THE CURRENT SITUATION AND SOLUTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE LEARNING AT SOME VIETNAMESE NATIONAL SCHOOLS IN VIETNAM

Vo Hoang Ca1, Nguyen Tan Danh2
1Faculty of Business Administration, Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam 2FPT University, Vietnam
1Corresponding author’s e-mail: ca.vh0121@oude.edu.vn

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The English language education in high schools in Vietnam has achieved many significant achievements over the years, but there are still many limitations in the method of teaching at high schools in many schools.

Methods: The article presents some points and arguments in the method of teaching English, improving and overcoming problems in communicative English teaching.

Results: A large number of students in high schools in Vietnam can firmly grasp the grammar and vocabulary, but communicating in English during learning is still not possible. Some of the students are unable to communicate despite mastering grammar.

Conclusions: Improving the ability of children to communicate in English at high school levels should be paid more attention to. In addition, it is important to recognize the role of using foreign language in teaching language communication at high schools in Vietnam.

Keywords: communicative, English teaching, Vietnam education sector

I. INTRODUCTION

In the age of highly developed technology, English has also become a global language. Therefore, to bring Vietnam to integrate into the world’s economy, the training of children to become global people is very necessary and important [1]. In the current situation in most high schools, most teachers and students spend all their time teaching and learning grammar, memorizing list of words instead of actually going out and giving what they have learned into practice. For those who have rushed into and out of the school environment to learn English, or moved abroad to work or travel, their English skills improve rapidly. While it is still extremely important to learn the written language in the curriculum, to improve their grammar and build their vocabulary, the most effective learning is still face-to-face [2].

Foreign languages play an important role and position in the education and training and in the development of the country [3]. In general, not only is knowing a foreign language an indispensable requirement for highly skilled workers to meet the constantly renewed technological processes, but knowing a foreign language is also a necessary capacity for Vietnamese.

In order to be able to access world knowledge, first of all, it is necessary to be good at foreign languages to foster knowledge on a par with the times, each person must be fluent in at least one foreign language [2].

II. RESEARCH CONTENTS

www.turkjphysiotherrehabil.org
The method of communication is the opposition of the notion that language is a structured system; it is the movement towards the view of language as a communication system. In this view, semantics and the way in which language is used are very important. In the field of language teaching, this point of view is crystallized into the communication direction [3].

Besides, the article relating to communication capacity of Hymes (1971) presents one of the most influential views on communication capacity. Although his views are largely based on Chomsky's concepts of competence and communicative ability, he criticizes Chomsky for his lack of linguistic reasoning. Hymes points out that knowledge of a language is not limited to knowledge of grammar rules. However it also needs learning to use language in practice [4].

Valette and Dissek (1972) have similar views about the ability to communicate and its receptivity. The authors believe that language learners' behavior is arranged according to ranks, from the simplest, the mechanical skills to the most complex. The listening-speaking method of language learning model means that the process of language learning is the progression from structural skills to the use of meaningful language [5].

Current status of English communicative ability of Vietnamese students and some reasons

In the current situation, the fact to get a desired job in all fields is indispensable one of the prerequisites that must have foreign language - English. This has also contributed to promoting the teaching and learning of foreign languages in universities and colleges to become more vibrant, especially in recent years [3]. Since then, innovations in book preparation, curriculum, teaching and learning methods have been constantly deployed with the aim of improving students' language proficiency after graduation, together with specialized knowledge. The industry plus foreign language capital will help students easily find a job, meeting the rigorous requirements of many employers [5].

However, in addition to students who have good results in IELTS and TOEFL exams and have the ability to communicate fluently with foreigners, the majority of students do not have basic and specialized knowledge or do well. They have firm knowledge of the language but cannot communicate. This situation has been happening in most of university and college training sectors, from engineering to the humanities, military security, and also in subjects with more or less exposure to English [6]. For the technical sector, it seems that students have little contact or work with English as the study just stops at almost mastering the basic knowledge [1]. Thus, there are many schools in this field where students only have to study English for one year, so that less attention to this subject leads to low results and the high rate of retest and re-study.

Despite learning English from primary school until university, except mentioning extra study in English language centers, many students applying for jobs do not meet the requirements for English skills and communication ability. There are several reasons for the above situation [4].

Firstly, the program of learning foreign languages is too heavy in grammar and vocabulary, while the practice of reflexes and communication is not focused [5]. Vietnamese students have a firm grasp of English grammar but cannot turn themselves into tools for communication. Grammar is just the foundation to practice other skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing like learning with practice.

Second, the inequality in English language ability among students in the same class leads to the situation that students at elementary level cannot keep up, while at higher levels they feel bored. This makes it difficult for both teachers and students in the teaching and learning process [2].

Third, students have lack confidence and cannot overcome their own inertia [7]. This is a hindrance in each student's perception. Many students are afraid to speak because they are afraid of being wrong, afraid of being ridiculed, then gradually become closed in English lessons. Moreover, many of students are not really aware of the importance of foreign languages [3].

