Common Problems in Oral Communication Skills Among High School Students

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**ABSTRACT**

Oral Communication is the life-skills constituent of the field of Communication. This study aims to determine the Common problem in Oral Communication Skills among High School students of Saint Michael College of Caraga. The researcher used quantitative research design in gathering data. The study was conducted at Saint Michael College of Caraga, whereas the 320 students in high school were the respondents. In
this study, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version .05 was used to analyze the data, the frequency, percentage, and weighted mean. The result of the study indicated that oral communication and communication apprehension were the main problems for the students. These problems were caused by not frequent usage in English in daily life resulting in nervous feelings when speaking in the second language. There is an overall total of 0.107 correlation coefficients with the description of a very weak positive correlation. There was a significant relationship on the student’s profile and a significant difference in the common problem of oral communication. It was recommended that there should open channels for staff who wants to strengthen their English skills and give them an opportunity to practice their English to their students. Lastly, role-play games should be provided to increase the familiarity of English usage.

KEYWORDS

Language Education, Common problem, oral communication skills, communication apprehension, intercultural communication, descriptive design, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a significant aspect of professional success. People who have suitable stages of communication skills and high levels of interpersonal skills are more likely to reach their career goal. He demanded that active oral communication skills and social interaction could lead to professional achievement. It is because communication skills would contribute to the process of acquiring new skills; resulting in continuous learning and rapid solution to problems (Crosling & Ward, 2001).

Due to the consequence of the High School Students in Saint Michael College of Caraga, several students can have a lack of public speaking English, particularly in oral communication skills. It is impossible to avoid communication with English students from different countries. Students as having better communication skills are cannot only communicate well in normal circumstances, such as greeting and small talk but also able to pursue higher levels of English speaking such as cooperation’s and demonstrations.

The students are required to interconnect well in English for speaking to the co-students in diverse university who come from universal stable school. The modest skill is necessary for English writing for documentation of complete works and reports with clear brief significance. Also, with the outcome of globalization and various students from the different school, such as the Saint James High School, Our Lady of Carmen Academy Caraga Incorporated, and Nasipit National Vocational School an ability to interconnect in English is progressively significant.

Nevertheless, most of the students are the people of the Philippines who graduated from non-international programs. Even if most of them have studied English for an
extended period, most lessons learned throughout their study focused only on reading skills and writing skills. As a result, the students had rare juncture to practice their speaking skills while studying. These result in glitches when they have to speak English with English speaking students at their school. In particular, students are required to have a higher level of oral communication skills than they do while they are learning due to a variety of communication styles needed for each business situations (Crosling & Ward, 2001).

The influence contributing to the glitches comes from various reasons. Four general problems have summarized from articles and other research findings. The first problem is language skills. Cheep-Aranai (2006) stated that language skills are essential and problematic as they could lead to misinterpretation of meaning and cultural misunderstanding. Students who have a low level of English speaking skills could have incorrect pronunciations and intonations, leading to a loss of communication.

The other problems are communication apprehension and intercultural communication differences, correspondingly. According to the research done by Punyasiricul (2006), about the communication problem, communication apprehension was designated as one of the reasons for communication failure. Also, as cited by Littlejohn in Punyasiricul (2006), communication anxiety could generate lower expansion of simple communication skills and the social learning environment. Intercultural communication, as cited by Bandura (2010), anxiety results from challenging doubt and a high option for a negative outcome. Consequently, understanding of other’s culture, including rules and standards, could lead to better cross-cultural communication.

Speaking is considered to be a vital factor as it is one of the four language skills, (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). People in general concentrate on this skill rather than the others, because it signifies somebody’s knowledge about the language he knows. The core goal of all English language teaching process should give the learners the ability to use English effectively, accurately in communication (Davies & Pears, 1998). It can say that not all language students could speak the target language accurately and fluently and this may be due to many factors concerning with language study. Students of English can pass and get the written knowledge about the philological, but the problem is how they can produce the language they have been studying in the faculty (Al-Hosni, 2014; Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal, 2014).

EFL Students have some difficulties in speaking English such as the use of the mother tongue instead of English when the students interact with each other in the classroom, inadequate time for speaking skill, lack of knowledge of the vocabulary in the target language and low proficiency in oral performance (Arcilla, Soriano, & Bayeta, 2017).
FRAMEWORK

This study anchored on the theory of constructivism that seeks to explain individual differences in students’ ability to communicate skillfully.

