

A Study of Methods of Teaching English Speaking to Pupils at The Buddhist Sunday School of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

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Received: Aug 6, 2023

Received in Revised: Oct 2, 2023

Accepted: Oct 2, 2023

Abstract

Objectives of the study include 1) to study the methods of teaching English speaking at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University; 2) to study the problems concerning methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University; and 3) to suggest solutions for improving the methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. The research is a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative researches in nature. A questionnaire is used for collecting quantitative data from 20 teachers and in-depth interview is used for collecting qualitative data from 10 key informants. For analyzing quantitative data statistics including percentage, mean, and standard deviation (SD). Findings of the study are as follows:

1. From a study of the methods of teaching English speaking at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University it found that for the methods of teaching English speaking, the overall level is high with a value of 3.82, while considering each aspects the statement of daily conversation applied by teachers was high with a value of 4.90, the aspect of the method of round table discussion was moderate with a value of 3.20.

2. In respect of a study of the problems concerning methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University it found that there were 8 problems concerning methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University including 1) the time schedule is influenced much on teaching

English speaking; 2) pupils have low ability in English pronunciation; 3) pupils have low ability in English speaking skills; 4) pupils have low ability in acquiring lesson; 5) it is very hard to teach English speaking skills to pupils in different English level; 6) it is very hard to teach English speaking skills to pupils in different ages; 7) most of pupils pay less attention in class; and 8) language communication between teachers and pupils.

3. With regard a suggestion of solutions for improving the methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University it revealed that there were 8 solutions for improving the methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University including 1) the problem of time schedule should be set up appropriately; 2) pupils were required to practice pronunciation of the new words, test pronunciation every week before starting classes, play the game of pronunciation in class, and be evaluated by teacher and other pupils; 3) teachers and parents should collaborate to help pupils to have a good environment; 4) pupils with low innate ability should study hard; 5) teachers can prepare appropriated lessons for them; 6) the foundation should arrange pupils with the same age as much as possible in one classroom, and if there were many pupils with different ages, the teacher should test pupils' knowledge and arrange them according to the result of test; 7) the teacher should prepare lessons with some games and rewards, make fun in teaching, or telling a story before or after teaching; and 8) the foundation should provide a Thai assistant to help foreign teachers and the foreign teachers should learn Thai language to communicate with pupils as well.

Keywords: Teaching English, English speaking, pupil, the Buddhist Sunday school

Introduction

Buddhism is the national religion of Thailand and is observed by over ninety-five percent of the population. Thai people learn the teaching of the Buddha starting in primary school. According to the Thai tradition, every teenager's rite of passage to adulthood is to spend at least 1 rain season as a monk. One who ordains can learn many useful tools and gain knowledge of Tipitaka in both Pali and Thai languages. He practices meditation, learns to arrange flowers, organizes ceremonies, spread the Buddha's teaching (Dhamma) and other humbling activities such as alms collection and maintenance of the temple, etc. The purpose of learning and training is to cultivate the mind, to propagate the Buddha-dhamma to the whole nation and the world, especially effecting a harmonious society. Moreover, Thailand is well known for its traditional, architectural designs, and cultural heritages. Thus, besides spreading Buddha-dhamma teaching, Thai people also try to maintain and protect their traditional cultures.

Cultural traditions are customs and consuetude that our ancestor left for us. It is important that the next generation maintains and preserves them. Additionally, the next generation needs to foster and advance cultural traditions of their country to the world. Realizing the importance of education in growing nation and

its contribution to developing wealth, improving civilization, and strengthening democracy, the Thai Government has to continue to invest substantially to its education system. An educated person is the one who can bring his talent and knowledge to build a wealthy and strong nation. Therefore, the Thai government has created an opportunity for Thai citizens to attend classes, and more and more schools have been opened. In present-day, there are many schools, colleges, and universities in Thailand. Thai people try to learn to develop their country because of the globalization of the modern world. While the Thai people tend to adjust themselves to the modern world, they do not forget their traditional culture. Therefore, parallel with developing the nation, they also try to maintain and promote their traditional cultures, such as Thai traditional dances, traditional instruments and music, Thai boxing, customs, languages and religion. Thai people are very proud of their legacy. Thai's arts and cultures are very unique and distinct. Therefore, a foreigner can easily and decidedly identify the Thai's customs or objects upon encountering. In encouraging and preserving their traditions, customs, and arts, numerous classes and workshops have been established of interested learners. Particularly, these classes are on Sunday to encourage maximum participation. Moreover, the aim of this foundation is to apply on young generation because children or young generation are important seeds of the society, the one who can affect a better or worst society. To create conditions for them, many schools from primary to high schools, even universities, convene classes on Sunday to teach the cultures, arts and the useful knowledge that are normally not a major subject in the regular schools.

