
Motivation of Students to Practice English Speaking in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the integrative and instrumental motivation of students at a university in Phitsanulok when they practice English speaking in their English as Foreign Language (EFL) classes. There were 75 undergraduate students who agreed to be participants in the study which included 25 students from each of the Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts (BALA), the Faculty of Science and Agricultural Technology (SAT), and the Faculty of Engineering (ENG). The participants were selected using a purposive sampling method to complete a 20-item questionnaire evaluating their motivation in practicing their English speaking. The results showed that the participants from the three faculties have a high level of motivation ($\bar{x}=4.04$, $SD=0.13$) to practice English speaking. Instrumental motivation ($\bar{x}=4.13$, $SD=0.20$) had a significantly higher mean than integrative motivation ($\bar{x}=3.94$, $SD=0.09$). It could be said that students of a university in Phitsanulok are highly motivated to practice speaking in English. Furthermore, students seem to believe that practicing speaking in English can help them find a job in the future and English-speaking experience could help them when they go abroad. Also, they tend to be more confident when they speak in English. The results of this study indicate that the motivation to practice speaking English among students at a university in Phitsanulok needs to be nurtured.

Keywords: integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, Thai university students, EFL students, English speaking

Introduction

English is a widely used language in many countries. In some other nations, English is the second or a foreign language. English is commonly used for communication with people who have different native languages. There have been some articles claiming that there are more than a billion people who can communicate in the English language, both as a native language and a non-native language. Among them is the account of Lyons (2017) who states that there are 1.35 billion users of the English language. The importance of English is not only related to the number of users but how

the language can be used in many ways. Some careers need English skills to function at work, such as staff in airports and hotels, tourist police, and guides. English in Thailand is categorized as a foreign language. English learning and teaching have been initiated over the years. Students need a long time to learn the four basic language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Among these four skills, speaking is considered a major one (Hussain, 2017). Ur (1996) claimed that speaking is the most important skill in communication. Having the ability to speak could open more doors to growth, development, and success. Despite the innovative and up-to-date pedagogical approaches being employed to teach English speaking to students in Thailand, the results remain insufficient (Wanich, 2014), resulting in Thai students lagging behind other non-native English-speaking nationalities. Thai students seem to have a need to build their confidence in speaking English. With the right motivation, Thai students could improve their English-speaking proficiency (Boonkit, 2010; Khamkhien, 2011).

According to Dornyei (1998), motivation is defined as a “process whereby a certain amount of instigation force arises, initiates action, and persists as long as no other force comes into play to weaken it and thereby terminate the action, or until the planned outcome has been reached.” Balog and Pribeanu (2010) also explained that motivation is necessary to thrive in the learning process. Furthermore, students have different motivations to learn the English language. Some students desire to learn English to obtain a high-paying job, while others use it for travel and communication with other nationalities (Gardner, 1985a).

Motivation is the drive of any human being to move toward a certain goal. Guay et.al (2010) stated that motivation is the purpose of any causal behavior, and it is fundamental in the hopes and achievements of any individual. Interestingly, motivation has direct connections to the learning process and it has significant influences on English learning (Al Mamun et. al, 2012; Quadir, 2011).

Accordingly, this study investigates Thai EFL students at a university in Phitsanulok to understand what motivates them to practice English speaking. These EFL students were studying general courses which include English for academic and technical purposes. The courses also covers some speaking parts where the EFL students have to speak in front of their peers or classmates and professors. This paper aims to increase our understanding of what motivated these EFL students to practice their English-speaking skill.

Objectives

This study had two objectives as follows:

1. to investigate what motivated students at a university in Phitsanulok to practice speaking in English; and
2. to investigate what type of motivation, integrative or instrumental, tended to have higher weight with students of a university in Phitsanulok when practicing English speaking.

Scope

This study aims to investigate motivation in learning English speaking. The population in this study were 200 first-year students from three faculties; namely, the Faculty of Engineering (ENG), the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SAT), and the Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Art (BALA) at a university in Phitsanulok. This study was conducted in the first semester of the Academic Year 2021-2022. This study employed only 75 participants, 25 students from each of the three faculties using the purposive sampling technique.

