

Exploring Linguistic Modification Techniques Employed in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Teachers' Discourse

Omar Ali Al-Smadi¹ & Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal¹

¹ Faculty of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 USM, Penang, Malaysia

*Correspondence: Omar Ali Al-Smadi, Faculty of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 USM, Penang, Malaysia.

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the linguistic modifications techniques employed by ODL teachers. Linguistic modification is a crucial aspect of learning and teaching as it facilitates students' comprehension by reducing the complexity of syntactic structures and utilizing familiar language patterns. The research data were collected through observations and informal chats with the teachers. A total of 10 observations were conducted during the Second Semester of the 2022/2023 academic year, with informal chats held at the end of each session to obtain additional insights into learning dynamics. The analysis reveals that the teachers' discourse in ODL context exhibits various linguistic modifications at phonological, syntactic and semantic level. These include a high frequency of self-repetition, exaggerated pronunciation, a slower speech rate, the avoidance of contractions, the use of concise sentences and phrases, paraphrasing, and the avoidance of idioms and unfamiliar words. These phonological, semantic, and syntactic modifications contribute to enhanced input comprehensibility, reducing confusion and fostering increased engagement and participation. This study underscores the significance of linguistic modifications in teachers' discourse. These modifications are essential for ensuring input comprehensibility and fostering students' engagement in the learning process. By adapting their language to meet the learners' needs, teachers can effectively facilitate understanding and create an inclusive learning environment in ODL context.

Keywords: discourse analysis, input comprehensibility, linguistic modification, open distance learning, teacher discourse

1. Introduction

Teacher talk refers to the language and communication used by teachers during instructional interactions with students. It encompasses the spoken or written language employed by teachers to convey information, provide explanations, ask questions, give directions, facilitate discussions, and engage students in learning activities. Teacher talk serves as a crucial tool for delivering content, clarifying concepts, modeling language usage, and promoting student understanding (Al-Smadi et al., 2020). It involves the choice of vocabulary, sentence structure, tone, pacing, and non-verbal cues employed by teachers to effectively communicate with students in the educational setting. Effective teacher talk involves clear and concise language, appropriate scaffolding, and strategies that promote active engagement and comprehension among students (Nguyen, 2022).

Teacher talk plays a vital role in enhancing students' comprehension in an English for Medical Purposes (EMP) courses. As medical terminology and concepts can be complex, students heavily rely on the guidance and explanations provided by their teachers (Al-Smadi et al., 2020). Research has shown that teacher talk significantly impacts student learning outcomes (Chen et al., 2020; Al-Smadi et al., 2020). Through clear and concise teacher talk, students gain a deeper understanding of medical terms, procedures, and case studies. Effective teacher talk helps students grasp the nuances of the English language, enabling them to communicate accurately and confidently in a medical context (Nasir et al., 2019). Moreover, teachers' use of appropriate vocabulary, intonation, and pacing assists students in developing listening skills, as they become familiar with the language patterns and cadence specific to medical conversations (Chen et al., 2020; Nasir et al., 2019). By incorporating interactive discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and examples, teacher talk facilitates active engagement, encourages critical thinking, and promotes effective learning strategies for learners (Nasir et al., 2019; Al-Smadi et al., 2020).

Understanding the specific linguistic strategies employed by teachers is crucial for designing effective instructional practices that meet the unique language needs of students (Al-Smadi et al., 2020). Therefore, this study is sought to investigate the linguistic modifications utilized by teachers in Open Distance Learning (ODL) courses. By examining teachers' discourse, this study seeks to identify the specific modifications employed, such as self-repetition, rate of speech, avoidance of contractions, use of concise sentences and phrases, paraphrasing, avoidance of idioms and unfamiliar words.

To gather comprehensive data, this research employed a qualitative approach, combining observations and informal chats with the teachers. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on teachers' linguistic modifications, particularly within the ODL context, and inform pedagogical practices that promote effective language learning and communication in ODL education and learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teacher Talk in ODL

Open distance learning (ODL) is a flexible and inclusive form of education that allows learners to study at their own pace and location, using various educational resources and technologies. In ODL, there is no requirement for physical presence in a traditional classroom setting. Instead, learners access learning materials, resources, and instructional support remotely, typically through online platforms, printed materials, video lectures, or a combination of these (Ghazali, 2021).

