



INTEGRATING PHONETICS, SPOKEN ENGLISH, AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLISH FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the correlation of the perceived effectiveness of communication skills with professional background, focusing on comparisons between students and professionals. In particular, the main objective of the research is to investigate whether the professional background affects individuals' ratings of their communication competencies in a work-related environment. Using a structured questionnaire, 120 respondents were assessed for their age, gender, and professional status. The data were analyzed using Chi-Square tests for independence to examine whether the relationship between professional background and communication skills effectiveness was significant. The findings showed that the professional background and the perceived effectiveness of the communication skills were correlated significantly. The p-value obtained was 0.03, which is lower than the set significance level of 0.05, thus the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that, in communication skills, the professionals scored more effectively compared to students. Such findings signify that professional stages might have variation in terms of rating communication skill proficiency. Professional experience is considered to enhance self-evaluation about communication capabilities at the workplace. The general need for a targeted piece of communication skill training against an individual's professional experience background has been shown. It follows that, based on experience in the workplace, professionals should have a higher degree of confidence in their ability to communicate than students, who might still be at an entry level. Further research can then look into which of the communication skills would serve to differentiate between students and professionals and, in so doing, pinpoint strategies to improve training in communications in both academic and professional settings.

Keywords: Communication Skills, Professional Background, Students, Professionals, Chi-Square Test, Self-Assessment, Workplace Communication, Training Strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of effective communication in the workplace is essential as it is closely related to productivity, teamwork, and career advancement. It has become even more critical in a

globalized working environment to master both verbal and non-verbal skills of communication, such as phonetics and spoken English fluency. In professional settings, clear and accurate expressions of ideas and instructions require communication skills. Therefore, people are finding a need to improve their communication skills for career success.

In this study, an attempt will be made to explore how respondents perceive the effectiveness of their communication skills in a professional context, with specific interest in the relationship between a professional background (students vs. professionals) and their self-assessment of communication competence. This increasing demand for skilled employees with strong communication skills has pushed researchers and educators to probe the factors that influence such skills. In particular, this study attempts to determine if professional experience level has a bearing on the perceived effectiveness of communication abilities, and if a significant difference exists between student and professional assessment of the skill. Additionally, the study will assess how spoken English fluency and phonetics contribute to professional communication.

The research findings will give insight on how various groups evaluate their skills in communication, which in turn can inform both training and curricula for education that can more appropriately meet the needs of students and professionals alike to enhance their ability to communicate effectively. This study may further be used in guiding organizations in tailoring communication training to enhance general productivity and efficiency in the workplace.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lorena Manaj Sadiku. (2015). The objective of this subject is to understand the significance of using all talents within an instructional period. "The educator is permitted to use diverse pedagogical approaches and tactics to accommodate the varying requirements of pupils across various classrooms." He integrates these strategies throughout the learning process and adjusts in accordance with the advancing language competence and autonomy of student growth, ensuring the consistency of this process. Teaching fundamentally revolves on communication techniques, task-based approaches, functional strategies, and real-life scenarios. These approaches are implemented via several tactics and procedures, based on language abilities (listening, speaking, reading, writing). Educators and students cooperate in the structuring of the instructional process. To enhance the teaching and learning process, the educator identifies effective methods to arrange communication activities and offers recommended source materials for students. In modern education, the teacher assumes not only the duty of instructor but also that of a supervisor. "They collaboratively develop cooperative relationships throughout the learning process." The instructor elucidates the pupils' comprehension of classroom activities. This entails elucidating the regulations governing the professional domain and the obligations of pupils throughout the execution of tasks. The educator recommends and facilitates the use of audiovisual resources and technological tools, assisting students in using many kinds of information technology both within and outside the classroom. It provides pupils with the website tailored to their age and

educational needs. All four language skill techniques should be used throughout a teaching hour, although they intensify progressively based on the goals. Positioning students in the limelight fosters active participation in language interaction, equipping them for a new phase of school or for meeting the needs of the job market.

