

# Oral Communication Apprehensions and Academic Performance of Grade 7 Students

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Asia Pacific Journal of  
Multidisciplinary Research

Vol. 6 No. 3, 5-16

August 2018

P-ISSN 2350-7756

E-ISSN 2350-8442

www.apjmr.com

CHED Recognized Journal

ASEAN Citation Index

Date Received: March 10, 2018; Date Revised: July 8, 2018

**Abstract** – This descriptive-correlational study aimed to describe and analyze the relationship between the oral communication apprehensions (CA) and academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science of the Grade 7 students. The participants of the study were the 371 Grade 7 students who were officially enrolled in the 22 public secondary schools in the Division of Ilocos Norte for the School Year 2016-2017. The data on students' level of oral communication apprehension were gathered using the McCroskey's Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24). Meanwhile, the data on the students' academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science were gathered from their report cards for the school year 2016-2017. Frequency, percentage distribution, and Pearson's *r* correlation were used to treat the data. Findings reveal that the Grade 7 students exhibit varied degrees or levels of oral communication apprehension in English in all the communication situations and in their overall oral CA. Further, the study reveals that there exists a significant relationship between the Grade 7 students' level of oral communication apprehension and their level of academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science, that is, if the students experience lower level of communication apprehension, they are more likely to have higher academic performance, but, if the students exhibit higher level of oral communication apprehension, they tend to have lower academic performance. This study could serve as basis for language teachers to consider speaking activities that could be best offered to students who are challenged with oral communication apprehensions. Further, this could help students monitor their oral communication apprehensions and find ways to address and overcome them.

**Keywords** – Academic performance, English language, oral communication apprehensions, Grade 7 students

## INTRODUCTION

Today, the importance of English cannot be denied and ignored since English is the most common language spoken everywhere. The English language has been occupying a major role in many sectors including medicine, engineering, business and education.

In most countries these days, top priority is given to English proficiency and English language education for individual career or welfare, as well as national development and globalization [1]. English continues to spread extensively around the world. No one would doubt that it is a dominant second or foreign language in Asian countries. Thus, English language proficiency functions as gatekeepers to individual career or welfare as well as national development. This implies the essential role of English language education in Asia including the Philippines.

English language education, in general, focuses on the needs of the learners holistically. Part of it is the five

intricately intertwined and integrated sub-strands (reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing) that serve as building blocks for understanding and creation of meaning and for effective communication. Among these macro skills, oral language is the foundation for student learning. It is essential for literacy learning, and its successful use is critical for students' well-being.

Consequently, speaking is one of the skills that high school students should master. This is anchored in the competencies to develop the 21st century skills as reflected in the K to 12 Basic Education Program of the Philippines. This focuses on the development of every learner to be functional individual.

While it is true that English is very useful to students for their education and future career, still, many neglect its importance. Despite that almost all classroom-based learning relies on oral language, oral communication in the classroom remains overlooked. This scenario holds true picture in English classes, especially in the elementary and secondary. This may

greatly hamper effective communication and interaction in the classroom and eventually affects the success of the whole teaching-learning process.

Students in secondary schools are said to perform poorly in English as the language of instruction [2]. Students struggle to express themselves clearly in the language they have not mastered. This has been contributed by poor preparation in the primary level, poor teacher preparation, lack of relevant teaching-learning materials, inefficient techniques and lack of reading habits among students.

Considerably, Senobio [3] articulated his students' attitudes towards using English in the classroom that whenever he asks someone to speak in front of his class, some of his students give one another meaningful looks, or make faces at their classmate who is speaking. Others simply do not listen. He further expressed that they do not realize that whenever his students sneer by words or facial expressions, they discourage their classmates from using the language for being ostracized.

Such claims from observations significantly testify the unwillingness of students in speaking and conversing in English inside the classroom. Interestingly, this problem is also shared among high school teachers not only in English classes but also in other core subjects such as Mathematics and Science, of which English is the medium of instruction. Students in these classes experience difficulties in using English to express their thoughts and ideas during classroom interactions and activities due to their oral communication apprehensions.

Various researchers have defined communication apprehension as a feeling of discomfort, or fear syndrome which is experienced in relation to either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons. It is also an avoidance or non-participation in, and subsequent withdrawal from communication, due to inadequate communication skills [4]. It seems, therefore, that communication apprehension can be conceived as a general unwillingness based on fear and anxiety, to communicate or as avoidance due to inadequate communication skills.

