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## Foreword

Welcome to the December 2018 issue 2.2 of the Journal of English as an International Language!

To foster better intercultural understanding, we need to maintain cross-cultural competence. Sukardi Weda and Haryanto Atmowardoyo in their study, Cross - Cultural Competence (CCC) and Cross - Cultural Understanding (CCU) in Multicultural Education in the EFL Classroom explored cross cultural competence (CCC) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at higher education in Indonesia. The results of the study revealed that the CCC under CCU is a cornerstone to build social harmony and peace in a multi-cultural society like Indonesia.

In First Language Interference in Learning the English Language, Maribel Fontiveros-Malana investigated on the first language interference in learning the English language among three cultural groups – the Ilocano, the Ibanag, and the Itawes in the Philippines. The researcher pushed forward that the study becomes a basis for constructing a prototype remedial instructional module for learning speaking particularly on intonation and pronunciation focusing on contrast analysis of patterns of intonation and sound production between L1 and L2.

Sahril and Sukardi Weda in their study, The Relationship of Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Motivation, and Writing Performance of Indonesian EFL Students in Higher Education analyzed the relationship of students' self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and the EFL English writing performance in Indonesian Higher Education. They concluded that teachers or lecturers should enhance students' self-efficacy belief and motivation in the EFL classroom in order to achieve the learning outcome and the curriculum target.

Literature occupies unique position in the society and it has high status in the civilized community. Noer Jihad Saleh and Sukardi Weda in Indonesian Poetry Translation: The Problem Within investigated students' ability in translating poetry and the problem faced by students in translation practices. They concluded that difficulties experienced by learners are syntactical and lexical errors therefore suggesting that students should be familiar with the literary works and the employed figurative languages.

Aprillette C. Devanadera in her research, Assessing Vietnamese EFL Students' Writing in the Light of World Englishes analyzed Vietnamese EFL students' patterns of writing and further revealed that Vietnamese student's rhetorical structure follows a three-step-pattern which is introducing the character, introducing the situation and finally telling what happens which is a deviation of the western's style of writing.

Multilingual countries have long institutionalized the policy requiring the use of mother tongue in primary education to foster better acquisition of a second language. Wilbert Giuseppe De Guzman and Presley De Vera in *English Language Performance and Difficulties of Pupils in the Mother Tongue – based (MTB) Medium of Instruction* investigated the status of elementary grade pupils' English proficiency, particularly the Grades 1, 2 and 3 pupils who are simultaneously taking up subjects in the Mother Tongue and English that are integrated in their curricula.

There are research studies that proposed the need for the shift to English as International Language (EIL) teaching in the multicultural and multilingual classrooms. Hang Thi Nhu Mai in her study, *Fostering learners' intercultural communicative competence through EIL teaching: A quantitative study* explored how learners' ICC is enhanced by implementing EIL teaching principles in an English-speaking course in the Vietnamese tertiary education context. The study drew the conclusion that the implementation of EIL teaching evidently equips learners with essential knowledge and appropriate behaviors to be successfully engaged in intercultural communication.

In *Indirectness Markers in Korean and Persian English Essays: Implications for Teaching Writing to EFL Learners*, Richard Rillo and Ericson Alieto investigated and analyzed the prevalence and presence of indirectness markers in Korean and Persian English essays. It was revealed that these indirectness markers in their writing are attributed to socio-cultural factors, such as Persians have the tendency to be literary in their writing while the Koreans, prose-oriented resulting to lengthy descriptive accounts and indirectness.

Yaweh Lady Mencias and Presley De Vera in their study, *Error Analysis of Verb Tenses Among Japanese ESL Learners* analyzed the description and classification of errors in verb tense as accounted for by Japanese ESL learners, particularly in their usage of verb tense in written composition. Researchers suggested that teachers have to exploit the use of mass media in the instructional design, taking advantage of the learners' high frequency of access to these social amenities to improve their writing skills.

Syukur Saud and Amirullah Abduh in their study, *Intercultural Understanding in Foreign Language Learning in an Indonesian Higher Education* explored learners' perceptions of intercultural understanding within foreign language learning and the challenges in promoting intercultural understanding within foreign language learning. It was suggested that educational institutions should identify groups of learners who are strongly supportive to intercultural understanding to become volunteers to promote cross culture understanding in the community.



In *The Modal Must in Philippine English: A Corpus-Based Analysis*, Aika Carla David investigated the dominant verb-phrase structure and the semantic functions of the modal must in research papers. The results of the study substantiated Morales' (2015) linguistic assumption that the obligation function of the modal must has a continuous usage in Philippine English and further confirmed the findings of Gustillo (2011) that the modal must in Philippine English maintains its conformity to the standard modal usage in American English.

Learner's attitude is acknowledged as one of the most important factors that impact language learning. Donita – Jane Canceran and Conchita Malenab - *Temporal in Attitude of Grade 12 SHS Academic Tracks Students Towards Speaking in English* investigated the attitude of students toward speaking in English. The study found no significant difference in the attitude of the students towards speaking in English when grouped according to strand and sex. The implication of these results redounds to the emphasis on the importance of classroom motivation to improve students' attitude towards speaking in English.

Ramon Medriano, Jr.  
TESOL Asia

# **Cross - Cultural Competence (CCC) and Cross - Cultural Understanding (CCU) in Multicultural Education in the EFL Classroom**

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## **Abstract**

Indonesia is a large multicultural country with 1340 ethnic groups (netralnews.com). To live in social harmony, we need to maintain cross cultural competence. With this reason, there is awareness that the inclusion of cross-cultural understanding (CCU) in multicultural education at university curricula to social and humanity sciences is crucial to language learners from different ethnic groups. This study aimed at exploring cross cultural competence (CCC) in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom at higher education in Indonesia. In this study, we explored CCC practices in the EFL classroom at English Department Universitas Negeri Makassar in 2018/2019 academic year. A questionnaire was distributed and responded by forty-four students. The data obtained from respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics revealing the mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and percentage of students' perceptions on the questionnaire dealing with CCC practices and CCU materials in multicultural education in EFL classroom in Indonesia. The results of the study revealed that the CCC under the CCU is a cornerstone to build social harmony and peace in multi-cultural society.

**Keywords:** Cross cultural competence (CCC), cross cultural understanding (CCU), multicultural education, EFL classroom, social harmony, research & development

## **Introduction**

Indonesia is a multi-ethnic country which has approximately 1000 ethnic groups. As a large country with various cultures and languages, each people who live in Indonesia needs to maintain a good relationship to other people and he or she is expected to have intercultural competence in his or her communication with people from other cultures. This idea is important to build social harmony and tolerance under the “*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*,” (unity in diversity). Mulyana (2012,

p. 47) argues that being part of a civilized world characterized by interreligious understanding and harmony is still very far from reality since in our own country we still have problems of interethnic and interreligious intolerance and enmity as indicated by various riots among ethnic and religious groups causing the deaths of thousands people in several parts of Indonesia in Aceh, Papua, and Maluku.

To create harmony and tolerance in the multi-ethnic countries, cross-cultural competence (CCC) becomes a paramount in maintaining cross-cultural communication. Many studies have been done due to the CCC practices in international business and cross-cultural communication (Ruben, 1989; Johnson, et al., 2006; Dean, 2001; Deci, et al., 2001; McAllister & Irvin, 2000; Abrams & Moio, 2006; and Suh, 2004).

Cross-cultural and intercultural interaction invariably implies that communicating entities appear as subjects of culture, representatives of a certain sociocultural community (Malyuga, et al., 2018, p. 566). The ability to understand other cultures, in fact, is not only important at the interpersonal level but also at the international one (Mulyana, 2012, p. 45). Mulyana therefore adds that history indicates that some conflicts and wars between nations are due to failures or difficulties in appreciating and understanding other cultures.

This research paper additionally pinpoints how comprehension and consciousness of intercultural, sociocultural and cross-cultural aspects may increase the understanding of how to more efficiently teach the communicative aspect of English as second language learners (Nurutdinova, et al., 2017, p.69).

Therefore, English educators should gain a deeper understanding of undercurrent cultural conflicts looming large and try to head off its impacts which will play out in the English education arena in the foreseeable future (Jin, 2014).

The study addresses the following research question: What are the basic behaviors associated with impressions of cross-cultural competence for self and others in cross cultural understanding in multicultural education contexts?

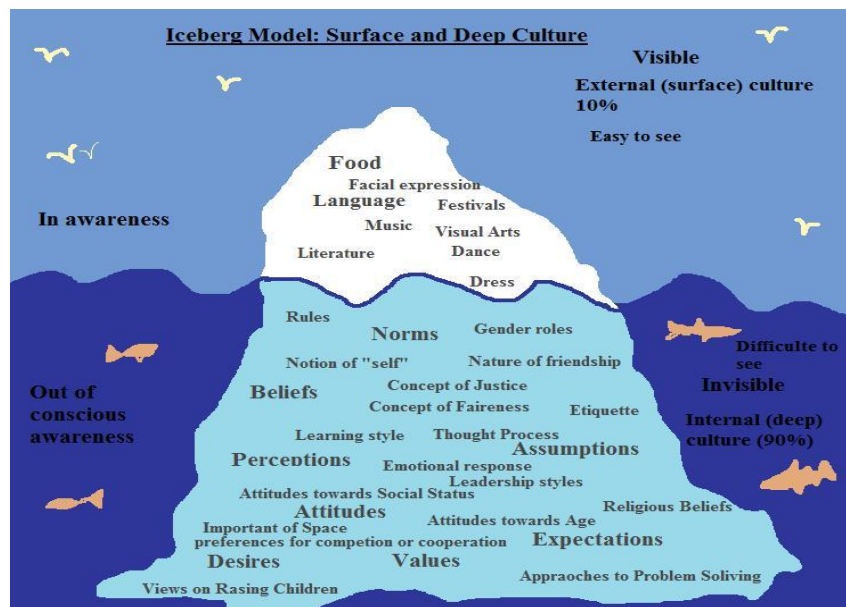
## **Pertinent Ideas**

### *Culture*

In this globalized era, important differences among nations are not ideological and economic, but cultural in nature (Mulyana, 2012, p. 38). Mulyana adds that culture is a difficult or complex concept as Hofstede et al in Mulyana (2012, p. 11) defines that culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.” Culture is an integral part of all human societies (Browaeys & Price 2015). Samovar, et. al. in Mulyana (2012) gives five categories show that culture can influence our communication with other people from different cultural background, those are: history, religion, value, social organization, and language.

Mulyana adds that culture can be placed as an “iceberg” (the iceberg of culture). Cultural product and cultural behavior can be observed. With a variety of efforts and purposes, we can identify language, body language, ritual, symbol, sign, and icon which reveal certain cultural group.

Bodley in Browaeys & Price (2015, p. 3) gives diverse definitions of culture: *Topical Culture*, consists of everything on a list of topics, or categories, such as social organization, religion and economy; *Historical Culture*, it is social heritage, or tradition, that is passed on to future generations; *Behavioural Culture*, it is shared, learned human behavior; a way of life; *Normative Culture*, it is ideals, values, or rules for living; *Functional Culture*, it is the way humans solve problems of adapting to the environment or living together; *Mental Culture*, it is a complex of ideas, or learned habits, that inhibit impulses and distinguish people from animals; *Structural Culture*, it consists of patterned and interrelated ideas, symbols, or behaviors, and *Symbolic Culture*, it is based on arbitrarily assigned meanings that are shared by a society.



Sumber: <https://www.google.co.id>

Picture 1. Iceberg Model: Surface and Deep Culture

Some parts of culture can be observed and some of them cannot be observed. Some parts of culture that can be observed are someone’s behavior, performance, language, and ways of people use their costume; some parts of culture that cannot be observed, like: thinking process, assumption, value, distance orientation, time orientation, expectation, and perception (Mulyana,

2012). For clear examples of an iceberg of culture, see picture 1 which reveals the iceberg model of surface and deep culture (<https://www.google.co.id>).

According to Browaeys & Price 2015, p. 4, culture operates on three levels, the first being on a level where it is observable and tangible which includes artefacts and attitudes in terms of architecture, rituals, dress codes, making contact, contracts, language, eating and so on. At a second level, culture is to do with norms and values. Beliefs – or norms – are statements of fact about the way things are. These are the cultural rules, as it were, which explain what is happening at level one and determine what is right or wrong. The third – and deepest level – has to do with basic assumptions. This level is difficult to explore and what lies there can only be construed through interpretation of what is happening at the other levels. Interpretation involves trying to explain why we act according to particular rules or in line with particular values. It is to do with the question ‘Why?’ and the attempt to answer it with more than just a ‘Because!’

#### *Communication*

Levine & Adelman in Mulyana (2012, p. 5) argue that communication is the process of sharing meaning through verbal and nonverbal behavior. In keeping with Levine & Adelman in Mulyana (2012, p. 5), Tubbs & Moss in Mulyana (2012, p. 5) reveal that communication is the creation of meaning between two people or more.

Every communication practice essentially represents culture (Mulyana: 2012, p. 10). When we communicate with people from other ethnic, racial, or religious groups, we are confronted with different values systems and rules (Mulyana, 2012, p. 53). Communication plays a key part in almost every aspect of everyday life, including business. It is an essential means of relaying information and coordination within a business internally and of promoting a product or service externally (Hua, 2014, p. 54). It also plays an indispensable role in establishing, maintaining and enhancing business relationships with a business’s key stakeholders such as customers, manufacturers and collaborators (Hua, 2014, p. 54).

#### *Cross Cultural Communication*

Some researchers or authors put cross cultural communication and intercultural communication are the same and they are used in cultural communication interchangeably. As we enter the twenty-first century, direct contact with culturally different people in our neighborhoods, communities, schools, and workplaces is an inescapable part of life (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 5).

Mulyana (2012, p. 53) reveals that even using the same (national) language, this intercultural interaction does not necessarily lead to mutual understanding, since each group is prejudiced against each other to various

degrees. Mulyana therefore (2012) adds that communication is characterized by the rhetoric that “we are right” and “they are wrong.” Mulyana (2012) emphasizes that each cultural group tends to view its own culture as superior to other cultures and measures other cultures by its own cultural standard. In intercultural communication practices, there is no superior culture but all cultures are the same and each culture has uniqueness.

Walsh in Mulyana (2012, p. 42) contends that the universal man is one who respects all cultures; understands what people of other cultures think, feel, and believe, and appreciate cultural differences. Using Lustig and Koester’s notion in Mulyana (2012, p. 43), she or he has intercultural competence, namely, “flexibility in thinking, ‘world-mindedness’ (which is a positive attitude toward people of other cultures), psychological and social adjustment in one’s own culture and relativistic values.

Williams (2005, p. 359) argues that effective intercultural communicators must have an understanding of cultural communication differences, an ability to overcome those barriers, and a desire to use those skills.

#### *Non-Verbal Communication*

Culture touches each other physically and it becomes universal throughout the world, but there is different meaning and form in maintaining non-verbal communication. Some aspects of nonverbal communication, such as touching and smelling, are conveyed naturally in face-to-face communication and will remain important (Mulyana, 2012, p. 37).

Pauwels in Mulyana (2012) notes that “Some cultural groups in Asia, the Middle East, Latin America like physically touching each other. It is common among Mexican men to embrace each other when they meet. Arab men kiss each other on the cheek in their encounters. However, touching among the same sex is avoided by Americans and most other Westerners. They consider this behavior is too intimate; it may connote sexual attraction (homosexualism among men and lesbianism among women).”

It is clearly seen that people from Mexico embracing each other when they meet. People from Arab kissing each other when they meet with the same sex. American or westerners avoid kissing and embracing each other when they meet with the same sex, because kissing and embracing with same sex connote sexual behavior.



Figure 2. Two Arab People Kissing Each Other (Merdeka.com)



Figure 3. Two Mexican Men Embracing Each Other (berita.net).

Mulyana (2012, p. 21) argues that eye contact is another aspect of nonverbal behavior. To show respect, most people in Asia and Africa do not maintain eye contact when they communicate with older people or people who have higher status. However, this behavior is often misinterpreted by North Americans. Americans look straight into the eyes of their communication partners to show their goodwill and sincerity. Mulyana therefore adds that their behavior is often perceived as dominance by those people accustomed to lowering their gaze.

### **Cross Cultural Competence**

Many international business failures have been ascribed to a lack of cross - cultural competence (CC) on the part of business practitioners (Johnson, et.al.,

2006, p. 525). Due to the CC definitions, several different keywords were used, forming combinations of the terms 'competence' or 'competency', and 'cultural', 'intercultural', 'cross-cultural', 'global', 'international', or 'transnational' (Johnson, et.al., 2006, p. 527). Johnson, et.al therefore present the results of their review of how these terms are defined and grouped in the literature as follows.

**Table 1. Defining Cross Cultural Competence (Johnson, et. al., 2006)**

<i>Field</i>	<i>Authors</i>	<i>Concept</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Content</i>
International business	Leiba-O'Sullivan (1999)	Cross-cultural competency	Knowledge, skills, abilities, 'other' attributes	Categorizes competencies as stable or dynamic
International business	Adler and Bartholomew (1992)	'Global' or 'transnational' competence	Specific knowledge, skills and abilities	An affective dimension (personality traits and attitudes), a cognitive dimension (how individuals acquire and categorize cultural knowledge), and a communicative, behavioral dimension.
International business	Gertsen (1990)	Cross-cultural competence	'The ability to function effectively in another culture'	
International business	Black and Mendenhall (1990)	Effective cross-cultural interactions	Cross-cultural skills development, adjustment, and performance	Three-way taxonomy of skills development: self, relational perceptual
International business	Hofstede (2001)	Intercultural communication competence	None	Awareness, knowledge, skills, and personality
Workplace	Cross <i>et al.</i>	Cultural	'...a set of	Personal



diversity	(1989)	competence	congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations'	attributes, knowledge, and skills
Intercultural	Collier (1989); Imahori and Lanigan (1989); Kealey (1989); Wiseman <i>et al.</i> (1989); Redmond and Bunyi (1993); Miller (1994); Lustig and Koester (1999)	Communications	Intercultural communications competence	To be appropriate and effective in the communication process that takes place between individuals from different national cultures
Psychology	LaFromboise, <i>et al.</i> (1993)	Cultural competence	None	Personality, knowledge, ability, skills, behaviors

The consensus is that 'competence' in the cross-cultural competence means to be appropriate and effective in interactions between individuals from different national cultures or ethnic groups (Johnson, et. al., 2006, p. 529).

## **Cross Cultural Understanding**

Many researchers focus their investigation on the development of cross-cultural understanding (CCU) in various settings and activities (some of them are: Raymond & Hall, 2008; Niles, 1999; Elfenbein, 2006; Finney & Orr, 1995; Evers, 1998; and Citron, 2013).

Cross cultural understanding becomes interesting and vital in everyday conversation among people from different ethnic groups in a multicultural society. Therefore, cross cultural understanding needs to be introduced at schools in Indonesia to students from primary schools to university. This is important because understanding each other from to people of different cultures can promote harmony and order in society.

Misunderstandings between two persons from different cultures, regardless of whether the two persons are from the same or different cultures, often arise because they do not understand each other's culture as it is (Mulyana, 2012, p. 43).

Lau (2016, p. 1 – 2) argues that the need for and even the imperative of intercultural understanding can be considered at least from the following two aspects. Firstly, the intensification of conflicts among civilizations and cultures in the twenty-first century in parallel to the acceleration of the pace of globalization is an undeniable fact. Secondly, since the middle of the nineteenth century, philosophy as a high order reflective activity enters the age of crisis both in the West and in China. The classical ways of doing philosophy in each of these traditions, being unable to take serious consideration of the thinking of the other tradition, have been questioned more and more in the face of the complex reality of the contemporary global intercultural constellations.

## **Multicultural Education**

Southeast Asian nations are culturally diverse (Sunarto, 2004, p. 48). Indonesia is one of the largest multicultural countries in the world (Yaqin, 2007, p. 3). As a multicultural country, Indonesian government implements multicultural education at schools. Multicultural education is furthermore not limited to schooling (Sunarto, 2004, p. 47). Azra (2002) and Saifuddin (2002) in Sunarto (2004, p. 47) have pointed out that multicultural education is a broad concept, which includes formal, non-formal, as well as informal education. In this study, our focus is on the multicultural education in formal educational institution at higher education.

Therik (2004, p. 62) therefore quoted collection concepts of multicultural education from Paul Gorski and Bob Covert in defining multicultural education

(the underlines are Therik's).

- Every student must have an equal opportunity to achieve to her or his full potential;
- Every student must be prepared to competently participate in an increasingly intercultural society;
- Teachers must be prepared to effectively facilitate learning for every individual student, no matter how culturally similar or different from her- or himself;
- Schools must be active participants in ending oppression of all types, first by ending oppression within their own walls, then by producing socially and critically active and aware students;
- Education must become more fully student-centered and inclusive of the voices and experiences of the students.

These quotations reveal that multicultural education focus not only on individual students and teachers but also on institution and multicultural education system. In Indonesian context, the implementation of multicultural education is on individual and teachers and also on institution and the education system on multicultural education practices.

## **Methodology**

### *Participant*

To explore students' perception on cross cultural practices in the EFL classroom, the authors conducted research on this topic at undergraduate program at State University of Makassar Indonesia. There were forty four English students as participants of this research. There were thirty students from English Education Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Literature, State University of Makassar, seven students from English Literature Study Program and seven students of Business English DIII Study Program of Faculty of Languages and Literature, State University of Makassar in 2017/2018 academic year.

### *Instrument and Procedure*

The instrument of this research is a questionnaire consisting of Likert scale 20 5-point Likert type questions plus and open ended questions about students' perception on cross cultural competence in the EFL classroom. All Likert scales were scored from 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (Neither agree nor disagree), 2 (disagree), 1 (strongly disagree).

### *Data Analysis*

The questionnaire items were written in Indonesian. This means to give opportunity to students or participants responding the questions easily and

comprehensively. The data obtained from the questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics Version 9.0 to see mean, standard deviation (SD), and percentage. Additional information obtained through open ended questionnaire is coded and analyzed to find out the students' perceptions on cross cultural practices in the EFL classroom at higher education in English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia.

## Results and Discussion

### *Participants' Profile*

There were forty three students participated in this study to test their perception on cross cultural practices in the EFL classroom. The students were from 3 majors; there were 30 students from Undergraduate degree in English Education Study Program, there were 7 students from Undergraduate degree in English Literature Study Program, and there were 7 students from Business English D-III Study Program of Faculty of Languages and Literature State University of Makassar Indonesia. The participants' age ranged from 17 – 25 years old. The information or profile of participants is revealed in detail in table 1 as follows.

Table 1. Participants' Information				
Program	Major	Semester	N	Percentage
Undergraduate Program	English Literature	5 <sup>th</sup>	30	68.18
	English Education	3 <sup>rd</sup>	7	15.90
	Business English	3 <sup>rd</sup>	7	15.90

### *Results on Students' Perception on Cross Cultural Competence and Cross Cultural Understanding*

Table 2 below shows the mean and standard deviation (SD) of students' perception on cross cultural competence and cross cultural understanding in multicultural education in EFL classroom at higher education in Indonesia.

Table 2.

Students' Perception on Cross Cultural Competence and Cross Cultural Understanding in Multicultural Education in EFL Classroom

No.	Items	Mean	SD
-----	-------	------	----

1.	Cross cultural competence (CCC) needs to know well.	4.5909	.72555
2.	In the era of globalization, interaction with other people from different culture is a must.	4.0909	.88444
3.	Cross cultural competence (CCC) is vital to maintain mutual understanding with people from different ethnic groups.	4.5455	.76111
4.	Cross cultural competence (CCC) is ability or skill to communicate with people from different ethnic groups.	4.0455	.56874
5.	To create positive image in communication with people from different ethnic groups, I always create good empathy.	4.1136	.72227
6.	To create positive image in communication with people from different ethnic groups, I always prioritize polite behavior, respect, and friendly.	4.4773	.87574
7.	To maintain communication in society with various ethnic groups, mutual understanding and tolerance become priority.	4.3182	.95899
8.	To maintain tolerance in multi culture society, prejudice and intolerance behavior need to be reduced.	4.2045	.87815
9.	Cross cultural communication cannot be avoided in daily communication.	3.9773	.82091
10.	Cross cultural understanding is an important subject and has vital role to create harmony and tolerance.	4.2500	.83874
11.	My culture is superior than other cultures.	2.5455	.97538
12.	Other cultures and my culture are the same in maintaining cross cultural interaction and communication.	3.8182	.86998
13.	I often use non-verbal language to communicate with people from different ethnic groups.	3.1818	.78571
14.	Non-verbal language used in cross cultural communication is frequently not understood by people from different ethnic groups.	2.9773	.76215
15.	I often do not understand non-verbal language used by people from different ethnic groups.	3.1136	.89484
16.	Cross cultural competence is a cornerstone to maintain cross cultural communication.	3.9545	.74567
17.	Cross cultural communication needs to be integrated in all subjects.	3.8636	.95457
18.	Multicultural education needs to be developed in	4.2727	.81736

Indonesia as a multi culture country.			
19.	Multicultural education needs to be developed by adopting local wisdom values.	3.9545	.83400
20.	Multicultural education with local wisdom value becomes cornerstone to build harmony and tolerance.	4.0000	.80695

Table 3. Cross Cultural Practices Scores of English Students (N= 43)

Code	Skewness	Kurtosis	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Sum	Weight %	Rank
SP-1	-3.011	13.066	2.3	0	0	31.8	65.9	202.00	97.7	1
SP-2	-1.240	2.422	2.3	2.3	13.6	47.7	34.1	180.00	81.8	12
SP-3	-2.647	10.019	2.3	0	2.3	31.8	63.6	200.00	95.4	2
SP-4	.013	.308	0	0	13.6	68.2	18.2	178.00	86.4	5
SP-5	-.563	.435	0	2.3	13.6	54.5	29.5	181.00	84	11
SP-6	-1.995	4.628	2.3	0	11.4	20.5	65.9	197.00	86.4	6
SP-7	-2.021	4.893	4.5	0	6.8	36.4	52.3	190.00	88.7	4
SP-8	-1.501	3.287	2.3	2.3	9.1	45.5	40.9	185.00	86.4	7
SP-9	-1.542	3.946	2.3	6.5	6.8	65.9	20.5	175.00	86.4	8
SP-10	-1.502	3.795	2.3	0	11.4	43.2	43.2	187.00	86.4	9
SP-11	-.212	-.896	18.2	25.0	40.9	15.9	0	112.00	15.9	20
SP-12	-.295	-.528	0	6.8	27.3	43.2	22.7	168.00	65.9	16
SP-13	-.339	.399	2.3	13.6	50.0	31.8	2.3	140.00	34.1	17
SP-14	.039	.661	2.3	20.5	56.8	18.2	2.3	131.00	20.5	19
SP-15	-.639	.485	6.8	11.4	47.7	31.8	2.3	137.00	34.1	18
SP-16	-1.336	4.699	2.3	0	15.9	63.6	18.2	174.00	81.8	13
SP-17	-.724	.563	2.3	4.5	25.0	40.9	27.3	170.00	68.2	15
SP-18	-1.892	5.717	2.3	2.3	2.3	52.3	40.9	188.00	93.2	3
SP-19	-1.172	2.779	2.3	2.3	15.9	56.8	22.7	174.00	79.5	14
SP-20	-1.391	3.842	2.3	2.3	11.4	61.4	22.7	176.00	84.1	10

As stated in table 3 that the students' perception on cross cultural practices in the EFL classroom are arranged according to the percentage, weight and rank related to students' perception at English Department Universitas Negeri Makassar. The results of the study are therefore presented according to the rank. As shown in table 3, there were 97.7% of the students admitted that "Cross - cultural competence (CCC) needs to know well (Students' Perception – 1/SP – 1)." There were 95.4% of the students stated that "Cross - cultural competence

(CCC) is vital to maintain mutual understanding with people from different ethnic groups (Students' Perception – 2/SP – 2).” There were 93.2% of the students admitted that “Multicultural education needs to be developed in Indonesia as a multi culture country (Students' Perception – 18/SP – 18).” Over 88% of the students revealed that “Cross - cultural competence (CCC) is ability or skill to communicate with people from different ethnic groups (Students' Perception – 7/SP – 7).” There were 86.4% of the students respectively stated that “To maintain communication in society with various ethnic groups, mutual understanding and tolerance become priority (Students' Perception – 4/SP – 4),” “To create positive image in communication with people from different ethnic groups, I always prioritize polite behavior, respectful, and friendly (Students' Perception – 6/SP – 6),” “To maintain tolerance in multi culture society, prejudice and intolerance behavior need to be reduced (Student's Perception – 8/SP – 8),” “Cross - cultural communication cannot be avoided in daily communication (Students' Perception – 9/SP – 9),” “Cross - cultural understanding is an important subject and has vital role to create harmony and tolerance (Students' Perception – 10/SP – 10).” There were 84.1% of the students admitted that “Multicultural education with local wisdom value becomes cornerstone to build harmony and tolerance (Students' Perception – 20/SP – 20).” There were 84% of the students stated that “To create positive image in communication with people from different ethnic groups, I always create good empathy (Students' Perception – 5/SP – 5).” There were over 81% of the students stated respectively that “In the era of globalization, interaction with other people from different culture is a must (Students' Perception – 2/SP – 2)” and “Cross - cultural competence is a cornerstone to maintain cross cultural communication (Students' Perception – 16/SP – 16).” There were 79.5% of the students admitted that “Multicultural education needs to be developed by adopting local wisdom values (Students' Perception – 19/SP – 19).” There were 68.2% of the students stated that “Cross - cultural communication needs to be integrated in all subjects (Students' Perception – 17/SP – 17).” There were 65.9% of the students admitted that “Other cultures and my culture are the same in maintaining cross cultural interaction and communication (Students' Perception – 12/SP – 12).” Over 34% of the students revealed that “I often use non-verbal language to communicate with people from different ethnic groups (Students' Perception – 13/SP – 13).” Over 34% of the students stated that “I often do not understand non-verbal language used by people from different ethnic groups (Students' Perception – 15/SP – 15).” There were 20.5% of the students stated that “Non-verbal language used in cross cultural communication is frequently not understood by people from different ethnic groups (Students' Perception – 14/SP – 14).” There were 15.9% of the students stated that “My culture is superior to other cultures (Students' Perception – 11/SP – 11).”

*What do you do when maintaining communication to other people from different ethnic groups to create positive image and you are assessed as a good cross cultural communicator?*

The data from the students reveal various responses. The following responses reflect the students' perceptions on what people need to do to maintain good communication to other people from different ethnic groups to create positive image.

- 1) Speak with good manner.
- 2) Keeping polite and good manner.
- 3) Starting the communication from general issue to specific issue.
- 4) I frequently use body language.
- 5) Respecting other people when they are speaking.
- 6) Be good in maintaining communication and put tolerance behavior, and respect to others' religion, and culture.
- 7) Respecting differences in cultural background.
- 8) I never put my culture as superior than others' culture.
- 9) Paying attention to what speaker says.

*What do you expect from other people from different ethnic groups to create positive image and you are assessed as a good cross cultural communicator?*

The data from the students reveal various responses. The following responses reflect the students' perceptions on what people expect from other people to create positive image in maintaining good communication.

- 1) Creating good image.
- 2) Knowing the way of polite and good manner.
- 3) I hope the communicant knows my cultural background.
- 4) I hope others can respect my culture.
- 5) Keeping eye contact and be polite.
- 6) Be polite.
- 7) Be respectful.
- 8) Receiving others' differences in terms of culture, language, accent, and tradition.
- 9) Other people need to know good communication practice.
- 10) I hope other people pay attention to what I say.



## **Concluding Remarks**

Some conclusions can be drawn from this current study. Those conclusions are as follows.

1. Cross cultural competence (CCC) needs to know well by people from different ethnic groups to maintain good communication and mutual understanding.
2. Interaction with other people from different cultural background cannot be avoided.
3. Cross cultural competence (CCC) is very important in daily life to maintain mutual understanding with people from different cultures and ethnic groups.
4. CCC is ability or skill to express ideas and thoughts to other people from different cultural background.
5. To create positive image in communication with other people from different ethnic group, the communicator needs to create good empathy, polite behavior, respect, and friendly to others.

## **Implications**

The implication of this present study reveals that multicultural education is one of educational practices in Indonesian. Multicultural education needs to be developed in Indonesia as a multi-cultural country, and multicultural education needs to be developed by adopting local wisdom and local values. This is because, multicultural education with local wisdom and local value becomes cornerstone to build harmony and peace.

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Sex :  
Age :  
Study Program:  
Semester :

### Questionnaire

Choose one of the following choices which reveal how much you agree or disagree by circling around. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neither agree nor disagree
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly agree

No.	Students' Perception	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	Cross cultural competence (CCC) needs to know well.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	In the era of globalization, interaction with other people from different culture is a must	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Cross cultural competence (CCC) is vital to maintain mutual understanding with people from different ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5

4.	Cross cultural competence (CCC) is ability or skill to communicate with people from different ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	To create positive image in communication with people from different ethnic groups, I always create good empathy.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	To create positive image in communication with people from different ethnic groups, I always prioritize polite behavior, respect, and friendly.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	To maintain communication in society with various ethnic groups, mutual understanding and tolerance become priority.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	To maintain tolerance in multi culture society, prejudice and intolerance behavior need to be reduced.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Cross cultural communication cannot be avoided in daily communication.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Cross cultural	1	2	3	4	5

	understanding is an important subject and has vital role to create harmony and tolerance.					
11.	My culture is superior than other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Other cultures and my culture are the same in maintaining cross cultural interaction and communication.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I often use non-verbal language to communicate with people from different ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Non-verbal language used in cross cultural communication is frequently not understood by people from different ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I often do not understand non-verbal language used by people from different ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Cross cultural competence is a cornerstone to maintain cross cultural communication.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Cross cultural communication needs to be	1	2	3	4	5

	integrated in all subjects.					
18.	Multicultural education needs to be developed in Indonesia as a multi culture country.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Multicultural education needs to be developed by adopting local wisdom values.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Multicultural education with local wisdom value becomes cornerstone to build harmony and tolerance.	1	2	3	4	5

*Remember, there is no correct and incorrect answer*

Answer the following questions:

1. What do you do when maintaining communication to other people from different ethnic groups to create positive image and you are assessed as a good cross cultural communicator?
2. What do you expect from other people from different ethnic groups to create positive image and you are assessed as a good cross cultural communicator?

### **Note on Contributors**

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# **First Language Interference in Learning the English Language**

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## **Abstract**

This research investigated on the first language interference in learning the English language among three cultural groups – the Ilocano, the Ibanag, and the Itawes. The subject of the study were sixty sophomore students from the College of Education and the College of Business Entrepreneurship, and Accountancy who are officially enrolled at Cagayan State University, Andrews Campus, Tuguegarao City for the school year 2010-2011. This research ascertained that the students, regardless of their ethnic affiliation, had similar proficiency levels in the written proficiency test. The students did not do well in the oral test, specifically on intonation and pronunciation. They had several errors in their performance and that their first language, to a great extent, interfered with their English language learning. However, the students' L1 facilitated in the completion of a given task on speaking. The students had to turn to their L1 in some instances. Their first language, therefore, served as a mechanism or strategy to realize an objective in language learning. On the other hand, while the researcher believed that the L1 serves to facilitate in learning the L2 and that the students should be allowed to use their L1 in the English language classroom, she stressed that teachers can strategize to provide students with opportunities to practice their speaking skills in the target language. The researcher also emphasized that this study becomes a basis for constructing a prototype remedial instructional module for learning speaking particularly on intonation and pronunciation focusing on contrast analysis of patterns of intonation and sound production between L1 and L2.

