

Implementing an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)-Based Practice Module to Enhance the English-Speaking Skills of Air Cadets

Research Article

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Abstract

This study aimed 1) to assess the impact of an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)-Based Practice Module, designed in textbook form to mirror the OPI sequence, on the English-speaking proficiency of Air Cadets, and 2) to examine the module's strengths and limitations through classroom observations. Participants were 23 fifth-year cadets at the Navaminda Kasatriyadhiraj Royal Air Force Academy, divided into a treatment group ($n = 11$) and a control group ($n = 12$). The treatment group practiced with the OPI-Based Module, while the control group followed the standard curriculum. Research instruments included the OPI-Based Practice Module, pre- and post-test OPIs aligned with CEFR descriptors, and structured classroom observations. Quantitative results showed that all 11 cadets in the treatment group (100%) improved: 5 advanced from A2 to A2+, 4 from A2 to B1, 1 from B1 to B2-, and 1 from B1+ to B2. In contrast, only 4 of 12 cadets (33%) in the control group showed noticeable gains, while others remained unchanged or slightly regressed. The strongest improvements were found in vocabulary range, discourse management, role-play interaction, and pragmatic competence. Qualitative findings confirmed that treatment group cadets gained greater confidence, participated more actively, and managed unpredictable communication tasks more effectively. Limitations included persistent grammatical errors, limited use of discourse markers, and time constraints during the intervention. Overall, the study indicates that the textbook-based OPI module is an effective tool for improving speaking proficiency and preparing cadets for oral proficiency assessments as well as authentic communication in professional and international contexts.

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1. Introduction

Effective communication skills in English are increasingly essential for military professionals operating in global contexts (Graham, 2010). This urgency has been reaffirmed by recent studies on professional English in defense and aviation contexts (Moder & Halleck, 2009). For Air Cadets, English proficiency—especially in speaking—is critical to ensure effective mission execution, international cooperation, and professional advancement (Kachru, 2006). Despite this need, English education in Thailand has often emphasized grammar and vocabulary at the expense of practical communicative competence, resulting in a gap between theoretical language knowledge and real-world application (Brown, 2007; Noom-ura, 2013). Recent research confirms that this gap persists, as Thai learners continue to face challenges in developing speaking proficiency and interactive communication skills (Khamkaew, 2021; Nusen, 2022).

This challenge is particularly pronounced in military educational settings, where opportunities for authentic spoken communication practice are limited. Studies on English for military cadets in Thailand report that instruction often prioritizes reading and grammar over oral interaction,

leaving cadets underprepared for real-time communication tasks (Chayakul, 2007; Jitpranee, 2020; Siraranghom, 2020). More recent evidence highlights the need for curriculum reforms that integrate interactive, task-based activities to strengthen cadets' communicative competence (Todorova, 2019; Nusen, 2022).

One of the most rigorous assessments of spoken English proficiency for Air Cadets seeking scholarships or training opportunities offered by the American defense sector upon graduation is the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). This high-stakes, telephone-based evaluation is administered by the United States Department of Defense (Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center [DLIFLC], 2019). Unlike standardized written tests such as TOEIC, TOEFL, or IELTS, the OPI requires candidates to engage in spontaneous dialogue with a native speaker, assessing their ability to navigate unpredictable conversational scenarios (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 2012). Recent scholarship has revisited the validity and fairness of the OPI in high-stakes assessment (Kim & Elder, 2021; Fulcher, 2020). Achieving success in the OPI requires not only linguistic accuracy but also a command of discourse strategies and sociolinguistic appropriateness—competencies that are often not fully addressed by traditional English instruction (Canale & Swain, 1980; Harmer, 2001).

In response to these challenges, this study explores the development and implementation of an OPI-Based Practice Module designed to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-world speaking demands. Drawing on principles of Communicative Language Teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) and sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), the module integrates targeted practice tasks, discourse markers, and sociolinguistic considerations to prepare Air Cadets for the dynamic and unpredictable requirements of the OPI. By simulating real-world speaking contexts and incorporating opportunities for peer and instructor feedback, the module also seeks to enhance cadets' overall communicative competence and confidence in English speaking (Lee, 2016). Similar findings are reported in recent studies on digital simulations and military English contexts (Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-von Ditfurth, 2011; Moder & Halleck, 2009).

