**Language Learning Strategies and their Relationship to the English Proficiency Level Among Pre-Service English Teachers**

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**Abstract**

*Language learning strategies are particularly important in learning a second language since they serve as tools for active and self-directed involvement, which is essential in improving one's English proficiency and self-confidence. The research study was conducted to look into the relationship between the language learning strategies of pre-service English teachers of Pangasinan State University – Bayambang Campus A.Y. 2020-2021 and their level of English proficiency. The questionnaire which served as the research instrument is comprised of three parts: 1.) sociodemographic profile of the respondents, 2.) questions regarding their language learning strategies which were adapted from the Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire (LLSQ), and 3.) assessment of their English proficiency level using the EF Standard English Test (EF SET). Data was collected through the online distribution of questionnaires utilizing Google Forms®. Also, data were analyzed using the non-experimental descriptive-correlational design to measure the said variables. Results showed that most of the pre-service teachers are female and are aged 20-21 years old. Some of the most effective strategies that the respondents use are repetition (speaking), listening to what somebody is saying (listening), checking and rechecking one's understanding in reading a passage (reading), and consulting a dictionary (writing). Also, the majority of the respondents fall under the "Intermediate" level of English proficiency. In general, there is no significant relationship between the language learning strategies and the English proficiency level of the pre-service teachers. However, age and year level have been found to be significantly correlated with their level of English proficiency. Furthermore, researchers should adapt a more specific standardized test to accurately measure each of the four macroskills. Understanding the LLS effectiveness in improving the English proficiency level of learners is essential for developing English lessons or instruction. Lastly, schools and related stakeholders should consider formal learning and school accreditation to ensure effective English teaching and learning, rather than using personal language learning strategies as a means of improving English proficiency.*

***Keywords:** English proficiency, language proficiency, language learning strategies, macroskills, basic language skills, strategy inventory of language learning (SILL), EF Standard English Test, Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire (LLSQ), reading, writing, listening, speaking*

**Introduction**

In today's global world, one cannot deny and ignore the importance of English since it is the greatest common language spoken universally (Nishanthi, 2018, p. 871). One consequence of the dominant status of English in many countries is the growing demand for knowledgeable, skillful, and effective teachers of English (Richards, 2017). Competency in English language teaching draws on content or subject matter knowledge, teaching skills, and the ability to teach in English – usually viewed as a skill that is influenced by the teacher's language proficiency (Richards, 2017).

English language proficiency is the ability of students to use the English language to make and communicate meaning in spoken and written contexts while completing their program of study (https://policy.usq.edu.au/documents/161460PL) (Retrieved May 3, 2021).

Since English proficiency is associated with spoken and written contexts, the four basic language skills are domains to one's English proficiency. Language educators have long used the concepts of four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing. These four language skills are sometimes called the "macro-skills" (Aydogan, 2014). Listening and speaking skills aim at fostering effective oral communication while reading and writing skills are tools for achieving effective written communication(Sadiku, 2015).

In the Philippine context, English is the country's official language aside from Filipino for purposes of communication and instruction as stated in Sec. 7, Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. The government adopted policies to ensure that Filipino students develop adequate proficiency in the English language. One of these was the 1974 Bilingual Education Policy (BEP), which aims to use the English language as the medium of instruction in science and mathematics (Barrot, 2018).

However, the English proficiency of Filipinos through time is assessed to be decreasing at an alarming rate. On the global English Proficiency Index (EPI), the Philippines fell six spots from its 14th place in 2018 to 20th among 88 non-native English countries in 2019. On the latest global EPI in 2020, the Philippines' rate has declined sharply once more from its 20th place to its current ranking of 27 out of 100 non-native English countries. Despite the annual drastic fall in ranking, the Philippines garnered a score of 562 out of 800, which still falls under "High Proficiency" in the EPI's "Proficiency Band," which is based on the score rather than rank. The proficiency bands range from very high to very low proficiency.

Nevertheless, as other countries are springing up in their English proficiency ranks, the Philippines must take action to improve its declining English proficiency level. So, in second language learning, the focus must be on the factors that affect the successful learning and enhancement of language proficiency.

Since the early 1970s, a considerable amount of research has been done to explore the key factors that enhance or hinder learning a second language. Among these factors are learning strategies used to study a second language (Al-Qahtani, 2013). However, most of these studies were based on the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL), and there are no studies found that utilized skill-based language learning strategies.