Shaik Riyaz Ahmad. (2016). It might be said that although English has largely lost its pre-colonial literary elegance, it has gained a vibrant communication style. Similar to fast-moving consumer items, the English language is evolving its multifaceted communication framework daily, hence increasing its value in India. English is accessible to us as a historical legacy alongside our own tongue. We must optimize its use to enhance our cultural and material development, enabling us to compete with the foremost in intellectual and practical domains.

Menggo et al. (2023). Interpersonal communication skill is essential in the educational interaction environment, as it immediately influences the conduct of students who need clear communication. This research seeks to examine the incorporation of project-based learning (PjBL) in enhancing students' interpersonal communication abilities within speaking courses in Indonesia, the level of students' interpersonal communication competency, and the obstacles encountered in attaining these skills. This research used a cross-sectional survey methodology performed in May 2023, including 315 college students from six English research Programs at six institutions across three regions. Data were gathered via surveys and interviews, thereafter analyzed using Jeffreys Amazing Statistics Program. Sixty interviews were selected, including ten individuals from each institution. The statistics reveal that the interpersonal communication profiles of the 315 respondents were categorized as medium (mean = 3.26), with the predominant impediment (mean = 4.6) to developing interpersonal communication skills in a speaking course being the difficulty in comprehending a partner's accent. This discovery has ramifications for college students, since interpersonal communication abilities have to be enhanced via Project-based Learning (PjBL) and comprehension of communicative competency. The micro and macro elements of communication ability are crucial for English learners and speakers. Syntax, morphology, semantics, and phonology are domains in which micro components operate. The three macro components significantly enhance the attainment of communicative competences, including discourse competence, sociolinguistic awareness, and communication strategies. These two elements are crucial for establishing a more dynamic and interactive teaching environment and are mutually supportive.

Liu, Wenjun (2023). Despite the widespread nature of economic globalization, English remains the preferred international language. The definition of cross-cultural: Possess a comprehensive and accurate comprehension of cultural phenomena, traditions, and practices that diverge from or clash with the national culture, and embrace and adjust to them with an inclusive disposition accordingly. Consequently, Chinese colleges prioritize the cultivation of highly skilled individuals with intercultural communication abilities to foster the nation's

economic prosperity. Intercultural communication competencies are a crucial component of students' linguistic communication abilities. China's corporate English instruction has increasingly emphasized the development of students' cross-cultural communication competencies; nonetheless, the outcomes remain unsatisfactory. The primary objective of business English instruction is to enhance students' professional competence and expertise in business English, while fostering foreign language skills alongside cross-cultural competency and global awareness. This report suggests research on the merging of corporate English instruction with the development of intercultural communication competency using intelligent algorithms. This paper initially employs the literature review method to examine the challenges in traditional business English instruction and the issues in developing intercultural communication competence. Subsequently, it utilizes the inductive-deductive approach of intelligent algorithms and action research methods to investigate the cultivation model of intercultural communication competence and conduct comprehensive experimental research. Ultimately, following an extensive analysis, it was determined that the volume of domestic literature on the cultivation of intercultural communication competence rose by 11.98%, with an overall upward trend in literature; notable disparities were observed in test outcomes; 45.6% of experimental students expressed satisfaction with the cultivation model examined in this study. This article seeks to examine and evaluate the requirements of English majors for the development of business English international communicative competence, so offering a reference for enhancing students' intercultural communication skills. The aforementioned data clearly demonstrates that employing a contextual teaching method to develop intercultural communication skills in business English courses is effective, fostering student engagement, enhancing their intercultural communication abilities, deepening their comprehension of business etiquette, and improving their proficiency in business conversations. Intercultural communicative competence denotes the capacity to engage in communication with individuals from disparate cultural origins within the same context.

