

# The Learning Needs in Speech 111 as Perceived by the Students and the Teachers in the University of Eastern Philippines: Inputs for Developing a Workbook on Oral Communication

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**Abstract:** *This study aimed to determine the learning needs of Speech 111 students in the University of Eastern Philippines as perceived by themselves and the teachers in terms of degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty. It ascertained if there was relationships and differences between the respondents' perceptions of the learning needs. A total of 213 students and 4 teachers teaching Speech 111 served as the respondents. The descriptive-correlational design was utilized. The instrument made by Clifford Prator and the needs analysis of the Institute of Language Teaching and Learning were used as the primary source of data. It revealed that the students regarded their learning needs as very much important, very much needed, and difficult and the teachers' perceived as very important, very much needed, and much difficult. The students' perceived learning needs and those of the teachers were found to be related. There was a difference between the respondents' perceptions in degree of importance and no difference in the level of needs and level of difficulty. The identified inputs in the workbook are pronunciation, intonation and stress, needs and importance of oral communication, listening comprehension, vocabulary enrichment, public speaking, and different speech activities on various situations.*

**Keywords:** learning needs; speech; workbook; inputs; oral communication

## 1. Introduction

In a high advanced society, excellent speaking ability particularly in English is recognized as a manifestation of culture and learning, a gauge of an individual's intellectual make-up. The ability to communicate well in English has become a necessary tool and an indispensable skill in any profession or calling.

Speaking has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four language skills. When attempting to speak, learners must muster their thoughts and encode those ideas in the vocabulary and syntactic structures of the target language. Students listen, read, write, and speak everyday. But of all these activities, it is speaking where students are engaged in more often. At least 60% of the active hours is spent in speaking.

Speaking is a central skill. The desire to communicate with others, often face-to-face and in real time, drives everyone to attempt to speak fluently and correctly. A dynamic tension caused by the competing needs for fluency and accuracy during natural speech has been observed by the researcher in her years of teaching. Thus, the varied difficulties learners face in speaking a second language (L2) is addressed in this study.

People can easily accomplish their objectives if they possess the skills of effective speech communication. In a rapidly developing economy where competence is greatly desired, mastery of the oral skills is very much needed.

Language is primarily spoken. These skills can be developed and improved through correct and consistent practice. This study was conceived to help bring about these desired skills

from students working on their own with minimal assistance from a teacher.

It has been observed that despite classroom speech drills and exercises for oral skills the learners still find difficulty. Therefore, having a workbook in Speech would mean better performance in oral communication because even outside classroom they can practice well. That is why, the UEP President Atty. Mar P. De Asis in one of the programs emphasized the importance of public speaking competitions, debates, speech events, and similar activities to encourage students to become better speakers of the English language.

Yet, success in all learning endeavors is brought about by better oral skill. Thus, to effect better teaching-learning process, professors design lessons appropriate to the students' competence and utilize the English language as the medium of instruction. As observed by the researcher who has been teaching Speech 111 (Speech and Oral Communication), individual oral skills in English is given only a limited time due to the big number of students in each Speech class. The class size makes it difficult for every member to orally participate. Moreover, secondary factors as according to research, learners' native tongue and the competencies acquired in the elementary and secondary years contribute to the apparent weakness in this area.

Taking into consideration that English is the medium used in learning other disciplines and is the language of the knowledge industry, a workbook on oral communication where learning a second language is geared at meeting the learner's needs is a necessity. This could be provided with audio-visual tapes because even without the teacher, s/he can use the workbook. Learners with different needs and interests are the target users of this workbook with the aid of

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the teacher as a model. Besides, language teachers will be encouraged to try this in teaching Speech 111 or any beginning speaking course. This workbook will be the output based on the needs of the Speech 111 students.

The workbook is designed in accordance with the CHED's goals in the training of students as effective speakers of English, thereby inculcate in them the right principles and standards in speaking in real life situations, and improve their global competitiveness.

The activities in this workbook will help students become better speakers of English. Moreover, the procedures described here can be adapted to teaching any language. It is hoped that the varied workbook activities will meet the needs of students and hopefully, teachers, enough to use them in teaching oral communication.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at finding out the learning needs in Speech 111 as perceived by the students and the teachers in the University of Eastern Philippines School Year 2011-2012 for them to become inputs for developing a workbook on oral communication.

Specifically, this study intended to:

- 1) identify the perceived learning needs of the students taking Speech 111, terms of degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty;
- 2) identify the teachers' perceptions of the learning needs in terms of degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty;
- 3) find out if the relationship between the students' perceptions on learning needs and those of the teachers' is significant;
- 4) find out if there is a significant difference in the learning needs of the students and teachers' perceptions of the learning needs; and
- 5) identify the inputs that can be included in the workbook based on the findings of the study.

