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Learning More about Chinese Culture through Speaking: English Speaking Module Incorporating Chinese Culture for EFL College Undergraduates in China

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ABSTRACT

College undergraduates in China are still generally weak in their abilities to speak English even after years of education. Teachers need suitable instructional materials and effective teaching methods to enhance the undergraduates' speaking abilities. This study employs a mixed-method design to develop a module to help English as a Foreign Language (EFL) college undergraduates in China acquire their English-speaking abilities by incorporating Chinese culture texts using the Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate (ADDIE) instructional model. Qualitative document gathering was utilized to identify key elements such as diverse Chinese cultural topics and communicative speaking activities, which were integral to developing the English Speaking Module. The prototype English Speaking Module was then validated by four experienced content experts using a 5-point Likert scale. The results, based on content experts' ratings using Content Validity Index formulas, indicated that the prototype English Speaking Module as a whole, possesses high content validity. Furthermore, quantitative research methods were employed to pilot the prototype module among 32 college undergraduates from a private college in China. The undergraduates' speaking performances were analyzed using the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC), and the results showed a high level of reliability for the prototype English Speaking Module. Then the developed English Speaking Module was formally implemented among 80 undergraduates in China to check its effectiveness in enhancing students' English speaking skills. The pretest and post-test results of the formal implementation of the English Speaking Module indicated a significant improvement in the undergraduates' speaking skills. This study's significance lies in its potential to provide a culturally relevant and effective educational tool that not only enhances undergraduates' English speaking skills but also enriches their understanding of their native culture. This dual focus can lead to a more engaging and meaningful learning experience, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes for EFL college undergraduates in China.
Keywords: ADDIE model; Chinese culture; Communicative speaking activities; Educational tool; English Speaking Module

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1. Introduction

English is renowned for its association with universal communication across various domains such as politics, business, and industry (Alshammari, 2023). The Oral English syllabus (2022) and College English syllabus (2022) at a private university in China, has both specified a shared goal of improving students' English speaking proficiency to effectively talk about Chinese culture with fluency and accuracy across diverse social and intercultural communication contexts. Furthermore, China's Ministry of Education (MOE) has initiated a series of policies, including the Action Plan for Carrying forward Excellent Chinese Cultural Heritage in School Education (hereafter, the APCCCH) (MOE, China 2014), and Construction Guidelines of Chinese Ethics and Culture Education in all the Courses of the Universities and Colleges (MOE, China 2020), to promote the teaching and learning of Chinese culture in schools at all levels. Regarding the integration of Chinese culture in college English classrooms, Lu (2021) states that it is a crucial step to meet the needs of learning English in China.

The current status of the Chinese college undergraduates' English speaking skills is still unsatisfactory (Amoah and Yeboah, 2021; Fan, 2020; Li and Wang, 2015; Xing and Bolden, 2019). Rose et al. (2020) found that what the primary challenges college students face in learning English are related to their productive skills such as speaking and writing skills. The difficulties the Chinese students face with speaking English are mainly due to the lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, or knowledge of grammar (Amoah and Yeboah, 2021), and a lack of confidence in speaking the language (Bo, 2023). Additionally, the students have a lot of difficulty in discussing Chinese culture (F. Li and Q. Li, 2020; Lin, 2018; Song and Bai, 2018; Zhong, 2019). Cong (2000) first referred to the phenomenon that Chinese college students learning English have difficulties in clearly expressing Chinese culture in English using the term Chinese Culture Aphasia (CCA). Scholars have a consensus that the phenomena of Chinese Culture Aphasia is mainly caused by the neglect of Chinese culture in the curriculum setting and syllabuses, inadequate native culture-related materials in textbooks and lack of native cultural awareness among the English teachers and students (Li, 2020; F. Li and Q. Li, 2020; Lu, 2021; Mu, 2019; Song and Bai, 2018; Li, 2019; Zhou and Ding, 2020).

Previous studies investigated the cultural content presented in the College English textbooks and revealed that only a very small percentage of Chinese culture texts are included (Lee and Li, 2020; F. Li and Q. Li, 2020; Lin, 2018; Liu, 2015; Peng, 2017; Liu and Laohawiriyanon, 2012; Mu, 2019; Yang, 2017; Yang et al., 2018; Zhou and Ding, 2020; Zhu, 2019). Sui (2023) discovered a scarcity of studies examining the significance of students' native culture and intercultural communication in foreign language instruction. Wang and Wang (2018) argued that despite the increased interest in academic discussions on Chinese traditional culture education, there has been limited empirical research conducted thus far.

The innovation of this study lies in that it incorporates Chinese cultural texts to provide engaging and relevant content for students. By integrating Chinese culture, the module not only improves English-speaking skills but also deepens students' cultural understanding. This dual focus is a novel approach in English language teaching in China.

This study aims to achieve the following research objectives:

Research Objective 1: Develop English Speaking Module for college students in China by incorporating Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Research Objective 2: Evaluate the effectiveness of the developed English Speaking Module in enhancing students' English speaking skills.

