A study to assess the communication skills of Chinese students at Memorial University

SHI LINLIN [1], DR. NIDHI AGARWAL[2a]
[1]PhD Research Scholar in Education, Lincoln University, Malaysia
[2] Professor in Lincoln University, Malaysia
Contact details: [a] dr.nidhi@lincoln.edu.my

ABSTRACT

One of the most crucial talents that a Chinese Memorial University student may have been the ability to communicate effectively with others. Throughout their stay at the university, students Was encounter a wide range of situations, both within and outside of the classroom, that call for effective communication. Group work and public speaking are two examples of such activities. Given this context, this study aims to investigate college students' level of communication competence. There were eleven facets of a person's communication skills that could be assessed using a questionnaire that they would be responsible for giving to themselves. Verbal, written, and social behaviour were all covered. The reliability of the questionnaire was adequate across all sub-components of the overall construct. The results of this study suggest that college students have matured to the point where they have developed effective communication skills. There are many different language, literacy, and/or communication-related educational programmes out there, and these terms can vary from country to country. The latter is the focus of this paper; it has long been associated with vocational training and is sometimes seen as a "key" or "core" talent within the context of a broader set of life and employment abilities. As China has emerged as a major player in the global economy in recent years, education has played an increasingly important role in the country's policies and growth. The goal of this research is to find out how teachers and students at three Chinese vocational colleges for higher education felt about the inclusion of a key skills communication course.

KEYWORDS: Communicative Abilities**,** Academic Pursuits, Knowledge Acquisition, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

1. INTRODUCTION:

Over the past two decades, China's economy, society, and culture have undergone significant shifts as a result of the country's reform and increasing commercial involvement. The increasing globalisation of Chinese businesses and MNCs has prompted some to demand for a reevaluation of the country's educational curriculum and standards, citing concerns about the quality of the workforce. The capacity to effectively communicate is "crucial for everyday living and professional advancement, both socially and systematically," as mentioned in the definition.

Communication and other once important talents may not be as vital in modern China, according to the Occupational Talents Test Authority of China. The study's overarching goals are to better understand what "key skills" means in the Chinese educational setting, to analyse its relevance, and to establish whether or not certain pedagogical techniques and curricula are required to foster their development. The bigger research focused on three Chinese vocational schools, and its results informed the creation of a communication-focused core curriculum. Although attendance was mandatory, the course could not be used to earn credit or a diploma. Since the students' academic pursuits was have far-reaching ramifications for their professional and economic futures, this piece tackles both social and political problems. It was difficult for everyone concerned to adapt to traditional Chinese educational practices, which put an emphasis on "knowledge acquisition and focus on learning that is classroom, teacher, and textbook-centered." This section discusses why scholars in China continue to argue over whether or not communication is an art form or a skill. Learn more about these topics from China's point of view by reading this report from the American Council on Education's National Council for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. The research also considers how a person's sense of self, professional opportunities, and social status could benefit from better communication skills **(Harris, 2015).**

In their study of current university professors, they identified three types of skills essential to the profession: core competencies, general professional competences, and specialised competencies. A strong desire to study is essential for acquiring even the most fundamental skills. Research skills, together with the necessary education and experience, are crucial. The ability to inspire students to exert themselves intellectually is a crucial talent for any educator. Professors in higher education report that students' increasing expectations make it more challenging to deliver an effective education. Effective educators in technical fields recognise the importance of lifelong learning and growth in these areas. This type of social connection is growing in importance in the countries of the North Caucasus. To stop the spread of the ethnic violence currently plaguing southern Russia, more training in effective communication is required **(Nurzija, 2015).**

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

The Communicative Approach, which gained popularity in the second part of the twentieth century, is still felt in today's classrooms. In spite of the fact that there is no officially recognised CLT model, CLT is frequently used in English language instruction due to the adaptability of the ideas involved. In this piece, they'll take a look at CLT from the perspective of a Chinese university to see if it makes sense there. As was previously said, the "functional and communicative potential of language" served as inspiration for the creation of CLT. One of the most crucial qualities is not just fluency in the language, but also everything else that goes along with it. Instead, they need to learn how to communicate effectively through the use of language. Instead of focusing on

grammatical rules and vocabulary lists, it is important to consider why they communicate in the first place. To put it another way, the primary responsibility of the teacher in a CLT classroom is to "guide and monitor" the students' linguistic interactions with one another. The success of any CLT activity depends on the instructor's ability to present communicative tasks that are appropriate for each student based on their current level of knowledge and skill in the target language. To ensure their students are making progress and are able to understand and use the target language, CLT teachers need to design engaging communicative activities that cater to their students' individual levels of knowledge and skill **(Mcintosh, 2016).**

Since many people are unhappy with more conventional techniques of teaching English, such as the Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual Methods, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become the gold standard (ELT). A lack of instruction from these methods prevented students from acquiring the linguistic competence necessary to communicate effectively in the target language. The aim of the Communicative Method is to teach children how to communicate with others in a way that is open and honest. With this shift, the focus shifts from "grammar competence" to "knowledge and skills required to apply grammar and other components of language appropriately for a variety of communicative aims," as put out by Richards. All these appear to have had a role in the development of communicative language teaching methods: Michael Long's interaction hypothesis and Dell Hymes' theory of communication skills are consistent with one another **(Parry, 2020).**

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT:

"Communication has also been defined as sharing and giving meaning occurring at the same time through symbolic interactions and a university student should take the opportunity in any activities that develop communication skills in a wider and complete aspect as it is one of the elements of generic skills that are essential among university students. Effectiveness of communication is sought after rather than merely accuracy or fluency, as most traditional approaches do."

