

ENGLISH CAMP FOR SPEAKING SKILL DEVELOPMENT: THAI STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

English camp or outdoor classroom activity is an English activity that aims to create a new atmosphere in learning English through various types of activities. This study aims to investigate Thai students' perspectives of English camp which was to develop students' speaking ability. The method in this study was descriptive quantitative. The participants involved in this study were 50 students at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand who joined the English camp. The instrument used by the researcher in this study was a questionnaire that was adapted from (Asmara, 2016) by considering two aspects which include: students' perspective on the English camp, and the English camp for speaking skill development. The process of data analysis used Microsoft Excel. Based on the finding, Thai students perceived that English camp activities could help develop their speaking skill. In this case, this study is anticipated to be helpful to other researchers and may serve as a source of information or inspiration for other researchers who are interested in the subject on the effect of English Camp on speaking skill development. As the limitation of the instrument used by the researcher, therefore, it is recommended for future researchers to add instruments and raise different topics about the English camp especially in speaking skill development.

Key words: English camp, Speaking skill, Students' Perspective

BACKGROUND

The most widely used language, English, plays a significant role in education and is taught as one of the topics in schools. Along with technological developments in the global era, the need for mastery of English as an international language is increasing. Currently, English is a bridge to the international world in various fields such as education, science, trade, politics, tourism, and other fields (Edge, J., 1999).

People are feeling a greater need for English language skills in daily life, particularly in the current global society. Preparing human resources for a young age in a global world requires not only the mastery of information and skill but also the capacity to communicate in different languages, one of which is English. Indeed, being able to speak clearly in English is necessary for academic achievement. According to (Prastyawan et al., 2021) English speakers have a better chance of obtaining well-paying positions in both public and commercial companies, which gives fluent English speakers preferential treatment (Kashmiri, 2020).

The problem that occurs among Thai students is a lack of knowledge of English, many of them still do not understand the basic knowledge of English and also lack of confidence to speak as stated by (Rusgandi et al., 2021) that due to their anxiety, the majority of pupils avoid speaking in front of their classmates. Such as when they were asked how their condition was, they did not know to answer or were even confused due to a lack of English vocabulary. Such as stated by (Noom-ura, 2013) the level of English proficiency among Thai students is poor. The 2010 Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) ranked Thailand 116th out of 163 countries. This data is

also reinforced by (EF EPI 2022) that Thailand is ranked 97th out of 111 countries and provinces as of 2022. Thus, Thai students need more attention in learning English which is not only in school but also in outdoor learning activities. According to (Kayi, 2006), some activities can be used by the teacher such as discussion, role-play, simulations, information gaps, brainstorming, storytelling, interviews, story completion, reporting, playing cards, image description, and identifying the difference are some learning activities that encourage speaking. While (Anh, 2020) explained methods that can be used in teaching speaking skills are singing songs and chants method, communicative games, storytelling, presentation, and debate.

One of the fun activities for learning English is attending an English Camp outdoor classroom activities, where the students will participate in English lessons with other students and the balance of the time participating in fun activities and excursions. According to (Aswad, 2017), using an English camp to study English as a second language is an excellent technique to boost students' interest and abilities because an English camp possible to create the learning becomes more varied and vivid, feels the strain while learning can be decreased, establishing familiar communication, stretching the anxious stressed into relax, and generating the attractiveness of learning.

An English camp is conducted by Thai students, especially where the research took place, at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, which provides students with fun activities such as singing English songs, playing games, and practicing speaking English with other friends. At the end of the agenda, the students practiced their speaking directly to the tourist they met at one of the most tourist attractions, namely *Ao-Nang*. And the English camp agenda was closed with performances by English camp participants and then continued by giving awards to the most active participants.

A previous study by (Batu & Cahyaningrum, 2020) shows that there are two factors in learning a foreign language that is internal and external factors. According to research, providing learners with an atmosphere where English is used constantly might help them develop a positive mindset and desire for learning or learning English. Additionally, it has been discovered that a supportive setting that offers feedback and exposure in the form of enjoyable outdoor activities influences students to see the program favorably. Therefore, it is acceptable to say that the availability of external factors, such as input and exposure, helps learners feel less anxious and enables them to effectively learn a foreign language through enjoyable activities.

In addition, a study by (Hengki, 2021) focused on the teaching method as a tool for implementing the teaching and learning process. It's found that using a cooperative teaching methods for speaking ability through an English camp is effective, give better achievement, and build self-confidence in the students. It shows many ways to increase students' interest in developing speaking skills through English camps.