Oral communication apprehension, therefore, may greatly impede students' good performance in the classroom and more importantly, their whole academic performance not only in their English subject but also in other core subjects, specifically Mathematics and Science of which using the English language is crucial for their learning.

In reality, many language learners find it difficult to express themselves in spoken language in the target

language. They can pass exams easily but they find it difficult to communicate in English.

The researcher, as well, through his observations in his English classes, noted similar scenario during classroom interactions. Whenever his students are asked to answer his questions, most of them respond negatively, exhibiting their communication apprehensions, if not of their lack of motivation in speaking as evidenced by their negative expressions, gestures, and attitudes. Most of them manifest communication apprehensions through their unwillingness and inhibitions, especially when they are asked to talk, deliver a speech or explain in front of the class. They often prefer to remain silent during classroom discussions, thus, making themselves passive learners in the classroom. Their oral communication apprehensions, in many ways, may result to poor performance in classroom interactions and discussions and ultimately to poor academic performance.

This study is anchored on three theories which include Communication Apprehension Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

The Communication Apprehension Theory of McCroskey [5] regards oral communication apprehension as an individual's level of fear or anxiety that is associated to communication with another person or persons. This also emphasizes the avoidance or non-participation in, and subsequent withdrawal from communication, due to inadequate communication skills. Communication apprehension can be conceived as a general unwillingness, based on fear and anxiety, to communicate or as avoidance to participate in communication contexts or situations. In addition, this theory asserts that there are different levels of oral communication apprehension which can be experienced by an individual. A person may have a high, medium or low level of oral communication apprehension. The person with a high level of oral communication apprehension avoids communication much of the time in order to avoid experiencing the fear or anxiety.

The role of oral communication apprehension in shaping educational outcomes has emerged as a major concern affecting the academic performance of secondary school students. Therefore, it is important to focus on oral communication apprehension in the classroom because it is critical to the success in the academic milieu.

Moreover, this study is anchored on Social Learning Theory by Vygotsky [6]. This theory explains how people learn in social contexts (learn from each

other) and informs how teachers construct active learning communities. According to this theory, social interaction is the source of learning and development which is not found solely in the mind of an individual. Thus, students learn through interactions and communication with others.

Further, Vygotsky [6] examined how social environments influence the learning process. He suggested that learning takes place through the interactions students have with their peers, teachers and experts. Therefore, there is a need for students to participate actively in classroom interactions and speaking activities because these may lead them to achieve good academic performance.

However, students may experience fear or oral communication apprehensions that may impede their active involvement in the classroom activities. This may result to poor performance and ultimately to poor academic achievement.

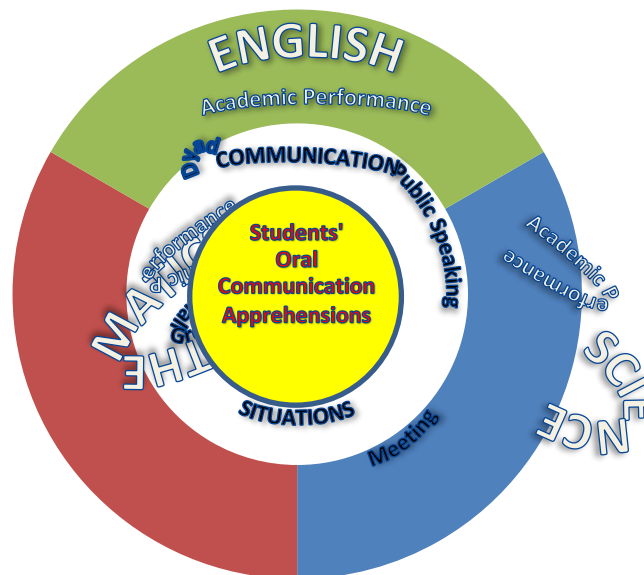
Since the study also focuses on the relationship between students' oral communication in English and their academic performance, this study is pinned on Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). In academic settings, both question-answer and conversational formats entail the use of academic language. Even students who are conversationally proficient need exposure to and practice with academic language in order to function successfully at school [7].

CALP refers to formal academic learning. This includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing about subject area content material. This level of language learning is essential for students to succeed in school. Students need time and support to become proficient in academic areas like English, Mathematics and Science. Academic language acquisition is not just the understanding of content area vocabulary. This also includes skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring.

