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Research Article

Oral Communication Skills of the Students of Osias Colleges, Inc.

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ABSTRACT

The study employed a descriptive design to gather baseline data on respondents' oral communication skills in English. The results revealed that the majority of respondents were female, aged 19-24, who primarily spoke Tagalog and Ilokano at home, and were mainly in their second and third years of study. Utilizing a 5-point Likert scale for assessment, the findings indicated that respondents were rated as "good" across various dimensions of oral communication, including audience engagement, context, transactional and interpersonal skills, medium of exchange, and paralinguistics. This overall rating suggests that while their skills are adequate, there is considerable potential for improvement to enhance their competitiveness in the job market.

As a result, the study underscored the need for a program aimed at strengthening students' oral communication skills in English, with an intervention proposed for review and implementation in the upcoming academic year. Recommendations for program heads and school administrators included incorporating these findings into curriculum evaluations and policy development. Regular curriculum mapping is essential to ensure that course objectives align with the enhancement of students' English oral communication skills. Additionally, it is recommended that training programs focused on improving these skills be made available, and that language teachers engage in professional development seminars to refine their instructional techniques. Furthermore, increasing the number of interactive classroom activities is advised to further cultivate students' oral communication abilities in English.

Keywords: Audience, Context, Transactional, Interpersonal, Medium of exchange, Paralinguistics

Introduction

Oral communication skills are essential for academic and professional success, yet many students face significant challenges in

developing these abilities, particularly in non-native language contexts. In the Philippines, despite English being a core component of the educational curriculum, students often struggle

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with effective verbal expression due to various factors, including limited exposure to authentic communication environments and a predominance of mother-tongue usage. Research indicates that students at Osias Colleges Incorporated experience particular difficulties in articulating their thoughts in English, which may hinder their academic performance and employability. This study aimed to investigate the oral communication skills of students at this institution, bridging the existing gap in literature regarding their specific challenges and providing insights that could inform targeted interventions. By examining these issues, the research seeks to contribute to the development of effective strategies for enhancing oral communication competencies among students, ultimately preparing them for a competitive job market (Mehra, 2019; Charyulu, 2019; Ilankumaran & Deepa, 2019).

Oral communication skills are fundamental for the development of literacy and are essential for thinking and learning. Through talking, students not only communicate information but also explore and come to understand ideas and concept; identify and solve problems, organize their experience and knowledge, and express and clarify their thoughts, feelings and opinion. Speaking, like listening, is essential for social interaction at home, at school and in the community (Ontario Curriculum for Language as cited by Henderson 2015).

Oral communication is the process of using verbal and non-verbal messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures, channels, and media. It encompasses various sets of skills including the ability to speak coherently and persuasively, understanding of communication theory and processes, knowledge of verbal and non-verbal cues, audience analysis, listening skills and communication ethics (Asraf 2015). It reflects the persistent and powerful role of language and communication in human society (Akinola 2014). Learning only writing skills that is thought as the main requirement in learning a language is not true as mastery in language includes listening, reading, thinking and speaking (Karnati and Vaidhyathan 2016).

The ability to express one's ideas orally both in the English and Filipino Languages is an

essential skill that every college student in the Philippines must harness because every classroom setting requires teacher to student as well as student to student interactions in which these two languages are utilized. However, though the medium of instruction in college in the Philippines are English and Filipino, there are more courses that are taught in English so students must focus more on learning to use the English language because they are already familiar with the Filipino language. Moreover, reading and writing, speech delivery and report presentations in English are part of school curriculum particularly in college for the overall development of students. Whichever of these languages is preferred by the students to use, it can not be denied that their ability to use the English language effectively in oral communication can contribute to their success in college. Casigan, et.al (2015) in their study emphasized that in today's competitive world, communication skills are essential for students to become successful in their career because this is one of the most sought qualification of an educated person. These skills include reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Asuncion, Z. S. (2010) conducted a study entitled Filipino College Freshmen Students' Oral Compensatory Strategies aimed at determining the compensatory strategies most frequently used by Filipino college freshmen in private universities and their relation to course, first language, type of high school graduated from and English 1 grade. Two oral tasks namely oral interview and pictured-cued narration were used as the primary sources of data. The results indicate that from the seven compensatory strategies namely, switching to the mother tongue, getting help, using mime, selecting the topic, coining word, avoiding communication partially or totally, and using circumlocution or synonym, the most frequently used was switching to mother tongue. It was also revealed that there was a negative relationship between compensatory strategies used and students' grade. The results implied the need to explicitly teach students these compensatory strategies for them to cope with their limitations in oral communication. The study revealed the problem on oral communication among college freshmen. Another study

