



English proficiency of the pre-service teachers in one state university in the Philippines

Estelito J Punongbayan

College of Teacher Education, Batangas State University ARASOF, Nasugbu, Batangas

Abstract

This study focused on English proficiency of the pre-service teachers in one state university in the Philippines. It determined their profile in terms of age and gender; the results of the respondents' English Proficiency test; and the significant differences in the English Proficiency test results of male and female pre-service teachers. The study employed the descriptive method to determine their level of proficiency and interview guide questions. Based on the results of the study, it was revealed that most of the respondents are in between 18-20 years old with a 43% of the total percentage of respondents. The respondents are 62 in all, broken down as follows: 55 females and 7 males. The respondents are somewhat proficient in English Proficiency Test. It was revealed that there is no significant difference in the English Proficiency test results. The findings negatively imply that most of the respondents are in beginning level.

Keywords: pre-service teachers, English proficiency, age, gender

1. Introduction

English is a globally effective medium of communication which gives an array of opportunities to everyone. It opens a new pathway to success in every fields, business, economics, and academics.

As a second language, English has an undeniable influence in the field of education. Teachers and students embrace the said language in the world of teaching and learning process. It is widely spread and used all over the world. As the world makes rapid changes and progress, English is still a language spoken by millions of people. Many countries accepted this as their second language, it is being taught in different schools and universities. In fact, English language is being used in written books and translation, articles, online resources, road signs and many more. Most of the countries worldwide use the English language as the medium of instruction due to its effectiveness in terms of communication.

Importance is latent to the society; great opportunities are waiting for someone who is studying and using the English language. Most of the people know that different countries worldwide hired teachers that are proficient in English language. The reason behind this is countries know that English language is the most used language in communication.

Different schools in Philippines administer test not because it is a requirement rather it is used to test or to know how the students improve their skills in using the English language. In fact, most of the universities in the country give the first-year students an English Proficiency test as an entrance exam to measure their proficiency in the said language after ten (10) years of studying from elementary to secondary.

In line with this, Filipinos are considered as a good English speaker and as a support to this, schools nationwide cultivate the Filipino minds by means of having this as an integral part of the curriculum since elementary. That is the reason why many universities made this language enhancement as a part of their curriculum and

specialization. Language is a crucial tool in communication. In the field of education, curriculum implementers and instructors exert effort to prepare the students especially the pre-service teachers in using the language in the teaching field to meet the necessary outcomes for the teachers accompanied with the university and course goals. Teachers, professor, and instructors emphasize the communication skills, language acquisition, mastery, demonstration, and other teaching learning process.

For many people, learning is a way to get access to a broader range of information, connections, and opportunities. The importance of English is clear for it is the globally dominant language. When students' proficiency in English language is high, it will affect and improve the academic performance of such students. Learners that are good and proficient in English are competitive, as well as learners can be a good speaker or listener. It can be also a good way of communication for them to be able to understand easily the subjects that are taught in English language.

English Proficiency can make every individual to be a successful in different fields as well as the learners in current time even in the future to attain a good academic achievement. Its explicit influence on the other learners or even other people in different career is highly perceived giving advantageous reasons to be proficient and competitive. It is also pivotal for the pre-service students enhance their learning capabilities to easily acquire the necessary information in textbooks, medias, internet and other written articles which all can see the advantage of having a high or good level of English proficiency. As such, concerns related to teachers' beliefs and teacher are instrumental factors in ensuring that the pre-service teachers are fully equipped with content knowledge and skills are prepared to embark on their teaching career in a meaningful and effective manner. It is very substantial to the pre-service teachers to be proficient in second language, as a teacher they should be competitive and knowledgeable enough in English language. Therefore, it is hoped that pre-service

teacher, while they are in teacher education programs, refine their skills about language learning to enhance their own learning and development.