It is true that proficiency in English is not only essential in the English subject but in other core subjects such as Mathematics and Science of which the language is used as medium of instruction and communication. But, if students experience oral communication apprehensions, their level of performance in the three core subjects may eventually be affected. This provided the researcher the basis to examine the relationship between the oral communication apprehensions of the Grade 7 students and their academic performance in the core subjects.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the oral communication apprehensions of Grade 7 students that

they experience along with the four communication situations or contexts such as small group, meeting, dyad, and public speaking and their academic performance in the core subjects – English, Mathematics and Science. These oral communication apprehensions could possibly impose concerns not only to the students' communication skills but more importantly to their academic performance.



**Figure 1. Research Paradigm**

This study conceptualizes that if the students exhibit high level of oral communication apprehension, they are more likely to have poor academic performance in the said subjects. Further, students with low level of oral communication apprehension are more likely to have good academic performance in these core subjects.

The observations, views and experiences relative to oral communication apprehensions and academic performance in the core subjects prompted the researcher in conducting this study. He then embarked on finding out if there is a significant relationship between the oral communication apprehensions of the Grade 7 students and their academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science.

Thus, this study focused on determining the relationship between the Grade 7 students' oral communication apprehensions and their academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science.

The students' oral communication apprehensions in English were delimited to the four communication situations or contexts based on the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24), a

questionnaire developed by McCroskey [5]. The students' level of oral communication apprehension was delimited to the collected data from the PRCA-24 questionnaire.

Moreover, the high school students involved in the study were delimited to the Grade 7 students from the selected secondary schools in the Division of Ilocos Norte. The Grade 7 students were chosen since they are in their transition period from the elementary, wherein the development of communication skills is crucial, to a higher level of learning, which is the secondary. Also, they were the target of the research so that their apprehension in oral communication may be given immediate actions to improve their oral communication skills, necessary for their participation in classroom interactions and more importantly in their academic performance.

Furthermore, the students' academic performance was delimited to their final grades in English, Mathematics and Science.

Significantly, this study is beneficial to students since the results of this study could provide them information on the impact of their oral communication apprehensions to their academic performance. This could encourage them to help themselves in improving their oral communication skills. Also, this study is of great help to teachers for this could guide them on how to address and provide remedies on students' oral communication apprehensions.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study primarily aimed to determine the relationship between the oral communication apprehensions of Grade 7 students and their academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science.

Likewise, the study endeavored to determine and describe the level of oral communication apprehension and level of academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science of the Grade 7 students.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study used the descriptive-correlational research design which described and correlated the relationship between the Grade 7 students' oral communication apprehensions and their academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science.

The study was conducted in the selected public secondary schools in the Division of Ilocos Norte. The said division consists of 54 public secondary schools that are grouped into four zones (central zone, east zone, north zone and south zone). In this study, the schools

were categorized as big (having three or more sections) and small (having one or two section/s). A total of 22 schools (11 big schools and 11 small schools) were selected to represent each of the zones.

The population of the study composed of 6,553 Grade 7 students who were officially enrolled in the public secondary schools in the Division of Ilocos Norte for the school year 2016-2017. The stratified random sampling technique was used to determine the samples according to zones, schools and size of population in each school. Therefore, from the selected schools in the four zones, 371 students were selected as samples.

This study utilized the survey questionnaire patterned after the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) by McCroskey [5].

The scoring scheme shown below was utilized to get the sub-scores and overall scores of the students.

Small Group	18+(scores for items 2, 4, & 6) - (scores for items 1, 3, & 5)
Meeting	18+(scores for items 8, 9, & 12) - (scores for items 7, 10, & 11)
Dyad	18+(scores for items 14, 16, & 17) – (scores for items 13, 15, & 18)
Public Speaking	18+(scores for items 19, 21, & 23) – (scores for items 20, 22, & 24)
Overall CA	Add all the four sub-scores

Meanwhile, the level of oral communication apprehension of the students was based on the PRCA-24 results. The five responses were given numerical equivalents as: Strongly Agree (1); Agree (2); Undecided (3); Disagree (4); and Strongly Disagree (5). According to this instrument, scores can range between 24 and 120. Scores of 24 – 50 indicate students who have a low level of communication apprehension; scores of 51 – 80 indicate people with moderate CA and scores of 81 – 120 indicate people who have high levels of CA. To determine the overall CA score, all four sub scores are added together.

Communication Situations	Low	Ave.	High
Small Group	1-10	11-20	21-30
Meeting	1-10	11-18	19-30
Dyad	1-12	13-20	21-30
Public Speaking	1-13	14-24	25-30
Overall CA	24-50	51-80	81-120

In connection to the four communication contexts, above is the norm chart for the PRCA-24 which is based on over 40,000 college students. Data from over 3,000 non-student adults in a national sample provided

virtually identical norms, within 0.20 for all scores.

