Impact of Language and Communication Skills on the Performance of Professional Accountants in Corporate Reporting

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Abstract
This study investigated the influence of language proficiency, written communication skills, and oral communication skills on the corporate reporting performance of professional accountants within increasingly complex regulatory and stakeholder environments. Drawing on Human Capital Theory, stakeholder and signalling theories, and Communication Competence Theory, the study conceptualised communication competencies as strategic human capital assets that enhance reporting effectiveness beyond technical accounting expertise. Using a cross-sectional survey of 300 professional accountants in listed and large private firms, data were analysed through descriptive statistics, multiple regression, and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Measurement model assessment confirmed reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, while structural model results revealed that language proficiency ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < .001$), written communication skills ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < .001$), and oral communication skills ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < .001$) significantly and positively influence corporate reporting performance. Written communication skills demonstrated the strongest predictive power, reflecting the narrative-intensive nature of modern corporate reports. The findings underscore that communication competence strengthens reporting accuracy, clarity, compliance quality, and stakeholder interpretation, particularly in investor briefings and audit engagements and for news reporting. The study contributed to accounting literature by empirically validating non-technical competencies as critical determinants of reporting quality and extended human capital discourse within professional accounting. Practically, it recommended integrating advanced business communication training into accounting education curricula and continuing professional development programmes to enhance transparency, credibility, and professional accountability in corporate reporting.

Keywords:
Language proficiency, Written communication skills, oral communication skills, corporate reporting performance, financial reporting quality, Professional accountants, PLS-SEM

1. Introduction

Communication is the mechanism through which management convey its stewardship and the degree of utilising shareholders' assets to appropriate stakeholders. One of the channels through which management communicates to owners and other stakeholders of the enterprise are annual corporate reports. Corporate reporting therefore serves as a primary mechanism through which organisations communicate financial performance, governance structures, and strategic outlook to stakeholders. High-quality reporting enhances transparency, investor confidence, and regulatory compliance. However, beyond technical accounting standards such as those issued by the International Accounting

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Standards Board, effective reporting also depends on the clarity, coherence, and interpretability of disclosures.

Professional accountants are traditionally evaluated on technical competence, basically knowledge of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and regulatory compliance frameworks. Yet, corporate reports are narrative-intensive documents containing management commentary, risk disclosures, sustainability statements, and governance explanations. These components require advanced language and communication capabilities. Poorly articulated disclosures may reduce credibility, impair stakeholder understanding or cause information asymmetry, and increase litigation risk.

Corporate reporting represents a critical accountability mechanism, providing stakeholders with reliable and transparent financial information. While technical accounting expertise ensures compliance with frameworks such as those issued by the International Accounting Standards Board and International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation, the clarity and interpretability of reports heavily rely on the accountant's communication skills. Apart from the investors, accounting reports are sometimes communicated to the wider audience through the print and broadcast media, and therefore requires ability to translate the technical accounting semantics into clear, easily assimilating language that even laymen could easily comprehend.

Recent studies such as Hakimova (2026), Nawir, Dwisusila and Wenny (2023) and Siriwardane and Durden (2014) suggest that language proficiency, written communication, and oral communication contribute to effective reporting, improving stakeholder understanding, regulatory compliance, and professional credibility. Nawir, et al (2023) noted that language skills in specific fields do not yield the same results, and each language skill must be mastered by learners to the same level of proficiency. It ultimately depends on which aspect of the job requires language skills for smooth communication to take place. This in line with Solikhah (2020) requires that accounting students and professional mainly obligated to have reading skill to build on their writing skill to enable understanding and interpretation of complex contexts. More so, reading and writing skills in English are crucial in the field of accounting as there are several aspects to consider in this practice, such as, reading accounting materials such as financial statements, tax documents, relevant tax laws, and guides for accounting procedures (Nawir, et al, 2023). A strong understanding of these materials is essential for accounting professionals to interpret information accurately, as noted by Sari and Atmanegara (2018) that ability to read in the context of accounting in English is also important in comprehending complex texts. Siriwardane and Durden (2014) had complained that despite the efforts of accounting educators and numerous studies of communication skills in accounting, there is a continuing perception that accountants are poor communicators (Lin et al., 2010; Maubane & van Rheede van Oudtshoorn, 2011; Witherspoon, 2010) and the reasons perceived included inadequacy of communication skills taught in the higher education to sufficiently meet professional needs; inability of the higher education providers to successfully translate and develop communication requirements identified by practising accountants into transferable communication skills, communication apprehension by accounting students who lack the zeal to develop the necessary skills and the mere fact that the perception of accountants having poor communication skills may in fact be wrong (Siriwardane & Durden, 2014).

