



**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING CHINESE SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING PERFORMANCE**

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PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

I certify that all the materials used in this study which are not my own work have been identified and acknowledged, and that no materials are included for which a degree has been conferred upon me.

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ABSTRACT

Spoken language production is often considered one of the most difficult aspects of language learning (Brown & Yule, 1983). Even English as foreign language teaching and learning in majority of schools and institutions in China for many years, but there is still a low achievement of Chinese students in English speaking performance. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors affecting Chinese senior high school students' English speaking performance.

This thematic paper will briefly introduce the current situation of English teaching and learning in China and the psychological factors that affect learners' English speaking performance. Through the analysis of six articles on how psychological factors affecting learners' English speaking. In addition, it may help Chinese EFL learners to improve oral communication. The six research articles which published in academic journals with the context of Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and China. Those articles cover at least three factors which related to the two research questions of this particular study will be analyzed. To make sense of this study, the research synthesis method was applied in this study. Some recommendations were made, based on the research findings. This research was expected to help students improve their English speaking performance in daily life.

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INTRODUCTION

Spoken language production is often considered one of the most difficult aspects of language learning (Brown & Yule, 1983). It is the most essential function of language. Language comes into being, develops and goes on existing because of human beings' needs. (T.Yashima, L.Zenuk-Nishide and K.Shimizu,2004, 54(1):119-152). English is regarded as the widely used language for communication. In the process, speaking and writing are two mediums of producing information. But compared to writing, speaking plays a much more important role in verbal interaction.

With the globalization process, English is used as lingua franca in many areas such as education, medicine, business, science. The most influential model of the spread of English is Braj Kachru's model of world English which in terms of three Concentric Circles: Inner Circle, Outer Circle and Expanding Circle. For the expanding circle, those countries where English is taught and learned as foreign language, like China, Russia, Japan, Korea and Indonesia. People who speak English as a foreign language of the "expanding circle" have been far greater than the number of native English speakers who belong to the "inner circle". Therefore, English no longer belongs to native speakers but also to all English users (Grandool 2006; Widdowson 1994).

In China, English is considered as the compulsory foreign language course which is given much more importance than any other foreign language had being taught in this country. In China, English is not second language country, in terms of this English has not been given a special official status. With China's joining the WTO in 2001, the awarding of the 2008 Olympic Games to Beijing, the Chinese government realized the importance of EFL teaching and learning in China (Jiang, 2003). Even though English as foreign language teaching and learning in the majority of schools and institutions for many

years. Also most Chinese senior high school students have been learning English for more than five or six years, but there's still a low achievement of Chinese students in English speaking. (Aldridge, J. M., Fraser, B. J., & Huang, T. C. I. 1999). Although, the Chinese government put English as a compulsory course in language curriculum, the Chinese English language teachers only focus on the score of the examination than the actual use of English, whether the students master the language or become unimportant (Luo, 2007). As well as the most of the Chinese English language learners always show increased level of unclearness, inaccuracy, and inadequacy when they use English for the oral communication. Luo (2007) mentioned those levels of unclearness, inaccuracy, and inadequacy are remarkable due to factors such as anxiety, lack of confidence, those psychological factors require further an investigation (Aldridge, J. M., Fraser, B. J., & Huang, T. C. I. 1999).

Therefore, it is necessary to make the language learners aware of the most important purpose of using English is for communication, instead of using as a tool to pass the examination. According to this situation, there would be an analysis of 6 relevant research articles conducted by different researchers on the factors affecting Chinese senior high school students' English speaking performance. Based on the research findings from various papers, some recommendation was made to the Chinese students' English speaking performance.

Rationale for the study

Language is an instrument for communication. To master a language, it's necessary to have a balanced development of the four basic language skills (Listening, speaking, reading and writing) for every learner (Giri,1996). The expansion of English in the 19th century and the dominance of the American economy in the 20th century made English played an increasingly important role in the

international affairs, global trade, cultural and educational exchanges, also the status of English as a lingua franca has been continuously improved (Graddol, 1999). With the spread and development of English in the world, English no longer only belongs to the native language users, but by the different first-language background of the common users (Graddol, 2006). According to statistics, the percentages of listening, speaking, reading and writing in human beings' verbal communication are 45%, 30%, 16% and 9% respectively (Bozorgian, 2012). Therefore, spoken language is quite important for exchanging information, thoughts and feelings. Therefore, in the teaching process of English, oral teaching should get more attention.

But in China, there is a phenomenon that most high school students cannot speak English when they need to (Luo, 2007). Though they have learned English for many years, they cannot express themselves in spoken English fluently (Aldridge, J. M., Fraser, B. J., & Huang, T. C. I. 1999). Because the level of economic development of medium-sized cities is imbalance, leading to the degree of education is not the same. Oral English teaching in those cities, especially in most areas loss attention than first-tier cities from the beginning (Zhan, 2015). This has largely limited the development of English language teaching. In terms of the present English teaching in China, the emphasis on English speaking performance of students is very necessary. For the English language teachers, the success or failure of oral English teaching will not only affect the ultimate goal of cultivating communicative competence but also directly determine the pace of the current teaching practice. Focusing on learning the spoken language can enhance the learners' interest in learning English and build up confidence. Also helps to improve the learners' enthusiasm and initiative.

Therefore, in English teaching, to focus on the expression of oral English ability is necessary and meaningful. Teachers should take every opportunity to guide language learners carefully and persistently. Through this particular way, the English teaching could be interactive and enjoyable. Finally, to achieve the goal of language teaching, achieving an information exchange in English.

