

SOLUTIONS OF APPROACHING ENGLISH FOR STUDENTS AT DONG THAP UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

English is an international language and its role is becoming more and more important. Every people all over the world from different social status, ethnic minorities or knowledge background can communicate to each other. The teenagers, especially students need to be equipped the language knowledge background, especially for the globalization at the moment. Therefore, we have conducted a survey to get opinions from Dong Thap University's students about approaching methods when they are learning in university. Then, we have analyzed the socialism data to propose some solutions to help students and school change the viewpoints, modern approach to replace traditional methods, in order to achieve goals as well as response intergration trend at this moment.

Keywords: Conditions, English, English approach, solutions.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is the main tendency of modern life and this was proved by the fact that Vietnam has become the member of World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2015 and a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), not only in economy, trading, science and technology but also affecting positively to education in every countries all over the world.

The 21st century is the knowledge economic century, the boom of science, information and technology. The countries all over the world have identified education as a top national policy, and investment in education is a top priority investment for the development of their country. Vietnam eager to get ahead need to leapfrog, to take one step forward in improving people's knowledge, personnel training and fostering talent.

Foreign languages in general, and English in particular, is considered a prerequisite, as an effective and sufficient tool and means in the process of integration and development. The 8th Conference of Central Committee Communist Party of Vietnam has approved resolution on fundamental innovation, comprehensive education and training to meet the requirements of industrialization and modernization in conditions of economic market with socialist orientation and international integration. One of the necessary tools for the integration process is foreign languages and English has been identified as a key tool.

However, accessing foreign languages, namely English at Dong Thap University has remained some problems. Although many students have awared of the importance of self-access, most of them have not turned the engine into active and have not had effective methods. Through the consultation of all students by means of sociological survey obtained 726 responses, through the preliminary statistics, we have known most students only approach to deal with output tests. Moreover, when they are asked about approaching to

foreigners in exchange to increase communication skills, the criteria rarely and never accounted for more than 60%. Therefore, this article focuses on analyzing the current situation, the excitement in the aspects: form, time, place, tools and support equipment as well as the causes affecting to the access not only to cope but also an effective means for jobs after graduation.

Research Methods

- Theoretical Study: Using analytical methods, synthetic material, classified material ... to build a theoretical basis of the issues to be studied.
- Action research: Using expert interviews, sociological surveys to assess the status of research issues.
- Methods of Mathematical Statistics: Using statistical software for data processing to handle Rstudio Version 0.99.491 to process the survey's results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Staff and facility conditions

English's lecturer staffs

According to the statistics from the Personnel Department, Dong Thap University has 29 English lecturers with 16% has doctoral qualified, 60% with Master degree and the 24 % remain are studying postgraduate. Moreover, according to the statistics of Student Affairs's Department, Dong Thap University has 9847 students. Thus the structure of the teaching staff of the schools did not meet the scale of the school. So, participating the support and teaching in the school will be shorten a great number of lecturers. Therefore, the school had invited many lecturers from other institutions in Dong Thap province who have good knowledge and capacity to participate in teaching. This leads to the facts that many classes have been learned at nights on weekday and cause unexpected results.

Facilities and equipment's condition

According to the statistics of the Foreign Languages Faculty showed that the Faculty has been equipped 3 rooms for specialized language learning to develop listening and speaking skills. Besides, according to the statistic of Le Vu Hung Library, the school have not had a software and supporting website for accessing language online because of many subjective and objective causes. Furthermore, the reference books available in English are 3634 and 1000 disk volumes. Such conditions and facilities haven't met the current requirements.

Results of the survey from learners' opinions

We conducted a social survey using Google Drive app, designed reply form then send replies link to Dong Thap University student's forum from March 28, 2016 until June 11, 2016. We have received 726 responses because this is an interest problem to students, the answers are completely voluntary.

