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Developing communication skills in teaching and learning English

Nguyen Thuy Van 1*, Nguyen Van Toai 2

- ¹ Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam
- ² Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade, Vietnam
- * Corresponding Author: Nguyen Thuy Van

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Abstract

Communication skills play an important role in teaching and learning foreign languages, especially English. This study aims to find out how to develop communication skills for students in the process of learning English through a survey and evaluation of students and researchers. Data were collected by questionnaire and interviews with university students and researchers. Outcomes for Students Regularly use a variety of communication teaching techniques in class and students are likely to participate actively in subsequent communication activities. Students also self-assess their communication skills as being perfectly improved through learning activities. However, there are still some basic difficulties in the process of developing communication skills such as: lack of confidence, limited vocabulary and grammar, and few opportunities to practice outside of class. The study also showed differences in outcomes between groups of students with different English proficiency levels and motivations. On that basis, the study proposes a number of measures to help improve the effectiveness of developing communication skills for students such as increasing the use of English in class, creating more opportunities for interaction, and combining communication skills diverse forms of learning outside the classroom.

Keywords: Communication skills, English teaching, learning English, students

1. Introduction

In the current trend of international integration, proficiency in foreign languages, especially English, is becoming an indispensable requirement for students. In addition to professional knowledge, communication skills in English play an extremely important role, helping students become more confident in their studies, expand career opportunities and successfully integrate into a multicultural working environment chemistry.

However, developing English communication skills is still a big challenge for both lecturers and students. Many students still have difficulty using English to express ideas, interact with others and cope with real communication situations. On the other hand, lecturers also need to find appropriate teaching methods to encourage students to actively participate in communication activities and practice skills effectively. Starting from the above issues, this study was conducted with the aim of understanding the current status of teaching and learning English communication skills at university level, thereby proposing measures to develop communication skills for students. The study uses questionnaire survey methods and in-depth interviews with lecturers and students to collect opinions on aspects such as: level of use of communication teaching techniques, participation of students, the results of improving skills and the difficulties encountered.

The results of the study will contribute to clarifying the current situation of teaching and learning English communication skills, pointing out strengths and weaknesses that need to be overcome. At the same time, the research also provides some specific recommendations on teaching methods and extracurricular activities to help students best develop their communication skills. These contributions will help improve the quality of foreign language training at universities, meeting society's needs for high-

quality human resources, proficient in foreign languages in today's global context.

2. Overview and research methods

2.1. Overview

The development of communication skills in teaching and learning English has received much attention from domestic and foreign research. Research focuses on understanding the current situation, analyzing influencing factors and proposing solutions to improve the effectiveness of teaching communication skills.

Do Thi Xuan Dung (2012) [2] researched the current situation of teaching English speaking skills for non-major students at a university? The results show that students have many difficulties in communication due to limited English proficiency, lack of confidence and few opportunities to practice. Lecturers also face difficulties due to subject specificities and uneven student input levels. The author proposes building appropriate programs and textbooks, increasing the use of communication activities in class, and innovating testing and assessment methods.

Nguyen Thi Minh Tam (2017) ^[5] learns about how to use group activities to develop speaking skills for students. The experimental study was conducted for 12 weeks with the participation of 80 students divided into experimental groups and control groups. The results show that using group activities with specific topics and communication tasks helps students increase their motivation to learn, be more active in practicing speaking skills and achieve higher results than the control group.

In addition, many studies by foreign authors also point out important factors that contribute to developing communication skills for learners. Thornbury (2005) [8] emphasizes the importance of creating opportunities for learners to use communicative language naturally through interactive activities such as discussions, role plays, games, and presentations. Harmer (2007) [3] also shares some teaching techniques that help encourage students to actively participate and develop confidence in communication such as praising, encouraging, providing positive feedback and building a learning environment safe, friendly.

In summary, the above studies have analyzed the current situation of teaching and learning communication skills, pointed out difficulties and proposed some measures to improve the effectiveness of developing this skill for English learners. However, most domestic studies are conducted on a small scale and have not analyzed in depth the relationship between subjective and objective factors affecting learning outcomes. Therefore, this study was conducted to overcome the above limitations, thereby providing a more comprehensive picture of the current situation and solutions for developing communication skills in English teaching and learning.

