

# SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS' EXPECTATION ON CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

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**Abstract:** Effective classroom teaching is more often than none, aided by effective classroom communication of the teachers or instructors. Teaching behaviors have been studied in various arenas in higher education. Many studies have found that most universities offer a traditional face-to-face communication format to deliver their courses; few offer them in online communication format. Since communication in classroom is mostly oral than written, many students equate being able to learn in classroom to effective communication of the instructor. That is, the appropriate use of the instructional language by the lecturer. This study therefore investigated the perceptions and expectations of students from two faculties in TWINTECH (Faculty of Business and faculty of Music) on classroom communication. This research was conducted using a quantitative research approach, 150 students both local and international participated in the study; the data were gathered via self-administered questionnaire. Principal component analysis (PCA) was used to validate both the questionnaire items and item construct (latent variables). Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the age of the respondents and the learner's perception of classroom communication score, independent t-test was used to investigate the differences in students' perception with regard to their gender. The findings show that most students in this study have a positive perception towards classroom communication and that those that have a negative perception, it is as a result of their lack of communication ability in the class, and that the better students have a high positive perception towards classroom communication than the weak ones.

**Keywords:** classroom, communication, student expectation, verbal communication.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The communication process is vital to effective learning within a classroom environment. Classroom instruction that produces positive results acknowledges the need for a liberal use of nonverbal cues, student involvement and team communication. According to Parker (2003) effective classroom communication can be based or is premised on five praxis, these include: Delivery (Delivering) instruction, Soliciting Participation, Verbal and Nonverbal Communication, Team Building, (and) Assessments. Parker argued that whether by means of direct or indirect communication, instructors must convey instruction to students within a classroom. Whenever a lecturer is lecturing or describing assignments, he must gauge the comfort level of each of his students with his communication style.

International University College (TWINTECH) Malaysia consists of students from different countries, including China, Yemen, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Nigeria and so on. These students are with different cultures, norms and values. The multiplicity of cultures, norms and values requires lecturers to be sensitive to needs and interests of the students. These diverse needs must be meticulously met before students can benefit maximally from teaching activities. This includes the ability to communicate well in class, encouraging the students to engage in classroom discussion and asking questions in the class. Another important concern of researchers is students' inability to participate and

communicate well in class. Some students tend to communicate among themselves (intrapersonal) rather than to expressing their views or opinions during class. This may be the result of students' inadequacy in the field of communication.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Classroom communication, as used in this paper, is a situation or process in which the instructors, lecturers or teachers ask some thought-provoking questions, to foster dialogue between students, encourage them to articulate and (reflect on the theme of discourse). In addition the questions should encourage students to continually probe their needs, progress knowledge and adjust to teaching behavior. Without doubt, effective classroom communication is a gateway for learning to takes place (Boulder & Colorado 2004)<sup>1</sup>. Thus, since good communication in the classroom is pivotal to learning, all basic communication skills such as verbal and non-verbal communication within the classroom setting should be experiential. This is particularly necessary to ensure that as it supports the claim of (Beath & Hebert 1995) that a lecturer does not slip into a monotone during class lessons, different tones and nuances are useful in attracting students' focus on the lectures conducted.

Non-verbal communication is also a fundamental norm for class lectures (Nurzila & Khairu 2009)<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore pertinent to note that basic non-verbal skills including the awareness of eye contact; facial expression, motion, gestures, physical contact and silence are all paramount in communication (McBeath & Hebert 1995)<sup>3</sup>. It should now be crystal-clear, that verbal and non-verbal communications skills are both important for teachers and students in teaching and learning in the classroom. Therefore, it is no gain saying, that an educator should possess these knowledge and skills in order to communicate better with the students and to take charge of the class as a whole.

In addition lecturers who are unable to recognize students' communication styles may end up hindering effective teaching and learning as well. Furthermore, the inability of lecturers to identify the non-verbal behavior of students may invariably lead to failure of the lecturer to comprehend the needs of their students. Asian students are more likely to express themselves by using non-verbal cues when compared to students who come from western countries, (Nurzila & Khairu 2009)<sup>1</sup>.

Moreover, student involvement in classroom discussions typically fosters a healthy communication process. Students should be (encouraged) to participate in the classroom, despite the fact that

many students are reticent to voice their opinions. The solicitation of participation serves multiple purposes. For example, students who observe that their questions are worthy being answered, can freely exchange ideas with one another and can build confidence as they express themselves in public. Often, instructors can quickly identify weak areas of student understanding when they are invited to speak up during a class session, (Parker, 2003)<sup>5</sup>.

