English Proficiency Among Teacher Education Students: A Basis for an Intervention Program

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ABSTRACT

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| **Aims:** English proficiency is the ability of an individual to use the English language effectively in both oral and written communication. It is a vital skill for all students. This study aimed to determine the English proficiency level of the first-year College of Teacher Education students in a private catholic institution in Ozamiz and made it a basis for an intervention program.**Study design:** The study utilized descriptive-developmental research design**Place and Duration of Study:** The study was conducted at a private catholic institution in Ozamiz City, Philippines, which lasted from November to December 2024**Methodology:** To determine the English proficiency level of the students, the researchers conducted a standardized test adopted from Birmingham City Schools. The test consists of 170 items: 100 for grammar, 50 for vocabulary and 20 for reading comprehension. There were a total of 40 students who took the test. Results were then analyzed and interpreted and made as a basis for designing an intervention program. **Results:** Findings revealed that students exhibited low proficiency in vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension necessitating the development of Project LEAP (Language Enhancement for Academic Proficiency) to address these gaps. |

*Keywords: English proficiency, vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is recognized as one of the developing countries in the ASEAN region that has formally designated English as part of its national languages, alongside Filipino (Turmudi & Hajan, 2020). The English language plays a crucial role in the development of the socio-economic status of the country in the context of business and instruction as claimed by Dungog and Libo-on (2021). This makes it a language that is a must to be honed and practiced. It is agreed that English is widely used globally, enabling effective communication between speakers of the language and non-speakers (Velasco & Malacaste, 2021).

From the previous claim, Manuel (2022) argues that the English language is utilized for instruction and communication. Thus, it is an absolute necessity for an individual to possess an adequate level of English proficiency to effectively achieve the status of a globally competitive citizen. Furthermore, there is a notable correlation between English language use and the academic achievement of the students (Alqahtani, 2022).

However, based on the Education First (EF) English Proficiency Index (an annual ranking by level of English), there is also a gradual deterioration that can be observed over the past years. Out of 113 countries, the Philippines ranks 14th place in 2018 to 20th place in 2019, and the country’s rank drops to 27th in 2020. Though in 2021, the Philippines climbs up to rank 18, it is still far from its 13th ranking way back in 2016 (Santos et al., 2022). It is also evident when the Philippines ranks 77th out of 81 countries based on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results released last 2023. The reading scores of the participants are over a hundred and twenty—lower than average scores.

Studies conducted in Philippine higher education institutions reveal problems in terms of students' English proficiency (Gomez, 2021; Asio & Quijano, 2023). In particular, a recent study for freshmen college students shows that their performance specifically in grammar was only average. This means that among the language skills, students acquire lower scores in grammar (Panado, 2023). Moreover, another study conducted by Hasan (2024) reveals that several college students encounter challenges in developing their English language skills, including vocabulary acquisition and meaning comprehension that significantly hinder their overall language development. In the deeper section of the study of Zarate (2022), English language major students in Cebu are discovered to have difficulties mostly in the domains of speaking, writing, and reading comprehension before listening comprehension when they take the International English Language System (IELTS).

Several studies that provide various strategies to improve language skills are focused on Junior and Senior High School students, primarily interactive classroom activities in the senior high school (Budiman et al., 2023) and the utilization of blended learning strategies in English classes among junior high school students (Gomez, 2021). With these studies, various intervention programs put emphasis on junior and senior high students. When it comes to intervention programs designed to improve the English language proficiency of college students, there is a scarcity of studies in the Philippines. According to Kilag et al. (2024), the use of the K-12 curriculum, together with the adoption of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education, is utilized towards closing the language proficiency gaps and enhancing educational results. However, they add that it is still unclear how well these measures work to solve certain issues in tertiary English language teaching.

