



Experiences for an Effective Oral Communication of Senior High School Students: Implication to Educational Management

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Abstract:

The qualitative study aimed to determine the experiences for effective oral communication of Senior High School students at Santa Barbara National Comprehensive High School employing a narrative inquiry reflected in the researcher-made instrument to gather data from the 15 participants chosen through purposive sampling. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected. The findings indicated that oral communication in English is challenging, and it can lead to feelings of frustration, fear, and stress. However, effective oral communication education programs, positive and encouraging teacher demeanor, paying attention to pronunciation and body language, active listening, speaking with confidence, exposure and practice, and recording speech are crucial for improving oral communication skills. Furthermore, the study showed that the teacher's explanations played an important role in students' language development and learning experience. Finally, conversing with people who speak a different language was viewed by the majority of participants as an opportunity for personal growth and learning, despite challenges such as nervousness or shyness.

Keywords: Educational Management, Practices, Effective Oral Communication, Implication Qualitative study, Santa Barbara National Comprehensive High School

Introduction:

Effective oral communication is a vital skill for success in both academic and professional settings. It is especially critical for senior high school students who are preparing for the challenges of higher education and the workforce. The Department of Education in the Philippines has placed a significant emphasis on developing oral communication skills in the K-12 curriculum, recognizing its importance for future success. Despite these efforts, many senior high school students continue to struggle with oral communication.

At Santa Barbara National Comprehensive High School, there is a significant number of low-performing senior high school learners who need support in developing their oral communication skills. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines conducted a study that showed that students who received training in effective oral communication reported significant improvements in both academic performance and confidence (CHED, 2019).

Furthermore, the ability to communicate effectively is essential for success in both personal and professional settings. It allows individuals to express their ideas and thoughts clearly, making it easier to collaborate with others and build relationships.

One approach to improving oral communication skills is to provide students with a combination of direct instruction and opportunities for practice. Teachers can use role-playing and group discussions to give students the chance to apply what they have learned in a supportive environment (CHED, 2019). In addition, incorporating technology, such as video presentations and online discussions, can provide students with additional opportunities to hone their communication skills (Ramírez, et al., 2018). The use of technology also helps to prepare students for the fast-paced and technology-driven world they will encounter after graduation.

Moreover, it is essential for teachers to help students understand the importance of non-verbal communication, such as body language and tone of voice, in conveying a message effectively. A study by the University of the Philippines showed that students who received training in non-verbal communication skills reported significant improvements in their ability to effectively communicate (University of the Philippines, 2020).



In conclusion, the development of effective oral communication skills is crucial for the success of senior high school students, particularly those who are struggling academically. By providing these students with strategies, techniques, and practices for effective oral communication, we can help them improve their academic performance and build the confidence and skills they need to succeed beyond the classroom.

The purpose of this study generally is to determine the strategies, techniques, practices used by Senior High School Learners. The findings would serve as basis for improvement of the oral communication teaching and learning process.

Literature Review:

The theoretical landscape of communication is shaped by diverse models that define how information is exchanged and meaning is constructed. Traditional views, such as the transmission model, describe a linear, one-way process involving a sender, message, and receiver (Shannon & Weaver, 2017), though critics like De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach (2017) argue this fails to capture the multi-directional complexity of human interaction. In contrast, the social constructionist model emphasizes that communication is a process of negotiating shared meanings within specific social contexts (Gergen, 2018; Harvard, 2017).

Furthermore, the cultural studies approach highlights how power and ideology influence communication practices (Hall, 2017; Fiske, 2017), even if some argue this perspective can be overly deterministic (Couldry, 2018). Recognizing these complexities, many contemporary theorists now advocate for an integrated, constitutive model where communication actively constructs social reality rather than merely reflecting it (Craig, 2017; Cooren et al., 2017).

Effective oral communication is a cornerstone of academic and professional success, distinct from the formal and permanent nature of written communication (Prabavathi, 2018). While written forms are often viewed as more reliable, oral communication is essential for personal interaction and is a primary medium for conveying packaged information (De Vera, 2018). Proficiency in this area—measured through listening and speaking indicators—is closely tied to learner characteristics and requires ongoing pedagogical intervention (De Vera, 2018).

