



Research in Management and Humanities

DWIJMH VOL. 5 NO. 3 (2026) ISSN: 2980-4817

Available online at www.dwijmh.org

Journal homepage: <http://www.dwijmh.org>

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Instructional strategies and oral communication activities in relation to the clarity, fluency, and confidence of multigrade learners' communication skills

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: May 23, 2026

Received in rev. form. July 4, 2026

Accepted: August 23, 2026

Published: September 10, 2026

Keywords: *Instructional strategies, oral communication activities, oral communication skills, multigrade learners*

JEL Classification: I21

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess multigrade learners' perceptions of the instructional strategies employed by teachers at Mabungtot Public Elementary School, and to examine the relationship between instructional strategies and communication skills, and between communication activities and communication skills of multigrade learners. This study employed a descriptive assessment- and correlational research design utilizing the weighted mean and Pearson r to analyze the data. The sample included the total enumeration of the 37 multigrade learners of the elementary school, with data gathered through questionnaires. Findings revealed a very high level of instructional strategies employed by teachers, with a very great extent of oral communication activities implemented in the classroom, and a very high extent indicating the opportunities given to learners, and a very effective level of communication skills of the learners. However, Pearson r indicated no significant correlation between instructional strategies and learners' communication skills; and likewise, there is no significant relationship between oral communication activities and learners' communication skills. The study suggests further research with a larger sample and additional variables to assess these outcomes more comprehensively.

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Introduction

Instructional strategies that are learner-centered and interactive can significantly improve communication skills. By integrating appropriate oral communication activities, teachers can create an engaging learning environment that fosters active participation and skill development (Rodgers, 2014). One of the key aspects of oral communication is its interactive nature, in which speakers and listeners actively exchange messages. It takes place in various settings, including formal environments such as classrooms, workplaces, and public speaking events, as well as informal interactions like everyday conversations with peers and family members. Effective oral communication is characterized by clarity, coherence, and the ability to adjust speech based on the audience and context (Santiago, 2018).

Effective communication skills are essential in the learning process, particularly in developing learners' confidence, comprehension, and participation. In multigrade classrooms, where learners of different grade levels are taught simultaneously, communication becomes even more crucial as teachers employ varied instructional strategies to address diverse learning needs. Oral communication activities such as storytelling, group discussions, role-playing, and interactive questioning play a vital role in enhancing learners' speaking abilities. However, multigrade learners often face challenges, such as limited exposure to structured communication activities. Teachers can create an engaging learning environment that fosters active participation and skill development (Long, 2023).

In many elementary school classrooms, teachers have observed that when learners are given the chance to speak in smaller, less intimidating groups, they become more confident and more willing to participate. For example, in peer-based activities, such as think-pair-share exercises, students are more comfortable sharing their thoughts with one peer before presenting to the larger class. Teachers have noted that when these opportunities are provided consistently, students become more confident in their speaking abilities and more willing to participate in whole-class discussions (Hymes, 2020). Studies on how instructional Strategies play a crucial role in facilitating effective learning and improving learners' academic performance and communicative skills are attested to by Douglas Brown (2007), who states that effective teaching involves the use of interactive and learner-centered strategies that encourage active participation. These strategies enable learners to engage in meaningful communication, enhancing their ability to express ideas clearly.

While numerous studies have investigated the effects of instructional strategies and oral communication activities on learners' fluency, clarity, and confidence, most of these were conducted in single-grade and urban classroom settings. There is a noticeable scarcity of research on multigrade learners, particularly in rural public schools in the Philippines, where a single teacher manages multiple grade levels with diverse learning needs in a single classroom. Existing literature also pays limited attention to how oral communication activities can be adapted to address the challenges of time management, differentiated instruction, and resource constraints common in multigrade settings. Few studies have examined how these strategies simultaneously develop clarity, fluency, and confidence among multigrade learners who often have minimal opportunities for guided speaking practice. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the effectiveness of instructional strategies and oral communication activities in enhancing the clarity, fluency, and confidence of multigrade learners.

Hence, with these gaps, the need to develop oral communication skills among Multigrade learners is critical to their academic achievement and social development. Teachers recognize that improving these skills will help students succeed in school and better prepare them for future challenges. By offering more opportunities for structured speaking activities, providing individualized support, and utilizing effective teaching strategies, students can be empowered to become confident and articulate speakers (Tomlinson, 2017).

