

English Proficiency and Social Correlates of Freshman Teacher Education Students

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Abstract

English proficiency is the students' ability to use English language in communicating meaning through oral and written contexts. It improves their personality and increases sense of self-worth. This study assessed the English proficiency of freshman teacher education students of four campuses at Cebu Technological University (CTU) anchoring on Canale and Swain's communicative competence theory. The works of literature dictate that there is no study about English proficiency and social correlates of freshman teacher education students conducted in the Visayas, Philippines where Cebu is one of the provinces. This prompted the researcher to get relevant information on respondents' demographic profile, proficiency level in listening, speaking, reading, and writing through a validated researcher-made instrument. There were 139 students who participated in the study. Utilizing descriptive-correlation research design, researchers established significant relationship of dependent and independent variables through Pearson's Product Correlation Coefficient and chi-square test. Results showed that respondents' ages ranged from 13-19, females dominated the males, Grade 12 English grade was below average proficiency and parents' combined family income was below poverty level. They attained average proficiency in listening, reading, and writing and above average proficiency in speaking. Significant relationship among scores of four macro-skills was evident. Their performance ratings did not show significant relationship with age, gender and parents' combined income. Average proficiency in listening, reading, and writing is attributed to less exposure in classroom instructional activities. Although they attained above average proficiency in speaking, to improve four skills simultaneously may be considered since developing one skill may help improve another.

Keywords: English Proficiency, communicative competence theory, listening, speaking, reading, writing.

INTRODUCTION

English is recognized as the most important common universal language which takes a leading role in individuals' lives in the academe and in the workplace. It is the world's business sectors' lingua franca which drives economic growth and global progress. It is the second language in the Philippines which is used as an avenue in delivering instruction in the Philippine education system. Its extensive usage is essential in almost all aspects of communication. The country's recognized

strength that led to economic growth being the number one in providing voice outsourcing is the Filipino's proficiency in English. Numerous studies were conducted to ascertain the factors affecting proficiency in English specifically the learning in language of English users who are nonnative. However, no literature or local studies focused on the English proficiency and social correlates in different universities in the Visayas, Philippines. One of the countries preferred by foreign learners who want to learn English is the Philippines because of the quality and affordability of Second Language

Programs in English which are offered, however, there is a decrease of teachers' and learners' competence in English. There is a decline in the proficiency of English among Filipino workforce which may be attributed to Filipino graduates who have the basic working proficiency level in English (Jugo, 2020). This reality prompts the researcher to conduct this study.

Language is a concept that is multifaceted which is comprised of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each skill has an effect which is potentially different on the learning and cognition of a student. Listening is the capacity to get and grasp the meaning of the speaker's message (Wong et al., 2018). The learning foundation is the effective listening skill, and this only occurs if the listener (learner) comprehends the intention of the sender (teacher) and gives behavioral or cognitive response which is appropriate. Perfecting one's skills in listening facilitates classroom learning by letting learners to master content, have linkages applicable to their lives as persons and professionals, ask clear and direct questions, and follow instructions properly (Bond, 2012).

Speaking is a macro skill required for communicating effectively in a language, especially when the mother tongue is not used by the speakers. Since English is used universally in communicating others, particularly in the world of internet, speaking skills in English needs to be honed together with other facets of communication to enrich achievement in communication of English native speakers and other international community members (Boonkit, 2010).

Reading consists of various cognitive skills like word decoding, acquiring vocabulary, perceiving, memorizing and comprehending text ideas for the creation of mental models and reading comprehension hinged on reader's perspective and context (Johnson et al., 2010). The processing of reading in alphabetic writing system is explained by utilizing double route (Cunha, 2008, and Cunha & Capellini 2009, as cited in Capellini et al., 2014).

Writing is a cognitive activity which is extremely complex for it requires the writer to exhibit simultaneous control of variables. In the level of a sentence, it includes control of form,

structure, contents, formation of letters, spelling and vocabulary. Beyond the level of a sentence, the writer should have the ability to structure and integrate information to form text and paragraph which are coherent and cohesive (Nunan 1991 as cited in Durga and Rao, 2018).

The receptive skills in learning and using language, listening and reading while the productive skills, speaking and writing needs to be integrated to develop a communication which is effective (Boonkit, 2010).

