

Identifying Chinese College EFL Students' Needs for an Oral Communication Instruction Module

Wang Yang¹, Soo Ruey Shing^{2*}

¹²Faculty of Education, Language and Communication,
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
wangyangbrooke@gmail.com
rsoo@unimas.my

¹College of Foreign Languages, JiLin Agricultural University, China
*Corresponding Author

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Abstract: This study examines the difficulties encountered by Chinese college students who are learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in oral communication. It also offers recommendation for the creation of a specialised module called the Oral Communication Instruction Module (OCIM) to address their specific needs. The research employs a mixed-methods technique to collect quantitative data from 394 third-semester students and qualitative insights through semi-structured interviews from 20 students and 8 experienced EFL instructors from a public university in China. The findings indicate significant challenges in grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, speech fluency, and the use of effective communication strategies. These obstacles hinder students' competence to effectively participate in academic and social situations, impacting their overall language skills and self-assurance. The study highlights the importance of integrating practical communication tasks, engaging teaching approaches, and a supportive classroom environment to tackle these problems. The proposed OCIM seeks to address deficiencies in oral communication competence, such as pronunciation challenges, limited vocabulary, and ineffective communication strategies, by offering a well-organized and thorough framework tailored to the specific needs of Chinese students learning English as a foreign language, which include targeted pronunciation practice, vocabulary development, and culturally relevant communication strategies. The curriculum aims to promote students' academic achievement, increase their employability in a globalised job market, and boost their confidence in using English by enhancing their oral communication abilities. This research provides significant insights for educators and policymakers who are seeking to enhance EFL instruction and increase student learning outcomes.

Keywords: Oral Communication Instruction Module, Chinese college EFL students, Needs analysis, Communication competence

1. Introduction

English oral communication has become increasingly crucial in the corporate and educational sectors due to globalisation. With increasing global interconnectedness, the ability to communicate successfully in English goes beyond just language aptitude and instead becomes an essential talent for achieving professional success and fostering international collaboration (Huang, 2019; Tan, 2020). The current worldwide situation has resulted in an increased emphasis on the development of oral English communication competence, especially in nations where English is taught as a non-native

language (EFL), including China. China has acknowledged the importance of improving the oral English skills of its college students to satisfy the requirements of the global economy and international collaboration (Li, 2023).

The 2020 Chinese English Teaching Guideline represents a notable shift in the pedagogical methodology for English language instruction in China, placing a strong focus on oral communication (Chinese University English Teaching Guideline, 2020 edition). This guideline presents a comprehensive framework aimed at fostering the oral proficiency of Chinese EFL college students, which outlines a progressive framework consisting of three levels: basic, enhanced, and developmental objectives. Each level is designed to gradually strengthen students' competence in different aspects of oral communication. This guideline also reflects an educational philosophy that aims to provide students with not only language skills but also the ability to skilfully navigate intricate social and professional circumstances.

Despite these ambitious objectives, the current level of oral English communication competence among Chinese college students is worrisome (Liu, 2019). Past studies have shown a significant lack in students' competence to communicate orally, which negatively affects their chances of getting hired and hinders their capacity to actively participate in professional environments (Li, 2023). The existence of this gap can be ascribed to several factors, such as the absence of specialised instruction in oral communication in the educational curriculum, insufficient teaching resources, and a predominant concentration on reading and writing abilities, neglecting spoken English (Li, 2023).

Hence, it is crucial to investigate methods for identifying the specific requirements of Chinese college students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in order to enhance their oral communication competence. Additionally, developing a module to increase their competence in oral communication is considered a significant matter that warrants further examination. Nevertheless, my research contends that tertiary students need proficiency in oral communication and the implementation of techniques that might enhance their performance in oral communication tasks. This study suggests that an instructional programme designed to enhance oral communication competence would benefit Chinese college students studying English as a foreign language. Prior to formulating a module, it is essential to conduct research to examine the needs of Chinese college EFL students in regard to oral communication learning.