- The first question, "What is your gender?". Received 720 responses

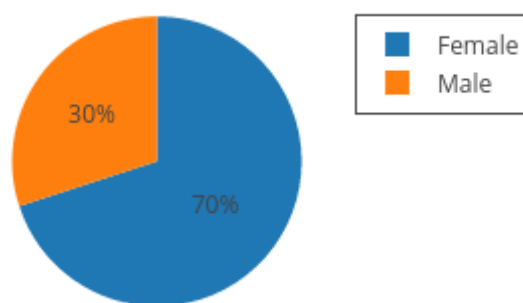


Chart 1. Gender's rate in the survey

Comment: Such problems on accessing foreign languages attracted more female students with 70%. This is true because Dong Thap University is a prestigious institution in training primary education and kindergarten education, these two particular majors have attracted mostly female students. Besides, in the stage of international integration, language issues are essential in life as well as in work after graduation. If students have good language's ability, they will have many opportunities to work in foreign investment's institutions. This will increase both personal pretigious and salary to improve life's quality.

- The second question "Which school year are you?". Received 726 responses.

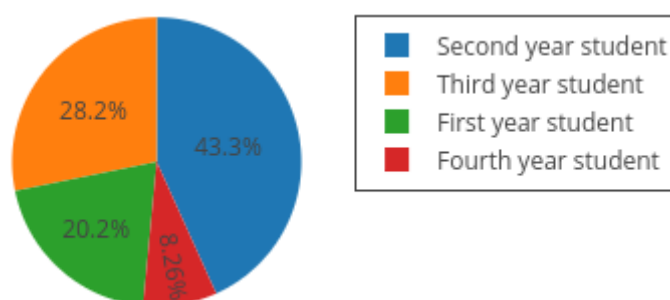


Chart 2. The rate on participants from first year to fourth year students

Comment: Chart 2 shows that there is a sufficient participation of all students from first year to the fourth year, mostly second year and third year students. The second year students have finished two compulsory subjects in the 4 years Bachelor course training, they are Basic English 1 and 2. This problem attracts 43.3% student's participation, which is a positive signal for the popular problems which attract many leaders and social life.

- The question "Which major group are you in?". Received 723 responses.

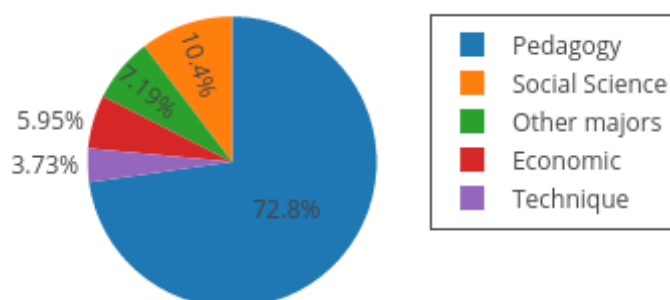


Chart 3. The rate of participated group majors

Comments: Chart 3 shows that the pedagogical majors takes a high number in survey with 72.8%, the social science majors take 10.4% whereas the rest ones takes 7.19%. According to

the Decision on establishing Dong Thap University and through vision and mission of the school:

"Training of highly qualified human resources, multidisciplinary, in which science education and teacher training is the key factor; conducting scientific research and providing community services; contributing to economic development and social in the Mekong Delta.

Becoming the quality center of training and research, reputable in the Mekong Delta; is one of the high quality's teacher training institutions of Vietnam." (Source from Department of Administration, May 6, 2016). This proves the fact there are more pedagogical students who participated in the survey. In our point of view, pedagogical students need to have English capacity in the current intergration trend. There are two main reason for this. Firstly, to complete the graduated requirement following the Decision of the school. Secondly, they will have ability to read materials, update new teaching methods to enhance their knowledge and have opportunities to teach in foreign educated institutions.

- The question "Where are you living?". Received 717 responses.

