Strategies to Overcome Communication Apprehension during Academic Presentations: A Case of International Students in Malaysian Universities

Fatemeh Amiri[1] & Marlia Puteh[2]
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

Abstract: Communication apprehension is defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey 1984: 279). While many prior studies have investigated oral communication apprehension among undergraduate students, there has been little research exploring this phenomenon among doctoral students. This study applied qualitative methodology via observation and interviews. The research subjects were international doctoral students from several Malaysian universities. The experiences of the students in communicating with their examination panel during academic presentations (e.g., proposal and viva) are analyzed and the strategies and techniques employed to overcome communication apprehension are explored.

Keywords: oral communication apprehension, international doctoral students, academic presentations.

1. Introduction

University students are generally required to interact orally in various contexts: namely, class presentations and conference presentations, discussions with professors, and thesis oral defenses. These academic activities are significant not only for the successful completion of courses and programs but also for the students' disciplinary enculturation and apprenticeship into academic discourse and culture (Morita 2000). International students, particularly those whose first language is not English, experience a more challenging situation, especially when speech is both formal and critical to success (Lipovsky 2006).

This study emphasizes the highest layer of students' communication pursuit: i.e., their viva. According to Howard and colleagues (2002), one's viva (final doctoral oral examination) depends highly on students' oral communication skills. Without the support of supervisors, notes, or books, students are forced to perform under pressure. Howard and colleagues add that the vitality of oral skills is manifest in the candidate's ability to defend his research project and clarify aspects of his work.

A viva is a situation that imposes a lot of negative feelings and pressure on doctoral candidates. A common predisposition that may affect students in such an event is communication apprehension (CA). CA has been identified as a major factor that inhibits an individual's willingness to communicate and ability to develop effective communication skills.

This paper offers insights into how international doctoral students relate the experience of presenting during viva sessions. Six themes emerge from the findings: self-confidence, use of efficient presentation strategies, passivity, positive cognitive restructuring, visualization

---

[1] Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur Jalan Sultan Yahya Petra 54100 Kuala Lumpur Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Email: famiri80@gmail.com.
[2] Email: marlia.kl@utm.my.

techniques, and (in relation to the interaction between students and their examiners) (inter-) cultural awareness.

Intercultural awareness is regarded as the foundation of communication. It encompasses two qualities: awareness of one's own culture and of another culture. Put differently, it concerns the ability to stand back from one's own point of view with enhanced awareness of not only one's own cultural values, beliefs and perceptions but also those of other cultures. Cultural awareness is crucial when one communicates with individuals from other cultures. Bush and colleagues (2001) demonstrate that a communicator's cultural awareness is a key factor in developing intercultural communication competence. Zimmermann (1995) reports that getting along with the owners of one culture is essential to successful communication. Wiseman and colleagues (1989) note a positive correlation between intercultural communication competence and awareness of other cultures.

This study has its theoretical origins in the integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation. Its main focus is on international students' coping mechanisms in overcoming communication apprehension in the academic context: i.e., in the viva and other presentations.

2. Literature review

International students are confronted with many problems when crossing national borders to pursue their education. Their experience may have an impact on their academic success and psychological well-being (Poyrazli & Grahame 2007). There is a general consensus among researchers that international students' communication problems are the main reason for numerous challenges that transcend all areas of their personal and social lives (Sandhu 1994). Communication research has identified a number of barriers to communication. Klimova and Semradova (2012) identify issues including relevant differences of national culture, life temperament, personal disposition and character, style of thinking, paradigm of rationality, professional level, age, experience/knowledge, and language.

Communication practices and behaviors inevitably vary as a result of different perspectives on the world. Intercultural communication is defined as the study of communication between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter their communication (Samovar & Porter 1997). Samovar and Porter illustrate how the meaning of a message changes when it is encoded by a person in one culture and decoded by a person in another culture, in the context of that person's own cultural background. In some cases, the message may be interpreted to carry a different meaning than intended.

Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension of power distance is very much relevant to this research. Hofstede defines power distance as "the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally".