Therefore, addressing this gap is not only crucial for cadets' academic success but also for their ability to operate effectively in international military environments. The findings of this research are expected to provide practical insights for curriculum development at NKRAFA, contribute to improved preparation for high-stakes oral proficiency assessments, and strengthen cadets' readiness for professional communication in multinational contexts. In particular, the OPI-Based Practice Module can serve as a preparatory tool

to familiarize cadets with the structure and format of the actual Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), thereby reducing test anxiety and equipping them with the strategies needed to perform successfully in real examination conditions.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the impact of the OPI-Based Practice Module on improving Air Cadets' speaking proficiency.
2. To identify the strengths and limitations of the OPI-Based Practice Module through classroom observations.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does the OPI-Based Practice Module improve the speaking proficiency of Air Cadets?
2. What strengths and limitations of the OPI-Based Practice Module are observed during classroom implementation?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives and questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Cadets using the OPI-Based Practice Module will improve speaking proficiency more than those in standard instruction.

H2: The OPI-Based Practice Module will show clear strengths (e.g., vocabulary, discourse, confidence) and limitations (e.g., grammar errors, limited markers, time constraints).

2. Literature Review

This chapter synthesizes relevant literature to establish both a conceptual and empirical foundation for implementing an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)-Based Practice Module. This module is specifically designed to enhance the speaking skills of Air Cadets and to prepare them to successfully complete the actual OPI—a high-stakes assessment recognized within military and defense contexts (Kim & Elder, 2021; Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-von Ditfurth, 2011). Additionally, the module aims to improve overall English-speaking proficiency, a crucial skill given the role of English as a global *lingua franca* in international communication and cooperation (Kachru, 2006; Crystal, 2003).

The literature review begins by examining the nature and structure of the OPI, which differs significantly from other standardized assessments such as TOEIC, TOEFL, or IELTS (DLIFLC, 2019). This unfamiliarity creates unique challenges for test-takers, as there are no publicly available practice tests or explicit preparation guidelines (Sayuri, 2016). The format and adaptive nature of the OPI—comprised of four phases: warm-up, level checks, probes, and wind-down—can be especially daunting for those with limited exposure. Furthermore, OPI scoring follows the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale, ranging from 0+ (memorized proficiency) to 3 (general professional proficiency), adding an additional layer of complexity (DLIFLC, 2019).

The OPI's design extends beyond simply assessing static language knowledge; it measures candidates' ability to communicate effectively and spontaneously in real time—skills that are particularly vital for Air Cadets who will engage in international, mission-critical environments (Graham, 2010). To address these challenges, this review draws on the theoretical foundations of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes interaction and real-world language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), and sociocultural theory, which underscores the importance of context and scaffolded learning in language development (Vygotsky, 1978).

This chapter also explores the five core components of communicative competence—grammar, vocabulary, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence—as proposed by Canale and Swain (1980). These components are critical for developing language users who can perform effectively in dynamic speaking contexts (Harmer, 2001; Kelley & Kuehl, 2015). In military English contexts, these competencies support not just linguistic accuracy but also the ability to respond confidently and adaptively to diverse communicative situations (Graham, 2010).

Finally, the literature addresses common challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in speaking, including limited classroom interaction, cognitive load, and anxiety (Thornbury, 2005; Sayuri, 2016; Liu & Jackson, 2008). Recent perspectives also

emphasize long-term speech development in adulthood (Saito et al., 2022). Research suggests that practice-based interventions—particularly those that simulate real-world speaking scenarios—can mitigate these barriers and build learners’ confidence in spontaneous communication (Krebt, 2017). These insights provide a solid theoretical and empirical foundation for the OPI-Based Practice Module examined in this study.

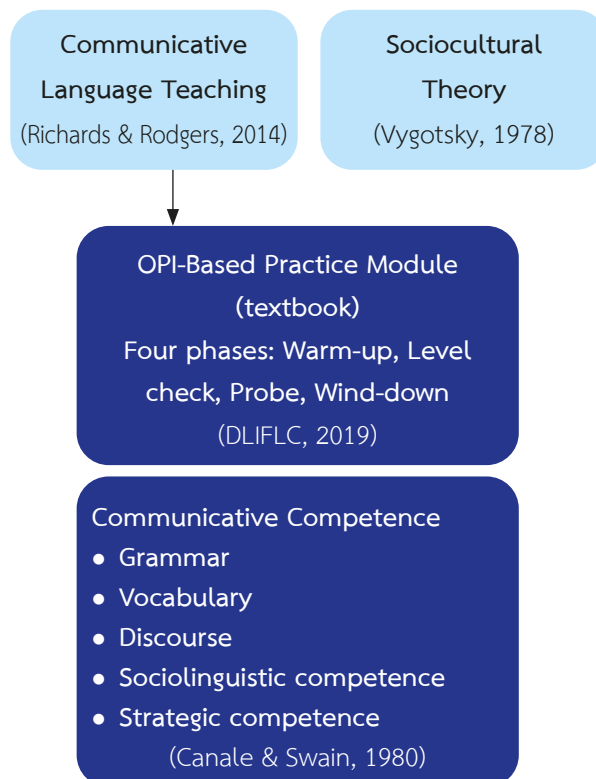
Conceptual Framework

Drawing on the reviewed literature, this study employs a conceptual framework that links theoretical foundations with instructional

