Ethnography of Communication in Empowering Women Farmers' Group in Sodong Village

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ABSTRACT

This study describes and analyzes communication activities in the empowerment of the Women Farmers' Group (KWT) in Sodong Village, Tangerang Regency. KWT empowerment faced persistent communication challenges: patriarchal norms constraining women's voice, information gaps arising from low digital literacy, and resistance to adopting hydroponic farming. Prior studies focused predominantly on economic outcomes, leaving a gap regarding communication as a vehicle for social change within local cultural and gender contexts. This study employs a qualitative ethnography of communication approach, applying Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model to examine interaction patterns. Data were collected from 18 participants—comprising 1 KWT leader, 12 members, 1 village head, 2 agricultural extension officers, and 2 community representatives—through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation (January–April 2025). Findings reveal that empowerment communication is organized through eight SPEAKING components, characterized by a familial atmosphere (key) in culturally familiar spaces such as the Saung Kebun (setting), fostering trust and openness. Participatory patterns facilitate agricultural innovation diffusion and strengthen social solidarity. This study contributes to community-based development literature by integrating communication, gender, and rural development perspectives, offering a strategic model for inclusive Food Self-Sufficient Villages.

Keyword: *women farmers group, communication ethnography, SPEAKING model, empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment programs for Women Farmers' Groups (KWT) in rural Indonesia face not only structural economic barriers—including limited product diversification, dependency on financial intermediaries, and inadequate government support (Al-Kubati & Selvaratnam, 2023; Lestari et al., 2026), but also deeply embedded communicative challenges that have received far less scholarly attention. Chief among these are patriarchal communication norms that restrict women's voice in collective decision-making, persistent information gaps between agricultural extension workers and KWT members exacerbated by low digital literacy, and community-level resistance to adopting new agricultural technologies such as hydroponic farming (Arintyas, 2024; Dash & Prusty, 2024). These communication barriers are not peripheral to the empowerment problem. They are constitutive of it. Without addressing how messages are

produced, received, and culturally negotiated within KWT settings, programmatic interventions risk reproducing the very exclusions they seek to overcome (Zhang et al., 2026).

Empirical data from Sodong Village, Tigaraksa District, Tangerang Regency, renders this gap particularly urgent. Based on 2025 workforce records, 2,719 women (approximately 32.42% of the population) are registered as housewives, while only 4 of 36 registered farmers are women—a disparity compounded by the national female Labor Force Participation Rate of 56.70%, compared to 84.34% for men (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025). In this context, KWT in Sodong Village has adopted hydroponic farming as a practical response to limited land resources, positioning the group as a vehicle for both agricultural innovation and women's economic inclusion. The urgency of examining how communication functions within this group is therefore clear: KWT represents one of the few institutional channels through which rural women can access knowledge, resources, and collective agency.

A critical synthesis of the existing literature reveals a significant theoretical bifurcation. One strand emphasizes communication as an information-delivery mechanism, documenting how training, peer discussions, and digital tools enhance KWT members' technical capacity (Prayuti et al., 2024; Amiruddin Saleh et al., 2023). A second, more critical strand argues that communication in rural women's groups is inseparable from gender relations and power structures: participatory communication models have been shown to raise awareness of inequality and build collective identity (Servaes & Servaes, 2021; Mubangizi, 2025), while top-down extension communication is criticized for reproducing hierarchies that silence women's knowledge (Vollmer et al., 2025; Garcia et al., 2024). What this body of work collectively lacks, however, is a systematic analytical framework for examining how gender norms, cultural values, and social structures are inscribed in the communicative practices of KWT itself at the level of speech events, interaction norms, and communicative genres (Sulastri et al., 2023).

Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication and SPEAKING model (Boromisza-Habashi et al., 2025) offer precisely this analytical capacity, and their selection for this study requires explicit theoretical justification. KWT empowerment in Sodong Village is not merely an economic process but a fundamentally communicative and cultural one: its success or failure is mediated by the patriarchal norms governing who may speak, in what contexts, and with what authority; by information asymmetries between external facilitators and local women farmers; and by the cultural logics of gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and musyawarah (deliberation) that shape how decisions are made. Unlike content-analytic or survey-based approaches, the SPEAKING model, which systematically maps eight interrelated components of speech events (Setting, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre), enables the researcher to uncover precisely how these cultural and gender dynamics are enacted in everyday communicative life within the group (Nawaz et al., 2024). It is therefore uniquely appropriate for evaluating a gendered rural empowerment program, where the communicative environment is itself a site of social transformation.

