Research Paper

The Development of English Public Speaking Competence Rating Scale for EFL University and College Students in China

Chen Cheng[1], Florence Kuek[2]

[1]Guilin University of Technology, China
[2]Faculty of Education and Languages, SEGI University, Malaysia

Corresponding Author: Chen Cheng

ABSTRACT

Due to globalization, EPS is increasingly important, especially among university students. However, in China, some fundamental questions have not been answered, such as, what specific competencies of English public speaking (EPS) should be attained by university students? What level of these competencies should be reached? What assessment instrument should be employed to gauge the performance of EPS among EFL university students? These have not received enough research. To response to these questions, this study took CSE (China Standard of English Language Ability) serve as the initial item pool, and filtered out relevant EPS descriptors, then via employment of inductive approach, a CSE-based EPS Ability Standard Framework (EASF)was established, and base on this framework, an EPS Rating Scale (ERS)was created. Within EASF and ERS, four (4) dimensions and 22 item statements are contained. Moreover, validity and reliability evidence for this new instrument was established. In the last portion of the paper, the potential implication and limitations of the findings are discussed. It is hoped that the findings in this study can give some implications on the future EPS syllabus development for EFL university student in China.

Key words: English Public Speaking; Competence; Scale; English as Foreign language (EFL);

1. INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is "a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to speak in public in order toinform, self-express, relate, or to persuade" (De Grez, 2009, p. 5). Public speaking as a type of oral communications is widely used in a modern society, for instance, a student presents his views to his group members, a teacher lectures his course, a researcher delivers an academic report in workshop, a salesman introduces his products to customers, and all these activities are regarded as public speaking (Wang, 2007). Due to its popularity, public speaking is considered as 21st century necessity skills for students' success in academy and career (Kivunja, C. 2015; Lucas, 2013).

In America, the ability to deliver public speaking is considered as one of the core competencies for college students (Kerby and Romine, 2009; Van Ginkel et al., 2015). Public speaking is a mandatory liberal course for college students from different disciplines (Yin, 2005). Likewise, in recent years, the competence of English public speaking has been increasingly emphasized in China higher education. This competence is considered to be of great value to Chinese university students: (1) it can improve students' English language skills, (2) it can foster students' critical thinking, (3) develop students' intercultural communicative skills (4) improve students' future employability (Wang, 2009).In response to these trends, in 2016, the

College English Teaching Guide (2016) from the Ministry of Education formulated a new objective of EPS for Chinese college students, "be able to deliver an academic presentation and participate in follow-up discussions in international conferences" (P2). In 2018, *National Standards for the Quality of Undergraduate Professional Teaching in General Colleges and Universities* (Teaching Guiding Committee of Higher Education, 2018), released by the Ministry of Education reiterated that English public speaking and English debate have been officially included into the core courses of English language major students. In response to this demand, in recent years, more and more colleges and universities in China have started incorporating EPS into college English course as a part of speaking skill or taking it as a stand-alone course so as to meet students' growing need for good communication skills in their second language. According to Zhang (2019), EPS-related courses in universities in China have boomed from just a few in2005 to hundreds currently offered across the country.

However, along with the rapid development of this course, some problems have begun to be exposed. For instance, there are very limited studies on the assessment of English-speaking competence in China. Teachers and language learners strongly need evaluation tools with high reliability and validity so that they can be applied to conduct EPS test (Guang, 2017). Some scholars have strongly called for the development of a suitable evaluation tools led by education departments of government. For example, Tian (2013), Liu (2015) and Guang (2017) pointed out that although there are already quite a few English public speaking ability standards and evaluation tools available in the world, yet due to the significant differences between China's English language teaching environment and other countries, these differences determine that China should not directly adopt or copy the existing English ability standards and evaluation tools from other countries. For example, the biggest difference is English is learnt and used as foreign language in China, English public speaking is virtually EFL public speaking. The most fundamental problem is the students' limited English language ability in public speaking (Tian,2013). without sufficient language ability, it means a speaker can't convey his message to audience, other public skills become meaningless(ibid). The establishment of Chinese-based context tools should be our priority. Besides, English public speaking ability standards and evaluation tools are urgent demanding to guide and measure students' presentation skills (Guang, 2017; Zhou & Wan, 2018). The ministry of Education stated in its teaching guidance documents that "a comprehensive, objective, scientific and accuracy evaluation is vital to achieve the set objectives" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.5).However, literature also reflects that, by to date, an reliable and authorized assessment instrument that specifically focus on the assessment of EPS is lacking in China as opposed to public speaking skills are widely assessed at a large number of higher education level institutions in the world. Thus, this study attempts to fill this gap.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENTS

It is a common practice in the international education community that a set of competency standards system is necessary for assessment of target language learning outcome. Generally, this standard clearly stipulates key competence indicators in a continuum of growth from a beginner to an expert. For example, in America, Performance Descriptors for Language Learners by ACTFL (The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) is this kind that specifies EFL learners' communication skills progress through the novice, intermediate, advanced, superior, and distinguished levels. This standard describes what language learners are required to know and what able to do, "how well" they were expected to do.

Similar to the United States, China issued its own EFL ability standard for the first time in 2018, namely, *China's Standards of English language ability (CSE)*, in which comprehensively define the English ability standards that Chinese English learners are required to achieve in English communication activities, and put a long list of wide range of English knowledge and abilities that learners should master, with an aim to provide baseline for Chinese English teaching and test at all stages. (Liu, 2019; Jie, 2019). This standard also seeks to help language learners to make self-diagnose with their English proficiency, find out their strengths and weaknesses and set their learning objectives in a targeted language (Hu, Shi and Zheng. 2018).