Various local research show that Filipinos are proficient in English. This evidence was shown in the Education First Index. However, the Philippines ranked lowest in reading in the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2019 as cited in Gomez & Gomez, 2021). To fully understand which among the macro skills of communication must be improved by educators, the researcher assessed the proficiency levels of selected freshman education students from the four campuses of Cebu Technological University.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Generally, this study would like to assess the English proficiency of the freshman education students in selected four campuses of Cebu Technological University. Specifically, this paper focuses on the following:

1. The socio-demographic profile of freshman education students in terms of age, gender, Grade 12 English grade, and parents' combined monthly income
2. The proficiency level of students in four macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing
3. The significant relationship among the scores of the four macro-skills in four campuses
4. The significant relationship between the performance ratings of students and the socio-demographic factors

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The different surveyed materials regarding English proficiency in the four macro-skills are discussed in this section to shed light on the concept of research. These articles were carefully examined purposely to elicit pertinent and reliable data to support the current study. The construct, English proficiency, is comprehensively defined and elaborated in this part. The quantitative research design used by author to elucidate research capability were also indicated. The works of literature and studies connive with one understanding which is the need to know the English proficiency of freshman education students.

English proficiency is a construct that caters to many audiences in the field of education, tourism and management. The results of the study conducted by Serquina & Batang (2018) indicated that age, sex, curriculum, household average years of schooling, parents' nature of occupation and motivation do not affect students' English proficiency, but household aggregate income has a significant relationship to students' English Proficiency, and household aggregate income affects students' anxiety. Age, gender, curriculum, household average years of schooling, parents' nature of occupation and motivation do not affect English Proficiency of respondents because respondents were not involved in activities requiring intellectual skills at home which could have improved their performance. Household aggregate income has a relation to the English Proficiency of the respondents. They have divided attention because their basic needs were prioritized not education, since majority of them come from families with low-income.

The study of Estacio et al. (2018) assesses beliefs of the effectiveness of a teacher to implement lessons of the macro-skills among Philippine teachers handling English as a Second Language. Utilizing data from interviews and reflective logs of 16 English teachers, data show that teachers' main beliefs focus on making learner the center of instruction, instructional abilities in macro-skill teaching and development in the profession. This study shows that of the four macro skills, speaking and writing encounter problems in the implementation of the lesson. Moreover, results of the study indicated that beliefs on how to

teach macro-skills effectively are associated in making learner the center of instruction, effectiveness in instruction and culture. He reached the conclusion that teachers exert substantial effort to implement speaking, reading, and writing activities while listening seems to be taught implicitly.

Listening is a skill which is passive that is mastered unconsciously in a period of time by practice and repetition without a need to teach explicitly how it is learnt (Chou, 2017, Rost, 2013 as cited in Singh, 2018). Students always associate inadvertently that to pay attention well is to listen well, not considering the need to comprehend listening and master their skills in listening. Because of this, listening activities in the classroom allow teachers to bring about student's desired outcomes. Moreover, among the four aspects of communication — listening, speaking, reading, and writing, listening is least understood but the most vital skill in learning inside the classroom (Paul & Elder, 2006 as cited in Bond, 2012). In the absence of guidance on how to develop listening skills properly, listening will turn into a task which is perfunctory that hinders the process of critical thinking. According to Beall, et.al (2008), when students effectively listen, improvement and motivation in listening and learning can be developed among students and teacher in the context of the classroom. Renukadevi (2014) states that listening, the language skill which is very basic is interrelated and intervened consistently with speaking, reading and writing.

Communicating effectively through speaking usually brings about several benefits to speakers and business organizations. The ability to speak effectively results in achievements in speaking activities during ceremonies, job interviews, job training, and several purposes in business (Osborn, Osborn, & Osborn, 2008). In the study of Wong et al. (2018) speaking was disregarded by numerous students for it was viewed as a skill which is lowest in importance in the achievement of student success and a practitioner's competence. They believed that oral communication skills of accountants in practice is not important. Research findings of Boonkit (2016) showed that having creative topics, being confident and competent in speaking are the important facets of achievement in speaking to a group of people. Students studying English

as a foreign language (EFL) generally have less chances of speaking English beyond class hours (Zhang, 2009) and also less opportunities to have exposure to persons who speak English or people in the global arena. This could be the reason why instructors give lots of activities and situations to improve students' competence in speaking. Speaking appears to be the most vital skill needed in communicating with other persons (Zaremba, 2006, as cited in Boonkit, 2010).