2. Literature review

2.1 Speaking modules developed by past studies

Educators from various countries have designed and developed modules for the teaching and learning of English speaking skills in classroom settings. They are: the Speaking Module Incorporating Co-

operative Learning by Hakim (2018) for introvert students at English Academy Bengkulu, Module for Communicative English Language Skills by Yigzaw (2020) for freshmen at Bahir Dar University, Foreground Approach to Motivating Students (FAMS)' Module by Shitu (2022) for college students in Nigeria, Your Language and My Culture (YLMC) Program by Nambiar et al. (2020) for students in the state of Terengganu, Malaysia, and Cultural Integrated Indonesian Speaking E-module by Munirah et al. (2023) for higher education students in Indonesia. These modules are briefly reviewed below.

Speaking Module Incorporating Cooperative Learning: Institute Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Bengkulu, Indonesia (Hakim , 2018).

Hakim (2018) designed a Speaking Module for introvert students at English Academy Bengkulu. In this module, team-based speaking activities are arranged to enhance student interaction. These collaborative tasks aim to boost the confidence of introverted students in English communication. The module comprises of seven chapters, each following a clear format: 1). Theoretical overview of the lesson, 2). Relevant examples, and 3). Conversation practice. A pilot study conducted by the researcher revealed positive feedback from introverted students regarding the Speaking Module incorporating Cooperative Learning.

In comparison, the current study not only emphasizes cooperative learning but also incorporates Chinese cultural content to engage students more deeply and make learning more relevant.

Module for Communicative English Language Skills: Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia (Yigzaw, 2020).

Yigzaw (2020), developed a module for Communicative English Language Skills II Module for University freshmen in Ethiopia to improve their reading, speaking and writing skills. They adopted the Communicative Language Teaching strategies in designing the module, which includes 5 units with universal themes with various pre-communicative activities and communicative activities. In this module, vocabularies, explanations, and brief notes were provided in the pre-communicative activities in each

unit, which enabled them to acquire linguistic forms and to relate these forms to meaning in their later practice. Regarding the communicative activities, the researcher designed speaking activities which involved group discussion, in which the students were asked to discuss their opinions in various scenarios, and debate over it. The students would have to rationally debate with evidence to support their arguments over controversial statements in each theme. These speaking activities guided by the Communicative Approach in Language Teaching provide students with genuine scenarios to carry out oral communication in English. This module is found to be very practical to the students and teachers to develop English language speaking skills.

While Yigzaw's module focuses on general communicative skills, the current study specifically tailors these activities to incorporate Chinese cultural themes, providing a more targeted instruction for college undergraduates.

Foreground Approach to Motivating Students (FAMS)' Module: Federal College of Education, Nigeria (Shitu, 2022).

Shitu (2022) designed Foreground Approach to Motivating Students (FAMS) Module for ESL students in the Federal College of Education Kano Nigeria based on the framework of the "Think-Pair-Share" collaborative approach. The FAMS module focuses on two domains of language skills: listening and speaking. The module contains various online resources including user-friendly images and videos from YouTube. The FAMS module is designed in a flexible way so it can be used in traditional classroom environment, and in blended learning environment of face-to-face and technologically mediated environment. The module is able to motivate the students to practise listening and speaking by providing practical materials.

Shitu's module emphasizes flexibility and motivation through multimedia resources. Similarly, the current study also adopts Chinese cultural elements to enhance engagement and relevance.

Your Language and My Culture (YLMC) Program: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia

(Nambiar et al., 2020).

The Your Language and My Culture (YLMC) program is a long-term initiative designed for secondary schools in Terengganu, Malaysia, which aims to enhance students' English proficiency and cultural awareness by incorporating local cultural content into reading materials. The program consists of three modules focusing on heritage, language, literature, and societal values. Structured lesson plans guide each session, which include reading, writing, listening, and speaking tasks. Regarding speaking skills, various activities were designed to enhance oral proficiency include Group Discussions, Role-Playing, Personal Introductions, Listening and Retelling, and Debates. The YLMC was implemented, and results showed that it has enhanced students' English reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

Nambiar's program demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating cultural content. The current study builds on this by specifically tailoring the content to Chinese culture, aiming to improve English proficiency and cultural knowledge simultaneously.

***Cultural Integrated Indonesian Speaking E-modul**: Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia (Munirah et al., 2023).*

Munirah et al. (2023) developed an Indonesian Speaking e-module integrated with local cultural values, aiming to address the issue of limited speaking skills ability among Indonesian students, particularly those at the University of South Sulawesi. This e-module, based on the Android system, incorporates local cultural themes and related materials to provide a richer learning experience. This module's integration of local cultural values allows students to not only enhance their speaking abilities but also to deepen their understanding of local culture. Through activities like face-to-face interaction and teleconferencing, students can practice spoken expression, while discussions and assignments provide opportunities to delve into local cultural topics. Additionally, the module offers a variety of learning materials and quizzes to reinforce learning outcomes and assess students' comprehension. The results of the study indicate that this e-module has significantly improved students' speaking abilities and enhanced their understanding of cultural values.