Meanwhile, a private catholic institution in Ozamiz conducts a standardized assessment among its first year college students in 2023. According to the results from the pretest of the Asian Psychological Services and Assessment (APSA) test, out of the 114 first-year students who took the test, only 28.9% demonstrate English Proficiency in the Communications and Media Information Literacy component. This result indicates that there is an issue regarding English proficiency which needs to be addressed.

This study aims to determine the level of English proficiency among first year teacher education students and develop an English proficiency intervention program to improve their language skills.

2. material and methods

The descriptive-developmental method was used in this study. To determine students’ level of English proficiency, a test was conducted utilizing an adopted standardized test. The scores of the students were then analyzed and interpreted following the intervals and qualitative descriptions based on the DepEd Order No.8 s. 2015. After identifying the proficiency level, the researchers designed an intervention program aimed at enhancing students’ English language skills.

The study was conducted at a private catholic institution in Misamis Occidental. The school is composed of seven colleges and one of these is the College of Teacher Education. The respondents represented all the programs from the College specifically, Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor of Physical Education (BPED), and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED). There were a total of 52 first-year students and 13 faculty of the College of Teacher Education. The institution also conducted admission tests upon enrollment of students.

The respondents of this study were the first-year students of the College of Teacher Education (CTE) students officially enrolled in the academic year 2024-2025. The researchers employed complete enumeration sampling as it allowed them to examine the entire population to get the accurate and reliable data (Gautam, 2020). All the first-year CTE students served as respondents of this study. However, only 40 students consented to participate in the study. Most of the respondents are from Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd), Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English (BSEd English), Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd), and Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Studies (BSEd SocStud).

The research instrument utilized in the study was the adopted standardized test from Birmingham City Schools which contained items for assessing vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension for multi-level starting from elementary level to upper-intermediate level. The vocabulary competency covered five subcomponents namely; synonyms, antonyms, logic lists, collective nouns, and phrasal verbs. The grammar covered ten subcomponents which are; articles, prepositions, pronouns, tenses of verbs, modals, conditionals, comparative and superlatives, infinitives and gerunds, passive voice, and indirect speech. There were a total of 50 items for vocabulary, 100 items for grammar, and 20 items for reading comprehension. The items were selected randomly through a random picker.

Since it was an adapted instrument, the researchers carried out a reliability test to assess the instrument’s internal consistency. Cronbach was used and yielded a reliability alpha of .93 which was also interpreted as excellent reliability. This indicated acceptable internal consistency, meaning the items in the scale are excellently reliable in measuring the same construct.

After conducting the test, the acquired data was tabulated and analyzed statistically to arrive at a realistic conclusion. The participants’ proficiency level in each competency was determined using the intervals and qualitative description based on the DepEd Order No.8 s. 2015.

The researchers secured informed assent from the participants by clearly outlining the objectives, procedures, potential risks, and anticipated benefits of the study. To uphold confidentiality and privacy, all data were securely stored in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring the protection of participants’ rights throughout the research process. Measures were taken to minimize any risk of physical, psychological, or emotional harm. Participants were treated with dignity and given the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point. The researchers upheld transparency in both methodology and reporting, while also continuously monitoring the study to address any ethical issues that might arise.

3. results and discussion

**3.1 Students’ Level of English Proficiency**

In a study conducted by Armea et al. (2022), English proficiency is defined as the ability of an individual to use the English language effectively in both oral and written communication. The test participants answered 170 items of the English proficiency test covering the different components and subcomponents of the language. Table 4 presents the English proficiency level of the students in the 3 components.