This study is organized into several sections: introduction, literature review, research methodology, data presentation and analysis, results and discussion, and conclusion.

Literature review

The literature review examines existing research on instructional strategies, communication activities, and communication skills of multigrade learners.

Instructional strategies

Learner-centered instructional strategies address the diverse needs of learners, particularly in multigrade classrooms. Similarly, SEAMEO INNOTECH (2012) highlights the importance of innovative teaching approaches in improving classroom interaction and learner engagement. The K to 12 Curriculum Guide also promotes oral communication activities. In the Philippine context, the Department of Education (2016) emphasizes the use of discussions and storytelling to enhance learners' speaking skills. These local studies support the idea that effective instructional strategies and communication activities are essential in developing learners' communication competence.

Instructional Strategies play a crucial role in facilitating effective learning, improving learners' academic performance and communicative skills. According to H. Douglas Brown (2007), effective teaching involves interactive, learner-centered strategies that encourage active participation. These strategies enable learners to engage in meaningful communication, enhancing their ability to express ideas clearly. Learner-centered approaches such as cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, and interactive teaching methods help address diverse needs in multigrade classrooms (Tomlinson, 2001). Studies show that active learning strategies improve engagement and communication skills (UNESCO, 2015). Similarly, Jerome Bruner (1996) emphasized that learning is an active process where learners construct knowledge through interaction and experience. In multigrade classrooms, teachers must use flexible strategies to accommodate learners with different abilities and levels. Moreover, differentiated instruction is essential in multigrade settings. Carol Ann Tomlinson (2017) stated that adapting teaching methods based on learners' needs improves engagement and participation. This approach helps learners develop confidence and communication skills.

Robert Gagné's (2002) advance is that conditions of learning occur in 9 events: gain attention, inform objectives, recall prior learning, present content, provide guidance, elicit performance, give feedback, assess, and enhance retention. Different types of learning need different instructional conditions. This guides the sequencing of lab lessons: demo safety first, then guided practice, then independent performance with feedback. Likewise, M. David Merrill (2020) first principle of instruction demonstrates that learning is promoted when: 1) problem-centered, 2) activation of prior experience, 3) demonstration, 4) application, 5) integration into the real world. This supports real lab problems, showing correct technique, then letting students apply and reflect.

Oral communication activities

Oral communication activities are vital in developing speaking skills. According to Jeremy Harmer (2007), activities such as discussions, role-playing, and storytelling provide learners with opportunities to practice language in meaningful contexts. These activities promote interaction and help learners become more confident speakers. In addition, William Littlewood (2004) highlighted that communication activities encourage learners to use language for real-life purposes. This approach

enhances fluency and promotes active participation in the classroom. Department of Education (2013), K to 12 Curriculum Guide in English. Promotes the use of oral communication activities such as discussions, storytelling, and interactive speaking tasks to develop learners' communication skills. Research from Philippine Normal University (various studies) shows that structured speaking activities enhance students' fluency and confidence. Dell Hymes's Communicative Competence Theory (2020) explained that communication is not just grammar. It needs 4 parts: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Learners need real context to use language. This could be used in lab reports, group discussions, and peer teaching so students practice explaining results orally, not just writing.

According to the Input + interaction hypothesis by Stephen Krashen & Michael Long (2023), students acquire language through comprehensible input and meaningful interaction. Negotiation of meaning during talk improves learning. This could be used in pair/group lab work where students must explain procedures and results to each other, which develops both science and oral skills. In addition, Task-Based Language Teaching by Jane Willis and N.S. Prabhu (2016) advocated that language is best learned through task-based activities. The focus is on meaning first, then form. This could be used in a task: perform titration while narrating steps. Oral communication becomes a tool, not just a subject. Furthermore, classroom interaction plays a crucial role in the development of communication. Learners who are frequently exposed to speaking opportunities tend to improve their communication skills more effectively than those who are passive participants (Brown, 2007).

Communication skills development

Communication skills include clarity, fluency, and confidence. According to Albert Bandura (1997), self-efficacy influences learners' confidence in performing tasks, including speaking. Learners who believe in their ability to communicate are more likely to participate actively. Additionally, Lev Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the importance of social interaction in learning. Through interaction with peers and teachers, learners develop language and communication skills. Department of Education (2016) identifies communication skills as a core competency in the K to 12 curricula, emphasizing clarity, fluency, and confidence. University of the Philippines (education research studies) indicates that communication skills improve through active participation and exposure to speaking opportunities. Research also shows that consistent practice through structured activities enhances speaking ability. Learners who engage in regular oral communication activities demonstrate improved fluency and clarity (Ellis, 2008).