Teacher talk in open distance learning courses encompasses several characteristics tailored to the unique nature of the learning environment. Clarity and conciseness are prioritized to compensate for the absence of face-to-face interaction (Rose, 2018; Izzati & Hamzah, 2021). Explicit instructions and support strategies are employed to break down complex concepts and provide guidance to students through learning activities (Sahlim, 2018).

In open distance learning courses, teacher talk undergoes linguistic modifications to address the unique characteristics of the online learning environment. Clarity and simplicity are emphasized, with teachers using clear and straightforward language to enhance comprehension (Sahlim, 2018). Explicitness and redundancy are employed to provide clear instructions and reinforce important concepts (Shadiev & Yang, 2020; Al-Smadi et al., 2020). Visual cues and descriptions are used to compensate for the lack of physical gestures, with teachers providing vivid descriptions and supplementary visual materials (Rose, 2018). Supportive language and tone are used to foster a positive and inclusive learning environment (Rose, 2018; Sahlim, 2018). These linguistic features of teachers' talk optimize communication in open distance learning courses, ensuring effective engagement with course materials despite the physical distance between teachers and students (Rose, 2018; Sahlim, 2018).

2.2 Linguistic Modification in Teachers' Discourse

Linguistic modification refers to the deliberate adjustments made by teachers in their language use to facilitate learners' comprehension and communication. For instance, Al-Smadi et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of teacher talk in healthcare education, emphasizing the need for teachers to modify their language to cater to learners' proficiency levels and specific medical discourse requirements. Previous research also has recognized the importance of linguistic modification in various language learning contexts, such as second language acquisition (Denis, 2017), and English for Specific Purposes (Ghafar, 2022).

In the field of second language acquisition, studies have highlighted the role of linguistic modification in reducing the linguistic complexity of input to enhance learners' understanding (Denis, 2017). This includes features such as self-repetition, slower speech rate, and paraphrasing, which have been found to positively impact learners' comprehension and fluency. Similarly, research in ESP contexts has also emphasized the significance of linguistic modification. For example, Ghafar (2022) found that the use of explicit language, simplification, and elaboration were to enhance learners' comprehension and engagement. These studies indicate that linguistic modifications play a crucial role in supporting learners' understanding and participation in specialized domains.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The study comprised a diverse cohort of 10 participants. Among them were language teachers, bringing specialized knowledge in linguistics, language acquisition, and communication. Additionally, the participant pool encompassed teachers from an array of disciplines, fostering a rich mix of perspectives from fields such as

science, humanities, technology, and social sciences. This selection aimed to capture a broad spectrum of insights and viewpoints, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the subject under investigation.

3.2 Data Collection

Data in this study were collected through observations and informal chats with the teachers. A total of 10 observation sessions were carried out, each lasting approximately one hour. When necessary, informal chats with the teacher took place to seek further clarification on the observed linguistic modifications, gain insights into the teacher's intentions, and understand the context of the instructional practices.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data collected through classroom observations and informal chats were transcribed and analyzed thematically in accordance with Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic approach. The analysis involved identifying patterns and themes related to linguistic modification in teacher discourse.

The following codes were used in the transcription: (CO2, M15) refers to classroom observation number two, minute fifteen and (IC) refers to informal chats. Students' names are replaced by (S1, S2, S3 etcetera) and the teacher's name is replaced by (T).

4. Findings

After the data were transcribed, it was thoroughly scrutinized for the purpose of identifying the occurrence of linguistic characteristics of teacher discourse. Linguistics modification in this study falls under three categories: phonological modification, syntactic modification and semantic modification.

4.1 Phonological Modification

It was noticed that the teachers tend to speak slowly. Sentences were short and simple. It was also noticed that the teachers avoided contractions in most of their language. Also, pauses were noticeably marked in the teachers' discourse. The teachers tend to self-repeat most of utterances and questions and used more expressions like 'ah' and 'alright' during talk for the purpose of making input comprehensible, thus enabling the student to use the target language in their talk. The following transcript illustrates the use of discourse markers *ah* and *alright* as shown in the extract below.

- 1) T: Ah, got it. So, in the research process, let's say a survey. Thanks, S1. It could be a lead
- 2) researcher, data analyst, or even a volunteer. someone with specialized expertise, alright?
- 3) S1: Okay clear

(CO1, M20).

The teacher's use of discourse marker *ah* (line 1) in the previous extract serves as confirmation for the student's input, while the discourse marker *alright* (line 2) was a comprehension check of understanding.

