

IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS FOR NON-MAJOR STUDENTS THROUGH EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT HANOI OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: *When learning English, the thing that students fear the most is speaking skills. Learning English to speak well and express your ideas to others is especially important. Therefore, students are very afraid of learning this skill. To teach this skill effectively and attractively to students, the research team used video recording, observation, and questionnaire methods to improve speaking skills for our students at Hanoi Open University. Our team consisted of two lecturers and seventy students. We had been using these methods for about 3 months. Using video recording in group activities helps students limit the use of their native language “L1” and increase the use of the second language “L2”. Our research team wants students to develop self-confidence, learn while doing, and use the second language fluently, confidently, and happily when learning a foreign language. After the application sessions, the students’ speaking ability has improved and become much more fluent. In addition, reviewing the recording helps students recognize grammar and pronunciation errors. This helps students to be serious about learning the language, as well as create fun video clips for them to review. Moreover, using additional questionnaires helps lecturers and students realize their goals and orient their own interests when teaching and learning the language. Students’ presentation and speaking skills have improved, especially the use of their native language in group activities as well as in class. This helps them love the subject and communicate confidently when participating in extracurricular activities.*

Keywords: *L1: mother language, L2: foreign language, speaking skills, video recordings*

I. Introduction

English is a language that is widely and helpfully used all over the world. Especially in Vietnam, schools and universities have used English to tutor students as a foreign language. Teaching English to students in non-

major departments at Hanoi Open University faces many difficulties, such as the fact that they are not yet proficient in English. Students still have difficulty with pronunciation and are afraid to communicate with foreigners. The communication environment is limited,

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so it is necessary to create an environment for students to practice listening and speaking skills as much as possible. In teaching English in the basic department at Hanoi Open University, improving speaking skills for non-major students is very necessary. We, the researchers, have innovated methods to improve this speaking skill by letting students participate in extracurricular activities. Creating an environment for them to practice and need to be well prepared in all aspects: Vocabulary, structure, knowledge, and skills. Besides, this activity helps students confidently use foreign languages. In addition, the level and attitude of students are not uniform. Students come from different regions: urban and rural. So group work helps students support and learn from each other. We want our students to use English as much as possible. When students record videos during extracurricular activities, it helps to limit the use of English and increase the use of English. This topic has been also paid attention to a lot by the researchers such as: Kondal and Prasad (2020) wrote “Effectiveness of video recording towards developing speaking skills”, Afifah and Lestari (2019) wrote “Video clips to enhance the development of the students’ speaking skill”, Manggolo et al. (2023) wrote “SVR (Self-Video Recording) technique to enhance self-confidence in English speaking proficiency”. In Vietnam, Vu and Nguyen (2024) wrote “Challenges to Vietnamese students learning to speak English”; Đông et al. (2021) wrote “Cải thiện kỹ năng nói tiếng Anh cho sinh viên năm thứ nhất trường Đại học Tân Trào”; and Nguyen (2024) wrote “Video recording in EFL learners’ speaking skills development: A literature review”.

II. Literature review

Using video recording during extracurricular activities to limit the use of

the native language to improve students’ speaking skills in group activities is quite interesting. Recording not only helps students focus on the topic and subject knowledge but also creates excitement and fun during group discussions. After completing the group discussion with recording, students can review the recording to self-evaluate and improve errors, such as grammar and phonetics. This also creates excitement for both lecturers and students when participating in language learning. Researchers have tried to find effective methods of teaching second languages to students.

First, Kondal said that using video recording as one of the modes of media can improve students’ speaking skills, as students are able to evaluate their work to self-reflect. He did a survey and saw that about 18% of his students used the English language to take part in fun activities, whereas 82% of them never spoke in English for participation in any fun activities outside the classroom. The research data showed that students (i.e., 8%) often use English for describing their feelings or emotions, whereas 74% of them never used L2 for expressing their feelings (Kondal & Prasad, 2020).

Next, the others also said that speaking skills are important and speaking is a pivotal skill in English acquisition, particularly for students worldwide, including Vietnamese learners. Therefore, their research is to underscore the imperative to address the obstacles hindering learners’ English-speaking skills. Through an extensive review of existing literature, this paper elucidates the importance of honing speaking abilities, as they pave the way for realizing aspirations (Vu & Nguyen, 2024).

Another study on using video clips to increase the effectiveness of teaching speaking skills to students in Indonesia, and the results were very satisfactory. The result

of the research shows that the use of video clips leads to significant improvement in speaking skills, in accordance with the advantages of using video clips in learning (Afifah & Lestari, 2019).

To improve Students' speaking skills, they should form the habit of thinking in English, limit translating sentences from Vietnamese to English, and then speaking. Always find every opportunity to communicate in English outside the classroom: talk to friends in English, join English clubs. Create confidence in communication for students, do not put too much emphasis on speaking correct grammar, which makes students feel shy. Instead, teachers should encourage students to try to express their ideas (Đong et al., 2021).