On the other hand, effective classroom communication and students' understanding contrast the constructivist learning paradigm. In this paradigm, it was postulated that persons or self schema plays a significant role in shaping students understanding. Moreover, extreme constructivists like Sylvia (1993) may as well argue that classroom communication is a teacher-centered style of teaching, and, that its favors behaviorism learning paradigm in its approach. This view may be contested on the ground that classroom communication evolved in virtually all the learning theory paradigm including constructivism.

## III. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

For communication to be effective, the information relay by the encoder must be fully understood by the recipients or the decoder. In a situation whereby the information from the sender does not make any meaningful impact on the receiver, this may be tantamount to noise or not achieving the learning objectives, (Kasmi, 2001).

This is further reiterated in the behaviorism theory of learning, which hypothesized that learning can only be said to have taken place when there is change in the behavior of the learner i.e. the responsibility for student learning rests squarely on the teacher. Thus, the communicating ability of teacher in classroom can greatly assist students in their learning.

However, there are situations in which many lecturers, instructors or teachers fail to convey their class lectures successfully due to communication rather than professional incompetency. In spite of the fact that some lecturers are well grounded in their field of studies, one cannot be assertive that these lecturers will be effective in communication to their students, (Nurzila & Khairu 2009)<sup>1</sup>. They might simply find the encoding process to be rather difficult for them. In such situations, useful information and vital idea may fail to achieve their latent purpose. Thus, it might be envisaged that thoughts, ideas and knowledge may fail to be transformed into something meaningful due to the aforementioned reasons. When lecturers fail to communicate, learning becomes impossible, (Ornstein, 1990)<sup>4</sup>. It is therefore a problem which prevents the attainment of the purpose of education or instruction. Therefore, it is natural that problems of this magnitude be studied to

discover their true nature and possible causes in context of a multi-cultural setting like TWINTECH. Very few studies however have been carried out in the context of the environment similar to the one proposed in this study.

**IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The aims of this study are to:

- 1.) Investigate the TWINTECH students' expectation of the classroom communication with regard to their gender.
- 2.) Examine the place of cultural differences in the students' expectation from classroom communication.
- 3.) Examine the relationship between age and students' expectations of classroom communication.

**V. RESEARCH QUESTION**

- 1.) Is there a significant difference in the classroom expectations of TWINTECH students with regards to their Nationality?

TABLE I  
RELIABILITY OF FACTORS

Factor	Reliability
Effective teaching	0.777
Communication	0.834,
Motivation	0.790

0.885

- 2.) Do genders make significant differences on classroom communication expectation of TWINTECH students?
- 3.) Is there any significant relationship between age and classroom communication expectation of TWINTECH students?

**VI. METHOD**

*A. Sample and Population*

The population of study comprises of students from two faculties in TWINTECH; faculty of Business and faculty of Music. Simple random technique was used to randomly select 150 samples. 180 questionnaires were distributed, but (153) 85% of the questionnaire were returned. The data were collected by the researcher and his friends, the researcher sought for

permission from the Dean of the faculties and lecturers. The lecturers informed the students about the research, 25minutes were dedicated to the survey after their class. The response rate was very high due to the fact that the lecturers encouraged respondents (students) to participate in the survey. The majority of the respondents were male (71.3 percent), Malay group was the highest contributors to the total respondents (58percent). Their age ranged from 20 to 24 with mean age of about 22.2 years old. The respondents were all undergraduate, and most of them were in their 3rd and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study which is 40% of the total sample.

*B. Measurement Development*

Respondents completed a personal survey questionnaire that included questions about the basic characteristics of the respondents' gender, age, course, level, CGPA and race. The items were also designed to assess Expectations on Classroom Communication.

*Expectations on Classroom Communication:* expectations on classroom communication were measured using items developed by Nurzila & Khairu (2009) and it was fully adopted. Nineteen items were rated using a multi-item method to increase the accuracy of measurement, and each item was based on a five point Likert scale (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

*C. Reliability*

Cronbach's alphas of each factor were statistically strong, factor one (Communication) value was 0.834, factor two (Effective teaching) value was 0.777 and factor three (Motivation) value was 0.790. These are also supporting the adequacy of the internal consistency of the overall Cronbach's alpha of the construct. Reliability from our sample showed a reasonable level of reliability (0.885). See (Table1)

*D. Text for construct Validity: factor analysis*

A factor analysis was conducted in order to develop factors that help in explaining the expectations of students' on classroom communication. As suggested by (Hair et al., 1995), three factors were identified for the factor analysis using the Eigen value criteria that suggest extracting factors with an eigenvalue of greater than 1.0 (Table2).

