



STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS OF FIRST-YEAR ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Uong Thu Hang*, Vu Van Tuan

Hanoi Law University, Vietnam

Email address: thuhanguong.mc@gmail.com

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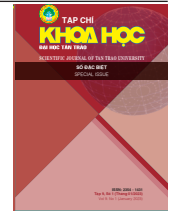
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Abstract:

English speaking skills are considered the most important necessity to master because of the primary mode of international communication. The majority of learners find it challenging to be fluent in these skills due to ineffective strategies. This study investigated the English-speaking strategies employed by first-year English major students at Hanoi Law University in the 2nd term of the academic year 2021-2022. The study used a descriptive quantitative method with a researcher-made questionnaire for 68 respondents via the active Google link. The results revealed that students did not identify effective strategies for improving their speaking skills. They should be equipped with advanced strategies involving how to improve their speaking skills effectively. This study would help school administrators adjust their program objectives and teaching outcomes to amend their existing programs, teachers change their pedagogical practices, and suggest to students some efficient English-speaking strategies.



CHIẾN LƯỢC PHÁT TRIỂN KỸ NĂNG NÓI TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ NHẤT CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH TẠI MỘT CƠ SỞ GIÁO DỤC ĐẠI HỌC

Uông Thu Hằng*, Vũ Văn Tuấn

Đại học Luật Hà Nội, Việt Nam

Địa chỉ email: thuhanguong.mc@gmail.com

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Thông tin bài viết	Tóm tắt
<p>Ngày nhận bài: 25/9/2022</p> <p>Ngày sửa bài: 22/10/2022</p> <p>Ngày duyệt đăng: 30/12/2022</p>	<p>Kỹ năng nói tiếng Anh được coi là kỹ năng cần thiết quan trọng nhất để sử dụng thành thạo vì kỹ năng nói được sử dụng làm phương thức giao tiếp quốc tế chính. Đa số người học thấy khó thành thạo các kỹ năng này do các chiến lược học dường như không hiệu quả. Nghiên cứu này đã khảo sát các chiến lược nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên năm thứ nhất chuyên ngành tiếng Anh tại Đại học Luật Hà Nội trong kỳ 2 của năm học 2021-2022. Nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp định lượng mô tả với bảng câu hỏi do nhà nghiên cứu thực hiện cho 68 người trả lời thông qua bảng trả lời trực tuyến trong ứng dụng Google. Kết quả cho thấy rằng sinh viên đã không xác định được các chiến lược hiệu quả để cải thiện kỹ năng nói của họ. Họ nên được trang bị các chiến lược nâng cao liên quan đến cách cải thiện kỹ năng nói của họ một cách hiệu quả. Nghiên cứu này sẽ giúp các nhà quản lý trường học điều chỉnh mục tiêu chương trình và kết quả giảng dạy của họ để sửa đổi các chương trình hiện có của họ, giáo viên thay đổi thực hành sư phạm của họ, gợi ý cho sinh viên một số chiến lược nói tiếng Anh hiệu quả.</p>
<p>Từ khóa:</p> <p><i>chiến lược, sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh; cơ sở giáo dục đại học; thực tiễn sư phạm; phương thức chính giao tiếp quốc tế</i></p>	

Introduction

Globalization demands people to exchange with one another comprehensively without limitation of different geologies, religions, races, or languages. To achieve mutual understanding in communication, there is a need to use a common language for exchanging information. Because of the variety of languages human beings use for communication, a need to use one language as an international means of communication has emerged for ages [1]. Take lingua franca for example, this language is used as a means of common communication between populations speaking vernaculars that are not mutually intelligible. However, lingua franca does not come to communicators' expectations so the United Nations (UNs) recognizes the current official and 6 working languages, particularly Arabic, Chinese, English, French,

Russian, and Spanish. In practice, the most popular number of people using English all over the world keeps increasing. According to Szmigiera [2], there were around 1.35 billion people worldwide who spoke English either natively or as a second language in 2021. English is learned as a prerequisite subject in school from primary to tertiary level [3]. Subjectively, English is commonly referred to as a global language, international language, or English. In the circumstances of Vietnam, English is used as a foreign language, not as a second language [4].