This study occupies a distinctive position in the literature. While prior research on KWT has predominantly examined economic capacity(Purnomo & Purwandari, 2025), digital marketing adoption (Yuyut Prayuti et al., 2024), or multi-actor collaboration structures (Sugito et al., 2022), none has applied a communication ethnography framework to analyze the internal communicative dynamics of a KWT in its socio-cultural setting. By integrating communication, gender, and rural development perspectives, this study contributes a theoretically grounded account of how communication practices sustain empowerment at the grassroots level addressing a gap that remains understudied in Indonesian rural development scholarship.

This study therefore aims to describe and analyze communication activities in the empowerment process of the Women Farmers' Group (KWT) in Sodong Village, Tangerang Regency, using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model as the primary analytical framework.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Ethnography of Communication

The ethnography of communication, developed by Dell Hymes as a systematic critique of formal linguistics, proceeds from the premise that language cannot be understood apart from the social contexts in which it is used. Hymes argued that what speakers need to communicate

effectively is not grammatical competence alone, but *communicative competence*—the culturally specific knowledge of when to speak, what to say, to whom, and in what manner (Ufaq Binte Jamal et al., 2025). This shift reframes the object of linguistic inquiry from the abstract sentence to the concrete *speech event*: a socially recognized occasion for communication, bounded by culturally shared rules of appropriateness (Jin, 2026). Applied to KWT empowerment, the ethnography of communication directs the researcher's attention not to the *content* of what is communicated (Laila & Sugito, 2025) but to the cultural logic governing *how* it is communicated and what social effects that communication produces.

The Washington School tradition of communication ethnography further argues that communicative practices do not simply mirror existing social structures; rather, they actively constitute and shape those structures (Witteborn, 2026). Communities of practice produce solidarity, authority, and identity through their characteristic ways of speaking. In the KWT context, this means that the familial tone of meetings, the deliberative decision-making norm, and the genre of personal testimony are not merely communicative styles but social mechanisms through which women's empowerment is actively produced or withheld (Affandi et al., 2025). This constitutive view of communication is what distinguishes the ethnography of communication from both content analysis (which focuses on message content) and survey-based approaches (which measure attitudes and behaviors), and justifies its selection for a study in which the communicative environment is itself a site of social transformation(Rasquinha & Sissons, 2026).

2.2. Dell Hymes' SPEAKING Model

The SPEAKING model is a systematic heuristic for describing and comparing speech events across communities of practice. Each letter designates one analytical component; together they form an integrated framework for understanding how communicative meaning is socially organized (Nguyen & Doan, 2026). Unlike approaches that analyze communication in terms of sender–message–receiver, the SPEAKING model captures the full sociolinguistic context within which meaning is produced and interpreted:

- **S – Setting and Scene:** Setting refers to the physical time and place of communication; scene refers to the psychological or cultural atmosphere the definition of the situation that participants co-construct within the interaction (Boromisza-Habashi et al., 2025). Setting and scene jointly determine what communicative behaviors are possible and appropriate, and are the primary level at which cultural values shape communicative access.
- **P – Participants:** All individuals involved as speakers, addressees, and audience. The social roles, relationships, and relative status of participants shape who speaks, how, and with what authority. In gendered empowerment contexts, participant structure determines whose knowledge is recognized and whose voice is heard.
- **E – Ends:** The purposes of a speech event, including both conventionally recognized goals (e.g., to decide on a planting schedule) and the personal goals of individual participants (e.g., to demonstrate competence or build solidarity). Ends may converge or conflict across participants.
- **A – Act Sequence:** The form and content of the speech act, including the sequential organization of communicative moves—what is said, in what order, and through what rhetorical structure. Act sequence captures the interactional template that participants follow and sometimes deviate from, and determines how knowledge is introduced and negotiated.
- **K – Key:** The tone, manner, or spirit in which a speech act is performed—whether seriously or jokingly, formally or casually, with deference or authority. Key modulates meaning: the same words can constitute different communicative acts depending on the key in which they are delivered, making it particularly consequential for gendered communication dynamics.
- **I – Instrumentalities:** The channels (oral, written, digital, gestural) and linguistic codes (standard language, dialect, local expressions) through which communication is conducted. Instrumentalities shape what meanings can be expressed and who has access

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to them, and determine how barriers such as low digital literacy can be navigated or overcome.

