

## **Speech Classes During COVID-19 Pandemic: Challenges Faced by the Classroom Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

The research study aimed at assessing the various difficulties that speech teachers had in delivering lessons during the distance learning era. The various phenomena and themes that emerged from the survey were determined using a descriptive research design. The survey was conducted to collect information about the various characteristics and behavior of speech teachers. It also explored the factors that influenced their decisions and actions when it came to addressing the pandemic. The repeated themes that emerged, include low motivation, altered activities, unstable internet connection, comprehension, questionable output integrity, delayed submissions, in-person monitoring, and the system of communicating with inactive students in online mode.

**Keywords:** *Teaching, Learning, Speech Classes, Challenges, COVID-19, English Classes, Speech Communication*

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## **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly a public health threat. As a result of an unexpected public health catastrophe, the country and the world as a whole are facing new challenges. The students, educators, and institutions worldwide were significantly affected by COVID-19 (Mailizar, 2020).

Even though in-person and flexible learning has been hosted by the pandemic, the education sector has to reconsider the use of technology for immediate student and teacher remote learning (Jones, 2005). Therefore, whether or not the effects of urgent distant learning are advantageous, educational institutions throughout the globe are being compelled to comprehend, experience, and accept vast and quick change (Hung, et al., 2010).

Oral communication topics are one of the areas in the education sector that have seen a major shift in delivery methods with challenging strategies in place. From traditional assessment methods to more complex individual interactions as the basis for mastering and deep understanding of the lessons (Gula, L. P., & Sumayang, K., 2022).

On school matters, this highlights the challenges the administration has faced in supporting teachers and students during the school year. In addition, as current instructors, to let parents know how they have helped and facilitated their children in learning the topic of communication courses, the only teacher who maintains open lines of communication supports the learning at home (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Additionally, they get the education and training they need to do their duties successfully. Another factor that is more likely to impact how well learning activities for distant education work is the availability of a robust system of communication between instructors, parents or guardians, and students (Nunez, 2021).

To respond to the emergent situation, a modular method of instruction was utilized. Modular teaching is one of the most widely used and respected teaching and learning approaches throughout the world (Isaacs, & Trofimovich, 2017). A modular method is used in almost every topic, including environmental education. It takes into consideration the qualities of the learners, requiring preparation for the best teaching strategies to support the person's growth and development at his or her speed (Sejpal, 2013). Substituting a teaching module for a textbook while teaching English may promote active learning, offer opportunities to groom critical thinking, and enhance problem-solving skills (Müller, 2012). Additionally, it gives the lecturer the chance to do formative evaluations in the classroom. As a consequence, it is crucial to improve how these activities are implemented in classrooms so that students are motivated to

take part as well as participate (Gula, 2022). The teaching and learning environment may be impacted by the styles, topics, depth of subject coverage, and arrangement of standardized textbooks (Cheng & Abu Bakar, 2017).

The synchronous chat function is a significant part of online course. There are many uses for these sessions, but lectures and instructor Q&A sessions are by far the most popular. In some situations, it is anticipated that students will have the tools necessary to communicate through audio and video with their teacher and other classmates. With the use of web conferencing, students who would typically deliver their final presentation in front of a large audience now do so (Guo, 2015). Some academic institutions demand that students conduct oral presentations online (Campbell & Larson, 2013).

### **Review of Related Literature**

Communication studies are necessary since every administrative task and function requires some kind of direct or indirect communication. Whether they are leading and supervising or planning and coordinating, school administrators cooperate with and through other individuals. This implies that both personal and organizational effectiveness is influenced by each person's communication skills (Brun, 2010; Summers, 2010). It is logical to infer that a lack of effective communication is one of the factors that most inhibits organizational efficiency (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010). Communication is the act of conveying information and public understanding from one person to another (Keyton, 2011).