There is definitely an absolute divergence of power between international doctoral students and their examination panels. Hofstede's definition of power distance is based on a survey on IBM Corporation staff in 72 countries. It may not quite capture international students' experience of power distance in the context of educational attainment.

This study evaluates students' adaptation in relation to Kim's (1988) five dimensions of integrative theory: namely personal, social and ethnic communications, as well as environment and predispositions. Kim's theory embraces the hosts (Malaysian examiners) and the newcomers (international students).

In a recent study on ethnic proximity and cross-cultural adaptation by Asian and European students in the United States, Kim and Kim (2016) elaborate the central part of integrative theory that includes personal and social communications involving host-communication competence that shapes the host's interpersonal (IC) and mass communication (MC) as well as newcomers' ethnic IC and MC. Personal and social-

communication engagements during IC and MC activities provide newcomers with "…distinct, subcultural experiences with fellow co-ethnics" (Kim & Kim 2016: 64).

The present research is significant because it emphasizes the need to include the newcomers' (i.e., students) communicative competence, rather than only focusing on the host's communicative competence, as *per* Kim (1988). The students' competence in interpreting and responding to interactions is crucial in easing the process.

Oral presentation – especially during the viva – is a real challenge for international students because it is conducted in English. Ability to communicate clearly under pressure and defend ideas is vital for success. Some individuals encounter challenges communicating with their examiners.

Previous studies have classified language, cultural and educational issues as the major challenges faced by non-native English speakers. Some of these studies focus more on linguistic issues while others find educational issues to be the major problem for international students (Alavi & Mansor 2011, Andrade 2006, Brown 2000, Campbell & Li 2008, Novera 2004). McCroskey (1984) identifies seven factors leading to CA: low intellectual skills, low social self-esteem, speech deficiencies, social alienation, voluntary social introversion, communication anxiety, and ethnic/cultural divergence in communication norms. Barriers to effective communication – as identified by Klimova and Semradova (2012) and Smith (2013): physical, perceptual, emotional, cultural, linguistic, gender, and interpersonal barriers – contribute to CA during academic presentations.

Andrade (2006) notes that, with distinct differences, both international and domestic students face academic and social transition issues in their first year of university. Ohnishi and Ford (2015) reason that domestic students are more advantaged than international students because they are well-versed on the university environment and have cultural knowledge within a particular university system. Brown (2000) writes that, despite fulfilling the English language prerequisite (i.e., IELTS), many students feel inferior for their poor oral English ability and suffer from apprehension and low self-confidence. Krashen (1982) argues that an individual's low self-image negatively influences his language experience. Andrade (2006) claims that academic and linguistic issues gradually reduce as students improve their linguistic and research skills: i.e., CA disappears once students demonstrate sufficient improvement. Radzuan and Kaur (2010) relate limited technical knowledge and limitations in students' English proficiency to students' CA during academic presentation. Academic presentations, particularly one's *viva voce*, cause students to display anxiety due to worries whether their research has addressed and sufficiently articulated the criteria for the award of a doctorate (Tinkler & Jackson 2004).

A few studies have been conducted investigating CA among international students in Malaysia. Amiri and Puteh (2018) studied cross-cultural communication and international doctoral students' experiences of CA during academic presentations. Participants' CA was influenced by linguistic issues, deficiency in knowledge of research, negative perceptions towards the presentation panel and related factors.

Another study (Zhiping & Paramasivam 2013) on international postgraduate students highlighted the students' anxiety speaking English due to CA and fear of negative evaluation. The study revealed that Nigerian students who speak English as a second language are more proficient in English and display lower levels of anxiety compared to their peers from Iran or Algeria who speak English as a foreign language.

Idris and colleagues (2015) surveyed 170 international postgraduate students on English comprehension and interpersonal communication at Universiti Utara Malaysia. Most of the study participants reported feeling awkward, uncomfortable, embarrassed, nervous and anxious in speaking English with their peers and supervisors. The researchers call for further

research to identify students' experiences of CA to assist them towards more effective interpersonal communication.

