

Teaching and Learning Communication Skills Through Radio Lecture Series: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

The effective use of the language skills is not acquired naturally but learnt, and enhanced as a set of practices in formal instructional settings. This is what the Communication and Study Skills Radio Lecture Series on Radio Windy Bay 98.3 FM MHz seeks to do. The defining question is: how relevant is this free-on air broadcast to the teaching and learning experience of its target audience after over a decade of transmission? This appreciative inquiry or tracker study sought to analyse the listening habits of the target audience of the programme; examine perceptions of the listeners at the level of programme content, anchor styles, interactivity, placement, and duration; and explore suggestions for improvement to enhance performance. A Descriptive survey, data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires from three hundred and sixty-four (N=364) participants and fifty (N=50) key informants from the University of Education, Winneba in the 2015/2016 academic year. Situated in the AMARC radio impact assessment tools, the Radio Audience Measurement (RAM) ratings, and the Audience tracker, one significant finding from was that the radio lecture was complementary and is capable of harmonizing the contents from the different lecturers of the course with varied teaching styles. Additionally, unlike the traditional face-to-face lectures, it was devoid of visual distractions which enabled the target audience to pay attention to details during the presentations. The study recommends the introduction and use of other emerging complementary learning tools such as the podcast to improve the asymmetrical nature of this teaching and learning experience.

Introduction

The purpose of higher education is to prepare students to function appropriately in their work places, communities and also in their personal lives. While this purpose may have remained constant for centuries, the means of preparing the students to be functional has been ever changing in this dynamic world. One of the agents for the change is the advent of technology – Information Communication Technologies in the teaching and learning experiences at the higher educational institutions (EDUCAUSE, 2009). A study by Verdegem and De Marez (2011) affirm that the emergence of new technologies is perceived as one of the most important driving forces capable of helping developing nations to make up for the arrears for the dominance of the developed nations in terms of logistics and human resources. Their study further asserts that the use of the radio or television to support learning outcomes enables the needed change for the creation of a more flexible and engaging learning environment. This proclamation is much more emphasised by Player-Koro (2012) who states that the use of digital technology in learning is the driving force for transformation in education because the digital age carries with it positive overtones contributing to numerous national initiatives and schemes. He adds that a technology-based learning allows nations to move into an information age which has prospects for providing the needed skilled labour and capacity to allow developing nations, especially, to move with the changing tides of development.

In a world that is rapidly moving into a digital media and information age, the use of ICT tools in education is becoming much more increasingly relevant. Access to every level of education worldwide begins with the use of one or more forms of ICT application or multimedia tool in order to be successful. From the completion of the admission forms to the list of graduates, the relevance of knowledge in the use of an ICT or multimedia tool cannot be over emphasised. In view of this a Ghana Government initiative for a draft national policy framework on Information and Communication Technology for Accelerated Development (ICT4AD) in 2003 emphasised the relevance of the use of ICT tools for teaching and learning. The implementation of the policy however was much more emphasised in September 2007, a few years after it had been initiated.

The radio has been used in different formats for a myriad of educational purposes across the world. Studies have proven that the radio technology was first developed during the late nineteenth century but gained popularity as an educational medium during the early twentieth century. Although often overshadowed as educational medium in relation to other technologies such as the television and the Internet, the radio still remains a viable medium that has proven educational worth in terms of both pedagogical importance and geographical reach. It is capable of delivering high quality educational programmes to highly diversified audiences who are located across broad geographical expanses at an extremely low per unit production cost

(Couch, 1997).

In spite of the strides made in recent times, some studies have reported that the use of the radio as a multimedia tool and an E-learning facility is not an emerging phenomena. A 1995 report by the Ghana Frequency Registration and Control Board (GFRCB), now the National Communications Authority (NCA) states that the use of the radio for teaching and learning began in Ghana in the 1970s when the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service found it essential to teach the Ga language (one of the Kwa languages of the Ningo-Congo basin, spoken by the indigenes of the Greater Accra region) to pupils in within the catchment area of the Greater Accra Region, especially in the Accra metropolis. Most pupils in the then growing cosmopolitan Accra were neither native speakers of the Ga language nor proficient in using the Ga language for the routine communication for their basic needs. Additionally, students in the region as a matter of policy were mandated to offer one Ghanaian language spoken in the locality of their school in as an external examination with the West African Examination Council. In recent times, the language policy of Ghana mandates that one local language (L1) spoken in the community of a particular school should be used as the medium of instruction for all subjects (with the exception of the English language as a subject) from Primary 1 to 4. This is because a plethora of studies had shown the benefits of using the child's LI in education at least at the early stages. Such studies had confirmed that transferring from L1 to L2 (the target language) was theoretically and empirically more probable. The English language (L2) in this case, which is the official medium of communication, however could be used as a medium of instruction from primary 4 onwards (Owu-Ewie, 2013).