Reading is a process which involves mediation in phonology (phonological route) or through a process which is direct and visual (lexical route). To read through phonological route is dependent on the knowledge usage of grapheme-phoneme rules of conversion to construct word pronunciation. Creation of a phonological code follows so that it will be identified by the auditory word recognition system, which frees the word's meaning. To read through the lexical route relies on word recognition acquired before which was kept in visual word recognition system and to recover this word's pronunciation and meaning is obtained by directly addressing the lexicon (Capellini et al., 2014).

To write effectively is important in higher education and the workplace where students will be employed. Act (2005 as cited in Johnson, 2010) supports this idea because he states that students require skills to obtain knowledge from written form to learn, and to do their best in the place of work later. To read, to write, and to think critically are important skills which students must master for them to have academic success. One's capacity of reading and learning what is being read is a fundamental skill necessary to achieve academic success in different fields of endeavor. The skill of composing a text which is extended is the only best predictor of success in writing course requirements during the first year in higher education (Geiser & Studley, 2001 as cited in Kellogg & Raulerson III (2007). Improvement in writing informative and analytical texts is a good indicator of added value of the higher education (Benjamin & Chun, 2003 as cited in Kellogg & Raulerson III (2007). The biggest share of the added value of businesses in an economy which is based on knowledge is coded in documents that are written, giving value to workforce who is

literate (Brandt, 2005 as cited in Kellogg and Raulerson III, 2007).

Moreover, findings of Wong et al. (2018) revealed that learners primarily depended on their skills in reading instead of listening in order to understand, and writing was given less importance compared to reading and listening.

The different articles discussed in this portion provided a wide array of understanding about English proficiency. It is important to see different aspects considered like listening, speaking, reading, and writing. English proficiency of students should be assessed to find ways how to improve it. These articles establish a good foundation of what to expect from the findings of this current study. These surveyed materials can surely support the completion of this research.

Theoretical Underpinning

This research is hinged on Canale and Swain's (1987, as cited in Lasala 2014) theory of communicative competence as a combination of knowledge and skill required in communicating other persons. Their notion of communicative competence states that knowledge pertains to the unconscious and conscious knowledge of a person regarding language and other facets of the usage of language. They say that knowledge has three types: knowledge of underlying principles of grammar, knowledge of how to use language in interacting with others to complete functions in communication and knowledge of how to combine statements and functions in communication in relation to discourse principles. Moreover, their idea of skill pertains to how a person can utilize the knowledge in communicating with others. Canale states that skill needs a further difference between underlying ability and its demonstration in actual communicative exchange of ideas or ability to speak a certain language (Bagariü and Djigunoviü as cited in Lasala 2014).

The theory of communicative competence of Canale and Swain was utilized in the study of Lasala (2014) as basis in assessing the communicative competence of senior high school students to craft a language instructional pocket. In this research, it is revealed that students' communicative competence in speaking, and writing was acceptable and their

sociolinguistic and communicative competence can still be enriched.

For purposes of finding significant features regarding communicative competence of students, the study of Leung (2005) described that the idea of communicative competence in English Language Teaching (ELT) more than a decade ago indicated a change from teaching which is based on grammar to Communicative Language Teaching. Besides the rules of grammar, teaching of language needs to consider the use of social setting and rules. The idea of communicative competence, developed initially for research in ethnography, seemed to give a basis which is intellectual to broaden pedagogy. The notion's transfer from research to teaching language generated contexts that are abstracted and social norms that are used which are idealized basing on the way a native speaker of English speak the language. Anchoring on current works of Englishes in the World which consider English as a second language and lingua franca, this paper asserts that it is important for English Language Teaching to give attention of the cultural and social world, the development of language in the present-day settings and to engage again with ethnographic sensibilities and sensitivities which are reformulated.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized the descriptive – correlational research design to establish significant correlation between the independent and dependent variables. The researchers gathered data through a validated researcher-made instrument. The instrument was designed following the processes of designing and validating an instrument by Colton & Covert (2007) cited by Cabello & Bonotan (2021). The instrument was composed of two parts; the first part was intended to elicit the demographic profile of respondents such as age, gender, Grade 12 English grade and parents' combined income while the second part was a

questionnaire of the proficiency level of respondents in four macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