For the students' level of academic performance, an information matrix was used to gather the students' final grades in English, Mathematics and Science, which were all obtained from their advisers.

**Data Collection Procedure**

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher requested permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Ilocos Norte. Upon approval, permission was also sought from the principals of the identified schools chosen to take part in the study.

To determine the level of communication apprehension of the students, the researcher distributed the modified PRCA-24 survey questionnaire to the Grade 7 students from the selected public secondary schools in the Division of Ilocos Norte, Philippines

Meanwhile, to determine the Grade 7 students' level of academic performance in the core subjects, their final grades in English, Mathematics and Science for the school year 2016-2017 were secured from their advisers.

For ethical considerations, letters of consent were given to the students and their parents. Responses from the questionnaires were kept with utmost confidentiality. The data gathered in their final grades in the three subjects – English, Science and Mathematics, were kept confidential and were used for research purposes only as agreed upon by the researcher and the students.

Students' responses from the survey questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed. Likewise, students' final grades in English, Mathematics and Science were interpreted. Moreover, the level of their oral communication apprehension and the level of their academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science were correlated.

**Data Analysis**

For the Grade 7 students' level of oral communication apprehension in the four communication situations, frequency counts and percentages were employed. Their level of oral communication apprehension in the four communication situations was identified using ranges of the norm chart for the PRCA-24.

Grading Scale	Descriptors
90-100	Outstanding (O)
85-89	Very Satisfactory (VS)
80-84	Satisfactory (S)
75-79	Fairly Satisfactory (FS)
Below 75	Did Not Meet Expectations (D)

Meanwhile, their level of academic performance in the core subjects (English, Mathematics and Science) was interpreted using the previous grading scale and descriptors, which are based on the grading system of the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum.

Moreover, for the correlation of the level of oral communication apprehension and the level of academic performance in the core subjects of the Grade 7 students, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Pearson *r*) was used.

In all tests of significance, the level of significance was set at the .05 probability level.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1. Level of oral communication apprehension of the students along small group, meeting, dyad, public speaking and overall oral CA.

Communication Situations	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Small Group</b>		
High	30	8.08
Average	319	85.98
Low	22	5.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Meeting</b>		
High	54	14.55
Average	274	73.85
Low	43	11.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Dyad</b>		
High	118	31.80
Average	232	62.53
Low	21	5.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Public Speaking</b>		
High	38	10.24
Average	318	85.71
Low	15	4.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Overall Oral CA</b>		
High	37	9.97
Average	322	86.79
Low	12	3.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100.00</b>

People may experience oral communication apprehension anytime, anywhere and in any situation. Experiencing such may vary on its extent or level depending on the kinds of people they are conversing with and the communication situations where they are

communicating with. Some may feel more apprehensive when they are in a dyadic situation, while others may experience higher level of apprehension when they are grouped with other people or delivering a speech in front of a big crowd. These are a manifestation that oral communication apprehensions may be experienced normally among people at varying levels.

The discussion in this section focuses on the level of oral communication apprehension of the Grade 7 students in different communication situations (small group discussion, meeting, dyad and public speaking).

Table 1 shows the Grade 7 students' level of oral communication apprehension in English when they are grouped in communication situations such as small group, meeting, dyad and public speaking as well as their over-all communication apprehension.

### ***Small Group***

It can be gleaned from the table that in small group, 319 (85.98%) of the Grade 7 students experience average level of apprehension. This implies that there are instances that they are tensed and nervous when they are involved in small group discussions while some small group discussions make them feel relaxed and comfortable. These students normally like to get involved in group discussions. On the other hand, some of them experience oral communication apprehensions when they are communicating in this type of communication situation.

Remarkably, 30 (8.08%) students experience high level of oral communication apprehension in small group. This shows that these students dislike participating and communicating in small group discussions. Although these students have already been exposed to various small group discussions, they still exhibit apprehensions and avoid communicating with other members of the group. They are still uncomfortable of expressing themselves, while they are conversing with different types of students within the group. Moreover, their small group discussions could be involving other students that are not within their line of interest and level of thinking. Also, their apprehensions may be based on the type of grouping that is typically used in a classroom setting. This manifests that these students are not yet fully comfortable and relaxed when they are expressing their thoughts in small group discussions, which may be contributed by their inadequate communication skills, lack of confidence, nervousness and shyness. Therefore, these students need to be motivated to communicate confidently to overcome their apprehensions in participating in small group discussions.