"Communicating" suggests "making common," "making known," or "sharing," and covers oral, nonverbal, and electronic ways of human interaction. The name "communication" is derived from the Latin word "communis," which means "common" (Velentzas and Borni, 2014). The idea stresses that communication does not start unless there is a common understanding as a result of information sharing (Cheney, 2011). By exchanging thoughts, ideas, and the like, this process of making common and recognized is done. Sharing thoughts and ideas may be done via writing, gestures, signs, signals, emotion, and more. People are considered to be in touch when they engage in conversation, have a phone call, or write each other letters to share information. Communication is centered on the sharing of information, whether it be verbal or written (Velentzas and Borni, 2014).

Several interpersonal skills must also be used throughout the communication process. Some of these include speaking, listening, observing, conducting interviews, analyzing, interpreting, and assessing.

Receivers of messages must be able to grasp the sender's intention, take into account the message's context, clear up any misconceptions, correctly decode the information, and decide how to respond to it. Such skills are necessary for learning, forming wholesome relationships, building community, and succeeding in the workplace (Velentzas and Borni, 2014). This global catastrophe has shown the effects long after a pandemic has gone, just like all others before it. To combat the Covid-19 outbreak, several countries have instituted curfew and lockout policies from the beginning (Alawamleh, 2020). From March 15 until May 30, 2020, Jordan's educational institutions will be closed. Institutions have thus turned to online continuing education via platforms like Google Meet. Since virtual communication differs from face-to-face communication, it is obvious that this influences communication. In this section, we'll look at the following sub-topics to have a deeper understanding of the problem. The majority of authors define online learning as using technology to access learning activities (Benson, 2002; Conrad, 2002). Online learning is characterized by Benson (2002) and Conrad (2002) as a more modern form of distance learning that increases access to educational opportunities for students who are both atypical and unsuccessful. Numerous scholars argue about the connectivity, mobility, and interactivity of online learning as well as its value (Ally, 2004). Like Benson (2002), Hiltz and Turoff (2005) state categorically that online learning is a modernized form of distant learning. These researchers believe there is a connection between distant education or learning and online learning, as do many others, but seem insecure in their elaborate narratives (Moore et al., 2011).

Second, face-to-face instruction takes place when teachers and pupils get together at the same time and location. Sessions run simultaneously when learning in person. There is no need for communication technology during face-to-face interaction (Caner, 2012).

The institutional, classroom and individual responses to the pandemic are the subjects of articles and growing research, which provides insight into how we might create virtual classroom environments that support learning while meeting COVID-19's demands. Excellent pandemic pedagogy includes a focus on student mental health and well-being (Gigliotti, 2020; Burke, 2021) an understanding of technical challenges and access issues (Turner et al., 2020; Burke, 2021; Singh, 2021), and a commitment to engaged teaching and learning (Turner et al., 2020; Jenkins, 2021; Lederman, 2021).

**Purpose of the Study**

The primary goal of this article is to highlight the difficulties that teachers have encountered while dealing with speech classes during the pandemic at the Junior High School level. It also points out how the teachers addressed the challenges in the meantime.

**Research Methodology**

This research study aims to investigate the challenges that speech instructors encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is done to ascertain the numerous circumstances that instructors deal with while dispensing modules of instruction and monitoring pupils' learning progress. The behavior, demographics, and experiences of the respondents were recorded using a descriptive-survey research methodology. They answer inquiries on their core traits, recent experiences, and behavior about the issue.

***Research Design***

Using a descriptive research methodology, the following difficulties experienced by teachers teaching speech communication courses during the COVID-19 pandemic were discovered. With the use of the researcher-made questionnaire, it is possible to ask instructors about their experiences, which will then be transcribed to identify any recurrent themes that are pertinent. Non-experimental descriptive research aims to describe the features of events as they take place (Schwarzkopf, 2008). A population, circumstance, or phenomenon are carefully and systematically described in a descriptive study. A descriptive research plan may use a variety of research techniques to investigate one or more variables. In contrast to an experimental study, the variables are observed rather than adjusted or altered by the researcher (McCombes, 2020). Then, themes are discovered using a recurrent phenomenon.