**3.1.1. Proficiency Level of Students in Terms of Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is defined as the body of words or phrases that an individual can comprehend and utilize effectively across the four language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Michie, 2023). The test includes 50 items related to vocabulary. It is divided into 5 sub components namely; synonym, antonym, logic list, collective nouns, and phrasal verbs. The performance level of the students in terms of vocabulary is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Students’ Proficiency Level in Terms of Vocabulary**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Vocabulary Subcomponents** | **Mean Scores** | **Proficiency Level** |
| Antonym | 5.23 | Not Proficient At All |
| Collective Nouns | 5.55 | Not Proficient At All |
| Logic List | 6.5 | Slightly Proficient |
| Phrasal Verbs | 6.63 | Slightly Proficient |
| Synonym | 7.93 | Moderately Proficient |
| **Overall Mean** | **6.37** | **Slightly Proficient** |

*Legend: 9 - 10 (Very Highly Proficient); 8 - 8.9 (Highly Proficient); 7 - 7.9 (Moderately Proficient); 6 - 6.9 (Slightly Proficient); < 6 (Not proficient at all)*

In the synonym, the respondents get a mean score of 7.93, which falls into the category of moderately proficient. This implies that the respondents have an adequate understanding of the system of synonyms; however, it is not on the exceptional level, there is still a need for improvement to achieve mastery. This moderate proficiency indicates the ability to identify and use synonyms adequately in familiar contexts but also points to gaps in their ability to apply this knowledge in more nuanced or challenging scenarios. Consequently, focused instruction in advanced synonym usage could help elevate their proficiency to higher levels.

In terms of identifying correct phrasal verbs, the mean score is 6.63, placing the students in the slightly proficient level. This reveals that students have modest understanding of phrasal vocabulary, yet still below the standards, thus requiring improvement. Given the frequent use of phrasal verbs in conversational English and idiomatic expressions, this deficiency could hinder students' fluency and comprehension in both spoken and written communication.

For the logic list, the students achieve a mean score of merely 6.5, exhibiting students’ performance at the slightly proficient level. This implies that students showcase a low level of understanding with logical word groupings which are essential for developing critical thinking and language organization. This weakness may impede their ability to categorize and connect words conceptually, an important skill for academic and practical language use.

As for the collective nouns, students only scored a mean of 5.55, classified as not proficient at all. This deficiency suggests that students have minimal understanding of or familiarity with collective terms, which are frequently used in both formal and informal communication. The inability to use collective nouns correctly could affect their precision in both writing and speaking.

Lastly, the performance of the respondents in the antonym significantly drops, where the mean score is 5.23, categorized as not proficient at all. This suggests that unlike synonyms, they struggle with antonyms. The lack of proficiency in this area could hinder their ability to discern contrasts and oppositional meanings, affecting both reading comprehension and expressive language skills.

For the whole vocabulary items, the students yield an overall mean score of 6.37. This score is interpreted as slightly proficient. This overall mean score indicates that the students experience problems in terms of vocabulary which is a big factor in their language proficiency. The students have a limited command of essential vocabulary, which is a crucial foundation for most language skills.

In relation to the study of Bhandari (2023), students encounter challenges in English language proficiency due to limited vocabulary which adversely affects their academic performance. It is also supported by Machfudi and Afidah (2022) as students are having problems in mastering vocabulary due to the reason that they are less interested in learning English and they are reluctant in opening the dictionaries. Based on the results, there is definitely a need to improve the vocabulary skills of the students. Although there is a relatively higher performance in synonyms, there are also significant gaps in antonyms, collective nouns, and logic lists.

If these deficiencies are not addressed, it would limit the overall language development and proficiency of the students. It would affect their ability to comprehend and communicate effectively. Addressing these gaps through intensifying English curriculum development and designing vocabulary enrichment activities will not only improve students’ vocabulary skills, but it will also enhance their overall linguistic competence.