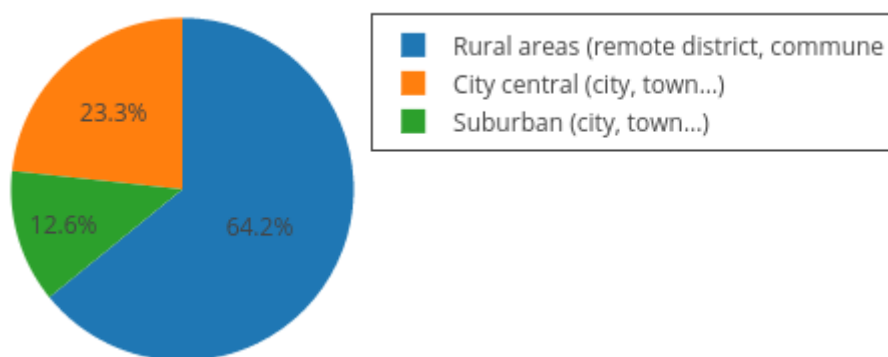


Chart 4. The rate on student's living before studying at school

Reviews: Dong Thap University is located in Ward 6, Cao Lanh City, Dong Thap province province in the Mekong Delta, which has been seen as the "valley" area in Vietnam about education level and living condition. Chart 4 shows that the university has attracted more students who come from rural areas, which takes 64.2%, whereas the two rest areas take separately 23.3% and 12.6%.

- The question "What do you think about learning English at the moment?". Received 721 responses.

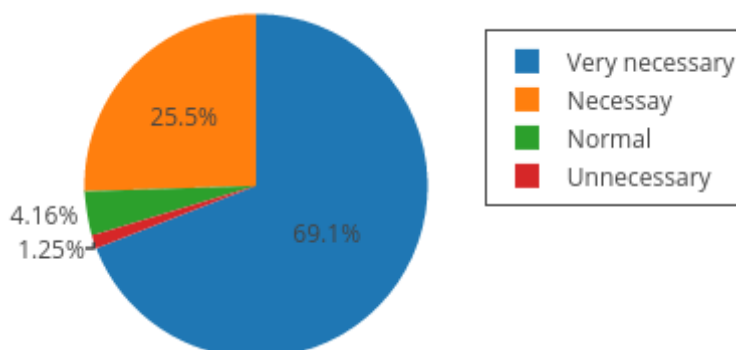


Chart 5. The rate on necessary's level of learning foreign language

Comment: Chart 5 shows that the opinion on learning a foreign language in the current period is very essential takes 69.1%, essential takes 25.5%. This shows that students pay much interest in learning a foreign language.

- Question "How do you evaluate your English skills?". Received 611 responses.

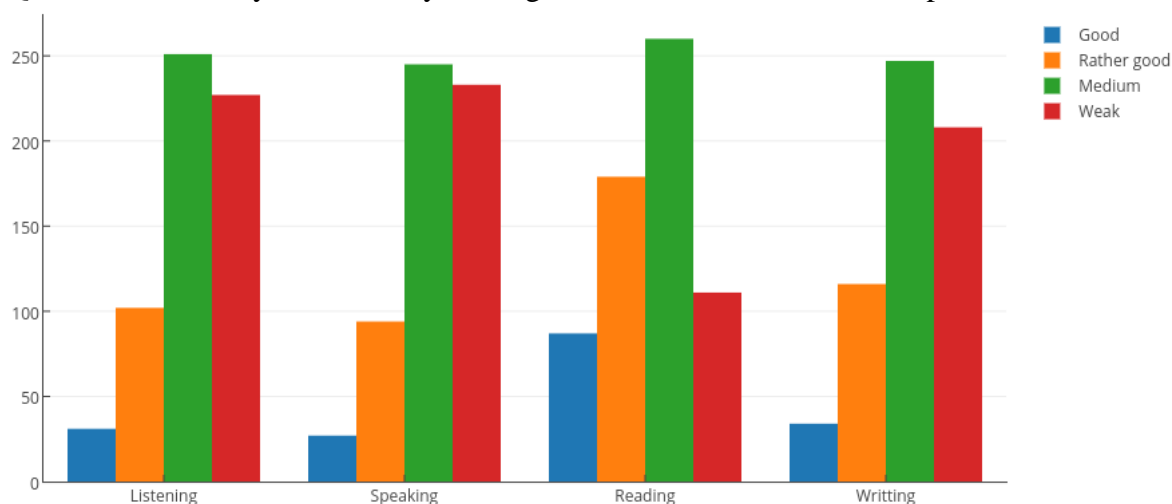


Chart 6. Students' self-evaluation on English skills

Comment: When students are asked about their current competence via their self evaluation, the chart 6 shows that most students choose their level are medium and weak for all 4 skills. We have conducted the survey from March to June, 2016 which belong to the second semester of the school year 2015-2016. Thus, most students have completed the English basic course in their learning process. In our point of view, it is dissapointed because student have been learned English during 6 years in high schools and 90 periods in university, but their level are weak and medium.

