



Enhancing Speaking Skill Among Senior High School Students on Oral Communication in the University of Eastern Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the oral communication needs of UEP SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL students at the University of Eastern Philippines and provide necessary remedies to address their learning difficulties. Specifically, it aimed to determine the degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty of the learning needs in oral communications. The study also examined the relative perception between students and teachers and assessed if there were significant differences in their perception of needs. The findings of the study were used to enhance the lessons on oral communication and improve the oral competence of UEP Senior High School students. A modified questionnaire, based on Clifford Prator and the needs analysis of the Institute of Language Teaching and Learning, University of Auckland, New Zealand, was utilized as the primary source of information. The questionnaire assessed perceived needs in terms of importance, level, and difficulty using a 5-point Likert scale. A total of 243 students and four faculty members teaching Oral Communication subjects participated in the study. Frequency count, percentages, and weighted mean computation were employed for data analysis. The Spearman Ranked Order Coefficient of Correlation was used to test the relationship between students' learning needs and teachers' perception of their needs. The T-test for two independent samples was conducted to examine differences in perception between students and teachers. The findings indicated that UEP Senior High School students considered their oral communication needs as "very much important," "very much needed," and "difficult." Similarly, teachers perceived these needs as "very much important" and "much difficult." The study revealed a significant relationship between students' perceived learning needs and teachers' perception in terms of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty, highlighting the importance of addressing these needs in the teaching-learning process. While a significant difference was found in the degree of importance, no significant differences were observed in level of needs and level of difficulty. In cases where there were differing perceptions between teachers and students, teachers were expected to prioritize students' needs. The study identified important lessons to enhance oral communication competence, focusing on exploring the nature of communication, the communication process, dimensions of communication, the influence of gender on communication, non-verbal and verbal miscommunication, functions of communication, speech contexts and styles, types of speech acts, speech preparation and delivery, and principles of speech writing and delivery.

Keywords: *Oral Communication, Needs Analysis, Perceived needs, Likert Scale, Data Analysis*

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INTRODUCTION

Every individual possesses the innate ability to speak and learn languages. However, in our society, communication is not merely a choice but a necessity. It is through communication that society thrives and evolves, as it serves as the lifeblood connecting individuals within a community. As social beings, we constantly engage in interactions, with a significant portion of our active time dedicated to speaking.

This study aims to dispel the misconception that communication is a natural process that requires no formal study. On the contrary, effective communication is an art, a science, a process, and a technique that demands deliberate learning and mastery. By studying communication, including its elements, discussions, and principles as highlighted by Ramona S. Flores in her book on oral communication, we can enhance our understanding and proficiency in this crucial skill.

The primary objective of this study is to augment students' comprehension of oral communication, building upon their existing knowledge. Emphasis will be placed on imparting practical tips for effective communication, accompanied by exercises and activities that provide valuable opportunities for practice and skill development.

This research serves as a guide for students in navigating the intricacies of the communication process. It endeavors to cultivate the realization that effective oral communication serves as the bridge to success beyond the classroom, in the real world. It is our hope that this study will expand students' communication horizons, equipping them with the necessary skills to become proficient and impactful communicators. Ultimately, this research aims to empower students, ensuring they are well-prepared to excel in the real world, where the ability to communicate effectively is integral to achieving success.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study was to assess the Oral Communication needs of students enrolled in UEP Senior High School at the University of Eastern Philippines. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Identify the perceived learning needs of UEP Senior High School students in terms of their degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty.
2. Determine the teachers' perceptions of the learning needs in terms of their degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty.

By examining both the students' and teachers' perspectives, this study sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Oral Communication needs within the UEP Senior High School course.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP), which is the sole comprehensive state university in the Eastern Visayas Region, situated in the municipality of Catarman, Northern Samar.

The College of Arts and Communication, as part of the university, offers various general education courses, including the Oral Communication subject, which was the target audience of this study.

The research approach employed in this study was descriptive-correlational, with a focus on identifying the learning needs of senior high school students in Oral Communication as perceived by both the students and the teachers. Descriptive research aims to provide a description of the current state and analyze relationships between variables, with the primary objective of gathering insights for improving Oral Communication instruction.

The variables investigated in this study encompassed the input, process, and output. The input variables encompassed the students' learning needs in Oral Communication and the teachers' perceptions of these needs. The students' learning needs were assessed in terms of their degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty, utilizing a 5-Point Likert Scale scoring system. The degree of importance was categorized as very much important, very important, important, fairly important, and not important. The level of needs was categorized as very much needed, much needed, needed, less needed, and not needed. The level of difficulty was classified as very much difficult, much difficult, difficult, less difficult, and not difficult. The process or throughout variable involved analyzing the learning needs of the students in Oral Communication. Lastly, the output variable was the study itself, which was structured based on the identified learning needs of the students. These needs included pronunciation (segmentals), intonation and stress (suprasegmentals), the importance of oral communication, listening comprehension, vocabulary enrichment, public speaking, and various speech activities in different situations.

