



## COMMUNICATION PREFERENCE, ANXIETY AND PROFICIENCY AMONG GRADE 10 SECONDARY STUDENTS

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### Abstract

This is the researcher's response on the needs of the ESL learners for effective delivery of instruction and understanding the learner's need especially in communication. This descriptive-correlational research was conducted to determine the communication preference, anxiety, and proficiency of 99 grade 10 students in Junior High School coming from the Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School District of Balete in the Division of Aklan. To determine the communication preference, level of anxiety and proficiency, researchers-made questionnaires were used. The frequency count, percentage, mean, standard deviation, ANOVA and Pearson r were employed as statistical tools and set at 0.05 level of significance for the analysis of data. Overall, the communication preferences of the Grade 10 secondary students have "moderately preferred" and most of the Grade 10 students used oral communication as preferred means of communication. On the other hand, communication anxiety of the Grade 10 students are "moderately severe" and the level of communication proficiency of the Grade 10 are "good." There is a significant difference in communication proficiency. Moreover, there is no significant difference in communication proficiency among the level communication anxiety among the Grade 10 students. There is a significant relationship among Communication Preferences, Anxiety and Communication Proficiency. However, there is no significant relationship in Communication Anxiety and Proficiency among Grade 10 secondary students.

**Keywords:** Communication, Preference, Anxiety, Proficiency, ESL learners,

### Introduction

Communication refers to the process of transferring or sharing ideas from one to another. Success in communication is achieved whenever messages are conveyed and transferred clearly and understandable. Aena, et. al (2012) state that communication



“permeates virtually in all human interaction activities”. In addition, the process of communication, especially for humans is undoubtedly complex.

This complexity is due to the fact that “humans communicate cognitively, emotionally, and socially”. This shows that communication holds important roles in human life especially in the life of high school students. To gain successful communication, problems during the communication process should be avoided. The process of transferring information, sharing ideas, and transmitting knowledge may vary depending on many different aspects. Individual, of course, have their own ways in doing all the said communicative activities.

Urea (2013) states that “communication style or preference represents the ensemble of characteristics a person possesses, and reflected in the communicative act”. Urea (2013) further states that communication skill is “a personality feature”, which can be in the forms of “specific ways of receiving/decoding the message; personal qualities in processing/interpreting messages; specific ways of expressing the response, and personal particularities of feedback”. In order to be successful in communication, good strategies are needed.

## **Main Part**

Effective communication is based on the way people talk and listen, how people respond and the body language. Nobody speaks the same way, although they speak the same language. This is also a mere fact observed for some high school students that are sometimes misinterpreted or hard to understand and tend to use different means in order to understand them better. Conversely, the idea where we want to understand our high school students is also sometimes unpredictable. Thus, the problem in English communication preference, the anxiety felt by the student and level of proficiency could be attributed to the students’ limited opportunities to practice the language they are acquiring. The researcher wanted to help other ESL teachers not only teaching English subject to understand their students and also to address what possible solution they may use in order to solve the agony inside the classroom. The result of the study may serve as an avenue to locate more appropriate delivery of instruction and understanding the learner’s need especially in communication.

It is in this light that the purpose of this study was to find out the different communication preferences, anxieties and proficiency of grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago National High School.



Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the communication preferences of the Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School?
2. What is the level of communication anxiety of the Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School?
3. What is the level of communication proficiency of the Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School?
4. Is there a significant difference in communication proficiency among the levels of communication preferences of Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School?
5. Is there a significant difference in communication proficiency among the levels of communication anxiety of Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School?
6. Are there significant relationships among communication preferences, anxiety and the proficiency of the Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School?

Based on the above stated statements of the problem, the following hypotheses were advanced:

1. There is no significant difference in communication proficiency among the levels of communication preferences of Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School.
2. There is no significant difference in communication proficiency among the levels of communication anxiety of Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School.
3. There are no significant relationships among communication preferences, anxiety and the proficiency of the Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School.

