

Competence in Oral Communication Skills of ALS Students in San Marcelino, Zambales

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Abstract: This descriptive quantitative study aimed to explore the Oral Communication competence of 20 ALS students in San Marcelino, Zambales. Particularly, the students were assessed in terms of fluency, comprehension and delivery through intensive, responsive and extensive speaking test. In this study, most of the respondents were aged twenty-six to thirty years old, female, with low income, single and belong to Tagalog ethnical group. The findings of the study revealed that after the administration of three different speaking skill tests, students were found to have a below average level of competence in Fluency, an average level of competence in Comprehension and below average competence in delivery. Furthermore, the result of the study shows no significant difference in students' oral communication competence when grouped according to profile variable. However, it was revealed that there is a positive correlation in oral communication competences among ALS students. The study recommends the implementation of intervention material which was constructed based on the results and findings of this study, thus Strategic Intervention Material (SIM) was developed.

Keywords: *Alternative Learning System, Oral Communication, Fluency, Comprehension, Delivery.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, the Education sector (DepEd) has offered several programs aimed at improving its general teaching methods and techniques. The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is one of DepEd's most important venues for addressing the scholastic needs of out-of-school Filipinos. It has deployed an upgraded ALS curriculum beginning with the 2019 ALS K-12 school year curriculum. The diverse geographical and socioeconomic circumstances of ALS students and their motivations for learning are persistent obstacles that demand immediate attention[1]. Furthermore, Alternative Learning System was designed primarily to give equivalent access to basic education to those who wish to continue their elementary and junior high school education. ALS were also being offered to those who had never experienced formal school due to various reasons in a way that it affects their distinct needs and social conditions[2]. Out of school youth and children was also a problem among global countries like Thailand and Pakistan. It was acknowledged that the problems of the out-of-school children and youth include the quality of life, lack of life skills, and behavior problems[3].

Using foreign language in communicating has been a problem for some of the students. It is considered an obstacle that prevents them from expressing themselves in an appropriate and professional way[4].

Meanwhile, mastering speaking appropriately needs a great effort as it requires skillful integration of certain language aspects such as vocabulary, correct grammar, sentence structure and correct pronunciation[5]. Thus, teaching oral communication appropriately has not yet been met, and one can find much to explore in this field which is related in the present study. The lived experiences of ALS students as regards to their oral communication apprehension highlight the code difficulty in communicating and expressing ideas with the core ideas having difficulty in communicating using English language, stuttering when speaking using the language and being nervous and unable to express ideas in their minds[6].

Moreover, the most essential skill that Human Resource officers or employers preferred among applicants is their ability to speak effectively in English since English serves as universal language[7]. Their previous studies have found that members of staff often face problems such as speaking fluently and presenting in front of a large audience. Their study focuses on the skills of English Language Oral Communication they contend that students must be prepared or trained in this kind of skills as future professionals. Having good communication skills is the path to success in the job, and good communication skills are viewed as both a fundamental and an added advantage. Oral communication in English is a vital ability for managers to have in order to complete duties properly at work[8].

The present study proposed a strategy for evaluating oral communication through analytic rubric. For this, it is necessary that the teacher performs a series of innovative activities in the classroom such as Intensive Speaking, Responsive Speaking, and Extensive Speaking, to develop activities of oral communication in a sustained and creative way while finding the precise objectives of oral communication. For the evaluation of these innovations, it is essential to create an instrument that contains a series of indicators for the development of oral communication from its integral aspects. The study was for the ALS Learners to provide them with a teaching strategy that could enhance their oral communication skills when the enhancement program is constructed based on the results and findings of the present study. The results and findings of the present study was also beneficial to ALS teacher as they already had an idea on how to enhance students' oral communication skills. The students were provided with a Strategic Intervention Material based on the Competence that they were falling behind.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The study used quantitative descriptive-survey research design. Descriptive survey concerns not only with the characteristics of individuals but with the characteristics

of the whole sample thereof. It provides information useful to the solutions of local issues (problems). Survey may be qualitative or quantitative in verbal or mathematical form of expression; such studies are factual and hence supply practical information[9].

