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Degree of acquisition of the English language, attitude, and speaking proficiency of pre-service teachers in a state university in Iloilo, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

English, one of the most important languages that is being spoken globally, serves as a tool for global networks and for local identities. There is a need to achieve higher English proficiency level among students in order to meet the demands of time and to totally gear them up for global competitiveness. This descriptive research was conducted to assess the degree of English language acquisition among the 112 pre-service students, which focused on the variables such as sex, field of specialization, family monthly income, and place of residence. It also looked into the speaking proficiency of the respondents, which formed bases of enhancement programs. A validated questionnaire was used to gather data on the degree of English language acquisition of the pre-service teachers with reliability coefficient of 0.87 while an impromptu speech was done to evaluate their speaking proficiency. Results revealed that “sex” was not a factor in the degree of English language acquisition of the pre-service teachers but “field of specialization,” “family monthly income,” and “place of residence” were factors. In terms of speaking proficiency, “field of specialization” and “place of residence” were factors. “Reading,” among the language areas, was found to be the most employed strategy in English language acquisition of the pre-service teachers but “speaking” was common among those with “high” level of speaking proficiency. Thus, English language acquisition is shaped by personal factors such as attitude, motivation and exposure to the language, and social factors such as socio-economic status and social proximity but is enhanced through reading, watching, listening to expedient materials accompanied by using the language. It is recommended that further studies be conducted considering the inputs the students get from school and outside

Keywords: Language acquisition, English language, attitude, speaking proficiency

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most important languages, which is being spoken globally. It serves as a tool for global networks and for local identities. The need to be proficient in the use of English among non-native speakers has become a global phenomenon. There is a need to achieve higher English proficiency level among students in order to meet the demands of time and to totally gear them up for global competitiveness (Runde, 2017). Today, educators are faced with the challenge of addressing the needs of the growing number of students whose primary language is not English (Gibbons, 2019).

The Philippines claims to be the third largest English-speaking country in the world after the United States and Britain. English proficiency is perceived as one of the Philippines' key advantages in the global market as the country tries to compete with India in the multi-billion-dollar business process outsourcing industry. However, growing evidence points to the country's deteriorating English proficiency—may it be speaking, reading, writing or listening. English proficiency in the Philippines has dropped significantly in more than a decade (Omanio, 2012).

In the actual classroom setting, even teachers have difficulty in dealing with students using the English language. Many teachers are complaining about the speaking

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ability of the students when it comes to the use of the English language. Students really lack the capacity to express themselves in English. Most teachers end up switching code, from English to a dialect, just to make their points clear to the students (Ramirez, 2012).

Researchers (Dogan & Akbarov, 2016; Rafieyan et al., 2014; Yastibas & Cepik, 2015.) underscored that teachers' attitude toward the use of English as a medium of instruction plays an important role in "language growth or decay, restoration or destruction" as well as its impact on the students who consider teachers their role models. A study by Omanio (2016) revealed that the majority of the pre-service teachers prefer the alternate use of both Filipino and English inside their classrooms, which defy the actual designation of media of instruction. For Science and Mathematics teachers, English should be the only medium in their classrooms. Experts in the field argue that concepts and topics taught are not comprehensible to students when taught in English (Dogan & Akbarov, 2016; Rafieyan et al., 2014). Student-teachers, though agreeing that English is necessary in teaching their subjects, suggest that Filipino be used as a support language in Science and Mathematics classes. This, however, does not support the national agendum of the government to enhance the English proficiency of the Filipino students.

To counter this problem, DepEd has done innovations in its curriculum. It has modified its scheme in hiring quality teachers through the National English Proficiency Program (NEPP), a nationwide program which trains English proficient teachers to become mentors to less proficient teachers in their respective schools. This was created in response to the need to raise the quality of English proficiency of Filipino teachers, particularly Reading or English, Mathematics and Science teachers, to improve the competencies of their students. Content-based approach to studying English has also been implemented by DepEd, as seen in the contents of the English textbooks used in public schools, with the aim to enhance the competence of the students in the use of the English language.