To determine the language proficiency level of respondents, the frequency percentage and mean scores of the students were computed. This was done in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The researcher together with three English teachers explained the test instructions carefully, made the students comfortable and provide each with a test booklet and answer sheets. Recorded materials were provided for the listening test to ensure uniformity of input. The oral test was conducted on a one-on-one basis. For the speaking test, ten questions were asked by the researcher to each of the respondents. The reading test dealt on comprehension, which was getting meanings through context clues, finding the main idea, and understanding proverbs and sayings. The writing test consisted of two sub-tests. The first sub-test was a controlled writing activity which was forming a statement out of the given group of words. The second sub-test was writing a friendly letter which was scored using rubric of 4-point scale. The total score of the test of each macro-skill is 20 points with the following descriptions: 1-3 low/marginally proficient, 4-8 below average /proficient, 9-13 average/moderately proficient, 14 -18 above average/proficient and 19 -20 superior/highly proficient. To ascertain the correlation among four macro-skills, the Pearson-Correlation Coefficient was utilized. To get the relationship between the performance ratings of respondents and the demographic factors, chi-square was used. In this study, fifty percent of the total population of students in the four campuses of Cebu Technological University which is 139 served as the respondents. The data gathered was treated with the highest degree of confidentiality and anonymity (Bryman & Bell, 2007 as cited by Perez et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *The Respondents' Demographic Profile of Four Campuses*

AGE	A		B		C		D		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
34 and above	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.72	1	0.72
27-33	1	0.72	0	0.00	1	0.72	5	3.60	7	5.04
20-26	12	8.63	7	5.04	4	2.88	16	11.51	39	28.06
13-19	39	28.06	4	2.88	16	11.51	33	23.74	92	66.19
TOTAL	52	37.41	11	7.92	21	15.11	55	39.57	139	100.00
MEAN		17.22		18.00		17.43		18.13		17.70
GENDER										
Male	11	7.91	4	2.88	5	3.60	18	12.95	38	27.34
Female	41	29.50	7	5.04	16	11.51	37	26.62	101	77.67
TOTAL	52	37.41	11	7.91	21	15.11	55	39.57	139	100.00
GRADE 12 ENGLISH GRADE										
85-89	15	10.79	3	2.16	11	7.91	18	12.95	47	33.81
80-84	31	22.30	3	2.16	9	6.47	19	13.67	62	44.60
75-79	6	4.30	5	3.60	1	0.72	18	12.95	30	21.59
TOTAL	52	37.39	11	7.92	21	15.11	55	29.57	139	100
PARENTS' COMBINED INCOME										
P20,000 and above	2	1.44	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.72	3	2.16
P15,000 – P19,000	3	2.16	0	0.00	1	0.72	2	1.44	6	4.32
P10,000 – P14,000	14	10.07	3	2.16	1	0.72	12	8.63	30	21.58
P5,000 – P9,000	22	15.83	3	2.16	9	6.47	19	13.67	53	38.13
P1,000 – P4,000	11	7.91	5	3.60	10	7.19	21	11.51	47	33.81
TOTAL	55	37.41	11	7.92	21	15.10	55	9.57	139	100.00
MEAN		7,431		6,300		4,762		6,250		6,186

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents such as age, gender, Grade 12

English grade and combined parents' income. It can be gleaned from the table that the age

bracket 13-19 had the highest counts 92 counts (66.19%) comprising 39 (28.06%) for Campus A, 4 counts (2.88%) for Campus B, 16 counts (11.51%) for Campus C and 33 counts (23.74%) for Campus D. This data exemplified that the respondents are dominated by students with age bracket 13-19 years old. Male respondents had 38 counts (27.34%) with 11 counts (7.91%) for Campus A, 4 counts (2.88%) for Campus B, 5 counts (3.60%) for Campus C and 18 counts (12.95) for Campus D. Female respondents had 101 counts (77.67%) with 41 counts (29.50%) for Campus A, 7 counts (5.04%) for Campus B, 16 counts (11.51%) for Campus C and 37 counts (26.62%) for Campus D. The males with 38 counts (27.34%) and females 101 counts (77.67) were not equally distributed. Majority of the students' Grade 12 English grade had the range of 80-84 below average with 62 counts (44.60%) comprising 31 counts (22.30%) for Campus A, 3 counts (2.16%) for Campus B, 9 counts (6.47%) for Campus C and 19 counts (13.67%) for Campus D. For parents' combined income, the range 5,000- 9,000 had the highest count comprising of 53 counts (38.13%) with 22 counts (15.83%) for Campus A, 3 counts (2.16%) for Campus B, 9 counts (6.47%) for Campus C and 19 counts (13.67%) for Campus D.