B. Respondents and Location

The respondents of this study were the 20 ALS students in San Marcelino, Zambales. The respondents were selected through comprehensive sampling technique. It refers to sampling plan which deals on the entire target population. Specifically, the researcher has chosen all ALS student that are actively participating on a regular basis. The Community Learning Centers (CLC) were located at different barangays. The research conducted by Mercado (2015) discussed the problems encountered by the ALS learners as well as their experiences and assessment in the program. The challenges and problems faced by the ALS center are (1) difficulty in recruiting learners especially in Basic Literacy Program (BLP) because of student shyness and indifferences, (2) behavioral problems specifically absenteeism, (3) negative thoughts from parents and even barangay officials about ALS, and (4) insufficient funds to sustain the program and project. Due to Absenteeism or irregular attendance of students, the researcher only gathered 20 respondents. The study was conducted in San Marcelino, Zambales as shown in Figure 1.

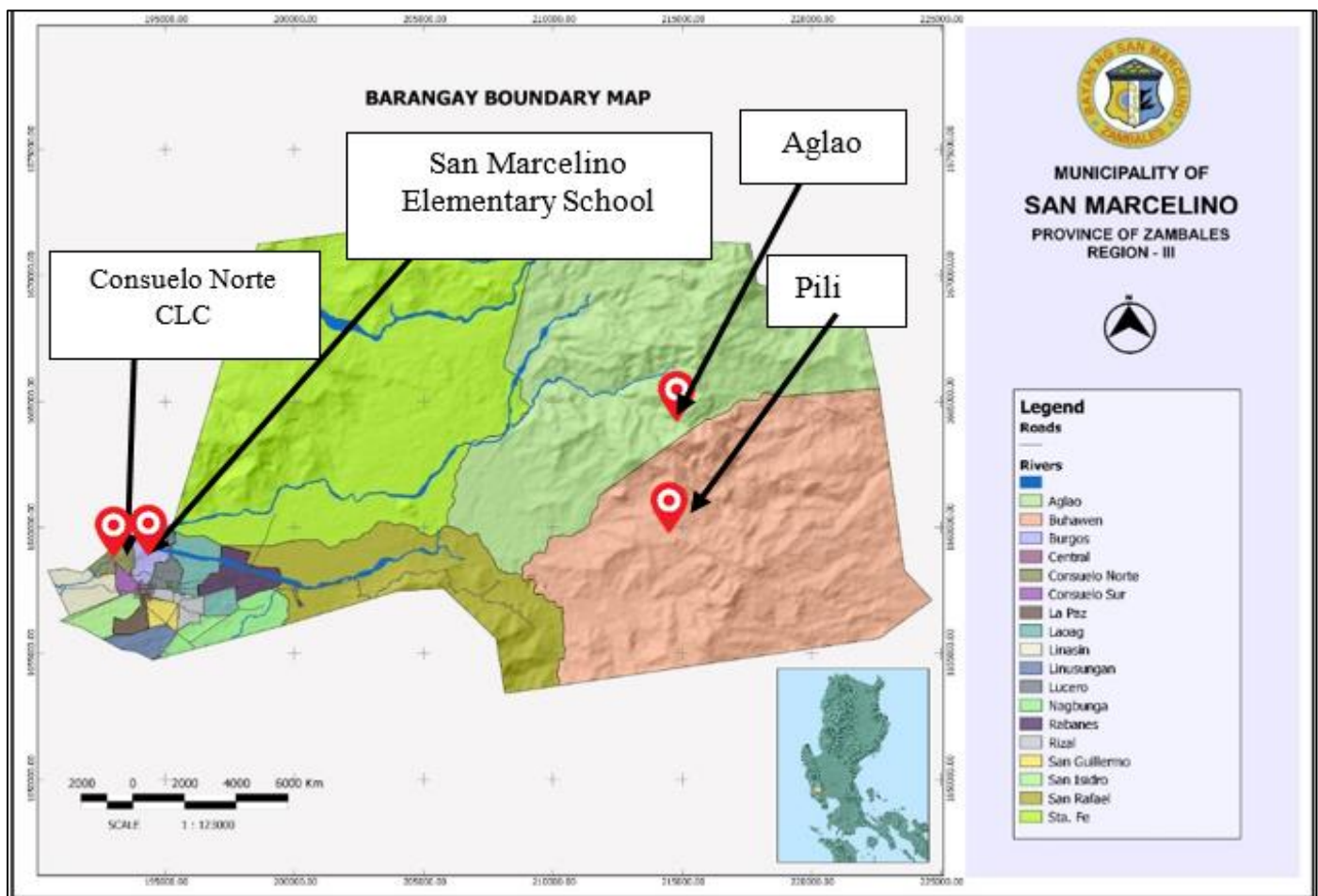


Fig 1: Map Showing the Location of San Marcelino, Zambales

C. Instrument

The present study proposed a strategy for evaluating oral communication through an analytic rubric. For this it is necessary that the teacher performs a series of innovative activities in the classroom such as Intensive Speaking, Responsive Speaking, and Extensive Speaking, to develop activities of oral communication in a sustained and creative way while finding the precise objectives of oral communication. For the evaluation of these innovations, it is essential to create an instrument that contains a series of indicators for the development of oral communication from its integral aspects. The technique selected for the study was observation. The selected instrument was a descriptive scale with four response options: "above average", "average", "below average" and "poor". The instrument was structured based on these elements that were deeply analyzed according to the theoretical and experiential references that led to the reflection on the research topic. The instrument in its first draft was presented to the panel of oral examiner for