

# **USING SOME SIMPLE SITUATIONS TO TEACH C62 NON-ENGLISH MAJORS ENGLISH FOR COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY.**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Speaking skill is always one of the most difficult skills for language learners. Vietnamese students, including both English and non-English majors, are among them. The lecturers and the students themselves express their deep expectation that the students are able to speak English fluently in class and in the society, as well. Effort has been made; however, the number of those excellent students is limited.

As a lecturer of English at Hanoi National University of Education (HNUE), the writer has had nearly 10 years teaching non-English majors. She has tried her best, day by day, to improve their speaking skill. Activities for students to practice speaking English are not many, but selected, basing on the activities in the textbook. To some extent, that works for several students in class, especially good and excellent students.

Recently, the writer has applied an extra activity for non-English students to practise speaking English. That is, she uses some simple everyday situations in teaching them to communicate in English. This has resulted in positive reflection from students. The research report, “**Using some simple situations to teach C62 non-English majors English for communication. A case study**” is done to synthesize and analyze the result of the real case in teaching.

## **II. DEVELOPMENT**

### **II.1. Current situation of C62 non-English majors’ speaking skill at HNUE**

A lot of lecturers of English who teach C62 non-English majors this school year have said that in their classes, only a small percentage of the students feel like speaking English and they are not shy when speaking in front of their classmates.

In some classes, that number can be fewer than 10. This fact is because of different reasons which are going to be found out later.

Those students are studying English with the textbook “*New Cutting Edge (Pre-intermediate)*”. Lecturers are advised to teach all parts in the book, including Vocabulary, Grammar, Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. Hopefully, the students have been taught all that knowledge in the book. If this is the fact, they are able to study all necessary fields of English, though they are not extremely of everything in English. From the real fact, speaking skill is always a big challenge for lecturers to teach and for students to study and practise. The part of speaking in a module is not long and complicated. This part is designed briefly but concrete. The lecturer can instruct students to do the speaking tasks in the module or he can also redesign them so that they are more appropriate and interesting.

However interesting the speaking tasks are, the most important factor is the students’ enthusiastic attendance and their not-afraid-of-making-mistake spirit. Those things are found in limited number of students in class. Most of them do not want to speak. They do not want to show their classmates that they are bad at speaking and are usually making mistakes. Thus, the only thing these ones do is to sit still and keep silent.

The writer has used different techniques and different speaking tasks for that type of students to encourage them speak. Some of them stand up and speak one sentence, only softly enough for both the lecturer and the classmates not to hear clearly, then sit down or stand quietly with the heads down. Others stand up, say nothing or say “*I don’t know*”. With the situation, the writer has felt disappointed for many times. Nevertheless, she continually renews her speaking tasks every week so that one day all the students want to speak English or at least do not feel scared when speaking English.

## **II.2. The study**

### **II.2.1. Survey questionnaires**

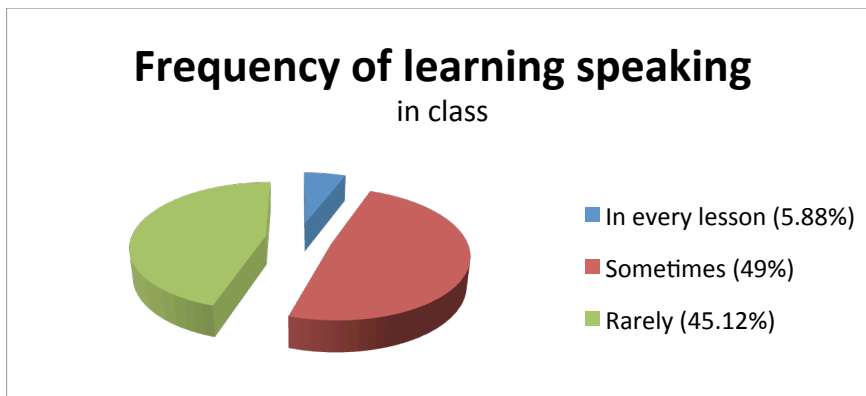
#### **II.2.1.1. Participants**

The study is done for a limited number of C62 non-English majors as a case study. The real number of participants is 52 students of different faculties at HNUE. Most of them are girls and fewer than 10 are boys. They have varied personalities and are of different levels of English. They answer two versions of survey questionnaire. The first version is done before they practise some simple situations in class; the second one is done after their real practice in such situations.

