied. Qualitative findings revealed reliance on technology, repeated practice, and simplified language use. English professors emphasized that effective speaking development requires integrating linguistic competence,

psychological readiness, and content knowledge through supportive and communicative classroom practices.

Keywords: English speaking problems, Coping approaches, Development approaches

Introduction

As English-speaking skills are essential for professional success (Robert & Meenakshi, 2022), developing oral proficiency remains a multidimensional challenge for Thai EFL learners, encompassing linguistic, psychological, and content-related barriers (Pristiyaputri et al., 2023; Sha'ar & Boonsuk, 2021). Addressing these barriers requires pedagogical approaches that foster communicative practice and learner confidence, yet translating such approaches into actual speaking ability remains difficult in EFL contexts (Farrelly & Sinwongsawat, 2021; Thuratham & Namsaeng, 2025). These difficulties often stem from limited practice opportunities, insufficient exposure, and a fear of negative evaluation, which significantly impact communicative readiness among university-level Thai EFL learners (Farrelly & Sinwongsawat, 2021; Sha'ar & Boonsuk, 2021; Thuratham & Namsaeng, 2025). At Srinakharinwirot University (SWU), this issue is particularly evident among non-English majors, whose formal exposure is largely confined to general Education courses SWU193 and SWU194.

This challenge is especially critical for Education faculty students in the Phet Nai Tom Scholarship Program, a tripartite collaboration among SWU, the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), and the Ministry of Education, which recruits high-potential students from rural and security-sensitive areas in southern Thailand to become civil service teachers in their hometowns. Prolonged regional unrest has often disrupted their prior English learning (Assalihee & Boonsuk, 2022), yet as future primary school teachers, they may be required to teach English despite not majoring in it (Tianchai et al., 2025), making their speaking ability critical for both academic success and future instructional effectiveness. To graduate, SWU students must achieve a CEFR B2 level on the SWU-SET (Srinakharinwirot University, 2019); however, records indicate that many Phet Nai Tom students perform below this threshold. To manage these difficulties, they employ coping approaches ranging from linguistic adjustments to psychological and technological support (Qin & Poopatwiboon, 2023), underscoring the need for targeted intervention.

Given these concerns, Phet Nai Tom students face dual demands: meeting graduation requirements and preparing to teach in underserved communities. Yet research on this group remains scarce. Although previous Thai EFL studies have examined speaking difficulties across linguistic, psychological, and content-related dimensions, these factors are often addressed separately (Diana et al., 2024; Qin & Poopatwiboon, 2023), and limited research has explored how they intersect with coping approaches and instructor recommendations, particularly among learners from security-sensitive backgrounds. Therefore, this study investigates the English-speaking problems experienced by Phet Nai Tom students, the coping approaches they employ, and expert recommendations for supporting their holistic speaking development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine English-speaking problems of Education faculty students.
2. To investigate coping approaches of Education faculty students.
3. To explore development approaches from English professors to enhance Education faculty students' speaking proficiency.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of this study consisted of 359 second- to fourth-year Education faculty students enrolled in the Phet Nai Tom Scholarship program at the Faculty of Education, Srinakharinwirot University, across the Prasarnmit (Bangkok) and Ongkharak (Nakhon Nayok) campuses, Thailand, in the 2026 academic year. Due to the examination period, a convenience sample of 101 participants was utilized. While smaller than the ideal 186 recommended (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), this sample yields an 8.3% margin of error at a 95% confidence level, remaining within the acceptable 10% threshold.

In addition, three English professors from the Department of Curriculum and English Language Instruction at Srinakharinwirot University were recruited as key informants. They were interviewed to provide recommendations on student's English-speaking problems and effective approaches for improvement.

2. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The research instruments employed in this study included a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

2.1 Questionnaire

The primary questionnaire consisted of four main sections. Section 1 collected demographic data, including gender, academic year, major, and SWU-SET English proficiency scores. Section 2 examined English-speaking problems using a 16-item, five-point agreement scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) to investigate students' internal perceptions and attitudes. These items covered three core domains: linguistic (vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation), psychological (motivation, confidence, and anxiety), and content constraints (topical knowledge). Section 3 explored coping approaches via a 24-item, five-point frequency scale (always to never) to capture actual behaviors and practical habits. This section comprehensively assessed approaches such as digital tool utilization, generative AI assistance, code-mixing/switching, non-verbal cues, relaxation techniques, collaborative learning, and conceptual brainstorming. Finally, Section 4 included open-ended questions to elicit qualitative insights into these specific speaking problems and strategic coping approaches.

