

DEVELOPING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS AT LUKMANULHAKEEM SCHOOL, YALA, SOUTHERN THAILAND THROUGH DISCUSSION-BASED LEARNING METHODS

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the effectiveness of the discussion method in improving speaking skills among English course participants at Lukmanulhakeem School in Yala, Southern Thailand. Using a qualitative approach through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, the research found that learners mainly struggled with pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and a lack of confidence. The discussion method proved effective in creating an interactive and supportive learning environment, encouraging students to speak and express their ideas more actively. It helped improve key aspects of speaking skills, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. Additionally, this method fostered critical thinking, student collaboration, and higher learning motivation. The findings suggest that discussion-based learning bridges the gap between theory and practice, making it a suitable teaching strategy for English as a foreign language, especially in multilingual contexts like Southern Thailand. Overall, the discussion method enhances communicative competence and promotes a more engaging and effective language learning experience.

Keywords: *Speaking Skills, Discussion-Based Learning, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Communicative Competence, Qualitative Research.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi efektivitas metode diskusi dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa pada kursus bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Lukmanulhakeem, Yala, Thailand Selatan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa kesulitan utama peserta terletak pada pengucapan, keterbatasan kosakata, dan kurangnya kepercayaan diri. Metode diskusi terbukti efektif dalam menciptakan suasana pembelajaran yang interaktif dan mendukung, sehingga siswa lebih aktif dalam berbicara dan mengekspresikan ide. Diskusi juga membantu meningkatkan aspek-aspek penting dalam keterampilan berbicara, yaitu kosakata, tata bahasa, pelafalan, kefasihan, dan pemahaman. Selain itu, metode ini mendorong pemikiran kritis, kolaborasi antar siswa, dan motivasi belajar yang lebih tinggi. Dengan demikian, metode diskusi menjadi strategi pengajaran yang tepat dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing, khususnya dalam konteks pembelajar di wilayah multibahasa seperti Thailand Selatan.

Kata Kunci: Keterampilan Berbicara, Pembelajaran Berbasis Diskusi, Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL), Kompetensi Komunikatif, Penelitian Kualitatif.

A. INTRODUCTION

In the ELT Curriculum in 2006 and its supplement, the ELT teachers should facilitate students to be able to communicate in English by mastering the whole skills. However, it is not easy to master all the skills (Bohari, 2019). Speaking is considered to be the mostly sought skill for an individual to be accepted competent in a foreign language. Speaking is more than to form grammatically correct sentences; it rather covers broad areas of mechanics, functions, pragmatics and social interaction. (Eyüp Yaşar). There are so many difficulties in mastering each skill. and English as a foreign language is the most difficult thing for the students to expand is speaking. According to Nunan (2004:48) speaking involves producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. In spoken language, speaking must have ability to be listened by others. It has temporary and immediate reception. It has an intermediate feedback from the listener during the conversation with others. Language is a tool for communication, We communicate with others, to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well. The importance of speaking skills, hence is enormous for the learners of any language. Without speech, a language is reduced to a mere script. The use of language is an activity which takes place within the confines of our community. (Mrs Ishrat A. Q)

Therefore, speaking skills are one of the most crucial skills to acquire, particularly for citizens of Southern Thailand. Given the region's proximity to Malaysia, English is not a second language but a third language, following Thai and Malay. Consequently, when researchers invited residents to engage in English conversations, they exhibited considerable difficulty in pronouncing English words, despite demonstrating an understanding of the questions posed. This suggests that their primary challenge lies in their lack of confidence in their English pronunciation. Furthermore, residents noted that speaking is the most challenging skill to master due to the five essential aspects it entails, namely vocabulary, grammar, fluency, comprehension, and pronunciation.

Researchers asked several residents who participated in the discussion forum, their reasons were varied. One of them was a resident named Tuansainu Hayeemamu, aged 49, who said that she could not speak because of limitations in his pronunciation in English, although she was no longer young but his enthusiasm to be able to speak English was very high. she said in Malay "*Saya mahu boleh berbahasa Inggeris seperti orang muda, tetapi sebutan saya dalam*

bahasa Inggris masih belum bagus.” This means that the difficulty in mastering speaking is caused by pronunciation. This suggests that the challenges in mastering speaking skills are largely attributed to pronunciation difficulties. However, it is essential to recognize that English language acquisition is not limited to students; anyone can learn and improve their English proficiency to enhance effective communication. To convey messages clearly, it is crucial to possess not only clear and accurate pronunciation but also a strong foundation in vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension. Mastering these aspects is indeed a complex task, but it is a vital component of proficient communication in English.

