

Effects of Applying Four Steps Interview Approach to Enhance Speaking Ability for Lao EFL College Students

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Abstract

The objectives of this study are: 1) to compare the students' speaking ability before and after using the Four steps interview approach for enhancing Lao EFL college students' speaking ability, 2) to investigate the satisfaction students through four steps interview approach for enhancing Lao EFL college students' speaking ability. This research applies both qualitative and quantitative or mixed research one group pre-test-post-test design. The populations of this research are 24 third-year English teacher students at STTC, the academic year 2023-2024. The research sample is 16 students who are studying in the third year (12+4), the academic year 2023-2024 selected by using the purposive sampling technique. The instruments of this research were: (1) Pre-test, (2) Lesson plans, (3) Post-test, and Satisfaction questionnaire. The data obtained from pre and post-test cores were calculated to find out mean, percentage, S.D, and one-sample t-test. The data from questionnaires was calculated to find out mean, percentage and S.D, whereas the data gained from three open-ended were encoded and interpreted the meaning. Result 1 revealed that the pre-test mean scores were ($\bar{X} = 5.85$, S.D. = 0.74) and the post-test mean scores were ($\bar{X} = 8.71$, S.D. = 0.63), which means that the post-test mean scores were higher than the pre-test mean scores. Result 2 revealed that the attitudes of teacher students at Savannakhet Teacher Training College after learning through Four Steps Interview Approach were at more satisfaction ($\bar{X} = 4.37$, S.D. = 0.61). Three highest scores were item 4 ($\bar{x} = 4.75$, S.D. = 0.45), item 1 ($\bar{x} = 4.69$, S.D. = 0.48) and item 14 ($\bar{x} = 4.63$, S.D. = 0.5). Three lowest scores were item 18 ($\bar{x} = 3.75$, S.D. = 0.68), item 16 ($\bar{x} = 3.94$, S.D. = 0.57), and item 11 ($\bar{x} = 4.13$, S.D. = 0.5). In addition, from the open-ended questions, most participants found that this four steps interview approach was very useful for enhancing not just their speaking but also critical thinking skills, whereas the difficulty of the topics found to be the frequent concerns and needed to be solved.

Keywords: Satisfactory, Interview approach, Speaking ability, College students, EFL

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Introduction

English is the language widely used in the globe for communication in different fields such as politics, educations, tourism, medicine, business, cultural exchange, sports, engineering, etc. Lao People Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a member of Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) which English is set as the official language for communication among its populations. The Government of the Lao PDR places education and sports development, as well as human resources development, as an important key in national socio-economic development to enable the Lao PDR to graduate from the ranks of least developed countries by 2020 and move to industrialization and modernity (MPI, 2016). To achieve the goal and encourage more Lao citizens to take part in its social-economic development, English is a foreign language that is compulsory for general education from the third year of primary school to university in Lao PDR (MOES, 2015).

Savannakhet Teacher Training College (STTC) is one of eight teacher training colleges in Laos which has produced teachers not only for two main provinces as Khammouane and Savannakhet but also some nearby provinces. English teacher is one of four main programs has trained at STTC since 1995. The students in this program have to learn English as the primary target language for four years from year 1-4. In order to complete the program, students are expected to equip with language skills, language components, and also pedagogical theories (MOES, 2015). There are four micro language skills are speaking, reading, writing, and reading, whereas other significant language components are pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (Brown, 2001). To obtain a true understanding of the using contexts, the application of those language skills and components in the real-world situations is needed.

Through observations, most students who are studying at the target classroom still have a problem with the speaking ability which they cannot engage even in a basic conversation or elaborate on real-world topics. That is to say, one of the most burning language skills that should be urgently learned by the students is speaking skill. As stated by Flutcher (2003) that acquiring a foreign language speaking ability is undoubtedly the greater prize of any other language skills (Flutcher, 2003). It means that speaking is the most vital ability that should be learned by foreign language learners, that is, without holding speaking ability, students would find some levels of difficulties for learning and participating in learning in the class and real-world communications.

In real situations, most college students even those who are studying in the third or fourth year at the college rarely communicate with their teachers and classmates in English in their classrooms. This circumstance can be contributed by the following two primary factors.

The first one would be the low self-efficacy due to the limitations of knowledge about vocabulary and pronunciation which can lead to low confidence when it comes to real communication. Another factor would be that the opportunity for communication in the class might not be enough plus the insufficient resources such as teaching materials and facilities. This can result in the limitations of the teacher's teaching techniques; thus, they apply their comfortable traditional language teaching method which puts the teacher as the center of the classroom instead of students.

To solve the above mention problems, researchers try to encourage students to expand their vocabulary knowledge and engage in communicative activities to improve their speaking ability through a four steps interview approach. This approach is consistent with cooperative learning technique which allows students to work together to pursue learning goals and objectives (Brown, 2001). He asserted that through cooperative learning, students have not just the chance to interact with teachers but also their peers in the class which can improve their speaking ability. Learning through four steps interview approach, students not just receive, but also produce language during the learning process where students have clear roles and put themselves in more practical speaking contexts.

