



THE EFFECTS OF SIMULATION TOWARDS ENGLISH VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF COACHING PROGRAM STUDENTS

TANG TSIAO YIN



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UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS

2020





THE EFFECTS OF SIMULATION TOWARDS ENGLISH
VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF
COACHING PROGRAM STUDENTS

TANG TSIAO YIN



THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT OF THE DEGREE MASTER IN EDUCATION (TESL)
MASTER BY MIXED MODE

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION
SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2020





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I dedicate my dissertation work to my beloved parents, mentors and friends who shared their words of advice and encouragement to finish this study.





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to God for the generosity of His knowledge, for granting me the patience, the strength, and good health throughout the preparation of this master dissertation.

I am also very grateful to the following individuals who have made this research possible. I would like to convey my heartiest thanks to my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Raja Nor Safinas Raja Harun for her most invaluable support, guidance, patience and tolerance throughout my duel with this study.

Thirdly, my great appreciation and gratitude to the lecturers of the Faculty of Sports Science and Coaching, Sultan Idris Education University, especially Dr. Mohd Izwan bin Shahril and Assoc. Prof. Norkhalid bin Salimin for granting me permission to conduct this research in the class. Also my subjects, who consists of Semester 4 and 8 Coaching students of Sultan Idris Education University for their cooperation and enthusiastic support for making the research a success.

My special thanks and gratitude to my parents, Tang Ing Lee, Pang Su Yung, and my siblings, Tang Tsiao Ting, Tang Tsiao Whua, Tang Tsiao Hui and Tang Tsiao Ming for the courage and support given in enabling me to complete this study.

Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to everyone who supported me in any respect during the completion of this dissertation.



ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effects of simulation towards English verbal communication skills of coaching program students. This study employed quasi-experimental design. It was conducted on 58 semester 4 coaching students in a teacher education university in Perak whereby 29 students were involved as control group and 29 students were involved as experimental group. Data were collected through pre and post English verbal communication skills tests, semi-structured interview, observation, reflective journals and debriefing feedback forms. Six simulation interventions were carried out in six weeks and a semi-structured guided interview was conducted to evaluate the coaching program students' views on the use of simulation in teaching verbal communication skills. The results of the pre and post tests were analyzed with SPSS program using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings based on the achievement in pre and post English verbal communication skills tests revealed that there was a significant difference $t(28)=11.499$, $p < .05$ in the English verbal communication skills of students involved in simulation technique. The responses from the semi-structured guided interview and debriefing feedback forms indicated that the students like simulation technique as they could practice English verbal communication in the real world coaching situations. Based on the findings of observation and reflective journals, it proved that the students' performance improved in each intervention. As a conclusion, simulation technique has improved the English verbal communication skills of the coaching program students especially in giving instructions in coaching. The study implied that simulation is suitable to be used to improve English verbal communication skills among coaching program students or other programs if proper adaptations are made.