The content validity, evaluated by three experts, showed acceptable IOC values ranging from 0.67 to 1.00, prompting revisions prior to data collection. Additionally, a pilot test with 30 respondents confirmed its reliability, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.89.

2.2 Interview

A semi-structured interview was conducted with three English professors to obtain in-depth insights into students' English-speaking problems and effective strategies for improvement. The interview protocol included open-ended questions focusing on linguistic, psychological, and content-related aspects. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

3. DATA COLLECTION

In late February 2026, the researchers distributed questionnaires to 101 Education faculty students, analyzing the collected responses using Google Forms and Microsoft Excel software. Based on the survey data, they conducted interviews with three English professors to obtain advice and recommendations to help develop the students' English speaking skills. The obtained data were categorized to create a holistic summary.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics via JASP and Microsoft Excel. Frequencies and percentages summarized demographics, while means and standard deviations evaluated speaking problems and coping strategies. Mean scores were interpreted on a five-level scale (from 1.00–1.80 for very low, to 4.21–5.00 for very high). Qualitative data from open-ended questions and interviews underwent content analysis, utilizing member checking to verify accuracy and ensure rigor.

RESULTS

The findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

PERSONAL INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The 101 participants were predominantly female (75.2%), followed by male (22.8%) and others (2.0%). Academically, the largest group comprised third-year students (38.6%), with second- and fourth-year students each accounting for 30.7%. Regarding academic majors, 71.3% were enrolled in Elementary Education, and 3.0% in Childhood Education. The remaining students majored in various Elementary Education and Learning Management programs, specifically in: Social Studies (6.7%); Mathematics, Science, and Thai (5.0%); English (3.0%); and Computer (1.0%).

In addition, the CEFR levels of 101 students, as measured by SWU-SET, revealed that 69 students (68.32%) of participants were the A2 level (22-49 score), followed by the B1 level (50-77 score) with 24 students (23.76%), the A1 level (0-21 score) with 6 students (5.94%), and the B2 (78-100 score) with only 2 students (1.98%).

1. ENGLISH SPEAKING PROBLEMS

Overall, the students experienced speaking problems at a high level (Mean = 3.84). The problems can be summarized into three main aspects:

Table 1: The Summary of Three Aspects of The English Speaking Problems.

Statement	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
1. Content and Ideas as Problems in English Speaking	3.88	0.99	High	1
1.1 I find it difficult to speak English when I am unfamiliar with the topic.	4.04	1.00	High	1
1.2 I cannot respond to English questions immediately when I have little knowledge about the topic.	3.84	0.95	High	3

Statement	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
1.3 I often pause or hesitate because I cannot think of ideas to express in English.	4.01	0.97	High	2
1.4 I struggle to organize my thoughts when speaking English.	3.63	1.03	High	4
2. Linguistic Problems in English Speaking	3.83	1.03	High	2
2.1 I experience problems in speaking English because I do not know enough words to express my ideas clearly.	4.10	0.97	High	2
2.2 I do not know how to choose appropriate words when I speak English.	3.93	1.02	High	4
2.3 I feel confused about how to arrange words correctly when I speak English.	4.01	1.00	High	3
2.4 I am unable to apply grammatical rules correctly in English conversation.	4.15	0.94	High	1
2.5 I have difficulty pronouncing certain English sounds that do not exist in my mother language.	3.28	1.18	Moderate	6
2.6 I experience problems in speaking English because I use incorrect stress or intonation that affects meaning of words or sentences.	3.49	1.04	High	5
3. Psychological Problems in English Speaking	3.80	1.18	High	3
3.1 I have less motivation to speak English during classroom activities and real-life contexts.	3.72	1.23	High	4
3.2 I have to put much effort into improving my English speaking skills.	4.04	1.05	High	1
3.3 I feel unconfident when I have to speak English in front of others.	3.71	1.28	High	5
3.4 I avoid speaking English because I am afraid of making mistakes.	3.63	1.22	High	6
3.5 I feel nervous when I have to speak English in class and real-life contexts.	3.76	1.20	High	3
3.6 I feel uncomfortable when I am asked to speak English without preparation.	3.94	1.10	High	2

These findings indicate that students' English-speaking difficulties are multidimensional, driven by content-related, linguistic, and psychological barriers. Specifically, limited topical knowledge significantly hinders their ability to generate ideas

and maintain communication effectively. Furthermore, linguistic deficits—particularly in grammar and vocabulary—present a serious challenge; while students understand grammatical rules theoretically, they struggle to apply them spontaneously in real-time. These issues are further compounded by psychological barriers, especially speaking anxiety. Students experience high discomfort and pressure during unexpected speaking tasks, indicating heavy reliance on advance preparation to feel confident.