2. A Review of Studies on EFL Students' Difficulties in Oral Communication

In a study to explore the challenges encountered by students in settings for English as a Foreign Language (EFL), specifically in oral communication, Nguyen, L. T. et al. (2021) and Samira Al Hosni (2014) critically evaluate the influence of curriculum design on oral communication competency. It was discovered that there are relatively few tasks offered, especially in teaching speaking. This is in congruent with recent findings that emphasize the need to include more interactive speaking opportunities in language education. These studies argue in favour of making changes to the curriculum to promote communicative competence. According to past research, there are not many assignments explicitly developed to teach speaking in EFL contexts, including China (Liu, 2019). This finding underscores the need for more targeted pedagogical strategies in such environments. Existing activities generally include asking and answering questions, with a focus on digging for certain frameworks that prioritise form over meaning. There is a noticeable lack of assignments that foster communicative use of English, implying that textbooks do not give enough opportunity for students to practise communicative English. They suggested that the curriculum should include communicative activities to ensure students have regular opportunities for speaking. Although these studies provide useful insights into improving speaking skills by modifying the curriculum, their qualitative approach and limited scope restrict the applicability of their results. This highlights the need for more comprehensive and universally relevant research.

Jiménez (2015) conducted research in Costa Rica to investigate the role of motivational variables, educational contexts, and native language interference as barriers to language acquisition. She discovered that these components severely reduce pupils' capacity to acquire a second language. Jiménez's study suggests that improving motivational tactics, modifying educational environments,

and addressing native language interference can all help with language acquisition. Her research, however, is restricted by the small sample size and the Costa Rican educational context.

Similarly, Tareen et al. (2023) investigated challenges in oral presentations, particularly focusing on fluency disruptions and pronunciation errors. The findings indicate important problems that learners experience when communicating orally. Tareen et al. propose focused therapies to improve fluency and pronunciation. Nonetheless, their study is restricted by its small sample size and narrow educational focus. These constraints highlight the necessity for larger-scale research that can reach global representativeness.

Lemana (2022) investigated the application of pedagogical strategies, such as circumlocution, to improve school students' oral communication in EFL classrooms. His research yielded noteworthy insights, including the efficiency of personalised instructional strategies in meeting the diverse demands of language learners. Lemana (2022) advocated using these personalised tactics to improve oral communication abilities. However, the study's relevance is limited because it focuses on a specific demographic and educational situation. In a similar vein, Salvacion (2021) investigated the effects of instructional practices on EFL learners' oral communication skills. Their research emphasised the importance of using a variety of teaching strategies, such as task-based learning and differentiated instruction, to meet the needs of various learners. They advocated incorporating these various strategies into EFL teaching practices to increase students' interest and competency. Despite the useful insights, the study's shortcomings include a limited sample demographic and a unique context, emphasising the need for further research involving varied student groups and learning situations.

Affective aspects appear as a key subject in EFL learning. For example, Tran (2023) conducted a qualitative study in Vietnamese EFL classrooms, emphasising the importance of lecturer-student connections and classroom belongingness in affecting students' motivation and learning outcomes. Tran's (2023) research discovered that strong emotional connections in the classroom dramatically increase student engagement and achievement. The study proposes creating supportive classroom conditions to enhance EFL learning experiences. However, one disadvantage of this study is that it focuses on a specific cultural environment, which may not be applicable to other contexts. Lemana et al. (2023) conducted quantitative research on Filipino ESL students to determine the impacts of self-motivation, confidence, and anxiety on learning. Their findings highlighted the critical role of emotional and psychological elements in EFL learning outcomes. They advocate employing measures to raise self-esteem and minimise anxiety in order to improve students' performance. Nonetheless, the localised nature of this study highlights the need for larger studies across varied global EFL contexts to fully understand the impact of affective elements on language learning.

