

ABSTRACT

In this present globalized world with advanced technology, English has become the most important language recognized worldwide as it has increasingly continued to assist individuals from different regions to communicate effectively with one another and there has been a tremendous demand for English speaking skills in all spheres of human endeavor. Thailand and other members of ASEAN nations recently have unanimously approved the use of English as their working language. This means that English language would be officially used when conducting businesses among the member countries and certainly any country with large number of citizens who could speak English would have more businesses and employment opportunities than others. Unfortunately, the performance of Thais in English language especially the students have continued to be very poor despite government efforts. This study focuses on the key success factors of English speaking skills of Thai secondary school students in Bangkok. In order to identify the problems, its causes and the possible solution to the problems, the researchers' question mainly focused on: (1) the main problems the students encounter when they intend to communicate with someone in English, (2) the main causes of poor English speaking skill problems among the students (3) identify any key success factors suitable for the improvement of English speaking skills of the students. The researcher's assumption was based on the fact that if there was a potentially English oriented environment within and outside classrooms, teachers' quality, effective curriculum cum teaching materials and management initiatives, the students' English speaking skills certainly would begin to improve. The researcher used qualitative questionnaire and interview technique to collect data from 30 participants, comprising 16 secondary school students, 10 English teachers and 4 school Administrators. The participants sincerely revealed that the students face various problems in English speaking skills ranging from fear of mistakes, preference for their first language resulting from their difficulty to remember what there were taught. These problems were caused by poor management, curriculum, teaching materials and lack of English oriented environment. The result

of the study however surprisingly shows that with effective management, teachers' quality, through training and development programs, curriculum, teaching materials as well as English oriented environment, the students' English speaking skills would certainly begin to improve.

KEYWORDS: success factors, English language, speaking skills, public secondary school