There are so many factors that contribute to the success or failure in the acquisition of the English language skills, particularly grammar, which can be manifested either in speaking or writing. Schumann (1978), one of the language acquisition theorists, argued that one of the strongest factors in the success of second language acquisition is the degree of acculturation. In his Acculturation Theory, Schumann asserted that the acculturation process would be easier and faster if psychological and social distances are lessened. Thus, based on the ideas of Schumann, it is apt to say that the higher the degree of acculturation of the English language, the more proficient one becomes.

Thus, the research was undertaken to determine the degree of acquisition of the English language of pre-service teachers, the molders and models of the next generation of professionals. It would be interesting to know which among the English language skills—reading, listening/watching, writing, and speaking—pre-service teachers generally acquire the highest and lowest at the same time. The study also determined the attitude toward acquiring the English language and the speaking proficiency of the pre-service teachers who were classified according to their sex, socio-economic status, place of residence, and field of specialization.

Framework

The research is anchored on the scholarly theories on language acquisition. One of which is Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model (Figure 1). According to Schumann, acculturation is "the process of becoming adapted to a new culture". In the process, language is seen as a way to hasten the whole process. Schumann conceptualized that "language is one of the most observable expressions of culture," (Ellis, 1985) and because in second (as opposed to foreign) language settings, the acquisition of a new language is seen as tied to the way in which the learner's community and the target language community view each other.

Schumann's research argued that social and psychological distance between the second language learner and the target language community is a major factor in determining the degree to which the language learner will acquire the target language without the development of pidginization—a sociolinguistic phenomenon, is a language that is essentially based on acculturation or contact with the target culture (Al-Jasser, 2012). The Model proposed by Schumann includes eight social variables which affect the quality of contact that second language learners have with the target language community. Additionally, there are four psychological variables included: language shock, cultural shock, motivation, and ego, which play important roles in determining the success of language acquisition.

If language shock and culture shock are not overcome, the learner will be unable to associate with the members of the target language (TL) group thus preventing the learner from acquiring the language skills to identify him or her as a member. Also, it is important to note that there are two types of motivational tendencies: integrative and instrumental. They both contribute to achievement in the second language and therefore need to be delineated.

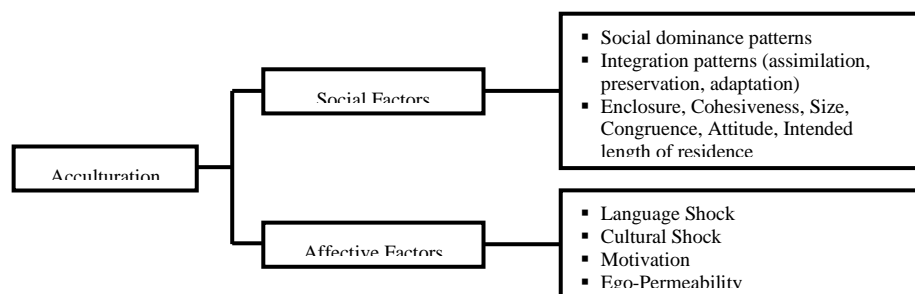


Figure 1. Schumann's Acculturation Model

The review of related literature and studies (Ambridge & Lieven, 2011; Fu, 2015; Khawaja, Allan & Schweitzer, 2018; Lemetyinen, 2012; Salamonson et al., 2013; provided the bases for the formulation of the conceptual framework of this study. The degree of acquisition of the English language is dependent upon the: (a) frequency of exposure (of the pre-service teachers) to the different activities in English such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing; and (b) their attitude that will be measured through their attention, interests, motivation, beliefs, and preferences toward listening, speaking, reading, and writing the English language.

On the other hand, the concept of “speaking proficiency” (the appropriateness in the use of the English language in speaking) of the pre-service teachers and the different areas that will measure it such as: Noun, Article, Pronoun, Diction, Adjective, Adverb, Phrasal Verb, Auxiliary Verb, Tense, Mood, Voice, Syntax, Infinitive, Gerund, Participle, Conjunction, Preposition, Tag Question, Agreement, Parallelism, and Error Identification.