3. Needs Analysis for Chinese college EFL students' oral communication

To enhance the oral communication skills of college EFL students, it is essential to create an instructional module that is tailored to their specific requirements. The aim of developing these instructional materials is to avoid making sweeping generalisations or hasty judgements, whether the programme is brief or extended. In order to acquire information about the specific requirements and preferences of targeted students regarding oral communication, it is necessary to conduct a systematic needs assessment or needs analysis. This evaluation will help in interpreting the gathered information and making informed choices about the design of oral communication education modules. Incorporating a suitable theoretical model in the requirements assessment tools might enhance the accuracy of the input, since the needs assessment process is cyclical and has a significant impact on the overall course design (Graves & Xu, 2000). Concerning this issue, the examination of Chinese college EFL students' requirements for proficiency in spoken communication may be seen as including knowledge in oral communication (including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) as well as techniques for effective oral communication.

These knowledge and strategies are not merely didactic content but are the vehicles through which improvements in communication competence are realized. This research intends to create and apply an Oral Communication Instruction Module (OCIM) geared exclusively for Chinese college students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL), with the goal of improving their oral

communication skills. The techniques established within this OCIM directly address specific communicative demands and challenges identified during the initial needs assessment, such as difficulties in using appropriate vocabulary, frequent grammatical errors, pronunciation issues, and a lack of effective communication strategies.

3.1 Approaches to Needs Analysis

Developing an instructional module for oral communication for Chinese college EFL students is a challenging endeavour that requires multiple procedures, sources, and materials. In addition to these steps, needs analysis is regarded as the fundamental element of the entire design route. While the results of a needs assessment may not be completely accurate, the variability can be reduced to some extent by using a suitable approach (Soo, 2020).

The theoretical basis for conducting needs assessment would rely on the approaches of present situation analysis (PSA) and target situation analysis (TSA) (Dudley Evans & St John, 1998). By employing these two approaches, the examination of Chinese college EFL students' needs for improving their oral communication competence can be approached from three aspects: (i) challenges faced in oral communication; (ii) needs for an instruction module to improve oral communication competence, and (iii) teachers' suggestion for an instruction module. The first part of this study focuses on analysing the difficulties faced by Chinese college EFL students in oral communication. The outcome derived from this aspect aids in assessing the challenges faced by students and identifying the areas that require necessary intervention. The second and third factors decide the content that should be included and the areas that require improvement in the oral communication education module.

The TSA approach specifically emphasises the students' needs upon completion of a course and their performance at the targeted level. This level is determined by the specific communicative competences that students are expected to achieve, which are essential for their future academic or professional environments. This study considers the oral communication needs of Chinese college EFL students in a classroom setting. The aim of this study is to conduct a needs analysis that informs the development of a tailored module, ultimately leading to the creation of a syllabus (Jordan, 1997). Specifically, it focuses on assessing the oral communication competence of Chinese college EFL students, including their knowledge (lexical, grammatical, pronunciation), strategies, and motivation in oral communication.

However, a present situation analysis (PSA) would be included as a supplement to TSA, offering more understanding of the learners' existing communication abilities before the start of the course. If needs assessment is considered a continuum, each of these approaches may represent the two separate ends (Soo, 2020). PSA seeks to assess the learners' characteristics, such as their current level of oral communication, before the start of a course. On the other hand, TSA intends to evaluate the expected performance of the learners upon the completion of the course. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), "PSA provides an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in language, skills, and learning experiences." (p.125) The needs assessment process starts with the establishment of the intended learning objectives, also known as TSA. It then continues to examine the learners' strengths and weaknesses in relation to these desired results, referred to as PSA.

The TSA and PSA represent the two endpoints of the range (Soo, 2020), as was previously mentioned. In this study, the recommended approach is to initially assess the necessary oral communication skills of Chinese college EFL students by following the processes outlined in TSA. Subsequently, their competence in these skills can be evaluated. The PSA assesses the student's present level of oral proficiency, taking into account their knowledge, methods, and motivation as outlined in the TSA. The disparity between the TSA and PSA data is crucial in determining the contents of the instruction module. In short, when it comes to needs assessment, both TSA and PSA rely on one another.