In reality, the speaking English competence of the first-year major HLU students remains a source of concern. Many of the first-year major HLU students are still unable to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings clearly and confidently. They undoubtedly face obstacles that prevent them from being competent

communicators, such as a lack of vocabulary, poor or unusual pronunciation, and poor grammar [5]. The issue is thought to be more than just the methods used. Because the language learner is the most important factor in language learning, it is reasonable to assume that some issues are with the students themselves. Learners frequently blame teachers, circumstances, and teaching materials for their lack of success in becoming competent at speaking, when the most important reason for their lack of success may be found within themselves. The language learning strategies used by the learners themselves are one of the aspects involved in the process of developing speaking skills. This is how students learn on their own. According to Dang [6], being strongly considered part of the Eastern culture, the popular philosophy of educational practices in Vietnam is more associated with absorbing and memorizing than experimenting and producing knowledge. Therefore, the practice of speaking skills is not really effective if students just learn from school without usual practice, so they really need to use more strategies to improve their English-speaking skills by themselves. Students learning strategies are actions they take to improve their learning [7]. Seeking out conversation partners, asking for corrections, and practicing out loud are some of the learning strategies used by students to improve their speaking abilities. Thus, learning strategies are one of the most important factors in determining how and how well learners learn a foreign language. It was found that, in order to enhance their progress in developing speaking skills, many students used a variety of different strategies, and each student at a different level used different language learning strategies that they thought were beneficial to them. The studies written by Gu and Johnson (1996) (cited in [8]) and O'Malley and Chamot [9] also have proved that successful learners use a greater variety of strategies and use them in ways that help the student complete language tasks more successfully. Hence, the researcher is interested in conducting this research to know what strategies are used by first-year major HLU students to develop their speaking skills through the Covid-19 pandemic. The research aims to seek the answers to the following questions as follows:

1. What strategies are used by first-year English major students during the Covid-19 pandemic to develop their speaking skills?

2. What major strategies do the participants encounter?

Method

Research Design

In this study, the author used descriptive quantitative research in the form of a researcher-made questionnaire to examine the strategies of first-year major HLU students. The questionnaire was fine-tuned well by the close cooperation with the supervisor for the content validation. After preparing the research instrument, the questionnaire was floated to first-year major HLU students using the active Google form due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. After two weeks, 68 participants returned their feedback, the researcher carried out the data screening, and 68 samples were selected for data analysis.

Research Instruments

The study used the researcher exploited the researcher-made questionnaire including two parts, specifically part I consisted of 5 questions about the demographic information of the respondents, and part II consisted of 22 closed questions and one open question, these questions focused on 3 kinds of strategies that students used for developing speaking skills. In particular, strategies to practice speaking skills had 5 questions. Strategies to engage in conversation involved 5 questions. Speaking skills for not finding a word or expression involved 7 questions. The 22 questions asked the respondents to choose 4 options after each question. The researcher collaborated with the supervisor to construct 40 raw questions, based on the criteria of attitudinal questions [10]. Then, the questionnaire underwent a dry run with 30 volunteered students for the liability of the content of the questionnaire objectives. The results of the pilot study were shortlisted to the acceptable internal consistency of Cronbach's alpha ($0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$). The final questionnaire included 22 closed questions.

Participants

This study aimed at the first-year students at Hanoi Law University (HLU) with course 46 including 127 first-year legal English major students total, who finished basic English-speaking course 1 during the second term of the academic year 2021-2022. The researcher used Slovin's formula to determine the number of participants serving as subjects of the study.

Although the expected number was 96 out of 127 first-year legal English major students, 68 of them willingly participated in the survey by returning their responses via the active Google form.

Procedures of data collection

After preparing a proper questionnaire, the researcher forwarded a letter of request asking permission from the dean of legal English faculty to conduct the study. When obtaining the approval, the researcher sent the questionnaire to the respective respondents by email addresses provided by counseling teachers of course 46. The respondents were requested to return the questionnaire 10 days after the date of sending emails. The letter from the researcher attached to the email explained the objectives and relevance of the study, assured the respondents of anonymity, and gave them the option of not participating in the study if they wished. A contact number was also provided in case a respondent had any questions. In the case

of a low response rate (less than 50 percent), another email was sent to the respondents as a gentle reminder. After the due date and getting the expected samples, the researcher started to implement the data screening process. Following this, there were total 68 relevant responses were selected for the analysis of data using IBM SPSS v.25 for data treatment.

