

VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HANOI

University of Languages and international Studies
THE FACULTY OF English LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

NGUYEN THI THANH XUAN

**APPLYING LEARNER - CENTERED TEACHING TO
PROMOTE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SPEAKING
CLASSES FOR FIRST YEAR MAINSTREAM
STUDENTS OF THE FACULTY OF English
LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION, ULIS -VNU**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of bachelor
of arts (TEFL)

Hanoi, May 2011

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Supervisor: Ms TRAN THI HIEU THUY
Hanoi, May 2011

ACCEPTANCE PAGE

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Hanoi, May 2011

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ABSTRACT

English teaching style often causes a big trouble for both teachers and educators who are trying their best to help their students make the best use of English. The idea of teaching and applying new methods like learner-centered teaching has been mentioned for a long time but its effect in Vietnam educational system is not much. This study examines the effectiveness of applying learner-centered teaching in speaking lessons for first-year mainstream students of the Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS-VNU. The paper began by reviewing

current trends of teaching speaking and related studies. The data was collected mainly through two class observations, the interviews with two speaking teachers and students' survey questionnaire. Basing on the findings and observations in the study, the researcher proposed some suggestions to solve the existing problems and to improve the students' learning and teachers' teaching styles in speaking classrooms. Added to that, this research suggested some techniques which are expected to be helpful for teachers to carry out good lessons based on learner-centered teaching.

List of charts and abbreviations

A. List of charts

1. Chart 1: Opinions about the role of 4 main skills
2. Chart 2: Students' responses toward setting their own goals for each speaking period
3. Chart 3: Students' main goals in learning speaking

4. Chart 4: The existed problems in speaking lessons
5. Chart 5: Students' responses to working independently in speaking lessons
6. Chart 6: Students' responses to comfort in contacting with their speaking teacher
7. Chart 7: Problems in teaching methods
8. Chart 8: Students' responses to the role of teacher
9. Chart 9: The roles of the teacher in helping students in learning speaking
10. Chart 10: Students' responses towards teacher' roles

B: Abbreviations

1. FELTE: Faculty of English Language Teacher Education.
2. ULIS: University of Languages and International Studies.
3. VNUH: Vietnam National University, Hanoi.
4. EFL: English as a Foreign Language

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
Acknowledgements	5
Abstract	6
List of charts and abbreviations	7
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	10
1.1. Statement of the problem and rationale for the research	10
1. 2. Aims and objectives of the study	12
1. 3. Scope of the study	13
1.4. Significance of the study	14
1.5. Organization of the study	14

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.1. Key terms	15
2.2. Overview of related research	22
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	25
3.1. Context of the research	25
3.2. Participants	25
3.3. Data collection instruments	26
3.4. Data collection procedure	28
3.5. Data analysis methods and procedure	31
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND FINDINGS	32
A. General findings:	32
B. Research questions	
<i>I. What are the advantages of applying learner-center teaching in speaking classes of first-year mainstream students of FELTE, ULIS-VNU?</i>	33
<i>II. What are the difficulties of applying this method for speaking classes of first-year mainstream students of FELTE, ULIS-VNU?</i>	37
<i>III. By what ways should teachers apply this method to foster the students' speaking learning at FELTE, ULIS-VNU?</i>	44
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	49
1. Major findings of the research	49
2. Pedagogical implications	50
3. Limitations	51
4. Suggestions for further studies	52

REFERENCES

APPENDICE

Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of problems and rationale for the research

The notion of learner-centered models in higher education has been around since at least the mid-1980s. However, it was not until 1987 that the article “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” by Chickering and Gamson placed an essential emphasis on student involvements. Moreover, in the language classrooms, it was not easy to apply an entirely new method in teaching like learner-centered teaching because according to Bilimoria and Wheeler (1995) and Weimer (2002), learner-centered teaching represents a typical shift from traditional teaching methods by focusing on how students learn instead of how teachers teach. Thus, the model’s conceptual underpinning is rooted in learning,

challenging the teachers to ask the rarely heard questions such as, “*How can I improve my students’ learning?*” instead of the often asked “*How can I improve my teaching?*” (Weimer, 2002.)

Since then “*learner-centered teaching*” has been extensively studied and many researchers have realized the benefits of this method in teaching in general and in teaching foreign languages in particular. However, adopting a learner-centered perspective, with its emphasis on trusting students and loosening teachers’ grip on content-driven lectures, is challenging. It requires students and professors to be both a facilitator and an evaluator and being both a learner and a teacher (Robertson, 2005). At times, learner-centered teaching demands teachers to join the students on their learning journey while simultaneously requiring teachers to grade their work and evaluate their performance. The important point to be noted is that although the research on learner-centered teaching in language teaching is generally much, research focusing only and closely on learner-centered approach in teaching speaking is not much enough so this is a big problem for teachers when trying to apply this new method in speaking lessons. In addition, despite being discussed and applied in many countries in the world, the application of learner-centered teaching in teaching foreign languages in Vietnam educational system is limited and embarrassed due to many practical reasons such as learning and teaching environment and styles. As can be seen, the traditional ways of teaching and learning where teacher is the center of the class and the format of the lessons sometimes forces teachers to base on fixed curriculum are popular in many schools around Vietnam.

On realizing the importance of learner-centered teaching, the author started deep research on learner-centered teaching in teaching foreign languages in Vietnam so that Vietnam educational system can have more interesting courses for students.

Considering the favorable conditions and positions of ULIS-VNU where the researcher has been studying, the researcher decided to choose participants in the study to be the students of FELTE, ULIS-VNU. The reason for that is she has known a lot about learning and teaching styles and it was quite easy for her to carry out any kinds of researching or observing. Added to that, ULIS-VNU is regarded as one of the most famous universities for training future foreign languages teachers so it is not too difficult for teachers trying to adapt any new teaching methods. Moreover, ULIS-VNU applies credit-based learning making a contribution to increase students' independence and autonomy so helping students get familiar with learner-centered teaching which enhances their autonomy in learning will provide them the basic steps in language learning.

Moreover, first-year mainstream students of FELTE, ULIS-VNU are new to the university's life with different ways of teaching and learning. Therefore, it is easier and more convenient for teachers and educators to familiarize them with such a new teaching method as learner-centered teaching. To narrow down the topic, the researcher only wants to focus on learner-centered approach in speaking teaching because she herself understands the importance of speaking in teaching and learning foreign languages. Secondly, the students, at the same time, urgently need to be able to communicate in English effectively. Moreover, this is a big advantage for the future-to-be teachers of English if learner-centered teaching proves its effectiveness in speaking lessons. Moreover, it will be much more practical and more effective if the students at the most beginning steps can realize strong points of learner-centered teaching.

In an attempt to study this topic, the researcher made her final decision on conducting a research on *“Applying learner-centered teaching to promote the effectiveness of speaking classes for first-year mainstream students of*

Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS-VNU". The author, with this study, hopes to reveal a real vision of what is going on in teaching speaking and to help teachers be more aware of the importance of learner-centered approach in language classrooms in general and in speaking in particular.

1.2. Aims and objectives of the study (Research questions)

As being noted in the research, the biggest difficulty in applying learner-centered teaching is the paradigm shift from the teachers' role to the students' role because teachers usually play an important role in the class and they often believe that students can not handle the responsibility for their own learning. Bearing this matter in mind, the researcher decided to carry out the research with the first aim to investigate how learner-centered teaching could foster students in speaking learning and whether it helps them in an effective and useful way. Secondly, the author would like to find out whether this difficulty exists in speaking classrooms in FELTE, ULIS-VNU or not. Finally, from the data of the research, the researcher hopes to suggest some techniques to help teachers' instruction better their students' learning in speaking classes.

To be more specific, the study would try to answer the following questions:

1. *What are the advantages of applying learner-centered teaching for students in speaking classes of first-year mainstream students of Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS-VNU?*
2. *What are the difficulties of teachers in applying this method for speaking classes of first-year mainstream students of Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS-VNU?*

3. *By what ways should teachers apply this method to foster the students' speaking learning at Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS-VNU?*

1.3 Scope of the study

The scope of the research has been made clear in the research title “*Applying learner-centered teaching to promote the effectiveness of speaking classes for first-year mainstream students of Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS-VNU*”.

In the first place, the study would focus on “learner -centered teaching”. The author would give ideas about the current situations and developments of learner-centered teaching within the specific context. The research included useful techniques for both teachers and students in attempt to enhance the effectiveness of speaking classes for students.

Secondly, the researcher would provide a deep understanding about speaking learning in different teaching methods and from that readers could see the important role of speaking skill in learning a foreign language process.

Thirdly, the subject of the study was limited to first-year mainstream students of FELTE, ULIS-VNU. Therefore, all of the generalizations are used for the direct context.

1.4. Significance of the study

The main goal of a speaking component in language class is to encourage the acquisition of communication skills and to foster real communication inside and outside the class. This study concentrated on the effectiveness of learner-centered

teaching in speaking class for first-year mainstream students of FELTE, ULIS-VNU and recommended some techniques for English teachers in the hope that they are able to help their students make the best use of the knowledge in learning language in general and in speaking skill in particular. Moreover, the valuable solutions were also provided basing on the findings from data of this paper. These solutions would help teachers be more flexible and active in their teaching.

1.5. Organization of the study

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Literature review

Chapter III: Methodology

Chapter IV: Results

Chapter V: Discussion

Chapter VI: Conclusion

In short, these points justify the contents and structure of the study. In addition, they serve as the guidelines for the rest of the paper.

Chapter II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Key terms

a. Learner-centered teaching (student-centered teaching)

After fifteen years of biology and cognitive psychology research findings on how humans learn offer this powerful and singular conclusion: “It is the one who does the work who does the learning” (Doyle, 2008). This conclusion strongly suggests

that the traditional model of teacher-centered instruction, where teachers do a lot of the work, is less effective and can be detrimental to students' learning. Therefore, a new approach is needed which gets the students to do most of the learning work and that approach is learner-centered teaching. The question everyone asks is why should teachers change to learner-centered teaching? The answer is actually very simple because of its advantages. Firstly, learner -centered teaching focuses on what the student is learning, how the student is learning, conditions under which the student is learning, whether the student is retaining and applying the learning, and how current learning positions the student for future learning (Normandy, 2000.) Moreover, learner-centered teaching represents a paradigm shift from traditional teaching methods by "*focusing more on how students learn than on how teachers teach*" (Bilimoria & Wheeler, 1995; Weimer, 2002.) In addition, a learner-centered classroom is one in which learners are actively involved in their own learning processes. There are two dimensions to this learner involvement. One is the involvement of learners in making decisions about what to learn, how to learn, and how to be evaluated and the other is on maximizing the class time in which the learners, rather than the teachers, do the work (Nunan, 2003).