Figure 2 presents the schematic diagram showing an analytical description and relationship of the concepts and variables of the study. The input provides the categories that describe the demographic characteristics of the pre-service teachers. These variables are hypothesized to influence the pre-service teachers’ exposure to the different language experiences. “Measures of acquisition” were devised to assess the students’ degree of acquisition of the English language. The measures of acquisition comprise the different language experiences such as: frequency of exposure to and kind of reading materials presented in English read; frequency of use (writing or speaking) of the English language; frequency of listening to and watching of TV programs presented in English and kind of programs watched; and the attitude toward the English language.

These different language experiences are actually considered as the “process” by which all pre-service teachers are subjected to, that will influence the output of this study, the speaking proficiency of the students. This conceptual framework is designed on the basis of what most of the literatures say, that, proficiency in English is affected by the knowledge of the students on grammar rules and usage, which is, in turn, is affected by their exposure to the different language experiences (Schumann, 1978).

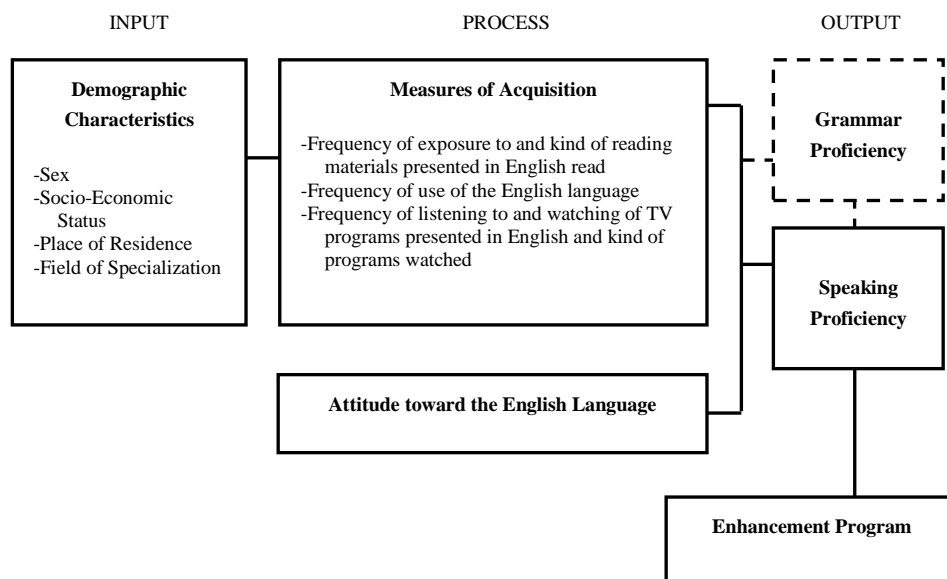


Figure 2. Schematic diagram showing an analytical description and relationship of the concepts and variables of the study

METHODS

The study primarily employed descriptive-correlational method that is dominantly quantitative. The study was conducted in West Visayas State University (WVSU), a state university in Iloilo that is the Center of Teacher Education in Western Visayas. The respondents of the study were the 112 (72% of the total population), determined using the Slovin’s formula, pre-service teachers of WVSU main campus who graduated in 2019 and were under the Student Teaching Program during the conduct of the study. All of the participants were under the College of Education, in different fields of specialization (English, Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies).

Two sets of questionnaires were used to get the necessary data needed in the study. The first set, “Acquisition of the English Language Questionnaire” (AELQ), a three-page, five-part standardized questionnaire, was used to determine the degree of acquisition (marginalization, separation, integration, and assimilation) of the English language of the pre-service teachers. It is a seven-point, bipolar scale that represents a week, which means if a pre-service teacher engages in English language experience every day, he or she has to mark 7 and gets 7 points. The second set measured the speaking proficiency of the pre-service teachers using rubrics (proficient, advanced, early advanced, intermediate, early intermediate, and beginning) used by a panel of experts.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean, and percentage were used to describe the results. Chi-square, *t*-test, and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) were used to determine the significant differences among the established variables in the study. All computations were done using a licensed Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Degree of Acquisition of the English Language

Table 1 shows the respondents' degree of acquisition of the English language in terms of language acquisition variables. Results show that in general, the respondents had a mean of 3.70 (SD= 0.92) that is described as "integration". However, it can be noted that in terms of "field of specialization", pre-service teachers majoring in Mathematics (M=3.33, SD=0.78) and Social Studies (M=2.90, SD=0.90) had the two lowest mean scores that is described as "separation".