In term of statements in CSE, even though it fully drew on successful experiences from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), for example, it adopted clear and specific more than 3000 "can-do" statement to describe the English language proficiency level, providing a detailed description among three stages (beginning, intermediate, and the advanced) and nine levels of English proficiency (Liu, 2017; Jie, 2019). However, there are some shortcomings for this system. Firstly, it is too complex because it contains 86 tables and more than 3000 statements. It is not easy to be carried out by educational practitioners. Secondly, it is not specific enough. For example, even though speaking ability is listed as one of five basic skills in the systems, yet it rarely goes deep into various forms of oral communication, such as dialogue, discussion, speech, debate, etc., but describe this ability at general level. From the perspective of English speaking, the description of this ability showed a fragmented picture，namely, That is to say, the descriptors of the public speaking skills are wildly scattered and hidden in the dazzling tables. In many cases, when teachers or students of EFL courses need to use CSE to set their own learning targets, they find themselves playing a complicated Jigsaw puzzle game. As a result, they are lost in the jungle of these tables. Therefore, this CSE is fail to help EFL public speaking skill learners and instructors to identify learning goals and chart their progress towards their goals.

Literature review also shows that some differences in foreign language ability standard formulation between the United States and its Chinese counterparts. Primarily, in addition to an ACTF *Performance Descriptors for Language Learners*, there are some reliable operational evaluation scales have been developed to support the standard. For example, to detail and specify the oral communication skills in *Performance Descriptors for Language Learners*, The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the higher education administration agency in the United States, issued the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) for all American college students in 2009. For EPS, VALUE stated that "Oral communication takes many forms. This rubric is specifically designed to evaluate oral presentations of a single speaker at a time and is best applied to live or video-recorded presentations." (Rhodes, 2010, p.1). To date, the scale has become a widely referenced and utilized form of assessment on campuses across the United States.

Besides, some professional academic organizations also have made their contributions to the EPS assessment instruments in America. For example, *The Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form* was created in 1990 by the NCA (Committee on Assessment and Testing), a division of National Communication Association, provides a statistically valid and reliable tool for the assessment of public speaking performance. The tool was developed to address that need for a standardized and reliable EPS evaluation at the higher education level, "for purposes of in-class speech evaluation, entrance/exit placement and assessment, as an instructional strategy or advising tool,

and/or to generate assessment data for institutional or departmental account-ability." (p.8)

By contrast, in the context of China, much work still needs to be done. On one hand, under the CSE, there is only overall English ability standard is available. On the other hand, the need for a standardized EFL public speaking assessment instrument has become increasingly evident as oral communication competence has been more and more emphasized in university level. Without this valid instrument for EPS, then some critical questions emerge: What performance should be awarded to a 'pass' grade? What are the targets in this aspect should be attained? How to chart the progress from threshold level to advanced level? Just as some scholars argued that: "with economic further internationalization in China, different employers, different types of schools and even different majors may have different requirements for English proficiency levels or some particular English language skills. In the future, the English proficiency evaluation should not merely report a simple total score of general English ability, but a report of a certain particular required skill. Moreover, in the report, not only scores but also qualitative descriptions should be presented, which can provide a more comprehensive and reliable description of the candidate's English ability." (Hu, Shi & Zheng, 2018, p.1). Given that these reasons discussed, the objective of this study was to establish an EPS ability standard and assessment instrument.

To achieve this objective, this study seeks to answer the following two research questions:
1. What kind of EPS ability standard can be developed for EFL Chinese university students based on CSE?
2. What kind of EPS rating scale can be created based on CSE?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the importance of public speaking skill has increasingly recognized,

educators' attention needs to shift to how to assess this skill (Thomson and Rucker, 2002). Currently, in higher education level, public speaking has become a required course for numerous universities in many countries (Van Ginkel, 2019).In the context of China, the history of the course of English Public Speaking (EPS) is relatively short, namely, just over 20 years, therefore, there inevitably a lot of research still need to be done (Tian, Z.2013; Wang 2014).This section focuses on EPS ability requirements in official documents and assessment instruments developed in China.

From the ministry of education document websites, three widely-accepted major EFL official documents related to English speaking within recent 5 years (from 2015-2020) issued by Ministry of Education can be found, namely, College English Teaching Guideline (2016), College English Test (Band 4) and CSE. Hence, they are targeted as the focus of the research. By following, three documents are discussed in order to select the best initial items extracting pool from them.

The first one, *College English Teaching Guideline* (CETC)*, CETC is an important official document developed by CFLTC (the College Foreign Language Teaching Committee) aligned to the requirements of the Ministry of Education (Wang, 2016). In the guideline, although it clearly states the course position, course objectives, course implementation, teaching evaluation, teaching methods. However, there are very few statements particularly associated with EPS. It merely provides a brief and general objective "Be able to present papers on international conferences occasion and discuss in a professional way; be able to participate in business negotiations, product promotion and other business activities" （MOE, 2016，p2). It is evident that no assessment criterions provided in this document.