This paper reports on a study with non-native English-speaking students enrolled in Pangasinan State University – Bayambang Campus taking up a Bachelor's degree of Secondary Education major in English.

Therefore, it is in the foregoing context that this study was conducted with the view of identifying and looking into the relationship between the self-reported language learning strategies of the respondents (in reading, writing, listening, and speaking), and their English proficiency level.

Results showed that most of the pre-service teachers are female, and are aged 20-21 years old. Some of the most effective strategies that the respondents use are *repetition* (speaking), *listening to what somebody is saying* (listening), *checking and rechecking one's understanding in reading a passage* (reading), and *consulting a dictionary* (writing). Also, the majority of the respondents fall under the "Intermediate" level of English proficiency. In general, there is no significant relationship between the language learning strategies and the English proficiency level of the pre-service teachers. However, age and year level have been found to be significantly correlated with their level of English proficiency.

This study recommends adapting another test for measuring the respondents' English proficiency level; and separate English proficiency tests for speaking and listening, reading, and writing. It is also advised for future research to compare this study's results to the relationship between the language learning strategies used by EFL teachers in the class and the learners' English proficiency level.

**Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study was to determine the relationship between pre-service teachers' language learning strategies and their level of English proficiency. It has also intended to attain the following objectives:

1. To determine the profile of the pre-service teachers in terms of age, gender, and year level;
2. To assess their language learning strategies in terms of reading, writing, listening, and speaking;
3. To measure their level of English proficiency;
4. To determine the relationship between the respondents' language learning strategies and their English proficiency level;
5. To test the connection between their sociodemographic profile and English proficiency level; and
6. To identify the significant difference between the pre-service teachers and

their year level among the English proficiency level.

## Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to determine the correlation between the language learning strategies and the English proficiency level among pre-service English teachers. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the extent of the language learning strategies used by the pre-service English teachers in terms of:
    1.1 reading;
    1.2 writing;
    1.3 listening; and
    1.4 speaking?

2. What is the English proficiency level of the pre-service English teachers?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the language learning strategies and the level of English proficiency among the pre-service English teachers?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the English proficiency level and the socio-demographic profile of pre-service teachers?
5. Is there a significant difference between the English proficiency level of the pre-service teachers and their year level?

## Methodology

The study employed a non-experimental descriptive correlational research method to determine the language learning strategies and the English proficiency level of pre-service English teachers enrolled during the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021 at Pangasinan State University- Bayambang Campus.

The present study considered the English proficiency level of the pre-service teachers as its dependent variable. Their English proficiency level was determined through their test scores in a test based on the EF Standard English Test (EF SET). Their test scores were indicated on English proficiency levels or labels such as "Beginner", "Intermediate", and "Advanced".

This study also assumed that different language learning strategies in terms of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are factors expected to be determinants of how pre-service English teachers develop their English proficiency. The data were gathered through a set of questions adapting the Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire (LLSQ).

Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed for the determination of the relationship between language learning strategies and the English proficiency level of pre-service English teachers.

## Subjects of the Study

To determine the language learning strategies and their relationship to the English proficiency level, the researchers conducted the said study among the pre-service English teachers enrolled during the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021 at Pangasinan State University – Bayambang Campus.

The respondents involved in the study were the eighty-one (81) English majors from Bachelor of Secondary Education which include (27) first years, (27) second years, and (27) third years. The researchers utilized systematic sampling to eliminate the phenomenon of clustered selection and a low probability of contaminating the data. Moreover, it also provided researchers with a degree of control and a sense of the process.

## Research Instrument

The researchers utilized survey questionnaires composed of three parts. The first part is made up of the respondent's profile such as age, gender, and year level. Meanwhile, the second part is composed of 40 questions regarding the different language learning strategies of pre-service English teachers in terms of reading, writing, listening, and speaking which was adapted from the Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire (LLSQ). The last portion of the questionnaire is composed of the English Proficiency Test. The questions are based on EF SET, a standardized test of the English language designed for non-native English speakers. The said questionnaire is in the form of Google forms to ensure the safety and welfare of the respondents amidst the COVID19 pandemic.