Students who come with fewer language skills tend to be more nervous and anxious about learning the English language [8]. Therefore, apprehension is viewed as a possible stumbling block to the language learning process of these students.

Meanwhile, 22 (5.92%) students exhibit low level of apprehension when they participate in small group discussions. These are the students who actively involved themselves in this type of communication situation. They are the ones who are generally calm and relaxed in conveying their thoughts with others. Their teachers are able to employ varied small group discussion strategies that motivate them and help boost their confidence of sharing their ideas among themselves. Furthermore, these students are normally at ease even engaging themselves in a small group discussion with a new acquaintance.

### ***Meeting***

It can be noted from the same table that in meeting, 274 (73.85%) of the Grade 7 students experience average level of apprehension. This shows that the students are comfortable during meeting or class but there are times that they are nervous. These students enjoy most of their class discussions that foster active engagement and participation in the classroom. Therefore, in such situation, they can confidently express their ideas when they want or called to recite. However, these students sometimes feel anxious in class discussions most especially when they are engaged in formal discussions wherein voicing out their thoughts and opinions are limited due to the apprehensions that they experience.

Considerably, 54 (14.55%) students experience high level of apprehension in meeting or class. This implies that these students generally dislike participating in class discussion. They are overwhelmed by fear and nervousness when they have to participate in class. These students are generally those who refuse to answer questions, share insights and express opinions. Likewise, they prefer to remain quiet when they are asked to recite to avoid committing mistakes and being ostracized by their classmates. These students are generally those who exhibit apprehensions in speaking, if not of their lack of encouragement and motivation of using English for communication. They, most of the time, find difficulty in composing their ideas orally even a short statement only. Moreover, they show their inhibitions towards using the language as evidenced by their unwillingness and shyness. Certainly, these students are passive learners in the classroom. Being highly apprehensive hampers them of being active and interactive participants in class

discussion. Furthermore, their apprehensions reduce their confidence of engaging themselves to other speaking activities, thus, hampering themselves to become good and effective communicators in the classroom. Therefore, their performance in class interaction and other performance tasks is greatly affected.

Meanwhile, only 43 (11.59%) of the Grade 7 students have low level of apprehension. This signifies that communicating in meeting or class discussion usually makes them at ease. These students generally have already the confidence to articulate their views and thoughts. They are ready and are not hesitant whenever they are called to recite, answer questions, state opinions and express judgments. Also, these students are the ones who seek opportunities of making themselves to be heard by others. Moreover, they are good communicators in the classroom since they have no fear and are comfortable of using the English language in conversing with others. Therefore, these students, having low apprehension, are likely to have good performance in class discussion and other speaking-related learning tasks and activities.

### ***Dyad***

When it comes to dyad, 232 (62.53%) of the Grade 7 students experience average level of communication apprehension in English. This indicates that these students still exhibit apprehensions in some dyadic situations. Normally, these students have no fear of speaking up in conversations. However, they are sometimes apprehensive when they are conversing with another person. This shows that the students experience anxiety and nervousness when communicating interpersonally with somebody, especially when participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance. In school, these students are usually exposed to dyadic situations when conversing with their schoolmates, teachers, school administrators and other school personnel, parents and visitors, among others. With these different types of people that the students encounter, their oral communication apprehensions may normally arise especially when they have to talk and speak with them formally specifically with their teachers and other school personnel. Likewise, their apprehension of using English may occur since they are not comfortable with the people they are talking with.

It is also shown in the table that 118 (31.80%) of the students' experience high level of apprehension in English when they speak up in conversations. This indicates that these students are the ones who are generally afraid of talking with another person. Also,

they avoid communicating in this situation because they are not really much exposed to this kind of conversation. Moreover, they feel uncomfortable and shy whenever they are engaged in conversations, especially if the person they are talking with is unfamiliar or a new acquaintance to them. This may disrupt the continuous flow of the exchanging of ideas and may result to ambiguity. Furthermore, they are highly apprehensive because they are pressured of what they share and are afraid of committing mistakes on the information that they are relaying and mispronouncing words, especially when they encounter a face-to-face conversation with professional personnel and other people who are proficient in English, wherein the formality of the language is observed.