Literature Review

Definition of motivation

Motivation can be defined as the inner drive for students to learn a particular topic. Islam (1999) further agreed that motivation is a drive that moves people to do or achieve something. Usually, it is used to describe the force that pushes humans to do something or define the human behavior. So for students, motivation propels them to work harder and to do or be better. However, Dornyei (1996) stated that motivation does not solely explain why human do something as many studies use different theories to explain the phenomenon. In the view of Pintrich and Schunk (1996), motivation involves many mental processes. They stated that “motivation is the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained.” Furthermore, it should not be assumed that motivation is a mental state, emotion, or goal. People often misunderstand motivation. Essentially, motivation should be understood as a process of action. Thus, Dornyei’s (1998) study claimed that motivation is the force to make humans do something, and defined motivation as a process where a specific amount of instigation force emerges, initiates action, and persists until the desired outcome is reached or until another force intervenes to weaken it and end the action.

Integrative and instrumental motivations

According to Brown (2000) and Gardner (1985b), motivations can be divided into two types: integrative and instrumental motivation.

Integrative motivation is used in a great deal of research in second or foreign language learning. Integrative motivation is the aspiration to learn a second or foreign language, an interest in learning a language community, or an attitude to the language of the community (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Moreover, integrative motivation is about the language that learners like to learn to enter a targeted community and become part of the community, according to Gardner and Lambert (1959 as cited in Gilakjani et al., 2012).

Instrumental motivation is different from integrative motivation. This type of motivation happens when learners want to achieve learning a second or foreign language as a tool to succeed in their goals. According to Crookes and Schmidt (1991),

“instrumental motivation has a more functional reason for learning a language to get a better job or a promotion or to pass a required examination.” These two types of motivation are elaborated in learning a language, however, they come accompanied by different reasons or attitudes to learning. Gardner (1977) clearly defined the concept of the two types of motivation with their reasons. Integrative motivations are those that show a desire to learn the language in order to interact and communicate with others who speak the language as a second language. Instrumental motivations are those that emphasize the practical benefits of learning a second language without a specific desire to interact with speakers of that second language.

The success or failure of language learning is influenced by both integrative and instrumental motivation. Finding the answer to the question of motivation must therefore relate to these two categories of motivation. However, integrative and instrumental motivation do not necessarily mean that they are mutually exclusive. According to Brown (2000), it is uncommon for learners learning a second language to select one type of motivation, rather they combine both types of motivation, instrumental and integrative. For example, students are willing to learn English for academic purposes but also want to use it for entertainment purposes.

The interplay between integrative and instrumental motivations provides a comprehensive framework for understanding why individuals embark on the journey of learning English. While integrative motivation emphasizes cultural connection and identity, instrumental motivation underscores the practical advantages associated with language proficiency. Recognizing and addressing both dimensions can inform educators and language programmers to create more engaging and effective learning environments.

Motivation to study the English language

Motivation plays a pivotal role in driving language learners to engage in the complex process of acquiring a new language. Understanding the various motivational factors provides insights into learners' dedication and persistence in studying English (Dörnyei, 2005). Motivation can be multifaceted, encompassing both integrative and instrumental elements that contribute to learners' language acquisition journey. In addition to integrative and instrumental motivations, social motivation centers around the desire for social interaction and communication. Language learners are often motivated by the prospect of connecting with others, fostering relationships, and participating in meaningful conversations, which is particularly relevant in the context of learning a global language such as English (Dörnyei, 2005).

Nowadays, many studies aim to understand the role of motivation in language learning. According to Gilakjani et.al (2012), the success of attaining the goals for any person depends on the effort and desire to do anything to achieve it. So, the success of learning a language depends on the motivation. Language learners spend a long time learning and need the motivation to study or retain what they learn. Furthermore, according to Dörnyei (1998), human behavior is guided and given energy by motivation. Therefore, motivation is the main element to drive people to succeed in

learning a language. Also, according to Dital (2012), learners who have high attitudes toward learning a language will have both instrumental and integrative motivation.

