

Enhancing Speaking Skills: Participatory Communication Strategies for Non-Language Lecturers

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ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization, effective communication skills have become increasingly crucial for educators, particularly those in non-language departments. This study investigates the impact of a Participatory Communication Approach on improving English speaking skills among lecturers from non-language departments at Jinarakkhita Buddhist College of Lampung. The research addresses the significant challenges faced by these lecturers, including linguistic difficulties, lack of confidence, and limited speaking practice opportunities. Employing a quantitative research design with a pretest-posttest experimental group approach, the study involved 20 lecturers (10 males, 11 females) from Buddhist Communication Science, Buddhist Education, and Buddhist Business and Management departments. The research was conducted from February 20th to April 20th, 2024, using Madsen's speaking skill rubric to assess participants' performance across five key dimensions: comprehension, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and speech speed. The findings revealed a significant improvement in lecturers' speaking skills which is representing a 13.5% enhancement. The study concludes that this approach provides a supportive, collaborative learning environment that helps non-language lecturers overcome communication barriers. By promoting active engagement, peer feedback, and interactive learning, institutions can effectively develop lecturers' English-speaking skills, ultimately improving educational quality and global academic interactions.

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Introduction

Speaking skills are the ability to convey messages through spoken language, which involves the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in various contexts. This skill includes the ability to express, convey, and verbalize one's thoughts and feelings ([Manurung, 2020](#)). Effective communication necessitates the development of proficient speaking skills. Such skills enable an individual to articulate ideas and information in a manner that is both clear and easily comprehensible to others. ([Leong & Ahmadi, 2017](#)). Good speaking skills allow one to capture the attention of listeners and convey messages in a persuasive manner, which is important in a variety of situations such as presentations, debates, and negotiations ([Letters & Yadav, 2023](#)). In an educational context, speaking skills are essential for lecturers to convey subject matter clearly and effectively. It also helps students in developing critical thinking and communication skills. In addition, speaking skills help in one's personal and social development. It enables individuals to interact and socialize with others, which is essential for success in social and professional life ([Manurung, 2020](#)). Speaking skills can also help in confidence building. Mastering speaking skills can boost one's confidence, especially in public or formal situations. It also helps in overcoming psychological barriers that may prevent one from speaking in public ([Lubis & Indra Kurniawan Siregar, 2021](#)). Therefore, speaking skills are an essential component of effective communication, both in personal and professional contexts. These skills not only help in conveying messages clearly and persuasively but also play an important role in education, personal development and social interaction. Developing speaking skills can increase one's self-confidence and ability to communicate better in various situations.

The components of second language (L2) speaking skills include pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar. Pronunciation is the ability to produce correct language sounds, including intonation and word stress. Good pronunciation is essential to avoid misunderstandings in oral communication ([Musa, 2021](#)). Furthermore, fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly and without many pauses or interruptions. Then, fluency is influenced by a good command of vocabulary and grammar ([Afna, 2018](#)). Then, vocabulary is the number and type of words mastered by the speaker. A good mastery of vocabulary allows the speaker to convey messages more clearly and precisely ([A.S. Patimah, Syafrudin Raharjo, 2024](#)). Finally, grammar includes the rules that govern sentence structure. A good command of grammar allows the speaker to construct sentences that are correct and easy to understand ([Zam Zam, Suriaman, Rofiqoh, & Budi, 2021](#)). Therefore, each of these components is interrelated and contributes to overall speaking ability. A good mastery of each of these components will significantly improve speaking ability.

Furthermore, this study does not only discuss speaking skills but also lecturers from non-language majors. Non-language lecturers in a professional context are strongly influenced by various factors, including professional identity, teaching quality, and professional development. Non-language lecturers are valued not only based on

their language skills but also subject matter expertise and pedagogical ability. Their professional development is influenced by institutional policies and individual motivation, demonstrating the importance of ongoing support to improve the quality of education. Previous research on the profile of non-language lecturers in a professional context in language learning, including The profile of non-language lecturers in a professional context includes various aspects that affect their professional identity, teaching quality, and professional development.