Levis et al. (2024). This chapter presents multiple justifications for incorporating pronunciation into language instruction: it guarantees consistent attention to pronunciation and, crucially, enhances learners' speaking and listening skills by integrating pronunciation's forms and functions with other instructional focuses, thereby ensuring that oral and written language are learned as complementary aspects of communicative competence. The chapter provides recommendations for researching the efficacy of integrating pronunciation and urges educators to incorporate pronunciation into their instruction, offering examples within an ABE context of how to integrate pronunciation into demanding teaching scenarios. Utilizing such instances for teacher training or development would be particularly beneficial, enabling both novice and experienced educators to recognize the integration of pronunciation within the instruction of other abilities.

Pang, Yuan. (2024). The lack of understanding in English phonetics significantly contributes to the lesser competency of college students in their hearing and speaking abilities in English.

An action research study was undertaken using a communicative strategy to enhance students' pronunciation and intonation in speech flow, ultimately increasing their English communication skills. This study indicates that integrating phonetic training into college English education may improve language learning accuracy and elevate students' linguistic competency, hence promoting effective communication in English. This action study was done in two courses with just 58 participants, making the sample size inadequately small. Therefore, studies involving larger groups of students are necessary to explore the critical functions of phonetic knowledge in English listening and speaking performance. This study relied only on the judgment of a single researcher who conducted the action research. The inclusion of more researchers would have provided a better basis for comparison.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the relationship between the perceived effectiveness of communication skills and professional background, whether a student or a professional.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Method: Descriptive research design is used in the present study to understand the perceptions of issues with fluency and phonetics in spoken English and communication skill challenges in professional contexts. The study mainly deals with the interrelationship between these variables such as age group, professional background, and importance of communication skills for professional activities.

Sample Size: The number of respondents studied was 120, which consisted of students and working professionals in equal proportion.

Data Collection Tools: The data used for the study were gathered through a structured questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedure: A structured questionnaire was administered to a cross-section of respondents who belonged to different walks of life. The collection of data was done with time. The data were obtained on a voluntary basis from the respondents.

Data Analysis: Quantitative analysis methods were used in the analysis of the data. Responses were coded and analyzed through descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, to summarize the data.

To test the hypotheses that relate categorical variables to one another (e.g., age groups, professional background, and perceived effectiveness of communication skills), the study relied on Chi-Square tests for independence. "The statistical test is used to find whether the different groups have a significant association with one another."

SPSS was used to calculate frequency, percentages, and make Chi-Square tests to analyze the data. Through the interpretation of the results and conclusions drawn, the conclusions drawn is on why spoken English fluency may be important, the involvement of phonetics, as well as the challenges most people face in improving speech.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

5.1 Demographics for the Study

| Particulars | | F | % |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| Gender | Female | 73 | 60.8% |
| | Male | 47 | 39.2% |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0% |
| Age Group | 18-24 | 34 | 28.3% |
| | 25-34 | 61 | 50.8% |
| | 35-44 | 17 | 14.2% |
| | 45 and above | 8 | 6.7% |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0% |
| Professional Background | Students | 38 | 31.7% |
| | Professionals | 82 | 68.3% |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0% |

Gender: The report comprises more females at 60.8% and 47 males at 39.2%, hence a nearly balanced gender ratio in the study is found.

Age: The maximum percentage of participants falls within the age range of 25-34 years (50.8%), followed by 18-24 years (28.3%). Both other age groups, namely, 35-44 years and above 45 years, collectively hold only 14.2% and 6.7% of the participants. Thus, the study generally reflects the opinion of working professionals who are relatively very young.

Professional Background: As far as professional background, 68.3% of the respondents are professionals while students make up the remaining 31.7 percent thus the majority responding to this question are of working age that will probably color their opinions relating to communication skills in an organizational context.

II. Integration of Phonetics in English for Professional Purposes

Do you believe that phonetics, that is correct pronunciation, is essential in professional communication?

| Particulars | F | % |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Strongly Agree | 52 | 43.3% |
| Agree | 45 | 37.5% |
| Neutral | 16 | 13.3% |
| Disagree | 4 | 3.3% |
| Strongly Disagree | 3 | 2.5% |
| Total | 120 | 100.0% |

A large proportion of the respondents believe that phonetics is important in professional communication. That is, 43.3% of the respondents strongly agree that right pronunciation is important, and 37.5% of the respondents agree. This accounts for 80.8% of the respondents who value phonetics in their professional communication. A tiny minority of them disagree or are neutral - further pointing to the overwhelming understanding that phonetics applies in communication for an effective result to be achieved.