Data collection and analysis

The frequency statistics were used to address the demographic information in Part 1. Descriptive statistics were employed to deal with 22 closed questions with the Likert interval scales, such as very low (1.0–1.75), low (1.76–2.5), high (2.51–3.25), and very high (3.26–4.0). For question 23, the information was treated with frequency statistics, too. In addition, an independent sample T-test was also employed to compare the difference among gender in regard to the strategies for developing English speaking skills.

Results and Discussion

Strategies 1. Strategies to practice speaking

Table 1. Strategies applied by K46 Legal English majors at HLU to practice speaking skills through the Covid-19 pandemic

	N		This strategy doesn't fit for me	I have never used this strategy, but am interested in it	I have tried this strategy and would use it again	I use this strategy and like it
1. Strategies to practice speaking skills						
1. Practice saying new expressions to myself.	68	Frequency	14	36	18	
		Percent	20.6	52.9	26.5	
		Std. Deviation	.689			
2. Practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build my confidence level in using them.	68	Frequency	12	44	12	
		Percent	17.6	64.7	17.6	
		Std. Deviation	.599			
3. Think about how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it that way	68	Frequency	8	46	14	
		Percent	11.8	67.6	20.6	
		Std. Deviation	.566			
4. Follow and duet English challenges with some Tik Tok channels	68	Frequency	14	39	8	7
		Percent	20.6	57.4	11.8	10.3
		Std. Deviation	.856			
5. Try to write a paragraph or an essay about some topics, and then practice speaking it by myself or in front of the mirror	68	Frequency	14	54		
		Percent	20.6	79.4		
		Std. Deviation	.407			

For the strategy to practice speaking skills through the Covid-19 pandemic, the author has given a total of 5 questions related to specific strategies. Question number 1 is also the first strategy, which is the strategy “Practice saying new expressions to myself.”, we find that according to the survey data statistics, the majority of students (52.9%) majoring in English language first-year HLU knew, interested but never applied. In addition, only 26.5% of the survey participants said that they had used this strategy and would continue to use it, and 20.6% of the respondents thought that this strategy was not suitable for them. No one even chose the answer “I use this strategy and like it”. This shows that the number of first-year major students at HLU who know this strategy was quite large, proving that this was a popular and effective strategy for many people. However, in reality, HLU English language first-year students did not often apply or love it to develop speaking skills during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Next, in response to question number 2, which is also related to the strategy of practicing speaking skills, which is the strategy “Practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build my confidence level in,” I discovered that, according to the data statistics survey, the majority of students (64.7%) majoring in English first-year HLU knew, interested, but never apply. The percentage of students who had used and would continue to use this strategy, as well as the percentage of students who believed it was not appropriate for them, is 17.6%. No one selected the response “I use this strategy and love it.” This demonstrates that a large number of HLU first-year majors are familiar with this strategy, showing that it is a popular and effective strategy for many people. However, first-year HLU English students still did not frequently use or enjoy it to develop speaking skills during the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the third strategy: “Think about how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it that way”, the results are similar to the above strategy. The majority of students participating in the survey (64.7%) had never used this strategy even though they knew and were interested in it. The remaining 20.6% of survey respondents had been using the strategy and would continue to accompany this strategy to develop English speaking skills during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, still up to 11.8% of the first-year English majors at HLU felt this strategy was not suitable for

them. This data proves that the percentage of HLU first-year English language students who know this strategy is quite large, but they do not bother to apply it to develop their English-speaking skills. We know, the technology era is growing, especially during this Covid-19 pandemic, and social platforms are being applied more widely than ever. Even learning and teaching at schools have to switch to online methods. And now, the social network Tik Tok is emerging as a place to entertain and provide a lot of different information, including sharing and teaching. That’s why this survey mentioned strategy 4: “Follow and duet English challenges with some Tik Tok channels”. The results obtained with this strategy have changed compared to the previous strategies. Most of the students participating in the survey knew and were interested in this strategy but had never applied it (accounting for 57.4%), of which 20% thought this was an inappropriate strategy, and 11.8% had applied and would continue to apply this strategy to develop English speaking skills. We had 10.3% of the students who responded that they applied and enjoyed the duet English challenges with some Tik Tok channels strategy.