Professional identity, including: Identity construction. Non-language lecturers, particularly those teaching English as a second language (ESL) in Pakistani universities, face both challenges and opportunities in shaping their professional identities. This identity is influenced by social, cultural and institutional contexts ([Rizvi & Krishnasamy, 2024](#)). The next issue is related to student perceptions. At international universities, students do not always consider lecturers who are native English speakers to be superior. Rather, they value lecturers who have high English proficiency, are experts in their field, and are able to create an international learning experience ([Inbar-Lourie & Donitsa-Schmidt, 2020](#)). The next aspect is desired quality. Students expect lecturers who use English as a medium of instruction (EMI) to have high competence in English, expertise in subject matter, and effective pedagogical skills. In addition, an understanding of the local language and culture is also considered important ([Inbar-Lourie & Donitsa-Schmidt, 2020](#)). Related to Armenian students' perceptions. In Armenia, students perceive both native and non-native English-speaking lecturers as able to meet their needs. Non-native lecturers are preferred in affective aspects, such as interpersonal relationships ([Hakimian, 2024](#)). Finally, contextual factors. In Vietnam, the professional development of English lecturers is influenced by national policy, institutional context and individual motivation. Although policies are often top-down, lecturers' engagement in professional development is driven by personal motivation and responsibility ([Loïse & Philip, 2018](#)).

Afterwards, English speaking skills are very important in the era of globalization, especially for lecturers of non-language majors. This is because English plays a significant role in global communication and international academic interaction. English dominates the academic world and is key in the development of higher education institutions. This skill is considered an important human capital for the professional development of lecturers and the institutions they represent. Lecturers who master English can participate in international academic exchanges, which enhances the reputation and development of their institutions ([Naka & Spahija, 2022](#)). English speaking skills help lecturers to communicate effectively at a global level, both in academic and professional contexts. They are also essential for interacting with international peers, attending conferences, and publishing research in international journals ([Tuyen, Nga, & Mai, 2022](#)). However, many lecturers face challenges in mastering English speaking skills, such as lack of vocabulary, grammar, and confidence ([Leonita, Apriyanti, Krismayani, Joni, & Budiarta, 2023](#)). It's not just that, Non-language lecturers face various challenges in improving their English communication competencies. These challenges include difficulties in reading,



writing, speaking and listening, which negatively impact their academic and professional development ([Al-Khawaldeh & Bani-Khair, 2016](#)). Non-linguistic lecturers often have difficulty in understanding and using appropriate vocabulary, as well as in forming correct sentences ([Trinh & Pham, 2021](#)). Speaking speed and lack of vocabulary are also major obstacles to understanding the material ([Putri, 2022](#)). Lecturers often feel pressure to perform well, fear making mistakes in front of the class, and fear criticism or loss of face ([Trinh & Pham, 2021](#)). Difficulties in English communication prevent lecturers from connecting with international organizations, publishing research, and introducing new partnerships. Not only that, but the lack of English competence also reduces lecturers' ability to communicate the latest findings in their field ([Al-Khawaldeh & Bani-Khair, 2016](#)). Whereas speaking skills play a crucial role as it is an effective mode of communication to connect with the world ([Humaira, 2023](#)). Therefore, English speaking skills are essential for lecturers of non-language majors in the era of globalization. These skills not only support professional and institutional development, but also enable more effective global communication and interaction.

A participatory communication approach is a method based on dialogue and active involvement of all parties involved. It emphasizes the importance of active participation of various community groups, as well as other stakeholders, in the communication process to achieve common goals ([Ibuot, Majemu, & Nwantah, 2021](#)). However, in this present study, the researcher wants to focus on language learning. The participatory communication approach to language learning involves active collaboration between teacher and learner to create a more interactive and meaningful learning environment. This approach can improve lecturers' motivation, engagement and language skills, especially lecturers from non-language majors.

The benefits of a participatory communication approach include increased lecturer engagement and motivation. The participatory approach allows lecturers to be more involved in the learning process, which can increase their motivation and engagement in language learning ([O'Toole, 2023](#)). Then, collaborative skills development. Through collaboration and active communication, lecturers can develop collaborative skills that are important in language learning, such as interactive listening and speaking in meaningful contexts ([Motlhaka & Wadesango, 2014](#)). Finally, language proficiency is improved. Studies show that participatory approaches can improve lecturers' language use and language skills, including in second language (ESL) and foreign language (EFL) learning contexts ([Mukaromah, 2020](#)).

Since non-language lecturers face various challenges in improving their English communication competence, including linguistic difficulties, lack of academic engagement and support, and psychological issues, these challenges negatively impact their academic and professional development. Therefore, the proposed solution is training to improve the English language competence of non-language lecturers. Therefore, in this study, the researcher is interested in investigating whether a participatory communication approach gives a significant effect to pro-

mote the lecturers' English-speaking skills especially lecturers from non-language majors.