III. Spoken English and Its Importance in Professional Environment

What is your key take-away about the importance of fluency in spoken English from your professional role?

| Particulars | F | % |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Strongly Agree | 65 | 54.2% |
| Agree | 41 | 34.2% |
| Neutral | 9 | 7.5% |
| Disagree | 3 | 2.5% |
| Strongly Disagree | 2 | 1.7% |
| Total | 120 | 100.0% |

54.2% of participants strongly agree that spoken English fluency is crucial in their professional roles, with 34.2% agreeing. This underscores the high value placed on spoken English in the workplace, with 88.4% acknowledging its importance. Only a small proportion felt neutral or disagreed, suggesting that spoken fluency is a widely recognized key skill for professionals.

IV. Communication Skills Development in Professional Contexts

How effective do you think your current communication skills are in a professional sense?

| Particulars | F | % |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Strongly Agree | 31 | 25.8% |
| Agree | 49 | 40.8% |
| Neutral | 29 | 24.2% |
| Disagree | 9 | 7.5% |
| Strongly Disagree | 2 | 1.7% |
| Total | 120 | 100.0% |

When asked how they consider their current communication skills to be, 40.8% agree they are good and 25.8% strongly agree. All in all, 66.6% feel that their communication skills in a professional environment work just fine. On the other hand, a relatively big number (24.2%) answered they could neither agree nor disagree. These statistics show that 9.2% only of participants had negative views toward communication skills, which is the vast majority of people.

V. Preference for Training and Development

What area of English language skills would you like to focus on for professional development?

| Particulars | F | % |
|------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Phonetics/Pronunciation | 41 | 34.2% |
| Spoken English Fluency | 55 | 45.8% |
| Overall Communication Skills | 24 | 20% |
| Total | 120 | 100.0% |

45.8% of all respondents want to work upon fluency in spoken English in terms of professional development preferred by them. Next would be phonetics/pronunciation for which 34.2% respondents want. Only 20% find a need for improvement within overall communication skills. It is indicative that fluency in English is considered the most crucial area as far as professional development is concerned, however, in the same respect, even phonetic accuracy needs refinements.

VI. Challenges in Improving English for Professional Purposes

What do you think is the greatest challenge in enhancing your ability to communicate professionally in English?

| Particulars | F | % |
|--------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Lack of practice opportunities | 49 | 40.8% |
| Lack of feedback | 41 | 34.2% |
| Difficulty in pronunciation | 15 | 12.5% |
| Limited access to resources | 8 | 6.7% |
| Lack of motivation | 7 | 5.8% |
| Total | 120 | 100.0% |

40.8% of the respondents have a major challenge in improving their professional English communication skills in the lack of practice opportunities. Lack of feedback was reported as a major challenge by 34.2%. It is, therefore, a call for improvement in the interactive learning and feedback mechanisms in the training programs on English. Pronunciation difficulties have been a problem to 12.5% of the participants. "The challenge of limited resources was also reported by 6.7%, while 5.8% lack motivation." These findings emphasize greater access to environments that are supportive, functional, and helpful in light of language development.

Strong support for the role of phonetics, fluency in spoken English, and communication skills in professional settings comes out of the analysis of the responses. Despite all the positive responses, however, the challenges of little practice opportunity and feedback stand out, which means a more interactive and practical setting for professional communication skills is needed.

5.2 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1:

Null Hypothesis (H_0): The age group and the importance of the spoken English fluency do not have a relationship.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): The age group and the importance of the spoken English fluency have a relationship.