Obviously, although this Tik Tok platform is growing stronger and more widely, there are many channels on Tik Tok that offer great foreign language challenges and have many levels for viewers to do, but in reality. The number of first-year HLU majors who actually applied or loved it was very small, even though they knew this popular strategy. The final strategy of part 1: Strategies to practice speaking skills are proposed: “Try to write a paragraph or an essay about some topics, and then practice speaking it by myself or in front of the mirror”. Although this was a very popular strategy and helped students practice self-confidence while studying, we can see that the vast majority of our first-year HLU majors did not apply, use or like the strategy. This percentage accounts for 79.4% of survey participants who are interested but never apply it, the remaining 20.6% did not find this strategy suitable.

Strategies 2. Strategies to engage in conversation

Covid-19 is a serious pandemic all over the world. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the closure of schools and the use of social networking platforms for learning and teaching are growing. Therefore, more and more students, students, and teachers are interested

in online courses or classes, learning and teaching their English speaking skills. Table 2 below shows English. And that’s also why the survey included two strategies to engage in conversation of K46 major students related to social media platforms to develop speaking skill through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 2. Strategies to engage in conversation of K46 major students related to social media platforms to develop speaking skill through Covid-19 pandemic

	N		This strategy doesn't fit for me	I have never used this strategy but am interested in it	I have tried this strategy and would use it again	I use this strategy and like it
2. Strategies to engage in conversation						
6. Seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers by joining some Speaking English group on Facebook or Instagram	68	Frequency	21	41	6	
		Percent	30.9	60.3	8.8	
		Std. Deviation	.595			
7. Seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers by buying some online speaking courses	68	Frequency	52	12	4	
		Percent	76.5	17.6	5.9	
		Std. Deviation	.575			

First, strategy 6: “Seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers by joining some Speaking English group on Facebook or Instagram” has obtained the following results: 60.3% of students surveyed said that this strategy was interesting but they had never applied it, 30.9% of the students thought that this strategy was not suitable, and there was only 8.8% of the students who participated in the survey had used it and would continue to apply this strategy to develop English

speaking skills during this Covid-19 pandemic. Next, with digital strategies “7. Seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers by buying some online speaking courses”, most of student agreed that this strategy was not suitable for them (76.5%). There was only 5.9% of respondents choosing “I have tried this strategy and would use it again”, and nobody found that this strategy was interesting enough for them to like and use it again.

Table 3. Other strategies to engage in conversation of K46 major students related to develop speaking skill through the Covid-19 pandemic

	N		This strategy doesn't fit for me	I have never used this strategy but am interested in it	I have tried this strategy and would use it again	I use this strategy and like it
2. Strategies to engage in conversation						
8. Initiate conversations in the target language as often as possible	68	Frequency	51	13	4	
		Percent	75.0	19.1	5.9	
		Std. Deviation	.580			
9. Direct the conversation to familiar topics	68	Frequency	19	40	9	
		Percent	27.9	58.8	13.2	
		Std. Deviation	.629			

	N		This strategy doesn't fit for me	I have never used this strategy but am interested in it	I have tried this strategy and would use it again	I use this strategy and like it
10. Plan out in advance what I want to say	68	Frequency	14	48	6	
		Percent	20.6	70.6	8.8	
		Std. Deviation	.533			
11. Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation	68	Frequency	13	48	3	4
		Percent	19.1	70.6	4.4	5.9
		Std. Deviation	.690			
12. Anticipate what will be said based on what has been said so far	68	Frequency	10	47	11	
		Percent	14.7	69.1	16.2	
		Std. Deviation	.560			
13. Try topics even when they aren't familiar to me	68	Frequency	8	41	11	8
		Percent	11.8	60.3	16.2	11.8
		Std. Deviation	.826			
14. Encourage others to correct errors in my speaking	68	Frequency	42	17	9	
		Percent	61.8	25.0	13.2	
		Std. Deviation	.723			

According to the result from Table 3 above, statement “8. Initiate conversations in the target language as often as possible”, and “14. Encourage others to correct errors in my speaking” got quite similar results, with most of the students participating in the survey responded that this strategy was not suitable (both accounting for more than 60%), and no students actually applied those strategies and love them all with the number strategies “10. Plan out in advance what I want to say”, “11. Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation” and “12. Anticipate what will be said based on what has been said so far” also had similar results. The vast majority of students participating in the survey said that these strategies they knew and felt interested in but had never applied them to develop English speaking skills

during the Covid-19 pandemic (accounting for 69.1% of students for strategy number 12, and accounted for 70.6% for both strategy number 10 and number 11). Especially for statement number “13. Try topics even when they aren't familiar to me”, the number of first-year English majors HLU thought it was a strategy that did not suit to them was equal to the number of people survey respondents thought that it was a very interesting strategy and they used it (both 11.8%). However, the majority of K46 major students still thought that they were interested in this strategy but had never used it (60.3%), and only 16.2% of survey respondents had applied the strategy and would continue to use that strategy.