Learner-centered teaching is an approach to teaching that is increasingly being encouraged in education. Learner-centered teachers do not employ a single teaching method. This approach emphasizes a variety of different types of methods that shifts the role of the instructors from giving information to facilitating student learning. Traditionally, instructors focus on what they do, and not on what the students are learning. This emphasis on what instructors do often leads to students who are passive learners and who do not take responsibility for their own learning. Educators call this traditional method, "instructor-centered teaching." In contrast, "learner-centered teaching" occurs when instructors focus on students learning.

Educators commonly use three phrases with this approach. Learner-centered teaching places the emphasis on the person who is doing the learning (Weimer, 2002). Learning-centered teaching focuses on the process of learning. Both phrases appeal to faculty because these phrases identify their critical role of teaching in the learning process. The phrase student-centered learning is also used, but some instructors do not like it because it appears to have a consumer focus, seems to encourage students to be more empowered, and appears to take the teacher out of the critical role (Blumberg, 2004).

Learner-centered teaching is about optimizing the opportunities for the students to learn. This means figuring out the best possible ways to get the students to do the work. The widely accepted definition of learning is that it is a “*change in neuron-networks of the brain*” (Ratey, 2002; Goldberg, 2009). For this change to happen, students must be paying attention and actively engaging their brains to process new sensory input. There is no such thing as passive learning. Learner-centered teaching means subjecting every teaching activity (method, assignment or assessment) (Doyle, 2008) Therefore, the only way for the students to increase their learning is to actively engage in learning the content and skills we teach, and then use and practice the content and skills for significant periods of time. This means that most of the time, our students need to be doing more than just listening to a lecture. And learner – centered teaching can do this job.

b. *Why is learner – centered teaching in EFL classrooms?*

The first step to help students adjust to learner-centered teaching is to explain why this approach is the best possible way to enhance their academic success. This includes explaining how the new learning roles and responsibilities in a learner-centered classroom will allow them to better meet their learning and life goals.

The best way to help students understand why teachers have changed to a learner-centered practice is perhaps help them to understand the importance and effectiveness of this approach. According to Terry Doyle (2008) in his new book, there are three reasons that the researcher believes are the key to help the students understand why teachers need them to take on the new roles and responsibilities in a learner-centered environment.

Firstly, changes in their understandings of how humans learn. Many of the changes students will see in the new teaching approach can be explained by the desire to bring the teaching into harmony with the new discoveries about how the human brain learns. For example, teachers want students to do more firsthand learning, group learning, practicing, reflecting, teaching of others, and presentations because all of these learning activities require active learner engagement. The teachers need to continually reinforce to their students and give them learning tasks to take on, which require them to adopt new learning roles, are done to optimize the development of the “*neuron-networks*” (Ratey, 2002; Goldberg, 2009) they need to be successful college learners.

Secondly, teachers are preparing students for their careers. The rationale for teaching many of the learning skills, behaviors, attitudes, and critical thinking strategies now a part of learner-centered college courses is that the students will need these skills for their careers. For example, teachers put students into small groups not only to promote a deeper level of learning but because learning to talk with or listen to others is, perhaps, the single most important skill needed to be successful in any career field. A reason for asking students to make presentations before the whole class is that learning to speak in front of others is crucial to career success. The simple point is that most learning activities or content knowledge the

teachers teach has relevance to students' career goals. Teachers just have to continually point this out to them.

Last but not least, college is the place which must prepare students to be lifelong learners. The new reality the students need to accept is that college is no longer a terminal educational experience. The big change teachers must accept is to rid by themselves of the idea that if they do not teach something to them then they will never learn it. Replacing that idea with one that says, if teachers do not prepare their students to be lifelong learners, capable of independent, self-motivated learning, then teachers have done less than a satisfactory job with their students college education.

One of the reasons students are being asked to take on more responsibility for their own learning is because they will be more responsible it for the rest of their lives. The responsibility teachers have to develop their students' lifelong learning skills is justification for many of the changes teachers are asking our students to make in a learner-centered classroom. When teachers ask their students to write copiously, read large amounts of information, learn to manage their time, work well with others, accept and give feedback and criticism, express ideas in clear and concise ways that can be easily understood by others, listen attentively, defend a position or idea, or find a proper source, teachers do so because the students will have to do these things the rest of their lives if they want to be successful.

c. *The role of teacher in learner-centered classes*

Learner-centered teaching requires significant changes because getting students involved and participating in class is such hard work. Ayers (1986) wrote “*good teachers, like good midwives, empower.*” Good teachers will find ways to activate

students, for they know that learning requires active engagement between the subject and “*object matter*.” Learning requires discovery and invention. Good teachers know when to hang back and be silent, when to watch and wonder at what is taking place all around them. They can push and they can pull when necessary—just like midwives—but they know that they are not always called upon to perform. However, are students so reluctant and seemingly lazy because they have gotten used to teachers who talk most of the time—to teachers who answer their own questions at the first sign of student hesitation. In learner-centered teaching, instructors guide and facilitate learning. The role is not new; it has been written about for years. The difference is that it has been proposed as an alternative, one among a number of roles a teacher might choose or rotate between. With learner-centered teaching, the role is not optional. Teachers must move aside, often and regularly. Fox (1983) proposed four “*personal theories*” of teaching that can be equated with roles. In the learner-centered model, he compares the teacher’s role to that of the gardener—the one who prepares the ground, tills, and cultivates, but whose plants do the growing. And although the gardener may take some credit for a beautiful garden, the real accomplishment belongs to the plants. Eisner (1983) compares the teacher to a maestro before an orchestra, offering insights on the role from yet another perspective.

Learner-centered teachers connect students and resources. They design activities and assignments that engage learners. They facilitate learning in individual and collective contexts. Their vast experience models for novice learners how difficult material can be accessed, explored and understood. The reason this role works is simple and obvious: when the focus is less on teaching and more on learning, learning is not assumed or presumed to happen automatically. Educators become much more aware of how teaching influences learning. What students do and do

not learn starts driving the instructional decision-making process. Students “*learn*” content and develop as learners much less effectively and efficiently if they are never given the opportunity to “*do*” the learning tasks that facilitate acquisition of content. Most do not learn how to summarize by listening to our summaries or reading those in the textbook. The students will need to be taught how to do meaningful self-assessment of their work; and teachers cannot expect them to know how to do something they have never been taught.

Among the most important skills teachers need to help the students develop are speaking and listening. These are also the most overlooked in the teaching in many language classrooms. There are so many activities that the students will do more often than any other on a day-to-day basis at work. The key to helping the students to learn in this new environment is to take a lesson from basic teacher training—always check to see what the students already know and can do before making learning assignments. If teachers find their students are unskilled or under-skilled, then the teachers must teach them these learning skills before expecting them to be successful learners in a learner-centered classroom. That is why the teachers’ role seems to be changed to help students in their study and obtaining knowledge.

d. Speaking skill

The objective of language is to encourage effective communication in daily life, by practicing effective expression, increasing vocabulary, give sample opportunities that use language to describe, to compare and relate experiences, thoughts and feeling, etc. Speaking has always been a major focus of language teaching, however both the nature of speaking skills as well as approaches to teaching them have undergone a major shift in thinking in recent years. Experts define speaking in many different ways. Brown and Yule (1989,p.14) wrote in their book

“speaking is to express the needs-request, information, service, etc.” Meanwhile, Jones (1989, p.14) stated that *“Speaking is a form of communication.”* Speaking is not only producing sounds but also a process of achieving goals that involves transferring messages across. Therefore, speaking process should be noticed on what and how to say as well as to whom.

Added to that, the notion of speaking skill should be seen in different methods of second language teaching under a lot of views and theories so that the teachers and learners have an overview on what needs to be noticed in teaching speaking. In grammar – translation method, *“student acquire a foreign language by learning and explaining grammar rules”* (To, 2009). Meanwhile, audio-lingual method understands speaking concept in different way when communicative competence and aural/oral skills are put at the top priority. However, speaking skill in this method is formed by process of habit formation and over-learning. Until in communicative language teaching, the concept and importance of speaking have been understood deeply and thoroughly. It claims that speaking skill is to *“prepare learners to be able to use the language”* (Bygate, 1987)

2.2. Overview of related research

There are some articles, books and research, written about learner-centered teaching. Rogers (2002) provides a lot of useful information for teachers who are interested in student-centered learning method. Firstly, he gives some features of student-centered learning which are useful for teacher when planning a lesson based on this method such as: *“ask don’t tell”* which means always try to elicit information, ideas, and answers from the students; *“focus on students’ experience*

and interests” meaning that teachers use the course book as a base for then moving on to practice activities relating to the students' personal lives and areas of interest and experience (personalization) to help the students involve in the lesson and remember more; or “*learning by doing*” means the more actively involved students are in their own learning, the more they are likely to remember what they learn, so forth. Moreover, he also suggests many important skills for teachers needed in student-centered approach such as giving useful practical suggestions, giving constructive feedback, acting as a language resource, monitoring student work, improvising teaching of language points, coping with the unexpected, coping with students with different learning styles, creating their own materials approaching the community for help.

However, this work by Rogers still has some weaknesses such as it only gives some skills for teacher in applying student-centered approach but it does not explain clearly in which situation and by what ways the teacher should use these skills to get the most effective results. In addition, this guideline only sees the good point of this new method but it does not see a lot of problems existed in traditional classes and the teacher’s different teaching styles.