KESAN SIMULASI TERHADAP KEMAHIRAN KOMUNIKASI VERBAL INGGERIS PELAJAR PROGRAM KEJURULATIHAN

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kesan simulasi terhadap kemahiran komunikasi verbal bahasa Inggeris pelajar program kejurulatihan. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kuasi eksperimen. Kajian ini dijalankan pada 58 orang pelajar program kejurulatihan semester 4 di sebuah universiti pendidikan di Perak di mana 29 pelajar terlibat sebagai kumpulan kawalan dan 29 pelajar terlibat sebagai kumpulan eksperimen. Data dikumpul melalui pra ujian dan pasca ujian, temu bual, pemerhatian, jurnal reflektif dan borang maklum balas. Sebanyak enam intervensi simulasi dijalankan dalam enam minggu dan satu temu bual secara semi struktur dijalankan untuk menilai pandangan pelajar terhadap penggunaan simulasi dalam pengajaran kemahiran komunikasi verbal. Keputusan pra ujian dan pasca ujian dianalisis dengan program SPSS menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan inferensial. Dapatan berdasarkan pencapaian pra dan pasca ujian kemahiran komunikasi verbal bahasa Inggeris menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan signifikan $t(28) = 11.499$, $p < .05$ dalam kemahiran komunikasi verbal bahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan pelajar yang terlibat dalam teknik simulasi. Maklum balas daripada temu bual semi struktur dan borang maklum balas menunjukkan bahawa pelajar menyukai teknik simulasi kerana mereka boleh menggunakan kemahiran komunikasi verbal bahasa Inggeris dalam situasi kejurulatihan yang sebenar. Berdasarkan penemuan pemerhatian dan jurnal reflektif, ia membuktikan bahawa prestasi pelajar meningkat pada setiap intervensi. Sebagai kesimpulan, teknik simulasi telah meningkatkan kemahiran komunikasi verbal bahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan pelajar program kejurulatihan, terutamanya dalam memberi arahan dalam kejurulatihan. Kajian ini mengimplikasikan bahawa simulasi sesuai digunakan untuk meningkatkan kemahiran komunikasi verbal bahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan pelajar program kejurulatihan atau program lain jika adaptasi yang bersesuaian dibuat.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
ESL	English as Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
iCGPA	Integrated Cumulative Grade Point Average
MEA	Malaysia English Assessment
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MUET	Malaysian University English Test
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Packages For The Social Science





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- W Student Verification for Conducting Research





CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English language is the lingua franca around the globe and is taught and learned over the world. In Malaysia, English is used as second language and is taught officially in schools and higher learning institutions. Despite the importance of English globally, Goh (2018) explains that the English proficiency among Malaysian undergraduates is still poor. Robinson and Zaitun (2008) have identified that Malaysian students do not concentrate in learning English because there is no compulsion for them to pass the subject. Normazidah et al. (2012) and Hiew (2012) have claimed that after 11 years of learning English in schools, Malaysian students do not seem to be able to achieve





reasonable English literacy. Low English proficiency and achievement among Malaysian graduates have become a worrying issue and therefore, there is a need to focus on language teaching particularly in enhancing communicative skills.

Hazita (2018), as mentioned in Zulita (2018) has pointed out our higher education students are required to attain three levels of English language proficiency in their respective higher institutions. She asserted that firstly, higher education students should achieve at least intermediate level in English and be equipped with the ability of speaking, reading, writing, understanding and communicating in English. Next, they should be able to master the language to an extent that they can utilize the specialized jargons in their academic studies and synthesize them to develop opinions and brainstorm new ideas. Besides, university students are expected to master sufficient language repertoire and skills so that they can perform their roles and duties effectively at the workplace in this competitive society.

The issue of low verbal communication skills among Malaysian graduates is a topic of concern by the government and the private sectors (Menon, 2017). The increasing importance of the English communicative proficiency in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 necessitates the government to implement new curriculum and assessment in teaching and learning of English in higher education. This is to ensure that graduates are proficient and fit to compete with the global community. The teaching and learning of English as second language in Malaysia focuses on the use of the Communicative Language Approach which emphasizes student





engagement in social interactions and in developing oral language skills (Debbagh & Jones, 2017). To address the low competency of English among Malaysian graduates, the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has launched Malaysia English Assessment (MEA) in November 2017. The purpose of MEA which is in line with Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is to establish a holistic ecosystem of formal and informal assessment in helping the university students to improve their English proficiency. MEA provides the platform for students to use and understand English and fulfills the aspiration of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, that is to prepare holistic graduates who are ready to cope with challenges of the 21st century.



1.1.1 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a standardized document that serves to evaluate language knowledge at an international level. It supplies the basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications within Europe. Many countries including Malaysia adopt Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as an international standard to describe the students' language ability. Being created by the Council of Europe, CEFR aims to “provide a common foundation for the elaboration of language syllabus, curriculum guidelines, examinations and textbooks across Europe” (Cambridge ESOL, 2011, p.