There are numerous schools, colleges, and universities in Thailand. A major and well-known Buddhist university is the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, located at Lamsai, Wangnoi, Ayutthaya province. It was established in the 18th century. Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University was established by King Chulalongkorn, Rama V the Great, in B.E. 2430 (C.E 1887) for the higher education of Buddhist monks, novices and laypeople, emphasizing Buddhist Studies. Over a thousand years ago, the world's first Buddhist University, the University of Nalanda, was founded in Northern India. Although the University of Nalanda no longer exists, the educational tradition continues, and presently persists at Mahachulalongkorn-rajavidyalaya University in Thailand. (Phra Suthithammanuwat: 8).

Language is a bridge that can lead to the success. A bridge can link to developing countries so that they can learn and develop their nation. Language plays an important role in the act of achieving this goal, especially common language. A kind of language that the Thai nation can share and learn many things from other countries. Moreover, in this globalization of time, English has obviously become the medium of communication around the world, both in local and global contexts. The realization of the importance of English performance. This necessity is also applicable to Thailand. In response to the demands for English skills, the Thai government has made consistent efforts to improve Thai learners' English performance throughout the

history of English language teaching in Thailand (Attapol Khamkhien, 2010: 757). Realizing the importance of it the foundation of Buddhist Sunday School, MCU has established English classes for pupils for many years. Especially, the foundation focuses on speaking skills because it is the good way to help pupils to contact modern world easily.

After observing, the researcher endeavors to conduct this research to investigate and evaluate suitable methods to solve these problems that have been mentioned above. First of all, the research will study the theoretical background concerning the content of method of teaching English speaking. Further, the researcher will identify all problems faced by teachers. Finally, the researcher will investigate the suitable methods to solve problems and giving some suggestions to improve the teaching of English speaking. This topic will mainly be approached through and in-depth interview and questionnaire. Moreover, books, magazines, theses, newspapers, internet sources will also be reviewed with the interpretation and an application suitable to methods of teaching English to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya university.

Objectives of the Study

- 1 . To study the methods of teaching English speaking at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.
2. To study the problems concerning methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.
3. To suggest solutions which can improve the methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

Literature Review

English as an International Language

The two authors, Sharfifian (Farzad, S., 2009: 126). and Saraceni (Mario Saraceni, August 2009: 175–186) have mentioned on spreading of English to the global that thanks to the colonial and postcolonial expansion of English as well as the help of globalization, it is widely agreed that the sociolinguistic reality of this language has become far more complex than those of other languages in the world today. This changing reality, envisioned by 1599 minor poet, Samuel Daniel, who fantasized about English going to the “strange shores”, has led English to acquire the status of an international language, and, thus, prompted a paradigm shift in the field of Applied Linguistics and ELT.

In fact, about one hundred years ago many educated people learned and spoke French when they met people from other countries. Today, the worldwide growing interest in English, most people speak English

when they meet foreigners. Therefore, it is necessary to stress the need for a new approach to English language learning and teaching. English, nowadays, becomes the international language. According to Wil (2015), there are more people who speak English as a second language than people who speak English as a first language. There are many reasons that English speakers in most countries around the world and English becomes so popular. One of them is language of business. It is increasingly true as international trade expands every year. And another important reason is American culture such as movies, music and McDonald's has quickly spread throughout the world. It brings its own language to people all around the world.

English Speaking Skills

Speaking is generally thought to be the most important of the four skills. Indeed, one frustration commonly voiced by learners is that they have spent years studying English, but still, they cannot speak it. Speaking is an “activity requiring the integration of many subsystems...all these factors combine to make speaking a second or foreign language a formidable task for language learners...yet for many people, speaking is seen as the central skill”. (Kathleen M. and Savage, L., 1994: 6–7). Speaking skill is one of main four skills in learning a language. Speaking skills are the skills that give us the ability to communicate effectively. These skills allow the speaker to convey one's message in a passionate, thoughtful, and convincing manner. Speaking skills also help to assure that one will not be misunderstood by those who are listening. English is a language that was first spoken by a West Germanic in early medieval England and is now the language most widespread native language in the world. So, English speaking skills are key to communication. By considering what good speakers do, what speaking tasks can be used in class, and what specific needs learners report, teachers can help learners improve their speaking and overall oral competency. (Richard, W., 2009: 76).

Research Methodology

This study is a mixed method between a qualitative research and quantitative research in nature to study methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. Due to the population of the study is less than 50 in number, hence, the researcher selects 20 teachers as the sample of the study by purposive sampling method. And selects 10 teachers who used to teach and are teaching English at the Buddhist Sunday School of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University as key informants of the study.

Result

1. Information on gender of teachers is divided into 8 Buddhist monks, 4 Buddhist nuns, 2 lay Buddhist men, and 6 lay Buddhist women. The majority of teachers are at the age of 25 – 30 years old. There are 9 teachers speaking Thai, 5 teachers speaking Vietnamese, 3 teachers speaking Chinese, 2 teachers speaking Dzongkha, and 1 teacher speaking Khmer. There are 12 teachers having over 11 years of experience of learning English with 1 – 2 years of teaching's experiences and favorite subject of teaching English. Most of teachers like teaching English like speaking skill. Most of teachers have finished Bachelor degree.