on Personnel interviewer perceptions of job applicants' oral and nonverbal communication skills and the effect they have on hiring decisions also identified the 5 most prevalent communication inadequacies; these included the oral skills of topic relevance, response organization, response clarity, grammar, and response feedback. (Marshalita Sims Peterson, 2009) Again, this shows the need to enhance the oral skills in English of college students to make them ready for job interviews.

This study on oral communication skills is grounded in Communicative Competence Theory, which highlights the importance of effective communication that integrates linguistic knowledge with social and cultural understanding (Canale & Swain, 1980). This theory asserts that effective communication requires both grammatical proficiency and pragmatic skills, such as context awareness and audience engagement. At Osias Colleges Incorporated, where most students are young females primarily speaking Tagalog and Ilokano at home, the application of this theory is particularly pertinent. The findings indicate that while students possess a "good" level of oral communication skills, there is significant room for improvement, especially to enhance their job market competitiveness. The study emphasizes the need for targeted programs that not only address language mechanics but also provide real-world communication experiences. By aligning curriculum and instructional strategies with Communicative Competence Theory, educators can better prepare students to navigate diverse communicative situations, ultimately improving their oral communication skills and future employability.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to evaluate the oral communication skills in English of the college students of Osias Colleges Incorporated. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. age;
 - 1.2. gender;
 - 1.3. language speaks; and
 - 1.4. year level?

2. How are the oral communication skills in English of the respondents described as to the following aspects:
 - 2.1 audience,
 - 2.2 context,
 - 2.3 transactional,
 - 2.4 interpersonal,
 - 2.5 medium of exchange and
 - 2.6 paralinguistics?
3. What is the implication of the study to the College of Education?
4. What program can be proposed to enhance the oral communication skills in English of the respondents?

Methods

This is descriptive research which sought to provide baseline data on the oral communication skills in English of the college students of Osias Colleges Incorporated in the following aspects of oral communication such as; audience, context, transactional, interpersonal, medium of exchange and paralinguistics. The study used a survey questionnaire to gather the needed data with a five-point Likert scale and a specific verbal interpretation to describe the oral communication skills of the students.

The respondents of the study are the students of Osias Colleges Incorporated enrolled in college level in the school year 2017-2018. The specific number of respondents was decided using the Slovin's formula.

Results

In order to function successfully academically and professionally, one needs to learn effective oral communication skills (Gamble and Gamble 2002). This is particularly true in English because although all college students can speak, it is also observed that in many cases, they cannot articulate their thoughts especially in the English language and thus making them unable to express their views effectively and this affects their classroom performance. This, according to Norafini Zulkumain & Sarjit Kaur,(2014) is attributed to the lack of English language knowledge as established in their study, although some studies attributed this also to the lack of training in the basic education in using the English language in the basic education. However, whether it is attributed to

lack of training or lack of knowledge, college instructors should review their teaching pedagogy to solve the problem. It is in this premise that the researcher also evaluated the oral communication skills in English of the college students of Osias Colleges Incorporated.

Findings of the Study:

1. Respondents’ Demographic Profile

As to the demographic profile of the respondents, the findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents are 19-24 years of age, female, speaks Tagalong and Ilo-kano at home and are in second year and third year college.