Motivation to study English is a dynamic amalgam of integrative, instrumental, social factors, and other elements in the motivation spectrum. Individuals may experience a combination of these motivations, and their intensity can vary over time. Thus, recognizing and catering to these motivational dimensions is crucial for educators and language programmers to create an environment that fosters sustained enthusiasm and dedication among language learners over an extended period of time.

Learning English speaking

Learning a language covers the learning of four basic skills, and speaking skill seems to be the most important skill in learning a second or a foreign language. As Ur (1996) reiterated, speaking uses all four language skills. According to Chaney and Burk (1998), speaking skill is the ability to create and communicate meaning in a variety of contexts using both verbal and nonverbal symbols. So, speaking is a skill that language learners cannot avoid in order to be successful. Moreover, speaking skills can improve the other three language skills, so learners cannot avoid studying it in a second or foreign language. However, as speaking skill uses all of the four skills, this can make learners feel stressed. Therefore, learning to speak is more special than learning other skills.

Speaking English can provide a significant advantage to learners. According to LaRock (2019), the benefits in speaking English are learners can have more opportunities in life. English skills are important to gain an opportunity and the most required skill is speaking skill. According to Nurmala (2012), it is necessary for every person to have good speaking skills. English-speaking skill as a foreign language is not only the easiest of the four skills to convey information but this skill also has a large impact in terms of the business world. Speaking skill is required by many companies and workers are able to speak with clients in English. Therefore, speaking English skills will help people to achieve their goals in life.

Other related studies

There are numerous articles and research studies about integrative and instrumental motivations. The relevant information from these sources required to conduct the present study are outlined below.

Integrative and instrumental motivations have had positive effects on EFL or ESL students around the world. In the case of Iranian students, they had very high motivation and positive attitude toward learning English and were more instrumentally motivated (Vaezi, 2008). This study aimed to describe and examine Iranian undergraduate students' integrative and instrumental motivation toward learning English as a foreign language. In addition, integrative motivation was internally related as one of the determinants of motivation for learning EFL among Lebanese students (Kassim & Ghaith, 2008). Even for Chinese and Malaysian students, there were positive responses to motivation being integrated into English language learning. Furthermore, Liu (2007) investigated 202 third-year non-English majors in a southern university in

China using a 44-item survey and revealed that students had positive attitudes in learning English language and were slightly more motivated instrumentally. As for Malaysian students, it was found that they had high motivation toward learning English and had slightly more instrumental than integrative motivation (Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013).

In Thailand, some studies are relevant to motivation with implications for students or their attitudes in learning English. Based on the findings of Wimolmas' (2012) survey study of first year undergraduate students at Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology (SIIT), Thammasat University, language improvement programs and activities were discussed in accordance with their language difficulties as expressed in the open-ended questions to increase their motivation in English language learning. It was also suggested that there should be a few pertinent and practical motivational learning approaches to boost and improve the student's motivation.

Interestingly, Thai students seem to have high motivation toward learning English. Nuchnoi (2008) investigated the level of motivation among political science undergraduate students and affirmed that Thai students have a high motivation to learn English. The results also showed that students have highly instrumental motivation toward learning English. Similarly, Kitjaroonchai and Kitjaroonchai (2012) also showed that Thai students had high motivation to learn English in their research into the motivation toward English learning of Thai students majoring in English at Asia-Pacific International University, Thailand. Also, Choomthong and Chaichompoo (2015) studied English language motivation of Thai undergraduate students and showed that students had high motivation, and instrumental motivation was slightly higher than the other types of motivation. Finally, Degang (2010) researched motivation toward English language learning of 50 second-year undergraduate students majoring in business English at an English-medium university using a survey adapted from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and found a high motivation level. It could be perceived that Thai students have high motivation toward learning English.

The aforementioned studies show that motivation has a direct and indirect association with learning a language, specifically the English language. Lastly, success or failure in learning a second language is apparently determined by motivation.

Methodology

Participants

a. Population

The population was approximately 200 first-year undergraduate students at a university in Phitsanulok. They were studying for a bachelor's degree in different disciplines in the three facilities; namely the Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts (BALA), the Faculty of Engineering (ENG), and the Faculty of Science and Agricultural Technology (SAT).

b. Sampling method

The participants were selected by purposive sampling method. The sample participants were 75 first-year undergraduate students, 25 students from each faculty: 25 participants from BALA, 25 participants from ENG, and 25 participants from SAT.