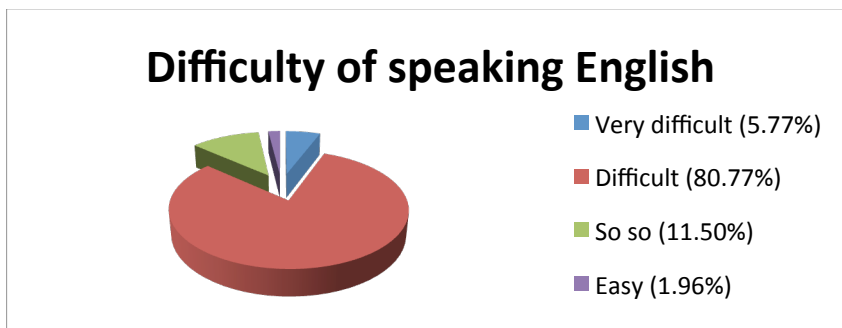
### II.2.1.2. Findings

For **Survey Questionnaire 1**, those are the results.

#### Question 3



#### Question 4

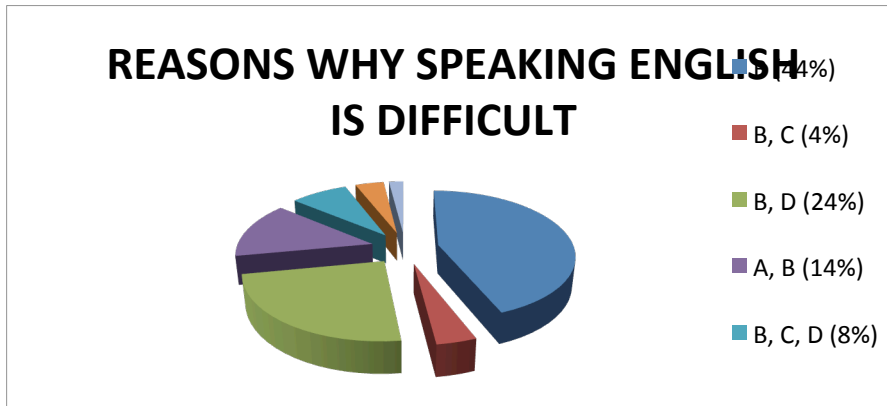


#### Question 5

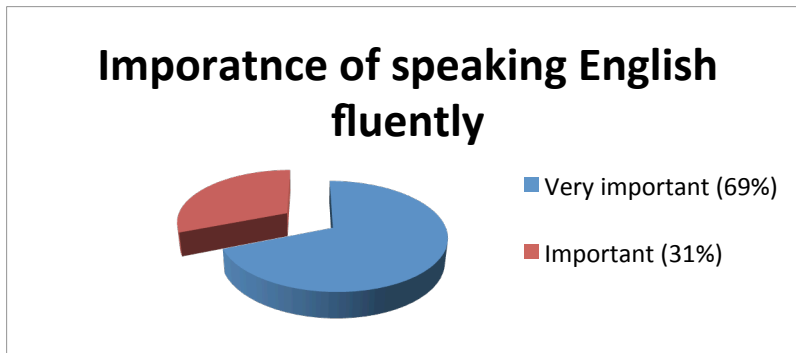
If your answer to question 4 is **Difficult**, explain for your reasons? (**You can choose more than one answer.**)

A. My teachers rarely teach us to speak English in class.

- B. I can't express my ideas because my vocabulary is not enough.
- C. I am afraid that if I make mistakes when speaking English, my classmates will laugh at me.
- D. I don't dare to speak English because my pronunciation is not good.



