



Problems Encountered by Public Administration Students on Their Communicative Competencies: Basis for Intervention

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Abstract - Communication is a fundamental skill for public administration professionals, who must interact with diverse citizens and clearly convey policies and procedures. This study identified problems in the communicative competencies of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) students and proposed interventions to address these issues. A descriptive quantitative survey design was employed, using a structured questionnaire administered face-to-face. The respondents included 263 BPA students and 25 faculty members from Pangasinan State University Bayambang Campus during the academic year 2023–2024. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages for students' demographic profile, and weighted mean for the level of seriousness of communication problems. Results reveal that BPA students face moderately serious difficulties in communication, particularly in written tasks such as essay writing. Faculty members, however, perceive these student communication problems as serious, especially in oral communication (e.g., students' reluctance to speak clearly in English). To address the identified problems, an intervention plan is proposed involving content-area writing workshops, collaborative writing activities, and public speaking exercises to build students' confidence and proficiency in both written and oral communication. These findings underscore the need for targeted educational interventions to improve communicative competencies among public administration students.

Keywords: public administration; communicative competencies; communication skills; oral communication; written communication; educational intervention

I. INTRODUCTION

Quality in higher education has increasingly been tied to the development of student competencies over the past few decades. With the continuous revamping of higher education programs, competencies have received considerable attention from both universities and industry (Tasopoulou & Tsiotras, 2017). In the field of public administration, effective communication skills are particularly crucial. Communication within the public sector is considered a key factor for achieving efficient governance and successful implementation of public policies (Mitu, 2021). Public administrators must be able to articulate complex ideas, engage with diverse stakeholders, and convey information clearly; thus, strong communicative competence is a core professional requirement.

In the current generation, many students appear confident in using the English language socially, yet not all use it correctly in academic or formal contexts. Mastery of English involves proper grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and tone—areas in which even college students often struggle. It is not uncommon to observe students who cannot easily write a simple essay, construct coherent sentences, or deliver an impromptu speech in English without significant assistance. Many students resort to relying on classmates or superficial online aids for these tasks instead of developing the skills themselves. This suggests that some students prefer the easiest way out when completing communication tasks, leading to persistent skill gaps. Several factors may contribute to these deficiencies. One major factor is a lack of motivation or engagement: demotivating classroom environments and uninteresting lectures can cause students to lose focus and retention, limiting their learning of language skills. Low class participation is another issue that hinders practice in both oral and written English. When students do not actively participate, they miss opportunities to use and refine their language skills in real time, impeding improvement in speaking and writing. Personal factors such as self-consciousness, personality differences, and peer pressure can also serve as barriers. For example, students who fear judgment from peers may feel too awkward or anxious to speak up or write freely, resulting in limited practice and growth. Such anxiety and reluctance align with the concept of communication apprehension, defined as fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication (McCroskey, 1977; Horwitz et al., 1986). Research has shown that lack of regular usage of English and fear of negative evaluation can heighten students' nervousness in speaking (Chentez et al., 2019). These challenges suggest that without intervention, some public administration students may graduate without fully developing the communication skills essential for their future careers (Robles, 2012).

In higher education, a competency-based approach emphasizes cultivating the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities that graduates need for the workplace (Robles, 2012). Communicative competence, in particular, has been defined as the integration of knowledge of a language with the ability to use it effectively and appropriately in real contexts (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980). This includes not only linguistic skills (grammar, vocabulary) but also pragmatic skills (knowing how to express ideas clearly and appropriately for the audience) and personal attributes like confidence and attitude. Martinez et al. (2014) describe several dimensions of competency in language learning: *knowing* (content knowledge and understanding), *knowing how* (skills and abilities), *knowing how to be* (appropriate attitudes and behavior), *knowing how to live or work together* (communication and collaboration with others), and *knowing what to do* (the practical application of skills and resources). In the context of public administration education, programs must foster both discipline-specific knowledge and these broader communicative competencies to produce well-rounded graduates (Martinez et al., 2014). Effective oral and written communication enable students to convey policies, write reports, and interact with the public—an advantage not only in academic performance but also in their future roles as public servants.

Within this context, the researchers became interested in examining the specific communication challenges faced by BPA students. Preliminary observations at the researchers' institution suggested that many students struggled with formal writing tasks and exhibited anxiety in spoken English communication. Identifying the areas where students have difficulty can help educators design curriculum enhancements or training interventions to target those weaknesses. Strengthening students' communicative competencies will not only improve their academic success but also better prepare them for the demands of public service careers, where clear and confident communication is indispensable.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the problems encountered by BPA students with regard to their communicative competencies, as a basis for developing intervention programs. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the profile of the BPA students at Pangasinan State University – Bayambang Campus in terms of age, sex, civil status, year level, and general average grade (GPA) in the last semester?
- What is the level of seriousness of the problems encountered by BPA students in their communicative competencies, as self-assessed by the students, in terms of: (a) written communication, and (b) oral communication?
- What is the level of seriousness of the problems encountered by BPA students in their communicative competencies, as perceived by faculty members, in terms of: (a) written communication, and (b) oral communication?
- Based on the findings, what interventions can be proposed to improve the communicative competencies of BPA students?