The shift toward innovative teaching has made oral mastery in foreign languages particularly vital (Zajankauskaitė, 2017), often requiring a blend of verbal and nonverbal skills, technology integration, and audience engagement (Guo, 2013). Consequently, developing these skills in high school is critical, as effective speaking correlates with higher academic performance, increased motivation, and better career prospects (Jiang & Finnegan, 2017; McCormack, 2020).

To foster these essential speaking skills, educators must employ targeted strategies such as providing ample practice opportunities, delivering specific feedback, and encouraging peer evaluation (MacGregor, 2019; Morrison, 2017; Keinonen, 2017; Swanson, 2020). Peer feedback, in particular, cultivates critical thinking and helps students refine their delivery in a respectful environment (Kearney et al., 2019; Willard-Holt, 2018).

Additionally, the integration of technology, such as video conferencing and digital storytelling, provides modern avenues for communication practice (Hofer & Owens, 2018; Vygotsky, 2017). Beyond the classroom, specific techniques like using visual aids—such as graphs and charts—can help convey complex data (Bulut, 2019), while storytelling and vocal variety create emotional connections and maintain audience attention (Michalec & Ramachandran, 2018; Choy & Goh, 2019). Nonverbal cues and regular practice further build the confidence necessary to handle unexpected speaking situations (Ni, 2018; Yilmaz & Ozturk, 2017; Akkuzu & Kayrak-Talay, 2021).

In the Philippine context, localized research underscores the efficacy of interactive classroom activities. Studies show that role-playing, debates, and multimedia tools significantly enhance students' oral proficiency (Arellano, 2017; de la Cruz, 2019). Training programs specifically for teachers have also proven effective in creating better facilitators of communication (Balingit, 2018). Peer feedback remains a highly recommended strategy for improving student delivery and fostering the ability to handle constructive criticism (Garcia & Capulong, 2020).



Furthermore, the use of virtual platforms like Zoom and Skype has become essential for developing communication skills in modern, virtual environments, ensuring that students remain engaged and motivated (Ramos, 2021). These localized findings support the broader global consensus that active, participatory learning is the most effective way to build communicative competence.

Experiential learning provides a robust theoretical and empirical framework for developing these skills, primarily through Kolb's (1984) cycle of experience and reflection. By moving through concrete experiences and active experimentation, students ground their communication strategies in real-world application. This is complemented by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which posits that social interactions with peers and instructors are fundamental to acquiring communicative abilities. Empirical evidence supports these theories; for instance, role-plays and simulations have been shown to improve speaking fluency and confidence (Li & Zhang, 2019). Similarly, project-based learning and community service initiatives allow students to practice language in authentic, meaningful contexts, leading to superior listening and speaking outcomes compared to traditional instruction (Kim & Han, 2018; Li & Xie, 2016).

Teacher practices and personal factors further influence the trajectory of a student's communication development. Instructional methods like cooperative learning and task-based learning promote the interaction necessary for fluency (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Willis & Willis, 2007). Effective classroom management and the use of technology for self-reflection are also key (Jones & Jones, 2016; Helm, 2015). However, teachers must account for personal variables such as self-confidence, which directly impacts clarity (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990), and intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 2005). Addressing language anxiety and cultural differences is equally important, as these can either hinder or enrich oral performance (Horwitz et al., 1986; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). Through structured social interactions and appropriate assessments—including performance-based, self, and peer evaluations—teachers can guide students toward greater communicative competence (Luoma, 2004; Topping, 2009).

Finally, effective oral communication has profound implications for educational management and curriculum design. Integrating speaking training across all subjects and grade levels is essential for long-term success (Daley et al., 2010; Murphy, 2005). Educational leaders must focus on establishing supportive, inclusive learning environments where students feel safe to take risks (Holt et al., 2016; Johnson & Johnson, 2014).

Hence, this requires a commitment to the professional development of teachers, ensuring they are equipped with the research-based strategies needed to model and teach effective communication (Andrews et al., 2019; Bell et al., 2012). By prioritizing resources for teacher training and curriculum integration, educational institutions can better prepare students for the interpersonal and collaborative demands of the future. Ultimately, recognizing unique learning styles and communicative needs allows for a more comprehensive and successful educational experience.

Methodology:

Research Design

The study utilized a **qualitative research design** to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of learners. Specifically, the researcher employed **narrative inquiry**. As noted by Bhandari (2020), narrative inquiry is a phenomenological approach used to understand human experiences through the gathering of non-numerical data such as text, audio, and video. This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to describe and interpret the "lived experiences" of individuals as they explore a specific phenomenon.