**Keywords:** first language, language interference, language proficiency)

## **Introduction**

Learning a second language encompasses a wide variety of situations which maybe in the forms of acquisition through direct conversation with native speakers, reading judiciously plenty of published materials, watching regularly some movies and listening intently of characters' dialogues or learning academically in the classroom its communicative structures. For native speakers, as caretakers of their own language, to learn their language structures would be just assumed a finishing touch mental exercise as this may simply be an

enhancing effort of comprehending one's very own culture. But for non-native speakers, to learn a second language necessitates the learner to face the challenges of meaningfully and proficiently appreciating the semantic component and syntactic structures of the second language.

The established set of measure of proficiency of learners to communicate across all macro-skills- listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing – is founded from adequate or substantial knowledge of the language areas. However, inter-cultural communication competence is essentially necessary in gaining English language proficiency.

Language teaching practice often assumes that most of the difficulties that learners face in the study of English are a consequence of the degree to which their native language differs from English. Language learners often produce errors on syntax and pronunciation that result from the influence of their L1, such as mapping its grammatical patterns inappropriately onto the L2, pronouncing certain words incorrectly or with difficulty, and confusing items of vocabulary. This is known as L1 transfer or language interference.

First language interference is seen as a major factor affecting English language proficiency and competence. Thus, an in-depth, rigorous, adequate, substantive and intelligent effort to study the language interferences in learning the English language geared among cultural groups is one judicious course of action on the part of the researcher to come up with authentic and functional language plan for learning, use and mastery of this target language, the English language.

## **Objectives**

This study attempted to find out the level of the second language proficiency of the respondents and the extent of interference of the first language (L1) spoken among Ilocanos, Ibanags, and Itawes in learning the second language (L2) through its syntactic structure and semantic component.

Specifically, it was geared towards realizing the following objectives:

1. Describe the profile of the students in terms of:
  - 1.1 Age
  - 1.2 Sex
  - 1.3 Year/Level when English was first learned
  - 1.4 Last high school attended
  - 1.5 Language dominantly used with parents, peers, and community
2. Find out differences on the language background of the students.
3. Determine the level of proficiency of the students in learning L2 on the following grammatical components of the English language.
  - 3.1 Syntactic Items

- 3.2 Semantic components
4. Determine the extent of L1 interference in learning L2 when students are grouped according to dialect.
  - 3.1 sentence patterns/word order
  - 3.2 intonation
  - 3.3 pronunciation
5. Determine the first language strategies used in learning English as a second language.
  - a. code switching
  - b. language borrowing
  - c. translation
6. Find out the significant difference in the level of proficiency of the respondents in learning L2 when grouped according to dialect.
7. Find out the significant relationship between the level of proficiency and extent of L1 interference of the respondents in learning L2 when grouped according to profile variables.

## **Methodology**

This study utilized the Descriptive Method using Survey and Correlation Techniques to ascertain how much variation is caused by L2 variables in relation to L1 interference as far as L2 learning among native speakers of Ilocano, Ibanag, and Itawes is concerned. It was also used to determine the magnitude and direction of the relationship that exist between the L2 and the L1.

The survey method was used to elicit information about variables necessary and related to knowing the L2 proficiency of the respondents and at the same time to find out the interferences that occur in learning L2.

On the other hand, correlation method was used in this study to ascertain the relationship of language interference with the language proficiency of each of the cultural groups mentioned.

The researcher utilized sixty (60) students from Cagayan State University-Andrews Campus. Thirty (30) of these students come from the College of Business Entrepreneurship, and Accountancy, and the other thirty (30) come from the College of Education. Although some of them can also speak other dialects, the researcher made sure that each was purposely chosen based on the language they dominantly speak. Purposive sampling was utilized in the light of objectively coming up with authentic and legitimate pieces of information and/or baseline data indispensably needed in this research.

This research was conducted in Cagayan State University-Andrews Campus, Caritan, Tuguegarao City where a considerable number of enrollees who

belong to the cultural-groups are enrolled. Specifically, the researcher extensively concentrated her attempts to study the extent of first language interference in learning the English language of the second year students of the College of Business Entrepreneurship, and Accountancy and College of Education in CSU-Andrews Campus, Tuguegarao City for the school year 2010-2011.

The researcher made use of the Survey Questionnaire, constructed by the researcher herself, to gather relevant information and data from the respondents. It consisted of two parts. It was pre-tested to 60 third year students in the College of Education. The first part consisted of a survey on the profile of respondents and their exposure to the English language, and the second part consisted of a test questionnaire intended to elicit the level of proficiency of the respondents in learning the second language. In particular, the questionnaire contained tests on grammar meant to identify the proficiency levels of Ilocano, Ibanag, and Itawes speakers on form classes or content words and function words. In addition, the test contained items geared at determining the proficiency levels of the respondents along vocabulary, comprehension, intonation, morphology, lexicon, syntax, and sentence patterns.

To test the extent of the respondents' first language interference, an oral test was also prepared by the researcher. It consisted of items intended to determine their ability to read sentences with proper intonation, to read a passage with correct English vowel and consonant sounds production, and to tell a story in an organized and logical manner. This part of the test was utilized to determine the strategies used by the students in relating the story in English like language borrowing, code switching or shifting, translating, and asking for information which are significant in learning L2.

The data for this study were gathered by the researcher with the help of some faculty who were in constant meeting with second year students in CBEA and COED. After permission was sought by the researcher from the dean of CBEA and COED, the researcher immediately administered the test to second year classes in both colleges where Ilocano, Ibanag, and Itawes speakers were identified. The tests were given at different sessions to allow the students ample time to answer the questionnaire, and to see to it that reliable data are collected. Besides, the students could not be accommodated at once because they belonged to different sections.

The first session with the students involved a paper-and-pencil test which was also a survey of their profile, and a proficiency test in English. The test included English grammar covering form classes/content words and function words, vocabulary, comprehension, intonation, morphology, lexicon, and syntax.

The second session involved an oral test that ascertained the L1 interference and the extent to which the L1 interfere while they were performing the tasks. The tasks given to them were: read sentences with proper intonation;

read a passage with critical vowel and consonant sounds; and, relate a story out of a set of pictures. There were 10 items of sentences to be read, each representing an intonation pattern for a particular kind of statement. The passage, on the other hand, was anonymously written.

To test the extent of the respondents' first language interference, an oral test was also prepared by the researcher. It consisted of items intended to determine their ability to read sentences with proper intonation, to read a passage with correct English vowel and consonant sounds production, and to tell a story in an organized and logical manner. This part of the test was utilized to determine the strategies used by the students in relating the story in English like language borrowing, code switching or shifting, translating, and asking for information which are significant in learning L2.

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The second session involved an oral test that ascertained the L1 interference and the extent to which the L1 interfere while they were performing the tasks. The tasks given to them were: read sentences with proper intonation; read a passage with critical vowel and consonant sounds; and, relate a story out of a set of pictures. There were 10 items of sentences to be read, each representing an intonation pattern for a particular kind of statement. The passage, on the other hand, was anonymously written. It was short, containing only 21 lines, and simple as the words used were average and easy to understand. However, this was not the focus of this task, instead it was on the production of some critical sounds found in the words that made up the passage. These sounds were the vowel sounds / i /, / ae /, / u / and consonant sound / zha /, voiceless and voiced / th / sounds. The students, however, were not expected to correctly produce the sounds. They read the passage as freely and as comfortably as they could. They read according to what they know is correct.

In story-telling, the respondents were asked to tell a story out of a picture. The pictures were arranged to facilitate the task. The students, like in the previous

tasks, were given the freedom to use every strategy they can utilize to come up with an organized and logical story. The strategies used by the students were in the form of code-switching or shifting, translating, asking for information, etc.

All tasks in the oral test were done individually and were recorded to ensure that data gathered were accurate and concise. This process also facilitated the researcher in coming up with accurate coding and decoding of the oral tasks, which eventually resulted to correct interpretation and analysis as far as interference is concerned. The recorded activities were later decoded by two other English teachers to ensure the reliability and validity of the data being analyzed and interpreted.

This study utilized the simple frequency counts, percentage and weighted mean to determine the average scores of the respondents in their level of proficiency. Likewise, these were used to determine the responses of the three cultural groups in terms of similarities and differences in their proficiency, and difficulties/errors in intonation, pronunciation, word order or sentence pattern with respect to language interference.

The t-test was utilized to find out if there is no significant difference in the level of proficiency of the three cultural group-respondents in learning the English language when grouped according to profile and language interference variables.

The two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized to ascertain the relationship between the L2 proficiency of the respondents and extent of L1 interference.

A scale of interpretation for the variables measured was used to reveal the level of L2 proficiency and extent of interference of the first language of the cultural group-respondents in learning the second language.

Another scale was used to describe the level of proficiency of the students in the English Proficiency Test where the highest scores ranging from 69 to 100 is described as Excellent ( E ), 52 to 68 as Very Satisfactory ( VS ), 35 to 51 as Satisfactory ( S ), 18 to 34 as Fair ( F ), and the lowest scores ranging from 1 to 17 as Poor ( P ).

The extent of interference of the first language in learning the second language was also described accordingly where 9 to 10 was described as Very Great Extent ( VGE ), 7 to 8 as Great Extent ( GE ), 5 to 6 as Moderate Extent ( ME ), 3 to 4 as Fair Extent ( FE ), and 1 to 2, which is the least, described as Poor Extent ( PE ).

Specifically, the simple frequency count was utilized to determine the Mean of the profile of the cultural group-respondents. This was then differentiated by using the t-test. The same treatment was used by the researcher to determine the difference in L1 interference in learning L2 among the three groups. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to determine the relationship between the English proficiency of the respondents and extent of L1

interference in learning L2 across word order/pattern, intonation, pronunciation/sound production, and English story-telling strategies.

The oral tests were analyzed based on noted observations from the language behavior of the students during the tests.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Profile of Students**

There were 60 students involved in this study- 30 from the College of Education and 30 from the College of Business Entrepreneurship, and Accountancy. The students were further classified according to their first language- 20 Ilocano students, 20 Ibanag students, and 20 Itawes students.

As to age, 67 percent of the students fall under ages 17 and above while 33 percent fall under ages 16 and below. In terms of sex, the females outnumber the males at 76.67 percent of the total number of students, which is equal to 46 out of 60. Females dominate all cultural groups.

On the other hand, most of the students started learning English as soon as they were in elementary. They made up 95 percent of the total student-respondents. Five percent expressed that they only started learning English at home.

Further, eighty percent were educated in a Government/Public High School. Those who had their high school in private institutions is 20 percent. It is inferred that most of the respondents may have graduated from high schools found in their own community which are mostly government high schools.

It was also revealed that the language used by the Ilocano students to speak to their parents is Ilocano, the Ibanags students used Ibanag, and the Itawes students used Itawes. The language used by Ilocanos to speak with their peers is Ilocano, while 95 percent of the Itawes used Itawes to communicate with peers. On the other hand, 75 percent of the Ibanags used Ibanag, but 20 percent of them used Ilocano to talk with peers. The Ilocanos and Itawes used their respective dialect to speak with the community, and 95 percent of the Ibanags used Ibanag to speak with the community. A few of them used Itawes to speak with the community.

### **Language Background of the Students**

In L1A category which represents the question, “*What language did you first learn?*” 100 percent of the Ilocanos first learned to speak Ilocano while 95 percent of the Itawes first learned to speak Itawes. However, only 90 percent of

the Ibanags first learned to speak Ibanag. The ten percent first learned to speak Itawes or English.

For the question “*What dialect is frequently used at home*, as represented by L1B, 100 percent of the Itawes frequently used the dialect Itawes at home. Ninety five percent of both the Ilocano and Ibanag frequently used Ilocano and Ibanag dialect, respectively, at home. In L1 C as represented by the question “*What language do you best understand when listening?*”, 80 percent of the Ilocanos understood best Ilocano while 20 percent of them understood best the English language when listening. For the Ibanags, 75 percent of them understood best Ibanag while 25 percent understood best the English language. Meanwhile, 95 percent of the Itawes understood best Itawes when listening, while only five percent understood best the English language when listening. Asked what language they speak fluently, 100 percent of the Ilocanos spoke Ilocano fluently, while 80 percent of the Ibanags spoke Ibanag fluently. The other 15 and 5 percent of them spoke Itawes and Ibanag, respectively. In writing, 95 percent of both the Ilocanos and the Ibanags can write best in English, and 80 percent of the Itawes can write best in English. Similarly, 95 percent of all the cultural groups could best understand English than any other language. For the Ibanags, 60 percent used Ibanag when thinking, 35 percent used English, and five percent used Ilocano when thinking. On the other hand, 60 percent of the Itawes used English when thinking while 40 percent of them used Itawes when thinking.

On content words, the Ibanag students had a mean of 8.95, followed by the Ilocano students with a mean of 8.85, and Itawes students with a mean of 7.45. Subsequently, the Ibanags had an index of mastery of 74.58, the Ilocanos with 73.75, and the Itawes with 70.17. It is inferred that the Ibanag students who had the highest mean and index of mastery among the three groups performed better in this subtest. Consistently, on function words, the Ibanag students had a better performance than the other two groups. This is manifested by the mean of 5.6 with an index of mastery of 56; the Ilocanos had a mean of 4.9 with an index of mastery of 49; and, the Itawes with a mean of 4.35 and an index of mastery of 43.5.

As to vocabulary, the mean of the groups are similar with 5.4, 6, and 6 for the Ilocano, Ibanag, and Itawes students, respectively. Their indices of mastery of 54, 60, and 60, respectively, make it possible to assume that their dialects do not make any difference in the performance of the students in this subtest.

As to comprehension, it is inferred from the table that the Ibanag bested the other two groups in this category. The mean of 8.35 makes them very satisfactorily proficient.

The succeeding subtests are all on giving meaning based on intonational patterns, morphology, lexicon, and syntax. Apparently, in the subtest on intonation, the Ibanags, as in the previous subtests, had the highest mean of 5.3,



followed by the Ilocanos with a mean of 4.95, and the Itawes with 4.45. Consequently, the Ibanags had the highest index of mastery of 53 followed English. Similarly, 95 percent of all the cultural groups could best understand English than any other language. For the Ibanags, 60 percent used Ibanag when thinking, 35 percent used English, and five percent used Ilocano when thinking. On the other hand, 60 percent of the Itawes used English when thinking while 40 percent of them used Itawes when thinking.

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In morphology, where the students had to group the words according to the meaning dictated by the affixes in the words, this study revealed that the respondents were fairly able to recognize and group words according to their plural –marking affixes, past-time marking affixes, actor-marking affixes, and gender-marking affixes. The Ilocano performed better in this particular subtest with a mean of 16.45 compared to the other two groups of students with 13.45 for the Ibanags and 14.65 for the Itawes students. The Ilocano students, therefore, gets the highest index of mastery of 83 and the Ibanags and Itawes with only 67.25 and 73.25, respectively. For the subtest on lexicon, the groups had similar mean scores of 10.50, 10.95, and 10.25 for the Ilocano, Ibanag, and Itawes group,

respectively. The Ibanag groups get the highest index of mastery of 54.75, although this is not significant because they almost have the same index of mastery.

Finally, on syntax, the means reflected similar result, although this time the Itawes had the highest mean of 3.55, followed by the Ibanags with 3.45 and Ilocanos with 3.4. Subsequently, the Itawes had an index of mastery of 79. The students, in general, performed similarly in this subtest.

The mean values of 63.0 for Ilocano, 62.05 for Ibanag, and 58.85 for Itawes did not significantly differ. The finding implied that the linguistic competence of the three groups of students was similar.

As far as the level of proficiency of the students are concerned, the Ilocanos were *very satisfactorily proficient* as shown by the index of mastery of 63.05. Similarly, the Ibanag students were very satisfactorily proficient with an index of mastery of 62.05, likewise with the Itawes students who garnered an index of mastery of 58.85. In general, the total index of mastery of the groups falls between 52 to 68 which clearly revealed that they performed *very satisfactorily proficient*.

In the performance of students in word/sentence order, the over-all mean was 2.72 and the over-all standard deviation was 1.439. The individual mean of each group recorded a similar value which means that the three groups performed similarly in this aspect of the test. Dialect, therefore, had nothing to do with the performance of the students in arranging words to form an acceptable or correct sentence.

The students were given oral test on intonation, pronunciation, and story-telling to find out how the first language or dialect interfere and/or facilitate in learning the English language.

In the test on intonation, the students were asked to read sentences whose intonation patterns represent those found in Standard English, the English spoken and written by educated native speakers. It was inferred from the average mean of all groups that many of the sentences were not read with proper intonation.

Generally, all three groups of students performed relatively low in the test on intonation. The mean scores of the groups which are similar with each other proved that their performance in this particular activity needs improvement. This may be due to lack of competence in intonation in L2 that they tend to apply the rules of intonation from their L1 to L2. This is called over-generalization. As described by Richards (1973), over-generalization is the application of a newly-learned target language rule form or context. In this study, it is the application of the L1 rule to a target language. The fossilization of their first language also contributed immensely to their inability to say the sentences with proper intonation. This particular linguistic skill is indispensable in communication especially in spoken language. Different intonation gives different meaning. If

intonation is not properly applied, the intended meaning may change when it reaches the listener or receiver.

As far as the extent of interference of L1 is concerned, the total mean scores of the Ilocano which is 5.75, the Ibanags which is 5.1, and the Itawes which is 5.2 manifested that the L1 of the students had moderately interfered in their L2 learning in intonation.

The pronunciation test included the sounds hard / th / and soft / th /, / s / and / z /, initial / st / and final / st /, / I / and / i /, half / o /, schwa / a /, open / e /, / U / and / u / to test the students on pronunciation. This test was expected to reveal distinct errors on phonology especially on the consonant and vowel sounds as produced by the students when reading a passage.

Apparently, the sounds involved in the test were sounds not mostly found, if not at all found, in the first language of the students. There is no related research on phonology that has been locally published which mentioned the presence of the sounds soft and hard / th /, initial and final / st /, half / o /, and the schwa sounds, except for / z / which is found in the Itawes language, the / I / and the / i /, which are present in all three dialects, in the dialects/languages mentioned. The absence of the sound made it difficult for them to pronounce words in English. Therefore, where the sound is present, the respondents did not usually commit error; where the sound is absent, the respondents committed the error.

In addition, the substitutions made by the students to particular sounds mentioned earlier such / d / for the hard / th /, / t / for soft / th /, / a / for / ae /, short / u / for long / u / and vice versa, and / s / for / st /, contributed to the commission of the error. In his Speech Learning Model, Flege (1987,1995) mentions about an observation to consider in contrastive analysis of various language groups and their L2 English production. He says that nationalities with a vastly different phonetic inventory to that of English, often find it easier to produce an acceptable phonetic target in the L2 than a nationality whose L1 contains contrasting sounds.

As to the extent of interference of the first language of students in their pronunciation, it was inferred from the total mean of the Ilocano students which is 5.85, the Ibanags which is 6.75, and the Itawes which is 7.8 with an overall total mean of 6.8, that their first language had greatly interfered with learning the L2 on pronunciation.

The story-telling portion of the test was done to find out if the first language has anything to do with how efficiently and effectively the respondents can complete the story based from a set of pictures.

The first to do the task was an Ilocano speaker. Obviously, while the student was relating the story, the student shifted from L2 to a language not his own, the Tagalog or Filipino language, because he/she could not think of the right

way to say it in the English language, and saying it in Tagalog was the easiest way for him/her to express what he/she wanted to say. Besides, for reasons of prestige, using the Tagalog was the most acceptable because it was spoken by most of the students in school and not his/her dialect which is Ilocano. The student then had to code shift and had to borrow another language to able him/her to complete the task though he/she knew he/she could use his/her first language.

One student exemplified code shifting and language borrowing. The student started his/her statement with L2, then, shifted to Ilocano, his/her L1, then towards the end of the statement, he/she shifted again, this time with another language which is Tagalog. This example proves that a bilingual or a multilingual, as in the case of the Ilocano student in this study, will source out any language he/she can to help him finish a language task. In the domain of sociolinguistics, a speaker switches from a language to another because learners of L2 (or another language) would inevitably learned a first language (or another), hence, the role of L1 as a strategy in L2 learning.

Another Ilocano speaker frequently switched from L2 to L1, specifically from Tagalog to English, while telling the story. Usually referred to as Taglish as mentioned by Lesada (2017), this kind of language common among multilinguals in the Philippines makes speaking more efficient and effective because the speaker could put his meaning across easily without having to think of which terms to use. The Taglish is simply another form of code switching. The other Ilocano subjects of this study had very similar way of telling the story from pictures. The use of code switching and shifting was very frequent that it is assumed by the researcher that this was their way of efficiently completing the task given to them.

The Ibanag student also obviously made use of code switching, translating, and language borrowing through asking information as a strategy to complete the task efficiently.

It is clearly proven in this study that code switching and shifting were the strategies used mostly by the students. It characterized the students' status as L2 learners. It also proved that L2 learners access their L1 while processing L2. This further proved the fact that people with access to two or more languages shift frequently between them.

The study further proved that speaking, especially in the L2 classroom, is not a monolingual event. The respondents in this study relied many times on the L1 when confronted with what terms to use or how to express the ideas in L2. The claim regarding the verbalization of his one's inner speech when faced with problems during the task so as to gain control over the task and to direct problem-solving activities supports the finding of this study. The use of L1 was very prominent in many of the strategies utilized by the students as they struggled with grasping for words and understanding the pictures.

Focusing on just the aspect of L1 use, a few comments can be made on how the students used their L1 to help them. The students usually resorted to L1 in their attempts to figure out what words, phrases, and sentences could be used to express their understanding of the story. The key function of the students' L1 in the task was most relevant in the students' switching, shifting, guessing for terms or ideas or substituting with possible equivalents from the L1.

The L1 provided a common ground whereby the students could verbalize accurately their thoughts, expressed their feelings and opinions and be understood by their listeners. According to Kern (1994), based on Krashen's Affective Filter Theory of acquisition and learning, "by making the input more familiar, putting it in user-friendly terms, the learner has greater confidence in his or her ability to put her meaning across, understand pictures and eventually use them to tell stories." The use of L1, therefore, reduces affective barriers among L2 learners.

This study hypothesized that there is no difference in the overall proficiency test scores of the students grouped by first language. The results of the analysis of variance indicated that the F-ratio of 0.29 has an associated probability of 0.461. This means that the performance of the students is similar or does not change regardless of the language they speak which further means that whatever they speak, this does not affect their performance in the proficiency test. For this reason, the null hypothesis is accepted.

In the analysis of variance on the word/sentence order scores of the students grouped by dialect, the F-ratio of 0.291 with associated probability of 0.749 indicated that the first language of the students did not affect their performance in the test on word/sentence order. This finding leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

The analysis of variance on the intonation scores of the students by dialect where the F-ratio is 2.131 with an associated probability of 0.128 meant that the first language of each group is not significant to their performance in intonation. This further meant that the difference in the language they speak did not have any effect in the performance of the students in giving sentences with proper intonation. Therefore the null hypothesis is also accepted.

This study hypothesized that the first language does not significantly affect their performance in L2 pronunciation when grouped according to dialect. In the analysis of variance on the pronunciation test of the respondents by dialect, the F-ratio of 1.021 with an associated probability of 0.367 revealed that the dialect or first language of each group did not make a difference in the performance between the groups of respondents. This meant further that whatever dialect the students speak, this had no effect to the variation in their performance on the production of some critical sounds in the English language. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of this study, the conclusions are herein stated.

The cultural groups, in general, are loyal to their own language, that is, the Ilocanos use the Ilocano language in most of their communication activities, the Ibanags use the Ibanag language, and the Itawes use the Itawes language. The students, regardless of the cultural group they belong (Ilocano, Ibanag, or Itawes), were likely to perform similarly when it comes to written English. The Ilocanos, however, had greater tendencies of transferring rules or pattern of intonation from their L1 in learning L2, which is why they committed more errors when asked to read sentences with their proper intonation. They also do not follow a variety of intonation patterns in their language that is why the tendency of sticking to their own set of rules are transferred to L2 when learning. On the other hand, the Ibanags had the tendency of transferring rules on pronunciation from L1 to L2 which is why they committed more errors on pronunciation. They tend to stick to their own way of pronouncing words in their language when reading L2 words.

When speaking, code-shifting and code-switching were tendencies of L2 learners like the Ilocano, the Ibanag, and the Itawes. These learners referred back to their own language when confronted with difficulties in learning the target language. They used these as strategy whenever they find it hard to proceed with a learning task in L2, although they shifted back to English easily.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions made, there is still a need to further investigate on the other aspects of English language learning. The subjects of this study were students from the College of Education and the College of Business Entrepreneurship, and Accountancy where, generally, students are performing well. Therefore, the result of this study may not be true to all students.

A short-term remedial course in speaking especially designed for proficient or non-proficient students be conducted or given to students in the College of Education and the College of Business Entrepreneurship, and Accountancy. The remedial instruction should be given to first year students after finishing the first semester as soon as their grades are evaluated. The area should focus on SPEAKING since this is where the students usually fall short. To facilitate this, the researcher also proposes for a specialized prototype instructional module for speaking in English intended for students in the different cultural groups like the Ilocano, Ibanag, and the Itawes and other groups who may have difficulty learning the second language particularly in the area of speaking. Second language learners, particularly those of lower proficiency usually lack the

ability to express or verbalize their thoughts confidently, clearly and accurately. Thus, although the teachers should, of course, encourage strongly the use of L2 among students of low proficiency and even to students of high proficiency, the teachers should also expect that a certain level of dependence on the L1 is necessary for the students for the students to carry out the procedure effectively and to gain from it. Concomitantly, as a way to encourage the students to use L2 more, teachers can utilize strategies that provide students opportunity to practice their speaking skills in the target language in the task of discussing meaning from a picture. This is because the students view the procedure as giving them the opportunity to improve their L2 speaking skills although they might still switch to their L1 occasionally.

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# **The Relationship of Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Motivation, and Writing Performance of Indonesian EFL Students in Higher Education**

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## **Abstract**

One of the cornerstones of academic achievement and the foundation for success across the curriculum is learning to write proficiently (Wilson & Trainin, 2007). Therefore, becoming proficient writer is a key objective for English students at university. There are a wide variety of factors that might influence foreign language writing. In this study, self-efficacy beliefs and motivation are two important factors which may enhance students' writing performance are studied. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the relationship of students' self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and the EFL English writing performance in Indonesian Higher Education. Questionnaire-based data were obtained from 50 students, 30 females and 20 males of English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature Universitas Negeri Makassar. The students' writing performance was obtained from the writing subjects: Basic Writing, Paragraph Writing, Argumentative Writing, and Essay Writing. The research findings address that 1) there was a significant correlation between students' self-efficacy belief and EFL students' writing performance and, 2) there was a significant correlation between motivation and students' writing performance while attending Writing Courses at State University of Makassar. Educational implications of the importance of students' self-efficacy beliefs and motivation in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia from secondary schools to universities are discussed in detail in this paper.

**Keywords:** self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, writing performance, EFL students, higher education

## **Introduction**

There is no doubt that English is one of the most vital subjects at schools and universities in Indonesian educational context. Due to its importance, English is placed as one the compulsory subjects in the national examination for the senior



secondary school level in Indonesia. This implies that students should have already had a basic communicative skill in English after finishing senior secondary school. The target of English teaching at schools and universities in Indonesia is to achieve English language communicative competence (Weda & Sakti, 2018). To achieve the curriculum objectives as stated in the Indonesian curriculum policy seems to be difficult, even though the norms have been employed in the classroom setting by the teachers. By having basic communicative skill in English, hopefully they will have a high self-efficacy belief in learning English at the university level and be able to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings in the form written and oral expressions.

In order to achieve the curriculum target at schools and universities in English, Indonesian government, beginning from the center government to local government has set the policy in educational system, especially in language education to promote success in language communicative competence.

Generally speaking, successful language acquisition requires one to gain theoretical knowledge of the grammar of a particular language, learning a certain number of words and collocations, learning how to pronounce the words as well as acquiring the skills to read texts of various styles or genre, writing different types of texts, understanding spoken language, and conversing with others (Vorobyeva, 2018, p. 136).

Dealing with the quality of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia, many researchers reported that the quality of teaching English is still low (Weda & Sakti, 2018, p. 718). Even though various kinds of training for the English teachers have been done in all levels of education, the quality of teaching – learning process is still far from our demand. Most of the EFL teachers were unable to motivate and engage their students in most of the English classes. Most students show their unwillingness to communicate in the teaching process (Sahril, 2016, p. 206). On the other hand, in most cases, Indonesian classrooms face a large number of students with not experienced teachers. As the results, the graduates' English motivation and willingness to communicate in the English classrooms is still low (Nasiruddin & Sahril, 2018, p. 3). To enhance the quality of English teaching at schools and universities in Indonesia, many influencing factors contribute to the quality of teaching – learning process in the classroom. Those influencing factors are self-efficacy belief and motivation. In keeping with this, Weda, et al (2018, p. 141) argue that some psychological factors like self-efficacy belief, motivation, and learning strategies contribute to the successfulness of the learning process and academic performance.

Self-efficacy beliefs and goals in combination contribute to subsequent academic achievement (Zimmerman, et al, 1992, p. 674). Self-efficacy can influence the choices people make and the courses of action they pursue (Schunk and Pajares, 1999, p. 37).

The modeling of structural equations confirmed that stability and motivation of the second language or foreign language contribute to an increase in the level of proficiency in the second language or foreign language (Isatayeva, Gulzhan, et al., 2018, p. 147).

Considering motivation as the most important force in the process of mastering a foreign language, which ensures its effectiveness, it should be borne in mind that motivation is a part of the personal universe of a student and it is determined by his own ambitions, preferences, and requirements (Selivanora, 2018, p. 218).

### **Aims of the Present Study**

The primary aim of the present study was to identify whether there is a relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and writing performance. The second aim was to explore the relationship between motivation and writing performance.

### **Review of Literature**

#### *Self-efficacy beliefs*

Many researchers reported that self-efficacy belief is one of the influential factors in determining students' success in language learning. Numerous empirical studies have reported that self-efficacy beliefs have relationship and influence on academic performance (Pajares, et al., 2002; Bandura, et al., 2006; Cocca, et al., 2018; Ersanti, 2015). Self-efficacy beliefs are specific judgments of one's capability to succeed in a particular task (Wilson & Trainin (2007:262). Many researchers believed that self-efficacy belief as one of the crucial variables that influence students' success in EFL classroom. Bandura, et al. (1996: 1206) argue that the full set of self-efficacy, aspirational, and psychological factors accounted for a sizable share of the variance in academic achievement.

#### *Motivation*

Motivation is one of the influential factors in language learning successfulness in a wide variety of classroom activities (Reyes, et al., 2017; Borrego, et al., 2017; Libao, et al., 2016; Bernaus, Merce & Wilson, Annie, 2009; Simons, Joke, et al., 2004; Nasihah, Mutiatun & Cahyono, Bambang Yudi, 2017; El Aouri & Zerhouni, 2017; Ersanli, 2015; Pajares, 2003; and Wilson & Trainin; 2007). Motivation is one of the most vital factors contributing to the achievement of students' learning outcomes is motivation (Weda, 2018).

Motivated student to learn will succeed in his learning. Reyes, et al., (2017, p. 292) reveal that a motivated student is one that is most prepared to face a task, focused on handling it, and persistent in addressing the difficulties faced,

as well as that invests more time and effort in learning than the unmotivated student.

Borrego, et al., (2017, p. 163) argue that one of the problems identified in the Degree of Computer Engineering of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona that also affects other studies is the lack of motivation. They therefore add that this lack of motivation directly influences their study performance and their average mark. Since the motivation is an essential factor in determining language learning successful, so instructors or teachers need to improve students' motivation to involve in the classroom activities. In keeping with Borrego, et al., Bernaus, et al. (2009, p. 25) argue that any change in the educational system that promotes higher levels of teacher motivation should result in improved levels of education of the students.

Beal & Stevens (Libao, et al., 2016, p. 210) state that motivation refers to reasons that underlie behavior that is characterized by the students' interests, willingness, and volition. So that, the teacher is recommended to nurture students' motivation in all levels of learning. Nasihah & Cahyono (2017, p. 250) state that pedagogically, EFL teachers are recommended to arouse the students' motivation to improve their language skills, especially for writing achievement.

## Method

### *Participants*

**Table 1. Participants' Information**

Program	Major	N	Percentage
Undergraduate Program	English Literature	15	30
	English Education	31	62
	Business English	4	8
Age	Age Scale	N	Percentage
	17 - 20	3	6
	21 – 25	47	94

### *Test and Procedure*

The research contained questionnaire which test the students' perceptions on self-efficacy belief and motivation. Self-efficacy belief consisted of 10 items and motivation consisted of 15 items. In this present research, the participants

were asked to rate their perceptions to test their perception on self-efficacy belief and motivation on a 5-point scale on which 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree or nor disagree; 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Data on students' writing performance were obtained from four English writing subjects, namely: (1) Writing 1/Basic Writing, (2) Writing 2/Paragraph Writing, (3) Writing 3/Argumentative Writing, and (4) Writing 4/Essay Writing). The results of the test were analyzed to find out (1) the correlation between self-efficacy belief and the writing performance of the students, and (2) the correlation between EFL students' motivation and writing performance after attending the four writing subjects.

#### *Data Analysis*

Data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics 9.0 to determine the mean scores, Standard Deviation (SD), skewness, kurtosis, and percentage. The correlation between self-efficacy belief and students' writing performance and the correlation between motivation and students' writing performance were analyzed based on Pearson-product-moment correlation.

### **Findings and Discussion**

**Table 2. Self-efficacy belief test scores of English students (N= 50)**

Code	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
SEB-1	3.9000	.64681	-.848	2.006	0	4.0	14.0	70.0	12.0
SEB-2	3.0000	.98974	.263	-.308	4.0	28.0	40.0	20.0	8.0
SEB-3	3.5400	.88548	-.769	1.301	4.0	4.0	36.0	46.0	10.0
SEB-4	2.1400	.80837	.942	2.215	18.0	56.0	22.0	2.0	2.0
SEB-5	2.6800	1.13281	.234	-.653	16.0	30.0	30.0	18.0	6.0
SEB-6	2.5800	1.16216	.082	-1.199	22.0	28.0	22.0	26.0	2.0
SEB-7	2.3600	.80204	.726	.111	8.0	60.0	20.0	12.0	0
SEB-8	3.9000	.67763	-.697	1.355	0	4.0	16.0	66.0	14.0
SEB-9	3.8400	.73845	-1.635	4.568	2.0	4.0	12.0	72.0	10.0
SEB-10	3.7000	.90914	-1.222	1.902	4.0	6.0	18.0	60.0	12.0

The means and standard deviations of students' perception on self-efficacy belief test scores of English students are displayed in table 2.

The findings indicate that the students achieved a mean of 3.9000 and SD = .64681 for SEB-1 (Self-efficacy belief 1). The students achieved a mean of 3.0000 and SD = .98974 for SEB-2 (Self-efficacy belief 2). The students achieved

a mean of 3.5400 and SD = .88548 for SEB-3 (Self-efficacy belief 3). The students achieved a mean of 2.1400 and SD = .80837 for SEB-4 (Self-efficacy belief 4). The means and SD for SEB-5 to SEB-10 are clearly revealed on table 2. Finally, a normal distribution can be observed for all scales in this current study as revealed by skewness and kurtosis value as presented in table 2.