According to Sarıgöz (2008) in his study which focuses on individual-centered teaching in foreign language learning and teaching, he also emphasizes the importance of applying individual-centered learning in teaching a foreign language because he believes that every learner would feel that she or he is in the centre of the foreign language learning tasks performed in and out of the classroom. He also provides some strong methodological currents which have moved the intensity of foreign language teaching from the teacher to the learner. In addition, this research predicts some changes about teaching methods in the near future. This study provides a lot of analysis about individual-centered foreign

language teaching and strengths of this method. However, this method just focuses on analysis without any applications in foreign language teaching. This study doesn't give any difficulties or suggest any techniques and skills for teachers who want to apply this new method.

There is a study mentioning "Student Perceptions of Learner-Centered Teaching" by Wohlfarth which introduces the context for learner-centered teaching in which students must do something instead of having something done to them. The goal of this paper is to increase understanding of learner-centered teaching through a student perspective and add to the body of knowledge so that teachers can better implement this model. This research is very informative because it provides some findings in learner-centered classrooms such as the control of learning is returned to the students so that they determine the timing of their assignments and become acquainted with their own learning style so as to better self-assess their learning and students will work harder and smarter when less emphasis is placed on grades, quizzes, and memorization. Although this study provides the results and discussion about this method and its strength, it still has some limitations. Firstly, it does not provide any techniques or advice for teacher to applying learner-centered teaching. Secondly, we see no difficulties of this method suggested in this paper which is a disadvantage for any teachers desiring to apply it.

In my paper, I will try to solve the limitations of the above research and focus more deeply on analyzing the strengths of this method in teaching foreign language in FELTE in ULIS, VNU. Moreover, I will point out some difficulties both teachers and students meet when applying this method and suggest some techniques and measures to help teachers in their speaking teaching in ULIS-VNU.

Chapter III: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Context of the research

Although there are many troubles in speaking classroom at present, it is very hard to solve them in a short time. Therefore, the research wanted to prove the effectiveness of learner-centered teaching in speaking lessons so that many problems would be minimized as many as possible. Firstly, learner-centered teaching focuses more on how students are learning and maximums the students' active involvement in learning process. From this advantage, speaking teachers will be easier to help students realize their own goals and how to achieve them quickly and effectively. Moreover, learner-centered teaching do not employ only one single teaching method, it emphasizes a wide range of different types of

methods that shifts the role of the teachers from giving information to facilitating student learning. Traditionally, students are often passive in their learning process, they only do what are required by their teachers. However, by applying learner-centered teaching, students will be more active and excited about each lesson because they realize the real goals of learning speaking. From these perspectives, the researcher would investigate deeper in learner-centered teaching and its advantages in teaching and learning process.

3.2.Participants

The process of data collection involved the participation of both English teachers and English major freshmen students of FELTE in ULIS, VNU. All of the personal information of the participants would be kept secret. Added to that, in order to ensure the study's reliability and validity, two classes for observations and two teachers were randomly chosen at different classes.

3.2.1. English Teachers

This study focuses on the effectiveness of teaching method in speaking classes so the roles of teachers are indispensable and very necessary. Teachers are considered to play an important part in guiding and monitoring the learning process of students. Therefore, the researcher invited two teachers of English in the Division I, FELTE in ULIS, VNU. The purpose was to bring a different perspective about the matter and see how the teachers think about the new method. The teachers invited were both those in charge of the classes observed because the information from them served to clarify, justify and bring insight into the matter studied.

3.2.2. First - year mainstream students

As the study focuses on the effectiveness of learner-centered teaching in speaking learning, the participation of students in the study is very important. The target population was the whole English major freshmen students of FELTE in ULIS, VNU. From the whole students, two English major classes, one class consists of 25 students and the other consists of 23 ones, aged from 17 to 20, were chosen randomly for class observations. The students reported to have studied English for at least four years and at most twelve years, and the majority of them experienced a studying period from five to eight years. Their English proficiency level ranks from pre – intermediate to upper – intermediate at the university. Added to that, the study also asked for the corporation of 100 English major freshman students at FELTE, ULIS participating in the survey questionnaire to investigate the students’ attitudes toward speaking lessons and their importance.

3.3. Data collection instrument

The methods of data collection in this study included videotaped classroom observations, interviews with two different teachers and the questionnaire for students.

3.3.1. Class observation

The researcher decided to focus the observation on speaking classroom activities because they are what the teachers are concerned about when teaching speaking skills. Due to the nature of the research questions which seek to answer a long-term and continuing phenomenon, observation of two classes for six periods per class not only provides a clear explanation but serves as an extra source of information which supplements the information gathered from the questionnaire and the interview. Added to that, classroom observation works as a way of looking at the

matter from the researcher's perspective in addition to the teachers' and the students'. This helps the author to increase the validity of the gathered information. The author decided to videotape the class because this would enable her to go back to data whenever she wants.

3.3.2. Questionnaire

The author also focused on survey questionnaire for students to collect the data because this tool is employed to address the research questions and it is one of the most attractive means of collect data (Nguyen, Pham and Luong, 2008, p.17). A survey takes the participants only a few minutes to check-off, select and answer short questions. By delivering the questionnaire, researchers could collect a wide range of information from target population within a short time. In other word, it is the quickest way to collect data from scattered participants with precise and clear result. As regards to the design of survey questionnaire, closed-ended and rating questions were chosen because participants can be easy to answer in a few minutes.

3.3.3. The interviews

The interviews carried out are used as another tool for the author to analyze the data to find out the most persuasive results for the research. The interviews were conducted in the form of informal recorded talks. Two interviews were conducted in English so as to create a comfortable atmosphere for the interviewees and to maximize the reliable information gathered and to avoid misunderstanding. In addition, all interviews began with a short talk on related issue with a view to building the rapport and leading the interviewees naturally to the subject matter.

The interviews with the teachers aimed to find out what the teachers have done to promote learners' independence in speaking lessons, what special issues have arisen and their suggestions. In the teaching and learning process in general, not everything the teachers plan can reach and become parts of the students' knowledge. Therefore, information from the teachers' side was necessary to draw up a complete picture of what is going on in the speaking classrooms.

3.4. Procedures of data collection

The study was conducted in the middle of March in 2011. The procedure of data collection went through 4 main stages:

Stage 1: Preparing

In this stage, the researcher managed to design the survey questionnaire, the interview questions and the observation checklist. A list of questions in questionnaire and the interview content were prepared with much of attention before reaching the target. The researcher made a start to write effective items to avoid ambiguity and repetition.

Stage 2: Piloting

Before having the final draft of the survey questionnaire and interview questions, the researcher asked for advice from the supervisor and piloted in a small group of 10 first year students and saw if it had any problems or misunderstandings and ambiguous aspects which the author believed that it could help to improve the content and layout of the final survey questionnaire. The questions for interview were reedited several times to suit the aims of the thesis and to avoid small mistakes.

Stage 3: Delivering the questionnaire and interviewing

a. Students' survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was delivered to 100 students at Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS, VNU. The author went to each class and explained the purpose of the research, research topic, asked students for their permission to complete the questionnaire and explained if they did not understand. After that, she distributed the questionnaire to the students. In the process of completing the survey questionnaire, if there were any further questions, the researcher was ready to give clear instructions. In addition, she made sure that all of the personal questions would be kept secret so that the respondents found comfortable to choose the answers reflecting their reaction.

b. Teachers interviews

At the time of sending the interview questions to the teachers via email in advance so that they could prepare for the answers and the author also checked if they understood the purpose of the questions clearly and gave explanation to any further questions. The researcher also asked two teachers for convenient time to conduct the interviews. For each appointment, the researcher gave a ring to the teachers in advance to confirm time and place. Each interview often began with a short informal talk, in which the teachers were reminded of the questions about the research topic. Then the researcher asked for permission to record the interviews to use as references afterwards. During the interviews, questions were asked one at a

time and whenever unexpected answers came up or new aspects were revealed, extra questions were added accordingly to exploit in-depth information from the interviewees. The interviewees were encouraged to speak out whatever they thought about the subject matter. However, reorientation was made when necessary so as to bring focus onto the investigated areas.

Stage 4: Synthesizing the data

After collecting the data from the participants' answers, the results were quickly synthesized to search for any unexpected outcomes. Then the data collection procedure continued with combining with data analysis procedure. As the data from interviews could come in a large amount, the transcripts would be summarized with detailed notes regarding time and place of interview. In order to misinterpret, all the interviewers' words were kept in original version.

3.4. Data analysis methods and procedure

-

The collected data was first classified according to the research questions. The students' responses were considered first. Teachers' responses were analyzed in comparison and contrast with the students' responses.

Descriptive statistics is used to analyze quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data will be quantified, calculated, and synthesized from the data in closed-ended questions into tables. The analysis of numerical data aiming at identifying statistical relations of variables are hard data on the numbers and the percentage of participants sharing the same ideas or rating. This type of data will

be analyzed more accurately and objectively.

Qualitative data allows the researcher to gain insight into the respondents' reactions mainly from open-ended questions. Same ideas will be grouped into different types of validity together to be compared.

Chapter IV: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

While the previous chapter dealt with the methodology of the research and overview of other research, this chapter presents the results revealed through the analysis of the collected data. It is noteworthy that the findings will be considered with reference to the current literature, in order to reinforce the existing arguments or to underline new findings on the research topic. Students' responses here and there will be contrasted with teachers' so that mismatch will be pointed out. For other responses that are agreed on, they will be reported as from the students' perceptions only in order to avoid repetition. Added to that, class observation

would play a role in analyzing data and answering research questions.