1). CEFR describes one's language ability in 3 tiers: basic, independent and proficient, on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners to C2 for proficient language users (refer to Figure 1.1). Trim (2011) claims that CEFR serves as a central point of reference to produce a solid structure of knowledge, understanding and practice shared by all.

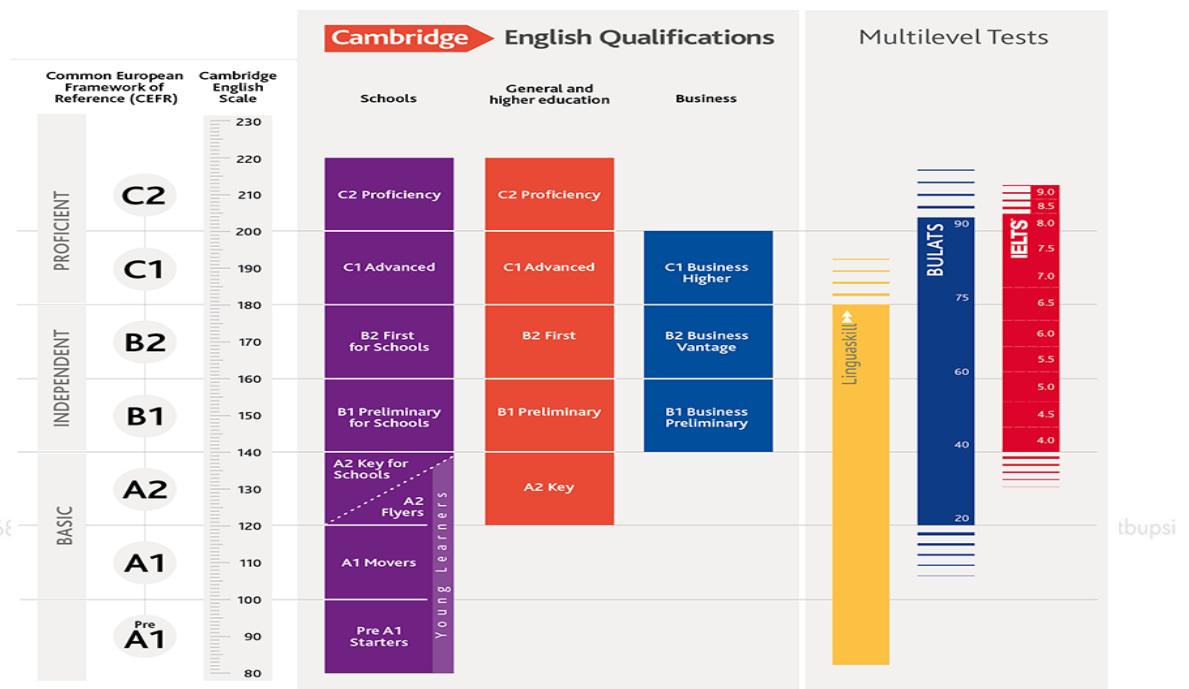


Figure 1.1. Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

According to the CEFR descriptions, for A1 (beginner) level, the English user is able to understand and use familiar daily expressions and very basic phrases to interact slowly. For A2 (elementary English) level, the user is able to understand sentences and commonly-used expressions of the related area to communicate in routine tasks. For B1 (intermediate English) level, the user is able to understand the key points of the input and can provide explanations and justifications for opinions





and plans. For B2 (upper intermediate) level, the user is able to understand the keys ideas of complex text and can interact fluently and spontaneously with native speakers. For C1 (advanced English) level, the user is able to use English flexibly and effectively for different purposes and show good use of cohesive devices. For C2 (proficient) level, the user is able to easily comprehend everything heard or read and express him/herself precisely.

