

Thai Student Ability on Speexx Language Training Program

Toby Gibbs, Glen Craigie, Suwaree Yordchim

Abstract—The Speexx results revealed four main factors affecting the success of 190 Thai sophomores as follows: 1) Future English training should be pursued in applied Speexx development. 2) Thai students didn't see the benefit of having an Online Language Training Program. 3) There is a great need to educate the next generation of learners on the benefits of Speexx within the community. 4) A great majority of Thai Sophomores didn't know what Speexx was.

A guideline for self-reliance planning consisted of four aspects: 1) Development planning: by arranging groups to further improve English abilities with the Speexx Language Training program and encourage using Speexx into every day practice. Local communities need to develop awareness of the usefulness of Speexx and share the value of using the program among family and friends. 2) Humanities and Social Science staff should develop skills using this Online Language Training Program to expand on the benefits of Speexx within their departments. 3) Further research should be pursued on the Thai Students progression with Speexx and how it helps them improve their language skills with Business English. 4) University's and Language centers should focus on using Speexx to encourage learning for any language, not just English.

Keywords—Ability, Comprehension, Sophomore, Speexx.

I. INTRODUCTION

ENGLISH is important to master for international business communication. Today Speexx has become an international asset to more than 7 million learners and in 1,500 companies worldwide. This has changed the way we communicate online, especially within the economy and society. The economic competition and expansion in world trade markets has changed the way we do business, continually demanding for more individuals to speak Business English. However, there is a serious problem for the Thai market as this has been an obstacle utilizing English communication. Further than this, learning is not limited in only the classroom, using internet worldwide in terms of convenience, rapidness, and a virtually ready system.

Nowadays, Thai student ability on English use of Speexx Language Training Program focuses on interactive communication online. The communication approach contains communication theories, grammars, situations and human psychology [1].

Many teaching methods are used to develop language learning. Speexx learners' skill set of development are

Toby Gibbs, Glen Craigie, and Asst. Prof. Dr. Suwaree Yordchim are lecturers and researchers at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. 1 U-Thong Nok Road, Dusit, Bangkok 10300, Thailand (e-mail: tigertoby111@gmail.com).

cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical. It leads to learner or student-centered learning that is a wide variety of educational programs, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-support strategies that are intended to address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural background of individual students and groups of students. Speexx is widely used for English ability, but is not limited to develop other language platforms.

Speexx can be defined as learning facilitated and supported through the use of information and communications technology. It covers the use of computers and technology as a vehicle for knowledge exchange within teaching and learning. It broadly benefits for an additional avenue with which to support teaching and learning practice in terms of: 1) the ability to provide distance learning (learning not on campus), 2) a blended learning/teaching approach (using face-to-face technology), and 3) the use of technology to support a wide range of educational activity. It provides many opportunities including large scale online delivery of module and courses. The development growth of technology-mediated learning systems has created a whole new learning environment that enables students to increase their confidence and academic achievement [2]-[4].

II. OBJECTIVES

Study the results of Thai student ability on the Speexx Language Training program.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Subject

190 Thai sophomores studying Business English were sponsored by Institute of Lifelong Learning Promotion and Creative (ILPC). They were second-year Thai students studying in the Humanities and Social Science department at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU). For the purpose of this study, these 190 students were grouped under by academic major: Chinese major and Japanese major.

B. Instruments

To collect data on students' use of the Online Speexx training program, Speexx Automated Inventory Database (SAID) applied with Oxford' Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), was used to compile the data. The Speexx instrument comprises of 10 modules regarding memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies. Students answered each module using multiple choice and fill in the blank. This instrument has been used on all Speexx programs worldwide for students learning a second

language.

C. Data Analysis

The Speex program was used to complete the analysis of the collected data. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were carried out in order to examine the use of SAID.

