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Speaking and Writing Skills in English of Fourth Year BS Marine Engineering Students at PMMA

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Abstract

Aim: This study assessed the speaking and writing skills of Fourth Year BS Marine Engineering students of the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA) in San Narciso, Zambales.

Methodology: The descriptive type of research was used in the study where the respondents are the Fourth Year BS Marine Engineering students of the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy in San Narciso, Zambales. Data were gathered with questionnaire and documentary analysis of their speaking and writing activities.

Results: The result of the correlation between the speaking skills of the respondents and their performance in Speech I was interpreted as moderate positive correlation. Using the Pearson r formula, the computed $r = 0.474$ with a significant value of 0.000 which is significant is at 0.05. This means that there is a moderate positive correlation between the speaking skills of the respondents and their performance in Speech I. Correlation is significant. Two variables are uncorrelated when a change in one doesn't lead to a change in the other and vice versa. Using the Pearson r formula, $r = 0.649$ with a significant value of 0.000 and a descriptive interpretation of moderate positive correlation, the computed r value in English 1 and writing skill is 0.649 which is significant at 0.05. There was a moderate positive correlation between the writing skills of the respondents and their performance in English 1. Correlation is significant.

Conclusion: Majority of the respondents were male, used Filipino language at home, used English language in school, and preferred reading newspapers. Most of the respondents obtained a satisfactory rating in their speaking skill. A few of the respondents garnered a satisfactory rating in their writing skill. The academic performance of the respondents in their Speech 1 had a moderate positive correlation in developing their speaking skill. The correlation of both variables is significant. The academic performance of the respondents in their English 1 revealed a moderate positive correlation in their writing skill. The correlation of both variables is significant.

Keywords: *speaking, writing, skills, Philippine Merchant Marine Academy, Marine Engineering*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a productive skill in the oral mode. Like other skills, it is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words. There are three kinds of speaking situations in which we find ourselves, these are: interactive, partially interactive, and non-interactive. Interactive speaking situations include face-to-face conversations and telephone calls, in which we are alternately listening and speaking, and in which we have a chance to ask for clarification, repetition, or slower speech from our conversation partner. Some speaking situations are partially interactive, such as when giving a speech to a live audience, where the convention is that the audience does not interrupt speech. The speaker nevertheless can see the audience and judge from the expressions on their faces and body language whether he/she is being understood.

Speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions (Richards, 2002). Speaking is one of the elements of communication where communication is the output modality and learning is the input modality of language acquisition.

As human beings, we always need communication to express our idea to do everything, what's more as a



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student or learners they must speak with their teachers if in learning process to be able to express their idea. Renandya (2002), "Communication in the classroom embedded in focused meaning activity. This requires teachers to tailor their instruction carefully to the needs of learners and teach them how to listen to others, and how to negotiate meaning in a shared context. Out of interaction, learners will learn how to communicate verbally and non-verbally as their language store and knowledge skills develop. Consequently, the give and take exchanges of messages will enable them to create discourse that conveys their intention in real life communication."

Therefore, in a formal environment between teachers and students must always interact to make communication. In fact, most of our daily communication remains interactional. It can interact in language that is essential. Speaking is a fundamental and instrumental act. Speakers talk to have some effect on their listeners. They assert things to change their state of knowledge. They ask them questions to get them to provide information. They request things to get them to do things for them (Clark, 1997).

On the other hand, writing is a very important skill too. Just like speaking, writing helps one express oneself. It prepares us for school and employment (both of which in most cases require a lot of it). Writing is how much of the world communicates. Writing can be a great tool to help you know more about the way you think...Writing can solidify ideas and thoughts and allow you to reflect on them better than if the ideas remained evolving in your head. It is one of the ways that we translate our thoughts for other people. Some people, even students, are better at expressing themselves in writing than any other way and get a better translation when you read what they have to say rather than hearing them speak.

Speaking can help you learn those things as well, but it is easier to self-examine and evaluate how to improve when you have something concrete in front of you, you can revise, you can go back to your writing and edit what you have written. Writing is a very important component of our life. It helps us to increase our speed, learn things faster and in an easy way. We write because we forget things very fast (Matway, 2007).