It was found that most Malaysian public university graduates are at B1 level, which is the ability to communicate in English with minimal vocabularies when they step out of the university (Menon, 2017; Sani, 2016). The Ministry of Higher Education aims to have all graduates on a minimum B2 level upon graduation with the MEA initiatives (Crace, 2018). It is hoped that via the systematic English learning and assessing method, Malaysian higher education students can be equipped with the ability to communicate ideas of various subjects in much detail to ensure effective communication in the global workplace. By making students as active participants in the learning of English in an authentic and meaningful context such as simulation, students are able to practice the language and thus develop their verbal communication skills.





1.1.2 The Teaching and Learning of Verbal Communication Skills

Verbal communication skill is one of the 21st century skills outlined in Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education). Communication is also highlighted as one of the key elements evaluated in Integrated Cumulative Grade Point Average (iCGPA). The ability to master English language and become a confident speaker of it is the goal of most Malaysian higher education students. Good English verbal communication skills is salient so that the students can communicate effectively in their personal lives, future workplace and political endeavors.



Realizing the urgency of improving Malaysian students' verbal communication proficiency, there is a need to shift from purely linguistic and degree-related content area to teaching English for communication in real life situations (Thomas et al., 2016). Adi (2012) has emphasized that students should be taught communicative English so that they are able to use and apply English as a medium of communication. Hence, the teaching and learning of English verbal communication skills focus on enabling the student to communicate in English clearly by articulating their ideas and thoughts effectively in various contexts and forms. Besides, students should be taught to use communication for various purposes such as to instruct, advise, persuade and motivate.





Classroom discussions, debates, oral presentations, simulations and role plays are some activities that are suitable to be implemented in teaching verbal communication skills to students. Simulations have been practiced prevalently in education over the past decades. Simulations ensure the teaching and learning process to occur in a meaningful and relevant context by supplying a complex model of reality where students can practice their competencies and skills (Salas et al., 2009). In the teaching and learning of English, simulation is a powerful tool for creating conducive environment for learners to practise the language. By creating a realistic workplace-like experience via simulation, students are given the opportunities to engage in a rich exercise of fluency.



Due to the increasing competition in job opportunities and professionalism, the mastery of specialized English becomes a sought after skill by many employers and youngsters. Many learners learn English because they need to use it in specific occupational or educational settings. Hence, the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is gaining momentum in the teaching and learning of English in higher education. ESP emphasizes on the communicative needs and practices of specific occupational or professional groups rather than general English. Therefore, this study intends to research into the communicative English in the field of sports coaching and help the students to improve their English verbal communication skills via simulation technique.





1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are two main problems with English language proficiency of Malaysian higher education students.

First, it is found that the English language proficiency and English verbal communication skills of Malaysian graduates are of unsatisfactory level (Nath et al., 2017; Clarvie & Fauziah, 2013; Kaur, 2013 & Hiew, 2012). A study by Institute of Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) (2017) has shown that the standard of English spoken by Malaysians is underwhelming. Hariati and Lee (2011) have claimed that many university graduates cannot speak or write proper English and are not able to transfer their academic knowledge or articulate their thoughts during interviews due to poor command of English. Poor command of English language can deteriorate one's knowledge acquisition in different subjects and weigh down chances for better job prospect. Lack of English communicative skills among graduates has been identified as a researchable major academic issue to be addressed because it affects the academic performance, employability, career development and the perceptions of other countries toward our education system.

Poor English verbal communication skills among higher education students are mainly due to the lack of practice in using the language (Robinson & Zaitun, 2008; Fairus, 2003). As a multi-ethnic and multilingual country, Malaysia comprises





multiracial society with majorities are the Malays, Chinese and Indians. The racial and religious polarization encourage the usage of first language or mother tongue which includes Malay language, Chinese, Tamil and other dialects such as Cantonese and Hokkien (for Chinese) and Hindi (for Indians). Normazidah et al. (2012) have claimed that the interference effect of Malay language is a crucial inhibiting factor of English verbal communication skills acquisition. Noor Hashimah, as cited in Normazidah et al. (2012) has found that the use of English is only limited to certain situations such as when the students have to conduct presentation in English, but at other times, the students converse in Malay language. Hence, the students have inadequate exposure to English language as there is a limited chance to use and practice conversing in English beyond the classroom (Santhosh & Meenakshi, 2017; Robinson & Zaitun, 2008).