Morita (2000) argues that non-native-English-speaking students experience psychological difficulties (lack of confidence or an inferiority complex, along with linguistic and sociocultural difficulties) related to presenting orally. Carter (2012) writes that international students' experience of the viva differs from their native counterparts, as they experience more language anxiety; this anxiety increases when speech is both formal and critical to success. Ariff and Mugableh (2013) investigated experiences of Jordanians in Malaysia. They discovered that linguistic difficulties were the students' main concern: particularly vocabulary, pronunciation, listening comprehension, and difficulties related to the immediacy and interactive nature of spoken language. The researchers argue that lack of experience in oral academic presentations in English put Jordanians in a difficult position while completing their studies. Ariff and Mugableh's motivation for their study is the growth in the number of international students in Malaysia with evidence of dissatisfaction and experience of CA. Their focus is on strategies employed by the international postgraduate students during academic presentations.

3. Method

This objective of this paper is to explore the phenomenon of oral communication apprehension (OCA) experienced by international doctoral students in Malaysia. Observations and interviews were conducted to develop an understanding of "the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences" (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). First, an interview guide and observation protocol were prepared which, drawing from the literature, directed the topics to be covered. The emphasis in the literature on strategies employed to eliminate OCA shaped the construction of the interview guide and observation protocol.

The interview participants comprised 25 male and female international doctoral students from multiple public universities in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Participants were chosen on the basis of their level of study and country of origin.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher clarified the objective of the study and the confidential nature of the research, emphasizing the interviewee's anonymity. The initial part of each interview was devoted to demographic information. When sufficient rapport was built up so that the interviewee seemed comfortable, the conversation turned to the interviewee's experience and perception of OCA during academic presentations. Interviews were voice recorded for subsequent transcription.

Gaining entrance to the observation site was accomplished through personal contact recommended by the interview participants. The researcher attended, as an observer, an open session of proposal presentations offered by one university's faculty. She participated during each question-and-answer session as permitted by the presentation format. She took field notes during the presentations and recorded them with participants' permission. She had the opportunity to establish rapport with the students and foster their cooperation.

The data was analyzed using NVivo v.11 software to uncover common themes. Using Ryan and Bernard's (2003) terminologies, themes were unfolded inductively from the data as well as deductively from the literature. Most of the themes emerged from the empirical data: interview transcriptions and observation images. Open-ended questions unearthed fundamental expressions that assisted the researcher. The process of discovering themes is described as *open coding* by the grounded theorists and as *qualitative analysis* by the content analysts.

The NVivo software is designed for qualitative, mixed-methodology research. It helped to 1) reorganize the coding and node structure quickly; 2) ensure efficient, effective and easy

coding making retrieval easier; 3) improve accuracy of the qualitative study, and 4) assist precise and transparent data analysis (Zamawe 2015). It assists recording, sorting, matching and linking data without losing access to the source data or context from which the data has been sourced (Bazeley & Jackson 2013). It facilitates efficient organization of nonnumerical, unstructured data with powerful procedures to index and search; simplifies complex data; offers an ample toolkit for speedy coding thorough exploration and exhaustive organization and analysis; is prized for generating text-data matrixes for comparisons; and provides for visually mapping themes identified in the analysis. The coding procedure for the present study applied the coding method suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1990) consisting of open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

4. Results

As said, six themes emerged from the data: self-confidence, efficient presentation strategies, passivity, positive cognitive restructuring, visualization techniques and cultural awareness.

4.1 Self-confidence
Participants reported that their confidence is gained from acquiring sufficient knowledge in the subject matter and an ability to anticipate beyond the current research. Confidence in one's own research was viewed as a great way to control anxiety during academic presentations:

> **P6:** I put this in my mind [that] no one in this class knows my title better than me. This is the way to encourage me and don't interrupt myself and don't hesitate and gone.

> **P9:** I think the best thing is to try to be enough confident. This is the only way you can reduce your anxiety.

By the researcher's own observations: whenever students had academically reasonable justifications sufficient to convince the examiner, linguistic issues or anxiety were no longer a concern to the student. When students were not able to provide the requested answer, heightened anxiety was evident from their voices and behavior. They found themselves at a loss for words, repeated themselves, etc.