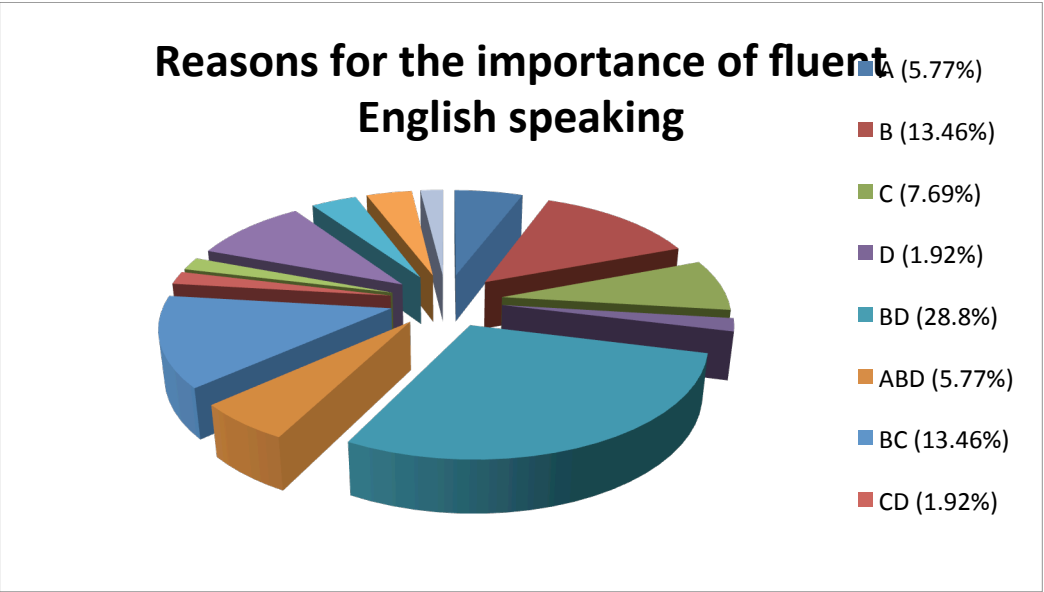
**Question 6**



**Question 7**

If your answer to question 6 is **A (Very important)** or **B (Important)**, explain for your reasons? **(You can choose more than one answer.)**

- A. Speaking skill is the most important one when learning English.
- B. I will have many more opportunities in life and work when I can speak English well.
- C. If I speak English well, I can learn other skills better.
- D. If I speak English well, I will be prouder and more confident in front of many people.



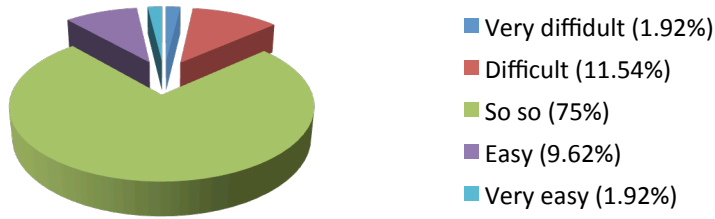
**Question 8**



Hereinafter is the analysis of data for selected questions in **Survey Questionnaire 2.**

**Question 1.**

### Difficulty of speaking English in simple situations

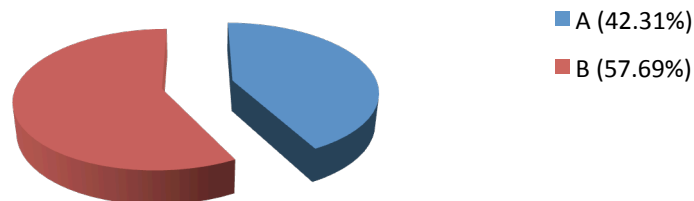


#### Question 3.

When you have learnt the expressions used in those situations, could you replace given information with your own information?

- A. Yes, I could do that easily.
- B. Yes, but I did that difficultly.
- C. No, I couldn't.
- D. I didn't understand the situations.

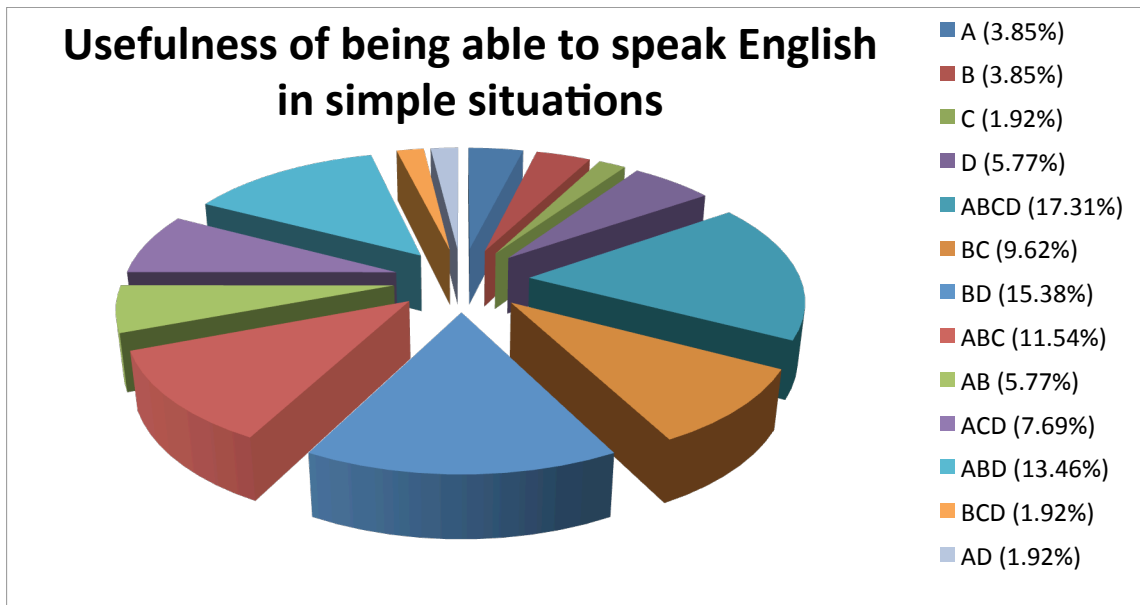
### Replacing new information for the given situations