Table 4. The last strategy of the first-year major students applied to engage in conversation to develop their speaking skill through the Covid-19 pandemic

	N		This strategy doesn't fit for me	I have never used this strategy but am interested in it	I have tried this strategy and would use it again	I use this strategy and like it
2. Strategies to engage in conversation						
15. Try to figure out and model native speakers' language patterns when requesting, apologizing, or complaining	68	Frequency	11	57		
		Percent	16.2	83.8		
		Std. Deviation	.371			

In particular, with the final strategy to engage in conversation to improve speaking skills through the Covid-19 pandemic of the first-year major students, which was the strategy “15. Try to figure out and model native speakers’ language patterns when requesting, apologizing, or complaining”, there were no survey participants had applied the strategy or felt like it, the majority (63.8%) just knew and felt interested in the strategy but never applied, and 16.2% thought that the strategy was not suitable for them. That result showed that, this strategy was not interesting or effective enough for the first-year major students to apply.

Strategy 3. Strategies for when I can’t think of a word or expression

In the process of developing and practicing English speaking skills, we can not avoid encountering difficult

words or situations where we cannot think of words or ways to express ideas. Therefore, having strategies to overcome this situation is extremely necessary to help students or learners develop their own English speaking skills and cope with these difficult cases. That is the reason why the researcher of this thesis had studied strategy number 3 called, “Strategies for when I can’t think of a word or expression”. This strategy section contains 7 specific strategies (numbered 16 to 22). The survey responses to these strategies clearly showed a division between the strategies chosen by the students favorites and heavily using, and the rest were unpopular strategies for them. First, the table 9 below shows the strategies that the first-year major students at HLU were disliked and not applied the most.

Table 5. The strategies of the first-year major students for when they can’t think of a word or expression which were disliked and not applied the most

	N		This strategy doesn't fit for me	I have never used this strategy but am interested in it	I have tried this strategy and would use it again	I use this strategy and like it
Strategies for when I can’t think of a word or expression						
16. Ask for help from my conversation partner	68	Frequency	41	20	7	
		Percent	60.3	29.4	10.3	
		Std. Deviation	.680			
18. Use words from my own language, but say them in a way that sounds like words in the target language	68	Frequency	49	12	7	
		Percent	72.1	17.6	10.3	
		Std. Deviation	.670			

In this section, we had 2 strategies with quite similar results, namely “16. Ask for help from my conversation partner” and “18. Use words from my language, but say them in a way that sounds like words in the target language”. These two strategies responded that the majority of students participating in the survey felt these were not suitable for them with the percentage of times for strategies 16 and 18 being 60.3% and 72.1%, then 29.4% and 17.6% for the answer “I have never used this strategy but am interested in it”, the remaining numbers are equal and 10.3% for the answer “I have tried this strategy and would do it again”. That data proved that the above strategies were not

suitable for the vast majority of freshmen majoring in HLU. They knew the strategies but did not apply them to develop their English-speaking skills during this Covid-19 pandemic. As we know, using synonyms or other similar expressions is a very effective strategy to practice and develop speaking skills. This strategy not only helps us to improvise flexibly in communication situations but also helps us expand our vocabulary and enrich our expressions when speaking English. So how has this strategy been applied by the first-year major students at HLU to improve their speaking skills during the Covid-19 pandemic? Table 6 below will show the survey results:

Table 6. The strategies of the first-year major students at HLU for when they cannot think of a word or expression by using synonym and different ways to express idea

	N		This strategy doesn't fit for me	I have never used this strategy but am interested in it	I have tried this strategy and would use it again	I use this strategy and like it
Strategies for when I can't think of a word or expression						
17. Look for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym	68	Frequency	9	50	9	
		Percent	13.2	73.5	13.2	
		Std. Deviation	.518			

Regarding the students' responses to employing "Look for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym" strategies in developing speaking English skills during the Covid-19 pandemic were reported generally not so positive. For this strategy, the majority of respondents agreed that this strategy was interesting

to them but they had never applied it in real (accounting for 73.5%), and those who chose that it was not the right strategy for them or they had applied the strategy and would continue in the future only accounting for an equal percentage of 13.2%, even though no one loved this.