Munirah et al.'s module successfully integrates local culture through technology. Similarly, the current study integrates Chinese cultural themes to enhance the English Speaking Module's relevance and effectiveness.

In summary, while each of these modules has contributed significantly to the field of language teaching, the current study stands out by integrating Chinese cultural elements with proven instructional strategies like Cooperative Learning, Communicative Language Teaching, and multimedia resources. This combination aims to address both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding, providing a novel and effective approach for teaching English speaking skills to college undergraduates in China.

2.2 Theoretical foundation of this study

This section presents the Schema theory and the theory of Communicative Competence as the theoretical foundation of this study, followed by the Communicative-oriented Language Teaching (Littlewood, 2004, 2007, 2013), which guided the researcher in designing various types of speaking activities in the English Speaking Module.

Schema theory

Schema theory suggests that information is stored in memory within broad mental frameworks known as schemas or schemata (Armbruster 1986). Bartlett (1932) defined schema as the organization of an individual's knowledge and experiences of the world. Schemata are units in which all knowledge is contained (Rumelhart, 1980), they serve as representations of our previous experiences, and they are undoubtedly shaped by an individual's cultural environment (Pitchard, 1990). Schema encompasses understanding the attributes of familiar objects and the connections among these attributes (Ye, 2021). According to the schema theory, comprehension is shaped by the interaction between prior knowledge and the information presented in the text (spoken or written) (Hassan, Akhtar, and Khan, 2020).

Scholars have continually expanded and refined schema theory, applying it to language teaching in the process (Bo, 2023). Alimohamadi and Poordaryiaenejad (2015) investigated the impact of integrating background knowledge among English as Foreign Language learners and results indicated that this integration can enhance speaking performances among the learners. Carrell (1987) characterized content schema as the prior knowledge held by a reader concerning the subject matter, with her research elucidating the evident and considerable impact of cultural content schemata on second language comprehension. Content schema is the prior understanding or knowledge of the subject matter covered in a text (Hassan, Akhtar, and Khan, 2020), and it encompasses various elements, including topic familiarity, cultural understanding, conventions, and prior experiences within the domain (Nusantara, Rahman, and Mahmud, 2021; Zhao and Zhu, 2012). Nusantara, Rahman, and Mahmud (2021) proposed that having prior knowledge of the subject enables students to effortlessly articulate ideas related to the topic. A significant implication of schema theory is acknowledging the influence of culture and personal experiences in shaping an individual's understanding (Widmayer, 2004). Khataee and Dowlatabadi (2023) highlighted that according to schema theory, incorporating cultural elements from both the source and target languages, along with providing pertinent background knowledge, can enhance the reading comprehension of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

The schema theory provides a theoretical basis for the development of the English Speaking Module by emphasizing the importance of incorporating local cultural materials.

Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings (1994) advocates teachers to actively engage with and appreciate the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students, fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment. This involves integrating students' cultural backgrounds and experiences into the curriculum, cultivating positive relationships with students, and critically examining power dynamics in education. Building on this foundation, Ladson-Billings (1995) developed Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, offering teachers systematic approaches to authentically incorporate students' cultural identities into classroom settings. This framework aims to support students in achieving academic success while enhancing their cultural competence and social-political consciousness. Similarly, Bao (2019) stated that when students' experiences and cultural background are valued and incorporated in the teaching process, they show greater enthusiasm in learning English.

The theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy recognizes the significance of cultural identity in learning and advocates integrating diverse cultural perspectives in the teaching process. By incorporating culturally relevant topics, and materials, more opportunities can be created for the students to express themselves authentically while building language skills in meaningful contexts, which will ultimately promote academic achievement and cultural empowerment among the students.

Theory of communicative competence

The development of the theory of communicative competence spans several decades and involves contributions from various scholars across disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and communication studies. The following table (**Table 1**) shows the evolution of the theory of communicative competence.

As shown from **Table 1**, different terms were used by various scholars to refer to the domains of knowledge included in communicative competence. The basic components of these models are the same, which are the linguistic competence—the knowledge including rules of grammar, vocabulary and phonology; sociolinguistic competence—the ability to use language appropriately in various social contexts; discourse competence— knowledge of appropriate language use beyond sentence level, such as coherence and cohesion; strategic competence—the ability to utilize techniques to compensate for failures in communication, and actional competence—the ability to comprehend and use all significant speech acts.

Table 1. Historical development of the theory of communicative competence.

Chomsky (1957, 1965);	Hymes (1967, 1972);	Canale and Swain (1980);	Canale (1983);	Celce-Murcia et al. (1995);
Linguistic competence	Linguistic competence	Grammatical competence	Grammatical competence	Linguistic competence
	Sociolinguistic competence	Sociolinguistic competence	Sociolinguistic competence	Sociocultural competence
		Strategic competence	Strategic competence	Strategic competence
			Discourse competence	Discourse competence
				Actional competence

In this study, the suggested components of communicative competence including Linguistic competence, Sociocultural competence, Strategic competence, Discourse competence and Actional competence by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (1995) are incorporated in the development of the English Speaking Module with an aim to cultivate the students' overall communicative competence.