research proposal and the research adviser of PRMSU Graduate School. All noted discrepancies were taken into consideration in the finalization of the instrument. To further ensure the validity, reliability, clarity and clearness of the instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot testing among ALS Junior High School of San Marcelino. After the pilot test, the results obtained were subjected to computation of Cronbach's alpha values. The results showed that the Fluency was Excellent; Comprehension was Acceptable; and Delivery was Good.

D. Data Collection

The first step that was undertaken in the process of data collection was to secure permit/endorsement from the Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd Division of Zambales. After securing permission, the researcher administered the competency assessment in terms of oral communication among ALS students and students' ratings were analyzed. The administration of the said instrument was conducted during the last three weeks of August 2022 and was retrieved immediately. The researcher personally administered the instrument to the ALS Learners. The researcher also used voice recorder and screen records via Google Meet as evidences of the data gathered. Lastly, the researcher has written a research report.

E. Data Analysis

The study used a researcher-made rubric instrument to assess students' competence in oral communication skills. The first part of the instrument was the demographic profile of the students specifically, in terms of age, sex, year level and civil status. The second part of the instrument was the assessment part for English oral communication skills. The assessment for students was done in three areas which were fluency, comprehension and delivery under three different activities which were Intensive Speaking, Responsive Speaking and Extensive Speaking. The tools that were used to analyze the data were Frequency and Percent Distribution, Weighted Mean, Standard Deviation, ANOVA and Pearson r Correlation Analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study included age, sex, household monthly income, marital status, ethnicity of the respondents, in gathering their profile as it could have a significant difference in their competence in terms of oral communication.