2. For a study of the methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School and the problems concerning methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School it indicates as follows: 1) The result of data analysis in the methods of teaching English speaking, the overall level is high ($\bar{x} = 3.82$). The most method that is applying much by teachers in this statement is daily conversation, the overall level is very high ($\bar{x} = 4.90$). It seems like there is no many teachers like to apply the method of round table discussion, the overall level is moderate ($\bar{x} = 3.20$). 2) The result of data analysis in problems encountered in teaching English speaking, the overall level is moderate ($\bar{x} = 3.45$). In this statement, the most problem that challenged teachers is pupils pay less attention in class, the overall level is very high ($\bar{x} = 4.55$). Most of teachers of this foundation are Thai. Therefore, language communication between teachers and pupils are not really happened, the overall level is moderate ($\bar{x} = 2.70$).

3. For the solutions for improving the methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University it includes 1) the problem of time schedule should be set up appropriately; 2) pupils were required to practice pronunciation of the new words, test pronunciation every week before starting classes, play the game of pronunciation in class, and be evaluated by teacher and other pupils; 3) teachers and parents should collaborate to help pupils to have a good environment; 4) pupils with low innate ability should study hard; 5) teachers can prepare appropriated lessons for them; 6) the foundation should arrange pupils with the same age as much as possible in one classroom, and if there were many pupils with different ages, the teacher should test pupils' knowledge and arrange them according to the result of test; 7) the teacher should prepare lessons with some games and rewards, make fun in teaching, or telling a story before or after teaching; and 8) the foundation should provide a Thai assistant to help foreign teachers and the foreign teachers should learn Thai language to communicate with pupils as well.

Discussion

1. Information on gender of teachers is divided into 8 Buddhist monks, 4 Buddhist nuns, 2 lay Buddhist men, and 6 lay Buddhist women. The majority of teachers are at the age of 25 – 30 years old. There are 9

teachers speaking Thai, 5 teachers speaking Vietnamese, 3 teachers speaking Chinese, 2 teachers speaking Dzongkha, and 1 teacher speaking Khmer. There are 12 teachers having over 11 years of experience of learning English with 1 – 2 years of teaching's experiences and favorite subject of teaching English. Most of teachers like teaching English like speaking skill. Most of teachers have finished Bachelor degree. The result of the above data analysis is related to research works of Pranee Nanthaboo (Pranee Nanthaboo, 2012: 20). who investigated the effect of communicative activities to develop English speaking ability of students and Chau Tuyet Ngan (2013: 56). who conducted the research paper entitled "The Application of Communicative Activities in English Speaking Classes of Grade 11th Students at Cao Lanh City High School" aimed to improve the effectiveness of applying communicative activities in English speaking to students.

2. For a study of the methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School and the problems concerning methods of teaching English speaking to pupils at the Buddhist Sunday School it indicates as follows: 1) the result of data analysis in the methods of teaching English speaking, the overall level is high ($\bar{x} = 3.82$). The most method that is applying much by teachers in this statement is daily conversation, the overall level is very high ($\bar{x} = 4.90$). It seems like there is no many teachers like to apply the method of round table discussion, the overall level is moderate ($\bar{x} = 3.20$); 2) the result of data analysis in problems encountered in teaching English speaking, the overall level is moderate ($\bar{x} = 3.45$). In this statement, the most problem that challenged teachers is pupils pay less attention in class, the overall level is very high ($\bar{x} = 4.55$). Most of teachers of this foundation are Thai. Therefore, language communication between teachers and pupils are not really happened, the overall level is moderate ($\bar{x} = 2.70$). The result of the above data analysis is related to research works of Henna Paakki (2013: 2). reasons for this were, for example, their previous education that had been too grammar oriented and theoretical, a late onset of learning, a fear of errors, a lack of practice and experience, and social pressure. Overall, the factors that create problems were instruction and input related, social and neurological. Accent was also an affecting factor: the standard models of English had a strong standing in the attitudes of the informants, and the Finnish and the Japanese accents of English were disliked. The informants with a higher education had stricter attitudes towards English accents. The difference between the two countries was that Finns were more aware of English accents and wanted to speak in a British accent more often. The Japanese had considerable difficulty with listening comprehension, which also affected speech.

Recommendations

The results of this study offered the first step into a wide variety of research in the area of methods of teaching English speaking, hence, the following are suggestions for a further study. 1. A study of the teachers' attitudes towards teaching English speaking in regard to first language background, age, and English language

proficiency would be valuable. 2. An investigation of the reason and modern method applying to pupils in other schools. 3. A study of an initial exploration of potential connections between the previous use of methods with a special reference to the problems encountered, suitable solutions and the importance of English in the society.

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