**3.1.2 Proficiency Level of Students in Terms of Grammar**

Grammar refers to a system of rules that governs sentence construction, encompassing various language elements such as parts of speech and language mechanics (Delfino, 2020). The test includes 100 items related to grammar. It is divided into 10 sub components such as article, preposition, pronoun, tenses, modals, conditionals, comparatives and superlatives, infinitives and gerunds, passive voice, and indirect speech. The performance level of the students in terms of grammar are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Students’ Proficiency Level in Terms of Grammar**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Grammar Subcomponents** | **Mean Scores** | **Proficiency Level** |
| Conditionals | 4.63 | Not Proficient At All |
| Indirect Speech | 4.63 | Not Proficient At All |
| Passive Voice | 4.83 | Not Proficient At All |
| Preposition | 5.18 | Not Proficient At All |
| Modals | 5.58 | Not Proficient At All |
| Tenses | 5.95 | Not Proficient At All |
| Comparative-Superlative | 5.95 | Not Proficient At All |
| Articles | 6.00 | Slightly Proficient |
| Infinitive-Gerund | 8.08 | Highly Proficient |
| Pronoun | 8.38 | Highly Proficient |
| **Overall Mean** | **6.63** | **Slightly Proficient** |

***Legend:*** *9 - 10 (Very Highly Proficient); 8 - 8.9 (Highly Proficient); 7 - 7.9 (Moderately Proficient); 6 - 6.9 (Slightly Proficient); < 6 (Not proficient at all)*

In terms of determining appropriate pronouns, the examinees achieve a mean score of 8.38, which means that they are in a highly proficientlevel. This level indicates a strong ability to correctly identify and apply pronouns within various grammatical contexts, reflecting a well-developed understanding of the subcomponent. Consequently, the infinitives and gerunds are accompanied with a mean score of 8.08, which is also in a highly proficientlevel. This indicates that some participants are adept at recognizing and using these verb forms effectively, which are crucial for constructing grammatically accurate and meaningful sentences.

A mean score of only 6.00 is achieved by the test takers in the domain of understanding and application of articles. The mean score falls into a slightly proficient level highlighting a significant gap in the student's basic knowledge. This indicates that students may instill the necessary foundational knowledge, but not to the extent of having a deep understanding of articles.

Conversely, the results reveal significant challenges in other subcomponents. In terms of identifying the correct comparative and superlative form as well as the correct verb tenses, the test takers achieve the same mean score of 5.95 for each subcomponent, which is interpreted as not proficient at all**.** This suggests that the test takers have significant difficulty in understanding and using these grammatical structures. These sub domains in grammar are essential for constructing accurate comparisons and expressing degrees of quality in sentences. Additionally, the students are also unable to correctly identify the most appropriate tenses in the sentences, which is crucial for expressing actions in various time frames.

The mean score of 5.58 which is interpreted as not proficient at all highlights the test takers' poor understanding of modals. Modal verbs such as "can," "could," "will," "must," and "might" and their specific functions may be confusing and complicated. The failure of grasping their basic functions may result in incorrect use of modals in appropriate contexts. The score confirms that the majority of the students lack complete understanding of modals, placing them into lower proficiency levels.

In identifying appropriate preposition, the students also achieve a low mean score of 5.18 which is also not proficient at all. This lack of proficiency can stem from insufficient practice, limited exposure to many contexts where prepositions are used, or confusion arising from multiple meanings and applications. Without a solid grasp of prepositions, students may struggle to form coherent and precise sentences.

For passive voice, students were able to receive a mean score of 4.83 which is interpreted as not proficient at all. This score clearly exhibits students' unsatisfactory performance in the domain of passive voice. The students are not well-equipped when it comes to applying passive voice in specific situations as they demonstrate severe insufficiency of understanding in passive voice. There are certain students that are able to recognize active voices; however, they tend to struggle transforming the sentences to passive voices

Lastly, the participants had a poor performance in both conditionals and indirect speech scores, with each of them producing the same mean score of 4.63 which is in a not proficient level. This low performance in conditionals reflects their difficulty in understanding and applying the rules governing conditional statements, which are vital for expressing hypothetical or cause-and-effect relationships. Similarly, the low performance in indirect speech indicates lack of mastery in transforming direct statements into indirect forms which is essential for effective communication and conveying information.

These results highlight the need for targeted intervention programs to address critical gaps. With the high proficiency in pronouns, infinitives and gerunds, and other subcomponents of grammar, it is also important to achieve balanced proficiency across all grammar subcomponents. These results serve as a guide for designing an intervention plan aimed to enhance students’ grammatical proficiency.

