

3 ICLICE 2016-61 Chonticha NA-NGAM

A Study of Problems and Needs in English Speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology Students

Chonticha NA-NGAM*, Wipanee PENGDATE
English Department, College of General Education and Languages
Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand
*Corresponding author: chonticha@tni.ac.th

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were 1) to study problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students in two aspects: problems and needs 2) to compare students' problems and needs according to students' gender, academic year and faculty, and 3) to gather supplemental suggestions. Research samples were 306 TNI students in the second semester of 2015 academic year, derived through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, F-test, and content analysis. The research findings were as follows: 1. Problems in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students as a whole was at moderate level ($\bar{x} = 3.26$). When considered in each aspect, it was found that their problems were at moderate level on anxiety and conversation ($\bar{x} = 3.14$, $\bar{x} = 3.38$ respectively). Furthermore, needs in English speaking were at high level ($\bar{x} = 3.79$). When considered in each aspect, it was found that their needs were at high level on contents, learning activities, teaching materials and communication skills respectively. 2. The students with different genders showed statistically significant differences in overall at .05. When considered in each aspect, it was found that there were statistically significant differences at .05 level on problems. 3. The students with different faculty showed statistically significant differences in overall at .05. When considered in each aspect, it was found that there were statistically significant differences at .05 level on needs. 4. The students with different academic year showed no significant differences in overall and each aspect. 5. TNI students had supplemental suggestions as following: Teachers should teach more grammatical rules in the classroom to enhance an ability in structure using in English; Speaking activity should be provided both in classroom and outside classroom; TNI should arrange foreigners to communicate with students frequently.

Keywords: Problems in English Speaking, Needs in English Speaking

Introduction

English is the universal language that is desperately needed. The English as a mediator of information exchange and dissemination of knowledge in various fields. It is also an important tool of communication, careers and create awareness about the culture and understand the vision of other nations, so it is essential that university students who are entering the labor market in the future have to be prepared to accelerate the development of the ability to use English to a higher level.

The Ministry of Education has recognized the importance of this issue. It provides foreign language courses (English) from primary education to strive the youth to be

^{3rd} International Conference on Language, Innovation, Culture and Education (ICLICE)

20th & 21st FEBRUARY, 2016

committed and be able to apply knowledge of the English language to develop their knowledge and careers. (Ministry of Education, 2002) As the major languages of the world, English is the international language, the global language and English is the common language of humanity. It is the language that contact between the human in the world. Whether people use their national language, but when they interact with people of different languages and different cultures. Moreover, different people need to use English as the primary anyway. For this reason, all nations, all languages are encased in English as a second language into the national language. The core of the curriculum at all levels. From early childhood to adult life . Thailand has recognized the importance of the English language consistently. As can be seen from the management of education has prescribed the teaching of English in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Richards, 1985).

Needs analysis is a very valuable tool in identifying where the learners are and where learners should be. If we are to analyze needs, we have to know what kinds of needs are. Many practitioners define language needs analysis in different ways and from special viewpoints. The definition of Language Needs Analysis is based on the work of Nunan (1991), and in which they define Language Needs Analysis is a set of tools, techniques and procedures for determining the language content and learning processes that involves systematic gathering of specific information about the language needs to meet the learning needs of a particular group of learners (Brown, 1995).

College of General Education and Languages , Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology focused on language teaching both English and Japanese and emphasized in communication. Speaking skill is found that there are some problems and needs in teaching and learning. In order to develop teaching and learning, a study about problems and needs in speaking English are required to survey.

In conclusion, the researcher created problems and needs questionnaire which passed checking from experts for survey a study of problems and needs of speaking English for Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology Students in second semester, 2015 academic year and the results derived from research will be guideline in improvement and development instruction and instructional materials in the next occasions.

Research purposes

- 1) To study problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students in two aspects: problems and needs
- 2) To compare students' problems and needs according to students' gender, academic year and faculty, and
- 3) To gather supplemental suggestions.

Methodology

Population and Samples

This research was to study problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students which consisted of population and samples as follows:

Population of this research was 1,500 TNI students in 3 faculties of Engineering, Information Technology and Business Administration in the second semester of 2015 academic year. Samples of the research were 306 TNI students derived through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, F-test, and content analysis.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher, based on problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students.

The first part (Part 1) of this questionnaire asks for the demographic information on their genders, academic year and faculty. The participants were asked to report their information by ticking in only one box.

The second part (Part 2) concerns a study of problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students. This part comprises 61 items of a study of problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students in 2 major areas: 25 items of problems, 36 items of Needs of speaking. The participants were asked to check by ticking in only one box under the five levels of importance on each item in Part 2 to indicate their problems and needs in English speaking in each area listed in the questionnaire.