**Data Gathering Procedure**

*Phase 1: Drafting the Letter*

The researchers drafted a letter that seeks permission to conduct a study from the Campus Executive Director (CED) of Pangasinan State University (PSU), noted by the adviser of the researchers while the instrument was in the validation process. Upon the secured approval, the researchers commenced with the respondent recruitment and request for the needed data.

*Phase 2: Distribution of the Questionnaire*

The survey questionnaires prepared were distributed online by the researchers. The respondents were asked to answer questions that are related to the study which served as data. These include the information on the demographic profile of the respondents and their language learning strategies in the four macro skills. The questions formed are close-ended where the respondents requested to tick their chosen response.

Furthermore, the research objectives and the procedures for answering the questionnaire were explained thoroughly to the participants through online communication.

*Phase 3: Retrieval and Analysis of data*

The questionnaires were retrieved immediately, and the responses were checked for thoroughness upon submission which ensured a 100% return rate. Each questionnaire was assigned with a code that facilitated its efficient tracking and retrieval.

The data gathered were then subjected to data processing where these were coded, encoded, and analyzed.

**Statistical Treatment of Data**

In analyzing the data that were gathered, the researchers used statistical tools.

Furthermore, the researchers used the Statistical Procedures for Social Sciences (SPSS) program for analysis. The following statistical tools were employed in the study:

**For Statement of the Problem No. 1**

For the respondents' language learning strategies and level of English proficiency, a five-point Likert scale using the average weighted mean was used. The scheme is shown below:

| Range | Descriptive Equivalent |
|---|---|
| 4.24 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree |
| 3.43 – 4.23 | Agree |
| 2.67 – 3.42 | Undecided |
| 1.81 – 2.61 | Disagree |
| 1.00 -1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

The formula used for the average weighted mean is:

$$WN = \frac{\varepsilon f x}{n} \quad \text{and} \quad AWM = \frac{\varepsilon WM}{c}$$

Where:
Wm = weighted mean each category
AWM = average weighted mean of each area
f = number or respondents in each category
x = point value classification
n = sample size
c = number of categories

**For Statement of the Problem No. 2**

For the descriptive presentation of the pre-service English teachers' level of English proficiency, percentage and frequency distribution, and average weighted mean were used.

The formula used for percentage is:

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100$$

Where:
P = percentage equivalent of each bracket
f = number or respondents in each bracket
n = sample size

In addition, the researchers also utilized the weighted mean. The formula used is:

$$WN = \frac{\varepsilon f x}{n} \quad \text{and} \quad AWM = \frac{\varepsilon WM}{c}$$

Where:
Wm = weighted mean each category
AWM = average of weighted mean of each area
f = number or respondents in each category
x = point value classification
n = sample size
c = number of categories

**For Statement of the Problem No. 3**

To determine if there is a significant correlation between the language learning strategies and the English proficiency of the pre-service English Teachers, the Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. The formula is as follows:

$$r = \frac{\sum(xi - \overline{x})(yi - \overline{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(xi - \overline{x})^2 \ \sum(yi - \overline{y})^2}}$$

Where:

$r$ =correlation coefficient
$xi$ =values of the x-variable in a sample
$\overline{x}$=mean of the values of the x-variable
$yi$ =values of the y-variable in a sample
$\overline{y}$=mean of the values of the y-variable

**For Statement of the Problem No. 4**

To determine the significant relationship between the language learning strategies and the English proficiency level of pre-service English teachers when compared along with their socio-demographic profile, the Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. The formula is as follows:

$$r = \frac{\sum(xi - \overline{x})(yi - \overline{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(xi - \overline{x})^2 \ \sum(yi - \overline{y})^2}}$$

Where:

$r$ =correlation coefficient
$xi$ =values of the x-variable in a sample
$\overline{x}$=mean of the values of the x-variable
$yi$ =values of the y-variable in a sample
$\overline{y}$=mean of the values of the y-variable

**For Statement of the Problem No. 5**

To determine the significant difference among the language learning strategies and the English proficiency level of pre-service English teachers, a One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. The following formulas are as follows:

$$F = \frac{MST}{MSE}$$

$$MST = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k}(T_i^2/n_i) - G^2/n}{k-1}$$

$$MSE = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k}\sum_{j=1}^{N_i} Y_{ij}^2 - \sum_{i=1}^{k}(T_i^2/n_i)}{n-k}$$

**Limitations of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to gather information about the students' language learning strategies in relation to their level of English proficiency. In order to arrive at the major focus of the study, the researchers considered the said variables.