The survey-correlational research design was used. Survey is intended when the data cannot be directly observed. It is a data gathering method that is utilized to collect, analyze and interpret the views of a group of people from a target population. It is also obtained using interviews or self-administered questionnaires and the responses of the respondents are reduced into numerals. Correlational is when the study intends to establish significance in differences or relations between or among the variables.



The respondents of the study were the 99 students of grade 10 in Junior High School coming from the Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School District of Balete in the Division of Aklan. A total of 99 respondents took part in the conduct of the study.

In the purpose of study, “communication preference” referred to as a measurement or score in preferred communication skill using the 10 items researchers-made perception-based questionnaire among secondary high school students and this can be measured by the mean score in a 10-item. It measured the level of preference of the secondary high school student on the use of oral, writing, online and nonverbal communication. A 5-point Likert scale was the basis for the responses which are classified as “Always” (5), “Often” (4), “Sometimes” (3), “Seldom” (2) and “Never” (1). This was arbitrarily categorized as “Strongly preferred” (4.21-5.00), “High preferred” (3.41-4.20), “Preferred” (2.61-3.40), “Less Preferred” (1.81-2.60), and “Least preferred” (1.0-1.81). In addition, “communication anxiety” referred to as level of apprehension or score in anxiety using the 10 items researcher’s-made perception-based questionnaire among secondary high school students and this can be measured by the mean score in a 10-item. A 5-point Likert scale was the basis for the responses which are “At all times” (5), “Most of the time” (4), “Often” (3), “Sometimes” (2), “Never” (1) and this was arbitrarily be categorized as “Very Severe” (4.21-5.00), “Severe” (3.41-4.20), “Moderately Severe” (2.61-3.40), “Less Severe” (1.81-2.60), and “Least Severe” (1.00-1.80).

Furthermore, “communication proficiency” is referred to as an evaluation or test of the quality of the performed behavior possess by a certain individual in English language and this can be measured by the mean score in a 40-item multiple choice test researchers-made with four options obtained from the respondent’s reference book specifically focus on their Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 lessons and scores are interpreted and classified as “Excellent” (28.01-35.00), “Very Good” (21.01-28.00), “Good” (14.01-21.00), “Poor” (7.01-14.00) and “Very Poor” (0.00-7.00).

The analysis of results were generally generated using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software. To analyse the data, the following descriptive statistics were employed frequency, percentage and mean. The inferential statistics used were ANOVA, and Pearson r. All inferential tests were set by 5% alpha level of significance. On the basis of the above-mentioned problem on communication preference, anxiety and proficiency the following results were generated:





1. The communication preference survey results as further broken down show the grade 10 students “preferred” to communicate in Oral and Written. Meanwhile, the non-verbal and online preference is “moderately preferred”. Among all the communication preferences, the students like better in performing oral communication. In terms of oral preference, this is the easiest way to convey the message through talking and sharing to others. When they are asked by their teachers to elicit ideas they prefer to use their oral skills. This means the oral is the most convenient way to elicit ideas, give feedbacks and communicate spontaneously. In terms of written preference, it was only second to the preferred means of providing and/or receiving information due to the fact students are not fond or required to write variety of essays. Notably, written communication is included as a generic skill expected of all students to attain higher education learning. In terms of non-verbal preference, this is the third choice on the most preferred of communicating to others. There are some reasons why students moderately preferred and this is because they find it hard to relay the message by using hand gestures or body movements only. The message or information is incomplete. In terms of online preference, there are several reasons why students chose the online as least preferred. These are: lacking of practice to increase the familiarity with the technical aspect of using gadgets and computers, poor in connection especially the school is situated away from the national road where connectivity is limited, and not all students have the ability to access in using the gadgets and not equipped to use such.

2. The result indicates that most of the students experienced “moderately severe” anxieties when communicating to others. The results indicate that students of grade 10 have “moderately severe” anxiety often withdrawn choose to sit out of activities and feel tense and nervous while participating in group discussions. Anxiety causes individual to fear situations. In the school setting, anxiety is experienced often by students when being evaluated, such as communicating fluently in English, taking a test or giving a public performance.