The five levels of problems and needs used in the questionnaire are “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Neither agree nor disagree”, “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree”. Responses from the student questionnaires were subsequently coded. The data of the students’ coded responses were statistically calculated and analyzed. The computation of Cronbach’s Alpha as a measure of reliability was employed to indicate how reliable the research questionnaire results are. Reliability is defined as the proportion of the students’ responses to each item in the questionnaire and the reliability coefficient or calculated alpha is a lower bound of the true reliability of the research instrument, or the questionnaire. The descriptive statistics is also used to determine the individual summary statistics for each of the 61 items in the questionnaire.

The third part (Part 3) asks for more opinions and suggestions of TNI undergraduate students about a study of problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students which based on open-ended questions.

Data Collection

Problems and needs in English speaking were accessed through the questionnaire in the second semester of 2015 academic year.

The administration of the research questionnaire was conducted in English classes. Part 1 concerns the demographic variables about their genders, academic years and faculties. The 61 items of Part 2 cover problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students. Therefore, the participants were requested to consider each item carefully and indicate how important each item was for their study. A total of 306 TNI students from the 3 faculties completed the questionnaire. The students’ responses from the questionnaire were subsequently coded using computer program as follows: “1 = male and 2=female” for genders; 1 = first year, 2 = second year, 3 = third year, 4 = forth year” for academic years; “1 = Engineering, 2 = Information Technology and 3=Business Administration for faculties and “1=strongly disagree, 2 =disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree” for each of the five levels of importance on 61 items in Part 2.

The analyses of the research data were conducted by means of descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistical analyses of the frequencies and percentages of the students’ responses were employed to report their demographic variables and to indicate the rank order of the items in each area of problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students listed in the questionnaire. The frequency distributions were analyzed to determine the proportions of the students’ responses to the five levels of importance on the 61 items in 2 majors area: 25 items of Problems, 36 items of Needs of speaking. Process analysis

was conducted with the second research question in determining the associations of the participants' problems and needs in English speaking to each of these demographic variables: genders, academic years and faculties.

Data Analysis from Questionnaire

Data analysis from questionnaire both single item and whole questionnaire which presented a form of rating scale. These rating scales were calculated to find out mean and standard deviation and then translated based on criteria developed by Best (1981) as follows:

- 1.00 $\leq \bar{x} < 1.50$ refers to students had the lowest problems and needs in English speaking.
- 1.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 2.50$ refers to students had low problems and needs in English speaking.
- 2.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 3.50$ refers to students had moderate problems and needs in English speaking.
- 3.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 4.50$ refers to students had high problems and needs in English speaking.
- 4.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 5.00$ refers to students had high problems and needs in English speaking.

The statistics used for analyzing the data

The collected data was analyzed using a computer program. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, f-test, and content analysis.

Results

Results of Data Analysis

Phase 1 The results of demographic variable of TNI students

The analysis of the data from the students' questionnaire reported by TNI students in the 2015 academic year is presented in the first section deals with the demographic variables from the students' responses to Part 1 of the questionnaire: genders, academic years and faculties as following table.

Table 1
Table of the results of demographic data of respondents

Demographic data of respondents	n=306	Percentage
1. Genders		
1.1 Male	161	52.6
1.2 Female	145	47.4
Total	306	100
2. Academic Years		
1st Year	76	24.8
2nd Year	76	24.8
3rd Year	77	25.2
4th Year	77	25.2
Total	306	100
3. Faculties		
Engineering	132	43.1
Information Technology	69	22.5
Business Administration	105	34.3
Total	306	100

Table showed that percentages of TNI respondents in genders ranged from 52.60% for male and 47.40% for female; in academic years ranged from 24.80% for 1st year, 24.80% for 2nd year, 25.20% for 3rd year and 25.20% for 4th year; in faculties ranged from 43.10% for Engineering, 22.50% for Information Technology, 34.30% for Business Administration.

Phase 2 Problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students

Table 2

Table of mean and standard deviation of problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students in total

Components	\bar{x}	S.D.	Level
Problems	3.26	0.86	moderate
Needs	3.79	0.59	high

The table above indicated that TNI students had a moderate level of problems in speaking English in overall (\bar{x} =3.26). For needs in speaking English, it was found that the students had a high level (\bar{x} =3.79).

Table 3

Table of mean and standard deviation of problems in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students in each aspect

Components	\bar{x}	S.D.	Level
Anxiety	3.14	0.84	moderate
English Conversation	3.38	0.89	moderate
Total	3.26	0.86	moderate

The table above indicated that TNI students had a moderate level of problems in speaking English in overall (\bar{x} =3.26). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the students had a moderate level on an anxiety (\bar{x} =3.14) and English conversation (\bar{x} =3.38) respectively.