Studies have shown that the radio presents one of the best medium of communication in Africa partly because of the continent's long standing with oral traditions. In view of this, the choice of the Community radio for lectures is appropriate for students in African and should be given the needed scholarly attention. Dwivedi (2010) writing about community radio with special reference to India, pointed out that community radio services tend to cater for the interest of a certain area by broadcasting contents that are of relevance to the developmental needs of the local audience but overlooked by the commercial radio. Mtimde, Bonin, Maphiri and Nyamaku (1998, p.13) describe a community as "a collective group of people sharing common characteristics and interests". The term "community" as thus used in community radio, has two references or notions: people in a particular geographical area, and a social group or section of the public with a common interest or goal. The Campus Radio as such is *by*, the community within which the radio station is situated; it is *for* providing the needs of the said community, and finally, the programme contents of the radio should bring *about* empowerment and development in the lives of the listener audiences of the radio (National Communication Authority, 2014).

Some studies have also shown that in recent times that tertiary institutions are clamouring for licences to operate campus radio and television stations because of the myriad of advantages in using it to support learning outcomes in the technological age. Like any other higher educational institution, the University of Education, Winneba is an academic discourse community with a goal of helping students to attain academic excellence. The university operates two (2) campus radio stations: Radio Windy Bay – 98.3 MHz at the Winneba campus, and the MYND FM – 105.1 MHz serving the satellite campuses; College of Technology Education in Kumasi and the College of Agriculture Education in Mampong - Ashanti. Awuku (2013) reports that Radio Windy Bay 98.3, especially, was started as an "experiment for using the radio as an innovative approach to resolving the challenges of teaching large classes and its attendant problems in a young and growing university. He accentuates that one of the core mandates for establishing the campus radio was for it to be used to complement the "face – to - face" lectures of the large classes of the general courses or core courses offered by almost every student in the university. It was also to ensure uniformity in relation to content delivery from the various lecturers handling the different groups of students and to allow the students as well to access lectures in the comfort of their homes and halls of residence.

The core courses often referred to as the General Courses or General Professional Development (GPD) courses, are offered by all the first year students irrespective of the academic programme being pursued. Designated general course coordinators are appointed to supervise the teaching and learning of these courses, and in consultation with the management of the radio station, monitor and rate the effectiveness of the radio lectures to serve the educational needs of the entire university community. In view of this, each general course is offered a slot and airtime on the programming schedules of the university's campus radio station so that radio lectures are presented in turns throughout the semester year after year.

The ability to effectively listen, speak, read and write is not acquired naturally but consciously learnt as a set of practices in formal instructional settings and this is what the free on air radio lecture series of the GPD111-Communication and Study Skills general course seeks to do. This is a one-semester course designed to help students develop effective language and study skills for their academic work. As a result, the course is offered by all the undergraduate Level 100 students of the University of Education, Winneba. The course content includes topics such as Communication in the Academic Discourse Community; Relationship between Grammar and Communication; How to Develop Study Skills; The Relationship between Reading and Writing; Developing

the Paragraph; Sourcing for Information; and Documentation Styles Across the curriculum. The mode of delivery in addition to the radio lectures includes face-to-face lectures, individual and group presentations.

The Communication and Study Skills radio lecture series on Radio Windy Bay 98.3 is offered in three different modes comprised of the solo, panel discussions, and simulated lecture hall sessions. There are also segments of interactivity such as the phone-in sessions and the Whatsapp group chat platform for both the students and instructors. These new media application addition is to support interactivity and to allow 'on the spot' opportunities for the target audience to contribute by asking questions and commenting on what other callers or presenters had intimated. Awuku (2013) asserts that the performance assessment and impact ratings conducted by the Management of the radio station every semester on all the radio lecture series of the General Courses had consistently showed that the Communication and Study Skills radio lecture series is one of the most highly patronized programmes. This recognition is commendable and as such an impetus or motivation for this tracker study or appreciative inquiry to enable the instructors of the course to assess the listening habits, programme content, level of interactivity, delivery, anchor styles, avenues for improvement in the production of the programme as well as its relevance in supporting the overall performance of the target audience.