Table 1- Degree of English LA of the Respondents

Language Acquisition Variables	F	M	SD	Description
Sex				
Male	29	3.67	0.89	Integration
Female	83	3.71	0.94	Integration
Field of Specialization				
English	30	4.53	0.71	Integration
Mathematics	33	3.33	0.78	Separation
Science	33	3.70	0.73	Integration
Social Studies	16	2.90	0.90	Separation
Family Monthly Income				
High (more than Php41,600)	19	3.89	1.01	Integration
Middle (Php8,301- Php41,600)	50	3.67	0.94	Integration
Low (Php8,300 and below)	43	3.66	0.86	Integration
Place				
City	52	4.89	0.88	Integration
Province	60	3.54	0.93	Integration
Total	112	3.70	0.92	Integration

Note: Marginalization (0-1.75); Separation (1.76-3.50); Integration (3.51-5.25); Assimilation (5.26-7.0)

On the other hand, it is interesting to know which of the English LA experiences the respondents scored highest and lowest at the same time. The results in Table 2 show that, in general, the respondents scored highest in "listening" part of their acquisition of the English language with a mean score of 4.13 (SD= 1.13), followed by "reading" (M= 4.03, SD= 1.00), then "writing" (M= 3.58, SD=1.30) and in lowest was "speaking" (M= 3.08, SD= 1.09). It was also noted that only in the "speaking" LA experience of the respondents' degree of acquisition of the English language when they were described as "separation". The rest were "integration".

Table 2-Degree of English LA in Terms of Language Experience Areas

Areas of Comparison	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
Mean	4.03	4.13	3.08	3.58
N	112	112	112	112
Std. Deviation	1.00	1.13	1.09	1.30
Description	Integration	Integration	Separation	Integration

Meanwhile, it is likewise interesting to know whether the differences in the degree of LA among the respondents in terms of the different LA experiences are significant or not, or which among the LA experiences really differed from each other. Table 3 shows the ANOVA result of the computation. It was revealed that the respondents' degree of LA was significantly better both in "reading" and "listening" compared to "writing" and "speaking".

Table 3-Difference in the Degree of English LA in Terms of LA Experiences

LA Experience Areas	N	M	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
			1	2	3
Speaking	112	3.08	3.08		
Writing	112	3.58		3.58	
Reading	112	4.03			4.03
Listening	112	4.13			4.13

F= 19.84; p= 0.00; Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

It can be deduced from the results that pre-service students acquire the English language most in terms of “reading” and “listening” and least in “speaking”. Furthermore, since “speaking” is the lowest, it suggests that they least acquire the language through speaking. This is also supported by their low evaluation results of their speaking proficiency test.

The result is consistent with Krashen’s (Krashen & Scarcella, 1982) Input Hypothesis theory. The input hypothesis answers the question of how a language acquirer develops competency over time. It states that a language acquirer who is at “level i” must receive comprehensible input that is at “level i+1.” Krashen stressed, “We acquire, in other words, only when we understand language that contains structure that is ‘a little beyond’ where we are now.” This understanding is possible due to using the context of the language that are heard or read and the knowledge of the world.

However, instead of aiming to receive input that is exactly at one’s i+1 level, or instead of having a teacher aim to teach grammatical structure that is at i+1 level, learners should instead just focus on communication that is understandable. If this is done, and if learners get enough of that kind of input, then they will in effect be receiving and thus acquiring out i+1. “Production ability emerges. It is not taught directly.”