IV. RESULTS

A. Website for Speex Language Training Program

The content structure of Speex Language Training Program is constructed from ILPC for Business English Program containing 10 interactive modules. It also includes exercises and tests in each unit for students to practice those skills on listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The Speex ILPC-SSRU website includes as follows: (a) Study the course description for Business English Communication (b) define the objectives and (c) construct the lessons-containing vocabulary, expressions, structures, exercises, tests and questionnaires and also adding other activities. The website is provided at <http://www.speex.ssrु.ac.th/index> which shows the homepage, interactive program, and video tutorial on how the program is used. This is shown in Figs. 1-4.

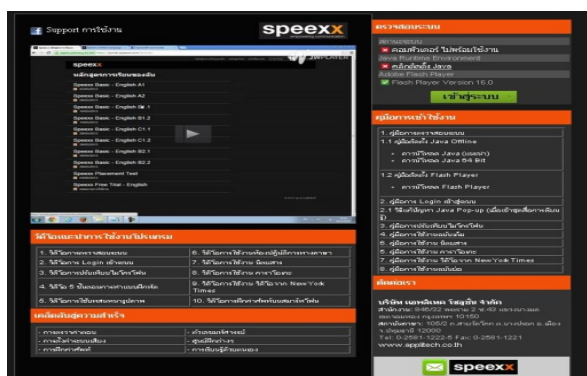


Fig. 1 Speex ILPC-SSRU Homepage

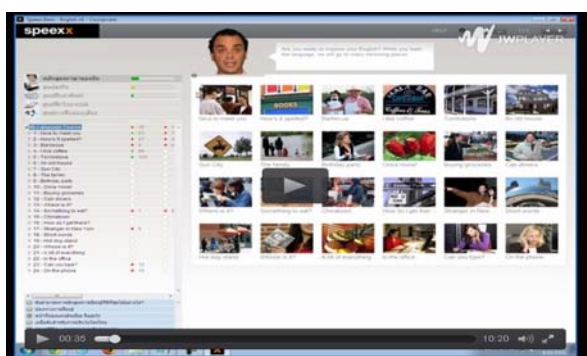


Fig. 2 Interactive Speex Language Training Program



Fig. 3 Thai Students participation on the training program



Fig. 4 Thai student ability results on Speex Training Program

B. Results on Thai Student Ability on Convenient Aspects

The average of student ability on convenient aspects is high level at 2.84. The most averages are information of the online system is interesting and update (2.97), response to the students' purposes (2.91), convenient and suitable for use (2.91), respectively. The least average is correcting and systematic system. The students satisfy on interesting and update because there are many activities for language practicing such as movies, songs, etc. and also other links for their self-interest practice. This is shown in Table I.

TABLE I
ABILITY ON CONVENIENT ASPECTS

Item lists	\bar{x}	S.D.
The system is easy to use.	2.79	.539
The working system is rapid for use.	2.78	.504
It is a correct and systematic system.	2.76	.530
It response the students' purposes.	2.91	.542
The design is comprehensible and not complicated.	2.78	.555
The information is interesting and update.	2.97	.506
It is convenient and suitable for use.	2.91	.501
Total	2.84	.539

C. Thai Student Ability on Academic Aspects

Online lessons for Business English majors are used at <http://www.speex.ssrु.ac.th/index>. It is based on Speex Language Training Program containing course content, exercises, tests, and other supplementary lessons such as movies, listening conversation, and multiple choice scenarios. It is for the students to practice and improve their English abilities. The teacher will have the students access the website via ILPC.

The results were found that the average of ability on

academic aspects is low level at 2.36. Most averages are discovered through Speexx system that support the students' learning (2.51), knowledge evaluation on pre-post learning and teaching (2.45), and change for project selections according to their interest, subject contents including practice in the real situations (2.45), respectively as shown in Table II.