Another study suggested that video recording can change the way learners of a foreign language learn, especially for speaking skills. In this situation, learners can record themselves and then assess the video recordings to improve their speaking skills (Nguyen, 2024).

Finally, this study was conducted with first-year students in Indonesia. They used self-recorded videos to practice speaking skills and corrected mistakes about grammar or pronunciation after they watched the video recording. Furthermore, the research above showed that pronunciation played a key role for students. This increased their confidence in speaking English, improved their Vocabulary, and enabled them to speak fluently with clarity of the intended message (Mangolo et al., 2023).

In short, using this method, "video recording for extracurricular activities to improve English speaking skills for non-major students at Hanoi Open University," can improve and enhance speaking skills for students. Our research team wants to apply for group work to compare the

results and conduct a survey for lecturers and students about this project. To draw out experiences, what has been done, and what needs to be overcome to develop as well as overcome.

III. Research method

3.1. Participants

We, two lecturers, applied this method to 6 groups in 2 classes. Each group consisted of 4-6 students participating. Each class had three groups participating in this activity, and others not participating. (for us to compare the results and due to the satisfaction of teachers and students). The total number of students participating in the study was 70. Their level was pre-intermediate (Class A had 36 students, Class B had 34 students). Of which, 30 students participated in extracurricular activities, and 40 students only answered the interview. The research subjects were first-year students at Hanoi Open University. The average age of the students was between 18 and 22 years old. The ratio of males and females in these classes was 40% and 60% respectively. The textbook used in these classes is the pre-intermediate New Headway by John and Liz Soars with workbooks and CDs. The content that students will work on is the topics discussed in the textbook. There are two lecturers involved in the study.

3.2. Data collection

This research was collected through observations and questionnaires.

3.2.1. Observations

The students were given a topic to draw in the first lesson to make a video in extracurricular activities. Students will have 4 weeks to prepare. Groups will discuss filming plans, filming content, scripts, etc. Students will use personal equipment, such as cameras or mobile phones, in group work. Student groups will present their projects. In weeks 7

and 8, students will edit content, plans, and places. In week 9, students will start filming. In week 10, students will edit. In week 11, they will present and submit their products to the lecturer. My colleague teaches one class. I teach one class. We accompanied each other throughout 11 teaching sessions for 11 weeks. In addition to teaching according to the detailed outline of the subject. In the speaking skills section. All students practice speaking skills in class. Particularly, six groups in two classes participating in the video recording method, if they have questions, will spend a few minutes discussing with the lecturer about the content, as well as how to do it. Even outside of class time, if students need help, the lecturer in charge is ready to help them.

3.2.2. Questionnaires

We sent interview questionnaires to 70 students in two classes: The survey consisted of 5 questions. 30 students participated in the study, and 40 students did not participate. These questionnaires were sent to students in week 11, after the classes were completed.

IV. Results and discussion

4.1. Data analysis

After the groups submit their 'video clip' products, we collect, discuss, and analyze what the lecturers and students have done.

• **Observations:** Based on group observations, we have the data and results as follows.

During the first 4 weeks, we observed groups discussing speaking topics, and students were discussing them normally. Groups that chose to record videos during extracurricular activities were quite worried about the method and planning for content, as well as scripts, roles, and locations. After regular classes, students stayed behind to ask about time, size, and costumes.

In the 5th week, while other students prepared topics for the midterm speaking test, the remaining students in the group that chose to record videos edited the content, practiced, and submitted drafts for the instructor to review.

In the 10th week, Students submitted video recordings of their extracurricular activities. We collected six recordings of 2 classes. They were great. The students had worked very hard to prepare and practice. They tried to work in groups, improve, and learn from each other. They rarely made mistakes in grammar, and the content was rich, fun, humorous, and entertaining. Besides, there were still problems with pronunciation for students with poor English proficiency.

The evaluation criteria for the recording are based on the following five parts

1. Recording time and division of roles among group members (2.0 pts)
2. Presentation content (2.0 pts)
3. Pronunciation (2.0 pts)
4. Brightness (2.0 pts)
5. Costume and context (2.0 pts)

Table 1. The scores that students got for the video recordings (30 students)

Scores	1.0 - 5.0	6.0	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0	10.0
Students	0	1	4	5	5	10	5	0

Assessment criteria for oral tests according to the detailed curriculum outline

Table 2. The scores that students took a speaking test in class with the following grading scale (40 students)

Scores	1.0 - 3.0	3.5	4.0	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	9 - 10
Students	0	2	3	7	6	5	4	7	5	1	0

From the above results, we see that: No students received a score from 1 to 5; only one student received a score of 6.0. This showed that the students tried very hard for preparation and responsibility. Besides, students who achieved between 7.0 and 7.5 points made up nine students (30%). Meanwhile, students who took oral exams were five students below average (12.5), and 18 students who achieved from 5.0 - 6.0 (45%). This ratio reflects that the number of students who achieved an average level was quite high.