Based on the identified problems, the researcher proposes a technique to overcome speaking difficulties, namely the discussion method or discussion-based learning. This approach involves an open exchange of ideas and thoughts between students and teachers, or among students themselves, to discuss specific topics, solve problems, or develop understanding. The discussion method offers several benefits, including: providing opportunities for students to articulate their ideas, enhancing communication skills, fostering deeper understanding, and increasing learning motivation. By implementing this technique, students can improve their speaking skills and become more effective communicators. According to Faizah (2025), The discussion method is a way of presenting lessons, where students are faced with a problem that can be in the form of a statement or problematic questions that can be discussed and solved together, the discussion method itself is actually a learning method in the form of exchanging information, opinions and there are elements of experience regularly to get the same answer about something.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching Speaking Skills

According to Ruziyeva (2025), Speaking skills are integral to language proficiency, yet they remain one of the most difficult areas to teach effectively. Unlike reading or writing, speaking requires real-time interaction, adaptability, and spontaneity, making it inherently dynamic and complex. Traditional pedagogical approaches, which often rely on passive learning and repetitive drills, frequently fall short in preparing learners for authentic communication. To address this gap, educators are increasingly turning to interactive methods that prioritize active participation and contextualized practice. Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching, it's an art of communications and one of four productive skills, that must be mastered in learning foreign language. Speaking a language is

especially difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions (Shumin, 2002).

Aspect Speaking Skills

English has four skills, in learning a language there are four aspects of language skills that must be mastered in students, namely fields, the ability to speak English or a second language is needed. Majority EFL students is passive in English communication because some reason and obstacles. General obstacles were faced by EFL students that was the milieu was not supporting, English media using in the class, and motivation of students in speaking English, There are four skills in English, namely reading, speaking, listening and writing. To improve the skills of students on these four skills, all that is needed is not only the theory but the application of practice in the implementation. In general, speaking aspect are divided into five namely vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension. Improving the students' speaking aspect and speaking competency is not effortless that it need treatment, learning method and strategy to solve each problem of the students in speaking (Mutakhirani, 2022).

Vocabulary

The Oxford Advanced dictionary (Hornby, 2005) defines vocabulary as "all the words that a person knows or uses." Without a sufficient vocabulary, one cannot communicate effectively or express their ideas in both oral and written form. A limited vocabulary is another barrier that prevents learners from learning a language (Fadilah, 2022). To develop our speaking skills, This progresses from single words to sentences when children are 2 or 3, at which point they will normally have a vocabulary of 150-300 words. Vocabulary development is where students understand the meanings and pronunciations of words necessary for communication. Without grammar, very little can be conveyed, and without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed.

Grammar

According to Eastwood (1994), grammatical units in English are the set of logical and structural rules that govern the composition of sentences, phrases, clauses, and words. Students must be able to arrange a correct sentence in conversation. It is consistent with Heaton's (1978: 5) explanation that students' ability to manipulate structure and distinguish appropriate grammatical form from 12 inappropriateness utility of grammar is also to learn the correct way

to gain expertise in a language in oral and written form. You may think that grammar is something we only need for written language. But grammar includes lots of important areas for spoken language such as an understanding of tenses and the correct way to structure sentences. Grammar helps us to convey information in a way that the listener will recognise and understand.

Pronunciation

According to Brown (2001: 271), the stress-timed rhythm of spoken English and its intonation patterns are important characteristics of English pronunciation. It means that the speaker must use clear language to convey a clear message to the listener. It is concerned with the phonological process, which is a component of grammar consisting of the elements and principles that determine how sounds vary and pattern in a language (Fadilah, 2022). Students who want to learn to develop speaking skills in English must be diligent in practicing overall pronunciation. They must be aware of the various sounds and their characteristics, as well as where they know the word that comes out of their mouth should match; they must also be aware of where to reduce redundant words, when to use a rising intonation, and when to use a low intonation. Understanding how to correctly pronounce words is another important element of speaking skills. We learn how to pronounce words by listening to those around us, such as our parents, friends and teachers.

Fluency

The skill to read, speak, or write easily, fluently, and expressively is referred to as fluency. Speakers are able to comprehend and respond to the intended meaning and context. Many language learners strive for speaking fluency. Fluency is characterized by a relatively fast rate of speech and a limited number of pauses and "umm" or "eeee." These indicators indicate that the speaker did not spend a significant amount of time searching for the language items required to express the message (Brown. 1997:4). Fluency in spoken language is something that naturally develops as children go through school, as they are using and practising speaking skills every day. Fluency is the ability to hear words and understand them straight away. If they see a word written down, they can read it aloud and pronounce it properly. Ways to develop this include guiding your students to read passages out loud.