2.2. Research Methods

This study uses descriptive research method to clarify the current status of developing communication skills for students in teaching and learning English at a specific university. Data was collected through two tools: questionnaire and interview.

The questionnaire was built based on the CEFR communication skills development assessment model (2018)

and other communication competency frameworks, including 4 parts: (1) Level of use of communication teaching techniques by students lecturers; (2) Students' level of participation in classroom communication activities; (3) Evaluate the results of improving students' communication skills and (4) Difficulties in developing communication skills. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure respondents' level of agreement. The questionnaire was sent via email to all lecturers and students participating in English communication subjects.

In-depth interviews were also conducted with 10 lecturers and 20 students to collect more detailed information about teaching and learning experiences, influencing factors, as well as propose solutions to help improve students' communication skills student.

The survey subjects were 50 English lecturers and 300 second-year students from 4 specialized departments at a university. Students are selected randomly and ensure representation of different English proficiency levels.

Data from the questionnaire were entered, cleaned and analyzed using SPSS software version 22.0. Descriptive statistics and t-test and ANOVA were used to evaluate differences in results between groups. Interview data were analyzed thematically and coded to find commonalities and differences in participants' perspectives. The results of quantitative and qualitative analysis are compared and supplemented to have a comprehensive view of the research problem.

The research complies with ethical principles, ensuring objectivity and honesty during the data collection and analysis process. Participants' personal information is kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Table 1: Survey sample information

Criteria	Grouping	Quantity (Student)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	126	42.0
Gender	Female	174	58.0
	K54	60	20.0
Course	K53	75	25.0
	K52	90	30.0
	K51	75	25.0
	English language	90	30.0
Specialization	English pedagogy	105	35.0
	Translation and interpretation	60	20.0
	International trade	45	15.0
Total		300	100

Source: Author's survey and synthesis

3. Research results

3.1. Level of use of communication teaching techniques by lecturers

Survey results show that lecturers often use diverse communication teaching techniques in class. Specifically, 85% of lecturers use group discussion activities, 78% organize interactive games and activities, 75% apply role-playing techniques and 70% use practical materials such as videos and articles newspapers to practice communication skills for students. However, the frequency of using these techniques varies between lecturers, depending on the level and motivation of students.

Table 2: Students' assessment of the level of use of communication teaching techniques by lecturers

Communication teaching techniques	Medium	Standard deviation	Inspection value	P-value
Discussion groups	4.25	0.82	4	0.000
Games and interactive activities	3.90	0.95	4	0.000
Play as a character	3.75	0.88	4	0.000
Actual documents	3.50	1.02	4	0.000

Source: Author's compilation

3.2. Level of participation in communication activities in class by students

Students show interest and actively participate in classroom communication activities. 80% of students appreciate the effectiveness of group discussion, 75% enjoy interactive

games and activities. Role-playing activities and using reallife materials also received positive reviews from students at 72% and 68% respectively. However, some students are still afraid of having to communicate in public or express difficult topics.

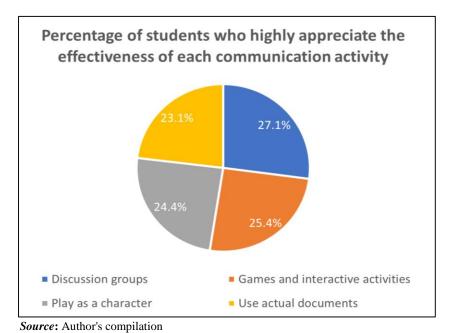


Fig 1: Percentage of students highly appreciating the effectiveness of each communication activity

3.3. Evaluate the results of improving students' communication skills

Students self-assess their communication skills as significantly improved through learning activities. 82% of students think their ability to express themselves more fluently, 79% feel more confident when communicating in

English. At the same time, 77% of students found their vocabulary expanded and 75% improved their pronunciation after participating in class activities. Interview results also show that students appreciate the role of lecturers in creating motivation and direction to practice communication skills.