Furthermore, the focus on the learners' English speaking performance has a direct benefit because by insisting on learning oral English, it will enhance the stronger sense of the language. But also can promote the development of learners' listening and thinking ability in the process of oral learning. It's difficult for some students who learn English as foreign language to feel confident while using English to communicate. In English classroom teaching, the teachers use some speaking activities to help students speak English as far as possible to break the psychological barriers, by a long-term adherence to the spoken language training, causes the student to be confident to speak English. It helps them to develop the habit of English thinking, better to use the English language in real life and have a better understanding and close to the foreign oral English cultural background.

EFL courses in China fail to cater to the needs of English language learners. Regarding this investigation of those previous research studies and findings might find out the factors affecting Chinese senior high school students' English speaking performance and provide some strategies that could be used to improve that.

Research questions

This study aims to investigate the following questions:

1. What are the factors affecting Chinese senior high school students' English speaking performance?

2. What are the strategies that could be used to improve the students' English speaking performance?



LITERATURE REVIEW

American psychologist Watzlawick (1964) once said: “No matter how a person can do nothing, one cannot communicate”. That is to say, the important value of language is to communicate. English as a lingua franca, its function and value are no exceptions. However, due to the existence of globalization in recent years, the oral English widely developed in China. Also cannot adapt to the requirements of the new world, and hinder the improvement of high school students’ oral English. So this chapter is divided into three sections: First, the features of oral communicative ability and oral English. Second, indicates the current issues of English speaking development and English language curriculum in China. The last part is the factors affecting English speaking performance of high school students in China which the psychological factors were the most emphasis elements.

Features of oral communicative ability and oral English

Oral communicative ability is defined to be one that has to do with dialogue or oral interaction rather than monolog (Gardner, 1991). Oral communication is a real-time and impromptu verbal use of language, so it is pretty informal in the use of vocabulary and structure (Zhan, 2015). The nature of oral communication includes five main parts: (1) oral communication is the verbal use of language to communicate with others. (2) Oral communication is a “real-time” phenomenon. Fengchao (2009) indicated oral communication is of an ephemeral nature which represents a psychological aspect of speaking. (3) Oral communication is a complicated cognitive act which is unique to the human species. (4) Oral communication is an interactive and dynamic process. Any successful oral communication is conducted through cooperative interaction between the speaker and the listener. (5) Taking part in oral communication in foreign language demands not only learner’s mastering linguistic knowledge but

also ability to use linguistic knowledge in a particular situation so that a meaningful intention can be conveyed (Zhen, 2009). In a dialogue, the listener should pay attention to what the speaker expresses, and give feedback to the speaker in any ways so that the speaker can retell or explain based on the listener's feedback (Littlewood, W. 1981).

Regarding to the above situation, Wang (2004) indicated that using English in daily life is spontaneous which means speakers start speaking without any plans in advance. Only in some formal circumstances, speakers will plan or organize what they are going to say. Daily expression often has such characteristics as the improper beginning, incomplete sentences and simple phrases. Another feature of oral English is the time -limit. The speakers should produce utterances without hesitation and any pause in real time or listeners are likely not to be patient to listen to them (Wang.2004).

Additionally, Brown and Yule (1983) found the features of oral English include several aspects, such as an incomplete sentence, fewer subordinate clauses, less passive voice, ambiguous conjunction, argument structure, more demonstrative pronoun, more repetition, and modal particle, etc. Brumfit (1979) proposes that oral English is usually made up of daily speech, simple structure, simple sentence, more repetition, more pauses, more error sentences, and self-correction, etc. (C.J. & K. 1979). Language is a convenient tool used by human to communicate with each other, it consists of verbal and nonverbal language while verbal language is used more widely (G. 2005). The changes of words in an oral language is less than written language, however, the repetition of words is more frequently. Spoken English could not be regarded as simple combination or repetition of vocabulary, expressions or sentences, but it can be seen like the whole part which have a connection among oral communication of thoughts, information and feelings (Littlewood, 1981). In addition, oral English is a

comprehensive competence gained by English learners by means of mastering and integrating a series of skills (Zhen, 2009).

In most cases, evaluators of education evaluate the language ability of learners from their communicative performance, therefore oral English language class should be student-centered and have oral training-oriented (Xu, 2003). Actually, speaking has its own patterns and rules (Zhan, 2015). Therefore, oral English teaching should be paid more attention to in English classes.

Current issues of English speaking development and English language curriculum in China

There is an aforementioned in introduction indicates that EFL becomes the most widespread language in the world. With the globalization process, English has become the world's dominant language, and in the global spread and use (Seidlhofer, B. 2001). Increasingly frequent international exchanges and cooperation have forced people to become more and more aware of the importance and urgency of English communication. As American future scientist Naisbitt (1982) said, "If you want to really succeed, you have to understand at least three languages: fluency English, Spanish, and computer language". From the end of the 1980s to early 1990s, the Chinese Education Bureau see the importance of learning English, most schools start take English course in the curriculum, in Chinese basic education (primary and secondary) stage, especially in the secondary stage, English as a compulsory course of more than 90% (Liu,2006). Beginning in the 1980s, the English language test was carried out in the ordinary university (Luo, 2007). English as the first foreign language required the course. English has been developing in China for 36 years, but in the thirty years Chinese students' listening and writing ability are constantly improving, but because of the high status of the exam-oriented education in English, for the practical application of the oral communicative

competence has not been emphasized (Liu, 2007). The theoretical and academic research of English education in Chinese colleges and universities belong to the fields of “foreign literature”, “linguistics” and “translation” respectively. On the one hand, there is no independent and complete theoretical support system for such a huge educational activity of Chinese college English education, which is obviously not normal (Qiang & Tao, 2014). Another phenomenon is, the speaking ability is not evaluated in the college entrance examination. Because of this, speaking gets less attention than other three basic skills and even ignored in English language learning.