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research employed a descriptive survey design to attain the objectives and answer the specific research questions. Descriptive research involves describing the current status of phenomena without experimental manipulation; it is concerned with “what is” at present (i.e., the conditions, relationships, or practices that exist) and often uses surveys or observational methods to gather data. In this study, the descriptive approach was appropriate because the goal was to describe the communication problems encountered by BPA students and how serious these problems are, according to the perceptions of students and faculty. By quantitatively summarizing these perceptions, the study provides a factual account of the situation that can serve as a basis for planning interventions.

Participants and Sampling

The participants of the study were undergraduate students enrolled in the Bachelor of Public Administration program at Pangasinan State University – Bayambang Campus, as well as faculty members who teach in that program or related general education courses. The target population consisted of all BPA students across four year levels (first year through fourth year), totaling 768 students. From this population, a sample of 263 students was determined using Slovin's formula for sample size with an acceptable margin of error (the formula ensures a representative sample when surveying a large population). A stratified random sampling technique was applied to ensure proportionate representation of each year level in the sample. Table 1 shows the distribution of the student respondents by year level. Out of 768 BPA students, for example, 204 were first-year students and 70 of them were sampled; 163 were second-years with 56 sampled; 194 third-years with 66

sampled; and 207 fourth-years with 71 sampled. This resulted in a total student sample of $n = 263$. The stratification by year level was intended to capture any differences in communication challenges that might occur as students progress through the program.

Table 1. Distribution of Student Respondents by Year Level (Population and Sample)

Year Level	Population (N)	Sample (n)
1st Year	204	70
2nd Year	163	56
3rd Year	194	66
4th Year	207	71
Total	768	263

Note. Sample size was determined using Slovin's formula. Source of population data: PSU Bayambang Campus Registrar's Office.

In addition to the students, the study also surveyed faculty members to get an external perspective on the students' communicative competencies. A total of 25 faculty respondents participated. These faculty members were drawn from various departments that interact with BPA students: the Public Administration Department itself, and other departments such as General Education, Social Science, Early Childhood Education, and Languages, where faculty may teach courses taken by BPA students. Table 2 presents the distribution of the faculty respondents by department. For instance, 8 faculty from the Public Administration Department responded, 13 from the General Education Department, and so on, summing to 25. Faculty input was sought to compare with student self-assessments, under the premise that teachers might have different perceptions of student communication problems (potentially noticing issues students overlook or evaluating severity differently).

Table 2. Distribution of Faculty Respondents by Department

Department	Number of Faculty (N)
Public Administration	8
General Education	13
Social Science	1
Early Childhood Education	2
Language	1
Total	25

Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire composed of three parts, developed and administered by the researchers. Part I of the questionnaire collected the personal and demographic profile of student respondents (age, sex, civil status, year level, and last semester's general average grade). Part II focused on the students' self-assessment of the seriousness of problems they encounter in their own communicative competencies, with separate sections for written communication and oral communication. Part III of the survey was directed to the faculty respondents, asking them to rate the seriousness of problems they observe in their BPA students' communicative competencies (again divided into written and oral aspects).

Many of the questionnaire items were adapted from existing assessment tools to ensure validity. In particular, items for written communication challenges were drawn and modified from the *Self-Assessment of English Writing Skills and Use of Writing Strategies* questionnaire (Nielsen, 2014), while items for oral communication challenges were informed by a checklist of causes of oral communication problems used in a previous study (Chentez et al., 2019). The researchers modified the wording of some questions to better fit the context of BPA students and the local academic environment. For example, statements like “I have difficulty writing or constructing essays” or “I feel anxious when talking in front of my classmates” were included as concrete indicators of writing and speaking problems, respectively. The questionnaire was prepared in English but was translated into Filipino (the national language) by a professional translator with a Master’s in Education, to accommodate students who were more comfortable reading in Filipino. This bilingual approach was intended to maximize comprehension and accuracy of responses, given that language proficiency itself was the subject of the survey. The Filipino version was used when administering to students, with English copies available for reference if needed, and the faculty were given the English version (as their English proficiency was presumed to be high).

Each item in Parts II and III was answered on a Likert-type scale of seriousness of the problem, typically ranging from 1 (“Not serious at all”) up to 4 or 5 (“Very serious”). For this study, a four-point scale was used for clarity, with 1 = Not Serious, 2 = Slightly Serious, 3 = Moderately Serious, and 4 = Serious. Respondents were instructed to consider how much difficulty or problem they experience (or observe, in the case of faculty) with each statement. By using a numerical scale with descriptive anchors, the study was able to quantify the level of concern for each issue and later interpret the mean scores in qualitative terms (e.g., a mean close to 3.0 indicates a “moderately serious” problem on average).

The questionnaire underwent content validation by several experts before use. A panel of five senior faculty members (including professors from language and education departments) reviewed the items to ensure they were clear, relevant to the research objectives, and free of bias. Their suggestions were incorporated, which led to minor revisions in wording and the addition of a few items addressing non-verbal communication and audience awareness. A pilot test was also conducted with a small group of students (who were not part of the final sample) to check the reliability of the instrument; the Cronbach’s alpha for the scale items was found to be satisfactory (above 0.80), indicating good internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the appropriate university authorities. The researchers sent a formal letter to the Office of the Registrar to request the list of all BPA students and their distribution by year level, which was needed for sampling. They also sought approval from the Campus Executive Director and the College Dean to conduct the survey on campus. Upon approval, coordination was done with class advisers and professors to schedule survey administration without disrupting classes.