Instruments

This study used a questionnaire as a research instrument. The questionnaire contained two sections. The first section asked about the participants' personal information: gender, age, and faculty. The second section was a set of statements about motivation in practicing speaking in English, both integrative and instrumental. The first part of this section contained 10 items concerning the importance of practicing English speaking. These items elucidated the motivation of the participants to learn English speaking for them to understand and communicate with other people. The second part also contained 10 items about the importance of practicing English speaking for them to achieve their goals and succeed in life or in their career.

The questionnaire used the five-point Likert scale with categories: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The study used Best's (1981) and Degang's (2010) scales to determine the level of agreement and disagreement among the participants. See Table 1.

Table 1

The 5-point Likert Scale with its range and level of interpretation

Scale	Range	Level	Score
5	Strongly agree	Very high	4.50-5.00
4	Agree	High	3.50-4.49
3	Moderate (Undecided)	Moderate	2.50-3.49
2	Disagree	Low	1.50-2.49
1	Strongly disagree	Very low	1.00-1.49

The questionnaire was validated by three experts in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching (ELT). The items in the questionnaire earned an Index of Item-Object Congruence (IOC) value which was greater than or equal to 0.5. After validation, the questionnaire had a total IOC value of 0.83 which meant that the items or statements in the questionnaire were reliable. Consequently, the questionnaire was revised according to the experts' suggestions before it was distributed to the participants.

Data collection method

The questionnaire was distributed to the participants in their English classes with the lecturer-in-charge and the researchers. At the time of the study, the 75 targeted participants were asked to fill out and answer the questionnaire during their English classes. The participants had to inform their gender, age, and faculty and then responded

to statements detailing their motivation to speak English. They returned the questionnaire within the given time limit of 50 minutes.

Data analyses

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Office Excel programs to find means and percentages. The data from the first section were calculated and presented in percentages. The data in the second section were calculated to find mean and standard deviation (SD). Lastly, paired sample *t*-test was computed to evaluate and compare the mean results between the two types of motivation.

Results and Analyses

This research aimed to study the motivation of students to practice their English speaking in their EFL classrooms. The data were collected using questionnaires. The participants were 75 first-year undergraduate students from the three faculties at a university in Phitsanulok.

Part 1: Personal Information

Table 2

Demographic profiles of the participants

Gender	n	Percent
Male	48	64
Female	27	36
Total	75	100
Age		
18	38	50.7
19	29	38.7
20 and above	8	10.7
Total	75	100
Faculty		
Business Administration and Liberal Arts (BALA)	25	33.33
Science and Agricultural Technology (SAT)	25	33.33
Engineering (ENG)	25	33.33
Total	75	100

Table 2 shows that the 48 or 64% of participants were male, the majority, while 27 or 36% were female. This indicates that the participants were a male-dominated group. In terms of age, 18 years old were at majority with 50.7%. The others were 19 years old at 38.7% and 20 years old and above at 8.3%. This is the usual age range of the first-year level in the university. Table 2 also shows the number and percentage of

the participants from each of the three faculties, with 25 participants or 33.33% from each faculty.

Part 2. Results on the integrative and instrumental motivation to practice speaking English

Table 3

Integrative motivation of the participants

Statements	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D.
1. Studying English speaking is important to me because I can understand more about culture.	4.21	0.08
2. Studying English speaking is important to me because I will be able to sing some English songs.	3.89	0.40
3. Practicing English speaking can be important for me because I will be able to join activities with who can speak English.	4.17	0.24
4. Speaking in English helps me to better understand the accents of various English speakers.	4.27	0.12
5. Practicing English speaking helps me to easily make friends with foreigners.	4.11	0.33
6. Practicing English speaking helps me to associate with foreigners and learn about them.	4.11	0.24
7. English speaking helps me to be an open-minded person.	4.00	0.02
8. English speaking can boost my confidence.	4.22	0.12
9. I enjoy speaking in English.	4.05	0.22
10. I enjoy speaking with native-English speakers more than my original language.	2.37	0.30
TOTAL	3.94	0.15