- **Age:** Among the 20 respondents, 8 (40%) were aged between 26 and 30 years, 6 (30%) were between 21 and 25 years, and the remaining 6 (30%) were between 16 and 20 years old. However, the computed mean age of the respondents is 23.5 or 24 years old. This result indicates that the respondents are considered as young adults. Similarly, these findings compliment the Department of Education's 2017 data as it shows that most ALS enrollees are between the ages of 15 and 24, indicating that the program is more compelling to people who are younger.
- **Sex:** Out of the 20 respondents, 15 (75%) were female, while 5 (25%) were male. The present study includes sex of the respondents, in gathering their profile as it could have a significant difference in their competence in terms of oral communication like the study conducted by Sergis et. al (2013) where the researchers considered gathering their respondents' data in terms of their sex as they believe that it has significant difference in their assessment.
- **Household Monthly Income:** Of the 20 respondents, 14 (70%) reported a monthly income of 5,000 pesos or less, and 6 (30%) had a monthly income between 5,000 and 10,000 pesos. According to Philippine Statistics Authority in 2021, the poverty incidence among Filipinos in the first semester of 2021 increased by 2.6 percentage points to 23.7% from 21.1% in the first semester of 2018 based on Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data. This was based on a poverty threshold in 2021 of P14,498 for half a year or P2,416.33 per month which represents the amount a Filipino need, on the average, to meet his basic food and non-food requirements. Food threshold refers to the minimum income needed to purchase the food items that are nutritionally adequate to ensure that one remains economically and socially productive. The PSA reported an increase in the per capita food threshold in the country from P8,849 in the first semester of 2018 to P10,071 (or P1,678.5 per capita per month) in the first semester of 2021. A family of five (5) needs an average of P8,392.5 per month to satisfy basic food and nutritional needs in the first semester of 2021.
- **Marital Status:** Among the 20 respondents, 17 (85%) were single, and 3 (15%) were married. These results were equivalent to what was observed in the study conducted by Tindowen, Bassig, and Cagurangan (2017)[10], which arrived at the conclusion that most of their respondents were single. This shows that most of the leaners enrolled in the ALS were single.
- **Ethnicity:** Of the 20 respondents, 13 (65%) identified as Tagalog, 6 (30%) as Aeta, and 1 (5%) as Ilokano. In accordance with the Department of Interior and Local

Government (DILG)- of Zambales, the inhabitants are composed of three principal ethnic groups: the Ilocanos, Tagalogs and Zambals. Though the earliest inhabitants in the province are “Sambali” from the ethnic group of Zambal, the data showed dominance of tagalog ethnic group. This is since through history, populations in the

Philippines have engaged in migrations and movement due to factors such as trade, colonization, and economic opportunities. Tagalog communities could have migrated to Zambales for various reasons, including trade, agriculture, and expanding territories (DILG-ZAMBALES, 2019).

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in Oral Communication Skills in terms of Fluency

Fluency	Descriptive Rating	Score	Frequency	Percentage
			(f)	(%)
Intensive Speaking Mean: 2.25 (Below Average)	Above Average	4	1	5.00
	Average	3	7	35.00
	Below Average	2	8	40.00
	Poor	1	4	20.00
	Total	20	100.00	
Responsive Speaking Mean: 2.20 (Below Average)	Above Average	4	1	5.00
	Average	3	6	30.00
	Below Average	2	9	45.00
	Poor	1	4	20.00
	Total	20	100.00	
Extensive Speaking Mean: 2.40 (Below Average)	Above Average	4	2	10.00
	Average	3	6	30.00
	Below Average	2	10	50.00
	Poor	1	2	10.00
	Total	20	100.00	

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents in Oral Communication Skills in terms of Fluency. Students must practice speaking as a rightful skill rather than a means of practicing grammar[11]. He suggests that practicing with genuine speaking and engaging in the process of communication can improve student's fluency.

- **Intensive Speaking:** Out of 20 respondents, 1 (5%) scored 4, indicating above average fluency; 7 (35%) scored 3, considered average; 8 (40%) scored 2, which is below average; and 4 (20%) scored 1, reflecting poor fluency. The study conducted by Wang (2014)[12] also considered fluency as one of the main difficulties among learners as it mentioned their low competence found in different assessment but highlighted the importance of implementing strategies that could help students improve their fluency. Thus, this present constructed an intervention in response to the poor competence of students in terms of fluency in Oral Communication.
- **Responsive Speaking:** Out of 20 respondents, 1 (5%) scored 4, indicating above average fluency; 6 (30%) scored 3, which is average; 9 (45%) scored 2, indicating

below average fluency; and 4 (20%) scored 1, reflecting poor fluency. In line with this, the study conducted by Kato and Mori (2019)[13] also concluded that learners who participated from their study have low level of Fluency which is same with the result of this present study. Furthermore, the researchers recognized teacher factor in developing students' competence in the said area. This means that teachers have a great role in helping students develop their competence in fluency as to oral communication.