practice and learning outcomes. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) and Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) provide the theoretical basis for designing the OPI-Based Practice Module, which mirrors the four phases of the actual OPI: warm-up, level checks, probes, and wind-down (DLIFLC, 2019). The module is intended to foster improvement in the five core components of communicative competence—grammar, vocabulary, discourse, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Figure 1 illustrates the framework, showing the pathway from theory to module design and finally to expected learning outcomes.

Figure

Conceptual Framework of the Study



3. Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the impact of an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)-Based Practice Module on the English-speaking proficiency of fifth-year cadets at the Navaminda Kasatriyadhiraj Royal Air Force Academy (NKRAFA). Such a design is well-suited to capture both measurable outcomes and classroom dynamics, aligning with best practices in language assessment research (Creswell, 2014; Dörnyei, 2007).

3.1 Participants

The study involved 23 fifth-year Air Cadets at NKRAFA during the second semester of the 2024 academic year. Cadets were divided into a treatment group ($n = 11$) and a control group ($n = 12$) based on their third-year speaking test scores (20-point scale) to ensure balanced proficiency. Each group was further stratified into three sublevels: High (19-20), Medium (17-18), and Low (≤ 16). Due to fixed class arrangements, random assignment was not possible, which may have introduced bias. To address this, baseline equivalence was checked using pre-test OPI scores, and gain scores were used for group comparisons rather than raw post-test means.

3.2 Research Instruments

3.2.1 OPI-Based Practice Module (Instructional Intervention)

The OPI-Based Practice Module, developed in textbook form and sequenced to mirror the actual OPI, served as the instructional

intervention for the treatment group over six weeks. It provided intensive, practice-oriented instruction through scenario-based tasks—such as narration, description, explanation, and role-play—emphasizing communicative practice with relevant vocabulary and grammar. Core activities included role-plays in varied contexts, speaking drills to build fluency, and structured peer and instructor feedback. As both a teaching resource and intervention tool, the module supported language development while familiarizing cadets with the OPI sequence, reducing test anxiety and improving readiness. Grounded in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), it emphasized authentic communication and learner engagement (Ellis, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The control group, by contrast, followed the standard NKRAFA English course, which focused mainly on grammar and vocabulary with limited oral interaction.

3.2.2 Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPIs)

Pre- and post-test OPIs were administered in accordance with ACTFL (2012) guidelines, following the four phases of warm-up, level check, probe, and wind-down (DLIFLC, 2019). Cadets were assessed across five dimensions: grammar, vocabulary, discourse, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Performance was rated using CEFR A2–B2 descriptors with half-band distinctions. Each OPI was conducted individually via telephone or VoIP, recorded, and evaluated by the researcher with reference to ACTFL and CEFR rubrics.

3.2.3 Classroom Observation Logs

Structured observation checklists were employed to document cadet participation, instructional strategies, and peer feedback throughout the intervention. These logs provided qualitative insights into learner engagement and the implementation of the module, complementing the OPI results.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

3.3.1 Treatment group

- Pre-test: Baseline OPIs administered and recorded.
- Intervention: Six-week OPI-Based Practice Module, with classroom observations.
- Post-test: Final OPIs administered under the same conditions as the pre-test.

3.3.2 Control group

- Pre-test: Baseline OPIs.
- Post-test: Final OPIs after six weeks of standard instruction.

Both groups completed pre- and post-tests under comparable conditions to ensure fairness. However, it must be acknowledged that the treatment group also received classroom observations as part of the intervention, while the control group did not. In addition, the treatment group's OPI post-tests were conducted via telephone/VoIP with recordings and structured observation notes, whereas the control group did not undergo observational data collection. These differences represent a limitation of the study, as they may have introduced minor variations in testing context and available qualitative data between the two groups.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Quantitative analysis. CEFR proficiency levels were converted into ordinal numeric codes (A2 = 2.0, A2+ = 2.5, B1 = 3.0, B1+ = 3.5, B2- = 3.75, B2 = 4.0) to allow statistical comparison. Analyses included:

- **Within-group change:** Wilcoxon signed-rank test for pre/post differences.
- **Between-group comparison:** Mann-Whitney U test on gain scores (post-pre).
- **Effect sizes:** Reported as r (for Wilcoxon/Mann-Whitney) with 95% confidence intervals.
- **Baseline equivalence:** Pre-test scores were compared between groups.