Good writing is one of those skills that may not always show importance until it is mastered, and one can personally see its effect. Most people leave off their practice of expressing themselves in writing with terrible fear. They assume that because they weren't writing perfectly, they should not write it at all. This habit often stems from public school where many students are discouraged by the words, "If you can't write, then stop trying to write something that you cannot express." These ideas created personal obstacles just because they feared how others would react to the errors within their writing. As a result, they also put some major obstacles into their process of learning. Therefore, these two communication skills improve the outcome of students' learning and the way they will be able to leave an impression on others through their expression.

The Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA) presently stands as a pillar among maritime institutions in the country, but its graduates still need to be globally competitive in terms of communication particularly in the use of the English language. As we all know, English is the universal language that is used all over the world. It is imperative that graduates of the PMMA be communicative and conversant in the English language as they unravel and sail the seven seas.

CMO No.14, Series of 2013, Article III under its Educational Objectives Program, states that the BS Mar-E program aims to (a) provide and equip students with knowledge, understanding, proficiencies, skills, competencies, attitudes and values to qualify them for professional licensure examination and assessment and certification as officer in charge of an engineering watch in a manned engine-room or designated duty engineer officer in a periodically unmanned engine room on seagoing ships powered by main propulsion machinery of 750kw propulsion power or more; (b) produce graduates that are competent to carry out safely the watchkeeping duties of an officer in charge of an engineering watch in a manned engine room or designated duty engineer officer in a periodically unmanned engine room, both at sea and in port; fully conversant with the basic principles to be observed in keeping an engineering watch as per STCW Regulation VIII/2, Chapter VIII of the STCW Code; and qualified to pursue a professional career or advanced studies in any maritime field of specialization.

Relevant to this CHED Memorandum Order, under the STCW/Conf.2/34, Table A-III/5 on Specification of Minimum Standard of Competence for Ratings as Able Seafarer Engine, the ability to understand orders and to communicate with the officer of the watch in matters relevant to watchkeeping duties, procedures for the relief, maintenance and handover of a watch is clearly emphasized. Information is required to maintain a safe watch assessment of evidence obtained from in-service experience or practical test. Communications should be clear and concise. It is with these reasons that the researcher saw the need and essential of this study to help solved the pressing problems/difficulties of some marine engineering graduates who are already onboard but were still incompetent in terms of speaking and writing. Sensible to say that the English language is a very important tool in our



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lives, as we use it to express ourselves, to defend ourselves, and even to attack when the need arises, the language that most of us are dependent on.

In the advent of technology and students' exposure to different electronic gadgets and recreations all over, it is observed that students nowadays are far beyond compared to students of before. Many students nowadays cannot speak and write well in English. Many of them cannot express themselves properly and have difficulty in speaking and writing. Many factors need to be considered in this rampant problem since our students come from different places and from all walks of life all over the Philippines. Take a giant leap into the future by whatever means available to us. We just want to check out what changes the English language would have undergone over this period. Our growing concern for the future of the English Language is indeed justifiable, as we are fully aware that at present, certain changes to the English language are taking place and these changes are inevitable as they are part of modernization. To integrate with the technology of the day and to facilitate the proper use of modern communication methods such as text messaging on mobile phones, i-pads, and other modern gadgets everyone is inclined to, the changes that are being applied to grammar and punctuation are inevitable.

The Internet, a great source of information serves well all those who are well versed in the English language. Technology is the culprit. The very same technology that had us reeling asking for more after the computer became a trend in offices, school and everywhere bidding a hasty farewell to typewriters. The computer, the tool with which the Internet could be accessed, made a giant leap into the lives of millions when the Internet was made accessible to the public. A parallel situation saw a thing called texting which involves sending text messages from the keypad of one mobile phone to the screen of another and vice versa. Almost immediately the trend to shorten words in a bid to save the agony of having to spell out every single word was generated.