Approximately 82% of students revealed experiencing with the statement “Even the English learning topic is difficult for me, I am sure that I can understand it and finish it.” Approximately 28% of students experienced some level of “I am not confident in understanding difficult English learning topics.”

Approximately 56% of students indicated experiencing to the statement “I am sure that I can do well the English tests.” Approximately 4.0% of students exhibited to the statement “No matter how much effort I put in, I cannot learn English well.” There were 24% of students exhibited to the statement “When the learning exercises in English subject are too difficult, I always give up or only do the easy parts.’ There were 28% of students experiencing with the statement “To finish the English assignment in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, I tend to ask my friends for the answers rather than thinking of by myself.” There were 12% of the students experienced that they exhibited to the statement “When I found the content or the material in English difficult, I used to ignore it.” There were 80% of the students revealed that they exhibited to the statement “I encourage myself to succeed in English.” There were 82% of the students experiencing that he or she tries to behave to learn all difficult topics or materials in English. Finally, approximately 72% of the students revealed that he or she is convinced that he or she can maintain communication well in English with her friends and lecturers.

**Table 3. The Average and SD of Students’ Motivational scores in English (N= 50)**

Code	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
Mot-1	4.0800	.69517	-2.006	8.387	2.0	2.0	2.0	74.0	20.0
Mot-2	4.0600	.86685	-1.098	2.048	2.0	2.0	16.0	48.0	32.0
Mot-3	4.2600	.66425	-.344	-.712	0	0	12.0	50.0	38.0
Mot-4	3.6000	.75593	.236	-.401	0	4.0	44.0	40.0	12.0
Mot-5	4.2200	.58169	-.051	-.274	0	0	8.0	62.0	30.0
Mot-6	3.7200	.80913	-1.122	2.043	2.0	6.0	20.0	62.0	10.0
Mot-7	3.7400	.69429	-.362	.308	0	4.0	28.0	58.0	10.0
Mot-8	3.4200	.67279	-.744	-.506	0	0	10.0	38.0	52.0
Mot-9	3.7000	.73540	-.417	.193	0	6.0	28.0	56.0	10.0
Mot-10	3.7000	.88641	-.458	-.360	0	12.0	22.0	50.0	16.0
Mot-11	3.4400	.99304	-.609	-.030	4.0	14.0	26.0	46.0	10.0

Mot-12	3.3400	.93917	-.592	.060	4.0	14.0	32.0	44.0	6.0
Mot-13	4.0800	.92229	-1.301	2.028	2.0	6.0	8.0	50.0	34.0
Mot-14	3.3200	.86756	-.490	-1.154	0	24.0	22.0	52.0	2.0
Mot-15	3.2200	.86402	-.451	-1.525	0	0	28.0	22.0	50.0

The average and standard deviations of students' motivational scores of learning English are displayed in Table 3.

The results of the analysis on students' motivation in learning English indicate that the students achieved a mean of 4.0800 and SD = .69517 for Motivation/Mot-1. The students achieved a mean of 4.0600 and SD = .86685 for Mot-2. The students achieved a mean of 4.2600 and SD = .66425 for Mot-3. The students achieved a mean of 3.6000 and SD = .75593 for Mot-4. The students achieved a mean of 4.2200 and SD = .58169 for Mot-5. They achieved a mean of 3.7200 and SD = .80913 for Mot-6. They achieved a mean of 3.7400 and SD = .69429 for Mot-7. The students achieved a mean of 3.4200 and SD = .67279 for Mot-8. They achieved a mean of 3.7000 and SD = .73540 for Mot 9. They achieved a mean of 3.7000 and SD = .88641 for Mot 10. The students achieved a mean of 3.4400 and SD = .99304 for Mot 11. The students achieved a mean of 3.3400 and SD = .93917 for Mot 12. The students achieved a mean of 4.0800 and SD = .92229 for Mot 13. They achieved a mean of 3.3200 and SD = .86756 of the Mot 14 and they achieved a mean of 3.2200 and SD = .86402 of Mot 15. Finally, a normal distribution can be observed for all scales in the present study as revealed by skewness and kurtosis value as presented in Table 3.

Approximately 94% of the students revealed experiencing with the statement "I want to learn all topics in English I need to learn." Approximately 80% of the students experienced to the statement "I have high expectation of myself to succeed in English." Approximately 88% of students experiencing to the statement "I feel good when I complete difficult tasks in EFL classroom." Approximately 52% of the students exhibited to the statement "I work best in group discussion." There were 92% of the students exhibited to the statement "I learn English for my future careers." There were 72% of the students experiencing with the statement "No matter how much I like or dislike a lecturer, I still try to learn from him." There were 68% of the students exhibited to the statement "No matter how much I like or dislike a topic, I still try to learn from it." There were 90% of the students revealed to the statement "I feel that I should be recognized by my friends when demonstrating abilities in front of the EFL classroom." There were 66% of the students experiencing that he or she feels more accepted by my friends and a lecturer when obtaining excellent score on a test or drill. Approximately 56% of the students stated that he or she completed his or her task and homework assignment because his or her teacher frequently gives reinforcement (rewards). 56% of the students revealed that he or she feels

ashamed when obtaining low score in a test or drill. 50% of the students stated that he or she gets nervous when his or her lecturer asks questions to him or her. There were approximately 84% of the students revealed that he or she tries to do the best in the classroom. There were 54% of the students said that he or she often feels nervous when he or she takes a quiz, mid-term test, and final-term test, and approximately 72% of the students revealed that even when he or she has studied for hours, he or she feels that he or she has no enough preparation for a test or a quiz.

**Table 4. The Average Scores and SD of Students' Writings**

Descriptive Statistics	Average Score of Writing 1	Average Score of Writing 2	Average Score of Writing 3	Average Score of Writing 4
Mean	3.1200	3.2400	2.8600	2.9600
SD	.47980	.59109	.80837	.80711

**Table 5. Results of Correlational Analysis between Students' Self-Efficacy Belief and Students' Writing Performance**

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
SEB	31.6400	3.57291		
Writing Performance	12.1800	2.14467		
SEB-Writing Performance			.057	.000

Note.  $P < 0.01$

The Pearson product moment correlation examines the correlation between self-efficacy belief and students' writing performance. The results reveal that a mean score and standard deviation (SD) of SEB ( $M = 31.6400$ ) out of possible maximum of 5 (strongly agree);  $SD = 3.57291$  and writing performance ( $M = 12.1800$ ;  $SD = 2.14467$ ), a significant correlation ( $p = .000$ ), the correlation coefficient is small with  $r = .057$ , and the size yield  $n = 50$ . Therefore, the findings imply that there is a significant correlation between students' self-efficacy and their writing performance in learning writing at English department at Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia.

**Table 6. Results of Correlation between Motivation and Writing Performance**

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Mot	55.9000	4.59925		

Writing Performance	12.1800	2.14467		
Mot-Writing Performance			0.001	.000

Note.  $P < 0.01$

Therefore, the Pearson correlation examines the correlation between motivation and students' writing performance. The results show that a mean score and standard deviation (SD) of Mot ( $M = 55.9000$ ) out of possible maximum of 5 (strongly agree);  $SD = 4.59925$  and writing performance ( $M = 12.1800$ ;  $SD = 2.14467$ ), a significant correlation ( $p = .000$ ), the correlation coefficient is small with  $r = 0.001$ , and the size yield  $n = 50$ . Therefore, the findings imply that there is a significant correlation between motivation and students' writing performance among students of English department at Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia.

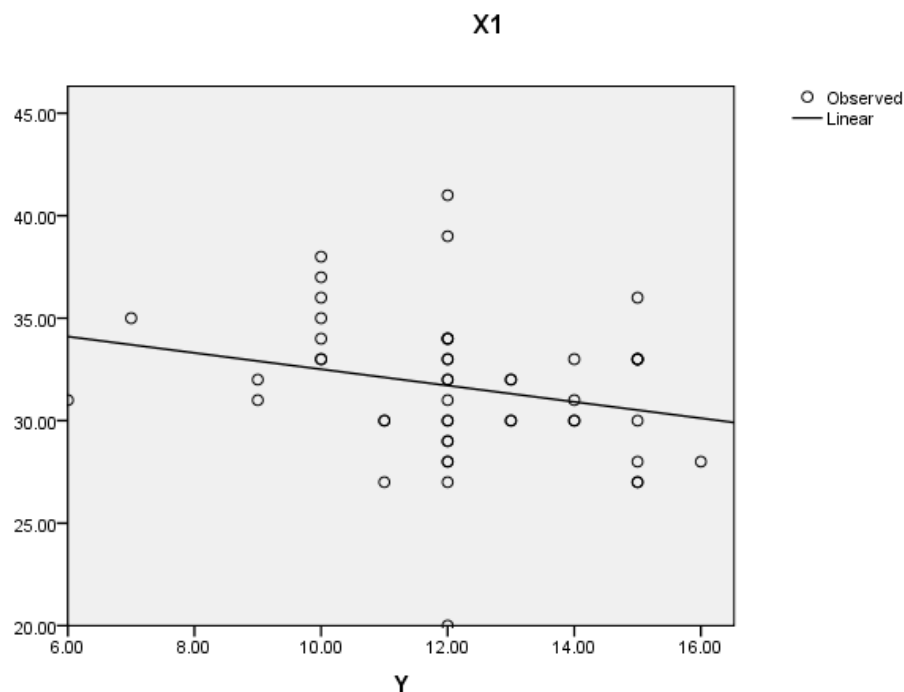


Figure 1. Scatter Plot of Correlation between Self-Efficacy Belief and Writing Performance

According to scattering of the dots in the scatter diagram above, it is clear that as the scores of self-efficacy beliefs increase, the scores of writing



performance increases too, which shows a positive relationship between the variables. In other words, the students who have high self-efficacy beliefs, the higher their scores of writing performance will be.

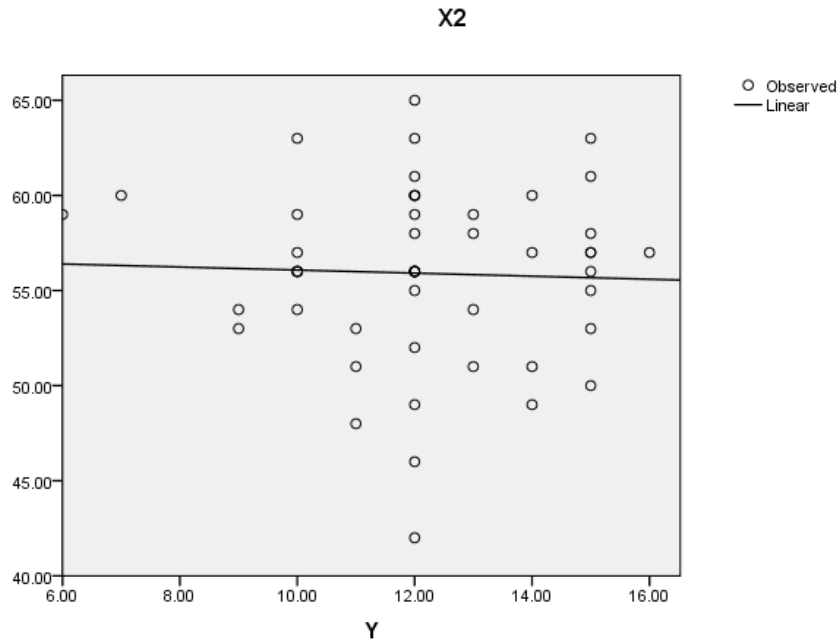


Figure 2. Scatter Plot of Correlation between Motivation and Writing Performance

According to scattering of the dots in the scatter diagram above, it is clear that as the scores of motivation increases, the scores of writing performance increases too, which shows a positive relationship between the variables. In other words, the more motivated the students are, the higher their scores of writing performance will be.

## Conclusion

This current study represents an attempt to identify the relationship between self-efficacy belief and students' writing performance and the relationship between motivation and students' writing performance. Results indicate that there is significant correlation between self-efficacy belief and students' writing performance, and there is significant correlation between motivation and students' writing performance at the English Department Faculty of Languages and

Literature Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM). Further studies in self-efficacy belief and motivation in relation to other language skills are recommended.

### **Pedagogical Implication**

The study therefore suggests some implications. One such implication is that self-efficacy belief and motivation as influencing factors at teaching – learning process in the EFL classroom need to introduce to the language learners. Due to the importance of self-efficacy belief and motivation as the influential factors in language learning. The teachers or lecturers hopefully will enhance students' self-efficacy belief and motivation in the EFL classroom in order to achieve the learning outcome and the curriculum target.

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**Respondent Identity:**

Name :  
 Sex :  
 Age :  
 Study Program :  
 Semester :

**Questionnaire**

Choose one of the following choices which reveal how much you agree or disagree by circling around. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

- (6) Strongly disagree  
 (7) Disagree  
 (8) Neither agree nor disagree  
 (9) Agree  
 (10) Strongly agree

No.	Self-Efficacy Belief	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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1.	Even the English learning topic is difficult for me, I am sure that I can understand it and finish it.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I am not confident in understanding difficult English learning topics. (-)	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I am sure that I can do well the English tests.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	No matter how much effort I put in, I cannot learn English well. (-)	1	2	3	4	5
5.	When the learning exercises in English subject are too difficult, I always give up or only do the easy parts. (-)	1	2	3	4	5
6.	To finish the English assignment in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, I tend to ask my friends for the answers rather than thinking of by myself. (-)	1	2	3	4	5
7.	When I found the content or the material in English difficult, I used to ignore it. (-)	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I encourage myself to succeed in English.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I try to behave to	1	2	3	4	5

	learn all difficult topics or materials in English.					
10.	I believe that I can maintain communication well in English with my friends and lecturers.	1	2	3	4	5

Adapted from Tuan, Chin, & Shieh (2005)

No.	Motivation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	I want to learn all topics in English I need to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I have high expectation of myself to succeed in English.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I feel good when I complete difficult tasks in EFL classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I work best in group discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I learn English for my future careers.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	No matter how much I like or dislike a lecturer, I still try to learn from him. (-)	1	2	3	4	5
7.	No matter how much I like or dislike a topic, I still try to learn from it. (-)	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I feel that I should be recognized by my friends when demonstrating	1	2	3	4	5

	abilities in front of the EFL classroom.					
9.	I feel more accepted by my lecturers and friends when obtaining excellent score on a test or drill.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I completed my task and homework assignment on time because my teacher frequently gives reinforcement (rewards).	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I feel ashamed when obtaining low score in a test or drill given by the lecturer.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I get nervous when my lecturer asks questions to me. (-)	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I try to do the best in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I often feel nervous when I take a quiz, mid-term test, and final-term test.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Even when I have studied for hours, I feel that I have no enough preparation for a test or a quiz.	1	2	3	4	5

Adapted from Brown (2007) and Shia (1998) in Nasihah and Cahyono (2017).

Choose one of the following scores from four writing subjects by circling around.

- A = 4
- B = 3
- C = 2
- D = 1

No.	Subject	SCORE			
1.	Basic Writing/Writing 1	A	B	C	D
2.	Paragraph Writing/Writing 2	A	B	C	D
3.	Argumentative Writing/Writing 3	A	B	C	D
4.	Essay Writing/Writing 4	A	B	C	D

### Note on Contributors

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# **Indonesian Poetry Translation: The Problem Within**

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## **Abstract**

Literature occupies unique position in the society and it has high status in the civilized community. Each ethnic group has unique culture and the culture presents a variety of literary works. Literary works deliver social messages to build harmony in the society. One of the genres of literary works that has vital role in our society is poetry. Based upon the benefit of understanding poetry, this study aims at investigating students' ability in translating poetry and the problem faced by students in translation practices in poetry. The subjects of the study were the students and lecturers of English Department Faculty of Cultural and Humanity Hasanuddin University and English Department Faculty of Languages and Literature Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. There were 60 students who took part in this study, they were in the 2017/2018 academic year. In this study, we assessed students' translation results of poetries from Horison monthly literary magazine in International Poetry Festival, Indonesia 2002. The research findings revealed that even though the students have passed the English Semantics and English Syntax, they still have problems in poetry translation production. The linguistics difficulties they experienced are lexical and syntactical errors. The educational implication of the study therefore suggests that the students need to be familiarized with literary works, especially poetry which employs figurative languages.

**Keywords:** literary work, poetry, translation, figurative languages

## **Introduction**

Nowadays, translation practices grow like mushrooms during the rainy season. This is because the demand of translation in a variety of texts becomes a must. To transfer and share knowledge and technology, translator becomes primary and new profession in the industrial revolution 4.0. The rapid growth of science and technology contributes to the need of translating scientific texts with their technical terms is irrefutable (Jayantini, 2011, p. 31). Therefore, Duff 1986 cited in Lin, et al (2014, p. 230) argues that translation happens everywhere, all

the time, so why not in the classroom?." This means that translation practices can occur in the classroom setting or outside the classroom.

Translation activity is connected with the processing of information, the value of which is determined by social, economic, and legal categories, and translators are ensuring national security in the information sphere (Fedyuchenko, 2018, p. 114). Thus, training of highly qualified translators who successfully can solve professional problems becomes priority strategies in the development of modern linguistic studies. The contemporary society demands professional translators who are able to transmit sense of the original message from another source quickly, fully and accurately, which in its turn stresses the importance of a strong theoretical and methodological foundation and search for adequate technological solutions to ensure and evaluate the quality of vocational training in the field (Fedyuchenko, 2018, p. 114).

Translator is not an easy job, a translator has to be competent in a source language and a target language. He also needs to know the culture of the target language to minimize the translation deviation. In technical terms, translation is often believed that many translators may face some difficulties in transferring the message precisely because technical terms are representation of very definite concepts (Jayanti, 2011, p. 31). One of the most difficult texts to be translated is poetry. This is because the author frequently uses figurative languages and the words have high meanings and interpretations.

In translating literary texts, either stories or poetry, there are some potential problems that might occur. Brata (2011, p. 11) argues that one of the potential problems faced by a translator is whether he has to preserve the meaning by keeping the form (a loan word) or adapt the meaning by changing the form (a generic word with a descriptive phrase, and a cultural substitute). In keeping with Brata, Thren (2011, p. 19) says that translation of news stories can pose numerous problems as a translator not only needs to consider the prepositional content, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage, vocabulary, parts of speech, and grammatical cohesion, but also understand the correct word choice, formal language related to the article, and subtle nuances in a new article. There is a general consensus among those who write about the translation of poetry that it is what Jones (2011, p. 1) calls 'a difficult job (Millán & Bartrina, 2012).

Culture has inextricably been linked to translation since its inception. In particular, since the so-called cultural turn which has swept translation studies with its focus on the interaction between translation and culture and on the way culture impacts translation, translating across cultures along with intercultural competence and awareness have become buzz words in the translation business (Bednarova & Gibova, 20172, p. 2).

## Review of Literature

### *Translation*

Nowadays, translation activity is connected with the processing of information, the value of which is determined by social, economic and legal categories, and translators/interpreters are ensuring national security in the information sphere (Fedyuchenko, 2018, p. 114). Translations are done for all sorts of reasons, for all sorts of audiences, and within all sorts of constraints (Aveling, Harry, 2006). Translation is an effort to convey a message from one language to another without altering the meaning of the message (Thren, 2011, p. 23). Translation is generally defined as a process of meaning or message transference from one language into another (Nugrahani, 2011, p. 49). Khristianto (2011, p. 87) indicates that a text translation must bring the full meaning with linguistic construction readable or understandable for the target audience.

Catford in Nugrahani (2011, p. 49) classifies translation into three criteria which are based on extent (full vs partial translation, level (total vs restricted translation), ranks (rank-bound vs unbound translation). Full translation indicates all parts of source language (SL) text are substituted into target language (TL) text while partial translation signals only a part of SL text which is transferred into TL text (there is a part of SL text which is not shifted into TL text). In partial translation, there are at least two reasons: untranslatable parts (non-equivalences) and special purposes from translators to introduce 'local color' of TL text.

### *Is Translation Science or Art?*

Some experts in translation practices argue that translation is an art or science, and others say that translation is a skill (Weda, 2011, p. 136). Cary cited in Weda (2011, p. 136) argues that translation is an art, Jumpelt cited in Weda (2011, p. 136) states that translation is a science, and Nababan in Weda (2011, p. 136) says that translation is a skill. Translation is a language skill which also involves vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics and the like (Wang, 2013, p. 249).

Weda (2014: 150) argues that a professional translator should have these three concepts. He or she should produce good translation with aesthetic value. He or she also should know that translation is applied science, and should apply the theory into translation practices. How to produce good quality of translation also depends on the translators' skill to interpret the idea or message of the words or sentences from source language to target languages.

### *Types and Procedures of Translation*

Davaninezhad cited in Weda (2010, p. 182) describes that there are a wide variety of translation types, such as word-for-word translation, literal, faithful, semantic, adaptation, free, idiomatic, communicative and cognitive translation. Nababan cited in Weda (2010, p. 182) argues that there are some types of translation.

Those are: i) word-for-word translation, ii) free translation iii) free translation, iv) literal translation, v) pragmatic translation, vi) esthetic poetic translation, vii) ethnographic translation, viii) linguistic translation and, ix) communicative and semantic translation. Newmark cited in Weda (2011, p.137) reveals that there are eighteen procedures of translation. The procedures are as follows:

- 1) Transference is equivalent to adoption, transcription, or loan words where a peculiar cultural word in the ST is borrowed directly without a change in spelling.
- 2) One to one translation is a literal translation that gives a one on one corresponding equivalent of word, phrase or clause (e.g. French: *un beau jardin* = English: a beautiful garden).
- 3) Through translation is also called loan translation which is used to translate common collocations, name of organization and other institutional terms.
- 4) Naturalization succeeds transference where the source language word is adapted first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal phonological and morphological form of the target language (e.g. French: *coup d'etat* = Filipino: *kudeta*).
- 5) Lexical synonymy means translation to the closest or most appropriate TL equivalent due to abundance of synonyms (e.g. English: old house = Filipino: *lumang bahay*).
- 6) Transposition is also called shift, where one grammatical unit is replaced by another.
- 7) Modulation is translating with minor modification in meaning or a change of viewpoint due to different context.
- 8) Cultural equivalent is an approximate translation where a SL cultural word is translated to an equivalent TL cultural word (e.g. American English: coffee break = British English: tea break = Indonesia: *rehat*).
- 9) Descriptive equivalent is also called amplification which gives the equivalent meaning through phrasal description and function of the word.
- 10) Functional equivalent is considered a useful and accurate means of translation by “deculturalising a cultural word.” i.e. choosing the most common and accepted word in the culture of the SL.
- 11) Recognized translation is the use of official and generally accepted translation of any institutional term (e.g. English: dean = Indonesia: *dekan*).
- 12) Addition is also called grammatical expansion for clarity of meaning. It becomes an imprecise translation procedure if it results to over translation.
- 13) Reduction is grammatical contraction without changing or destructing the meaning of the original.
- 14) Componential analysis is splitting up of a lexical unit into meaningful components or parts for purposes of clarity.

- 15) Paraphrase is an amplification or explanation of a segment which may results to over translation and is recommended to be used in ‘anonymous’ text that is poorly written.
- 16) Compensation is said to occur when a loss of meaning in one part of a sentence is compensated or found in another part.
- 17) Improvement is used to correct any typographical and grammatical error or clumsy writing in the original text.
- 18) Couplet is the application of two or more translation procedures in one translation unit.

This paper employs Pym’s latest model or typology of translation solutions as quoted by Bednarova-Gibova (2017, p. 205 – 206), and in this rests its contribution to contemporary translation studies research focusing on literary translation. In his own words, Pym has given weight to the copying of words, which means drawing on and presenting the foreign; he has emphasized the role of textual density as a factor which can be worked on by the translator when appropriate and he has permitted that translation can involve changes in content, moving beyond the conceptual limits of narrow equivalence (Pym, 2016, p. 244). Pym’s proposed new typology of translation solution types is given in Table 1.

Table 1. A typology of translation solution types  
(Pym in Bednarova-Gibova, 2017, p. 206)

Copying	Copying Words	Copying Sounds
		Copying Morphology
		Copying Script ....
	Copying Structure	Copying Prosodic Features
		Copying Fixed Phrases
		Copying Text Structure ...
	Perspective Change	Changing Sentence Focus
		Changing Semantic Focus
		Changing Voice ...
Expression Change	Density Change	Generalization/Specification
		Explicitation/Implication
		Multiple Translation
	Compensation	Resegmentation ...
		New Level of Expression
		New Place in Text (notes, paratexts) ...
	Cultural Correspondence	Corresponding Idioms
		Corresponding Culture-Specific Items ...

Content Change	Text Tailoring	Correction/Censorship/Updating Omission of Content Addition of Content
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The translation solution of ‘Copying’ is based on using minimal linguistic units which are meaningful when used either alone (copying words) or in larger syntactic patterns (copying structure). In case of the ‘Copying Words’ there are three main linguistic levels involved: phonetics (sounds), the meaning-expressing units (morphemes) and the written form (scripts). ‘Copying Structure’ comprises copying prosodic features (rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration), fixed phrases (syntax, idioms, common expressions) and text structure (paragraph and major units of text organization) and sails close to word-for-word literalism, which is reminiscent of Newmark’s literal translation. ‘Perspective Change’ appears to be another name for classical modulation based on seeing the same object from a different angle. It involves changing sentence focus (all the non-obligatory sentence-level syntactic transformations), changing semantic focus (change due to the choice of different values) and changing voice (changes in register). ‘Density Change’ concerns how much text is used so as to convey a given set of information. The main sub-types are the following: generalization/specification (changing the degree of specificity), explicitation/implicitation (showing or hiding implicit information), multiple translation and resegmentation (changing sentence or clause breaks), which Newmark dubs ‘recasting sentences’. Compensation is understood as placing the solution in a new textual location and/or at a new linguistic level. However, one could argue that this is not a proper solution type per se since it merely concerns the place or level where other types are used. Cultural Correspondence includes translation based on using corresponding idioms and corresponding culture-specific items (e.g. units of measurement, currency and forms of address). Lastly, Text Tailoring (or Content Change) recognizes that there are situations where translators legitimately alter what is actually said in the text; they may correct mistakes, delete significant stretches of material that is not pertinent to the purpose of the new text or conversely, add new information which enhances that purpose. The main sub-types of text tailoring are correction/censorship/updating, omission of content and addition of content (Pym in Bednarova-Gibova, 2017: 206 - 207).

### *Poetry Translation*

Researchers and translation theorists have never hesitated to proclaim their skepticism regarding the possibility of translating metrical poetry, and, when attempted, the unavoidable necessity to master the metrics both of the source and target literary languages to the utmost (Zarandona, 2002, p. 4). Holmes (Zarandona, 2002, p. 4) for example, talks of metaliterature, and mentions seven

rewriting processes of a poetry which can undergo: criticism in the same language, criticism in a different language, literal or free prose translation, verse translation, direct imitation, partial imitation and remote imitation. Lefevere (Zarandona, 2002, p. 4) writes about seven possible strategies: phonetic, literal, prose, rhymed or blank verse translation (the only one he recommends), and an interpretation where only the contents are kept or a new independent poem in imitation of the original one.

The translation of literary works, especially poetry is not only for the purpose of transferring the meaning of SL to TL, but also expressing poetry topography (Weda, 2010, p.184). Most literary translators find difficulties not only in producing good poetry translation in terms of providing word equivalent, but also finding difficulties in creating poetry topography (Weda, 2010, p. 184). The example is given by Kadarisman's Swan and Shadow translation in Weda (2010, p. 184).

**Swan and Shadow** by: Johan Hollander (1969) in Weda (2010, p. 179)

Dusk  
Above the  
water hang the  
    loud  
    flies  
    here  
    O so  
    gray  
    then  
What                   A pale signal will appear  
When                  Soon before its shadow fades  
Where                 Here in this pool of opened eye  
In us                 No upon us As at the very edges  
                        of where we take shape in the dark air  
                        this object bares its image awakening  
                        ripples of recognition that will  
                        brush darkness up into light  
even after this bird this hour both drift by atop the perfect sad instant now  
                        already passing out of sight  
                        toward yet-untroubled reflection  
                        this image bears its object darkening  
                        into memorial shades Scattered bits of  
light                 No of water Or something across  
water                Breaking up No Being regathered  
soon                 Yet by then a swan will have  
gone                 Yes out of mind into what  
vast  
pale  
hush  
of a  
place  
past  
sudden dark as  
if a swan  
sang

Below is one of Indonesian translation versions of Swan and Shadow translated by Kadarisman (Weda, 2010, p. 184) and its topography is modified by Weda (2010, p. 184) which shows that the result is not an elegant swan, but a horrible water-bird. Kadarisman (Weda, 2010, p. 184) argues that the poem is translatable linguistically, but not topographically. He then stresses, this is

probably due to the fact that many monosyllabic words in the English original are replaced by bisyllabic or trisyllabic words in the Indonesian translation.

	senja	
	di atas air	
	mengambang	
	karang	
	kenangan	
	di sini	
	o begitu	
	kelabu	
	saat itu	
	apa sebuah	tanda putih-pasi akan
mengada		
	kapan	segera sebelum lenyap bayang-
bayangnya		
	di mana di sini di kolam cendera mata	
	di dalam diri kita. Tidak di atas kita. Ketika di ujung	
paling-sana		
	kita menjati-diri pada rembang cuaca	
	wujud diri muncul seakan citra bangun-terbuka	
	riak kenal-sua yang akan	
	mengusir gelap ke dalam cahaya	

## Research Method

### *Participants*

There were forty six participants in this study, 29 male and 17 female. The participants were forty one students and five lecturers from English Department, Faculty of Cultural and Humanity, Hasanuddin University (Unhas) and English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM).

### *Data Collection Procedure*

The data of the study obtained from students and lecturers from Hasanuddin University and Universitas Negeri Makassar. The participants of the study were given two Indonesian poems to be translated into English. Another instrument of the study was questionnaire consisted of 5 questions.



*Material*

Two poems written in Indonesian by Abdul Hadi W.M. in *Horison Majalah Sastra, Edisi Khusus: Puisi International Indonesia 2002*, followed by English equivalent. The poem entitled **Tuhan, Kita Begitu Dekat** written in 1976 and translated into English by the poet, Abdul Hadi W.M. and the poem entitled **La Condition Humaine** written in 1975 and translated into English by John McGlynn.

**Tuhan, Kita Begitu Dekat**

Tuhan  
Kita begitu dekat  
Seperti api dengan panas  
Aku panas dalam apimu

Tuhan  
Kita begitu dekat  
Seperti kain dengan kapas  
Aku kapas dalam kainmu

Tuhan  
Kita begitu dekat  
Seperti angin dan arahnya

Kita begitu dekat

Dalam gelap  
Kini nyala  
Pada lampu padammu

1976

**God We Are so Close**

God  
We are so close  
As close as heat to fire  
I am the heat of your fire

God  
We are so close  
As close as the cloth to cotton  
I am the cotton of your fire

God  
We are so close  
As close as the wind to its direction  
We are so close

In the midst of darkness  
I am the light  
of your extinguished lamp

1976

**La Condition Humanine**

Di dalam hutan nenek  
Aku hanya sebatang pohon manga  
- tidak berbuah tidak berdaun –  
Ayahku berkata: “Tanah tempat kau  
tumbuh  
Memang tak subur nak,” sambil makan

**La Condition Humaine**

In the forest of my ancestors  
I was merely a mango tree  
- without fruit, without leaf –  
My father said, “Truly, my child, the  
land  
on which you grow is not fertile” while  
eating

buah-buahan dari pohon kakekku with great relish fruit from my  
dengan grandfather's three  
lahapnya

Dan kadang malam-malam And sometimes late at night  
tanpa sepengetahuan istriku without my wife knowing  
akupun mencuri dan makan buah- I too steal and steal and eat the  
buahan unripened fruit  
dari pohon anakku yang belum masak from the tree of my own child

1975

1975

## Findings and Discussion

### Findings

#### Demographic of Participants

Table 1 shows the demographics of participants in the study. There were 29 or 63.04% female and 17 or 36.96 male. Participants were 41 or 89.13% students and 5 or 10.87% lecturers. There were 38 or 82.60% participants in 20 – 25 age range, 3 or 6.52% in age range, 1 or 2.17% in age range, and 4 or 8.69% in age range.

**Table 1: Demographic of Participants**

<i>Demographic Information</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender		
1. Female	29	63.04
2. Male	17	36.96
Profession		
1. Student	41	89.13
2. Lecturer	5	10.87
Age		
1. 20 – 25	38	82.60
2. 26 – 35	3	6.52
3. 36 – 40	1	2.17
4. $\geq 40$	4	8.69

*Students' Translation Product*

**Table 2. The frequency and percentage of students' proper translation and deviation translation in *God We Are so Close***

English Translation	Proper Translation		Deviation Translation	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
<b><i>God We Are so Close</i></b>				
God	46	100	0	0
We are so close	36	78.26	10	21.74
As close as heat to fire	2	4.35	44	95.65
I am the heat of your fire	26	56.52	20	43.48
God	46	100	0	0
We are so close	36	78.26	10	21.74
As close as the cloth to cotton	31	67.39	15	32.60
I am the cotton of your fire	37	80.43	9	19.56
God	46	100	0	0
We are so close	37	80.43	9	19.56
As close as the wind to its direction	34	73.91	12	26.08
We are so close	37	80.43	9	19.56
In the midst of darkness	8	17.39	38	82.60
I am the light	0	0	46	100
of your extinguished lamp	2	4.35	44	95.65

Table 2 reveals that there were 46 or 100% of the subjects gave proper translation to the first lyrics "***God***" in the poem entitled ***God We Are so Close***. There were 36 or 78.26% of the subjects gave proper translation to the second lyrics "***We are so close***," and there were 10 or 21.74% of the subjects gave deviation translation to the second lyrics. There were only 2 or 4.35% of the subjects gave proper translation to the third lyrics "***As close as heat to fire***," and there were 44 or 95.65% subjects gave deviation translation to the third lyrics. There were 26 or 56.52% students gave proper translation to the fourth lyrics "***I am the heat of your fire***," and there were 20 or 43.48% of the subjects gave deviation translation to the fourth lyrics.

There were 46 or 100% of the subjects gave proper translation to the fifth lyrics "**God.**" There were 36 or 78.26% of the subjects gave proper translation to the sixth lyrics "**We are so close,**" and there were 10 or 21.74% of the subjects gave deviation translation. There were 2 or 4.35% subjects gave proper translation to the seventh lyrics "**As close as the cloth to cotton,**" and there were 44 or 95.65% subjects gave deviation translation. There were 37 or 80.43% of the subjects gave proper translation to the eighth lyrics "**I am the cotton of your fire,**" and there were 9 or 19.56% of the subjects gave deviation translation to the eighth lyrics. There were 46 or 100% of the subjects gave proper translation to the ninth lyrics "**God**" in the poem entitled **God We Are so Close**. There were 37 or 80.43% of the subjects gave proper translation to the tenth lyrics "we are so close," and there were 9 or 19.56% of the subjects gave deviation translation. There were 34 or 73.91% of the subjects gave proper translation to the eleventh lyrics "**As close as the wind to its direction,**" and there were 12 or 26.08% of the subjects gave deviation translation. There were 37 or 80.43% of the subjects gave proper translation to the twelfth lyrics "**We are so close,**" and there were 9 or 19.56% of the students gave deviation translation. There were 8 or 17.39% of the subjects gave proper translation to the thirteenth lyrics "**In the midst of darkness,**" and there were 38 or 82.60% of the subjects gave deviation translation. There were 46 or 100 of the subjects gave deviation translation to the fourteenth lyrics "I am the light, and none or 0% of the subjects gave proper translation. Finally, there were only 2 or 4.35% of the students who gave proper translation to the fifteenth lyrics "**of your extinguished lamp,**" and there were 44 or 95.65% of the students who gave deviation translation.

