



## Investigating Students' Motivation in Learning Speaking through Online Learning

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### Abstract

This research aimed to examine students' motivation in learning speaking through online learning and students' speaking ability during the learning process. A quantitative design was selected to achieve research objectives with speaking tests and questionnaires as instruments. Participants of this study included 8th-grade students at Kaeng Sripoom school for the 2020/2021 academic year with a total of 25 students. The data analysis used descriptive statistics with a frequency distribution method. After the data analysis, the levels of both students' motivation and students' speaking ability were divided into three categories: low, moderate, and high. The study found that students' motivation in carrying out learning through online learning was in the moderate category, while students' speaking ability was also in the moderate category. From the findings, it can be concluded that students' motivation and speaking ability in learning speaking through online learning have the same category namely the moderate category.

Keywords: students' motivation, speaking skills, online learning

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### Introduction

In language learning, especially English, one of the most important skills is speaking. People use English to communicate with each other, which means sending and receiving messages

that will be understood by both the speaker and the listener (Hamouda, 2020). As English is an international language and its speakers come from all over the world, it is a form of purposeful communication. This shows that speaking in teaching and learning activities can provide opportunities for students to enter a wider community network between cultures and languages from various stages of education. In Thailand, speaking is one of the important objectives of learning English. This is also based on the researcher's personal experience during online teaching internships in Thailand with an emphasis on teaching speaking skills. (Wongsa & Son, 2022) stated that the emphasis on communication skills along with learner-centeredness in various places including schools and universities in Thailand is important. During COVID-19 pandemic, many activities were adjusted based on the regulations to minimize transmission. Teaching and learning activities that were initially carried out face-to-face were not spared and lessons were eventually modified to be carried out remotely. The pandemic has forced educators and students to adopt technology in their teaching and learning process. Educators were required to use online applications and guide students in conducting online learning. Being used to face-to-face, this is a new habit for students. Students are more likely to be influenced by online learning when they are new to it and insist on using it (Gyamfi & Sukseemuang, 2018). In learning to speak a language, the process is usually more effective when it is done face-to-face since several methods require interaction between students such as learning through drama or dialogues. However, if it is conducted remotely, it is necessary to pay attention to student readiness in learning, which is associated with their performance in online learning (Imsa-Ard, 2020). The enthusiasm of students in learning is a form of students' readiness which can be manifested in the form of motivation to learn. Previous studies indicated that there were problems with students' motivation related to drastic changes in the learning process due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Online learning is not an obstacle in carrying out teaching and learning activities. Similar to offline learning which is carried out in the classroom, online learning uses a platform to carry out learning. Online platforms promote inquiry-based learning and independent learning since they facilitate interaction between teachers and students despite being not in the same room (Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020). In practice, online learning has its challenges. Unlike offline learning, online learning requires teachers to pay close attention to students and ensure that all students have good online learning support facilities. Most students face some similar problems during online learning such as poor or unstable internet connection, lack of adequate teacher feedback and guidance, and interaction (Sukman & Mhunkongdee, 2021). Which eventually determines the effectiveness of online learning. Manegre and Sabiri (2022) stated that to have an effective virtual learning environment, teachers and students must have a stable internet connection and clear instructions and guides for online classes. The platform used in online learning has many features that teachers and students can use. Features used in virtual classrooms, such as audio or video calls, provide opportunities for students to interact constantly, increasing their engagement and sense of community (Berry, 2019). Since COVID-19, the use of online platforms for virtual learning has increased. Numerous applications are used to ensure the continuity of learning. Baron (2020) explained that various online applications can be used based on the needs of ongoing learning, such as Zoom and Google Hangout as a means of practicing speaking through dialogue, YouTube for practicing speaking in monologues, WhatsApp to communicate during the learning process, Skype and Zoom as a means for presentations. It is very useful for teachers to be able to adjust which applications are optimal for use in the teaching and learning process for their classes.

Several studies showed that online learning is effective in learning speak. Hamouda (2020) examined the effectiveness of virtual classes for university students and concluded that virtual classes have a significant impact on students' speaking abilities and provide students the freedom to express their views. In addition, Alshumaimeri and Alhumud (2021) conducted research on the effectiveness of virtual classes to improve communication skills through students' perspectives

and performance which were carried out on university students and found that students have a positive attitude in implementing virtual classes and virtual classes have a significant role in improving their abilities. The use of online platforms to improve students' speaking skills can be seen from the results of research conducted by Syafiq et al, (2021) who examined the use of YouTube to improve students' speaking skills and how to use YouTube for teaching and learning activities that can be implemented in class. The study involved 85 students and showed that YouTube videos could be used as English learning materials and that they could improve students' speaking skills in the aspects of pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and content. At the junior-high-school level, Yuniarti et al. (2019) conducted research on the effects of Edmodo and Schoology applications on teaching speaking and found that the two applications were effective in teaching speaking and improving students' speaking performance, especially in pronunciation and grammar.

