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**Teachers' Communication Skills and Students' Academic Performance in Linguistic:  
Empirical Study of Students in Tertiary Institutions in Akwa Ibom State**

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**BY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study was to assess the teachers' communication skills and students' academic performance in linguistic. Expost facto was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of teachers and student in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 4 tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. From each institution 5 teachers and 50 students were randomly selected from University of Uyo; 3 teachers and 30 students from Akwa Ibom State University; 3 teachers and 30 students from Akwa Ibom State College of Education and finally, 3 teachers and 30 students from Akwa Ibom State polytechnic. This gave a sample size of 154 respondents (made up of 14 teachers and 140 students) which constituted the sample size for the study. The instrument titled "Teachers' Communication Skills and Students' Academic Performance in Linguistic Questionnaire (TCSSAPLQ)" was used for data collection. Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by one expert in test and measurement from University of Uyo to ensure that the instrument was accurate for the study. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of the reliability of the instrument. In this case the average reliability coefficient obtained was 0.89 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as simple regression in testing the hypothesis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha level. The study concluded that teacher's communication skills play a very crucial role in building the student academic performances. Teachers communication skill motivates the students to enhances their abilities in subject matter like linguistic. Therefore, student academic performance is highly influenced by the teacher's communication skills of speaking, attitude, gestures and facial expressions. One of the recommendations made was that teachers should exhibit a good communication skill while teaching to improve the student's academic performances.*

**KEYWORDS: Teachers' Communication Skills, Students' Academic Performance, Linguistic, Tertiary Institutions and Akwa Ibom State**

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**Introduction**

In an educational context, teachers and students share the same objective – learning, and each needs the other in order to achieve this objective. Among the variables impacting the process of instruction, communication skill remains a very important. Nasser, (2014) teachers communication skills have an immediacy (non-verbal immediacy – skills such as smiling, gesturing, eye contact or relaxed body language; verbal immediacy – calling the students by name, using humor and raising questions that encourage students to talk and ask for different viewpoints, praise) or perceived communicator style, are variables that influence motivation, cognitive and affective learning positive student evaluations, perceived teacher competence, trustworthiness and caring. According to CSC (2019). Student academic performances depends on solid communication skills, beginning with clear oral communication. Students are often called upon in class to answer questions. These questions may range from those with simple factual answers to questions that involve putting thoughts together and making arguments. Answers to questions need to be communicated effectively so teachers can assess a student’s knowledge. Students with oral challenges may also become embarrassed if they are unable to communicate on par with their peers.

Teachers communication skills are most vital for interactions with students, because the act of teaching itself requires skills. In the role, teacher is responsible for comprehending and breaking down complex information, conveying this information clearly to their students (both verbally and in written resources), presenting in a manner that sustains their attention, and listening to and resolving their questions or problems (Sword, 2020). Teaching is all about communication skills - listening, speaking, reading, presenting and writing. Teachers who hone their communication skills are prepared to instruct, advise and mentor students entrusted in their care (Silver, 2018). Communication skills of teachers are the basic need of academic’s performance of students and professional success of life. Student need to understand that what is right and what is wrong while it totally depends upon the communication skills of teachers which he adopts in class-room (Morreale, Osborn & Pearson 2000). Good communications minimize the potential of unkind feeling during the process of teaching.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The issue of poor academic performance of students in Akwa Ibom State has been of much concern to all the teachers and educational board. The problem is so much that it has led to the widely acclaimed fallen standard of education in Akwa Ibom state. Several accusing fingers are pointed at teachers for being responsible for the fallen standard of education in the state; some suggest that the quality of education depends on the teachers’ communication skills in the performing of their duties. Overtime student’s academic performance in both internal and external examinations had been used to determine excellence in teacher’s communication skills. Poor communication skills of a teacher have lead to bad teaching and learning which turn to enhance the poor performance of the student. Therefore, the study investigates on teachers’ communication skills and students’ academic performance in Linguistic.

### **Objective of the Study**

1. To find out the influence of oral communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State.
2. To examine the influence of written communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State.

3. To determine the influence of empathizing communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State.

### Research Question

1. What is the influence of oral communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What is the influence of written communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State?
3. What is the influence of empathizing communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State?

### Research Hypotheses

- H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant influence of oral communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State?
- H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant influence of written communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State?
- H0<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant influence of empathizing communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State?

### Concept of Communication Skills

Communication skills refers to the act of developing meaning among entities or groups through the use of sufficiently mutually understood signs, symbols, and semiotic conventions (Harper, 2013). Communication skills are fundamental to good interactions between two or more people. According to Garg, (2006) Communication is often considered as an activity. In actuality, communication skills include transmission of information, ideas, emotions and knowledge. This is done with the help of symbols, words, pictures, figures, graphs, drawings, and illustrations, etc. Communication skills is the sum of all the things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding. Communication skills involve listening, speaking, observing and empathizing. It is also helpful to understand the differences in how to communicate through face-to-face interactions, phone conversations and digital communications like email and social media (Skills You Need 2011). Corporate Finance Institute (2015) stated that communication skills are the aids in all aspects of life from professional life to personal life and everything that falls in between. communication skills are essential to allow people to understand information more accurately and quickly.