4.1.1 Pauses

Teachers' pauses in this study fall into two types. The first one arises in the teachers' act of organizing materials, thoughts, resources and activities. This type of pause was not subject to analysis as it refers to non-verbal behavior of teacher. The second type of pause is the linguistic pause. In this type, it was noted that the teacher is giving time to support students' comprehension, tolerate speech modification and giving students enough time to think and talk. Pauses appeared mostly after asking questions rather than after declarative or imperative statements as illustrated in the transcript below.

Extract 4.2

- 1) T: Do you need help with anything else S13? ... What is the function of
- 2) this question? ... Request ... or Offer...

(CO8, M26).

The pauses are marked by three dots (...). The teacher paused three times to allow the students to think and answer. The teacher's wait time was enough as the student was able to answer the question.

4.1.2 Rate of Speech

It was noted that the teachers modified their speech rate to offer comprehensible input and to give the students more time to process the input. It was also noted that the teacher spoke slowly when addressing the whole class and he tended to increase the rate of speech when talking to individual students.

4.1.3 Exaggerated Pronunciation

The teachers frequently exaggerated enunciation of certain words in order to elicit students' recognition and awareness of these words and enable students' comprehension of these words. One teacher explained this in one of informal chats as an attempt to make his discourse easy to follow and understand. The teacher said: "I choose to stress key words more than I would typically do, with the purpose of making what I say more audible, clearer and perceived as key term that will be frequently used in the lectures" (IC, 3).

4.1.4 Avoiding Contraction

Contractions like *gonna* instead of going to were not found in teachers' talk. Contractions can pose challenges to non-native speakers, particularly students with lower language proficiency levels, potentially leading to confusion or difficulty in grasping the meaning within teachers' discourse. During an informal chat, a teacher emphasized the importance of clarity in speech, especially for those at lower language levels, stating, 'To ensure better understanding, particularly for those with lower proficiency' (IC, 5).

4.2 Syntactic Modification

Syntactic modifications refer to the teachers' practice of simplifying talk in terms of grammatical structure, length of utterances and type of statements.

4.2.1 Sentence and Tense Type

Out of a total of 1369 sentences, simple sentences constitute 1343, making up 98.10% of the total. Compound sentences account for 15 sentences, representing 1.02% of the total number. Complex sentences, on the other hand, amount to 11 sentences, making up 0.88% of the total count. Teachers predominantly utilized simple sentences, comprising 98.10% of their speech, attributing this prevalence to factors such as students' English proficiency levels and the nature of teaching materials and objectives. The preference for simpler, concise sentences was due to their ease of comprehension and accessibility for all students in the class. Compound and complex sentences were infrequently employed, with compound sentences being marginally more common than complex ones.

Perfect tenses were notably absent from the teachers' speech, mainly relying on present simple, past simple, future simple, and present progressive tenses. The instructional materials prioritized different aspects, steering teachers toward simpler tenses. This preference was guided by both 'the frequency of these tenses and the students' existing familiarity' (IC, 8). Specifically, the teachers favored the simple present tense the most.

Different types of tense were exemplified in the course materials. The simple present tense was demonstrated through statement like, "Economists analyze market trends." In discussing historical contexts, the simple past tense was highlighted, as seen in sentences like "Herodotus examined ancient civilizations." Looking ahead, the simple future tense was illustrated through sentences like "Mastering these skills will make you a great presenter." Additionally, the present progressive tense was exemplified in the statement, "I am just leaving work." These diverse tense types were showcased to exemplify various temporal aspects within language usage.

4.2.2 Imperatives

It was found that the use of the imperative in teachers' talk is less than other forms of language such as declaratives or questions. Declarative sentences were the most prevalent, constituting 1369 sentences, which accounts for approximately 64.91% of the total. Imperative sentences were less frequent, comprising 167 sentences, making up approximately 7.92% of the total count. Finally, interrogative sentences numbered 577, representing approximately 27.17% of the total sentences analyzed. These diverse sentence types provide insights into the varied linguistic structures employed within the corpus studied. The teachers' use of imperatives appeared in most cases when the teachers gave instructions to students regarding exercises, course work, homework, etcetera. What is fascinating in the findings is that the teacher used polite imperative forms. The following transcript illustrates the use of the polite imperative.

Extract 4.3

1) Let's work in this exercise together.