The Second one, the CET Syllabus (College English Test), CET is a large-scale standardized English proficiency test for college students across China sponsored by

MOE (Ministry of Education).In recent years, this test has reformed traditional paper-based mode and added speaking part as an independent test called CET-SET (College English Test- Spoken English Test), it comprises five parts:

- Warm-up: Self-introduction (20 seconds for each candidate)
- Task 1: Read short essay aloud, (1 minute for each candidate)
- Task 2: Short answer according to the essay (2) (40 seconds for each candidate)
- Task3:presentation base on prompts（60 second for each candidate）
- Task 4: Start a discussion according to the provided context and tasks (3 minutes for two candidates together) *(National College English Test Committee for Band 4 and Band 6, 2016.p.7)*

As CET-SET exam tasks indicate, Task 3 basically falls into the category of EPS discussed in this research. Its scoring standards are presented below:

CET-SET Rating Standard

Dimension	Definition
a. Accuracy	The correctness of pronunciation, intonation and grammar and vocabulary
b. Range	Difficulty level of vocabulary and grammatical structures
c. Involvement	Size of contribution in the oral communication made by the candidate
D. Continuity	the candidate is able to produce continuous and coherent discourse
E. Flexibility	the candidate is able to manage to deal with different situations and topics
F.Appropriacy	language used by the candidate suitable to specific occasion

Obviously, test designers have noticed that EPS is one of the indispensable types of spoken English that is why presentation skill has been included into CET-SET as task 3. However, constrained to this test ultimate objective is to measure overall spoken English proficiency rather than specifically focus on EPS, some limitations exist with the CET-SET Rating Standard. (1) the primary function of this CET-SET rating scale is to examine the overall speaking -skill ability, it does not focus specifically on public speaking competence. Many EPS components (e.g. organization, purpose, transitions, supporting material, and voice) have been ignored under that scale; however, these components are essential for an effective speech. As Lucas (2009) stated: "Oral English and EPS are not identical. oral English is concerned primarily with gaining proficiency in vocabulary, grammar, syntax, pronunciation and accent. all these important for an effective public speaker, but public speaking involves more than technical proficiency in a language. oral English competence is necessary EPS, but not sufficient." (p.4). Therefore, this may be an effective scale for spoken English yet ineffective scale for EPS performance. (2) In the result report, simply a letter (e.g. A /B/C) is provided, no qualitative descriptions involved. The candidates cannot receive sufficient feedback from the report and thereby make more improvement accordingly.

The third one, CSE, CSE is developed and completed by taking 3 years, with leading by the Ministry of Education, participated by a group of 200 top English experts cross China, widely collecting data from more than 1,500 education institutions from primary schools to universities.CSE serves as an authorized official standard for EPS research in English language ability assessments in China, and also provides a guidance for front-line English learning and teaching (Liu, 2017). However, as it mentioned above, CSE didn't give a clear statement on a learning outcome of EPS skills, nor provide an operational assessment instrument. All benchmark statements are organized based on five language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation.ESP skills are irregularly scattered among numerous tables, which is very inconvenient for speech educators and learners to follow. Besides, it does not provide a specific EPS instrument. Therefore, it is lack of operability and

flexibility. It is noted that, different from CSE, as the counterpart, the ACTFL standard in American is organized based on three different communication forms, namely, interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational, instead of five language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation). As a result, statement for EPS in ACTFL standard is clearer and more specific. Moreover, it is more operational when it is carried out.

In addition, some educational institutions in China have also developed some evaluation standards for English public speaking and set up their own oral examinations. For example, the *Standards for Oral Proficiency in English developed* Renmin University of China include oral presentation part. Some scholars have proposed some scoring criterions. For example, Guang (2017) put forward 11 items assessment standard of EPS. Zhou and Wan (2019)'s assessment standard for oral presentation in college English class Foreign Language Education; However, these are basically the evaluation standards of school-based courses and lack the endorsement of government departments. Their EPS competencies statements are formed by collecting data from a small number of student participants (the former is 40 students; the latter includes 11 teachers and 60 students). As for education practitioners, these tools lack sufficient reliability. Therefore, a more comprehensive specialized EPS evaluation is necessary to assist evaluators and ensure accuracy.

In short, the above literature review shows that China has not yet formed a unified, complete, scientific and systematic EPS curriculum syllabus. There is an urgent need to establish a set of evaluation systems to measure students' speech ability in EPS course (Guang, 2017).The extant evaluation scales for EPS are developed by a handful of schools or scholars and have not been widely accepted. By current, education departments in Chinese government have failed to fulfill their duties to establish a set of authoritative evaluation standards. In most cases, EPS is tested with other forms of oral communication tasks and assessed by sharing the same set of standards. Therefore, seeking to establish a more reliable evaluation instrument will be of significance to improve the quality of speech teaching.

4. METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

In order to attain the objectives, the methodology employed in this study was document analysis based on an inductive approach. The overall process followed a 4-stage from initial data pool selection to data analysis.

4.1 Initial data pool

There are two folds reasons for selecting CSE as the initial data pool. Firstly, despite the CSE is swollen and complicated. Undoubtedly, CSE is still the most authoritative, detailed, and reliable official document in China. according to Liu (2019), the leader of experts in charge of CSE, "in order to collect as many English proficiency descriptors as possible, the researchers conducted a large-scale data collection in three years, involving 1,500 schools at various levels and 160,000 English school learners, frontline English language teachers, EFL researchers."(p.10) Therefore, CSE's data is huge and more advantageous than any small-scale data collection. As Jin & Jie, (2019), two EFL speaking skill experts in the panel, asserted CSE is "the most authoritative English language document in China in these years" (Jin & Jie, 2019, p.13). Therefore, it is reasonable and appropriate to select CSE as the initial data pool in this study. Secondly, literature review showed that the previous studies mainly depends on interview method, For example, Guang (2017) collected his qualitative from 40 students whereas Zhou and Wan (2019) collected qualitative from 11 teachers and 60 students. By contrast, this study employed the document analysis method by taking CSE as an initial data pool. This initiative makes this study different from the previous

ones. Maybe the data used in this study was more representative.