A. General findings

The importance of speaking according to students' attitude

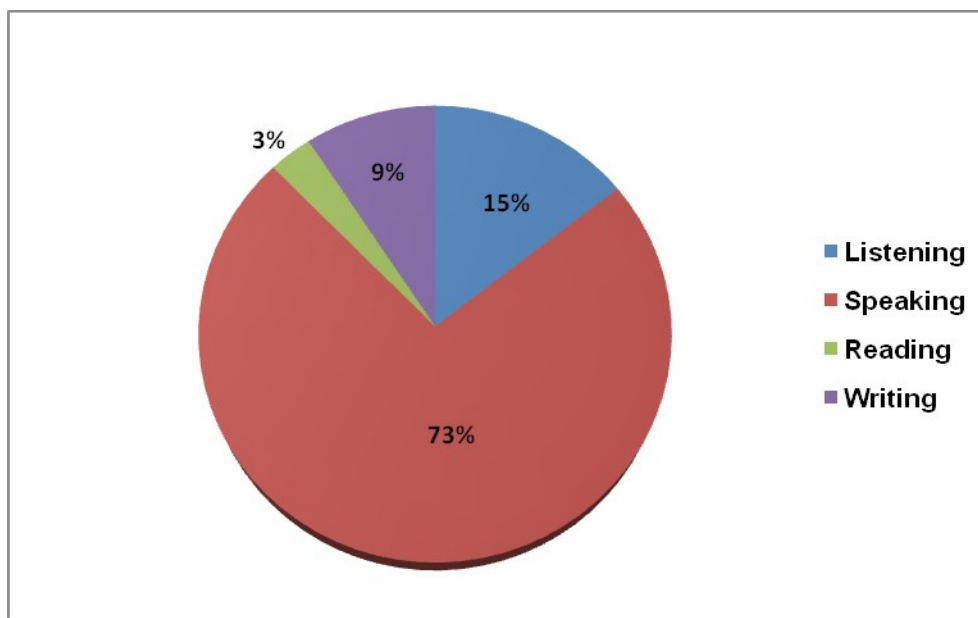


Chart 1: Opinions about the role of 4 main skills

According to students' responses about which skill is the most important among 4 main English skills: Listening, speaking, reading, writing. A vast majority of students (73%) choose that speaking is the most important one among 4 skills. Next to that is listening (15%) and writing (9%). Only 3% of students decide reading is the most important one.

Discussion

Although the number of students involved in the research is quite large, their perceptions about the importance of language skills do not vary very much. First of all, the researcher intended to investigate the attitude of the students towards the importance of speaking skill in English learning process. And the number is not too

surprising and over 70% of students choose speaking is the most important and necessary skills among listening, reading and writing. Based on the result, the researcher is more trusted in the aim of the research which tries to find out the most useful teaching method to foster the effectiveness of speaking classes.

B. Research questions

I. What are the advantages of applying learner-center teaching in speaking classes of first-year mainstream students of Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS-VNU?

1. Purposes of students in speaking

1.1. Students' responses

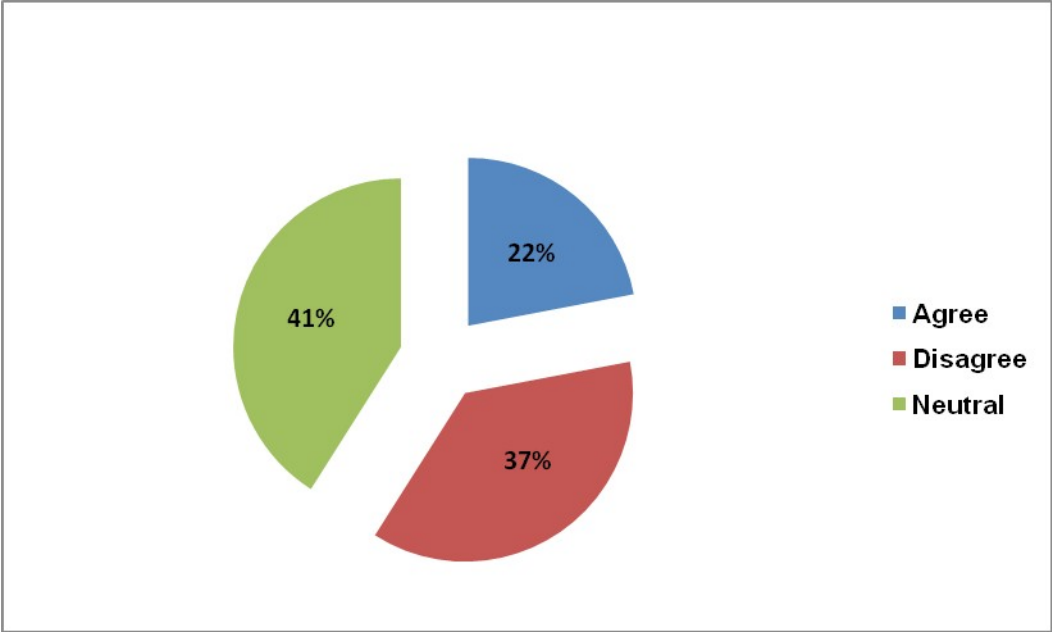


Chart 2: Students' responses toward setting the own goals for each speaking period

Looking at the pie chart, there are 37 % of students say that they don not set their own goal for speaking lessons while 22 % agree they often set goals for each speaking lesson and 41 % are neutral with this question.

Discussion

The pie chart shows how the students' responses toward setting their own goals for each speaking period. The number is not unevenly much. There are 37 students said that they didn't set their own goals for speaking lessons. From this figure, we can see that one third of the students don't set goals for their speaking lessons or in other words, these students often passively accept what is prepared by their teacher and attend each lesson without preparation. However, 22 students agreed they often set goals for every speaking period; and though this number is not too many compared to the number of students choosing not set goals for each lesson but it is still good a sign when 22 % of students understood their aims of each speaking lesson and they themselves would try to achieve their goals through each period.

In this following chart, the researcher has tried to find out the students' main goals in learning speaking.

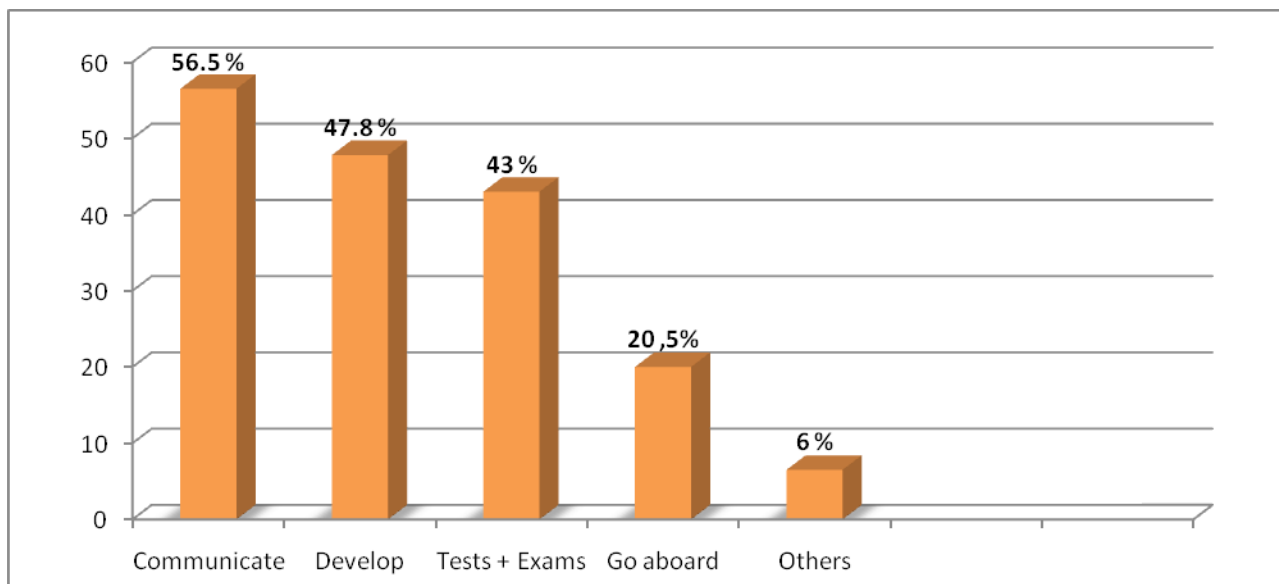


Chart 3: Students' main goals in learning speaking

The chart shows the choices of students towards the main goals of learning English speaking. More than a half of students (56,5%) choose communication is the most

important goal in speaking, next to that are for developing their English (47,8%) and for tests and exams (43%).

Discussion

The figures in this chart show what goals students need most in speaking lessons. About half of students decided that learning speaking for communication and development of English are the most important among a lot of listed factors. This proves that students mainly understand the real aims of speaking lessons which means they will have more motivation in their learning. However, there were still very high numbers of students chose learning speaking for tests and exams (43 people) which means they still focus much more on marks than the progress of their speaking and that problems will harden teachers in teaching and helping students in their speaking.

1.2. Teachers' responses

Two teachers taking part in the interviews have all agreed that “*most of students want to learn English to pass the exams and tests and get certificate in university, and they really want to learn English to be able to communicate in English*” (one teacher noted). This means that there are still very large numbers of students choose learning speaking just for tests and exams which is also a problem for teachers and educators if they want to introduce some updated topics for students to practice because they only focus on what matters are in the exams. On the other hand, according to two teachers, many students also try to learn English to communicate well so it is an advantage for speaking teachers in trying to apply new teaching methods and techniques to foster their students' learning process.

1.3. Class observation

During the process of observation, the researcher noticed that students in two classes seemed ready with many matters or situations given by their teachers. When their teacher introduced the topic and explained what they had to do. They were quickly discussed with friends and tried to work the topic out. This is a good sign for teachers who want to apply learner-centered teaching which much involves students in the lessons and students become more and more active and independent in their learning.

That is why the researcher tried to prove the effectiveness of learner-centered teaching in speaking lessons because this approach gets the students to do most of the learning work and be more active in their learning and “learner-centered teaching focuses on what the student is learning, how the student is learning, and how current learning positions the student for future learning” (Normandy 2000, p.14) so this method can help both teachers know how good the students, which level they are at and students assess their progress and improvement day by day through teachers and friends’ comments. As a result, teachers and students can work every problem out and find the most effective ways so that the students’ results can be fostered.

II. What are the difficulties of applying this method for speaking classes of first-year mainstream students of Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS-VNU?