Despite many earlier studies, the subjects of the previous study conducted by (Batu & Cahyaningrum, 2020) were final-year cadet students, in Indonesia. While in this study is Thai students. This study reveals the perspective of Thai students on their English-speaking development in the English camp. The subject of this study were Thai high school students or commonly called the *Matthayom* level at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School.

Based on the previous explanation, the researcher assumed that an English camp is the best choice for students in increasing their speaking skills. So that students also can talk to foreigners or even to native speakers even if only with basic statements. Therefore, this research wants to investigate Thai students' perspective on english camp and to investigate Thai students' percieve the English camp to develop students' speaking skill.

METHOD

This research used descriptive quantitative research. In a non-experimental study design known as quantitative descriptive research, the variables are quantified using numbers without the

researcher manipulating the variables being studied. According to (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015) quantitative descriptive data uses statistics or numerical data to explain, characterize, predict, or control the phenomenon that is the subject of this study. To solve a study topic or purpose, quantitative research frequently uses numbers, quantification, and statistics, and it typically calls for a sizable sample size. An average score, a percentage, or a rank of anything for all participants may be all that is required to be reported in quantitative research that looks into the characteristics of a population or the opinions, views, and attitudes of learners. Descriptive statistics are used in this form of quantitative research.

To gather enough information for this study, the research participants were 50 students who joined an English camp for five days. The students were a mixture of several classes in Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, from grade 1 to grade 6 of *Matthayom* (Juniour-Senior High School).

A questionnaire is a research tool instrument consisting of some kind of statement to gather the participants' information. A questionnaire could be considered as a kind of written interview. It is a research instrument having sequences of statements to collect data and obtain information from individuals.

The questionnaire consisted of twelve statements about students perspective on English camp to develop their speaking skill that were adapted from (Asmara, 2016) and the score of the questionnaire used Likert Scale that was categorized into strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree which has been translated into Thai so the students can easily understand with the questionnaire.

To collect the data, firstly the researcher asked permission to the headmaster of Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School and to the chairmain of the committee, then a set of questionnaires was given to the participants of the English camp for being participants in this research. Before the participants filled in the questionnaire, the researcher gave the instructions to the students to make sure they answered completely. The researcher provided the students time about 20 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. Then, the students read the statements that have been translated into Thai one by one carefully and give the checklist mark on their statement. The researcher also takes pictures during the activity as documentation.

FINDINGS

The researcher collected the data at Eakkapapsasaniwch Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand. The results of the questionnaire were used to inform this study's conclusions which was divided into two aspects of the research results. The first aspect is about students' perspective on the English camp, which describes the results of activities of the English camp. The second aspect, explains the results of research on students' opinions of the English camp for students' speaking skill development. To respond to the study's research question related to students' perspective on English camp, the researcher distributed a questionnaire consisting of 12 items to be filled by the students. A total of 50 students answered the questionnaire.

1. Students' Perspective on English Camp

In this investigation, the first aspect was students' perspective on English camp. This aspect was explored through questionnaire item number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 12. The result is described as follows in Table 4.1:

Table 1. Students' Perspective on English Camp

Statement	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
The objective of the English camp is clear	0	0	0	0	4	2	38	19	58	29
The activities in the English camp are organized well	0	0	0	0	8	4	28	14	64	32
The activities in the English camp are fun	0	0	0	0	10	5	30	15	60	30
The activities in the English camp are motivating	0	0	2	1	0	0	26	13	68	34
The activities in the English camp are useful	0	0	0	0	4	2	30	15	66	33
English camp is a good place to learn English	0	0	2	1	6	3	22	11	70	35

SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree N: Neutral A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

Table 4.1 shows “*The objective of the English camp is clear*”, 30% of students choose to agree and 58% of students choose strongly agree. It could be assumed that the majority of the students are aware of and comprehend the purposes of the English camp that is to improve students' speaking skill. On the table of item “*The activities in the English camp are organized well*” also almost all students felt that activities at English camp are organized well; 28% agree and 64% strongly agree, indicating that the implementation of the English camp runs well, so the students could follow the agenda well.

The table of item “*The activities in the English camp are fun*”, in this case, showed 28% of students agree and 64% of students strongly agree. However, in this item also there were 10% (5) students stated either yes or no (neutral). All of the students agreed and strongly agree that all the activities of the English camp are fun, and almost all of the students also enjoy the activities of the English camp. It is supported by the next item of the table that “*The activities in the English Camp are motivating*”. This item is different from the previous item due to there was one student who choose to disagree. The results of the research show 26% choose to agree and 68% strongly agree. It could be assumed that English camp increased students motivation in learning English. Therefore, in the item of the table above that “*The activities in the English camp are useful*” there are 4% of students choose neutral, but all the students in this study choose agree and strongly agree. There were 15% of students agree and 66% of students strongly agree, it can be assumed English camp had many benefits in their learning English, and it can be seen on the last item of the table “*English camp is a good place to learn English*” show 22% of students choose to agree and 70% of students choose strongly agree of English camp as a good place for learning English.