The questionnaire was administered in person by the researchers. The student respondents were gathered in small batches by year level (e.g., during a common free period or after a class) and were given the paper questionnaires with instructions. The researchers were present to explain the purpose of the study, assure respondents of anonymity and confidentiality, and address any questions about the items. Students were encouraged to answer honestly, and the atmosphere was made as

comfortable as possible to reduce any anxiety about reporting their communication problems. For the faculty respondents, the researchers distributed the questionnaires to each faculty member individually at their offices or department mailboxes and later collected them at an agreed time. Faculty were similarly briefed on the purpose and asked to provide candid assessments based on their experience teaching BPA students.

Throughout the data collection, the researchers offered assistance in clarifying any questionnaire items. For instance, if a student did not understand a term in English, the Filipino translation was provided. The researchers ensured that all surveys were completed on the spot to maximize the response rate and retrieved all questionnaires immediately after completion. This hands-on administration process yielded a 100% retrieval rate of the distributed questionnaires (263 from students and 25 from faculty). All completed responses were checked for completeness and consistency.

Data Analysis

After gathering the surveys, the data were encoded and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. The personal profile of the student respondents (Part I) was summarized using frequency counts and percentages. This provided a demographic breakdown (e.g., the percentage of male vs. female students, the distribution of ages, etc.). Presenting these frequencies gives context to the sample characteristics and ensures that the sample reasonably represents the population.

To determine the level of seriousness of communication problems, the researchers computed the weighted mean for each survey item in Parts II and III. The weighted mean was calculated across all student respondents for each indicator of written and oral communication problems, and likewise across all faculty respondents for each corresponding indicator. These mean scores were then interpreted using the predetermined scale: means from 1.00–1.75 were interpreted as “Not Serious”, 1.76–2.50 as “Slightly Serious”, 2.51–3.25 as “Moderately Serious”, and 3.26–4.00 as “Serious”. (In practice, as will be seen in the results, most student-rated issues fell in the moderately serious range, whereas many faculty-rated issues reached the serious range.)

For clarity, each table of results includes the descriptive equivalent of the mean (based on the scale) so that readers can easily see how the numeric values translate to qualitative severity. The study focused on identifying which specific problems had the highest mean ratings (indicating the most serious challenges) and which had the lowest (indicating relatively lesser concerns), for both students and faculty. No complex inferential statistics were required since the aim was not to test hypotheses or correlations but rather to describe the central tendencies of ratings. However, where relevant, comparisons between student and faculty perceptions are noted in the discussion (though formal statistical tests of difference were beyond the scope of this descriptive study).

All quantitative analyses were performed using Microsoft Excel and cross-verified manually to ensure accuracy. The results are presented in tabular form (Tables 4–7) for each major category of communicative competency problem, followed by descriptive analysis. These tables form the basis for the subsequent discussion of the findings and the development of recommended interventions.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary; students and faculty were informed that they could opt not to answer any question they were uncomfortable with, and they could withdraw from the survey at any time. The respondents' identities

were kept confidential, and individual responses were not reported—only aggregate data are presented. The study was conducted in accordance with the university's research ethics guidelines, ensuring respect, beneficence, and confidentiality for all participants.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the BPA Student Respondents

A total of 263 BPA students participated in the survey. The demographic profile of these student respondents is summarized here in terms of age, sex, civil status, year level, and academic performance (general average grade):

- **Age:** The students were predominantly young adults. A majority (152 students, or 57.8%) were in the 18–20 years old age range. Another 97 students (36.9%) were 21–23 years old. A small minority were older: 10 students (3.8%) were aged 24–27, and only 4 students (1.5%) were 31 or older. Notably, none of the respondents were in the 28–30 age bracket (0%). This age distribution is typical for an undergraduate program, with most students entering around age 18 and progressing through their early 20s by graduation.
- **Sex:** The sample had more female students than male students. Out of 263, 151 (57.4%) identified as female, whereas 112 (42.6%) were male. This indicates a female majority of students in the BPA program. While the survey did not delve into reasons for this imbalance, it reflects the enrollment pattern in the department at the time. Female students forming the majority could imply that women are particularly drawn to or successful in this field at the university. No other gender categories were reported in the data.
- **Civil Status:** Nearly all student respondents were single, as expected in a college setting. Specifically, 261 students (99.2%) reported being *single*. Only 2 students (0.8%) were *married*. None of the respondents indicated being legally separated, annulled, or widowed (0% in each of those categories). The overwhelming majority of single students corresponds with the young age profile; most are likely unmarried undergraduates.
- **Year Level:** The respondents were fairly well distributed across the four year levels of the BPA program, with a slight skew toward the senior years. First-year students comprised 26.6% of the sample (70 students), second-years 21.3% (56 students), third-years 25.1% (66 students), and fourth-years 27.0% (71 students). The fourth-year group was the largest single cohort in the sample, which is unsurprising as the population data (Table 1) showed the fourth year had the highest enrollment among the four levels. The smallest group was the second-year cohort at just over one-fifth of the sample. These proportions ensure that opinions from all academic stages are represented, from newcomers to those about to graduate.
- **General Average Grade (GPA):** The academic performance (in terms of general weighted average from the last semester) of the respondents varied, but most fell in the middle range of the grading scale. Using the Philippine grading system (where 1.00 is highest and 5.00 is

