Research Article

Assessment of the Readiness of Teachers for Developing Students' Skills in Speaking English through the Use of the "Zoom" Platform

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ABSTRACT

Online learning platforms such as "Zoom" platform enable teachers who want to teach a second language like English without having to leave home, especially during the height of the (COVID-19) pandemic in the Kingdom of Thailand. The researcher investigated the readiness of English teachers for the employment of skills needed for online classes. The mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) research strategy was adopted in this study with the questionnaire as the main tool supported by interviews and observation. The data gathered researcher utilized the following statistical tools/formula: frequency, mean distribution, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and t-test. 1. Thirty-one (31) to 40 years old have the greatest number of respondents; 48 out of the 90 or 53.3% of the respondents are female and 42 out of the 90 or 46.7% of the respondents are male, and most of the respondents are teaching Primary 1 and 2. conducting small-group projects in an online class is the most experienced challenge encountered by the teachers in teaching the English Language through the "Zoom" platform. The study's findings are considered helpful in increasing institutional support for faculty development plans that will help faculty members transition from traditional methods to virtual ones.

Keywords: *Assessment of teachers' readiness, developing students' skills, education, English language teaching, online teaching, Thailand, Zoom platform*

Introduction

Understanding how to speak English is one of the most significant components of learning a new or foreign language, and success is judged by the capability to discuss the language. Educators see talking as one of the most significant communication and engagement skills utilized throughout the history of English

education because it is defined as an interactive process of meaning production that involves creating, acquiring, and analyzing data. It is one of the most crucial English language skills for learners to master since it is required to function in a variety of situations and the job market.

The COVID-19 epidemic, particularly in the Thailand Metropolitan Area, has forced second language (L2) instructors to abandon face-to-face (F2F) instruction in favor of online instruction. Zoom is a popular, immersive, and simple-to-use SMT. It has various elements that might assist teachers in achieving their aims of developing their pupils' English communication abilities. Language learners today are used to incorporating technology into the educational process and anticipate occasions to participate and interact. Teachers, on the other hand, may not be completely equipped to instruct online in real-time since it necessitates new digital capabilities. Utilizing and leveraging SMTs, such as Zoom, is one such ability.

Students can use Zoom to raise a question, demonstrate agreement, or suggest that the teacher hurry up, slow down, or have a breakthrough nonverbal symbol. These indicators can give important information about pupils' levels of attention, enthusiasm, agreement, or bewilderment with the linguistic material being delivered. The teacher can also offer remedial feedback via nonverbal functions. If students have a question that is not represented by an icon, they can utilize the textual chat option to ask it privately or to the entire class. This is especially good for students who are reluctant to demonstrate their perplexity in front of the entire class or who are anxious about their spoken English.

Educators may find it difficult to keep students motivated over a lengthy live online session. To solve this issue, Zoom allows teachers to incorporate surveys and polls which can be used to fully involve students and collect feedback, suggestions, and recommendations. Furthermore, because the answer is presented, they can be effective for completing linguistic exercises with correct or erroneous responses, delivering understanding recommendations to both learners and teachers, and acting as a motivation for linguistic elaboration.

Zoom allows teachers and students to share browser screens synchronously. For example, teachers could elicit vocabulary using a word cloud. Teachers can also play videos and audio files for meaning-focused input and receptive listening practice activities. The teachers' acquisition of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills will improve their way of teaching the English Language through the use of SMT such as "Zoom". Developing their Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills makes the teachers maximize the use of the "Zoom" platform in the development of English-speaking skills of students.

Objectives of the Study
1. Examine the existing technology and skills in teaching;
2. Identify and address the challenges teachers encounter in using the Zoom platform; and
3. Appreciate the importance of acquiring Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills in Teaching the English Language Online, and adopt a method of teaching appropriate in online classes.

Methods
Research Design
The mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) research strategy was adopted in this study. Before the treatment, the ninety (90) respondents' Zoom proficiency skills were examined using a survey questionnaire, interview, and observation.

Locale of the Study
With the importance given to the English language in Thailand, the researchers decided to conduct a study on developing the students' English-speaking skills in their online classes in Wichakon Boriban School formerly known as Wichakon Municipal School in Dindaeng District, Bangkok, Thailand.

Wichakon Boriban School opened a bilingual (Thai-English) school curriculum in the year 2013 with the following salient features: 1. Educational curricula are up-to-date and ready to step into the ASEAN Community; 2. Bilingual courses are organized to raise the quality of education, enhancing the welfare of

children of civil servants employees in Bangkok, and the general public; 3. The educational management meets the needs of the school stakeholders such as parents and the community; they help in the educational administration guidelines of Bangkok; 4. The school is ready in terms of building and premises; there are teachers specializing in Foreign Language Teaching. Some people have enough potential to take care of and manage the course; and 5. The Academic and Curriculum Administrative Committee is ready and capable enough to manage a bilingual school curriculum.

Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The study's participants were Primary 1 to 6 Full Time and Part Time teachers of Wichakorn Boriban School in Bangkok's Dindaeng District. Purposive sampling was employed as the sample in this study, which focused on selected instructors from Wichakorn Boriban School.