Communication skills refers to the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another. Communication skills effectively is one of the most important life skills to learn. Communication skills refers to transferring information to produce greater understanding. It can be done vocally, through written media, visually or non-verbally (C.F.I. 2015). Communication skills may be a regular part of your day-to-day work life, communicating in a clear, effective and efficient way is an extremely special and useful skill (Indeed Career Guide 2021). Learning from great communicators around you and actively practicing ways to improve your communications skills over time will certainly support your efforts to achieve various

personal and professional goals. WIKIJOB (2007) stated that communication skill is the main ingredients for corporate success, but the problem is that the phrase ‘communication skills’ is a term so overused that it is difficult to identify what it actually means. Communication involves transmission of verbal and non-verbal messages. It consists of a sender, a receiver and channel of communication. In the process of transmitting messages, the clarity of the message may be interfered or distorted by what is often referred to as barriers.

### **Types of Communication Skill**

There are six main types of communication skill that is use on our daily basis: oral/verbal, Observation, Empathizing, non-verbal, written and visual. With all of these communication styles, it’s most effective when you know how to actively listen, observe and empathize. Developing these soft skills can help you better understand a message and respond thoughtfully.

**Oral/ Verbal Communication Skills:** Oral communication refers to the speaking and listening skills needed to participate verbally in discussions, exchange thoughts and information, make clear and convincing presentations, and interact with a variety of audiences. Swarthout, & Chapel, (2020) stated that oral communication is the process of verbally transmitting information and ideas from one individual or group to another. Oral communication can be either formal or informal. Oral communication implies communication through mouth. It includes individuals conversing with each other, be it direct conversation or telephonic conversation. Speeches, presentations, discussions are all forms of oral communication

**Observation skills:** Observation skills refer to the ability to use all five of your senses to recognize, analyze and recall your surroundings. This practice is often associated with mindfulness because it encourages you to be present and aware of the details of your daily life (Indeed Editorial Team2021). Observation skill refers to the ability to notice subtle details about a person or situation. Observation skills help us to understand people better and maneuver conflicts and challenges more tactfully.

**Empathizing skills:** Empathizing is the ability to recognize emotions in others, and to understand other people's perspectives on a situation. At its most developed, empathy enables you to use that insight to improve someone else's mood and to support them through challenging situations (Emerald Work 2019). Empathizing helps us to communicate our ideas in a way that makes sense to others, and it helps us understand others when they communicate with us. It is one of the foundational building blocks of great social interaction and, quite obviously, powerful stuff.

**Non-verbal communication skills:** Non-verbal communication refers to the transfer of information through the use of gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, eye contact (or lack thereof), body language, posture, and other ways people can communicate without using language (Doyle, 2020). Indeed Editorial Team (2020) indicates that everyone uses non-verbal communication skills all the time whether they know it or not. Non-verbal communication is dependent on seeing and analyzing physical movements as opposed to verbal communication, or the use of language to transfer information through written text, speaking or sign language.

**Written communication skills:** Writing skills are an important part of communication. Good writing skills allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations (Skills You Need 2020). Written

communication skills are those necessary to get your point across in writing. While they share many of the same features as verbal communication skills, there are some important differences. Where verbal communication uses body language and tone of voice to express meaning and tone, written communication relies on grammar, punctuation and word choice. Developing written communication skills requires practice and fine attention to detail.

**Visual communication skills:** Visual communication skills refer to one's ability to communicate through the signals received by eyes. Any nonverbal communication utilizing the sense of sight is, therefore, known as visual communication. Visual communication is the practice of using visual elements to convey a message, inspire change, or evoke emotion (Nediger, 2020). Visual communication skill refers to the expression of ideas and information using visual forms or aids. Visual communication skills can include maps, photographs, diagrams, graphs and charts to effectively convey a message.

### **Concept of Academic Performances**

Academic performance is the measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects. Teachers and education officials typically measure achievement using classroom performance, graduation rates and results from standardized tests (Ballotpedia 2020). Rono, (2013) affirmed that academic performance of a students is a key feature in education. Academic performances are considered to be the centre around which the whole education system revolves. Narad and Abdullah (2016) stated that academic performance of students determines the success or failure of any academic institution. Academic performance is the knowledge gained which is assessed by marks by a teacher and/or educational goals set by students and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time. They added that these goals are measured by using continuous assessment or examinations results. Singh, Malik and Singh (2016) also argued that academic performance of students has a direct impact on the socio-economic development of a country. Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq and Behanu (2011), emphasized that the top most priority of all educators is academic performance of students. Students' academic performance serve as a bedrock for knowledge acquisition and the development of skills.