Constructivism is a communication theory, which focused on determining the individual differences in everyone’s ability to communicate successfully in the social situation (Griffin, 2012). Jesse Delia had an excessive contribution to the growth of this theory. Delia’s theory of constructivism indicates that there is a difference between people who are successful, opposite to those who are not. Delia’s theory of constructivism is centralized on being able to understand the differences among individuals who communicate more skillfully in social situations.

The theory influenced by scholars such as the Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, and the American philosopher, George Mead, both of whom believed that good communication depended on the ability to understand (or imaginatively construct) how others think. Because we perceived communication as a skill— as a practical art for fulfilling social purposes—we were particularly interested in comprehending how individual uniqueness in the insight of people and social events were related to the use of more and less of kinds for communication.

Fundamentally, constructivism believes that people construct their understanding and knowledge of the world through undergoing things and reflecting on those experiences. Constructivism viewed knowledge as created from (and shaped by) experience and learning as an active process and an individual interpretation of the world (Jarvis, 2012). People build their knowledge through their interactions with the world, coactively in social settings, and in a culturally linguistic environment (Nilsson, 2008).

The core assumption of constructivism is that “individuals make sense of the world through systems of personal constructs.” The Construct is the cognitive stencils we fit over reality to bring order to our perceptions. Much like sets of opposing terms (good-bad, fast-slow), constructs are contrasting features that we have available to distinguish other people. A police artist has an idea identification tool with which an eyewitness can construct the face of a suspect. By orderly change the shape of the chin, size of the nose, distance between the eyes, a line of the hair, etc., the witness can build a likeness of the person in question (Griffin, 2012).

Through the development of interpersonal constructs. Individuals create cognitive templates to produce impressions of people throughout social situations (Bereiter, 1994). It intends to provide descriptions and explanations of individual differences in communication. It does present the models or accounts of several things: First, constructivism recognizes what counts as skillful conduct with respect to several processes, including social perception (the ability to acquire, retain, manipulate, and utilize information about the social world), message product (the ability to create verbal and nonverbal messages that efficiently and excellently attain various personal and
social goals), and message reception (the ability to fully understand the meaning of others’ messages and, when appropriate, go beyond those messages to understand the source’s desires and motives). Second, constructivism explains why there is individual’s distinctness in these communication skills.

The theory of constructivism serves as the basis to determine the conjoint problems in oral communication skills among high school students of Saint Michael College of Caraga and to answer the question if there is a significant relationship on the profiles to the common problem in oral communication skills.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to determine the Common problem in Oral Communication Skills among High School students of Saint Michael College of Caraga, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte, Philippines

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The researchers used descriptive research design in gathering data and information necessary to accomplish the purpose of this expressive investigation. This study determined the Common Problems in Oral Communication Skills among High School students in Saint Michael College of Caraga.

**Research Locale**

The study was conducted at the locations of Saint Michael College of Caraga formerly Saint Michael’s Institute (SMI). The school is situated in the heart of Nasipit, Agusan del Norte and is founded by Missionarri Sacratissimi Cordis (MSC) fathers in 1948. The school is beside the rector with an area of 1,630 sqm.

**Research Respondents**

The respondents of the study were the High School students of Saint Michael College of Caraga who experienced the common problems in oral communication skills. The questionnaire was given to a different level of High School students. A total of 320 questionnaires were given to 320 specific students from different levels that had already experienced problems in Oral Communication Skills.
Table 1. Population and sample size of the Study (n=320)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female %</td>
<td>Male %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Instrument

The questionnaire’s basis from the independent study on the topic: A study of Factors upsetting the English expertise of non-native English Communication students at Asian Institute of Technology by Sa-adpan (2008), with an adaptation of survey studying the needs and glitches of English practice at effort of the big 4’s examiners concerning English training development by Naphon (2008). The questionnaire aims to possess peculiar profiles of the students, to know which include the age, academic performance, gender, and year. The number of items was organized into different domains these are communication skill, intercultural communication, communication apprehension, and motivation to speak English.

Ethical Standards

This current study was assured to the principles of voluntary participation in research, implying that the respondents might remove from this research at any time. The informed consent, which means that the respondents must at all times, be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give agreement to his/her participation in this research. Safety in contribution put inversely, that the researchers will make sure that the respondents should not place at risk or harm of any kind. The privacy of the students should ensure confidentiality, and anonymity of the respondents should be protected at all times. And trust, which implies that the respondents will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal in this research process or its published outcomes and has the right to know the conclusion of this study.

Also, the researchers understand what plagiarism entails and are aware of the School’s policy in this regards. We accept not to make use of another person’s previous
work without acknowledgment or to submit it as our own. We also undertake not to allow anyone to copy our workings with a determination of using it as their effort. We understand that the data collected in the course of our research become the property of the Saint Michael College of Caraga.