Comprehension

Comprehension is the power of the mind's action of understanding exercise aimed at improving the examiner (Hornby. 1999). According to Harris (1969), speaking is a complex skill that necessitates the simultaneous use of multiple abilities that often develop at different rates. In most analyses of the speech process, five components are recognized: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency (the ease and speed with which the speech flows), and comprehension (an understanding of what both the tested are talking about or the ability to respond to speech as well to initiate it). In speaking the speaker and the listener must have a good understanding so that the conversation certainly requires a subject to respond to speech as well as to initiate it. But in this research, the researcher will call the comprehensibility.

Discussion Learning Method in Teaching Speaking

A teaching technique that involves students interacting and sharing ideas on a specific topic. It encourages participation, critical thinking, and the development of communication skills, particularly in speaking. In the context of teaching speaking, the discussion method helps students practice expressing their opinions, asking questions, and engaging in meaningful conversations. There are some advantages of discussion method. Smaldino, Lowther, & Russell (2005,p.29) state that there some advantages of using discussion method: Interesting. Discussions are often more interesting for students than sitting and listening to someone tell them facts. Challenging. Students can be challenged to think about the topic and apply what they already know. Inclusive. Discussion provides opportunity for all students to speak, rather than only a few answering teacher questions. Opportunity for new ideas. Students may bring new ideas to the information presentation. According to Jones (1996:1) “discussion is an activity in which people talk together in order to share information about a topic or problem or to seek possible available evidence for solution”. Arends (2008:74) states that “discussion is to engage in verbal interchange and to express thought on particular subjects”.

According to Jones (1996:1) there are types of discussion;

- a. The whole-class Discussion is the type generally referred to when facilitators employ the discussion method. The facilitator simply leads an informal discussion involving the class as a whole. The facilitator, as the director of the discussion, asks questions, clarifies student comments, and makes tentative summaries to help students achieve understanding of the topic.
- b. Debate is generally used in the classroom as a small- group technique, with a small number of students teamed on either side of an issue. Each team is given a specific amount

of time to present its "side" of the issue. The members can alternate presentations and often are identified as "pro" and "con" with respect to the issue. Rebuttals of specific time duration then follow the presentations. Upon conclusion of the debate, the facilitator can enter into a whole-class discussion on the issue.

- c. Position Reversal Debate is similar to debate, except both groups are required to take notes on the other team's "position presentation." Teams then switch positions and debate the other point of view using the notes. They then work on solving the problem that started the debate utilizing vantage points from both points of view. This discussion format helps students develop conflict resolution, problem solving, and consensus building skills.

The characteristics of good discussion

Five primary characteristics of good discussion: your ability to synthesize, to question, to engage in argument, to use the readings and to hypothesize.

1. Synthesize : Good participants not only generate ideas of their own, but also creatively synthesize the ideas of others. Synthesis includes drawing connections between the readings, between in class and out of class experience, and between the comments of others in the class.
 - a. an ability to connect your comments to the discussion: if someone has just said something that you want to build on, make sure you articulate the connection. However, you should not be repetitive.
 - b. an ability to synthesize class discussion: you should put together things others have said and form them into a coherent position. Listening, and then synthesizing, is an integral part of any discussion. It is also one of the most difficult to develop.
 - c. an ability to resolve conflict: sometimes people disagree when they really do not mean to. If you, as a participant, can put together apparently divergent opinions into a coherent position, then you have been a good participant.
2. Question : Asking questions is as important to good discussion as making claims.
 - a. other class members: if a person's position is unclear, ask him/her to clarify it. Sometimes the right question can synthesize a discussion. Other times, a question might be necessary in order to check the accuracy of perceptions. Also, asking questions of others is a good way to include quieter members in the discussion.
 - b. the readings: if the readings are unclear, then pose questions about the readings.

- c. the professor: you should be willing to question me, both for clarification and as a challenge. Sometimes, I will make outrageous claims simply to instigate debate and discussion.
3. Argument : An argument contains a claim, data to support that claim, and a warrant linking the evidence to the claim. Argument not only is a supported claim, but it is also a process through which you engage others in a critical examination of ideas.
- a. argument as claim/data/warrant :
 - making complete arguments: it is hard to contest a claim if no evidence is presented with the claim. If you make a claim, you need to provide evidence to support it.
 - more than opinion: a complete argument is more than "just your opinion." It is a reasoned position that deserves examination and consideration.
 - b. argument as process :
 - not talking only to hear yourself talk: you are being graded on the quality and quantity of discussion. However, if you only have quantity on your side, your grade will be a poor one. Engagement requires that you become part of the process.
 - a willingness to engage other class members: do not direct all of your comments to the instructor. Challenge and respond to other class members. If you have a question, ask the person making the argument, not the prof. Also, listen to and take notes on what your classmates say. Insightful and noteworthy comments do not exclusively spring forth from the professor's mouth.
 - a willingness to disagree: you should be willing to disagree with a classmate. Argument and controversy are good -- they tend to sharpen ideas and clarify readings. If you and a classmate disagree, both of you are forced to develop your positions more fully. Disagreement is not bad.
 - avoiding interrupting others: you should treat others with respect and make sure you listen to what others say. By listening, you avoid repeating what has already been said.

