THREE-STEP INTERVIEW STRATEGY TO ENHANCE SPEAKING SKILL OF SECOND YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to test the effectiveness of using a three-step interview strategy in teaching speaking to second-year college students at the Viet Bac Art-Culture College in Thai Nguyen Province, for the academic year 2020-2021. Specifically, this study ascertains the second-year college students' speaking skill level as to pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and interactive communication; employ the three-step interview strategy in teaching speaking among the respondents; the significant difference in the pretest and posttest scores of the students in the control and experimental group; the acceptability as to usability, appropriateness, appeal to the target user, and relevance of the strategy used. The quasi-experimental method through non-equivalent design was employed along with a self-constructed questionnaire to 40 second-year college students. The three-step interview strategy in teaching speaking was employed and perceived by the respondents as *strongly acceptable* as to usability (3.26) and appropriateness (3.32) and *acceptable* as to appeal to target users (3.12) and relevance (3.2). Thus, the three-step interview strategy is commendable in teaching students' English speaking skill. However, it was recommended that other aspects of speaking skill such as fluency, strategic competence, and other paralanguage may be considered in the study and a three-step interview strategy may be used in other English classes in other schools, be it basic or higher education to improve their speaking skills.

Keywords: Three-step interview, teaching speaking, strategy, college students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is used as the most convenient tool for people to communicate, share ideas and transmit information to each other, in other words, it is basic to human communication. Having a common language to communicate with the people from different countries in the world is very interesting and helpful, thus English speaking skill is very necessary to be promoted by both teachers and learners. In Viet Nam, although four basic skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing are required to teach and study equally, these skills are taught and learned differently in each school.

Different school levels have different requirements in the examinations. For example, in secondary schools and high schools, the English examinations based on the General Education Certificate Exam often have the same forms in written tests which contain reading and writing exercises. Therefore, reading and writing skills are paid much more attention than speaking and listening to meet the short term goal with good marks in each exam. It is not similar to the secondary and high schools, in colleges and universities, the examination forms are optional and agreed upon by language teachers in each school. It means that the exam can be written or oral.

However, many college students who took part in the oral exams showed their poor speaking skill. "Over three-quarters of graduate students cannot communicate verbally in English because of shyness, inadequate vocabulary, or simply lacking the necessary knowledge" (Dang Thi Thu Hang, 2012). Traditionally, Vietnamese language teachers often keep the main role in language classes where the grammar-translation approach was used too much in the process of teaching language. This method causes the passive learning way in almost all students so many Vietnamese students could not use English naturally as a mean of communication after a long time of learning it.

In recent years, with the demands of modern society, the approach of teaching and learning English for a long term goal is strongly promoted in Viet Nam. The ability to communicate orally in real-life situations is essential for language learners and it may help a lot in their future careers. However, many language teachers and learners in VietNam are still facing a lot of difficulties in the process of teaching and learning English effectively. Speaking skill is considered the most difficult skill for language teachers to deal with and for language learners to improve themselves (Dang Thi Thu Hang, 2011). This problem also happens at Viet Bac Art-Culture College where the English language is required as a general compulsory subject for each class. Most of the students in the college come from the mountainous and remote areas northeast of VietNam where the conditions of teaching and learning English as a communicative language is limited. Therefore, many of them are very afraid of oral examinations that they prefer more written tests which are often long and complex.

In speaking tests, many students can monologue quite fluently and clearly but when the examiner interviews them with some questions that relate to their speech they feel very nervous and do not give satisfactory answers. It means they do not take part in conversations interactively and effectively. Practising interview technique is very useful for learners because such activities can help enhance both listening and speaking skills. During each interview, the interviewer and interviewee keep important roles to control the English language to practice questions and answers logically. It not only helps students to be familiar with interviews but also create students' confidence to overcome the fear or shyness in speaking activities.