2. Respondents Oral Communication Skills in English

Table 1. Oral Communication Skills in Terms of Audience

Indicators	Mean	Verbal interpretation
Engages audience in the process through listening	3.24	Good
Stimulates audience understanding	3.27	Good
Sustains audience interest by speaking clearly and articulately in a well modulated voice.	3.20	Good
Grand Mean	3.24	Good

It shows in this table that the respondents have the ability to engage their audience, stimulates their understanding and sustains their interest by speaking clearly and articulately in a well modulated voice as shown in the grand mean 3.24 which is interpreted as Good. Although this is expected to all college students, the result is only fair or average because the highest verbal interpretation is excellent. This implies that there is a need to improve the oral communication skills of the students if the target of the school as stated in its vision, is to make the students become globally competitive.

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that respondents possess a "good" level of oral communication skills, with a grand mean of 3.24 across various audience engagement indicators. This finding aligns with recent studies that emphasize the importance of oral communication in academic success and student engagement. For instance, Apat et al. (2021)

found that effective oral communication significantly influences students' learning engagement, suggesting that students who actively engage their audience tend to perform better academically. Additionally, research by Lucanus (2017) highlights the reciprocal relationship between oral communication and learning engagement, indicating that improved communication skills can lead to enhanced academic performance and future career prospects. Despite the positive ratings in audience engagement, the results also suggest that there is room for improvement, reinforcing the need for targeted programs to develop these skills further. As noted by Monsalve and Correal (2006), providing students with regular opportunities for practice through interactive classroom activities can significantly enhance their oral communication abilities, ultimately helping them become more competitive in the job market.

Table 2. Oral Communication Skills in Terms of Context

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Express ideas accurately supported by factual information.	3.02	Good
Organizes ideas appropriately by considering the listeners level of understanding	3.11	Good
Considers audience background and prior knowledge in presenting a topic for discussion	3.04	Good
Grand Mean	3.06	Good

Context has to do with how the respondents express their ideas supported by factual information, organize ideas appropriately by considering the audience level of understanding, and considers audience background and prior knowledge. As shown in the table, the respondents still come short in this area for they are only found to be Good as interpreted by the Grand Mean 3.06. Again, this is just fair or average and hence, a need for improvement.

Above finding is consistent with recent studies highlighting the importance of contextual awareness in effective communication. For instance, Apat et al. (2021) found that students'

ability to express ideas accurately and organize them according to the audience's understanding significantly impacts their learning engagement and overall academic performance. Similarly, Palmero (2019) emphasized that considering the audience's background and prior knowledge is crucial for enhancing oral communication proficiency, as it fosters better interaction and comprehension during discussions. Despite these positive indicators, the results suggest that there is still room for improvement, reinforcing the need for targeted interventions to develop these essential skills further.

Table 3. Oral Communication Skills in Terms of Transactional

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Obtains and shares information accurately	3.09	Good
Provide space for audience questions and clarifications	3.2	Good
Satisfies audience queries by providing more specific and relevant answers to questions asked.	3.14	Good
Grand Mean	3.14	Good

In terms of Transactional oral communication skills, the respondents are still found to be Good in all the indicators such as obtaining and sharing information accurately, providing space for audience questions and clarifications, and satisfying audience queries and providing more specific and relevant answers to questions as indicated by the Grand Mean 3.14. Although, transactional communication requires the sender and receiver of message to feel equally responsible in decoding the meaning of the message, in oral communication, the speaker should feel the greater responsibility (Gatdula, guno and Jocson, 2008)

Respondents exhibit a "good" level of transactional oral communication skills, with a grand mean of 3.14 across various indicators, including obtaining and sharing information accurately and providing space for audience questions. This finding is supported by recent

studies that emphasize the significance of effective transactional communication in academic settings. For instance, Alshahrani et al. (2019) found that students who actively engage in transactional communication demonstrate improved comprehension and retention of information, highlighting the importance of mutual responsibility in the communication process. Additionally, research by Khamis et al. (2019) emphasizes that providing opportunities for audience interaction, such as encouraging questions and clarifications, enhances the overall effectiveness of communication and fosters a more engaging learning environment. Despite these positive findings, the results suggest that there is still room for improvement in developing these skills further, reinforcing the need for targeted training programs to enhance students' transactional communication competencies.