**Table 3. The frequency and percentage of students' proper translation and deviation translation in La Condition Humaine**

English Translation	Correct Translation		Incorrect Translation	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
<b>La Condition Humaine</b>				
In the forest of my ancestors	0	0	0	100
I was merely a mango tree	9	19.57	37	80.43
- without fruit, without leaf -	0	0	46	100
My father said, "Truly, my child, the land	0	0	46	100
on which you grow is not fertile" while eating	0	0	46	100
with great relish fruit from my grandfather's three	0	0	46	100
And sometimes late at night	0	0	46	100
without my wife knowing	7	15.22	39	84.78

I too steal and steal and eat the unripened fruit	0	0	46	100
from the tree of my own child	0	0	46	100
In the forest of my ancestors	0	0	46	100

Table 3 shows that none or 0% of the subjects gave proper translation to the first lyrics “*In the forest of my ancestors.*” There were 9 or 19.57% of the subjects gave proper translation to the second lyrics “*I was merely a mango tree,*” and there were 37 or 80.43% of the subjects gave deviation translation. There were 7 or 15.22% of the subjects gave proper translation to the eighth lyrics “*without my wife knowing,*” and there were 39 or 84.78% of the students gave deviation translation. None or 0% of the subjects gave proper translation to lyrics: three, four, five, six, seven, nine, ten, and eleven. This indicates that the subjects felt difficult to translate the second poem “**La Condition Humaine**” into good Indonesian equivalent.

**Table 4. Problems of inappropriate translations of words, phrases, and sentences in *God We Are so Close* poetry**

Source Translation	Target Translation	Types of Problems
<i>God We Are so Close</i>		
God	God	-
We are so close	We are so closer	Lexical Errors
	We are too close	Lexical Errors
	I look you in me	Syntactical & Lexical Errors
	We so close	Syntactical Errors
	We are close	Syntactical Errors
	We are so near	Lexical Errors
As close as heat to fire	Like fire with heat	Lexical Errors
	Like fire and hot	Lexical Errors
	Like a fire	Syntactical & Lexical Errors
	Like a fire with a warm	Lexical Errors
	Like a blaze and heat	Lexical Errors
	Like flame and warm	Lexical Errors
I am the heat of your fire	I am hot in your fire	Lexical Errors
	I’m burn in the fire	Syntactical Errors
	I am the pail of yours	Lexical Errors
	I am burn with you	Syntactical Errors
	I warm in your fire	Lexical Errors

	I'm heat in your blaze I'm burn in your flame	Lexical Errors Syntactical & Lexical Errors
God We are so close	God We are so closer We are to close	- Lexical Errors Lexical Errors
As close as the cloth to cotton	Like a cloth with cotton	Lexical Errors
	Like a cloth and cotton	Lexical Errors
	Like a cotton fabric	Lexical Errors
I am the cotton of your fire	I am cotton in your cloth	Lexical Errors
God We are so close	God We are so closer	- Lexical Errors
As close as the wind to its direction	Like the wind and the direction	Lexical Errors
	Like an air and its direction	
We are so close	We are so closer	Lexical Errors
In the midst of darkness	In the dark	Lexical Errors
	This time to flame	Lexical Errors
I am the light	Now bright	Syntactical Errors & Lexical Errors
	Now shine	Syntactical Errors & Lexical Errors
of your extinguished lamp	on your light out	Lexical Errors
	by the lamp on you	Lexical Errors
	in your calmed light	Lexical Errors
	in the light out	Lexical Errors
	in your light of dark	Lexical Errors
	to suppressed lamp.	Lexical Errors
1976	1976	

Table 4 reveals that the majority of the problems occur in the students' translation production in *God We Are so Close* poetry was lexical errors. The students cannot choose the correct dictions to the equivalent of the translation in the target language. Some of the students cannot employ correct grammar.

**Table 5. Problems of inappropriate translation of words, phrases, and sentences in *La Condition Humaine***

Source Translation	Target Translation	Types of Problems
<b>La Condition Humaine</b>		
In the forest of my ancestors	In the grandma woods	Lexical Errors
	In the forest of my grandma	Lexical Errors
	Grandma in the forest	Lexical Errors
	In the grandmother's forest	Lexical Errors
	In grandma's forest	Lexical Errors
	In grannie's woods	Lexical Errors
I was merely a mango tree	I'm just a mango tree	Lexical Errors
	I just a mango tree	Syntactical Errors
	I mango tree	Syntactical Errors
	I, mango tree	Syntactical Errors
	I'm just a stalk of mango's tree	Lexical Errors
	I just be a trunk of mango's tree	Lexical Errors & Syntactical Errors
- without fruit, without leaf -	Does not bear fruit is not leafy	Lexical Errors
	No bear no leaf	Lexical Errors
	No fruit no leaf	Lexical Errors
	No bear fruit and no leaf	Lexical Errors & Syntactical Errors
	No fruitless leaves	Lexical Errors
My father said, "Truly, my child, the land on which you grow is not fertile" while eating with great relish fruit from my grandfather's tree	My father said: "the land where you grow up"	Lexical Errors
	Indeed infertile, son, while eating	Lexical Errors
	The fruits in the grandfather tree with gluttonous	Lexical Errors
And sometimes late at night without my wife knowing	And sometimes in the night	Lexical Errors
	Without the knowledge of my wife	Lexical Errors
	Without permission of	Lexical Errors

	my wife	
	Without my wife know	Lexical Errors
	Without my wife's	Lexical errors
	knowledge	
I too steal and steal and eat	I'm stealing and eating	Lexical Errors
the unripened fruit	the fruits	
	I steal and eat the fruit	Lexical Errors
	I will steal and eat fruits	Lexical Errors &
		Syntactical Errors
from the tree of my own	In my little tree that not	Lexical Errors &
child	yet cook	Syntactical Errors
	From my child tree	Lexical Errors
1975	1975	

Table 5 indicates that the majority of the problems occur in the students' translation production in *La Condition Humaine* poetry was lexical errors. The students cannot choose the correct dictions to the equivalent of the translation in the target language. Some of the students cannot employ correct grammar.

#### *Students' Comments on Questionnaire*

##### *Question 1*

There were 42 or 91.30% of the students said that poetry translation is difficult and only 4 or 8.69% of the students said that poetry translation is not difficult. The responses of the students who said that poetry translation is difficult are as follows:

- 1) Because the meaning of poetry has many perspectives (Participant 1)
- 2) Because language of poetry needs high imagination and suitable figurative language (Participant 2)
- 3) Because, before translating text, we have to know various meaning in other the meanings do not miss when translated (Participant 3)
- 4) Because we have to know the meanings of poetry to produce translation product which has close meaning to its original (Participant 4)
- 5) Because in translating poetry, we have to choose the same diction but the message is well delivered (Participant 5)
- 6) Because to translate poetry, we cannot translate it word per word (Participant 6)
- 7) Because lack of vocabulary (Participant 7)
- 8) Because lack of knowledge and vocabulary in English (Participant 8)
- 9) Because I do not know translation method (Participant 9)
- 10) Because translating poetry is difficult because its meaning tends to be difficult (Participant 10)



- 11) Because to translate poetry, we cannot translate it word by word (Participant 11)
- 12) Because lack of vocabulary and I am still confuse to translate (Participant 12)
- 13) Because translating poetry is difficult than translating other texts, as an example translating short story (Participant 13)
- 14) Because vocabularies used in a poetry are unfamiliar (Participant 14)
- 15) Because I do not know method in translating poetry in English (Participant 15)
- 16) Because I am not accustomed to translate poetry (Participant 16)
- 17) Because poetry employs poetic vocabulary and multi-interpreted meanings and cause the translator are difficult to translate it (Participant 17)
- 18) Because poetry has vocabularies with various meanings which can cause difficulties to translator because it is difficult to find the suitable word equivalent (Participant 18)
- 19) Provides lots of words and dictions which are relevant with poetry themes (Participant 19)
- 20) Because there are some different words or phrase in a poetry (Participant 20)
- 21) Because I sometimes confuse to choose the correct words with poetry and there are some difficult words (Participant 21)
- 22) Because there is implicit meaning (Participant 22)
- 23) Because in my opinion, in translating poetry, we have to pay attention on diction (Participant 23)
- 24) To translate poetry, we need lots of stock of vocabulary and interpretation according to the context (Participant 24)
- 25) Because, we do not only translate meaning of word by word in a poetry (Participant 25)
- 26) Because what is translated must be in accordance with the concept (Participant 26)
- 27) Because its word reference is not literal (Participant 27)
- 28) Because in poetry, the sentences used need to be fitted with original English (Participant 28)
- 29) Its poetic language is difficult to be replicate into target language (Participant 30)
- 30) It is difficult to translate languages used in poetry to target language, because there are some elements of poetry which potentially change (Participant 31)
- 31) Because it needs to fit with rhyme (Participant 34)
- 32) Because translating poetry needs lots of vocabularies and another reason is poetry has implicit meaning and needs high interpretation (Participant 35)

- 33) Because poetry has its own esthetics which has figurative meaning. So, the word choices in translating poetry are difficult (Participant 36)
- 34) Because writer's intention is different with our understanding on poetry (Participant 37)
- 35) Because we need to use poetic language which has symbolic meaning (Participant 38)
- 36) Because poetry usually uses implicit and explicit meaning (Participant 39)
- 37) Word/diction choice (Participant 40)
- 38) Because I do not focus on poetry which is different with other texts (Participant 41)
- 39) Because its meaning cannot be translated according to its source language (literal), there are a lot of figurative languages and sometimes it has cultural meaning (Participant 42)
- 40) To translate poetry, we need to know the soul of the writer (Participant 43)
- 41) Because poetry has limited words, but it has tens of meanings. It needs to fit the target and source language (Participant 44).

#### *Question 3*

There were 27 responses or 58.69% of the participants gave responses to number 1 (reading the whole script to catch the main message). There were 23 or 50% of the participants gave responses to number 2 (reading frequently the poetry script). There were 10 or 21.74% of the participants responded to number 3 (translating directly to the poetry). There were 7 or 15.22% of the participants responded to number 4 (to find out the unfamiliar words) and there was 1 or 2.17% of the participants chose others and he gave comment "Using the word that have close equivalent."

#### *Question 4*

There were 11 responses or 23.91% of the participants responded to number 1 (be-lingual conventional dictionary). There were 40 or 86.96% of the participants gave responses to number 2 (machine or electronic translation). There were 6 or 13.04% of the participants gave responses to number 3 (Encyclopedia), there were 9 or 19.57% participants gave response to number 4 (thesaurus), and there were 2 or 4.35% of the participants responded to number 5 other reasons, and they gave the following comments "web translation" and "direct translation with lots of vocabularies."

#### *Question 5*

There were 21 or 45.65% of the students responded to number 1 (language), there were 22 or 47.83% of the students gave response to number 2 (subject matter), there were 29 or 63.04% of the students gave responses to number 3 (vocabulary), there were 28 or 60.87% of the participants gave responses to number 4 (culture), and only 1 or 2.17% of the participants gave response to other reasons and he gave comments "using 'poetic license' which has poetic meaning."

## Concluding Remarks and Implications

This present study then comes up with the following concluding remarks and implications.

### *Concluding remarks:*

Firstly, although the students have passed the subjects of English Semantics and English Syntax, they still have problems in translating Indonesian literary works into English, especially poetry.

Secondly, the linguistics difficulties they experienced are grammar and lexical (Semantics and syntax). The errors occurred in the students' translation production were lexical errors and syntactical errors.

Lastly, there were 42 or 91.30% of the subjects said that poetry translation is difficult.

### *Implications:*

- The head of the Department of English should revise the translation Curricula.
- The lecturers of translation should actively assess the students' translation work and discuss the result as the feedback, to increase the quality of the translation output.
- There should be a separate subject about 'Theory of translation' in general and 'literary translation practices' in particular.

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## Appendix

Name :  
 Sex :  
 Age :  
 Semester :

Instruction:

1. Translate the following poetries into English!

### **Tuhan, Kita Begitu Dekat**

Tuhan  
 Kita begitu dekat  
 Seperti api dengan panas  
 Aku panas dalam apimu

Tuhan  
 Kita begitu dekat  
 Seperti kain dengan kapas  
 Aku kapas dalam kainmu

Tuhan

Kita begitu dekat  
Seperti angin dan arahnya

Kita begitu dekat

Dalam gelap  
Kini nyala  
Pada lampu padammu

(Abdul Hadi W.M., 1976)

### **La Condition Humanine**

Di dalam hutan nenek  
Aku hanya sebatang pohon manga  
- tidak berbuah tidak berdaun –  
Ayahku berkata: “Tanah tempat kau tumbuh  
Memang tak subur nak,” sambil makan  
buah-buahan dari pohon kakekku dengan  
lahapnya

Dan kadang malam-malam  
tanpa sepengetahuan istriku  
akupun mencuri dan makan buah-buahan  
dari pohon anakku yang belum masak

(Abdul Hadi W.M., 1975)

2. Answer the following questions:

a. In your opinion, is poetry translation difficult?

Yes

No

b. If you answered ‘Yes,’ Why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- .....
- c. What strategies do you employ in translating Indonesian poetry into English?
- 1) Reading the whole script to catch the primary message.
  - 2) Reading the text (poetry) for many times.
  - 3) Translating the poetry directly.
  - 4) Finding out the difficult/unfamiliar words.
  - 5) Others, write down:
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- d. What kind of translation tools you use to translate poetry (You can give more than one answers by circling around the choices).
- 1) Conventional dictionary
  - 2) Electronic dictionary/machine translation
  - 3) Encyclopedia
  - 4) Thesaurus
  - 5) Others, write down:
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- e. What kind of difficulties you face in translating poetry from Indonesian to English (You can give more than one answers by circling around the choices).
- 1) Language
  - 2) Subject matter
  - 3) Vocabulary
  - 4) Culture
  - 5) Others, write down:
- .....
- .....
- .....

### **Note on Contributors**

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# Assessing Vietnamese EFL Students' Writing in the Light of World Englishes

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## Abstract

This study is anchored on Swale's Theory of Genre Analysis and employed Labov and Waletzky's Personal Experience Narrative (PEN) as a narrative framework in analyzing Vietnamese EFL students' patterns of writing. The study reveals that Vietnamese student's rhetorical structure follows a three-step-pattern which is introducing the character, introducing the situation and finally telling what happens. This pattern deviates from what is perceived standard or western's style of writing which is preferred in most universities in the Philippines. The result may be a good basis for planning new prospectus and teaching materials suited for Vietnamese and other EFL students. This study also hopes to raise awareness among language teachers to the different rhetorical patterns of EFL students.

**Keywords:** *World Englishes, rhetorical patterns, narrative essays, Asian Englishes,*

*Labovian narrative analysis, EFL students*

## Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Integration provides great opportunities in meeting the influx of globalization through education, labor and economy among its members. ASEAN Integration aims to bridge the development apparent among its constituent members – Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, Philippines, Myanmar, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Singapore, and Indonesia. Canagarajah (2007) posits that one of the global demands for the teaching of English is that English has become the lingua franca of most countries. English is also established as the official working language of ASEAN countries (Gonzalez, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 2012).

Kachru (2005) argues that English is no longer just *in* Asia but *of* Asia and has become an Asian language. According to Bautista (1997), most countries in Asia accepted English as their own and used it to suit their needs. This is because people in Asia with varied norms and scopes of proficiency also use English language for practical purposes. Kachru (1997) also discusses the functional

dynamics of '*Asian Englishes*' and how it has changed the construct of English in Asia which stimulated scholars to study Asian Englishes such as Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong English etc. in the field of World Englishes.

Asian Englishes are expected to be spoken as more students coming from different countries are estimated to study English in the Philippines which is considered to have the most budget English teacher in the world. Thus Filipino English teachers, including the researcher, will eventually experience challenges in teaching students from other ASEAN countries. With the presence of ASEAN Integration, the Philippines can expect an increasing number of Asian students who consider studying in the Philippines not only because they want to learn how to speak English but more so to learn how to write in English. Among the ASEAN countries that recognize the implication of English language in meeting the global demand is Viet Nam that belongs to Kachru's Expanding Circles.

Prior to Kachru's (1996) 'Concentric Circles Model of World Englishes', several studies in language learning focused on errors when it does not conform to the perceived standard English which belongs to the Inner Circles like USA, UK, Australia, and New Zealand. The study of Heydari & Bagheri (2012) reveals that EFL/ESL learners' most frequent errors are negative influence from the learners' mother tongue which need to be corrected. Adopting appropriate teaching strategies were suggested to correct ESL/EFL errors. It was also posited by Heydari & Bagheri that re-conducting more research in error analysis is significant for scholars and researchers seeking for the best teaching strategies suitable for ESL/ EFL students to learn better.

However, with the concept of World Englishes, errors from non-native speakers of English have become more of a deviation. Groves (2010) argues that deviations from the standard English are now becoming a central feature among varieties of English in non-native speakers. He further asserts that frequent use of deviant forms (from what is accepted as 'standard') from a broad range of people in that local community, is now more appropriately called feature of variety of English in that community rather than error. According to Groves (2010), it can be a manifestation of the creativity of the language in that particular community.

Several studies were conducted to show features of Asian Englishes. Wee (2010) asserted that the Colloquial Singapore English (CSE) has a new particle 'ya' with a discourse pragmatic function that constitute a grammatical category to female Singaporeans who were observed as the main users of the new particle 'ya', a distinct feature of CSE. On the other hand, Wong (2007) explained that Hong Kong speakers of English use tag question '*Is it?*' as deviations from British and American English usage. Wong in his study found out that deviation on the use of '*Is it?*' account for more than 80 percent of tag questions found in the ICE-HK. In the Philippines, Gonzalez (1997) illustrated the features of Philippine English (henceforth PE) in describing its phonology, lexicon, syntax

and discourse through discussing the history of English in the Philippines from the time Mckinnon organized the first teaching of English among soldier volunteers that eventually led the teaching of English in the public elementary schools. Bautista (2000a) in her study responded to Gonzalez' (1983, cited in Bautista 2000a) famous question on how error can be considered a feature of Philippine English. Bautista presented deviations as grammatical features of PE used by educated Filipinos. While these studies focused on the features of Englishes from the Outer Circles which English is used as a second language, it is equally important to conduct studies on the variety of English from the Expanding Circles like Viet Nam for which English is used as a foreign language.

### **English in Viet Nam**

The country of Viet Nam has recently recognized the significance of the English language as an international language that will aid Vietnamese people to enhance their global competitiveness. Nguyen, T.T.L. (2016) in his study explained that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) issued 'Project 2020' in Viet Nam to enhance the English competency of Vietnamese people. Nhan (2013, cited in Berowa, Devanadera & David, 2018 p.7) stressed that 'Project 2020' envisions that by the year 2020 Vietnamese students will be able to confidently use the English language. It basically envisions that by year 2020 all Vietnamese students can confidently use the English language both in speaking and writing in their daily communication and in serving their country. Berowa et. al (2018) argue that 'Project 2020' motivates Vietnamese students to study English in other countries like the Philippines in order to achieve the objectives of the government by the year 2020.

In the study of Van (2007, cited in Berowa et.al), he mentioned that the Vietnamese government mandated the introduction of English in their primary education curricula and encouraged tertiary institution to implement the use of English as a medium of instruction in schools. There are two national universities and three regional universities for which the implementation should start. These are Viet Nam National University in Hanoi and in Hao Chi Minh City; Thai Nguyen University, Hue University and Da Nang University from the regions of Viet Nam. Despite of this move from the government, Anh (2010) found out that most Vietnamese graduates were not being employed in foreign countries for having poor English in speaking and writing. On the other hand, Tran & Baldauf, (2007) revealed that Viet Nam has poor quality of teaching language class setting in learning English.

Asian countries are beginning to forge partnership with international educational institutions. Thus, Vietnamese students move to other countries to learn how to speak and write in English. In the year 2008, one of the universities

in Viet Nam forged partnership with one of the universities in the Philippines. The partnership allows Vietnamese students to study in the Philippines through student exchange program. College students in the Philippines are confronted with academic demands that require them to communicate in English which is also the medium of instruction (MOI) for most courses in the universities. Thus, Vietnamese students are expected to experience challenges and adjustments while they pursue their education in a foreign country like the Philippines, significantly with their use of English in communicating with Filipinos. Therefore, the Vietnamese students will have to accomplish academic tasks both oral and written in English and not in their native language. These adjustments on the use of language are significant source of stress that may affect the social and academic performance of students. For one, Vietnamese students will have to learn a writing pattern dissimilar to them.

The researcher as a teacher of English observed that written compositions of her foreign students have distinct pattern in writing. In the Philippines teachers are more concern in checking the grammatical errors in the students' composition instead of looking for content error. The researcher believes that it is equally important to give attention to the rhetorical patterns of students' written composition in assessing cultural differences. According to Dayag (2007) varieties of English may not be comprehensible to other Asian Englishes. The researcher prior to her exposure on the concept of *World Englishes* marks her foreign students' composition as unsatisfactory for not conforming to the western way of writing essay. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) explained that the western way of writing composition is when a student must first introduce what the story is about, then explain the main ideas in a body of paragraph and finally give conclusions on what the story is about. Thus, conforming to the introduction, body and conclusion pattern which follows a western way of writing regarded as the standard for which the researcher supports its use in her teaching of writing. This perceived standard for Philippine writing according to Martin (2009) is a result of Filipinos' four decades of exposure to the Anglo-American pedagogical canons.

At this juncture, the researcher would like to explain that these reasons stimulated her to determine the distinct pattern in the narrative essays of Vietnamese students. It is her utmost hope that the study will create awareness on the knowledge of different writing patterns across cultures. It is also hoped that English teachers will be aware of other writing styles and be sensitive in assessing written compositions of foreign students in the light of World Englishes.

## **Research Questions**

The present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What rhetorical patterns emerge from personal narrative essays of Vietnamese

students in the Philippines?

2. What are the implications of this study to EFL students?

## **Methodology**

This paper is anchored on Swale's Theory of Genre Analysis (1990) where Swales describes genre as a set of communicative events with different communicative purposes. He also posits that while there are varieties of writing tasks which are represented by different genres and communicative purposes. In this paper, the communicative purposes of the narrative essays of the participants may be unique to their discourse community. Swales espoused the 'Move Step model' in analyzing research paper abstracts which is now referred as Create a Research Space (CARS). Swales (1990 in Guinto 2012) also claims that most research papers adopted three obligatory moves and several optional steps in presenting their abstracts.

On the other hand, to determine the rhetorical pattern used by 30 Vietnamese students in their personal narrative essays the framework developed by Labov and Waletzky (1967) and was again outlined in the book '*Some further steps in narrative analysis*' by Labov in 1997 (henceforth Labov 1997) is used as an instrument in preparing a coding guide. Labov and Waletzky (1997) describe narrative as a way of reporting past events which according to him is a temporal juncture. This is important in understanding that the purpose of narrative is to tell about something. The framework shows the relationships of ordered clauses of events that form complicating action in a narrative. This framework is useful in following the path of narrative construction which according to Labov and Waletzky is a fully formed narrative if it follows the six-part structure: beginning with an abstract, orientation, evaluation, complication, resolution and coda. For Labov and Waletzky, a complex narrative is a result of the combination and evolution of simpler elements. Though the limitation of his analysis is geared towards the actual narratives of large numbers of unsophisticated speakers, Tolliver (1997) argues that the framework is still useful in examining sophisticated literary narratives.

Boyno, Akil and Dolas used Labov and Waletzky's framework in analysing how language works in a narrative story that aimed to help EFL students read with understanding language in a narrative. Boyno et al. further suggested assigning EFL learners with writing stories by following the framework.

On the other hand, Guinto (2012) also used Labov and Waletzky's framework in analysing the preferred writing patterns among 29 Filipino young writers in the Youngblood section of Philippine Daily Inquirer. He found out that the 29 young Filipino writers follow these patterns: introducing the temporal

setting; introducing the situation; recapitulation of series of events; releasing tension; giving comment on the story from outside; and connecting the world of the story to the present. He argued that these young Filipino writers' narrative essays are leading towards the standard Western way of writing.

In the present study, the researcher also used the same framework of Labov and Waletzky in determining the rhetorical structure that emerged in the narrative essays of Vietnamese students.

### **Features of Labovian Narrative Analysis**

According to Tolliver (1997) the framework provided by Labov and Waletzky is pertinent for examining natural, oral and simple narratives. It also emphasized the concepts of reporting past events and temporal juncture to understand the importance of evaluating narratives. The six-part narrative analysis framework of Labov and Waletzky that begins with an abstract, orientation, evaluation, complication, resolution and coda is used as a guide in coding the rhetorical patterns that emerged in the narrative essays. The six-part analysis framework was then used in the coding to describe the moves and steps utilized by the Vietnamese students in writing. The following descriptions guide the researchers in coding where M stands for moves while S stands for steps.

#### **M1 - Abstract**

An abstract presents an initial clause that reports the entire sequence of events in the narrative. The steps in M1-Abstract are as follows:

*Step 1 Announcing the beginning of the story*

*Step 2 Stating the sequence in the story*

*Step 3 Presenting the summary of the story*

#### **M2 -Orientation**

Orientation or orientation section refers to the structure feature that serves to orient listeners in respect to person, place of the events, time, identities of the participants and their behavioural situation. In the narrative clauses, phrases or lexical items frequently appeared as an orientation function. The steps in M2 – Orientation are as follows:

*Step 1 introducing the characters*

*Step 2 introducing temporal setting*

*Step 3 introducing the situation*

#### **M3 - Complication**

A simple narrative is a result of a sequential clause that ends the complicating action. The step in M3 – complication includes *Step 1 recapitulating series of events*

#### M4 - *Evaluation*

Evaluation section is significant to establish personal interest in a narrative event. This section is concern with the information for human needs and desires. The steps in

M4 – evaluation are as follows:

- Step 1 reporting what is un/interesting in the story*
- Step 2 stating additional details about the characters*
- Step 3 suspending action*
- Step 4 comparing the sequence of events*

#### M5 - *Result or Resolution*

The result or resolution is a structure of complicating and resolving actions that are considered as the ending of narratives. The steps in M3 – resolution are as follows:

- Step 1 releasing the tension of the events*
- Step 2 finally telling what happens or will happen*

#### M6 - *Coda*

A coda is a structure of events in the narratives that describe the time of speaking with a functional device in examining verbal perspective for returning to the present moment. The steps in M6 – coda are as follows:

- Step 1 announcing the ending of the story*
- Step 2 providing summary of the story*
- Step 3 stating the connections of the events*

### **Instrumentation**

According to Labov and Waletzky, a fully formed narrative follows the six-part structure: (1) abstract – Announces the beginning of the story; (2) orientation – introduces characters, temporal setting, and situation; (3) complicating action – recapitulates series of events leading to the climax; (4) evaluation – reports what is un/interesting in the story; (5) result or resolution – releases the tension and finally tells what happens; and (6) coda – announces the ending of the story. This framework was used as a coding guide to determine the rhetorical pattern in the narrative essays of Vietnamese. Following the six-part structure of the framework, the emerging rhetorical moves from the narrative essays are determined through the aid of simple statistical techniques such as frequency and percentage. The researcher also identified whether the ‘moves’ and ‘steps’ are preferred or optional. The Slovin’s formula was used in considering

whether the move/step is preferred or optional. The move/step is considered as 'preferred' if it appears in at least 27 or 90% in the narrative essays. The total number of 27 or 90% is the result from the computation using Slovin's formula with 0.05% level of significance which is the standard probability level of significance. Therefore, the move/step appearing at least 27 in the essay is statistically worth to be labeled 'preferred move'. If the moves and steps from the narrative essays proved to be preferred, the researcher then regarded these as the emerging rhetorical pattern in the narrative essays of Vietnamese students.

### Data Collection Procedure

The 30 Vietnamese students from Viet Nam were asked to write their life experiences as a college student in the Philippines through their personal narrative essay. As regard to the choice of the topic, the researcher believes it is of significance that the topic is familiar, realistic and achievable since only limited time was given to the students. All of the participants are native speakers of Vietnamese language. They use Vietnamese language in communicating orally and in writing with their Vietnamese friends and family. The Vietnamese students are all third year college students, ages 20-23 years old.

### Results and Discussions

The data on Table 1 summarizes the rhetorical patterns that emerged in the 30 narrative essays written in English by Vietnamese students. As reflected in Table 1, there are two steps from M2 - Orientation and only one step from M5 - Resolution which emerged to be the preferred move/step in the analysis. The steps were introducing the characters and situation followed by telling what happens/will happen. It is apparent from the result of the study that Vietnamese students tend to ignore the other moves like M1, M3, M4 and M6 that got low frequency. The move/steps that got at least 27 frequency were considered the preferred moves/steps by Vietnamese college students in writing narrative essays.

**Table 1. Labovian narrative analysis of the rhetorical structure for the personal narrative essays**

Move step	f	%
<b>QD</b>		
Move 1 Abstract		
Step1 Announcing the beginning of the story	4	13.3
<b>O</b>		
Step 2 Stating the sequence in the story	1	3.33



O			
	Step 3 Presenting the summary of the story	0	0
O			
	Move 2 Orientation		
	Step 1 introducing the characters	30	100
PM			
	Step 2 introducing temporal setting	10	33.4
O			
	Step 3 introducing the situation	27	90
PM			
	Move 3 Complication		
	Step 1 recapitulating series of events	1	3.34
O			
	Move 4 Evaluation		
	Step 1 reporting what is un/interesting in the story	11	36.7
O			
	Step 2 stating additional details about the characters	13	43.4
O			
	Step 3 suspending action	4	13.4
O			
	Step 4 comparing the sequence of events	0	0
O			
	Step 5 Explaining what happened	1	3.33
O			
	Move 5 Result or Resolution		
	Step 1 releasing the tension of the events	6	20
O			
	Step 2 finally telling what happens or will happen	27	90
PM			
	Move 6 coda- announces that the story is finished.		
	Step 1 announcing the ending of the story	16	53.6
O			
	Step 2 providing summary of the story	0	0
O			
	Step 3 stating the connections of the events	0	0
O			

---

Legend: f – frequency; % - percentage; QD – qualitative description; = PM or Preferred Move O=Optional

R – rank Note: f – Frequency or number of instances the move/step are observed in the corpus.

## **The Rhetorical Patterns from the Narrative Essays**

In reference to the six moves and 19 steps from the framework, two moves and three steps were found to be the preferred moves by Vietnamese students when writing a narrative essay. While three moves and 16 steps were found to be optional, there are four steps which are not present in the 30 essays and got 0 or 0%. These are M1S3 – presenting the summary of the story; M4S4 - comparing the sequence of event; M6S2- providing the summary of the story and M6S3 stating the connections of the events. There are also some optional moves/steps that appear in most of the narrative essays but fall short of count to be considered preferred for the 30 essays. It was mentioned in the methodology that moves/steps should be present in at least 27 or 90% from a total of 30 essays to be considered as the ‘preferred move’ or the emerging rhetorical pattern.

For instance, in Move 6 Step 1(M6S1) - announcing the ending of the story only appears in 16 essays or 53.6%. Therefore, this move is not considered as a preferred move but worth to be given emphasized in the study. The researcher observed that from the 16 essays, the Vietnamese students have similarities in announcing the ending of the story. This is apparent from the following extracts:

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Essay (2)  | THANKS for letting me share my story.                       |
| Essay (4)  | THANK YOU for reading my essay.                             |
| Essay (21) | This is my story. THANK YOU.                                |
| Essay (24) | It is not long but I think it is enough. THANK for reading! |

The researcher would like to argue that this move although not considered as a preferred move is worth to be given emphasis for reasons that this phenomenon as observed by the researcher is never present in the narrative essays of her Filipino students. This is consistent with the study of Huong, (2012) that politeness for Vietnamese people is a crucial factor for effective communication valued in Viet Nam’s social context. However Huong stressed that politeness of Vietnamese people heavily rely on the social status of the hearer or the speaker. The study of Huong elucidates why some Vietnamese students end their narrative essays with ‘thank you’. In the light of World Englishes, the manner for which some Vietnamese students end their essay can be attributed to cultural differences.

Furthermore, Table 1 explains that from the six moves adopted from the framework in Labovian Narrative Analysis, only two moves were found to be preferred in the narrative essays which are Move 2 – Orientation and Move 5 – Result or Resolution. It is clear that from 19 possible steps from the Labovian Narrative Analysis, only three steps emerged from the essays of Vietnamese

students which are Step 1 from M2 - Introducing the characters; Step 3 from M2 – Introducing the situation and Step 2 from M5 - Telling what happens or will happen.

Again, the data from Table 1 reveals that in Move 2- Orientation, two steps were preferred, i. e. – Step 1- Introducing the characters with frequency of 30 or 100 % and Step 3- Introducing the situation with frequency of 27 or 90% respectively. While from Move 5- Result or Resolution, only one step was preferred, i. e. - Step 2 finally telling what happens or will happen with 27 or 90 %.

