

English Proficiency of College Students

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Abstract- This study was conducted to determine the English proficiency of the college students covering 305 respondents in Capiz State University, Mambusao Unit. A teacher-made test were used in the collection of data. Frequency, percentage and means were used to analyze the data. Results revealed that in terms of English proficiency, the college students are very satisfactory in terms of grammar, satisfactory in terms of spelling but are not proficient in terms of vocabulary.

Index Terms- English proficiency, college students

I. INTRODUCTION

The need to be proficient in the use of English among non-native speakers has become a global phenomenon. Today, educators are faced with the challenge of addressing the needs of the growing number of students whose primary language is not English (Gibbons, 2003 as cited by Vizconde, 2006). While mastering other skills and content in other subject areas, there is the necessity for these learners to gain proficiency in English (Vizconde, 2006).

College students' low English proficiency has received increasing attention in Taiwan these years. In 2000 and 2001, the LTTC (Language Training and Testing Center) involved 9,527 students from 85 technical colleges in Taiwan in a test equivalent to the GEPT beginners' level, a level junior high school graduates are supposed to reach. (GEPT, the General English Proficiency Test, is a standardized test developed by the government of Taiwan to encourage people to learn English and get an accreditation.) The result of the test indicated that, except in the department of foreign languages and of tourism, the percentage of college students who passed the test in all other departments did not exceed 20 % (Hsu and Sheu 2008).

The Philippines is recognized globally as one of the largest English-speaking nations with majority of its population having at least some degree of fluency in the language. English has always been one of the official languages of the Philippines and is spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos. It is the language of commerce and law, as well as the primary medium of instruction in education. Proficiency in the language is also one of the country's strengths that has helped drive the economy and even made the Philippines the top voice outsourcing destination in the world, surpassing India in 2012. The influx of foreign learners of English is also on the rise due to the relatively more affordable but quality English as a Second Language (ESL) programs being offered locally. However, in a recent roundtable discussion organized by the British Council, key stakeholders from the government, academe, private, and non-government sectors acknowledged that even if the Philippines is doing fine in terms of English competency, concerns on how much of a competitive

advantage it still is for the country were raised. The stakeholders agreed that the country needs to step up its efforts in improving the teaching and learning of English, developing it as a vital skill of the workforce. This is an initiative that could potentially strengthen the Philippines' distinct advantage in this part of the world, particularly with the upcoming ASEAN economic integration (Cabigon, 2016). In view of this, this study is conducted to find out the proficiency of college students in one of the institutions here in the Philippines.

II. RESEARCH ELABORATIONS

The respondents of the study are 305 drawn by simple random sampling from a total population of 1, 299 freshmen college students from the six campuses of Capiz State University, Mambusao Unit during the school year 2009-2010.

The research instrument used was a teacher made test which is based on the syllabus of English 1 and covers the four areas namely: (1). Grammar, consisted of subject – verb agreement (25 items), (2). Spelling composed of 25 items, (3). Vocabulary which consists of contextual clues (25 items), and (4). Reading comprehension which includes inferring, sequencing, and getting the main idea (25 items). The test consisted of 100 items. A Table of Specification was prepared to guide the researcher in the preparation of the items in the teacher made test. Comments and suggestions from the adviser were incorporated to improve the instrument in the final questionnaire. The questionnaire was subjected to content validation by a panel of experts. In order to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, the instrument was subjected to field testing through a pre-test administered to 30 freshmen students of Capiz State University, Dayao Campus. These students are not included in the study. The computed coefficient of correlation is 0.86. Frequency, percentage and means were used to analyze the data.

III. RESULTS OR FINDINGS

Out of 305 respondents, 215 came from Sigma Campus; 71 from Poblacion Campus; 215 from Burias Campus; 176 from Dumarao Campus and 153 from Tapaz Campus. The lowest number of respondents came from Sapijan Campus.

For the English proficiency of the respondents in terms of grammar, the scores obtained by respondents were categorized into excellent (1.0), highly outstanding (1.25), outstanding (1.5), very good (1.75), good (2.0), very satisfactory (2.25), satisfactory (2.5), unsatisfactory (2.75), passed (3.0), failed (5.0). Of the 305 respondents, most (63 or 21%) had "very satisfactory" English proficiency in grammar, (57 or 19%) had "unsatisfactory", (53 or 17%) had "good", (45 or 15%) had "very good", (31 or 10%) had "satisfactory", (30 or 10%) had an "outstanding", (12 or 4%)

had “passed”, and (7 or 2%) of the respondents were on the category “excellent” and “highly outstanding”. These findings reflect that students had a “very satisfactory” English proficiency in terms of grammar.

For the 549 English proficiency of the respondents in terms of spelling, it was found that out of 305 respondents, 77 (25%) failed in spelling; 39(13%) was conditional; 37(12%) was satisfactory; 32 (10%) was good; 31(10%) was very satisfactory; 26(9%) was very good; 13(4%) was outstanding and only 1(1%) was highly outstanding. The result shows that freshmen college students are not proficient in English in terms of spelling.

For the 549 English proficiency of students in terms of vocabulary, the data reveals that out of 305 respondents, most or 71(23%) was satisfactory; 58(19%) was unsatisfactory; 38(12%) was very satisfactory and conditional; 29 (10%) failed; 27(9%) was good; 17(6%) passed; 15(5%) was very good; and 12(4%) was outstanding. It implies that the English proficiency of the students in terms of vocabulary was satisfactory.

In terms of reading comprehension, result show that out of 305 respondents, 77 (25%) was satisfactory; 58 (19%) was unsatisfactory; 56(18%) was conditional; 46(15%) failed; 28(9%) was very satisfactory and passed; 7(3%) was good and 5(2%) was very good. Data implies that the English proficiency of the students in terms of reading comprehension was satisfactory.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In terms of English proficiency, the college students are very satisfactory in terms of grammar, satisfactory in terms of spelling and reading comprehension but are not proficient in terms of vocabulary.

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