ORAL PRESENTATION DIFFICULTIES OF THE FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS (K12 GRADUATES) IN THE PURPOSIVE COMMUNICATION SUBJECT

Kyle S. Espiritu

Doctor of Philosophy in Education
Major in Educational Management

ABSTRACT

This study showed the oral presentation difficulties of the first-year college students (K12 graduates) in the Purposive Communication subject. Data were gathered through direct observation which includes oral presentation. The results showed that Purposive Communication students across gender, course, type of school in SHS, and academic strands have these oral presentation difficulties in the hierarchy: a) stammering; b) stuttering; c) translation tendency; d) stage fright; and e) restricted code. This showed that the capability of Purposive Communication students to speak the English Language needs to be properly addressed. It also revealed intervention programs that should be done to address these deficiencies.

INTRODUCTION

Communication skills development has always been an important factor of business success, but the influence of globalization and cross-cultural interaction in recent decades has impacted the types of communication skills needed in dramatic ways. No longer can entrepreneurs afford to simply communicate well within their own homogenous cultures. Today, people need to understand the dynamics of long-distance collaboration, the impact of culture on manners of speaking and body language, and the use of technology to communicate with people on the other side of the globe. Understanding the impact of globalization on each of these factors can help select the most useful communication skills development programs for oneself or one's employees.

Being able to communicate effectively is the most important of all life skills: the ability to communicate effectively with superiors, colleagues, and staff is essential, no matter what industry one works in. Workers in the digital age must know how to effectively convey and receive messages in person, as well as via phone, email, and social media.

The advent of global collaboration introduces another new dynamic to communication skills -- the need to communicate and share information with people across several time zones. When people collaborate with others on the other side of the globe, their counterparts are usually at home asleep while they are at work. Today's communication skills development programs should address the nuances of overcoming this challenge by teaching people to understand the information needs of their colleagues, according to the communication styles of different countries or cultures. Being able to effectively share information between shifts can make or break the productivity of a geographically dispersed team, making this an important issue for many companies.

The five skills of communication include listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing. Communication is studied and simulated in advanced academic settings, such as conversing intelligently on a subject

of import, reporting on group work and/or assignments, writing and delivering a formal speech, writing minutes of meetings and similar documents, preparing research or technical paper, and making an audio-visual or web-based presentation. In the process, the criteria for effective communication are discussed and used as the basis of peer evaluation of communication exercises in the class as well as for judging communication techniques used by public officials, educators, industry leaders, churches, and private individuals. The purpose of these combined activities is to enable students to practice strategies of communication with a clear purpose and audience in mind, guided by the criteria of effective communication and the appropriate language.

One especially relevant part of the language curriculum at universities is teaching students how to prepare, organize and deliver successful oral presentations for professional purposes. Oral presentations provide "a rewarding and stimulating experience both for teachers in developing facilitating skills and for students in training themselves to have confident presentations in public" (King, 2002).

Oral presentations are a form of assessment that calls on students to use the spoken word to express their knowledge and understanding of a topic. It allows capture of not only the research that the students have done but also a range of cognitive and transferable skills. Oral presentations are becoming an important part of language teaching, especially in the university environment. Teaching students to design effective oral presentations presupposes two goals, namely: enabling students to function successfully in the future professional surrounding and preparing them for their possible further academic career. Teaching presentations is a necessity if students are to perform well both in professional and academic settings (Živković, 2014).

In the language classroom setting, making presentations is an important kind of activity. If properly guided and organized, oral presentations provide a learning experience and lifelong skills that will be beneficial to students in all school subjects as well as later in their careers. They can improve not only their speaking ability in the target language but also other sub-skills like outlining a talk, organizing ideas, dealing with

questions, etc. Students can give a speech on a topic of their own choice or given by the teacher. Such talks are subject matter-oriented, prepared, and "writing like."

Making oral presentations brings students a lot of benefits which are bridging the gap between language study and language use, using the four language skills in a naturally integrated way, helping students to collect, inquire, organize, and construct information, thus enhancing teamwork and helping students become active and autonomous learners. A language learner's ability to present in the target language is dependent on several factors related to both their knowledge of the language systems (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) and their personality traits such as timidity or self-confidence. To get the best presentation result, students need to master a wide range of skills and techniques such as the use of language, the way to organize all ideas, the ability to speak clearly and confidently, and the use of body language.