Table 4. Oral Communication Skills in Terms of Interpersonal

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Maintains good relationship with audience/listener	3.42	Good
Is open to suggestions and Criticism	3.30	Good
Can organize dissenting ideas to avoid conflicts	3.20	Good
Grand Mean	3.30	Good

Interpersonal communication is an exchange of information between two or more people either in speaking or writing. This aspect gains the highest Grand Mean among all the aspects of oral communication used in the study. The indicators; Maintain a good relationship with audience/ listener, Is open to suggestions and criticism and Can organize dissenting ideas to avoid conflicts gained a Grand Mean 3.30. Although this is still fair, it is good to note that when it comes to interpersonal communication, the respondents' scores are a little bit higher. It is therefore manifested in the result that the respondents get along well with others

and it's a positive attribute. Barbacas, M. & Patrickson M. (2012). in their study Interpersonal Communication Skills That Enhance Organizational Commitment point out that interpersonal communication skills that enhance organizational commitment and are most valued by organizations are those that are most lacking in managers. This shows shows two things—that even those who have been in top managerial positions still lack the skill and that there is a need to develop this important skill among students for they can use this in the workplace someday.

Table 5. Oral Communication Skills in Terms of Medium of Exchange

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Can deliver a speech regardless of number of audience	3.0	Good
Can express an idea or opinion in any situation that calls for it.	3.02	Good
Gives and takes instruction through telephone conversation	3.29	Good
Grand Mean	2.96	Good

The table above shows the oral communication skills of the respondents in terms of medium of exchange which covers the ability of the respondents to deliver a speech regardless of the number of audience, express an idea or opinion in any situation that calls for it, and gives and takes instruction through telephone conversation with the Grand Mean 2.96. It can be noted that among the aspects of oral communication used in the study, Medium of Exchange got the lowest Mean. Although this still falls under the verbal description Good, it is important to help the respondents cope up with their difficulty along this aspect. This is supported by Cheekeong (2014) in his study "Oral Communication Problems of Yemeni High School EFL Students" which states that students might have some skills to communicate

with others but they do not practice speaking with others outside the classroom which does not help them in overcoming their oral English communication problems. This shows that the problem can be attributed to the lack of practice in using the language orally not only in classrooms but also outside the classroom. In the study of Byrne M., Flood B. & Shanahan D., they identified that communication apprehension or fear in communicating is a major factor which inhibits an individual's willingness to communicate and his/her capability to develop effective communication skills. It is implied in the indicators mentioned above that the activity calls for students to speak in front of an audience and even to give and take instructions which can be difficult for them if they also have communication apprehension.

Table 6. Oral Communication Skills in Terms of Paralinguistics

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Stands in proper posture and maintains an eye contact with the audience.	3.07	Good
Observes proper pauses when speaking to an audience or when engaging in conversation.	3.11	Good

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Speaks with a modulated voice observing proper pronunciation and articulation and changes the tone and pitch of the voice when necessary	3.17	Good
Grand Mean	3.12	Good

Paralinguistics are aspects of spoken communication that do not involve words but may add emphasis or shades of meaning to what people say. These are facial expressions, gestures, tone and pitch of voice and the manner of delivery of an utterance. (Paralinguistics / TeachingEnglish / British Council / BBC <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk>) In the above table, it can be noticed that the indicator Speaks with a modulated voice observing proper pronunciation and articulation and changes the tone and pitch of voice when necessary, got the highest mean of 3.17 while stands in proper posture and maintains eye contact with the audience got the lowest mean

of 3.07. Although both of these indicators fall on the description Good, it can be noted that the students are better at ease with speaking than with looking at their audience in the eye, a typical attitude of country youths who are very shy which is also observed in classroom settings. Meanwhile, Observes proper pauses when speaking to an audience or when engaging in conversation got a mean of 3.11 which is also interpreted as Good. The Grand Mean 3.12 indicates a need to enhance students oral communication skills.

