English Proficiency of Education Studentsin Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology San Isidro Campus

ELOISA C. GABRIEL, MAEd

College of Education, Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology
San Isidro Campus, San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, Philippines
eloisacastillogabriel@gmail.com

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Abstract -*The ability to use English as a second language is measured by English language proficiency. This study aimed to identify the English Proficiency of Education students of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, San Isidro Campus (NEUST-SIC). The descriptive method of research was utilized on the results of the English proficiency test. Findings revealed that both BEED and BSE students performed well in vocabulary and correct usage, with both scores exceeding the passing percentage of 50% of the total score. However, both classes scored below the passing rate in error analysis and reading comprehension, with the BEED group scoring 7 % and the BSE group scoring11 %. Furthermore, the majority of the relationships among the four domains are weak, although they resulted in a positive correlation, particularly in the BSE group, which has a weak relationship. There is also a significant difference in BEED and BSE test scores among the four domains except for error analysis with a t-value of -1.57 and p-value of .058. Lastly, the study revealed that NEUST education college students' English proficiency is lower than the passing mark of 50% of the overall score. The study's findings also highly recommended a Remedial Teaching Program in English Proficiency for Education students at NEUST San Isidro campus.*

Key Words:English Proficiency, Vocabulary, Error Analysis, Correct Usage, and Reading Comprehension.

Introduction

Future educators should emphasize the importance of English as a medium of communication rather than a collection of information to memorize. Similarly, the Department of Education focuses on learners' needs and ensures that they learn the English language holistically, as required by the K–12 basic education system (Cabigon, 2015).

According to a Philstar study, IDP experts who investigated the 2008 IELTS scores given to Filipinos blamed it on poor quality English instruction as well as "instructional materials" or textbooks on English teaching. And that it was certainly influenced by the availability of high-quality resources, mainly textbooks. (Romero, 2009) Furthermore, according to a study conducted by HA Cervantes Knowledge Systems, Inc. (Philippine Star, 2002), Filipino college graduates have only limited working knowledge of English. A similar survey conducted by EF Education First (Business Mirror, 2016) supported this, suggesting that the Filipino workforce's English proficiency

has declined, negatively affecting Filipinos' employment and foreign investment potential.

Several causes can be blamed for Filipinos' diminishing English proficiency. According to Wilson (2009), unqualified and incompetent teachers played a significant role in the situation. According to a research conducted by the Department of Education in 2008, 80% of secondary school teachers in the Philippines failed an English proficiency exam. This demonstrates teachers' low English competence, which results in graduates with roughly the same level of proficiency. Other aspects claimed to have contributed to the problem include the country's bilingual policy, the negative effects of media and information technologies, erroneous English textbooks, and a diminishing number of English television channels (Wilson, 2009).

In light of the above, this study was conducted to assess the English proficiency of students enrolled in the NEUST-San Isidro campus's Teacher Education program, which will be used to develop a remedial training program for potential educators and assist them in preparing for their future teaching careers, and enhance their English language competencies.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to identify the English Proficiency of education students at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, San Isidro Campus. The result of this study will be used as a basis for Remedial Instruction in English Program. Specifically, it aims to address the following objectives:

1. Determine the English proficiency of the respondents in terms of the following domains:

    1.1. Vocabulary

    1.2. Error analysis

    1.3. Correct usage

    1.4. Reading comprehension

3. Determine the relationship of the respondents' English proficiency among the four domains.

4. Determine the significant differences between BEED and BSE English Proficiency among the four domains.

4. Determine the overall English proficiency of Education students of NEUST-SIC.

Significance of the Study

This study will help the education students improve their English competence through the remedial instruction program that will be provided by the College of Education English teachers of NEUST-San Isidro Campus. This will also help students raise their confidence and perform well in academics and co-curricular activities. Further, students will be able to recognize their strengths and limitations in using English as a second language based on the study's findings.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study aimed to evaluate the English proficiency of education students at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology in terms of vocabulary, error analysis, correct usage, and reading

comprehension for the second semester of the academic year 2016-2017.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The descriptive method of research was utilized in this study. Results were presented in tables and aimed at highlighting the English proficiency of education students, particularly their vocabulary, error analysis, correct usage, and reading comprehension. Scores were tallied, analyzed, and interpreted. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, ranking, and percentage were used. The passing score in each domain is 10 points and above; the overall passing score is 40 points and above.