4.2 Benchmark level identification

To begin with, after CSE was adopted as target document, it needed to be further narrowed down to specific levels among 9 levels in CSE due to this paper merely focus on higher educational level. According to Liu (2018) and Wang (2018), level 5 and 6 is the required levels for college English learners (p.29). Therefore, these two levels are locked as the target levels of this study whereas other levels are excluded. Considering level 4 also belong to intermediate level (level 4/5/6), therefore, level 4 is also included for this study.

4.3 Inclusion criterions

As mentioned before, CSE is a huge and complicated system, with more than 3,000 descriptors, even if the scope has been narrowed down to 4-6 level, the remaining statement number is still huge. In this case, it is difficult to effectively extract relevant statement without a criterion. In this study, the Public speaking process framework proposed by Lucas (2012) was adopted as the sorting criterions, which comprises 7 components:

a. theme and purpose determination,
b. audience analysis,
c. speech structure outline,
d. speech material collection,
e. language use,
f. voice and body language,
g. visual aid

Therefore, the descriptors were extracted from the initial pool (CSE) based on these seven (7) components in the framework, it means only those who meet these conditions can be selected otherwise they were discarded.

4.4 Extraction

This stage involved a thorough review and careful extraction. The review was carried out to highlight those statements specifically relating to EPS base on the Lucas' seven component framework.All descriptors listed in CSE were read repeatedly to get the EPS relevant data. After a verbatim systematical review, 75 relevant descriptors were identified in CSE and extracted from it and encoded as initial codes from CS1 to CS75. Besides, the pages number and corresponding level of the initial codes in the CSE were put after each statement item, which make them traceable. Moreover, to ascertain the reliability of extraction, the identification process was conducted by two researchers independently to guarantee the inclusion of relevant and exclusion of irrelevant statements, the overlap of the two researchers' decisions was sufficient (Cohen's Kappa= 0.89). The discrepancies were resolved through a focused discussion.

4.4 Classification and generalization

At this stage, in order to categorize and generalize 75 extracted descriptors (initial codes), an inductive analysis was carried out with the initial codes. They were checked again. After conduction of merging or deleting irrelated descriptors based on their meaning and features, 22 merged descriptors were yielded in this stage. During the process, these new merged descriptors have been maintained as much as original information in the initial codes. Furthermore, it also followed the "can do" statement format as the way in CSE. To build a framework, a keyword was summarized from new merged descriptors. In sum, the merged codes included new merged descriptors and its corresponding key words (examples for encoding presented in Table 1).

Table 1.1 Some Examples for Encoding

Initial codes	Merged codes	
	Merged descriptors	Summarized Key words
E1 Can give a detailed and accurate description of scenery or places（P43,L6） E2 Can describe in detail the main characters and scenes of a story or a movie.（P43,L6） E3 Can give a detailed and orderly description of the progression of hot social issues（P43,L6） E4 Can describe his/her plans or experiences（P43,L6） E4 Can describe in detail common events/objects, character traits, and everyday scenes. (P43,L5）	CS1. Be able to make a descriptive speech in English, such as describing some characters, scenery, plans	Descriptive English speech

4.5 Themes

At this stage, the 22 merged codes yield at the last stage were further streamlined and were categorized with thematic analysis. Four (4) main themes were yielded they were named based on the task for making an effective speech proposed in Lucas (2009), they virtually constituted dimensions of an EPS ability standard framework (EASF), in other words, under EASF, there four themes and 22 merged codes (22 descriptors and 22 summarized keywords). Four themes are presented as follow:

Theme 1: speech type (S1-S6)

Theme 2: speech content and organization (S7-S11)

Theme 3: speech language (S12-S16)

Theme 4: speech delivery (S17-S22)

5. Preliminary finding

Preliminary finding includes an EPS ability standard framework (EASF) and EPS Assessment scale (EAS), these are interrelated. The reason of called them "preliminary" is that they are unvalidated, hence, they are not the ultimate findings.

5.1 Preliminary EASF

After three stages inductive encoding，a preliminary EPS ability standard (hereafter EASF) yielded, on some extent, this standard was considered to be quasi-official requirements on EPS for university students since all the initial codes are extracted from national document namely, CSE. All the data are sorted out from CSE and maximum original information contained in the initial

descriptors have been maintained in the inductive process. For the convenience of reading, in tabularization, the table is displayed in the order of dimensions, indicators, and descriptors from left to right (see Appendix A).EASF comprises 4 dimensions and 22 indicators 22 descriptors.

As it shown in the table 1.2, there are four dimensions imbedded in EASF: （1）speech types，（2） content and organization， （3）language，（4）deliv ery. Under each dimension, a set of specific performance statement is provided. The four competencies and corresponding performance statement provide a comprehensive description of EPS competency:

- Different speech types. It refers to the ability of the speaker to deal with different speech tasks. The tasks include：a descriptive speech; a narrative speech; an expositive speech; a persuasive speech; an instructive speech; respond to the audience's questions
- Content and organization. Content means what the speaker delivers to his audience while organization represents how the speaker to arrange his content according to his need. Five (5) items are included in this dimension. Items S7, S8, S9 were intended to reflect topic selection, purpose determination, and outline of manuscript. Item S10 and S11 focus on the speech structure and supporting evidences
- Language refers to the way the speaker put his ideas into words, this dimension includes vocabulary variety, cohesion,

rhetoric technique, grammar, pronunciation, fluency.

- Delivery is the way of the speaker conveying his message to audience in his speech. This dimension includes five items (S18, S 19, S 20, S 21, S22), ranging from audience awareness, voice control (pace, volume, pitch, stress) and visual aid to body language (gestures, eye contact and appearance).

