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Higher Education Institutions: Its Factor Affecting Oral Communication Skills

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Abstract

This study highlights several key factors influencing students' oral communication skills in higher education institutions, particularly at North Eastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU). Researchers utilized a quantitative approach through a questionnaire control form to explore how language, personal, and familial factors impact these skills. The findings suggest that students of diverse age, gender, and ethnic backgrounds face challenges in oral communication, particularly in learning English. Among the personal and language-related factors, one critical issue is that students lack consistent practice with correct pronunciation and grammar. This lack of habit, in turn, hampers their proficiency in the universal language. Familial influences also play a role in either hindering or enhancing students' speaking skills. While the study found that students' age does not significantly affect their ability to learn oral communication, gender and ethnicity do have an impact. Differences in gender and ethnic backgrounds contribute to difficulties in language acquisition and communication development, making it harder for students to master English. In summary, the research indicates that personal habits, familial influences, and certain demographic factors, particularly gender and ethnicity, contribute to the challenges students face in improving their oral communication skills in a multicultural and diverse academic environment.

Keywords: oral communication, language proficiency, family influence, gender, ethnicity

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Introduction:

Oral communication skills are crucial in higher education institutions (HEIs) as they play a significant role in students' academic performance and future employability. Recent studies have highlighted the growing importance of these skills in the modern educational landscape. For instance, Alghamdi and Alshahrani (2023) found that students with strong oral communication abilities excel in group activities and display higher levels of engagement in classroom discussions. Similarly, Mukhtar et al. (2022) emphasized that proficiency in oral communication enhances students' critical thinking skills, allowing them to contribute more effectively to problem-solving tasks and collaborative projects.

In addition to these findings, several related studies have explored specific factors within HEIs that affect students' oral communication skills. Johnson and Sargeant (2021) examined the role of interactive teaching methods, showing that participatory approaches like group discussions and role-playing exercises significantly improve oral proficiency. Kim et al. (2020) investigated the impact of the learning environment, noting that resource-rich and supportive

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settings lead to higher levels of student confidence in speaking. Bukhari and Khan (2021) emphasized the importance of extracurricular activities, such as public speaking clubs, in providing students with opportunities to practice and refine their communication skills. Zhu and Zhang (2022) focused on socio-economic background, revealing that students from underprivileged backgrounds often struggle with access to resources that support oral skill development. Lastly, Rehman and Akhtar (2023) highlighted the influence of faculty expertise, where skilled instructors model effective communication and provide essential feedback to students.

Despite these studies, a gap remains in the existing literature regarding the comprehensive understanding of how multiple factors within HEIs interact to affect students' oral communication development. While research has identified individual elements, such as teaching methods, learning environments, and faculty expertise, few studies have analyzed how these factors work together to influence communication outcomes. Additionally, most of the research has been limited to specific regions or student populations, leaving a need for broader studies that examine these factors in diverse educational settings. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the collective influence of institutional factors on oral communication skills development in HEIs.

This research will benefit various stakeholders, including students, faculty, and administrators in HEIs. Students will gain from improved pedagogical practices and resources that better support their communication skills. Faculty members will benefit from insights into more effective teaching strategies that promote oral proficiency. Furthermore, educational administrators and policymakers can use the study's findings to guide curriculum development and resource allocation, ultimately fostering better communication outcomes across institutions. By addressing these factors, the study contributes to enhancing the overall quality of education in HEIs and improving students' future employability prospects.

Theoretical Framework:

This study is grounded in several key theoretical frameworks that explain the factors influencing oral communication skills development in higher education institutions (HEIs). First, the **Constructivist Learning Theory** (Piaget, 1967) highlights that students learn by actively engaging with their environment, particularly through interactive methods like group discussions and presentations, which enhance their oral communication abilities (Johnson & Sargeant, 2021). Second, **Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory** (1978) emphasizes the role of social interactions and the cultural environment in shaping students' cognitive and communication skills, suggesting that participation in collaborative activities and peer interactions fosters improved speaking abilities (Bukhari & Khan, 2021). Third, **Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory** (1977) explains that students' belief in their ability to succeed significantly impacts their performance in oral communication. Students with higher self-confidence, often bolstered by supportive faculty and positive feedback, are more likely to participate actively in verbal exchanges (Rehman & Akhtar, 2023). Fourth, **Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory** (1984) asserts that students learn and develop communication skills through real-life experiences, such as debates, presentations, and public speaking opportunities, emphasizing the importance of practice in skill acquisition (Kim et al., 2020). Lastly, **Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory** (1986) underscores the role of

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observational learning, where students enhance their oral communication skills by observing and modeling the behavior of competent speakers, such as faculty and peers, in HEIs (Alghamdi & Alshahrani, 2023). These frameworks collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the multiple institutional factors that influence oral communication skills in HEIs.

Methods of the Study:

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the factors affecting oral communication skills in higher education institutions (HEIs). The quantitative component involved a survey administered to 120 students from various HEIs, using a structured questionnaire adapted from previous study of Teresitta (2019) as the basis for the test and as a guide for the respondents. The second part of the questionnaire consists of 30 items, which are divided according to various factors affecting speaking ability. Data from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the frequency and distribution of responses, and inferential statistics, specifically multiple regression analysis, to identify the relationships between the institutional factors and students' oral communication proficiency (Field, 2018).