Communicative-oriented Language Teaching by Littlewood (COLT) (2004, 2007, 2013)

Combined with the theories of communicative competence, Littlewood (2004) proposed to use the term "communication-oriented language teaching" (COLT) to refer to the kind of teaching which aims at teaching students' successful communication through using flexible means. Littlewood (2004, 2007, 2013) introduced a communicative continuum for communication-oriented language teaching (COLT) (See **Table 2**) which includes five categories that locate activities in relation to each other and the objective of communicative competence.

Table 2. Speaking activities in the "Communicative Continuum" by Littlewood (2004, 2007, 2013).

Non-Communicative Learning	Pre-Communicative Learning	Communicative Language Practice
Focusing on the structures of language, how they are formed and what they mean	Practising language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others	Practising pre-taught language but in a context where it communicates new information (predictable language)
substitution exercises, inductive "discovery" and awareness-raising activities (grammar exercises, substitution drills, and pronunciation drills)	questions and answers (describing visuals or situational language practice)	information gap, personalized questions, survey

Littlewood's (2013) five types of language teaching practices, non-communicative learning, pre-communicative learning, communicative language practice, structured communication, and authentic communication, are in line with the five components of communicative competence by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (1995). As Guo, Wang, and Ortega-Martín (2023) noted that the primary focus of language education is to encourage learners to participate in meaningful communication. Therefore, both the Theory of Communicative Competence and the Communicative-oriented Language Teaching were taken into consideration in the designing of the speaking activities in the English Speaking Module to better engage the undergraduates in meaningful communication, and ultimately to enhance their English speaking skills. Based on the researchers' experience with university students, it is evident that while the Communication-oriented teaching approach yields some positive outcomes for adult English as Foreign Language learners' communicative skills (Khaleghi et al., 2024).

In summary, the researchers employed various theories and methodologies to design and develop the English Speaking Module, as depicted in **Figure 1**.
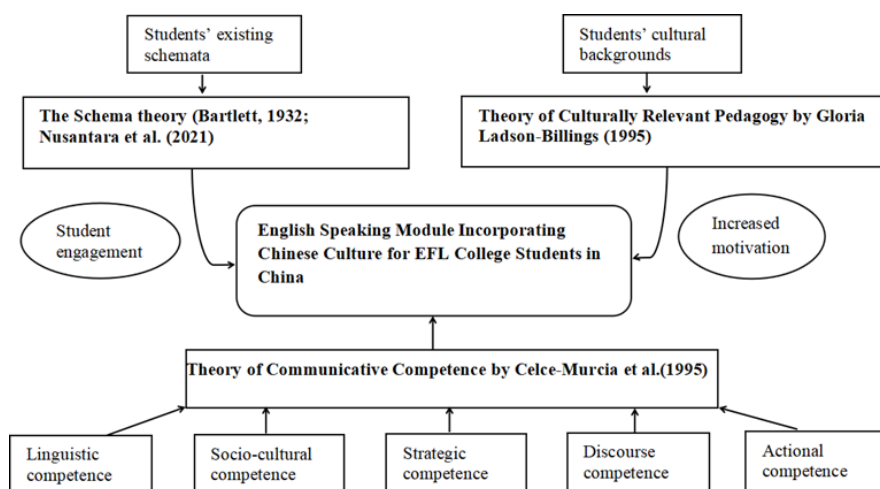
Figure 1. Theoretical framework of this study.

3. Development of the English Speaking Module

The researcher adopted the Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate (ADDIE) instructional model for the development of the English Speaking Module. Widely acknowledged as a flexible framework within the field, ADDIE offers a systematic and well-structured approach to module development (Nawi et al., 2015). Its structured phase is suitable and appropriate for developing learning resources and teaching materials in education (Branch, 2009; Nafiah, 2020).

The ADDIE model involves five main phases: Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate. The development of the English Speaking Module involves multiple documents including the Oral English Syllabus (Dongguan City University, China 2022), College English Syllabus (Dongguan City University, China 2022), Action Plan for Carrying forward Excellent Chinese Cultural Heritage in School Education (MOE, China 2014), Communicative-oriented Language Teaching (Littlewood, 2013), and speaking modules developed by past studies. The procedures for developing the English Speaking Module are provided in detail below.

3.1 Analyze

The Oral English Syllabus and College English Syllabus (Dongguan City University, China 2022) were analyzed with the aim to pinpoint the learning objectives, while the Action Plan for Carrying forward Excellent Chinese Cultural Heritage in School Education (Ministry Of Education, China 2014) was analyzed to determine the specific Chinese cultural topics to be incorporated into the development of the English Speaking Module.

Oral English Syllabus and College English Syllabus (Dongguan City University, China 2022)

The Oral English Syllabus and College English Syllabus (Dongguan City University, China 2022) specified the learning objectives for students to achieve. **Table 3** shows how the learning objectives for the English Speaking Module were derived from the objectives outlined in the syllabuses. Minor adjustments were incorporated to ensure the alignment of all learning objectives with Chinese culture topics.