Therefore, a Four Steps Interview Approach can be helpful for enhancing students' speaking ability as it associates students with the real interactions which students can automatically learn what and how to react in the authentic language using situations.

Research objectives

There are two main objectives in this research including:

- 1) To compare the students' speaking ability before and after using the interview approach for enhancing Lao EFL college students' speaking ability.
- 2) To investigate the satisfaction students through interview approach for enhancing Lao EFL college students' speaking ability.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research applies both qualitative and quantitative or mixed research one group pre-test-post-test design.

Populations and Samples

The populations of this research are 24 third-year English teacher students at STTC, the academic year 2023-2024. The research sample is 16 students who are

studying in the third year (12+4), the academic year 2023-2024 selected by using the purposive sampling technique.

Research Instruments

There were 4 primary instruments used in this research as follow:

- Pre-test (interview)
- Lesson plans
- Post-test (interview)
- Satisfaction questionnaire

Data Collection

The data was collected from conducting the pre-interview, instructing the process of the interview approach, conducting the post-interview, distributing the satisfaction questionnaire and collecting them back.

Statistic Used

The statistic used in this research were below:

- Percentage
- Mean
- Standard deviation.
- One sample t-test

Results and Discussion

After collecting the data, it found that:

The result 1

No	Pre-test score (10)	Post-test score (10)	Difference
1	5.25	9.21	3.96
2	6.6	9.19	2.59
3	5.25	8.18	2.93
4	6.75	9.29	2.54
5	6.25	8.39	2.14
6	6.75	8.15	1.40
7	5.25	7.91	2.66
8	6.25	9.39	3.14
9	6.5	9.16	2.66
10	4.75	8.80	4.05
11	6.25	9.16	2.91

12	4.75	7.46	2.71
13	4.75	7.94	3.19
14	6.25	9.39	3.14
15	6.25	9.19	2.94
16	5.75	8.59	2.84
Total Score	93.6	139.38	45.78
\bar{X}	5.85	8.71	2.86
S. D	0.74	0.63	-0.11
%	58.50	87.11	28.61

From the table, it can be seen that the pre-test mean score was (\bar{X} = 5.85, S.D. = 0.74) and the post-test mean score was (\bar{X} = 8.71, S.D. = 0.63), which means that the post-test mean score was higher than the pre-test mean score.

The result 2

No	Statements	Mean	S. D	Levels
01	I like learning to speak English.	4.69	0.48	the most satisfactory
02	Four Steps Interview Approach helped solve my English-speaking problem.	4.25	0.68	More satisfactory
03	Four Steps Interview Approach allowed me to practice English both in and outside the class.	4.5	0.52	More satisfactory
04	Learning with Four Steps Interview Approach encouraged me to apply new ideas in speaking English.	4.75	0.45	The most satisfactory
05	Learning with Four Steps Interview Approach, I had more chance to interact with my speaking partners.	4.38	0.62	More satisfactory
06	Learning with Four Steps Interview Approach encouraged me to use new language in speaking English.	4.25	0.77	More satisfactory

	Learning with Four Steps Interview			More
07	Approach encouraged me to practice new vocabulary in speaking English.	4.5	0.52	satisfactory
	Learning with Four Steps Interview			The most
08	Approach helped increase my new vocabulary English.	4.56	0.73	satisfactory
	Learning with Four Steps Interview			More
09	Approach helped improve my confidence in speaking English.	4.19	0.66	satisfactory
	Learning with Four Steps Interview			The most
10	Approach helped increase my English Grammar knowledge.	4.56	0.63	satisfactory
	Learning with Four Steps Interview			More
11	Approach helped enhance my English pronunciation.	4.13	0.5	satisfactory
	The activities were suitable for my English-speaking level.			More
12		4.38	0.72	satisfactory
	The activities were interesting and useful.			More
13		4.5	0.63	satisfactory
	Four Steps Interview Approach helped improve my speaking skills in English.			The most
14		4.63	0.5	satisfactory
	Four Steps Interview Approach helped improve my English-speaking motivation.			More
15		4.19	0.66	satisfactory
	I enjoyed learning with Four Steps Interview Approach, which can be applied in other topics.			The most
16		3.94	0.57	satisfactory
	I am keen to participate in such the class in the future.			More
17		4.5	0.63	satisfactory
	Four Steps Interview Approach equipped me with collaborative skills.			The most
18		3.75	0.68	satisfactory
	Four Steps Interview Approach enhanced my critical thinking skills.			More
19		4.19	0.66	satisfactory

20	I found that Four Steps Interview Approach is useful for enhancing students' speaking skills.	4.56	0.51	The most satisfactory
Grand Total		4.37	0.61	More satisfactory

From the table, it can be seen that more satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 4.37$, S.D. = 0.61). Three highest scores were item 4 ($\bar{x} = 4.75$, S.D. = 0.45), item 1 ($\bar{x} = 4.69$, S.D. = 0.48) and item 14 ($\bar{x} = 4.63$, S.D. = 0.5). Three lowest scores were item 18 ($\bar{x} = 3.75$, S.D. = 0.68), item 16 ($\bar{x} = 3.94$, S.D. = 0.57), and item 11 ($\bar{x} = 4.13$, S.D. = 0.5).