Students' language proficiency is one of the factors contributing to the success or the failure of an oral presentation. Language proficiency is the ability of an individual to speak or perform in an acquired language. "Proficiency ranges from zero to native-like. Complete competence is hardly ever reached by second language learners". The grading criteria for assessing English speaking proficiency are pronunciation (intonation, word stress, and sentence stress), fluency, and accuracy (grammar and vocabulary). Another factor is related to students' personality traits.

Studies of oral assessment have occasionally noted the potentially inhibiting role of anxiety in affecting students' ability to perform (Joughin, 2007). Lack of presentation skills was believed to be the second most important factor that causes difficulty in an oral presentation. Likewise, fear of facing the audience and the instructor was reported by most studies as the worst fear of all in oral presentations.

With the presented factors of oral presentation difficulties, one thing is certain – these deficiencies can be properly addressed with appropriate intervention programs.

Conceptual Framework

With the implementation of the K12 curriculum, an educational shift rolled in the General Education Course in the tertiary level, one of which is the Purposive Communication subject that focuses on writing, speaking, and presenting to different audiences and for various purposes (CMO 20 s. 2013). It is a 3-unit course that develops students' communicative competence and enhances their cultural and intercultural awareness through multimodal tasks that provide them opportunities for communicating effectively and appropriately to a multicultural audience in a local or global context. It equips students with tools for critical evaluation of a variety of texts and focuses on the power of language and the impact of images to emphasize the importance of conveying messages responsibly.

Purposive Communication (PurCom) is described as "writing, speaking, and presenting to different audiences and for various purposes." As defined, the course is a variant of Language for Specific Purposes or LSP. One point of contention is—What language should be used in teaching this course? CMO 20-2013 stipulates that "general education courses are taught in English or Filipino". The language decision is left to the universities and colleges. While Filipino is used in local business-to-business transactions in the Philippines, English remains widely recognized as the international language of business. With the prevailing efforts to participate in the ASEAN economic integration, member countries can better establish and strengthen business ties by further developing their English for Specific Purposes World. The Philippines, placing fifth in the productivity and competitiveness ranking of ASEAN countries (Malinao, 2015), can benefit from training its future business professionals to be competent in their use of English in the workplace. This contention is supported by the earlier study of the author, which investigated the specific application of English skills in the work of entry-level accountants in audit firms. Prompted by curricular changes at the college level and informed by industry inputs, this research aims to present a course design for an English for Specific Purpose (ESP) course geared at making future accountants work-ready. The proposed syllabus uses outcomes-based education as its framework,

consistent with the practice of most higher education institutions in the Philippines (Borsoto et al., 2014).

This study was anchored on the following framework:

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework
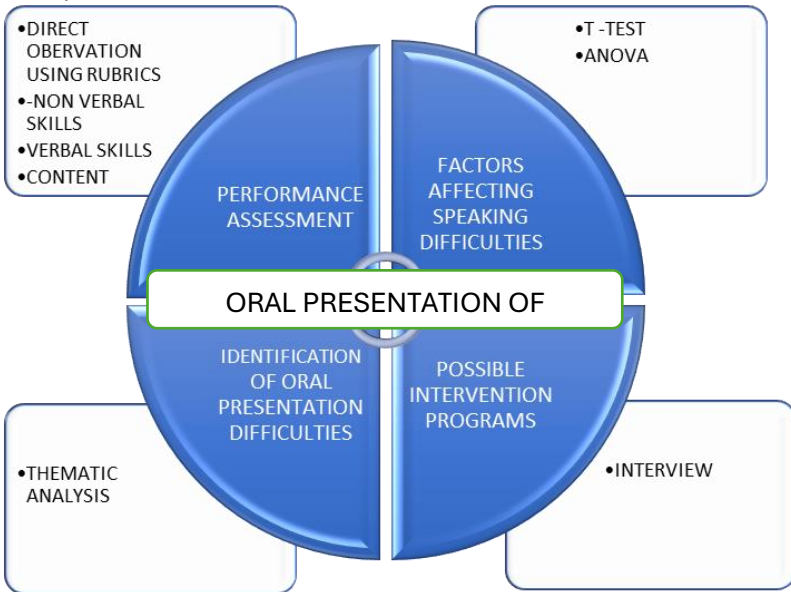
As shown in the figure, the students enrolled in the Purposive Communication course are required to go through oral presentations as this will serve as the main source of data for the investigation. The students' performance in Purposive Communication with the aid of assessment rubrics which are focused on three areas as non-verbal skills, verbal skills, and course content. The thematical analysis on the common errors committed by the students in the oral presentation summarizes the difficulties of students in communication. The results of the inferential tests (i.e., t-test and F test) point to the factors that influence these speaking difficulties. The results of the investigation provide inputs for intervention programs to improve students' communication skills.

Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to determine students' performance and difficulties in oral communication. Factors associated with students' communication skills will further be determined and students' suggestions to improve instruction will also be obtained.

Particularly, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the students in terms of:
    1.1 course;
    1.2 gender;
    1.3 type of school graduated from in SHS; and
    1.4 academic strand in SHS?
2. What is the performance of students in Purposive Communication in terms of non-verbal skills, verbal skills, and content?
3. Is there a significant difference in the performance of students in Purposive Communication when they are grouped according to their profile variables?
4. What are the oral difficulties of students in terms of non-verbal skills, verbal skills, and content?
5. What instructional interventions do the students suggest to improve the delivery of instruction in Purposive Communication?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research utilized the mixed research approach. The quantitative part dealt with the profile of the participants and their performance in oral communication. This approach further included the identification of the factors affecting students' performance in oral communication with the use of inferential tests. The qualitative part dealt with the thematic analysis of students' common deficiencies and oral presentation difficulties. More specifically, the descriptive research design was used since the study characterized the participants in terms of their performance and difficulties in oral communication.

Participants of the Study

This study was conducted on 40 students at University of Saint Louis Tuguegarao who are enrolled in Purposive Communication subject. This study covered the profile of the students in terms of their course, gender, type of school in SHS and their academic strand vis-à-vis their performance in oral presentation with regard to verbal and non-verbal skills, and content expertise.

Instrumentation

The data were obtained using the following instruments:

Checklist. The students' profile was obtained using the checklist. The checklist is used to classify students in terms of their course, gender, type of school graduated from the SHS, and academic strand in the SHS.

The Students' Oral Presentations and an analytic rubric. This was used to determine the performance and difficulties of students in purposive communication in terms of non-verbal skills, verbal skills, and content.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher gathered data through the following procedures:

1. The researcher sought permission from the school principal for the conduct of the study.
2. The researcher obtained informed consent from the students.
3. The researcher had undertaken the actual data gathering.
   3.1. The researcher asked the students to accomplish the checklist to obtain the profile.
   3.2. The assessments of the students' purposive communication performance and difficulties were conducted as follows:
       3.2.1. The researcher conducted the lecture and prescriptions about oral presentation where students were tasked to prepare a business or project proposal as an offshoot of the

learning. Time preparation was one week (3 hours) with topical and linguistic follow-up.

3.2.2.The oral presentation was done per group and after each presentation, then sets of questions were posed to the group for them to answer. Each member was graded individually based on their oral performance in the presentation and their ability to answer questions. Assessment of the students' performance was facilitated by an analytic rubric.

3.2.3.The identification of the students' oral presentation difficulties was done through direct observation. During the oral presentation of the students, the researcher recorded the students' common speaking deficiencies and oral presentation difficulties. These observations were organized thematically.

Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study were subjected through the following data analysis tools:

Frequency and Percentage. These were used to present the profile of the students in terms of course, gender, type of school graduated from, and academic strand in SHS.

Mean and Likert Scale. The mean was used to present the performance of the students in purposive communication in terms of non-verbal skills, verbal skills, and content which were assessed through analytical rubrics. The corresponding descriptive interpretation for the obtained means was obtained from the scale below:

Mean Range	Descriptive Interpretation
3.25 – 4.00	Excellent
2.50 – 3.24	Very Good
1.75 – 2.49	Good
1.00 – 1.74	Fair

T-test for independent samples and Analysis of Variance. These inferential tests were used to determine the significant difference in the performance of students in Purposive Communication when they are grouped according to their profile variables. The level of significance used in the inferential tests was set at 0.05 level of significance.