This trend of shortening words in text messages caught on fast and soon became widely accepted. The evolution of this trend too took place so rapidly that along with simplified spellings, omitting prepositions and conjunctions, and even leaving out vowels from words caught on. From here on it would be only a matter of time for the deterioration of the English language that we have witnessed in the electronic media to seep into the other media like newspapers and magazines and wherever else the written word was needed. This new trend emerged purely for the sake of convenience, and for saving time. Speed was most vital ... they thought. This trend was carried out in chat sites online, and even noticeable was the absence of a space between words after a punctuation mark. Spell it the way you think fit and if it is understood. That's all that matters. And so, the speaking and writing skills of the students were adversely affected. Through this study, the researcher hopes to help solve the problem among students of PMMA to boost and uplift their morale and self-confidence in order to improve their communication skills particularly in speaking and writing. It is also hoped that those who will read or follow the footsteps in studying and researching such as this study will be inspired and be guided accordingly to continue to educate, improve and build upon legacy – a world famous merchant marine officers, known not only for training excellence but in academics as well particularly in speaking and writing skills to become qualified and competent merchant marine officers for shipboard and shore-based positions, in response to the global requirements of the expanding international maritime industry.

Research Questions

This study assessed the speaking and writing skills of Fourth Year BS Marine Engineering students of the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy or PMMA in San Narciso, Zambales.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Gender.
 - 1.2 Preferred Language Used at Home.
 - 1.3 Preferred Language Used in School; and
 - 1.4 Preferred Reading Materials
 - 1.5 Academic Performance in Speech 1
 - 1.6 Academic Performance in English 1
2. How may the speaking skills of the respondents be described?
3. How may the writing skills of respondents be described?
4. What is the correlation between the speaking skills of the respondents and their performance in Speech 1?
5. What is the correlation between the writing skills of the respondents and their performance in English1?
6. What training module may be proposed to improve the speaking and



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writing skills of the Marine Engineering students of PMMA?

Hypotheses

Given the stated research problem, the following are the hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. There is no correlation between the speaking skills of the students and their performance in Speech 1.

Hypothesis 2. There is no correlation between the writing skills of the students and their performance in English1.

METHODS

Research Design

The descriptive type of research was used in the study where the respondents are the Fourth Year BS Marine students of the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy, in San Narciso, Zambales. Data were gathered with questionnaire and documentary analysis of their speaking and writing activities.

Population and Sampling

This study was conducted at the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy, San Narciso, Zambales with one hundred twenty-three students in the College of Marine Engineering during the first semester of the Academic Year 2013-2014. A Survey Questionnaire form was distributed to the respondents, and they were also being tested at the PMMA Speech Laboratory and were orally graded as regards their pronunciation and diction. Similarly, the researcher gathered data/answers from the respondents as regard to their writing activities on Paragraph Writing and Subject - Verb Agreement.

Instrument

A survey questionnaire was used to collect the necessary data in this study. Said instrument was validated by experts in the field. PMMA Speech Laboratory was used as a testing area where respondents were orally graded as regard to their pronunciation and diction.

Data Collection

The data were gathered, read, and analyzed following the objective of the study and in adherence to all protocols in the conduct of this research.

Treatment of Data

The data gathered through the responses indicated in the questionnaire were organized, tabulated, and analyzed. Percentage was used to determine the proportion of the students/respondents belonging to specific categories relative to their profile. Mean was utilized to determine the final weight of each item in the respondent's awareness of themselves. Pearson r was used to discuss correlations between the speaking skill of students and their performance in Speech 1, writing skill of students and their performance in English 1.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that all research protocols involving ethics in research were complied with for the protection of all people and institutions involved in the conduct of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This presents the findings in tabular form, analysis and interpretation drawn from the data gathered.

1. Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents was tabulated to give better insights on the background information of the respondents. The following Tables present the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, preferred language used at home, preferred language used in school and preferred reading materials.

1.1 Gender. Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of gender. It can be gleaned from the Table that one hundred thirteen (113) or 91.87 % among the respondents are male and ten (10) or 08.13 % among the respondents are female. There are only ten (10) female respondents out of one hundred twenty-three (123)

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respondents. This means that majority of the respondents are male because in PMMA male gender is dominant.