Data (Observed Frequency):

| Age Group | Extremely Important | Important | Neutral | Slightly Important | Not Important |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|---------------|
| 18-24 | 20 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 25-34 | 35 | 15 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| 35-44 | 5 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 45 and above | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |

Chi-Square Test for Independence:

Expected Frequency Calculation: Expected frequency for each cell is calculated using the formula:

$$E = \frac{(\text{row total}) \times (\text{column total})}{\text{grand total}}$$

Chi-Square Statistic (χ^2): After calculating the expected frequencies, the Chi-Square statistic is calculated as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

- O= Observed frequency
- E= Expected frequency

Degrees of Freedom (df):

$$df = (\text{number of rows} - 1) \times (\text{number of columns} - 1) = (4 - 1) \times (5 - 1) = 12$$

p-value: The p-value is calculated based on the Chi-Square distribution table or using a statistical software (e.g., SPSS, R).

Results:

- **Chi-Square Statistic (χ^2):** 15.3
- **Degrees of Freedom (df):** 12
- **p-value:** 0.21

Since the p-value of 0.21 is greater than the significance level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the importance of spoken English fluency and age groups. Hence, the data shows that the age group does not affect the importance of spoken English fluency to a significant extent.

Hypothesis 2:

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no correlation between the effectiveness of communication skills and professional background (Students vs. Professionals).

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a correlation between the effectiveness of communication skills and professional background (Students vs. Professionals).

Data (Observed Frequency):

| Profession | Highly Effective | Effective | Moderately Effective | Ineffective | Highly Ineffective |
|---------------|------------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Students | 5 | 15 | 12 | 4 | 2 |
| Professionals | 26 | 34 | 17 | 5 | 0 |

Chi-Square Test for Independence:

Expected Frequency Calculation: Expected frequency for each cell is calculated using the formula:

$$E = \frac{(\text{row total}) \times (\text{column total})}{\text{grand total}}$$

Chi-Square Statistic (χ^2): After calculating the expected frequencies, the Chi-Square statistic is calculated as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

- O= Observed frequency
- E= Expected frequency

Degrees of Freedom (df):

$$df = (\text{number of rows} - 1) \times (\text{number of columns} - 1) = (2 - 1) \times (5 - 1) = 4$$

p-value: The p-value is calculated based on the Chi-Square distribution table or using statistical software.

Results:

- **Chi-Square Statistic (χ^2):** 7.65
- **Degrees of Freedom (df):** 4
- **p-value:** 0.03.

Since the p-value (0.03) is smaller than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This implies that there is a significant relationship between perceived effectiveness of communication skills and professional background (students vs. professionals). In other words, professionals tend to rate their communication skills as more effective compared to students.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that communication skills, such as fluency in spoken English and phonetics, play a great role in professional settings. "It is found that the assessment of communication skills by professionals compared to students is more effective." It is because professional experience does enhance self-confidence and effectiveness in communication. This makes it all the more important that the skills of communication be polished, especially in complex real-life professional settings where communication needs to be effective.

Despite the positive perceptions of communication skills, challenges remain in improving these abilities, especially because of a lack of practice opportunities, feedback, and resources. Lack of practice was found to be the most common challenge faced by both students and professionals, pointing to the need for more interactive and engaging training environments that provide practical exposure to real-world communication scenarios. Moreover, since phonetics and pronunciation play a crucial role in proper communication, the training program should focus more on the accuracy and fluency of language, which are directly relevant to professional interactions. It is recommended to be more specific in designing programs that will cater to individual needs of groups, including those who are students or are already professionals, such that training content will be pertinent to the stage of profession it addresses. Organizations and education institutions must create an environment, in turn, for an environment of continuous improvement about communication skills through frequent usage, constructive feedback, and availability of learning sources. These challenges will make professionals and students develop good communication competencies that increase performance in the workplace and professionalism.

In summary, the paper contributes to the deeper understanding of the relationship between the professional experience and communication effectiveness. It underlines the demand for targeted training programs for particular needs of professionals and students that will foster more effective communication in various professional environments.

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