After obtaining, analysing, and interpreting the information from the requirements assessment, the aims, objectives, and substance of the instruction module can be developed. Nevertheless, before being immediately implemented in course planning, all information collected in needs analysis must undergo interpretation (Richards, 2001). This suggests that not all of the oral

communication demands of Chinese college EFL students will be feasible or appropriate to cover in a course; thus, some of them will have to be prioritised. Accordingly, requirements assessment is neither a flexible nor a value-free procedure (Kathpalia & Heah, 2007). In this study, the researcher's understanding of the course material, limitations imposed by the institution, and the student's perception of their own requirements all influence the selection of instructional materials.

4. Methods

This study used a mixed-methods methodology, including both quantitative and qualitative data collection in two distinct research phases: Phase I focused on quantitative needs analysis, while Phase II centred on a qualitative needs analysis. The mixed-methods approach was considered the best strategy for conducting needs analysis as it requires the use of data from multiple sources to capture complex educational phenomena (Soo & Goh, 2020).

4.1 Contexts and Participants

The research was conducted at a public university in China and involved both third-semester EFL students who had completed their mandatory first-year English courses and experienced EFL teachers (10-23 years). 394 students in the third semester participated in Phase I. The student participants had completed the compulsory courses for the first year of college English, indicating a comprehensive understanding of the goals, content, materials, and teaching methods in the college English classroom and thus being suitable as participants. In Phase II, 20 EFL students were interviewed. In addition, the second phase consisted of semi-structured interviews involving eight EFL teachers who have experience teaching general English courses at the college level. Given that the teachers have a minimum of 10 years of experience in teaching, these instructors might have deeper insights and understanding regarding the challenges in the teaching process, student needs, and the effectiveness of teaching methods.

4.2 Instruments and Data Collection

Phase I involves the use of a questionnaire called the "Chinese EFL Learner's Oral Communication Difficulty Survey" to collect data about the Chinese EFL learners' difficulties and needs for oral communication. Twenty oral communication tasks were covered in the questionnaire items, which were deemed important for designing the Oral Communication Instruction Module (OCIM). The questionnaire comprised of 20 items which covered four primary topics relating to oral communication issues that EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students encounter. The areas are: (1) grammatical and sentence structure, which focuses on students' ability to construct correct and coherent sentences; (2) pronunciation and fluency, which evaluates the clarity of speech and smoothness of verbal expression; (3) classroom learning environment, which investigates how the educational setting influences oral communication; and (4) oral communication competence, which examines the students' oral communication abilities. These items were adapted from Amoah and Yeboah's (2021) studies. The questionnaire items for PSA seek to identify the difficulties of Chinese college EFL students in oral communication. The data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Semi-structured interviews in Phase II aimed to investigate the needs of Chinese college EFL students on what should be included in the instruction module to improve their oral communication competence in class (e.g., expectancies, goals, and needs). Twenty third-semester EFL students who participated in the survey were interviewed in Chinese, using six questions adapted from Ahmed (2015). The semi-structured interview questions for the students covered both PSA and TSA. Besides, eight EFL teachers were invited for semi-structured interviews to give opinions about college EFL students' present situation, problems with oral communication competence and suggestions for designing the OCIM. Similarly, the interview questions were adapted from Ahmed (2015). In addition, to prevent biasness during interviews (Cohen et al., 2007), every college EFL teacher and student was surveyed using identical predetermined questions that were carefully arranged and phrased in a

uniform way (Patton, 2002). In order to ease this process and to ensure consistency in data collection, the college EFL teachers and students were given a list of the interview questions before the actual interview.

5. Findings

5.1 PSA: Difficulties encountered by Chinese college EFL students in oral communication

The questionnaire's result (see Table 1) indicated that Chinese college EFL students had several challenges in different areas of oral communication. These conclusions were drawn from the responses of 394 participants. The issues faced by the students in successfully communicating in English were classified into four main categories: grammatical and sentence structure, pronunciation and fluency, classroom learning environment, and oral communication strategies. Each category posed distinct obstacles to the students' communication competence.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of having difficulty in different oral communication (N=394)