Besides, Malaysian students do not speak English in daily lives because they are fear of being mocked for trying to be a *mat salleh* (Yee, 2017). Bernama (2017) states that students were made fun of when they speak English as they were perceived as attempting to appear elitist or superior. These result in inferiority complex among Malaysian students which cause them not willing to practice the language. Brian et al. (2013, p. 158) have addressed this as “communication apprehension- a clinical fear of communicating with others”. The studies conducted by Raba (2017), Hiew (2012) and Trevor et al. (2013) have explained that reasons such as worry about making grammatical errors, feel embarrassed of their low language proficiency, receive





negative physical response and negative preliminary presumptions about proficient speakers' views towards them could restrain them from speaking English.

Secondly, low English verbal communication skills among higher education students cause unemployment upon graduation. Rebecca (2016) has highlighted a statistic by Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) which shows that 200,000 Malaysian graduates were unemployed with poor command of English being the primary reason. A survey conducted by Jobstreet.com, a Malaysian employment agency on 3300 human resource officers and bosses found that 56 percent of graduate unemployment is due to lack of competence in the English language (Jamal et al., 2014; Chan & Tan 2006). The more shocking fact is that there were about 200,000 students graduate with a degree from universities annually but 25 percent of them are unemployed. Masturah, Gurnam and Chan (2013) in their studies on unemployed graduates, also claim that moderate to low level of verbal communication skills amongst the graduates led to their unemployed status.

It is noted that verbal communication skills are essential in the process of coaching sports activities. In order to coach and deliver message effectively at international level, the coach needs to possess good English proficiency and master good verbal communication skills. The coaching industry and commercial ventures look for versatile graduates who are equipped with good English proficiency in sports communication. However, most Malaysian coaches are generally not trained on their English and verbal communication skills. In addition, the Coaching program students





in the university could not deliver their instructions using correct English (Andrade, 2009). Even though they are well equipped with coaching skills and knowledge, they could not deliver the knowledge and express themselves well during the coaching process.

Education is evolving in leaps and bounds in recent years. In the 21st century classrooms, traditional teaching techniques, based mainly on a teacher explaining a topic and students taking notes is not effective anymore. Teachers need to adjust their approach depending on their students' learning needs and apply the best teaching technique that suits the students best. Simulation technique is a recommended cornerstone teaching and learning technique to help the students to see how things

happen in the real world ideally.



In the teaching and learning of English verbal communication skills, numerous methods had been adopted by practitioners all around the world. Games, role-plays lectures, tests and verbal communication exercises had been used to instill verbal ability among students. However, all these methods yield limited result as the students could not really apply what have been played in their real life situation (Shellman, 2006). Vincent (2019) has claimed that even though students have been taught the necessary skills in English verbal communication, it is still hard for them to use the appropriate technical terms and communicate effectively at the workplace, and this can be detrimental to their career advancement, impedes communication and affects work performance.





The traditional pedagogical techniques of teaching English verbal communication skills through games, lectures, presentations, exercises, tests, and papers often fail to replicate the real world in that these traditional learning experiences frequently do not require the students to integrate, synthesize, and apply the course material in realistic situations (Shellman, 2006). Simulations, on the other hand, put students in realistic situations that allow them to participate affectively, behaviorally, and cognitively (Silvia, 2012) and, in so doing, may assist students in engaging in higher-level learning. Simulation introduces the aspect of realism into the students' learning experience and thus promotes long-term retention of course material.



they do not integrate language use. Therefore there is a need that leads to the rationale of this study.