Over the years, Chinese college English education has not been the correct purpose of education, therefore there is still some degree of functional failure (Zhan, 2015). Because of without independent and complete theoretical support system for such a huge educational activity of Chinese college English education, they researchers cannot find a proper and organic position in the higher education stage of the social education system. Chinese college English education has not been able to determine the objective, reasonable and accurate educational purposes (Qiang & Tao, 2014). “To meet the needs of individual development” and “cultivate learners self-learning ability” is the contemporary social education of the two basic requirements (Qiang & Tao, 2014). But so far, the course of college English education is not only put the “language knowledge” as the main purpose of teaching and knowledge, and “compulsory course” as the main teaching and curriculum model. This situation cannot really meet the needs of educated people, but also contrary to the general concept of modern social education. In Chinese senior high schools, however, English seems to lose its real meaning of communication now (Ma, 1994).

Jiangsu Provincial Department of education in 1999,15 documents proposed “from 2000, the implementation of the oral English test system, focus on examining the students’ oral expression ability” (Zhu, 2011). This is an important measure to promote the teaching of spoken English in the examination reform. From 2000, the provincial department has also prepared a “high school oral English test program (for Trial Implementation)” (Zhan, 2015). Increase the oral test of this part, the purpose is to mobilize the enthusiasm of students learning English, enhance students’ awareness of the use of language, which shows the leadership of the attention to the development of oral English. However, today, the real effect of spoken English test is not satisfactory, the students’ English is still very weak, and especially the phenomenon of “dumb English” exists in a large area of China (Zhan, 2015).

Factors affecting English speaking performance of high school students in China

The ability of spoken language is an important goal of English language teaching. It is an important basic skill in English learning and is also an important part of high school students’ ability of comprehensive language application. However, in the process of China’s continuous development, the spoken English is influenced by many factors, which directly or indirectly lead to the development of the current high school oral English. The following are some factors that affect Chinese high school students’ English speaking performance:

1. Examination-oriented education system

Examination-oriented education refers to out of the social development needs, the educational ideology and educational behavior aimed at coping with the entrance examination, it is a concentrated expression of the drawbacks of educational work. (Zhang, 1999). The examination-oriented education

examines the quality of school education, the teacher's performance, and the student's academic level. It is for the purpose of examination, the education model and examination methods limit the students' ability to develop potential, limiting the creativity of students. In this mode of education students are difficult to adapt to work and social development. Some scholars have pointed out that exam-oriented education is equivalent to the one-sided pursuit of graduation rate. Like Xu (1992:6) said, "The exam-oriented education is out of the practical needs of social development and human development, in violation of the purpose of education only consider the entrance examination results for a traditional education model" (Xu,1992:6). But Yu Ma (1994) said that "The so-called Exam-oriented education refers to the school around the entrance examination to carry out targeted education and teaching activities" (Ma, 1994). Zhan (2015) also mentioned "Examination-oriented education only serves for The National College Entrance Examination, around the "examination" to carry out education and teaching activities are one-sided, easy to be eliminated. In terms of educational content, exam-oriented education only focuses on the subjects which will be tested, despise or even give up non-examination subjects" (Zhan, 2015).

Also, the Exam-oriented education in response to the test as the goal of education is a kind of teaching system, which aims at entering a higher school, in order to improve the test result as the educational goal and the knowledge infusion as the teaching method (Zhang, 1999). Exam education has its coerciveness, students need to take a lot of exercise and variety of exams, after each exam the school will convey students' results of the exam and ranking to their parents. Occasionally parents will be convened to discuss students' scores with teachers and sum up a period of time students' learning. Through this will enable students to learn, for students with poor learning autonomy, the effect is more

obvious to help them to improve their performance (Ma, 1994). The National College Entrance Examination scores are determined by written test results, and the results of oral tests are for reference only. Therefore, the vast majority of students and English teachers do not pay attention to the oral test, most of the students only take the English test as a go through the motions (Luo, 2007).

English class in China, almost every class emphasizes the importance of grammar and vocabulary, and the importance of repetition, the teachers prefer to use their mother tongue to teach during the English language class, in order that students have no chance to speak either. In this case, how could improve the enthusiasm of students learning English?

2. Psychological factors

Students' psychological factors have great influence on the expression of English speaking, and the psychological factors will directly affect the quality of oral English communication. Due to the high school period of students in oral English learning did not get well, a lot of students' oral English is zero basis when they want to use English as a tool of communication in a real situation, may cause a lot of problems. However, many students whenever they want to use English to communicate, they might worry about their English speaking will go wrong, not fluently, and also might be criticized by the teacher and losing face in the classroom who may laugh at them. So in the process of learning and speaking English, the students may produce the psychological barriers of lack of motivation, fear of mistakes, anxiety, and shyness (Sheng, 2009).

(1) Anxiety

The anxiety in foreign language learning mainly refers to the fear or uneasiness of the learners when expressing with the target language (Juhana, 2012). In 1986, Horwitz et al. published a "foreign

language classroom anxiety” article, in this book he designed a program “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)” that was widely used by many scholars, they use this scale to achieve almost identical results: “Anxiety and foreign language learners’ Negative correlation” (P.D, 2002). Behaviorism theory also believes that the typical performance of learners’ anxiety is foreign language evasion behavior. The most common way is that learners in the classroom shy away from the teacher’s question to avoid answering. Anxiety is the biggest emotional disorder in foreign language learning (Oxford,1999). In oral classes, students often take public performance and speech, naturally often in public was been “watch” and “evaluate”, whether it is true or imagination of the students, from the vision of teacher and classmates and evaluation will lead to anxiety.

(2) Shyness

Psychology research shows that “emotional factors play an 80% role in people’s learning” (Zhang, 2004). The famous American linguist Krashen (1982) inherited and developed the “emotional filter” theory. Krashen (1982) pointed out that language learners’ motivations, anxiety, and shyness are emotional factors that hinder or promote language input into the brain. If the learner has a high level of motivation, low anxiety and shyness, that is, their emotional filtration is low, then their language input is large and the quality of input is good. Otherwise, it is not the case.