Respondents of the Study:

The study's participants were education students enrolled during the academic year 2016-2017's second semester.

Data Collection:

A teacher-made test divided into four domains: vocabulary, error analysis, correct usage, and reading comprehension were distributed to the respondents during their vacant hour. Results were recorded and tallied for presentation, analysis, interpretation, and discussion.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Data gathered were tallied, analyzed, and interpreted. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, ranking, and percentage were used from the formula given as:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where: P = percentage
f = frequency
N = total number of responses/respondents

Results and Discussion

Table 1 English Proficiency of the Respondents in Terms of Vocabulary, Error Analysis, Correct Usage and Reading Comprehension

BEED	Number of			Passing
	Passed	Failed	TOTAL	Percentage
Domains				
Vocabulary	16	11	27	59%
Error Analysis	2	25	27	7%
Correct Usage	16	11	27	59%
Reading Comprehension	3	24	27	11%
BSE				
Vocabulary	221	44	265	83%
Error Analysis	53	212	265	20%
Correct Usage	194	71	265	73%
Reading Comprehension	98	167	265	37%

Table 1 shows that both BEED and BSE students fared well in vocabulary and correct usage. 16 or 59% of BEED group passed the vocabulary domain as well as in correct usage. 221 or 83% of the BSE group passed the vocabulary domain and 194 or 73% passed the correct usage domain. However, both groups fell short of the passing rate percentage in terms of error analysis and reading comprehension, with the BEED group, only 2 or 7% of the respondents passed the error analysis domain and only 3 or 11% of the respondents passed the reading comprehension. In the BSE

group, in terms of error analysis, 52 or 20% of the respondents passed. 98 or 37% of the BSE respondents passed the reading comprehension. These findings imply that respondents' performance in four domains varies. The same findings were shown in Domingo's (2018) study on the English Language Skill of Students in Visayas State University. Students varied in their proficiency level in using the English language. It can also be noted that respondents' comprehension of the texts in English language is poor as they do not perform well both in reading comprehension and error analysis. This result is consistent with the findings of Pardede et al. (2016) in their study on Error Analysis on Reading Comprehension at Vocational School. The analysis found that the students struggle in five areas. They are identifying the main idea, identifying the name, identifying specific words, locating references, and comprehending the text's structure.

However, when compared to the performance of elementary students, Umali's (2012) study on the reading difficulties of Grade 3 students in the Manila division revealed that Grade 3 students who took the National Achievement Test (NAT) in 2012 are considered average readers. The variance in these findings is not impressive on the part of the college students because the materials utilized in two studies were appropriate for their levels of knowledge and age.

Table 2 Relationship of the English Proficiency of the Respondents Among Four Domains

BEED	Value of R	Verbal Interpretation
Domains		
Vocabulary and Error Analysis	.49	positive correlation but weak relationship
Vocabulary and Correct Usage	.55	positive correlation
Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension	.43	positive correlation but weak relationship
Error Analysis and Correct Usage	.54	moderate positive correlation
Error Analysis and Reading Comprehension	.72	moderate positive correlation
Correct Usage and Reading Comprehension	.58	moderate positive correlation
BSE		
Vocabulary and Error Analysis	.31	positive correlation but weak relationship
Vocabulary and Correct Usage	.40	positive correlation but weak relationship
Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension	.36	positive correlation but weak relationship
Error Analysis and Correct Usage	.49	positive correlation but weak relationship
Error Analysis and Reading Comprehension	.41	positive correlation but weak relationship
Correct Usage and Reading Comprehension	.45	positive correlation but weak relationship

Table 2 presents the Relationship of the English Proficiency of the Respondents in Four Domains. There are positive but weak correlation in BEED' performance between vocabulary and error analysis; between vocabulary and correct usage; and between vocabulary and correct usage. However, a moderate positive correlation was found between error analysis and correct usage; between error analysis and reading comprehension; and between correct usage and reading comprehension.This implies that if the BEED group can identify the errors in the given passage, they can also recognize appropriate word usage and understand the meaning of the texts they are reading. On the contrary, this study demonstrates a minor difference from the idea that students with a strong vocabulary and context knowledge have a better chance of comprehending the content they are reading (Weiser, 2013).