TABLE 2  
TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.256	47.780	47.780
2	1.133	10.301	58.081
3	1.019	9.259	67.340

TABLE 4  
CORRELATION MATRIX TABLE

KMO and Bartlett's Test	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.831
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	798.830
	Df
	55
	Sig.
	.000

TABLE 5  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST RESULT FOR  
NATIONALITY

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
	Equal variances assumed	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
	Equal variances not assumed			1.069	117.875	.287	1.20471

In conducting the factor analysis the researchers followed Hair et al (1995) and Julie (2007). The three factors identified explain 67.340 percent of the total variance.

The extraction method used was principal component analysis with Varimax rotation (Table3). Principal component is a psychometrically sound and simpler mathematically, and it avoids some of the potential with factor indeterminacy associated with factor analysis (Stevens 1996, p. 363).

TABLE 3  
ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX FOR STUDENT  
EXPECTATION

	Component		
	1	2	3
P1		.748	
P3		.547	
P4	.536		
P9		.781	
P11			.854
P12			.696
P13			.767
P16	.853		
P17	.689		
P18	.846		
P19		.749	

In this survey, The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value was 0.831, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser 1970, 1974) and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett 1954) reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

TABLE 7  
TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED

Correlations between Age and Students' Expectation			
		age	expectation
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.170*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.038
	N	150	150
Expectation	Pearson Correlation	.170*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	
	N	150	150

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

*E. Results*

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare mean scores of student expectation on class room communication for males and females the Levene test for equality of variance was not violated Levene's *F* (sig > .05), *F*=.812 . However, there was no significant difference in students' expectation of classroom communication scores for males and females (M=44.7126, SD=6.05384), and females, (M=43.5079, SD=7.31299); *t* (148) = 1.1028, *p*= .272 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean differences=1.204710, 95% CI: - .95636 to 3.36578) was very small (eta square=0.0005785). Based on this result, the researchers concluded that both male and female students have the same expectations of classroom communication.

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare students' expectations of classroom communication scores with regards to their nationality. Levene test for equality of variance was assumed. Levene's *F* (sig > .05), *F*=.812. There was no significant difference in scores for students expectation with regards to their nationality Malay (M=44.7126, SD=6.05384), non-Malay (M=43.5079, SD=7.31299); *t* (148) =.1.102, *p*= .272. (Two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean differences=-.1.20471, 95% CI: -.95636 to 3.43651) was very small (eta square=0.0005785). Based on this result, we may conclude that both Malaysian and non-Malaysian students share the same expectation on classroom communication.

The Table7 shows that age and expectations of TWINTECH students on classroom communication variables were significantly correlated. There was a positive relationship, which would be considered a large effect size was between Age and students' expectation on classroom communication, *r* = .170\* *n*= 150, *p*<0.05. This indicated that the older students were, the more likely to have higher expectations in terms of classroom communication.

*F. Discussion*

Results show that expectations of classroom communication among TWINTECH students has three underlying variables—communication, motivation and effective teaching. Besides that, the results also show that there is no significant difference between male and female students in terms of expectations on classroom communication of teachers. That means, students irrespective of their gender have same expectations about communication of teachers in the classroom. Better still, there is no significant difference in terms of nationality between male and female students. Therefore, it can be asserted that male and female students in TWINTECH have same expectation towards teachers' communication in the class.

However, the results reveal a significant relationship between students' expectations and age. That means the older students have a very high expectations towards classroom communication.

TABLE 6

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST RESULT FOR GENDER

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Expectation	Equal variances assumed	.812	.369	1.102	148	.272	1.20471	1.09359
	Equal variances not assumed			1.069	117.875	.287	1.20471	1.12700

## VII. CONCLUSION

From the research, results show that overall expectations of classroom communication among respondents are very high. The researchers feel that expectations of students with regard to classroom communication are very high. The study showed the importance of integrating the needs of classroom communication and students' expectation. Even though there were no significant differences in the students' expectations with regard to gender and nationality, it is very important for higher institutions of learning to improve communication practices among lecturers. In addition to this, management of higher institutions, Ministry of education must give their support to help lecturers or teachers by organizing a series of seminars and workshops on classroom communication.

Though the result showed that older students have more expectations of classroom communication than the younger ones, there is need to encourage lecturers to improve their communication skill in order to inculcate the needed knowledge and skills into the students regardless of their level and age.

However, we should not take this matter for granted, if we want to avoid continuous impediment in students' learning as argued by (Ornstein, 1990). If this happened, the ultimate aim of educational institutions will be harmed. More so, our youth success relies much on the quality of their lectures: Lecturers also have to presume their communicating ability as a challenge towards achieving the best quality of education for the students.

## VIII. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The study is limited in several ways. First it involved only students of International University College of Technology (TWINTECH), from faculty of Business and Music. This restricts the generalizability of the findings. Therefore the outcome of the study can only be generalized to students of the Business and Music Technology or to others who are in a similar situation. Second, further analysis is needed on the relationship between classroom communication and students' comprehension.

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