Evidences for the input hypothesis can be found in the effectiveness of caretaker speech from an adult to a child, of teacher-talk from a teacher to a language student, and of foreigner-talk from a sympathetic conversation partner to a language learner/acquirer. One result of this hypothesis is that language students should be given an initial “silent period” where they are building up acquired competence in a language before they begin to produce it. In short, speaking (or producing the language) comes after reading, listening or writing, where students in these language experiences learn the basics of the target language. Whenever language acquirers try to produce language beyond what they have acquired, they tend to use the rules they have already acquired from their first language, thus, allowing them to communicate but not really progress in the second language.

Acquisition of the English Language in terms of the Attitude

Table 4 shows the attitude of the respondents towards the acquisition of the English language. Results show that 19 or 17% of the respondents had a negative attitude towards the acquisition of the language. Out of 112 respondents, there were 64 or 57.1% had a positive attitude towards the acquisition of the English language. There were 29 or 25.9% of the respondents had a very positive attitude towards the acquisition of the English language. The results in also show that in terms of “attitude,” a very positive attitude (M=4.82, SD=0.66) had the highest degree of language acquisition, followed by positive attitude (M=3.81, SD= 0.63), and the negative attitude (M=2.76, SD=0.56) shows “low” (separation) degree of language acquisition.

Table 4-Acquisition of the English Language in Terms of Attitude

Attitude	N	M	%	SD	Description
Negative	19	2.72	17.0	0.65	Separation
Positive	64	3.62	57.1	0.72	Integration
Very Positive	29	4.53	25.9	0.75	Integration
Total	112	3.70	100	0.92	Integration

Acquisition of the English Language in terms of Speaking Proficiency

Table 5 shows the speaking proficiency of the respondents. Results revealed that most of the speaking proficiency of pre-service teachers is at “early intermediate” level with 51 (45.5%) respondents and there were 30 or 26.8% of them at the “intermediate” level. Moreover, there were also pre-service teachers who were at the “beginning” level which corresponds to 13.4% (15 respondents) and “early advanced” level, which corresponds to 14.3% or 16 respondents. In terms of “speaking proficiency,” respondents who were categorized as “early advanced” (M=4.85, SD=0.62) speaking proficiency had the highest degree of language acquisition; the lowest degree of language acquisition is for pre-service teachers who had “early intermediate” (M=3.41, SD=0.75) speaking proficiency. In general, “beginning” and “early intermediate” respondents were categorized to have a “separation” degree of English LA; those who had higher speaking proficiency, “intermediate” and “early advanced” had “integration.”

Table 5-Degree of English LA in Terms of Speaking Proficiency

Speaking Proficiency	N	M	%	SD	Description
Beginning	15	3.46	13.4	0.74	Separation
Early Intermediate	51	3.41	45.5	0.75	Separation
Intermediate	30	3.71	26.8	0.95	Integration
Early Advanced	16	4.85	14.3	0.62	Integration
Total	112	3.70	100	0.92	Integration

The result is consistent with Krashen’s *Comprehensible Input Hypothesis* theory, which contends that more comprehensible input results in more acquisition. In the study, it is clear that beginners had little or insufficient input when it comes to the acquisition of the English language that is shown in their degree of English LA, which is “separation.”

Difference in the Degree of English LA of Pre-service Teachers in Terms of LA Variables

Table 6 shows the *t*-test results on the difference in the degree of acquisition of the English language in terms of “sex”. Although females showed a higher degree of

English LA than males, the difference was not significant ($t= 0.203$, $p= 0.84$) at $\alpha \leq 0.05$. This means that “sex” is not a determining factor in the degree of English LA of the pre-service teachers; male or female pre-service teachers generally have the same degree of English LA.

However, in terms of the “place” where the pre-service teachers reside, the result showed that there was a significant difference ($t= 1.99$, $p= 0.04$) at $\alpha \leq 0.05$. This simply shows that those pre-service teachers who live in the city have higher degree of English LA than those who live in the province. Therefore, “place of residence” was a defining factor in the degree of English LA of the pre-service teachers.