Whatever the validity, it is expected that sufficient skills development in the areas of written and oral communication is essential for accounting students as well as practitioners. However, as noted by Siriwardane and Durden (2014), most of the research on the communication skills of accountants is crucially out of date, with the few spotted studies emanating from Australia, Singapore, Uzbekistan, etc, while studies on Nigerian contexts are not handy. More so, empirical evidence quantifying these effects among professional accountants remains limited. This study addressed this gap using a PLS-SEM approach to test the influence of communication competencies on corporate reporting performance.

The study aims to investigate the influence of language skills and communication competencies on the corporate reporting performance of professional accountants. Specifically, it seeks to examine how language proficiency, written communication skills, and oral communication skills contribute to enhancing the accuracy, transparency, compliance, and professionalism of corporate reports. By exploring these dimensions, the study intends to provide insights into the extent to which effective

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communication complements technical accounting expertise in improving reporting quality and stakeholder understanding.

In essence, therefore, the objectives of this study are:

1. To assess the influence of language proficiency on corporate reporting performance of professional accountants.
2. To evaluate the effect of written communication skills on corporate reporting performance of professional accountants.
3. To examine the impact of oral communication skills on corporate reporting performance of professional accountants.

The study tested the following hypotheses:

$H_0$1: Language proficiency has no significant influence on corporate reporting performance. $H_0$2: There is no significant influence between written communication skills and corporate reporting performance.

$H_0$3: Oral communication skills do not exert significant influence on corporate reporting performance.

1.2. Literature Review

A competent accountant is not only proficient in technical skills but also communication skills. The Education Committee of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC, 1998) has defined competency as the ability to perform the tasks and roles expected of a professional accountant' and this was subsequently revised in IFAC (2003) as follows: "Competence is being able to perform a work role to a defined standard with reference to real working environments". This according to Siriwardane and Durden (2014) requires an accountant having the appropriate skills including communication skills to perform any appropriate task, including communication tasks.

1.2.1 Communication and Professional Accounting

Professional accountants operate in environments that demand synthesis of quantitative data and qualitative narrative. Complex financial data can be condensed into simplified narrative explanation that would be easily comprehended by stakeholders with different backgrounds. Communication proficiency enables accountants to translate technical accounting information into understandable and actionable reports for diverse stakeholders including investors, auditors, and regulators (JTC CPAs, 2023). In the context of accounting, language proficiency encompasses not just grammar and vocabulary, but also the ability to interpret accounting terminology consistently across documents (Nawir, 2023).

1.2.2 Language Proficiency

Language proficiency refers to the ability to use language accurately, appropriately, and effectively across grammatical, lexical, and contextual dimensions for professional communication. It involves skills to read, comprehend and interpret the content of a particular context. In corporate reporting, it involves grammar, vocabulary precision, technical terminology usage, and coherence, a skill that enhances comprehension and readability of corporate reports and reduces information asymmetry. In organisational contexts, it encompasses clarity, coherence, precision, and terminological accuracy in conveying technical information (Canale & Swain, 1980; Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

Language proficiency ensures grammatical accuracy, clarity, and correct terminology usage in accounting reports. Within accounting and corporate reporting environments, language proficiency enhances interpretability of disclosures and reduces ambiguity in financial narratives, thereby improving decision usefulness (IASB, 2018). Clear language enhances readability, and strengthens stakeholder trust. Research suggests that financial reports with higher readability scores improve investor decision-making and reduce capital costs while language barriers can impose information costs and reduce the usefulness of financial disclosures, particularly when international standards like IFRS are translated or applied across linguistic contexts (Fülbier & Sellhorn, 2023). Language deficiencies may lead to ambiguous disclosures and misinterpretation but clear language supports decision-useful reporting (Siriwardane & Durden, 2014; Nawir, 2023).

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1.2.3 Communication Skills

Communication skills denote the capacity to transmit, interpret, and respond to information effectively through verbal, non-verbal, and written channels. These involve ability to structure and pass messages logically, accurately and clearly avoiding information overload and asymmetry among stakeholders. They also cover clarity, structure, audience awareness, feedback responsiveness, and professional tone (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Communication skill is an essential skill required of any professional to establish an easily understandable communication between parties. In professional accounting practice, effective communication facilitates transparency, stakeholder engagement, and regulatory compliance, reinforcing the credibility of financial reporting (IFAC, 2019). Professional communication skill therefore covers communication tasks (activities), which are the tasks most frequently undertaken in accounting, skills (abilities) most needed to successfully complete a certain accounting task and elements (attributes or qualities) which are the essential attributes or elements of communication needed to effectively complete the accounting task. In relation to this study, written and oral communication skills are examined briefly as follows:

a) Written Communication Skills: Written communication involves the coherent structuring and presentation of data, clarity in integrating financial figures with narrative explanations, and complying with professional reporting standards. Effective writing improves transparency and professional credibility.