To embed the English Speaking Module with these learning objectives, the module aims to enable the teachers to enhance the undergraduates' speaking ability to talk about Chinese culture in English.

Action Plan for Carrying forward Excellent Chinese Cultural Heritage in School Education (MOE, China 2014)

The Action Plan for Carrying forward Excellent Chinese Cultural Heritage in School Education (the APCCCH) (MOE, China 2014) specified the knowledge relating to Chinese culture themes such as: the lifestyle and customs of all ethnic groups in China, Chinese calligraphy, classical Chinese literature, classical Chinese folk art, and traditional Chinese music, to be promoted among Chinese students. In this English Speaking Module, the researcher incorporated 12 Chinese culture topics curated from these main culture themes in the English Speaking Module (See **Table 4**).

Table 3. Oral English Syllabus and College English Syllabus (Dongguan City University, China 2022).

Learning objectives in the Oral English Syllabus (Dongguan City University, China 2022)	Learning objectives in the College English Syllabus (Dongguan City University, China 2022)	Learning objectives in the English Speaking Module
Competence dimension a. Cultivate students' ability to carry out proper and fluent conversation on general topics in daily life.	Competence dimension b. Be able to use conversational skills to talk, speak and narrate fluently.	a. To enable teachers to help their students to develop the ability to talk about topics on Chinese culture fluently and confidently.
Knowledge dimension c. Master the knowledge of correct English pronunciation and intonation;	Knowledge dimension a. Master the vocabulary and expressions for general daily English conversations and common topics.	b. To enable teachers to help their students to enhance their ability to talk about topics on Chinese culture using appropriate vocabularies, expressions, grammar, and pronunciation.
General literacy dimension c. Cultivate students' cultural self-confidence and shoulder the important task of communicating Chinese culture to the world.	General literacy dimension c. Cultivate students' ability to describe Chinese culture in English. d. Cultivate students' cross-cultural communication skills and build cultural confidence.	c. To help teachers organize various speaking activities to enable the students to carry out meaningful conversations about topics on Chinese culture.

Table 4. Chinese culture topics in the English Speaking Module and the APCCCH (MOE, China 2014).

Units	Chinese Culture Topics in the APCCCH (MOE, China 2014)	Chinese Culture Topics in the English Speaking Module
Unit 1	Lifestyle and customs of all ethnic groups in China	Chinese Food
Unit 2	Lifestyle and customs of all ethnic groups in China	Chinese Tea
Unit 3	Lifestyle and customs of all ethnic groups in China	Chinese Hanfu
Unit 4	Chinese calligraphy	Chinese Character
Unit 5	Lifestyle and customs of all ethnic groups in China	Chinese Kung Fu
Unit 6	Important traditional Chinese festivals	Traditional Chinese Festivals
Unit 7	Lifestyle and customs of all ethnic groups in China	Chinese Wedding
Unit 8	Classical Chinese literature	Chinese Myth
Unit 9	Classical Chinese folk art	Chinese Folk Art
Unit 10	Classical Chinese folk art	Traditional Chinese Painting
Unit 11	Traditional Chinese music	Traditional Chinese Music
Unit 12	Lifestyle and customs of all ethnic groups in China	Chinese Medicine

The English Speaking Module encompasses 12 captivating Chinese culture topics in line with the Chinese cultural themes from the APCCCH (Ministry of Education, China 2014). These Chinese culture topics include Chinese cuisine, Chinese tea culture, Hanfu (traditional Chinese clothing), Chinese calligraphy, Chinese characters, Chinese martial arts (Kung Fu), traditional Chinese festivals, Chinese wedding customs, Chinese mythology, Chinese folk art, traditional Chinese painting, traditional Chinese music, and Chinese medicine. These topics not only pique students' interests but also stimulate discussions, providing students with a rich and vibrant learning experience for speaking skills. Through exploring these topics, students gain a deeper understanding of the diversity and richness of Chinese culture while broadening their perspectives and enhancing their appreciation for it.

3.2 Design

This section outlines the development of the English Speaking Module including the structure of the developed English Speaking Module and strategies and resources incorporated in designing the prototype English Speaking Module.

Structure of the English Speaking Module

The English Speaking Module is structured into 12 distinct units, each centered around a specific Chinese culture topic. To ensure a coherent and engaging learning experience for the undergraduates, each of these 12 units follows a consistent structure (Refer to **Table 5**).

All the 12 units begin with an introductory section that gives an overview of the unit's content. Clear learning objectives are outlined to guide students' expectations and outcomes, followed by the main learning points of the unit, showing the central areas for skill development. Subsequently, each unit unfolds into three distinct parts: Part 1 features non/pre-communicative learning activities (pronunciation drills, describing visuals, and personalized questions), preparing the students with foundational language skills; Part 2 engages students in communicative learning activities (information gap speaking activities, structured role-plays, complex information exchanges, interviews, dramas, case study and other group discussion activities), focusing on building the students' ability to interact with others using the language skills; and finally, Part 3 provides authentic communication assessment tasks (individual presentation and group discussion), allowing students to apply their acquired knowledge and skills in authentic scenarios.