5.2 EPS Assessment scale

EASF is not the ultimate objective of this study. The ultimate objective of this study is to build up an EPS rating scale base on the previous EASF. Obviously, the content of the EPS rating scale has been determined by EASF accordingly. What need to do is to decide the measurement approaches used by this instrument. Performance levels on ratings scales which is ranging from 1 to 5 points (strongly disagree=1 disagree=2 uncertain=3 agree =4 strongly agree=5) (see Appendix B).. The 5-point Likert scale allow the assesses to indicates their level among 22 relative key competencies. This rating scale is easy to be carried out. It not only can be used to be conducted in a large-scale investigation for self-perceived EPS competence, but also can be used in a face to face test.

6. Trustworthiness

To verify the reliability and validity of EPSRS, the following section describes the testing process from the prospective of content validity, construct validity and reliability by using statistical analysis, from including how quantitative data was collected and how was analyzed.

6.1 Validity

This scale was validated from content and construct.

6.1.1 Content Validity

Before data collection, the scale has to be validated by experts. In this study, the items of EASF were checked by two EPS teachers in the foreign language department in a Chinese university. One has professors title and another have associate professor title. Furthermore, a pilot interview with five EFL university students. Experts and students were asked to proofread and examine the scale items both in Chinese and English in terms of (a) content relevance and coverage, (b) item clarity, and (c) format. Based on recommendations from experts and students, the scale was modified. As a result, some grammatical errors and some wordings that sounded awkward are recommended to be adjusted and an English native expert finally proofread the modified version. Moreover, 41 Chinses students majoring in English Business were invited to read through the items of the Chinses version and help make comments if they found the items confusing while reading. With collection of feedback from teachers, expert and students, some minor amendments have been conducted.

6.1.2 Construct Validity

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 in China, the questionnaire was administered online at a Chinese university by the researcher co-operated with that university English teachers. Eventually 1148 EFL students voluntarily participated in the questionnaire. The data obtained from the questionnaire were downloaded from that internet website and input SPSS (Version23) to make statistical analysis.

Factor analysis (FA) can be used to verify "the underlying correlation among a set of observed variables" (Plonsky, 2015 p. 182). In this study, with the collected questionnaire data, SPSS factor analysis conducted. Three steps are carried as follow.

Firstly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was used to predict suitability of conducting a factor analysis. Kaiser (1974) suggested that minimum value for KMO should be above 0.6 while Bartlett's test value should be below 0.05. Based on the result, KMO in this study attained a 0.976 value while Bartlett's test value p=0.00, which was far greater than the acceptable value. The result

indicated that the questionnaire had a good sample size and was suitable to conduct a factor analysis.

Secondly, the oblique rotation yielded four-factor solutions accounted for 51.4% of the total variance. Principle component analysis was conducted to examine the factor structure of the preliminary 22-item public speaking rating scale, the eigen value >1 and a minimum primary loading >0.50 are required. Rotated Component Matrix (RCM) was presented. It indicated that one item was identified as problematic due to its cross-loading on two factors. Therefore, it was eliminated. Eventually the remaining 21 items yielded a four-factor solution meeting factor extraction requirement; all retained items

loaded adequately on their respective factors.

As displayed in Figure 1, 6 (6) items(1,2,3,4,5,6) loaded on factor 1, five (5) items(7,8,9,10,11) loaded on factor 2, six (6) items(12,13,14,15,16,20) loaded on factor 3 and another three(3) items(17, 22, 21) loaded on factor 4. Factor 1 was in line with original component 1, namely, types of speech while Factor 2 was in line with original component 2, content and organization; Likewise, Factor 3 was in line with original component 3, language while Factor 4 was in line with original component 4, delivery. Conclusively, the factor analysis results were consistent with what was originally hypothesized in the EASF.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
3. The speaker is able to give an expositive speech in English, such as explaining a game rule or phenomenon.	.816			
2. The speaker is able to give a narrative speech in English, such as telling a story vividly or event detailly	.797			
4. The speaker is able to give a persuasive speech in English, such as persuading others to approve your plan and position	.750			
5. The speaker is able to give an instructive speech in English, such as demonstrate and instruct how to use some electronic products	.728			
1. The speaker is able to make a descriptive speech in English, such as describing some characters, scenery, plans	.728			
6. After the speech, the speaker is able to respond to the audience's questions correctly and appropriately	.571			
14. The speaker is able to use appropriate rhetoric to make the speech more attractive.		.728		
15. The speaker is able to avoid basic grammatical errors in his speech		.682		
13. The speaker is able to use appropriate rhetoric to make the speech more attractive.		.649		
12. The speaker is able to use a wide range of vocabulary to express		.633		
16. The speaker is able to pronounce words accurately and make audience understand		.570		
20. The speaker is able to use stress to convey his feeling		.556		
10.When writing a speech, the speaker is able to provide enough evidence to support the points			.690	
9. The speaker is able to logically conceive and outline his main points of the speech			.690	
7. The speaker is able to choose an interesting and appropriate topic.			.684	
8. The speaker is able to collect the necessary supporting materials with the help of the library or the Internet			.683	
11. When writing a speech, the speaker is able to well streamline the beginning, body and conclusion.			.648	
21. The speaker is able to use body language appropriately and effectively to increase the speech effect.				.806
20. The speaker is able to use various aids properly, such as diagrams, PPT, objects and models, making speech more impressive.				.801
18. The speaker is able to respect and build up a rapport with audience				.641
19. The speaker is able to control his speech volume, rate, and pitch, maintaining the audience's attention.				.586
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.				

To validate the questionnaire, the researcher applied two types of validity: the expert validity and the internal consistency validity.