Dean Barnlund's (2021) Transactional Model of Communication emphasized that communication is simultaneous rather than linear. The sender and receiver both encode, decode, and provide feedback simultaneously. Noise can be physical or psychological. This can be used to explain why clear lab instructions and feedback loops matter. Misunderstood steps-"noise" causing accidents. Further, Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1997) emphasizes that people learn by observing, modeling, and imitating others, and then reinforcing those behaviors. Self-efficacy affects performance. This theory can be used to help students learn communication skills by watching a teacher demo a lab report and then modeling it with peers. Likewise, in Berlo's SMCR Model (2010), the emphasis is on the source, message, channel, and receiver. Effectiveness depends on skills, attitudes, knowledge of the

source/receiver, and the clarity of the message/channel. This theory can be used for a lab: Teachers-source, procedure- message, demo/video=channel, student-receiver. All 4 must be clear to be proficient.

Multigrade teaching context

Multigrade teaching involves teaching learners from different grade levels in the same classroom. According to UNESCO (2015), multigrade classrooms require innovative teaching strategies to ensure that all learners are actively engaged. Teachers must create opportunities for collaboration and peer learning. Department of Education (Multigrade Education Program) provides guidelines for managing multigrade classes using differentiated and interactive strategies. SEAMEO INNOTECH conducted studies on multigrade teaching in the Philippines, emphasizing teachers' adaptability and learner participation. In multigrade settings, communication activities are essential in promoting interaction among learners. These activities allow learners to learn from one another and develop their communication skills despite differences in age and ability (Tomlinson, 2017).

Differentiated Instruction Theory by Carol Ann Tomlinson (2017) emphasizes that a single class includes multiple levels, adjusting content, process, product, and learning environment based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. This can be used in a Grade 7-10 combined lab: beginners take measurements, advanced students do titrations; all share the same safety orientation. Likewise, with the Multi-age Continuous Progress Model by John Goodlad and Robert Anderson (1997), students of different ages/grades learn together and progress at their own pace, not by age. Curriculum is spiral and flexible. This could be used in lab skills when taught on a competency basis rather than by grade. A Grade 8 student proficient in safety can mentor Grade 9 peers.

The numerous dimensions of instructional strategies, oral communication skills development, communication activities, multigrade teaching context identified by researchers such as Brown (2007), UNESCO (2015), Tomlinson (2017), Gagne's (2002), Merrill, (2020, Harmer (2007), Littlewood (2004), Hymes, (2020), Prabhu, (2016), Lev Vygotsky (1978), Bandura, (1997), (Ellis, 2008), Barnlund, (2021), Berlo, (2010), Anderson, (1997) are ultimately the various authors that contributed to each theme, highlighting the importance of interactive teaching, communicative activities, and learner-centered approaches in enhancing communication skills.

Statement of the problems

The study explored the relationship between research on instructional strategies and communication skills, and between communication activities and communication skills of multigrade learners. Specifically, it addressed the following questions:

1. What is the level of instructional strategies used in teaching multigrade learners?
2. What is the extent of oral communication activities implemented in the classroom?
3. What is the level of communication skills of multigrade learners in terms of:
 - a. clarity of expression

- b. fluency
- c. confidence

4. Is there a significant relationship between instructional strategies and learners' communication skills?
5. Is there a significant relationship between oral communication activities and learners' communication skills?

Hypothesis

Instructional strategies used to teach multigrade learners tend to improve their communication skills more effectively (Brown, 2007). Learners who engage in regular oral communication activities demonstrate improved fluency and clarity in communication skills (Ellis, 2008). These activities allow learners to learn from one another and develop their communication skills despite differences in age and ability (Tomlinson, 2001). Building on these findings, the current study hypothesizes that instructional strategies are correlated with learners' communication skills, and that communication activities are likewise correlated with them.

Scope and delimitation of the study

The study focuses on instructional strategies used in teaching multigrade learners, the extent of oral communication activities implemented in the classroom, and the dimensions of communication skills: clarity of expression, fluency, and confidence. and confidence. The research is confined to the multigrade learners at Mabungtot Public Elementary School in Langiden, Abra.