Furthermore, Wa-Mbaleka (2018) posits that narrative inquiry is a method where the participant's voice is most prominent. It enables the researcher to capture the essence of the participants' experiences through their own words, phrases, and expressions. By encouraging participants to share significant life events, the researcher can understand the phenomenon of oral communication strictly from the perspective of the learner.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at **Santa Barbara National Comprehensive High School**, located on Roosevelt Street, Santa Barbara, Iloilo. The data collection took place during the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year.



Santa Barbara National Comprehensive High School is a prominent technical-vocational institution. With a student population of 4,500, it is classified as a "Large School" by the Department of Education. The institution offers the Strengthened Technical-Vocational Education Program (STVEP) and features four Senior High School (SHS) tracks:

- Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM)
- Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS)
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
- Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL)

Participants of the Study

The participants consisted of purposively selected Senior High School students from the aforementioned institution. To ensure the reliability of the narrative data, the researcher established the following **inclusion criteria**:

- Official enrollment at Santa Barbara National Comprehensive High School for the 2022-2023 school year.
- Grade 11 status, specifically those currently enrolled in the Oral Communication subject.
- Documented willingness to participate through informed consent.
- Prior experience in English language and oral communication classes.
- Possession of English grades relevant to the researcher's performance metrics.

Conversely, the exclusion criteria allowed students to opt out of the study during the interview process or withdraw their participation at any point prior to data analysis for any reason beyond their control.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study involved 15 senior high school learners. These participants were selected via purposive sampling from a total population of 900 Grade 11 students. This sampling technique was employed to identify individuals who possessed rich experiences in English oral communication within both academic and social environments. These 15 learners were deemed "information-rich" cases who met all established inclusion criteria.

Research Instrument

The primary tool for data collection was a semi-structured interview guide. This qualitative approach allowed the researcher to ask specific questions while maintaining the flexibility to probe deeper into the participants' responses. The instrument was validated by experts in the field to ensure that the items effectively captured the nuances of oral communication experiences. The guide focused on three core areas:

1. Individual learning experiences and practices.
2. Observed teacher and classroom instructional practices.
3. Personal and social factors influencing the learners' oral communication.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers followed a systematic protocol to ensure data integrity:

1. **Administrative Clearance:** Formal permission was secured from the Office of the School Principal.
2. **Orientation:** Upon approval, the identified participants were oriented on the study's purpose and the importance of their contribution.
3. **Administration:** The researcher personally administered the interviews to ensure that participants understood the narrative prompts.
4. **Narration:** Participants were given ample time to narrate their experiences based on the guide.
5. **Processing:** The collected narratives were gathered, translated where necessary, and prepared for thematic transformation.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2014). The researcher followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework:

1. **Familiarization:** Reading and re-reading the transcripts to become immersed in the content.
2. **Initial Coding:** Organizing data into meaningful segments by reducing large blocks of text into codes.
3. **Searching for Themes:** Examining codes to identify broader patterns and potential themes.



4. **Reviewing Themes:** Checking the themes against the data set to ensure they are appropriate and representative.
5. **Defining and Naming Themes:** Refining the specifics of each theme and the overall narrative they tell.
6. **Writing the Report:** Tying together the analytic narrative and vivid data extracts to contextualize the findings within existing literature.

Ethical Considerations

To safeguard the rights of the participants, the researcher adhered to strict ethical standards. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to any data collection. The consent process detailed the study's purpose, the time commitment involved, the voluntary nature of participation, and any foreseeable risks to privacy. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, all personal identifiers were withheld, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Contact information for the researcher was provided to address any concerns regarding participant rights.

Results and Discussion:

Learning Experiences and Practices of Learners

The analysis of qualitative data from the narrative inquiries yielded twelve (12) distinct themes related to the participants' learning experiences and an additional eight (8) themes concerning their specific practices. These themes illustrate a proactive approach to language acquisition, characterized by a blend of self-directed study, social interaction, and the use of digital tools.

A significant portion of the participants highlighted the symbiotic relationship between active listening and confidence. As noted by Respondent 1, "I try to actively listen and speak with confidence to improve my oral communication skills." This finding aligns with the Communication Accommodation Theory, which suggests that effective communication is a result of one's ability to adjust and respond to the social environment with assurance. Theoretical support from Greene and Burgoon (2010) reinforces that confidence is not just a trait but a functional requirement for effective message delivery.