failing, with 3.00 often being the passing cutoff), the study found that 50.2% of students (132 individuals) had a GPA in the range 2.00–2.25. This range can be interpreted roughly as a “Good” performance (approximately equivalent to a B or B- average). Additionally, 27.4% of students (72 individuals) had a slightly higher average of 1.50–1.75 (around a B+ to A-range), and 8.4% (22 students) achieved an *excellent* average of 1.00–1.25 (roughly an A range). Meanwhile, 14.1% (37 students) were in the 2.50 range (2.25–2.50, which is around C+ level). Importantly, none of the respondents had a general average of 3.00 or lower, indicating that all were in good academic standing (3.00 is often a passing threshold, so 0% in “3.00 and below” means no one was at risk of failing out academically). The most common GPA bracket being 2.00–2.25 suggests that about half of the students are average in academic performance, with a significant minority performing above average.

This profile establishes the context for the subsequent analysis of communication problems. In particular, it is worth noting that the majority of respondents are young, single, and in their later years of study, with moderate academic success. Female students constitute a larger share, which could be relevant if communication issues differ by gender (though this study did not specifically disaggregate results by sex). Overall, the student sample appears to mirror the general BPA student population, lending credibility to the findings on communicative competency challenges.

The faculty respondents (25 in total) were not characterized by personal demographics in this study, but it is noted that they span multiple departments and thus bring a range of perspectives. Many of these faculty members have extensive teaching experience and have observed student performance in various communication tasks (e.g., writing assignments, oral presentations) in their classes. Their aggregate perception will be compared with student self-assessments in the results that follow.

Students' Self-Assessment of Problems in Written Communication

Students were asked to rate how serious various writing-related problems were for them. Table 4 presents the results for ten indicators of written communication issues, based on the responses of $n = 263$ BPA students. Each indicator is a statement describing a potential difficulty in writing, and students rated each on the scale from 1 (Not Serious) to 4 (Serious). The table shows the mean score for each item and its descriptive equivalent.

Table 4. Level of Seriousness of Problems Encountered by BPA Students in Written Communication (Student Self-Assessment, $n = 263$)

Indicator (Writing Problem)	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I have difficulty writing or constructing essays.	3.08	Moderately Serious
2. I am incapable of making an outline when writing an essay.	3.02	Moderately Serious
3. I lack ideas when writing essays.	3.00	Moderately Serious
4. It is hard for me to write in an academic style and tone.	2.98	Moderately Serious
5. I struggle to choose the appropriate words when writing a sentence.	3.05	Moderately Serious
6. I have limited knowledge of different sentence structures.	3.05	Moderately Serious
7. I lack interest in browsing the dictionary (looking up words).	2.98	Moderately Serious

8. I am afraid of discussing or collaborating with fellow students on writing tasks.	2.87	Moderately Serious
9. It is tough for me to incorporate my ideas using proper grammar.	2.92	Moderately Serious
10. I often do not carefully consider the instructions or topic before writing.	2.71	Moderately Serious
Overall Mean	2.97	Moderately Serious

As shown in Table 4, all the listed writing problems were, on average, rated as “Moderately Serious” by the students. The mean scores cluster narrowly around the 3.0 mark, indicating a moderate level of difficulty across the board. The highest mean was 3.08 (for item 1: “I have difficulty writing or constructing essays”). This suggests that, of all the writing issues, students most strongly acknowledge trouble with essay writing. An average of 3.08 reflects that many students find essay composition to be a challenging task—often requiring idea generation, organization, and clarity, which are areas of struggle. Even though the rating is “moderate” rather than “serious,” in practical terms this still signals a significant concern, as essay writing is a common requirement in their coursework.

On the other hand, the lowest mean among the items was 2.71 (for item 10: “I often do not carefully consider the instructions or topic before writing”). This was the lowest-rated issue but still falls within the “moderately serious” range. A mean of 2.71 suggests that while some students admit to occasionally neglecting to plan or understand the task fully before writing, it is comparatively a less severe issue than the others listed. In other words, students generally feel they pay attention to instructions at least moderately well (since a lower score would indicate a lesser problem), but there is still room for improvement in how carefully they prepare for a writing assignment.

Several other items hovered around the 3.0 mark, notably difficulties with outlining (3.02), lack of ideas (3.00), limited vocabulary choice (3.05), and limited knowledge of sentence structures (3.05). The consistency of these scores implies that multiple facets of writing are challenging for the students: content generation, structure/organization, diction, and grammar/syntax all pose moderate problems. It is worth highlighting item 8 as well: “afraid of discussing or collaborating with fellow students on writing tasks” had a mean of 2.87, slightly lower than most others. This might indicate that peer-related anxiety in writing (perhaps fear of criticism when sharing one’s writing) is present but somewhat less intense than the technical or cognitive challenges of writing itself.

The overall mean for the ten writing problem indicators was 2.97, firmly categorized as “Moderately Serious.” This overall score consolidates the student perspective that, on average, they perceive noticeable problems in their written communication competence, though not to an extreme or crippling degree. The moderate level suggests that students are aware of their shortcomings but perhaps feel these issues are manageable or could be overcome with effort and support.