***Population and Sample***

Only English teachers were eligible to participate in this survey. In total, six people took part in the study. The respondents were English teachers from various schools who had previously taught oral speech communication at the Junior High School level. Respondents were chosen based on characteristics such as educational attainment in line with an English major program, length of service of more than three months, and grade and year level taught. Eligible participants are only licensed, professional teachers in the Philippine standards.

### ***Research Instrument***

The data for this study is collected through online communication methods such as messenger, phone conversations, and video chats. A questionnaire is a tool created by the researcher. It includes the respondents' demographic questions as well as open-ended questions.

### **Results and Discussion**

The replies range in age from 20 to 30 years old, and three of them have had teaching experience ranging from five months to two years. The other four respondents had just received their bachelor's degrees, while respondent C was finishing up his Master's degree in the English field. English is the subject of Respondent A's Bachelor of Arts degree. They were all associated with a certain school that enrolled them in different English-related courses.

Table 01

#### *Detailed Responses*

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##### *Respondent A*

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| 1. <i>What challenges did the pandemic create as you tried to teach speech communication?</i>                | Teaching oral communication should be fun and simple, but I've seen a new learning style during this pandemic in which exercises are usually wrong and frequently modified. I've had trouble with students losing interest in the subject, and some of them submit modules late since most of them study in a decentralized manner. |
| 2. <i>How did students find it challenging to acquire speech communication concepts during the pandemic?</i> | The majority of students have trouble with their internet connection, which hinders them from attending lectures and viewing debates. The bulk of activities and projects are handled utilizing a recorded presentation; unfortunately, the internet connection is severely inconsistent.   |
| 3. <i>What obstacles did the school face in handling Speech Communication lessons during the pandemic?</i>   | During the pandemic, our school came into challenges with module distribution and retrieval by barangay. The designated instructors must dedicate time and effort to dispersing and retrieving the modules.   |

4. *What measures did you take to remedy the issue? Was it successful?* Knowing the kids' profiles helped me tackle the issue. Then, if they can't submit the module on time, contact them, and it worked!

*Respondent B*

1. *What challenges did the pandemic create as you tried to teach speech communication?* Students are unable to execute their obligations properly, which is one of the challenges I've experienced when teaching oral communication courses during the pandemic.
2. *How did students find it challenging to acquire speech communication concepts during the pandemic?* They struggle to grasp the lessons because the instructor did not explore and clarify the lessons and concerns in person.
3. *What obstacles did the school face in handling Speech Communication lessons during the pandemic?* We don't have any since we're employing a modular class.

*Respondent C*

1. *What challenges did the pandemic create as you tried to teach speech communication?* Not seeing your student in person is a huge concern, and I mean this in all subject areas. Specifically, we're talking about oral communication, which means we deal with diverse presentations on various occasions. We can't adjust gestures, intonation, diction, and the proper manner of presenting the information.
2. *How did students find it challenging to acquire speech communication concepts during the pandemic?* A student may have difficulties recognizing what is proper or wrong in their speech, making it difficult for them to correct their work. How would they know if they are right at first? Modules can only teach students so much, unlike when we, the teacher, are educating them directly, not just digitally but physically.
3. *What obstacles did the school face in handling Speech Communication* The school assists us by finding out how to disseminate and build modules, but they are inadequate as a learning tool for speech communication. Since this involves

*lessons during the pandemic?*

communication, interactive messages between the sender and recipient are required. The problem is that as a teaching tool, a modular or even an online soft copy falls short.

4. *What measures did you take to remedy the issue? Was it successful?*

We advise them on how to use Facebook or messaging applications to handle the issue, but to be honest, this is insufficient to solve it. To put it another way, there are theoretically possible solutions that are difficult to implement in this situation.