1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Good English verbal communication skill is becoming the most sought after skill by many employers nowadays (Hairuzila et al., 2011). Applicants are assessed on their English verbal communication skills during interviews. In the 10 Shifts outlined in Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education), the ministry





aspires to generate balanced and holistic graduates with entrepreneurial mindsets who possess high language proficiency. Hence, Malaysian higher learning institutions aim to generate graduates who have the ability to communicate using English effectively and can exhibit their potential through adding value to their hard skills with fluent English (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025). To cope with the needs in this era of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Malaysian universities and colleges embarked and implemented various language programs and syllabus with a focus on communication skills as an effort to boost Malaysian graduates' employability.

With the globalization of markets which requires specialized language skills, the teaching and learning of coaching is encountering a shift towards integrating verbal communication instruction into its highly technical curriculum. The development of effective English verbal communication skills is an essential part of coaches' advancement potential. The ability to communicate with fluent and accurate English will contribute to the coach's personal, academic and professional success. Since the ability to communicate effectively is the overarching requirement for a successful coaching process, coaches need to equip themselves with advanced English verbal communication skill to promote effective performance on the job. Hence, the researcher aims to use simulation to improve verbal communication skills among future coaches.





There is a need for the simulation technique to establish communication-based competencies among future coaches as simulation can bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world. Compared to traditional teaching and learning method such as drilling, simulation provides language practice based on actual situations. By exposing the student teachers to the real teaching and coaching situations through simulations, they will have the chance to practice their English verbal communication skills. Hence, when they graduate, they are more prepared and well-equipped to cater to the demanding needs of diverse students and clients.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY



The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of simulation technique in improving Coaching program students' English verbal communication skills. The researcher identifies the English language needs of Coaching program students and develop six simulation lesson plans to enhance their English verbal communication skills.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To investigate the effectiveness of simulation in improving Coaching program students' English verbal communication skills.





2. To gain insights from students on the use of simulation in teaching English verbal communication skills.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Is simulation technique effective in improving the English verbal communication skills of Coaching program students?
2. How do the students perceive the use of simulation in teaching English verbal communication skills?



1.7 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The research hypotheses of this study are as follows:

1.7.1 Hypothesis 1:

H_{01} There is no significant difference between the verbal communication skills test score of control group and experimental group in the pre-test.

H_{a1} There is significant difference between the verbal communication skills test score of control group and experimental group in the pre-test.





1.7.2 Hypothesis 2:

H₀₂ There is no significant difference between the verbal communication skills test score of control group and experimental group in the post-test.

H_{a2} There is significant difference between the verbal communication skills test score of control group and experimental group in the post-test.

1.7.3 Hypothesis 3:

H₀₃ There is no significant difference between the pre and post verbal communication skills test score for control group.

H_{a3} There is significant difference between the pre and post verbal communication skills test score for control group.



1.7.4 Hypothesis 4:

H₀₄ There is no significant difference between the pre and post verbal communication skills test score for experimental group.

H_{a4} There is significant difference between the pre and post verbal communication skills test score for experimental group.





1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Since verbal communication skill is one of the important soft skills outlined in the National Educational Blueprint, it is necessary to analyze the verbal communication difficulties encountered by higher education students and provide appropriate means and effective strategies to solve them. Toward this overarching goal, the researcher investigates the verbal communication problems faced by the Coaching program students and tries to solve them through the use of simulation technique. This offers the knowledge of effective verbal communication skills and techniques to the students beside provides a suitable platform for practicing and developing verbal communication skills.