In the study Iksan that reported It's too early to tell whether the theories put forward in this essay have any sway in the classroom. Study findings might assist China's instructors enhance students' communication skills, resulting in increased interest in this field of study **(Iksan, 2018).**

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

i. To understand the willingness of Chinese students to communicate with each other in the University.
ii. To evaluate the ways Chinese students with each other in the University.
iii. To examine the communication barriers for Chinese university students.

iv. To define alternate ways to communicate with each other.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Information transmission is intrinsically intertwined with interaction, perception, and involvement. A person's whole personality evolves as a consequence of their social abilities. One's "inner world" becomes more transparent via communication. That implies everyone participant has to have their own distinct "inner world." Consequently, they may say that communication is the exchange of messages between two or more people in order to share and gain knowledge, understanding, and empathy. Persuasion is the process of influencing someone else's thinking via conversation. It's possible that both verbal and nonverbal cues are used to encode the message (such as body language, mime, gestures, and tone). In order to understand the signals being sent, one must have the knowledge to decode them. Therefore, both parties' activities are essential to the communication cycle's completion. What someone says, asks, or offers as a reward during a discussion might reveal or conceal their genuine motives. Think about who knows who in a conversation to get a sense of the dynamics at play **(Anatolievna, 2017).**

Despite the emphasis on the integration of communicative competence with cognate performance in the literature on competency-based education, the focus often shifts away from an assessment of measurable skills and towards an evaluation of behavioural attributes, framing communication as a collection of quantitative abilities. This concept is at odds with the idea that "performance" is the "complex product of a number of psychological processes," as well as the notion that "performance" is a "socially positioned" effort and "cooperative" endeavour. The term "communication skills" refers to a set of "goal-directed, interrelated, circumstance-appropriate social behaviours that can be learned and are within the individual's control." Use of the phrase "situationally suitable" serves to emphasise the value of both setting and human interaction. Price stressed the need of clear communication once again **(Zhang, 2019).**

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:
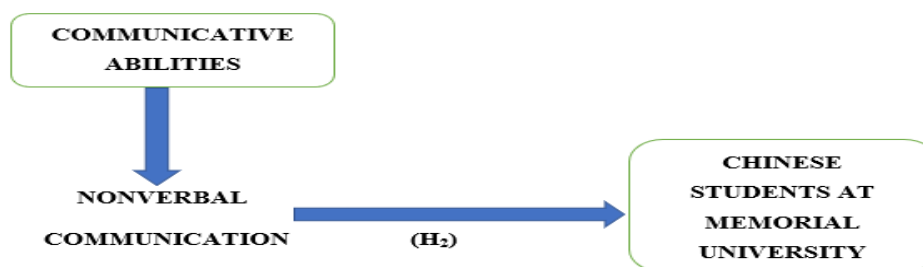
7. METHODOLOGY:

Sampling: In this research, a random sample of 1415 students from around the institution served as the participants.

Research Instruments:

When students had trouble understanding one another due to language barriers, it was expected that they would find other ways to transmit their meaning. This study's students participated in a role-playing activity that needed two-way communication as well as a definition formulation exercise that required just one-way exchange of information.

Data Collection Procedures:

The information was collected in the spring of the academic year 2022. Both role playing and the creation of their own definitions were required of the pupils. At first, all of the smartest kids were taken out of class and made to wait in another room. The researcher ensured that the tasks were communicated to the students in a manner that they could fully grasp and know what was expected of them. The first two assignments gave pupils the chance to act out roles and create their own definitions. Each team of two received their assignment in a separate room. It was hard for students to brief their classmates on their assignments since they were not allowed to return to the waiting area or classroom after finishing each work. After completing an assignment, high-proficiency students were required to wait outside the classroom until a group of low-proficiency students was called inside. Video recordings of student presentations were transcribed in full.

Statistical Software: MS-Excel and SPSS 25 was used for Statistical analysis.

Statistical tools: The pilot research has four objectives. As a preliminary step, made certain that the role-playing theme and lexical elements employed in the definition formulation exercise weren't too challenging for the students at this level. The second goal was to make sure that the pupils knew what they were supposed to perform and that the instructions were clear. As a third step, it was necessary to identify any potential issues or challenges that may develop throughout the data collection process in order to prevent them during the primary research. Lastly, the goal was to test out the communication strategy taxonomy that would be utilised in the main research.