Nevertheless, where the proficiency in English is lacking any academic setting, it will lower the academic performance of such students. A person who is proficient in English may have unlimited access to the world's known scientific and technological discoveries that are predominantly written in English. This means that for a better grasp of knowledge in English, students should be more exposed in Mass Media, Technology, and Printed Reading Materials (Alogog, 2013) ^[1]. In connection with the relationship between language environment and language preference to the English language proficiency, it is presumed that students who have high proficiency in English are expected to perform well in English as a subject and in other school subjects. Melor Md Yunus and Gan Ek Hen (2011) ^[2] said that many local graduates are still unemployed due to their lack of fluency in English as most job sectors demand those with the capability to communicate in English effectively. Thus, the researcher focused on, English Proficiency of fourth year BEED pre-service teachers of one state university in the Philippines. Many have a great impact in their preparedness in teaching career in the future. The revelation above seems to suggest that mastery of English language is very important in the field of education, to the teachers, students and even pre-service teachers in academic performance, learning, studying and in teaching aspects. That is why comparison and improvement is highly examined and investigated in this research. In this idea the researchers focus to conduct the study to know if respondents are ready to be the 21st century teachers, and if respondents are competitive enough to use the second language in teaching and learning process as a teacher to be. As 21st century teachers it is important to be knowledgeable and aware in the English language, so that they can teach the subject well to their students and encourage them to also speak the language inside and outside of the school.

The general purpose of this study is to determine the English proficiency of the fourth year Bachelor of Elementary Education pre-service teachers in one state university in the Philippines. Specifically, it aimed to seek answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age and;
 - 1.2 Gender?
2. What are the results of the respondents' English Proficiency Test?
3. Is there a significant difference in the English Proficiency test results of male and female of BEED Pre-service teachers?

2. Materials and Methods

The descriptive research method is used in gathering the needed information for this study. This method helped the researcher to interpret the theoretical meaning of the findings and hypothesis development for further studies. Specifically, the researcher utilized a test type of descriptive research method which enables the researcher to gather information from the respondents without the respondents having any difficulties in answering the questions which required for the researcher to have information regarding the English Proficiency of the 4th year pre-service Bachelor of

Elementary Education. Using this research design, the researcher was able to interpret more the data and information that they have gathered and explain and tell the processes they have done in this study. It also helped this study to be more detailed and specific when it comes to interpreting the results of this study.

The respondents of the study covered a total sixty-two (62) selected respondents; which include 7 male and 55 females 4th year BEED pre-service teachers of Batangas State University-ARASOF Nasugbu.

The setting of the study was chosen by the researcher because the findings would be a great help on the department for their future use and will serve as a reference for the improvement and development of curriculum in the College of Teacher Education that would help enhance the quality of education in the country. The questionnaire was given to the respondents during their vacant and free time.

In this study, the survey questionnaire and interview guide were constructed as instruments to attain the needed data. These instruments helped the researchers dig information to determine the level of English Proficiency of the Pre-service Secondary Teachers.

The first instrument used was an adaptive questionnaire that was divided into two (2) parts: Demographic Profile and the examination about English Proficiency which is also divided into three parts namely: Grammar, Vocabulary and Reading. The second instrument presented is the interview guide that discussed the practices of Pre-Service Secondary Teachers do to enhance and improve their English Proficiency.

To determine the level of English proficiency of Pre-Service Teachers, the researcher researched and downloaded questionnaires related to their topic. The said instrument was summed up and revised to form a new instrument for a better understanding of the topic while the researchers constructed their own interview guide.

Before the construction of the questionnaire, the researcher read previous thesis, journals and books to gain enough background information regarding writing the questionnaire. The researcher utilized a questionnaire as the main tool for gathering the information needed in this study. After the approval of the request for the distribution of the questionnaire, the researcher administered the questionnaire to the respondents of the study. The respondents were given a day to answer the questionnaire. After the allotted time, the researcher retrieved the questionnaires. In the end, the researcher anticipated that 90% of the survey questionnaires could be returned. This anticipation was because not all the respondents were able to answer the questionnaire due to some reasons and busy schedule.

Key answers were used to check the proficiency test. Ranking was done after determining the level of the proficiency of the participants.

The data gathered were analyzed and statistically treated to obtain answers to the proposed question. To provide clearer meaning to the data gathered, the researchers utilized the ranking.