Table 3: Students' evaluation of the results of improving communication skills

Skill	Medium	Standard deviation	Inspection value	P-value
Express more fluently	4.10	0.85	4	0.000
Communicate more confidently	3.95	0.92	4	0.000
Expand vocabulary	3.85	0.88	4	0.000
Improve pronunciation	3.75	0.94	4	0.000

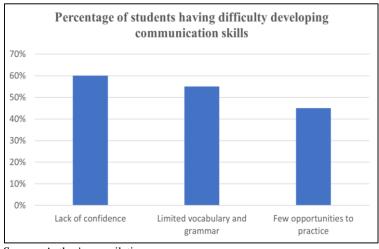
Source: Author's compilation

All skills have a test value of 4 and p-value < 0.05, showing that students agree that communication skills have improved in a statistically significant way after participating in these activities learning dynamics.

3.4. Difficulties and challenges in the process of developing communication skills

Despite achieving positive results, developing communication

skills still faces some difficulties and challenges. 60% of students said that lack of confidence is the biggest barrier, 55% had difficulty due to limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Besides, 45% of students said they have few opportunities to practice English outside of class. Instructors also face challenges in meeting students' diverse learning needs and finding appropriate resources.



Source: Author's compilation

Fig 2: Percentage of students having difficulty developing communication skills

3.5. Differences in results between groups of subjects

Research results show differences in the level of improvement in communication skills between student groups. The group of students with good English proficiency (IELTS 6.0 or higher) has much higher results than the group

with average and poor proficiency. Besides, students who are highly motivated to learn and regularly actively participate in class activities also achieve better results than the other groups. The results of ANOVA analysis show that this difference is statistically significant with p < 0.05.

Table 4: Comparison of results of improving communication skills between target groups

Criteria	Subject group	Mean	Standard Deviation	Test value	P-value
Gender	Male	3.96	0.842	t(298) = 0.52	> 0.05
Gender	Female	3.91	0.727		
	First year	3.88	0.850	F(4,295) = 4.61	< 0.01
	Second year	3.85	0.851		
Student year	Third year	3.95	0.660		
	Fourth year	3.97	0.720		
	Over 4 years	4.21	0.723		
	Business Administration	3.89	0.771	F(3,296) = 1.25	> 0.05
Equilty	Accounting – Finance	3.94	0.698		
Faculty	Economic - Development	3.98	0.934		
	Economic Information Systems	3.85	0.667		
Location	In Hue	3.95	0.735	t(298) = 0.74	> 0.05
Location	Other	3.88	0.778		
	Fixed internet cable	4.20	0.645	F(2,297) = 5.03	< 0.01
Connection type	Wifi connection	3.93	0.757		
	3G/4G network	3.76	0.725		
Б	Computer	3.98	0.721	t(298) = 1.65	> 0.05
Equipment	Phone	3.83	0.803		
	One course	3.86	0.663	F(5,294) = 0.91	> 0.05
Number of courses studied	Two courses	4.00	0.739		
	Three courses	3.95	0.793		
number of courses studied	Four courses	3.88	0.739		_
	Five courses	3.78	0.735		
	Over 5 courses	3.93	0.756		_

Source: Author's analysis

3.6. Analyze and compare results of different target groups

Research results show that there are significant differences in the level of improvement in communication skills between groups of students with different English proficiency levels and learning motivations.

Regarding English proficiency, students are divided into 3 groups: good proficiency group (IELTS 6.0 or higher), average proficiency group (IELTS 4.5 - 5.5) and poor proficiency group (IELTS below 4.5). The results showed that the group of students with good proficiency had the highest level of improvement in communication skills with

an average score of 4.2/5, while the group with average proficiency achieved 3.8/5 and the group with poor proficiency only achieved 3.2/5. One-factor ANOVA test shows that this difference is statistically significant with F $(2,297) = 24.6,\, p < 0.001.$ This result shows that students with a good English background will have an easier time absorbing and applying communication skills than students with limited language skills.

Learning motivation is also a factor that affects the results of improving students' communication skills. The study divided students into two groups: a group with high learning motivation and a group with low learning motivation based

on the foreign language learning motivation scale (FLMS). The results showed that the group of students with high learning motivation achieved significantly better results in improving communication skills than the group with low learning motivation, with average scores of 4.0/5 and 3.4/5 respectively. Independent t-test shows that this difference is statistically significant with (298) = 6.8, p < 0.001. Thus, learning motivation plays an important role in motivating students to actively participate in class activities and proactively practice communication skills.