Rationale for the study

Studies have been conducted on the use of the multimedia and mass media tools to support learning experiences in different parts of the world. For instance, the Ministry of Education in Namibia's report in 2004 on the use of the radio for educational programmes has highlighted the strides made in performance after the introduction of the free-on air radio programmes. The report affirmed the complementary efforts of the radio broadcast to the face to face classroom interactions for students, especially, in the second cycle institutions which offer programmes in Agriculture and other science related courses. Beukes (2006, p. 3) also declares the "importance of the radio in the dissemination of information as the most accessible medium which are credible and transcends literacy barriers depending on the format of the radio." Beukes adds that the radio lectures are capable of addressing the target audience individually in context and it is also able to provide high quality educational programmes to a highly diversified audience as a group of listeners.

Jaminson and McAnany (2008) have reported on three main advantages of radio lectures to include: (1) for improvement in educational quality and relevance; (2) ability to lower per student educational costs since it can reach a large number of students at a comparatively lesser cost; and (3) has improved access to education, particularly for disadvantaged groups who may be residing in the rural areas to also have access to education. However, some limitations of the radio for educational purposes have also been cited as being asymmetrical and lacking interactivity. Thus, there is no instructor feedback and clarifications are generally unavailable. Additionally, the instructions cannot be interrupted or reviewed by students (unless it is tape-recorded); the pace of the lesson is fixed; note taking is difficult; and time for reflection is woefully inadequate or minimal.

Goodluck and Thompson (1987) as well as Galda and Searle (1980) have presented findings on how campus radio stations have been used extensively in Nicaragua to teach abstract concepts in the Mathematics and in the Sciences. Galda and Searle for instance, conducted a comparative study using two groups of samples: students who had access to supplementary radio lecture series and students who did not. Findings from that study revealed that the students who had access to both the radio lecture series and the face-to-face lectures performed better not because the radio lecture was complementary but that, the students paid extra attention in class after the radio lectures to enable them better understand abstract concepts they could not comprehend because of the inability to have access to graphical illustrations on the radio mode.

Further, some efforts have been made on the teaching of the Communication Skills course and the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course in Ghana. For instance, Asemanyi (2015) and Afful (1998) have both assessed the acquisition of language competences of students and its impact on the reading and writing skills of students as well as on the performance of the students beyond the course. Owu-Ewie, Hammond, and Amo-Mensah (2014) for instance, have looked at the varied errors committed by students in their academic essays and their implications for performance after they have gone through the Communication and Study Skills course at the University of Education, Winneba.

However, in spite of the efforts made, fewer studies have looked at an assessment of radio lecture series as complementary to face-to-face lectures of the Communication Skills course or the English for Academic Purposes course using the AMARC assessment tools in Ghana. More especially, no study has been conducted on the free-on-air Radio lecture series of the University of Education, Winneba. In view of this, the current study specifically, sought to analyse the listening habits of the target audience of the GPD111 Radio lecture Series by examining their perceptions on the lecture series; and exploring suggestions to improve the programme and to enhance the performance of the students target audience. Per these objectives for the study, we pose these research questions: What are the listening habits of the target audience of the GPD 111 Radio lecture Series? What are the perceptions of the target audience on the GPD 111 Radio Lecture Series? How can the GPD111 Radio Lecture Series be explored for improvement and to enhance the performance of the students target

audience?

Theoretical Consideration

This study was situated in the assessment tools provided by the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters often referred to as the AMARC Global Evaluation Assessment tools, (2007) which has been adopted by UNESCO and UNICEF as participatory action-research processes for the social impact of community radio programmes on their target audience worldwide. The tools are open-monitoring evaluation processes for programmes that combine the appropriate use of information communication and technology (ICT) tools with face-to-face meetings with the view to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a particular radio programme content and its potential impact on the listener audience of the programme. The core target group of the evaluation processes usually comprise the community radio stakeholders such as opinion leaders, academics, students, the marginalized and minority groups (i.e. women, children, the poor, disabled etc), donor agencies, development communication stakeholders and partners, and the consumers of the programme who are also considered as key stakeholders in daily happenings on the community radio.