4.2 Efficient presentation strategies
Strategies included preparing good slides, rehearsing, preparing notes, engaging in eye contact with examiners and memorizing the presentation. Participant P13:

> Even they don't understand English, through diagram, graph and pictures in my slides I was able to show them pictures in my slides. Because they have the knowledge, they know what you are doing but the main thing is their English by seeing the diagram, graph, they know where I am going through. They knew what is happening.

Participant P7 rehearsed his presentation many times, to reduce his anxiety:

> I usually do preparation. I usually do rehearse before the presentation. Rehearsal to overcome the anxiety. I think as long as presentation is concerned the only thing is preparation and rehearsal that can help you out.

Some participants prepared notes as preparation for the question-and-answer session; Participant P6:

> I [had] written the whole things that I will say, just in case maybe I feel anxious. Sometimes is not all the discussions inside the in presentation asking and answer. It is

more notes, I wrote the notes to get benefit and see what's the weaknesses places that I have, I kept busy with writing these notes and try to say something about if I have.

Participant P5 made use of eye contact:

> I try to [have] eye contact with them. When they comment me I try to accept their comments. I openly welcome any comments.

Some students compensated for their language deficiencies by memorizing their presentations.

> **P10:** I focus on reading when I have presentation the previous night to make myself confident. Sometimes I try to memorize full sentences.

4.3 Passivity

Passivity is an effective coping strategy in two situations: first, in situations where a student feels he lacks sufficient knowledge to argue with his examiner. Passivity was the basis for the coding category *full agreement to avoid confrontation*. Students may react expressively but non-verbally in response to intense OCA. An individual may attempt to mask his true feelings of anxiety by smiling or laughing. Consider:

> **P7:** But yes of course you feel nervousness when you do not know the answer… now you surrender yourself to the evaluators because I knew that I can't do anything.

There are instances when students are forced to remain passive despite high confidence in their work. This can be an effective technique when dealing with strict examiners asserting their authority over students.

> **P2:** If they are saying something even you don't like you have just to agree. If you make like just disagreement or like argument you will get in troubles.

The student tried to save face by smiling and nodding when she failed to convince the examiners during the Q-and-A session.

4.4 Positive cognitive restructuring

Strategies employed here include self-reflection on one's own abilities and accepting comments from examiners. Some students overcame OCA by remaining positive and trusting their work.

> **P6:** Focus on my presentation and my talking and don't care about who is in the room. I try to make something and continue saying what I know because I put this in my mind no one in this class knows my title better than me. This is the way to encourage me and don't interrupt myself and don't hesitate and gone.

Receiving comments about a proposal is difficult for some participants, who may end up experiencing resentment due to unresolved communication issues. Some students choose to avoid any confrontations with the examination panel and accept whatever comments are offered.

> **P7:** When you come the question-and-answer session now you surrender yourself to the evaluators because I knew that I can't do anything. I need to listen whatever they say weather it is a positive feedback or negative feedback so I left it on the evaluators.

4.5 Visualization techniques

These techniques include imagining the kind of questions that might be asked. Students – especially those experienced in making presentations – feel the need to prepare beyond simply making the presentation slides.

> **P2:** Emotionally prepare your mind. Imagine what kind of the questions they will ask especially like tricky questions. Yeah sure it's a trick, why you think they are coming? They are coming to make sure that one hundred percent you know, you understand and this is your work and its originality.

4.6 Cultural awareness

Cultural awareness is another way to cope with OCA and mitigate communication breakdowns encountered with one's examination panel. International students become aware that Malaysia is a high power-distance society, and they have to accept status differences to avoid communication misinterpretations.

> **P5:** This is a culture of Malay, I have understood, I know a lot of Malay professors and lecturers; really, they expect that we must show that we are humble towards them and so cannot claim we know more than you. They cannot accept this. Especially in public universities. They say you are still student as long as you don't have any position and you cannot publish you cannot claim anything. In front of them you must be very humble.