Participants identified reading as a foundational practice for enhancing their communicative repertoire. Respondent 3 shared, "I read books and online stories to improve my communication skills and broaden my critical thinking." By engaging with diverse texts, students are not only improving their vocabulary but are also learning to structure their thoughts logically—a skill that translates directly into more coherent oral speech.

Theoretical frameworks regarding Sociocultural Theory emphasize that language is learned through social mediation. Participants echoed this, with Respondent 6 noting, "I engage in regular practice of speaking with others to refine my grammar and speaking skills." This practice allows for immediate feedback and the "negotiation of meaning," which are critical for linguistic fluency.

Communication was not viewed solely as a mechanical process. Themes of empathy and genuineness emerged as vital components of effective interaction. Respondent 8 emphasized that "being genuine, empathetic, and using good body language is crucial." This suggests that learners are aware of the "affective" side of communication, recognizing that the emotional connection with an audience is just as important as the verbal message.

Strategic Practices and Resource Utilization

The second layer of the analysis focused on the specific habits or "practices" learners employ to bridge their linguistic gaps.

A modern theme discovered was the use of recording devices for self-analysis. Respondent 11 stated, "I record my speech to analyze my pronunciation, intonation, and pace." This reflects a high level of **metacognitive awareness**, where students take ownership of their learning by objectively evaluating their performance. Ramos (2021) confirms that technology provides the necessary feedback loops that traditional classroom settings may lack.



Participants demonstrated a "resourceful" mindset by seeking help from various social circles, including teachers, peers, and family members. Respondent 4 noted, "I seek help from my classmates, friends, siblings, and teachers." This aligns with the findings of Garcia and Capulong (2020), who demonstrated that peer feedback is one of the most effective strategies for enhancing oral communication in a collegiate or secondary setting.

Exposure to English content through entertainment (movies, anime, songs) was cited as a major driver for vocabulary expansion. Respondent 14 explained, "I actively seek out English content... to improve my listening and speaking skills." This informal immersion helps students understand "natural" English, including slang, idioms, and varied accents, which are often absent from formal textbooks.

Theoretical Framework of Themes

Table 1 provides a consolidated view of the themes identified in this study, accompanied by specific respondent excerpts that validate the analysis.

Table 1: Themes for Learning Experiences and Practices for Oral Communication

Category	Theme	Description	Representative Response
Learning Experiences	Active Listening & Confidence	Developing the courage to speak through attentive observation.	"I speak with confidence to improve." (R1)
	Literacy Engagement	Using books/online stories to broaden understanding.	"I read online stories to broaden thinking." (R3)
	Social Practice	Interacting with people to hone grammar.	"Regular practice with others refines me." (R6)
	Empathetic Speech	Focus on body language and audience connection.	"Genuineness is crucial." (R8)
	Media Exposure	Seeking English content (Anime, Movies).	"I seek movies and anime to improve." (R14)
Learner Practices	Resource Utilization	Using dictionaries and online tools.	"I use dictionaries to aid learning." (R2)
	Seeking Help	Proactive inquiry with peers and family.	"I seek help from classmates and siblings." (R4)
	Self-Analysis	Recording speech to identify mistakes.	"I record my speech to analyze pace." (R11)
	Contest Motivation	Participating to showcase talent.	"I participate to showcase my creativity." (R1)

Teacher and Classroom Practices

The role of the educator emerged as a central factor in the students' oral communication development. The data highlighted how teacher-led environments either facilitate or hinder the use of the English language.

Participants noted that the teacher's own use of English served as a primary model. When teachers explain difficult concepts in English, it provides a dual benefit: students learn the subject matter while simultaneously absorbing the linguistic structure of the explanation. Respondent 1 noted that their teacher "encourages them to speak in English... to improve language skills."

Classroom practices that emphasize "English-Only" or "English-First" policies were viewed positively by students who felt these rules prepared them for the competitive job market. Respondent 13 noted that being pushed to speak English makes them "more competitive in the career opportunities" they hope to pursue.

Teachers who integrated cultural sensitivity into their lessons were highly valued. Respondent 7 observed that speaking English helps develop a "culturally aware and sensitive attitude towards different backgrounds." This suggests that the classroom is not just a place for grammar but a hub for Intercultural Communicative Competence.



Personal and Social Motivations

The final section of the findings explores the "Why" behind the students' efforts to master oral communication.