Categories	Percentage (%)				
	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	5
Category 1: Grammatical and Sentence Structure					
1. I find it difficult to communicate in English without making grammatical mistakes	3.9 (17)	5.3 (23)	26.0 (113)	30.4 (132)	34.3 (149)
2. I find it a difficult task to make English tenses correctly	5.5 (24)	10.1 (44)	38.5 (167)	24.7 (107)	21.2 (92)
3. On saying something in English, I always find it difficult to say it directly without phrasing it in Chinese, and then translating it into English	3.9 (17)	7.6 (33)	29.3 (127)	27.2 (118)	32.0 (139)
Category 2: Pronunciation and Fluency					
4. Fluent English pronunciation is difficult for me	6.2 (27)	9.5 (41)	30.9 (134)	27.4 (119)	26.0 (113)
5. I find it difficult to pronounce like native English speakers.	4.6 (20)	7.4 (32)	29.5 (128)	28.1 (122)	30.4 (132)
Category 3: Classroom Learning Environment					
6. I find it difficult when my teacher uses Chinese while explaining English lessons	25.8 (112)	26.0 (113)	30.7 (133)	9.9 (43)	7.6 (33)
7. I find it difficult when my teacher uses English while explaining English lessons	7.8 (34)	12.7 (55)	36.6 (159)	24.4 (106)	18.4 (80)
8. I find it difficult to communicate with classmates and teachers in English during English lessons	5.5 (24)	9.9 (43)	36.9 (160)	28.6 (124)	19.1 (83)
9. I find it difficult when I have to communicate with others without preparation during English lessons	3.7 (16)	7.4 (32)	28.3 (123)	32.0 (139)	28.6 (124)
10. I find it difficult to answer questions in an English classroom	6.7 (29)	10.6 (46)	36.2 (157)	26.0 (113)	20.5 (89)
11. I find it difficult to debate in English in the presence of other students during English lessons	3.7 (16)	6.5 (28)	27.0 (117)	27.4 (119)	35.5 (154)
12. I find it difficult to understand every word the teacher says in the English classroom	11.1 (48)	18.2 (79)	39.6 (172)	16.8 (73)	14.3 (62)

Categories	Percentage (%)				
	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	5
13. I find it difficult to voluntarily answer questions during English lessons	6.0 (26)	7.4 (32)	36.6 (159)	25.8 (112)	24.2 (105)
Category 4: Oral Communication Competence					
14. I find it difficult to communicate with foreigners in English	4.2 (18)	7.1 (31)	34.8 (151)	28.3 (123)	25.6 (111)
15. I find it difficult whenever I communicate in English without hesitation	4.2 (18)	4.4 (19)	33.4 (145)	26.7 (116)	31.3 (136)
16. I find it difficult to communicate with others in English outside the English classroom	5.3 (23)	9.5 (41)	32.3 (140)	27.9 (121)	25.1 (109)
17. I find it difficult trying to explain important issues to friends in English	5.3 (23)	7.8 (34)	31.6 (137)	26.7 (116)	28.6 (124)
18. I find it difficult to even remember the words or phrases I know from the English classroom	7.4 (32)	16.1 (70)	42.4 (184)	18.2 (79)	15.9 (69)
19. I find it difficult to narrate or describe events orderly in English	5.1 (22)	7.6 (33)	34.8 (151)	29.3 (127)	23.3 (101)
20. I find it difficult to present my academic research in English during oral presentations	2.8 (12)	5.3 (23)	28.3 (123)	27.7 (120)	35.9 (156)

Key: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3= neutral; 4 = agree; 5= strongly agree

Students had substantial difficulties in achieving grammatical accuracy and sentence coherence, underscoring a key obstacle in attaining oral communication knowledge. A significant proportion of 64.7% of participants had considerable difficulty communicating in English without committing grammatical mistakes. Likewise, a significant number of individuals (45.9%) had challenges understanding English tenses. Furthermore, the significant proportion of individuals (59.2%) who rely on translating their ideas from Chinese to English before speaking indicates a strong dependence on their mother tongue, which impedes direct communication in English.

Issues of pronunciation and fluency were also noteworthy. Approximately half of the students (53.5%) had significant difficulties in achieving fluent English pronunciation, while 58.6% experienced great challenges in speaking with native English speakers. These problems not only impact students' self-assurance but also their competence to engage actively in discussions, which is vital for acquiring and mastering a language.