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of using a three-step interview strategy in teaching speaking to second-year college students at the Viet Bac Art-Culture College in Thai Nguyen Province, for the academic year 2020-2021. Specifically, this sought to attain the following objectives:
- Determine the level of speaking skill of the second-year college students in terms of: Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammar and Interactive communication.
- Employ the three-step interview strategy in teaching speaking among the respondents.
- Ascertain if there is any significant difference in the pretest and posttest scores of the students in the control and experimental group.
- Find out if the strategy used is acceptable among the respondents as to: Usability, Appropriateness, Appeal to the Target User and Relevance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW
Three-Step Interview Strategy and Speaking
According to Nunan (2003), "to teach speaking means to teach language learners to: 1) produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns; 2) use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language; 3) select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper social setting, audience; 4) situation and subject matter; 5) organize thoughts in meaningful and logical sequence; 6) use language as a means of expressing values

and judgments; and 7) use language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency."

Nguyen Thi Thu Linh (2008) mentioned that "in the oral communication process, the role of speakers and listeners are interchanged. Information gaps between them are created and then closed with the effort from both sides." Artikel Bahasa Inggris (2012) has the same point of view as speaking is interactive and it requires the ability to cooperate in speaking turns. However, he stated that language learners find difficulty in speaking English. He gave some examples that cause the problem like worrying about making mistakes, being laughed at by friends and lack of confidence. He suggested using effective approaches that encourage students to take part in speaking lessons.

FIFRA Interview Techniques (2002) explained that interview is the task of gathering information, it is also defined as a complex process of dyadic communication with a predetermined and serious purpose-designed to interchange behaviour through the asking and answering of questions. In addition, it is a skill that can be learned, polish and improved through practice (http://:www.au.af.mil/interviewing techniques). The three-step interview strategy is one of the cooperative learning strategies that help promote achievement, enhance retention, desire and motivation, social skills, self-esteem, and improve students satisfaction with the learning experience.

In Montha Songsiri's (2007) action research on promoting students' confidence in speaking English, he stated that cooperative learning is one of the main factors to promote students' communication. Some of its advantages are promoting members' relationships and providing equal opportunity to members to think, speak, and act while working together. Besides, this method also helps members listen to each other carefully to promote communication. Interview technique is considered one of the six techniques applied in stages of practice language.

Interestingly, Poskan Komentar (2012) conducted a study on teaching speaking skill through the three-step interview technique. He emphasized the use of cooperative learning in a variety of learning activities to improve understanding and help each other. Therefore, the three-step interview is implied as an adaptable process in the classroom and he ensures that the three-step interview is effective to improve students' speaking ability. He also supplies some benefits of a three-step interview: a) three-step interview creates simultaneous accountability, b) students share and apply different questioning strategies, and c) over time, students are introduced to different taxonomies of thinking to extend their ability to use different levels of questioning and thinking. He further states that the three-step interview is effective to improve the speaking of the learners. It is a cooperative structure that helps students personalize their learning and listen to others' ideas and thinking. In addition, there are various ways to organize the sentences in a piece of speaking and one of them is the three-step interview. The three-step interview is praised as an effective way to encourage students to share their thinking, ask questions, and take notes. It works best with three students per group, but it can be modified for groups of four.

Kristin Rahayu (2010) completed research on "improving speaking skill by using interview" which aims to know whether interview improves students' speaking skill of SMA Negeri 1 Surakarta in the process of learning English. The result of the study shows that interview is a very effective technique called interactive skill in teaching and learning speaking English. There is a significant difference in the pretest and posttest scores of the respondents in the experimental group who applied the interview technique in practising speaking skill. Students' posttest score of speaking increased clearly and the behaviour of students to speaking is much

better. Most students become more active in speaking lessons because owing to the interview technique, an interesting atmosphere was created in the classroom. The author of the research further supported that interviews give many advantages in teaching speaking. The advantages are: "1) interviews are motivating, 2) interviews invite students to speak actively, 3) interviews in pairs or groups contribute to an atmosphere of healthy competition in a non-stressful situation, 4) interviews can be used in any language teaching situations and with any skill areas; and 5) interviews provide immediate feedback for teacher". On the other hand, he gave some disadvantages for this technique such as the noisiness while practice and the use of mother tongue may happen in pairwork and groupwork.