According to Arhad, Zaidi & Mahmood, (2015) academic performance measures education outcome. They stressed that it shows and measures the extent to which an educational institution, teachers and students have achieved their educational goals. Yusuf, Onifade and Bello (2016) indicated that academic performance is a measurable and observable behaviour of a student within a specific period. Academic performance consists of scores obtained by a student in an assessment such as class exercise, class test, mid-semester, mock examination, and end of semester examination. Martha (2009) emphasized that academic performance of students is defined by a student's performance in an examination, tests, and in a course work. Academic performance involves factors such as the intellectual level, personality, motivation, skills, interests, study habits, self-esteem or the teacher-student relationship (Marti, 2003). When a gap between the academic performance and the student's expected performance occurs, it refers to a diverging performance. An unsatisfactory academic performance is the one that is below the expected performance. Sometimes it can be related to teaching methods.

### **Concept of Linguistic**

Linguistics is the systematic study of the structure and evolution of human language, and it is applicable to every aspect of human endeavor. Linguistics is the scientific study of language (Halliday & Jonathan, 2006). It encompasses the analysis of every aspect of language, as well as the methods for studying and modeling them. Linguistics is the study of language - how it is put together and how it functions. Various building blocks of different types and sizes are combined to make up a language. Sounds are brought together and sometimes when this happens, they change their form and do interesting things (Summer Institute of Linguistics 2020). Words are arranged in a certain order, and sometimes the beginnings and endings of the words are changed to adjust the meaning. Then the meaning itself can be affected by the arrangement of words and by the knowledge of the speaker about what the hearer will understand. According to Hana (2019), Linguistics is the scientific study of human language. Linguistic tries are to observe languages and describe them accurately, find generalizations within what has been described and draw conclusions about the general nature of human language.

Linguists refer to how people acquire their knowledge about language, how this knowledge interacts with other cognitive processes, how it varies across speakers and geographic regions, and how to model this knowledge computationally (UCDAVIS, 2020). Linguists study how to represent the structure of the various aspects of language (such as sounds or meaning), how to account for different linguistic patterns theoretically, and how the different components of language interact with each other. According to Khan (2018) stated that linguistics is an academic pursuit that models the structure of the human language, explores how language develops in human beings and examines the intricacies involved in processing different kinds of usages. Linguistics is concerned with the nature of language and communication. It deals both with the study of particular languages, and the search for general properties common to all languages or large groups of languages.

### **Teachers Communication Skill and Student Academic Performances**

Teacher's communication skill can help well trained teacher to develop good relationship with the student academic performances. Baruch, Hershkovitz & Ang, (2015) stated that there is more positive relationship between teachers and students. Unavailability of teachers and poor communication by teachers are the major factors that have led students to abandon their study at a certain level. Khan, et al. (2017) stated that the success of student academic performance is directly related to the effectiveness of teacher communication skills. Asrar, Tariq, & Rashid, (2018) stated teacher's communication skill plays an important role in building up the character and standard of student's academic performances in education. Teacher's communication skills motivate the students to increase their ability in the field of education performances. Love, affection, sincerity, obligation, responsibility and dedication from the teacher may bring the prosperity and love which students require towards their academic performances.

Teacher's communication skills are very important for an effective delivery for students to achieve their academic performance (McCarthy and Carter, 2001). Teachers' communication skills have been tipped to have an important influence on students' academic performances and at the same time play a crucial role in educational attainment of the students. This is because the teacher is ultimately responsible for translating policy into action and principles based on practice during interaction with the students (Afe2001). Both teaching and learning depends on teachers and their ability to communicate subject matter without so much confusing of the students: no wonder an effective teacher has been conceptualized as one who produces desired

results in the course of his duty as a teacher. Davis (2001) proved that the self-confidence and self-ability of the students helps to build their relationship with their teachers by non-verbal communication.

## Method

Ex-post facto was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of teachers and student in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 4 tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. From each institution 5 teachers and 50 students were randomly selected from University of Uyo; 3 teachers and 30 students from Akwa Ibom State University; 3 teachers and 30 students from Akwa Ibom State College of Education and finally, 3 teachers and 30 students from Akwa Ibom State polytechnic. This gave a sample size of 154 respondents (made up of 14 teachers and 140 students) which constituted the sample size for the study. The instrument titled “Teachers’ Communication Skills and Students’ Academic Performance in Linguistic Questionnaire (TCSSAPLQ)” was used for data collection. Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by one expert in test and measurement from University of Uyo to ensure that the instrument was accurate for the study. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of the reliability of the instrument. In this case the average reliability coefficient obtained was 0.89 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as simple regression in testing the hypothesis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha level.