3.4.2 Qualitative analysis. Observation notes were thematically coded to identify instructional practices, learner strategies, and evidence of communicative development (Mackey & Gass, 2016).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval and institutional permission were obtained from Navaminda Kasatriyadhiraj Royal Air Force Academy. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all cadets involved in the study. This research was financially supported by Navaminda Kasatriyadhiraj Royal Air Force Academy.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of the study in relation to the two research objectives:

1. To assess the impact of the OPI-Based Practice Module on Air Cadets' speaking proficiency.
2. To identify the strengths and limitations of the module through classroom implementation.

Both quantitative and qualitative data are reported. Quantitative results are drawn from pre- and post-test Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) scores, analyzed with statistical tests to measure the extent of improvement. Qualitative insights are based on transcript excerpts and classroom observations, which provide a deeper understanding of cadets' language development, communicative strategies, and classroom

engagement. Together, these complementary data sources offer a comprehensive picture of the module's effectiveness.

4.1 Overall Results

Treatment group cadets showed a significant improvement from pre-test ($M = 2.23$) to post-test ($M = 2.98$), Wilcoxon signed-rank test, $V = 0.00$, $p < .001$. Control group cadets did not improve significantly, $V = 0.00$, $p = .079$. Gain scores were significantly higher for the treatment group ($M = 0.75$) compared to the control group ($M = 0.08$), Mann-Whitney $U = 127.0$, $p < .001$.

Table 1

presents the pre-test, post-test, and gain scores for both groups.

Group	Pre-Test M (SD)	Post-Test M (SD)	Gain M	Statistical Test
Treatment ($n = 11$)	2.23	2.98	0.75	Wilcoxon $V = 0.00$, $p < .001$
Control ($n = 12$)	2.46	2.54	0.08	Wilcoxon $V = 0.00$, $p = .079$
Between-group gains	-	-	-	Mann-Whitney $U = 127.0$, $p < .001$

4.2 Component-Level Results (Objective 1)

To provide more detailed insights, results are presented by the five components of speaking competence assessed in the OPIs: grammar, vocabulary, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

4.2.1 Grammar

Treatment cadets demonstrated substantial improvement in grammatical accuracy and complexity, as confirmed by significant quantitative gains ($p < .001$). Errors in tense, articles, and complex structures that were frequent in pre-test responses were largely reduced in the post-tests. Extracts illustrate these improvements.

- In the pre-test, Cadet T3 produced the sentence *"I go to the market yesterday,"* showing incorrect tense use. In the post-test, however, the same cadet correctly used the past tense and expanded the sentence into a more complex structure: *"I went to the market yesterday, and I bought food because I wanted to cook for my friends."*

- Cadet T10 initially omitted the copula and article, saying *"He very smart and good leader."* In the post-test, he produced the grammatically accurate *"He is very smart and a good leader who can manage the team effectively."*

- More advanced grammatical gains were also evident. For example, Cadet T5 moved from an incorrect mixed tense construction, *"If I have time, I join the activity last week,"* to a correct past unreal conditional, *"If I had had time, I would have joined the activity last week."*

These examples indicate that cadets were able to progress from basic, error-prone sentence structures toward more accurate and complex grammar, supporting the quantitative evidence of significant improvement.

4.2.2 Vocabulary

Treatment cadets demonstrated significant lexical expansion, confirmed by quantitative gains and supported by classroom observations. Their post-test responses contained a wider range of adjectives, precise nouns, and discourse markers compared to the pre-tests.

- In the pre-test, Cadet T6 said simply, *"I feel happy, very happy."* In the post-test, he elaborated: *"I was **emotional**, **almost in tears**, when my team won the **golf competition**."* This shows increased variety and expressive vocabulary.

- Cadet T8 initially stated, *"I want to be pilot because like airplane."* In the post-test, he used more professional lexis: *"I want to become a **commercial pilot** because I am interested in aviation and want to improve my **communication skills** with international teams."*

- Similarly, Cadet T5 progressed from limited descriptors to more nuanced phrasing. His post-test included adjectives such as *"challenging, stressful, but rewarding,"* which had not appeared in his earlier responses.