Table 7. The strategies of the first-year major students at HLU for when they cannot think of a word or expression by making up words or guess if they do not know the right ones to use.

	N		This strategy doesn't fit for me	I have never used this strategy but am interested in it	I have tried this strategy and would use it again	I use this strategy and like it
Strategies for when I can't think of a word or expression						
19. Make up new words or guess if I don't know the right ones to use	68	Frequency	7	42	19	
		Percent	10.3	61.8	27.9	
		Std. Deviation	.597			

With the next strategy, "19. Make up new words or guess if I don't know the right ones to use", the survey result was still quite similar to the above strategies. Up to 61.8% of the first-year major students at HLU participating in the survey were interested in this strategy but had never applied it to develop their skills, besides 10.3% of the respondents agreed that they were not suitable with this strategy, and 27.9% of survey respondents had applied and would continue to use this strategy to develop speaking English skills during the Covid-19 pandemic. This shows that the reaction of students when they did not know the correct words

to reach their opinions was still quite "timid" and in some ways, it was "careful". Be careful here, that is, they did not make up words or guess to try to express themselves, but would just find other ways or use other strategies to protect English words that could express exactly what they mean. As for the "timidity" here, it was because the first-year major students at HLU were still quite passive when they knew but did not apply this strategy to improve their speaking skills during the Covid-19 pandemic, maybe because they are afraid of making mistakes when making up new words.

Table 8. The strategies of the first-year major students for when they can't think of a word or expression which were liked and applied the most

	N		This strategy doesn't fit for me	I have never used this strategy but am interested in it	I have tried this strategy and would use it again	I use this strategy and like it
Strategies for when I can't think of a word or expression						
20. Use gestures as a way to try to get my meaning across	68	Frequency		5	20	43
		Percent		7.4	29.4	63.2
		Std. Deviation	.632			
21. Switch back to my own language momentarily if I know that the person I'm talking to can understand what is being said	68	Frequency			15	53
		Percent			22.1	77.9
		Std. Deviation	.418			
22. Using translator or dictionary to help	68	Frequency		13	53	2
		Percent		19.1	77.9	2.9
		Std. Deviation	.444			

The last 3 strategies were strategies that all freshmen were most interested in, had used, or really loved it. Those were strategies “20. Use gestures as a way to try to get my meaning across”, “21. Switch back to my own language momentarily if I know that the person I’m talking to can understand what is being said”, and “22. Using a translator or dictionary to help”. Among them, the strategy “21. Switch back to my own language momentarily if I know that the person I’m talking to can understand what is being said” was the most favorite and used by students, accounting for 77.9% of the people, the rest 22.1% had used that strategy and would continue to use it. There was no one who had never used or disliked this strategy. This was understandable when the psychology of students wanted to switch back to their native language to talk easily with the person they were talking to if they understood that language. This could help them feel more comfortable and easier when communicating. However, it was clear that sometimes this strategy was not good for them. Because they invisibly closed the opportunity to practice their English-speaking skills by automatically closing the foreign language environment to their native language. The next most popular strategy was the strategy “20. Use gestures as a way to try to get my meaning across” with the highest rate was 63.2% of the first-year major students at HLU liked it, 29.4% had used and would continue to use this strategy, and there was only 7.4% of respondents chose that they were interested in but had never applied. There was no one

who did not like this strategy for developing English-speaking skills. This result was not so surprising for the researcher. The use of gestures as a way to try to get speakers’ meaning across body language was a common thing and worth applying, because it brought effective communication, helped listeners understand and the speaker could feel more confident when releasing body language. Therefore, all first-year major students at HLU knew and were interested in this strategy, and the rate of respondents who loved and applied was very high, no one thinks that the strategy is not suitable for them. This further proves that this strategy is a popular and widely applied strategy to practice language and communication.