Written communication skills refer to the ability to prepare structured, coherent, grammatically accurate, and professionally formatted documents tailored to specific audiences. These skills therefore involve structuring arguments logically, presenting data clearly, synthesising complex information, and maintaining consistency across reporting documents. In accounting contexts, this includes integrating numerical data with explanatory narratives, complying with reporting standards, and providing transparent disclosures (Bovee & Thill, 2021). Effective written communication ensures that financial disclosures are comprehensible to diverse stakeholders, including investors, regulators, analysts, and non-specialists. Narrative disclosures, such as sustainability and integrated reports, require strategic reporting aligned with frameworks such as those promoted by the International Integrated Reporting Council. Accounting reports that integrate data with narrative explanations effectively improve stakeholder understanding and transparency. Studies also show that oral communication deficiencies often exacerbate misinterpretation of written information, further underlining the need for strong writing proficiency (Accountancy Age, 2023). High-quality written communication improves comparability, reliability, and understandability—core qualitative characteristics of useful financial information (International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), 2018).

b) Oral Communication Skills: Oral communication skills involve clarity in presentations, audit discussions, investor briefings, and board interactions. Accountants frequently defend accounting judgments before audit committees and regulatory bodies. Ineffective oral communication may undermine stakeholder trust, even where technical competence exists.

Oral communication skills involve the ability to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively in spoken form during presentations, meetings, and professional engagements. This includes clarity of expression, confidence, logical sequencing, and responsiveness to questions (Keyton, 2011). For accountants, oral communication is essential in explaining financial results to boards, auditors, regulators, and investors, thereby enhancing stakeholder understanding and trust (IFAC, 2019). Accountants can verbally convey facts, explain results, present findings, or justify estimates in meetings with management, auditors, or boards, audit committees and regulators. Strong oral skills foster stakeholder understanding, facilitate discussion of complex accounting judgments, and support decision-making. Speaking skills are essential for professional interactions, networking, and leadership roles that involve explaining complex information to non-experts (Hakimova, 2026). Without effective oral articulation, accountants may struggle to communicate judgment calls or strategic decisions underlying reported figures.

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1.2.4 Corporate Reporting Performance

Corporate reporting encompasses the process of communicating financial and non-financial information about an organisation's performance, position, governance, and prospects to stakeholders and thus serves as a fundamental accountability mechanism through which organisations transmit financial information to stakeholders. It includes financial statements, management commentary, sustainability reports, and integrated reports prepared in accordance with established standards such as those issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB, 2018). Effective corporate reporting enhances transparency, accountability, and capital market efficiency (Healy & Palepu, 2001). In order to promote transparency, facilitates informed decisions, and supports regulatory compliance high-quality reporting is pivotal (Fülbier & Sellhorn, 2023). While technical competence in accounting standards remains central, the ability to clearly articulate complex financial information is increasingly recognised as essential for professional accountants (IFAC, 2023, Hakimova, 2026).

Corporate performance refers to the extent to which an organisation achieves its financial and strategic objectives. It is commonly measured through profitability, efficiency, growth, market valuation, and non-financial indicators such as governance quality and stakeholder satisfaction (Richard et al., 2009). High-quality reporting contributes to improved corporate performance by reducing information asymmetry and strengthening investor confidence (Bushman & Smith, 2001).

Corporate reporting performance refers to the accuracy, transparency, compliance with regulatory standards, stakeholder satisfaction, and professionalism of financial and narrative disclosures. Comprehensive reporting must be both technically accurate and also effectively communicated to meet stakeholder needs (JTC CPAs, 2023). Corporate reporting performance can further be described as the effectiveness, clarity, accuracy, timeliness, and compliance quality of financial and non-financial disclosures. It serves as a measurable outcome of accountants' technical and communication competencies. It encompasses both quantitative financial statements and qualitative narrative reporting such as Management Discussion and Analysis (MD&A). Performance indicators include reporting accuracy, understandability, regulatory compliance, disclosure completeness, and stakeholder confidence.

Communication skills, encompassing language proficiency, writing, and oral articulation, are fundamental in this regard. Effective written reports improve readability and reduce information asymmetry, whereas effective oral communication promotes stakeholder engagement and trust (JTC CPAs, 2023).

Despite this growing recognition of communication as a core professional competence by bodies such as the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), empirical understanding of how specific communication competencies influence corporate reporting performance remains limited, particularly in accounting literature that has traditionally prioritised technical skills over soft skills (Siriwardane & Durden, 2014).

Even the few available are basically theoretical while empirical research examining the direct effect of communication skills on accountants' reporting performance remains limited. This study addresses this gap by investigating how language proficiency and communication skills influence corporate reporting performance using structural equation modelling. The study contributes to accounting literature by integrating communication theory into corporate reporting research and by empirically validating the non-technical determinants of reporting quality.