N – Norms: The social rules—both explicit and implicit—governing communicative interaction, including norms of interaction (turn-taking, appropriate topics, interruption) and norms of interpretation (how statements are to be understood). Norms are the primary site where cultural and gender values are inscribed in communicative practice.

G – Genre: Conventionalized categories of communicative events—discussion, lecture, narrative, ceremony—that participants recognize and orient to. Genre provides a frame within which specific communicative moves acquire meaning; different genres distribute voice and authority differently across participants.

The analytical power of the SPEAKING model lies in the *interaction* among these eight components: no single component is interpretable in isolation. The key chosen by a facilitator (K) depends on participant relationships (P) and setting (S); the act sequence (A) enacts the ends (E) through available instrumentalities (I), constrained by community norms (N) and enacted within a recognized genre (G). This systemic quality makes the SPEAKING model uniquely appropriate for studying KWT communication, where empowerment outcomes emerge not from any single communicative feature but from the configuration of the entire speech event ecology. It enables the researcher to move from micro-level observations (how a meeting is opened, who speaks first, what tone is maintained) to macro-level social analysis (how gender hierarchies are reproduced or challenged through communicative practice).

2.3. Communication, Gender, and Women's Empowerment in Rural Agricultural Contexts

The role of communication in empowering women within agricultural settings has generally been conceptualized through two complementary perspectives, both of which provide the theoretical basis for this study. The first perspective highlights the importance of access to information, arguing that communication interventions such as gender-responsive agricultural extension and participatory peer-learning networks can substantially improve women farmers' technical competencies and economic performance (Dash & Prusty, 2024). Likewise, previous research indicates that participatory communication strengthens the capacity of rural farming communities to organize collective action (Amiruddin Saleh et al., 2023). Nevertheless, this perspective predominantly views communication as a mechanism for transmitting predetermined information, while giving limited attention to the sociolinguistic and cultural processes that shape whether women living within patriarchal social systems actually receive, interpret, internalize, and translate such information into meaningful action.

The second, more critical perspective contends that women's empowerment cannot be achieved through the simple dissemination of information; instead, it depends on the establishment of communicative environments where women are able to express their concerns, negotiate social relations, and exercise collective agency. From this viewpoint, participatory communication fosters empowerment by recognizing community members as active co-creators of knowledge rather than passive recipients of externally generated messages (Servaes & Servaes, 2021). Likewise, research on rural livelihood programs demonstrates that communicative processes including who facilitates discussions, the forms of interaction employed, and the norms regulating participation—significantly influence whether women's voices are acknowledged or excluded, regardless of the substantive content of the program (Mubangizi, 2025). Other studies further indicate that communication strategies are more effective in promoting empowerment when they are grounded in local cultural values and supported by relationships of trust among participants (Gunawan & Laura, 2025).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using the ethnography of communication framework (Boromisza-Habashi et al., 2025), which treats communicative competence the cultural knowledge of when, how, and to whom to speak as a central object of inquiry. Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model structures the analysis across eight components: Setting and Scene, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre. Each component

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conceptualized in the framework is defined here to allow the Results and Discussion section to focus directly on empirical findings.

Fieldwork was conducted from January to April 2025 (approximately 16 weeks) in Sodong Village, Tigaraksa District, Tangerang Regency. The specific speech events selected for observation and analysis were chosen to represent the full range of communicative contexts within KWT empowerment, and comprised: (1) weekly routine KWT meetings at the Saung Kebun and village hall, in which cultivation planning, group administration, and social matters were discussed; (2) hydroponic agricultural training sessions conducted by extension officers, covering cultivation techniques, nutrient management, and post-harvest handling; (3) informal interactions among members during field activities in the hydroponic garden; and (4) coordination meetings between the KWT leader, the village head, and agricultural extension officers regarding program implementation. These speech events were selected because they represent the communicative contexts in which the intersection of gender norms, agricultural knowledge, and social solidarity is most visibly negotiated.