In the end, the strategy “22. Using a translator or dictionary to help” achieved the following results: 77.9 % had and would continue to use the strategy, 19.1% had never used this strategy but still loved it, and only 2.9% really liked this strategy in applying to develop English speaking skills during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was understandable given that information technology is rapidly evolving, and students frequently use technology to supplement their learning or training language skills. The use of a dictionary or a high-accuracy translator could help students to get answers quickly and accurately. Therefore, it was understandable that most of them loved and applied this strategy often. However, a quite high percentage of students participating in this survey chose “I have

never used this strategy but am interested in it" (19.1%). This demonstrates that this strategy was interesting and effective for the first-year major at HLU to know about it but they were still not hard-working to apply the strategy in reality. Looking at the above data from Table 17, it was clear that there was almost no gender difference related to the selection and use of strategies when the first-year major students at HLU could not think of a word or expression to develop their English-speaking skills during the Covid-19 pandemic. The *Sig.* index listed in the statistics table for all strategies is greater than 0.005, showing that there was no gender difference related to the problem being studied, which means both girls and boys had the same ways of choosing and applying strategies for when they could not think of a word or expression. Only strategy number 16: "*Ask for help from my conversation partner*" with a *Sig.* result of 0.002 (< 0.005) had shown that there was a disparity and difference between male and female students in choosing and using this strategy to develop their English-speaking skills during this pandemic.

Discussion

Based on the results of data analysis conducted by research, we can see, most of the first-year HLU majors know the strategies, and are interested in them, but have never applied them to develop their English-speaking skills during this Covid-19 pandemic. This has reflected the fact that first-year HLU majors are still quite passive and lazy in applying strategies for language development during this pandemic. They mostly just know, just enjoy, but do not put the strategies into practice. Even the number of students participating in the survey thinks that strategies are not suitable, while the number that has applied and will continue to use them is really small. The number of first-year majors who really love strategies to develop their English-speaking skills is too small. This needs to be seen frankly and clearly.

Brown [11] confirms the growing body of evidence demonstrating the value of learners incorporating strategies into their learning process. Similarly, according to Brown and Scase [12], language learners must develop autonomy, and the English teacher must assist them in taking charge of their own learning by setting goals and implementing learning strategies. Based on the data above, it can be concluded that, in fact, the learning process of speaking skills at HLU of the

first-year Legal English major where the research was conducted did not apply clearly, and usually the learning strategies of speaking English to the students of the control groups. An appropriate learning strategy model for speaking English was the one that could improve the students speaking skills so that they became more independent or more autonomous in learning to speak English. Benson [13] states "*autonomy is the capacity to take charge of one's own learning*". Students are more effective when they take control of their own learning. The twenty-two strategies of speaking English developed in the study can be considered appropriate for the purpose of improving the language learners' speaking skills/proficiency. The lack of initiative in applying strategies to develop English speaking skills during the pandemic among first-year HLU majors is really something that needs to be corrected in order for them to attend university majors. Learn in the most effective and easy way. This lack of initiative may be due to the fact that the students are too new to the self-directed learning style of the university environment. They are used to the hands-on instruction used since high school, so now they are quite unfamiliar with these strategies, only knowing and enjoying them, but never applying them. Therefore, we need to guide students more about these strategies and organize challenges related to strategies to motivate students to implement, them so that they can find the most suitable strategy to apply to develop their English-speaking skills.

Conclusion

First, first-year legal English-major students at HLU became aware of speaking strategies. However, they did not acknowledge the importance of using speaking English strategies; thus, they were adopting them passively and not frequently. Therefore, these strategies should be officially and systematically included in the speaking course offered to students. Second, even though most students have figured out how to make use of speaking English strategies, they do not apply them much in reality. In others words, they are still passive in developing speaking skills and lazy. As a result, there is room for further improvement in teaching and learning during speaking classes at HLU. More significantly, the identification of what speaking English strategies should be further incorporated and promoted in the training programs needed to be taken into consideration.

Second, even though most students have figured out how to make use of speaking English strategies, there were still some obstacles preventing them from using it frequently and effectively. The most common problems were regarding the shortage of interactive activities and active learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. For that reason, there is room for further improvement in teaching and learning during listening classes at HLU. More significantly, the identification of what speaking strategies should be further incorporated and promoted in the training programs needed to be taken into consideration

Third, while each legal English major student has his or her own personal method of implementing speaking strategies, most students nowadays are open to incorporating new technology into their process; in fact, they are interested in implementing tools such as social networks or screencasting programs. Consequently, teachers and students should be encouraged to incorporate technology-based strategies in the process of learning speaking English skills.

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