“Oral language is a two-way language exchange composed of information senders and information recipients, which requires spoken learners to work together with others” (Zhang, 2004). Moreover, the spoken conversation requires the speaker to fully “show” in front of the audience, this fully “show” for the learners is a great psychological pressure and challenge. Also, for most people from the expanding circle, learning English as a foreign language and culture, for a long time is

unfamiliar, which in turn affect the people look at the attitude of learning English. Therefore, in foreign language classes, especially oral class, students often have a cautious, timid, shy when speaking English.

(3) Attitudes

The value of attitude and interest in learning, motivation, are important parts of the learners' learning. Attitude is by learning to form the impact of individual behavior choice of internal state (Gagné, 1974). He argues that attitudes are a behavioral predisposition or response to the state of preparation, rather than the actual response but can affect the occurrence of potential factors, therefore, the attitude mainly affects the individual's tendency to choose the behavior, manifested as willing to complete a learning task of a psychological reaction tendency. Learning attitude, generally refers to the students in learning and their learning situation exhibited a relatively stable psychological tendency, they are learning to hold a positive or negative attitude (M, 2007). Learning attitude affects students' directional choice of learning the purpose, curriculum, learning style (P.D, 2002). Students who have a positive attitude towards learning have a strong desire for knowledge. They are always actively participating in various learning activities, consciously learning, thus the learning efficiency is higher. Positive learning attitude has a positive effect on learning speed and the positive learning attitude can enhance students' learning enthusiasm (MacDouqai & Smith, 1952).

(4) Motivation

Psychologist W.F. Mackey (1988) pointed out "Only the practice of voluntary that might bear fruitful results". What is the motivation to learn spoken English, how much to learn, what degree to achieve, and how to learn. This series of questions, to a certain extent, will decide how much a person

willing to pay for it? Learning motivation is to stimulate and maintain the individual to carry out learning activities and towards a certain goal of the internal psychological state (Ls.P, 2009). Motivation is divided into two kinds, integrative motivation and instrumental motivation (Gardner&Lamber, 1972).

Integrative motivation refers to the learners in order to meet their hobbies, curiosity, self-esteem and sense of accomplishment and even the community's recognition of personal employment and take the initiative to learn. Instrumental motivation refers to learners' motivation to learn from external incentives and rewards, such as recognition, scholarships, honorary titles and degree certificates. Driven by integrative motivation, learners have a strong desire to learn to get a sense of happiness and accomplishment from the learning process (Wang, 2004).

At present, the common problems in primary education in China are too much emphasis on the instrumental motivations of students' learning and ignore cultivating students' integrative motivation. Now many of the students learn English not from for their own interests but for tests and employment pressure. The English learners believe that to learn English well especially written in good grades can make them successful in order to get the English level certificate, graduation and find more satisfying work. For the one-sided emphasis on the instrumental motivation not only benefit for learners but also can let the students lose their interests in learning, hinder the integrative motivation of learning. And for the real interest in learning, knowledge of curiosity and the sense of accomplishment is long-term learning and effective learning protection.

METHODOLOGY

Kachru's model of World English explained that the expanding circle refers to nations which include Mali, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and China (Kachru, B. 1992). In those countries, English is taught and learned as a foreign language (Bhatt, 2001). Particularly in China, English is considered as the primary foreign language which has given more emphasis than any other foreign languages being taught (SuXian, Z. 2015). Chinese students learn English as a compulsory course since the 6th grade of primary school. After the senior year of high school, many of the Chinese undergraduate students keep on majoring in English language education in Chinese universities (Hao, L. 2007). What is more interesting, English has become a part of students' everyday activities in China (SuXian, Z. 2015). In this study, regarding to the selection criteria those six articles conducted with those countries where learned and taught English as foreign language like Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam (Bhatt, 2001). The context of those articles have similarity with the Chinese criteria.

In addition, those articles cover at least three factors which related to the two research questions of this particular study will be analyzed. To make sense of this study, the research synthesis method was applied in this study. Basing on the method, the process through which two or more research studies are assessed with the objective of summarizing the evidence relating to a particular question (Tasha, B& Ian, S. 2015).

Similarly, those articles which refer to young age group learners from the age of 14 to 18 that bring some of the varied facts of the whole picture and the author will present an objective analysis. Through those six relevant articles conducted with validity and reliability which published in academic

journal within five years. Below are the lists of six relevant articles that will be investigated and analyzed to answer the two research questions of this study.

Cases under the investigation

This study article conducted by Juhana (2012) aims to find out the cause of psychological factors hinder senior high school students in speaking and some possible solutions to overcome. Juhana believes that psychological factors have an impact on students' speaking. The author did a research on whether there are five factors hinder students from speaking in English class and causes of psychological factors. The research was undertaken at a senior high school in South Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia. They included 62 participants of second grade students and used three instruments (questionnaires, interviews and observations) through classroom to collected data. The author used open-ended questionnaires in classroom to get the responses of students, there were five numbers of choice related to some psychological factors hinder students' speaking included to be selected, under each choice the author also put forward two questions "What are the causes of your (Anxiety, Shyness, Lack of Confidence, Fear of Mistakes and Lack of Motivation) ?" , "What are the solutions you do to overcome your (Anxiety, Shyness, Lack of Confidence, Fear of Mistakes and Lack of Motivation)?" . Another instrument, the interview included 12 students by reference of their English teacher were divide into three groups based on high, medium, low achievement, each group have 4 students to take participant in to find out the factor that hinder students from speaking English in English classes.