On the BSE group, there is positive correlation but weak relationship between vocabulary and error analysis; between vocabulary and correct usage; between vocabulary and reading comprehension; between error analysis and correct usage; between error analysis and reading comprehension; and between correct usage and

reading comprehension. This result suggests that the relationship between the BSE group's scores in each domain is not particularly strong. Even though their vocabulary and correct usage scores are both high, they still have a weak link in that if their vocabulary scores are high, it should not be assumed that their correct usage scores will be high as well. Each domain had unique contributions to the over-all scores of the respondents. However, this study's result negates the idea of Weiser (2013) that there is a significant link between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension; students must learn the meaning of the words they will be reading in order to increase comprehension. Students have a better chance of understanding the material they read if they have a good vocabulary and prior knowledge. Furthermore, many studies have found that vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in reading comprehension. In the study of Wu et.al (2007), among the various variables examined, vocabulary knowledge was discovered to have a strong and positive link with reading achievement and to have an important role in reading comprehension. As a result, it appears that sufficient vocabulary knowledge is one of the requirements for efficient reading comprehension.

Table 3 revealed a significant difference in BEED and BSE test scores among the four domains except for error analysis with a t-value of -1.57 and p-value of .058. This means that the scores of the two groups differ in terms of vocabulary, correct usage, and reading comprehension. Although BEED and BSE are in the same curriculum, their performance in vocabulary, correct usage, and reading comprehension differs, as seen by their scores as two distinct groups. However, the findings of this study did not change the fact that our country's English proficiency level remains low, despite the revamping of the Philippines' basic educational system through K to 12 programs aimed at producing competent graduates. Tan added that preliminary findings from a two-year study show that college graduates in the Philippines had lower English proficiency levels than high school pupils in Thailand and taxi drivers in Dubai. According to the Test of English for International Communication metrics, the average proficiency score of a Filipino college graduate was 631.4. "A cab driver in Dubai, the largest city in the United Arab Emirates, is expected to have a TOEIC proficiency score of 650, while business process outsourcing agents are expected to have an 850 in the metric."

Table 3 Significant differences between BEED and BSE English Proficiency among the four domains.

Domains	T-Value	P- Value	Verbal Interpretation
Vocabulary	-3.45	.000318	Significant
Error Analysis	-1.57	.058	Not significant
Correct Usage	-2.81	.00267	Significant
Reading Comprehension	-2.55	.005559	Significant

Figure 1. Overall English Proficiency of the Respondents

Figure 1 revealed that the majority of the respondents' average score is 38.93, which is below

50% of the total score, which is 40. This suggests that the respondents' English proficiency is lower than the passing mark of 50% of the overall score. Moreover, it gave a not so impressive mark on the English Proficiency of the college students. The findings of this study align with the statement of Tan (2018) that internationally, Filipino graduates have just a B1 rating in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, where A1 represents primary users, and C2 represents proficient users. He pointed out that the B1 level of Filipino college graduates falls short of Thailand's B2 threshold for high school graduates.

Conclusions and Recommendations

NEUST-SIC students perform well in identifying the meaning of vocabulary words when used in sentences and choosing the appropriate words in a given discourse. However, they had difficulties in identifying grammar errors and reading comprehension. Students' success in each domain or language area has a negligible impact on one another. The majority of the respondents struggle in error analysis. The scores of the education students in the English proficiency test suggest they need to be more engaged in different activities and training that will help improve their understanding and use of English as a second language.

Based on the study's findings, it is highly recommended that the NEUST-San Isidro campus should develop and improve the students' English language skills by providing a Remedial Teaching program. A similar study should be conducted with the same respondents after two years to validate the success of remedial measures. A study on English speaking skills proficiency of the same respondents is recommended to use as a basis for another remedial teaching program.

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Online Resources:

Declining Of English Proficiency In The Philippines. http://www.tech4edorion.com/index.php/8-education/2203-declining-of-english-profeciency-in-the-philippines

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