1.3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study positions Language Proficiency (LP)**,** Written Communication Skills (WCS)**,** and Oral Communication Skills (OCS) as the independent variables, while Corporate Reporting Performance (CRP) serves as the dependent variable. Language proficiency is proxied by grammatical accuracy, clarity, appropriate use of accounting terminology, and consistency in reporting language. Written communication skills are measured through logical structuring of reports, integration of financial data with narrative explanations, compliance with reporting standards, and transparency of disclosures. Oral communication skills are proxied by clarity in presentations, confidence in explaining financial results, responsiveness to stakeholder inquiries, and professional articulation. Corporate reporting performance is measured by accuracy of financial statements, transparency of disclosures, regulatory compliance, stakeholder satisfaction, and ethical

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professionalism. The framework proposes that enhanced communication competencies (LP, WCS, and OCS) significantly improve the quality, transparency, and effectiveness of corporate reporting.

Conceptual Model

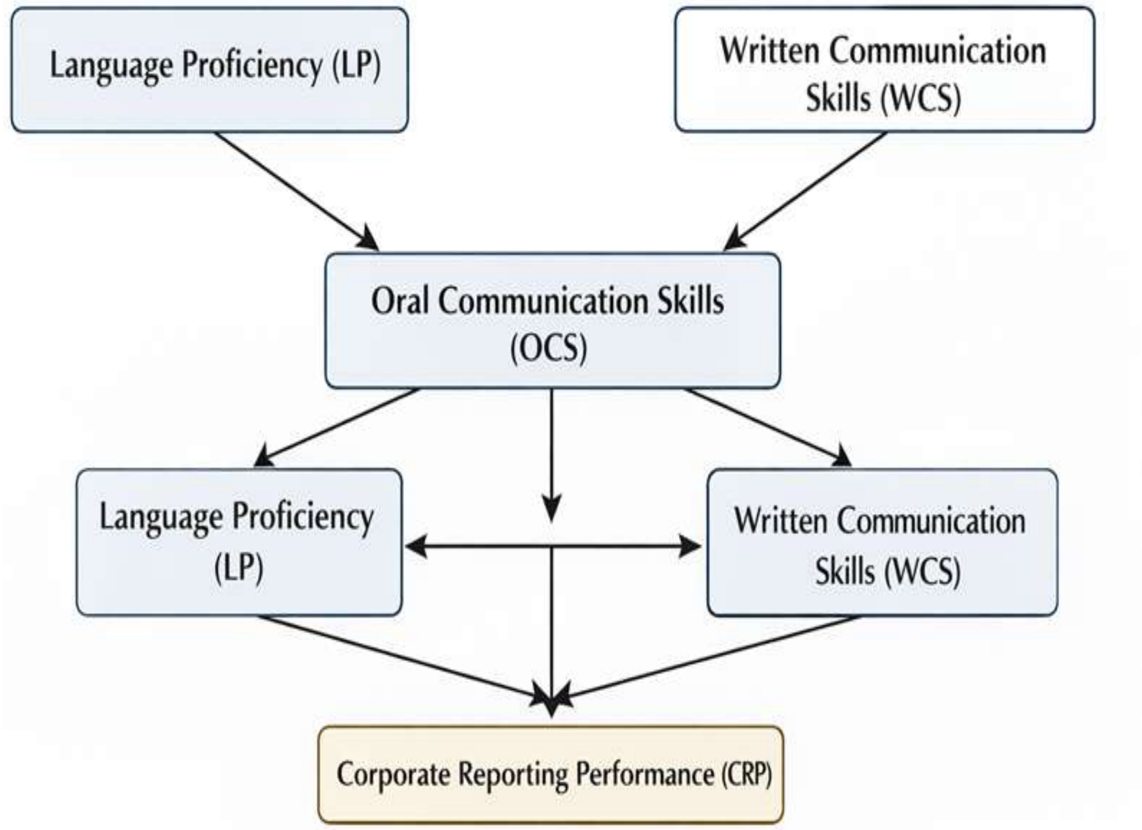

Fig. 1 Conceptual Model Diagram

Influence of Language and Communication skills on accountants' reporting performance

Explanation:

- LP, WCS, and OCS are independent variables (predictors).
- CRP is the dependent variable (outcome).
- The arrows indicate hypothesized positive relationships between communication competencies and corporate reporting performance.

