

Abstract

This study aims to explore the development of spoken English proficiency of Thai adult learners using the audiolingual method (ALM) and their opinions concerning their English speaking abilities, the role of English and the ALM.

Two groups of seven participants each of Thammasat University's Pridi Banomyong Library personnel took part in this study. One was the "librarian group" whose jobs require specialized knowledge; the participants work in the multimedia room and the reference service section. The other was the "staff group" who deal with routine matters in the circulation service section and the bag deposit section. Each group took an applied ALM course for 19.5 hours. The data collection instruments consisted of 1) tasks and questions in English used in the teaching, and 2) pre-course and post-course questionnaires.

Analyses of data reveal that, before taking the course, the speaking abilities of both the librarian and staff groups were low. After taking the course, the former group improved to the good level and the latter to the medium level.

The results show that, based on the questionnaires, after taking the course the participants learned more vocabulary and felt confident in speaking English. However, they felt they needed more practice and they wanted to learn more English grammar. Also, they were still afraid of not being understood by foreigners.

The findings indicate that, after attending the course, the participants had a more positive view of studying English and were of the opinion that ALM is a good method for teaching speaking English to adult learners.