- attitude: your attitude toward others should be positive, non-divisive, respectful, yet critical (critical does not mean negative). You should avoid blaming others for misunderstanding.
 - inclusiveness: you should attempt to draw other class members into discussion. If engagement is to occur, then it is important that each of you take responsibility to draw in quieter class members. You should look for non-verbals and then ask the person to comment on what you just said.
4. Readings : A discussion-based class only succeeds if all members of the class have completed the readings. The purpose of discussion is not to describe and review the readings. Instead, discussion is a chance for you to internalize and apply the concepts from the readings. The more you engage in discussion, the quicker and more completely you will learn key concepts.
- a. specificity: the more specific you can be with examples and with references to the reading, the better your participation.
 - b. application of concepts from the readings.
 - c. understanding of the readings.
 - d. evidence of critical thought about the readings.
5. Hypothesize : While complete arguments are always good, sometimes, you have not completely formulated a position. Because discussion is a process, it is important that people be willing to toss out unformed ideas for evolution and as a basis for further discussion.
- a. a willingness to hypothesize: you should be willing to throw ideas out on the table for discussion. You do not have to wait until you have completely developed positions. You should be willing to begin developing an idea and then let others take over.
 - b. a willingness to play devil's advocate: sometimes, you may want to toss out a position you yourself do not completely ascribe to. Be willing to instigate debate. Be willing to be the focal point of discussion

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted at Lukmanulhakeem School in Yala, Southern Thailand, an Islamic educational institution that hosts community service activities from various campuses. The study focused on the English course offered by the school during the odd semester of the

2024/2025 academic year. This study aimed to identify the effectiveness of discussions in improving speaking skills among English course members at Lukmanulhakeem School.

1. Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research method, which involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. The qualitative research methods used in this study were observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to understand the effectiveness of discussions in improving speaking skills.

2. Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design that is flexible and focused on preserving rich meaning when interpreting data. The study did not aim to generalize the findings but rather to provide a clear depiction of the problem being studied based on facts in the field.

3. Data Collection Methods

This study used three data collection methods, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to observe the discussion process and interaction among course participants. Interviews were used to collect data on participants' experiences and perceptions of the effectiveness of discussions in improving speaking skills. Documentation was used to collect data on the discussion process and learning outcomes.

By employing these methods, this study can provide a clear understanding of the effectiveness of discussions in improving speaking skills among English course members at Lukmanulhakeem School.

a. Observation Finding

The observation conducted at Lukmanulhakeem School revealed several challenges faced by the course members, including a lack of confidence in speaking English due to limited vocabulary. Additionally, the members experienced feelings of shame, fear, and low self-esteem, which further hindered their ability to communicate effectively in English.

b. In-Depth Interviews

To gather more detailed insights, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with several members of the English course at Lukmanulhakeem School. The interviews were

held at the school's office and were recorded manually by the researcher, allowing for a thorough analysis of the participants' responses.

c. Document Analysis

To further validate the findings, the researcher utilized documentation data collected from observations and interviews with English course members at Lukmanulhakeem School. This documentation served as a supplementary data source, enabling the researcher to triangulate the data and enhance the study's validity.

D. HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

This study employed a multi-method approach, utilizing three primary instruments: observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Through observation, the researcher meticulously recorded all activities and processes involved in teaching speaking skills using the discussion method. The observations were conducted in a naturalistic setting, allowing the researcher to provide detailed and contextualized explanations of the findings based on real-world conditions.

Result of Analysis at the first meeting

During the first meeting on November 18, 2024, the researcher conducted an observation at Lukmanulhakeem's school, specifically focusing on the English course for its members. The teacher introduced a conversation topic centered on hobbies and interests, and initially, the students exhibited hesitation and reluctance to engage in English-speaking activities. However, through the teacher's patient and slow-paced instruction, supplemented by the use of body language, the students gradually gained a better understanding of the topic. By the end of the lesson, the students demonstrated improved comprehension of the discussion topic.