Motivation is an important aspect of supporting students' achievement in learning, and online learning has presented certain challenges for some students. Meşe and Sevilen (2021) studied factors that serve as challenges for students in online learning, which include dissatisfaction with learning materials, lack of self-discipline, and lack of private space to take part in learning. Gustiani (2020) found that students have the high internal motivation and suggested paying more attention to external motivation factors since these factors are also integrated with students' self-determination in online learning. Students' motivation is an important component in achieving learning outcomes. In online learning where there is a distance between students and teachers, motivation becomes crucial in determining the results of student learning. The results of research from Baber (2020) show that motivation is important in determining successful learning outcomes and learning satisfaction. The research conducted by Silalahi (2018) shows that there is a correlation between students' motivation and students' speaking abilities which can be observed from students' speaking scores. The research also stated that most students with high motivation scores also have high score points in their speaking abilities. Furthermore, Fatimah and Sale (2019) stated that students' speaking scores increase in direct proportion to students' motivation. In addition, research conducted by Behforouz et al. (2021) on the role of gender in the level of students' learning motivation found that female students are slightly more motivated in online learning than male students. It also shows that online learning is preferred by students to improve their skills and assessing online learning is more interesting than offline learning. Muslimin and Harintama (2020) examined motivation, alternatives, and challenges during online learning and found that students have instrumental motivation as dominant and integrative motivation to help themselves in facing challenges during learning and passing the course.

Based on the above explanation as well as considering the drastic changes that have occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the differences in face-to-face and online speaking learning that may affect students' motivation in learning, this research aimed to examine students' motivation in learning speaking through online learning and students' speaking ability during the learning process.

## **Methodology**

A quantitative design was selected for this study. The participants of this study were 25 8th-grade students of Kaeng Sripoom school for the 2020/2021 academic year. There is only one study group for each class of junior high level at Kaeng Sripoom school, therefore the number of 8th-grade students was the entire population in this study, and the selected sampling technique was the saturated sampling technique. The instruments in this study included a speaking test and a questionnaire. The speaking test used a rubric adopted from Kassem (2018). The scoring for the speaking test was obtained from assessing students' performance in dialogues using scripted roleplay. The questionnaire included 10 questions modified from Cheng (2006) cited in (Abou

El-Seoud et al., 2014) and (Behforouz et al., 2021) adjusted based on the research needs with details of the Likert scale as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Likert Scale of Questionnaire

Scale	Point
Not all true	4
Not true	3
True	2
Extremely true	1

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were processed with SPSS software. In measuring the validity of the questionnaire, the Pearson method was utilized. From the result of validity, if the r-value was greater than the r-table, the items in the questionnaire were considered valid. At N(25) with a sig of 0.05, the r-table was 0.396, from 10 questionnaire questions, the lowest r-value was 0.543, and the highest value was 0.87 which indicates that the 10 question items in the questionnaire were valid. For reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha method was used and the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.923, which was greater than 0.7 and it was concluded that the questionnaire question items were reliable. The questionnaire was subsequently translated into Thai to make it easier for students to answer the questions.

The data analysis of this study used descriptive statistics with a frequency distribution method. From the frequency distribution, students' motivation and speaking ability were divided into 3 categories, namely low, moderate, and high.

## Results

Based on the research questionnaire, students' learning motivation was categorized into 3 levels as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Categories of Students' Motivation

Category	Formula	Frequency	Percentage
Low	$X < 19$	5	20%
Moderate	$19 \leq X < 32$	16	64%
High	$32 \leq X$	4	16%
Total		25	100%

The results show a mean of students' motivation of 26, a standard deviation of seven, a minimum score of 14, and a maximum score of 35. In the data analysis, there were three categories of students' motivation. The first category was students with low motivation ( $X < 19$ ) and there were five students with low motivation with a score below 19. The second category was students with moderate motivation ( $19 \leq X < 32$ ) and there were 16 students with moderate motivation with scores between 19 to 32. The third category was students with high motivation ( $32 \leq X$ ) and there were four students with high motivation with scores above 32. A description of the distribution of students' speaking test results is in Table 3.

Table 3 Distribution of Speaking Test Results

Category	Formula	Frequency	Percentage
Low	$X < 53$	6	24%
Moderate	$53 \leq X < 70$	17	68%
High	$70 \leq X$	2	8%
Total		25	100%

The scores of students' speaking tests were categorized from low to high. The most dominant student speaking score is the moderate category, which can be seen from the value of the frequency column. The minimum score for students' speaking test was 50 and the maximum score was 75. There were three categories of students' speaking test scores. The first category was low ( $X < 53$ ) with six students. The second category was moderate ( $53 \leq X < 70$ ) with 17 students. The third category was the high category ( $70 \leq X$ ) with two students.