The research participants comprised a total of 18 individuals, selected through purposive sampling based on active involvement in KWT empowerment activities. The participant breakdown was as follows: 1 KWT leader, 12 active KWT members, 1 village head (Kepala Desa Sodong), 2 agricultural extension officers from the Tangerang Regency Agriculture Office, and 2 community representatives (neighboring residents who participate in hydroponic farming activities). This multi-category participant structure was designed to capture communication dynamics across both the internal KWT community and its external institutional networks.

Data were collected through four complementary methods: in-depth interviews (18 individual sessions), focus group discussions (3 FGDs: one with 8 active KWT members, one with the 2 extension officers and village head, and one with the 2 community representatives and KWT leader), participant observation across 24 field sessions, and documentation (attendance records, meeting minutes, photographic evidence of hydroponic activities). Data analysis followed the processes of data reduction, data display, and verification, integrated with the eight SPEAKING components. Validity was ensured through source, methodological, and temporal triangulation. Research ethics were maintained through informed consent, participant anonymity, and objective presentation of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Communication Activities in the Empowerment of the Women Farmers' Group in Sodong Village

This section presents empirical findings organized according to the eight components of Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model. Conceptual definitions of each component are provided in the Research Methods section; subsections here open directly with field data. Throughout the analysis, findings are explicitly connected to the specific socio-economic context introduced earlier namely, the 2025 demographic condition of Sodong Village (32.42% of women registered as housewives; only 4 of 36 registered farmers are women) and the adoption of hydroponic farming as the group's primary agricultural innovation. This contextual grounding ensures analytical continuity across the manuscript and situates each communicative pattern within the material conditions that make KWT communication both necessary and significant.

4.1.1. Setting and Scene

In Sodong Village where the majority of women are registered as housewives and female participation in formal agriculture remains critically low the physical and symbolic spaces in which KWT communication takes place are themselves meaningful interventions. Communication activities related to the Food Self-Reliant Village Program took place primarily in the Saung Kebun (garden hut), the village hall, and the hydroponic agricultural fields. These spaces were not chosen arbitrarily: the Saung Kebun, in particular, is structurally and symbolically distinct from the formal village hall. Whereas the village hall is associated by participants with government authority and hierarchical formality contexts in which women reported feeling less entitled to speak the Saung Kebun operates as a communal, informal space that participants described as 'like meeting in someone's home.' This symbolic differentiation of

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setting directly mediates the communicative participation of women who, in everyday village life, are subject to patriarchal norms constraining their public voice.

Communication within all KWT spaces is embedded in the local cultural principles of gotong royong, mutual cooperation, and openness, fostering interpersonal trust and collaborative relationships among development actors. Such a communicative environment supports the successful diffusion of hydroponic farming innovations by enabling participants to negotiate, validate, and internalize new agricultural knowledge through participatory interaction rather than one-way information delivery. Research has shown that communication spaces grounded in culturally shared knowledge increase both participant engagement and the legitimacy of collective learning. Consistent with this perspective, the Saung Kebun in Sodong Village functions as a culturally resonant communication arena where women farmers are empowered to share experiential knowledge, engage in dialogue, and shape innovation collectively rather than merely receiving technical recommendations from external experts (Carter et al., 2025).

4.1.2. Participants

The participant structure of KWT communication reflects the broader challenge of female labor force marginalization in Sodong Village. Of the 18 research participants, 12 are active KWT members women who, prior to joining the group, were predominantly registered as housewives with minimal participation in formal agricultural activities. The main participants include village officials, agricultural extension workers, and KWT members. The central role of KWT reflects the strategic contribution of women in building village food independence through hydroponic farming. Extension workers serve as facilitators who encourage knowledge transfer using participatory innovation approaches, while the village head acts as a connector between government and community, reinforcing program legitimacy (Giyarsih et al., 2025). Beyond formal actors, family members, neighbors, and community representatives also play roles in spreading information about hydroponic practices and applying agricultural innovations at the household level demonstrating that KWT's communicative reach extends well beyond the formal group boundary, embedding agricultural knowledge in the domestic spaces where the majority of Sodong Village women spend their time.