(CO2, M17).

Polite imperatives imply that the teacher is not exercising a hierarchical power relationship, but rather a kinship and closeness relationship with his student. This is evident through the use of the pronoun *us* and the word *together*.

4.2.3 Passive Voice

Passive voice was only used 37 times in transcripts. The percentage is 0.14%. The use of the Passive requires the student to focus on action more than the doer and in certain cases the doer is not even spoken. This makes it difficult for students to interpret and understand passive statements. Also, in some cases the doer of action is important as it relate to objects, names or description etcetera. Considering the following passive statements in talk: *The patient was presented to ER; the patient was advised to walk every day.* The doer of the action is not mentioned in the previous statements despite the fact they are key terms: paramedic in first sentence, physician in second statement. In a teacher's word "Medical terms are more important than the structure of a sentence" (IC, 7).

4.2.4 Type of Phrases

In the analysis of phrases within the dataset, various types were identified. Noun phrases were the most prevalent, totaling 692 instances and accounting for approximately 36.90% of the total phrases observed. Verb phrases followed, comprising 570 instances, making up about 30.4% of the observed phrases. Adjective phrases were noted 210 times, representing approximately 11.2% of the total. Adverb phrases were less frequent, with 90 instances, constituting approximately 4.8% of the observed phrases. Finally, prepositional phrases were observed 313 times, accounting for around 16.70% of the total phrases in the dataset. These diverse phrase types illustrate the varied syntactic structures employed within the analyzed corpus.

These disparities can be attributed to the varying difficulty levels and familiarity associated with different phrase types. Noun phrases tend to be more easily understood and utilized compared to adverbial phrases, for instance. Additionally, the course content incorporates a higher frequency of noun phrases in comparison to other phrase structures.

4.2.5 Question Tags

Surprisingly, question-tags were absent in teacher talk despite the fact that they offer ordinary and common forms of language. In this manner, the teachers avoided using tags as questioning tools and as comprehension checks. In an informal chat with one teacher, he justified this as related to difficulties students might face using or comprehending tag questions and that tag questions are not commonly used in their context. The teacher said: "I don't want students to mix tag questions with other forms of questions, tag questions are most common in informal talk, and it does not relate to our objectives" (IC, 9).

4.3 Semantic Modification

Semantic modifications refer to the teachers' practice of simplifying talk in terms of vocabulary, pronouns, and unfamiliar words etcetera for the sake of providing comprehensible input.

4.3.1 Paraphrasing and Repetition

The teachers tends to self-repeat and paraphrase talk. Self-repetition and paraphrasing secure input comprehensibility. The following transcript illustrates the use of self-repetition and paraphrasing.

Extract 4.4

- 1) T: Yes, concussion. OK ... Excellent... Brilliant. Concussion. Concussion
- 2) Means brain injury... Ok... head injury, OK? Concussion a short-term
- 3) loss of brain function, OK?

(CO5, M16).

In the previous excerpt, the teacher repeated the word *concussion* four times and appropriated it to the context when he linked it to the word *brain* and *head* (line 2). Also, the teacher used the discourse marker *Ok* four times; as a comprehension checker (lines 1 & 2) and as a confirmation checker (line 3).

Explaining, modifying and paraphrasing are strategies employed by the teachers to make input clear and comprehensible. The teachers frequently simplified language and instructions by repeating and paraphrasing what might be considered hard to digest among students. This was done by choosing more familiar words to students, simpler grammatical formats, avoiding contractions and subordinations, shorter statements and limited choice of tenses. These strategies helped the teacher to be understood and minimized the questions that might arise as a result of students misunderstanding of what they are requested to do or practice.

It was also noted that the teachers frequently modified and restated questions instead of just repeating them. The teachers employed self-repetition, paraphrasing and pausing as techniques to modify questions. The teachers

asked the same and modified questions to several students to guarantee attention and comprehension of the questions being asked. The following transcript illustrates how the teacher restated the same question and asked several students when they were talking about symptoms.

Extract 4.5

- 1) T: What challenge is the government currently facing?
- 2) S1: Economic instability.
- 3) T: Good point, S1. Economic instability. Alright, S2, what is a significant concern
- 4) for the government?
- 5) S2: Opposition from various parties.
- 6) T: Precisely, S2. The government is facing opposition from various parties, Good
- 7) job S2. Now, S3 what is the main issue affecting government policies?
- 8) S3: Lack of public transport.
- 9) T: That is correct, S3. The government is experiencing a lack of public transport.