1.4.Theoretical Framework

A number of theories are relevant for this study. This includes: Human capital theory, communication competence theory, signalling and stakeholder theories. These theories together explain that while stakeholders' confidence is built on transparent reporting, accountants' skills and competence enhance his productivity and performance. The relationship between these theories and how they influence corporate reporting performance is shown in Figure 2 below:

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Human Capital Theory

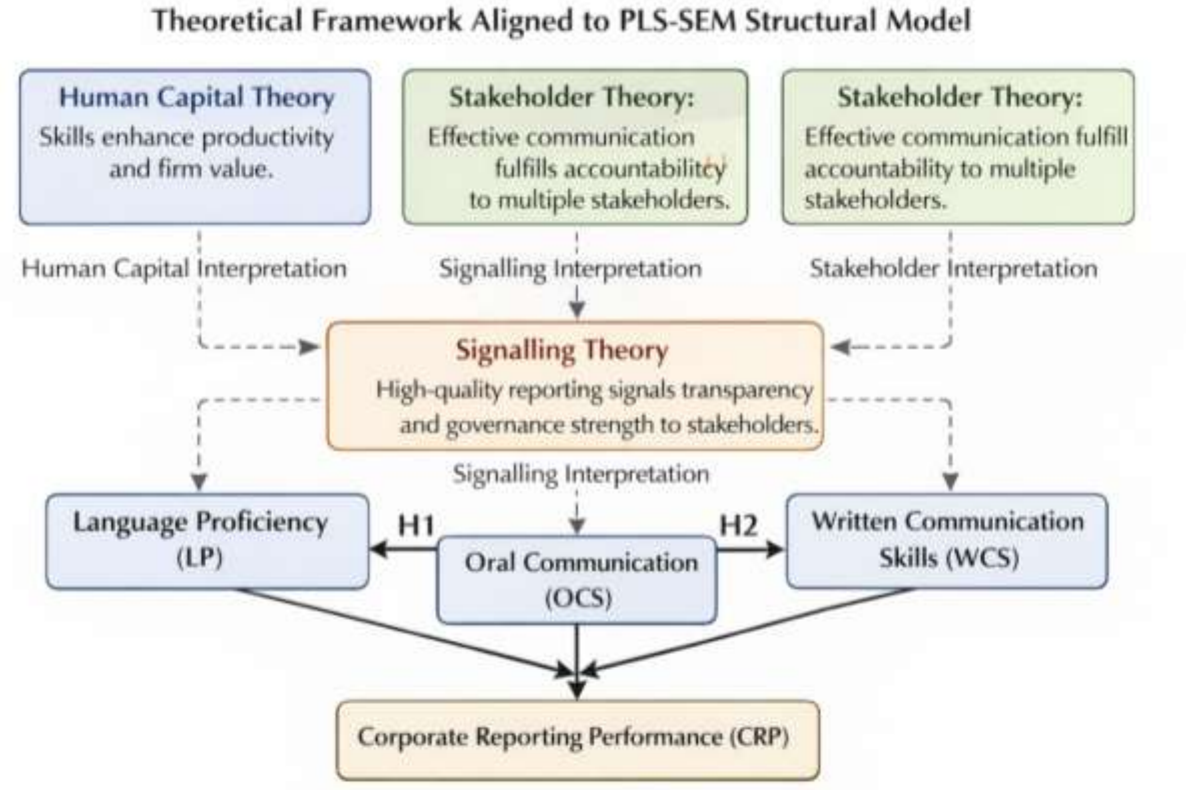

Figure 2 Theoretical Framework Aligned to PLS-SEM Structural Model

Human Capital Theory posits that individuals' skills and competencies enhance productivity and performance. Communication competence constitutes an intangible asset that complements technical accounting expertise in improving reporting outcomes.

Communication Competence Theory

Communication Competence Theory suggests that effective communication requires linguistic knowledge, sociocultural awareness, and strategic interaction skills. Applied to accounting, competence ensures that financial information is transmitted clearly and ethically to intended audiences.

Additionally, *Signalling Theory* suggests that firms voluntarily disclose credible financial information to signal quality and reduce uncertainty in capital markets. The theory posits that organisations use financial disclosures to signal firm quality and performance to the market, hence transparent financial reporting serves as a credibility signal to investors and thereby reduces uncertainty among investors (Spence, 1973). In other words, according to signalling theory, organisations signal financial stability and managerial competence through transparent financial communication, thereby influencing investor perceptions and market valuation. The role of journalists in interpreting these signals becomes particularly important in environments where financial reports are highly technical or where stakeholders have limited financial literacy.

Stakeholder theory further argues that corporate entities have an obligation to provide relevant and understandable information to a wide range of stakeholders beyond shareholders, including employees, regulators, creditors, and the general public (Freeman, 1984). Thus this theory emphasises inclusive disclosure practices that enhance transparency and trust.

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Human Capital Theory is adopted as the anchoring theory for this study because it provides the strongest theoretical basis for explaining how language and communication skills influence the performance of professional accountants in corporate reporting. According to the theory, individuals' knowledge, skills, competencies, and expertise constitute valuable forms of human capital that enhance productivity and professional performance; hence in corporate reporting, accountants require not only technical accounting knowledge but also effective language and communication skills to interpret, articulate, and present complex financial information accurately, clearly, and understandably to diverse stakeholders. Thus, stronger communication competencies enhance accountants' ability to produce high-quality corporate reports, making Human Capital Theory particularly relevant to explaining the relationship between language and communication skills and accountants' reporting performance.