Research methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing a descriptive assessment and correlational research design. The research is conducted at Mabungtot Public Elementary School in Langiden, Abra, with the target population comprising all multigrade learners, of whom the researcher is one. Data are collected through questionnaires, and both descriptive and inferential statistics are used for analysis, specifically weighted mean and Pearson r. To facilitate data collection, the researcher obtained approval from the Principal of the School via a form letter authorizing the distribution of questionnaires, and data were collected through teacher representatives. An ethical review was considered, but given that the study does not involve sensitive human issues, it was waived.

The following ranges of values with their respective interpretation were used in the instructional strategies employed by teachers as perceived by learners:

Statistical Range	Descriptive Rating	Overall DR
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)	Very High (VH)
2.51 - 3.25	Agree (A)	High (H)
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree (D)	Low (L)
1.00 - 1.75	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Very Low (VL)

The following ranges of values with their respective interpretation were used in the extent of oral communication activities:

Statistical Range	Descriptive Rating
3.26-4.00	Very High Extent (VHE)
2.51-3.25	High Extent (HE)
1.76 –2.50	Moderate Extent (ME)
1.0 -1.75	Low Extent (LE)

The following ranges of values with their respective interpretation were used in the communication skills of multigrade learners:

Statistical Range	Descriptive Rating
3.26-4.0	Very Effective
2.51-3.25	Effective
1.76 –2.50	Moderately Effective
1.0 -1.75	Ineffective

Data presentation and analysis

The data are presented following the study objectives, collected through research questionnaires, and analyzed using statistical methods:

Problem 1. What is the level of instructional strategies used in teaching multigrade learners?

Table 1. *Level of instructional strategies used in teaching multigrade learners.*

ITEMS	Mean	DR
1. The teacher uses different teaching strategies in the class.	3.46	SA
2. The teacher explains lessons clearly and effectively.	3.62	SA
3. The teacher encourages participation from all learners.	3.41	SA
4. Group activities are used to support learning.	3.62	SA
5. The teacher adapts lessons to suit different grade levels.	3.46	SA
6. The teacher uses interactive methods in teaching.	3.68	SA
7. The teacher provides opportunities to speak in class.	3.57	SA
8. The teacher gives feedback to improve communication.	3.57	SA
Composite Mean	3.55	VH

Source: Marzano, R.J. (2007)

Legend: Strongly Agree (SA), Very High (VH)

Based on the data presented in the table, the level of instructional strategies used in teaching multigrade learners received a composite mean of 3.55, which is “very high”. This rating indicates that instructional strategies used in teaching multigrade learners emphasize learner-centered approaches that address diverse learners’ needs, particularly in multigrade classrooms. When examining the individual indicators, it is evident that most of them fall within the same very high level, including the use of interactive methods in teaching, the use of group activities to support learning, and the teacher explaining

lessons clearly and effectively. Provides opportunities to speak in class, and the teacher gives feedback to improve communication. Robert Gagne's (2002) noted that conditions of learning happen in 9 events: gain attention, inform objectives, recall prior learning, present content, provide guidance, elicit performance, give feedback, assess, and enhance retention.

Problem 2. What is the extent of oral communication activities implemented in the classroom?

Table 2: *Extent of oral communication activities implemented in the classroom*

ITEMS	Mean	DR
1. I participate in group discussions.	3.51	VHE
2. I am given opportunities to tell stories or share ideas.	3.65	VHE
3. Role-playing activities are used in class.	3.38	VHE
4. I answer questions orally during lessons.	3.62	VHE
5. I participate in pair or group conversations.	3.51	VHE
6. I am encouraged to express my opinions.	3.68	VHE
7. Activities help me practice speaking skills.	3.49	VHE
8. I enjoy participating in speaking activities.	3.54	VHE
Composite Mean	3.55	VHE

Source: Richards, J.C. (2006)

Legend: Very High Extent (VHE)

As indicated by the data in the table, the extent of oral communication activities implemented in the classroom received a composite mean in the "very high extent" category. This rating suggests that students acquire language through comprehensible input plus meaningful interaction. This could be used in pair/group lab work where students must explain procedures and results to each other, which develops both science and oral skills. When examining the individual indicators, it is evident that most of them fall within the same very high extent mean rating level, including being encouraged to express their opinions, being given opportunities to tell stories or share ideas, and answering questions orally during lessons. Hymes (2020) argued that communication is not just grammar. It needs 4 parts: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. This could be used in lab reports, group discussions, and peer teaching so students practice explaining results orally, not just writing.