This paper is a case study of Vietnamese high school students in Vietnam by Nguyen Hoang Tuan and Tran Ngoc Mai (2015). In this study, the authors find out students can pass the exam but they feel difficult for them to communicate in English. Helping students to improve their presentation skills

requires finding ways to help them solve their problems. Regarding to this, the authors selected 203 students of five grade 11 classes were chosen from grade 11 (11B- B10) students to answer the questionnaires which consisted of 10 closed-questions to ten teachers of English at Le Thanh Hien High School participated in this study. In this study, the authors applied questionnaires to the ten teachers of English and the grade 11 students, also the authors used class observation to see how the teachers carried out speaking lessons to collect data. Based on the research questions, the author used the descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentage to analyze. The strong and weakness from the class observations also had a discuss in detail.

The study in this study which conducted by Youssouf Haidara (2016) in Indonesia. The objective of this study is aimed at the psychological factor affects the English learners' speaking performance in a negative way in Indonesia. Haidara (2016) presumes psychological can be a factor affecting the way of people using language. Before the author did a descriptive qualitative research, also the author argues that taking into account the psychological affecting English speaking performance for the English learners in Indonesia. It is necessary to mentioned the current development of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia and the characteristics and nature of spoken skill in the theoretical review part of this study.

In the process of research, a descriptive qualitative design was used to collect data, the data of this research was undertaken at Graduate School of Yogyakarta State University and 20 students participated. Classroom observation was done first to collect the data from those 20 students and give the opportunity to the author to collected open-ended and firsthand information about the question under study. The unstructured interview also was used to collected data, it contains four questions in

the interview process: what are difficulty for the students in speaking English, why the students always switch the code, why the students prepare their findings in English then present them using their first language and why they feel insecure or worried when using English to communicate. Because of the availability of some students, the unstructured interview only used collected data from 10 out of 20 students. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the interactive analysis technique was used to analyze the collected data.

“The Impact of Attitude towards Speaking English on the Use of Communication Strategies by English Majors in Thailand” conducted by Parichart Toomnan and Channarong Intaraprasert (2015), it is a case study that the authors tried to find out the relationship between communication strategy use and students’ attitude towards speaking English in Thailand. In order to find out the result, the researchers went to nine universities in the Northeast Thailand in person to gather the data from the Communication Strategy Questionnaire (CSQ) and Attitude towards Speaking English Questionnaire (ASEQ), which are included random sampling and the purposive sampling had been used to select. In the process of investigation, the participants consisted 949 university English major students gave their responses from four public universities, twelve Rajabhat Universities and Rajamangala Universities of Technology Isan. This particular study started from August to October,2013, which done for 3 months. The author used the descriptive statistics, the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Chi-square test to analyze the data of questionnaire.

The article “Factors affecting English listening and speaking abilities of non-English major students: taking engineering students as an example” conducted by Zhibo Liu (2015). In this paper, the author aims to explore the factors related to engineering students’ English listening and speaking

ability. In the research part, the author argued the prevailing question: What are the factors that affect the English listening and speaking skills of engineering students? And assumed that social and psychological factors would affect the students' listening and speaking skills, in order to prove this assumption and find out the answer, a quantitative research was used to collect data through the questionnaire, the data of this research employed the academic performance of listening and speaking in the final examination in the second semester of 2013-2014 at QingDao Vocation and Technical College of Hotel Management and 150 students took participate in. For the part of questionnaire, 50 questions were involved in this study divide into two aspects. The first aspect focus on the personal factors of students, like gender, hometown and educational level which consisted of six multiple choice question. The second aspect is focus on the objective factors like social environment, English teachers and teaching resources with 42 multiple choices and two subjective questions.

This paper is a case study of whether psychosocial aspects of English classroom environments had associations with the English learning motivation conducted by Xuefei Bi (2015). There are 1,000 participants aged from 18 to 20 years who enrolled in the first-year and second-year of the Comprehensive English course at one of the top universities located in Southern China to take participant in, among the 1,000 participants 18.1 % were male and 81.9 % were female. All of the participants had learned English for an average of 10 years, ranging from 5 to 19 years. The author used different instruments to classroom environment and motivation through this study to collected data. For the classroom environment instrument, the author used the modified version of questionnaire which consisted of six scales to test six different psychosocial aspects exist in the English classroom environments, a small informal interview with six students and a large-scale survey with 156 students

in the pilot phase. In order to measure the Chinese tertiary-level English majors' perceptions of the psychosocial aspects of English classroom environments. The slightly modified version of The Motivation Types of Chinese College Undergraduates questionnaire (MTCCU) provided by Gao et al. (2007) used in the part of motivation instrument to investigate the Chinese colleges and universities involved the seven motivation types of English majors: Intrinsic interest, Immediate achievement, Learning situation, Going abroad, Social responsibility, Individual development and information medium.

Factors affecting the students' English speaking performance

Juhana (2012) assumed that there are five factors hindering students from speaking in English class and psychological factors. According to this particular study, there are five psychological factors investigated: anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, fear of mistakes and lack of motivation that influence the students in English speaking. The descriptive information for the psychological factors that hinder students from speaking reveals that most students have psychological factors which the fear of making mistake ranges first (37%) while shyness is the second (26%), followed by anxiety (18%), lack of confidence (13%), and the last is lack of motivation (6%).

There are some excerpts from the students who choose the fear of mistake as their hindrance:

(1) *"Yes, there is. I mean, I'm afraid to make mistake. If I use or pronounce the words, my friends will mock me"*.

(2) *"Because I'm afraid of make mistake and my friends will laugh at me"* Juhana (2012).

Regarding fear of making mistake, it ranges first as their hindrance from students' perspective while speaking English in the class. The cause of their fear mistake was they were worry about their friend or classmates would laugh at them when they are talking in English in front of the class.

The findings indicate fear of mistake is the most influential one among other five psychological factors, also that psychological factor hinder students' speaking not only from the students but also from the teachers' perspective.