Discussions

A Comparison of the Speaking Ability before and after Using the Four Steps Interview Approach for Enhancing Lao EFL College Students' Speaking Ability.

The result revealed that the post-test mean score was higher than the pre-test mean score. It could be summarized that the Four Steps Interview Approach was efficient because the students could improve their speaking ability after learning. According to Permanasari (2014), the benefits of using interview technique included creating simultaneous accountability, providing opportunity for students to share and apply different questioning strategies, and developing their taxonomies of thinking to extend their ability to use different levels of questioning and thinking skills. He found that interview approach could be an alternative technique for enhancing students' speaking skills. Similarly, Jacobs et al. (1997) asserted that along the process of interactions between interviewers (teachers) and interviewees (students), students will automatically accumulate their speaking skills or what to speak and how to speak it up in English. Through a number of practices, it influenced to the development in students' speaking ability. They concluded that the area of improvement from such the practice could involve Grammar, Vocabulary, Fluency, Pronunciation, Comprehension, Task and so forth. Therefore, the eight lessons taught by using Four Steps Interview Approach were effective in improving Lao EFL college students' speaking ability.

The Satisfaction of Using Four Steps Interview Approach for Enhancing Lao EFL College Students' Speaking Ability.

The results reveal that students' satisfaction in learning through using four steps interview approach were at more satisfactory level. It illustrated that the students were more satisfied with engaging in the lessons. This could be interpreted that interview approach was assessed by experts resulted in the high quality, appropriate content and suitable for students'

level. Three highest scores items were no. 4, 1, and 14 “Learning with four steps interview approach encouraged me to apply new ideas in speaking English, I like learning to speak English, and four steps interview approach helped improve my speaking skills in English” respectively. In addition, almost participant gave positive comments in open-ended questions that the implementation of four steps interview approach was very useful for enhancing not just their speaking skills in terms of fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and personal growth. Furthermore, they also found that this active learning approach helped foster their critical thinking skills, especially broaden their perspectives on viewing the world. Along with these positive aspects, some problems also occurred while implementing the interview approach such as the difficulty of the topics found to be the frequent concerns and needed to be solved. Overall, it could be asserted that the students’ hold more positive attitudes toward the use of four steps interview approach to improve their English-speaking capacities. This finding is consistent with Perman sari (2014) who reported that interview approach not just provided students’ the chance of speaking practice but it also accumulated authentic language items and obtained necessary skills to be applied in the real-world interactive situations.

In summary, the findings of this research show that the implementation of four steps interview approach produced more positive effects on students’ speaking ability, especially interactive skills for responding to for students. As the result, this approach can be regarded as an alternative effective approach that the EFL teachers or other relevant careers could apply for enhancing students’ speaking skills.

Conclusion

The aims of this study were 1) to compare the students’ speaking ability before and after using the interview approach for enhancing Lao EFL college students’ speaking ability and 2) to investigate the satisfaction of students through an interview approach for enhancing Lao EFL college students’ speaking ability. The samples in this study were 16 third-year “B” students who took on General English Subject Course 5 in first semester of academic year 2020-2021 at Savannakhet Teacher Training College, Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR. The researchers taught 2 classes (class “A” and class “B”). Class “B” was the sample group, selected by using simple random sampling technique. The independent variable of this study was 7 topic interview plans technique to enhance English speaking ability, which were generated by the researchers. The dependent variables were the efficiency of the students’ learning achievement, speaking ability and students’ satisfaction toward the lessons using 4 steps interview plans technique to enhance English speaking ability. The research instruments were 7 topic interview plans, speaking performance test (interview and oral presentations) and the satisfaction questionnaire. This study was conducted for 32 hours described as follows: 1) 2

hours for orientation; 2) 28 hours for interviewing and presentation; and 3) 1 hour for satisfaction questionnaire. The statistics used to analyze the data were percentage, mean, standard deviation, and dependent samples t-test. The findings were as follows:

1. The learning achievement of students' post-test mean score was higher than the pre-test mean score with a statistically significant difference at the .01 level.
2. The students' satisfaction in learning through using the four-step interview technique to enhance speaking ability in overall was at a more satisfactory level.

Recommendations

For the Usage of the Research Results.

From the results, it could be asserted that four steps interview approach can be applied for upgrading students' speaking skills in Lao EFL classroom context. By the way, to apply this approach in the classroom the teachers should closely follow the instructions below: 1) the teachers should make a survey on the topics to be used in the interview in terms of difficulties to make sure that students are familiar with the topic and not too difficult for them to find information. 2) If possible, teachers should have a clear format for students to include and get them work worked before each interviewing time. 3) make sure that students have time for completing such the tasks and should include this subject in the program, course or school curriculum.

For Further Research

Based on the results presented earlier in this paper, the following suggestions would be beneficial for future research: 1) the researchers might consider applying this teaching approach to investigate the effectiveness of these educational innovations with different cohorts of students. 2) The researchers could also find if the result of this research is compatible with the participants who are studying at the same level at other schools.

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