Problem 3. What is the level of communication skills of multigrade learners in terms of:

- a. clarity of expression,**
- b. fluency, and**
- c. confidence?**

Table 3: *Level of communication skills of multigrade learners*

ITEMS	Mean	DR
A. Clarity of Expression		
1. I can express my ideas clearly.	3.54	VE
2. Others understand what I say.	3.65	VE
3. I use appropriate words when speaking.	3.65	VE

4. I can explain my thoughts well.	3.41	VE
Mean	3.56	VE
B. Fluency		
1. I can speak smoothly without too many pauses.	3.62	VE
2. I can speak in complete sentences.	3.62	VE
3. I can continue speaking without hesitation.	3.57	VE
4. I can respond quickly during conversations.	3.43	VE
Mean	3.56	VE
C. Confidence		
1. I feel confident speaking in front of others.	3.51	VE
2. I am not afraid to share my ideas.	3.65	VE
3. I participate actively in class discussions.	3.70	VE
4. I feel comfortable answering questions orally.	3.49	VE
Mean	3.59	VE
Overall Mean	3.57	VE

Source: Richards, J.C. (2006)

Legend:

Statistical Range	Descriptive Rating
3.26-4.00	Very Effective
2.51-3.25	Effective
1.76 –2.50	Moderately Effective
1.0 -1.75	Ineffective

Looking at the data in the table, communication skills of multigrade learners received an overall mean of 3.57, which falls under the category of “very effective “. This rating suggests that communication skills of the learners in the three parameters- clarity of expression, fluency, and confidence influence learners’ confidence in performing tasks, including speaking. Hence, learners believe in their ability to communicate and are more likely to participate actively. When examining the individual parameters, all indicators were rated as very effective in terms of confidence, fluency, and clarity of expression.

Studies have shown that communication skills improve through active participation and exposure to speaking opportunities. (Ellis, 2008) noted that research also shows that consistent practice through structured activities enhances speaking ability and that learners who engage in regular oral communication activities demonstrate improved fluency and clarity.

Problem 4. Is there a significant relationship between instructional strategies and learners’ communication skills?

Table 4: *relationship between instructional strategies and learners’ communication skills*

Communication Skills	Pearson's r	Interpretation	p-value	Interpretation	Decision (Null)
Instructional strategies	0.336*	+ moderate relationship	0.042	Significant	Reject H ₀

Note. *p < .05

The data presented in the table reveal a moderate positive relationship between instructional strategies and learners' communication skills. This indicates that as the effectiveness and appropriateness of instructional strategies increase, learners' communication skills also tend to improve. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between instructional strategies and learners' communication skills is rejected. The findings reveal that instructional strategies play an important role in developing learners' communication skills. Teachers who employ learner-centered, interactive, and engaging teaching strategies may create more opportunities for students to practice and enhance their communication abilities. School administrators and educators may therefore consider strengthening professional development programs that focus on effective instructional approaches, particularly those that encourage active participation, collaboration, and communication among learners. This also implies that improving classroom instruction can contribute to better communication outcomes among multigrade learners. Douglas Brown (2007) noted that effective teaching involves interactive, learner-centered strategies that encourage active participation. These strategies enable learners to engage in meaningful communication, enhancing their ability to express ideas clearly. Learner-centered approaches such as cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, and interactive teaching methods help address diverse needs in multigrade classrooms (Tomlinson, 2001).

Problem 5. Is there a significant relationship between oral communication activities and learners' communication skills?

Table 5: relationship between oral communication activities and learners' communication skills

Communication Skills	Pearson's r	Interpretation	p-value	Interpretation	Decision (Null)
Oral Communication Activities	0.234	+ weak relationship	0.163	Not Significant	Do not reject H_0

Note. * $p < .05$

The data presented in the table indicate a weak positive relationship between oral communication activities and learners' communication skills. Although the correlation coefficient suggests that communication skills tend to increase as participation in oral communication activities increases, the relationship is relatively weak, indicating that the relationship is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between oral communication activities and learners' communication skills is not rejected. The findings reveal that while oral communication activities may contribute to learners' communication skill development, their influence is insufficient to establish a statistically significant relationship in this study. This may imply that merely engaging in oral communication activities is insufficient to improve communication skills substantially. Other factors, such as the quality of instruction, the frequency and structure of activities, learner motivation, language proficiency, the classroom environment, and teacher feedback, may have a greater influence on the development of communication. Educators may need to carefully design and implement oral communication activities that are purposeful, engaging, and aligned with learners' developmental needs to maximize their effectiveness. This affirms Prabhu (2016), who advocated that language is best learned

through task-based activities. The focus is on meaning first, then form. This could be used in task-performance titration while narrating steps. Oral communication becomes a tool, not just a subject.