With questionnaires and class observation, Nguyen and Tran (2015) found there are nine factors affecting affecting students' speaking performance at Le Thanh Hien High School, but the authors only focus on the seven main factors, like topical knowledge, motivation to speak, confidence, anxiety, listening ability, feedback during speaking activities, time limitation to perform a speaking task, time for preparation and pressure. The descriptive information for the factors affecting students' speaking performance from teachers reveals which topical knowledge ranges first (90%) while listening ability and motivation to speak are the same number (80%), followed by feedback during speaking activities and confidence (70%), and the last one is time for preparation and pressure (40%).

As well as factors affecting their speaking performance chosen from the students, topical knowledge is the most influential factor (81%), the confidence of speaking is the second (62%), followed by pressure to perform (47%), motivation (41%), anxiety (40%), time limitation to perform a speaking task (38%), and the last is time for preparation (27%).

There are some excerpts of the results from class observation:

- (1) The students were not given enough time to prepare for a speaking task before the task was performed and to perform their task.*

(2) The students looked very nervous when they spoke in front of the class. Sometimes, they did not know what to say and kept silent.

Both the results from teachers and students indicate that knowledge, listening ability and motivation to speak are three main factors affecting students' speaking performance at Le Thanh Hien High School.

With the qualitative study, Haidara (2016) found out the students' English speaking performance is negatively affected by their own psychology. Also even the students have a good level in English grammar and vocabulary and have been learning English for many years but they are speechless while using English to communicate. There were some psychological factors affecting students' English speaking performance were found through those data: lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, shyness, and feeling hesitated. From the data of classroom observation, ten of the participants agreed that lack of confidence is the main psychological barrier in speaking English. It is difficult for some students to feel confident while they always think about their pronunciation and use a correct grammar to interact in English. Some of the students fear of making mistake, they are only using English to communicate until for sure, otherwise they think people may laugh at them. Also some students' own perception of the language were negatively affecting their English speaking, like the students use English to communicate outside the classroom can be seen like a way of show off in Indonesia. Two students express that feeling shy is part of their cultural background. In their culture, if someone like speaking English instead of their native language outside of classroom, it would be like show off.

Referring to the results of this study, it can be confirmed that the psychological factors were negatively affecting students' English speaking performance.

In addition, Toomnan & Intaraprasert (2015) tried to investigate the relationship between English major students' communication strategy use and attitudes towards speaking English. Based on the results of the questionnaire, it proved the researchers' view and also indicated the students majoring in English with positive attitudes towards English speaking greater than the students who also used communication strategies with the negative attitudes. The results of CS use in overall showed the frequency scores of the students with positive attitude towards speaking English were 2.75 and the students who with the negative attitude towards speaking English were 2.62. The result of variation in frequency of the students' use of CS under the three categories demonstrate those categories are considered "medium" frequency of CS use. The last results of individual CS use indicated that there is a high use of all 13 CSs of students' positive attitudes towards speaking English than those with negative attitudes towards speaking English.

There are some excerpts of the high percentage of students with examples towards speaking English use of CSs to convey a message:

- (1) *Giving examples if the listener doesn't understand what one is saying*
- (2) *Correcting one's own pronunciation, grammar and lexical mistakes*

Through this results of the study, Toomnan and Intaraprasert illustrated the student with positive attitude towards speaking English can have a greater use of communication strategies than those with negative attitudes towards speaking English.

In the research which conducted by Liu (2015) in China argued the prevailing question: What are the factors that affect the English listening and speaking skills of engineering students? And assumed that social and psychological factors would affect the students' listening and speaking skills.

With the results of the study, it proved the author's view. In the process of the research, there are two major group of factors: objective factors and subjective factors were investigated. In order to reduce the confusion of the research, the objective factors were divided into natural factor and non-natural factor. There was a very different research conclusion from other scholars indicated the test results from engineering students of natural factors which included gender, region and the educational level of their parents showed there was no great impact on this on the academic performance of their English speaking and learning.

In addition, the descriptive statistic for the influence of non-natural factor indicated which the social environment ranges first (M=3.87) while English teachers is the second (M=3.85), followed by teaching resources (M=3.48), textbooks of listening and speaking (M=3.45) and the teaching curriculum (M=3.16). All the critical values (M>3.0) were confirmed objective factors affecting the listening and speaking skills of the students. The results of subjective factors arranged from high to low: learning attitude (M=3.95), learning motivation (3.61), learning methods and strategies (M=3.58) showed most of the students agreed their listening and speaking skills influenced by subjective factors.

In terms of those findings, the author found out there are two major group of factors affecting the students' English speaking and listening performance: subjective factors which include learning attitudes, learning strategies and methods; the objective factors include social environment, teaching curriculum and teaching resources.

Moreover, in order to find out whether psychosocial aspects of English classroom environments had associations with the English learning motivation conducted, Bi (2015) did a case study to confirm this viewpoint. In the results of classroom psychological environment perception from students, which

the favorable of students' cohesiveness, equity and cooperation range first (3.5-5.0) while the moderate of the involvement and teacher support is the second (2.50-3.49). Therefore, the author found out English classroom psychological environment is considered by students as friendly, has a partnership between the members, and get fair treatment from the teacher. According to observation, the results of motivation types of Chinese tertiary-level English majors revealed the first-year and second-year English majors involved in the study were driven to learn English by all the seven motivation types which the individual motivation as the most prominent motivation type. The information medium is second within the range of 3.50-5.00, the other five motivation types arranged from highest to lowest: cultural motivation of intrinsic interest (3.42), native-culture motivation of social responsibility (3.33), short-term instrumental motivation of immediate achievement (3.22), going abroad (3.14) and 3.12 for learning situation.

Regard to this study, the author found the Chinese tertiary-level English majors revealed the first-year and second-year English majors involved in the study were driven to learn English by all the seven motivation types and students' perceptions of psychosocial aspects of the English classroom environments associated with their motivation types. As well as there was a positive correlation between the perceptions of teacher support and motivation types immediate achievement, and information medium.