**3.1.3 Proficiency Level of Students in Terms of Reading Comprehension**

Lenz (2024) claims that reading comprehension refers to the cognitive process of deriving and constructing meaning from the text. The test includes 20 items related to reading comprehension. Table 3 displays the proficiency level of the students in terms of reading comprehension.

**Table 3. Students’ Proficiency Level in Terms of Reading Comprehension**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Language Component** | **Mean Score** | **Proficiency Level** |
| Reading Comprehension | 10.68 | Not Proficient At All |

***Legend:*** *18 - 20 (Very Highly Proficient); 16 – 17.9 (Highly Proficient); 14 – 15.9 (Moderately Proficient); 12 – 13.9(Slightly Proficient); < 11.9 (Not proficient at all)*

Table 3 showcases the respondents’ inadequate performance in the reading comprehension component. The students’ accomplish a mean score of 10.68, which is categorized as not proficient at all. This signifies that most of the students encounter challenges and struggles in dealing with reading comprehension tasks. The low mean score indicates that the respondents are incapable of fully comprehending, interpreting, and analyzing written texts. Similarly, the study of Adap et al. (2024) also reveals that the students are facing inefficiencies in reading as they solely attain low reading proficiency levels. They believe that the students’ struggles are due to factors such as time-management and unfamiliarity of words. Hence, achieving a better academic performance would require an intervention program involving reading tasks and activities is a necessity.

Being in the category of not proficient at all, simply means that students may find it difficult to identify and determine main details, formulate inferences, or understand the overall gist of a particular text. This limitation in recognizing the central points of a text can severely impact their ability to understand and remember the content being read. Additionally, students may have difficulty formulating inferences—drawing conclusions based on the information provided in the text—which is an essential skill for deeper comprehension and critical thinking. The inability to make inferences often prevents readers from fully engaging with the text or understanding its deeper meaning.

The results indicate a critical need for an intervention program aimed to enhance reading comprehension. Teachers may need to focus on designing strategies that build foundational skills such as identifying main ideas, making inferences, and summarizing texts. Moreover, integrating and incorporating a variety of text, reading strategies and exercises which are contextualized could help improve students’ comprehension. Addressing these challenges in reading comprehension can help students improve their performance in other academic areas that require interpretation and application of written context. The summary of students’ level of English Proficiency is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Summary of Proficiency Levels in Three Components**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Mean Scores** | **Proficiency Level** |
| Vocabulary | 25.46 | Not Proficient At All |
| Grammar | 23.67 | Not Proficient At All |
| Reading Comprehension | 10.68 | Not Proficient At All |

***Legend for Reading Comprehension:*** *18 - 20 (Very Highly Proficient); 16 -17.9 (Highly Proficient); 14 - 15.9 (Moderately Proficient); 12 - 13.9 (Slightly Proficient); < 11.9 (Not proficient at all)*

***Legend for Vocabulary:*** *45 - 50 (Very Highly Proficient); 40 - 44.5 (Highly Proficient); 35 - 39.5 (Moderately Proficient); 30 - 34.5 (Slightly Proficient); < 30 (Not proficient at all)*

***Legend for Grammar:*** *90 - 100 (Very Highly Proficient); 80 - 89 (Highly Proficient); 70 - 79 (Moderately Proficient); 60 - 69 (Slightly Proficient); < 60 (Not proficient at all)*

Table 4 displays the proficiency levels of students in the three primary components of language: vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. The vocabulary component has a total of fifty items and has a mean score of 25.46 categorized as not proficient at all, indicating that the test takers encountered difficulties with vocabulary and demonstrated a lack of competency. This also indicates that students lack a solid grasp of essential vocabulary, which is critical for understanding texts, expressing ideas clearly, and engaging in meaningful communication. Without a strong vocabulary foundation, students’ may also encounter challenges in both grammar and reading comprehension. A study of Balce (2024) highlights senior high school students who are achieving a commendable level of developing vocabulary proficiency, with different levels in aspects such as range, richness, and practical application. The findings of the study are the actual opposite of the findings in this discussion which entails a concerning need of revamp in the teaching strategies and methods for the incoming students. In conclusion, vocabulary knowledge has shown to be an important factor in reading comprehension (Brooks et al., 2021).