**Data Gathering Procedure**

In this study, the researchers asked permission to the principal by giving a request letter to conduct an interview and to distribute the survey questionnaires regarding student’s perception of common problems in oral communication skills. The researchers were personally administering the instructions on answering the survey questionnaires after a brief orientation with the respondents of the study. Then, the researchers remained collected the answer questionnaires.

In conducting an interview, the researchers were randomly selected students in high school by year level. First, the guided questionnaire is given to the students and asked questions regarding their experiences of common problems in oral communication.

**Statistical Treatment**

To the derived treatment of the data statistically, the following numerical tool was provided and employed by the researchers. The researchers utilized the following arithmetical tools to aid the reliability and validity of the test results namely: percentage and frequency, Weighted Mean, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient Correlation (PPMCC), & Qui-Square.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Weighted Mean</th>
<th>Verbal Description</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lack of understanding of accurate pronunciation usually brings about misunderstanding and communication problems.</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Incorrect word stress and final sounds result in Miscommunication with students.</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Inaccurate intonations create confusions in oral communications.</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Inadequate understanding of grammar highly impedes Effective communication with students.</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the results in table 6, with the mean are from 2.31 to 2.66, the respondents agreed that low level of oral communication skills is one of the main factors contributing to communication problems. The table shows that lack of understanding inaccurate pronunciation and incorrect word stress and final sounds result in miscommunication are the most significant elements identified as obstacles to oral communication skills with the means of 2.31, 2.49, and 2.54 correspondingly. Inaccurate intonation, word meaning in conversation, were rank as 4th and 5th vital skills with the means of 2.54-2.58. However, the respondents believe that lack of knowledge about informal words used is the lowest decisive factor in oral communication with the mean of 2.66. The overall total is 2.53 with the description of Agree.

Ishinuki (2009) argues that second language speaking is complex. He confirms that the learners who want to speak L2 have to master the grammar, vocabulary and the sounds. Yuan & Ellis (2003) points out that speaking accuracy indicates the extent to which the language produced conforms to the target language norm which involves the correct use of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

Table 3. Intercultural communication of the high school students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intercultural communication</th>
<th>Weighted Mean</th>
<th>Verbal Description</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Insufficient understanding of cultural differences could lessen courage to speak with English speaking students.</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Large gaps between positions at the school to create discomfort And block oral communication with students.</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Different communication styles from different nationalities obstruct effective communication results.</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lack of intention to learn a cultural difference discourages communication with students.</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of intercultural communication that the high school students in SMCC agreed that lack of ability to adapt to the different culture with the mean of 2.45. It is followed by a large gap between positions at the school to create discomfort and block oral communication, lack of intention to learn a cultural difference discourages communication, insufficient understanding of cultural differences and different communication styles with the mean of 2.57, 5.58, and 2.64, consistently. They believe that a different attitude towards rules and behavior is the main factor that contributing to oral communication skills with the main of 2.7. The Different attitude towards rules and behaviors from different cultures block smooth oral communication was ranked in the lowest areas of the causes of the problems with the mean at the range of 2.7. The overall total is 2.58 with the description of Agree.

In terms of intercultural communication, as cited by Punyasiricul (2006), anxiety results from challenging doubt and a high option of the negative outcome. Consequently, understanding of other’s culture, including rules and standards, could lead to better cross-cultural communication.

Table 4. Communication apprehension of high school students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication apprehension</th>
<th>Weighted Mean</th>
<th>Verbal Description</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nervous feelings often contribute to communication avoidance with English speaking students.</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A low level of self-esteem is one of the important factors contributing to anxiety while speaking in English.</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of proper practice for English speaking leads to discomfort while speaking English.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My own personal trait to avoid communication with others results in communication problems with students.</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shyness is the cause of communication avoidance with students.</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen in table 4 about communication apprehension, the respondents agreed that nervous feelings and formal English communication were the highest causes contributing to English speaking problems with the mean of 2.55, and 2.61. This was followed by their own personal trait to avoid communication with others results in oral communication problems with the mean of 2.63. On the other hand, the mean of 2.65, and 2.66 are self-esteem, shyness, proper practice of speaking English indicated that some respondents of Saint Michael College of Caraga believed that fear in communication might not result from personal characteristic. The overall total is 2.63 with the description Agree about the statement it was confirmed that there is not low communication apprehension involved.