Table 4

Table of mean and standard deviation of needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students in each aspect

Components	\bar{x}	S.D.	Level
Contents	3.73	0.64	high
Activities	3.71	0.71	high
Materials	3.73	0.74	high
Other skills	3.99	0.68	high
Total	3.79	0.59	high

The table above indicated that TNI students had a high level of needs in speaking English in overall ($\bar{X}=3.79$). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the students had a high level on contents ($\bar{X}=3.73$), activities ($\bar{X}=3.71$), materials ($\bar{X}=3.73$) and other skills ($\bar{X}=3.99$) respectively.

Phase 3 The results of the comparison of problems in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students according to genders, academic years, and faculties

Table 5

Table of mean and standard deviation of problems in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students according to genders

Components	Male (M) n=161		Female (F) n=145		t	p
	\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.		
Anxiety	3.05	0.84	3.25	0.83	-2.10	0.03
English Conversation	3.24	0.89	3.53	0.86	-2.80	0.00

The table showed that students with different genders had statistically significant differences in each aspect at 0.05 level both on anxiety and English conversation.

Table 6

Table of comparison of problems in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students according to faculties

Components		SS	df	MS	F	p
Anxiety	Between groups	2.10	2	1.05	1.47	0.23
	Within groups	215.69	303	0.71		
	Total	217.79	305			
English Conversation		0.394	3	0.131	0.848	0.469
	Between groups	0.99	2	0.49		
	Within groups	240.79	303	0.79		
Total		241.78	305			

* Statistical significance at 0.05 level

The table showed that students with different faculties had no significant differences in the total and in each aspect.

Table 7

Table of comparison of problems in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students according to academic years

Components		SS	df	MS	F	p
Anxiety	Between groups	5.22	3	1.74	2.47	0.06
	Within groups	212.56	302	0.70		
	Total	217.79	305			

Components	SS	df	MS	F	p
English Conversation					
Between groups	2.25	3	0.75	0.94	0.41
Within groups	239.53	302	0.79		
Total	241.78	305			

* Statistical significance at 0.05 level

The table showed that students with different academic years had no statistically significant differences in the total and in each aspect.

Phase 4 The results of opinions and suggestions

TNI students had supplemental suggestions as following:

1. Teachers should teach grammar in the classroom to enhance an ability in structure using in English.
2. Speaking activity should be provided both in classroom and outside classroom; TNI should arrange foreigners to communicate with students.

Conclusions

According to the study and data analysis, the results of this study were concluded as follows:

Phase 1: The results of demographic variable of TNI undergraduate students

percentages of TNI respondents in genders ranged from 52.60% for male and 47.40% for female; in academic years ranged from 24.80% for 1st year, 24.80% for 2nd year, 25.20% for 3rd year and 25.20% for 4th year; in faculties ranged from 43.10% for Engineering, 22.50% for Information Technology, 34.30% for Business Administration.

Phase 2: problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students

TNI students had a moderate level of problems in speaking English in overall ($\bar{x}=3.26$). For needs in speaking English, it was found that the students had a high level ($\bar{x}=3.79$).

Phase 3: The results of the comparison of problems and needs in English speaking of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students according to genders, academic years, and faculties

1. Students with different genders had statistically significant differences in each aspect at 0.05 level both on anxiety and English conversation.
2. Students with different faculties had no significant differences in the total and in each aspect.
3. Students with different academic years had no statistically significant differences in the total and in each aspect.

Phase 4: The results of opinions and suggestions as following:

1. Teachers should teach more grammatical rules in the classroom to enhance an ability in structure using in English.
2. Speaking activity should be provided both in classroom and outside classroom.
3. TNI should arrange foreigners to communicate with students frequently.

Discussion

According to the study and data analysis, the results of this study can be discussed as follows:

1. Problems on English speaking of TNI students were at moderate level in overall. This might be because TNI students need inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low or uneven participation which related to the concept of **Ur (1996)** who advocated that there are some speaking problems that teachers can come across in getting students to talk in the classroom. Such as inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low or uneven participation and mother-tongue use.

2. Needs on English speaking of TNI students were at high level. It might be because TNI students required and expected feedback from their teachers about their performance. This is related to the concept of **Harmer (1991)** who asserts that the decision made by teachers about how to react to students' performance will depend upon the stages of the lesson, the activities, the types of mistake made and the particular student who is making that mistake. If the teachers correct whenever there is a problem, the conversational flow as well as the purpose of the speaking activity will be destroyed. However, if the students are corrected all the time, they can find this very demotivating and become afraid to speak. They suggest that the teachers should always correct the students' mistakes positively and with encouragement (**Baker & Westrup, 2003**).

Acknowledgements

This research is supported by College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand

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