Table 6-t-test Results of the Difference in the Degree of English LA Terms of Sex and Place of Residence

LA Variables	N	M	t	df	p	Remarks
Sex						
Male	29	3.67	0.203	110	0.84	Not Significant
Female	83	3.71				
Place of Residence						
City	52	3.89	1.99	110	0.04	*Significant
Province	60	3.54				

*Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

The result is consistent with the study of Bernat and Lloyd (2007) on “Exploring the gender effect on EFL learners’ beliefs about language learning,” which underscored that “sex” was found to be not significant on EFL learners’ beliefs about language learning. This is also supported by Beiser and Hou (2001) in their study titled, “Language acquisition, unemployment and depressive disorder among Southeast Asian refugees: a 10-year study.”

The result is consistent with the study conducted by Vogt and Martin (2013) on “Rural and urban differences in language socialization and early vocabulary development in Mozambique.” They observed that rural infants are much less exposed to child-directed speech and child-directed co-speech gestures than urban infants, which correlates to their vocabulary development over their second year of life. Another study that supports the result was conducted by Gobel et al. (2013). The findings indicated that urban and rural students held different attribution ratings for the success and failure for learning English as a second language with the urban group being more willing to attribute success to their own ability, effort, and study skills than the rural group. The urban group is much more study-wise and confident as they have a greater belief in their own ability to take control of their successes in the language classroom. These findings are also in line with predictions based on Keller’s (2012) distinction between rural and urban communities. These differences seem to affect vocabulary development as well, but while the results from the urban area are consistent with predictions from western studies (Pan et al., 2005; Rowe & Goldin-Meadow, 2009), those from the rural community are inconsistent.

In terms of “family monthly income” shown in Table 7, ANOVA result showed that there was no significant difference ($F= 0.48$, $p= 0.62$) at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ in the degree of English LA of the pre-service teachers. This means that, whether the pre-service teachers belong to poor or rich family, in general, they have the same degree of English LA. The result supports the study conducted by Butler (2014) who found out that the parents’ socio-economic status did not show much effect on their children’s listening and reading/writing performance in school. However, the result of the present study contradicts with the research done by Fish and Pinkerman (2003) who concluded that children whose parents earn much have the opportunity to get acquainted with materials written in the target language, thus improving their proficiency of the language. The same is true with the study conducted by Hoff and Tian (2005) titled, “Socioeconomic status and cultural influences on language,” which highlighted that socioeconomic status (SES) affects the rate of children’s language development; that those belonging to higher income family have relatively smoother and faster development compared to those belonging to the family with lower income. With the contrasting related studies, further studies need to be explored to validate the results of the study.

However, in terms of “field of specialization,” a significant difference ($F= 21.08$, $p= 0.00$) at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ was noted. Using Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) as a post hoc statistical tool, the result in Table 8 shows which among the categories of “field of specialization” were significantly different.

Table 7-ANOVA Results of the Difference in the Degree of English LA in Terms of Family Monthly Income and Field of Specialization

LA Variables	F	df	p	Remarks
Family Monthly Income	0.48	2	0.62	Not Significant
Field of Specialization	21.08	3	0.00	*Significant

*Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

Social Studies and Mathematics majors were not significantly different from each other while Science majors were significantly different from Social Studies majors but not in Mathematics majors. English majors, on the other hand, with the highest degree of English LA were significantly different from the three other majors. The results show that Science majors acquire the English language better than Social Studies majors while English majors acquire the English language best. Thus, “field of specialization” is a factor in terms of the degree of English LA of the pre-service teachers. The result of the focus group discussion (FGD) validates the result. English major pre-service teachers were more enthusiastic and religious in their campaign to improve their English proficiency level.