Table 3 shows that the participants have high integrative motivation with a mean score of 3.94 (SD=0.15). Under the integrative motivation, the statement which garnered the highest mean score of 4.27 (SD=0.12) was *Speaking in English helps me to better understand the accents of various English speakers*. It was followed by the statement *English speaking can boost my confidence* which earned a 4.22 mean score (SD=0.12). Moreover, the statement *Studying English speaking is important to me because I can understand more about culture* had 4.21 (SD=0.08) as its mean score. All of the statements including the three previous ones had a high level of motivation except for one statement. Interestingly, the statement *I enjoy speaking with native-English speakers more than my original language* garnered a 2.37 mean score which can be interpreted as a low level of motivation.

As a whole, most of the participants had a high level of integrative motivation. They try to practice English speaking because they want to understand English speakers. Speaking English can be a confidence booster for them as well as speaking the language can be a tool for them to become more culturally diverse. On the one hand, the

participants clearly disagree that they enjoy speaking with native-English speakers, hence they still have a strong adherence to their mother language.

Table 4

Instrumental motivation of the participants

Statements	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D.
1. English speaking can be important for me because it will help me to get a job in the future.	4.41	0.10
2. English speaking can be important for me because I need to use it for my future career.	4.32	0.25
3. English speaking can be important for me because I don't want to be embarrassed when I speak in real situation with English speakers.	4.26	0.04
4. English speaking can be important for me because other people will respect me more.	3.81	0.20
5. English speaking can be important for me because it will help me to investigate or ask something in person.	3.99	0.14
6. English speaking can help me when I travel abroad.	4.39	0.04
7. Speaking English is important to me because it will help me to achieve good performances and commendations at school.	3.82	0.13
8. I practice speaking in English diligently because I want good grades in English subjects.	4.17	0.21
9. I practice speaking in English diligently because it is an important tool for communication.	4.04	0.19
10. English speaking can be important for me because I need to use it when I render any public speaking engagement.	4.08	0.24
TOTAL	4.13	0.24

Table 4 shows that the overall mean score was 4.13 (SD=0.24) from participants garnering a high level of instrumental motivation. The statement which gathered the highest mean score at 4.41 (SD=0.1) was *English speaking can be important for me because it will help me to get a job in the future*. The statement *English speaking can help me when I travel abroad* had a mean score of 4.39 (SD=0.04) from the participants. The statement *English speaking can be important for me because I need to use it for my future career* had a mean of 4.32 (SD=0.25), and the statement *English speaking can be important for me because other people will respect me more* got the lowest mean score at 3.81 (SD=0.2). All of the statements had a high level of motivation among them.

To sum up the results for each type of motivation, instrumental motivation is at a high level for the participants to practice English speaking. Primarily, the reason why they had this level of motivation was that they could use their English-speaking ability when they finish studying at the university.

Table 5*Mean scores of integrative and instrumental motivations among the three faculties*

Types of Motivation	BALA	ENG	SAT	Total Mean	S.D.	Level
Integrative	4.0	3.90	3.93	3.94	0.20	High
Instrumental	4.23	4.04	4.12	4.13	0.09	High
TOTAL	4.12	3.97	4.03	4.04	0.13	High

Table 5 illustrates the total mean scores of the responses of the participants. Furthermore, it also elucidates the comparison between integrative and instrumental motivation among the three faculties. There is a high level of motivation among the participants. It shows that both types of motivation have slightly different results with instrumental motivation having a slightly higher motivation with a mean of 4.13 (SD=0.09) while integrative motivation is at 3.94 (SD=0.20). However, both types of motivation garnered a high level of motivation among the participants.

Students' motivations at a university in Phitsanulok revealed that they had almost equal total mean scores between integrative and instrumental motivation. However, the instrumental motivation mean was slightly more dominant than integrative motivation. Moreover, instrumental was a more dominant motivation in each of the faculty.

