

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Nowadays, English is extremely important in global connectivity when people use English as a communicative language; apart from their native language, people communicate and share their ideas via English more than in the past. For this reason, many nations are eager to educate and cultivate English language in their citizens, so that the citizens are able to use English efficiently as a global language to share more information, receive updated news and also communicate with other people across the world. One example is Thailand, the Thai government attempts to develop a good English curriculum focusing on English skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing that enable Thai students to study English from kindergarten. However; although, the government particularly emphasizes the English skills, senior Thai undergraduate students who have spent approximately 15 years at English study still face English learning problems and one of the crucial problems is their English speaking.

According to the stated problem, senior Thai undergraduate students are not able to speak English proficiently. They do not dare to speak English confidently, because they are afraid that they might use English incorrectly which might lead to a misunderstanding or a communication breakdown from speaking English. Probably, the problem of Thai students is a lack of confidence in speaking English due to their deficient pronunciation, weak grammatical structures, unclear listening skills, and also a poor knowledge of vocabulary.

For this reason, the researcher would like to study some factors influencing the confidence in speaking English of senior Thai undergraduate students at Srinakharinwirot. However, because of the differences in personal characteristics and attitudes towards speaking English, these factors might have an effect on senior Thai undergraduate students' confidence. Some senior Thai undergraduate students who become more familiar with English might be more confident than other students who are not accustomed to English. Therefore, to support senior Thai undergraduate students to strengthen their confidence, the researcher will explore the degree of

senior Thai undergraduate students' confidence, their attitudes toward English speaking, and also activities that they normally do in order to support their confidence in speaking English in daily life and also in their future careers.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### **1.2.1 Main Question**

What are the factors influencing confidence in speaking English by Thai senior undergraduate students at Srinakharinwirot University?

### **1.2.2 Sub Questions**

1. To what degree do senior Thai undergraduate students at Srinakharinwirot University feel confident in speaking English?
2. What is their attitude towards speaking English?

## **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.3.1 Main Objective**

To explore the factors that influences the confidence in speaking English by senior Thai undergraduate students at Srinakharinwirot University.

### **1.3.2 Sub Objectives**

1. To investigate the degree of senior Thai undergraduate students' confidence in speaking English at Srinakharinwirot University.
2. To survey the attitude of senior Thai undergraduate students in speaking English at Srinakharinwirot University

## **1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The research aims to study senior Thai undergraduate students at Srinakharinwirot University who are studying in the last year of their bachelor's degree. The samplings come from 13 faculties as follows: Faculty of Education, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social Science, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Dentistry, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Fine Arts, Faculty of Health Science, Faculty of Nursing, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Faculty of Physical Education and International College for Sustainability Study. Therefore, the students at other levels who do not study in the last year are not included in the

sampling group, and the students who are not the senior graduate students at Srinakharinwirot University will not be selected to participate in the study either.

Although, the researcher found some more factors that might have an impact on the confidence in speaking English of the students like living abroad and chatting with foreign friends, the researcher can not use these factors because of only a few samplings which are concerned with these factors. Therefore, a limitation of the study is the number of sample. The sample should be adequate and relate to each factor in order to be used to find the factors influencing confidence in speaking English.

The scope of the study will start from November 2008 to the end of February 2009 by revising literature, determining samples and revising questions. The implementation phase which comprised distributing questionnaires and collecting data will be completed within December 2008. The analysis phase and data verification will be processed through January 2009. Finally, the report phase will be finished in February 2009.

## 1.5 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1. **Students' confidence in English speaking** means a belief that enables students to communicate with people in English without shyness or anxiety.
2. **Senior Thai undergraduate students** mean Thai undergraduate students in their final year before graduation.
3. **Attending English activities** means paying attention to activities related to English content seriously such as listening to English songs or news, seeing English movies or reading English books.
4. **Attitude towards English speaking** means a degree of agreement towards the importance of English speaking in daily life and careers in the future.
5. **Motivation** means the psychological factor that arouses students to speak English more or any aspect which give purpose and direction to any behavior in speaking English.
6. **Anxiety** means the students' concern or uncertainty which disturbs their mind and makes them uneasy about speaking English.
7. **English grammatical structure** means the structural patterns of English which are used to create phrases or sentences combined with English words.

8. **English vocabulary means** English words in which each word has its meaning.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study can indicate the personal factors influencing confidence in speaking English of senior Thai undergraduate students at Srinakharinwirot University. The result of the study might be beneficial for the students who have less confidence but require developing more confidence in their English speaking. The result of the study can indicate some factors or English activities that might support the students' speaking skills. Additionally, the faculties or the university can arrange activities, according to the students' participation, in order to give them confidence in speaking English.

## **1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study of factors influencing confidence towards English speaking of senior Thai undergraduate students at Srinakharinwirot in this paper is divided into five chapters.

1.7.1 The first chapter deals with the introduction of this research paper which consists of background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, definitions of terms, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

1.7.2 The second chapter focuses on the review of related literature concerning the theory of the self-determination approach to motivation, communicators anxiety, communicative language learning and teaching, the student's English background knowledge and experience studying and relevant research papers.

1.7.3 The third chapter concerns the research methodology, including the subject, materials, procedures, and data analysis.

1.7.4 The fourth chapter presents the result of the study.

1.7.5 The last chapter provides the conclusions, discussions, and recommendations for further study.