Discussion

The discussion focuses on the findings related to instructional strategies used in teaching multigrade learners, the extent of oral communication activities implemented in the classroom, and the dimensions of communication skills on clarity of expression, fluency, and confidence.

Regarding the level of instructional strategies used in teaching multigrade learners, the level is “very high.” This suggests that instructional strategies and communication activities are essential in developing learners’ communication competence. This finding conforms with Douglas Brown (2007), who emphasized that effective teaching involves the use of interactive and learner-centered strategies that encourage active participation. These strategies enable learners to engage in meaningful communication, enhancing their ability to express ideas clearly. Learner-centered approaches such as cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, and interactive teaching methods help address diverse needs in multigrade classrooms (Tomlinson, 2001). Similarly, studies show that active learning strategies improve engagement and communication skills (UNESCO, 2015). Similarly, Jerome Bruner (1996) emphasized that learning is an active process where learners construct knowledge through interaction and experience. In multigrade classrooms, teachers must use flexible strategies to accommodate learners with different abilities and levels. Moreover, differentiated instruction is essential in multigrade settings. Likewise, Carol Ann Tomlinson (2017) agrees with these findings, noting that adapting teaching methods to learners’ needs improves engagement and participation. This approach helps learners develop confidence and communication skills.

Regarding the extent of oral communication activities implemented in the classroom, the results indicate a “very high extent” level. This suggests that oral communication activities are vital in developing speaking skills. This finding corroborates Jeremy Harmer (2007), who emphasized that activities such as discussions, role-playing, and storytelling provide learners with opportunities to practice language in meaningful contexts. These activities promote interaction and help learners become more confident speakers. In addition, William Littlewood (2004) highlighted that communication activities encourage learners to use language for real-life purposes. This approach enhances fluency and promotes active participation in the classroom. Likewise, it adheres to the Department of Education (2013) K to 12 Curriculum Guide in English. Promotes the use of oral communication activities such as discussions, storytelling, and interactive speaking tasks to develop learners’ communication skills. Research from Philippine Normal University (various studies) shows that structured speaking activities enhance students’ fluency and confidence. Furthermore, classroom interaction plays a crucial role in the development of communication. Learners who are frequently exposed to speaking opportunities tend to improve their communication skills more effectively than those who are passive participants (Brown, 2007).

In terms of communication skills, multigrade learners obtained a “very effective” level across the three parameters: clarity, fluency, and confidence. emphasized the importance of social interaction in learning.

This suggests that through interaction with peers and teachers, learners develop language and communication skills and are likely to participate actively. This finding conforms with the Department of Education (2016), which identifies communication skills as a core competency in the K to 12 curricula, emphasizing clarity, fluency, and confidence. University of the Philippines (education research studies) indicates that communication skills improve through active participation and exposure to speaking opportunities. Research also shows that consistent practice through structured activities enhances speaking ability. Learners who engage in regular oral communication activities demonstrate improved fluency and clarity (Ellis, 2008). Further, Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1997) emphasizes that people learn by observing, modeling, and imitating others, and then reinforcing those behaviors. Self-efficacy affects performance. This theory can be used to help students learn communication skills by watching a teacher demo a lab report and then modeling it with peers. Multigrade teaching involves teaching learners from different grade levels in the same classroom. According to UNESCO (2015), multigrade classrooms require innovative teaching strategies to ensure that all learners are actively engaged. Teachers must create opportunities for collaboration and peer learning. Further, the Department of Education (Multigrade Education Program) provides guidelines for managing multigrade classes using differentiated and interactive strategies. SEAMEO INNOTECH conducted studies on multigrade teaching in the Philippines, emphasizing teachers' adaptability and learner participation. In multigrade settings, communication activities are essential in promoting interaction among learners. These activities allow learners to learn from one another and develop their communication skills despite differences in age and ability (Tomlinson, 2001).