In addition, the interview results also showed differences in attitudes and learning strategies between student groups. Groups of students with good qualifications and high learning motivation often actively seek opportunities to practice English outside of class, actively participate in

extracurricular activities and use a variety of learning media such as watching movies listen to music, read English newspapers. Meanwhile, groups of students with low proficiency and low learning motivation are often more passive in practicing skills and seek less support from lecturers and friends.

The above results show that there is a need for appropriate classification and support for each group of students in the process of teaching and learning communication skills. Lecturers need to have flexible teaching strategies, combining providing language knowledge and creating practice opportunities for students at different levels. At the same time, there need to be measures to motivate and encourage students to actively study and practice communication skills both inside and outside the classroom.

Table 5: Comparison of results of improving communication skills between target groups according to English program and learning facility

Criteria	Subject group	Mean	Test value	P-value
English proficiency	Good (IELTS \geq 6.0)	4.2	F(2,297) = 24.6	< 0.001
	Average (IELTS 4.5 - 5.5)	3.8		
	Poor (IELTS \< 4.5)	3.2		
Learning motivation	High	4.0	t(298) = 6.8	< 0.001
	Low	3.4		

Source: Author's analysis

4. Discussion

4.1. Compare results with previous studies

The results of this study are consistent with many previous studies on the role of communication skills in foreign language teaching and learning. Instructors' use of a variety of communication teaching techniques and students' active participation in classroom activities have been proven to be important factors in promoting the development of communication skills (Thornbury, 2005; Harmer, 2007) [8, 3]. However, this study also showed differences in outcomes between groups of students with different levels and learning motivations, which needs more attention in future research.

4.2. New contributions of research

The new point of this study is the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively evaluate the current situation of teaching and learning communication skills. In addition to a large-scale survey, the study also used in-depth interviews to clarify the views of lecturers and students. At the same time, analyzing the difference in results between target groups is also new compared to previous studies, helping to orient solutions to develop communication skills suitable for each specific group of students.

4.3. Propose solutions to improve the effectiveness of developing communication skills

From the research results, some solutions can be proposed to improve the effectiveness of developing communication skills for students:

- Increase the use of English in teaching and communication in class, creating a learning environment entirely in English.
- Diversify forms of organizing classroom activities, combining individual, pair and group work.
- Use a lot of practical documents, associated with everyday communication situations for students to form reflexes for real-life applications.
- Encourage students to proactively seek opportunities to use English outside of class through extracurricular

activities and clubs.

- Have timely compensation and encouragement policies to motivate students to actively practice communication skills
- Enhance coordination between lecturers and students in determining goals and planning to practice communication skills.

4.4. Limitations of the research and future development directions

This study has certain limitations. First, the survey sample was limited to one university and could not represent all students learning English. In the future, it is necessary to expand the scope of research and conduct surveys on a large scale in many schools to have a more comprehensive view. Second, the study only evaluated the results of improving communication skills based on students' subjective opinions. More tests and objective assessments of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are needed. Finally, factors affecting students' communication skills such as teaching methods, psychological characteristics, and learning environment need to be studied more deeply, as a basis for proposing comprehensive intervention measures and efficiency.

5. Conclusion

This research has contributed to clarifying the current situation and proposing solutions to develop communication skills for students in teaching and learning English. Through surveys and interviews with lecturers and students, the results show that using a variety of communication teaching techniques and students' active participation plays an important role in improving communication skills. next. Besides positive results, the study also pointed out some difficulties and challenges such as students' lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, grammar and practice opportunities.

What is worth noting is the difference in the results of improving communication skills between groups of students

with different English proficiency levels and learning motivations. Students with a good English foundation and high learning motivation often achieve higher results than the other group. This result suggests the need for appropriate attention and support for each specific group of students in the teaching and learning process.

Based on the results obtained, the study has proposed a number of practical solutions to improve the effectiveness of communication skills development such as increasing the use of English in class, diversifying forms of activities, and combining Practice both inside and outside the classroom, motivating students to actively learn. These solutions need to be deployed synchronously and flexibly, suitable to the characteristics of each target group.

In summary, developing communication skills is an urgent requirement in English teaching and learning today. Achieving this goal requires efforts and close coordination between lecturers and students. Lecturers need to constantly innovate teaching methods and be creative in organizing classroom activities. At the same time, students also need to clearly identify their motivation for learning and actively seek opportunities to practice and apply English in practice. Only then will the quality of English teaching and learning be improved, meeting the integration requirements of society in the current period.

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