Research Instrument

The researchers used a self-made questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into five sections. The first section includes questions that determine the respondents' profile, such as grade level, age, gender, and the highest degree of education. The second section includes questions on how frequently they used technology in their classroom teaching. The third section comprises questions about the respondents' perceptions of using the "Zoom" platform. The fourth section comprises questions about the respondents' zoom competence in using the different tools and also their skills. The fifth section comprises questions about the respondents' challenges in Online Teaching using the "Zoom" platform. The last section comprises questions about the respondents' ways of addressing the challenges. Aside from the survey questionnaire, an interview was done with the respondents to assess the respondents' ability to use the Zoom platform. However, due to the social distance policy, the researchers conducted interviews with respondents via online video chat and some in-person interviews following the minimum health and safety measures. The last research instrument

was direct observation to examine the teacher's tactics for teaching English speaking by zooming in and visiting the respondents' classes to witness and monitor the learning process directly. A checklist was prepared by the researchers as a measurement to be used to identify the teacher's zoom proficiency during the observation process.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers started with the validation of the questionnaire. Following the validation of the questionnaire, the researchers conducted a pilot test on those who did not teach English and were not part of the actual study. This was done to see how the subjects would react to the questionnaire; whether the items were clear and easy to understand; whether more items were needed in certain areas; whether there were any items to which they would not like to respond; and the feasibility of the proposed data analysis method for the study. The researchers would be able to tell if the questionnaire was ready for the final survey based on the results of the pilot test.

Then the researchers revised the instrument or the survey questionnaire based on the results of the pilot testing and the comments and suggestions of the experts. Once the final revision of the instrument had been made, an actual data gathering was conducted by sending surveys via Google Forms and conducting interviews via online video chat and some in-person interviews at school. The researchers informed the respondents about the schedule of the data gathering or the submission of the survey questionnaire and the meeting with the respondents for an interview based on their given time and place.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Weighted mean was used to get the means of the types of technology commonly used by teachers; teachers' perceptions on the use of Zoom platform in teaching the English language, Teachers' Online teaching experience through Zoom platform; level of development of the English-speaking skills of the class of the teachers; the level of the skills of the teachers in terms of the use of technology in teaching English in the new normal situation; level of the

challenges encountered by the teachers in teaching the English Language through the "Zoom" and the level of the zoom platform measures.

In Likert's usage, the scale always measures attitude in terms of the level of agreement/disagreement with a target statement. It was used to describe verbally the strength of the mean namely: the types of technology commonly used by teachers; the perceptions of teachers on the use of the Zoom platform in teaching the English language, teachers' Online teaching experience through the Zoom platform, and level of the challenges encountered by the teachers in teaching the English Language through the "Zoom Platform.

Relative Frequency and Percentage Distribution were used to describe the respondents' information in terms of age, gender, and grade level in which they are teaching Standard deviation was used to measure the spread of data distribution. It measures the typical distance between each data point and the mean.

Pearson Correlation coefficient is the best-suited statistical formula that measures the strength between variables and relationships. The interview results were double-checked. The data were analyzed to create clusters for each question, and the results were summarized in text form. The text data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

Results and Discussion
On Respondents' Profile

Thirty-one (31) to 40 years old have the greatest number of respondents; 48 out of the 90 or 53.3% of the respondents are female and 42 out of the 90 or 46.7% of the respondents are male, and most of the respondents are teaching Primary 1 and 2. Women teachers were more likely than men to experiment with more related ways of teaching and to employ technology for a variety of goals (Campbell & Varnhagen, (2002) as cited by Martin, 2019). As a result, there are considerable gender inequalities in technology-assisted education.

On the use of the Zoom Platform

The teachers' usage of the "Zoom" platform in teaching the English language and the development of students' English-speaking skills (r = .412, p = .000) show a moderate positive relationship. With a p-value (.000) which is less than the assumed level of significance of 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant. 7. The teachers' perceived usefulness of the Zoom platform and their skill in using it (r = .322, p = .001) reveals a weak positive relationship. With a p-value (.001) which is less than the assumed level of significance of 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant. Using the Zoom Platform during a coronavirus epidemic is just as effective as learning English in a classroom during its first year of use. This occurred as a result of several circumstances, including a solid internet network in Bangkok, Thailand's economic and educational capital, good comprehension of materials delivered by the teacher, and attempts to practice English conversation in class and individually. Hence, the majority of respondents liked online instruction because of the unique benefits and advantages it provided.

The most experienced challenge encountered by the teachers in teaching the English Language through "Zoom" is the difficulty in conducting small-group projects in an online class with the highest mean and standard deviation of 2.90, 0.56; on the measures to address the challenges, "Attending training on how to use the Zoom platform" attains the highest mean and standard deviation 4.70, 0.46. Teachers are working hard to do their best to choose various learning methods and strategies in teaching the English Language that is more entertaining, fascinating, and can be implemented in everyday life to motivate students to learn and explore the content. It is not the same as online learning through virtual media, such as using video conferencing software like Zoom. The teachers have little choice but to teach using traditional learning methods that they are accustomed to, such as lectures and questions and answers, causing some participants to become bored and others to feel challenged during the learning process.

Attend training on how to use the Zoom platform gained the highest mean and standard deviation of 4.70, 0.46. Respondents seemed to detect a slight prejudice against online teaching

prejudice among their colleagues. Respondents, on the other hand, appeared to have a considerable amount of institutional backing; they are shown to have access to pedagogical and technical training that is typically non-mandatory. In general, respondents are open to learning new things and are moderately technology-oriented.

Conclusion

The new normal situation sees respondents modify their practices and become more technologically involved. The use of zoom helps in developing the pupils' English speaking skills. since the Zoom Application is very interesting as it provides motivating and stimulating activities for English learners. Moreover, using the Zoom Application makes English learners an appropriate platform and new friends to practice improving their speaking skills at the same time.

Although the zoom application is useful in teaching language, teachers still encounter challenges in adopting it in online teaching. This can be attributed to the limited time and opportunity to attend training workshops. Online Tutorials like Youtube, among others, can address the problem of insufficient time.

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