These examples indicate that the module not only expanded cadets' lexical repertoire but also enabled them to use vocabulary that was **context-specific, expressive, and professional**, reflecting improved readiness for real OPI tasks.

4.2.3 Discourse Competence

Cadets also demonstrated clear gains in discourse management. Pre-test responses were often fragmented, with little sequencing. Post-test responses showed greater coherence, logical sequencing, and appropriate use of discourse markers.

- Cadet T9's pre-test response was limited to *"I go travel. Good. Finish."* In the post-test, he produced: *"First, I prepared the documents. After that, I met my teacher. Finally, I joined the training and learned many new things."* This illustrates improved narrative sequencing.

- Cadet T11 initially said, *"I want to be officer. Hard."* In the post-test, he extended his reasoning: *"I want to be an officer because it is my goal. I follow a strict routine, and I always remind myself to stay disciplined. As a result, I can handle stress better than before."*

- Other cadets similarly employed connectives such as *"moreover, in contrast, therefore"* to structure their speech.

These examples show that cadets became better at organizing ideas, sequencing events, and signaling relationships between sentences, strengthening their overall communicative competence.

4.2.4 Sociolinguistic Competence

Improvements were also found in cadets' sociolinguistic appropriateness. Pre-test utterances were often abrupt or overly direct, while post-test responses demonstrated more polite forms and appropriate register.

- Cadet T1 moved from the direct *"You tell me again"* in the pre-test to *"Would you mind explaining that once more, sir?"* in the post-test.

- Cadet T7 replaced the blunt *"I want discount"* with *"Could you please offer me a promotion or special code for the booking?"*

- Another cadet, when role-playing with a superior officer, shifted from *"Say again"* to *"Excuse me, sir, could you repeat that for me?"*

Such changes highlight cadets' improved ability to adapt their language to social norms, demonstrating politeness strategies that align with both military and international professional communication.

4.2.5 Strategic Competence

Finally, treatment cadets displayed stronger strategic competence. They increasingly used clarification requests, paraphrasing, self-repair, and hesitation strategies to maintain communication flow under pressure.

- Cadet T9, when forgetting a word, said: *"I cannot remember the exact word, but I mean the person who guides the trip, like a tour leader."* This illustrates paraphrasing.

- Cadet T10, after losing his train of thought, repaired his utterance: *"Sorry, let me say it again... what I wanted to explain is that our team needs more discipline to succeed."*

- Another cadet employed hesitation strategies: *"Well... I think... maybe the best way is to check the equipment first, and then... continue with the plan."*

These strategies reduced breakdowns and allowed cadets to maintain fluency, showing that the module not only improved accuracy but also gave learners tools to manage unpredictable interactions — a key requirement for the OPI.

4.3 Subgroup Analysis (Objective 1)

Subgroup analyses revealed that cadets across all three proficiency levels in the treatment group made significant gains ($p < .05$),

while none of the control subgroups improved significantly. Low-proficiency cadets (Group L) demonstrated the largest relative gains ($M = +0.75$), moving from A2 to B1-. Medium and high subgroups also advanced by approximately three-quarters of a CEFR band. In contrast, control cadets in all subgroups plateaued, with minimal average gains ($M = 0.00-0.25$).

Table 2

Results by proficiency subgroup (High, Medium, Low).

Subgroup	Group	N	Pre-Test M (SD)	Post-Test M (SD)	Gain M (SD)	Wilcoxon Test
High (H)	Treatment	4	3.00 (B1)	3.75 (B2-)	0.75	$V = 0.00$, $p = .042^*$
High (H)	Control	4	3.00 (B1)	3.00 (B1)	0.00	$V = 2.00$, $p = .317$
Medium (M)	Treatment	4	2.50 (A2+)	3.25 (B1+)	0.75	$V = 0.00$, $p = .043^*$
Medium (M)	Control	4	2.50 (A2+)	2.75 (A2+/B1)	0.25	$V = 4.00$, $p = .180$
Low (L)	Treatment	3	2.00 (A2)	2.75 (B1-)	0.75	$V = 0.00$, $p = .046^*$
Low (L)	Control	4	2.00 (A2)	2.25 (A2+)	0.25	$V = 3.00$, $p = .317$

4.4 Classroom Observations (Objective 2)

Classroom data supported the OPI findings. Treatment cadets actively initiated dialogue, participated in peer feedback, and demonstrated higher engagement. Instructors

observed that feedback was valued and contributed to confidence. However, limitations included restricted practice time and the need for more dynamic, scenario-based tasks.