- The question "Do you self-study and research to improve your competence in English?". Received 721 responses.

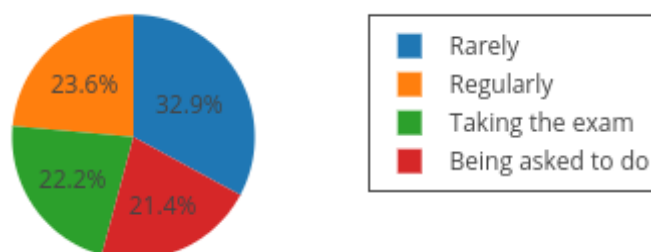


Chart 7. The rate on self-study and research's level of students

Comment: The chart 7 shows the regular English self study and research of students which including regular, being asked, taking examination and rarely. The rarely self study and research takes 32.9% whereas other answer only takes 20%. This shows that students have not had high awareness in self-study to increase their level although they know clearly that self-study is very important for learning process and after graduation. Although English is the second language and it needs a lot of time to practice all skills to improve.

- The question "What type of study do you usually do?". Received 710 responses.

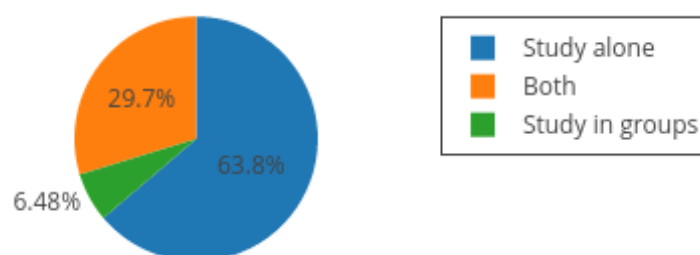


Chart 8. The rate on English self-study and research's types of students

Comment: Chart 8 shows that individual learning takes a great number with 63.8%, group learning takes 6.48%, while mixed learning method takes 29.7%. This will be very difficult to develop necessary skills for learning and researching. Firstly, it is very difficult to practice listening skills when students learn individually, they just read or do some exercises perfunctorily. Secondly, this will lead to incorrect pronunciation because students do not have partners to realise and peer-correct pronunciation. Thus, it will be difficult to approach English if the pronunciation is incorrect and lack of communicative environment.

- The question "How much time do you spend a day studying English?". Received 714 responses.

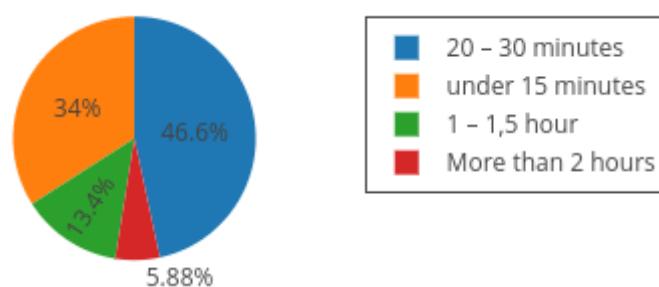


Chart 9. The rate on self-study and research's time of students

Comment: We are temporarily divide into 4 periods of time for learning, the lowest is 15 minutes, while the highest is more than 2 hours. The survey shows that students spent 15 minutes for learning takes 34%, from 20 to 30 minutes takes 46.6%. The rest from 1 to 1.5 hours and more than 2 hours take separately 13.4% and 2.88%. Thus, most students spent little for learning English and this lead to the low results in learning.

- The question "Where do you study English?". Received 715 responses.

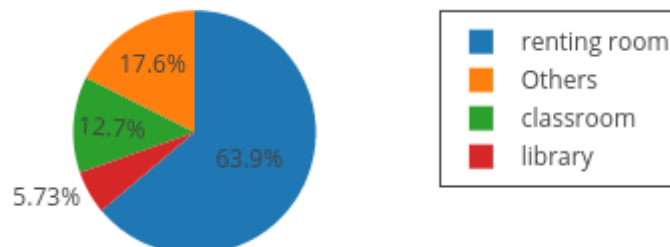


Chart 10. The rate on the place students self-study and research

Comment: The location will be very important in learning and research. If students want to achieve high efficiency, the learning place must be fully equipped with connected computer, English disks or specialized software. But the chart 10 shows that the learning in libraries and classrooms just take only 5.73% and 12.7%, whereas the rest who study in other places takes 17.6% while in boarding room takes 63.9%. This leads to ineffective learning and it will be difficult to get high results.