2.1. Difficulties of students in speaking lessons

2.1.1. The existed problems in speaking lessons

a. Students’ opinions

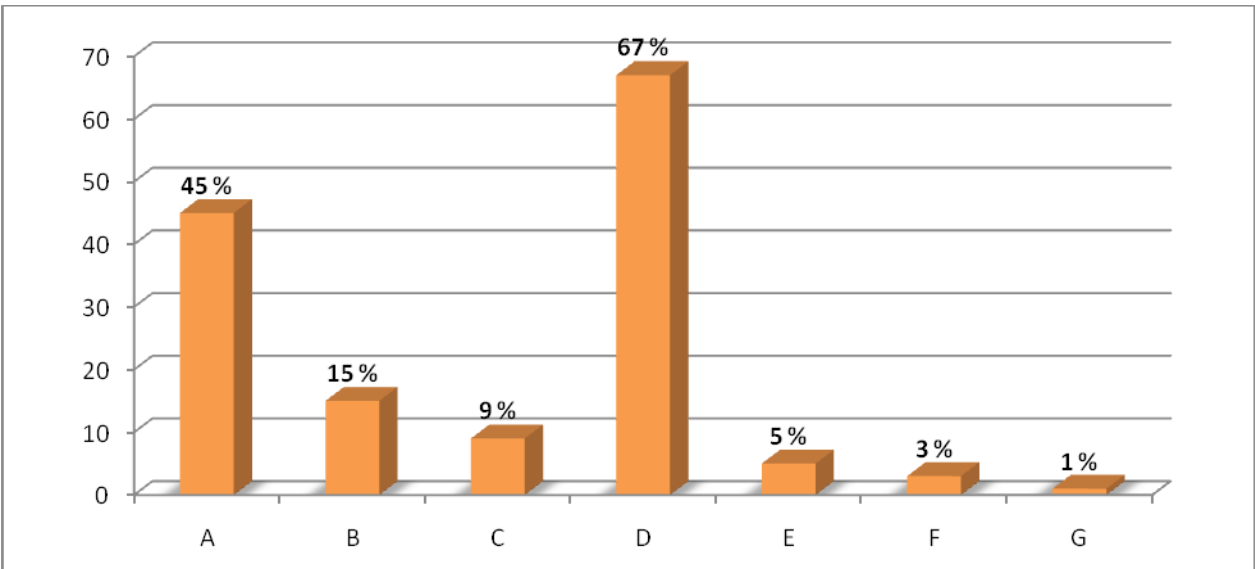


Chart 4: The existed problems in speaking lessons

(A. Lack of vocabulary and expressions (45%), B. Lack of confidence when speaking (15%), C. You teacher doesn't help you much when you speak (9%), D. You don't know how to find the ideas for your speaking tasks (67%), E. You can't work in group or pair (5%), F. No problems (3%), G. Others (1%))

As can be seen in chart 4, most of the students (97%) have problems in speaking lessons and only 3 % of the students state that they are perfect in English. A vast number of students find lack of ideas for speaking tasks (67%); and lack of vocabulary and expressions (45%) are one of the biggest problems existed in speaking lessons. In the third place is lack of confidence when speaking (15%).

Discussion

As can be seen from chart 4, most students meet troubles in speaking lessons. In the first place is lacking of ideas when speaking (67%), next to that is lacking of vocabulary and expression (45%) and lacking of confidence (15%) is another problem – all of them are the most decisive factors which can make a speaking

lesson fail. These existed problems all need to be solved as soon as possible so that students can perform better in the next speaking lessons and they themselves will achieve and enrich their own knowledge in order that they will be more ready and comfortable when speaking English inside and outside classroom. That's why it is necessary for not only students but also teachers join hands to find out a good and effective solution so that students can make progress in their speaking learning soon.

b. Teacher's opinions

Generally, teachers demonstrated a deep understanding about their students' problems and they also said that "we are trying our best to help the students as much as possible." Although the students all understand the importance of speaking learning but because of learning style and methodology so they still have a lot of problems such as "lack ideas, *vocabulary and expression and pronunciation when speaking*" (a teacher said). It is the big problems among first year students. Added to that using Vietnamese seems to be another problems in speaking classrooms.

Discussion

In the teachers' interviews, both teachers find students' lack of ideas, vocabulary and expression and bad pronunciation are the most outstanding problems among students. According to one teacher "*pronunciation and ideas are huge problems and I spend a lot of time to help them. However, they will make the same mistake in another time without my help. That is matter of habit.*" To minimum these problems, students really need to learn by themselves a lot so that they can catch up with friends and course's learning process. However, students just realize their problems but it is very hard for them to solve them alone without the help from teachers. To do this, teachers should apply some methods such as tasked – based

teaching or learner –centered teaching that focus mainly on learners’ learning rather than focus on how right the course’s learning process is going so that these existed problems can be figured out and solved.

c. Class observation

Class observation also plays an important role in trying to find problems in speaking classroom. From observation, the author could see some existing problems in two observed classes. Firstly, students used Vietnamese for discussion quite often when teacher did not notice and they sometimes did not do their best to use English to express their ideas or opinion. This problem is not too big but not only speaking teachers should help students realize the importance and necessity of using English speaking but also students need self-practice so that they can make use of speaking periods in achieving their long-term goals. Secondly, the researcher noticed that students still lacked ideas and expression when trying to express their opinion toward a given matter which maybe is not easy to solve in a short time. Another problem is lacking of confidence when speaking; students seemed afraid of making mistakes and sometimes they dare not speak out and keep quiet and passive during the lessons.

These listed problems are common in speaking classrooms and they are needed to make clear for students and both speaking teacher and the students should join hands to solve them completely. To solve these problems, teachers often suggest some directions or orientations for students and students can base on these to develop their own ideas. Added to that, they offered some punishment for students who not tried to use English.

2.1.2. Students’ difficulties in working independently in speaking lessons

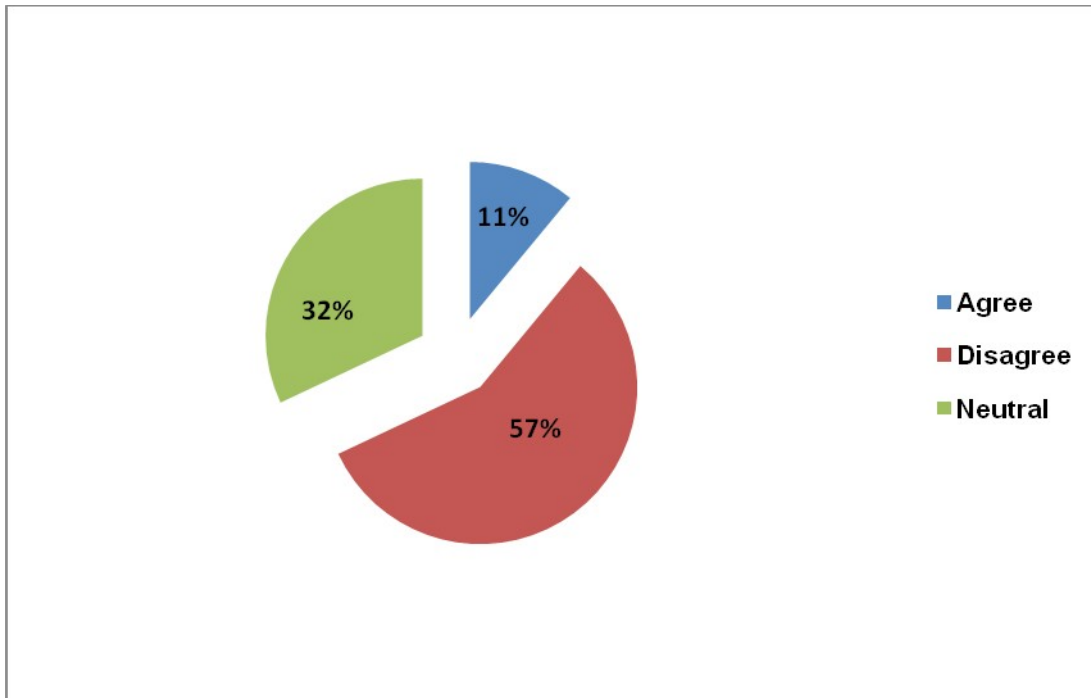


Chart 5: Students' responses to working independently in speaking lessons

Looking at the pie chart, a large amount of students say that they can not work independently when encountering matters in speaking lessons (57%). 32% of students stay neutral with this idea. Meanwhile, there are still 11% of students choose the choice that they can work independently with all matters in speaking lessons.

Discussion

The figures in the chart above show the responses of students to the question of working independently with any matters in speaking lessons. However, more than half of students (57%) stated that they couldn't work independently when encountering matters in speaking lessons and their choice varies from totally to somewhat disagree. This result can help us to see more deeply how difficult it is for teachers to applying learner – centered teaching in speaking lessons in which the role of teachers can be changed from controllers to instructors and facilitators

because the students are not ready to deal with speaking problems by themselves. Even though the students could solve a lot of speaking matters independently such as poor pronunciation, enrich ideas and vocabulary for each lesson, they seem to rely too much on teachers to help them find out the ways of solving each speaking matter. This is a big disadvantage of applying learner – centered teaching because this methodology is described as one to maximize the class time in which the learners, rather than the teachers do the work (Nunan, 2003) and learners are actively involved in their own learning processes.