For the draft questionnaire, all of the items were checked by three langue experts with professor title or associate professor title to ensure its clarity and relevance. Two

of them are from Education Faculty of SEGI University, Malaysia, reviewed the instruments. The third expert from Guangxi University (China) with over ten years of teaching experiences

6.2 Internal Reliability

To measure the internal consistency of the EPS rating scale, Cronbach's alpha

was adopted. The reliability of the questionnaire items can be calculated by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Davenport & Shannon, 2000). Generally speaking, the higher the alpha score is, the more reliable the score are. The 21-item EPS scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.976, which can be considered to be at excellent reliable level based on the *Interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha Scores (Creswell, 2012)*. The result proved that the current questionnaire had a high degree of internal consistency and reliability.

7. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to establish an EPS ability standard and assessment instrument. In order to attain these objectives, this study employed document analysis based on an inductive approach. Eventually an EPS ability standard framework (EASF) was established. Based on this, an EPS rating scale (ERS) was developed. For the EASF and the ERS, some implications and limitations can be discussed.

Implications

In term of implications, the EASF was a breakthrough in EPS due to literature reflects there is few EPS ability standard established in China. EASF was derived from CSE due to CSE's solid foundation that was an outcome of Ministry of Education worked with 200 tops English language experts, however, unlike CSE centering on overall English ability, EASF specifically focus on EPS at the higher education level. For the university teachers and students can rely on EASF to set their personalized EPS learning targets. With regard to the EPS rating scale (ERS), the biggest difference from scales in the extant literature, for example, Guang (2017) and Zhou and Wan (2018), is that this scale is grounded in CSE and can be regarded as the quasi- national standard of English-speaking ability to a certain extent. Therefore, it can be employed by college language learners to

identify their current level and find out the strengths and weakness and chart their progress toward their learning goal.

With regard to content of EASF and the ERS, it is noted that there is a different from the traditional assessments that is in both EASF and the ERS, speech type is incorporated as one of major dimensions of EPS core competencies. It means the speaker's competence of handling different speech tasks. This competence hasn't been attached importance in the traditional assessment scales. For example, one classical EPS assessment tool in America, the Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form from the NCA (National communication Association) includes eight competencies, namely, purpose determination, topic selection, organization, articulation, vocal variety, nonverbal behavior, language use, and use of supporting material (Morreale, et al. 2007). The speech type is excluded in these eight competencies. Along with the Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form, Thomson and Rucker's 20-item Public Speaking Competency Instrument (2002), Lucas' 22 - item Speech Evaluation Form (2007), L. M. Schreiber et al's Public Speaking Competence Rubric (2012). The speech type within these assessment instruments is also ignored. yet, there is an exception, Al-Tamimi (2016) developed a set of questionnaires to measure students EPS ability in a Malaysia university, within the questionnaire, 4 items related to skills of dealing with different types of public speech, in which includes giving speech in small groups, giving speech to inform people, giving speech to persuade people, giving speech in special occasion. This viewpoint is basically consistent with EASF and the ERS developed in this study. In the China context, the ability of making different speeches has been emphasized. CCTV Cup English Public Speaking Competition is the largest scale and highest level of this kind in China. It's scoring standards focus on three aspects: content; language; delivery (Zhang, 2009). Most

importantly, the ability of making different speeches is evaluated in the competition, that is, in three rounds, three types of EPS tasks are offered to the competitors, extemporaneous speech; impromptu speech; and question responding. The scoring criterion is completely consistent with the results of this article. In the United States, the purpose of mother tongue-based speech courses is not only to train students to adapt to future social life and work, but also to cultivate students' critical thinking and democratic awareness (Brydon, S. R., & Scott, M. D. 2003). Very differently, EPS teaching in Chinese colleges and universities mainly aims to cultivate students' ability of smoothly completing their tasks in various occasions in future jobs (Wan, 2009). From this point of view, speech type is of special significance to Chinese EPS learners.

Limitations and Future Directions

The scale also has some limitations. Its biggest one is that although it is a tool based on the CSE descriptors, after all, it is essentially a temporary compromise under the condition that there is no specific EPS ability standard issued by official departments, nor widely-recognized scale. In the inductive process, although the current researchers have tried their best to ascertain the consistency between the original codes (extracted descriptors from CSE) and the merged codes, yet subjectivity is inherent and inevitable. The validity and reliability of ERS need to be further tested, especially by the communication experts. In this study, the content validity merely carried out with English language teachers and 1148 students in a university. Therefore, further testing of the instrument is warranted. Future research findings need to support or disconfirm these findings. Testing in a variety of academic settings and a variety of cultural settings would be useful.

Moreover, there are nine (9) levels within CSE from novice to an expert. This study only shed light on the level 4,5 and 6

(intermediate level) whereas the other levels are neglected because the purpose of this study merely scopes at the higher educational level, other educational level, for instance, middle school and post-graduate level, have been excluded. The rationale for this is that most university and college graduates are the biggest population of EPS participants in China when they get their jobs. But a limitation yielded here is that some EPS descriptors in CSE at post graduate level (e.g. level 7, 8 and 9) have been discarded. As a result, some important EPS skills may be not included in EASF and the ERS due to they are listed as advanced level (e.g. level 7, 8 and 9) in CSE by its developers. For example, impromptu speech was required in level 7-9 (the advanced stage) in CSE whereas manuscript speech and extemporaneous speech are required at level 5-6. Therefore, virtually, EASF and the ERS constrained to manuscript speech and extemporaneous speech in term of descriptors source. However, impromptu speech is the most frequently used speech type in daily communication (Bytwerk, 1985). Therefore, if impromptu speech is required for the college students still to be further evidenced.