#### Question 5.

In your opinion, is it useful for you to be able to speak English in such simple situations like those?

- A. I can talk to foreigners in simple situations.
- B. This helps me to have reaction of speaking English.
- C. I no longer feel afraid of speaking English any more.
- D. This encourages me to speak English in more difficult situations.



## II.2.2. Class Observation

### II.2.2.1. The setting of class observation

So as to draw a reliable conclusion from this research paper, the writer has used one more method, class observation. The writer and the lecturer, as well observed two lessons of teaching students to speak English in some simple situations. Two situations which were used were *Introducing yourself* and *Talking on phone*. The two observed lessons were done in the same class for 31 C62 non-English majors from different faculties and levels.

This method of collecting data was done the same time with the first method of survey questionnaires. This saved time and energy for the researcher.

### II.2.2.2. Findings

From the fact of students' practising speaking English in some simple situations that the writer found out from observation in class, there are some hints to bear in mind.

Firstly, most of the students in the class have a thirst for practising speaking English in simple situations. When they are instructed carefully and given time and chances to practise, at least half of them are able to speak English with

foreigners in reality. Then, they will become one of the speakers who directly take part in the situation.

Moreover, the average or bad students, though found it hard to make up real similar dialogues and seem not to be able to play the role in reality, have had opportunities to learn and practise typical expressions. One day, if their job requires them to study speaking English, or they have other reasons, they will be able to study more easily in simple situations like introduced ones.

In addition, the students only study for the final exams at university. They focus on learning grammar in order to get good marks with the non-speaking form of the end-of-term test. They think that it wastes time learning such skill as speaking because this one is not tested. As a result, this research has raised their awareness of practising speaking and using the expressions in real situations outside class.

### **III. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING**

From the findings, it can be said that many non-English students are good at speaking, at least speaking in simple situations. However, the time for speaking English in class is limited since there is no oral test at the end of the semester. The test is on grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Therefore, the lecturers also focus on these parts, mainly. Speaking and listening are the two skills which are added in the lesson only if the time is allowed.

Additionally, some average or bad students show little interest in learning speaking because they do not want to show their classmates that they are not good at speaking English. They do not want to try practising this skill, so they keep silent when they are asked to speak.

This short research is done so that the non-English students have right attitude for studying foreign languages. When speaking skill is taught as part of the schedule continually and the students would like to practise it, except for doing grammar exercises, the fact of teaching and learning English will be improved a lot. Then



the students are able to develop their skills totally, which is good for their studying English.

There are some limitations for this research that should be noted down. The first thing is that this is only a case study. Thus, the findings can not be reliable enough for lecturers and educators to imply in teaching for a large number of non-English students. Secondly, the research is done only for students at HNUE, so if this is used for other types of students from other universities, the result may not be the same. Furthermore, for limited time, the writer only used two methods of collecting data, survey questionnaires and class observation. Therefore, the result may not be totally exact.

Despite all the above limitations, the writer does hope that, to some extent, this research benefits students, lecturers and educators who are interested in.

The results of this research can be used for teaching and learning foreign languages including English for non-English students. Speaking skill should not be omitted from the schedule. This skill is advised to be included in every lesson, but of different quantity for different classes. Exercises for speaking should be designed properly so that the students feel motivated and interested when learning speaking. Teaching them to communicate in simple situations is a suggestion for improving their speaking skill. One more thing is that there are various types of students in class, so the lecturer should be flexible when she prepares and controls the speaking lesson. Students of bad level should be encouraged and motivated more than the others. Then, they feel that they are cared and will try harder.