Result of Analysis at the second meeting

During the second meeting, the researcher conducted an observation at Lukmanulhakeem's school office on December 4, 2024. The observation focused on an assessment session where the teacher administered both written and oral tests to English course members. The purpose of the tests was to evaluate the effectiveness of discussion techniques in enhancing students' speaking skills.

Result of Analysis at the third meeting

On December 4, 2024, the researcher conducted an interview with Kak Zachwa, an English course teacher at Lukmanulhakeem in Yala, South Thailand. The purpose of the interview was to gain a deeper understanding of the teacher's approach to using discussion methods to enhance speaking skills among English course participants.

- Why do teachers use discussion method in speaking skills?
- What is the purpose of teachers using discussion method in speaking skills?
- How is the discussion method applied in speaking skills?
- What are the results or impacts of using the discussion method in speaking skills?

Results of interviews with English teachers

The results of the interview with the English teacher at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, in South Thailand are:

- Teachers require effective and engaging methods to enhance students' speaking skills, and discussion-based approaches offer a natural and interesting solution. By incorporating discussions into the learning process, educators can create opportunities for students to practice speaking and self-expression in diverse contexts, while also fostering peer communication and collaboration..
- In addition to enhancing students' speaking skills, the discussion method has been found to promote critical thinking and foster a more engaging learning environment. The interactive nature of discussions renders learning more enjoyable and stimulating, while providing a natural platform for students to practice public speaking, develop confidence, and refine their self-expression abilities. Through collaborative discussions, students can practice speaking and listening in a supportive atmosphere, leading to improvements in fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and overall confidence in speaking.
- The discussion method in speaking skills development involves posing specific questions to guide conversations and stimulate students to articulate their thoughts and ideas. This approach facilitates structured interactions among students, prompting them to engage in active participation, ask questions, and elaborate on topics, ultimately leading to improved speaking skills.
- The utilization of discussion methods in speaking skills development can significantly enhance fluency and accuracy in language use by facilitating peer observation and

feedback, thereby reducing grammatical errors. This approach fosters a supportive environment, enabling students to build confidence and alleviate apprehensions associated with public speaking. Through discussions, students can gain a deeper understanding of various concepts and topics by exploring multiple perspectives and engaging in collaborative problem-solving activities. Moreover, participating in discussions necessitates attentive listening and responsive communication, ultimately refining students' listening skills.

The result of interviews with members of English course at Lukmanulhakeem school.

- a. According to Tuansainu Hayeemamu, aged 49 years old

For me, learning English through discussions like this makes it easier to understand, because the teacher asks specific questions and explains them slowly and carefully, so I can grasp it better.

- b. According to Nifatehah Hayeemamu, aged 19 years old

I think this method is really suitable for us to improve our English skills, especially speaking. The teacher doesn't just give us the topic, but explains it until we understand. And I think this discussion method gives us more confidence in speaking English.

- c. According to Balqis, aged 16 years old

Honestly, I used to be super insecure and embarrassed about speaking English, but after joining the English course at Lukmanulhakeem, my English improved a lot! The discussion method they use here really makes me think more critically. We discuss topics based on themes determined by the teacher, and it's become a new challenge for my brain.

Based on the results of the observations and interviews above.

The use of discussion methods is very useful to show students' speaking skills. The method is able to increase the students' motivation in learning English, especially in speaking English, and the method has to be able to be understood. By discussion method enables the students to practice speaking and express themselves in the classroom also in their daily life where they live.

E. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of the discussion method is an effective strategy for improving speaking skills among learners of English as a foreign language, particularly in the context of Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala,

Southern Thailand. The discussion-based learning approach allows students to actively engage in communication, express their thoughts, and build their confidence in using English. Through structured and thematic discussions, students are encouraged to practice vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension in an interactive and supportive environment.

The study revealed that many learners initially struggled with speaking due to limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and low self-confidence. However, through the gradual application of discussion techniques, supported by clear instruction and patient facilitation, students demonstrated significant progress in their speaking abilities. The method not only improved language proficiency but also fostered critical thinking, collaboration, and motivation to learn English.

Furthermore, the insights gathered from interviews with both teachers and learners confirmed that the discussion method helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. It promotes meaningful language use, encourages peer learning, and creates a dynamic classroom atmosphere conducive to language development.

In conclusion, the discussion method serves as a practical and engaging pedagogical tool in teaching speaking skills. It offers learners the opportunity to develop their communicative competence, enhances classroom interaction, and contributes to a more effective and enjoyable learning experience. As such, educators are encouraged to integrate this method into their teaching practices to support the development of students' oral language skills in English.

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