- **Extensive Speaking:** Out of 20 respondents, 2 (10%) scored 4, indicating above average fluency; 6 (30%) scored 3, considered average; 10 (50%) scored 2, which is below average; and 2 (10%) scored 1, reflecting poor fluency. In the study conducted by Kazemi (2015)[14], low level of competence in extensive speaking were also determined which depicts from the result of this present study. Particularly, the researcher recommends substantial number of speaking activities or exercises to improve learners' speaking skills. This might involve conversations, presentations, debates, and other forms of oral communication.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in Oral Communication Skills in terms of Comprehension

Comprehension	Descriptive Rating	Score	Frequency	Percentage
			(f)	(%)
Intensive Speaking Mean: 2.65 (Average)	Above Average	4	4	20.00
	Average	3	7	35.00
	Below Average	2	7	35.00
	Poor	1	2	10.00
	Total	20	100.00	
Responsive Speaking Mean: 2.50 (Below Average)	Above Average	4	1	5.00
	Average	3	9	45.00

Average)	Below Average	2	9	45.00
	Poor	1	1	5.00
	Total	20	100.00	
Extensive Speaking Mean: 2.40 (Below Average)	Above Average	4	2	10.00
	Average	3	6	30.00
	Below Average	2	10	50.00
	Poor	1	2	10.00
	Total	20	100.00	

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents in Oral Communication Skills in term of Comprehension.

- **Intensive Speaking.** Out of twenty (20) respondents, there were 4 or 20.0% whose scores are 4 which is interpreted as above average; 7 or 35.0% whose scores are 3 which is interpreted as average; 7 or 35.0% whose scores are 2 which is interpreted as below average and 2 or 10.0% whose scores are 1 which is interpreted as poor. The computed mean for the intensive speaking of the respondents was 2.65 interpreted as average. Students' Intensive speaking skill is geared by their linguistic abilities at a particular language level and in order to enhance students' competence in this area, teachers must ensure that learners are equipped with basic knowledge as a fundamental foundation[15].
- **Responsive Speaking.** Out of twenty (20) respondents, there were 1 or 5.0% whose score is 4 which is interpreted as above average; 9 or 45.0% whose scores are 3 which is interpreted as average; 9 or 45.0% whose scores are 2 which is interpreted as below average and 1 or 5.0% whose score is 1 which is interpreted as poor. The computed mean for the responsive speaking of the respondents was 2.50, interpreted as below average.

Since the students have Below Average level competence in this area, the constructed intervention program considered includes activities that will enhance students' responsive skills. Responsive speaking includes interaction and test comprehension[16].

- **Extensive Speaking:** Out of twenty (20) respondents, there were 2 or 10.0% whose scores are 4 which is interpreted as above average; 6 or 30.0% whose scores are 3 which is interpreted as average; 10 or 50.0% whose scores are 2 which is interpreted as below average and 2 or 10.0% whose scores are 1 which is interpreted as poor. The computed mean for the responsive speaking of the respondents was 2.40 interpreted as below average. This indicates that students are averagely capable of comprehending, but experiences struggle in presenting their ideas. Hence, it is still important for the respondents to enhance their comprehension since ALS students are primarily honed to be job-ready individuals. However, a low level of language proficiency is a barrier to employment[7]. He further emphasized that employees needed oral communication abilities in English to be effective in the workplace since they must perform a variety of communicative duties such as presentations, meetings, and negotiations.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in Oral Communication Skills in Delivery