This multi-actor participant structure aligns with Sugito et al.'s (2022) finding that cross-sector actor involvement is a key condition for sustainable empowerment program impact. Crucially, however, the present study adds that the involvement of informal participants—particularly family members—is not incidental but structurally important for contextualizing KWT communication within the gender relations of the household, thereby contributing to longer-term shifts in women's status and communicative authority.

4.1.3. Ends

The communication goals of KWT Sodong are organized across three temporal horizons, each directly linked to the specific empowerment challenge of transforming housewives with minimal agricultural background into active hydroponic farmers. In the short term, communication aims to ensure members understand and can apply hydroponic cultivation techniques and post-harvest practices. In the medium term, communication builds social solidarity and trust through routine interaction and cooperation—processes essential for the collective management of shared hydroponic infrastructure (Golfinopoulos & Koumparou, 2024). The long-term goal is achieving a sustainable Food Self-Reliant Village, aligned with national rural development policy.

The hierarchical organization of communication objectives aligns with the behavior–identity–structure framework, which views development communication as a progressive process encompassing individual capacity development, collective identity formation, and, ultimately, structural transformation at the societal level (Kannengießer, 2023). In the KWT Sodong case, the progression is particularly significant against the backdrop of the 2025 demographic data: the movement of women from housewife status toward active farmer identity is not merely an economic shift but a communicative and identity-level transformation, mediated by the goal structure embedded in every KWT interaction. This explains why KWT communication is more than agricultural training: it is a social process that progressively

repositions women as agricultural actors and agents of village development a repositioning made possible because the communicative ends embedded in every meeting interaction extend beyond information delivery to encompass membership in a recognized social category (farmer, not housewife). The 2025 demographic data showing only 4 of 36 registered farmers are women makes this identity-level transformation all the more significant as a communicative achievement.

4.1.4. Act Sequence

Interactions in KWT Sodong follow a consistent and purposefully structured sequence: the facilitator or KWT leader opens with a contextualizing introduction, the group moves into discussion, and sessions conclude with agreed follow-up actions. In hydroponic training sessions specifically, this sequence was extended to include hands-on demonstration phases, in which extension officers modeled cultivation techniques using the group's own hydroponic installations before members practiced independently. This integration of demonstration into the act sequence is analytically significant: it addresses the information gap between technical experts and women members with limited prior agricultural exposure, making abstract knowledge practically actionable within the specific material conditions of Sodong Village's hydroponic gardens.

The act sequence within KWT is characterized by reciprocal communication, where members actively engage in dialogue rather than passively receiving information. Participants ask questions, exchange farming experiences, and collaboratively adapt agricultural practices to their own environmental and socio-economic conditions (Yadav et al., 2022). This interactive communication pattern contrasts with the conventional top-down extension approach that has historically dominated agricultural development in Indonesia(Vollmer et al., 2025). Instead, it reflects a participatory communication process in which reciprocal interaction supports collective learning and facilitates the adoption of agricultural innovations among rural women's groups. This distinctive act sequence can be understood through the interplay of several SPEAKING components. The familial key discourages hierarchical interaction, the musyawarah norm institutionalizes equitable turn-taking, and the deliberative genre legitimizes members' voices as valuable contributions to collective decision-making rather than as disruptions. Together, these communicative elements constitute a participatory interactional architecture that structurally empowers women to engage actively in knowledge exchange and decision-making, rather than merely allowing their participation (Mubangizi, 2025)

4.1.5. Key

Perhaps the most significant communicative mechanism at work in KWT Sodong, and the one most directly responsive to the patriarchal communication barriers identified at the start of this study, is the communicative "key": the warm, family-like tone that characterizes all interactions within the group. Communication within the KWT consistently takes on a relaxed, informal register, one that allows members to feel psychologically safe enough to voice opinions, admit when they're unsure, or push back against facilitators. This participatory tone matters a great deal to the 12 KWT members who took part in the study, who described in focus group discussions how, before joining the group, they had absorbed norms of deference that left them reluctant to speak up in mixed-gender or formal settings. The familial tone of KWT meetings functions as a kind of communicative counterculture to the patriarchal speech norms of everyday village life, carving out a group space where gender hierarchies are temporarily set aside and women are able to take on new communicative identities as knowledgeable agricultural actors. Prior work has shown that inclusive interaction environments meaningfully boost learning engagement in community settings; this study builds on that insight by showing that "key" is not merely a stylistic feature of group communication but operates as a substantive mechanism of gender empowerment (Molina Roldán et al., 2021).