Based on the data above, the aspect of “students' perspective on English camp” received positive feedback. Nearly all of the pupils in this study know and understand clearly the purpose of the English camp. It indicated that the agenda of the English camp was arranged and planned well, so that students know the flow of the agenda, and most students think that English Camp is very effective.

2. English Camp for Speaking Skill Development

The second topic this study investigated was the English camp for speaking skill development. Items 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 of the questionnaire investigate this topic. The result is described as followed in Table 4.2:

Table 2. The Benefits of Joining English Camp

Statement	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
By joining English camp, I can improve my speaking skill	0	0	2	1	4	2	30	15	64	32

By joining English camp, I feel better to speak in class of English Camp	0	0	2	1	8	4	50	25	40	20
By joining English camp, I am confident to speak English	0	0	0	0	14	7	34	17	52	26
By joining English camp, I am confident to speak with tourist	0	0	0	0	8	4	30	15	62	31
By joining English camp, my pronunciation is better	0	0	2	1	6	3	34	17	56	28
By joining English camp, I learn more vocabulary	0	0	2	1	6	3	24	12	68	34

SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree N: Neutral A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

Table 4.2 displays result “*By joining English camp, I can improve my speaking skill*”. The data obtained on the table showed that as many as 30% of the students choose to agree, 64 % of students choose to strongly agree, and 4% of the students choose to be neutral. It indicates that The students were able to develop their public speaking abilities by joining the English camp. Meanwhile, 2% of students choose to disagree, they believe they are unable to develop their speaking skills by joining the agenda.

The second item on the table above “*By joining English camp, I feel better to speak in class of English camp*”, 50% of students agreed with this statement, by participating in learning English at the English camp they felt their speaking skills were better. 40% of students strongly agreed that the English camp could help them improve their speaking skills. In contrast to several other participants who had neutral answers and disagreed with the items above. There were 8% of students who stated that they were neutral about the English camp, neutral is not taking sides or choosing the middle. And there were 2% of students who disagree that participating in the English camp felt better about their speaking skills.

The third item of the table is “*By joining English camp, I am confident to speak English*”. The result of this item gained 34% agree, 52% strongly agree, while those choose neutral are 14% students. It indicated that all students were able to practice speaking English during the time of English camp. So, it made the ability of students to progress their confidence in learning English. The previous item was supported by the result of the item on the table above “*By joining English camp, I am confident to speak English with tourists*”. It shows 30% of students agree, 62% choose strongly agree and 8% of students choose neutral. It could be concluded if students always trained to speak during class by having conversations with their friends without feeling fear of being wrong, these were proven when they conducted interviews with foreigners during the agenda of the English camp. They ventured to converse with foreigners with confidence.

The pronunciation aspect of the students was much better than before, as in the results of the item on the table above “*By joining English camp, my pronunciation is better*”. 34% of students agree, 56% of students choose strongly agree, and 6% of students choose neutral. In this case, Most pupils thought that their pronunciation in learning English had improved. Because before it, they did not have good pronunciation. Like when they pronounced the letter “w” which sounds like the letter “v” and many more errors in the pronunciation of letters, but after joining the English camp, they could differentiate and pronounce it correctly. Likewise, only 2% of students disagree with this item, they had difficulties in improving their pronunciation.

On the last item on the table above “*By joining the English camp, I learn more vocabularies*”. It shows 24% of students agree, 68% of students choose strongly agree, and 6% of students choose neutral. Based on the data presented, the data showed that students could get more vocabulary in English camp. Because before it, they had limited vocabulary in English which affected their speaking ability. Meanwhile, there are 2% of students choose to disagree about this item.

Based on the data above, the aspect of “English camp for speaking skill development”, obtained positive results. The majority of the students assumed that they could improve their speaking ability. The students argued that joining the English camp increase their self-confidence to speak English with foreigners or even with native speakers. They also argued that they could have better pronunciation and got more vocabularies. Although there were very few students who could not improve their English speaking ability by joining the English camp.