The extent of the language learning strategies was delimited to the four types of macroskills which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Finally, since this is a descriptive and correlational research, part of the limitation of this study is that correlation does not equal causation.

**Results and Discussion**

**Frequency Distribution**

The personal profile of the respondents includes information as to their sex and age. These data are presented in Figures 3-A to 3-C.

**On Sex.** In terms of the sex of the pre-service teachers, it is dominated by the female group. It can be inferred from the table that 76.7 % of them (69 out of 90) are female respondents while the remaining 23.3 % (21 out of 90) belonged to the male group.

**Figure 3-A.**
*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents as to their Sex*
**N = 90**

| Sex | f | % |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 21 | 23.3 |
| Female | 69 | 76.7 |
| **Total** | **90** | **100** |

**On Age.** The majority of the respondents (73.3%) numbering 66 out of 90 respondents are aged 20-21 and the minority of the respondents (4.4%) or 4 out of 90 of the respondents are aged 22-23.

**Figure 3-B.**
*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents as to their Age*
**N = 90**

| Age | f | % |
|---|---|---|
| 18-19 years old | 20 | 22.2 |
| 20-21 years old | 66 | 73.3 |
| 22-23 years old | 4 | 4.4 |
| **Total** | **90** | **100** |

**On Year Level.** The ninety (90) respondents are composed of pre-service teachers from Bachelor of Secondary Education (Major in Communication Arts – English). The respondents are equally distributed from First Year to Third Year which has 30 respondents that gained 33.3% of the population.

**Figure 3-C.**
*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents as to their Year Level*
**N = 90**

| Year Level | *f* | % |
|---|---|---|
| First Year | 30 | 33.3 |
| Second Year | 30 | 33.3 |
| Third Year | 30 | 33.3 |
| **Total** | **90** | **100** |

**Language Learning Strategies**
The responses of the pre-service teachers towards Language Learning Strategies are presented in Figures 4-A to 4-D.

**Figure 4-A.**
*Language Learning Strategies of English Pre-Service Teachers in terms of Speaking*

| Items | Mean | DE | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I use rhymes to remember new English words. | 3.24 | Undecided | 10 |
| 2. I try to remember new English words by pronouncing them. | 4.44 | Strongly Agree | 3 |
| 3. I speak a word or a sentence several times to remember it. | 4.58 | Strongly Agree | 1 |
| 4. I try to learn a new pattern by making a sentence orally. | 3.80 | Agree | 8 |
| 5. I try to translate Filipino sentences into English sentences and produce them orally. | 3.87 | Agree | 7 |
| 6. I try to remember the English word equivalent to a Filipino word. | 4.00 | Agree | 6 |
| 7. I try to evaluate my utterances after speaking. | 4.21 | Agree | 4 |
| 8. I try to correct the mistakes that I produce orally. | 4.52 | Strongly Agree | 2 |
| 9. I ask somebody to correct me when I talk. | 4.02 | Agree | 5 |
| 10. I practice speaking with my friends and teachers. | Agree | Usually true | 9 |
| **Total** | **4.04** | **Agree** | |

**In Speaking.** As gleaned from the table above, speaking a word several times to remember it ranked first with an average weighted mean of 4.58 or is equivalent to "Strong agree". This implies that one of the most effective strategies when it comes to speaking English is repetition. On the other hand, using rhymes to remember English words ranked the least with an AWM of 3.24.

**Figure 4-B.**
*Language Learning Strategies of English Pre-Service Teachers in terms of Listening*
**N = 90**

| Items | Mean | DE | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I try to guess what somebody is saying by using grammatical rules. | 3.57 | Agree | 8 |
| 2. I learn English by watching English TV programs. | 4.24 | Strongly Agree | 3 |
| 3. I learn English by listening to English songs or other listening scripts. | 4.22 | Agree | 4 |
| 4. I try to understand what somebody is saying by translating it to Filipino | 3.46 | Agree | 9 |
| 5. I concentrate on grammar rather than on communication. | 3.22 | Undecided | 10 |
| 6. While listening, I take notes to remember ideas. | 3.88 | Agree | 7 |
| 7. I try to be aware of which sounds give the greatest trouble. In this way, I can pay special attention to them while I listen and practice. | 4.11 | Agree | 6 |
| 8. I listen to what I say to practice my listening skill. | 4.27 | Strongly Agree | 2 |
| 9. Listening to what somebody is saying improves my listening skill. | 4.51 | Strongly Agree | 1 |
| 10. If I cannot understand what somebody is saying, I ask him/her to slow down and say it again. | 4.19 | Agree | 5 |
| **Total** | **3.97** | **Agree** | |

**In Listening.** The table reveals that listening to what somebody is saying improves one's listening to skill ranked first with a mean of 4.51. This implies that one of the strategies to effectively learn a language involves paying attention to what the speaker utters. Meanwhile, concentrating on grammar rather than on communication is what the pre-service teachers do only about half the time.