Table 1
Distribution of the Respondents According to Gender

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	113	91.87
Female	10	08.13
Total	123	100 %

1.2 Preferred Language Used at Home. Language used at home is one of the factors that affect the students' performance in their speaking and writing skills. It can be gleaned from the table that sixty-eight (68) or 55.28% among the respondents used Filipino language at home; thirty (30) or 24.39% used the English language; eleven (11) or 08.94% used other languages; ten (10) or 08.13% used Ilokano; four (4) used Cebuano and nobody used the Zambal language. This means that majority of the respondents preferred to use the Filipino language at home.

Research in bilingual homes supports the concept that parents should communicate in their stronger language.

Table 2
Distribution of the Respondents According to Language Used at Home

Language	No. of Respondents	Percentage
English	30	24.39
Filipino	68	55.28
Ilokano	10	08.13
Zambal	0	0
Cebuano	4	03.25
Others (Kapampangan, Ilonggo, Bicolano, Tuwali,Chavacano, and Bisaya)	11 (2, 2, 2, 1,2,1,1)	08.94
TOTAL	123	100 %

1.3 Preferred Language Used in School. It can be seen from the Table that seventy-one (71) or 57.7% of the respondents used the English language in school; thirty-seven (37) or 30.1% used Taglish; and fifteen (15) or 12.2% used the Filipino language in school. It means that the most preferred language used in school is English.



Table 3
Distribution of the Respondents According to Preferred Language Used in School

Language	No. of Respondents	Percentage
English	71	57.7
Filipino	15	12.2
Taglish	37	30.1
Others	0	0
TOTAL	123	100 %

1.4 Preferred Reading Materials. Table 4 reveals the profile of the respondents in terms of their preferred reading materials. Sixty-two (62) or 50.4% preferred to read newspapers; fifty (50) or 43.1% preferred magazines; four (4) or 03.3% preferred to read other reading materials; two (2) or 01.6% preferred both journals and cartoon comics; and none preferred to read pamphlets.

Table 4
Distribution of the Respondents According to Preferred Reading Materials

Preferred Reading Materials	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Magazines	53	43.1
Newspaper	62	50.4
Journals	2	01.6
Pamphlets	0	0
Cartoon Comics	2	01.6
Others (Books/pocketbooks)	4 (3/1)	03.3
TOTAL	123	100 %

This means that most of the respondents preferred to read newspapers as their reading materials. Magazines, newspapers, journals, pamphlets, cartoon comics, books and pocketbooks are among the reading materials which were all written in English.

1.5 Academic Performance in Speech 1. Table 5 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of their academic performance in Speech 1. Forty one (41) or thirty three point thirty three percent (33.33%) got a Final Grade of 76 to 80; twenty seven (27) or twenty one point ninety five percent (21.95%) got a Final Grade of 81 to 85; twenty six (26) or twenty one point fourteen percent (21.14%); eighteen (18) or fourteen point sixty three percent (14.63%) got a Final Grade of 71 to 75; six (6) or four point eighty eight percent (4.88%) got a Final Grade of 91 to



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95; and five (5) or four point zero seven percent (4.07%) got a Final Grade of 70 and below. None of the respondents was able to get a Final Grade of 96 to 100 in Speech.

Table 5
Distribution of the Respondents According to Academic Performance in Speech 1

SPEECH 1 Performance	Frequency	Percentage
96-100	0	0
91-95	6	4.88
86-90	26	21.14
81-85	27	21.95
76-80	41	33.33
71-75	18	14.63
70- Below	5	4.07
TOTAL	123	100%

1.6 Academic Performance in English 1. Table 7 reveals that the profile of the respondents in terms of their academic performance in English 1. Sixty two (62) or fifty point forty one percent (50.41%) got a Final Grade of 76 to 80; forty three (43) or thirty four point ninety five percent (34.95%) got a Final Grade of 81 to 85; nine (9) or seven point thirty two percent (7.32%) got a Final Grade of 71 to 75; seven (7) or five point sixty nine percent (5.69%) got a Final Grade of 86 to 90; two (2) or one point sixty three percent (1.63%) got a Final Grade of 91 to 95; nobody got a Final Grade of 70 and below and no one got a Final Grade of 96 and above.