The qualitative data consistently supported these results, revealing the underlying behaviors and emotional reactions associated with these challenges. When facing unfamiliar topics or lacking an adequate mental word bank, students demonstrated a lack of automaticity, relying heavily on mental translation from Thai to English. This first language interference caused hesitation, fragmented sentences, and unnatural grammatical structures. Moreover, spontaneous speaking situations triggered intense mental blocks, primarily driven by a fear of making vocabulary or grammar mistakes and the worry of being judged by peers. Ultimately, these negative emotional reactions create a detrimental cycle where fear reduces classroom participation, limiting speaking practice and further weakening their overall confidence.

2. COPING APPROACHES FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING PROBLEMS

Overall, students applied coping approaches at a high level (Mean = 3.72). They employed various coping approaches across three aspects:

Table 2: The Summary of Three Aspects of The Coping Approaches.

Statement	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
1. Linguistic Approaches	3.94	1.00	High	1
1.1 I ask classmates to help correct my pronunciation.	3.44	1.17	High	8
1.2 I use simple and familiar words to express my ideas clearly when speaking English.	4.27	0.99	Very high	1
1.3 I use code-mixing with my mother language tongue or other language to maintain communication when I cannot think of English vocabulary.	3.92	1.00	High	6
1.4 I try to use simple and short grammatical structures when speaking English.	4.09	0.96	High	3
1.5 I prepare and practice constructing sentence structures before participating in English discussions or presentations.	4.22	0.94	High	2

Statement	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
1.6 I use a variety of sentence patterns to convey my intended meaning when I am unsure about my grammatical accuracy while speaking English.	3.67	1.04	High	7
1.7 I use online tools or dictionaries to check the correct English pronunciation when people cannot understand what I said.	3.95	1.02	High	5
1.8 When I do not know certain English words during a conversation, I use an online dictionary or a digital application to find out and translate their meaning.	4.02	1.03	High	4
1.9 I use repetition or slower speech to improve English pronunciation clarity and accuracy when speaking English.	3.92	0.87	High	6
2. Content and Ideas Approaches	3.67	0.96	High	2
2.1 Before speaking English, I read or search for information related to the discussion or conversation topic.	3.90	0.92	High	2
2.2 I summarize key points from reading materials before participating in English discussion or conversation.	3.43	0.97	High	6
2.3 I use my topical knowledge to speak English with more detail, substance, and fluency.	3.55	0.99	High	4
2.4 I use brainstorming to generate ideas before participating in an English discussion or conversation.	3.50	0.93	High	5
2.5 I organize my ideas using notes or outlines before speaking English.	3.62	0.98	High	3
2.6 I use gestures or body language to help express my ideas more clearly.	4.04	0.98	High	1
3. Psychological Approaches	3.54	1.02	High	3
3.1 I motivate myself to practice speaking English regularly to improve my ability.	3.37	1.05	Moderate	8
3.2 I participate in speaking activities because I believe English speaking is not important for my future.	3.00	1.17	Moderate	9
3.3 I use technology or online platforms to encourage myself to practice speaking English independently.	3.63	0.96	High	4
3.4 I practice speaking English with peers before speaking in front of the other.	3.39	1.00	Moderate	7
3.5 I keep talking in English even after I say something wrong.	3.67	1.00	High	3
3.6 I prepare and rehearse to increase my confidence when speaking English.	4.00	1.02	High	1

Statement	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
3.7 I use deep breathing or relaxation techniques before speaking English in front of others.	3.48	1.04	High	6
3.8 I pause briefly and stay calm to organize my thoughts when I feel anxious while speaking English.	3.61	0.95	High	5
3.9 I ask my conversation partner for help or to repeat the question when I feel anxious.	3.70	1.02	High	2

These findings suggest that students utilized practical and preparation-based approaches to overcome their multifaceted English-speaking challenges. To address linguistic barriers, they prioritized communicative effectiveness over grammatical complexity by simplifying their speech with familiar vocabulary and short sentence structures. For idea-related and psychological problems, students recognized the crucial role of pre-speaking preparation. They relied heavily on gathering information, planning, and rehearsal to build confidence, reduce anxiety, and increase their readiness for oral performance. Furthermore, when verbal expression was limited, they effectively employed non-verbal communication, such as gestures and physical cues, to ensure their meaning was conveyed clearly.