The classroom setting significantly influences the process of acquiring linguistic skills. The survey revealed that 60.6% of students acknowledged the challenge of spontaneous communication during English sessions, while 62.9% admitted struggling with debating in English in the presence of their peers. Moreover, the difficulties encountered in spontaneous communication, comprehending professors, and engaging in discussions or debates highlight the need for increased interactive and immersive English practice opportunities inside the classroom.

In terms of oral communication competence, students face significant challenges when using English in various contexts. Specifically, 53.9% of students report difficulties in effectively communicating with foreigners, indicating gaps in their ability to manage real-life conversations. Additionally, 58.1% of students struggle to express themselves confidently in English, reflecting broader issues with fluency and coherence. These challenges extend beyond the classroom, as evidenced by 63.6% of students who report substantial difficulties in delivering academic presentations and articulating research findings in English, highlighting the overall need for improvement in their oral communication competence.

The questionnaire highlights the complex difficulties encountered by Chinese college EFL students in achieving proficiency in spoken English communication. These findings emphasise the significance of focused teaching methods that target particular areas of challenge, such as enhancing

grammar knowledge, improving pronunciation and fluency, cultivating a supportive and immersive English-speaking classroom setting, and developing practical communication strategies. It is essential to tackle these issues to assist students in overcoming obstacles to efficient English communication. This will ultimately improve their overall competency and confidence in using the language, both in academic and social contexts.

Meanwhile, the semi-structured interview with Chinese college EFL students and teachers also revealed the oral communication challenges experienced by these students. For instance, the students said that they were weak in pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. This is shown in the subsequent excerpts, which were translated from Chinese. The students' views or ideas expressed during the interviews were retained in the translated excerpts to ensure originality.

My ability to connect words smoothly and express myself in English is very poor, struggling with word order and tense, and often not knowing how to say certain words.
(student 2)

My oral English is very poor, lacking in vocabulary and practical speaking experience, and my pronunciation needs significant improvement.
(student 15)

Besides that, Chinese college EFL teachers commented that the students were weak in vocabulary, grammatical expression, pronunciation, confidence, and class participation.

Many students find themselves lacking sufficient vocabulary and grammar knowledge to express their ideas accurately and fluently in oral communication. Some students may struggle with pronunciation errors or inaccurate intonation, resulting in less clear and natural oral expression. Some students may lack confidence in their oral communication skills, fearing mistakes or judgment from others, which can impact their ability to express themselves effectively.
(teacher 8)

My students' oral English is uneven; some are very smooth, and some have difficulty expressing themselves. Moreover, students' incorrect use of grammar often makes their expressions difficult to understand.
(teacher 1)

5.2 TSA: Expectation for oral communication instruction module

The findings from the semi-structured interview revealed an expectation (TSA) of oral communication among Chinese college EFL students. The examination of the qualitative data revealed specific oral communication skills that Chinese college EFL students were expected to develop, such as fluency, pronunciation accuracy, and effective use of communication strategies. These findings highlight the importance of incorporating these elements into the instructional module. The following tasks must be considered while designing an instructional module for oral communication. Consequently, the instructional material should focus on helping students carry out such a task.

5.2.1 Chinese college EFL students' expectation for oral communication instruction module

As part of the needs analysis requirements, inquiries about the Chinese college EFL students anticipated learning what they expected to learn in an oral communication instruction module to improve oral communication competence. Generally, over 80% of students wanted to enhance their fundamental oral communication abilities, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, as well as build confidence in their ability to communicate with others in English. It demonstrates an understanding of the key concepts required for effective communication. In addition, about 60% of the students indicated a tremendous willingness to study and utilise English in real-world

circumstances. This includes targets such as mastering public speaking, learning to begin and maintain discussions, and comprehending cultural subtleties, showing a shift from classroom learning to real-world applications. Finally, the students suggest that the activities be modelled after real-life experiences, such as role-playing, discussions, and interactions with native speakers, emphasising the value of doing. This reflects a pedagogical predilection for immersive learning settings that encourage active engagement and the direct application of language skills. This can be seen in the subsequent replies.