4.4.1 Strengths and Limitations of the Module (Objective 2)

In line with Research Objective 2, the study revealed both strengths and limitations of the OPI-Based Practice Module.

Strengths The module provided systematic practice aligned with the actual OPI format, helping cadets become familiar with the test sequence and reducing anxiety. It promoted noticeable gains in vocabulary, discourse management, role-play interaction, and pragmatic competence. Classroom observations confirmed that cadets became more confident, engaged actively, and handled unpredictable communication tasks more effectively.

Limitations Despite these benefits, persistent grammatical errors and limited use of advanced discourse markers were observed. The six-week intervention provided only modest practice time, which constrained further progress. In addition, classroom observation was conducted only with the treatment group, preventing direct comparison of interactional behaviors. Finally, as the study relied on a single rater, inter-rater reliability could not be established. Overall, the findings suggest that while the OPI-Based Practice Module is effective in enhancing speaking proficiency and test readiness, its impact would be strengthened by extended duration, broader observation, and multi-rater evaluation.

4.5 Discussion

The results demonstrate that the OPI-Based Practice Module significantly improved cadets' speaking proficiency across all five components compared with standard instruction.

Grammar and Vocabulary: Structured practice facilitated grammatical control and lexical expansion, consistent with prior findings (Harmer, 2001; Thornbury, 2005).

Discourse: Explicit sequencing tasks improved coherence, aligning with Canale and Swain's (1980) discourse competence model.

Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competence: Cadets learned to adapt register and apply strategies, supporting (Graham, 2010).

Classroom Engagement: Classroom observations confirm the benefits of task-based and feedback-driven practice (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Ellis, 2003). These findings align with contemporary trends in speaking assessment, including AI-driven approaches that are reshaping oral proficiency testing (De Jong, 2018).

Limitations. Results were based on ratings by a single researcher, which may affect generalizability. While intra-rater consistency was ensured, inter-rater reliability was not available. Future studies should employ multiple raters and larger samples.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the effectiveness of an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)-Based Practice Module in improving the English-speaking proficiency of fifth-year Air Cadets at the

Navaminda Kasatriyadhiraj Royal Air Force Academy (NKRAFA). Using a mixed-methods design with pre- and post-test OPIs and classroom observations, the study demonstrated that structured, practice-oriented instruction can significantly enhance cadets' communicative competence.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Cadets in the treatment group showed substantial gains in grammar, vocabulary, discourse, sociolinguistics, and strategic competence, while the control group made only marginal progress. These findings support earlier studies highlighting the benefits of role-play and simulated speaking practice for fluency and confidence (Lee, 2016; Krebt, 2017) and extend this evidence by applying OPI-aligned procedures in a preparatory module. The results confirm that adapting high-stakes oral assessment formats to classroom practice is both feasible and effective.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

Classroom observations confirmed that the module encouraged active engagement, responsiveness to feedback, and better management of unpredictable tasks. Building on these outcomes, the following recommendations are proposed:

5.2.1 Refine Module Content by adding diverse scenario-based speaking activities and reducing rote grammar drills to reflect authentic OPI and military communication demands.

5.2.2 Emphasize Test Strategies by training cadets to handle transitions, unpredictable prompts, and discourse markers for both test and real-world communication.

5.2.3 Allocate More Practice Time by extending module duration or embedding repeated mock OPIs to build fluency, reduce anxiety, and improve confidence.

5.2.4 Promote Reflective Learning through structured feedback and self-reflection sessions to help cadets identify strengths and areas for improvement (Dörnyei, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978).

5.2.5 Integrate into Curriculum by formally adopting the OPI-Based Practice Module within NKRAFA English courses and adapting it for other military programs preparing personnel for oral proficiency tests.

5.3 Limitations

The study was limited by a small sample ($N = 23$), one cohort, and a short six-week intervention, restricting long-term conclusions. Group assignment was not fully randomized, which may have introduced bias. Additionally, OPI ratings were conducted by a single rater, preventing inter-rater reliability checks.

5.4 Implications for Assessment Practice

The findings suggest directions for improving assessment in military education:

5.4.1 Train additional raters to strengthen reliability and reduce subjectivity.

5.4.2 Develop an internal OPI-style rubric calibrated to ACTFL/CEFR descriptors for consistent scoring.

5.4.3 Establish regular mock OPI assessments to give cadets repeated exposure to test-like conditions.

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