Strategies and resources incorporated in the English Speaking Module

In the development of the English Speaking Module, the researcher has drawn inspiration from several innovative speaking modules developed by other educators (Refer to **Table 6**).

Table 5. Structure of the English Speaking Module.

Units	Contents
Unit 1	Introduction
Unit 2	Learning objectives
Unit 3	Key learning points
Unit 4	
Unit 5	Part 1: Non/Pre-communicative learning activities such as pronunciation drills and describing visuals.
Unit 6	
Unit 7	Part 2: Communicative learning activities: including information exchange, role-play, interview, drama, group discussion activities, etc.
Unit 8	
Unit 9	
Unit 10	Part 3: Authentic communication including individual presentation and group discussion activities.
Unit 11	
Unit 12	

Table 6. Speaking modules developed by past studies.

Speaking Modules Developed by Others	Prototype English Speaking Module
Speaking Module Incorporating Cooperative Learning (Hakim, 2018). ● Cooperative Learning strategies	Cooperative Learning strategies are incorporated in the English Speaking Module such as students are required to work in pairs and groups to engage in the speaking activities.
Module for Communicative English Language Skills (Yigzaw, 2020). ● Communicative Language Teaching strategies	Communicative Language Teaching strategies are incorporated in the English Speaking Module in the way that various communicative speaking activities in the English Speaking Module.
Foreground Approach to Motivating Students (FAMS)'Module (Shitu, 2022). ● Use of various online resources	Use of various online resources in the English Speaking Module includes videos from TED, China Daily, bilibili.com etc., pictures and images from various websites., and online voting platforms such as Wenjuanxing and Typeform.
Your Language and My Culture (YLMC) Program (Nambiar et al., 2020). Cultural Integrated Indonesian Speaking E-module (Munirah et al., 2023). ● Use of Chinese culture materials	Use of Chinese culture related topics and materials in the English Speaking Module includes Chinese Food, Chinese Tea, Chinese Hanfu, Chinese Character, Chinese Kung Fu, traditional Chinese Festivals, Chinese Wedding, Chinese Myth, Chinese Folk Art, traditional Chinese Painting, traditional Chinese Music, and Chinese Medicine.

Table 6. *(Continued)*

Drawing inspiration from Hakim's (2018) speaking module, the researcher incorporated cooperative learning strategies into the design of the English Speaking Module, with the aim of fostering peer collaboration and enriching the learning experience. Additionally, communicative language teaching strategies from Yigzaw's (2020) speaking module were integrated. Furthermore, multimedia resources from platforms like TED, China Daily, bilibili.com, as well as online voting platforms such as Wenjuanxing and Typeform, were included to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment for students, inspired by Shitu (2022). The Your Language and My Culture (YLMC) Program by Nambiar, Ibrahim, Hashim, (2020) and the Cultural Integrated Indonesian Speaking E-module by Munirah, Syahruddin, Yusuf, (2023) served as sources of inspiration for integrating Chinese cultural topics and materials into the English Speaking Module.

3.3 Develop

This English Speaking Module comprises of 12 units centering around 12 specific Chinese culture related topics, with each unit offering a range of speaking activities categorised into three parts including: Part 1:Non/Pre-communicative learning, Part 2: Communicative learning and Part 3: Authentic communication (See **Figure 2.(a)**) The English Speaking Module offers an array of online resources, including pictures and videos, to supplement classroom instruction and deepen students' understanding of Chinese culture. **Figure 2(b)** is an example of a video showcasing different Hanfu styles across dynasties, which aids students in recognizing similarities and differences of various Hanfu styles. This aligns with the activity where students compare these styles with traditional Hanfu exhibited in museums, fostering critical thinking as well as their English speaking skills.

(a)

(b)

Figure 2. Screenshots of the English Speaking Module.(**a**) Authentic communication; (**b**) Example of online resources.

3.4 Implement

The researcher conducted a pilot study among 32 respondents enrolled in the September semester in 2023 in a private university in China to establish the content validity and reliability of the English Speaking Module before it is ready for formal implementation. After revising the prototype English Speaking Module based on the comments and suggestions from the content experts and the results gained from the pilot study, the main study was conducted to formally implement the developed English Speaking Module among another 80 college freshmen enrolled in the September semester, 2023. The implementation of the English Speaking Module was conducted

once a week throughout 12 weeks from October, 2023, to January, 2024. The main objective of the implementation is to find out the respondents' general speaking performance and to check the module's impact on enhancing their English speaking skills.