Delivery	Descriptive Rating	Score	Frequency	Percentage
			(f)	(%)
Intensive Speaking Mean: 2.45 (Below Average)	Above Average	4	2	10.00
	Average	3	5	25.00
	Below Average	2	13	65.00
	Poor	1	0	0.00
	Total	20	100.00	
Responsive Speaking Mean: 2.60 (Average)	Above Average	4	2	10.00
	Average	3	10	50.00
	Below Average	2	6	30.00
	Poor	1	2	10.00
	Total	20	100.00	
Extensive Speaking Mean: 2.40 (Below Average)	Above Average	4	1	5.00
	Average	3	6	30.00
	Below Average	2	13	65.00
	Poor	1	0	0.00
Total			20	100.00

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents in Oral Communication Skills in term of Delivery.

- **Intensive Speaking.** Out of twenty (20) respondents, there were 2 or 10.0% whose scores is 4 which is

interpreted as above average; 5 or 25.0% whose scores are 3 which is interpreted as average and 13 or 65.0% whose scores are 2 which is interpreted as below average. The computed mean for the intensive speaking of the respondents was 2.45 interpreted as below average. The result shows that ALS students need

development in terms of delivery or speaking skills. Similarly, a study revealed that 80% of their student-respondents have a low to moderate level of oral communication apprehension[17].

- **Responsive Speaking.** Out of twenty (20) respondents, there were 2 or 10.0% whose score is 4 which is interpreted as above average; 10 or 50.0% whose scores are 3 which is interpreted as average; 6 or 30.0% whose scores are 2 which is interpreted as below average and 2 or 10.0% whose scores are 1 which is interpreted as poor. The computed mean for the responsive speaking of the respondents was 2.60 interpreted as below average. Based on the results from the gathered data, the ALS students are in need of interventional assistance in developing their skills in terms of oral communication. Enhancing their skills in this competency will equip them to succeed in their chosen career path. The same views in the study from Kasim and Ali (2012)[18] concluded oral communication has significant role towards employment. According to their assessment among employer-respondents, 71 to 80 percent of them preferred an applicant who has competitive oral communication skills.
- **Extensive Speaking.** Out of twenty (20) respondents, there were 1 or 5.0% whose score is 4 which is

interpreted as above average; 6 or 30.0% whose scores are 3 which is interpreted as average and 13 or 65.0% whose scores are 2 which is interpreted as below average. The computed mean for the responsive speaking of the respondents was 2.40 interpreted as below average. Study shows that extensive speaking skills among students need development to further enhance their delivery skills. This solely indicates that strategies that are aimed at enhancing the competence of the students must be utilized. Relatively, the study conducted by Abeywickrama and Brown (2019)[15] stated that students' skills in this competency can be developed through speeches, oral production, and storytelling.

The study conducted by Tsang (2020)[19] relates to the findings of this present study as it reported student-respondents from his study have low level of competence in terms of delivery. Further, a descriptive-correlational study conducted by Delima (2014)[20] in Isabela State University also recognized delivery as one of the difficulties that students have with oral communication. Thus, it is important for the teachers to provide an enhancement program that could help students improve their competence in terms of delivery in terms of Oral Communication.

A. Significant Difference in the Extent of Competence of Respondents when Grouped According to Profile Variables.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance to test Differences on the Extent of Competence when Grouped According to Profile of Respondents in Terms of Fluency

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Age	Between Groups	1.32	2	0.66	1.18	0.33	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	9.48	17	0.56			
	Total	10.80	19				
Sex	Between Groups	0.12	1	0.12	0.20	0.66	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	10.68	18	0.59			
	Total	10.80	19				
Household monthly income	Between Groups	1.02	1	1.02	1.87	0.19	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	9.78	18	0.54			
	Total	10.80	19				
Ethnicity	Between Groups	0.22	2	0.11	0.18	0.84	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	10.58	17	0.62			
	Total	10.80	19				
Marital status	Between Groups	0.02	1	0.02	0.03	0.87	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	10.78	18	0.60			
	Total	10.80	19				