**Figure 4-C.**
*Language Learning Strategies of English Pre-Service Teachers in terms of Reading*
N = 90

| Items | Mean | DE | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. To understand unfamiliar English words while I am reading, I guess from available clues. | 4.14 | Agree | 6 |
| 2. I learn English by reading English books or magazines. | 4.18 | Agree | 5 |
| 3. I try to understand sentences by analyzing their patterns. | 3.97 | Agree | 8 |
| 4. I try to translate word for word. | 3.42 | Undecided | 10 |
| 5. I try to understand the passage by using my general knowledge and experience. | 4.30 | Strongly Agree | 2 |
| 6. I read a text more for ideas than words. | 4.24 | Strongly Agree | 4 |
| 7. I check and recheck my understanding after reading a passage. | 4.40 | Strongly Agree | 1 |
| 8. If I cannot understand a reading passage, I try to analyze what difficulty I actually have. | 4.29 | Strongly Agree | 3 |
| 9. If I do not understand the content of a reading passage, I ask my friends or my teachers. | 4.07 | Agree | 7 |
| 10. I discuss reading passages with my friends. | 3.84 | Agree | 9 |
| **Total** | **4.09** | **Agree** | |

**In Reading.** Checking and rechecking their understanding after reading a passage (4.40 AWM) ranked first among the language learning reading strategies of the pre-service teachers, the table shows. From this data, it could be concluded that in learning and studying English, one of the best ways is to assess one's understanding before and after reading a passage. Alternately, trying to translate word for word while reading a passage seems to be the least used strategy of the pre-service teachers in reading. It had garnered an average weighted mean of 3.42 which means that they do it only about half the time.

**Figure 4-D.**
*Language Learning Strategies of English Pre-Service Teachers in terms of Writing*
N = 90

| Items | Mean | DE | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I try to translate word for word. | 3.22 | Somewhat true | 8 |
| 2. I mix Filipino words and English words in writing. | 2.71 | Undecided | 10 |
| 3. I write the main ideas first as a guideline. | 4.18 | Agree | 4 |
| 4. I use Filipino writing patterns to keep writing in English. | 2.83 | Somewhat true | 9 |
| 5. I consult a dictionary to find out the meanings of words. | 4.68 | Strongly Agree | 1 |
| 6. I write out new material over and over. | 3.70 | Agree | 7 |
| 7. I read my writing and correct the mistakes. | 4.62 | Strongly Agree | 2 |
| 8. I try to be aware of which words or grammar rules give the greatest trouble, this way I can pay special attention to them while I write and practice. | 4.43 | Strongly Agree | 3 |
| 9. I ask my friends or teachers to correct my writing. | 4.01 | Agree | 5 |
| 10. I write messages to my friends using English. | 3.73 | Agree | 6 |
| **Total** | **3.81** | **Agree** | |

**In Writing.** The table denotes that consulting a dictionary in finding out a meaning of a word ranked first with an AWM of 4.68. The majority of the respondents (69 of 90) answered that they use the dictionary almost always while writing as a part of their language learning strategy. However, mixing Filipino words with English words ranked the lowest with an average weighted mean of 2.71.

**English Proficiency Level**

The English Proficiency Level as observed through the respondents' EF SET results is presented in Figure 5.

**Figure 5.**
*Level of English Proficiency of the Pre-Service English Teachers*
**N = 90**

| English Proficiency Level | *f* | % |
|---|---|---|
| Beginner | 2 | 2.2 |
| Intermediate | 48 | 53.3 |
| Advanced | 40 | 44.4 |
| **Total** | **90** | **100** |

The data presented above demonstrate that more than half of the pre-service English teachers which is 53.3% (48 of 90) fall under the Intermediate Level of English Proficiency. This means that majority of the respondents can deal with familiar situations frequently encountered in work and life in English, and that they can also interpret and produce complex information of both concrete and abstract topics in English.