In a related research by Nor Aini and Normazla [9], the study subjects were found to experience the highest level of communication apprehension when participating interpersonal communication. Their study also revealed that the major causes of communication apprehensions are the personality trait of the students and their inability to pronounce English words correctly.

Meanwhile, 21 (5.66%) of the Grade 7 students experience low level of apprehensions in dyadic situations. This means that these students are ordinarily calm and relaxed in conversations. They are the ones who are comfortable while conversing with different kinds of people that they encounter even with a new acquaintance. They have no fear of speaking up in interpersonal conversations because they normally like and enjoy sharing their insights and are confident enough in exchanging their ideas with other people.

### ***Public Speaking***

It is clearly manifested in the table that 318 (85.71%) of the Grade 7 students have average level of apprehensions in public speaking. This implies that these students have no fear of giving or delivering a speech but there are instances that they are conquered by nervousness, especially when they are talking in front of a big crowd. They are generally comfortable in public speaking. However, there are times that oral communication apprehensions are normally experienced, especially when giving a speech with the presence of a large audience, wherein different kinds of people are present.

In the same table, 38 (10.24%) of the students have high level of apprehensions in public speaking. This indicates that these students are generally afraid of public speaking. In school, students do not have much exposure in this communication situation. Their teachers may not

yet fully introduce or utilize public speaking as a strategy in overcoming their fear of using English as a means for communication. Thus, when they are engaged to such, they become highly apprehensive. These students get so nervous that certain parts of their body feel very tensed and rigid while giving a speech. There are also instances that their thoughts become confused and jumbled and even forget the facts of ideas they want to convey while delivering a speech. Their being highly apprehensive is rooted from their inability to speak well in English and their lack of exposure to the language. Likewise, their fear of being judged and criticized by other people while talking also contributes to their apprehensions, especially so when they are surrounded with a crowd of different kinds of people. Moreover, the pressure of making a good impression to other people disrupts them of delivering their speech well. These students, therefore, consider public speaking as an activity that stimulates fear and anxiety because this communication situation only makes them uncomfortable and tense.

This finding can be linked to the result of the study of Patil and Karekatti [10] which revealed that students are more apprehensive while giving oral presentation or public speech. The study also highlighted that the students dislike public speaking and viewed it as an activity which incites fear and anxiety.

Meanwhile, 15 (4.04%) of the students' experience low level of apprehension in public speaking, which means that they have no fear of giving a speech. These students do not experience anxiety while they are expressing their ideas through a speech. They face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence and ease even in front of a large group or audience. Hence, they are able to deliver a speech well and convey what they really want to impart or share. Since they experience low level of apprehension, they are likely the ones who view public speaking as an engaging and enjoyable activity.

**Overall Oral Communication Apprehension**

With regards to the students' overall communication apprehension, 322 (86.79%) of them exhibit average level of apprehension, followed by 37 (9.97%) who have high level of apprehension. Only 12 (3.23%) experience low level of oral communication apprehension in English.

Considerably, only 12 of the Grade 7 students are likely to regard communicating with others as a satisfying activity, others are averagely apprehensive which makes them apprehensive in some situations and conversations, while the rest experience a high level of

apprehension which makes them refuse to communicate and converse with other people in the different communication situations.

Grade 7 students, with their young minds, are still in the stage, wherein enhancing the basic language skills required for them is very crucial. If they experience moderate and high levels of apprehension, they are more likely to avoid communicating inside and outside the classroom. As the Communication Apprehension Theory assumes, that high-apprehensive individuals are less likely to engage in communication than low-apprehensive. The results imply that as early as possible, the Grade 7 students have to enhance their communication skills to alleviate their apprehension in English in order for them to perform better in classroom activities in their succeeding grade levels.

**Level of Academic Performance of the Grade 7 Students in the Core Subjects**

Another concern of the study is to determine the Grade 7 students' level of academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science based on their final grades in these core subjects.

**Academic Performance in English**

It can be noted from Table 2 that 140 (37.73%) of the students obtained a final grade range of 85-89, which is marked *very satisfactory*, followed by 97 (26.14%) with a final grade range of 80-84, which is described as *satisfactory*.

Meanwhile, 80 (21.56%) are within the final grade range of 75-79, marked as *fairly satisfactory*, while 54 (14.55%) have a final grade range of 90-100, which is described as *outstanding*.

Table 2. Distribution of the students according to their academic performance in English.