## Discussion

The results of the questionnaire showed that the level of students' motivation in learning to speak online is moderate. In the low category with as many 5 children, students are not very familiar with online platforms. Since learning platforms are a form of learning environment like the classroom, students who are not familiar with learning platforms will find it difficult to participate in the learning process and their motivation will decrease due to these obstacles. In contrast to students who have high category motivation, and who are well acquainted with online learning platforms, it will not be difficult for these students to follow the course of learning. For the moderate category, the motivation category is in the middle and this creates confusion. Students know the learning platform but are not very proficient and this will have an impact on their engagement in participating in the learning process. In general, understanding both students and teachers on online learning platforms is very important to create a classroom atmosphere that is passionate about learning. Hamouda (2020) stated that the atmosphere of online learning strongly attracts students' attention. Hence, with the category of moderate students dominating, only a few students are in the high category.

Bagata et al. (2020) stated that online platforms shorten students' learning time and lighten their effort. Based on the questionnaire, students have the opportunity to improve their speaking skills in class and outside the class independently. This is in line with what was mentioned by Imsa-Ard (2020) that online learning can also help students adjust their learning pace. Students are motivated to learn on their outside of the class. The results of the questionnaire showed that some students do not easily participate in online learning, hence it is not surprising that the moderate category dominated the level of student motivation. Regarding the limitations of students in class and engagement outside the class, it showed that there is motivation within students to continue learning to speak online by themselves. This is in line with the findings of Gustiani (2020) regarding high internal motivation in students during online learning.

With the dominant results in the moderate category, it showed that students are confused. Online learning provides convenience in terms of effort and time which students can explore inside and outside the classroom. However, some obstacles are often identified in online learning, namely the problem of distance and internet networks where students must have a deeper motivation to be able to achieve learning goals while participating in online learning since teachers cannot monitor students directly and students are far from their friends, as found by Meşe nad Sevilen (2021) regarding self-discipline. This is what made students chose not to agree that online learning is sustainable and considered to disagree that online learning is more fun than face-to-face learning. This is also in line with the findings of Alshumaimeri and Alhumud (2021) in which students chose neutral if they had to choose online or offline learning. Sukman and Mhunkongdee (2021)

also found that students have no problem if online learning is continued but they prefer learning to be carried out offline. Furthermore, Imsa-Ard (2020) found that students are more comfortable with face-to-face classes and do not want online learning to continue for a long period. Behforouz et al. (2021) found that students are interested in online learning rather than traditional learning. Students also disagree if online learning continues. This can be related to the problems students face when online learning takes place. The frequently identified problem is internet data as found by (Sukman & Mhunkongdee, 2021) and (Bagata et al., 2020). Therefore, this is a concern for teachers to be able to ensure that both teachers and students have a good internet access network to support the learning process. If the internet network is reliable, it can establish good interactions between students as well as teachers and students. In addition, the problem of distance is also considered problematic in online learning. From observations during the learning process, interaction with students was discovered to be lacking. Moreover, the research was conducted between two countries. However, for interactions between students, despite distance learning, students can maintain their interaction, and if one student has difficulty, another student can help. Thus, students' motivation in learning is maintained even though learning is carried out online.

The results of the students' motivation questionnaire showed that there are more students with motivation in the moderate category as much as 64% and at the same time dominate the overall results of the questionnaire compared to students with low (20%) and students with high motivation (16%). Based on the results of the questionnaire, students find it easy to save time and effort while learning to speak through online classes and they feel that a lot of time can be used to improve their speaking skills outside of the class. In online learning, the obstacle faced by students is often internet data which usually disrupts interactions, as well as the distance between them. These are the reasons students have a moderate level of motivation in learning speaking through online learning. On the one hand, students benefit from saving time and effort, but on the other hand, they are constrained by interactions with their teachers and friends which can affect their learning motivation during online learning. However, based on the results of the questionnaire, students can maintain good interactions with their teacher or with their peers during the learning process. In the moderate category, there is confusion between agreeing that learning speaking online is advantageous and the realization of constraints found in online learning.

In the speaking test, students carried out role-play dialogues with their friends virtually. Roleplay was conducted with the text provided and students were welcome to change the dialogue or vocabulary based on their knowledge. From the results of the speaking test, 68% of students were in the moderate category. When referring to the findings of Baber (2020) that motivation has an important role in determining the success of learning outcomes, the results showed that students have moderate motivation as indicated by speaking test scores in online learning. Students' motivation, which can be seen based on students' speaking scores in this study, is in line with the research conducted by (Silalahi, 2018) and (Fatimah & Sale, 2019). Thus, it can be considered that 8% of students who scored in the high category and 24% of students in the low category have the same level category in their motivation. From students' scores on the speaking test, students' scores when taking online speaking lessons can be determined.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate students' motivation level in learning speaking through online learning as well as examine students' speaking scores in online learning speaking. To achieve this objective, 25 students from the Kaeng Sripoom school participated in this study. The findings showed the result from the questionnaire of the student's motivation level for online learning speaking online is moderate, and the result of the speaking test indicates that the student's speaking ability is also moderate category. Looking at the results of the speaking test and students'

motivation questionnaires, it can be concluded that students in the moderate category are dominant during online speaking lessons.

From the results of both students' motivation questionnaire and the speaking test score, students have the same level of motivation, namely moderate. In the moderate category, it shows that students find it easy in learning speaking online but also face obstacles that cause them to be unable to maximize their enthusiasm during online learning.

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