On the other hand, the grammar component, having a total of one hundred items, has a mean score of 23.67, categorized as not proficient at all. This score reflects the students' difficulties in mastering the rules of grammar, which are essential for constructing clear, accurate, and coherent sentences. The result also suggests that the students may struggle with foundational aspects of sentence structure, verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and other grammatical rules. Without a solid understanding of grammar, students may be unable to convey their thoughts clearly, which can affect their academic writing, communication with others, and overall ability to express themselves in English. According to the study of Albarico (2021), students achieving a fair proficient level in grammatical skills entails having the ability to use the language in both oral and written meaningfully. Therefore, intervention programs must be created to address the grammar deficiencies and provide them with general awareness of the significance of grammatical skills in expressing ideas effectively.

The lowest mean score of 10.68, out of the twenty items in the reading comprehension component, also falls under the category not proficient at all. This result signifies considerable difficulties in reading comprehension. Students who struggle with reading comprehension may have difficulty identifying main ideas, making inferences, understanding the overall meaning of a text, or connecting new information to existing knowledge. This can create significant barriers not only in language learning but across all academic disciplines, as comprehension skills are required in almost every subject area. Reading comprehension is essential in facilitating understanding various domains (Muallim & Hasanah, 2024). With that being said, a study of Tugo & Tabernilla (2024) concludes that students are encountering attaining such low levels of reading comprehension due to different circumstances involving poor study habits, parent’s low educational attainment, internet connectivity, mode of learning and students’ academic background. These factors play a pivotal role in influencing students reading comprehension difficulties, hence, an effective intervention program must be developed to counteract the alarming problem.

The aggregate performance in all categories is below proficiency, indicating a necessity for focused intervention measures. The results suggest that students are encountering difficulties in fundamental aspects of language learning, which could hinder their academic progress and success in other subjects that rely on language skills. Therefore, it is essential to implement tailored programs that address these specific deficiencies, helping students build a solid foundation in language skills that will support their long-term success. Based on the different level of performance of the students in the different components and subcomponents of the English language, the overall English proficiency level of the students are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Students’ Overall Level of English Proficiency**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of Proficiency** | **n** | **%** |
| Very Highly Proficient | 0 | 0 |
| Highly Proficient | 1 | 2.50 |
| Moderately Proficient | 7 | 17.50 |
| Slightly Proficient | 15 | 37.50 |
| Not Proficient At All | 17 | 42.50 |
| **Total** | **40** | **100** |
| **Overall Mean Score: 101.68 (59.81%)** | **Interpretation: Not Proficient At All** |

***Legend:****90% - 100% (Very Highly Proficient); 80% - 89% (Highly Proficient); 70% - 79% (Moderately Proficient); 60% - 69% (Slightly Proficient); < 60% (Not proficient at all)*

Table 5 reflects the English proficiency levels of the test takers. Only 1 (2.5%) student is highly proficient. This minimal portion signifies that only a limited number of students exhibit advanced proficiency in vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. This student potentially demonstrates proficiency in comprehending and utilizing linguistic concepts adeptly. However, the minimal percentage of highly proficient students indicates that advanced proficiency is rare among the group, underscoring the challenge of reaching higher levels of linguistic competence across the student body.

Meanwhile, there are 7 (17.5%) students who are moderately proficient. These students possess a fundamental understanding of the basic language skills. However, they still encounter difficulties with more complex or nuanced language applications, such as using advanced vocabulary, applying complex grammar rules, or analyzing deeper meanings in reading comprehension tasks. Although they excel beyond others, these remain potential for enhancement.