2. Materials and Methods

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. The population comprised professional accountants employed in corporate organisations. Stratified sampling was used to ensure representation across industries. The sample was 300 professional accountants across corporate organisations. Secondary data were obtained from financial reports of selected corporate organisations where latent constructs for measuring the corporate reporting performance were obtained.

Variable Measurement Table

Variable	Variable Type	Dimension	Measurement	Source/Reference
Language Proficiency (LP)	Independent	Grammar, clarity, terminology, simplification	5 Likert items (LP1–LP5); 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree	Adapted from Fülbier & Sellhorn (2023); Journal of English Language and Education (2023)
Written Communication Skills (WCS)	Independent	Structure, integration, compliance clarity, transparency	5 Likert items (WCS1–WCS5); 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree	Adapted from Accountancy Age (2023); Siriwardane & Durden (2014)
Oral Communication Skills (OCS)	Independent	Presentation, explanation, responsiveness, persuasion	5 Likert items (OCS1–OCS5); 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree	Adapted from Umida Furqat qizi (2026); JTC CPAs (2023)
Corporate Reporting Performance (CRP)	Dependent	Accuracy, transparency, compliance, professionalism	5 Likert items (CRP1–CRP5); 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree	Adapted from IFRS Foundation (2023); International Accounting Standards Board (2023)

Source: Author's Research Compilation, 2026

All constructs were modelled as reflective constructs using a five-point Likert scale.

Model Specification

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The regression model is specified as:
$CRP_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LP_t + \beta_2 WCS_t + \beta_3 OCS_t + \varepsilon_t$
Where CRP is corporate reporting performance; β_0 = intercept, $\beta_{1\text{-}3}$ = coefficients and ε = standard error
PLS-SEM was employed to assess measurement validity and structural relationships.

3. Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to assess the central tendency and dispersion of the study constructs. The results indicate generally high levels of agreement among respondents regarding their communication competencies and corporate reporting performance.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	SD	N
Language Proficiency (LP)	4.12	0.79	300
Written Communication Skills (WCS)	4.20	0.74	300
Oral Communication Skills (OCS)	4.10	0.77	300
Corporate Reporting Performance (CRP)	4.15	0.80	300

Source: Field Study/Author's Computation, 2026
All constructs recorded mean scores above 4.00 on a five-point Likert scale, indicating strong perceived competence. Standard deviations below 1.00 suggest moderate variability and relative homogeneity of responses. The distribution showed positive skewness toward agreement, implying respondents generally rated their communication competencies and reporting performance highly.

Multiple Regression Analysis

A preliminary multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the direct effects of communication competencies on corporate reporting performance using the model:

$CRP_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LP_t + \beta_2 WCS_t + \beta_3 OCS_t + \varepsilon_t$

Table 2: Regression Results

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
LP	0.41	6.82	< .001	Significant
WCS	0.49	7.15	< .001	Significant
OCS	0.37	5.98	< .001	Significant
R^2	0.63	—	—	Substantial explanatory power

Source: Author's Compilation of data output (2026)
The regression model explains 63% of the variance in corporate reporting performance ($R^2 = .63$), indicating substantial explanatory power.

i. Language proficiency significantly predicts CRP ($\beta = .41$, $p < .001$).
ii. Written communication skills exhibit the strongest effect ($\beta = .49$, $p < .001$).
iii. Oral communication skills also significantly influence CRP ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$).

These findings provide preliminary empirical support for the hypothesised relationships.

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PLS-SEM Analysis

To achieve robust model estimation and account for latent construct measurement, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed following the two-step approach recommended by Hair Jr. et al. (2017).

Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The measurement model was evaluated for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Table 3: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	AVE	Interpretation
LP	0.91	0.93	0.72	Reliable & Valid
WCS	0.90	0.92	0.71	Reliable & Valid
OCS	0.89	0.91	0.70	Reliable & Valid
CRP	0.92	0.94	0.73	Reliable & Valid

Source: Authors' Compilation (2026)

All constructs exceeded recommended thresholds:

- Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$
- Composite Reliability > 0.70
- AVE > 0.50

All indicator loadings were above 0.70, confirming indicator reliability.

Discriminant Validity

The Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, confirming adequate discriminant validity among constructs. This indicates that each latent variable captures a distinct conceptual domain.

Structural Model (Inner Model)

Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was performed to assess path significance.