Besides, being selected as the initial data pool of this study, CSE has its huge advantages comparing with first-hand small-scale qualitative data collection, yet it has its some deficiencies. CSE primarily centers on general English ability without incorporating some EPS skills, which may lead in the incompleteness of EASF and the ERS. For example,

Informing speech, persuasive speech and speech on special occasions are considered as three major types of public speaking. Informing speech (e.g. narrative speech, descriptive speech and instructive speech) and persuasive speech are required in oral express ability and writing ability in CSE, yet speech on special occasions is ignored. As a result, this type of speech is ignored in EASF and the ERS as well. As a matter of fact, this type speech is of great value for the Chinese college and university

students as potential international liaisons. For example, making a welcome or farewell remark to foreign guests is a kind of routine activities.

Finally, 21 items for the EASF and the ERS is sometimes considered to be too many (Hsieh, Tsai & Lee, 2018), especially conducting face to face EPS test due to judges can concentrate on many items within a few minutes. Generally speaking, 3-4 constructs and around 10 items are recommended in an EPS scoring scale (ibid). Therefore, it is possible for some evaluators that this scale is brief enough to quickly judge a student's EPS performance in a very short period of time.

CONCLUSION

With EPS competence play a more and more important role in higher education of China, colleges and universities are challenged to employ more effective ways of assessing their students' competence of delivering English public speaking for EFL college students. However, rare studies and official document has focused on public speaking evaluation. To fill this gap, this study took CSE (China Standard of English Language Ability) serve as the initial item pool, and filtered out relevant EPS descriptors, then via employment of inductive approach, a CSE-based EPS Ability Standard Framework (EASF)was established, and base on this framework, an EPS Rating Scale (ERS)was created. Within EASF and ERS, four (4) dimensions and 22 item statements are contained. Moreover, validity and reliability evidence for this new instrument was established. the potential implication and limitations of the findings are discussed. It is hoped that the findings in this study can give some implications on the future EPS syllabus development for EFL university student in China and make some contribution to target setting of college EPS students via identifying the gaps between their current level assessed by ERS and the standard ability requirements set by EASF.

REFERENCES

1. Brydon, S. R., & Scott, M. D. (2003). Between one and many: The art and science of public speaking. McGraw-Hill.
2. Bytwerk, R. L. (1985). Impromptu speaking exercises. Communication Education (2)
3. Chen Lang, (2010), Public English speaking course content, activities and evaluation planning, Foreign language research, p.56-57
4. De Grez, L. (2009). Optimizing the instructional environment to learn presentation skills (Doctoral dissertation, Ghent University).
5. Guang Caihong, (2017), Construction of evaluation rules of English public speech ability. Journal of North China University of Technology.
6. Hsieh, Tsai &Lee, (2018), A Preliminary Study for Automatic Scoring System in Oral Presentation, Psychological Testing
7. Jie Wei; Jin Yan, (2017), Stylistic Analysis of Descriptive Language of Spoken Ability: A Study Based on the Chinese standard of English language Ability, Foreign Languages world, p.20
8. Jie Wei, 2019, Research on the Connection between Oral English Test and the Chinese standard of English language Ability, Foreign Language World
9. Kim.S. (2006). Academic oral communication needs of East Asian international graduate students in non-science and non-engineering field. English for Specific Purposes, 25(4), 479-489.
10. Kerby, D., & Romine, J. (2009). Develop oral presentation skills through accounting curriculum design and course-embedded assessment. Journal of Education for Business, 85(3), 172-179.
11. Kivunja, C. (2015). Exploring the Pedagogical Meaning and Implications of the 4Cs" Super Skills" for the 21st Century through Bruner's 5E Lenses of Knowledge Construction to Improve Pedagogies of the New Learning Paradigm. Creative Education.
12. Little, D. The Common European Framework of reference for Languages: Perspectives on the making of supranational language education policy, The Modern Language Journal，2007，p.645－655
13. Liu Jianda. 2015, The Basic Philosophy of The development of Standard of English

Language Ability in China. Chinese Examination, 2015, p.7-11

14. Liu Jianda, Huang Liyan, Hu Huawei (2018), the Implication of China Standard of English Language Ability onEnglish teaching, learning and assessment,English learning.

15. Liu Jianda, (2018), China Standard of English Language Ability and English language test,China Examinations, p. 1-6

16. Liu Jianda, (2017), China Standard of English Language Ability and and English Learning, Chinese Foreign Language

17. Liu Jianda, Peng Chuan, (2017), Constructing a Scientific Chinese English Proficiency Scale. Foreign Language world. p.2-9

18. Lucas, S. E. (2013). English public speaking and the cultivation of talents for Chinese college students. Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics, 36(2), 163–182

19. Lucas, S. E. (2007). The art of public speaking (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill

20. Ministry of Education, (2018), China Standard of English Language Ability. Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2018.

21. Ministry of education, (2016), College English Teaching Guideline, Retrieved from www.cet.edu.cn

22. Morreale, S. P., Moore, M. R., Surges-Tatum, D., & Webster, L. (2007). ''The competent speaker'' speech evaluation form (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: National Communication Association.

23. National College English Test committee for Band 4 and Band 6, (2016), National College English Band 4 and Band 6 Examination Syllabus. Retrieved from www.cet.edu.cn

24. Rhodes, T. (Ed.). (2010). Assessing outcomes and improving achievement: Tips and tools for using rubrics. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

25. Teaching Guiding Committee of Higher Education Ministry of Education, (2018), National standards for the quality of undergraduate professional teaching in ordinary colleges and universities. Beijing: Higher Education Press.

26. Thomson, S., & Rucker, M. L. (2002). The development of a specialized public speaking competency scale: Test of

reliability. Communication Research Reports.

27. Tian, (2013), Localization of English Public Speaking (EPS) at universities in China: Nature of the course and teaching approach, Foreign Language Education of China.