Strategies to improve the students' English speaking performance

In this article, Juhana (2012) provided some recommendations related to the results of this study. Referring to the results, it revealed the English speaking performance of students influenced by five main psychological factors: fear of mistake, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence and lack of

motivation. Regard to those findings, the author provided some possible corresponding suggestions to overcome the psychological factors for both the students and teachers. With solutions to fear of mistake, from some excerpts of the students:

R#14: “Try to build my self-confidence to speak English without thinking that will be wrong or not, what most importance is to have a try”.

R#28: “Maybe I have to be more confident and believing in myself”.

It can be seen, for the students themselves improving their confidence is a good way to overcoming the fear of mistake. In response to this situation, it is necessary for the teachers to persuade students reduce the psychological burden like fear of mistakes and encourage them to express their ideas through speaking in English.

With regard to shyness, some recommendations to encourage students: they can use English to interact as much as possible, trying to use English in daily life.

What the expected from students indicated if they do more practice in English speaking can be a good way to reduce their shyness. So that in the process of English language teaching, the teachers can provide more opportunity for the students to communicate in English.

With respect to a possible way to overcome anxiety, the students expected teachers could have motivated them more to speak English and also give more attention to the real needs of students.

According to the students' expectation that the teacher should motivate them, the teachers can creative a leisure atmosphere to motivate students and provide a positive reinforcement to reduce the students' anxiety, enhance their willingness to communicate in English.

With regard to lack of confidence, some excerpts from students:

R#24: *“I try to be calm and convince myself that I’m able to do that and have the belief that I can be the best”.*

R#37: *“I try to practice my English and not to notice my friends’ derision which only can reduce my self-confidence’.*

From the students’ perspective, in response to build the confidence of students in English speaking, teachers can provide students with some opportunities to practice the pronunciation and intonation, also there is requisite to let students know teachers do not expect them have perfect pronunciation, let students to realize self-confidence and speaking ability can be improved through the constantly practice of English speaking.

Regarding lack of motivation, students expected the teachers should teach in an interactive way to avoid monotonous classroom situations, the students can motivate themselves and keep searching about English subject. In addition, the teacher should be more interactive rather than a monotone teaching.

So that Juhana (2012) found out there are four strategies can be used to encourage students’ motivation: creating a pleasant environment in the classroom; creating a relevant material for the students; offering some stimulating activities to enhanced the cooperation between students; giving positive feedback to students.

For another research which conducted by Tuan& Mai (2015) pointed out there were seven factor affecting students’ English speaking performance. According to this, the Tuan& Mai (2015) provided some suggestions for both teachers and students at Le Thanh Hien High School to fix this ‘poor English speaking performance’ phenomenon. As for teachers: (1) teachers should give students enough

time to prepare speaking task and help them overcome inhibition and shyness; (2) topics in the textbook should be personalized and simplified and the speaking skills ought to be included in tests and exams is also mentioned; (3) teachers should provide more opportunities to require students speak English in class by using some speaking activities and encourage them participate in speaking activities. As for students: (1) understand the importance of speaking skills; (2) through the speaking tasks in the textbook, joining speaking club to practice speaking English; (3) As far as possible use English to communicate, rather than native language.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Haidara (2016) focused on psychological factor as one of the factors that hinder students from practicing their English speaking performance in Indonesia. There are other most problems were found through those data (1) fear of making mistakes (2) shyness (3) feeling hesitated (4) lack of confidence. Basing on the results of this study Haidara (2016) provided some suggestions anticipated to overcome those problem for both teachers and students in Indonesia. While using English to communicate, the students were encouraged to stop bearing in mind that speaking English is a difficult thing or no need to think too much about the mistakes they would made. As for teachers: they need to be aware of the problems mentioned above, trying to find a positive way to teach English, like give some speaking activities to cultivate their interests in English.

Additionally, Toomnan and Intaraprasert (2015) believed the students would feel more comfortable when the classroom atmosphere was relaxed, as well as they would be more willing and motivated to learning. For those findings, the research provides some suggestions for teachers: If possible to encourage students especially focus who hold a negative attitude in learning, or creative a

relaxing and joyful atmosphere in the classroom to enhance students' needs in English speaking. As a result, it could be a limitation of this study.

Moreover, in terms of those findings from this study, Liu (2015) found out there were objective factors like social environment, the English teachers. As well as personal factors like learning attitudes and learning motivations affecting the students' English speaking and listening performance. But the limitation of this particular study the author only did research to find out the main factor affecting students' English speaking performance, but Liu didn't put forward any recommendation according to this problem.

Simultaneously, Bi (2015) revealed the relationship between the nature of the classroom psychological environment and students' English learning motivation had confirmed the classroom psychological social environment affecting the motivation of the importance of emotional learning outcomes and function. According to the results of the study, it presented some suggestions for pedagogical practice for the tertiary-level English majors students in the Chinese EFL context to improve student's achievement of the affective outcome of motivation. For example, students were motivated to learn English by using English language as an instrument to increase social status. As for teachers, they could pay attention to the "intrinsic interest" of students and enhance their motivation.

DISCUSSIONS

To answer the research questions on what are the factors affecting Chinese senior high school students' English speaking performance, the findings revealed the different factors had been found in the aforementioned relevant 6 articles. From the above article which can be drawn, psychological factor is the most influential factor that influencing students' English speaking performance. These psychological factors, while not directly involved in the specific learning process, but for the effectiveness of learning it plays a regulatory, incentive and promote role (R.C, 1985). In the analysis of these six articles, the findings indicated about psychological factors such as: shyness, anxiety, motivation and attitudes while performing in English for the communicative purposes.