3.5 Evaluate

The researcher conducted a one-group pre-test and post-test design to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing the developed English Speaking Module in enhancing the respondents' speaking skills. Both the Pre-test and Post-test were adapted from the Malaysian University English Test Speaking Test format using Chinese culture topics and checked for its content validity and reliability before they were carried out among the students. The students speaking scores in performing the speaking tasks in the Pre-test and Post-test were assessed using the Malaysian University English Test Speaking Assessment Criteria.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research design

This study utilized a mixed-method design to develop English Speaking Module and assess its effectiveness in enhancing the undergraduates' English Speaking skills. Firstly, qualitative document gathering was carried out in developing the prototype English Speaking Module, and then quantitative methods were utilized in the validation of the prototype English Speaking Module. Secondly, to evaluate the effectiveness of the English Speaking Module in enhancing the students' speaking skills, a one group pre-test and post-test design were conducted to assess the participants' English-speaking proficiency before and after using the English Speaking Module. The one-group pre-test and post-test design was used in this study since it only calls for one group for the study and does not call for a huge number of participants (Creswell, 2012).

4.2 Participants

For the pilot study, this study employed purposive sampling and selected four content experts who have vast knowledge and experience in teaching English speaking skill and in teaching Chinese culture so that they can provide professional opinions and suggestions regarding the appropriateness and suitability of the content in the prototype English Speaking Module. The participants comprised of a sample size of 32 college English freshmen enrolled in Dongguan City University in the September semester in 2023. While for the main study, 80 participants were selected under scrutiny. These participants were also freshmen enrolled in the September semester in 2023, who have undertaken English as a foreign language for more than a decade. Their selection is based on their performance in the English segment of the Chinese National College Entrance Examination (a standardized test determining students' eligibility for university admission based on their academic performance) in 2023, suggesting a relatively uniform level of English proficiency among them. These individuals have demonstrated a commendable command of oral English skills, as attested by their enrollment in the Oral English course scheduled for the September semester of 2023.

4.3 Data collection

Data collection involved content experts' rating on a five-point Likert scale and the students' scores in performing the tasks using the prototype English Speaking Module in the pilot study. Furthermore, the students' scores were collected in the Pre-test and Post-test adapted from the Malaysian University English Test Speaking test using Chinese culture topics. The Pre-test and Post-test consist of two parts: an individual presentation and a group discussion, typically conducted in groups of four within a 30-minute time frame. In Part 1, candidates prepare and deliver a response to a prompt individually, with 2 minutes for preparation and 2 minutes for presentation. In Part 2, candidates engage in a group discussion centered around a question provided with a mind map containing five prompts. They have 3 minutes to prepare points and 8-12 minutes to discuss them

with other candidates. The students' speaking performances were then scored by 3 scorers based on the Malaysian University English Test Speaking Assessment Criteria.

4.4 Data analysis

Data obtained from the four content experts were analyzed using Content Validity Index (CVI) to establish the validity of the prototype English Speaking Module, while data collected from the students' English speaking performances in the pilot study were analyzed using the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) to establish the reliability of the prototype English Speaking Module. Additionally, to analyse the data collected in the Pre-test and Post-test, descriptive statistics were utilized to describe the students' speaking ability before and after using the English Speaking Module.

5. Results

5.1 Content validity of the Prototype English Speaking Module

Content Validity Index (CVI) can be used to illustrate the content validity evidence (Almanasreh et al., 2018; Polit et al., 2007; Yusoff, 2019). Therefore, the ratings given by the content experts were calculated using the Content Validity Index (CVI) formulas to determine the content validity of the prototype English Speaking Module. The results showed a unanimous consensus among experts that each activity exhibits significant content validity, with the Content Validity Index (Item-CVI) of 1.0, and the

English Speaking Module as a whole also shows a high level of content validity, with the Scale Content Validity Index (Scale-CVI) of 1.0.

5.2 Reliability of the Prototype English Speaking Module

The researcher collected and then calculated inter-rater reliability of the scores given by the three raters using Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC), for it is widely used as an index in inter rater reliability analyses (Koo and Li, 2016). The results showed a strong reliability of the prototype English Speaking Module, with a calculated ICC value ranging from of 0.844 to 0.937 for the 12 teaching units. Therefore, the prototype English Speaking Module shows strong reliability.

5.3 Effectiveness of the English Speaking Module in enhancing the students' speaking skills

The English Speaking Module was formally implemented among 80 respondents to find out its effectiveness in enhancing the respondents' English Speaking skills. A pre-test and post-test were conducted before and after the implementation of the English Speaking Module. The students' scores in the Pre-test and Post-test were analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe their speaking ability before and after using the English Speaking Module. **Table 7** presents the comparison of results gained from the Pre-test and Post-test in terms of the percentage of respondents' overall speaking proficiency in different categories.

Table 7. Analysis of the pretest and post-test results.