Table 6
Distribution of the Respondents According to Academic Performance in English 1

ENGLISH 1 Performance	Frequency	Percentage
96-100	0	0
91-95	2	1.63
86-90	7	5.69
81-85	43	34.95
76-80	62	50.41
71-75	9	7.32
70- Below	0	0
TOTAL	123	100%

2. Speaking Skills.

Table 7 shows the distribution of respondents according to speaking skills. It can be gleaned from this Table that thirty-eight (38) or 30.9% of the respondents got "Satisfactory" rating in their speaking activities; twenty-nine (29) or 23.6% got "Very Satisfactory"; twenty-five (25) or 20.3% got a "Fair" rating; sixteen (16) or 13.0% got an "Excellent" rating; fifteen (15) or 12.2% got "Poor" rating; and none got a rating of "Needs Improvement".

This means that most of the respondents garnered a "Satisfactory" rating which is equivalent to eighty-six to ninety (86-90).

Baluma (1994) surveyed the communicative competence profile of freshmen students at Divine Word College of Tagbilaran. She considered five (5) aspects of oral proficiency pronunciation, and these were: (1) auditory discrimination of sounds, (2) fluency, (3) grammar, (4) vocabulary and (5) comprehension. The study provided background regarding listening competency in relation to the speaking and writing proficiency of the respondents. Based on the curriculum 2007 the students are intended to have the English ability in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.



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Table 7
Distribution of the Respondents According to Speaking Skills

SCORING			
100-ITEM SCORE	QUALITATIVE INTERPRETATION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
96-100	Excellent	16	13.0
91-95	Very Satisfactory	29	23.6
86-90	Satisfactory	38	30.9
81-85	Fair	25	20.3
76-80	Poor	15	12.2
71-75	Needs Improvement	0	0
	Total	123	100

3. Writing Skills.

Table 8 reflects the distribution of the respondents according to writing skills. Thirty-seven (37) or 30% got a rating of "Satisfactory"; twenty-eight (28) or 22.8% got a rating of "Fair"; twenty-five (25) or 20.3% got a rating of "Very Satisfactory"; twenty (20) or 16.3% got an "Excellent" rating; twelve (12) or 09.8% got "Poor" rating; and one (1) got a "Needs Improvement" rating.

This means that most of the respondents garnered a "Satisfactory" rating which is equivalent to eighty-six to ninety (86-90). Choosing the right words requires a wide vocabulary. At present, we are using English as our medium of communication; therefore, there is a need for us to be familiar with the English vocabulary.

The study of Enriquez and Nolasco (2007) also showed that a person who has a wide range of vocabulary might not have difficulties in thinking and communication. The two also added that vocabulary, spelling, and grammar skills are the basic components of language which are very useful to man's life. The term of ability is defined as skill or power. Concisely, writing ability is the skill to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings to other people in written symbols to make other people or readers understand the ideas conveyed.

Table 8
Distribution of the Respondents According to Writing Skills

SCORING			
100-ITEM SCORE	QUALITATIVE INTERPRETATION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
96-100	Excellent	20	16.3
91-95	Very Satisfactory	25	20.3
86-90	Satisfactory	37	30.0
81-85	Fair	28	22.8



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76-80	Poor	12	09.8
71-75	Needs Improvement	1	00.8
	Total	123	100

4. Correlation between the Speaking Skills of the Respondents and Their Performance in Speech 1.

The result of the correlation between the speaking skills of the respondents and their performance in Speech I was interpreted as moderate positive correlation. As shown in Table 9 using the Pearson r formula that the computed $r = 0.474$ with a significant value of 0.000 which is significant at 0.05. This means that there is a moderate positive correlation between the speaking skills of the respondents and their performance in Speech I. Correlation is significant. Two variables are uncorrelated when a change in one doesn't lead to a change in the other and vice versa.