The AMARC assessment tools underscore key evaluation indicators such as *access, programme content, anchor styles, levels of interactivity, and duration* as necessary for assessing the impact of a radio programme on its target audience. Other indicators include *voice, empowerment, local ownership* and the *use of communication process* in terms of impact. All the indicators are rooted in elements that define the strategic lines of actions upon which the impact of community radio programmes could be assessed as highlighted by the different bodies of AMARC and adopted by UNESCO and UNICEF. For this study, the entire Communication and Study Skills radio lecture series aired on Radio Windy Bay – 98.3 MHz was subjected to the demands of the assessment tools as espoused by the different bodies of AMARC.

Methodology

The study was conducted in 9 months of two semesters of the 2015/2016 academic year. It was primarily qualitative and it involved the collection of a variety of empirical data spanning from personal experiences, introspections, interviews, and open-ended questionnaires. The design was a descriptive survey which Babbie (2009), describes as the most convenient method that allows researchers to gather original data from the description of a problem from a very large population sample which cannot be directly observed in order to generalize findings. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), see the descriptive survey as typically a plan for gathering data with the intention to describe the nature of an existing condition or situation by identifying standards against which the conditions could be compared or determined. This design was appropriate for the study because it enabled the researchers to work with a sample that was representative of the over two thousand and five hundred (2500) students who take the Communication and Study Skills course annually. The design therefore allowed the researchers to employ structured and predefined questions aimed at gathering the needed information from the perspectives of the target audience who were the beneficiaries as well as the key stakeholders. Thus, the main instruments for the collection of the needed data included self-administered open ended questionnaires and semi- structured interviews.

Population and Sampling

The population for the study involved all first year (Level 100) students of the University of Education, Winneba in the 2015/2016 academic year at the Winneba satellite campus who offered the course GPD: 111 – Communication and Study Skills. However, a sample size of four hundred and fifty (450) students were purposively sampled from all the faculties of the university at the Winneba campus. With the help of four (4) research assistants, every Level 100 student the researchers came across with became a potential sample until the target number of 450 students was attained. This method was essentially plausible because Lindlorf and Taylor (2002) had said that in purposive sampling convenience was core and it could help the researcher to decisively select *whom* to observe or interrogate, and *what* to collect or use within a specific period or context.

Data Collection Procedures

The two data collection instruments were the open ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Both instruments were designed in line with the objectives of the study. In all, 400 questionnaires were distributed to the sampled students out of which 364 were retrieved. The semi - structured interview sessions were held for 50 key informants comprising 42 students and 8 Communication and Study Skills lecturers. The lecturers were sampled through consensus. Each interview session lasted between 15 – 20 minutes where the proceedings were recorded and later transcribed for further thematic analysis. For ethical considerations and to ensure confidentiality of the respondents, the interviewees were also given Pseudonyms such as *S1, S2, and S3* and so on, in the narrative discussions in this paper.

Results and Discussions

In order to make sense from the bulk of data gathered that had been gathered from the questionnaires as well as the interviews, the gathered data was coded and categorized according to its similarities and differences per the objectives and the research questions of the study. In addition, with the help of an audience tracker provided by the Radio Windy Bay and a Radio Audience Measurement (RAM) ratings plan designed by the researchers, part of the data which had been gathered during the weekly radio lecture sessions were categorized for themes and subthemes to emerge themselves and subjected to detailed narrative discussions.

RQ1: What are the listening habits of the target audience of the GPD 111 Radio lecture Series?

The listening habits of the students were grouped and collated in percentages using simple frequencies. The figures were then displayed in a table for further clarifications to be drawn from it. Therefore, the data presented in Table 1 shows that 4% of the students “do not tune-in” to the radio lecture series at all. Such students cited the schedule for the programme which was Fridays between the hours of 06:30 GMT to 07: 30 GMT as a great disadvantage to them. At the University of Education, Winneba lectures are to begin at 07:30 GMT and by 06:30 GMT, majority of the students who are the target audience were either already at the lecture halls or were commuting to the lecture halls. This conscription did not allow them to access to the radio lectures because there were no radios at the lecture halls but are expected to be seated by 07:00 when the radio lecture was already underway. A few of the students constituting about 1% of the already mentioned 6% however, reiterated that even though they lived closer to their lecture halls and could tune-in for a few minutes before they set off, they have refused to do so because the radio lectures often do not begin on schedule and when it does, it starts with a recap of the previous lecture which also takes away the opportunity of the few minutes at their disposal to participate in the lectures. In essence, it was a complete waste of time and resources to tune-in at all.