Fifteen students (37.5%) are categorized as slightly proficient. These students showed minimal proficiency in English and lacked fluency and mastery of the language necessary to succeed in more challenging academic activities, as seen by their difficulties with vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. This group of students requires significant support to build a stronger foundation in language skills, particularly in areas where they are weakest, such as vocabulary acquisition, grammar structure, and reading comprehension strategies.

The predominant group of students, with a number of 17 (42.5%) of the total number of test takers, show no proficiency at all. These students exhibit considerable difficulties in vocabulary recognition, grammar application, and reading comprehension. These students represent nearly half of the number of test participants which indicates a strong need for an intervention program.

In general, the overall mean score of the test takers was 101.68 (59. 81%) which indicates a level of **not proficient at all**. It was an unfortunate sight that almost all of the students, based on the score, signifies that they severely experience shortfalls in the English language. Almost all students got poor interpretation in each single domain of the English language as they all encounter the same obstacles due to the lack of foundational knowledge in the language itself. Upon answering the test, they all fail in attaining the substandard score that is expected, entailing a serious demand for revamp in the teaching and learning process of the students.

The overall distribution of proficiency levels indicates a significant gap in language skills, with a considerable portion of students falling into the "slightly proficient" or "no proficiency at all" categories. The fact that no students achieve "very high proficiency" further emphasizes the need for focused intervention programs to improve English proficiency across the entire student body. Given the broad range of proficiency levels, intervention programs must be tailored to address the diverse needs of students at different stages of language development.

**3.2. Proposed Intervention Program**

On the basis of the findings, it can be claimed that there is really a problem in all components of language, including vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. As a result, it becomes clear that they have limited proficiency with the use of the English language, which requires quick attention. With this, Table 6 presents the components that the participants perform the lowest.

**Table 6. Components with the Lowest Performance**

| **Component** | **Mean Scores** | **Proficiency Level** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Conditionals | 4.63 | Not Proficient At All |
| Indirect Speech | 4.63 | Not Proficient At All |
| Passive Voice | 4.83 | Not Proficient At All |
| Prepositions | 5.16 | Not Proficient At All |
| Modals | 5.58 | Not Proficient At All |
| Tenses  | 5.95 | Not Proficient At All |
| Comparatives - Superlatives | 5.95 | Not Proficient At All |
| Articles | 6.00 | Not Proficient At All |
| Antonyms | 5.23 | Not Proficient At All |
| Collective Nouns | 5.55 | Not Proficient At All |
| Reading Comprehension | 10.68 | Not Proficient At All |

***Legend:****90% - 100% (Very Highly Proficient); 80% - 89% (Highly Proficient); 70% - 79% (Moderately Proficient); 60% - 69% (Slightly Proficient); < 60% (Not proficient at all)*

As presented in Table 6, the components with the lowest performance are conditionals, passive voice, indirect speech, prepositions, modals, tenses, comparatives and superlatives, articles, antonyms, collective nouns, and reading comprehension. These are all the not proficient levels, which implies that there is really a need for an intervention. In order to be successful in the field of education in the future, it is absolutely vital to have a strong command of the English language. Similarly, it is necessary to implement an intervention program in order to improve the English language skills of the students.

**Project LEAP: Language Enhancement for Academic Proficiency** is an intervention program that was developed by the researchers. To assist students in becoming more proficient in the English language is the objective of this program. The implementation of this program will take place every Wednesday with each session lasting for an hour and thirty minutes. At the beginning of each session, there will be a discussion of concepts, and then there will be a series of learning activities and assessments that are supervised by the instructor to help the students improve their vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension.