The number of students who achieved good results in the oral test was 12 students (30%). The number of students who achieved excellent results in the video recording group was 20 students (66.6%). Meanwhile, the oral exam group was 1 (2.5%). From the above data, we see that if there is careful preparation and practice, students' speaking skills will be improved and enhanced significantly. Students put themselves in situations and speak naturally. This shows that extracurricular activities play a very important role in the application and cultivation of students' practical language skills. Besides, working in groups helps students gain confidence and helps each other. I interviewed my colleague and some students. Their answers were:

Our colleagues: We saw that using video recording makes students busier and harder. However, students felt happier and more responsible. The

students recognized the importance of speaking English in real life. "It was necessary in real life".

Student 1: I like group activities because working in groups helps me to be confident, I can correct each other's mistakes, and importantly, whether there are mistakes or not, it is the whole group.

Student 2: I like to submit speaking products by video recording through extracurricular activities because my group prepares and practices carefully, so the test score will be high

Student 3: Being on a video crew is fun because we get to gather together to cook and hang out.

• Questionnaires

Seventy sheets of questionnaires were printed in English and sent to students in two classes. Six groups were applied with video recording, and others without using video recording. This questionnaire consisted of five items developed by us. After classes ended on the 3rd of April 2025, we sent questionnaires to the students directly on the 28th of March 2025 and collected them right after they had been answered. We were in classes during the time the students answered the questions. After collecting data, we saw how the students' attitudes toward using video recording in extracurricular activities to improve speaking skills were. We found that this activity limited the use of the mother tongue in language practice and maximized language practice.

Table 3. The results of student questionnaires

Questions	Respondents (30 students using video Recording)	Answers	Respondents (40 students without making a video recording)	Answers
1. What skills do you like best when learning English?				
A. Listening	2	A	1	A
B. Reading	15	B	18	B
C. Speaking	5	C	6	C
D. Writing	8	D	15	D

Questions	Respondents (30 students using video Recording)	Answers	Respondents (40 students without making a video recording)	Answers
2. Do you prefer to do speaking tests individually or in groups? A. Individually B. In groups	7 23	A B	8 32	A B
3. What skills do you want to improve? A. Listening B. Reading C. Speaking D. Writing	10 4 11 5	A B C D	15 7 10 8	A B C D
4. How is using L2 important in learning English? A. Especially important B. Unimportant	24 6	A B	36 4	A B
5. Do you like to participate in extracurricular activities? A. Yes B. No	23 7	A B	28 12	A B

From the above statistics, we can see that the number of students who like to learn speaking skills is exceedingly small (11 out of seventy respondents), accounting for 15.7%. In question 1, reading and writing skills are two skills that students quite like to learn (33 out of 70 respondents like reading skills, and 23 out of 70 respondents like writing skills). Therefore, we need to focus on improving and enhancing speaking skills for students. That is the reason students in Vietnam read and write English quite well, but when listening and speaking to foreigners, they are confused and bewildered. They need to use body language a lot. From the survey above, we can see that students need to improve their listening and speaking skills a lot. We can see respondents from question 3 in the above table (listening: 25 out of 30 respondents and speaking: 21 out of 40 respondents). It is true that listening and speaking skills are quite difficult, and students who get high scores for this skill are quite few. Especially now, Hanoi Open University has applied oral exams for this speaking skill in the final exam of the semester.

In questions 2 and 5, students really like speaking in groups and like to record videos for extracurricular activities to get speaking test scores. We guide and encourage students to participate in group activities and extracurricular activities, which not only increases their love for the subject but also helps students continuously learn from each other, be confident, and responsible. For shy students, oral exams in front of lecturers are stressful. But if they are trained and practice a lot in field trips or extracurricular activities, I think students will have more experience and be more confident and bold. Through this survey, we see that extracurricular activities have a positive impact on students' perception of learning speaking skills (23 out of 30 respondents like recording videos, and 28 out of 40 respondents do not participate in recording videos for extracurricular activities).

Question 4 shows us that students still attach great importance to using L2 in the classroom. It could be due to many reasons, such as lack of vocabulary, lack of practice, and fear, so discussing and using L2 in class

still faces many difficulties. That is why students are afraid and do not like to learn speaking skills. The number of respondents who believe L2 is important when learning a foreign language is very high (23 out of 30 respondents to this question for the video groups and 36 out of 40 respondents for the groups of students who do not participate in extracurricular activities).

Through the survey, we can see that the group of students who participated in filming videos in extracurricular activities enjoyed doing this project at a very high rate (23 out of 30 responses). The group of students who did not participate, the data showed that the rate of students choosing to participate in extracurricular activities was just over 50%.