Regarding the relationship between instructional strategies and learners' communication skills, this suggests that as the effectiveness and appropriateness of instructional strategies increase, learners' communication skills tend to improve. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between instructional strategies and learners' communication skills is rejected. The findings reveal that instructional strategies play an important role in developing learners' communication skills. Teachers who employ learner-centered, interactive, and engaging teaching strategies may create more opportunities for students to practice and enhance their communication abilities. School administrators and educators may therefore consider strengthening professional development programs that focus on effective instructional approaches, particularly those that encourage active participation, collaboration, and communication among learners. This also implies that improving classroom instruction can contribute to better communication outcomes among multigrade learners.

Regarding the relationship between oral communication activities and learners' communication skills, although the correlation coefficient indicates that communication skills tend to increase with greater participation in oral communication activities, the relationship remains relatively weak. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between oral communication activities and learners' communication skills is not rejected. The findings reveal that while oral communication activities may contribute to learners' communication skill development, their influence is insufficient to establish a statistically significant relationship in this study. This may imply that merely engaging in oral communication activities is insufficient to improve communication skills substantially. Other factors, such as the quality of instruction, the frequency and structure of activities, learner motivation, language proficiency, the classroom environment, and teacher feedback, may have a greater influence on the

development of communication. Educators may need to carefully design and implement oral communication activities that are purposeful, engaging, and aligned with learners' developmental needs to maximize their effectiveness.

Theoretical contribution

This study contributes to existing theories of language development by providing empirical evidence of a significant relationship between oral communication activities and learners' communication skills, particularly in a multigrade classroom setting. Anchored on Vygotsky's (1978) Social Interaction Theory, the study supports the idea that language proficiency is developed through meaningful social interaction and collaborative talk. Likewise, it affirms Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory...by demonstrating that participation in oral activities enhances learners' confidence in expressing ideas. Furthermore, the findings align with Krashen's (2023) Input and Affective Filter Hypotheses, which emphasize that low anxiety and communicative environments promote fluency and clarity. Bruner's (2000) Constructivist Theory and Willis's (2016) Task-Based Learning also support the study by highlighting the role of structured activities in scaffolding learners' speaking abilities. Thus, this research extends these theories by demonstrating how adapted oral communication activities can address the unique challenges faced by multigrade learners and contribute to the development of clarity, fluency, and confidence in communication.

Practical contribution

Based on the theories and findings, the study offers the following practical contributions:

For Teachers. Teachers are encouraged to integrate oral communication activities such as role-play, group discussions, and storytelling into multigrade classes. This is anchored in Vygotsky (1978) and Willis (2016) to promote interaction and scaffold learning across different grade levels. Doing so can improve learners' clarity, fluency, and confidence in speaking.

For Learners. Frequent participation in oral activities helps learners overcome speaking anxiety and develop self-efficacy, as supported by Bandura (1977) and Krashen (2023). This leads to better communication skills and more active classroom engagement.

For School Administrators. School heads may provide training, teaching materials, and support for teachers handling multigrade classes. This ensures that instructional strategies are aligned with Bruner's (2000) Constructivist Theory and are appropriate for diverse learners....

For Curricular Developers. The study suggests including more structured, low-anxiety, and task-based speaking activities in the curriculum for multigrade settings. This addresses...the unique challenges of teaching multiple grade levels in one classroom.

For Future Researchers. This study serves as a reference for further research on instructional strategies and oral communication in multigrade and rural contexts in the Philippines.

Conclusion

The study explored the impact of instructional strategies on communication skills and the relationship between communication activities and communication skills of multigrade learners. The findings indicate that, while instructional strategies are very high, the extent of communication activities implemented is very high, and communication skills are very effective, the Pearson r reveals no significant relationship between instructional strategies and communication skills, or between communication activities and the communication skills of multigrade learners. This suggests that the variance in these two factors does not influence communication skills, leading to the rejection of the study's hypothesis.

The study acknowledges its limitations, including its focus on a small sample of multigrade learners at the Mabungtot public elementary school in Langiden, Abra, and the use of a limited set of predictor variables. Future research should expand the sample size and include a broader range of predictors to gain more comprehensive insights. A larger population could yield different results and provide a more robust understanding of the dynamics between instructional strategies and communication skills, and between communication activities and communication skills outcomes of multigrade learners.

Authors' contributions: C.A.A., Adviser: E.B.V. **The conceptualization:** C.A.A., E.B.V. **Research methodology:** C.A.A., E.B.V. **Analysis of data:** C.A.A., E.B.V.

Conflict of interest statement: Authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical review statement: The research was submitted to the ethics review board and approved for conduct. It does not involve human-sensitive issues.

Funding: The author funded the study.

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