- The question, "How did you get the reference resources serving for your self-study English?". Received 719 responses.

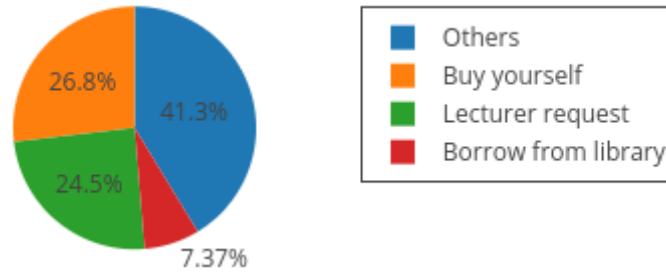


Chart 11. The rate on reference resources

Comment: The problem on reference sources which borrowed from library attracts a small number of students' interest, which takes 7.37%, the rest is buying by themselves, when they are asked by teachers and other sources. This is contradict because the non-standard document which is not updated, the study and research will not get expected results

- The question "Which resources, techniques, devices do you use for your self study English?". Received 660 responses.

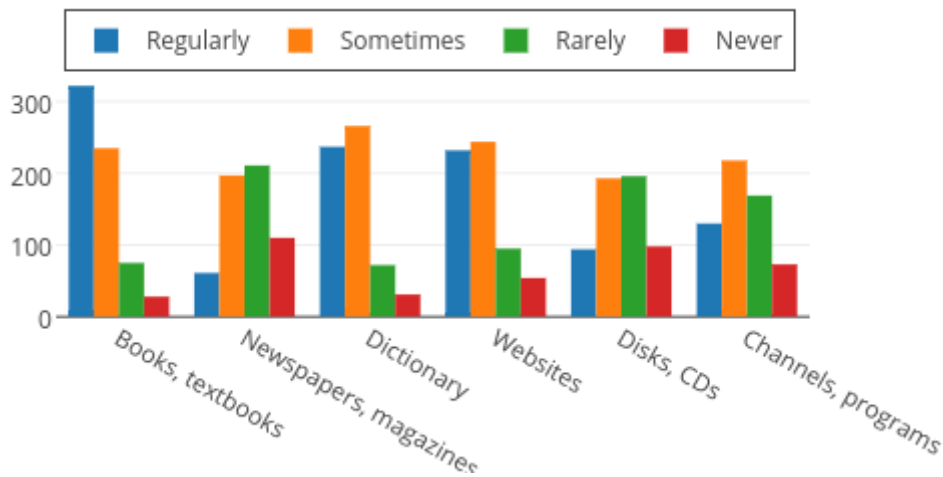


Chart 12. The rate on regular's level use of references and equipment in research

Comment: The chart shows that the regular use of traditional media like dictionaries, books and teaching English's website is in the regular and sometimes takes a lot of opinions. In our point of view, students need to combine the traditional and modern learning methods to get better results in learning and research. Moreover, reading newspapers, listening to the CDs players or watching programs will help approach necessary information and improve listening and speaking skills for themselves easily.

- The question "Do you contact with English lecturer positively to discuss about English learning methods, documents, textbooks?". Received 717 responses.

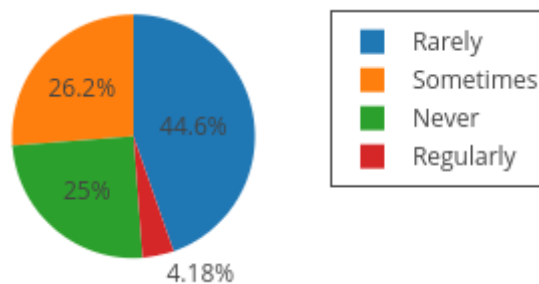


Chart 13. The rate on communicative and discussing's level between students and lecturers

Comment: In our point of view, there are some reasons for the issue on communicating English lecturers. Firstly, they do not have good preparation with basic knowledge as well as the topics will lead to the problem that they do not have topics in mind as well as they do not know where to start. Second, because of the apprehension of communication and exchange on academic of students, most of them have not active in approaching new knowledge. Thus, although lecturers are well educated people who have been trained, with experience and knowledge, most students have not contacted to study or exchange academic knowledge to improve learning skills. This leads to the disadvantage for themselves as well as affect to their learning results.