According to Martin (2015), students with high communication apprehension talk less and are less satisfied in their communication with others. In the classroom, students high in communication apprehension talk less, are less motivated, and are less successful than students low in communication apprehension. The intention of this study was to focus on how students’ trait communication apprehension was related to their motives for communicating with their instructors. Findings show that the motives of relational, participation, and functional are negatively related to communication apprehension.

Table 5. Motivation to speak English of high school students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation for English speaking</th>
<th>Weighted Mean</th>
<th>Verbal Description</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. Career advancement and promotions are effective driving factors contributing to motivation in English speaking skills development.</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Time limits together with a lot of work requirements motivate me to develop English speaking skills.</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate employee English level testing discourages employee motivation to develop English speaking skills.</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are specific requirement for English skills development in each position causes delay in English improvement.</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Occasions for English speaking with students increase employee’s encouragement to develop English speaking skills. An availability to switch to writing and sending e-mails instead of speaking with students motivated to speak English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasions</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An availability to switch to writing and sending e-mails instead of speaking with students motivated to speak English.</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>Agree 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The table shows on motivation in English speaking, the respondents thought that Career advancement and promotions are effective driving factors contributing to motivation in English speaking skills development with the main of 2.58 is the most important issues leading to low level of motivation to develop English speaking skills. The respondents of High School students agreed that an availability to switch to writing and sending e-mails instead of speaking with students motivate to speak English with the mean of 2.62. The Respondents believe that adequate employee English level testing discourages employee motivation to develop English speaking skills, there are specific requirement for English skills development in each position causes delay in English improvement with the mean of 2.63. On the other hand, occasions for English speaking to the students increase encouragement to develop English speaking skills, Time limits together with a lot of work requirements motivate me to develop English speaking skills was ranked as higher motivated to speak English with mean of 2.64-2.67. According to the theory by (Gardner and Lambert, 1972) people are motivated to learn the language. Gardner indicated that people who have been motivated through integrative motivation are more likely to be successful in language learning and have a stronger intention to continue studying the language.

Table 6. Students profile of the high school students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Verbal Description</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>Very Weak Positive Correlation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>Very Weak Positive Correlation</td>
<td>Reject the Null Hypothesis (Ho1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>Very Weak Positive Correlation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year level</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>Very Weak Positive Correlation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Correlation</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td></td>
<td>VERY WEAK POSITIVE CORRELATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 shows the relationship between the students profile. This represents the age has .119 significance and .087 correlation coefficient with the description of very weak positive correlation, academic performance has .12 significance and .101 coefficient correlation with the description of very weak positive correlation, gender has .072 significance and .098 coefficient correlation with the description of very weak positive correlation, and year level has .081 significance and .141 coefficient correlation with verbal description of very weak positive correlation. The overall average correlation has the total 0.107 with the description of very weak positive correlation. Therefore, the decision was to reject the null hypothesis.

According to Thanasoulas (2001) that students help to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, gender, social class, academic performance, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.

CONCLUSIONS

This study showed that the results of the implementation of Common Problem in Oral Communication Skills among High School students of Saint Michael College of Caraga were fully implemented. This study aimed to connect the individual to be competent enough in speaking the target language confidently in such a way that they will be productive in their oral communication skills.

Oral Communication is the life-skill constituent of the field of communication in that, in nature compasses training for all the discipline relative to the efficacy of human interaction and the understanding of phenomena and oneself. This study supports on the theory of Constructivism which is focused on determining the individual differences among everyone’s ability to communicate skillfully. The theory was influenced by scholars such as the Swiss Psychologist, Piaget, and American Philosopher, George Mead, both of whom believed that good communication depended on the ability to understand (or imaginatively construct) how other think because we perceived communication as a skill—as a partial art for fulfilling social purposes that we were particularly interested in comprehending how individual uniqueness in the insight of people and social events were related to the use of more and less effective kinds of communication.

Pappamihiel, (2002) from a cognitive perspective, high or lower anxiety depends on the individual’s appraisal on his/her capacity in dealing with the threatening environment. It is explained that it depends on the individual itself on how they will assess themselves in dealing with those four factors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researchers would like to recommend to the students to speak English and to give a chance to interact with English speakers. Also, the Saint Michael College of Caraga should open a channel
for staff who wants to strengthen their English skills and give them an opportunity to practice their English to their students. Organizing an English course with a role-play game is also recommended to increase the familiarity of English usage.

Crosling & Ward (2001), suggested that active oral communication skills and social interaction could lead to professional achievement. Better communication skills would contribute to the process of acquiring new skills; resulting in continuous learning and rapid solution to problems.

**LITERATURE CITED**