DISCUSSION

Based on the data in the findings, the researcher drew an in-depth discussion to answer the research problems in this study. The first research problem in this study was students’ perspectives on the English camp that was held at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School. This research seeks to learn more about Thai students’ perspectives on English camps. Questionnaires were used as instruments in this study. This study was conducted on October 14-18 2022 at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi - Thailand.

Considering the questionnaire's findings that was used to collect the data, most of the students thought the English camp was the appropriate place to learn English. The majority of the students believed that the English camp gave them many benefits and gave them some opportunities to practice and improve their ability in the learning process.

Moreover, most of the students stated that activities at the English camp were fun because they enjoy the activities and did them happily. This is related to the theory from (Prancisca, 2019) that through practical activities including sports, outdoor activities, games, and seminars, as well as encounters with native English-speaking volunteers from America, English camp focuses on having fun and enjoying the activities while learning English. The camp's engaging and enjoyable activities will provide the opportunities for students to practice natural contextual English, which is expected to increase their enthusiasm for learning the language and their proficiency.

Then the students also stated that by participating in the English camp they could improve their interest in learning English because one of the most crucial elements in the learning process is motivation. Without motivation, learning's goal is difficult to attain This is related to the theory (Garhani & Supriyono, 2021) stated that a learner's motivation is crucial to their success in achieving language proficiency, particularly when studying a second or foreign language (such as English as a foreign language). This study identified that motivation is really helpful in students learning.

The third dominant student’s perspective on the English camp was beneficial for the activities. English camps are also helpful in the development of soft skills. Students have the chance to discover their talents and abilities, overcome new obstacles, think creatively and solve issues, gain self-esteem, and become independent thinkers mainly to the break from home in a supportive atmosphere. (Aswad, 2017) stated that English camp is promoted as having social and psychological advantages for students, assisting in their relaxation, fostering a friendly classroom environment, creating relations between classmates, stimulating their attention, and generally making studying more fun.

From all the activities of the English camp, students assumed that English camp was the best outdoor activity to learn and increase their English, especially in speaking skills. Through the activities, students could practice their casual conversational English or general English, and they could find fun activities in the agenda such as learning through games, and also singing songs.

To answer the second research problem about students’ perspective on speaking skill development by joining an English camp, students perceived that an English camp could help them to develop their speaking ability. (Seong, 2012) also added that the camp was successful in its main goal of fostering communication skills. The students felt that their time at the English language camp improved their English abilities. The numerous opportunities for students to practice speaking

English with teachers through classes, activities, and personal interactions with teachers was one of the most important variables of the enhancement of students' English ability.

Then the students also perceive that they could repair their errors in pronunciation of English letters during English camp activities. Because in English camp activities, students used to be trained to pronounce the correct letters and used trained repeatedly, in those ways, their pronunciation was better. The reason for errors in pronunciation by Thai students was supported by (Wongsuriya, 2020) first, it's possible that English pronunciation doesn't produce the Thai language's sound. It's possible that Thai students used an initial syllable that doesn't exist in English. Finally, because spoken and written forms are similar in Thailand, learners there have not made a distinction between the two. Not only in terms of pronunciation, but students also learn more vocabulary in English camp to develop their speaking ability. (Mustakim & Ismail, 2018) also stated that the majority of English camp activities are designed to improve student's communication skills in everyday situations. Therefore, it should be used with other vocabulary-learning strategies to make this strategy effective. Communication requires a certain amount of vocabulary. Without vocabulary, speakers are unable to communicate their ideas

CONCLUSSION AND SUGGESTION

Considering what was discovered in the prior chapter, more than 50% of the students demonstrate a high perspective on the activities of the English camp. Students perceive that the purpose of the English camp is clear, so they could understand the means and the purpose of the English camp. By knowing the intent and purpose of the English camp, they also get a lot of benefits. They also assumed that they could enjoy the activities, which could make students feel fun and motivate students to learn English. And it shows that English camp was an effective outdoor learning activity to learn English.

Moreover, students also demonstrated that they could increase their speaking skills. Students felt more confident practicing speaking in class with their friends, such as doing a conversation. Not only that, they were even confident to practice speaking with tourists and native speakers that they met during the activity. In addition, students also stated that they learn more vocabularies and even had better pronunciation in English by joining the English Camp.

In relation to this research, the researcher suggest for the future researcher. This study is anticipated to be beneficial to other studies, as well as a source of information or motivation for others interested in the topic of English camp effect on Speaking skill development. As the limitation of the instrument used by the researcher, therefore, it is recommended for future researchers to conduct qualitative research and add instruments such as interview and raise different topics about the English camp, i.e.: Study the Effectiveness of English Camp Program for Speaking Skills

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