Basing on the data shown on the table, it implied that most of the respondents were in the age level of a college student considering the six years of schooling in both elementary and secondary level. Majority of them were female which implied that those who take education courses were females who were more inclined to teaching than males. According to Bolton and Muzio (2008) in history, women numerically dominated teaching and their dedication, vocationalism and nurturance describes it as the work of women, capitalizing on the idea of a female who is caring. The dominance in occupation has significant implications on their ambition in the profession and rewards that are received. The teacher has a

powerful image most particularly on primary children, as a maternal and nurturing figure (Etzioni as cited by Bolton and Muzio 2008). Women dominate in primary schools because of the relational skills which are needed to develop basic competences, either social or civic. This emphasis perpetuates differences in tradition between hard and soft skills, between educating and nurturing, in other words, between the work of men and women. The soft skills involved in the success of primary teaching are assumed to be fundamental and natural to a woman, consequently, it is not considered as a proper skill (Bolton, 2004; Tancred, 1995 as cited in Bolton and Muzio, 2008).

Since most of them had English grades which was below average, it implied that they were not that proficient in the English language. This could be attributed to the inadequacy of language learning materials adopted in the lower level of education. This in consonance with the findings of Mirzaei Rizi et al. (2014 as cited in Akbari, 2015) which revealed that Indian students' exposure to audio-visual aids in English (e.g., watching or listening TV programs or news in English) and reading English magazines and newspapers made them perform better than Iranian students in their English classes considering that people in Iran are not allowed to have access or watch satellite TV, as a source of authentic materials, since clergymen and policy makers in Iran consider their program inappropriate and against morality.

The parents' combined monthly income of the respondents was below poverty level. Based on the data of Income Classes in the Philippines reported by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies, the income of less than P 9,520.00 is less than official poverty threshold and is classified as poor income cluster (Albert et. al, 2018). This could be the reason why they enrolled in CTU Campuses because of free tuition fee compared to private schools in the city.

Table 2. *Proficiency Level of Freshman Students on Listening Skill of Four Campuses*

Listening Scores	A			B			C			D			TOTAL		
	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des
19 – 20	1	0.72	S	0	0.00	S	0	0.00	S	3	2.16	S	4	2.88	S
14 – 18	18	12.95	AA	5	3.60	AA	15	10.79	AA	14	10.07	AA	52	37.41	AA
9 – 13	27	19.42	A	2	1.44	A	3	2.16	A	24	17.27	A	56	40.29	A
4 – 8	5	3.60	BA	4	2.88	BA	3	2.16	BA	12	8.63	BA	24	17.27	BA
1 – 3	1	0.72	L	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L	2	1.44	L	3	2.16	L
TOTAL	52	37.41		11	7.92		21	15.11		55	34.57		139	100.00	

Legend: Des – Description S – Superior AA – Above Average A – Average
 BA – Below Average L – Low

Table 2 presents proficiency level of freshman students on listening skill. It showed that 56 counts (40.29%) of the respondents attained average proficiency level in listening skill having a score ranging from 9 -13 with 27 (19.42%) from Campus A, 2 (1.44%) from Campus B, 3 (2.16%) from Campus C, 24 (17.27%) from Campus D. Moreover, there were 3 counts (2.16%) who got low level of proficiency in listening with 1 count (0.72%)

from Campus A and 2 counts (1.44%) from Campus D. Overall data revealed that respondents' listening skills recorded an average proficiency level. This implied that the teacher needs to give more attention on developing student's listening comprehension skills. According to Beall et al. (2008), when students listen effectively, improvement and motivation in listening and learning can be

fostered between students and instructor in the classroom context.