Also, it came to light from the data that 6% of the students actually “tune in to the radio lectures but do not actively listen”. The justifications for this listening habit according to the respondents, were that these category of students are usually involved in other things such as eating, commuting, or preparing to set off for lectures at the onset of the programme and could not actively participate in it.

From the table, although 19% of the students had declared that they listen, they stated that they only “tune-in for 15 to 20 minutes” and then stop to set off for lectures. Like the category that did not actively partake in the radio lecture, this group cited similar reasons including using the time to eat, take a shower, or start commuting to the lecture halls. All the listening habits identified in the data affirmed the assertions made by Asiedu (2012) as well as Bandeli (2012) who admonished that the listening habits of audience for a particular programme depends not only on the programme content or anchor style of the host but largely on the placement of the programme. This revelation of the relevance of the schedule or placement for a particular program was however not an explicit key indicator in the evaluation tools espoused by AMARC. It was subsumed under the element access to the programme which invariably may involve several other factors and placement could not be divorced from it.

Findings from the data also showed that 20% of the students “listen to only the presentation of the lecture” which is 30 minutes but do not take part in the phone-in segment. Since a teaching and learning experience was more effective if it involved symmetrical communication, the phone-in segment was one of the interactive segment of the programme for feedback, contributions and ‘on the spot’ opportunity for salient contributions, grappling questions and for the provision of needed answers. This group of listeners also added that they “do not also contribute to the programme through the whatsapp platform”. This category of students in addition to the placement of the programme also cited among others the lack of appropriate network support systems; and the inability to get through to the radio station because of the use of a single phone line for the large number of listener audience for the programme. The whatsapp platform was for text messages and recorded messages of students who could not phone-in. Yet, other participants or listeners of the programme also phoned in using the number for the whatsapp text messages thereby preventing potential ‘texters’ from getting through with their messages.

Although the audience tracker could produce the number of listeners that had tuned-in for a particular radio lecture session, it was unable to identify the percentage of the listeners who were actually the target audience (in this case the level 100 students). The unwarranted inclusion of the other listeners who were not part of the target audience but participated in the phone-in segments unduly exerted excess pressure on the only phone line activated or provided for the phone-in segments. Additionally, the inability of the audience tracker to produce the exact number of listeners constituting the target audience was confirmed and much more emphasised during the phone-in segments. Some listeners who phoned-in although were not part of the target audience, had the opportunity to call-in to ask questions. Their questions or contributions more often, did not have a bearing on the programme content and unduly deprived the target audience of the limited airtime. Itemised below are some contributions or questions gathered as data from some listeners who were not part of the target audience of the programme but phoned-in only to deprive the target audience of the opportunity to contribute to the programme:
SPEAKER 1: “I like your voice very much. I am sure you must be such a beautiful lady. I will call you after the

programme for a date so expect my call”

SPEAKER 2: “I want to contribute to the programme. How do we pronounce this word.....p-a-r-a-m-b-o-u-l-a-t-e. Bye bye”.

The levels of interactivity as stipulated in the AMARC assessment tools is to ensure feedback for improvement of the programme from listeners considered as part of the production team. However in the case of the GPD 111 Communication and Study Skills radio lectures, a greater percentage of the potential stakeholders are unable to interact with the course presenters because other listeners have prevented them from doing so by competing with them on the two platforms available for interactions.

Finally, from the table, 51% of the respondents actually listen to the entire “radio lecture and also participate in all the forms of interactions that come with it.” They have access to the programme; the placement is conducive; the anchor styles of the presenters are favourable; and the level of interactivity is overwhelmingly appropriate. This finding supports Awuku’s (2013) statement that the Communication and Study Skills radio lecture series aired on Fridays between the hours of 06:30 GMT and 07:30 GMT is one of the most highly patronized programmes on radio Windy Bay, 98.3 FM MHz

Table 1: Listening Habits of the Target Audience of the GPD 111 Radio Lectures

Listening Habits of students	Categories in %
Do not tune-in at all	4%
Tune-in but do not listen	6%
Listen for 15-20 min and stop	19%
Listen to the lecture but not the phone-segment	20%
Listen to the lecture and participate in Whatsapp and phone-in segments	51%
Total	100%

Source: Fieldwork, March 2015 to March 2016

RQ2: What are the perceptions of the target audience on the GPD 111 Radio Lecture Series?