The data that were interpreted from the instruments determined the English proficiency level of fourth year Bachelor of Elementary Education pre-service teachers of Batangas State University ARASOF-Nasugbu. The level of English Proficiency determined the significant difference between the two groups of respondents which classified by gender.

A numerical value scale is assigned to each potential choice

and a mean figure for all the responses is computed at the end of the evaluation. This is the value scale of proficiency used by the researchers that will be using in interpreting the result of English Proficiency Test.

Value Scale	Score Range	Verbal Interpretation
6	89 and above	Extremely Proficient
5	78-88	Moderately Proficient
4	67-77	Somewhat Proficient
3	56-66	Slightly Proficient
2	45-55	Not all Proficient
1	34-44	Beginner

For the interpretation of proficiency test, the result of the test will be interpreted according to their level of proficiency. In relation to the research method, English proficiency test in interview guide were used by the researchers as the data gathering instrument of this study. The data gathered from the survey were tallied, tabulated, analyzed, as well as interpreted. The statistical method includes the following:

Frequency Count. This was used to present the number of actual responses at the participants to specific scores, gender and age.

Weighted Mean. This was used to determine the assessment of the participants with regards to their personal profiles.

Percentage. This was used to determine the frequency, counts and percentage distribution of personal related variables of the participants. It was used to determine the measure of portion in a relation to a whole.

3. Results and Discussion

Profile of the respondents in terms of Age. The age of the respondents is one of the most significant characteristics in understanding the views of a problem. It has a big factor of knowing the level of maturity of the respondents particularly the Bachelor of Elementary Education Pre-Service Teachers in socializing the different kinds of student in the field of their profession, and in the sense of giving response to all the questions of the researcher. The respondents can answer all the English Proficiency test questions of the researcher with the high level of their maturity. Therefore, knowing the age of the respondents is very important to get the main concept of the study and to have meaningful findings in the study.

The responses of the fourth year Bachelor of Elementary Education pre-service teachers in terms of their age are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Profile of the respondents in terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
18-22	43	69.35%	1
23-27	14	22.58%	2
28-32	2	3.24%	4
33above	3	4.83%	3
TOTAL	62	100%	

Table 1 presents the age of the fourth year BEED pre-service teachers of Batangas State University ARASOF-Nasugbu. Majority of the respondents belong in the age bracket of 18-22 years old. It only implied that their ages fit the year level they are in because it obtained the combined highest percentage of 91.93 %. The remaining respondents belong in the age category of 27-39 years old. These are mostly students who have stopped their schooling

previously and how just natural to complete their course to learn and to earn a degree even though their age is far from ages of the majority. Moreover, it simply implies that the level of maturity of the fourth- year Bachelor of Elementary Education Pre- Service Teachers of BatangasState University ARASOF-Nasugbu based on their age are appropriate for the level or age of the students that they are going to encounter in the field of their profession.

Profile of the respondents in terms of Gender

The researcher include their gender as one of the factors of gathering the data that is reliable to the study and the perceptions of the respondents towards the use of English as a medium of instruction in the field of their profession. Gender is also one of the focus of the researchers if this will affect to their proficiency on English language.

As indicated to the study of Kvara Guledani [3], it will be viewed as the contrasts between the female and male students at schools and instructive focuses with respect to their scholarly execution, their frames of mind, desires and run of the mill standards of conduct and attempt to examine the organic or social reasons and bases for these distinctions. Initially, the issue of gender stratification in the cutting-edge instructive framework does not exist; young ladies and young men have level with open doors for the training. It simply means that even though they have the same course that studying in the same specialization, they still have the differences in terms of their perception in teaching. By this they may know the difference of the perception of both the male and female in terms of English proficiency.

The table below shows how many men and women want to become teacher someday and knows which in the both sides want a profession of being a teacher.