Table 3. Proficiency Level of Freshman Students on Speaking Skill of Four Campuses

Speaking Scores	A			B			C			D			TOTAL		
	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des
19 – 20	0	0.00	S	0	0.00	S	1	0.72	S	0	0.00	S	1	0.72	S
14 – 18	43	30.94	AA	5	3.60	AA	16	11.51	AA	37	26.62	AA	101	72.66	AA
9 – 13	9	6.47	A	6	4.32	A	4	2.88	A	18	12.95	A	37	26.62	A
4 – 8	0	0.00	BA	0	0.00	BA	0	0.00	BA	0	0.00	BA	0	0.00	BA
1 – 3	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L
TOTAL	52	37.41		11	7.92		21	15.11		55	39.57		139	100.00	

Table 3 shows the proficiency level of freshman students on speaking skill. It exemplified that there were 101 counts (72.66%) of the respondents who achieved the above average proficiency level in speaking skill with test scores ranging from 14 -18 having 43 counts (30.94%) from Campus A, 5 counts (3.60%) from Campus B, 16 counts (11.51%) from Campus C and 37 counts (26.62%) from Campus D. Furthermore, there were only 1 count (0.72%) who got superior proficiency level which was from Campus D.

This implied that the respondents are proficient in speaking the English language due to their exposure to the language because of their English-speaking campaign. This is in contrast with the study of Wong et.al (2018) which states that speaking was given less importance by several students for it was classified as a skill which is least important necessary for the achievement of student success and practitioner's competence.

Table 4. *Proficiency Level of Freshman Students on Reading Skill of Four Campus*

Reading Scores	A		B			C			D			TOTAL			
	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des
19 – 20	0	0.00	S	0	0.00	S	0	0.00	S	0	0.00	S	0	0.00	S
14 – 18	0	0.00	AA	0	0.00	AA	1	0.72	AA	0	0.00	AA	1	0.72	AA
9 – 13	30	21.58	A	6	4.32	A	8	5.76	A	28	20.14	A	72	51.80	A
4 – 8	21	15.11	BA	5	3.60	BA	12	8.63	BA	27	19.42	BA	65	46.76	BA
1 – 3	1	0.72	L	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L	1	0.72	L
TOTAL	52	37.41		11	7.92		21	15.11		55	39.56		139	100.00	

Table 4 presents the proficiency level of freshman students on reading skill. It showed that most of the respondents attained average proficiency level in reading skills test comprising 72 counts (51.80%) with 30 counts (21.58%) for Campus A, 6 counts (4.32%) for Campus B, 8 counts (5.76%) for Campus C and 28 counts (20.14%) for Campus D. This implied that students should be exposed to effective reading activities because according to Johnson et al. (2010), reading consists of various cognitive skills like word decoding, acquiring vocabulary, perceiving, memorizing and comprehending text ideas for the creation of mental models and comprehension in reading based upon reader's perspective and context. Moreover, reading is a process which

involves mediation in phonology (phonological route) or through a process which is direct and visual (lexical route). To read through phonological route is dependent on the knowledge usage of grapheme-phoneme rules of conversion to construct word pronunciation. Creation of a phonological code follows so that it will be identified by the auditory word recognition system, which frees the word's meaning. To read through the lexical route relies on word recognition acquired before which was kept in visual word recognition system and to recover this word's pronunciation and meaning is obtained by directly addressing the lexicon (Capellini et al., 2014).

Table 5. *Proficiency Level of Freshman Students on Writing Skill of Four Campuses*

Writing Scores	A			B			C			D			TOTAL		
	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des	f	%	Des
19 – 20	1	0.72	S	0	0.00	S	1	0.72	S	2	1.44	S	4	2.88	S
14 – 18	11	7.91	AA	2	1.44	AA	9	6.47	AA	17	12.23	AA	39	28.06	AA
9 – 13	30	21.58	A	7	5.04	A	11	7.91	A	27	19.42	A	75	53.96	A

4 – 8	10	7.19	BA	2	1.44	BA	0	0.00	BA	9	6.47	BA	21	15.11	BA
1 – 3	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L	0	0.00	L
TOTAL	52	37.40		11	7.92		21	15.10		55	39.56		139	100.00	