In summary, according to the students’ self-assessment, the most prominent writing-related problem is difficulty in composing essays, which encompasses a range of skills (planning, organizing, expressing ideas). The least prominent (though still moderate) problem is the tendency to ignore instructions or insufficiently plan before writing. All identified issues merit attention, since even the “lowest” rated problem had a mean close to 3.0. These findings indicate that writing competency is an area of concern for BPA students, and any intervention program should address essay writing skills,

idea development, vocabulary expansion, and grammar usage, as well as encourage better pre-writing preparation and peer collaboration to reduce anxiety.

Students' Self-Assessment of Problems in Oral Communication

Table 5 shows the students' ratings of ten common oral communication issues they encounter. Similar to the written communication section, these indicators were rated on the 1–4 seriousness scale by the 263 student respondents, focusing on speaking and listening aspects of communication (particularly in using English).

Table 5. Level of Seriousness of Problems Encountered by BPA Students in Oral Communication (Student Self-Assessment, $n = 263$)

Indicator (Oral Communication Problem)	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I feel anxious when talking in front of my classmates during class.	3.08	Moderately Serious
2. I am hesitant to participate in a class discussion conducted fully in English.	3.10	Moderately Serious
3. It is difficult for me to concentrate while speaking English with others.	3.08	Moderately Serious
4. Using proper intonation is challenging for me and may cause confusion.	3.02	Moderately Serious
5. I lack knowledge of informal words used in real-life situations (slang), which results in communication problems.	2.91	Moderately Serious
6. I am unfamiliar with the meaning of some words in conversations, which causes problems while speaking.	3.03	Moderately Serious
7. I am often held back by a lack of understanding of proper pronunciation, which leads to miscommunication.	2.95	Moderately Serious
8. I have experienced stuttering during class recitation.	3.21	Moderately Serious
9. I am unsure if I am knowledgeable or informative enough in what I am saying.	3.08	Moderately Serious
10. I am hesitant about my ability to speak clearly in English.	3.13	Moderately Serious
Overall Mean	3.06	Moderately Serious

From Table 5, we see that all the listed oral communication problems also received mean ratings in the “Moderately Serious” range. The students clearly indicate that they face some degree of difficulty in various aspects of speaking English and communicating orally, although none of the average ratings reached the “Serious” threshold (which would be above 3.25 on our scale).

The highest mean among the oral communication items was 3.21, corresponding to statement 8: “I have experienced stuttering during class recitation.” This suggests that many students often find themselves stammering or stuttering when speaking in class, which is a sign of nervousness or lack of fluency. A mean of 3.21 is at the upper end of the moderately serious range, very close to tipping into

“Serious” – it indicates that this is a notably frequent or troublesome issue for a significant portion of students. Stuttering in class can be both a cause and effect of anxiety: students may stutter because they are anxious, and experiencing it may further increase their anxiety about speaking in the future.

Another relatively high mean was 3.13 for item 10: “I am hesitant about my ability to speak clearly in English.” This reflects a common self-doubt – students are not confident that their spoken English is clear or correct, which likely causes them to hold back in speaking. This hesitation could stem from awareness of accent, pronunciation issues, or grammar mistakes, and it connects to the concept of self-efficacy in language use.

Items 1, 2, 3, and 9 all had means around 3.08 to 3.10, indicating that speech anxiety and hesitation are prevalent. Specifically, item 2 (hesitant to participate in English discussions) at 3.10 underscores that many students shy away from active participation when the medium is English. Item 1 (anxiety speaking in front of class) at 3.08 corroborates that stage fright or performance anxiety is a moderate problem. Item 3 (difficulty concentrating while speaking English) at 3.08 may reflect that the mental load of speaking a second language in real-time can be taxing for students, causing them to lose focus or struggle to form thoughts on the fly. Item 9 (unsure if knowledgeable enough about what they’re saying) at 3.08 suggests a content-related insecurity—students fear they might not have sufficient information or the right answers, which can also hamper their willingness to speak.

The lowest mean in this set was 2.91 for item 5: “I lack knowledge of informal words used in real-life situations, which results in communication problems.” This implies that understanding or using colloquial expressions (slang or idiomatic language) is comparatively the least severe issue from the students’ perspective. It’s possible that because academic and classroom communication tends to be more formal, not knowing slang doesn’t impact them as much day-to-day in school (though it might in social conversations). Still, 2.91 is very near 3.0, so even this lowest issue is borderline moderate—a fair number of students do feel out-of-the-loop with informal English at times, which could make casual conversations with peers or understanding pop culture references slightly challenging.

Other items like item 7 (pronunciation issues leading to miscommunication, mean 2.95) and item 4 (intonation challenges, mean 3.02) highlight linguistic aspects of speaking that trouble students. Pronunciation is a common concern for ESL learners; students may know the word they want to say but worry about saying it correctly, and mispronouncing can sometimes impede understanding. Intonation (the rise and fall of voice pitch) is crucial for expressing meaning and emotions, and improper intonation can cause a statement to be misunderstood or sound awkward. A 3.02 mean suggests many students aren’t confident in using correct intonation patterns, possibly fearing that they might sound monotonous or put stress on the wrong part of a sentence, thus confusing listeners.

The overall mean for oral communication problem ratings was 3.06, a bit higher than the overall mean for writing problems. This indicates that, taken together, students see their oral communication issues as slightly more severe than their writing issues (moderate in both cases, but oral leaning closer to the serious threshold). In practical terms, students might find speaking in English under the spotlight of a classroom more intimidating than writing, which they can do more privately and with more time. It’s also plausible that immediate oral interactions (where there is no backspace or pause) feel less controllable than writing tasks.