I want to improve my pronunciation to be easily understood and to respond to questions in English swiftly and clearly.

(student 1)

My goals are to become more confident in initiating communication, improve my listening skills to better understand others, and work on my accent.

(student 4)

Improving logical thinking and correct pronunciation during daily communications, aiming for complete and continuous sentences, is my focus.

(student 5)

I aim to broaden my vocabulary, correctly apply grammar, and refine my pronunciation.

(student 15)

My goals are to overcome nervousness and lack of confidence in speaking English and to enhance my listening and comprehension skills of others' spoken English.

(student 6)

5.2.2 Chinese college EFL teachers' expectation for oral communication instruction module

As a crucial component of the needs analysis, the Chinese college EFL teachers were also queried regarding the specific areas of oral communication they desire their students to enhance, as well as the recommended content and activities to foster improvement in their students' oral communication competence. Chinese college EFL teachers unanimously acknowledge a wish for their students to improve many aspects of oral communication.

We can design some exchanges or debates around a certain topic.

(teacher 1)

I wish my students can improve their English for daily communication in various situations.

(teacher 4)

I hope they can improve listening comprehension and their ability to express ideas clearly.

(teacher 6)

I want my students to improve their ability to express ideas clearly, use appropriate language, and demonstrate fluency and pronunciation.

(teacher 3)

Furthermore, the educators suggested an extensive range of teaching content designed to promote oral communication abilities through captivating and authentic situations.

In class, teachers can divide students into groups, and then let them communicate or debate on a certain topic.

(teacher 1)

I would suggest comprehensive activities including dialogues, discussions, role-play, and multimedia resources for listening practice.

(teacher 7)

Design speaking activities that simulate real-life communication situations, like role-plays, debates, discussions, presentations, and problem-solving tasks.

(teacher 8)

Finally, instructors also offered a variety of interactive ways to carry out oral communication activities, stressing the value of a nurturing and stimulating learning environment.

Let students express their opinions through the form of achievement display.

(teacher 1)

Activities would include discussions, role-plays, debates, and group work to enhance communication skills and boost student confidence.

(teacher 6)

I will use various methods, including speaking activities, role-plays, feedback, and self-assessment to create a safe environment for students.

(teacher 5)

The remarks from the teachers' interviews highlighted their shared goal of creating an oral communication instruction module in Chinese college EFL programmes that is more dynamic, interesting, and successful.

6. Discussion and recommendation for oral communication instruction module

Considering the findings and evaluations from the phases of both quantitative and qualitative research, it is clear that Chinese college EFL students encounter significant difficulties in communicating orally in English. The hurdles encompass a range of issues, including grammatical errors, pronunciation obstacles, limited fluency, and ineffective communication strategies (Xie, 2019; Guo, 2020). The study's conclusions suggest a marked demand among students for improvements in practical communication skills applicable to both academic and real-life contexts. They demonstrate a strong desire to improve their pronunciation, expand their vocabulary, increase their fluency, and boost their general confidence in utilising the English language (Fu, 2020; Ji, 2022). This is consistent with the comments received from EFL teachers who support a pedagogical approach that is characterised by increased interactivity, engagement, and authenticity in simulating real-life communication scenarios (Arianie, 2017; Santoso, 2018; Chen & Cai, 2022).

The findings suggest numerous recommendations for the Oral Communication Instruction Module (OCIM) to address the communication skills gap among Chinese college EFL students. Firstly, the OCIM should stress the incorporation of real-life communication tasks that mimic actual linguistic and cultural contexts, such as role-playing, discussions, and simulations. This method will allow students to engage in and enhance their spoken English abilities in diverse contexts (Suchada & Tasanameelaep, 2018; Rahman & Maarof, 2018; Katemba & Grace, 2023)

Furthermore, the module should incorporate interactive teaching approaches that encourage active involvement and participation from students. Engaging in activities such as group discussions, peer reviews, and collaborative projects can foster a conducive learning environment, enhancing students' self-assurance in English communication. Also, it is crucial to place a particular emphasis on improving pronunciation and expanding one's vocabulary (Bora, 2021; Mister, 2023). The OCIM could incorporate specialised sessions for phonetic instruction, seminars on pronunciation, and

activities to enhance vocabulary, all customised to address the unique requirements and skill levels of the students.