Part 3. Results on comparison of mean scores of the integrative and instrumental motivations to practice speaking English among the participants

Table 6*Comparison of the means of integrative and instrumental motivation through t-test*

	Paired Samples Test							
	<i>Paired Differences</i>							
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Standards Error Mean</i>	<i>95% Confidence of Interval</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
				<i>Upper</i>	<i>Lower</i>			
<i>Pair 1</i>	-0.19	4.389	0.809	-9.218	-5.789	-9.93	74	0.000
<i>Integrative</i>								
<i>Instrumental</i>								

Paired *t*-test was done to determine whether the mean of instrumental motivation was significantly higher than the mean of integral motivation. As shown in Table 6, the mean of instrumental motivation (\bar{x} =4.13, SD=0.09) was significantly higher than the mean of integrative motivation (\bar{x} =3.94, SD=0.20), $t_{(74)} = -9.93$, $p < 0.001$.

In summary, most of the participants thought that practicing English speaking was more valuable for their success and future.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This study attempted to investigate the types of motivation of the students, both integrative and instrumental, at a university in Phitsanulok vis-à-vis the practice of speaking English among the 75 participants in their first year-level from three faculties. It revealed that these EFL students had a high level of motivation to practice English speaking, both integrative and instrumental. Significantly, instrumental motivation to practice English speaking seems to have a higher concern among them rather than integrative motivation which means that their motivation to practice English speaking is mostly related to their success and future careers.

The students in this study believed that English speaking can be important for them because it may help them to obtain employment in the future and to travel to other countries. Also, they tend to be more confident when they speak in English. Moreover, they practice English speaking because they think that they could earn more respect when they know how to speak the language. Nevertheless, they are not yet comfortable speaking with native-English speakers.

Motivation to practice English speaking among students at a university in Phitsanulok needs to be nurtured in terms of both types of motivation, otherwise, the motivation for some students will gradually decrease. According to Liu (2005), students can be demotivated in learning if proper motivation factors are not maintained. This means that to improve motivation and prevent the demotivation of the students at a university in Phitsanulok, both types of motivation need to be maintained equally.

Discussions and implications of the study

Learning English needs to occur over the long term to achieve success, and motivation is important to make the students continue to learn or enhance their skills in many aspects. Motivation plays a large role to achieve success in a second language. So, in order to accomplish English-speaking skills, students need some motivation to reach their goals and researchers need to investigate the factors motivating them to practice speaking English. The present study supports the previous study of Nurmala (2012) who found it was necessary to have good speaking skills as a tool to succeed in the business sphere. Similarly, the students who participated in this study believed that practicing English speaking could also serve as a tool, regardless of their speed and pace to acquire the skills, for them to reach a specific goal that they try to achieve after completing their university degree. This study also coincides with the findings of Degang (2010) who revealed that Thai students have a high motivation toward learning English speaking with instrumental motivation seeming to be more of a concern among Thai students, both specified and determined.

Moreover, instrumental motivation appears to be of significance for Asian learners. Malaysian pre-university students considered instrumental motivation could be a good tool to learn a language (Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013). This is also the result of a study among Chinese learners which favored instrument motivation to study English (Liu, 2007). Furthermore, both of these studies from Asian countries where English is considered as a foreign or second language showed a positive attitude toward instrumental and even other types of motivation. As a result, for effective improvement of the students of a university in Phitsanulok or other schools and academic institutions in the future, it is necessary to provide lessons that increase and maintain both types of motivation, instrumental and integrative.

Limitations

The findings of the study specifically reflected the motivation in a certain group of participants; the results from 75 participants who were first-year students in a university in Phitsanulok do not represent or can be generalized to the other groups of students.

Recommendation for future studies

The findings of this study were unique for the particular group of students; the students had almost equal motivation value in both integrative and instrumental motivation. Thus, the following recommendations for future research are made:

1. This study had only 75 students as participants. Further studies could have more participants to increase accurate and reliable outcomes. The subject could be twelfth-grade school students for a longer time lesson plan.
2. This study used only close-ended questions or statements to collect data. Future studies could employ a greater range of methods such as interviews to gain more in-depth data.
3. This study investigated only integrative and instrumental motivation. Future studies could include more types of motivation to investigate, such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation or attitude toward practicing English speaking.

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