Accordingly, 44.4% of the respondents (40 0f 90) have an English Proficiency level of "Advanced". These students are those that can infer implicit meaning and use English flexibly in social and professional settings and can understand and communicate with ease, spontaneity, and precision for virtually all types of written and spoken forms of English. Lastly, two (2) among the 90 respondents fall under the category of "Beginner" which means that they can understand and communicate simple basic phrases.

**Correlation**

The following tables below show the relationship between the language learning

behaviors of the respondents among the four macroskills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and their level of English proficiency as well as the correlation between the respondents' sociodemographic profile and their level of English proficiency.

**Figure 6-A.**
*Correlation between the Respondents' Language Learning Strategies and their Level of English Proficiency*

| Language Learning Strategy | r | p | N | H$_o$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Speaking | -.210* | 0.47 | 90 | Reject |
| 2. Listening | 0.40 | .710 | 90 | Accept |
| 3. Reading | .137 | .197 | 90 | Accept |
| 4. Writing | -.157 | .140 | 90 | Accept |

Figure 6-A presents the correlation between the Language Learning Strategies of the respondents and their level of English proficiency using Pearson r correlation.

The table above states that there is no significant correlation between the three macroskills—listening, reading, and writing (language learning strategies), and their level of English proficiency.

Meanwhile, the language learning strategies of the pre-service teachers in speaking and their English proficiency have a significant relationship.

In speaking, it shows that there is a negative minimal linear correlation ($r$= -.210, p = .047). This means that those students who focus more on speaking strategies are less likely to attain a high score on English proficiency tests.

In listening, it can be depicted that there is a positive moderate linear correlation ($r_s$= .044, p = .678) between the variables. This entails that students who observe the listening strategies are more likely to attain a high level of English proficiency.

When it comes to reading, there is a positive minimal linear correlation ($r_s$= .139, p = .190) between the variables. It could be inferred that students who practice reading as their language learning strategy are more likely to get a high English proficiency level.

In terms of writing, the table shows that there is a negative minimal linear correlation ($r_s$= -.181, p = .089) between the language learning strategies and the English proficiency level of the

respondents. With these figures, it could be stated that students who give priority to writing as their language learning strategy are less likely to have a high English proficiency level.

However, these relationships were found to be not significant at 0.05 level of significance (p > .05). Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the pre-service English teachers' language learning strategies and their English proficiency level is accepted.

The findings are similar to the study of (Kiram, et.al, 2014) and (Ella, 2018) where they also found out that there is not enough evidence to say that there is a relationship between the overall language learning strategy and language proficiency.

**Figure 6-B.**
*Correlation between the Respondents' Socio-demographic Profile and their Level of English Proficiency*

| Socio-demographic profile | r | p | N | $H_o$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | -0.005 | .965 | 90 | Accept |
| Age | .210* | .047 | 90 | Reject |
| Year Level | .491** | .000 | 90 | Reject |

The table above shows that there is no relationship between the respondents' sociodemographic profile and their level of English proficiency. Furthermore, this displays that these variables are not dependent on each other.

The above result is in contrast with the study conducted by (Magno, 2010), which explains that socio-demographic profile, specifically the year level (years spent in learning English) significantly contributes to the English proficiency of students.

A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine whether the pre-service English teachers' scores on the standardized English proficiency test are a function of their year level. The independent variable represented the three different year levels of the pre-service English teachers: first year; second year; and third year. The dependent variable is the pre-service teachers' scores in the English proficiency standardized test.

See Figure 7-A for the means and standard deviations for each of the three groups.

**Figure 7-A.**
*Means and Standard Deviations of Standardized English Proficiency Test*

| Year Level | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| First Year | 30 | 2.17 | .592 |
| Second Year | 30 | 2.50 | .509 |
| Third Year | 30 | 2.57 | .504 |
| **Total Group** | **90** | **2.41** | **.559** |

An alpha level of .05 was used for all analyses. Moreover, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene F*(2, 87) = .590, *p* > .05] indicating that this assumption underlying the application of ANOVA was met. The one-way ANOVA of standardized test score (see Figure 7-B) revealed a statistically significant main effect [*F*(2, 87) = 4.788, *p* < .05] indicating that not all three-year levels resulted in the same standardized test score. The ω2= .077, a medium effect size indicated that approximately 7.7 % of the variation in standardized test scores is attributable to differences between the three groups of year levels.