> **P4:** …Because you know they say you should not argue much because it might give them negative feelings so I had to just give it up. Even when I am sure that I have the answer, even when I am sure I am correct about the answer I am providing.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This study is one of a few efforts investigating strategies that international students adopt to overcome CA during academic presentations. Analysis of the data reveals various strategies employed to overcome CA. The emerging themes are consistent with both viewpoints and findings in the literature. The findings here parallel previous findings that students are able to develop their own survival techniques for dealing with CA depending on their experiences and maturity.

The analysis of communication strategies employed by the study participants is in line with the oral communication strategy categories developed by others who have argued that students' use of oral communication strategies depends largely on their level of linguistic proficiency. Highly proficient students tend to employ social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, and negotiation for meaning, while weakly proficient students employ message abandonment strategies and less active listener strategies.

Apart from language proficiency, participants' confidence on their knowledge of their research significantly influenced the choice of strategies to maintain communication or avoid CA. The findings are further in line with Zhiping and Paramasivam (2013) who report that apprehensive students tend to avoid eye contact and display expressive reactions such as smiling to mask their anxiety. Those participants who possess enough confident in their research choose relaxation, positive thinking or other alternative strategies to address the situation.

Confidence in oral presentation should also be highlighted. Some participants experienced CA due to their poor communication skills or those of the examination panel. However, if one possesses prior experience in oral presentation, one is able to manage the communication breakdown through application of relevant strategies.

McCroskey (1984) argues that, by attempting to solve issues causing CA, one can overcome CA. If a student's linguistic competency, research skill or cultural awareness increases in subsequent semesters, CA is perceived to decrease.

This research has many implications that relate to educational settings. Its findings may increase students' awareness of OCA and make them mindful of relevant strategies when experiencing OCA during academic presentations. The findings indicate that interpersonal conflict between students and examiners during presentations greatly affects students' performance. Examiners need to adopt flexible strategies depending on the student.

Investigations on academic-presentation events contribute to the quality of graduate research. The findings of the present research give useful insights on the implementation of policies towards elevating and improving international students' experiences.

Acknowledgements

About the authors

Fatemeh Amiri recently received the degree of doctor of philosophy from the faculty of social sciences and humanities at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Her research area is language, culture and communication. She holds a master's in the teaching of English as a second language from the faculty of education at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Her publications include refereed journals and conference papers.

Marlia Puteh is associate professor at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, currently seconded to the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. Her publications include refereed journals, conference papers, book chapters and academic books in the domains of English language studies, engineering education, technology in language learning, higher education policies and disruptive challenges to higher education.

References

Alavi, M. & S.M.S. Mansor (2011). Categories of problems among international students in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences, 30: 1581-1587. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.307

Amiri, F. & M. Puteh (2018). Oral communication apprehension among international doctoral students. *English Language Teaching*. **11**(2): 164-171. Accessed 25 June 2021 from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1166905.pdf

Andrade, M.S. (2006). International students in English-speaking universities: Adjustment factors. *Journal of Research in International Education*. **5**(2): 131-154. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1475240906065589

Ariff, T. & A.I. Mugableh (2013). Jordanians' academic discourse socialization through oral academic presentations in Malaysia. *International Journal of Linguistics and Communication*. **1**(2): 1-17. Accessed 25 June 2021 from http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.1090.1188&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Bazeley, P. & K. Jackson (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo*. Sage.

Brown, H.D. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Longman.

Bush, V.D., G.M. Rose, F. Gilbert & T.N. Ingram (2001). Managing culturally diverse-buyer-seller relationships: The role of intercultural disposition and adaptive selling in

developing intercultural communication competence. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, **29**(4): 391-404. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F03079450094234

Campbell, J. & M. Li (2008). Asian students' voices: An empirical study of Asian students' learning experiences at a New Zealand university. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. **12**(4): 375-396. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1028315307299422

Carter, S. (2012). English as an additional language (EAL) *viva voce*: The EAL doctoral oral examination experience. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*. **37**(3): 273-284. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2010.528555

Corbin, J. & A. Strauss (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons and evaluative criteria. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*. **19**(6): 418-427. Accessed 25 June 2021 from http://eli.johogo.com/Class/CorbinStrauss.pdf

Howard, D., M. Shaw, P. Tinkler & C. Jackson (2002). In the dark? Preparing for the PhD viva. *Quality Assurance in Education*. **10**(2): 86-97. https://doi.org/10.1108/09684880210423573

Hughes, R. (2002). *Teaching and Researching Speaking*. Pearson Education.