Others have the thought of learning another language. They feel that they are weak in English, so they switch to another language more easily without realizing that no language is easy to learn if they are not working hard or without suitable learning method [4].

www.turkiphysiotherrehabil.org
Finally, the learning environment is also a factor affecting the ability to communicate in English [5]. Currently, students only use English during compulsory school hours, and almost neglected in other activities. While learning a foreign language only takes a period of inactivity can be forgotten [2].

Research Methodology

The paper is based on the results of the statistics on the effectiveness in teaching English communication in high schools, the survey data of high school students at all levels on the ability to communicate in English, and the level of communication in English throughout their learning process. Besides, the respondents are also consulted about methods and expectations when learning communication.

Research Results

After surveying more than five people are already studying in high schools today, most of them recognize the importance of English communication in the new age. However, when being asked about the their studying curriculum, only a few of them answered that the teacher had put communication into the teaching but with a limited number. They also answered that they never had any practice to communicate when learning English. They said that they had about four to five English lessons a week, but during the time they learned English, the teachers only focused on academic English, but ignored the communication in English. When they had English communication classes, they only held books to read by face to face (Figure 1).

![Figure 1: Number of learning English communication in high schools](image1)

And only a few of them are completely confident in their ability to communicate by foreign languages when they are asked. During the process of English communication with foreigners, most of them felt shy and afraid of making mistakes when talking directly with foreigners. (Figure 2)

![Figure 2: Confidence in English communication with foreigners](image2)

Most teachers who have taught English language in high schools answered that although the number of English teaching periods is high, due to the heavy curriculum volume, they do not have much time to teach communication to their students. Some other teachers believe that the number of students in a class is quite large, so it is impossible to guarantee the quality of teaching English communication [6]. There are also a few ideas that
it is not necessary to communicate in English in class and the students should learn it by themselves or study at English language centers to practice communication skills.

III. DISCUSSION

Most of them have been studying English at high schools today and feel that it is very important to communicate with their native teachers when learning English. They understand that English is the key for them to open the door to the future, as well as the path to study abroad. They are often confused that academic English and communication English are the same [7]. However, English communication will help them easily integrate into the new country and new environment.

The teaching point of current high schools still emphasizes academic English over communication [8]. They think that just by understanding the grammar structure, students will naturally be able to communicate easily. Although this view is not entirely wrong, it has become outdated that it no longer fits current social trends.

Besides, the training of English professors is still limited and out of date, inconsistent with current trends. The disparity between the number of teachers capable of teaching English and the number of students is still high, leading to the failure to guarantee the quality of teaching and learning communication between teachers and children [9]. Achievement illness in high schools remains a problem. Rigid English language curriculum and curriculum framework are not flexible and adaptable to current needs.

Also, because the high school does not meet the English communication needs of the students, it will take them to foreign language centers to learn to communicate. Then, the language centers will orient them before they settle abroad. Relating to brain drain phenomenon, this is a particularly serious problem causing waste of human resources in the country [10].

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

For the highest efficiency in teaching and learning English, first of all we need to reform the English education system in current high schools, simplify the teaching process, and ignore outdated or less used academic scholarship [11]. The schools should apply programs that match our current social needs. Effective English communication lessons should be replaced, and the curriculum must ensure the excitement of both teachers and children.

Besides, it is also necessary to focus on the training to improve the quantity and quality of lecturers with high communication skills to meet the needs of high schools across the country. Schools should not place heavy points on the teaching in general and communicative teaching in particular. They should create conditions for them to communicate in English as much as possible [12]. For the inclusion of native teachers in the curriculum framework, depending on the conditions of each school, there will be different directions. These teachers still have to ensure their academic qualifications and enthusiasm, patience when working with students. It is also essential to create a comfortable environment where students can confidently communicate in English with teachers without fear of making mistakes [13].

The school should also participate in organizing cultural exchange activities such as English-speaking competitions in front of the crowd, or organizing tours to destinations with many foreign tourists, creating favorable conditions for students to enjoy using their English and listen to common English in society from many different regions [14]. In addition to the short-term solutions outlined above, we need to continually innovate the curriculum to suit the current social orientation, and then reduce the number of students in a class to ensure the quality of teaching to achieve good results. This reduction will also help teachers to easily monitor their students' performance throughout the learning process of English communication, to make timely changes suitable for them [15].

V. CONCLUSIONS

From the analyzed points, we can see that the importance of learning English is not merely learning English academically, it must also be accompanied by communicative English. However, changing the entire structure of the English education industry is not an overnight thing, but instead is the short-term and long-term plans as mentioned above, to be able to gradually change and develop quality of teaching English in general and communicative English in particular. At the same time, it helps students get out of psychological barriers when
communicating with foreigners, turning them into international citizens and bring Vietnam forward on the path of national integration and internationalization.

VI. LIMITATIONS
This article still has some limitations. There are not many references, but in the future, I will try to improve this topic more. Hopefully, later, a more complete article will be given to everyone.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The author of the article would like to thank individuals who have completed the survey as well as ideas for contributions from colleagues. Nguyen Tan Danh is responsible for writing the paper while Vo Hoang Ca is responsible for editing and sending as well as receiving the paper. Both share the ideas, equal tasks and work together to complete the research.

REFERENCES