In summary, BPA students self-report that they face moderate challenges in oral English communication. Speech anxiety and lack of confidence emerge as central themes – manifested in hesitation, nervousness, and stuttering. Linguistic deficits like vocabulary gaps (especially informal language), pronunciation, and intonation issues are also present but somewhat secondary to the anxiety factor. The fact that no item is rated below “moderate” means that none of these potential problems can be dismissed; they all warrant attention. Notably, even the act of participating in class discussions in English is moderately hard for these students, which can impact their learning and engagement. The findings underscore the need for interventions such as public speaking practice, confidence-building exercises, and pronunciation training to help students become more comfortable and competent in oral communication.

Faculty Perceptions of Problems in Students' Written Communication

To complement the students' self-assessments, faculty members were asked to evaluate the seriousness of similar communication problems as observed in their students. Table 6 displays the results for ten indicators related to written communication, based on responses from the 25 faculty respondents. The phrasing of items for faculty was adjusted to reflect observation (e.g., “The students have difficulty...”). The means indicate how the faculty generally perceive student competency issues, on the same 1–4 scale, and are interpreted with the same descriptive equivalents.

Table 6. Level of Seriousness of Problems in Written Communication as Perceived by Faculty (Faculty Assessment of Students, $n = 25$)

Indicator (Observed Student Writing Problem)	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The students have difficulty writing or constructing essays.	3.92	Serious
2. The students are incapable of making an outline when writing an essay.	3.80	Serious
3. The students lack ideas when writing essays.	3.60	Serious
4. It is hard for students to write in an academic style and tone.	3.80	Serious
5. The students struggle to choose the appropriate words when writing a sentence.	3.68	Serious
6. Students have limited knowledge of different sentence structures.	3.68	Serious
7. Students lack interest in using a dictionary to improve their vocabulary.	3.48	Moderately Serious
8. The students are afraid to discuss and collaborate with peers on writing tasks.	3.32	Moderately Serious
9. It is tough for the students to apply proper grammar when incorporating their ideas.	3.72	Serious
10. The students often do not consider the instructions or the assignment prompt carefully before writing.	3.52	Serious
Overall Mean	3.65	Serious

Several striking points emerge from Table 6. First, the faculty's ratings of student writing problems are generally higher than the students' self-ratings for the same issues. The faculty mean scores predominantly fall in the “Serious” category (above 3.25), whereas students had rated all their

writing issues as only “Moderately Serious.” This suggests that faculty perceive the students’ writing difficulties to be more severe than the students themselves do.

The highest mean in Table 6 is 3.92, for the indicator “students have difficulty writing or constructing essays.” This nearly approaches the maximum of the scale, clearly categorizing it as a *Serious* problem in the eyes of the faculty. In fact, a mean of 3.92 implies that almost all faculty respondents rated this issue at the top end of seriousness. This aligns qualitatively with student responses (who also ranked essay-writing as their biggest challenge) but quantitatively shows an even greater concern from teachers. Faculty likely observe students struggling significantly with essay assignments—perhaps seeing frequent cases of poorly structured essays, insufficient content, or an inability to start and develop an essay effectively.

Other very high ratings include 3.80 for both item 2 (“incapable of making an outline”) and item 4 (“hard to write in academic style”), as well as 3.72 for item 9 (problems with grammar when expressing ideas). These are all labeled *Serious*. Faculty evidently notice that many students do not plan their writing (outlining) which can lead to disorganized essays. They also note that students have trouble adopting an academic tone, possibly writing in a colloquial or informal style that is not suitable for scholarly work. And grammar remains a significant issue—teachers see students making grammatical errors when trying to express their ideas, indicating that language rules are not adequately mastered. A mean of 3.72 for grammar issues suggests this is a pervasive problem.

In fact, except for two items (7 and 8), every listed writing problem was rated *Serious* by faculty. Items 5 and 6 (word choice difficulties and limited sentence structure knowledge) both had means of 3.68, clearly in the serious range as well. These highlight that teachers frequently find student writing to suffer from simplistic or incorrect sentence constructions and imprecise vocabulary usage. From a faculty perspective, such weaknesses can impede the clarity and effectiveness of student writing.

The two items that did not reach the serious threshold were item 7 and item 8. Item 7 (“lack interest in using a dictionary”) had a mean of 3.48, which is just slightly below the cutoff we set for “*Serious*.” It is labeled “*Moderately Serious*” here. This indicates that some teachers feel students are not proactive in improving their vocabulary (for example, not looking up unfamiliar words), but this is somewhat less alarming to them than structural issues like essay organization or grammar. It might also be that faculty cannot directly observe whether a student uses a dictionary or not; they infer it from vocabulary quality in writing. The slightly lower score could reflect uncertainty or lesser emphasis on that behavior compared to observable writing outcomes.

Item 8 (“afraid to discuss/collaborate on writing tasks”) had the lowest mean at 3.32, also in the upper end of “*Moderately Serious*.” This suggests that faculty do see some reluctance among students to engage in peer collaboration for writing (for instance, peer review sessions or group writing activities might not be as fruitful if students are hesitant to share). However, compared to technical writing skills, teachers perceive this social aspect as a bit less critical. They might believe that even if students don’t collaborate, they could individually learn to write well—whereas lacking fundamental skills like outlining or grammar is more directly detrimental to writing quality.