Thematic Analysis. This was used to analyze the oral difficulties of students in terms of non-verbal skills, verbal skills, and content. These difficulties were based on the recorded errors committed by students during their project presentation. Furthermore, this was used in obtaining the students' suggestions to improve the delivery of instruction in the purposive communication course.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

I. Students' Profile

Table 1
Profile of the Student-Participants

Profile Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Course	BSAC	16	40.0
	BSBA - FM	4	10.0
	BSMA	20	50.0
	Total	**40**	**100.0**
Gender	Female	33	82.5
	Male	7	17.5
	Total	**40**	**100.0**
Type of School Graduated from in SHS	Private	33	82.5
	Public	7	17.5
	Total	**40**	**100.0**
Academic Strand in SHS	ABM	35	87.5
	GAS	2	5.0
	HUMMS	1	2.5
	Pre-Baccalaureate Maritime Education	1	2.5
	STEM-HEALTH	1	2.5
	Total	**40**	**100.0**

Table 1 shows that 50% of the participants are taking Bachelor of Science in Management Accounting (BSMA), 40% are under the Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSAC) Program, and 10% are from the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Financial Management (BSBA-FM).

Furthermore, majority (82.5%) of the participants are female students while 17.5 % of them are male students.

In terms of the type of school, majority (82.5%) finished their Senior High School (SHS) curriculum in private schools while 17.5% are SHS graduates in public schools.

As for their academic strand in Senior High School, majority or 87.5% were enrolled in the Accountancy and Business Management (ABM) strand, 5% in the General Academic Strand (GAS), 2.5 % in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand, another 2.5 % came from the Pre-Baccalaureate Maritime Education, and the other 2.5 % came from the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) strand. The data imply that participants are currently pursuing a course in business.

II. Students' Performance in Purposive Communication

Table 2
Performance of the Students in Purposive Communication

Areas	Mean	Description
Non-verbal Skills	2.61	Very Good
Verbal Skills	2.88	Very Good
Content	2.66	Very Good
Overall Performance	**2.72**	**Very Good**

As shown by the specific means in Table 2, the students got the highest mean rating in terms of their verbal skills [$\hat{x} = 2.88$], followed by their content [$\hat{x} = 2.66$], and non-verbal skills [$\hat{x} = 2.61$], respectively.

The "very good" verbal skills of students is an indicator of their ability to express themselves verbally using the appropriate choice of words that

conform with grammar rules. The "very good" non-verbal skills of students implies that the students use appropriate gestures such as eye contact, body language, and poise as they express their ideas. The "very good" rating of the students along content means that the students demonstrate a high level of subject knowledge, a high level of skills in organization of their ideas, knowledge on the rules of grammar, and a high level of mastery of the mechanics on spoken discourse.

In general, Table 2 reveals that the students' performance in Purposive Communication in terms of their verbal skills, non-verbal skills and content is "very good". This means that students' oral communication is within the "very good" level. This implies that the students are skillful in expressing their ideas and feelings in either verbal or non-verbal modes and integrates the content related to English discourse in communication.

III. Significant Difference on the Students' Performance in Purposive Communication Across Grouping Variables

Table 3

Test of Significant Difference on Purposive Communication of Students when Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables	Areas	t/F value	p-value	Decision at α = 0.05
Course	Non-verbal Skills	0.655	0.526	Not significant
	Verbal Skills	1.400	0.259	Not significant
	Content	0.554	0.579	Not significant
Gender	Non-verbal Skills	-0.430	0.670	Not significant
	Verbal Skills	-0.526	0.602	Not significant
	Content	-1.846	0.073	Not significant
Type of School graduated from in SHS	Non-verbal Skills	.0.883	0.223	Not significant
	Verbal Skills	0.105	0.362	Not significant
	Content	.903	0.143	Not significant
Academic Strand in SHS	Non-verbal Skills	0.369	0.829	Not significant
	Verbal Skills	0.238	0.915	Not significant
	Content	0.566	0.689	Not significant
	Total	**1.019**	**0.411**	**Not significant**

The p-values indicate that the performance of the students in Purposive Communication concerning the three areas (i.e., non-verbal, verbal, and content) when they are grouped according to their course, gender, type of school graduated from, and academic strand in their SHS, do not differ significantly. This implies that these variables do not affect students' performance in communication.

IV. Observed Difficulties of Students in Oral Communication

Table 4
Oral Communication Difficulties of Students

Oral Presentation Difficulties	Participants who Committed the Difficulty	
	Frequency	**Percentage**
Stammering	39	97.50
Translation Tendency	32	80.00
Stage Fright	30	75.00
Restricted Code	29	72.50

Table 4 shows that stammering is a prevalent speaking difficulty among students in oral presentations with 39 learners committing it, followed by translation tendency committed by 32 students, stage fright which is evident among 30 students, and restricted code which is observed in 29 students.