4.1.6. Instrumentalities

Face to face interaction continues to be the primary channel used by KWT Sodong, taking place both at the Saung Kebun and the village hall. These two settings give members room to

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engage with one another personally and to watch firsthand how hydroponic techniques are demonstrated nonverbally something digital media struggles to replicate. WhatsApp, meanwhile, serves a supporting role, used mainly to share planting schedules, send training reminders, and circulate photos tracking the plants' progress over time. What stands out is how photos of the hydroponic plants are used as a form of visual documentation on WhatsApp. This practice allows members who can't be physically present to stay in touch with the group's farming activities, while also helping work around limited digital literacy, since complex information can be conveyed more simply through images. The combination of closeness built through in-person meetings and practical coordination via WhatsApp ultimately addresses one of the communication issues raised earlier in this study: the information gap stemming from members' limited digital literacy. Because the group leans on brief visual content rather than lengthy, complicated written instructions, KWT Sodong has essentially adjusted its way of communicating to match its members' actual literacy abilities. A similar pattern has been found in rural WhatsApp communities in India, reinforcing the idea that digital communication only becomes truly effective when it strengthens existing face-to-face relationships rather than replacing them (Yadav et al., 2022)

4.1.7. Norms

Communication norms within KWT Sodong place strong emphasis on mutual respect, taking turns when speaking, and collective deliberation (musyawarah). There's also an unspoken expectation that every member will participate actively, share their experiences, and offer input; confrontational language is avoided, and reaching consensus takes priority. These deliberative norms are not simply neutral procedural conventions—they represent a culturally rooted response to the resistance-to-change barrier identified at the outset of this study. By folding all decision-making into the musyawarah process, KWT's norms establish a communicative structure in which innovations like hydroponic farming are introduced not as top-down expert directives but as choices arrived at collectively. Framing things this way reduces resistance by giving members a genuine sense of communicative ownership over the adoption process. Musyawarah has been recognized as a central mechanism for building social capital within Javanese agricultural communities. The findings here suggest it also serves a gender-leveling function: within the musyawarah framework, every member's voice carries equal formal weight, offering an institutionalized counterbalance to patriarchal norms that would otherwise push women's perspectives to the margins. That said, the tension between this inclusive deliberative norm and the risk of silencing dissenting minority voices deserves closer attention in future research (Putro et al., 2022).

4.1.8. Genre

The tradition of storytelling that has taken root and continues to be sustained within KWT carries particular significance, especially when considered alongside Sodong Village's demographic circumstances. The personal stories members share about their hydroponic journeys, from early failures, through the gradual process of building skill, to the successes eventually achieved function as "public narratives," stories that bridge individual experience with shared purpose while also sustaining members' motivation to stay engaged. This holds special meaning for women who joined KWT as housewives with no prior agricultural knowledge: such narratives offer a dual benefit. On one hand, they affirm the value of knowledge born from members' own experience, helping to offset an information gap that has often favored outside expertise. On the other, they provide tangible proof that change is possible, something especially meaningful for newer members still hesitant about trying new practices (Ganz et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the idea that story-based communication works precisely because it translates abstract information into something grounded in everyday lived experience. Within KWT, then, the practice of sharing personal testimony serves not only as a pedagogical approach well-suited to local culture, but also as a communicative mechanism that supports women's empowerment something that future program design should recognize and deliberately nurture (Bhattacharjee et al., 2022). A summary of these communication activities across the eight SPEAKING components is presented in Table 1.

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Table 1.
Communication Activities in the Empowerment of the Women Farmers' Group (KWT) in Sodong Village