In the conduct of the study, 30 Vietnamese students when asked to write their life experiences as a college student in the Philippines through their personal narrative essays prefer to first introduce themselves. It is shown in table 1 wherein M2S1 – Orientation-introducing the characters got 30 or 100%. While M1S1 – Abstract - announcing the beginning of the story only got 4 or 13.3%. Vietnamese students do not announce the subject or topic of their composition but prefer to directly introduce the characters in their essays. The preferred move/step of Vietnamese students can be observed from the following extracts:

Essay (13) M2S1 – Introducing the characters

*Hello, my name is Thao. My english name is June.  
My family include four people: my father, my father,  
my old brother and me. I don't have sister so  
that's a bit boring sometimes.*

Essay (4) M2S1 – Introducing the characters

*I'm Trang, English name is Hailie, Im from Viet Nam,  
I'm 22 years old We have 4 people in my family. My  
parents, my older brother and me. My parents working  
in the farm. My brother work for my government....*

The two samples from the gathered data explain that Vietnamese students tend to disregard the first move suggested in Labov and Waletzky's framework which is announcing the beginning of the story or introducing the topic or subject of the text. Instead, they directly proceed in introducing the characters in the story which can be attributed to their desire to establish to the readers that they are Vietnamese students. It also prepares the audience that the character and the writer is the same person being described in the essay. The data from Table 1 also reveals that M2S3 – Orientation - introducing the situation got the second highest frequency with 27 or 90%. Therefore after introducing the characters in the essay, Vietnamese students then directly introduce the situation. This can be observed in the following extract:

Essay (2) M2S3 – Introducing the situation

Essay (4)      *In 2013, my parents decided to send me to the Philippines for studying as an overseas student. It changed my life much.....*  
M2S3 – Introducing the situation  
*I'm went to the Philippine when I was so young At the time I was 19 years old. I felt miss my hometown and my parent so much. I met some new friend and after so many thing I know the life it not always beautiful.....*

The introduction on the situation of the characters prepares the readers of what is bound to unfold in the succeeding sentences. It also introduces the difficult situation of a Vietnamese student studying in a country different from theirs. Consequently, it was also found out that M5S2 – Result or Resolution – telling what happens and what will happen is the third and last preferred move by Vietnamese students in writing their personal narrative essays with 27 or 90% occurrence in the data on Table 1. The following excerpt is from the gathered data:

Essay (13)      M5S2 – Telling what happen or will happen  
*NOW, my ambition is be a rich business at the same time, so I need to study and be mature. I hope that my life will be better and better.*

The excerpt from essay (13) follows the discussion of Dalisay (2006) that a resolution or results are events of realizations being retold by the writer with signals like now, so, in other words, anyway, in the future and many other signals. These events of realization can also be an anticipation of what they would like to happen in the future which can be observed in this excerpt:

Essay ( 9)      M5S2 – Telling what happen or will happen  
*NOW It's been three year I stayed here. I will try study hard and save my experiences more. My dream is I can manage a small company in the future.*

At this point, Table 2 reveals the distinct rhetorical patterns of Vietnamese students that may be deemed less acceptable to the perceived 'standard' in writing. It is observed that only three steps emerged from the rhetorical pattern which exhibits shorter and simpler way of writing a narrative essay. According to

Silva ( in press) ESL/EFL learners write with short paragraphs with less sophistication. It is evident in the narrative essays of Vietnamese students who complained during the conduct of the study that they lack enough ‘vocabulary’ to write their essay. The preferred moves and steps were ranked after the analysis. The findings are as follows:

**Table 2. Rhetorical pattern that emerged from the personal narrative essays of Vietnamese Students**

Move step	f	%
<b>QD</b>		
M2S1: Orientation: introducing the characters PM	30	100
M2S3: Orientation: introducing the situation PM	27	90
M5S2: Result: finally telling what happens or will happen PM	27	90

From the data on table 2, it can be perceived that the rhetorical pattern that emerged from the narrative essays are preferred by almost 30 Vietnamese students that follow this pattern in writing - iintroducing the characters, introducing the situation and finally telling what happen or what will happen. The rhetorical pattern that emerged from the 30 narrative essays of Vietnamese students does not follow the –introduction, body and conclusion. This pattern of writing also differs from the findings of Guinto (2012) who asserted that the 29 young Filipino writers still write in the manner leading towards the standard western practice. The differences of the moves and steps employed by 30 Vietnamese students and 29 young Filipino writers in the study of Guinto may be attributed to Kachru’s Concentric Circles of Englishes where Philippines is positioned in the Outer Circle and English is a second official language. It is notable to mention that young Filipino writers are consistently exposed to the use of English as a medium of instruction in schools making them proficient in speaking and writing in English. Also, in the Philippines, Martin (2009) argues that the prospectus in writing courses still adheres to the Western pedagogical canons. Viet Nam on the other hand, has only begun the implementation of English in their educational system for it recognizes the significance of English as a lingua franca. To (2010) reveals in his study that Vietnamese have limited English competence because the teaching and learning of English in Viet Nam is still in crisis. Thus Vietnamese students move to other Asian countries to study

and learn English.

### **Implications to EFL students**

This study is initially intended to be of help for EFL students. It is the researchers' utmost hope that this study will provide insights to language educators to consider the result of the study as a viable contribution in the curriculum planning for English programs for foreign students. It is essential to re-consider prospectus and practices fitting for EFL students particularly in writing. There is also a need for instructional materials that should provide understanding to the rhetorical patterns that emerged from the study. As Silva (1994) argued that materials that are successful in teaching native speakers of English may not be necessarily efficient in teaching ESL/EFL learners. It might even be a disadvantage for them.

The main objective of this study is to determine the rhetorical pattern used by 30 Vietnamese students in writing narrative essays which may be of help in addressing the concerns among language teachers. Results show that Vietnamese students narrative essays deviate from the deemed standard of writing favored in most universities in the Philippines. The Vietnamese students tend to ignore the steps for a good composition such as introduction -announcing the beginning or the topic of the story, body- developing the topic of the story and conclusion - providing the summary of the story. The pattern for which the 30 Vietnamese students use in writing is directly introducing the character and situation followed by telling what happens or will happen. This three-step pattern used by Vietnamese students is deviating from what is perceived a good composition. It is significant to reiterate that the personal narrative essays of Vietnamese students were written inside the classroom and were never checked by the teacher that may have numerous imperfections but according to Pajares & Johnson (1996) may be the most reliable source for a study.

Therefore the rhetorical patterns that emerged from the study could give language teachers ideas on what needs to be done in addressing the issues that concern the written composition of their EFL students. For one, they can propose appropriate strategies in teaching EFL students in the early phase of their writing class. It is also crucial that after language teachers are exposed to the result of the study, they will not only understand but will have a tolerance for rhetorical differences manifested in the essays of their EFL students. The result of the study will also raise awareness and understanding among teachers of English to the different facets of writing essays embedded in the cultural background of the students. Connor (1996) posits that different rhetorical patterns of the students are not indicators of educational deficiencies but more of a cultural influence. This is important for the teachers in planning their writing activities suited for EFL

students that will help them adjust their writing styles. The writing activities should encourage students to celebrate their culture and individuality but should also equip them to engage their compositions to the target audience. EFL students, specifically Vietnamese students should also be made aware on the result of the study for them to better understand their pattern in writing. Although it is still commendable that English teachers guide their students to write compositions more acceptable and comprehensible by the target readers, encouraging them to elaborate and explain their ideas without hesitation is important to EFL students. The researcher also strongly suggests in this paper the importance of constructing effective evaluation that will fairly assess the compositions of EFL students.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, it was established that there is a rhetorical pattern preferred in writing narrative essays distinct among 30 Vietnamese students enrolled in the Philippines. This pattern deviates from what is perceived standard leading towards western's style of writing –introduction, body, conclusion which is preferred in most of the universities in the Philippines. Instead, these students prefer to write their essay following these structures: (1) introducing the character; (2) introducing the situation and lastly; (3) telling what happens or what will happen. It is apparent that Vietnamese students produced only short narrative essays by following three steps that emerged from the study. This pattern may not have the qualities of a good composition nevertheless it shows the identity of Vietnamese essays as a unique discourse community. It is equally important to raise consciousness among language teachers to a different rhetorical pattern coming from the Outer Circle for which English is considered a foreign language. Therefore the pattern that emerged from the study should encourage teachers of English to assess and evaluate student writing with understanding. It is strongly suggested that other scholars interested in writing structure may examine rhetorical patterns of other *Asian Englishes*. The result may be a good basis for curriculum development and revision of teaching materials in EFL programs. Likewise, future studies should continue to examine other rhetorical patterns of Asian Englishes from students' composition to teachers' journal articles. Thus Asian students should not only be made aware of different writing styles but more so language teachers should foster celebration of the ASEAN's cultural differences in the practice of *Asian Englishes*

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### Note on Contributor

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# **English Language Performance and Difficulties of Pupils in the Mother Tongue – based (MTB) Medium of Instruction**

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## **Abstract**

This study that adopts descriptive and inferential research methods investigated the status of elementary grade pupils' English proficiency, particularly the Grades 1, 2 and 3 pupils who are simultaneously taking up subjects in the Mother Tongue and English that are integrated in their curricula. The research population was sourced from a single research locale, i.e. Don Amadeo Perez Sr. Memorial Central School-Main, during the SY 2017-2018. The study employed content-validated data-gathering instruments.

The pupils across the three curriculum grades have varied socio-demographic and language-learning characteristics. Sex-distribution in the three grade levels have different ratios. Regardless of curriculum grade designation, the pupils' mother tongues range from "Ilokano", "Tagalog", and "English". The family income of all the pupils regardless of curriculum grade are differentiated and range from "Very High", "High", "Above Average", "Average", "Low", and "Very Low".

Across the three grade levels, the pupils' academic performance in English registered into different levels from "Outstanding" (maximum) to "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum). Most of the pupils in each group registered densely in the lower strata of performance levels. Their academic performance in Mother Tongue registered in the levels of "Outstanding" (maximum) to "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum). Grades 1, 2, and 3 pupils' English proficiency levels range from "High" (maximum) to "Low" (minimum).

Relationship between the profile variables and English proficiency is dependent on the grade level of students. None of the profile variables are significantly related to EPL in the accounts of the Grade 2 pupils. Grade 1 pupils account for a significance in relationship between "academic performance in mother tongue" and EPL. Grade 3 pupils account for a significance in relationship between EPL and "sex", "academic performance in Mother Tongue" and "academic performance in English".

Teachers vary as to their level of agreement or disagreement on the positive

or negative implications of the MTB-MLE policy in the English proficiency of pupils.

Based on the aforementioned gist of research findings, several recommendations were offered to improve instructional efficiency and strategies that can alleviate pupils' difficulties and limitations in their English proficiency as well as their academic performance in English subjects. This shall be done adjacently as they are also expected to equally develop linguistic skills in their Mother Tongue. These involve the initiative and cooperation among the concerned English language and Mother Tongue teachers, the School management, and the pupils. Recommendations were also addressed for future researchers to continue their scholarly investigation on the effects or implications of the adjacent learning of Mother Tongue and English prescribed by the MTB-MLE policy of the Department of Education (DepEd).

**Keywords:** English Language Performance, English Proficiency, Mother Tongue-Based (MTB), MTB-MLE

## **Introduction**

The Philippines as a multilingual country has a different scene setting when it comes to the institutionalization of a national policy requiring mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in the primary school years (Burton, 2013). With regards to such implementation, many studies have long supported the use of mother tongue as the language of instruction. However, these researches have primarily been conducted in the community rather than national settings.

In Southeast Asia, a rising number of educational programs encourages a mother tongue approach in teaching and learning different core areas. Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Timor L'Este and Vietnam are among the countries in the region which adhere to the emerging language-in-education policy (UNESCO, 2007). In line with this, the programs are being utilized at the community level with support from international non-governmental agencies. While the use of non-dominant languages in education is allowed in each of these countries, the Philippines is the single country to institute a national policy requiring their inclusion in the early grades.

It was 2009 when the Department of Education (DepEd) challenged the Bilingual Education Policy through the issuance of an order requiring different educational institutions to implement mother tongue-based multilingual education or MTB-MLE for brevity (Department Order No. 28, s. 2013). This order requires the first language of the learners to be used as the medium of instruction in all subject areas from pre-kindergarten through grade three with Filipino and English

being taught as separate subjects (Department Order No. 74, s. 2009). In 2012, another order was issued that offered more specific guidelines for MTB-MLE and embedded the reform in the newly adopted —K to 12 Basic Education Program (Department Order No. 16, s. 2012). This order shifted from the original mother tongue approach by specifying twelve major regional languages or lingua franca to be used as the languages of instruction and offered as a learning area. Under this order, teachers are provided government-issued materials in their regional languages but are expected to adapt them to reflect the students' first languages. Until recently, the MTB-MLE policy resided solely within DepEd.

Finally, in January 2013, Congress officially supported this effort by passing the Enhanced Basic Education Act. In addition to shifting toward a K to 12 educational structure, this legislation becomes as prerequisites in instruction, teaching materials, and assessments of the learners, considering further their regional and native languages as an accessory to learning from kindergarten through grade three with a mother language transition program from grades four through six.

Gradual implementation started with grade one students in 2012, followed by grades two and three in 2013 and 2014 respectively. This shift in language policy is part of a growing number of trends around the world which support mother tongue instruction in the early years of a child's education.

As a result, the implementation of MTB-MLE in the Philippines is being looked at as an example for the rest of the region. The adoption of MTB-MLE became the beginning of a bigger movement for the DepEd and Congress that solely relies on the findings of various and previous studies that elucidate the benefits of mother tongue as a language of instruction (Burton, 2013). These studies deduced that minority language pupils who gained literacy in their first language or mother tongue experienced higher academic achievement than students who learned in a second or third language. They suggested that second and third languages can be acquired more easily if a foundation in the first language is established early.

These studies also posited the importance of late-exit programs in which the mother tongue is utilized until Grade 6 with other languages taught as separate subjects. These findings are apparent in DepEd's policy statements about the objectives and outcomes of the MTB-MLE reform. Three outcomes cited in the 2009 order focused on the speed in which students will gain literacy skills under the MTB-MLE Reform.

Anent the above highlights and merits in the implementation of the MTB-MLE curriculum, it has likewise been the target of multiple criticisms by scholars, academicians, educational managers, teachers, students and their parents and other stakeholders of Basic Education. In 2012, Nolasco noted in Philippine Daily Inquirer that:

“[The changes in the K to 12] curricular content and focus emanate from the ... intention to do away with the bilingual policy and to affirm mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE). [It] provides that for kindergarten and from Grades 1-3, the regional or native language of the learners shall be used for instruction, teaching materials and testing. From Grades 4-6, there shall be a language transition plan so that Filipino and English are gradually introduced until these languages can become the primary modes of instruction in high school.

The transition plan addresses a critical flaw, which limits L1 use up to Grade 3 only. Research has shown that “short exit” schemes lead to the same disastrous academic results as complete immersion in a second language (L2) that learners cannot speak.

In addition to the above, Wyk et al (2016) noted in their research that despite the pervasive criticisms and ongoing arguments in favour of MT medium of instruction during the early years of education, multifaceted reasons have urged people to go against this notion and rather opt for the dominant language or the Language of Wider Communication (e.g. English) to be implemented in schools as soon as possible. Wyk et al quotes Porter’s (Porter, 1999 in Wyk et al, 2016) explanation of the “maximum exposure hypothesis” or “time-on-task hypothesis” which states that the more a person is exposed on learning a language, the better a person will do in it. She further stipulated that students should be given more direct instruction in English, as this will result in them being able to do schoolwork in English earlier and more effectively.

Moreover, Kolawole and Dele (2002, in Wyk et al, 2016) contend that a firm foundation in English language is very important for better academic performance. They further suggested that the number of years of study and teaching periods in English should be increased.

Educational settings in the provincial regions have a considerable number of teachers, along with their students and the students’ parents who cannot fully appreciate the MTB-MLE with their perceptions that it has inimical and debilitating implications to the development of students’ skills in English. Some teachers think that the official languages of the academe already make use of both English and Filipino. Adding more languages to the medium of instruction, such as the mother tongue can pave more linguistic confusions on the part of learners who have to alternate their language mindsets each time and across the different courses that they take up in the school. Many educators have likewise doubted as

to how the students' mother tongue can be promoted as a medium of instruction for some academic subjects considering that most regional mother tongues are hardly "intellectualized languages". Even Filipino, which is already the national lingua franca, is challenged for its level of intellectualization, save more for the regional languages in the Philippines that were scarcely used at all in expressing and communicating scientific knowledge.

Also, it has likewise been contested that development of language skills in the mother tongue can be an essential preparation for second language acquisition in English. Many of the regional languages in the Philippines presuppose syntactic, lexical, orthographic, and phonemic features that are extremely aloof from the linguistic system of English. Accordingly, there is no way for the learners to draw so much parallelism in language rules across their mother tongue and the English language.

In the above context, that this researcher has observed among his fellow teachers and have read articles that indicate the still pervasive criticisms to the MTB-MLE, the researcher's assumption is that most of such opinions may be conditioned by teachers' less familiarity on the optimal benefits of Mother Tongue-Based medium of instruction. Thus, this study had been conceptualized to expose teachers' underlying beliefs and professional opinions based on their perceptions on the MTB-MLE. This study intended to provide an empirical basis to substantiate either one of the opposing lobbies as to whether or not mother tongue-based medium of instruction can interfere in the English language skills of learners who are concurrently taking up subjects in English and mother tongue. Moreover, the study also looked into the English language performance and difficulties of pupils which is within the researcher's area of specialization.

## **Related Studies**

The conceptualization of this study is launched from the researcher's readings of prior conducted studies dealing with mother tongue-based instruction and its general effects to pupils' academic performance and second language learning, specifically in English.

One such study is that of Wyk et al (2016) which investigated the effect of mother tongue instruction and gender on second language acquisition using a causal-comparative quantitative research design. The two distinguishing groups compared were: (a) learners that were taught in their mother tongue (i.e. Afrikaans); and (b) learners that were not taught in their mother tongue but in English, from grades 1 to 3. The dependent variable was the second language acquisition that was accounted for by the learners' performance in grade 5 in three tests, i.e. on vocabulary, on syntax, and on oral communication tests. The sample included 2 schools in Windhoek and a total of 70 learners, with 35 learners that

had Afrikaans as medium of instruction, and 35 learners that had English as medium of instruction from grades 1 to 3. The study aimed to shed some light on the ongoing debate as to whether mother tongue instruction or immersion in L2 is more beneficial for the child's second language acquisition and competence.

The above mentioned study has extreme parallelisms to the study conducted in terms of the type of respondents, i.e. Grades 1, 2 and 3 pupils. However, Wyk et al's study involved an experimental approach that investigated learning conditions of students who were exposed to mother tongue-based education and those who were immediately taught using English. This set-up diverts from this study since in the Philippine setting, the MTB medium of instruction is implemented in Grades 1, 2, and 3 adjacent the use of English as instructional medium in the other subjects. This means that the respondents of this study were simultaneously exposed to MTB instruction and English language-based instruction contrary to the conditions in Wyk et al's study.

Likewise, the research design adopted by Wyk et al paves for a highly conclusive investigation as to the effects of MTB instruction on second language acquisition. Conversely, this proposed study presupposes a more modest investigation. This study will correlate the academic performance of pupils in their mother tongue subject and in their English subject, wherein the pupils are concurrently taking up the said courses. A specially prepared proficiency test will also identify the difficulty index to help determine the specific areas of difficulty among the pupils in terms of English-related skills. The difficulty index will be analyzed and interpreted alongside the linguistic features of their mother tongue to verify if any L1-L2 interference exists and which may be conditioned by their simultaneous instruction using the mother tongue and English. Although such analyses may generate findings as to the possible implications of MTB medium of instruction to pupils' development of English skills; nevertheless, the theory that such an impact exists can only be inferred from this study's prospective findings or which may ignite subsequent research that will employ a research design that can, more or less, establish greater certainty as to the causal relationship between the variables.

Another significant study is that of Ong'uti et al (2016) that dealt on the "Factors affecting teaching and learning in the mother tongue in Public Lower Elementary Schools in Kenya". Based on their findings, both teachers and learners had negative attitudes towards teaching and learning in mother tongue. It was also deduced that poor attitude of teachers towards mother tongue and preference of foreign languages as a mode of communication, could be attributed to lack of proper training among the teachers and the unavailability of resources for teaching and learning in mother tongue, while learners' preference for English and Kiswahili could be attributed to their prominence as languages of education and greater communication.



The above mentioned study reinforced the researcher's insight about the negative attitudes or perceptions that teachers have over the use of the mother tongue as an instructional medium or the teaching of the mother tongue as a subject in itself. However, the study of Ong'uti was designed to obtain the general reasons behind teachers' negative perceptions about MTB medium of instruction or MTB course instruction. In contrast, this proposed study narrows the investigation to teachers' perception about MTB medium of instruction in relation to the development of English skills by pupils who are concurrently taking up subjects in their mother tongue and in English.

Finally, the research of Zergani (2016) dealt on the "Effects of Using and Teaching with Mother Tongue Language in Primary School". The latter concluded that teaching the mother tongue alongside the second language allows the sounds and structures of the language to be transferred more easily. The child builds on what is already known and understood. Even if the written structures of the languages are different, literacy strategies, sensory motor skills and coordination are more easily transferred. As the language development progresses, concepts already understood in the first language are more easily transferred into the second language. The transition, however, shifts from reliance on the mother tongue to the second language. Thus, the research conclusively established that simultaneous mother tongue language and second language learners have enhanced linguistic and educational development. They develop a deeper understanding and are able to compare, contrast and use multiple linguistic systems, giving greater depth of understanding. Moreover, it was found that success and ability in the mother tongue is a strong predictor of success in the second language. The learners with strong first language foundation performed better in second language exams and education.

The above quoted findings of Zergani were very programmatic and definitive. His study presupposed on the simultaneous exposure of students to MTB medium of instruction and English language instruction (i.e. English being the students' second language). On such account, Zergani found that the use of the mother tongue facilitated the acquisition of second language rules. However, the study was conducted in a setting outside the Philippines and presupposed a mother tongue based in another country. His findings at this point may be contingent to a possible semblance in the linguistic structures across a mother tongue and a second language which helped pave the complementation of learning two languages simultaneously. On the other hand, this study would like to find out if the linguistic features of the students' mother tongue (i.e. a regional language in the Philippines) can indeed facilitate second language acquisition in English. This is the reason that this study engaged in analyzing the difficulties of pupils along the different English skills with the anticipation that such difficulties might cue on possible interlanguage transference experienced by the pupils in

learning their mother tongue and English simultaneously.

The findings in the study of Burton (2013) entitled “Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the Philippines: Studying Top-Down Policy Implementation from the Bottom Up” indicated that teachers’ and parents’ views of MTB-MLE focused on the short-term benefits of the policy and the long-term disadvantages. While both groups were overwhelmingly satisfied with the increase in student understanding, they expressed concern about the future implications for learning in Bikol rather than in English. Though supportive of the policy, they remain to be tact in words and actions especially in demonstrating their full adherence. The results of her previous study bear a significant implication on how a language policy is being managed especially among educational institutions. The advent of such policy holds true to the fact that it is delivered from the top to bottom approach rather than considering ground level stakeholders.

Based on the above gist of Burton’s study, perceptions of teachers and parents on the MTB-MLE implementation were obtained. Accordingly, the parents and the teachers perceived MTB-MLE as having both benefits and disadvantages. Such level of investigation served as the basis in the proposed study to assert the ethical possibility of looking into teachers’ perceptions on the mother tongue-based medium of instruction. This research query is thus valid and ethical, having been a verified item of analysis in previous scholarly works. However, contrary to Burton’s study, this proposed research delimits such query on perception only to the English language teachers. Burton’s research population comprehensively covered a wide range of respondents which include teachers, regardless of what subjects they teach and regardless of whatever vantage points they can draw their perceptions on the MTB-MLE policy. Burton also included the parents of students as respondents.

The study of Cabansag (2016) explored the stakeholders’ perspective on the implementation of MTB-MLE as a pedagogical approach. The stakeholders’ perspectives were explored through the results of the different focus group discussions among teachers, pupils, parents, local school board, parents-teachers and community association, non-government organization and local government unit. Results indicate four main benefits of MTB-MLE, namely: expressing better ideas, building self-confidence, better retention, and promoting friendly environment. Meanwhile, the challenges which hinder the implementation of MTB-MLE are grouped into four significant themes, i.e. multilingual environment, difficulty in translation, inadequacy of instructional materials, and mandatory compliance to the Department of Education (DepEd) order.

The significance of the results of the above mentioned study points out important actions the program can benefit Filipino pupils. Notably, MTB-MLE emanated from the higher authorities in which grassroots sector were not

consulted, the Department of Education (DepEd) order should be executed by an interface between the higher level management and the local stakeholders. Involving them can undoubtedly contribute in the success of MTB-MLE.

Anent the above, Cabansag's study parallels with that of Burton with its emphasis of the implementation of the MTB-MLE as initiated by the Department of Education without grounding such policy on significant consultations with grassroots sectors. Since this was already the case, the purpose of Cabansag's research was to expose the perceptions of stakeholders on the features and implementing policies of MTB-MLE in the hope that such data generated will reach higher education authorities and initiate a possible interface with the local stakeholders, not necessarily to achieve negotiations as to whether or not MTB-MLE is deemed to continue. The interface hopes to inform higher authorities with insights that can help improve the implementing guidelines of MTB-MLE especially that some perceptions obtained have exposed certain inadequacies or disadvantages in the current policy guidelines. The most that can be done is to introduce possible reforms on the existing guidelines from where the problems seem to originate.

The above discussed purpose of Cabansag's study parallels the intention of this researcher when he conceptualized this study. However, this study secured a narrower investigation of the probable effects of MTB-MLE, and that is in relation to the English language teaching enterprise. MTB-MLE was just a recent implementation of the Department of Education compared to the English language curriculum in the DepEd that has operated for many decades. The implementation of MTB-MLE may have rates of implications along the interest of language learning in English and in Filipino, as well as probably the teaching of other content subjects. This is what this proposed study also aims to find out in its targeted locale. Like Cabansag's study, this researcher also hopes that the merits of the study's findings can be useful for improving the strategies and guidelines in implementing MTB-MLE to eliminate wrong perceptions.

Finally, the study of Valerio (2015) reveals that teachers were not yet confidently certain whether the instructional materials they presently have can assure that they can really appreciate the MTBE due to the unavailability of localized translation along the instructional materials. The study also provided empirical evidences to show that the mother tongue based instruction cannot really elevate the learners' academic performances. Several other factors can be considered in dealing with MTB instruction. Teaching materials and assessment have not been transcribed into the regional or native languages of the learners. Results also showed that the respondents believed that MTB-MLE policy must consider the development of graded transcribed reading materials in the learners' home language. Significant differences existed when the respondents were grouped according to their ethnicity and according to the number of years of

teaching experience. This implies that linguistic background or their ethnicity has caused variations or differences on the way they perceived the mother tongue based education. There were also significant differences on their perceptions when they were grouped according to the number of years they have been teaching. This implies that the way they perceive the mother tongue based instruction differs based on their teaching experiences. The use of the mother tongue in its pedagogic aspect reflects the desire of learners to promote national identity, however the teachers seemed to be unprepared yet with the mandate of the new curriculum on the use of mother tongue based instruction. Indeed, the use of local dialects along instruction is clearly a complex process that is continually being redefined by the bilingual and multilingual system of education.

The above gist of Valerio's study employed respondents among the teachers handling mother tongue-based courses. Accordingly, the findings of the study reveal that even MTB course teachers are not confident in the optimal benefits of using mother tongue as the medium of instruction due to several factors like lack of instructional resources transcribed in the mother tongue, among other factors.

As to the bearing of Valerio's findings to the concern of this study, the researcher gained significant insight that the current status of instruction that uses the mother tongue as medium has its own problems and inadequacies. Anent that, it was previously established that MTB instruction aims to be beneficial in preparing pupils for second language acquisition. However, if MTB instruction is itself not adequately implemented, how then can a problematic instructional setting cause any beneficial effect to the pupils' development of language skills in English. At any rate, this study concentrated on the perceptions of teachers of English on MTB medium of instruction from the vantage point of how it relates to the development of the students' English skills. If Valerio's findings shall be credited, then it only implies that mother tongues being used in MTB learning area instruction have not been adequately intellectualized to teach important concepts in the different content courses. On such reality, it will be sound to project the same condition to English language courses. This study, however, aims to generate its own empirical evidences to substantiate or reject the conclusions of these previous studies.

## **Methodology**

This study adopted the use of descriptive research design. As a descriptive research, it will feature an intensive analysis and interpretation of the characteristics of its respondent population as well as other variables related to them. The characteristics used to describe the situation or population in a descriptive method is known as descriptive categories (Shields & Rangarajan,

2013). Descriptive method was applied to this study relative to its aim to present a thorough description of several data sets that include: (a) the learner-variables based on the respondents' profile; (b) learner difficulties in English skills based on a difficulty index of their performance in a proficiency test; and (c) the perception of the English language teachers on the implications of mother tongue-based medium of instruction on the pupils' English language learning.

In addition, the study also employed inferential method. Inferential statistics is used to examine the relationships between variables within a sample, and then make generalizations or predictions about how those variables will relate within a larger population (Cole, 2018). Using a statistically valid sample and inferential statistics enables the conduct of research over a large scale population. Social scientists access various techniques to examine the relationships between variables, which include but are not limited to: linear regression analyses, logistic regression analyses, ANOVA, correlation analyses, structural equation modeling, and survival analysis.

Anent the above, this study sought to resolve its hypotheses as to significance in correlation between sets of variables. Inferential statistics was employed to determine: (a) if significant relationship exists between the pupils' level of academic performance in English subject and in Mother Tongue subject; and (b) if there is a significant relationship between the pupils' level of academic performance in English subject and their profile variables.

### **Respondents of the Study**

This study presupposed several units of analysis. Data corresponding to each unit of analysis were retrieved from two sets of respondents, i.e. (a) pupil-respondents and teacher-respondents. The entire research population are based in Don Amadeo Perez Sr. Memorial Central School-Main, located in Urdaneta City (research locale).

Moreover, total enumeration was used to determine the research population. The research locale had three (3) sections for grade levels 1, 2, and 3. Adjacently, there were also three (3) English language teachers assigned for each section. Overall, the study employed a total of nine (9) sections and nine (9) teachers. In the final outline of the research, the pupil-respondent population was presented in a tabular form to show the specific number and rate of contribution of each section to the whole population.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Mother Tongue**

As to the profile of the pupils in terms of mother tongue, Table 3 shows

the accounts corresponding to each group of the research population. Generally applicable across the three groups, the mother tongues of the pupils based on their self-report range from “Ilokano”, “Tagalog”, and “English”. No reports of other Philippine languages invoked as mother tongue has been found in as far as this research population.

In the Grade 1 group, most of the pupils (49 or 57.0%) registered “Ilokano” as their mother tongue, with lower incidences of Tagalog (36 or 41.9%) and English (1 or 1.2%) functioning as the mother tongue of the pupils. In contrast, a case of parallel findings was noted between the Grades 2 and 3 groups, in which majority of the pupils indicated “Tagalog” as their tongue, i.e. “74 or 73.3%” and “67 or 67.0%”, respectively. In the accounts of both Grades 2 and 3 groups, there are smaller traces of those who reported “Ilokano” and “English” as their mother tongue. As to the synthesis of the aforementioned findings on the distribution of the total research population in terms of mother tongue, majority of the pupils across the three groups registered “Tagalog” as their mother tongue, i.e. 177 or 61.7%. This is followed by the number of pupils that registered other mother tongues such as “Ilokano” (106 or 36.9%) and “English” (4 or 1.4%).

The above cited findings hardly align with the demographic description of Urdaneta City, Pangasinan in terms of “languages” used by its locals. It should be noted that the research locale of this study is Urdaneta City, where Don Amadeo Perez Sr. Memorial Central School-Main is based, and where all the pupils in the research population have their domicile in the said locale. In the demographic profile of Urdaneta City, it is indicated that historically, the first settlers of Urdaneta are “Pangasinenses”, although in the subsequent periods, the city has been gradually populated by “Ilokanos” migrating to the place as per 2015 census of population in Region 1. As such, the increased rates of migration of Ilokanos to Urdaneta City can possibly explain the finding in this study wherein the number of pupils who have Ilokano as their mother tongue constitutes a considerable fraction of more than one-third of the total research population. However, what is rather unexpected in the findings is that none of the respondents make use of “Pangasinan” as a mother tongue. This runs counter to the demographics of Urdaneta City wherein the expected dominant languages spoken by the locals are purportedly Pangasinan and Ilokano.

### **Academic Performance in a Mother Tongue Subject**

The pupils’ academic performance in Mother Tongue is operationally based on the teacher-assessed ratings that the pupils obtained upon their accomplishment of a Mother Tongue subject in their curriculum. As with the foregoing section, the qualitative description of the pupils’ academic performance level is based on a rubric that uses a 5-point scale corresponding to the bracket of

the grades they obtained in a Mother Tongue subject. The performance levels, arranged in a hierarchy of descending order, are “Outstanding” (maximum), “Very Satisfactory”, “Satisfactory”, “Fairly Satisfactory”, and “Did not Meet Expectations” (minimum). Appendices H.1, H.2, and H.3 show the distribution of the pupils in their respective groups into the different percentile ratings corresponding to the grading system employed by DepEd. Table 4 reflects data configured from the tables in the aforementioned appendices, in which the pupils’ grades were directly used as bases for classifying their level of academic performance in Mother Tongue. The table also shows the distribution of the pupils per group into the different levels of academic performance in Mother Tongue. Moreover, the data in the table is organized to enable comparison and contrast across the groups’ respective accounts, as well as a summary of the accounts to reflect the profile of the entire research population.

As to features in the findings generalizable across the three groups, it is noteworthy that the pupils’ academic performance in Mother Tongue generally registered in the following levels, i.e. “Outstanding” (maximum), “Very Satisfactory”, “Satisfactory”, and “Fairly Satisfactory” (minimum). Such pattern applies to all the pupils in the entire research population regardless of grouping. No pupil registered a performance level of “Did Not Meet Expectations”. In addition, it appears that most of the pupils in each group registered densely in the lower strata of performance levels. For instance, the highest proportion of Grade 1 pupils were gauged to have “Fairly Satisfactory” level of academic performance in Mother Tongue (i.e. 31 or 36.2%). Although the fraction does not constitute the majority of the group, it is of the highest fractional proportion. There is obviously a small trace of pupils achieving a “Very Satisfactory” academic performance level in Mother Tongue (15 or 17.5%). If the accounts for the two lower levels of performance are combined, i.e. the rate of registrants under “Satisfactory” (2\3 or 26.8%) added to the rate of registrants under “Fairly Satisfactory” (31 or 36.2%), then the synthesis of these two accounts already

constitute majority of the groups’ population (i.e. 63%). This only shows that most of the grade 1 pupils were more likely susceptible to obtain lower levels of academic performance in Mother Tongue.

The above described case of the Grade 1 group somewhat parallels the case of the Grades 2 and 3 groups. Majority of the Grade 2 pupils registered a “satisfactory” level of academic performance in Mother Tongue (55 or 54.5%). In the same way, the highest proportion of Grade 3 pupils (44 or 44.0%) registered a “Satisfactory” academic performance level in English. In the respective accounts of Grades 1 and 3 groups, it is not possible to establish a typical performance level since the proportions allocated to each performance level failed to reach at least 50% of each group’s population. In the case of Grade 2 pupils, the typical

academic performance level in Mother Tongue that they are likely to achieve is “Satisfactory”.

There appears to be a slight leverage in the accounts of the Grades 2 and 3 pupils wherein these groups account for relatively higher rates of registration under “Very Satisfactory” level of academic performance in English, i.e. 54.5% for the Grade 2 group and 44.0% for the Grade 3 group. These registration rates are obviously higher compared to what is accounted for by the Grade 1 group (26.8%). For these aspects of the findings, it appears that, on a general basis, Grades 2 and 3 pupils’ academic performance in English are slightly higher than the performance levels obtained by the Grade 1 pupils. To confirm this, Table 5 presents a further configuration of the data to show the computed mean level of performance of the three groups. Accordingly, the highest mean level of academic performance in English is achieved by the group of Grade 2 pupils (84.12%), followed by the account of the grade 3 pupils (83.46%), and finally by the account of the Grade 1 pupils having the lowest mean (83.07). Although the magnitude of the gap in the mean performance level between the groups is not considerably huge, it remains noteworthy to indicate the degree of superiority in academic performance among pupils in the higher curriculum year levels. However, the progression of the performance is not linear across the three groups because the account of Grade 2 pupils is still higher than the account of the Grade 3 pupils.

A further analysis of the above mentioned findings reveals that the academic performance level of the pupils in Mother Tongue appears to have exactly the same pattern as to the \characteristics of their academic performance in English. It is remarkable to note on the same sets of comparable and contrasting features across the three groups, whether their subject is English or Mother Tongue. The consistency in the pattern may be dismissed as having occurred only incidentally since it is not sound to conclude that learners’ performance in English can be ideally projected to their performance in Mother Tongue, or vice-versa, since these two different subjects presuppose different contents.