The overall mean of the faculty’s ratings for student writing problems is 3.65, which falls into the “*Serious*” category. This overall assessment implies that, from the faculty’s viewpoint, the problems BPA students have with written communication are serious and in need of urgent attention.

Teachers collectively see essay writing difficulties, poor planning, style issues, and grammar/vocabulary shortcomings as significant hindrances to the students' academic performance in written tasks (Dedushaj, 2022).

Comparing this to the students' self-reported overall mean of 2.97 for writing issues, a gap is evident. Students rated their difficulties as moderate, whereas faculty see them as serious. This discrepancy could be due to students potentially underestimating the gravity of their writing deficiencies or being more lenient in judging their own skills. Faculty, having a broader perspective and higher standards, might be more critical. It could also reflect that when students submit written work, teachers observe more errors or problems than students realize they have. This is a common phenomenon in education: learners sometimes lack full awareness of the extent of their weaknesses until those are pointed out in evaluation.

In summary, faculty perceptions underscore severe writing competency issues among BPA students. Essay composition, organization (outlining), academic style, grammar, and vocabulary choice are all seen as areas where many students fall short of expectations. The findings from faculty lend weight to the argument that interventions (like writing skills workshops or enhanced writing instruction) are necessary, as the current level of student writing is causing concern among instructors. The fact that even the lowest faculty-rated issue is still on the high end of moderate seriousness indicates that from their professional standpoint, virtually all these aspects need improvement.

Faculty Perceptions of Problems in Students' Oral Communication

Table 7 presents the faculty assessment of the seriousness of oral communication problems among the BPA students. This parallels the students' oral communication self-assessment in Table 5, but now from the instructors' perspective ($n = 25$ faculty respondents). Each item corresponds to an observable student issue in speaking or oral interaction, and the faculty rated these on the 1–4 scale. We include the mean and descriptive equivalent for each item.

Table 7. Level of Seriousness of Problems in Oral Communication as Perceived by Faculty (Faculty Assessment of Students, $n = 25$)

Indicator (Observed Student Oral Communication Problem)	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Students feel anxious when speaking in front of the class.	3.52	Serious
2. Students are hesitant to participate in class discussions in English.	3.88	Serious
3. It is difficult for students to concentrate while speaking English with others.	3.84	Serious
4. Students struggle to use proper intonation in oral communication, causing potential confusion.	3.88	Serious
5. Students lack knowledge of informal words/slang used in real-life situations, which causes communication problems.	3.56	Serious
6. Students are unfamiliar with some word meanings in conversation, contributing to speaking difficulties.	3.60	Serious
7. Students often mispronounce words (lack appropriate pronunciation), leading to miscommunication.	3.84	Serious
8. Students have experienced stuttering during class recitation.	3.64	Serious

9. Students are unsure if they are knowledgeable or informative enough in what they say.	3.68	Serious
10. Students are hesitant about their ability to speak clearly in English.	3.96	Serious
Overall Mean	3.74	Serious

According to Table 7, faculty members rate all of the listed oral communication problems as Serious. Each mean score is well above 3.25, indicating a high level of concern for every aspect of students' oral communicative competence that was evaluated. This again mirrors the trend seen with written communication: faculty generally have a more critical or heightened perception of the issues compared to the students themselves.

The highest mean in this table is 3.96, which is an exceptionally high rating, for item 10: "Students are hesitant about their ability to speak clearly in English." This suggests that virtually every faculty member observed notable hesitation or lack of confidence among students when it comes to speaking clearly. A mean that close to 4.00 implies that many instructors see this as an almost universal trait—students doubt their speaking clarity and thus often refrain from speaking up or do so with obvious trepidation. Faculty likely witness this in the form of students speaking very softly, trailing off, or prefacing their remarks with apologies for their English, etc. This faculty perception aligns with what students self-reported (who gave a high rating to a similar item about hesitancy and lack of confidence), but again, faculty perceive it as even more severe.

Other items with very high means include item 2 and item 4 (both at 3.88). Item 2 ("hesitant to participate in English discussions") at 3.88 indicates that teachers see strong reluctance among students to join conversations or answer questions in English. This can have direct classroom implications, such as difficulty conducting interactive lessons because students are reticent to speak. Item 4 (intonation problems at 3.88) is interesting—students themselves rated intonation issues moderately, but teachers clearly find it to be a serious issue. This could be because teachers notice that misintonation actually impairs understanding or the naturalness of students' speech to a greater extent than students realize. It can also reflect that teachers value intonation as part of effective oral communication (ensuring that a question sounds like a question, emphasizing the right words, etc.), and they observe students struggling with it.

Several items are at 3.84, including item 3 (difficulty concentrating while speaking) and item 7 (mispronunciation issues). The high rating for concentration difficulty suggests faculty notice that when students attempt to speak in English, they may lose their train of thought or get mentally "stuck," possibly due to the cognitive load of formulating language. This aligns with a teacher's perspective: they might see students start a sentence and then pause excessively or correct themselves repeatedly, indicating difficulty in maintaining the flow of speech. Mispronunciation (item 7) at 3.84 confirms that faculty often encounter students whose pronunciation issues lead to misunderstandings or require correction. For example, a student might pronounce a word so inaccurately that the listener (the teacher or classmates) cannot immediately understand, disrupting communication. Such instances would understandably cause teachers to mark pronunciation as a serious problem.