Idris, M., F. Elmenfi & A. Gaibani (2015). English language apprehension and relationship building bonding among international students in the College of Arts and Sciences at University Utara Malaysia. *Journal of Academic and Applied Studies* (*Special Issue on Linguistics & English Literature*). **5**(2): 1-25.

Kim, Y.Y. (1988). *Communication and Cross-cultural Adaptation: An Integrative Theory*. Multilingual Matters.

Kim, Y.S. & Y.Y. Kim (2016). Ethnic proximity and cross-cultural adaptation: A study of Asian and European students in the United States. *Intercultural Communication Studies,* **25**(3): 61-80. Accessed 25 June 2021 from https://www-s3-live.kent.edu/s3fs-root/s3fs-public/file/Yang-Soo-KIM-Young-Yun-KIM.pdf

Klimova, B.F. & I. Semradova (2012). Barriers to communication. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, **31**: 207-211. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.12.043

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Pergamon Press.

Kvale, S. & S. Brinkmann (2009). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Lipovsky, C. (2006). Candidates' negotiation of their expertise in job interviews. *Journal of Pragmatics*, **38**(8): 1147–1174. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2005.05.007

McCroskey, J. (1984). The communication apprehension perspective. In J.A. Daly & J.C. McCroskey (eds.), *Avoiding Communication* (13–38). Sage.

Morita, N. (2000). Discourse socialization though oral classroom activities in a TESL graduate program. *TESOL Quarterly*, **34**(2): 279-310. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587953

Novera, I.A. (2004), Indonesian postgraduate students studying in Australia: An examination of their academic, social and cultural experiences, *International Education Journal*, **5**(4): 475-487. Accessed 25 June 2021 from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ903872.pdf

Ohnishi, S. & J.H. Ford (2015). Student seminar program for improving academic presentation skills for PhD students in science: The effect of language background on outcome. *International Journal for Researcher Development*. **6**(1): 57-76. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRD-09-2014-0027

Poyrazli, S. & K.M. Grahame (2007). Barriers to adjustment: Needs of international students within a semi-urban campus community. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, **34**(1): 28-46. Accessed 25 June 2021 from https://www.redorbit.com/news/education/907480/barriers_to_adjustment_needs_of_international_students_within_a_semiurban/index.html/

Radzuan, N.R.M. & S. Kaur (2010). A survey of oral communication apprehension in English among ESP learners in an engineering course. *English for Specific Purposes World*, **31**(10): 1-14.

Ryan, G.W. & H.R. Bernard (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods*, **15**(1): 85–109. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1525822X02239569

Samovar, L.A. & R.E. Porter (1994). *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* (*7th ed*.). Wadsworth.

Sandhu, D.S. (1994). An examination of the psychological needs of the international students: Implications for counselling and psythotherapy. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*. **17**: 229-239. Accessed 25 June 2021 from https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/BF01407739.pdf

Smith, C. (2013). *The Seven Barriers of Communication*.

Tinkler, P. & C. Jackson (2004). *The Doctoral Examination Process: A Handbook for Students, Examiners and Supervisors*. McGraw-Hill.

Wiseman, R.L., M. Hammer & N. Nishida (1989). Predictors of intercultural communication competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, **13**(3): 349-70. https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(89)90017-5

Zamawe, F. (2015). The implication of using NVivo software in qualitative data analysis: Evidence-based reflections. *Malawi Medical Journal*, **27**(1): 13-15. https://doi.org/10.4314/mmj.v27i1.4

Zhiping, D. & S. Paramasivam (2013). Anxiety of speaking English in class among international students in a Malaysian university. *International Journal of Education and Research*, **1**(11): 1-16.

Zimmermann, S. (1995), Perception of intercultural communication competence and international student adaptation to an American campus. *Communication Education*, **44**(4): 321-335. https://doi.org/10.1080/03634529509379022