Correlational studies on professional preparation and other variables were conducted by Paloma, (1993) and Librano, (1992). Paloma's study focused on the relationship of teacher professional preparations and English achievement and skills among freshmen college students. Their studies proved that there is a positive correlation in a teacher's professional preparation with students' achievement. On the other hand, Librano's study dealt with the relationship of the professional preparations of the senior secondary teachers' oral communication achievement.

Table 9
r - Value for the Correlations of Variables

Variables Correlated	r - value	Significance	Interpretation (L = 0.05)
Speaking Skill and Speech 1	0.474	0.000	Moderate positive Correlation and Correlation is significant
Writing Skill and English 1	0.649	0.000	Moderate positive Correlation and Correlation is significant

5. Correlation between the Writing Skills of the Respondents and Their Performance in English 1.

As shown in table 10 using the Pearson r formula, $r = 0.649$ with a significant value of 0.000 and a descriptive interpretation of moderate positive correlation.

Table 9 shows that the computed r value in English 1 and writing skill is 0.649 which is significant at 0.05. There was a moderate positive correlation between the writing skills of the respondents and their performance in English 1. Correlation is significant. Jutare (1990) also claimed in his article that our graduates in both high school and college can hardly speak and write. With the distressing criticism on English proficiency, it is a must to pinpoint area of difficulty in English communication, because effective communication in English naturally requires proficiency in the language.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents is based on their gender, preferred language used at home, preferred language used in school, preferred reading materials, academic performance in Speech 1 and academic performance in English 1.

Among the 123 respondents, 113- or ninety-one-point eighty seven percent (91.87%) of the respondents are male. Sixty-eight (68) or fifty-five-point twenty eight percent (55.28%) of the respondents used the Filipino language at home, seventy-one (71) or fifty-seven-point seven percent (57.7%) used the English language in school and sixty-two (62) or fifty-point four percent (50.4%) of the respondents preferred reading the newspaper.



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In terms of their academic performance in school particularly in Speech 1 and English 1, forty-one (41) or thirty-three-point thirty three percent (33.33%) of the respondents got a Final Grade of 76 to 80, sixty-two (62) or fifty-point forty one percent (50.41%) got a Final Grade of 76 to 80.

The speaking skills of the respondents

Thirty-point nine percent (30.9%) of the respondents obtained a "Satisfactory" rating in their speaking skill which is equivalent to 86 to 90 in a 100-item score.

The writing skills of the respondents

Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents got a "Satisfactory" rating in their writing skill which is equivalent to 86 to 90 in a 100-item score.

Conclusions

Based on the salient findings presented, the following are the conclusions made:

1. Majority of the respondents were male, used Filipino language at home, used English language in school, and preferred reading newspapers.
2. Most of the respondents obtained a satisfactory rating in their speaking skill.
3. Several of the respondents garnered a satisfactory rating in their writing skill.
4. The academic performance of the respondents in their Speech 1 had a moderate positive correlation in developing their speaking skill. Correlation of both variables is significant.
5. The academic performance of the respondents in their English 1 revealed a moderate positive correlation in their writing skill. Correlation of both variables is significant.

Recommendations

After careful analysis of the data, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. The respondents should be encouraged to speak English at home and continue using the English language in communicating in school. They should likewise be required to explore other reading materials aside from the newspapers.
2. The respondents should be provided with more speaking activities to motivate them to earn higher grade in Speech 1.
3. The school should provide the latest equipment and facilities that can be utilized by the students to empower their capabilities and improve their speaking skills.
4. PMMA English Instructors should update their syllabi and modules to answer the needs and the difficulties encountered by the students in the four skills especially speaking and writing. They should use the recommended Maritime English Training Module to improve their teaching methods and strategies to help upgrade the students in their speaking and writing activities. A writing program could be developed to improve the writing skill of the students as well.
5. The respondents should just be encouraged to give time and importance to their General Education subjects particularly in English. More effective drills, exercises, and activities in speaking and writing are strongly recommended to overcome errors especially in their pronunciation and diction, grammar, and composition writing.
6. A parallel study should be conducted to explore other areas of speaking and writing.

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