Grades	Description	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
90-100	O	54	14.55
85-89	VS	140	37.73
80-84	S	97	26.14
75-79	FS	80	21.56
Below 75	D	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>371</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Mean =		84.13 (S)	SD=4.75

Evidently, none of the students obtained a final grade range of Below 75 or those who *did not meet expectations* or those who failed in the subject area. From the same table, it can be gleaned that the mean grade of



the students is 84.13, with standard deviation of 4.75, which is described as *satisfactory*. The result indicates that most of the students are within the average range of final grade in English.

Table 3. Distribution of the students according to their academic performance in Mathematics.

Grades	Description	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
90-100	O	55	14.82
85-89	VS	115	30.99
80-84	S	110	29.64
75-79	FS	91	24.52
Below 75	D	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>371</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Mean=	83.76 (S)		SD=5.27

When it comes to the students' academic performance in Mathematics, as presented in Table 3, 115 (30.99%) of the students attained a final grade range of 85-89, which is marked *very satisfactory*, followed by 110 (29.64%) with a final grade range of 80-84, which is described as *satisfactory*.

It can also be deduced from the table that 91 (24.52%) are within the final grade range of 75-79, marked as *fairly satisfactory*, while 55 (14.82%) have a final grade range of 90-100, described as *outstanding*.

Interestingly, none of the students obtained a final grade range of Below 75 or those who *did not meet expectations* or those who failed in this subject area. It can be noted from the same table that the mean grade of the students is 83.76, with standard deviation of 5.27, which is described as *satisfactory*. The result manifests that most of the students are within the average range of final grade in Mathematics.

Table 4. Distribution of the students according to their academic performance in Science.

Grades	Description	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
90-100	O	58	15.63
85-89	VS	121	32.61
80-84	S	116	31.26
75-79	FS	76	20.48
Below 75	D	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>371</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Mean =	84.13 (S)		SD=4.82

For the students' level of academic performance in Science, it is reflected in Table 4 that 121 (32.61%) of the students achieved a final grade range of 85-89, which is marked *very satisfactory* and 116 (31.26%) obtained a final grade range of 80-84, which is described as *satisfactory*.

It can be also observed from the table that 76 (20.48%) are within the final grade range of 75-79, marked as *fairly satisfactory*, while 58 (15.63%) have a final grade range of 90-100, which is described as *outstanding*. None of the students obtained a final grade range of Below 75 or those who *did not meet expectations* and those who failed in this subject area.

It can be then deemed from the table that the mean grade of the students is 84.09, with standard deviation of 4.82, described as *satisfactory*. This shows that most of the students are within the average range of final grade in Science.

Table 5. Coefficients of correlation between each of the students' level of oral communication apprehension and their academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science.

Communication Situations	Subject Areas		
	English	Math	Science
Small Group	-.305**	-.265**	-.275**
Meeting	-.279**	-.196**	-.210**
Dyad	-.180**	-.113*	.080
Public Speaking	-.107*	.044	.042
Overall Oral CA	-.312**	-.221**	-.213**

\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level; \*Significant at the 0.05 level

The study further determined if the students' oral communication apprehension and academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science have significant relationship. The coefficients of correlation are presented in Table 5.

Notably, the students' level of oral communication apprehension in small group and their academic performance in English (-.305), Mathematics (-.265) and Science (-.275) are significantly related at the .01 level of significance.

This significant correlation coefficient implies that the students' oral communication apprehension in this communication situation affect their academic performance in the three core subjects. Since students are frequently engaged to communicative activities in the form of small group discussions in English, Mathematics and Science, their oral communication apprehension in this situation could significantly affect their performance in the classroom and more importantly, their academic performance in the said subjects.

It can be also deduced from the table that the students' oral communication apprehension in meeting and their academic performance in English (-.279), Mathematics (-.196) and Science (-.210) are significantly related, which are all significant at the .01 level of significance. This indicates that the students' level of oral communication apprehension in meetings or class discussions, which are typical communicative situations in the classroom, have significant impact to their academic performance in the three subjects.

The table also reflects the relationship between the students' oral communication apprehension in dyad and their academic performance. It can be gleaned from the table that the students' level of communication apprehension in dyads has significant relationship to their academic performance in English (-.180), which is significant at the .01 level of significance and their academic performance in Mathematics (-.113), which is significant at the .05 level of significance. These significant correlation coefficients indicate a direct relationship between their oral communication apprehension in dyads and their academic performance in the said subjects.