28. Van Ginkel, S., Gulikers, J., Biemans, H., & Mulder, M. (2015). Towards a set of design principles for developing oral presentation competence: A synthesis of research in higher education. Educational Research Review, 14, 62-80.

29. Wan Jiangbo, 2009, On establishing English public speaking as a course for non-English majors. Foreignlanguage Education in China. p.56

30. Wang Lifei, 2009, English Public Speaking in Global Context: Challenges and Innovations: Proceedings of the First National Symposium on English Public Speaking. Beijing: Foreign language and teaching and research press.

31. Wang Shouren. (2016). Interpretation of the main points of College English Teaching Guide. Foreign Languages, p.2-10.

32. Xue Zhang, 2019, Building Assessments for Self-Efficacy in English Public Speakingin China

33. Yin Suya. (2005). Public speaking education: A crucial addition to the English Curriculum of Chinese Universities. Applied Linguistics in China, (4), 3-15.

34. Zhang, X., Ardasheva, Y., Egbert, J., & Ullrich-French, S. C. (2019). Building assessments for self-efficacy in English public speaking in China. The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 28(5), 411-420.

35. Zhou Jiming, Wan Jiangbo, (2019), Evaluation Criteria for Oral presentations in College English Classes, Foreign Language Education.

36. Zhou and Wan, (2019), Assessment standard for oral presentation in college English class, Foreign Language Education, p.69

Appendix-A EASF

Dimensions	Indicators	Descriptors
Different Speech Tasks	a descriptive speech	S1. The speaker is able to make a descriptive speech in English, such as describing some characters, scenery, plans
	a narrative speech	S2. The speaker is able to give a narrative speech in English, such as telling a story vividly or event detailly.
	an expositive speech	S3. The speaker is able to give an expositive speech in English, such as explaining a game rule or phenomenon
	a persuasive speech	S4. The speaker is able to give a persuasive speech in English, such as persuading others to approve your plan and position
	An instructive speech	S5. The speaker is able to give an instructive speech in English, such as demonstrate and instruct how to use some electronic products
	respond to the audience's questions	S6. After the speech, the speaker is able to respond to the audience's questions correctly and appropriately
Content and Organization	Topic selection	S7. The speaker is able to choose an interesting and appropriate topic.
	Materials collection	S8. The speaker is able to collect the necessary supporting materials with the help of the library or the Internet
	Main point composition	S9. The speaker is able to logically conceive and outline his main points of the speech
	Evidence provision	S10. When writing a speech, the speaker is able to provide enough evidence to support the points
	Organization	S11. When writing a speech, the speaker is able to well streamline the beginning, body and conclusion.
Language	Vocabulary variety	S12. The speaker is able to use a wide range of vocabulary to express
	cohesion	S13. The speaker is able to effectively use transition words and conjunctions in his speech
	rhetoric	S14. speaker is able to use appropriate rhetoric to make the speech more attractive.
	Grammar	S15. The speaker is able to avoid basic grammatical errors in his speech
	Pronunciation	16. The speaker is able to pronounce words accurately and make audience understand
	Fluency	S17. The speaker is able to deliver speech fluently
Delivery	Audience awareness	S18. The speaker is able to respect and build up a rapport with audience
	Volume and speed control	S19. The speaker is able to control his speech volume, rate, and pitch, maintaining the audience's attention.
	Stress	S20 The speaker is able to use stress to convey his feeling
	Visual aids	S21. The speaker is able to use various aids properly, such as diagrams, PPT, objects and models, making speech more impressive.
	Body language	S22. The speaker is able to use body language appropriately and effectively to increase the speech effect.

Appendix-B
English Public Speaking Rating Scale (ERS)

Please circle on the best answer which represents your current EPS situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Fairly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Statement items	Scales
1. I am able to make a descriptive speech in English, such as describing some characters, scenery, plans	1 2 3 4 5
2. I am able to give a narrative speech in English, such as telling a story vividly or event detailly	1 2 3 4 5
3. I am able to give an expositive speech in English, such as explaining a game rule or phenomenon	1 2 3 4 5
4. I am able to give a persuasive speech in English, such as persuading others to approve your plan and position	1 2 3 4 5
5. I am able to give an instructive speech in English, such as demonstrate and instruct how to use some electronic products	1 2 3 4 5
6. After the speech, I am able to respond to the audience's questions correctly and appropriately	1 2 3 4 5
7. I am able to choose an interesting and appropriate topic.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I am able to collect the necessary supporting materials with the help of the library or the Internet	1 2 3 4 5
9. I am able to logically conceive and outline my main points of the speech	1 2 3 4 5
10. When making a speech, I am able to provide enough evidence to support the points	1 2 3 4 5
11. When making a speech, I am able to well streamline the beginning, body and conclusion.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I am able to use a wide range of vocabulary to express	1 2 3 4 5
13. I am able to use appropriate rhetoric to make the speech more attractive.	1 2 3 4 5
14. I am able to use appropriate rhetoric to make the speech more attractive.	1 2 3 4 5
15. The speaker is able to avoid basic grammatical errors in my speech	1 2 3 4 5
16. I am able to pronounce words accurately and make audience understand	1 2 3 4 5
17. I am able to deliver speech fluently	1 2 3 4 5
18. I am able to respect and build up a rapport with audience	1 2 3 4 5
19. I am able to control my speech volume, rate, and pitch, maintaining the audience's attention.	1 2 3 4 5
20. I am able to use various aids properly, such as diagrams, PPT, objects and models, making speech more impressive.	1 2 3 4 5
21. I am able to use body language appropriately and effectively to increase the speech effect.	1 2 3 4 5

******