Results and Discussions

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16-20	31	25.83%
21-25	83	69.17%
26-30	4	3.33%
31-35	1	0.83%
36-40	0	0%
41-45	1	0.83%
Total	**120**	**100%**
Gender		
Male	43	35.83%
Female	77	64.17%
Total	**120**	**100%**
Ethnicity		
Bisaya	77	64.17%
Manobo	40	33.33%
Illonggo	2	1.67%
Ilocano	1	0.83%
Total	**120**	**100%**

The demographic profile of the study participants reveals a predominantly young, female, and ethnically Bisaya sample. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents (69.17%) are between 21 and 25 years old, with an additional 25.83% in the 16-20 age range, suggesting that the sample primarily consists of young adults, likely students in higher education. The

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remaining participants are distributed across older age groups, with minimal representation from individuals aged 26-45, indicating a clear skew toward younger individuals in the sample (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Regarding gender, females make up 64.17% of the sample, while males constitute 35.83%, highlighting a significant gender imbalance that may reflect trends in enrollment in specific educational programs (Field, 2018). In terms of ethnicity, the majority of respondents (64.17%) identify as Bisaya, followed by Manobo (33.33%), with only small percentages identifying as Illonggo (1.67%) and Ilocano (0.83%). This ethnic distribution reflects the regional demographic patterns, where Bisaya and Manobo groups are likely dominant, while Illonggo and Ilocano individuals are minorities. The overall demographic makeup of this study provides valuable context for interpreting the results, particularly in relation to the socio-cultural factors that may influence oral communication skills in higher education (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Table 2. Factors affecting the Oral Communication Skills

No.	Description	mean	Adjectival rating
2.1	Personal Domain	1.79	Sometimes
2.2	Linguistic Factors	2.13	Sometimes
2.3	Family Domain	1.66	Never
	Average Weighted Mean	**1.86**	**Sometimes**

The data reflects the mean scores and adjectival ratings for three domains: Personal, Linguistic, and Family. The **Personal Domain** has a mean of 1.79, indicating that personal factors "sometimes" affect the respondents. This suggests that personal elements, such as motivation or self-perception, occasionally influence outcomes (Jhangiani et al., 2019). The **Linguistic Factors** domain has a slightly higher mean of 2.13, also rated as "sometimes," implying that language-related challenges intermittently impact the respondents. These may involve communication barriers or language comprehension issues (Jhangiani et al., 2019). In contrast, the **Family Domain**, with a mean of 1.66, is rated "never," suggesting that family-related influences are minimal or almost non-existent in affecting the participants' experiences. The overall **Average Weighted Mean** is 1.86, corresponding to "sometimes," which indicates that, on average, the factors across all domains occasionally influence the respondents but are not consistently impactful.

Table 3. The significant relationship between demographic profile of the student and the factors affecting oral communication.

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Variables	Result	Decision	Remarks
Age Vs. Factors	0.004	Not Significant	Accept
Sex Vs. Factors	0.067	Significant	Reject
Ethnicity Vs. Factors	0.062	Significant	Reject

The data presents the relationship between various variables (Age, Sex, and Ethnicity) and their corresponding factors, along with significance levels and decision outcomes. For **Age**, the p-value is 0.004, which is below the typical alpha level of 0.05, indicating that the relationship between age and the factors is not statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted, implying that age does not significantly influence the factors under investigation (Field, 2018). Conversely, for **Sex**, the p-value is 0.067, which is above the 0.05 threshold, showing a significant relationship between sex and the factors. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that sex significantly influences the factors. Similarly, the p-value for **Ethnicity** is 0.062, also above the 0.05 threshold, which leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that ethnicity significantly affects the factors. This analysis reflects that while age does not play a significant role, both sex and ethnicity do have notable impacts on the factors being studied (Field, 2018).

Conclusion:

The findings suggest that students of diverse age, gender, and ethnic backgrounds face challenges in oral communication, particularly in learning English. Among the personal and language-related factors, one critical issue is that students lack consistent practice with correct pronunciation and grammar. This lack of habit, in turn, hampers their proficiency in the universal language. Familial influences also play a role in either hindering or enhancing students' speaking skills. While the study found that students' age does not significantly affect their ability to learn oral communication, gender and ethnicity do have an impact. Differences in gender and ethnic backgrounds contribute to difficulties in language acquisition and communication development, making it harder for students to master English. In summary, the research indicates that personal habits, familial influences, and certain demographic factors, particularly gender and ethnicity, contribute to the challenges students face in improving their oral communication skills in a multicultural and diverse academic environment.

Recommendation:

The research title "Higher Education Institutions: Factors Affecting Oral Communication Skills" is both timely and relevant, addressing the critical role that higher education plays in developing students' communication abilities. This study could explore various factors that influence oral communication skills among students, such as curriculum design, teaching methodologies, availability of language resources, and the role of extracurricular activities. Additionally, it may

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delve into how socio-economic background, technology integration, and student motivation affect communication proficiency. Such research would provide valuable insights for educational institutions seeking to enhance communication competencies, ultimately preparing students for professional success in diverse fields.

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