## 3. Methodology

This study was conducted in the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP), the only comprehensive state university in the Eastern Visayas Region, which is located in the municipality of Catarman, Northern Samar.

The College of Arts and Communication being the University College offers the general education courses of which Speech 111, the target audience of this workbook, is one.

This study used the descriptive-correlational research that focused on identifying the learning needs in Speech 111 as perceived by the students and the teachers. As a descriptive research it is concerned with the description of the current state and analysis of relationship between variables, the principal aim of which is to gather inputs for a workbook on Speech and Oral Communication.

The variables of this study were composed of the input, process and output. The input variables were the learning needs of Speech 111 students and the teacher's perceptions on the students' learning needs. The students' learning needs were identified in terms of degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty using the 5-Point Likert Scale scoring system. The degree of importance was categorized as very much important, very important, important, fairly important, and not important. The level of needs was categorized into very much needed, much needed, needed, less needed, and not needed. The level of difficulty was categorized as very much difficult, much difficult, difficult, less difficult, and not difficult. The process/throughout variable was the analysis of the learning needs of the Speech 111 students. The output variable was the workbook in Speech 111, which was organized based on the learning needs of Speech 111 students where the inputs consists of pronunciation (segmentals), intonation and stress (suprasegmentals), needs and importance of oral communication, listening comprehension, vocabulary enrichment, public speaking, and the different speech activities on various situations. The contents of the workbook are the following overview, learning objectives, key concepts/topics, and learning tasks or exercises.

Two hundred thirteen (213) students enrolled in eight (8) Speech 111 classes in UEP were chosen as the subjects of the study. The four (4) teachers teaching the subject also served as respondents of the study. The student-respondents were determined through Slovin's formula and fish-bowl technique sampling while complete enumeration was used for the teacher-respondents.

This study made use of a modified questionnaire patterned after Clifford Prator as used in Estolatan's and Tobes' studies and the needs analysis of the Institute of Language Teaching and Learning, University of Auckland, New Zealand as the primary source of information on the learning needs of the randomly selected students taking Speech 111 and on the teachers' perceptions of these learning needs. It looked into the a) degree of importance, b) level of needs, and c) level of difficulties of these needs.

Frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean computation were used to analyze the data obtained from the respondents. The Spearman Rank Order Coefficient of Correlation was used to test the significant relationship between the students' learning needs and the teachers' perception of the learning needs of the students. The T-Test for two independent samples was used to test if there is a significant difference between the students' perceptions of their needs and those of the teachers.

## 4. Findings

The students' viewpoints of their learning needs showed that the items are "very much important" as reflected in the grand weighted mean of 4.26 and this implies that inasmuch as passing the course is concerned apart from the goal of oral proficiency. While the teachers' perceived the students' learning needs as "very much important" as reflected in the grand weighted mean of 4.75 and this shows that since talking was identified in almost all indicators to be very

much important, these should be addressed in their course content.

**Table 1:** Learning Needs of Speech 111 Students by Degree of Importance as Perceived by Themselves and by Teachers

Perceptions	Grand Mean	Interpretation
Students	4.26	Very Much Important
Teachers	4.75	Very Much Important

The grand weighted mean of 4.25 shows that all the mentioned items in the students' learning needs by level of needs are "very much needed", which indicates that a workbook to address them could be of good help. The teachers' perceptions on the students' level of learning needs rated as "very much needed" as reflected in the grand weighted mean of 4.25 and this means that the teacher's innovativeness is one key to stir student interest in addressing the very much needed indicators.

**Table 2:** Learning Needs of Speech 111 Students by Level of Needs as Perceived by Themselves and by Teachers

Perceptions	Grand Mean	Interpretation
Students	4.25	Very Much Needed
Teachers	4.25	Very Much Needed

The items on the level of difficulty reflected in semblance to those learning needs perceived by the students rated "very important" in Table 1 and "much needed" in Table 2 in the degree of importance and level of needs, respectively. Based on the grand weighted mean of 2.62, all items were rated "difficult" and it suggests that there is a need to focus on the students speaking skills in their communicative performance in English. And based on the grand weighted mean of 3.30, the teachers' perceived the level of difficulty of the students' learning needs from the "much difficult" to "difficult" rating and it implies that there is a need to address the students' speaking skills and proficiency in the English language.

**Table 2:** Learning Needs of Speech 111 Students by Level of Difficulty as Perceived by Themselves and by Teachers

Perceptions	Grand Mean	Interpretation
Students	2.62	Difficult
Teachers	3.30	Difficult

The test of relationship between the perceptions of the students of their learning needs and those of the teachers showed that the degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty were significantly related, which means that the students' and teachers' perceptions are the same.