8. RESULT:

8.1 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is often used to verify the latent component structure of a set of measurement items (FA). It is believed that latent (or unseen) factors account for the observed (or measured) scores. Modeling is at the heart of accuracy analysis (FA). It focuses on modelling the interplay of seen

occurrences, undiscovered causes, and measurement error. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test may be used to determine whether the data is suitable for factor analysis. Both individual model variables and the whole model are tested to ensure sufficient sampling. Data analysis reveals the extent to which many variables may have some common variance. In most cases, a lower proportion indicates that the data is more amenable to factor analysis. KMO returns values between zero and one. The sample size is adequate if and only if the KMO value is between 0.8 and 1.0. A KMO of less than 0.6 indicates inadequate sampling and calls for adjustment. Some authors utilise the number 0.5 for this purpose; somewhere between 0.5 and 0.6, they'll have to use their discretion.

• KMO If it's close to zero, then means the sum of the correlations is tiny compared to the size of the partial correlations. To restate, large-scale correlations are a significant obstacle to component analysis. Here are Kaiser's minimum and maximum standards: Kaiser's minimum and maximum standards are as follows. Faltering between 0.050 and 0.059.

Below-average (0.60-0.69) In the middle school level, typically, With a quality point value between 0.80 and 0.89. Incredible diversity exists between 0.90 and 1.00.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.980
	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

The first phase of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) involves determining whether or not the data can be used for undertaking factor analysis. In this respect, Kaiser proposed that the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measure of sampling adequacy coefficient value should be more than 0.5 as a basic minimum for carrying out factor analysis. This is because KMO stands for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy. This research yielded a KMO value of .980 for the data that was utilised. In addition, the significance level was determined to be 0.00 according to Bartlett's test of sphericity.

8.2 Test for Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a working assumption or speculation that may be debated and tested to determine how likely it is to be right. Notwithstanding a broad review of related earlier research, the first step in the scientific method is the creation of a working hypothesis. In a hypothesis, they may see the outcomes of our inquiry. A hypothesis is a statement about the answer to a research topic that has not yet been confirmed. It may be necessary to generate many hypotheses to probe different aspects of the research problem, depending on its size.

- **Nonverbal Communication**

Several aspects of nonverbal conduct may be directly linked to words. The connection between and nonverbal exchanges is both dependent and autonomous. Several forms of nonverbal communication may be rendered word for word with remarkable precision. The connection between words and actions may be seen in many common gestures. The gesture of folded hands for namaste, the gesture of handshake, a grin, a frown, etc., may all be translated into words. There is a subset of nonverbal behaviour that is integral to communication and is used to emphasise certain words or phrases. Movements of the head and hands are used more often with words and phrases to emphasise them.

In the questionnaire used for the study, 20 questions representing Likert scale were used. The detailed response. The table shows the minimum value for the Likert scale which is 1. Similarly, the maximum value of Likert scale in the questionnaire is 5. The mean for all the Likert scale questions is represented in the table and the overall mean for the questions was found to be 4.18. The highest mean among all the 20 questions was for the question 16, i.e., 4.29 and the lowest mean recorded was for question 5, i.e., 4.09.

ANOVA test (H₂)

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	75207.347	436	4700.459	572.417	.000
Within Groups	681.563	978	8.212		
Total	75888.910	1414			

In this study, the result is significant. The value of F is 572.417, which reaches significance with a *p*-value of .000 (which is less than the .05 alpha level). This means the *"H₂: There is a significant relationship between nonverbal Communication and Chinese students at memorial university." is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected."* is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

9. CONCLUSION:

Both teachers and students agreed that the ability to communicate effectively is vital. They also understood the value of improving their communication abilities to a higher degree. Teachers and students alike recognised that development was a multifaceted process dependent on interaction with others and exposure to new information. The traditional approach, in which the lecturer

usually just talks at the students, was shown to be ineffective. An examination of the idea of communication and the significant talents that surfaced from the case studies revealed that critical thinking abilities were among the employability skills that arose. Students' views of themselves as social creatures with agency were generally favourable. There would be more engaging and thought-provoking exchanges of ideas if they could improve their communication skills, which they felt would make them more adaptable and self-assured and help them better integrate into their social and professional networks. They were given the chance to speak and be heard for the first time in an environment designed to encourage development in both language and culture. This is in line with the research of, who emphasised the importance of open and honest dialogue in fostering growth in introspection, inspiration, and value orientation; it has found widespread acceptance in China. This highlights the complex character of these skills, which go beyond technical knowledge or overt proficiencies that may be learned by mechanical training techniques. From this, they may infer that good communication has the capacity to expand one's horizons, make it easier to deal with the challenges posed by the aforementioned social and political transformations, and meet the challenges posed by the new demands of employability and globalisation.

10. LIMITATION:

If they're curious in the dynamic between native and non-native speakers, they can also observe this. Learning how native speakers engage in conversation might help students who are not yet fluent in the language. In the future, it may be able to study the intercultural dynamics of a sample of students from both native and non-native nations. It would be interesting to find out whether or not students with high language skills, students with limited language abilities, and native students all employed the same or different tactics. Seeing how EFL learners and teachers interact would be a fascinating topic for research.

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