Table 5 shows the proficiency level of freshman students on writing skill. It showed that the respondents achieved average proficiency level in writing skill comprising 75 counts (53.96%) with 30 counts (21.58%) for Campus A, 7 counts (5.04%) for Campus B, 11 counts (7.91%) for Campus C and 27 counts (19.42%) for Campus D. This implied that their writing skills need to be developed. Chand (2013) states that academic writing needs an explicit effort and practice on how to compose, develop, and analyze ideas. Students need to acquire proficiency in appropriate strategies, techniques, and skills in writing. To write effectively is important in higher education and

the workplace where students will be employed. The skill of composing a text which is extended is the only best predictor of success in writing course requirements during the first year in higher education (Geiser & Studley, 2001 as cited in Kellogg & Raulerson III (2007). Improvement in writing informative and analytical texts indicates the added value of higher education (Benjamin & Chun, 2003 as cited in Kellogg & Raulerson III, 2007). The biggest share of the added value by businesses in an economy which is based on knowledge is coded in documents that are written, giving value to workforce who is literate (Brandt, 2005 as cited in Kellogg and Raulerson III, 2007).

Table 6. *Significant Relationship of Macro-Skills in Four Campuses*

A	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Listening	1.00			
Speaking	0.248	1.00		
Reading	0.334*	0.219	1.00	
Writing	0.170	0.226	0.236	1.00
B				
Listening	1.00			
Speaking	0.571*	1.00		
Reading	0.537*	0.185	1.00	
Writing	0.591*	0.169	0.397*	1.00
C				
Listening	1.00			
Speaking	0.217	1.00		
Reading	0.147	0.002	1.00	
Writing	- 0.021	0.439*	0.195	1.00
D				
Listening	1.00			
Speaking	0.528*	1.00		
Reading	0.562*	0.413*	1.00	
Writing	0.229	0.463*	0.178	1.00

Legend: Less than + 20 slight correlation, negligible relationship

.20 - .39 = low correlation, definite but small relationship

.40 - .69 = moderate correlation, substantial relationship

.70 - .89 = high correlation, worked relationship

.90 – 1.00 = very high correlation, very dependable relationship

Table 6 shows the significant relationship of macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing of the freshman education students in four CTU Campuses.

It can be gleaned from the table that the interrelationship of four macro-skills by the respondents of Campus A which was set at 0.05 level of significance with $r \geq .30$ showed low correlation, definite but small relationship for speaking and listening (0.248); reading and listening (0.334*); reading and speaking (0.219); writing and speaking (0.226); and writing and reading (0.236). Although reading and listening had low correlation, definite but small relationship of 0.334*, it was significant at 0.05 $r \geq .30$. Writing and listening had a slight correlation showing negligible relationship of 0.170.

For Campus B, there were three functions which resulted to moderate correlation, substantial relationship for speaking and listening with an r of (0.571*); reading and listening with an r of (0.537*) and writing and listening with an r of (0.591*). Two functions resulted to slight correlation, negligible relationship for reading and speaking with an r of (0.185); writing and speaking with an r of (0.169). Only one function resulted to low correlation, definite but small relationship for writing and reading having an r of (0.397*). Significant results set at 0.05 $\geq .30$ were speaking and listening, reading, and listening; writing and listening; and writing and reading.

The results of Campus C indicate four skills showing slight correlation, negligible relationships for reading and listening with an r of (0.147), reading and speaking with an r of (0.002); writing and listening having an r of (-0.021), and writing and reading with an r of (0.195). There was also low correlation, definite but small relationship for speaking and

listening with an r of (0.217) and moderate correlation, substantial relationship for writing and speaking having an r of (0.439*) which was significant set at 0.05 $r \geq .30$.

For Campus D, there were four aspects which resulted to moderate correlation, substantial relationship for speaking and listening having an r of (0.528*) as significant, reading and listening with an r of (0.562*) as significant, reading and speaking with an r of (0.413*) as significant, and writing and speaking having an r of (0.463*) as significant. Only one had low correlation, definite but small relationship with an r of (0.229) for writing and listening. There was slight correlation, negligible relationship for writing and reading with an r of (0.178).