Item 1 (speech anxiety in front of class) scored 3.52, the lowest on this table but still categorically "Serious." This suggests that while faculty are well aware that students get anxious (and indeed rated it serious), it might be slightly less alarming than issues like hesitation and language accuracy. It could be that some teachers consider a certain amount of stage fright normal, but the fact

it's 3.52 means many see it as beyond the normal jitters. Perhaps they see anxiety manifesting in extreme ways (like visibly shaking or completely freezing up during presentations) in a portion of students.

Items 5 and 6 (knowledge of informal language at 3.56, and unfamiliar word meanings at 3.60, respectively) show that teachers also believe students' vocabulary limitations in English—both colloquial and general—seriously hinder their oral communication. While students themselves rated the slang/informal language issue the lowest (though still moderate), teachers still consider it serious. This might reflect teachers' holistic judgment that for students to be truly competent communicators, they should be able to handle informal registers too, not just formal classroom language. Furthermore, when students do not understand common expressions or key terms in English, communication can break down, which faculty find problematic.

Item 8 (stuttering during recitation) had a mean of 3.64 as rated by faculty. So, teachers do observe stuttering or dysfluency as a serious issue, though interestingly students rated their own stuttering slightly higher (3.21 moderate). It's possible that students who stutter are keenly aware of it; however, faculty might be considering the class as a whole (not all students stutter, but those who do present a significant issue). The faculty's 3.64 suggests they see enough instances of stuttering or significant pausing among students to call it a serious concern for the group.

The overall mean for faculty-perceived oral problems is 3.74, firmly in the Serious range. This contrasts with the overall student-rated mean of 3.06 (moderate). Just as with written communication, there is a perceptual gap: faculty judge the oral communication problems of students to be more severe than students do. They witness many students struggling or underperforming in oral tasks. The largest gap in individual items might be in things like intonation and participation, where students perhaps don't fully gauge how much they hold back or how their prosody affects comprehension, but teachers notice these details.

In summary, from the faculty perspective, every aspect of oral communication examined is a serious problem among the BPA students. Especially pronounced issues include lack of confidence (hesitation), reluctance to speak in English, lapses in concentration and fluency under pressure, and pronunciation/intonation weaknesses. The faculty essentially confirm that the students' own concerns are valid and even understate the problem: teachers see an urgent need to improve students' oral skills to meet academic and professional standards. This strong signal from instructors reinforces the importance of instituting comprehensive interventions to develop oral communicative competence—such as more interactive English practice, pronunciation clinics, and confidence-building activities—in the BPA program.

Possible Interventions

To address the communicative challenges identified among BPA students, the researchers recommend a comprehensive intervention strategy focused on enhancing both written and oral communication. First, a sustained writing development program should be implemented, incorporating regular writing exercises, workshops on essay outlining, academic tone, grammar, and peer review activities to boost student confidence and competence. Second, vocabulary expansion should be supported through curated reading materials, library engagement, and vocabulary enrichment activities. Third, oral communication skills can be improved through structured public speaking exercises, English-speaking clubs, mirror practice, video recording, non-verbal

communication training, and the gradual integration of English use in classrooms, all reinforced by constructive feedback. Additionally, communication skills should be embedded in the curriculum, either through new courses or as integrated modules within existing subjects. To support struggling students, academic services such as language centers, tutoring, and writing consultations should be utilized. Faculty collaboration is also crucial, with professional development workshops recommended to align instructional strategies in reinforcing communication skills. Finally, the implementation of these interventions should be accompanied by regular monitoring and evaluation to assess progress and adjust strategies accordingly, ensuring that students not only improve in communicative competence but also develop greater confidence and readiness for their future roles in public service.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study reveal that the majority of BPA students are facing notable challenges in their communicative competencies. Demographically, most respondents were young (18–20 years old), predominantly female, single, and in their senior year of study, with about half attaining a good academic average of 2.00–2.25 in the prior semester. Despite relatively solid academic standing, these students self-reported their communication problems (in both writing and speaking) to be moderately serious, indicating they are aware of difficulties such as essay writing, generating ideas, speaking anxiety, and hesitancy in using English. On the other hand, faculty members perceived the students' communication issues as even more severe, rating both written and oral weaknesses generally in the “serious” category. This discrepancy suggests that students may under-appreciate the extent of their communication deficiencies, or that faculty have higher performance benchmarks informed by professional and academic standards.

In written communication, students especially struggle with essay writing and related skills (organization, academic style, grammar), which are hampering their ability to clearly express ideas in coursework. In oral communication, issues of confidence and fluency stand out – many students are anxious about speaking English publicly, leading to avoidance of class participation and instances of stuttering or loss of train of thought when they do speak. Both students and teachers identified that reluctance to speak, limited vocabulary, and pronunciation problems are impeding effective oral communication. The concurrence of student and faculty views on the types of problems (if not their severity) strengthens the validity of these findings.

Overall, the communicative competence of BPA students at this university is below the desired level, with students moderately to seriously hindered in both writing and speaking tasks. This has implications not only for their remaining academic pursuits but also for their future roles in public service, where strong communication is essential. The results call for immediate and concerted action to support students in overcoming these challenges.

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