(CO8, M20).

In the previous excerpt, the teacher used various words for asking the same question in order to familiarize students with several linguistic repertoire which they can use to enrich their linguistic range (lines 1, 3, 7).

When students face difficulties in answering a question (which was noticed when no one volunteered to answer the question or when the answer to the question was incorrect), the teacher modified the question to make it more comprehensible. The following transcript illustrates question modification by one teacher.

Extract 4.6

- 1) T: What alleviates the character's distress?
- 2) S13: Nightmares.
- 3) T: Let me ask the question again... What eases the character suffering?
- 4) S13: Poetry.
- 5) T: Excellent S13. The word alleviate is similar in meaning to ease and make better, Ok?
- 6) Alleviate means make better.

(CO10, M36).

In this excerpt, the teacher asked a question, but the student was not able to provide a correct answer which is evident in the word *nightmares* (line2). The teacher then modified the question and asked the same student to answer again (line 3). In this manner, the teacher did not only employ input modification, but also he supported the student's face by not rejecting the answer and saying wrong or incorrect. This teacher's act supports a healthy relationship with students. The teacher also praised the student when he offered the correct answer by saying *excellent* (line 5). The teacher then reinforced the input through repetition (line 6).

4.3.2 Avoiding Pronouns

It was found that all the referents used by the teachers were easily interpretable by students. The teachers chose to avoid using pronouns when they refer to key words that they wish to highlight and repeat for the sake of comprehensibility. In one teacher's word "clarity is the key to achieve objectives" (IC6). The following extract further confirms the avoidance of pronouns.

Extract 4.7

- 1) T: Grab bar is a mobility aid for home. Grab bar gives a patient something to hold on to.

(CO 9, M18).

The teacher used the term *grab bar* twice (line 1). The teacher avoided using the pronoun 'it' in the second statement and chose to use the term again for emphasis.

To interpret pronouns, students need to remember what the teacher said earlier which may result in misunderstanding or a negative obstacle to comprehensibility. Therefore, the teachers avoided using pronouns and chose to spell out the noun instead.

In addition, homonyms like ‘they’re,’ ‘their,’ and ‘there’ were notably absent in the teachers’ speech. Their omission likely aimed to prevent potential misinterpretation, ambiguity, and subsequent misunderstanding.

4.3.3 Conjunctions

It was found that the teacher avoids using conjunctions unless they are easy to digest. Working out the relationship between sentences such as cause and effect and the conclusion is not an easy job for students (IC, 8). However, conjunctions appeared in teacher talk to serve basic functions such as alternatives and addition. For example, *did you get it from your father side or your mother side?* (CO2, M12); we also *investigated how organisms adapt and interact with their environment* (CO2, M33). In the previous examples, it is easy for students to understand the function of the conjunction *or* in the question which is related to a choice. Also, the conjunction *and* for addition in statements.

4.3.4 Avoiding Idioms and Unfamiliar Words

The teachers in this study did not use idioms in their speech at all. Due to their nature, idioms are difficult to understand among learners because the meaning is not literal, and they require a high proficiency level. Also, the teachers did not use any proverb in their talk. Moreover, it was noted that the teacher used a few phrasal verbs in their talk such as *fill in*, *take out*, *switch in* and *switch off*.

One teacher explained this as ‘intentional’ because such words require cultural background and high level of language accuracy and proficiency (IC, 7).

4.3.5 Discourse Markers

Discourse markers such as *now*, *anyway*, *great*, *finally*, *good*, *oh*, *well*, *just*, *ok* have been observed in teachers’ talk. The teachers used different discourse markers to express different functions in their talk. Discourse markers depend on a specific context and a specific teacher’s purpose such as offering direction or assertion etcetera. For example, “You guys need to answer just five questions. Ok... Just five.” (CO, 3) - Function: Affirmation. Here, ‘just’ emphasizes the small number of questions, reinforcing and confirming the limited quantity. It’s used to affirm the speaker’s intent and emphasize the simplicity or smallness of the task. “Can you just switch off your camera! (CO, 1)” - Function: Permission. In this context, ‘just’ is used to politely request or give permission for a simple action. It softens the command or request, making it less imposing or demanding. “This is just awesome. (CO, 6)” - Function: Appraisal. ‘Just’ in this sentence serves to intensify the speaker’s admiration or positive evaluation of something. It emphasizes the degree of the speaker’s appreciation or admiration for the subject, implying that it’s more than just good; it’s exceptionally great.