Technology may play a key role in enriching the learning experience. By using multimedia resources, language learning software, and internet platforms, students can have access to a wide range of materials for practice and independent study (Badan & Onishchenko, 2021; Hafour, 2022). These tools provide individualised feedback and introduce pupils to diverse language accents and cultural material.

Moreover, cultivating a nurturing classroom atmosphere is of utmost importance (Kutasi, 2023). Educators should endeavour to establish an environment that mitigates students' apprehension and trepidation about making errors, fostering a culture of open dialogue and a disposition to learn from mistakes. Additionally, promoting introspection and self-evaluation among students helps cultivate a sense of responsibility for their educational journey (Tyas, 2020). These elements were considered by including reflective journals and peer feedback sessions in the OCIM. They could foster students' critical evaluation of their own development and establishment of personal achievement goals. Through introspection of their communication encounters and establishing individual objectives, students can pinpoint precise areas for enhancement and actively strive towards augmenting their oral communication aptitude.

Interacting with individuals who speak the language as their first language and exposing pupils to genuine cultural settings are integral components of the OCIM module as these components can greatly enhance their educational journey (Miranda & Wahyudin, 2023). Furthermore, engaging students in language exchange programmes or virtual meet-ups could also be included in the OCIM module as an additional component. However, it might require a longer learning time.

Ultimately, the effective execution of the OCIM heavily relies on the imperative enhancement of instructors' professional development. Offering educators the chance to acquire and implement cutting-edge pedagogical techniques centred around verbal interaction might augment the efficacy of the instructional module (Alam, 2021).

To summarise, the creation and execution of a thorough OCIM requires a multidimensional strategy that tackles the various facets of oral communication competence. To significantly enhance Chinese college EFL students' skills and confidence in English communication, instructors should customise the instructional content and approaches to align with their specific linguistic challenges, cultural background, and learning preferences, ensuring the teaching methods directly address their unique needs and expectations. Consequently, this will greatly enhance their academic accomplishments and prospects for future employment.

7. Conclusion

A thorough investigation into the oral English communication competence of Chinese college EFL students in this study indicates considerable students challenges and highlights the crucial need for instructional intervention. The study's results emphasise the complex and diverse nature of obstacles to oral communication experienced by these students. These obstacles include errors in grammar, challenges in pronunciation, restricted fluency, and ineffective tactics for communication. This is similar to Xie's (2019) and Guo's (2020) findings. Additionally, present study reveals a strong desire among the students to strengthen their communication competence, aligning with the expectations of the present globalised world and the demands of the worldwide work environment.

The purpose of developing and implementing the Oral Communication Instruction Module (OCIM) is to address the students' deficiency in oral English communication competence. This module provides a curriculum that is both relevant and adaptable. The OCIM contents emphasize the importance of practical communication practice in real-world situations, interactive learning experiences, and the use of technology to create diverse learning opportunities. Additionally, the curriculum focuses on creating a supportive learning environment that encourages risk-taking, reduces communication anxiety, and builds learners' confidence.

Ultimately, this study makes a substantial contribution to the field of English language instruction in China. It thoroughly investigates the difficulties encountered by college students studying English as a foreign language in oral communication and puts forth a well-organised

instructional framework to tackle these obstacles. The OCIM has the potential to revolutionise English language training for Chinese college EFL students by addressing their individual needs and utilising the expertise of experienced educators. This will result in more effective and relevant instruction that meets the requirements of global communication. This effort has the potential to improve the spoken English skills of Chinese college students and provide them with the necessary skills to actively engage in the global community. This will enable them to succeed professionally and contribute to international collaboration (Jiao, 2021). The successful implementation of such a module involves constant review and customisation to ensure it remains sensitive to the developing requirements of learners, thereby marking a significant step forward in English language instruction in China.

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9. References

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