2.1.3. Students’ comfort to contact with their teacher if they have problems in speaking lessons

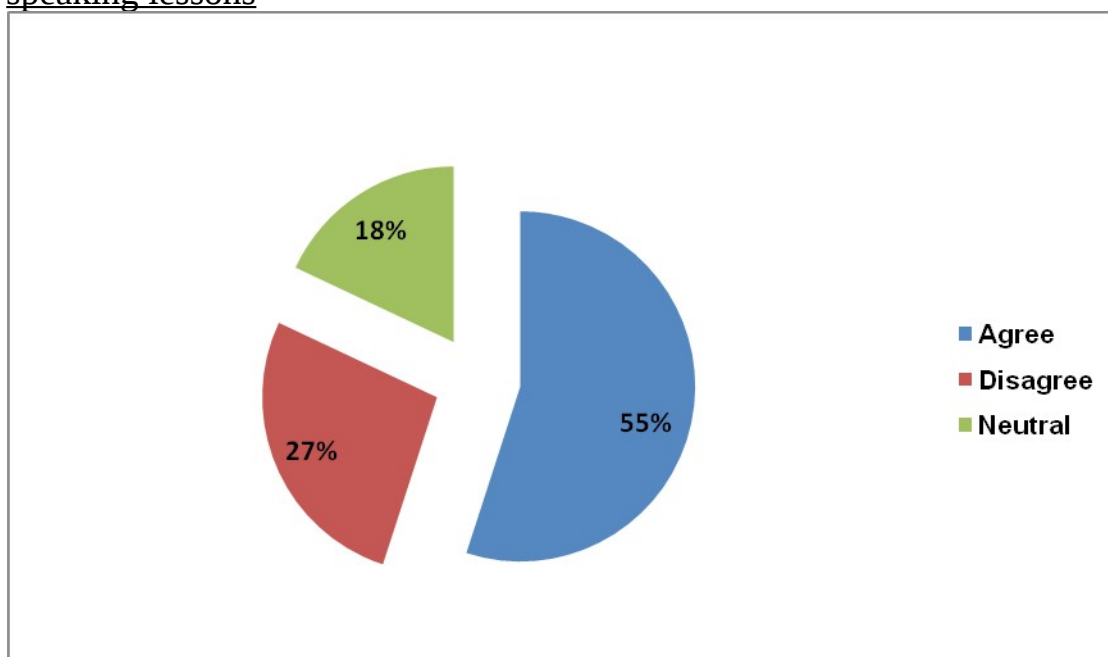


Chart 6: Students’ responses to comfort in contacting with their speaking teacher

The chart shows that more than 50% of the students (55%) feel comfortable to contact with their teacher when they have troubles in speaking lessons; however, there are still 27 students finding that they can not discuss comfortably with their teachers.

Discussion

Nearly one third of students (27%) which is not a small number in total 100 % could not feel comfortable when interact with their teacher. This number will cause a huge problem for speaking lessons because speaking is mainly interactions between teachers and students or students and students. Therefore, if students find it hard to contact with their teacher when facing speaking problems, the effectiveness of English lessons, especially in speaking classrooms will be affected. Added to that, if teachers apply learner-centered teaching, it will be a disadvantage because learner-centered teaching will focus more on learners and teacher's role just to elicit or guiding when necessary.

2.1.4. Problems in teaching methods

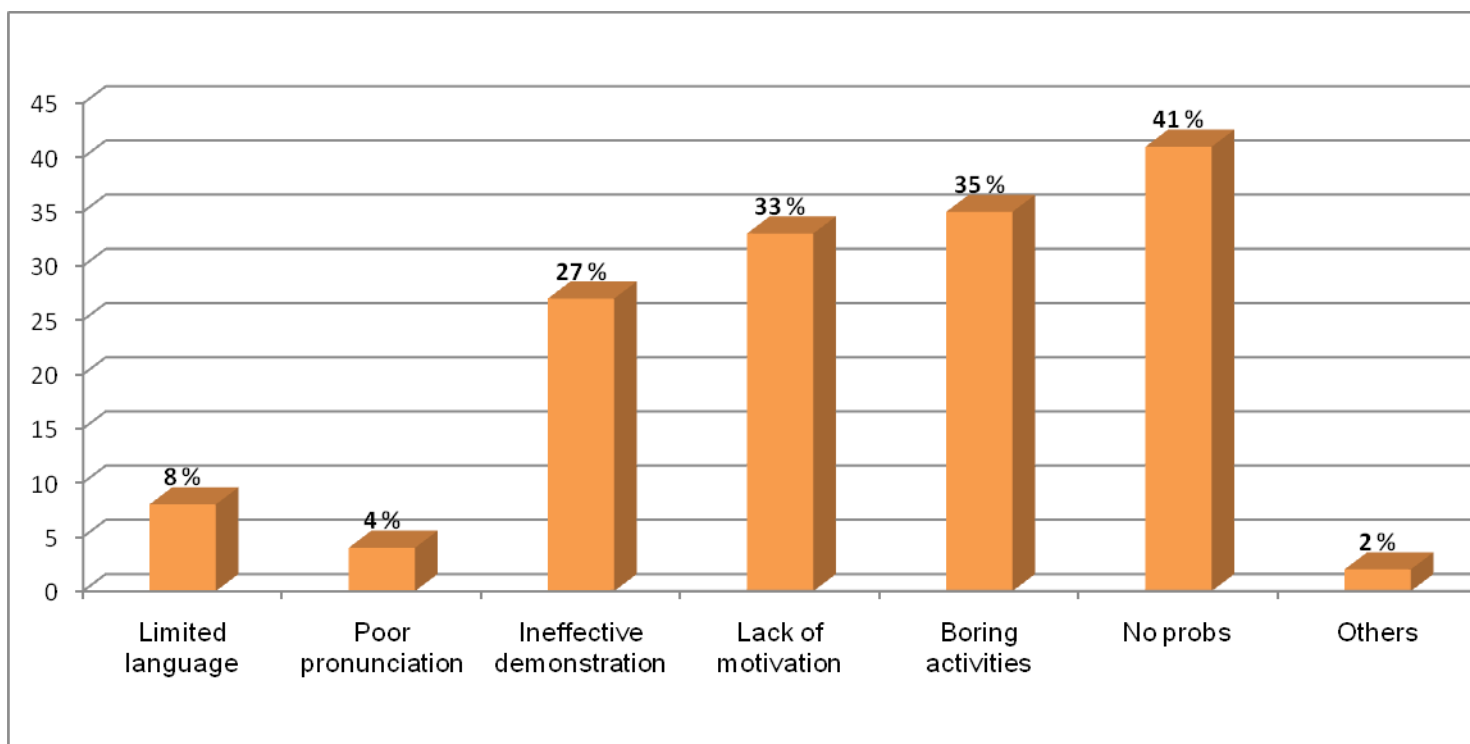


Chart 7: Problems in teaching methods

There are 41 students say that their teacher has no problems in teaching at all but there are still 59 students state that their speaking teacher still has some problems

like boring repetition of activities (35%), lack of motivating tasks (33%), ineffective demonstration (27%).

Discussion

In speaking learning process, teacher is one of the most important factors to make students improve their skills better since they are not only an instructor but also a guide to lead students through every lesson. Therefore, teachers need to enrich their knowledge, skills and even refresh their teaching methods so that they can help their students improve their speaking skill. However, there were still more than a half of students stating that their teacher has some problems like boring repetition of activities, lack of motivating tasks and ineffective demonstration. This matter needs to be discussed and changed completely for the both students' and teachers' sake.

To improve these problems, learner – centered approach is introduced to enhance the effectiveness of each speaking lesson because this teaching method will involve more cooperation from students and interaction among students. Moreover, when teachers apply learner – centered approach in their speaking teaching, they will be creative enough to design interesting and hot topics to maximum their students' cooperation and interaction in speaking lessons, they have to explain clearly enough for their students to comprehend and do the tasks in the right way. If these troubles are not solved, they will be giant problems in applying learner – centered teaching in speaking lessons.

III. By what ways should teachers apply this method to foster the students' speaking learning at Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS-VNU?

a. Students' responses

3.1. Teacher helps the students be aware of their important roles in the success of learning speaking lessons.

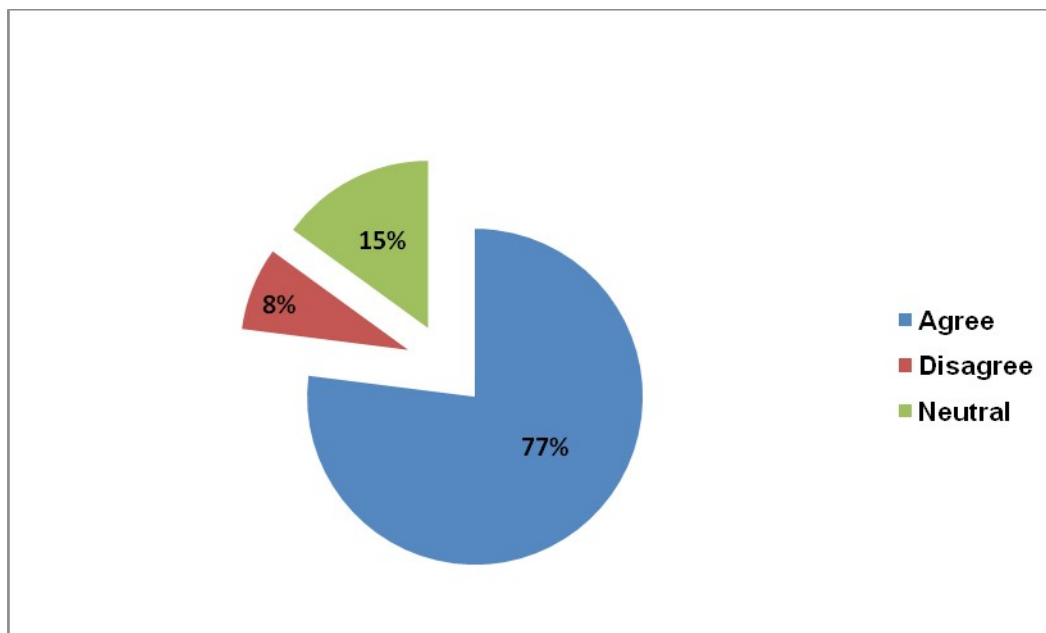


Chart 8: Students' responses to the role of teacher

Most of students (77%) agree that teacher should help the students be aware of their important roles in the success of learning speaking lessons while there are still 8 % of students disagree with this idea and 15% are neutral with it.

Discussion

In the pie chart above, more than 70% of students agreed with the idea that speaking teacher should help them be aware of their important roles in the success of learning speaking lessons. I personally think that this technique is good one for teachers in inspiring motivation with their students so that their students can understand the importance of speaking skill and be more motivated and willing with their speaking learning. Added to that, first – year students seem to be so new and inexperienced in university's learning environment that they need guiding and instructing from their teacher in order to get the main set goals. By helping

students realize their importance roles in the success of learning speaking lessons, students will be more active and cooperated with each other.