## Results

### Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis One:** The null hypothesis states there is no significant influence of oral communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State. In order to answer the hypothesis, simple regression analysis was performed on the data (see table 1).

**Table 1: Simple Regression Analysis of the influence of oral communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State**

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.96a	0.91	0.91	2.35	0.91

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 152; N= 154; critical R-value = 0.197**

The above table 1 shows that the calculated R-value (0.96) was greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.5 alpha levels with 152 degrees of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.91 predicts 91% of the influence of oral communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution. This rate of percentage is moderately positive and therefore means that there is significant influence of oral communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State. It was also deemed necessary to find out the influence of the variance of each class of independent variable as responded by each respondent (see table 2).

**Table 2: Analysis of variance of the influence of oral communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8959.41	1	8959.41	1622.89	.000b
Residual	839.14	152	5.52		
Total	9798.55	153			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant): Oral Communication Skills

The calculated F-value (1622.89) and the P-value as (.000b). Being that the P-value (.000b) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result therefore means that there is significant influence exerted by the independent variables i.e. oral communication skills on the dependent variable which is performance. The result therefore means that there is significant influence of oral communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, the result is in agreement with the opinion of Swarthout, & Chapel, (2020) which stated that oral communication is the process of verbally transmitting information and ideas from one individual or group to another. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

**Hypothesis Two:** The null hypothesis states there is no significant influence of written communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State. In order to answer the hypothesis, simple regression analysis was performed on the data (see table 3).

**Table 3: Simple Regression Analysis of the influence of written communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State**

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.74a	0.55	0.54	5.42	0.55

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 152; N= 154; critical R-value = 0.197

The above table 3 shows that the calculated R-value (0.74) was greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.5 alpha levels with 152 degrees of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.55 predicts 55% of the influence of written communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution. This rate of percentage is moderately positive and therefore means that there is significant influence of written communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State. It was also deemed necessary to find out the influence of the variance of each class of independent variable as responded by each respondent (see table 4).

**Table 4: Analysis of variance of the influence of written communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5338.96	1	5338.96	181.97	.000b
Residual	839.14	152	29.34		
Total	9798.55	153			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance



## b. Predictors: (Constant): Written Communication Skills

The calculated F-value (181.97) and the P-value as (.000b). Being that the P-value (.000b) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result therefore means that there is significant influences exerted by the independent variables i.e. written communication skills on the dependent variable which is performance. The result therefore means that there is significant influence of written communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, the result is in agreement with the opinion of Skills You Need (2020) which stated that good writing skills allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

**Hypothesis Three:** The null hypothesis states there is no significant influence of empathizing communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State. In order to answer the hypothesis, simple regression analysis was performed on the data (see table 5).

**Table 5: Simple Regression Analysis of the influence of empathizing communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State**

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.56a	0.31	0.31	6.65	0.31

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 152; N= 154; critical R-value = 0.197

The above table 5 shows that the calculated R-value (0.56) was greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.5 alpha levels with 152 degrees of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.31 predicts 31% of the influence of empathizing communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution. This rate of percentage is moderately positive and therefore means that there is significant influence of empathizing communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State. It was also deemed necessary to find out the influence of the variance of each class of independent variable as responded by each respondent (see table 6).

**Table 6: Analysis of variance of the influence of empathizing communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3073.99	1	3073.99	69.48	.000b
Residual	6724.55	152	44.24		
Total	9798.55	153			

## a. Dependent Variable: Performance

## b. Predictors: (Constant): Empathizing Communication Skills

The calculated F-value (69.48) and the P-value as (.000b). Being that the P-value (.000b) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result therefore means that there is significant influence exerted by the independent variables i.e. empathizing communication skills on the dependent variable which is performance. The result therefore means that there is significant influence of empathizing communication skills on student performance in linguistic in tertiary institution in

Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, the result is in agreement with the belief of Emerald Work (2019) which stated empathizing is the ability to recognize emotions in others, and to understand other people's perspectives on a situation. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that teachers' communication skills play a very crucial role in building the student academic performances. Teachers communication skill motivates the students to enhances their abilities in subject matter like linguistic and it encourages the student to work hard in their study. For effective teaching, a teacher needs to be highly skilled in all the areas of communication to make the learning easier and understandable. Therefore, student academic performance is highly influenced by the teacher's communication skills of speaking, attitude, gestures and facial expressions.

### **Recommendations**

1. Teachers should exhibit a good communication skill while teaching to improve the student's academic performances.
2. Educational board should make adequate provision for teachers to be exposed to effective communication skills as well as practicing teachers being trained and retrained to cultivate good communication skills.
3. Teachers communication skills should be considered during enrollment and selection of teachers since lack of good communication skill affects the teaching and learning process and consequently influence students' academic performance negatively.

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