The gender distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	7	11.29%
Female	55	88.70%
Total	62	100%

Table 2 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. The number of the male fourth year Bachelor of Elementary Education pre-service teachers had a total of seven (7) with an equivalent of eleven-point twenty nine percent (11.29%). It implies that only few males were enrolled on the program. The female pre-service teachers got the highest frequency of fifty-five (55) which clearly means that more females are enrolled than male in the same course and has a percentage of eighty-eight-point seventy percent. Meaning, there are more women who want to become teacher someday and have the deepest desire in terms of doing habitual activities of a teacher.

Results of the respondents' English Proficiency test

English is known as the medium of communication that is why it is important to all to learn it. This may help the people to be more competitive enough in terms of communication using the English language. It is likely the most essential subject that a person can learn in school. Without knowing the proper English language an individual who doesn't present legitimate English limit on his or her

capacity to accomplish their most notable potential. Information of the English language is critical to figure out how to have their capacity to speak with others, and in the instructing of foreigner students (English Club, 2017) ^[4].

English language proficiency is the capacity of students to utilize the English language to make and the impart of significance in spoken and composed settings while finishing their program of study. It simply means that

understanding the basic English will help to strengthen the foundation of the knowledge of someone particularly the Bachelor of Elementary Education Pre- service teachers in learning difficult English, so that they can teach their students well and encourage them to speak the English language. By this, they can assure that they are prepared and competitive enough in socializing different kinds of student (Andrade, 2009) ^[5].

Table 3: The English Proficiency results of the female fourth year BEED pre-service teachers

Respondents	Score	Rating	Interpretation
1	78	72	Somewhat Proficient
2	85	75	Somewhat Proficient
3	80	73	Somewhat Proficient
4	86	76	Somewhat Proficient
5	86	76	Somewhat Proficient
6	81	74	Somewhat Proficient
7	80	73	Somewhat Proficient
8	81	74	Somewhat Proficient
9	86	76	Somewhat Proficient
10	84	75	Somewhat Proficient
11	81	74	Somewhat Proficient
12	86	76	Somewhat Proficient
13	77	72	Somewhat Proficient
14	80	73	Somewhat Proficient
15	82	74	Somewhat Proficient
16	88	77	Somewhat Proficient
17	93	79	Moderately Proficient
18	80	73	Somewhat Proficient
19	79	73	Somewhat Proficient
20	78	72	Somewhat Proficient
21	81	74	Somewhat Proficient
22	80	73	Somewhat Proficient
23	86	76	Somewhat Proficient
24	79	73	Somewhat Proficient
25	74	71	Somewhat Proficient
26	80	73	Somewhat Proficient
27	91	78	Somewhat Proficient
28	82	74	Somewhat Proficient
29	80	73	Somewhat Proficient
30	75	71	Somewhat Proficient
31	76	71	Somewhat Proficient
32	86	76	Somewhat Proficient
33	83	75	Somewhat Proficient
34	84	75	Somewhat Proficient
35	86	76	Somewhat Proficient
36	85	76	Somewhat Proficient
37	78	72	Somewhat Proficient
38	72	70	Somewhat Proficient
39	79	73	Somewhat Proficient
40	69	68	Somewhat Proficient
41	67	67	Somewhat Proficient
42	84	75	Somewhat Proficient
43	71	69	Somewhat Proficient
44	77	72	Somewhat Proficient
45	81	74	Somewhat Proficient
46	80	73	Somewhat Proficient
47	66	70	Somewhat Proficient
48	83	75	Somewhat Proficient
49	86	76	Somewhat Proficient
50	87	76	Somewhat Proficient
51	88	77	Somewhat Proficient
52	87	76	Somewhat Proficient
53	81	74	Somewhat Proficient
54	83	75	Somewhat Proficient
55	84	75	Somewhat Proficient

The level of their proficiency will define how they are prepared enough in terms of using the English language as a medium of instruction on the teaching learning process, and if they can teach the basic English to the students, so that they can serve as a foundation of learning for every learner. The English Proficiency results of the fourth year Bachelor of Elementary Education pre-service teachers of Batangas State University ARASOF- Nasugbu.