Table 8-DMRT Result of the Significant Difference in the Degree of English LA in Terms of Field of Specialization

Major	N	M	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
			1	2	3
Social Studies	16	2.93	2.93		
Mathematics	33	3.33	3.33	3.33	
Science	33	3.70		3.70	
English	30	4.53			4.53

$F = 21.08$; $p\text{-Value} = 0.00$; *Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

When it comes to the degree of English LA of the pre-service teachers in terms of their attitude toward the English language, results in Table 9 show that there was a significant difference ($F = 37.45$; $p = 0.00$) at $\alpha \leq 0.05$. Using DMRT as post hoc statistical tool, the results revealed that those pre-service teachers with “negative” attitude toward the English language have also the lowest degree of English LA, which is categorized as “separation” while those with “positive” attitude have higher degree of English LA. Those with “very positive” attitude have the highest degree of English LA. The results conclude that the more positive the attitude of the pre-service teachers toward the English language, the higher their degree of English LA becomes. Thus, attitude is a determining factor in the degree of English LA among the pre-service teachers. This is consistent with the study conducted by Verma (2005) titled, “Learner’s Attitude and its Impact on Language Learning.” The results revealed that positive attitude toward learning a language facilitates smooth and easy learning. Furthermore, both researches (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Karahan, 2007) stated that positive language attitude let learner have positive orientation towards learning English.

Table 9-DMRT Result of the Significant Difference in the Degree of English LA in Terms of Attitude toward English

Attitude	N	M	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
			1	2	3
Negative	19	2.72	2.72		
Positive	64	3.62		3.62	
Very Positive	29	4.53			4.53

$F = 37.45$; $p\text{-Value} = 0.00$; *Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

On the other hand, when it comes to the degree of English LA of the pre-service teachers in terms of their “speaking proficiency,” results in Table 10 show that there was a significant difference ($F = 13.86$; $p = 0.00$) at $\alpha \leq 0.05$. Using DMRT as post hoc statistical tool, the results revealed that those pre-service teachers with “early intermediate,” “beginning” and “intermediate” speaking proficiency did not differ from each other in terms of their degree of English LA but significantly differed from those with “early advanced” speaking skills. The results, in general, underscore that higher degree of English LA leads to a more proficient speaking skill. Thus, speaking proficiency is a determining factor in the degree of English LA among the pre-service teachers.

Table 10-DMRT Result of the Significant Difference in the Degree of English LA in Terms of Speaking Proficiency

Speaking Proficiency	N	M	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
			1	2
Early Intermediate	51	3.41	3.40	
Beginning	15	3.46	3.46	
Intermediate	30	3.71	3.71	
Early Advanced	16	4.85		4.85

$F = 13.86$; $p\text{-Value} = 0.00$; Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

The researchers believe that the results of the impromptu speech to determine the pre-service teachers speaking proficiency are consistent with the results of their “degree” of English LA. The result is supported by Krashen’s *The Monitor Hypothesis*, which attempts to explain how acquisition and learning are used. The theory underscores that language is normally produced using three acquired linguistic competence. Conscious learning has only one function... as the “Monitor” or “Editor.” After producing some language using the acquired system, the learners sometimes inspect it and use the learned system to correct errors. This can happen internally before actual speaking or writing commences, or as a self-correction after producing the utterance or written text. In the context of the study, what the pre-service teachers had shown to the jurors, in terms of their speaking ability, was simply the product of their English language acquisition. Those who had higher degree of English LA had higher level of speaking proficiency as well. Some of the notes shared by the jurors with the researchers showed that most of the errors committed by the pre-service teachers are related to grammar. Some pre-service teachers, especially non-English majors, were not really meticulous of their grammar. Some spoke fluent English but ungrammatical when thoroughly digested. On top of the list among the errors commonly committed is the subject-verb agreement.

Ellis (2008) in his *Variability Model*, discussed the reasons why individuals make mistakes in their utterance using the second language. It is emphasized in the model that there is the formation of interlanguage—the unique rules developed by the learners in the process of learning a second language; it resembles neither the first nor the second language of the learner. This is considered as one of the coping mechanisms of the learners in the process of learning a second language. There were studies such as Richards’s “A non-contrastive approach to error analysis,” where he identified sources of competence errors; L1 transfer results in interference errors; incorrect (incomplete or over-generalized) application of language rules results in intralingual errors; construction of faulty hypotheses in L2

results in developmental errors (cited by Karra, 2006).