3.2. The roles of the teacher in helping students in learning speaking

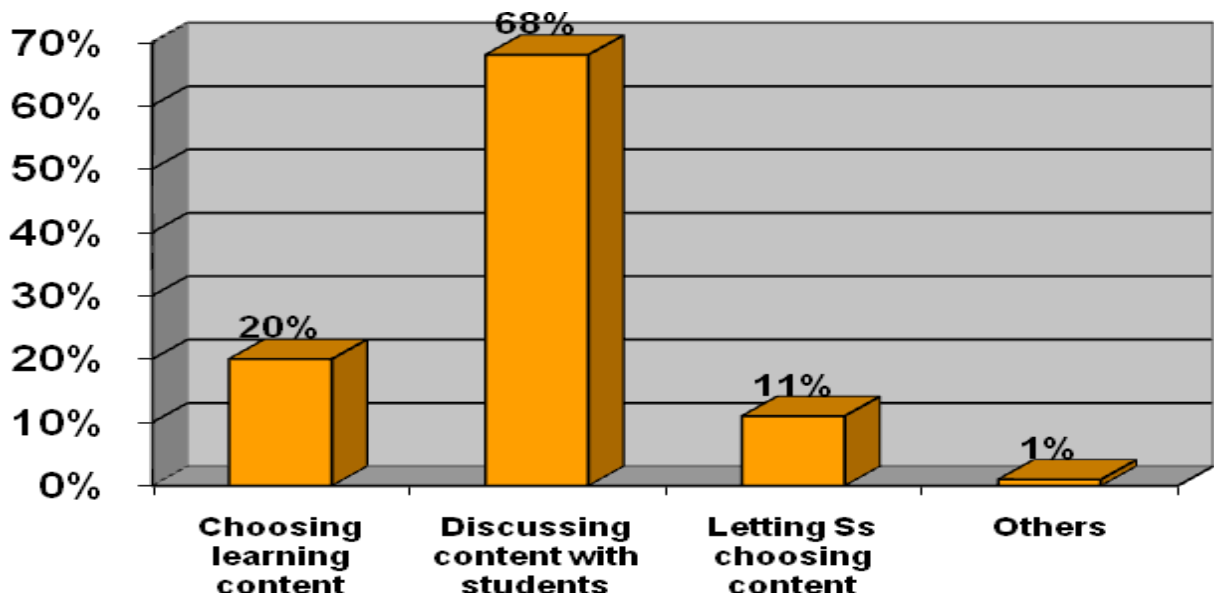


Chart 9: The roles of the teacher in helping students in learning speaking

Looking at the graph, we can see that nearly 70 students (67%) agree that students and teacher should spend time to discuss the content of the lessons. 20 % think that teacher should decide what to learn whereas 11% want to decide what to learn.

Discussion

As can be seen from the chart, actually, first year students need guideline from teachers about what to learn and it is even much more useful if teacher let their students voice what they need to learn rather than personally decide the content of the whole lessons. For example, teachers can involve students in decision – making process by asking for their ideas and opinions about course outline or course assessment. This technique will help foster the interest and excitement among students in each lesson so that they can be likely to enjoy and take part entirely in the lessons which will make the lessons more useful and interesting.

3.3. Teacher spends most of the class time for students and their partners discussing some specific topics.

a. Students' responses

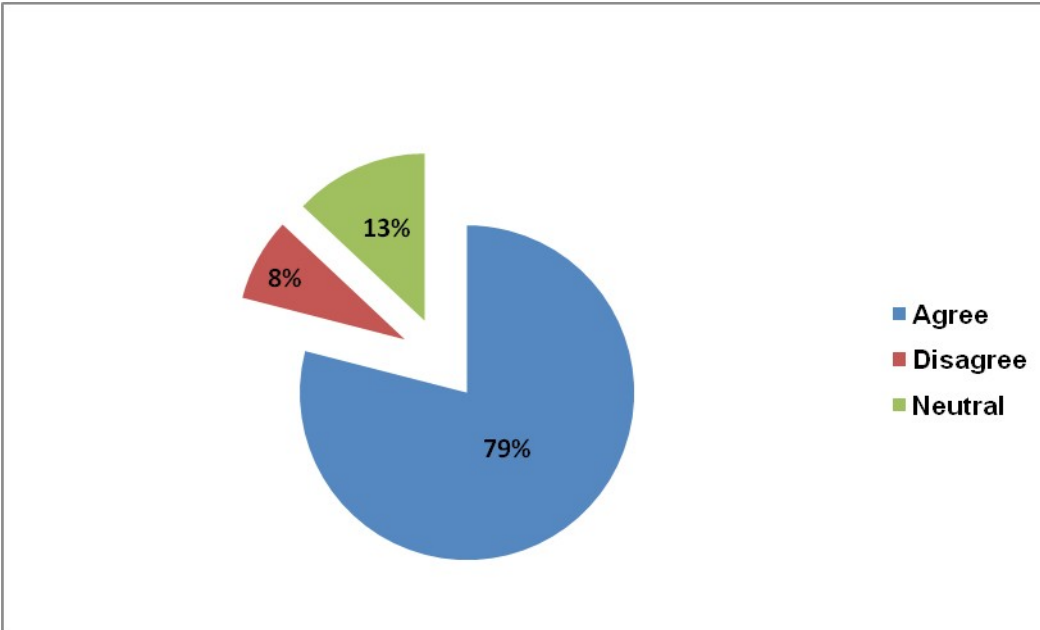


Chart 10: Students' responses towards teacher' roles

In the above pie chart, 79% of the students agree that their speaking teacher should spend more time for them and their partners discussing about some specific topics and 13% remain neutral. However, there are still 8 % stating that they don't agree with this idea.

Discussion

Actually, students need more time in speaking lessons because the more time students have to speak, the more progress they will make in their speaking learning process. In this survey, 79 students agreed that group work and pair work are effective and necessary and they can learn a lot from these activities. May be they are the most useful tips for speaking lessons where teachers change their roles from controllers into facilitators or help so that they can help their students learn better and make more progress. Moreover, learner – centered teaching is the method

which can foster the students' roles and let them have more time to work actively and autonomously.

b. Teachers' responses.

Teachers respond that to apply learner – centered teaching, teachers should “*changing their roles, when they teach speaking lessons*” which mainly give students get more chances to speak and “*teachers have to play different roles in different environment which are best for their students*” and now “*students are more active in learning.*”

Discussion

This idea is very useful for teachers in applying learner – centered teaching because it will help the teachers realize their importance roles in fostering their students' learning result as instructors, guides and facilitators. Teachers should be more flexible and active when changing their roles so that they can maximum the involvement of the students in each lesson.

c. Class observation

During class observation, the researcher observed that the two teachers often spent more time for group and pair discussions; moreover, teachers organized some role – plays to attract and involve students' cooperation and attention. It appeared that students got used to doing these activities and they would be always ready when being asked. As being discussed, group work and pair work are among the most useful tips for speaking lessons where teachers spent more time for students discussing and problem - solving that they can help their students gradually improve their speaking skill.

To conclude, all three questions in research questions are answered in the light of data and ideas taken from teachers, students and class observation.

Chapter V: CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, the introduction, the literature, the methodology and the results with discussions have been reported in great detail. In this chapter, a summary of findings together with pedagogical implications, limitations and contributions of the research and suggestions for further studies will be put forward.

1. Major findings of the research

With exhaustive analysis of the data collected from questionnaires, interviews and classroom observation, the researcher came up with some major findings in answer to the research questions as follows:

Firstly, first-year mainstream students at FELTE, ULIS-VNU are potential but unexploited capacity of speaking learning. They are confident of their ability to learn speaking independently and they acknowledge and appreciate cooperation and interaction in the process of speaking learning. Positive results regarding the act of goal setting, group work, and independence have been reported. However, both teachers and students do not perceive the students as highly independent learners due to major problems concerning motivation and skill. Although intrinsic motivation does exist, it does not last long. Rather, it is triggered if the students are exposed to interesting and communicative contexts as well as materials. The reason is probably due to students' contentment with their current lack of vocabulary and expressions, lack of ideas and inability to realize the benefits and learning opportunity hidden in tasks. Some skills and methods are introduced but not thoroughly enough for the students to "*interest*" and make those skills their own. That's why a new and effective teaching method is introduced to maximize the

students' speaking learning. With introducing learner-centered approach, the author does hope the students will be more active and responsible to their own learning. Added to that, on applying learner-centered teaching, speaking teachers can involve more cooperation from their students and since then, students can spend more time on building up their own skills and knowledge to deal with many speaking matters.

Secondly, learner-centered teaching is perceived by teachers and students as one of the most useful techniques in speaking lessons. Because speaking skill is assumed to be one of the most important skills in learning's process and it is advantageous for teachers if their students can realize and wish to improve their speaking skill. Moreover, learner-centered teaching can help teachers solve existing problems of students in speaking lessons when the teachers let students have more chance to deal with their own problems independently.

Finally, a modern approach is more important and necessary in fostering the effectiveness of speaking lessons. The techniques utilized by teachers in order to foster learner independence in speaking learning, as perceived by the students, cover a wide range of activities with less to more authority given to the students. However, lack of motivating activities and repetitive speaking activities are notified by the students as one of the most serious issues in teaching methods.

2. Pedagogical implications

It is necessary to acknowledge the contribution of first-year mainstream students and their teachers in this part. As well as raising their voices about the current issues regarding the research topic, they suggested solutions to the problems basing on their own experiences. This is a significant step towards a better awareness and achievement in promoting learner-centered teaching in speaking learning.

However, there still existed a number of obstacles which were yet to be discussed. These issues, therefore, open to solutions with further research onto the topic.

The research findings have raised many issues which are closely related to success in promoting learner autonomy and independence in learning speaking. Of those issues, it is clear that raising motivation and enriching vocabulary and ideas in learning for the students emerges as the key matter. In addition, pair work and group work seem to approve their effectiveness and necessity in speaking lessons.

3. Limitations

This research provided in attempt to get both teachers and students to understand clearly about learner-centered approach and to suggest some useful techniques for teachers so that they can make full use of this method. However, it is unavoidable that there are some limitations of the research due to the limited scope, the time constraint and other objective factors.