Likewise, the language competencies or skills aimed by the two subjects to develop are not also common between them. The only similarity between the two subjects is that they are both language subjects. As such, it may be the case that students’ linguistic skills in learning the Mother Tongue may be analogous at certain points with their skills in learning a second language, such as English.

Anent the above explanation, an article published in the “Language Magazine” attempted to theoretically establish the link between a person’s mastery of his / her Mother Tongue and the level of his / her acquisition skills in a second language. Portions of the article state that:

“[recent studies have been] exploring how a person’s native language can influence the way the



brain processes auditory words in a second language... [in relation to this issue, it has been generally accepted that] the speech processing system is extremely adaptive. Despite all the claims about the existence of a critical period for language learning, the speech processing system is actually very flexible.” (Language Magazine, 2017)

In the study of Yadav (2014), the latter took a rather neutral stance by invoking a balance between the positive and negative effects of the encouraging the use of the Mother Tongue in the school curriculum while subjecting the same students to subjects that require second language acquisition, such as the English subjects in school prescribed for ESL learners. Yadav quotes from the scholarly opinions coming from opposing lobbies to this dilemma. For language educators who oppose the simultaneous use of both Mother Tongue and Second Language in the subjects offered to ESL learners, the scholars in this lobby assert that:

“The role of mother tongue in second language learning has been the subject of much debate and controversy ... use of L1 should be minimized [especially] using it a lot ... English should be learned through English, just as you learn your mother tongue using your mother tongue. But the idea that the learner should learn English like a native speaker does, or tries to 'think in English', is an inappropriate and unachievable thought.” (Yadav, 2014)

In contrast to the above cited assertion by certain scholars, Yadav also noted on the equal number of SLA scholars who gave credit in the use and even in the teaching of the Mother Tongue even if it were adjacent to a learner’s subject in second language acquisition, since it produces no harm, challenge or confusion on the part of the learner. As explained by these scholars:

“The role of mother tongue in teaching and learning of English has long been discussed in literature. The influence of mother tongue is proven to have positive effects in teaching and learning of English. A learner's L1 is an important determinant of Second Language Acquisition. The L1 is a resource which learners use both consciously and subconsciously to help them arrange and re-arrange the L2 data in the input and to perform as best as they can. The cultural features connected with L1 use can

be put to good effect when teaching L2. Second language acquisition is a developmental process; L1 can be a contributing factor to it.” (Yadav, 2014)

As with the above quoted opposing opinions of language scholars, the findings of this study offers its modest premise to side with the lobby of scholars who assert that there may indeed be a link between learning the Mother Tongue adjacently with learning a second language such as English, especially in cases when students are simultaneously exposed to these subjects in School. In the MTB-MLE Program of the Philippine Department of Education, two subjects that impart the learning of skills in Mother Tongue and skills in English are offered simultaneously in the curricula of Grades 1, 2, and 3 which is the condition that the respondents in this study are exposed. In the foregoing presentation of the findings of the pupils’ academic performance in both their Mother Tongue and English subjects, one of the remarkable observations pointed out is the seeming commonality in certain patterns as previously discussed.

The common pattern seems to cue that the pupils’ performance in their English subject parallels their performance in their Mother Tongue subject. What the extent of the findings, however, cannot definitely explain is which between the two subjects is causing a possible influence to the other. It can get as confusing as framing the right question --- Do pupils who poorly perform in their Mother Tongue subject susceptible to have poor performance as well in their English subject? Or Do students who poorly perform in their English subject susceptible to have poor performance as well in their Mother Tongue subject? These two questions may appear structurally the same, although they do not suggest the same meaning.

The first question makes the assumption that a pupils’ performance in Mother Tongue projects an impact to his / her performance in learning English, thereby indicating that it is the learning of the Mother Tongue which generates influence or impact to English language learning. The second question offers a reversed assumption wherein it is English language learning that causes impact on Mother Tongue learning. The extent of what this current study’s findings can only shed light to is the seeming parallelism in the pattern of pupils’ performance across the two subjects. Even with that finding, the circumstances may only have been incidental or that there is really a link between them. And in case that the hypothesized link is worth crediting, the remaining issue is which between the variables is the active one that influences the other. A follow up research to clarify further the findings of this study is highly recommendable.

## Academic Performance in English

The pupils' academic performance in English is operationally identified based on the teacher-assessed ratings that the pupils obtained upon their accomplishment of an English subject in their curriculum. Likewise, the qualitative description of the pupils' academic performance level is based on a rubric that uses a 5-point scale corresponding to the bracket of the grades they obtained in an English subject. The performance levels, arranged in a hierarchy of descending order, are "Outstanding" (maximum), "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory", "Fairly Satisfactory", and "Did not Meet Expectations" (minimum). Appendices I.1, I.2, and I.3 show the distribution of the pupils in their respective groups into the different percentile ratings corresponding to the grading system employed by DepEd in assigning course ratings to pupils across the different subjects in the curriculum.

Table 6 reflects data configured from the tables in the aforementioned appendices, in which the pupils' grades were directly used as bases for classifying their level of academic performance in English. The table also shows the distribution of the pupils per group into the different levels of academic performance in English. Moreover, the data in the table is organized to enable comparison and contrast across the groups' respective accounts, as well as a summary of the accounts to reflect the profile of the entire research population.

As to features in the findings generalizable across the three groups, it is noteworthy that the pupils' academic performance in English generally registered in the following levels, i.e. "Outstanding" (maximum), "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory", and "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum). Such pattern applies to all the pupils in the entire research population regardless of grouping. No pupil registered a performance level of "Did Not Meet Expectations".

In addition, it appears that most of the pupils in each group registered densely in the lower strata of performance levels. For instance, the highest proportion of Grade 1 pupils were gauged to have "Fairly Satisfactory" level of academic performance in English (i.e. 30 or 35%). Although the fraction does not constitute the majority of the group, it is of the highest fractional proportion. There is obviously a small trace of pupils achieving an "Outstanding" academic performance level in English (13 or 15.2%). If the accounts for the two lower levels of performance are combined, i.e. the rate of registrants under "Satisfactory" (27 or 31.4%) added to the rate of registrants under "Fairly Satisfactory" (30 or 35%), then the synthesis of these two accounts already constitute majority of the groups' population (i.e. 66.4%). This only shows that most of the grade 1 pupils were more likely susceptible to obtain lower levels of academic performance in English.

The above described case of the Grade 1 group somewhat parallels the

case of the Grades 2 and 3 groups. Almost half of the population of the Grade 2 pupils registered a “satisfactory” level of academic performance in English (50 or 49.5%). In the same way, the highest proportion of Grade 3 pupils (41 or 41.0%) registered a “Satisfactory” academic performance level in English. In the respective accounts of the three groups, it is not possible to establish a typical performance level since the proportions allocated to each performance level failed to reach at least 50% of each group’s population.

There appears to be a slight leverage in the accounts of the Grades 2 and 3 pupils wherein these groups account for relatively higher rates of registration under “Very Satisfactory” level of academic performance in English, i.e. 20.9% for the Grade 2 group and 23.0% for the Grade 3 group. These registration rates are obviously higher compared to what is accounted for by the Grade 1 group (18.6%). For these aspects of the findings, it appears that, on a general basis, Grades 2 and 3 pupils’ academic performance in English are slightly higher than the performance levels obtained by the Grade 1 pupils.

Although the magnitude of the gap in the mean performance level between the groups is not considerably huge, it remains noteworthy to indicate the degree of superiority in academic performance among pupils in the higher curriculum year levels. However, the progression of the performance is not linear across the three groups because the account of Grade 2 pupils is still higher than the account of the Grade 3 pupils.

One noteworthy feature in the above discussed findings is that the academic performance in English of the Grade 3 group is slightly lower than that of the Grade 2 group. That seems to induce greater curiosity than the finding that the academic performance of the Grade 2 group is higher than that of the Grade 1 group. However, these aspects of the findings do not necessarily imply a case of regression in the pupils’ acquisition of English skills. The risk of comparing academic performance level across learners belonging to different curriculum year levels is even flawed. For one, the set of language competencies expected of each curriculum grade level are different. It is possible that a pupil may have achieved higher levels of academic performance in Grade 2 but subsequently obtained lower grades in his / her succeeding grade levels. As explained in the official page of “Supporting English Language Learners” ([https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/tracking\\_strategies.html](https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/tracking_strategies.html)), regress in performance and acquisition skills on the part of ESL learners may be a normal condition:

“[...] Learners may sometimes appear to regress when acquiring English. This can happen due to a number of factors, such as:\ challenges adjusting to academic language expectations between grade levels; experimenting with new vocabulary and

sentence structures, for example, an English language learner may revert back to simple sentence structures when using new vocabulary, especially when trying to be accurate adjusting to life or school changes returning from a break in their learning and/or an extended absence from school

A learner's progression through the ESL Benchmarks from division to division may not be linear. For example: A student transitioning between divisions may be assessed at a lower benchmark. This does not indicate regression. As the benchmarks move between divisions, what is expected at each division increases in terms of linguistic complexity. The student assessed at Level 5 in one division may be assessed at Level 4 in the next division as developmental and linguistic expectations increase."

## **Summary**

This study investigated the status of elementary grade pupils' English proficiency in the context of those who are simultaneously taking up separate subjects in the Mother Tongue and English but are integrated within the same curriculum year level. The respondents of the study are Grades 1, 2, and 3, purposively selected because of their adjacent learning of Mother Tongue and English subjects as per MTB-MLE policy implemented by DepEd. The entire research population was drawn from a single research locale, i.e. Don Amadeo Perez Sr. Memorial Central School-Main during the SY 2017-2018.

The study presupposed several objectives slated in a total of six (6) research questions. The research population was treated as three groups, in which the pupils were clustered based on their curriculum grade. Presentation and analyses of data were also organized per group with a final synthesis to compare and contrast the accounts of the groups. The respondents were initially profiled in terms of socio-demographics and language-learning characteristics. Their academic performance in Mother Tongue and English were also noted and analyzed. Moreover, the pupils were subjected to English Proficiency Tests (EPT) to determine their English Proficiency Level (EPL). Three EPT variants were used as they are sensitized to the varying proficiency standards appropriate for Grades 1, 2, and 3 pupils. Each EPT accounted for five (5) different areas which served as the indicators of English proficiency. The respondents' scores in the EPT were used to qualify their EPL as a whole and their rates in the component indicators. The results of the EPT served a dual purpose as basis to determine

their difficulty index in English as basis to gauge the level of their limitation in English proficiency, i.e. LEP level. The pupils' EPL were further correlated to their socio-demographic and language-learning profiles to resolve the hypothesis if the latter set of variables are significantly related to the likelihood of achieving certain English proficiency levels. Finally, a separate set of teacher respondents also sourced from the same research locale were requested to report their perception on the possible positive or positive implications of the MTB-MLE policy to the aim of developing pupils' English proficiency. The findings of the study were compared with analogously related findings in previous studies.

The following provides a summary of the salient points in the research findings. The findings are aggregated into the accounts of the three groups of pupil that comprise the total research population.

### **Profile of the Grades 1, 2, and 3 Pupils along Socio-Demographic and Language-Learning Variables**

The Grade 1 pupils accounted for equal number of male (43 or 50%) and female members (43 or 50%). In the Grade 2 group, the male pupils (53 or 52.5%) outnumber the female (48 or 47.5%), which is the exact opposite in the Grade 3 group wherein the female pupils (55 or 55%) outnumber the males (45 or 45%). As to the respondents' profile in terms of mother tongue, generally across the three groups, the mother tongues of the pupils range from "Ilokano", "Tagalog", and "English". Among the Grade 1 pupils, most of them (49 or 57.0%) registered an "Ilokano" mother tongue. In contrast, a case of parallel findings was noted between the Grades 2 and 3 groups, in which majority of the pupils indicated "Tagalog" as their mother tongue, i.e. "74 or 73.3%" and "67 or 67.0%", respectively.

As to the profile of the students in terms of the income of their respective families, the consolidated self-reports of the respondents reveal that the family income bracket of all the pupils regardless of curriculum grade are differentiated and that they range from "Very High", "High", "Above Average", "Average", "Low", and "Very Low". The only exception is that of the Grade 3 group who have no registered account of "Very High" income range. Majority of the Grade 1 pupils (56 or 65.1%) belong to families with "Very Low" income range (i.e. P 10, 999.00 and below). This parallels the accounts of the other groups where majority of them also registered a "Very Low" income range of their respective families on the part of Grade 2 pupils (58 or 57.4%) and Grade 3 pupils (79 or 79.0%).

As to the pupils' academic performance in English, across the three groups, the pupils' academic performance in English generally registered into levels of. "Outstanding" (maximum), "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory", and "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum). Most of the pupils in each group registered

densely in the lower strata of performance levels. For instance, the highest proportion of Grade 1 pupils were gauged to have “Fairly Satisfactory” level of academic performance in English (i.e. 30 or 35%). Almost half of the population of the Grade 2 pupils registered a “satisfactory” level of academic performance in English (50 or 49.5%). In the same way, the highest proportion of Grade 3 pupils (41 or 41.0%) registered a “Satisfactory” academic performance level in English.

On the other hand, findings on the pupils’ academic performance in Mother Tongue that are generalizable across the three groups show that their grades registered in levels of “Outstanding” (maximum), “Very Satisfactory”, “Satisfactory”, and “Fairly Satisfactory” (minimum). The highest proportion of Grade 1 pupils were gauged to have “Fairly Satisfactory” level of academic performance in Mother Tongue (i.e. 31 or 36.2%). Majority of the Grade 2 pupils registered a “satisfactory” level of academic performance in Mother Tongue (55 or 54.5%). In the same way, the highest proportion of Grade 3 pupils (44 or 44.0%) registered a “Satisfactory” academic performance level in Mother tongue.

### **English Proficiency Level (EPL) of the Grades 1, 2 and 3 Pupils**

Across the groups of Grades 1, 2, and 3 pupils, each groups accounts for pupils’ whose English proficiency levels range from “High” (maximum) to “Low” (minimum) which thus implies extreme differentiation in the pupils’ EPLs. The highest proportion of grade 1 pupils (32 or 37.2%) registered an “Average” EPL. The combined ratio of Grade 1 pupils consigned to the lower bracket of EPLs constitute the majority of the group’s population. The account of the Grade 2 pupils is slightly superior, with the highest proportion of the group’s population who registered an “Above Average” EPL (39 or 38.6%). The combined fractions of Grade 2 pupils with “average” and “above average” EPL already constitutes the majority of the group’s population (72.3. Parallel to the case of the Grades 1 and 2 groups, there is also a dearth of Grade 3 pupils who achieved a “High” EPL (7.0%). The highest proportion of pupils across the three groups are the ones who were assessed to have an “Average” EPL (i.e. 100) constituting 37% of the total research population. This is followed by the number of pupils who obtained an “above average” EPL (92 or 31.0%), “Below Average” EPL (20.1%), “Low” EPL (24 or 8.1%). The least goes to the fraction of pupils who have “High’ EPL (21 or 7.1%).

### **Limitations in English Proficiency (LEP) of the Grades 1, 2, and 3 Pupils**

On account\ of the Grade 1 pupils, their index of difficulty across the five areas of the EPT range from Moderate level of difficulty (maximum) to Very Low level of Difficulty 9minimum). They have low level of difficulty in most of the

areas of English proficiency, i.e. “Phoneme Recognition”, “Vocabulary Synonym”, and “Reading Comprehension-Inferential”. They accounted for a Very Low level of difficulty in terms of “Reading Comprehension-Interpretative”. Generally, they are more challenged when it comes to the area of “Identifying Describing Words”, although their assessed level of difficulty in the latter is only “Moderate”. Overall, their level of difficulty across the five areas of English proficiency is “Low”.

As for the Grade 2 pupils, their index of difficulty across the five areas of the EPT range from High level of difficulty (maximum) to Moderate level of Difficulty (minimum). They have moderate level of difficulty in most of the areas of English proficiency namely, “Identifying the Right Word”, “Identifying a Sentence”, and “Reading Comprehension-Creative”. Generally, they are even more challenged when it comes to the areas of “Phoneme Recognition” and “Correct Usage of Prepositions” in which their assessed level of difficulty in both areas is “High”. Overall, their level of difficulty across the five areas of English proficiency is “Moderate”.

On the part of the Grade 3 pupils, their index of difficulty across the five areas of the EPT range from High level of difficulty (maximum) to Low level of Difficulty. The areas which they found low level of difficulty are on “Semantic Conceptualization” and “Reading Comprehension-Literal”. Their level of difficulty rises one scale higher (i.e. “Moderate”) when it comes to the area: “Identifying the Right Word” to which they registered a high level of difficulty. Overall, their level of difficulty across the five areas of English proficiency is “Moderate”. In synthesis, the Grade 1 group had the lowest level of difficulty, while the Grade 2 group were assessed to have the highest level of difficulty.

### **Significant Relationship between the Pupils’ English Language Proficiency and Their Profile Variables**

None of the profile variables were found to be significantly related to EPL when statistically tested using the accounts of the Grade 2 pupils. On the contrary, using the accounts of the Grade 1 pupils, “academic performance in mother tongue” was found to be significantly related to English Proficiency level. The correlation coefficient value obtained (-0.236) indicates a negative correlation.

Using the accounts of the Grade 3 pupils, the latter’s “sex” was found to be significantly related to English Proficiency level. Moreover, the correlation coefficient value obtained (5.076) further indicates a case of a positive correlation. Furthermore, findings reveal a significantly higher EPLs achieved by the male Grade 3 pupils over their female counterpart.

The accounts of the Grade 3 pupils also indicate a significant relationship between the pupils’ academic performance in Mother Tongue and their English



proficiency level. Moreover, the correlation coefficient value obtained (0.675) further indicates a positive correlation. In addition, the accounts of the Grade 3 pupils also indicate a significant relationship between the pupils' academic performance in English and their English proficiency level. Moreover, the correlation coefficient value obtained (0.732) further indicates a positive correlation.

### **Perception of English Language Teachers on the Implications of MTB Medium of Instruction on Pupils' English Language Learning**

Majority of the teachers "fairly agree" that pupils' simultaneous learning of Mother Tongue and English is indeed favorable as such. The two subjects are complementary and mutually supportive to develop the pupils' language skills in the two languages. Likewise, majority of the teachers also noted that they "fairly agree" that their professional capability to teach Mother Tongue and English subjects in accordance with the policies set in the MTB-MLE is sufficient, without having to cause pernicious effects to the language learning abilities of the pupils in both the Mother Tongue and English.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the merits of the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Grades 1, 2, and 3 pupils simultaneously taking up subjects in Mother Tongue and English are male and female. Sex-distribution in the three grade levels are different. Regardless of curriculum grade designation, the pupils' mother tongues range from "Ilokano", "Tagalog", and "English". The family income of all the pupils regardless of curriculum grade are differentiated and range from "Very High", "High", "Above Average", "Average", "Low", and "Very Low".
2. Across the three grade levels, the pupils' academic performance in English registered into levels of. "Outstanding" (maximum), "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory", and "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum). Most of the pupils in each group registered densely in the lower strata of performance levels. Their academic performance in Mother Tongue registered in levels of "Outstanding" (maximum), "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory", and "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum).
3. Grades 1, 2, and 3 pupils' English proficiency levels range from "High" (maximum) to "Low" (minimum).
4. Grade 1 pupils' index of difficulty across the five areas of English proficiency range from Moderate level of difficulty (maximum) to Very Low level of Difficulty (minimum). Their difficulties center on "Phoneme Recognition", "Vocabulary Synonym", and "Reading Comprehension-Inferential". The Grade 2 pupils' index of difficulty range from High level of

difficulty (maximum) to Moderate level of Difficulty (minimum). Their difficulties center on “Identifying the Right Word”, “Identifying a Sentence”, “Reading Comprehension-Creative”, “Phoneme Recognition” and “Correct Usage of Prepositions”. The Grade 3 pupils’ index of difficulty range from High level of difficulty (maximum) to Low level of Difficulty. Their difficulties center on “Semantic Conceptualization” and “Reading Comprehension-Literal”.

5. Relationship between the profile variables and English proficiency is dependent on the grade level of students. None of the profile variables are significantly related to EPL in the accounts of the Grade 2 pupils. Grade 1 pupils account for a significance in relationship between “academic performance in mother tongue” and EPL. Grade 3 pupils account for a significance in relationship between EPL and “sex”, “academic performance in Mother Tongue” and “academic performance in English”.

6. Teachers vary as to their level of agreement or disagreement on the positive or negative implications of the MTB-MLE policy in the English proficiency of pupils.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. On account of the pupils’ profile revealing their differentiated mother tongues, this should raise the consciousness of the school management and teachers in the research locale as well as in other school settings so that they can adjust the instructional design of the Mother Tongue subjects sensitized to the needs of pupils whose mother tongues are not covered in the Mother Tongue subjects.

2. On account of the finding that majority of the pupils across the three grade levels register lower levels of academic performance in English, it should serve as a launching point for English teachers and the school management of the research locale to reinforce and reinvent their instructional designs, their instructional materials, and language programs to elevate the performance of their pupils in the English subjects.

3. On account of the finding that there remain to be traces of pupils with low level of English proficiency, this should cue impetus for advancement. Concerned pupils are recommended to work harder to improve their English proficiency with the able assistance of their teachers and the school management who can device alternative or reinforced strategies and intervention programs to reinforce their advancement in English skills.

4. On account of the finding that several pupils were assessed to have moderate to high levels of difficulty in English, intervention strategies and supplemental learning materials are highly recommendable to assist the special needs of these learners with limited English proficiency (LEP). This taps the cooperation among the school management, the teachers, parents and pupils.

5. On account of the finding that male Grade 3 pupils outperform their female counterpart in terms of English proficiency level, care must be taken to gender sensitize the learning tasks prescribed in English subjects in order to make them appealing to both genders and generally make English language learning enjoyable to all pupils regardless of sex. As to the finding that mother tongue learning is either negatively or positively correlated to English language learning, this dichotomy of findings in the current study should inspire future research to produce more conclusive results via the conduct of a parallel study.

6. On account of the varied perception of teachers which indicate their opinions of both positive and negative implications of the MTB-MLE policy on the aims of English language teaching, teachers should work harder to strengthen their appreciation of the policy via their own initiative to research on the benefits of MTB-MLE and how the policy can be executed effectively in their classroom teaching.

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# **Fostering learners' intercultural communicative competence through EIL teaching: A quantitative study**

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## **Abstract**

While a considerable body of research has proposed a crucial need for the shift to English as an international language (EIL) teaching to suit learners' communicative needs in the mobilized world, little has been conducted regarding its effects on improving learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC). To fill in the literature gap, this study adopted a quantitative approach to gain insight into how learners' ICC is enhanced by implementing EIL teaching principles in an English-speaking course in the Vietnamese tertiary education context. A close-ended questionnaire was administered to 40 third-year English-major students at Quang Binh University, Vietnam before and after the course. Their responses were converted into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using a deductive approach. A Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, a non-parametric alternative to the paired-samples t-test, was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in learners' knowledge and attitudes in relation to intercultural communicative competence before and after their participation in the course. The findings revealed that mean scores of learners' ICC, in terms of intercultural knowledge and attitudes after the course were significantly higher than those before the course. The study drew the conclusion that the implementation of EIL teaching evidently equips learners with essential knowledge and appropriate behaviors to be successfully engaged in intercultural encounters, and, hence, it is vital to adopt this perspective into English language teaching to meet learners' communicative needs and goals in the twenty-first century.

**Keywords:** English as an international language, intercultural communicative competence, Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, Vietnam

## **Introduction**

It is widely assumed that communication is an interrelationship between a language and its users and if a cultural dimension is not included in the language teaching, then communication cannot happen completely in real life. With the growth of English as an international language, intercultural contacts are occurring on a daily basis not only between native speakers and non-native

speakers but also among non-native interlocutors. Especially, in the context of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), an ASEAN community will be formed and consist of three pillars including the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), and the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) by 2020. English will become the official language being used for business (ASEAN 2009, 2011), and an equal opportunity will be open for every ASEAN citizen to travel, work, and study at any nations in the ASEAN community. Therefore, enhancing intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills has become a requisite response to the changing sociolinguistic reality of English in order to establish and maintain successful intercultural relationships in the international environment. This poses a new requirement for English language teaching in terms of incorporating up-to-date content and effective teaching approaches in the curriculum to fulfil the 21<sup>st</sup>-century teaching and learning goals, that is, to help learners become intercultural speakers of English who can communicate and interact appropriately and effectively with other multicultural and multilingual interlocutors. A plethora of research has proposed that intercultural issues need to be integrated into English skill training for learners to be able to produce the target language in culturally appropriate ways for specific purposes. In line with this, Ahmad and Ahmad (2015) state that “language and culture correlation is a must for an effective cross-cultural communication,” (p. 52). Additionally, Nguyen (2007) claims that involving the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English language teaching may be among the most significant undertakings in the future of language education.

Meanwhile, English language teaching in Vietnam has still received much criticism, such as relying heavily on strict teacher-centered methods and rote learning as well as not helping learners become interculturally competent in English communications. In fact, although the grammar-translation method is losing its popularity, the attention to developing ICC in English language teaching seems to be inadequate (Tran & Duong, 2015). Despite a newfound emphasis on the ICC development in some educational institutions, there are no specific teaching guidelines available. Consequently, intercultural communication issues are not embedded in the curriculum in any integrated or significant ways. Nguyen (2007) asserts that while the increasing demand for English language teaching and learning is obvious, the curriculum contents and textbooks could not meet learners’ communicative needs and goals. The textbooks have been used for the tertiary education level in Vietnam, for example, are mainly designed in English speaking countries; hence, most of the time those textbooks emphasize the language and culture of English-speaking nations rather than of other English speakers or users, or even the learners’ own cultures. In other words, Western

cultures seem to dominate in English language classrooms in Vietnam, and many teachers tend to believe that in order to master the target language, learners need to acquire target language cultures without raising their intercultural awareness in English communications. This leads to the fact that a large number of Vietnamese learners are not confident enough to participate in intercultural encounters with multilingual speakers or take part in those circumstances unsatisfactorily.

Thus, many researchers (e.g., Mai, 2017, 2018; Nguyen, 2007; Kramsch and Sullivan, 1996; Tran & Duong, 2015) have proposed an urgent need for more effective alternatives and a pedagogy of appropriation for the use of English as an international language today. ELT is able to be efficient for global transactions and relevant to the users' local cultures, therefore, intercultural communicative competence is supposed to be integrated into ELT to prepare learners "to be both global and local speakers of English and to feel at home in both international and national cultures" (Kramsch and Sullivan, 1996, p. 211).

This study aims to raise awareness of the benefits of integrating ICC into teaching English language skills and proposes an implementation of EIL teaching principles as a teaching approach in EL classroom to enhance learners' ICC. The study focuses on exploring the development of two elements of ICC, which are knowledge and attitudes because these two elements are fundamental to the development of skills necessary for ICC (Deardorff, 2006). Moreover, it is believed that intercultural communication skill development is a long-term process that is better formed through real-life multicultural encounters outside classrooms rather than in the context of a monoculture classroom. In the scope of this study, learners' development of knowledge and attitudes necessary for ICC were examined and evaluated before and after their participation in the EIL principle-adopted Speaking course.

In what follows, this paper will present the background knowledge of intercultural communicative competence and English as an international language pedagogy, followed by a review of some studies of the field in the EFL and ESL contexts. Next, the findings will present the results of the study before making an analysis and discussing its implications. Finally, the conclusion will capture the main points of the study.

## **Literature Review**

### **Intercultural communicative competence**

Defining intercultural communicative competence is a challenging task due to the variety of definitions and frameworks elaborated by various intercultural scholars. Firstly, in the discussions of ICC, most researchers tend to start from clarifying the concept of intercultural competence (IC). It is commonly assumed that



intercultural competence is the preparation of the individuals to interact appropriately and effectively with other interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2012). In the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, Bennet (1993) describes the learners' internal process moving from ethnocentricity to ethnorelativity. Byram (1997) subsequently develops a multidimensional model of IC that considers the knowledge, values, and skills as essential elements for successful intercultural interactions.

Additionally, Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence significantly contributes to the better understanding of IC, which implies the intervention and movement of an individual between five elements of attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes, and external outcomes in relation to intercultural interactions. In this framework, attitudes are composed of respect, openness, curiosity, and discovery. Openness and curiosity imply the willingness to risk and move beyond one's comfort zone while respect means valuing others. In relation to knowledge essential for intercultural competence, four major elements are considered such as cultural self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, deep cultural knowledge (including understanding other worldviews), and sociolinguistic awareness. With regard to skills necessary for intercultural competence, Deardorff's framework is in line with Byram (1997) that these skills address the acquisition and processing of knowledge such as observation, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating. Another element constituting intercultural competence is internal outcomes that consist of flexibility, adaptability, an ethnorelative perspective, and empathy. These aspects occur in each person as a result of acquired attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for intercultural competence. External outcomes in Deardorff model's refer to the effective and appropriate behavior and interaction in intercultural encounters.

Although intercultural competence provides a strong underpinning for ICC and some scholars use it as an interchangeable term for ICC, it is argued that these two should not be considered equivalent (Byram, 1997; Moller & Nugent, 2014; Nguyen, 2017; Wilberschied, 2015). When comparing IC and ICC, Byram (1997) emphasizes the cluster of skills required for acquired competence "in attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to IC while using a foreign language" (p. 71). According to Wilberschied (2015), individuals with ICC have the ability to "manage interactions of a greater variety and complexity as a result of self-study, foreign language proficiency, and analysis of one's own culture and that of those who speak the target language" (p. 3).

Among the working definitions of ICC, Byram's (1997) is one of the most popular, which coins that ICC includes "knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others'

values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one's self. Linguistic competence plays a key role" (p. 34). It underscores that in an intercultural interaction someone gains an inside view of other interactants' cultures while also contributing to their understanding of his or her own culture from an insiders' viewpoint. Byram explains further that an interculturally competent speaker turns intercultural encounters into intercultural relationships; however, contrasting with the IC model, individuals with ICC develop such relationships while using the foreign language.

Despite some different ways of conceptualizing ICC, intercultural scholars have a consensus that intercultural communicative competence is a lifelong process (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Moller & Nugent, 2014; Nguyen, 2017; Wilberschied, 2015). Hence, it is important to pay attention to the development process and how one acquires the necessary knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The above-mentioned models and interpretations also suggest that intercultural communicative competence is not a naturally occurring phenomenon; rather, it must be intentionally addressed at institutions through curricular and co-curricular effects. Students' ICC should be developed in a more comprehensive and integrated approach. For that reason, a plethora of research has proposed the need for employing English as an international language pedagogy in English language classroom to meet learners' communicative needs and goals.

### **English as an International Language**

It is the colonial and postcolonial expansion of English along with the rapid growth of globalization that has generated a changing sociolinguistic reality of the English language, which is far more complex than any other languages across the world (Marlina, 2014). A plethora of research has confirmed that English is the most dominant international language of the 21st century, used as the main communication tool for international trade, international conferences, entertainment, education, technology, and media. In most international encounters, English is regarded as the number one global language that expresses the fullest meaning.

"For better or worse, by choice or force, English has 'traveled' to many parts of the world and has been used to serve various purposes. This phenomenon has created positive interactions as well as tensions between global and local forces and has had serious linguistic, ideological, socio-cultural, political and pedagogical implications" (Sharifian, 2009, p.1).

Seidlhofer (2011) refers to English as an International Language as a term

that can be used interchangeably with others, such as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as a global language, English as a World English and English as a medium of intercultural communication. Although Seidlhofer highlights the international role of the English language by naming it with some terms such as international and global language, due to the diversity of the social contexts of English, equating EIL to some other terms seems to be insufficient. In a more distinguishing way, McKay's (2002) conceptualization considers EIL as an "umbrella" term that characterizes the use of English between any two L2 speakers of English sharing the same culture or owning a different culture. Moreover, it also includes speakers of World Englishes (WEs) communicating within their country, as well as English as a Lingua Franca interactions. It then includes L2 speakers of English using English with L1 speakers. EIL is, therefore, viewed "far more complex linguistically than is allowed for in either the World Englishes or ELF model" (p.16) though it cannot separate from WEs and ELF (Marlina, 2014).

### ***English as an International Language Pedagogy***

In terms of EIL pedagogy, Doel (2007) argues that a "truly international English model" should not follow a narrow perspective that focuses on native or non-native "local or parochial concerns"; rather, it is essential to revolve around "a broad view of communication" which embraces both L1 and L2 speaker needs and a diversity of communicative situations. In line with this, Mackay (2002) points out the different assumption between teaching English as an International Language, teaching English as a Second Language, and teaching English as a Foreign Language. The author claims that EIL entails the context of teaching English to those who have learned an additional language alongside their mother tongue to communicate with other interlocutors of different languages and cultures with a desire to be a part of the global community. As an international language, English is not the property of any nations or countries but of its users and serves the local and global needs of various nations and communities with multicultural contexts. Therefore, EIL teaching rejects the single norms of English in intercultural communications and emphasizes that, with many varieties or with the status of pluricentricity, English is a language of international and hereby intercultural communication (Sharifian, 2009).

Due to a wealth of writings on EIL teaching pedagogy by various scholars, a summary of a common agreement on its principles is significantly made by Marlina (2014), which will be presented as follows.

#### ***Principles of EIL teaching***

##### ***Raising an awareness of and a respect for the pluricentricity of English***

As English appears to be a common tool of communication among people across multiple cultures, how and what they speak serves as a source of personal

and social identity (McKay, 2002). As Lick and Alsagoff's (1998) claim, varieties of any language are associated with particular social groups and can be characterized by a specific set of linguistic modifications. These varieties should be treated equally as they are fully systematic and regulated by a set of principles. In teaching EIL, it is imperative that learners become cognizant of and have a view of English as a heterogeneous language with multiple norms rather than a single model of the mother-tongue speakers (McKay, 2012).

#### *Exposure to different varieties of English*

To develop multilingual communicative competence, learners necessarily understand different varieties of English (Marlina, 2014). McKay (2012) contends that the native models are no longer appropriate in the teaching of an international language; rather, English should be seen as "a truly pluricentric language, which does not focus simply on one or two varieties" (Sharifian, 2014, p. 41). Furthermore, Gee (2004) claims that in an international communication environment, developing learners' ability to understand the meanings in a specific social context, what he calls *Discourse*, is of vital importance. At the same time, he emphasizes that what learners of a heterogeneous English today need is "multiple ways of acting-interacting-speaking-writing-listening-reading-thinking-believing-valuing-feeling with others at the 'right' times and in the 'right' places" (p.25). Thus, knowledge of different varieties of English would be advantageous for learners in cross-cultural communications.

#### *Development of negotiation skills in different varieties of English*

EIL scholars argue that the changing sociolinguistic conditions of English call for more sophisticated formulations of competence. Canagarajah (2006) notes that in the postmodern context of communication today, "to be really proficient in English, one has to be 'multidialectal.' This does not mean that one needs production skills in all the varieties of English but needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication" (p. 233). Sharifian (2014) shares the same idea and terms this competence *multi-varietal competence*. In this regard, he emphasizes that apart from the passive competence to comprehend different varieties of English, language users also need "the skills to employ strategies to facilitate communication in the face of any difficulties that arise, for example, from phonological variations associated with varieties of English" (p. 42).