Method

In this study, the researcher uses a quantitative approach as a method to conduct this study. According to ([Apuke, 2017](#)) explain that quantitative research involves quantifying and analyzing variables to produce results. The researcher sought to explore whether participatory communication style has a significant effect on improving the speaking skills of lecturers, especially lecturers from non-language majors. This study adopted an experimental pre-test-posttest group design. In each treatment, the teachers taught in the same classroom for 100 minutes. Pre-test Post-test the experimental group was implemented using a participatory communication method. At the end of the treatment, the lecturers were given a post-test to determine the differences in speaking skills. This study was conducted on lecturers from the Buddhist Communication Science Department, Buddhist Education Department and Buddhist Business and Management Department, Jinarakkhita Buddhist College, Lampung, located at Jalan Raya Suban No. 86, Pidada Village, Panjang District, Bandar Lampung 35241. This study started from February 20 to April 20, 2024. It included 20 lecturers (10 males, 11 females).

The speaking rating scale was used to assess the speaking skills of lecturers. The rating scale consists of five speaking criteria, namely: comprehension, pronunciation, grammar and word order, vocabulary, general speed of speech and sentence length ([Madsen, 1983](#)). Each dimension consists of a number of indicators with different evaluation weights. Validity and reliability tests were also conducted to ensure the suitability of the instrument used in this study. The expert rating validity result was 0.82, and the reliability test result was 0.90. According to Pallant (2016) as cited in ([Frinaldi, Saputra, Embi, Habibie, & Hashanah, 2023](#)) revealed that a valid and reliable instrument can be achieved if the value exceeds .80. Therefore, the instruments used in this study are valid and reliable.

Findings

The result is presented according to the research question: Does participatory communication approach improve the speaking skills of lecturers from non-language majors. To answer this research question, data were collected through pre-test and post-test of the speaking test. Inter-rater was used to check the reliability of the test. The researcher and an English lecturer of the Jinarakkhita Buddhist College in Lampung participated in the test.

In this study, the researcher used a rating scale to analyze and measure the English language skills of the lecturers. In this case, the researcher used the ([Madsen, 1983](#)) rating scale because it was suitable for the purpose of this study, which was to determine the English language proficiency of the lecturers. Madsen's rating criteria included comprehension, pronunciation, grammar and word order, vocabulary, general speed of speech and sentence length.

The scores obtained from the two inter-raters involved in this study were aggregated to produce the final average scores. The highest recorded final score for The speaking pre-test was 62, while the lowest final score was 35. It is noteworthy that the researcher had not administered any instructional interventions to the lecturers at that time, which accounts for the relatively low scores observed. Each lecturer engaged in speaking practice in English for approximately seven minutes. During the pre-test, they adhered closely to the instructions outlined in the pre-test documentation provided by the researcher. The lecturers delivered explanations pertinent to the themes assigned by the teaching team.

In this situation, the lecturers faced significant challenges, particularly because speaking skills can be demanding for those from non-language disciplines. Several factors contribute to this difficulty, starting with a lack of practice. Lecturers in these fields often encounter limited opportunities for speaking in academic settings, which tend to prioritize theoretical knowledge and subject expertise over practical communication skills. Another hurdle is related to language proficiency.

Many lecturers may lack confidence in wielding appropriate and effective language to articulate their ideas, especially if they are not fully proficient in the language of instruction. Furthermore, limited practical experience plays a crucial role. Many lecturers from non-language backgrounds are not accustomed to public speaking or giving presentations, which can create discomfort and hinder their speaking abilities. Despite these challenges, the lecturers persevered, engaging in speaking practice based on their understanding of the themes provided by the teaching team. As a result, the lecturers' performance in various aspects of speaking yielded the following results: comprehension 15.7, pronunciation 11.5, grammar and word order 10.5, vocabulary 10.9, general speed of speech and sentence length 2.5.