Moreover, an interview is described in the article "Characteristics of an Interview" as a goal-driven transaction characterized by questions and answers, clear structure, control and imbalance, and is the dyadic transaction. Interview shares many characteristics with other types of communication in which it is transactional and symbolic requires meaning. Add to, interviews are generally controlled by an interviewer, who is responsible for moving the interview toward its intended goal. Especially, interviews tend to be more structured than other types of communication because interviews involve planning and preparation and also tend to have a clear sequence. Some types of interviews are mentioned in the article such as employment interviews, performance interviews, exit interviews, persuasive interviews, information gaining interview and solving-problem interview. However, information-gaining interviews are the way to gather information from another person.

In addition, research on "Cooperative small group learning structures" in Centre for teaching support and innovation of the University of Torronto (2011) supported that a three-step interview is a cooperative structure in which partners interview one another on a particular topic. This structure can be used in any content area or lesson to these terms: a) introduce a topic or a lesson; b) share opinions or experiences; c) summarize a lesson or topic; d) review; and e) explore concepts. There are also some suggestions of applying this technique in the language learning process such as: 1) teacher has students formed trios; 2) identify interview questions and provide an organizer for students note; 3) assign roles for the first round: interviewer, responder and recorder; 4) roles rotate after each interview; 5) repeat and cycle until every student in the trio has been in each role; and 6) teacher brings the groups of three together for a large group debriefing.

Calderon and Minaya-Rowe (2010) assured that "three-step interviews can be used at the beginning of the school year to form heterogeneous groupings. They also can be used during the year for reseating purposes to start a new activity" These researchers suggested using interesting topics like favourite movies, hobbies or life goals to conduct lessons using the three-step interview. The steps that they supplied are the same as the other authors' steps who were mentioned in pre-paragraphs in general. These two authors further explained that the purpose of the interview is to gather information to share with teammates so as to instruct students and model to look for themes in the positive essence of the peer. The time for each interview is advised to be limited for students to practice concentratedly.

III. METHODOLOGY
Research Design
The quasi-experimental method through non-equivalent design was used in this research. In this study, the researcher used the experimental two-group design as a means of research and a self-constructed questionnaire. The traditional technique was taught to the control group while the three-step interview strategy was used for the experimental group.

Population and Sampling

The respondents in this study were 40 second-year college students at Viet Bac Art - Culture College. These students were in two classes TNK5 and QLVHK6. Each of these classes had 20 students wherein TNK5 is the control group and QLVHK6 is the experimental group.

Data Gathering Procedure

A letter of permission was sent to the principal of Viet Bac Art Culture College for the conduct of the study. Upon approval, first, an oral quiz which consists of two sub-quizzes (one is to test students' English speaking level in terms of vocabulary and grammar, another is to test students' speaking in terms of pronunciation and interactive communication) was administered. After finding the students' level of English speaking, a pretest was given to 40 second-year college students of the two classes (known as control and experimental groups). Then the lessons were conducted using the three-step interview strategy for the experimental group. After two months, both the two classes (control group and experimental group) had the posttest. The posttest was conducted and then a checklist questionnaire was given to students of the experimental group. After the administration of the questionnaires, all data were gathered, tabulated, analyzed, interpreted and statistically treated.

Statistical Treatment

To determine the level of speaking skill of second-year college students in the four (4) areas: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and interactive communication, and the level of acceptability of the three-step interview, the weighted arithmetic mean was used. The formula is:

$$WM = \frac{4f + 3f + 2f + 1f}{N}$$

Where:

WM = Weighted mean
f = frequency
N = number of respondents

The range interval used for the remarks given in speaking skills and for acceptability of the Three-Step Interview is as follows:

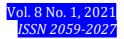| Point Score	Range Interval	Descriptive Rating
4	*3.26 - 4.00*	*Outstanding* (O)/ *Strongly Acceptable* (SA)
3	*2.51 - 3.25*	*Satisfactory* (S)/ *Acceptable* (A)
2	*1.76 - 2.50*	*Average* (A)/ *Fairly Acceptable* (FA)
1	*1.00 - 1.75*	*Poor* (P)/ *Not Acceptable* (NA)

The formula for mean is:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i}{n}$$

The following formula is used for standard deviation:

$$s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N}\left(X_i - \bar{X}\right)^2}{N(N-1)}}$$

Where:

X = the value of the mean

N = the sample size

X_i = represents each value from i=1 to i=N

∑ = the summation function

1 = the degree of freedom

T-test for independent samples was used to find out if there is a significant difference in pretest and posttest scores of the students in the control and experimental groups. The formula is shown as follows:

$$t = \frac{X_1 - X_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(n_1-1)s_1^2+(n_2-1)s_2^2}{n_1-n_2-2}}\sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1}+\frac{2}{n_2}}}$$

Where: X_1 = mean of the control group

X_2 = mean of the experimental group

n_1 = size of the control group

n_2 = size of the experimental group

s_1 = standard deviation of the control group

s_2 = standard deviation of the experimental group.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
1. Respondents' English Speaking Skill Level

Table 1.1: Frequency and Weighted Mean Distribution on the Respondents' Level of Speaking Skill in terms of Pronunciation

Pronunciation	O 4	S 3	A 2	P 1	WM	DR
The student… 1. Shows clear and understandable pronunciation	6	10	18	6	2.4	A
2. Makes volume adequate and sustained from the beginning to the end of the phrase	7	11	19	3	2.55	S
3. Demonstrates warmth, colour and meaning to the given voice which accounts for quality	4	7	20	9	2.15	A
Average Weighted Mean					**2.36**	**A**

Table 1.1 shows the weighted mean distribution on respondents' level of speaking skill in terms of pronunciation.

It can be seen that *pronunciation* is generally perceived as *average* with 2.36 AWM. Among the three items, making volume adequate and sustained from the beginning to the end of the phrase is ranked first with the 2.55 weighted mean described as *satisfactory*. It is followed by showing clear and understandable pronunciation (2.4, average) and the least rated among the three terms is demonstrating warmth, colour and meaning to the given voice which accounts for quality (2.15; *average*).

Table 1.2: Frequency and Weighted Mean Distribution on the Respondents' Level of Speaking Skill in terms of Vocabulary

Vocabulary	O 4	S 3	A 2	P 1	WM	DR
The student … 1. Chooses appropriate words to speak	9	12	8	11	2.47	A
2. Does not repeat words occasionally	7	8	18	7	2.37	A
3. Avoids code-switching (or switch from English to native language)	10	8	16	6	2.55	S
Average Weighted Mean					2.46	A

Table 1.2 exhibits the weighted mean distribution on the level of the speaking skill of the students in terms of vocabulary.

As can be seen on the table, vocabulary is generally perceived by the respondents as *average* with 2.46 AWM. Among the provisions, the criterion for avoiding code-switching is ranked first with 2.55 described as *satisfactory*. It is followed by choosing appropriate words to speak with 2.47 (*average*), and not repeating words occasionally is the least of the three items with 2.37 described as *average.*

The result implies that many of the students can avoid code-switching from English to Vietnamese. However, the students still repeat words quite occasionally which means that their vocabulary is limited. Students should use a wide range of vocabulary and related words or words with similar meanings to make the conversation more attractive.

Table 1.3: Frequency and Weighted Mean Distribution on the Respondents' Level of Speaking Skill in terms of Grammar

Grammar	O 4	S 3	A 2	P 1	WM	DR
The students… 1. Observes correct subject-verb agreement	16	13	8	3	2.95	S
2. Uses complex sentences with conjunctions and other linking words.	9	15	10	6	2.67	S
3. Expresses complete and logical thought/ statements	10	16	12	2	2.85	S
Average Weighted Mean					2.82	S

Table 1.3 exhibits the weighted mean distribution on the level of speaking skill of the respondents in terms of grammar.

It can be seen from the table that grammar is generally perceived by the respondents as *satisfactory* with an average weighted mean of 2.82. Observing correct subject-verb agreement ranks first of the three items with a weighted mean of 2.95 described as *often*. Expressing complete and logical statements ranks second with 2.85 (*satisfactory*). The least rated among the three items is using complex sentences with conjunctions and other linking words which accounts for quality described as satisfactory with a weighted mean of 2.67.

It can be interpreted that the students can observe quite correct subject-verb agreement and express quite logical thought. However, students should practice making complex sentences more and more with the use of conjunctions and linking words effectively. Tasee (2009) Ngo

Thi Thanh Hue (2012) supported that anxiety in grammar is one of the main factors that cause the limitation in producing the target language of the learners. These problems are popular in many countries where the English language is taught as a foreign language like Vietnam.