Meanwhile, the students' level of communication apprehension in dyad is not significantly related to their academic performance in Science (.080). This shows that their oral communication apprehension in such situation does not have an impact to their academic performance in Science. This implies that students' engagement in dyad or dyadic situation is not a great indicator of their academic performance in Science unlike in English (-.180) and Mathematics (-.113), which show significant relationship between their academic performance and their level of oral communication apprehension in dyad at the .01 level of significance and .05 level of significance, respectively.

In public speaking, the figures on the table show that the students' oral communication apprehension in the said situation is significantly related only to their academic performance in English (-.107), which is significant at the .05 level of significance. On the other hand, the table reveals that the students' oral communication apprehension in public speaking has no significant relationship to their academic performance in Mathematics (.044) and Science (.042). The results imply that the students' level of oral communication apprehension in public speaking affects their academic performance in English only, since communicative activities done in this situation are required more in English than in the other two core subjects.

As a whole, it can be further noted that the students' overall communication apprehension and their academic performance in English (-.312), Mathematics (-.221) and Science (-.213) are significantly related at the .01 level of significance. This only shows that their overall CA has impact to their academic performance as measured by their final grades in the said core subjects.

The negative correlation coefficient implies that as the level of oral communication apprehension gets high, their academic performance gets low. The results further indicate that the students with low level of CA are likely to perform better academically, while those who have high level of CA tend to have lower academic performance.

The findings of the study can be associated to the results of the studies of Allen and Bourhis [11], which showed that a significant level of communication apprehension affected the students' academic performance.

By way of contrast, Devi and Feroz [12] found out that communication apprehension did not show any relationship with students' academic performance.

With the results of the study, Smith [13] claimed that it is important to reduce communication apprehension in the classroom in order to increase participation. It is important to address high communication apprehension among students to help them attain success in the class.

Moreover, communication skills, especially oral communication skills, are truly essential not only in English subject but also to other core subjects like Mathematics and Science wherein the use of English is very useful. Therefore, Mathematics and Science teachers should also employ effective language instructions while students are learning science and math concepts. This is to help students reduce their fear or anxiety of using the English language to have better performance in classroom interactions and ultimately to have better academic performance, especially so that performance task has the highest percentage in the total grade of the students in the three subjects.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the light of the findings, it can be concluded that the Grade 7 students exhibit varied degrees or levels of oral communication apprehension in English in all the communication situations (small group, meeting, dyad and public speaking) and in their overall oral CA.

The students' level of oral communication apprehension significantly influences their level of academic performance in English, Mathematics and

Science. Thus, the study concludes that oral communication apprehension could be a predictor in the students' academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science.

This supports the idea of CALP which delineates that there is a connection between students' cognitive and linguistic processes to their academic performance. Thus, students who have not yet developed their communication skills may encounter difficulties in learning Science, Mathematics and other academic subjects.

This study, therefore, discloses that if students experience a significant level of oral communication apprehension, they are more likely to have lower academic performance. On the other hand, if they experience lower level of oral communication apprehension, they are more likely to obtain higher academic performance.

This study focused on determining the relationship between the Grade 7 students' oral communication apprehensions and their academic performance in the core subjects namely, English, Mathematics and Science. The students' oral communication apprehensions in English were delimited to the four communication situations based on the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24). Moreover, the high school students involved in the study were delimited to the Grade 7 students from the selected secondary schools in the Division of Ilocos Norte. Furthermore, the students' academic performance was delimited to the students' final grades in the core subjects – English, Mathematics and Science.

With the scope and limitations of the study, the researcher offers several recommendations for future investigation.

High school English teachers should continue exposing their students to varied oral communication activities to reduce the students' oral communication apprehensions. They should employ engaging and interesting speaking activities that could maximize students' participation to further enhance their communication skills.

Mathematics and Science teachers should use the English language effectively in teaching Science and Mathematical concepts to promote the important use of the English language in their classes. In this way, the students are not only acquiring essential concepts but at the same time enhancing their oral communication skills in English.

High school students should realize the important role of English for self-development. They should

develop positive attitude of learning it to further understand its demands on the academic tracks. They should also practice using English in conversing with other people so as to lessen their difficulty and apprehension in using the language for communication.

Lastly, other research enthusiasts are encouraged to conduct related studies, exploring on other grade levels and other school divisions and examine other factors such as student's language anxiety, language/s spoken at home, type of school they attended, and the speaking activities they are engaged into, which may have effects on their oral communication apprehensions and academic performance.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Acknowledgment goes to DepEd – Ilocos Norte, Mariano Marcos State University Graduate School and Bingao National High School for providing support and assistance in the conduct of this study.

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