In the bid to be successful with this tracker study or appreciative inquiry of the GPD 111- Communication and Study Skills radio lecture series, this research question was targeted at gathering data from the respondents on the perception of target listener audiences who are regarded as the major stakeholders of the programme as well members of the production team. The data gathered was coded and thematised on the basis of similarities and differences of issues identified. The themes were thus categorised under the sub-themes *Prospects* and *Challenges*:

Prospects

1. The radio lecture offers a centralised source for the teaching and learning of the course;
2. Students of the course have the opportunity to listen to variant methodologies and anchor styles from different lecturers who deliver the different topics to be treated in the course;
3. It is an open source for information and also an elite base to a mass system of education in the contemporary;
4. The radio lecture is complimentary to the face-to-face lectures and the understanding of issues is much more enhanced;
5. The phone-in segment and the whatsapp platform additions supports interactivity and allows ‘on the spot’ opportunity for students to ask question or contribute to the programme.
6. The lecture can be recorded and played back as notes for references.

Challenges

1. Although the programme content is adequate because it is targeted at improving the development of the four major language skills, the programme does not include any aspect on spelling and pronunciation. These skills however are necessary for the development of the productive language skills (speaking and writing) as espoused by the course outline for the course.
2. It is sometimes extremely difficult to access the programme because of poor reception including interferences from other radio stations. The frequent power outages, and the erratic power supply often denied students the access to the potential benefits of the programme.
3. The one hour duration for the programme is woefully inadequate because most students are unable to contribute or ask questions within the stipulated time. Especially, the frustration becomes more pronounced during the phone-in segments. Sometimes, questions or contributions that are directed to the whatsapp platform as an alternative avenue for support are often not given the needed on-air attention or even attended too at all. This lack of access deprived students the ‘on the spot’ opportunity

for feedback from the presenters or other listeners as espoused in literature on the importance of radio lectures.

4. Difficult to follow through with some lecturers or presenters of the programme because of their choices of anchor styles. Irrespective of the format being used, some of the presenters spoke extremely fast and did not allow intermittent breaks in the form of musical interludes. This is to allow the students to take notes and benefit from the overall purpose of the programme.
5. The placement for the programme is unsuitable for students to participate fully.
6. There are no repeat broadcast for students who are unable to access the live broadcast.
7. The programme is not streamed Online for students who have no access to the radio to access.
8. The students have no common radio lecture module or manual to use or follow through during the programme

The excerpts shown here are from some key informants comprising both students and lecturers who for the purposes of this current study, have been given pseudonyms (i.e., S1, S2) for easy identification and for ethical considerations:

▪ **S1**

“Although the radio lecture is to complement the face to face lectures, responses from students during the regular lectures indicate that some of them do not benefit as intended. It is either they don’t tune-in at all or they don’t actively listen to the programme. However, teaching is an art and I have extremely benefited from the radio lecturer because as a lecturer, I rarely get this opportunity to listen to my other colleagues teach different topics using different anchor styles. The radio lectures has indeed been extremely beneficial to me in particular”

▪ **S2**

“I understood the Communication Skills course better because I took advantage of the radio lectures. Honestly, the presentations were always far better than my face-to face lectures. At a point I was even considering not attending lectures but a friend advised me to take advantage of both and I have never regretted it. In fact, they both really helped me a lot to pass the course with an excellent grade”

▪ **S3**

“I knew the benefits to be accrued from the radio lectures in addition to the face-to-face lectures. However, some of the lecturers irrespective of the delivery format they had employed, could simply not make the radio lecture series relevant to me. For instance, I don’t want to mention names but some of them spoke so fast that I could hardly hear what they were saying. For Christ sake, this is the radio not the lecture hall where you could ask them to slow down or repeat for emphasis or further clarifications”

The excerpts from S1, S2, and S3 confirm the complementary nature of the radio as advocated by some researchers. Thus, the contributions from S1 although is highlighting some particular listening habits that are detrimental to benefiting from the radio lectures and its attendant demerits to performance, it is also confirming the relevance of the programme to the acquisition of knowledge. Both contributions are affirming the findings of Galda and Searle (1980) which asserted that students who had access to both the radio lectures and the face-to-face lectures performed better than those who do not. However, the excerpts from S3 is supporting the relevance of the appropriateness and use of particular anchor styles as espoused by the AMARC assessment tools.