3. The result indicates that grade 10 students were “good” in terms of how proficient they are in using the English language with a mean of 18.57 and a standard deviation of 6.39 respectively. The grade 10 students are in the middle scale of performing well in the school. There are some factors that were identified by the teachers that affect students’ performance through informal interview. The results were due to duration of administering the test, large class size and unavailability of preparation to take the proficiency test. Some of the students reveal having a perception that answering the



survey is tiresome. The topics and the scope of the test is maybe not that much learned by the students and need enough time to understand each question.

4. It shows that there is a significant difference between Communication Proficiency among the levels of communication preferences. This means, they are likely performing better and have a good result in communication proficiency when using oral skills or in any other forms that includes oral communication. When students perceived in the class as emphasizing high preferred communication preference was salient to them, they were more likely to have a high communication proficiency result. Conversely, when students are using their less preferred skill to test such as proficiency test in English the result might be low uncompetitive. In any case, students may adopt different communication preferences the most preferred way to learn and understand the messages. Teachers may also modify or change the nature of student's communication preference in the classroom to provide a viable way of redirecting student's communication proficiency level. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in communication proficiency among the levels of communication preferences of Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School is rejected.

5. There is no significant difference in analysis of variance of Communication Proficiency among the levels of Communication Anxiety. The findings deemed to point out that communication proficiency is not significantly different among the levels of communication anxiety. The implication of the involvement of communication anxiety is not a guarantee for a student to get a high or low communication competence level. Determining whether the student's communication competence level is competitive or degrading should not compare on the level of fear or apprehension associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in communication proficiency among the levels of communication anxiety is accepted.

6. There is significant relationships among Communication Preferences and anxiety, Communication Preference and proficiency and there is no significant relationship among Communication Anxiety and proficiency of the Grade 10 secondary students at Father Julian C. Rago Memorial National High School. In terms of communication preferences and anxiety, the data findings indicate when a student chose his prefer way of communication in learning English he may encounter apprehension associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons. It may arises



certain anxieties because he may not sometimes use the other skills like written, non-verbal or online in which it is essential to develop one's English competence level. In terms of communication preference and proficiency, on the other hand, when a student solely focuses on his preferred way of communication there is a higher rate of proficiency in the English class. While students focus on their chosen communication preference that ensures future success, positive result is distinctly observable to be more proficient in English communication. In terms of communication anxiety and communication proficiency, meanwhile, is not significantly related for it not affects the students' performance inside the classroom. It means when a student subjectively experience apprehension associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons this could not show complete normal effect on the proficiency level to him. The null hypothesis which states that there are no significant relationships among communication preferences and communication anxiety and communication preference and proficiency are rejected. While the communication anxiety and communication proficiency is accepted.

## Conclusion

1. The study revealed that among all the communication preferences, the students like better in performing oral communication. Therefore, the class may lead on to activities that they can utilize the speaking abilities of the students, strong familiarity on the activities or discussions where oral skills are highly needed and less difficulty in perceiving English subject. They prefer oral presentations like spoken poetry contest, field reporting, public speaking, small-group or team-based oral working and debating.
2. The results revealed that students probably experience anxiety often withdrawn choose to sit out of activities and feel tense and nervous while participating in group or individual discussions. Anxiety causes individual to fear situations. This anxiety may lead to shame and embarrassment and negative self-criticism to the students inside the classroom. They might not perform well and may lead to absenteeism and reduction of interest to go to school. This also may result to misunderstanding and to worst terrified to go beyond and to have positive outlook in life.
3. The study revealed that students are good in English proficiency. This may lead to insufficiency of knowledge and skills on English grammar and communication, difficulty to comprehend the spoken word and the written text if students are not properly taught how to do so, and poor study habits as perceived that English is a



difficult subject to learn and thus may not cooperate in class. Not being good in taking tests or not even participating in the class discussion maybe the reason for having good proficiency level.

4. The study revealed that there is a positive result if the students choose their prefer communication preference to regulate and use it inside the classroom to be more proficient in English class. When some students perceived in the class as emphasizing high preferred communication preference was salient to them, it may lead them eager to learn. Also, they may develop passion to go beyond their capacity in learning the English subject. Therefore, the more the student engaged on his chosen communication preference, the higher the chance of getting high proficiency result.