The table below shows the summary of the oral communication skills of the respondents in the six selected aspects.

Table 7. Oral Communication Skills of the Respondents

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Audience	3.24	Good
Context	3.06	Good
Transactional	3.14	Good
Interpersonal	3.30	Good
Medium of Exchange	2.96	Good
Paralinguistics	3.12	Good
Grand Mean	3.14	Good

It can be gleaned from the table that in all the indicators of the oral communication skills, the students are found to be good with a weighted mean of 3.24 in audience, 3.06 in context, 3.14 in transactional, 3.30 in interpersonal, 2.96 in medium of exchange and 3.12 in paralinguistics. The Grand Mean 3.14 which is also interpreted as Good is only equivalent to average or fair in the five point Likert scale. It can also be noted that Medium of Exchange got the lowest Mean which has to do with being able to deliver a speech regardless of the number of audience, expressing an opinion in any situation and giving and taking instruction through telephone conversation. This implies that the respondents find it not easy to perform the stated tasks which shows the need to enhance the oral communication skills especially

on this area to make them more competitive in their chosen careers and also to be at par with other college students who are graduate of big colleges and universities.

The study implied a problem in the development of the college students' oral communication skills and that there is a need to look after this. Furthermore it also implied that teachers and school administrators should look into the problem and come up with a solution.

To address the problem, an intervention program was proposed and suggested to be reviewed immediately for possible implementation in the school year 2018-2019.

It is therefore recommended that the program heads and school administrators should include the results of the study as one of the concerns in their curriculum review and policy

formulation. Curriculum mapping must be done regularly to align the objectives of each course in addressing the current needs. Additional programs or trainings aimed at improving the oral communication skills of the students to help them enhance their ability to express their ideas orally can also be offered. Furthermore, teachers of language classes must at-

tend seminars and trainings on how to help improve their teaching pedagogy in order to address the need of their students particularly on enhancing their ability to express themselves in speaking. Moreover teachers are advised to include more classroom activities that will develop the oral communication skills of their students.

Proposed Program to Enhance Oral Communication Skills in English

Areas of Concern	Strategy	Activity	Means of Verification
Medium of Exchange	Implement public speaking workshops	Organize weekly public speaking sessions	Feedback forms from participants
Contextual Awareness	Develop contextual communication training	Conduct role-playing exercises focusing on audience understanding	Pre- and post-training assessments
Transactional Skills	Facilitate interactive Q&A sessions	Host monthly forums where students present and answer questions	Observation checklists during sessions
Interpersonal Skills	Encourage peer feedback sessions	Create small group discussions to practice giving and receiving feedback	Peer evaluation forms
Paralinguistics	Train in non-verbal communication techniques	Workshops on body language, eye contact, and voice modulation	Video recordings of practice sessions reviewed
Overall Communication	Establish a mentorship program	Pair students with mentors for one-on-one communication practice	Mentor reports on student progress

Conclusion

College students at Osias Colleges Incorporated exhibit "Good" oral communication skills across various aspects, their abilities are generally average, particularly in the "Medium of Exchange" category, which indicates a need for improvement. The findings suggest that the development of students' oral communication skills is essential to make them more competitive, and the school should address this through curriculum review, policy formulation, and targeted interventions. It is recommended that additional training for both students and teachers be implemented to enhance these skills, ensuring alignment with the school's vision of producing globally competitive graduates.

Recommendations

To enhance the oral communication skills of students at Osias Colleges Incorporated, it is crucial to implement a structured program focused on targeted training for both students and faculty. This can be achieved through a comprehensive curriculum review that identifies specific areas for improvement, particularly in the "Medium of Exchange" category where students currently exhibit average abilities. By integrating workshops, seminars, and practical exercises into the curriculum, the institution can foster an environment conducive to developing effective communication skills. Additionally, formulating policies that support ongoing professional development for teachers will ensure they are equipped to guide students effectively. These initiatives will align with the college's vision of producing globally

competitive graduates, ultimately enhancing students' preparedness for the demands of the professional world.

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