▪ **S4**

“I am surprised the lecture is aired that early in the morning when lectures are to begin 07:30 GMT. How do they expect us to tune-in and benefit when they are the same people who expect us to be seated in the lecture halls by 07:00 GMT? They should as well say the radio lecture is for the town folks because they are already in their homes and not for us, especially, when they are aware that not all of us have campus accommodation”.

The response from speaker S 4 is supporting the relevance of placement as explicated in the AMARC assessment tools that emphasises that the placement of a programme is key to its patronage and expected impact on the target listener audiences. In essence, the place of the programme is affirmed to be unsuitable and unfavourable to attract the expected patronage.

RQ3: How can the GPD 111 Radio Lecture Series be explored to enhance the performance of the target audience?

The research question three was aimed at collecting data from the respondents and the presenters/lecturers on how to improve the programme to bring about a consequential improvement on the performance of the students offering that course. The findings included suggestions such as the provision of a common module for students and lecturers to use during the delivery of the radio lectures. Mention was also made of the need for an in-service training for the lecturers and presenters on the appropriate use of anchor styles such as voice modulation, use of musical interludes and bridges, awareness of media ethics, and on the three modes of radio lecture presentation styles. The respondents also accentuated the need for a change in the schedule of the programme or perhaps, a repeat broadcast after lectures when all the students are expected to have retired to their halls of residence and

can listen in the comfort of their homes. Although contributions through the phone-in will not be possible, students will be more attentive in the regular lectures as the last resort for any further clarifications on a particular topic.

Additionally, it was also suggested that the programme could be streamed online for students to access with their mobiles in the event of poor signal receptions, power outages or erratic power supply. One other finding that came to light from the data was the need to acquire additional phone numbers to ease access to the phone-in segment of the programme. This could make the programme more interactive and less symmetrical.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current paper titled “The Teaching and Learning of Communication Skills through Radio Lecture Series: Challenges and Prospects” was conducted as a tracker study or appreciative inquiry into a programme that had been running for over a decade on Radio Windy Bay, 98.3 FM MHz - a campus radio of the university of Education, Winneba. The study was aimed at establishing the listening habits of the target audience of the Communication and Study Skills Radio lecture series and to ascertain how suggestions could be explored from the perspective of the stakeholder listeners to improve the programme and to enhance performance.

In summary, the radio lectures enhance learning and provides information on various issues critical for listeners to make daily decisions on their performance. Although the campus ready is often used for entertainment purposes is not a liability because unlike the television or face-to-face lectures, it is devoid of visual distractions which require student to engage both the eyes and ears attentively within a particular instructional period. The researchers as such have come to a reasoned conclusion that majority of the target student listeners do indeed take part and benefit from the program. The Radio Lecture series is an effective way of complementing what is taught in the regular face to face lectures and is much more complementary to the more traditional forms of educational delivery.

Per the objectives of the study as well as the findings, the following recommendations are being made. Firstly, presentations of the radio lectures should be supervised by the Coordinator of the course and should also be strictly monitored by the Management of the University. This will set the parameters for all the on-goings during the programme and it will be a motivation for the students to tune-in, participate and then benefit from the programme. Also, the university in collaboration with the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the University of Education, Winneba, the radio station as well as other stakeholders of innovative means of education, should organise regular training sessions or workshops on *Programming* and *Broadcast Journalism* for the presenters of the Communication and Study Skills course and to an extent, for all the lecturers of the general courses who may not have had any basic training in broadcasting.

Additionally, the access to Radio Windy Bay should be improved through the provision of additional telephone lines to enhance interactivity during the programme. The radio lectures should be streamed online or recorded for a repeat broadcast to give the opportunity to students who could not tune-in to the live programme to also access and benefit from the programme. It is also recommended that the management of the university should invest more in the training and use of supplementary E-learning tools such as the Moodle and podcast to make the learning of the course more interactive and result-oriented.

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