5. The study revealed that if some students feel fear or apprehension associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons it might not probably concern to the subject. Maybe the students are not comfortable with their classmates and the learning environment is likely less conducive to learn and they feel unsafe and threatened. This may lead on to conducive learning atmosphere inside the classroom for both teachers and the students, students are free to explore mastery of English proficiency which may acquire through experiences and other related instances that a teacher might not give to his student, and a student may also gain knowledge from exteriors like being inquisitive on his surroundings, adopting the new trends and feeding themselves with full of knowledge on the things in which he is always exposed without any hesitation and anxiety. Inasmuch as communication anxiety is concern competence must be asserted to the students' performance through elicit adaptive result.

6. The result revealed that communication preference and anxiety have a significant relationship to each other. This may lead to students focus only on their preferred way of communicating others, they might not develop the other skills in which essential to develop one's English competence level, poor motivation and/or the interest, and thus they fail to invest effort to highlight other skills worriment might occur and it may lead to unsuccessful rate. Reluctance and ignorance of which other skills are involved may lead to a problem and this may result to difficulty in embracing the English subject and the environment where they belong. Similarly, on the results of communication preference and communication proficiency is significantly related, when a student might value his preferred way of communicating with others there is a possibility of getting a higher proficiency rate. This may lead to a student who is driven by his passion





to learn, the other skills which embodied to that particular skill could be absolved. Hence, it may lead to developing students' eagerness, attentiveness, and love for the subject on his preferred communication preference thus, can be repeatedly achieving high-end proficient result. Meanwhile, the communication anxiety and communication proficiency is not significantly related for it not affects the students' performance inside the classroom. This may lead a student to gain knowledge from exteriors like being inquisitive on his surroundings, adopting the new trends and feeding themselves with full of knowledge on the things in which he is always exposed without any hesitation and anxiety.

## **Recommendations**

1. In oral communication preference, teachers and students may use varied techniques to harness the skills of the students like one-on-one speaking, small-group or team-based oral work, full-class discussions, in-class debates and deliberations, speeches and presentations and oral examinations. While in written preference, journal writing, proofing and note writing are feasible activities. With regards to non verbal preference, teachers and students may utilize these techniques to improve more: acting out, group drawing, charades, and acting or demonstrating lesson. In online preference, teachers and students can do different activities to improve more the English skills like: creating original products and infomercials, utilizing social networking sites to improve writing skills, web use and communication activities, and encouraging participation in public discourse through online writing in ESL instruction.
2. In the school setting, the anxiety of a certain student should be evaluated such as communicating fluently in English, taking a test or giving a public performance. They should expose on public performances like in the school's program, community –based activities and civic programs. Engage them frequently in the class, forming group activity, set an activity where students can stand, talk, and mingle with other peers like assemblies. Field trip is also one of the most engaging activities to lessen the anxiety felt by the student.
3. The communication proficiency must be applicable on the level of recognition of the students. It is recommended that communication skills should be aligned more on communication activities and has a better capability of grasping the knowledge in English subject. Teachers can start talking in English with their students in whatever way possible. They should always try to ask them in English and encourage them to



reply in English. Allow students to listen and watch English program. Expose the students to participate in social interactions and give them home tasks like simple essays.

4. Since both factors communication proficiency and communication preference is significant different to each other, a teacher can increase the numerous activities that can lead a student to utilize his most preferred communication preference to be more proficient in the English class. Like engaging them in in-school and out-school programs or contests. Students can join different group forums and organization, journalism, read-a-thon and reading month celebration.

5. For the teachers, they should focus on how to improve the communication proficiency level by reducing the number of entry avenues, utilizing only well-organized style in teaching, able to orchestrate and combine particular types of language learning strategies in effective ways according to their own learning needs. It can recommend that teachers should create appropriate lesson plans, classroom activities and teaching materials. Make the learning environment safe and conducive for learning to lessen the stress and anxiety.

6. For the teachers, it is recommended for improving English-language proficiency to treat English as a living language rather than subject for studying.

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