TABLE II
 ABILITY ON ACADEMIC ASPECTS

Item lists	\bar{x}	S.D.
They help the class climate to contribute students' language learning.	2.21	.424
They support the students to participate and giving opinions in the Speexx program.	2.44	.433
They make it easier for language learning.	2.26	.431
They have other learning resources for further study for the student self-study.	2.34	.455
They are suitable tools for supporting students' learning ability.	2.35	.477
They have fair and suitable criteria on assessment and evaluation.	2.29	.432
Total	2.36	.423

D. Learning Ability on Teaching Strategic Aspects

The overall mean score of ability on teaching strategic aspects is 2.375. All scores on teaching strategic aspects are at average ability level (2.29-2.45). In general, the students learning ability evaluation on pre-post learning and teaching (2.45), responding to purposes, objectives, learning activities of the course (2.41), and having a channel for informing the students about their feedback, correction, and suggestion on their mistakes (2.35), respectively shown in Table III.

TABLE III
 ABILITY ON LEARNING STRATEGIC ASPECTS

Item lists	\bar{x}	S.D.
They respond to purposes, objectives, learning activities of the course.	2.41	.267
They have student's knowledge evaluation on pre-post learning and teaching.	2.45	.249
They have fair and suitable criteria on assessment and evaluation.	2.29	.232
They have a channel for informing the students about their feedback, correction, and suggestion on their mistakes.	2.35	.276
Total	2.375	0.306

E. Ability on Facilitator Aspects

The overall mean score of learning ability on facilitator aspects is 2.312 (SD 0.350). All the scores on facilitator aspects indicated below average ability level (1.21-2.44). In general, the students are most satisfied with supporting the students to participate and giving opinions in the Speexx Program (4.44). This is shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV
 ABILITY ON FACILITATOR ASPECTS

Item lists	\bar{x}	S.D.
They help the class climate to contribute students' language learning.	2.21	.424
They support the students to participate and giving opinions in the Speexx program.	2.44	.433
They make it easier for language learning.	2.26	.431
They have other learning resources for further study for the student self-study.	2.34	.455
Total	2.312	0.450

For using Speexx Training Program at ILPC, the teacher's role is a facilitator rather than the content authority. As Michael Sunnarborg's article explains, "Facilitation makes the learners responsible for their own learning. While this is a classic classroom strategy, it works in e-Learning too!" [5], [6].

F. Ability on Student-Centered Learning Aspects

The overall mean score of ability on student-centered learning aspects is 2.385 (SD 0.415). The total score on student-centered learning aspects are at good ability level (4.25-4.51). In general, the students are most satisfied with a technological tool in the classroom for data search through Speexx that supports the student's learning (4.51), giving the change for project selections according to their interest, subject contents including practice in the real situations (4.45), and are flexible and response to students' need.(4.40), respectively shown in Table V.

TABLE V
 ABILITY ON STUDENT-CENTERED ASPECTS

Item lists	\bar{x}	S.D.
They open the chance for sharing their ideas with their friends and teacher on discussion and group activities.	2.35	.438
They are a technological tool in the classroom for data search through Speexx program that supports the students' learning.	2.51	.451
They are suitable tools for supporting students' learning.	2.35	.477
Total	2.385	0.415

Student-centered ability model is a main point of this study "learning by using online system". The process is thoroughly designed to be an ongoing process, created information and practice, including planned the learning environment for student's interest based. Especially, their activity selected from each of student's group in making decisions about topic and content. However, to solve the cohort effect, learning by using Speexx Training program can add more content for the student to explore. The online program can provide that opportunity by making more other complementary links to the lessons such as songs, movies, etc. [7]-[12].

V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to study the Thai student Ability on Speexx Language Training Program, look for any language barriers, and examine the relationship between the use of Speexx Program and Ability.

The main findings show that Thai students use the overall language learning strategies at a low level. Other results show most university student's ability of using the program is in decline. This decrease may be impacted by lack of marketing and advertising of a proven language training program. Therefore, it forces ILPC to pay more attention on how to market this elaborate program to Thai students more effectively, in order to develop and improve Thai student ability to adopt English as a second language. Thai students are often highly motivated to study English, however if the Speexx training program is unknown to the public, it may impact further study to become inconclusive. Thai student's ability to learn English for communication abroad is

paramount. Whenever they communicate in Thai language in Thailand, they can use English instead. This makes them have high motivation to use Speexx for further educational development [13], [14].