The female respondents' results imply that in respondents' number there are still got failed in the English Proficiency test given by the researches. But in the other hand the remaining female respondents meet the score to pass the English Proficiency test as well as to know the level of English Proficiency of the female respondents. Most of them belong to the description of moderately and somewhat proficient. But none of them have reached the percentage/score to be considered as extremely proficient. It clearly means that most of them are still in the process of development when it comes to English productivity. However, being the 21st century pre-service teachers the expectance of the university has been achieved in terms of proficiency and development. The result proved that they are prepared enough to be a teacher. It simply means that even though they are in the line of somewhat proficient, they are still in the process and of development in the field of their profession and they are also able to learn more and spread their knowledge about English.

In table 4 below, it shows that out of seven male respondents, three of them have reached a passing score/percentage of 75% and the rest are not. Most of them belong to the description of moderately and somewhat proficient. But none of them have reached the percentage/score to be considered as extremely proficient. It clearly means that most of them are still in the process of development when it comes to English productivity. However, being the 21st century pre-service teachers the expectance of the university has been achieved in terms of proficiency and development. The result proved that they are prepared enough to be a teacher.

Therefore, it simply implies that although there are respondents who got the scores lower than seventy-five, they can still be considered as proficient enough and prepared enough to teach those elementary students in the field of their profession, because even though they are belong in the somewhat proficient, it simply means that they are still improving and developing in the field of their profession, and they are still able to learn new skills and knowledge as they strive to develop their English proficiency.

Table 4: The English Proficiency results of the male fourth year BEED Pre-Service Teachers

Respondents	Score	Rating	Interpretation
1	67	67	Somewhat Proficient
2	89	77	Somewhat Proficient
3	81	74	Somewhat Proficient
4	86	76	Somewhat Proficient
5	80	73	Somewhat Proficient
6	79	73	Somewhat Proficient
7	90	78	Moderately Proficient

Test of Significant difference between the respondent's English Proficiency Test results of Male and Female fourth year BEED Pre-service Teachers. Based on the results, a data analysis was performed thus making one to reject the null hypothesis. The data analysis performed using the excel application revealed data such as mean, known variance, observation, hypothesize mean difference, z, $P(Z \leq z)$ one-tail, and z Critical one-tail, $P(Z \leq z)$. A significance level of 0.05 indicates a 5% risk of concluding that a difference exists when there is no actual difference. If the p-value is less than or equal to the significance level, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis and if the p-value is greater than the significance level, the decision is to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 5 firstly presented the mean of the two variables which is 81.30 for female and 85.71 for male. It clearly denotes that there is a small interval in the mean result of male and female. Whereas in variance, the interval is 15.11 which means that male variance is dominant in female. The z-test value is -2.72 which means the data value is smaller than the mean. The BEED female pre-service teacher has a C-value of 1.64 and BEED male pre-service teachers have 1.96 of C-value.

Table 5 shows that it is failed to accept the null hypothesis; it means that there is a significant difference between the test scores of the respondents when they are grouped according to their gender, it also firmly shows that their gender did not affect their EPT result as long as they show the qualities of being a teacher whether male or female.

Table 5: Test of Significant Difference between the respondent's English Proficiency Test result of male and female BEED pre-service teachers. (z-Test: Two Sample for Means)

Gender	Mean	Known Variance	Z-test	C-value	Verbal Interpretation	Decision
Female	81.30	29.68	-2.72	1.64	Significant	Failed to accept the null hypothesis
Male	85.71	14.57		1.96		

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: that most of the respondents are in between 18-20 years old with a 43% of the total percentage of respondents. In addition to this, the respondents are 62 in totality, which divided into 55 female and 7 males. Aside from that, it was concluded that the fourth year Bachelor of Elementary Education Pre- Service Teachers are somewhat proficient in English Proficiency Test. The last is that, there is no significant difference between male and female EPT results of fourth year BEED pre-service teachers of Batangas State University ARASOF-Nasugbu.

It is recommended that the BEED Pre-service teachers shall attend different trainings and seminars to enhance their English proficiency and to work well. Moreover, the study can be used by the future researchers as guide, reference, as well as a tool to conduct a new study about English Proficiency.

5. Reference

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