Claude Hagège is a supporter of this concept and he mentioned it in his book "The child between two languages", dedicated to children's language education. According to Hagège, interference between L1 and L2 is observed in children as well as in adults. In adults it is more obvious and increases continuously, as a monolingual person gets older and the structures of his first language get stronger and impose themselves more and more on any other language the adult wishes to learn. In contrast, as regards children, interference features will not become permanent unless the child does not have sufficient exposure to L2. If there is sufficient exposure, then instead of reaching a point where they can no longer be corrected (as often happens with phonetics features), interference features can be easily eliminated. Hagège stressed that there is no reason for worry if interference persists more than expected. The teacher should know that a child that is in the process of acquiring a second language will subconsciously invent structures influenced by knowledge he already possesses. These hypotheses he formed may constitute errors. These errors, though, are completely natural; it is not expected that the child to acquire L2 structures immediately (Karra, 2006).

Proposed Enhancement Program

Based on the results of the study, the following are summary of the possible programs that can be adopted by a tertiary education institution to improve its Teacher Education Program on English proficiency:

- (1) Helping to Lay down English Teaching Objectives and Choose Teaching Materials;
- (2) Helping Teachers to Flexibly Employ Proper Teaching Methods;
- (3) Revelation and Application of the Research on Second Language Acquisition Theories to College English Teaching Reform;
- (4) Establishing Student-Centered Dynamic Class Teaching Pattern;
- (5) Establishing "Four-in-One" College English Teaching Method;
- (6) Creating Favorable Language Teaching Environment and Stimulating Learners' Enthusiasm for Language Learning; and
- (7) Correctly Treating Language Transfer and Fully Considering Learners' Emotional Factors

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

English major pre-service students had the highest degree of acquisition of the English language. They engage themselves in most of the language skills such as reading, listening, writing and speaking, may it be for academic or recreational purposes. Those who live in the city or urban place have higher degree of acquisition of the English language. These people, in general, have the greatest number of opportunities to use the English language, which improves their speaking proficiency.

Attitude toward English and toward acquiring it plays an important role in language acquisition. A positive attitude would always lead to better or higher degree of acquisition. Positive attitude paired with higher motivation leads to smooth and higher degree of language acquisition.

Speaking proficiency and degree of acquisition of the English language are directly proportional to each other. Once the degree of acquisition is higher, the speaking proficiency is also higher. This is true among English major pre-service teachers who performed better in the two variables considered.

Grammatical errors on subject-verb agreement, verb tenses and use of prepositions top the problem areas of pre-service teachers. It is quite difficult to perfectly acquire a second language. Even native speakers commit mistakes in their own language.

Reading, writing, and listening to English materials help pre-service teachers acquire certain level of proficiency of the English language. Moreover, speaking or using the language determines the English major pre-service teachers' level of English proficiency.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. The researcher-made questionnaire was used to gather data in the form of survey, which was a self-evaluation. It is suggested that a similar study be conducted using interview method so that the degree of English LA of the pre-service teachers can really be assessed and described more objectively.
2. The speaking proficiency evaluation through an impromptu speech did not attempt to analyze in detail the errors of the pre-service teachers. It served only as baseline data to provide another possible area to be explored for further studies especially that the results revealed that pre-service teachers had difficulty acquiring the English grammar among others.
3. Curriculum developers should find ways on how to enhance English speaking proficiency of the pre-service teachers. An additional speech communication subject that focuses more on discourse may be added in the program, especially among non-English majors, most especially among Social Studies majors who had the lowest degree of English LA.
4. There is a need to assess the degree of English LA of the students, specifically high school, and take into consideration the different factors—social and affective or psychological—that would directly affect their degree of the English LA for habit formation is crucial in the context of LA. High school students would likewise be the best subject for future study since habit formation generally starts in the adolescence stage.

5. The study did not measure any input the respondents get from school in the form of formal instruction and its effects on the student's speaking proficiency. Thus, it is suggested that further studies be conducted considering the inputs the students get from school and outside.

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