*Respondent D*

1. *What challenges did the pandemic create as you tried to teach speech communication?*

One of the challenges I encountered while teaching oral communication during the pandemic was the lack of a reliable internet connection, which made it impossible for me to ensure that all of the students understood the discussion or voiced their concerns. Additionally, it was challenging to get in touch with students who weren't active on social media. Due to their poor desire and adjustment to this new normal of education, students might be difficult to communicate with; it can also be challenging to hold their interest during discussions; and giving courses, particularly when utilizing video-recorded classes, can be a little challenging.

2. *How did students find it challenging to acquire speech communication concepts during the pandemic?*

Students had several difficulties in understanding oral communication classes during the epidemic, including the following: a. Since they can't access and participate in the discussion because of their bad internet connection, they learn less; b. passive participation; c. Not all inquiries or inquiries get immediate responses; d. Some students struggle with technology, which is one of the main reasons they decide not to participate in the activities because they are ashamed to admit it and ask for assistance; as a result, they get poor grades; e. Some students have trouble fully understanding the lecture's material; f. Their classroom environment is not conducive to learning; g. Since there is no physical contact, there is a tendency for rote learning to take place, which causes the pupils' acquired

information to be quickly lost; h. The topic is challenging for some students to understand on their own, especially those who adopt the modular learning style; i. Since some parents are reacting to the modules rather than the students, learning cannot take place.

3. *What obstacles did the school face in handling Speech Communication lessons during the pandemic?*

When queries from kids are not swiftly addressed, misunderstandings occur. As a result, some parents visit the school to express their displeasure; in other instances, parents get so furious that they yell in the office without first considering their child's performance. In addition to that, the system is another problem the school is facing. Since our system is always changing, it could be challenging for us teachers to do our work. However, we must keep going because we believe that these changes will be good for the pupils.

4. *What measures did you take to remedy the issue? Was it successful?*

Regarding the interaction problem, I take care to make my PowerPoint presentation simple to follow by minimizing the use of too wordy or monotonous passages. Additionally, I took care to just utilize verbal explanations and phrases. A part with questions and answers is also provided, which I believe is helpful. In addition, I phoned the professors who advise the students I have trouble interacting with to ask for help in resolving the problem. I also deal with these circumstances by telling my students what outputs they haven't met.

*Respondent E*

1. *What challenges did the pandemic create as you tried to teach speech communication?*

I've seen that students often hesitate to answer during a chat and always complain that their internet connection is unstable or that their microphone is broken.

2. *How did students find it challenging to acquire speech communication concepts during the pandemic?*

They were so shy that they were unable to express their ideas and views.

*Respondent F*

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| 1. <i>What challenges did the pandemic create as you tried to teach speech communication?</i>                | There were minimal variances in terms of education since everything was done online. We are unable to take part in in-person courses.   |
| 2. <i>How did students find it challenging to acquire speech communication concepts during the pandemic?</i> | Most of my kids went to an after-school English academy before the outbreak. When the epidemic hit, they could only visit there a few times a week, or they had to manage things online, which they sometimes found monotonous. |

**THEMES****1. Difficulties faced while teaching Speech Communication during the pandemic**

Insufficient motivation  
 Activities that have been altered  
 Unreliable internet access

It is impossible to know if the students comprehend the topic since some students opt not to ask questions or speak out about their concerns. Unreliable results and late submission cannot be corrected directly and personally. The problem is making a follow-up to students who are inactive on social media. The viewpoint on motivation entails diminishing or even disregarding the difference between students' internal drives or energies and the actions they display in public to show these energies. The two are regarded as the same or almost so (Seifert, K. & Sutton, R., 2012). When the other way around will happen, thus, demotivation arises.

**2. Difficulties faced by the students while learning Speech Communication topics during the pandemic**

Poor comprehension  
 Internet connection  
 Passive participation  
 Illiterate in terms of technology

Word decoding, the capacity to interpret or identify written words, and oral language or listening comprehension, the capacity to comprehend what is decoded in spoken form, are two of the many abilities that must be integrated and coordinated in the complicated process of reading comprehension (Gough and Tunmer, 1986).