From the pedagogical standpoint, the result could be used as a feedback or a reference for teachers in planning an effective technique to improve students' verbal communication skills. Future curricular and pedagogical improvements can be designed based on the areas where verbal communication difficulties are observed. Teachers can immensely benefit from this research for the process of making effective decisions in choosing the most suitable technique to teach English verbal communication skills. In fact, this study opens doors for both teachers and researchers to draw attention to simulation technique and its application in ESL verbal communication classes and ESP classes. Researchers can plan for further studies on English for Coaching Purpose and come out with an effective module on enhancing the English verbal communication skills of Coaching program students.





By tapping into the verbal communication problems encountered by higher education students and solving it with simulation technique, the lecturers and language teachers can prepare students to participate in a range of communicative activities. The lecturers and language teachers can provide students with necessary guidance and training to communicate in English and thus produce employable English medium graduates with sound working knowledge of English to compete with national and international labour market.

1.9 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION



The following are the operational definitions of terms used in this study.

Simulation

Simulation is the act of mimicking or imitating the behavior of some situations or process by something similar (Choudhary, 2013; Baek, 2009). Simulation technique can be applied and practiced in many disciplines including education. Simulation is seemed as an effective and immersive technique to substitute and expand actual experiences with guided ones to bring forth or recreate considerable aspects of the actual world in an interactive way (Lateef, 2010). In this study, simulation technique is a set of scenarios created in which the coaching program students can learn and





hone their verbal communication skills. The simulations designed can bridge the gap between the classroom and the real coaching process.

Verbal Communication Skills

Verbal communication is the sharing of information among individuals or groups through speaking. When your verbal communication skills are weak, the intended recipients of your messages will not be able to understand them and, subsequently, will not be able to respond appropriately. In the Oral Communication Competency Report presented by University of Virginia in 2016, verbal communication is defined as the effective interpretation, composition, and presentation of information, ideas, and values to a specific audience. The researcher emphasizes on the verbal communications skills required in giving instructions and feedback during coaching sessions.

English for Specific Purposes

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a branch of English as Second Language (ESL). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have explained ESP as a language teaching method whereby all the instructions and subject matters are taught based on the learners' learning objectives. According to Mackay and Mountford (1978), ESP is "the teaching of English for a clearly utilitarian purpose" (p.2). Hence, ESP is the teaching and learning of specific content and skills of English as a second or foreign language to a specific group of learners for the purpose of using it in a particular





discipline. The examples of disciplines are engineering, nursing, marketing and human resource. In this research, the researcher focuses on teaching English for students majoring in Coaching program. Emphasis is given to the English language and communication requirements of professional coaches so that they can fulfill the needs of the coaching industry locally and internationally.

Coaching Program Students

Jannat & Kee (2014) have asserted that coaches are individuals who take the responsibilities in guiding the athletes to excel in their sports performance by helping them to enhance their skills. Coaches are required to provide professional advice, guidance and training for athletes in order to help them in developing correct skills and achieving the best performance in sports. The Coaching program students in the study refer to the students who will be joining coach profession in the future. This group of students are currently taking Bachelor of Education in Sports Science and Coaching in Sultan Idris Education University. They have undergone 3 semesters of Coaching Education.





1.10 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This first chapter of the research introduces the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the research, the objective of the study, research questions, the significance of the study and the operational definitions of the terms used.

The second chapter presents the literature review of the study. The first part explains the theoretical framework that forms the basis of the study whereas the second part follows with the distinctive viewpoints of proponents of the field with which critical evaluation has been attempted.



Mode of data collection, techniques of data analysis and validity of research techniques are highlighted in this chapter. The discussion encompasses the validity of data and sampling techniques used therein. Validity and reliability of various instruments of the study are discussed within this chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research. The results answer the research questions on the effectiveness of simulation technique in teaching verbal communication skills to Coaching program students and explain on the students' perception of the use of simulation in teaching English verbal communication skills. Results are shown both quantitatively and qualitatively.





In Chapter 5, the researcher discusses the findings of the study and makes conclusions based on the research questions of the study, followed by the summary of the implications of the research and recommendations for further research.