➤ Fluency

Based on the results in Table 4, the hypothesis was accepted, indicating that there was no significant difference in the level of competence in fluency based on the

respondents' profiles. This suggests that factors such as age, sex, household monthly income, marital status, and ethnicity do not influence the respondents' communication skills in terms of fluency.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance to Test Differences on the Extent of Competence when Grouped According to Profile of Respondents in Terms of Comprehension

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Age	Between Groups	0.64	2	0.32	0.65	0.54	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	8.36	17	0.49			
	Total	8.99	19				

Sex	Between Groups	0.22	1	0.22	0.46	0.51	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	8.77	18	0.49			
	Total	8.99	19				
Household monthly income	Between Groups	0.86	1	0.86	1.90	0.18	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	8.13	18	0.45			
	Total	8.99	19				
Ethnicity	Between Groups	0.85	2	0.42	0.88	0.43	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	8.15	17	0.48			
	Total	8.99	19				
Marital status	Between Groups	1.25	1	1.25	2.90	0.11	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	7.75	18	0.43			
	Total	8.99	19				

➤ *Comprehension*

Based on the results in Table 5, the hypothesis was accepted, showing that there was no significant difference in the level of competence in comprehension based on the

respondents' profiles. This implies that age, sex, household monthly income, marital status, and ethnicity do not impact the respondents' communication skills in terms of comprehension.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance to Tests Differences on the Extent of Competence when Grouped According to Profile of Respondents in Terms of Delivery

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Age	Between Groups	0.75	2	0.38	0.99	0.39	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	6.46	17	0.38			
	Total	7.22	19				
Sex	Between Groups	0.02	1	0.02	0.04	0.84	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	7.20	18	0.40			
	Total	7.22	19				
Household monthly income	Between Groups	0.74	1	0.74	2.07	0.17	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	6.47	18	0.36			
	Total	7.22	19				
Ethnicity	Between Groups	0.12	2	0.06	0.14	0.87	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	7.10	17	0.42			
	Total	7.22	19				
Marital status	Between Groups	0.24	1	0.24	0.62	0.44	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	6.98	18	0.39			
	Total	7.22	19				

➤ *Delivery*

The computed significance values were all greater than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Consequently, the hypothesis was accepted, indicating that there was no significant difference in the level of competence in delivery based on the respondents' profiles. This suggests that age, sex, household monthly income, marital status, and ethnicity do not affect the respondents' communication skills in terms of delivery.

B. Significant Relationship with the Oral Communication Skills of the Respondents

The computed Pearson (r) value for fluency when correlated to comprehension was 0.577, indicating a moderate positive relationship, and for delivery, it was 0.866, indicating a high positive relationship. Both values were less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between fluency and both comprehension and delivery.

Additionally, the computed Pearson (r) value for comprehension when correlated to delivery was 0.580, indicating a moderate positive relationship, which was also less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming a significant relationship between comprehension and delivery.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the summary of findings, the following conclusions are derived: The majority of the study's respondents are aged between 26 and 30 years, female, have low income, are single, and belong to the Tagalog ethnic group. The respondents' oral communication skills were rated below average, indicating the need for an intervention to improve students' competence. There is also no significant difference in the respondents' competence in oral communication skills when grouped by profile in terms of fluency, comprehension, and delivery. There is a significant relationship that exists among the respondents' oral communication skills. The intervention material is developed based on the results and findings of the study, and

it is recommended for implementation if approved by the Department of Education (DepEd).

Based on the findings and conclusions that were attained, the researcher proposes that since the students were assessed as below average in oral communication skills, this study recommends to DepEd that further intervention be utilized to elevate the students' skills. Further study in exploring the factors affecting students learning progress in oral communication is recommended to have an idea to the barriers that hinder students' communication skills. Review in ALS curriculum is recommended to integrate great prioritization in enhancing students' skills in terms of oral communication.

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