- The question, "Do you participate in English Clubs positively or outside activities to enhance competence in English?". Received 716 responses.

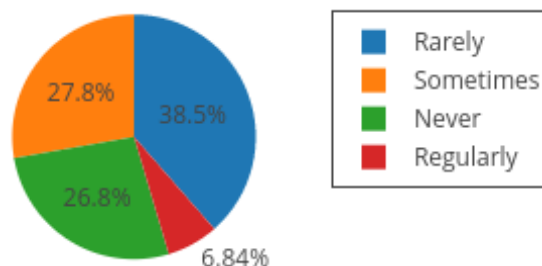


Chart 14. The rate on regular's level of participating English clubs of students

Comment: Chart 14 shows students participation in English clubs or English activities in order to practice listening and speaking skills among peers and under the guidance of trainers, the regular level is very low with 6.84%. The survey results will reflect the level of accumulated skills in chart 6.

- The question "Do you positively contact with foreigners to practice speaking English when you have chances?". Received 720 responses.

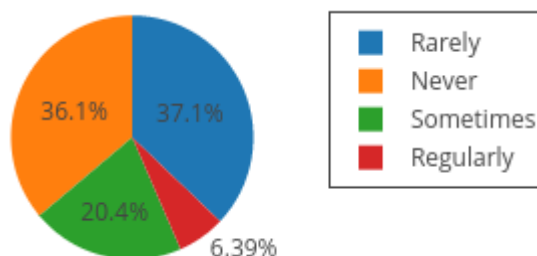


Chart 15. The rate on regular's level of practice English speaking skills with foreigners.

Comment: By analyzing the above charts in associated with the chart 15, the practice problems to raise the basic skills needed will meet a lot of difficulties. First, they are not ready psychologically prepared for the approach. Second, there is no regular practice environment and student do not have proactive approach when they have conditions

CONCLUSION

From analysis on the current situation on school's staff conditions and facilities to the survey's analysis to get opinions. We proposed some following solutions:

To Dong Thap University

Firstly, creating an academic environment in the form of clubs, student union's forums, youth union, writing essay's contests, English speaking contests for English major and non major English students. The regular activities periodically with the supervision of lecturers and foreign language's experts.

Secondly, making investment in building Lap room for interactive foreign language's teaching and learning, in order to create excited for learners in the process of learning which make more positive learning.

Thirdly, adding more basic English materials and design standard English's materials which appropriate to each major trained.

To English lecturers

The lecturers should clearly define their tasks not only in professional training, but also in combination with the specified purposes, research orientation, guiding self-study and research methods. Besides, they should plan their work after teaching in the classroom and well-prepared for teaching to get student's participation.

Providing necessary materials and introduce learning references. Guiding the search and orienting research and learning methods. Moreover, the lecturers should be friendly and openly in order to create friendly classroom's environment. They also need to combine many teaching methods, especially situational method to encourage student's participation and excited. More importantly, they are the people who can share and support students in academic learning.

Evaluating and testing regularly during the process of learning through multiple testing forms such as personal exercises or group exercises which are appropriate to the English subject. Thus, this can form good behavior on learning, creativity on students to get good learning's results.

To students

The students need to define clearly learning goals and supply necessary language's skills in addition to check their current English's competence. Therefore, they can adjust and change traditional learning methods by themselves. It is important to learn both in coursebooks and other materials to improve their learning's results. Besides, students need to be more confident in participating extra curricular activities and clubs. More importantly, they should be creative in making communicative environment.

Thus, on the basis of a situational analysis in combination with social survey on the research problem. We offer 3 groups of solutions, this is a popular issue in the society. In our points of view, there are some certain difficult conditions such as facilities, equipment, regional, low starting point. If we can change viewpoints in approaching modern methods, the self-study and research will be more effective and get many positive results to meet the current needs.

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