The following transcript further illustrates the use of discourse markers ‘*oh*’ and ‘*finally*’.

Extract 4.8

- 1) S20: I am marry next week
- 2) T: Oh! ... Is that true?
- 3) S20: Yes... welcome my marriage
- 4) T: Finally ha....

(CO2, M45).

In the previous excerpt, the use of *oh* (line 2) serves the function of exclamation. Also, the word *finally* (line 4) indicates that something happened after waiting for a long time.

It is worth mentioning here that linguistic modification was noted to be a lot at the beginning of the lessons to familiarize students with intended target language. Students need to know the required language to use and practice. As the lesson moves on, modifications tend to decrease as a result of students’ input comprehension. One teacher expressed in one of the informal chats that he will do whatever it takes to make sure students understand. In teacher’s words, “I pause, repeat, simplify and drill to guarantee that I am making myself clear and students are following what has been done or intended” (IC, 9).

5. Discussion

The analysis of the observations and informal chats revealed that the teachers modified their talk at phonological level, syntactic level, and semantic level. The teachers employed repetition and simplification, emphasizing key information, and using familiar language structures to enhance comprehension. Exaggerated pronunciation and a slower rate of speech were observed, facilitating the intelligibility of input and giving students more processing time. The teachers actively avoided the use of idioms and unfamiliar vocabulary, opting for clear explanations

and paraphrasing.

These findings align with previous research in various language learning contexts. Studies in second and foreign language learning have emphasized the benefits of linguistic modifications, such as self-repetition and simplification, in enhancing learners' comprehension (Denis, 2017; Sahlim, 2018; Izzati & Hamzah, 2021; Ghazali, 2021). Additionally, research in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has underscored the importance of linguistic modification in specialized domains. Ghafar (2022) highlighted the use of explicit language and simplification in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context to enhance comprehension and engagement. The present study's findings regarding the avoidance of idioms and unfamiliar vocabulary in the EMP classroom align with this research, as the teacher aimed to promote students' understanding of medical discourse.

The present study's findings contribute to the existing literature by specifically focusing on linguistic modifications in teachers' discourse in ODL settings. The observed linguistic modifications, such as repetition, simplification, pronunciation adjustments, and avoidance of idioms, demonstrate the teacher's commitment to facilitating students' comprehension and engagement in a specialized learning context. By adopting these modifications, the teachers ensured input comprehensibility, reduced linguistic barriers, and supported students' active engagement and interactions.

Future research could explore the impact of these linguistic modifications on students' language development, communicative competence, and confidence in ODL settings. Longitudinal studies could investigate the sustained effects of linguistic modifications on students' language proficiency and their ability to interact effectively in their respective fields. Additionally, research could examine the perspectives of ODL students to gain insights into their perceptions and experiences regarding the linguistic modifications employed by their teachers.

6. Conclusion

Teacher talks in this study can be described as having a high frequency of self-repetition, exaggerated pronunciation, slower rate of speech, avoiding contractions, use of short sentences and phrases, paraphrasing, avoiding idioms and unfamiliar words, and pausing. The findings highlight the significance of adapting language use to meet the needs of students and promote their comprehension and engagement.

The practical implications of this study are twofold. Firstly, ODL teachers can benefit from incorporating linguistic modifications into their instructional practices. By employing strategies such as repetition, simplification, pronunciation adjustments, and avoidance of idioms, teachers can create an inclusive learning environment that supports students' language development and facilitates their understanding of complex concepts. Secondly, educational institutions and curriculum designers should recognize the value of linguistic modification in ODL programs and provide appropriate training and resources for teachers to implement these strategies effectively.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The findings are based on observations and informal chats with a limited number of participants. Therefore, caution should be exercised in generalizing the results to other educational settings. Future research could expand the scope of the study by including a larger sample size, and different institutions to enhance the external validity of the findings.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of linguistic modification in ODL context and its implications for students' comprehension and engagement. The findings emphasize the necessity of linguistic modifications in creating an inclusive learning environment for non-native English-speaking students. By adopting these modifications, ODL teachers can enhance students' language learning experiences, support their academic success, and prepare them for effective communication in their professional endeavor.

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Authors' contributions

All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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No additional data are available.

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