**3.2.1. Rationale**

One of the necessities for guaranteed academic success and future career opportunities in an increasingly globalized world where English serves as a global language is to become proficient in the English language. Unfortunately, most of the students, even the educators themselves, struggle in acquiring the standard level of basic communication skills as they are incapable of expressing their thoughts and ideas both in oral and written forms using the language. This intervention program aims to enhance the English language capacity of the individuals through implementing interactive and engaging activities that heighten vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and speaking areas. The program seeks to deepen the individuals' foundational knowledge in the domains of English language by addressing existing gaps in their language skills, and build their confidence and competence with necessary support by providing such practical tools and strategies, unlocking their hidden language abilities and allowing them to effectively use English in various situations.

**3.2.2. Objective of the Intervention Program**

The implementation of the Project LEAP: Language Enhancement for Academic Proficiency aims to improve the level of English language proficiency of the students in the College of Teacher Education. This program focuses on enhancing the grammar competence of the students, including vocabulary building skills and reading comprehension ability. It seeks to elevate their language proficiency, preparing them to become more efficient and effective individuals in their future roles as educators. Richards (2015) emphasizes the new roles of teachers as course and materials developers, classroom researchers, learning assessors, and learner-based innovators. Teachers need the capacity in developing effective context-specific pedagogy.

The program will be done for the whole semester and will take place every Wednesday. Each session will be conducted within one hour and thirty minutes. The session will start with a discussion for thirty minutes to an hour. After the discussion, the series of learning activities will follow. Some components may require more than one session to ensure that there will be enough time to discuss the content and concepts and ensure effective learning from the students.

**3.2.3. Post-Implementation Activities**

To determine the program’s effectiveness, it would be necessary to conduct pre-post implementation procedures. For its first year of implementation, the College of Teacher Education who will be the main implementers of the program, may conduct one-group pre-post design to recognize the students’ progress in terms of English proficiency as a result of attending the intervention. This would be recommended should the enrolment of the next academic year be limited to one section of students only. However, should the number of students increase, the program may be implemented a two-group quasi-experimental design, where a control and treatment group may be assigned. This will ensure scientific rigor, through thorough comparative analysis of the students’ performance. This will also provide a more conclusive and empirical results on the effectiveness of the program.

4. Conclusion

The study unveils a critical deficiency in English proficiency among first-year College of Teacher Education students. This issue strikes an alarming issue, as educators must be well-equipped with a strong grasp of the English language, which is an essential foundation for effective teaching. This also highlights the need for educational policy makers to enhance language education curriculum and to provide more teacher training programs. To be able to succeed in academic and professional pursuits, aspiring educators must possess excellence and mastery in this language by addressing the gaps. To bridge the said gap, a well-structured intervention program is necessary to ensure development of language proficiency in their future careers. It is also necessary that there would be continuous professional development programs and specialized English trainings for educators. Overall, the findings in the study unravel the dire need of revitalization of both the teaching and learning processes to equip the students with the linguistic competence required in the teaching profession. Acknowledging the pivotal role of the English language as a primary medium of instruction and professional communication within the ASEAN region, this research offers valuable insights upon the amelioration of the overall language abilities of pre-service teachers. The research highlights revamped practical and policy-oriented suggestions and recommendations which achieve curriculum revitalization that aims to guarantee a holistic development in teacher training instructions and strengthening teachers' English proficiency. The findings offer a significant broader discourse on improving communicative abilities in higher education, especially in multilingual and developing settings. In a nutshell, this study supports evidence-based strategies that can improve work-readiness of the teachers, ensuring to anticipate better quality education across diverse learning environments.

Consent:

All authors declare that informed consent and assent were obtained from the study participants.

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence):**

Author(s) hereby declare that generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models, etc. have been used during the writing or editing of manuscripts. This explanation will include the name, version, model, and source of the generative AI technology and as well as all input prompts provided to the generative AI technology

Details of the AI usage are given below:

1. Chat GPT was used to aid the researchers in further elaborating concepts thus enriching the discussion of the manuscript.

2. SciSpace was used to search for relevant and updated related literature and studies.

3. Quillbot was used in the enhancement of the use of the English language, maintaining the manuscript’s academic and professional tone.

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