SPEAKING Component	Description of Research Findings
Setting and Scene	Saung Kebun and village hall function as culturally familiar spaces that counteract patriarchal formality norms. The familial, gotong royong atmosphere enables women to speak with less hierarchical constraint than in formal village settings.
Participants	18 participants: 1 KWT leader, 12 active KWT members (former housewives), 1 village head, 2 extension officers, 2 community representatives. Informal participants (family, neighbors) extend hydroponic innovation diffusion into household settings.
Ends	Short-term: applying hydroponic cultivation and post-harvest techniques. Medium-term: building social solidarity for collective hydroponic infrastructure management. Long-term: achieving a sustainable Food Self-Sufficient Village through women's active participation.
Act Sequence	Consistent meeting structure (introduction → discussion → demonstration → agreed actions). Hydroponic training includes hands-on demonstration phases addressing the technical knowledge gap. Reciprocal communication: members actively question and negotiate technique application.
Key	Warm, familial tone creates psychological safety. Functions as a communicative counterculture to patriarchal village norms, enabling women to enact new identities as knowledgeable agricultural actors within the group space.
Instrumentalities	Face-to-face primary; WhatsApp secondary for visual agricultural documentation. Hybrid infrastructure adapts to members' low digital literacy by prioritizing accessible visual content over complex text.
Norms	Musyawarah (deliberation) embeds agricultural innovation adoption within collective decision-making, reducing resistance to change and formally equalizing members' communicative authority regardless of gender.
Genre	Group discussion, instructional lecture with hands-on demonstration, and personal testimony/storytelling. Narrative genre validates members' experiential knowledge and models transformation, countering the information gap between expert and non-expert.

4.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Looked at holistically through the SPEAKING model, the findings point to a communicative architecture that is at once responsive to the specific communication challenges facing KWT Sodong patriarchal norms, information gaps, and resistance to change—and constitutive of the empowerment process itself. Three theoretical implications stand out.

First, the study shows that the effectiveness of KWT's communication stems from its cultural alignment: the setting, key, norms, and genre involved are all calibrated to pre-existing local cultural values such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and musyawarah (deliberative consensus), which means the adoption of new practices is grounded in social trust that already exists rather than built from scratch. This reinforces the view that empowerment communication works best when woven into local cultural values, while also offering a more fine-grained, SPEAKING-level account of exactly how that integration plays out (Yudarwati & Gregory, 2022).

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Second, the findings reveal that each SPEAKING component functions not merely as a descriptive category but as a site where gender is actively negotiated. The familial key temporarily suspends patriarchal norms of deference; musyawarah equalizes communicative authority; personal testimony validates experiential knowledge. Taken together, these components form what might be called a "communicative ecology of gender empowerment" a mutually reinforcing system of interactional practices through which women's agency expands incrementally.

Third, the study surfaces a productive tension between the inclusive deliberative norm and the risk of suppressing dissent. Future research should explore whether KWT's communication patterns evolve to make more room for critical reflection a condition necessary for empowerment to remain sustainable in the long run, beyond simply transmitting information.

On a practical level, program designers looking to replicate KWT Sodong's approach should: design culturally familiar communication settings as the primary venues for activities; invest in narrative-based pedagogies that validate members' experiential knowledge; structure activity sequences to include hands-on demonstration phases that specifically address technical knowledge gaps; and adopt digital tools calibrated to members' actual literacy levels rather than assumed ones.

CONCLUSIONS

This study applied Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication and SPEAKING model to analyze communication activities within the empowerment of the Women Farmers' Group (KWT) in Sodong Village, Tangerang Regency. Beginning from the specific communication challenges facing KWT—patriarchal norms, information gaps between extension experts and women members, and resistance to adopting hydroponic farming—the analysis demonstrates how each SPEAKING component constitutes a structured response to these challenges.

Across eight components, the findings reveal that KWT communication is not a neutral conduit for program information but a culturally embedded social practice through which women's empowerment is negotiated, enacted, and sustained. The Saung Kebun setting reduces hierarchical barriers; the familial key creates psychological safety; musyawarah norms equalize communicative authority; and personal testimony genres validate the experiential knowledge of women who entered KWT without agricultural backgrounds. Critically, all of these communicative patterns are intelligible only against the backdrop of Sodong Village's socio-economic conditions—the 32.42% housewife population, the minimal female agricultural participation, and the adoption of hydroponic farming as a practical solution to land constraints—demonstrating the importance of contextual grounding in ethnographic communication research.

This study contributes to the literature on community-based development communication by offering a theoretically grounded, empirically detailed account of how communication practices constitute empowerment at the grassroots level. Future research should pursue longitudinal analysis of whether KWT's communicative patterns evolve toward greater critical reflexivity, comparative application of the SPEAKING model across KWT contexts in different regions, and examination of how increasing digital adoption reshapes KWT communication norms and genres in Indonesia's rural communities.

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