FINDINGS

The students' perspective on their learning needs demonstrated a high level of importance, with a grand weighted mean of 4.26. This indicates that meeting the course requirements and developing oral proficiency are both significant goals. Similarly, the teachers also recognized the students' learning needs as very important, reflected in a grand weighted mean of 4.75. Since communication skills were identified as crucial in almost all indicators, these needs should be addressed in the course content.

Table 1

Oral Communication Learning Needs of UEP Senior High School Students by Degree of Importance as Perceived by Themselves and by Teachers

Perceptions	Grand Mean	Interpretation
Students	4.26	Very Much Important
Teachers	4.75	Very Much Important

Furthermore, the students' learning needs were rated as "very much needed" based on a grand weighted mean of 4.25, suggesting that a workbook specifically designed to address these needs could be highly beneficial. The teachers' perceptions aligned with this, rating the students' level of learning needs as "very much needed" with a grand weighted mean of 4.25. This emphasizes that the teachers' innovative approaches are key in engaging students and addressing their significant needs.

Table 2

Learning Needs of UEP Senior High School Students by Level of Difficulty as Perceived by Themselves and by Teachers

Perceptions	Grand Mean	Interpretation
Students	2.62	Difficult
Teachers	3.30	Difficult

The items related to the level of difficulty were consistent with the students' perceived importance and level of needs, as shown in Table 1 and Table 2. With a grand weighted mean of 2.62, all items were rated as "difficult," indicating a need to focus on students' speaking skills in English communicative performance. Similarly, the teachers perceived the level of difficulty of the students' learning needs to range from "much difficult" to "difficult," as reflected in a grand weighted mean of 3.30. This implies the importance of addressing students' speaking skills and proficiency in the English language.

The test of relationship between the students' and teachers' perceptions of learning needs revealed a significant correlation in terms of degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty. This indicates that the students' and teachers' perceptions are aligned.

By incorporating these topics, exercises, and activities in the workbook, students can enhance their competency and responsibility as speakers and listeners, effectively addressing everyday communication challenges in both formal and informal contexts.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that utilizing a module or workbook is a more effective approach in teaching Oral Communication compared to traditional methods. The students expressed a strong desire for additional lessons focused on pronunciation, intonation, stress patterns, and related aspects, indicating the importance they place on mastering these skills. This suggests that allowing students to learn at their own pace, tailored to their individual abilities, levels, and needs, may result in improved academic performance. Additionally, the study highlights the significance of incorporating listening skills into the teaching-learning process, as they greatly impact students' overall communication abilities.

Furthermore, in terms of the teachers' perceptions of the senior high school students' learning needs in Oral Communication, the majority of oral communication skills were deemed very important, very much needed, and quite challenging for the students. This implies that for the learning-teaching situation to be effective, it is crucial to prioritize the development of oral communication skills to facilitate optimal student performance.

In conclusion, the study suggests that adopting a module or workbook approach enhances the teaching of Oral Communication, taking into account the students' specific focus on pronunciation. Moreover, the teachers' recognition of the importance, necessity, and difficulty of oral communication skills underscores the need for these skills to be emphasized in the teaching-learning process. By addressing these findings, educators can create a more effective learning environment that supports students in becoming competent and confident communicators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions reached, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Encourage active student participation in oral communication activities to enhance their listening and speaking skills. Teachers should provide ample opportunities for exercises and activities focused on pronunciation, including segmental features, vowels, consonants, stress and intonation patterns, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.
2. Incorporate individual oral presentations into lessons to motivate students to develop effective speech habits. Teachers should guide students in using correct pronunciation, intonation, stress, and comprehension. Additionally, they should adapt their teaching methods to suit the students' aptitude and create engaging classroom interactions to foster student interest. Addressing these aspects can contribute to improving students' academic performance in Oral Communication.
3. Enhance the competence of Oral Communication teachers by encouraging them to participate in various training programs and seminars focused on speech and oral communication. Continuous professional development will equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach the subject.
4. Ensure the availability of high-quality Oral Communication workbooks specifically designed for the subject. These workbooks should be comprehensive, covering the essential aspects of oral communication and providing valuable learning resources for students.
5. Conduct a follow-up study that includes not only the University of Eastern Philippines but also its satellite campuses, such as UEP Laoang and UEP PRMC Catubig Campus. This expanded research will verify and validate the identified learning needs of Oral Communication students and teachers, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the subject across different campus settings.

Implementing these recommendations will contribute to the improvement of the Oral Communication learning experience, promoting effective communication skills among students and fostering a conducive learning environment in the university.

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