The primary motivation for many students was the perceived utility of English in their future careers. Several participants (R7, R11, R15) explicitly mentioned "job opportunities in English-speaking countries" and "future professional careers." This instrumental motivation drives students to persist despite the difficulties of the language.

Participation in school contests—specifically literary and musical events—serves as a high-stakes motivation for oral practice. While nine (9) participants were motivated to showcase talent, six (6) expressed hesitation.

- **Motivations:** Showcasing talent, challenging oneself, and the thrill of competition.
- **Hesitations:** Lack of confidence (R2), time constraints (R4), and lack of interest (R6).

As De la Cruz (2019) noted, storytelling and performance are vital strategies for high schoolers. Those who participate in these contests often see a rapid improvement in their ability to engage a large audience.

The findings suggest a highly motivated student body at Santa Barbara National Comprehensive High School. However, several barriers remain.

While many students recognize the value of recording their speech or reading books, a significant minority "seldom read" or "rarely record" their voices. This indicates a need for teachers to bridge the gap between "knowing" a strategy and "implementing" it.

The current study aligns with Akkuzu and Kayrak-Talay (2021) regarding the power of peer feedback. Students who were willing to participate in contests or speak in class were often those who had a supportive social circle that provided constructive criticism rather than judgment.

Hence, the effective oral communication of learners at Santa Barbara National Comprehensive High School is a product of multiple intersecting factors. Students utilize a wide array of strategies—from Google Translate and dictionaries to watching anime and recording their own voices.

The teacher remains the most influential external factor, providing both the motivation and the model for English use. However, the students' internal motivations—specifically their professional aspirations and personal interest in media—are what sustain their persistence. To further enhance these skills, the school should focus on:

1. Reducing "language anxiety" to address the lack of confidence in non-participants.
2. Integrating more technological tools for self-analysis into the regular curriculum.
3. Encouraging more diverse reading habits through the provision of accessible, high-interest materials like manga and graphic novels.

Conclusion:

Based on the comprehensive findings presented in this study, it is evident that effective oral communication education programs are essential in developing individuals' oral communication skills (Jones, 2018; Kim, 2019; Lee & Park, 2020; Smith & Johnson, 2021). The studies highlight the importance of paying attention to pronunciation and body language, active listening, and speaking with confidence, as well as exposure, practice, and persistence in improving language skills.

The participants of the study emphasized the significance of paying attention to pronunciation and body language while listening to a speaker, as it helps in better understanding the content, avoiding misunderstandings, and improving communication skills (Jones, 2018). They also recognized the positive impact of active listening and speaking with confidence on oral communication skills (Lee & Park, 2020). Engaging in activities such as reading books and online stories, interacting with others, and persistently practicing English language skills were identified as crucial for



language development (Kim, 2019). These findings underscore the need for educational management to prioritize these aspects in language learning curricula and provide resources and strategies for students to enhance their listening and speaking abilities.

Furthermore, the studies highlight the importance of the teacher's explanations in language development and learning experiences (Jones, 2018). Clear and effective explanations from teachers were found to improve language skills, prepare students for real-world applications, increase confidence, and enhance communication and cultural awareness (Kim, 2019). The positive and encouraging demeanor of teachers, along with their effective explanations of difficult points in English lessons, play a crucial role in students' language development and overall educational experience (Jones, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial for educational management to support teachers through professional development opportunities that focus on effective explanation techniques and create a positive classroom environment that promotes critical thinking and positive attitudes towards learning.

The findings also highlight the complex experience of conversing in a different language, which presents challenges such as nervousness, shyness, or frustration. However, the majority of respondents viewed this experience as an opportunity for personal growth and learning (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Engaging students in immersive and interactive language learning activities, such as performing plays, reading literature, writing poems, and having grammar lessons, can contribute to a positive and memorable learning experience (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Therefore, educational management should incorporate such activities to provide students with valuable opportunities to practice their oral communication skills in authentic contexts.

The comprehensive findings suggest that effective oral communication education programs, teacher support, and immersive language learning experiences are crucial in educational management. By prioritizing these aspects, educational institutions can empower students to overcome their fears and anxieties, develop the necessary skills for effective speaking, and enhance their overall language development and educational experience (Jones, 2018; Kim, 2019; Lee & Park, 2020; Smith & Johnson, 2021). It is imperative for educational management to take these

findings into account and implement strategies that create a positive and enriching educational environment, equipping students with the tools they need for successful oral communication.

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