The presentation above gave a viewpoint of slight correlation, negligible relationship, low correlation, definite but small relationship and moderate correlation, substantial relationship of the four macro-skills in the four CTU Campuses. Hence, the hypothesis which states “There is no significant relationship among the scores in listening, speaking, reading and writing” is rejected because there is an interplay of the four macro-skills. This is supported by the findings of Renukadevi, (2014) which states that listening is a language skill that is very basic which interrelates and intervenes consistently with the macro-skills – speaking, reading and writing. According Act (2005 as cited in Johnson, 2010) students require skills to obtain knowledge from written form to learn, and to do their best in the place of work later. To read, to write, and to think critically are important skills which students must master for them to have academic success. One’s capacity of reading and learning from what is being read is a fundamental skill necessary to achieve academic success in different fields of endeavor.

Table 7. Relationship between Performance Ratings and Demographic Factors

Performance and Age	A (N=52)		B (N=11)		C (N=21)		D (N=55)	
	χ^2	c	χ^2	c	χ^2	c	χ^2	c
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value
Ratings	1.303	9.488	4.539	9.488	0.179	5.991	5.354	16.918

Degrees of Freedom	4	4	2	9				
Decision	Do not reject the null hypothesis							
Performance Ratings and Gender	2.408	5.991	3.685	7.815	2.933	7.815	7.736	7.815
Degrees of Freedom	2	3	3	3				
Decision	Do not reject the null hypothesis							
Performance Rating and Parents' Combined Income	3.745	9.488	5.622	7.815	5.498	12.592	4.773	12.592
Degrees of Freedom	4	3	6	6				
Decision	Do not reject the null hypothesis							

0.05 level of significance

Table 7 presents the relationship between the performance ratings of respondents and the demographic factors. As reflected in the table, the relationship between performance ratings and age for Campus A revealed the chi-square (χ^2) value of (1.303) while Campus B had (4.539) which were lesser than the critical value of (9.488), four degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Moreover, Campus C and D obtained a computed chi-square (χ^2) value of (0.179) and (5.354) which were lesser than the critical value of (5.991) and (16.918) respectively. This implied that there is no significant relationship between the performance ratings and age. This is supported by the findings of (Serquina & Batang, 2018 and Gomez & Gomez, 2021) which states that age does not affect students' English Proficiency.

The table also shows the relationship between the performance ratings and gender at 0.05 level of significance with 2, 3, 3, 3, degrees of freedom from the four campuses. Respondents obtained chi-square (χ^2) results of (2.408) for Campus A, (3.685) for Campus B, (2.933) for Campus C and (7.736) for Campus D which were smaller than the critical value of (5.991) and (7.815) respectively. It implied that respondents' performance ratings were not

affected by their gender. This supports the findings of Serquina & Batang, 2018 and Gomez & Gomez, 2021) which states that gender does not affect the English Proficiency of respondents because they were not involved in intellectual activities at home which could have improved their performance.

The relationship between performance ratings and parents' combined income is also reflected in the table. It showed that the computed chi-square (χ^2) of (3.745) for Campus A, (5.622) for Campus B, (5.498) for Campus C and (4.773) for Campus D was lesser than the critical value of (9.488), (7.815), and (12.592). It showed no direct relationship which means performance ratings do not depend on parents' combined income. This is in contrast with the findings of Serquina & Batang (2018) which states that household aggregate income affects respondents' English Proficiency. Their attention was divided because their basic needs were given more priorities than education for majority of them come from families with low-income.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The freshman teacher education students of four CTU Campuses do not exhibit the desired

mastery in some test items in the English proficiency test on listening, reading, and writing. The average language proficiency level is attributed to the inadequacy of language learning activities in the lower levels of education resulting to the lack of mastery. Teachers' awareness of the specific listening problems of their students will enable teachers to prepare suitable listening experiences or activities in the class and suggest to their students out-of-the-class listening experiences. Average proficiency level in reading is attributed to reading difficulties in vocabulary and comprehension skills. Students lack the necessary skills to express themselves in written form especially in true-to-life experiences/ situations. Average writing proficiency level of respondents reveals a need to improve the students' writing skills as they are communicative tools in expressing oneself. Although the respondents attained above average proficiency level in speaking, to improve the four skills simultaneously is considered since developing one skill may help improve the other especially that this study showed a significant relationship of the four macro-skills.

It is recommended that instructional activities in English be provided to enhance students' four macro-skills.

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