**Table 3:** Relationship between the Students' Learning Needs and the Teachers' Perceptions

Learning Needs	Spearman Rank		Interpretation
	$r_s$ -tab.	$r_s$ -comp.	
Degree of Importance	.377	0.99	Significant
Level of Needs	.399	1.00	Significant
Level of Difficulty	.377	0.88	Significant

The data on the test of difference between the students' perception of their needs and those of the teachers showed that both the teachers and the students perceived the items on the degree of importance to be very important, which can be inferred that these areas are important points to be taught. While the level of needs and the level of difficulty revealed

to be not significant, which suggests that the teachers and the students had different perceptions of their level of needs and level of difficulty where the perceptions of the two classes of respondents differ, those of the students were given more emphasis. The students' needs are to be given priority for inclusion in the workbook.

**Table 4:** Difference between the Students' Learning Needs and the Teachers' Perceptions

Learning Needs	T-Value		Interpretation
	Computed	Tabular	
Degree of Importance	5.085	2.024	Significant
Level of Needs	0.7	2.028	Not Significant
Level of Difficulty	0.052	2.021	Not Significant

*Inputs that can be Included in the Workbook.* All the items indicated as very much and much important, very much and much needed, and difficult are the basis for drawing up the context of the workbook. Thus, the workbook included more exercises or drills on pronunciation (segmentals), intonation and stress (suprasegmentals), and more activities and exercises which would hone the students speaking and listening skills and let them appreciate the lessons of oral communication skills.

Moreover, the topics relating to the needs and importance of oral communication, listening comprehension, vocabulary enrichment, public speaking, and the different speech activities on various situations like debate, interview, panel discussion, symposium, lecture forum, interpretative reading, speaking on radio and television, jazz chant, role-playing, poetry reading, choral interpretation, asking and/or giving directions, songs, chamber theatre, and reader's theatre were included because they answer the students oral communication needs in Speech.

These topics, exercises, and activities were incorporated in the workbook, they would help the students become competent and responsible speakers and listeners and thereby meeting adequately the everyday problems of formal and informal communication.

## 5. Conclusions and Implications

In the light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions and implications were drawn:

Using a workbook is more effective for Speech 111 as compared to traditional teaching method. It can be concluded that students want more lessons on pronunciation, intonation, stress patterns, etc. They believed that pronunciation is an important aspect of learning a language. This means that if the students are provided the opportunity of learning at their own pace, according to their ability, level and needs, it may yield a better academic performance. It also implies that based on the survey conducted, listening skill should not be neglected in the teaching-learning process for it greatly affects their communication skills.

In terms of teachers' perceptions on the learning needs of the students of Speech III, the majority of the oral communication skills are perceived to be very important, very much needed and much difficult to the students. This

implies that for the learning-teaching situation to be effective, oral communication skills are needed in order for the students to perform well.

Since there is a significant relationship between the students' perceived learning needs and those of the teachers in terms of degree of importance, level of needs, and level of difficulty, it purports that the both the teachers and students in Speech 111 expect that these needs are addressed.

In as much as to the significant difference, it can be concluded that the students' perceptions of their needs is significantly different from those of the teachers in terms only of degree of importance, this implies that the some learning needs are very much important but less difficult considering the kind of learners or students enrolled in Speech 111 under study during the second semester of School Year 2011-2012 find their indicated learning needs are important while the teachers' perceptions differ. In this case, the teachers are to stress more the lessons that address students' needs are good in this subject. The implication is that Speech teachers expect oral competence from the students.

The identified learning-teaching needs if inputed in a workbook would do much in improving the proficiency in oral English of the student. This implies that a lot of exercises should be provided in the workbook to intensify practice and make students appreciate the lessons in oral communication skills. The salient findings have been the basis for developing the workbook, an important output in this research.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were arrived at:

- 1) Students should be made to actively participate in the oral aspects of the language to enhance their listening and speaking skills. The teacher should give more activities or exercises requiring on pronunciation including segmental features, vowels and consonants and the stress and intonation patterns, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.
- 2) Speech teachers should provide opportunities for individual oral presentations as part of a lesson to encourage the students to develop speech habits that motivate the students to speak with the right pronunciation, intonation, stress, and comprehension. Furthermore, they should bring their teaching to the level of the students' aptitude and make classroom interactions more interesting so as to arouse the interest of the students. This would go a long way in solving the problem of poor academic performance of students in Speech 111.
- 3) Speech teachers should be masters of and competent in speech and oral communication. One venue to attain this is by upgrading themselves by attending various speech trainings and seminars.
- 4) It is recommended that the Speech 111 workbook which is the output of this research be used for speech classes to ensure quality learning for students enrolled in the subject.

- 5) It is recommended that a follow-up study be conducted covering not just the University of Eastern Philippines but also the two satellite campuses, i.e., UEP Laoang and UEP PRMC Catubig Campus to confirm or disconfirm the learning needs of the Speech 111 students and teachers who participated in the research.

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