### **3. Problems encountered by the school in managing Oral Communication subjects during the pandemic**

Distribution of learning modules  
Parent's offensive inquiries  
Form of instruction used

The Al-Dsouqi Study (1995) sought to develop and design a program based on teaching modules with multiple teaching tools for technology teachers in primary education. Based on a sufficient body of research, the study's findings focused on statistically significant differences between the average marks of the experimental and control groups when the achievement test was administered.

### **4. Solutions/ interventions undertaken**

Facebook and messenger communication  
PowerPoint presentations  
Student's profile

The most significant changes are a result of the use of the telephone as a medium, notwithstanding the possibility of systematic variations between the sample and the instruments used (Block, E. S., & Erskine, L., 2012).

## **Discussion**

The repeated themes that emerged on the challenges faced by teachers in teaching Speech Communication subjects during the pandemic include low motivation, as evidenced by the three responses. According to Gula, L., (2022) implementation of these activities in schools must be strengthened, not merely for participation, but also because students are driven to do so. The demotivated stage is a critical phase of the learning process as it may lead to drop-outs and negative perceptions about studying. The pandemic has greatly influenced the drive and interest of the students in attending virtual classes which results in withdrawal from the enrolment. Altered activities, obstructed the standard of quality performances due to the need to cater to the capacities of the other students in meeting the demands. As

evidenced by Sejjal, (2013) almost every subject, including natural education, uses a modular approach. It takes into account the learners' characteristics, necessitating planning for the most effective teaching tactics to help the individual grow and develop at his or her own pace. Poor internet connection is a recurring problem in answering modules and synchronous classes. Many academics debate the usefulness of online learning as well as its connection, portability, and interaction (Ally, 2004). Affirmation of understanding the lesson is also a challenging concern as it questions the evaluation process. Unreliable outputs, because of the late submissions, personal encounters for corrections, and finally the need to communicate with students who are not active in the mode of communication. It was found out that the leading problem faced by the teachers is the low motivation of the students which in turn affects them in some aspects of their lives and perceptions. Articles and growing research on the institutional, classroom, and individual responses to the pandemic give an insight into how we may construct virtual classroom settings that enhance learning while satisfying the demands generated by COVID-19.

Difficulties experienced by the students include poor comprehension as the leading problem followed by internet connection, passive participation, and technological illiteracy. It appears reasonable to assume that one of the most constraining forces for organizational efficiency is a lack of good communication (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010).

Problems encountered by the school in managing speech communication courses include the system of distributing learning modules as the most emerging problem followed by the parent's offensive inquires and the system of instruction. The majority of the respondents answered inquiries through a phone call as the most emerging solution used followed by communication using Facebook and messenger, PowerPoint presentations and lastly knowing the student's profile.

The themes generated after an analysis has taken place are also evidenced by the previous and recent research with the same faced problems. In other words, these emerging problems are continuing to recur and should be given much attention.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

As a result of the responses gathered, the following are narrowed down by the many issues faced by teachers. Respondents cited the same issue as a factor in determining the issue's authenticity. The majority of teachers have dealt with the issue of students' lacking motivation, which is a complex issue that involves emotional preparedness and stability. Motivation must be developed throughout the time to influence the thinking of the students as it plays a significant role.

The student's emerging problem is that they have trouble understanding the module's contents since the lecturers cannot explain personally the lessons. Students find it challenging to depend just on textual material without further explanation and examples.

The school's most pressing issue is the challenging distribution and retrieval of modules, which takes time and effort. Despite all of the issues, instructors were able to come up with an instant remedy to the problem, which is calling a student for follow-ups and interacting with them via messenger, as this is the most popular means of contact that were utilized.

For future study, the comparison of the difference made by the modular method of teaching from the traditional way of teaching is recommended. Based on the findings, a correlational study must be carried out on the difference between which the alternative mode of lesson delivery improved the solutions provided by the curriculum experts. And lastly, to determine the importance of selecting the best competencies to be used as a basis in crafting a module.

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