#### *Appreciation of diverse cultures*

In cross-cultural communication, learners are encouraged to recognize and appreciate the diversity existing within all cultures, especially in the modern era of travel and migration when cultures are in constant contact (British Council, 2013; Moeller & Nugent, 2014; Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). Kramsch (1993) proposes that there exist a variety of national characteristics relating to age, gender, ethnic background, social class, and regional origin within each culture. It highlights the fact that national identities are not monolithic, and that no two

people share an entirely similar set of experiences and worldviews. Additionally, Smith (1976) posits that English as an international language is de-nationalized, and it is embedded in the culture of the country in which it is used. In the context of intercultural communication, therefore, it is crucial that learners of English accept and respect the diversity of cultures rather than insist on the exocentric norms (McKay, 2002).

#### *Exposure to diverse cultures*

It is imperative that learners are exposed to other cultures as a way of reflecting on their own values and beliefs (McKay, 2012). This goal cannot be attained through learning about cultures of the English-speaking countries only, but rather through learning about many cultures and about differing cultural values, which helps to increase learners' sensitivity to cross-cultural differences. Kramsch (1993) argues that language classrooms need to establish a "sphere of interculturality." It requires two essential elements, such as (a) learners need to gain knowledge of other cultures, and (b) learners need to reflect on how their culture contrast with it. Moreover, McKay emphasizes that through comparisons and contrasts with other cultures, learners can gain the greater understanding of their culture. In addition, as one of the primary purpose of communication is to share one's own culture, learners also need to know how to explain and express the cultural values that they hold in English.

#### *Development of negotiation skills of diverse cultures*

In today's intercultural communicative settings, interlocutors might encounter misunderstandings or conflicts, as they are not familiar with cultural conceptualizations associated with a particular sociocultural situation (Sharifian, 2014). Sharifian proposes the need of developing the capacity "to communicate and negotiate cultural conceptualizations during the process of intercultural communication," what he calls *metacultural competence* in learners (p. 44). The term of *cultural conceptualizations* alludes to units of conceptual knowledge that are culturally constructed. It is also referred to cultural schemas which are "pools of cultural knowledge" providing "a basis for a significant share of semantic and pragmatic meanings in a cultural group," (p. 45). However, every individual may internalize different elements of cultural schemas. Thus, members of the same cultural group also need to negotiate different cultural meanings (Marlina, 2014; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008).

### **Research on Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence**

Bennett (2009) claimed that teaching knowledge of different cultures is not adequate to develop intercultural communicative competence. Students are supposed to not only accumulate facts and knowledge about a culture but also critically examine cultures in order to develop intercultural communicative competence. While studies have examined several approaches for developing

ICC, many of them have continued to receive much criticism for lacking in rigor (Mendenhall et al., 2004).

Cushner (2014), for example, proposed strategies for intercultural training in classrooms. First of all, Cushner identified five stages of intercultural learning, namely denial, polarization, minimization, acceptance, and adaptation. For learners at each stage, Cushner proposed specific strategies and developmental tasks for teachers to draw on in their teaching. He also pointed out the intercultural skills that should be expected for the learners to develop when they are working towards the next stage. For example, for the students at the denial stage, the teachers should focus on developing trust, friendliness, and cooperation among students, help the students to manage anxiety and cultural shock, and gradually develop the ability to recognize the cultural differences and the initiatives to explore more aspects of different cultures. At the final stage, the intercultural skills that the teachers should expect from their students include cultural-specific knowledge, cognitive flexibility, respect for others' cultural values and beliefs, culture-related problem-solving skills, interaction management skills and so forth. However, Cushner's framework is developed in the ESL context where students are from multiple countries with diverse cultures. In the EFL context, in most of the cases, learners live in the same country and share many common aspects of culture. Although EFL learners have their own regional cultural values differing from others, intercultural interactions that happen among EFL learners within their countries might be simpler than those in ESL contexts. Hence, Cushner's teaching approaches could not meet all English learners' needs and goals but need to be adapted by practitioners in their own teaching contexts.

Another study by Ahmad and Ahmad (2015) gave insight into the voice of Arabian teachers of English on the effects of implementing EIL teaching on learners' ICC development in English classrooms. The research adopted a qualitative method by using semi-structured interviews with twelve faculty members who had the vastest experience of teaching English at an international level and experienced much teaching in various countries. The participants' interview responses were audio-recorded and then themes were identified and reported. The findings showed that most of the respondents were convinced the importance of inculcating ICC in the learners through the language teaching and learning process by adopting the EIL teaching principles. The study contributed to the field by raising the awareness of adopting EIL teaching in the language teaching. However, the importance of EIL teaching was just explored from teachers' viewpoints but not from learners' voices. Hence, there remains a room for further research to go insight into learners' perspectives and with a different research method such as using a quantitative approach.

With the same purpose of raising awareness of incorporating intercultural

communications into English language teaching, Nguyen's (2007) study proposed a variety of activities that could be carried out in the language classroom in the Vietnamese context. The author based on three domains of intercultural communicative competence including cognition, affect, and behavior to orient and move the learning of intercultural communications beyond its cognitive domain. Various activities in English language teaching were presented to integrate learners' ICC development into the language teaching process such as discussion, role-play, lecture, and story-telling. Also, based on a literature research, Tran and Duong (2015) suggested adapting six principles of intercultural communicative language teaching to enhance learners' ICC in English language classrooms in Vietnam. These studies made a contribution to the field by responding to the call for more attention to intercultural communications and raising the awareness of this issue in ELT in Vietnam. However, the proposed activities as well as teaching principles were described in a general way and lacked specific contexts – for example, for what levels of learners and how to implement them effectively in actual classrooms to suit different levels of students. Moreover, there were no data shown regarding the effects of these teaching and learning activities or approaches on developing learners' ICC. Further research is, therefore, suggested to explore the effects of different teaching approaches on the ICC development to add more data to this research area.

Overall, the literature shows that in the Vietnamese teaching context there are still a very limited number of studies on how to foster ICC and its effects on particular learners. Furthermore, although research has proposed the urgent need for a shift to EIL teaching pedagogy to meet learners' communicative needs and goals, there have been no empirical studies on the effect of the implementation of EIL teaching principles on learners' ICC development in actual classrooms from learners' viewpoints, especially by employing a quantitative method. Therefore, this study fills in the gap by adopting this approach to explore whether learners' intercultural communication knowledge and attitudes necessary for intercultural communicative competence are improved after taking the EIL-adopting Speaking course. It aims to address the following research questions:

1. How do learners' intercultural communication knowledge change after the course?
2. How do learners' intercultural communication attitudes change after the course?

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

The participants were 40 English-major students who enrolled in a Speaking class

according to their curriculum in Quang Binh University. Quang Binh University is located in Dong Hoi city in Quang Binh, a small province in the middle of Vietnam. All of the participants were third-year students and their ages ranged from 20 to 22. Among them, the number of males accounted for 7.5% and that of females made up 92.5%. Since third-year students at Quang Binh University had a higher level of English proficiency than the first-year and second-year students who were still at the pre-intermediate level, third-year students were chosen for the experimental teaching. Furthermore, fourth-year students were not chosen to avoid adding more pressures on them in their final year.

### **Teaching Setting**

Through 7 Speaking lessons, the teacher employed EIL teaching principles to both develop learners' linguistic skills and intercultural communicative competence, particularly enhancing their intercultural communication knowledge and attitudes through three major points: (1) the changing socio-linguistic reality of the English language; (2) varieties of English; and (3) cultural diversities in English communications. The contents in these teaching streams were embedded in different lessons of the English speaking class. The aim of the first session was to make learners cognizant of the changing status of English and the development of English as an international language, allowing learners to understand the new functions and roles of English today, and enhance their critical thinking as to how to learn English in order to successfully communicate in international encounters. For the second point, designed lessons aimed to make learners aware of varieties of English around the world, expose them to some varieties of English such as Singlish, Indian English besides American or British Englishes, and encourage learners to respect different accents of English as well as its users. At the same time, the teacher used intelligibility to assess learners' ability of English speaking skill rather than the native-like accent. Also, the teacher provided learners with some useful languages to negotiate the meaning to avoid the breakdown in international communications. For the final point, teachers made learners aware of the diversity of cultures in international communications, exposed them to diverse cultures in Speaking lessons, and encouraged them to respect different beliefs, customs, and rituals in international communications.

### **Instruments**

#### ***Survey questionnaire***

With the ability to collect data on a large scale and its benefits in time, in terms of effort and financial saving (Brown, 2000; Dörnyei, 2003), a survey questionnaire was utilized to collect data in the study (see Appendix).

The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part helped to collect the biodata of the participants and was followed by 32 statements



regarding learners' intercultural communication knowledge and attitudes. The participants would tick on the appropriate answer (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree) to evaluate their changes before and after the course. The time taken to complete the survey ranges from 15 to 20 minutes according to the feedback of fifteen students who piloted it.

### ***Piloting***

The pilot test allows the researcher to accumulate assessments on the effectiveness of the instrument, that is, whether it performs the job for which it has been designed. Based on that, the researcher can make modifications and fine-tune the final version (Dörnyei, 2003).

Before delivering the survey to the participants, the survey was sent to fifteen learners who were asked to try to answer the questionnaire and give any comments on any problems that they encountered. Based on the comments, some improvements were made with an aim of achieving more accurate responses.

After correcting and improving the questionnaire, it was delivered to 40 third-year English-major students before the course and after the class employing each point of EIL teaching pedagogy with the traditional paper. This administration allowed the participants to reflect their thoughts immediately after the class so that they could remember clearly what they experienced and provided more accurate responses.

### **Data Analysis**

***Reliability level of the questionnaire.*** Reliability analysis was conducted with the questionnaire data using SPSS 22. The Cronbach's alpha value of .947 indicated a high level of reliability (Field, 2009).

***Close-ended questionnaire.*** Firstly, the participants' responses were converted into numbers to calculate scores, such as strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neutral = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. Secondly, since the purpose of the study was to explore learners' changes in their intercultural communication knowledge and attitudes, the closer the mean scores were to 5, the more knowledge and positive attitudes learners had.

It was hypothesized that there were significant differences between the mean scores of students' attitudes and knowledge before and after the course. However, in analyzing the data, null hypotheses of no differences were tested. It was expected, however, that these null hypotheses would be rejected.

All the null hypotheses were tested at alpha .05 level of significance and with a 95% confidence interval. The procedure of data analysis consisted of the following phrases to deal with the research question.

Firstly, a normality test was conducted to check whether the data set was normally distributed. The result could help to determine which statistical technique was suitable to analyze the data.

Secondly, a Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test, a nonparametric alternative for the paired samples t-test, was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores of students' knowledge and attitudes in relation to intercultural communications before and after the course.

## **Results**

### ***Data screening***

To test the assumption of normality, a Histogram was firstly observed, which showed that the shape did not look symmetric and bell-shaped. Hence, the assumption of normality was not met. A visual inspection of Normal Q-Q plot also indicated that the scores were not normally distributed along the line.

The observed values of the Shapiro-Wilk statistics for the post-test variable did not meet the assumption of normality ( $p < .05$ ). Also, the values of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov for both the pre-test and post-test data were significantly different from the normality ( $p < .05$ ).

As the assumption of normality was not met, the Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test instead of the paired-samples t-test was used to test whether there is a significant difference between mean scores of students' intercultural communication knowledge and attitudes before and after the course.

### **Research question 1: How do learners' intercultural communication knowledge change after the course?**

The statistics for the development of learners' intercultural communication knowledge was analyzed throughout each teaching principle adopted.

Firstly, through the introduction about the changing socio-linguistic reality of English, the statistics showed that learners' intercultural communication knowledge about the changing status and role of the target language was significantly improved ( $Z = -5.388$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and the median knowledge score rating was 2.33 for the pre-test and 4.67 for the post-test. The statistics for each statement can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1

*The differences in learners' intercultural communication knowledge score rating before and after introducing the changing socio-linguistic reality of English*

		N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mdn	Z	Sig. (2- tailed)
Q1. I am aware of the spread of English and its changing status in the mobilized world.	Pre_score	40	2.33	1.05	1	5	2.00	-5.447	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.45	0.60	3	5	4.50		
Q2. I have learned more about the new roles and functions of English as an international language today.	Pre_score	40	2.67		1	5	3.00	-5.164	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.50		3	5	5.00		
Q3. I am aware that to be proficient in English communications is not only developing linguistic skills but also intercultural communication competence.	Pre_score	40	2.80		1	5	3.00	-5.214	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.65		3	5	5.00		

Note: Z=Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, \*p<.05

Secondly, through exposing learners to different varieties of English in the classroom, learners' intercultural communication knowledge regarding varieties of English was also significantly improved ( $Z=-5.515$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and the median knowledge score rating was 2.00 for the pre-test and 4.20 for the post-test. The statistics for each statement can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2

*The differences in learners' intercultural communication knowledge score rating before and after the exposure to varieties of English*

		N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mdn	Z	Sig. (2- tailed)
Q5. I am aware that besides American English or British English, there are other varieties of English such as Indian English, Singlish, etc.	Pre_score	40	2.13	1.14	1	5	2.00	-5.504	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.58	0.64	3	5	5.00		
Q6. I have learned some different accents and vocabulary of Singlish, Indian English, and Manglish besides American and British Englishes.	Pre_score	40	1.90	1.08	1	4	2.00	-5.518	.000*
	Post_score	40	3.93	1.02	2	5	4.00		
Q7. I am aware that I might communicate in English with people from other countries or regions (such as China, Japan, Thailand,...) but not only with people from English-speaking countries such as America or Britain.	Pre_score	40	2.65	1.21	1	5	2.50	-5.292	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.55	0.60	3	5	5.00		

Q8. I have learned that people coming from different countries or regions might have different accents.	Pre_score	40	2.58	1.24	1	5	-5.301	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.42	0.87	2	5		
Q9. I have learned and practiced using some languages to negotiate the meaning in intercultural communications.	Pre_score	40	2.10	0.90	1	4	-5.569	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.25	0.63	3	5		
Q10. I have learned and practiced using some languages to join intercultural communications and avoid the breakdown.	Pre_score	40	1.75	0.87	1	4	-5.556	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.10	0.93	2	5		

Note: Z=Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, \*p<.05

Finally, through exposing learners to a diversity of cultures in the classroom, learners' intercultural communication knowledge regarding the diversity of cultures in English communication was also significantly improved ( $Z=-5.517$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and the median knowledge score rating were 2.00 for the pre-test and 4.36 for the post-test. The statistics for each statement can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3

*The differences in learners' intercultural communication knowledge score rating before and after the exposure to a diversity of cultures*

		N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mdn	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q16. I am aware that besides American or British cultural norms, there are a	Pre_score	40	2.15	0.92	1	4	2.00	-5.576	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.30	0.72	3	5	4.00		

diversity of cultural norms and beliefs expressed by English speakers from different cultures in English communications.

Q17. I am aware of enriching my knowledge of different cultures to develop my intercultural communicative competence.	Pre_score	40	2.63	1.10	1	5	3.00	-5.389	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.70	0.68	2	5	5.00		
Q18. I learned various cultures of different countries besides American or British cultures such as about non-verbal communication, politeness, silence, and turn-taking, etc..	Pre_score	40	2.33	0.92	1	4	2.00	-5.585	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.52	0.72	3	5	5.00		
Q19. I have developed my knowledge about my own cultures in English.	Pre_score	40	2.10	0.78	1	5	2.50	-5.511	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.10	0.78	3	5	4.00		
Q20. I have understood more about my culture in comparison with other cultures.	Pre_score	40	2.22	0.86	1	4	2.00	-5.450	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.43	0.68	2	5	4.50		
Q21. I have developed my knowledge about	Pre_score	40	2.30	0.88	1	4	2.00	-5.545	.000*
	Post score	40	4.15	0.70	3	5	4.00		

people and cultures in the world.										
Q22. I have learned some languages to participate in intercultural communications and avoid the breakdown.	Pre_score	40	1.67	0.83	1	4	2.00	-5.600	.000*	
	Post_score	40	4.07	0.73	2	5	4.00			

Note: Z=Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test; \*p<.05

Overall, the descriptive statistics showed that learners' intercultural communication knowledge score rating after participating in the course was significantly higher than that before the course. It can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4

*Descriptive statistics of learners' knowledge score before and after participating in the ICC course*

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Knowledge_Score_Pre	40	2.27	.71	1.0	3.9
Knowledge_Score_Post	40	4.36	.45	3.2	4.9

A Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test showed that the implementation of EIL teaching principles in English speaking classroom helped to make a statistically significant improvement in learners' intercultural communication knowledge (Z=-5.513, p<.05). Indeed, the median knowledge score rating were 2.00 for the pre-test and 4.36 for the post-test. The table also indicated that all of the participants (N=40) gained a positive development of intercultural communication knowledge after the course. It can be seen in Table 5 below.

Table 5

*A Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test*

		N	Mean Rank	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)
Knowledge_Score_Post - Knowledge_Score_Pre	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>a</sup>	0.00	- 5.513	.000*
	Positive Ranks	40 <sup>b</sup>	20.50		

	Ties	0 <sup>c</sup>
	Total	40
a. Knowledge_Score_Post < Knowledge_Score_Pre		
b. Knowledge_Score_Post > Knowledge_Score_Pre		
c. Knowledge_Score_Post = Knowledge_Score_Pre		
Z=Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test; *p<.05		

## Research question 2: How do learners' intercultural communication attitudes change after the course?

The statistics for the changes in learners' intercultural communication attitudes were also analyzed through each teaching principle adopted.

Firstly, through the introduction about the changing socio-linguistic reality of English, the statistics showed that learners' attitudes towards the changing status and roles of the target language were significantly improved ( $Z=-5.569$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and the median knowledge score rating were 2.00 for the pre-test and 5.00 for the post-test. The statistics for each statement can be seen in Table 6 below.

Table 6

*The differences in learners' intercultural communication attitude score rating before and after introducing the changing socio-linguistic reality of English*

		N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mdn	Z	Sig. (2- tailed)
Q4. I have a desire to learn more essential knowledge and skills to communicate successfully in intercultural encounters.	Pre_score	40	2.33	1.05	1	4	2.00	-5.569	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.58	0.60	2	5	5.00		

Z=Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test; \*p<.05

Secondly, through exposing learners to different English varieties in the classroom, learners showed a significantly positive attitude towards English varieties in international communications ( $Z=-5.515$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and the median knowledge score rating were 2.80 for the pre-test and 4.60 for the post-test. The statistics for each statement can be seen in Table 7 below.



Table 7

*The differences in learners' intercultural communication attitude score rating before and after the exposure to varieties of English*

		N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mdn	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q11. I respect all accents of English wherever speakers come from.	Pre_score	40	2.45	1.26	1	5	2.00	-5.210	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.35	0.77	2	5	4.50		
Q12. I wish my accent of English will be respected by other interlocutors from other countries.	Pre_score	40	2.32	1.05	1	5	2.00	-5.501	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.35	0.80	2	5	5.00		
Q13. I do not feel ashamed if I do not speak like the native's accent as long as I am understood.	Pre_score	40	2.58	0.90	1	4	2.50	-5.609	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.50	0.64	3	5	5.00		
Q14. I want to keep my identity through my English accent when communicating with people from other countries (e.g., Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Australia,...).	Pre_score	40	3.42	1.15	1	5	4.00	-4.888	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.80		3	5	5.00		
Q15. I want to enrich my knowledge of other Englishes outside the classroom to enhance my intercultural communicative competence.	Pre_score	40	3.42	1.15	1	5	4.00	-4.786	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.78	0.66	2	5	5.00		

Z=Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test; \*p<.05

Lastly, through exposing learners to a diversity of cultures in the classroom, learners' attitudes regarding the diversity of cultures in English communications was significantly improved ( $Z=-5.513$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and the median knowledge score rating were 2.60 for the pre-test and 4.50 for the post-test. The statistics for each statement can be seen in Table 8 below.

Table 8

*The differences in learners' intercultural communication knowledge score rating before and after the exposure to a diversity of cultures*

		N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mdn	Z	Sig. (2- tailed)
Q23. I have an open mind to different cultures that I might meet in international communications.	Pre_score	40	2.63	1.10	1	4	3.00	-5.523	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.55	0.64	3	5	5.00		
Q24. I respect other interlocutors' cultural norms and beliefs in intercultural communications.	Pre_score	40	2.77	1.03	1	5	3.00	-5.516	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.65	0.66	2	5	5.00		
Q25. I wish other interlocutors will also respect my cultural norms and beliefs in intercultural communications.	Pre_score	40	3.00	1.22	1	5	3.00	-5.309	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.70	0.61	3	5	5.00		
Q26. I want to keep my identity in intercultural communications.	Pre_score	40	2.60	1.13	1	5	2.00	-5.311	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.48	0.68	2	5	5.00		

Q27. I wish other interlocutors recognize me as a Vietnamese in an international environment although I speak English.	Pre_score	40	2.30	1.04	1	4	2.00	-5.562	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.55	0.71	2	5	5.00		
Q28. I am sympathetic with cultural mistakes or conflicts that might happen in intercultural communications.	Pre_score	40	2.15	1.00	1	4	2.00	-5.257	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.25	0.81	2	5	4.00		
Q29. I do not feel embarrassed or ashamed if there is a cultural misunderstanding in an intercultural communication.	Pre_score	40	1.97	1.03	1	4	2.00	-5.285	.000*
	Post_score	40	3.95	0.88	2	5	4.00		
Q30. I feel more confident to communicate in English in an international environment.	Pre_score	40	2.05	0.90	1	4	2.00	-5.573	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.30	0.82	2	5	4.50		
Q31. I love the world more with a multicultural picture.	Pre_score	40	2.97	1.00	1	5	3.00	-5.308	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.65	0.66	2	5	5.00		
Q32. I love my own culture more.	Pre_score	40	3.20	1.18	1	5	3.00	-5.140	.000*
	Post_score	40	4.60	0.67	2	5	5.00		

Z=Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test; \*p<.05

The descriptive statistics of learners' intercultural communication attitude score rating before and after the course showed that learners' intercultural attitude score rating after the course was by far higher than that before the course. It can be seen in Table 9 below.

Table 9

*Descriptive statistics of learners' intercultural communication attitude scores before and after participating in the ICC course*

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Attitude_Score_Pre	40	2.65	.76	1.3	4.1
Attitude_Score_Post	40	4.50	.47	2.4	5.0

A Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test showed that the implementation of EIL perspective in English speaking classroom helped to make a statistically significant improvement in learners' intercultural attitudes ( $Z = -5.513$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Indeed, median attitude score rating were 2.64 for the pre-test and 4.53 for the post-test. The table also indicated that all of the participants ( $N = 40$ ) gained a positive change in intercultural communication attitude after the course. It can be seen in Table 10 below.

Table 10

*A Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test*

		N	Mean Rank	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)
Awareness_Score_Post-	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>a</sup>	0.00	- 5.513	.000*
Awareness_Score-Pre	Positive Ranks	40 <sup>b</sup>	20.50		
	Ties	0 <sup>c</sup>			
	Total	40			

a. Awareness\_Score\_Post < Awareness\_Score\_Pre

b. Awareness\_Score\_Post > Awareness\_Score\_Pre

c. Awareness\_Score\_Post = Awareness\_Score\_Pre

Z=Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, \* $p < .05$

## Discussion

The findings suggest that adopting EIL teaching principles in teaching English Speaking skill significantly develops learners' knowledge and attitudes in relation to intercultural communicative competence.

As previously pointed out in the Literature Review, due to the changing socio-linguistic reality of English, the target of the 21st-century English language teaching must embrace both the development of linguistic skills and intercultural communicative competence. However, not only can ICC be enhanced through separate curricular courses or training, but it can be also substantially improved by integrating EIL teaching principles into skill training like Speaking skills. This study's findings confirm McKay's (2002) claim on the vital role of embedding the cultural dimension in English language teaching to develop learners' communicative needs. It is also in line with Roger Nunn's (2007) assertion that in the more varied and unpredictable contexts of English communications, it is obviously inappropriate to teach language in limited cultural situations and a mono-model of the target language.

Although previous studies have proposed using EIL teaching pedagogy to meet learners' communicative needs and goals, most of them mainly stopped at stating the problems and calling for more practical actions in the classroom. Little empirical research was conducted on how to develop learners' ICC in an actual language classroom by employing EIL teaching principles and to what extent it affects learners' intercultural communicative competence. Despite some differences such as adopting a quantitative method and from learners' voice, the current study confirms Ahmad and Ahmad's (2015) claim that implementing EIL teaching is an effective approach to develop learners' ICC in the classroom in a significant and integrated way. However, differences in using two criteria, learners' intercultural communication knowledge and attitudes, to evaluate the development of learners' intercultural communicative competence could contribute to the rate differences between the present study and previous studies.

Despite its valuable findings, this study cannot avoid some caveats. For example, the study used only two criteria, knowledge and attitudes, to evaluate learners' ICC development. Future research could explore whether other elements such as skills to interpret, skills to relate, or ability to solve intercultural situations in international encounters can be measured and how to carry out as well as assess them so that a more comprehensive assessment of learners' ICC can be added to the research field.

## **Pedagogical Implications**

The study firstly drew an implication for curriculum makers and material designers. Due to the fact that English is now used more frequently for cross-cultural communications, the modification in the existing curriculum is crucial for catering the needs of Vietnamese learners of English in the globalized era which is aligned with the role of English as an international language. To be more specific, the EIL curriculum needs to be culturally sensitive to equip learners with knowledge and appropriate attitudes necessary for further skill development in intercultural encounters. In addition, it should make learners cognizant of the plurality of English by introducing World Englishes and the changing face of English as an international language. This will encourage learners to explore more knowledge outside the classroom to meet their interests and needs.

To English language practitioners, on the one hand, they should have “agentive spaces,” demonstrating an awareness of the changing face of English, and on the other hand, act as “gate-keepers” of the language norms (Hamid & Baldauf, 2013). That is to say, although current curricula use the original varieties such as British English or American English to guide learners, it does not mean that varietal features of the language should be ignored in the language classroom. Rather, in a more active role, language teachers should act as gate-keepers to correct learners' errors while be aware of the language variations and learn to distinguish between errors and variants to nurture learners' language creativity.

To researchers, as the study merely adopted a quantitative method to address the research questions, further research could use a qualitative method using interviews, observations, or documents to examine more about learners' performances and opinions regarding the effects of the teaching approach after participating in the course. One subject that remains to be explored is which variable makes a higher contribution to learners' ICC enhancement between knowledge and attitudes.

## **Conclusion**

The research of this study utilized a quantitative method with the aim of exploring how learners' intercultural communicative competence in terms of their knowledge and attitudes would change through adopting EIL teaching pedagogy in an English-speaking classroom. Based on the research sample, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant development of learners' intercultural communication knowledge and attitudes after the course employing EIL teaching principles.

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## Appendix

### Survey Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this project. This questionnaire is designed for research purposes only, and all information will be kept confidential. The questionnaire will begin with some questions asking you about personal information. It, then, includes 32 statements regarding your intercultural communication knowledge and attitudes in English communications before and after employing English as an international language (EIL) principles in the Speaking class.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate response (strongly agree, agree to some extent, neutral, disagree to some extent, strongly disagree) to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

(The survey was delivered to learners before and after the EIL-adopted Speaking class. The survey before the course did not contain three points of EIL teaching)

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Age: .....

Gender:     ☐ Male     ☐ Female

#### **Through the introduction to the changing socio-linguistic reality of English, Knowledge**

Q1. I am aware of the spread of English and its changing status in the mobilized world.

Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
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Q2. I have learned more about the new roles and functions of English as an international language today.

Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
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Q3. I am aware that to be proficient in English communications is not only developing linguistic skills but also intercultural communication competence.

Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
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#### **Attitude**

Q4. I have a desire to learn more essential knowledge and skills to communicate successfully in intercultural encounters.

Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
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#### **Through the exposure to varieties of English,**

### **Knowledge**

Q5. I am aware that besides American English or British English, there are other varieties of English such as Indian English, Singlish, etc.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Q6. I have learned some different accents and vocabulary of Singlish, Indian English, and Manglish besides American and British Englishes.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Q7. I am aware that I might communicate in English with people from other countries or regions (such as China, Japan, Thailand,...) but not only with people from English-speaking countries such as America or Britain.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Q8. I have learned that people coming from different countries or regions might have different accents.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Q9. I have learned and practiced using some languages to negotiate the meaning in intercultural communications.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Q10. I have learned and practiced using some languages to join intercultural communications and avoid the breakdown.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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### **Attitude**

Q11. I respect all accents of English wherever speakers come from.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Q12. I wish my accent of English will be respected by other interlocutors from other countries.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Q13. I do not feel ashamed if I do not speak like the native's accent as long as I am understood.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Q14. I want to keep my identity through my English accent when communicating with people from other countries (e.g., Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Australia,...).

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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disagree

Q15. I want to enrich my knowledge of other Englishes outside the classroom to enhance my intercultural communicative competence.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

**Through the exposure to the diversity of cultures,  
Knowledge**

Q16. I am aware that besides American or British cultural norms, there are a diversity of cultural norms and beliefs expressed by English speakers from different cultures in English communications.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

Q17. I am aware of enriching my knowledge of different cultures to develop my intercultural communicative competence.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

Q18. I have learned about various cultures of different countries besides American or British cultures such as about non-verbal communication, politeness, silence, and turn-taking, etc.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

Q19. I have developed my knowledge about my own cultures in English.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

Q20. I have understood more about my culture in comparison with other cultures.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

Q21. I have developed my knowledge about people and cultures in the world.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

Q22. I have learned some languages to participate in intercultural communications and avoid the breakdown.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

**Attitude**

Q23. I have an open mind to different cultures that I might meet in international communications.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

Q24. I respect other interlocutors' cultural norms and beliefs in intercultural communications.

Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
Q25. I wish other interlocutors will also respect my cultural norms and beliefs in intercultural communications.				
Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
Q26. I want to keep my identity in intercultural communications.				
Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
Q27. I wish other interlocutors recognize me as a Vietnamese in an international environment although I speak English.				
Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
Q28. I am sympathetic with cultural mistakes or conflicts that might happen in intercultural communications.				
Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
Q29. I do not feel embarrassed or ashamed if there is a cultural misunderstanding in an intercultural communication.				
Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
Q30. I feel more confident to communicate in English in an international environment.				
Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
Q31. I love the world more with a multicultural picture.				
Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
Q32. I love my own culture more.				
Strongly agree disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly

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# **Indirectness Markers in Korean and Persian English Essays: Implications for Teaching Writing to EFL Learners**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated and analyzed the prevalence and presence of indirectness markers in Korean and Persian English Essays. The researchers analyzed the prevalence of the indirectness markers as a set of politeness strategies employed by the Korean and Persian university bound students in their English compositions. Furthermore, the researchers espoused the Politeness Strategies Theory proposed by Brown and Levinson as framework in the analysis of the indirectness markers in the texts. In the analysis of the English essays, it was found out that there were seven (7) categories of indirectness markers evident in the essays. The Persian English writers displayed a noticeable evidence of repetition and vagueness and ambiguity in their essays while the Korean counterparts on point-of-view distancing. The presence of these indirectness markers in their writing are attributed to socio-cultural factors, such as Persians have the tendency to be literary in their writing while the Koreans, prose-oriented resulting to lengthy descriptive accounts and indirectness. The results and findings of the study could be beneficial to English writing pedagogy in an English as Second Language (ESL) context.

**Keywords:** Indirectness markers, English composition, Politeness Strategies Theory, ESL

## **1 Introduction**

The ‘Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis’ or the Whorfian Hypothesis propagates the idea that the logic evident in any written discourse is culture specific. This notion of logic is where Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) was originally taken from. Moreover, both the concepts of CR and Whorfian Hypothesis instigate the idea that peoples from different cultures organize their thoughts in writing in the same reality, yet varying in methods. Furthermore, Kaplan (1990) added that different cultural

communities have their set of writing practices that are not shared outside their respective communities. Therefore, written compositions from different communities exemplify their own sets of shared beliefs, cultural norms, and other social practices.

Park (1990) attributed Korean writing styles to be prose-oriented, thus, leading to long and descriptive accounts themed on an event or a person instead of getting directly to the point. Furthermore, Hinds (1990) claimed that Oriental writing (i.e. Thai, Chinese, Korean), follows a 'quasi-inductive' pattern, which means that the thesis statement is implied. The implied thesis statement uses indirect, inferential expressions (Hall, 1976 & Beamer, 1994). Furthermore, Kaplan (1990) reiterated that most Asian languages are 'reader-responsible' languages; hence, the reader takes on the responsibility to understand the writer's implied message within a text. In the context of the Korean writers, Sohn (1986) mentioned that this implicational or indirectness strategies in writing are based on the interlocutors' shared knowledge about the context presented in their writing.

On the other hand, Hong- Nam & Leavell (2006) claimed that Persian writers of English find it difficult to write using the international language, thus, it is important that they are given very clear instructions on how to carry on the task. Contrarily, Nimehchisalem, et. al. (2015) emphasized that Persians have adequate skills to develop content, organize ideas, and choose the right words in their essays, only with minor difficulties in the English language's syntactic structuring.

Nowruzi, Khiabani & Pourghassemian (2009) analyzed Persians' English argumentative essays and found out that their subjects wrote inductively. Alijanian (2012) justified that this indirectness style of writing among Persians is a product of artistic writing and is aimed towards achieving harmony with the readers. Also, he emphasized that the Persian readers are naturally patient in reading and are noted of their reflective thinking geared towards meaning-making.

It has been established that indirectness in writing is evident in all written discourses of different speech communities. However, indirectness appears less in the Western cultures, particularly among the Anglophone speakers. They are noted for their straightforward style in writing across genres. This attribute in Western writing is known as being writer-responsible in style, rather than reader-responsible (Hinds, 1990). In written academic discourse, direct discussion of main ideas related to the text's thesis and the writer's analyses are considered requisite (Matalene, 1985; Swales, 1990; Swales & Feak, 1994); thus, must be observed when advancing arguments and points in writing.

In the light of the use of these indirectness markers in writing, Tran (2007) claimed that these markers are used as a strategic communicative style; thus,

circling around the thesis is intentionally done. Kaplan (1966) described this circling around the thesis as gyres moving around the subject that makes the composition appear longer, and the thesis implicit. To support these claims and descriptions, Scollon (1997) added that this circling around is also a strategy that delays sensitive points in the discussion.

Felix-Brasdefer (2004) argued that indirectness is relative to politeness. while Myers (2004) defended that indirectness in writing is used to soften the argument, especially when advancing ideas to maintain politeness as a tone in writing .

Sew (1997) further claimed that any audience who is unaware of these styles in writing of the different cultural communities may have difficulties in understanding the ideas and points being advanced in the composition.

In this age of globalization, the ability to effectively communicate interculturally has become more demanding and important than ever before. Language and culture are said to be two inclusive entities that cannot be separated from one another; thus, in understanding language, especially when used as a tool in writing, issues like the use of indirectness markers, must be understood not just on how words appear in compositions, but more importantly, on how culture is embedded in them. In fact, Halliday & Hasan (1978) clarified that language situates culture, and not otherwise. In effect, it is important that readers must be able to decode culturally significant contexts in written discourses (Rivers, 1988). Therefore, to communicate in written form in this highly globalized world, different peoples coming from different cultural backgrounds, possessing unique patterns of writing development across genres, must be able to adjust to the demand and context of writing in an international sense.

Mogridge (1988) forwarded that culture is mediated by language., This implies that teaching language as a tool in writing means directly teaching the culture that abounds it. Teaching the culture could be consciously or unconsciously done. Woolever (2011) claimed that there is a need for a study like this present study to promote cultural understanding when it comes to language used in written form. She further added that if sufficient descriptions of these language features are assessed in studies, culture education in the context of writing could easily be carried out..