Inter-rater reliability was employed in the evaluation of the lecturers' speaking post-test, mirroring the approach utilized for the speaking pre-test. The results indicated that the highest final score for the speaking post-test was 70, while the lowest final score recorded was 54. The researchers administered treatments to the lecturers based on a participatory communication approach during this period. Each lecturer completed the speaking post-test within a duration of seven minutes. Ultimately, the lecturers successfully concluded their speaking skills post-test. The subsequent results of the lecturers' speaking skill post-tests are presented as follows: comprehension 19.2, pronunciation 13.6, grammar and word order 13.2, vocabulary 16.15, and general speed of speech and sentence length 3.0. Furthermore, by comparing the average score of the pre - test and post - test, the lecturers' speaking skills improved from 48.5 to 62. As a result, there was a 13.5% improvement. The end result was as follows:

Table 1 The Students' Writing Improvement Paired Samples Statistic

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair1Writing_Pretest	48.5000	21	6.19001	1.29071

Writing Posttest	62.0000	21	3.46353	0.72220
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Source: SPSS 23

The t - test was used to determine whether the improvement was significant or not. The end result was as follows:

Table 2 Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences				T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std.Devitatio n	Std.Erro	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
				Lower Upper			
Pair1 Posttes t- Pretest	25.82609	7.81404	1.6293 4	22.4470 4	29.2051 3	15.85 20	.000 1

The researcher compared t-value to t-table using the table above. The t-value in this case was 15.851, while the t-table was 2.085. If t-value > t-table, the current study's result was significant. This could imply that participatory communication approach could improve lecturers' speaking skills significantly than conventional strategies. The table above also shows a significant difference in the lecturers' speaking skill pre-test and post-test scores. According to the Paired Sample T-Test, the treatment had a significant impact on the lecturers' scores, as indicated by the sig. (2-tailed) value of .000.

Discussion

In recent years, the demand for effective communication skills has become progressively vital within educational settings, especially for lecturers in disciplines beyond language departments. The present study highlights the necessity of addressing the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical applications of speaking skills. The efficacy of communication is crucial in cultivating student engagement, encouraging active learning, and improving educational outcomes.

One of the principal challenges encountered by lecturers outside of language departments pertains to the anxiety associated with public speaking and communication. In contrast to their colleagues in language-centric disciplines, these lecturers frequently do not possess formal training in speaking skills. This absence of training can lead to diminished confidence and effectiveness in the delivery of presentations (Lee & Liu, 2022). The participatory communication approach constitutes a valuable strategy within this context, as it underscores the importance of active engagement and collaboration among educators. By integrating participatory techniques, lecturers have the capacity to cultivate a more supportive



and encouraging environment, thereby facilitating the development of speaking skills. The present study indicates that collaborative learning environments not only enhance individuals' confidence but also improve the retention of spoken content. This is primarily due to the fact that lecturers tend to engage more effectively when they are part of an interactive community ([Muir, Wang, Trimble, Mainsbridge, & Douglas, 2022](#)). This matter holds particular significance for non-language lecturers, who may greatly benefit from collegial support and dynamic interactions that facilitate the practice and refinement of their skills in real-time environments.

Furthermore, cultivating a culture of feedback is essential for enhancing the development of speaking skills. Regularly encouraging educators to both give and receive constructive feedback fosters self-awareness and contributes to ongoing improvement. Creating an environment in which colleagues can provide critique on each other's presentations or lectures without the apprehension of judgment can significantly facilitate progress ([Williams, Ruch, & Jennings, 2022](#)). Furthermore, feedback may be organized around specific competencies, including clarity, engagement, and interactive elements. This approach assists lecturers in concentrating on critical areas for improvement.

Enhancing speaking skills for lecturers not affiliated with language departments through a Participatory Communication Approach demonstrates a multitude of advantages. By fostering interactive and supportive environments that promote feedback and effectively utilize technology, institutions can empower educators to enhance their communication capabilities. Ultimately, this investment not only facilitates the professional development of lecturers but also enriches the learning experiences of students by enabling them to engage with confident and articulate instructors.

Conclusion

To sum up, it is essential to improve speaking abilities among lecturers who do not specialize in language for successful communication within the educational sphere. This study underscores the significance of the Participatory Communication Approach, which encourages collaboration and active participation. Implementing strategies such as peer feedback, interactive workshops, and the integration of technology can cultivate a nurturing atmosphere that enhances both confidence and skill growth for lecturers. Additionally, this method tackles issues like anxiety and insufficient practice, thereby enriching the students' learning experience. When lecturers communicate effectively, it encourages meaningful engagement, ultimately resulting in better educational outcomes. To aid in the shift from theory to practice, it is essential for institutions to supply the required resources, support professional development, and offer encouragement. By emphasizing participatory techniques, a culture of collaboration and ongoing enhancement can be fostered. In conclusion, implementing a Participatory Communication Approach serves as an effective strategy for improving speaking abilities among non-language lecturers, which in turn promotes their professional advancement and elevates educational quality. Future studies should investigate additional innovative approaches and their lasting effects on both lecturers and students.

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