Thanks to the application of video recording and questionnaires, we see that students need to have learning methods, and lecturers need to have methods and orientations to convey inspiration to students. There are no stupid students and lazy students. It is important that we, the pedagogists, explore, research, and love our profession to create a fun atmosphere and an exciting learning environment for students.

In this study, we have found a way to improve English speaking skills for non-major students through extracurricular activities at Hanoi Open University. In addition, we have promoted group activities. Students actively explore and research outside of class hours and make the most of their self-study time. Through observation, receiving video recordings, and questionnaires, we see that students are responsible and interested in this subject, especially in speaking skills. No more shyness and fear. This study was conducted by my colleagues and me to meet the need for innovation in teaching methods in our school. This change was considered an important change because I proposed a solution to a perceived problem.

4.2. The limitation of the research

When analyzing the data and the results of the research process, I found the limitations of my work. We only applied to 6 groups of 30 students in 2 classes and two lecturers. This was the first time applying, so the students did not have many ideas. Most of the students studied full days, so they had little time for group meetings. The members of the group did not live near each other, so it was difficult to hold group discussions. The groups preferred to choose their favorite members, which created an imbalance in scores between the groups.

V. Conclusion

This study aims to help students reduce stress when practicing public speaking skills or presenting ideas. Initially, it helps students reduce anxiety, fear, and stress when presenting or talking about topics in the subject. Video recordings for extracurricular activities bring many benefits to students, such as exchanging, supporting each other, and studying together. Working in groups for 11 weeks helps students become closer and more familiar with each other. The filmed footage introduces the dishes in a very attractive and fun way. In addition, if there are errors in pronunciation or technique, students have to start over and have more delicious meals. Or the activities in the cultural village help students have interesting and useful picnics.

In addition to the achievements, this study also has limitations, such as the technical means of filming and the use of video editing software. The limited number of classes and students prevented us from having a deep understanding of this activity. But we would like to thank our colleagues and the students for their enthusiastic participation in the project. This project aims to improve the English speaking skills of non-major students

through video recording for extracurricular activities at Hanoi Open University.

The positive results from applying this method are the basis for expanding the implementation to more classes in the future, contributing to clearly improving students' speaking skills.

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CẢI THIỆN KỸ NĂNG NÓI TIẾNG ANH CHO SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN THÔNG QUA CÁC HOẠT ĐỘNG NGOẠI KHÓA TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC MỞ HÀ NỘI

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Tóm tắt: Khi học tiếng Anh, điều sinh viên lo sợ nhất chính là kỹ năng nói. Học tiếng Anh để nói tốt và diễn đạt ý tưởng của mình với người khác đặc biệt quan trọng. Chính vì vậy, sinh viên rất ngại học kỹ năng này. Để dạy kỹ năng này một cách hiệu quả và hấp dẫn đối với sinh viên, nhóm nghiên cứu đã sử dụng các phương pháp quay video, quan sát và bảng câu hỏi để cải thiện kỹ năng nói cho sinh viên tại Đại học Mở Hà Nội. Nhóm nghiên cứu gồm hai giảng viên và bảy mươi sinh viên. Chúng tôi đã áp dụng các phương pháp này trong khoảng 3 tháng. Việc sử dụng quay video trong các hoạt động nhóm giúp sinh viên hạn chế việc sử dụng tiếng mẹ đẻ “L1” và tăng cường sử dụng ngôn ngữ thứ hai “L2”. Nhóm nghiên cứu mong muốn sinh viên phát triển sự tự tin, vừa học vừa làm, sử dụng ngôn ngữ thứ hai một cách lưu loát, tự tin và vui vẻ khi học ngoại ngữ. Sau các buổi ứng dụng, khả năng nói của sinh viên đã được cải thiện và trở nên lưu loát hơn rất nhiều. Ngoài ra, việc xem lại bản ghi âm giúp sinh viên nhận ra lỗi ngữ pháp và phát âm. Điều này giúp sinh viên nghiêm túc hơn trong việc học ngoại ngữ cũng như tạo ra các video clip thú vị để các em ôn tập. Hơn nữa, việc sử dụng bảng câu hỏi bổ sung giúp giảng viên và sinh viên nhận ra mục tiêu và định hướng sở thích của bản thân khi dạy và học ngoại ngữ. Kỹ năng thuyết trình, nói của sinh viên được cải thiện, đặc biệt là khả năng sử dụng tiếng mẹ đẻ trong các hoạt động nhóm cũng như trên lớp. Điều này giúp các em yêu thích môn học và tự tin giao tiếp khi tham gia các hoạt động ngoại khóa.

Từ khóa: L1: tiếng mẹ đẻ, L2: ngoại ngữ, kỹ năng nói, bản ghi video

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