Stammering or Stuttering. This speaking difficulty is characterized by repeating the words or parts of words, and the tendency to prolong certain speech sounds. Students who stutter find it harder to start some words (Newman, 2017). Some may become tense when they start to speak, they may blink rapidly, and their lips or jaw may tremble as they try to communicate verbally. Ryan (1992) defined stuttering as a disorder in the rhythm of speaking as a result of interruption or the repetition of the sounds involuntarily, although the person knows what he is going to say. According to the definition of American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) (1999), stuttering is a speech disorder that contains repetition of the word partially or wholly, understandable sound

extensions, and silent blanks. In addition to this, there are more behaviors (secondary) like avoiding/escaping from the symptoms.

Translation Tendency. When students cannot express themselves, they tend to shift to the vernacular or their dialect since they cannot think of the appropriate term or phrase to express their ideas.

Stage Fright. Stage fright or performance anxiety is the anxiety, fear, or persistent phobia which may be aroused in an individual by the requirement to perform in front of an audience. Stage fright is an incredibly common communication-based anxiety disorder, which usually occurs when you have to speak in front of a group of people. Studies estimate that between 40–80% of people may suffer from it.

Restricted Codes. The student tends to use words that are understood by a particular group that is not understood by the public. Within the restricted code, speakers draw on background knowledge and shared understanding. This type of code creates a sense of inclusion, a feeling of belonging to a certain group. Restricted codes can be found among friends and families and other intimately knit groups.

V. Instructional Enhancement Plan for Purposive Communication Subject

The following are the processes to be integrated into the teaching of Purposive Communication subject to enhance student communication skills:

Fluency Conditioning. The teacher allows the students to converse about any topic for five minutes to condition them to use the English language. This allows the students to relax and remove their anxiety and tension in using the English Language, avoiding the following symptoms such as sound and syllable repetitions, sound prolongation of consonants as well as vowels, broken words, audible or silent blocking (filled or unfilled pauses in speech), circumlocutions (word substitutions to avoid problematic words), words pronounced with an excess of physical tension, and monosyllabic whole-word repetitions (e.g. "I-I-I-I see him").

Visualize Interactions. The teacher provides 15 minutes for the students to rehearse using a prompter, the techniques to see the words to be said lead to a better articulation and spontaneous presentation. Anyone who is feeling nervous about speaking should try to visualize their words before they are pronounced (Gregersen & Horwitz,2002). This can help a person to feel more prepared, in control, and confident in their communication. Imagining interactions and rehearsing speeches ahead of time can improve the fluency of speech and a person's evaluation of their performance (Kusnierek, 2015). It may also help to visualize the positive outcomes of conversations. This can ease a person's nerves and help them to avoid stuttering during interactions (Blomgren, 2013).

List of Conversational English. The teacher will ask students to accomplish a chart stating the common Filipino phrases they want to be translated and finds time to accomplish this within four weeks. Handout/translation materials are given to students to master/memorize. Their familiarity with conversational English shall lead to a smoother flow of presentations (Kita, 2000).

Suggestopedia Activities. The teacher must have a list of laidback speaking activities for students to engage in oral presentations in a less stressful way.

CONCLUSION

The mean performance of the students in Purposive Communication subject in the areas of non-verbal skill, verbal skill, and content is very good. The proficiency of Purposive Communication students in the non-verbal skill, verbal skill, and content when grouped according to their course, gender, type of school they came from and academic strand does not differ significantly.

In terms of the oral presentation of the students through direct observation, the hierarchy of speech difficulties is specified as stammering, stuttering, translation tendency, stage fright, and restricted code. The following strategies were solicited as the commonly preferred intervention programs to address these oral difficulties: fluency

conditioning, visualize interactions, list of conversational English, and suggestopedia activities. The Purposive Communication subject, as part of the New General Education Curriculum, should be properly taught and handled by the subject instructors who in turn should conduct profiling and diagnostic assessment among their students in the first meeting, to identify common oral presentation difficulties of students and address these in the conduct of the course thru suggested intervention programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations were made for the extension of this research:

1. Teachers involved in teaching communication courses may consider integrating the instructional enhancements that were derived from the study.
2. The researcher may consider expanding the research to a wider scope of participants including the other programs (i.e. Teacher Education, Engineering, Medical Courses), and use other instruments/rubric in assessing oral presentations.
3. The researcher may seek endorsement from the head of the Senior High School Department for the integration of the instructional enhancement in the teaching of Purposive Communication.
4. The researcher may test the effectiveness of the instructional enhancement of the students' performance in communication.

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