Table 4: Structural Model Results

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
LP → CRP	0.41	6.82	< .001	Supported
WCS → CRP	0.49	7.15	< .001	Supported
OCS → CRP	0.37	5.98	< .001	Supported

Source: Authors' Compilation (2026)

The model explains 63% of the variance in CRP ($R^2 = .63$), indicating moderate-to-high explanatory power. According to PLS-SEM guidelines, this reflects substantial predictive capability in behavioural research contexts.

Effect Size (f^2)

Effect sizes were examined to determine the contribution of each exogenous construct to CRP.

Table 5: Effect Size (f^2)

Predictor	f^2	Interpretation
LP	0.11	Medium
WCS	0.15	Medium
OCS	0.09	Medium

Source: Authors' Compilation (2026)

All predictors demonstrate meaningful medium effect sizes, with written communication skills exerting the strongest influence.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Blindfolding procedures yielded: $Q^2 = 0.42$

Since $Q^2 > 0$, the model demonstrates strong predictive relevance. A value of 0.42 indicates high out-of-sample predictive capability.

Summarily, the empirical results consistently show that:

1. Language proficiency significantly enhances corporate reporting performance.
2. Written communication skills exert the strongest effect on reporting quality.
3. Oral communication skills also contribute significantly to reporting effectiveness.
4. The structural model demonstrates substantial explanatory power ($R^2 = .63$).
5. Reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity are all satisfactory.
6. The model exhibits strong predictive relevance ($Q^2 = .42$).

Collectively, these findings provide robust empirical support for the proposition that communication competencies constitute critical human capital resources that significantly enhance corporate reporting performance.

4. Discussion

The findings had shown that communication competencies enhance corporate reporting performance among professional accountants. Specifically, the empirical findings demonstrate that language proficiency (LP), written communication skills (WCS), and oral communication skills (OCS) all exert statistically significant and positive effects on corporate reporting performance (CRP), with written communication skills emerging as the strongest predictor. The model explains a substantial proportion of variance in reporting performance ($R^2 = 0.63$), underscoring the centrality of communication competence in contemporary financial reporting environments.

The results strongly support Human Capital Theory, which posits that investments in knowledge, skills, and competencies enhance individual productivity and organisational value (Becker, 1964). Traditionally, accounting performance has been associated primarily with technical expertise in financial standards and regulatory compliance. However, the present findings extend this perspective by empirically demonstrating that non-technical competencies or soft skills, particularly communication skills, constitute valuable forms of professional human capital.

Written communication skills, which showed the largest effect size, reflect the ability to translate complex accounting data into coherent, transparent, and standards-compliant narratives. In the context of modern corporate reporting, which is characterised by expanded disclosures, management commentary, sustainability narratives, and risk reporting, communication competence enhances the productive application of technical accounting knowledge. Thus, communication skills are not peripheral attributes but core productive assets that improve reporting outputs and organisational credibility.

Furthermore, the findings are equally consistent with Communication Competence Theory, which emphasises clarity, accuracy, appropriateness, and effectiveness in professional communication. Corporate reporting is inherently a communicative act: financial statements and disclosures are intended to transmit decision-useful information to diverse stakeholders. Language proficiency reduces ambiguity and enhances readability, thereby improving the clarity and interpretability of

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disclosures. Written communication skills facilitate logical structuring, integration of quantitative and narrative information, and compliance articulation. Oral communication skills strengthen interactive dimensions of reporting, such as engagements with auditors, regulators, and investors. Collectively, these competencies enhance both the transmission and reception of financial information, reinforcing the quality dimension of corporate reporting.

The dominance of written communication skills is theoretically intuitive, given the narrative-intensive nature of contemporary corporate reports. Modern financial disclosures extend beyond numerical statements to include explanatory notes, risk analyses, governance discussions, and forward-looking statements. The ability to craft coherent and transparent narratives therefore becomes a decisive determinant of reporting performance.

Besides, from the perspective of Stakeholder Theory, corporate reporting functions as a primary accountability mechanism between organisations and their stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). The significant relationships observed in this study indicate that communication competence enhances the organisation's ability to discharge this accountability function effectively. Clear and transparent reporting strengthens stakeholder trust, reduces misunderstanding, and promotes informed decision-making. Oral communication further facilitates stakeholder engagement by enabling accountants to interpret results, clarify judgments, and respond to inquiries. Thus, communication competencies contribute not only to reporting quality but also to relational legitimacy and stakeholder confidence.

More so, the results can also be interpreted through Signalling Theory, which posits that organisations convey quality signals to the market to reduce information asymmetry (Spence, 1973). High-quality, well-articulated corporate reports signal governance strength, transparency, and managerial competence. Particularly, written communication skills enhance the credibility and interpretability of disclosures, thereby strengthening the signalling effect of financial reports. Language precision reduces ambiguity that might otherwise be interpreted as obfuscation. Oral communication competence further reinforces signalling mechanisms during earnings presentations, audit discussions, and investor briefings. Consequently, communication skills amplify the informational value of corporate reporting and enhance market confidence.