English is considered as foreign language which is given more importance than any other foreign languages being taught in the country which belongs to the expanding circle. English as a foreign language for most students is difficult (Haidara, 2016). Furthermore, since the EFL students are not able to speak English in a natural way, when some students compared their English proficiency is not good as other students. In addition, most of them think people may laugh at them if they don't have a standard accent or mispronounce some words, therefore it is easy to produce anxiety for the students. Most EFL students indicated anxiety is the biggest psychological barriers to communicate in English. Some students think another psychological factor barrier in using English to communicate or express their thoughts in front of people is due to shyness. Thus, most students who learn English as foreign language are not willing to use this language to interact with Native-English speakers.

Regarding to the learning motivation, English language learners have differences on personal learning motivations, therefore their performance of English learning and speaking will also be different. For example, if some students like English songs or movies, this kind of integrative

motivation will encourage them to take the initiative to learn and speak English more actively. But if the students only take the instrumental motivation to improving English performance, it would make them lose their real needs of speaking English. As well as motivation, different learning attitudes will also lead to different English speaking performance. Students' attitudes towards learning, including attitudes to learning, attitudes to learning materials, and attitudes to teachers or schools. Therefore, learning attitude, which is an important factor affecting the effects of English language learning. For students' attitudes towards language and culture, it is necessary to strengthen the learning attitude in the English language and culture atmosphere, like more students are interested in Western festival and culture, they will be more focus on those relevant knowledges. Due to this their awareness of learning, the relevant knowledge of English would be improved. As for the attitudes of teachers: if an English teacher who could speak English fluently, making the class more interactive, it can attract more students for the passion of English learning. Because some students regard the relationship between teachers and teaching in a good way, so that lead to a negative attitude towards teachers.

Pedagogical implication*

This research focuses on psychological factor as one of factors that hinder students from practicing their English speaking performance in China because the researcher believes that one of the biggest problems among EFL students today is the psychological one. Psychology is the number one key to success for most EFL students in their English speaking performance. For the EFL students who learned English for many years, most of them have difficulties to use the language to speak, whereas when the author did the analyze, the results come to indicate that most of EFL students have psychological barriers like anxiety, shyness. And majority of those EFL students have weak

motivation and negative attitudes in using English to communicate. As with China, English is also taught as foreign language, it is considered as the primary foreign language which has given more emphasis than any other foreign languages being taught, which therefore it can also produce the same problem. Basing on the results of the study, in order to overcome the problems mentioned in the part of findings, the study has practical value in that ELT teachers can implement the appropriate way such as cultivate and stimulate students' learning motivation inside and outside of class to improve the English speaking performance of students.

As for the teachers:

- (1) Cultivate and stimulate students' learning motivation. Because learning motivation is directly promoting students to learn a kind of internal motivation. Teachers can focus on the real motivation of students and making students produce the learning needs. First, to clear the specific objectives of each lesson and the specific meaning of knowledge for students, and guide them to complete the task of this lesson as an immediate motivation. Second, teachers should guide students to have a positive thinking by using some challenging questions and encourage them to participate in speaking activities to foster studying motivation.
- (2) Create a good classroom teaching environment. The essence of teaching and the fundamental task is to create a situation that makes students feel safe, relaxed, and eliminate psychological stress and burden. In English classroom teaching, teachers should let students have courage to express their own thoughts, and have the freedom to imagine and create a speaking task and help them overcome inhibition and shyness.

As for students:

- (1) Self-psychological hints. In psychology, self-hints refer to the subjective imagination by the existence of some kind of special people or things to stimulate themselves, to achieve the purpose of changing behavior and subjective experience. For the students who have communication issues related to shyness and anxiety, they should encourage themselves to stop thinking their minds that speaking English is difficult, especially a dialogue with others in English, even there are some mistakes in grammar or non-standard pronunciation, as long as they could use English to communicate.
- (2) Joining an English-speaking club. Joining English speaking clubs to communicate in English with foreign friends is one of the effective way to improve oral English. In the process of communication students can use different body language to express thoughts, make themselves feel more confident and produce a strong desire to practice speaking.

CONCLUSION

The learning and teaching of English as a foreign language is a complex process, involving the seemingly infinite number of variables. The intricate web of these variables that are put together influences language learning as well as teaching. Generally, language teaching is known as one of the most important aspects of applied linguistics, at present, English as a foreign language is widely taught in many countries, especially in China. According to the current issue of English speaking in China, this thematic paper has conducted an analysis of research articles on the factors affecting ELF students' English speaking performance.

As a result, through the analysis, the author concludes that psychological factor is the most influential among other factors. In addition, that psychological factors hinder students' speaking not only from the students but also from the teachers' perspective. Furthermore, through this particular study, it might let English language teachers to realize the importance of students' psychology in English learning and develop a feasible teaching program. The teachers can enhance the students' interest in learning English and help them to build their confidence in speaking English. Regarding this, the author put forward some possible solutions both for teachers and students to overcome those problems. The author has referred to her own experience as an EFL learner to give those suggestions expected to be significant remedies to those students who learn English as a foreign language.

Throughout the article, the author focused on those similar contexts which teaching English as a foreign language, and did a centralized analysis on the students which encountered the psychological barriers in the process of speaking, and made some appropriate recommendations. In addition, China is a country which teaching English as a foreign language, so the recommendations also could be applied

to the particular context to Chinese students. There is one more that can be further studied, although the center of this paper discussed in regards to the speaking, learning English can be regarded as a whole, the improvement of students' English level depends on the progress of listening, reading and writing ability at the same time. Similarly, speaking is one of the productive skills that enables us to convey or to express something in a spoken language. Therefore, in the study of the speaking performance, the other one of productive skills in writing and receptive skills in listening and reading of English should also be taken into account. In addition, the personal factors like gender, regionalism and social demand also need to be considered as well.



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