**Figure 7-B.**
*Analysis of Variance for Standardized English Proficiency Test*

| Source | SS | df | MS | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2.756 | 2 | 1.378 | 4.788 | .011 |
| Within Groups | 25.033 | 87 | .288 | | |
| **Total** | **27.789** | **89** | | | |

Post hoc comparisons using Games-Howell procedures were used to determine which pairs among the three group's means differed. These results were tabulated in Figure 7-C which indicates that the third year pre-service teachers (M = 2.57) score significantly higher in the standardized English proficiency test than the students who are in their first year (M = 2.17). The effect size for this significant pairwise difference is 0.75 which falls under medium effect size.

**Figure 7-C.**
*Games-Howell Post Hoc Results and Effect Size of Standardized Test Scores by Year level*

| Year Level | Mean Differences $(\bar{X}i–\bar{X}k)$ (Effect Size is indicated in parentheses) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | 1. | 2. | 3. |
| First Year | 2.17 | | -.333 | -.400* |
| Second Year | 2.50 | .333 | | -0.67 |
| Third Year | 2.57 | .400* (0.75) | 0.67 | |

## Conclusion

In line with the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

(1) Most of the pre-service English teachers are females, aged 20-21 years old, and are equally distributed at every year level.

(2.1) In terms of the language strategies of the respondents, one of the most effective strategies they use when it comes to speaking English is repetition. On the other hand, using rhymes to remember English words is the least language learning strategy used by the pre-service teachers.

(2.2) Listening to what somebody is saying improves one's listening skills is the most frequently used by the respondents in terms of the language learning strategy in listening. Meanwhile, concentrating on grammar rather than on communication is what the pre-service teachers do only about half the time.

(2.3) When it comes to the language strategy in reading, checking and rechecking the respondents' understanding after reading a passage is the most used strategy. In contrast, trying to translate word for word while reading a passage is deemed to be the least used strategy of the pre-service teachers in reading.

(2.4) Consulting a dictionary in finding out a meaning of a word ranked first in the language learning strategies of the respondents in terms of writing. However, mixing Filipino words with English words ranked the lowest among the strategies used by the pre-service teachers.

(3) More than half of the Pre-Service English teachers are under the "Intermediate" Level of English Proficiency. Almost half of the respondents have an English Proficiency level of "Advanced". Meanwhile, the least number of respondents fall under the category of "Beginner".

(4) In general, there is no significant relationship between the language learning strategies in reading, writing, and listening as compared to the English proficiency level of the pre-service teachers. However, the socio-demographic profile (age, and year level) of the respondents when compared along their English proficiency were found to have a significant relationship.

(5) The pre-service teachers who are in their third year level scored significantly higher on the standardized English proficiency test than the students who are in their first year level. Hence, there is a significant difference between the year level and the English proficiency of the students.

## Recommendations

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions, the researchers recommend the following:
(1)     Adapting another test for measuring the respondents' English proficiency level; and separate English proficiency tests for speaking and listening, reading, and writing. The following are reasons found in conducting this study to consider changing the EF set:

(1.1) The EF set is an online test that can be repeated five times with the same questions, hence, it does not guarantee an accurate report of their English proficiency.
(1.2) The online EF Set only measured the English proficiency of the respondents in listening and reading, as such, having separate tests for the other macroskills may affect their general English proficiency level.
(1.3) The EF set only lasts for 15 minutes or less and has fewer test questions compared to other standard English Proficiency Tests.

(2)     Understanding the LLS effectiveness in improving the English proficiency level of learners is essential for developing English lessons or instruction. However, as the findings show that there is no significant relationship between the strategies used by the learners themselves and their English proficiency but has a significant relationship with their age and year level;  LLS used by EFL teachers should not be based upon it. It is then advised for future research to compare this study's results to the relationship between the language learning strategies used by EFL teachers in the class and the learners' English proficiency level.
(3)Schools and related stakeholders should consider leveling up formal English classes and school accreditation status to ensure effective English teaching to ESL students. It is also suggested that future researchers conduct further study on how and under what conditions the factors can contribute to students' English achievement.

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