Relative to corporate reporting literature, this study advances corporate reporting scholarship by empirically validating communication competencies as significant predictors of reporting performance, complementing traditional emphases on technical accounting skills. While prior research has highlighted the importance of disclosure quality and governance mechanisms, this study foregrounds the human-capital dimension of reporting effectiveness.

By integrating Human Capital Theory, Communication Competence Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Signalling Theory into a unified explanatory framework, the findings demonstrate that communication competence operates simultaneously as: a productive professional asset (Human Capital Theory), a quality determinant of message effectiveness (Communication Competence Theory), an accountability mechanism (Stakeholder Theory), and a market credibility signal (Signalling Theory).

Practical and Policy Implications

The findings have some important practical implications for professional accounting bodies, organisations, and educational institutions:

a) **Professional Practice**: Accounting organisations or professional bodies (such as ICAN, ANAN, etc) should integrate structured communication training into continuing professional development (CPD) programmes. Communication skills should be formally assessed as part of performance evaluation systems. For reporters, it is also necessary to include financial education into communication art curriculum. Such knowledge helps in communicating financial reports to the wider audience comprehensibly.

b) **Organisational Governance**: Firms should recognise communication competence as a strategic capability that enhances reporting credibility and stakeholder trust.

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c) **Accounting Education**: Universities and training institutions should revise curricula to embed business writing, financial report writing, and professional oral communication modules alongside technical accounting courses. As argued by prior scholarship (e.g., Siriwardane & Durden, 2014), accounting education must transcend purely technical content to prepare graduates for complex reporting environments.

On the whole, the results confirm that communication competencies significantly enhance corporate reporting performance among professional accountants with written communication skills exerting the strongest influence, reflecting the narrative-heavy character of contemporary corporate disclosures. By empirically validating the theoretical propositions of Human Capital, Communication Competence, Stakeholder, and Signalling theories, this study underscores that effective corporate reporting is not solely a function of technical accounting expertise but also of the communicative competence through which that expertise is expressed.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the impact of language proficiency, written communication skills, and oral communication skills on corporate reporting performance among professional accountants. Using regression and PLS-SEM analyses, the findings demonstrate that all three communication competencies significantly and positively influence corporate reporting performance, with written communication skills exerting the strongest effect. The model explains a substantial proportion of variance in reporting performance ($R^2 = 0.63$), confirming that communication competence is a critical determinant of reporting quality.

Theoretically, the study advances accounting scholarship by integrating Human Capital Theory, Communication Competence Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Signalling Theory into a unified explanatory framework. The results confirm that communication competencies function as strategic forms of professional human capital that enhance productivity and reporting effectiveness. They also demonstrate that corporate reporting is fundamentally communicative—its quality depends not only on technical accuracy but on clarity, structure, appropriateness, and stakeholder-oriented articulation. Furthermore, the findings show that high-quality communication strengthens corporate disclosures as credible signals of governance quality and transparency, thereby reinforcing stakeholder trust.

Empirically, the study contributes to corporate reporting literature by moving beyond traditional technical determinants of reporting quality to highlight the central role of non-technical competencies. While prior research has emphasised accounting standards, governance structures, and regulatory compliance, this study demonstrates that the communicative capacity of accountants significantly shapes the effectiveness, clarity, and perceived credibility of corporate reports. This helps stakeholders with accounting background as well as those with no novel knowledge of accounting including journalists who help in publishing and broadcasting such information over the media. This way, therefore, the study contributes to knowledge by bridging accounting and communication scholarship by empirically validating communication competence as a determinant of reporting performance. It provides evidence-based justification for integrating soft skills into accounting professional development frameworks.

Practically, the findings underscore the need for professional accounting bodies to incorporate advanced communication training into continuing professional development frameworks. Organisations should integrate communication competence into performance appraisal systems and leadership development initiatives. Universities and training institutions should embed structured modules on business writing, financial narrative development, and professional oral communication within accounting curricula to align graduate capabilities with evolving reporting demands.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. The reliance on perceptual self-reported data may introduce response bias, and the cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Future research could employ longitudinal designs, experimental approaches, or multi-source data (e.g., archival reporting quality indices) to validate and extend these findings. Comparative studies across jurisdictions or regulatory environments may also reveal contextual variations in the communication–reporting relationship. Additionally, future research could explore moderating variables such as digital reporting technologies, organisational culture, or governance quality.

In conclusion, this study establishes that communication competence is not merely a complementary soft skill but a strategic professional capability that significantly enhances corporate reporting performance. As corporate disclosures become increasingly narrative-driven and stakeholder-focused, the communicative expertise of accountants will remain central to ensuring transparency, accountability, and sustainable organisational performance.

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