It is according to The National Education Act in 1999 focuses on the learning process, learner-centered educational, technology and resources to expand services and provide opportunities for the students to play a role in the development of their full potential [15]-[18].

Using the Speexx Online Language Training Program with Thai students has allowed us to evaluate their learning comprehension and track their progression through the English language program. Speexx sets the standard for excellence and innovation in web-based language training and online coaching services. The program is designed to improve the business communication skills of language learners for Thai students. Speexx consists of English lessons, exercises, tests, web boards, and supplementary lessons to help students practice English.

The sample groups are 190 Thai sophomores studying Business English with the department of Humanities and Social Science. The data was received by standard deviation (S.D.) value from questionnaires and samples provided from the Speexx training program.

The results found that most Thai sophomores fail the Speexx training program due to their learning comprehension of the English language being below average. With persisted efforts on new training methods and with proper application; the success of the Speexx Language Training Program can break through any cultural barrier and help future students adopt English as a second language.

Further research should be carried out with different universities using Speexx; together with a larger sample size of Thai students will determine more conclusive findings that might be generalized to other case studies in this field.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Very special thanks to Glen Craigie and ILPC for their cooperation and assistance; to Asst. Prof. Dr. Suwaree Yordchim for her mentorship, and to Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for funding this project.

REFERENCES

- [1] Speexx. 2013. Language learning software. Online: speexx.com/en/
- [2] ILPC.SSRU. 2015. Online: www.ilpc.ssrु.ac.th/
- [3] K. Fandl, J. Smith, 'Success as an Online Student-Strategy for Effective Learning' Published: March 2013: Imprint: Anderson.
- [4] S. Yordchim 2014. Satisfaction on English Language Learning with Online System. Bangkok: Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.
- [5] M. Sunnarborg. (2008). Learning Solutions Magazine. "From teacher to facilitator". Retrieved from <http://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/74/from-teacher-to-facilitator> March 12, 2014.
- [6] R. W. Lucky, "Automatic equalization for digital communication," *Bell Syst. Tech. J.*, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 547-588, Apr. 1965.
- [7] G. R. Faulhaber, "Design of service systems with priority reservation," in *Conf. Rec. 1995 IEEE Int. Conf. Communications*, pp. 3-8.
- [8] Finocchiaro. 1989. English as a Second/Foreign Language: From Theory to Practice. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Regents.

- [9] K. Youngs. 2014. Introduction to e-learning. Retrieved from: <http://www.jiscdigitalmedia.ac.uk/guide/introduction-to-elearning> (May 5, 2014).
- [10] S. Yordchim. 2014. The Development on Business English Competency of Undergraduates with Online Learning System. Bangkok: Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.
- [11] S. Yordchim. 2010. Area Based Development Research Journal. "The Development of English Learning Process and English Teacher for Office of the National Education Commission. 1999.
- [12] M. Lessard-Clouston, "Language Learning Strategies: An Overview for L2 Teachers," *The Internet TESL Journal*, 3 (12), December 1997.
- [13] R.L. Oxford, *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. New York: Newbury House, 1990.
- [14] A. L. Wenden and J. Rubin (eds), *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*. London: Prentice Hall, 1987.
- [15] A.D. Cohen, *Language Learning: Insights for Learners, Teachers, and Researchers*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle, 1990.
- [16] J. M. O'Malley and A. U. Chamot, *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- [17] J. M. Green and R. L. Oxford, A closer Look at Learning Strategies, L2 Proficiency, and Gender. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29 (2), pp. 261-297, 1995.
- [18] R. L. Oxford, Second Language Learning Strategies: Current Research and Implication for Practice. *ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 278273*, 1986.