Table 1.4: Frequency and Weighted Mean Distribution on the Respondents' Level of Speaking Skill in terms of Interactive Communication

Interactive Communication	O 4	S 3	A 2	P 1	WM	DR
The student… 1. Communicates effectively by appropriately participating in turn-taking	10	8	18	4	2.6	S
2. Adapts to situations to meet goals	8	8	14	10	2.35	A
3. is aware of how other people perceive them and know what to say in response	8	10	14	8	2.45	A
Average Weighted Mean					**2.46**	**A**

Table 1.4 presents the weighted mean distribution on the level of speaking skill of the respondents in terms of interactive communication.

As seen on the table, interactive communication is generally perceived by the respondents as *average* with 2.46 AWM. Among the three items, communicating by appropriately participating in turn-taking ranks first with a weighted mean of 2.60 described as *satisfactory.* Then, it is followed by being aware of how other people perceive them and to know what to say in response with 2.45 WM (*Average*), and adapting to situations to meet goals is the least of the three items with 2.35 WM and described as *average.*

2. Students' Pretest and Posttest Scores in Two Groups

Table 2.1: Mean Performance between the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups

Group	Pretest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest Mean	Posttest SD	t-value	Significance
Experimental	5.8	1.54	7.1	1.27	-1.55	0.14
Control	5.6	1.50	5.9	1.29	-6.11	0.01

Table 2.1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the pretest and posttest scores of the students in the control and experimental groups.

As seen in the table, the mean pretest scores of the students in the experimental group is 5.8 and the standard deviation is 1.54. The control group got a mean of 5.6 and 1.50 standard deviation. The findings imply that the mean scores of the experimental group and control group are nearly equal in the pretest. This indicates that the two groups are similar at the beginning of the study. In other words, the students in both groups have the same level.

On the other hand, the mean posttest score of the students in the experimental group taught with a three-step interview strategy is 7.1 and 1.27 standard deviation. The control group taught with the traditional method got a mean of 5.9 and 1.29 standard deviation. The result shows that the posttest mean score of the students in the experimental group taught with the three-step interview is higher than that of the control group.

Although both the experimental and the control groups show an increase in their scores across pretest and posttest there is a bigger improvement in the students' speaking skills after exposure to three-step interview compared to that taught with the conventional method.

**Table 2.2: Significant Difference between the Mean Gain Scores
of the Control and Experimental Groups**

	Mean Gain	SD	t-value	Significance
Experimental Group	1.3	0.92	3.48	0.001
Control Group	0.3	0.86		

Table 2.2 presents the summary of values for testing the significant difference between the mean gain scores of the experimental group and control group in the pretest and posttest.

As shown in the table, the mean gain score of the respondents in the experimental group is 1.3 with a standard deviation of 0.92 and the mean gain score of the respondents in the control group is 0.3 with a standard deviation of 0.86. Since the computed t-value of 3.48 is greater than the tabular value at α = .001 level of significance, the null hypothesis which states that "there is no significant difference in the gain scores of the respondents in two groups" is rejected. Therefore, there is enhancement in the speaking skills of respondents taught with three-step interviews in comparison with the students exposed only to the traditional method. According to the statistical findings, students in the experimental group taught with a three-step interview performed much better than those students in the control group. It can also be deduced that there is an improvement in the speaking skill of the students after applying the three-step interview strategy in practising the target language.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Conclusions
From the results of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:
1. The second-year college students have generally average English speaking skill which made them good subjects for improvement through a three-step interview strategy.
2. The three-step interview strategy is ready for adoption in other English speaking classes.
3. There is improvement in the speaking skills of the respondents taught with three-step interviews.
4. The three-step interview strategy is commendable in teaching students' English speaking skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:
1. Other aspects of speaking skill such as fluency, strategic competence, and other paralanguage may be considered in the study.
2. Three-step interview strategy may be used in other English classes in other schools, be it basic or higher education to improve their speaking skills.
3. The study may be replicated in other locales and using an increased number of respondents.
4. Other dimensions such as content, authenticity, and organization for the acceptability of the three-step interview strategy may be viewed.

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