The qualitative findings consistently supported these results, revealing a strong reliance on technological aids, proactive rehearsal, and behavioral adjustments. Students frequently used tools like Google Translate and online dictionaries to compensate for vocabulary deficits, while depending on memorized scripts, repeated practice, and circumlocution to maintain communication. To mitigate anxiety and build topical familiarity, they actively researched topics beforehand and exposed themselves to English media (e.g., movies, music, and TikTok). During unexpected or real-time speaking situations where preparation was not possible, students actively utilized gestures and facial expressions to aid incomplete verbal expression and sustain the interaction.

3. DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES FROM ENGLISH PROFESSORS

Based on the interviews with three English professors, their recommendations to improve students' English speaking skills can be summarized into three main dimensions:

3.1 Linguistic Development: The professors agreed that linguistic knowledge is the foundation of speaking. Teachers should teach vocabulary through sentence construction and role-play activities. They emphasized that basic, high-frequency words are sufficient for general communication. For grammar and pronunciation, teachers should not interrupt students while they are speaking. Instead, they should use indirect correction and

provide correct models after the students finish speaking. The focus should be on intelligibility rather than a perfect accent.

3.2 Psychological Support: Motivation is the starting point for speaking development. To reduce anxiety and build self-confidence, teachers must create a safe space for mistakes. They should normalize errors and use positive reinforcement, such as praise and small rewards. If students are too shy to speak in public, alternative practice formats, like recording videos or audio at home, should be allowed.

3.3 Content and Idea Generation: Receptive skills, such as listening and reading diverse content, are essential for productive speaking. Teachers should use brainstorming activities to help students build background knowledge before speaking. In real-life communication, students should practice "circumlocution" (using simple words to describe an unknown word) and use body language to support their meaning.

Overall, the professors strongly suggested that all three dimensions must be integrated into classroom activities. Furthermore, assessments should focus on long-term behavioral observation and individual progress rather than strict grading.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that students experienced high-level speaking problems, primarily driven by "Content and Ideas" barriers due to their rural backgrounds and limited prior English exposure (Assalihee & Boonsuk, 2022). Aligning with their CEFR A2 proficiency, learners naturally lack the automaticity and topical knowledge needed for spontaneous thought formulation. Consequently, they experience a deficit in strategic competence, where the cognitive load of retrieving vocabulary simultaneously paralyzes their ability to generate content (Choi & Kang, 2024).

This introduces a new discovery in Thai EFL pedagogy: speaking barriers for rural, non-English major pre-service teachers stem primarily from conceptual and topical deficiencies rather than purely linguistic ones. Contrasting with traditional literature that blames vocabulary and grammar rules (Dayama et al., 2021; Riensumettharadol & Sujarinpong, 2023), however this study aligns with Attahakul et al. (2024), confirming that performance blocks are deeply intertwined with affective barriers and a lack of opportunities to engage with unfamiliar topics.

Furthermore, a profound disconnect exists between students' coping behaviors and communicative competence. Their heavy reliance on immediate linguistic approaches, such

as translation tools and body language, temporarily reduces anxiety and facilitates "talk as performance." However, it ultimately impedes the development of "talk as interaction" (Richards, 2008), trapping students in a cycle of mental translation from Thai to English.

To break this cycle and foster pedagogical readiness, expert recommendations emphasize holistically integrating linguistic, psychological, and content dimensions. Instruction must prioritize building topical knowledge through receptive skills and brainstorming to enrich students' mental schemata, rather than focusing on isolated grammar drills. This proactive conceptual preparation, alongside positive reinforcement and "delayed correction," is crucial for lowering anxiety and nurturing confident future teachers who can effectively bridge the urban-rural educational gap (Tianchai et al., 2025).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendations for Pedagogical Implications

Instructors should create a low-anxiety classroom environment where making errors is treated as a normal part of learning, reducing fear of mistakes and peer judgment. Strategic competence, especially circumlocution, should be explicitly taught to help students manage linguistic blocks without depending on translation tools. Classroom activities should also gradually progress from prepared presentations to semi-structured tasks and spontaneous role-plays, building students' real-time thinking and speaking skills.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should incorporate classroom observations or actual speaking tests to complement self-reported data and better reflect students' real behaviors. Studies should expand beyond the Education faculty to include other faculties, majors, or universities to examine differences in English-speaking problems and enhance generalizability. Finally, researchers may develop and evaluate intervention programs using experimental or quasi-experimental designs to assess their effectiveness in addressing the identified challenges.

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