	Very Good Speaker 48-54	Good Speaker 39-47	Competent Speaker 30-38	Modest Speaker 21-29	Marginal Speaker 12-20	Limited Speaker 0-11	Average Mean Percentage
Pre-test	0	1.25%	16.25%	66.25%	15%	1.25%	45.96%
Post-test	0	40%	58.75%	1.25%	0	0	67.87%

In the Post-test, there is a significant increase in the percentages of respondents categorized as "Good Speaker" (scores 39 to 47) and "Competent Speaker" (scores 30 to 38), rising from 1.25% and 16.25% in

the Pre-test to 40% and 58.75% in the Post-test, respectively. This suggests an enhanced speaking performance by more respondents, reaching higher proficiency levels in oral expression. On the other hand,

there is a substantial decrease in the percentages of respondents categorized as "Modest Speaker" (scores 21 to 29), "Marginal Speaker" (scores 12 to 20), and "Limited Speaker" (scores 0 to11), with "Modest Speaker" notably decreasing from 66.25% in the Pre-test to 1.25% in the Post-test. These changes imply that the implementation of the developed English Speaking Module have positively influenced respondents to achieve higher levels of speaking proficiency. Furthermore, by comparing the average mean percentage gained from the Pre-test and Post-test, the respondents have significantly improved their English speaking ability after using the developed English Speaking Module, with the average mean percentage increase of 21.91% from 45.96 % in the Pre-test to 67.87% in the Post-test.

6. Discussion and conclusions

The developed English Speaking Module integrating Chinese cultural themes demonstrates significant content validity, reliability, and effectiveness in enhancing students' speaking skills. The Content Validity Index (CVI) calculations indicate a unanimous consensus among content experts, with both the Item-CVI and Scale-CVI achieving perfect scores of 1.0. This highlights that the activities in the module are highly relevant and appropriate for the intended educational outcomes. The reliability of the module, as measured by the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC), further supports its robustness. The ICC values ranged from 0.844 to 0.937 across the 12 teaching units, indicating strong agreement among the raters and consistency in the evaluation of the students' speaking performances.

In terms of effectiveness, the implementation of the English Speaking Module resulted in substantial improvements in the students' speaking abilities. The pre-test and post-test analysis revealed significant increases in the percentages of respondents categorized as "Good Speaker" and "Competent Speaker," rising from 1.25% and 16.25% in the pre-test to 40% and 58.75% in the post-test, respectively. Conversely, there was a notable decrease in the percentages of "Modest Speaker," "Marginal Speaker," and "Limit-ed Speaker" categories, with "Modest Speaker" decreasing dramatically from 66.25% to 1.25%. These results underscored the module's positive impact on elevating students' English speaking proficiency.

As Wang, Derakhshan, and Zhang (2021) highlighted, students' engagement and enjoyment are crucial positive psychology factors in the foreign language learning experience. Integrating Chinese culture into the development of the English Speaking Module is therefore vital for fostering these elements and enhancing students' engagement and enjoyment in learning English speaking skills. With China's increasingly interconnected global relations, there is a rising demand for English oral proficiency, especially in showcasing its rich cultural heritage to the world, which the Chinese government actively promotes by enhancing English speaking skills alongside cultural education to strengthen international communication. However, Chinese teachers lack instructional materials containing Chinese culture to adequately teach college English students in enhancing their speaking abilities (Li, 2020). Hence, the integration of Chinese culture into the English Speaking Module not only addresses the pressing need to enhance the undergraduates' English speaking abilities, but also resonates with government policy goals aimed at promoting traditional Chinese cultural education.

In conclusion, the developed English Speaking Module integrating Chinese cultural themes is a valuable tool for enhancing the speaking skills of college undergraduates in China. It demonstrates strong content validity and reliability, as well as significant effectiveness in improving speaking proficiency. Additionally, the module provides a structured, culturally relevant approach to language instruction that aligns with government policy goals and addresses the lack of appropriate instructional materials. Furthermore, the developed English Speaking Module constructed in this study offers significant benefits for teaching practice. For teachers, the module provides a comprehensive framework and resources to enhance language instruction effectively. For students, it offers an engaging and culturally enriching learning experience that significantly improves their English

speaking skills.

7. Limitation and future research

This study has two main limitations. Firstly, the number of participants is limited, which could affect the generalization of the findings. A small sample size may not adequately represent the larger population and may overlook individual differences. Therefore, future research should consider increasing the participant pool to enhance the reliability and validity of the study. Secondly, the English Speaking Module in this study focuses solely on improving students' speaking skills, neglecting other language skills such as listening, reading, and writing.

Future research could explore more comprehensive language teaching modules to foster the integrated development of various language skills, better meeting students' learning needs and goals. Additionally, future research can focus on how the developed English Speaking Module can be integrated into existing language education curricula.

Author Contributions

Shaoli Xiong took the lead in conceptualizing and designing the study, conducting the research, and preparing the original draft of the manuscript. Prof. Lin Siew Eng, contributed by critically reviewing and editing the manuscript, provided valuable insights and suggestions for improving the content, and oversaw the project's progress.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data and materials used in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author, subject to restrictions due to confidentiality agreements and participant privacy. Access to the data is permitted for purposes of further research or verification of the results presented in this paper.

For inquiries regarding access to the data and materials, please contact author. Requests will be considered in accordance with the ethical and confidentiality guidelines that govern the original study.

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