Firstly, not all first-year mainstream students participated in the study and this research only focused on a small number of participants who are the first-year mainstream students of FELTE, ULIS-VNU so it might not capture all problems existing in English speaking lessons. Added to that, the limited number of teachers involved in the study is another limitation. Therefore, it must be admitted that some interesting techniques utilized by the teachers may be overlooked.

Secondly, learner-centered approach is a new method in Vietnam' classrooms and many teachers are afraid to apply it so it's hard for the researcher to find out the existing problems just by observing the speaking lessons.

Another limitation is that the researcher is afraid that the presence might have an inhibiting influence on the existing patterns and problems of classroom interaction.

Since the researcher was fully aware of these limitations, most of the findings have been considered initial findings, offering the opportunities for further research in the future to further validate the findings.

4. Suggestions for further studies

As aforementioned, the limitation of this research lies in the limited number of participants. Therefore, further studies could employ a larger number of participants to increase the validity of the data and conclusion. In addition, since the application of learner-centered teaching remains rather awkward in Vietnam educational context, other researchers may wish to explore the situation in other universities with different proficiency, majors or specializations of students. Another direction is to find out about the development of learner-centered teaching, not in speaking learning only, but in other areas such as reading, listening, or writing.

Moreover, since the paper placed its focus on students' perception of the development of their independence in speaking learning, other researchers may wish to measure some collected data methods which may require experimental studies. Expectedly, the results of such studies would be extremely helpful in providing a complete picture about current situation of applying learner-centered teaching in Vietnam educational setting.

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APPENDICE

APPENDIX 1

1. Students' traditional roles

- Take lecture notes
- Listen in Class
- Read the textbook
- Read other assigned reading
- Take tests and quizzes
- Take part in recitation
- Do homework
- Take part in whole class Discussion
- Write papers on assigned topics
- Memorize
- Organize information

2. Students' new roles and responsibilities in learner – centered classroom

<i>Learner Centered Student Roles</i>	<i>Learner-Centered Student Responsibilities</i>
Self-teach Collaborate with others Work in teams/groups Take part in discovery learning Teach others Evaluate own learning Evaluate others' learning Perform/present learning publicly Learn new “how to learn skills and strategies” Solve authentic problems Engage in reflection Demonstrate use of teacher	Make choices about own learning Take more control of own learning Give input to the evaluation/assessment methods Give input to course rules and guidelines Give formative feedback on learning

feedback to improve performance Take learning risks Practice more Take class notes Listen in Class Read the textbook Write papers Take tests and quizzes Take part in recitation Do homework	Spend more time outside of class learning Working with people not in your class
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(According to Professor Terry Doyle retrieved from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/12695241/The-Changing-Role-of-Students-in-a-LearnerCenteredv>)

APPENDIX 2
Student Survey Questionnaire

- A. Teacher should choose what to learn, how to learn and when to learn
- B. Teacher and students should discuss about what to learn, how to learn and when to learn
- C. Teacher should let students decide what to learn, how to learn and when to learn
- D. Others (please specify).....

9. When do you often practice speaking?

- A. Whenever you have time and chance
- B. When your teacher asks you to do
- C. Before exams
- D. Sometimes when you like to
- E. When you meet an interesting topic
- F. Seldom
- G. Others (please specify).....

10. In your opinion, what should be learnt about speaking first?

- A. Pronunciation and spelling
- B. Generating ideas
- C: Words and phrases used in the speaking
- D. Expressions
- E. Others (please specify).....

11. What are your usual sources of speaking learning?

(You can choose more than one answer)

- A. Television
- B. Internet
- C. Course materials
- D. Newspapers and magazines
- E. Novel
- F. Comic books.
- G. Others (please specify).....

12. In what way you prefer to learn speaking?

(You can choose more than one answer)

- A. Listen to teacher's lectures
- B. Learn by yourself
- C. Discuss with your classmates
- D. Listen to native speakers' lectures
- E. Talk with foreigners
- F. Others (please specify).....

13. What does your teacher often do at class to help you learn at speaking lessons?

(You can choose more than one answer)

- A. Read the topic or situation and explain to students everything.
- B. Give some clues or guidelines to help students understand the topic or situation.
- C. Organize the group work and pair work.
- D. Let students deal with the topic or situation by themselves.
- E. Help students with their common problems like pronunciation, ideas, word choice
- F. Others (please specify).....

14. What problems do you often have when you learn speaking lessons?

(You can choose more than one answer)

- A. Lack of vocabulary and expressions
- B. Lack of confidence when speaking
- C. You teacher doesn't help you much when you speak
- D. You don't know how to find the ideas for your speaking tasks
- E. You can't work in group or pair.
- F. No problems
- G. Others (please specify).....

15. What are the main problems in your teacher's speaking teaching?

(You can choose more than one answer)

- A. Limited vocabulary, word choice and expressions.
- B. Poor pronunciation
- C. Ineffective demonstration
- D. Lack of motivating tasks
- E. Boring repetition of activities
- F. No problems at all
- G. Others (please specify).....

Part 3: Scale: Tick in the box

Please give your opinion by ticking in the box that correct to your degree of agreement with the statement listed on the left.



Statements	5	4	3	2	1
<i>16. Speaking is the most important skills in language learning?</i>					
<i>17. You enjoy the speaking periods very much.</i>					
<i>18. You set your own goals for each speaking period.</i>					
<i>19. You can work independently with any matters in speaking lessons</i>					
<i>20. You feel comfortable to contact with your teacher if you have problems in speaking lessons</i>					
<i>21. You are willing to do more than what is required by your teacher in speaking learning</i>					
<i>22. You are flexible to adapt yourself to new way of learning speaking.</i>					
<i>23. Your teacher provides you with opportunities to reflect on your learning process</i>					
<i>24. Your teacher help you be aware of your important roles in the success of learning speaking lessons.</i>					
<i>25. Your teacher instructs you how to use learning resources to learn speaking</i>					
<i>26. Your teacher spends mainly time for you and partners discussing about a specific topic.</i>					
<i>27. Your textbook/course book covers all aspects you want to learn about speaking.</i>					
<i>28. Your learning environment encourages a lot of interactions and group works</i>					

APPENDIX 3

Questions for teacher interview

1. What do you think are the main goals of your students' learning speaking?
(eg: communication, general development of English, exams and test, ect)

2. What are the difficult items of speaking which concern students most (pronunciation, vocabulary and expressions, fluency or accuracy, ect)
3. Should students learn by themselves much to solve these problems?
4. Do you often provide your students with opportunities to reflect on their learning process?
5. Do you think your first year students can learn speaking lessons autonomously or independently without much help from teachers?
6. What are changes in teachers' roles in learner-centered classrooms?
7. Do you try to find something more interesting and attractive to students based one course book?
8. Do you think that learner-centered approach is a good method in teaching language in general and teaching speaking in particular?

APPENDIX 4: **Interviews' transcript**

1. What do you think are the main goals of your students' learning speaking?
(eg: communication, general development of English, exams and test, ect)
Teacher 1: I think most of students want to learn English to pass exams and tests and get their certificate in university. And many of them want to learn English to improve their skills and be able to communicate in English.
Teacher 2: I think most of students need English for their future career but first of all they often try to learn English to pass exams and tests and get their degree in university. Then they will try to make full use of speaking lessons for their general development of English and communication.

2. What are the difficult items of speaking which concern students most (pronunciation, vocabulary and expressions, fluency or accuracy, ect)

Teacher 1: I think pronunciation is a huge problem although I spend a lot of time correcting my students' errors and teaching them how to pronounce individual sound correctly. Normally, when I teach them they can pronounce sounds and words perfectly but when they speaking themselves then they forget everything and they use old pronunciations that they have been using for years so I think that is the matter of habit and that requires students to be more conscious about sound that they are making

Teacher 2: Poor pronunciation and using Vietnamese are 2 biggest problems. Added to that, some students seem unconfident about their speaking ability.

3. Should students learn by themselves much to solve these problems maybe at home or outside classroom?

Teacher 1: Yes, I always raise their awareness of pronouncing correctly the words or sound and then to practice to make them perfect.

Teacher 2: Totally, the time at school is not much so it's very necessary and important to students to self – practice.

4. Do you often provide your students with opportunities to reflect on their learning process?

Two teachers: That's what I often do in my lessons.

5. Do you think your first year students can learn speaking lessons autonomously or independently without much help from teachers?

Teacher 1: I don't think so, the basic rule or principle of teaching is students at A level and then you help them to reach A + level. The teachers should provide input before output.

Teacher 2: I think it's hard to do so because first year students lack a lot of thing such as vocabulary and ideas. However, sometimes letting students solve the speaking matter independently will help them feel more interested and excited in learning process.

6. What are changes in teachers' roles in learner-centered classrooms?

Teacher 1: That is the change in the performance in teaching method. Teachers will let students have more chances to access their progress. Teachers have to play different roles in different environment which are best for their students.

Teacher 2: I think that students nowadays are more active in their learning so teachers should give them more time to practice and discuss. The roles of teachers must foster students' independence in learning.

7. What are your solutions to the problems of using Vietnamese and lacking ideas.

Generalizing two teachers' ideas:

- Rule: No Vietnamese in class and I tell them that if any students can't express in English, they can ask for help from me.
- Input: Before providing students tasks to do, teachers should give them some language items needed.

8. Do you try to find something more interesting and attractive to students based on course book?

Two teachers said:

Yes, in speaking course, we have some big themes which give them chances to deal with different topics. Therefore, I always try to help students feel more motivated in learning by narrowing down the theme into smaller and more interesting topics. And students nowadays are more active in learning.

9. Do you think that learner-centered approach is a good method in teaching language in general and teaching speaking in particular?

Teacher 1: Yes, I think this method would be good if the teacher help students realize their roles in learning process and help them to feel more interesting in their speaking lessons.

Teacher 2: Yes, it will be good if students are ready to take more responsibilities and roles in the class.

APPENDIX 5:
Class Observation Scheme

Items	Details	Comment
1. Classroom atmosphere		
2. Teaching method (s) and design		
3. Blackboard design and/or teacher's presentation		
4. Learning interest and students' participation.		
5. Classroom interaction		
6. Teacher – students cooperation		
7. Activities participation		
8. Process assessment		
9. Task accomplishment		
Other comments		