Swales (1990) argued that students must be able to learn the value systems present in a particular language when writing in that language. According to him, it is essential when addressing an international audience. This, however, is not possible since these value systems could compromise the inherent cultural



characteristics present in particular speech communities trying to write using another language. As a mitigating solution, Herrington (1985) and McCarthy (1987) suggested that students must be able to recognize and learn different discourse paradigms and the appropriate degrees of indirectness when writing in the target language. Since indirectness is an inevitable style in writing, only varying in degrees of usage, it has to be present in the context of writing using the English language in moderation to avoid vagueness, and achieve explicitness, accuracy, and precision.

The Philippines is one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world today, and one of the Asian countries that offer quality education, especially in ESL instruction. In fact, there were about 2,655 South Korean Nationals who were studying in the country according to the 2013 statistics, and most of them are enrolled in the leading universities of the country (inquirer.net, 2013). On the other hand, in the City of Manila alone, the capital city, there are about 4,000 to 4,500 Iranians and a good percentage of them are studying medical allied programs in the University belt (Rappler, 2016). These statistics clearly show that foreign students come to the Philippines to obtain their higher education degrees with the aim of also improving their English language competencies.

Most of the communication done internationally is through writing, thus, it is imperative that the universities and institutions in the Philippines and the world, which cater to foreign students, adopt pedagogical practices that would specifically address writing conventions of their learners toward successful communication in the international arena. In the light of this study, the indirectness markers that are used sparingly, which cause explicitness and inaccuracy in writing, must be addressed to achieve a written discourse in English that is usually straightforward, with clear ideas that are interrelated and are aiming at a common thesis statement.

### **1.1 Significance of the study**

This study is inspired by the increasing number of Korean and Persian nationals flocking in the Philippines to pursue their higher education degrees with premium on improving their communicative competence using the English language, as an international language. From this inspiration, a prompt of improving English language instruction to these foreign students is highly sought. Furthermore, the results and findings of this study shall benefit the academic communities in all parts of the world who cater to Korean and Persian learners as international students.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Therefore, in this study three (3) research questions were developed as follows:

1. What are the prevalent indirectness markers evident in the Korean and Persian English essays?
2. What is the extent of occurrence of these indirectness markers in their English essays?
3. What are the implications of the findings of the study in English writing pedagogy for EFL learners?

## **2 Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study made use of the descriptive research method because it dealt with the analysis of indirectness markers in the written discourse of the subjects under study.

Calderon (2006), defined descriptive research as a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, processes, trends, and cause-effect relationships and then making adequate and accurate interpretation about such data with or without or sometimes minimal aid of statistical methods. Also, this method ascertains prevailing conditions of facts in a group under study that gives either qualitative or quantitative, or both, descriptions of the general characteristics of the group as results.

### **2.2 Corpus**

The corpus used in this study were the essays composed by entering Korean and Persian university students at the Centro Escolar University (CEU) in Manila, Philippines. The essays were part of their initial requirements for entry to the university. The University has been screening foreign applicants in terms of their writing using the English language as a medium since 2012. Thus, the researchers decided to choose randomly from the essays composed by the Korean and Persian entrants from 2012 to 2016. There were 30 randomly selected essays, which were subjected for analysis of the use of prevalent indirectness markers. Also, the 30 essays were chosen based on the number of minimum paragraphs that should comprise an essay, which is three (3). The three paragraphs should represent the components of an essay, which are— *introduction*, *body*, and *conclusion*. Moreover, the English essays revolve around the topics— ‘Describe yourself as a student’; ‘Tell something about yourself’; ‘One thing I like about the Philippines’; ‘The advantages and disadvantages of computer technology’; and ‘How I see

myself ten (10) years from now'. There were 15 randomly selected essays from the Korean group. Eight (8) were written by females and seven (7) were written by males. The numbers of words in the essays were ranging from 119 to 257 with a mean of 185.33 words. The ages of the writers were ranging from 16 to 30. The mean age of the group was 19.07. On the other hand, there were also 15 randomly selected essays from the Persian group. Seven (7) were written by females, and eight (8) were written by males. The numbers of words in the essays were ranging from 70 to 256 with a mean of 109.47 words. The ages of the writers in this group were ranging from 18 to 29 while the mean age was 22.80.

### **2.3 Framework for Analysis**

The framework that the researcher espoused in this study is the Politeness Strategies Theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) (B & L). B & L provided a comprehensive definition of indirectness markers as a set of politeness strategies used by the speaker to reduce imposition towards the hearer. Furthermore, the speaker employs politeness strategies to achieve solidarity and sound relationship with his hearer. B&L proposed three major categories of indirectness markers namely: (1) *rhetorical strategies/markers*; (2) *lexical and referential markers*; and (3) *syntactic markers and structures*. These major categories are further identified into subcategories. First, rhetorical strategies/markers include *rhetorical questions, tag questions, disclaimers and denials, vagueness and ambiguity markers, repetition and irony*. Second, lexical and referential markers include *hedges and hedging devices, point of view distancing, downtoners, diminutives, point-of-view distancing, demonstratives, indefinite pronouns and determiners, and other understatement markers*. Finally, syntactic markers and structures include the *use of passive voice, nominalization, and conditional tenses in the sentence structures*.

Hinkel (1997) claimed that the use of these indirectness markers are used in the written discourse of different languages. However, the gravity of the use of these markers vary from one culture to another. Alijainan (2012) mentioned that despite the presence of the use of indirectness markers in interpersonal communication, particularly in writing, they still appear less in Western composition.

In this study, the analysis of the presence of indirectness markers in non-Western writing has been anchored, particularly the Koreans and the Persians through identifying the categories presented by B & L in their essays.

### **2.4 Procedure**

A letter requesting for the acquisition of the essays of the Korean and Persian entrants was sent via email to the head of the CEU- Languages Department, Dr. Arlene S. Opina. After her approval, the essays were sorted out and only the ones

written by the Koreans and the Persians were chosen. Attached in each essay is a profile sheet that includes the entrant's full name, age, date of exam, gender, and nationality. Furthermore, a separate sheet that contains the entrant's reading comprehension test and interview results were also attached. Due to confidentiality issues, the entrant's age, gender, and nationality were recorded on a separate sheet since this information is not written on the essay's heading and is not a part of the 'confidential' results of their other tests. The essays that contain at least three (3) paragraphs regardless of the length were selected. Eventually, 15 essays for each group with a mixture of both genders were carefully selected.

The essays were analyzed of the presence of indirectness markers through hand-tagging. They were organized for analysis by labelling each with a code; hence, **K** for Korean, and **P** for Persian. Each letter code is accompanied by a corresponding number (e.g. **K1** for Korean essay number one, **K2** for the second, and so on). A separate sheet of one-eighth (1/8) in size was stapled with the essay. Written on the one-eighth sheets are the evident indirectness markers; their corresponding occurrences; and the percentage computation. The categories of indirectness markers were also coded for a more convenient analysis both on the actual essays and the stapled sheets of paper.

## **2.7 Statistical Treatment**

Since this study is descriptive in nature, a descriptive statistics method was employed for getting the frequency, mean, and percentage of occurrences of indirectness markers in the essays of the two groups. Moreover, a specialized accounting of occurrences of each indirectness marker in the essays was employed. To ascertain whether the Korean and Persian essays similarly used the indirectness markers, the percentages of these occurrences were derived and compared.

## **2.8 Method of Analysis**

Brown and Levinson (1987) Politeness Strategies Theory linked to the use of indirectness markers in written discourse was employed to analyze the essays. Additionally, the works of Hinkel (1997) and Alijanian (2012), which are similar studies, were also utilized to provide directions in analyzing the essays.

To address the first research question on the evidence of indirectness markers in the English essays of Korean and Persian entering university students, the essays were read and analyzed for the evident occurrences of these indirectness markers three (3) times. The essays were read thrice to establish the credibility of the analysis. There were seven (7) sub-categories of the three (3) categories of indirectness markers that were found evident in the essays of the two (2) groups. Under the first category, rhetorical strategies/markers, there were two (2) evident indirectness markers: (a) repetition, coded as RR; and (b) vagueness

and ambiguity, coded as RV. The second category, lexical and referential markers were (a) hedges and hedging devices, coded as LH; (b) diminutives, coded as LD; (c) point-of-view distancing, coded as LP; and (d) indefinite pronouns and determiners, coded as LI. Finally, the third category, syntactic markers and structures, where only one was found evident—the use of conditional tenses, coded as SC.

To address the question on the extent of occurrence of the evident indirectness markers in the English essays of the two (2) groups, the frequencies of occurrence of the seven (7) identified markers were tabulated in individual essays. The specialized accounting of the indirectness marker occurrences in the individual essays was statistically treated by counting the occurrence of a particular marker divided by the number of words of the essay multiplied by 100. For example; there is only one (1) occurrence of rhetorical repetition (RR) in an essay of 166 words (i.e.  $1/166 \times 100 = 0.06\%$ ). This treatment in the data was carried out to obtain the percentage rate of each indirectness marker in each essay of the subjects. The mean percentage of the occurrences of the different evident indirectness markers was also obtained to compare the extent of the occurrences of the identified indirectness markers between the Korean and the Persian English essays.

Lastly, in citing the possible implications of the result of the study in the teaching of English writing to the two (2) groups, the researchers wrote possible pedagogical implications on how these indirectness markers could be neutralized in terms of usage in the context of writing an English essay.

### 3 Results and Discussion

The analyses of the 30 English essays of the Korean and Persian entering university students were found to be evident of seven (7) indirectness markers proposed by B & L (1987).

The first indirectness marker evident in the English essays of the subjects is repetition (RR). Repetition is a politeness strategy employed by a speaker of any culture to maintain an agreement (Brown and Levinson, 1987). However, Tarone & Yule, (1987) claimed that repetition is not tolerable in English writing because it is synonymous to redundancy. Examples of repetition from the essays are—

**K1:** *'...I came here (Philippines) to study. When I came here (Philippines), I was so nervous because I am afraid to study'.*

**P14:** *'The Philippines has very **big buildings**. The **buildings are huge** they have malls inside.'*

In the exemplars given, repetition was used by the two (2) groups as a means to delineate the theme from the rheme by re-establishing the same theme and adding another rheme. Mc Carthy (1991) instigated the idea that the tolerance of repetition in writing is largely dependent on culture. In fact, he also found out in his study that both the Japanese and the Chinese cultures use repetition as a means to avoid theme-rheme relationship of ideas in the text. Moreover, repetition in the analyzed essays also signifies persuasion; thus, convincing the reader of what is emphasized. In the exemplar above, K1 tries to convince the reader that coming to the Philippines to study is difficult for him; while P14 establishes the idea that the buildings are huge that even malls (referring to stalls) could be found inside them. Mc Carthy and Carter (1994) claimed that repetition as an indirectness marker is employed by the writer as a persuasion strategy that could enable the reader to help the writer construct the argument.

The second evident indirectness marker is vagueness and ambiguity (RV). B & L (1987) defined vagueness and ambiguity as an indirectness strategy which communicative intention of the speaker (in the case of the study— the writer) is to lessen the threat on the ‘face’ of his hearer (reader). There are words and expressions that signal vagueness and ambiguity in any utterance which come in both numerical and non-numerical quantifiers; scalar qualifiers; and classifiers. Examples of these words and expressions are *a lot, lot(s) of, around, always, between, aspects of, kinds of, good, bad, high, low, and so on, etcetera*. To illustrate vagueness and ambiguity used by the groups in this study, the following exemplars were lifted—

**K9:** *‘I depend on (to) You (God) everything such as my dream, my future, my studies, and so on.’*

**P4:** *‘I had a lot of experience(s) here in the Philippines.’*

Both the exemplars are vague and ambiguous statements because they failed to make their examples concrete and precise for the readers to understand the main point of the proposition. Both statements clearly depend on how the reader would define the idea(s) presented or supply specific examples. Since the K9 writer in the above exemplar wishes to think that there are other domains in his life that largely depend on God, he ended his statement by writing- *and so on*. Also, the same interpretation can be drawn from the statement of P4 when he stated that he had *a lot* of experiences, which may be good or bad; memorable, or not. Channel (1994) defined vagueness in writing as a result of using vague words. Furthermore, in her study, she was able to find out that vague claims in writing are products of the writer’s desire to accomplish two simultaneous

goals—to eradicate the writer’s responsibility on the proposition; and to reduce the imposition that the writer has towards his reader.

The third evident indirectness marker is hedges and hedging devices (LH). Hedges and hedging devices can be numerous and complex (Hinkel, 1997). However, in this study, the outline of hedges and hedging devices proposed by B & L was used as basis for the analysis of the presence of hedges and hedging devices.

There are five (5) evidential markers for locating hedges in a written discourse namely: lexical, possibility, quality, performative, and hedged performative verbs. Examples of words and expressions that signal hedging are *(at/for) about, in a way, maybe, more or less, by any chance, possibly, in case, as is, people say, they say, apparently, basically, perhaps, seemingly, want to/would want to + discuss/tell/ explain/note mention*. To illustrate how hedges and hedging devices was evident in the essays of the two groups, the following exemplars were lifted—

**K5:** *‘I just want to tell someone to correct his or her mistake.’*

**P11:** *‘Maybe computer technology has some disadvantages for us.’*

From the exemplars, both statements express uncertainty of the possibility of the occurrence of a particular action (Biber, 1988). However, in the case of K5, hedging is used as a confirmatory possibility since it seeks approval from the reader whether the action could be done or not. B & L defined hedging as a way to delimit or define the extent of a particular claim, the truth in a proposition or the completeness of it. On the other hand, P11 simply shows complete uncertainty that agrees with Biber (1988) who described hedging as a plain expression of uncertainty or possibility.

The fourth indirectness marker that was found evident in the two (2) of the essays from the two (2) groups is diminutives (LD). According to B & L, diminutives are a general class of hedging. It has a goal of delimiting the speaker’s/writer’s responsibility over a claim that leads to its imposition on the hearer/ reader. Expressions that are evident of diminutives are *a little, a little bit, little by little, a few*. The statements that follow are the only examples from both groups that contain diminutives as an indirectness marker. Quirk, et.al. (1985) & Hubler (1983) claimed that diminutives often appear in speaking, but rare in writing.

**K6:** *‘I studied little by little’*

**P12:** *‘I will be a little older’*

K6's statement is evident of a diminutive that coincides with the claim of B & L because the goal of the writer delimited his responsibility over a past action, and implications of such. Alternatively, P12's diminutive use expresses a 'smaller risk of negotiability' (Hubler, 1983) by implicitly writing that he may not be totally old when the day comes that he must be old.

The fifth indirectness marker is point-of-view distancing (LP). B & L described point-of view distancing as an indirectness construction that distances the speaker from a claim or proposition. Ergo, the removal of the claim distances him in time and space. Expressions such as *I/we feel, hope, wonder, worry, think, believe, understand* mark this indirectness. Both groups manifested point-of-view distancing as an indirectness marker. Another set of exemplars illustrate this indirectness marker—

**K4:** *'I hope to be a dentist because I want to help my father.'*

**P1:** *'I believe that I came here from my country to study before anything else'*

K4 expresses a particular desire, but does not totally agree to the fulfilment of the desire. Likewise, P1 isolates himself from the claim by not being totally responsible for it. This point of view distancing used in the context of both statements save the face from direct fault through decentralization (B & L).

The sixth indirectness marker is indefinite pronouns/determiners (LI). B & L maintained that choosing a point of reference (pronoun) that is higher or lower than the actual state of affairs is significant of indirectness. Pronouns/references such as *nobody, none, no one, nothing, some, somebody, someone, something* are prompts of this indirectness. The exemplars that follow illustrate this indirectness marker—

**K10:** *'Nowadays, most machine(s) make everything.'*

**P8:** *'I went to Malaysia (to study), but because (through) some problem(s), I came (went) back to Iran.'*

K10 used the indefinite pronouns as indirectness markers twice in his statement. Essentially, he failed to specify 'which' machines and 'which' everything he actually means. Likewise, P8 also failed to specify 'which' particular problem(s) he means in his statement. The two sample statements are both overstated and exaggerated. Cherry (1988) found out that in certain contexts, overstating adds power to the stand of the rhetoric. Additionally, Channel (1994)



cited that exaggerations allow the speaker/writer to create a point without being precise.

Finally, the seventh indirectness marker that was found occurring in the essays is conditional tenses (SC). The use of conditional tenses is an ambiguous indirectness strategy that can prevent a threat to the writer's or the reader's face (Myers, 1989). Additionally, Myers proposed that conditional tenses are used by the writer to solicit the reader's agreement of the proposition or claim. The use of the words *If* plus a conditional tense or *Unless* plus a conditional tense signifies this indirectness marker. In this study, the essays of both groups were evident of the use of this indirectness marker. The following exemplars are evident of this indirectness:

*K8: 'If I could (can) have the chance to study in America, I would (will)!'*

*P1: 'If I have more free (extra) time, I would (usually try to go) go to the library.'*

The conditional tenses in these statements both express 'willingness' to do the actions, but have certain 'boundaries' or may have 'restrictions' to do so. Myers (1989) characterized the use of conditionals as an indirectness marker to achieve an indirect solidarity between the writer and the reader, wherein the latter may or may not agree.

The table below contains the English essays of the Korean subjects' indirectness markers; their frequency of occurrences; and mean percentages.

**Table 1**

*Occurrence of indirectness markers in Korean English Essays*

Indirectness marker	f	mean %
<b>I. Rhetorical strategies/markers</b>		
<i>1. Repetition (RR)</i>	16	0.60
<i>2. Vagueness and ambiguity (RV)</i>	24	0.88
<b>II. Lexical and referential markers</b>		
<i>1. Hedges and hedging devices (LH)</i>	14	0.49
<i>2. Diminutives (LD)</i>	1	0.03
<i>3. Point-of-view distancing (LP)</i>	20	0.73
<i>4. Indefinite pronouns and determiners (LI)</i>	12	0.42
<b>III. Syntactic markers and structures</b>		
<i>Conditional tenses (SC)</i>	5	0.20

In Table 1, it could be seen that the indirectness marker with the highest number of frequency and mean percentage of occurrence is the evidence of vagueness and ambiguity in the Korean English essays with 24 occurrences and a mean percentage of 0.88%. Carlson (1988) and Bickner & Peyasantiwong (1988) found out in their studies that non-native speakers' (NNSs) English essays were dominated by vague and ambiguous statements, phrases, and words. Furthermore, Hinkel (1997) also found out that vagueness and ambiguity is the dominant indirectness marker that characterized the English essays of his Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, and Korean subjects.

Contrarily, the use of lexical diminutives was only evident in one Korean English essay, and only appeared once, thus, obtaining a mean percentage of 0.03%. This result of the occurrence of diminutives in the English essays of the Korean subjects agree with the claim of Quirk, et.al. (1985) & Hubler (1983) that diminutives often appear in speaking, but rare in writing among NNSs.

The following Table illustrates the occurrence of indirectness markers in the Persian English essays:

**Table 2**

*Occurrence of indirectness markers in Persian English Essays*

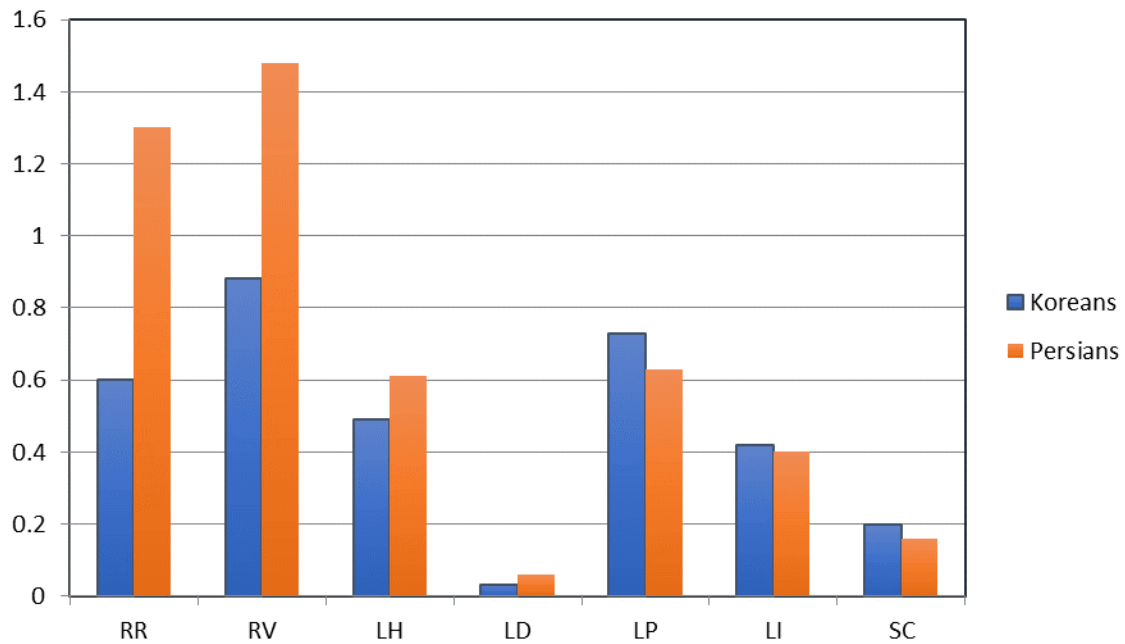
Indirectness marker	f	mean %
<b>I. Rhetorical strategies/markers</b>		
<i>1. Repetition (RR)</i>	23	1.30
<i>2. Vagueness and ambiguity (RV)</i>	23	1.48
<b>II. Lexical and referential markers</b>		
<i>1. Hedges and hedging devices (LH)</i>	10	0.61
<i>2. Diminutives (LD)</i>	1	0.06
<i>3. Point-of-view distancing (LP)</i>	10	0.63
<i>4. Indefinite pronouns and determiners (LI)</i>	7	0.40
<b>III. Syntactic markers and structures</b>		
<i>Conditional tenses (SC)</i>	2	0.16

Table 2 shows that both repetitive and vague and ambiguous statements were prevalent in the Persian English essays. Both rhetorical strategies/markers receive a frequency of 23 occurrences. However, the mean percentage of vague and ambiguous statements is slightly higher than the repetitive ones with 1.30% and 1.48% respectively. Alijainan (2012) justified that the indirectness in Persian English writing is a product of their goals to achieve artistry and harmony in

human communication and their belief that stating the points clearly is relative to disrespecting the readers. Thus, repetition of statements, phrases, and words, are associated with their artistic characteristics while their vagueness and ambiguity in writing with their show of respect towards the readers.

Least in terms of indirectness marker occurrence in the Persian English essays is similar to the result of the Korean English essays is the use of diminutives with one (1) occurrence at 0.06%. Diminutives are believed to occur most of the time in oral communication and are very rare in written communication.

The figure below shows the extent of occurrence of the indirectness markers in both the Korean and Persian English essays.



*Legend: RR repetition; RV vagueness and ambiguity; LH hedges and hedging devices; LD diminutives; LP point-of-view distancing; LI indefinite pronouns/referencing; SC conditional tenses*

**Figure 1**

*The extent of occurrence in mean percentages (mean %) of the indirectness markers in both the Korean and the Persian English essays*

In Figure 1, it could be gleaned that both the Korean and the Persian English essays have the same extent of occurrence in the use of the seven (7) indirectness markers respective of their groups. However, what is significantly evident in the figure is the difference in terms of their use of repetition and vague and ambiguous statements in their essays. The Persian English essays were shorter compared to their Korean counterparts in terms of their mean average in the number of words of essays; however, the Persian English essays have more repetitions and vague and ambiguous use of words, phrases, statements in their essays. Kachru (1992) proposed that discourse in different languages and cultural communities are often contextualized and these conventions are not necessarily shared paradigms outside a particular culture.

The difference of the rest of the indirectness markers in both groups is not significant, but still do occur in their English essays. Myers (2004) claimed that indirectness in writing is vital in the sense that it is a strategy for the writer to maintain politeness in written academic discourse especially when the writer has to advance his ideas.

#### **4 Pedagogical implications of the findings of the study in teaching writing to Korean and Persian EFL learners**

This study has explained thoroughly that writing conventions vary from one language and culture to another. Purves (1988) emphasized that the understanding of these rhetorical deviations among languages could bridge the gap between cultural encoding and decoding. Simply put, this statement of Purves explains that university professors/instructors of writing to foreign students should be aware that differences in rhetorical patterns are not relative to the differences in terms of the cognitive ability of their learners. In the case of the Persians, which English essays were shorter and more evident of their use of repetition and vague and ambiguous statements do not necessarily mean that the Korean counterparts are better writers. For example; Nimehchisalem, et. al. (2015) found out among that his Persian students learning English writing have adequate skills to develop content, organize ideas, and choose the right words despite their weakness on English syntactic structures.

Therefore, it is essential that both Korean and Persian students, most especially the latter, to have more writing exercises that avoid repetition (RR) and vagueness and ambiguities (RV). In doing so, writing professors/instructors should be more aware of this occurrence in the writing of the students, and must return 'corrected' written outputs to students emphasizing that statements, phrases, or words are repeated; thus, must be avoided or statements are vague and ambiguous because they lack clarity, unity, and coherence. On the other hand, for the point-view-distancing (LP), both the Korean and the Persian students, most

especially the former, must be instructed to be factual in what they write, so that they can take responsibility of their written statements.

However, Kaplan (1988) instigated that writing for a particular audience does not come instantly especially when an individual is coming from a completely different context. He also added that the teaching of writing would not be effective if students are asked to imitate the style in writing of a particular target audience just to fit in. In the case of the Korean and Persian university students, having their respective languages and cultures, and as evident in their writing, the presence of indirectness markers that cause problematic results to writing professors/instructors, it is important to understand that total eradication of these rhetorical conventions is impossible. Hence, what is more important is not the total eradication of these conventions in writing, but an ideological process through which one could arrive at the form. This underpins the idea that organization and presentation of the sequences of information in writing are most crucial in the writing classroom. It is therefore advisable that writing instruction should begin with modelling on how to write a specific written genre. In short, for EFL students to be effective writers in English, it is vital that writing professors/instructors should anchor their teaching of writing on the process and the product. Conversely, it is crucial that foreign students' written compositions are well-checked and corrected, and must be instructed to rewrite their outputs for gradual practice of effective writing. Through this, the presence of these prevalent indirectness markers could be minimized. After all, students need to recognize and learn different discourse paradigms and the appropriate degrees of indirectness in writing (Herington, 1985 and McCarthy, 1987).

In summary, there is no concrete set of pedagogical strategies and approaches that could be utilized in teaching writing to foreign students (Li, 2017), but through the writing professor's/instructor's deeper understanding of the students' complex cultures and rhetoric that the teaching of writing to the foreign students could be realized.

## **5 Insights**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The rhetorical conventions on the use of indirectness markers were found evident in both the Korean and Persian English essays. The occurrences of these indirectness markers in the English essays vary in terms of their extents especially in the case of repetition of ideas and words and vagueness and ambiguity of words, phrases and statements that favor the Korean English writers. However, because of the inherent culture in language, the writing professor/instructor must consider the fact that total eradication of these indirectness markers when writing in English is impossible, but could be minimized and appropriated. Scollon

(1997) mentioned that it is through schooling and education that the learners are made familiar to the social norms and discourse traditions of different languages with different cultural backgrounds.

The English essays of the Koreans and the Persians are reader-responsible texts. The essays allowed the reader to interpret the meaning behind the essays due to the use of indirectness markers.

## 5.2 Recommendations

In the light of the conclusions made, the researchers recommend that instead of asking foreign students to imitate a particular model when writing in English, it is more important to teach the form and process of writing a particular essay. What is more crucial is that students understand how to organize their thoughts and ideas properly. Linguistic accuracy is secondary to form and process. Moreover, designing classroom activities and instructional materials that would immerse foreign students in the context of the target audience would also be effective. These activities and materials could not only help them understand their target audience, but most importantly could make them realize that excessive use of indirectness markers could impede the understanding of their writing among their readers. After all, peoples today do not live on separate worlds anymore. The idea of a 'global village' has immersed that is multilingual and multicultural.

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# **Error Analysis of Verb Tenses Among Japanese ESL Learners**

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## **Abstract**

The study anchors on the Linguistic research tradition of Error Analysis (EA), focused on the grammatical errors, specifically on “verb tenses” manifested in the sentences of Japanese ESL learners. The entire respondent population was drawn from the pool of registered learners in 2017 at the Clark Institute of the Philippines Foundation, Inc., Angeles City, Pampanga.

The researcher classified the learner errors using Corder’s Taxonomy of Errors, with a tripartite error typology that includes “selection”, “omission”, and “addition”. Moreover, the frequency and types of errors were statistically correlated to the learners’ profile variables that include age, sex, years of exposure to English, educational level, and hours spent per day on different mass media in English.

Descriptive and correlational research designs were employed, with the use of a researcher-developed data-gathering instrument. The instrument includes two parts, i.e. a questionnaire for profiling the respondents and a writing activity. Aside from the researcher’s assessment of the written discourses, professional assistance was sought from three (3) ELT experts, namely: the Training Director of the research locale’s academic team, an IELTS/TOEFL trainer, and a TESOL trainer who co-evaluated the respondents’ written compositions using the Cambridge Grammar of English Language.

As to the learners’ profile, majority of them are female and register to ages ranging from 11 to 30 years old. The learners’ highest educational attainment ranges from Elementary School graduate to Post-Graduate Studies. All learners spend from one to more than three hours accessing a variety of mass media in English.

From the error analysis of the learners’ written discourse, they accounted for errors in certain types of verb tenses. Moreover, the errors are distributed in all the three types of errors in Corder’s taxonomy, with most of their errors registered under “selection”, followed by the frequency of their errors in “omission”. The learners have few traces of errors under “addition”.

On the merits and essentials drawn from the study's findings and conclusions, several recommendations are offered. Also, learners are advised to spend more time on the internet to reduce their omission errors. Likewise, teachers have to exploit the use of mass media in the instructional design, taking advantage of the learners' high frequency of access to these social amenities.

**Keywords:** ESL, Japanese Learners, Verb Tense, Error Analysis

## **Introduction**

English serves as a second language by a quarter of the world's population, enabling a true single market in knowledge and ideas, i.e. referring to the imperial place of English as a language in most economic and social commerce. Moreover, non-native speakers have substantially outnumbered the native speakers and, as a result, English is increasingly becoming the language of the world rather than of any one country. The British Council forecasted that two billion people would be using—or learning—English by 2020. It is the more economically active language. Thought leaders, business decision makers, the young, and the movers and shakers of the present and future are learning and speaking English. These people will pave more discourses in this language, indicating more solid evidenc to English as the operating system of global conversations.

Also, Global English, or access to one of the many global Englishes, is a highly valued technical skill. It is generally regarded as a passport to international positions, an asset in diplomacy, foreign relations, and advancement in the global media and entertainment and financial worlds. Gauck (2012), former President of Germany, called for English to be made the language of the European Union in his speech on Europe's future. To encourage a greater sense of commonality and a stronger economy, Europe has realized the need for a common language, adjacent his campaigns for a balanced promotion of multilingualism. (Gauck, 2012) argued that

“[...] one of the main problems ... in building a more integrated European community is the inadequate communication within Europe ... both can live side by side. The sense of being at home in your mother tongue, with all its poetry, as well as a workable English for all of life's situations and all age groups.’

Besides its propensity to unify differing cultures, the financial incentive to learning English is also compelling. The skill to communicate in English is a

clear-cut competitive edge for an individual compared to those who cannot use the language. Ample opportunities await English speakers anywhere in the world. The so-called "English effect" does not only prevail in the West but in Asia as well.

Within the circle of Asia's business power elites like Japan's leading business tycoon Hiroshi Mikitani of Rakuten, i.e. Japan's largest online marketplace, mandated in March 2010 that English would be the company's official language of business relative to the company's goal to become the number one Internet service company in the world. Mikitani believed that the new policy, which would affect some 7,100 Japanese employees, was vital to achieving that end, especially as expansion plans were projected outside Japan. Moreover, he envisioned that the proliferation of English would mark a legacy for contributing to an expanded worldview for his country, which is stigmatized for many years as a conservative island nation.

However, acquiring English skills is laborious and protracted. The results of the sixth edition of the Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), which ranks 72 countries by English skills and involves 950,000 adults who took English tests in 2016 worldwide, show that the Netherlands has the highest English proficiency band overall. Among Asian countries, only Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines placed at the top of the rank. Singapore was categorized to be very highly proficient and placed sixth, while Malaysia and the Philippines belonged to the highly proficient bracket at twelfth and thirteenth, respectively. Other Asian countries placed much lower such as Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam in the mid-range, and Japan below the median.

With many countries recognizing English being the language of the world, it has drawn the attention of international students and professionals alike. In addition to this, a series of research by the British Council, each year since 2010, reveals that over 600,000 international students from 200 countries go to the UK to study at local universities and colleges, and about 700,000 attend short English language courses in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), surprisingly those coming from countries or nations whose second language is English.

Predicted to have a fourfold increase by 2020 (British Council, 2013), this burgeoning interest in the English language learning has swiftly paved its way for the rise of many language academies and certification tests all around the world. As useful as acquiring English skills as it is, learning the language, though, comes with an expensive price. The average course fee in an English country like Australia, America and Britain for a 15-hour class (i.e. 45 minutes for five days a week in a month) is around 150 USD, excluding books, accommodation and food (<http://www.ihaberdeen.com/course-fees/>).

Despite these academies' high rates, however, many English as a Foreign

Language (EFL) Learners and English as a Second Language (ESL), learners continue to avail of their services. Besides, ESL learners endure the burden of these academies' cost because of the reality that developing language skills takes time and such services offer specific programs from beginner to advanced levels. Learning the language is just way too difficult especially in the case of Japanese learners. Writing and speaking, in particular, are the most problematic areas of learning for Japanese learners.

According to a survey by Izzo (2006) of 34 English professors in Japan, most Japanese students are not proficient in writing and speaking because of errors in subject-verb agreement as well as aspects and tenses of verbs. Japan's Ministry of Education in an interview in 2015, told Japan Times that high school students in their final year majorily fell short on government targets in the English proficiency test and had particular difficulties with speaking and writing. However, even long before this problem attracted serious attention in Japan, prior research on the issue have already been published, indicating the high frequency of errors among Japanese students when it comes to verb inflection and verb tenses. (Bryant, 1984)

In relation to the abovementioned research, Sasaki's (2011) study has concurrent findings wherein he identified that the average Japanese ESL student spends, at least, 11 months in language schools abroad to study writing and speaking, which is excessively longer compared to other Asian learners. Reinforcing the research mentioned above findings, Geminiano (2008) also notes that it had been a problem to many language schools in the Philippines that offer English classes to Asian learners. Accordingly, most of their Japanese clients often feel frustrated and behind among others because they spend an average of 9 months to improve their English writing and speaking skills.

Because of the problems mentioned above, many researches on Japanese learners' learning strategies focused on intrinsic and extrinsic factors that affect their English writing and speaking proficiency. However, the framework of these studies do not transcend merely pointing at factors that may cause erroneous writing like wrong usage of verb tenses with regard to Japanese learners. Exhaustive investigation is lacking to explain and analyze the subject further. Corder (1967) believes that if learner errors are dissected and analyzed, then teachers will have a better grasp of the problem, thenceforth enabling them to formulate remedial actions to reduce and prevent errors. In addition, it fosters awareness-raising on the part learners, attending more closely to the details, types and probable factors to their inaccuracies and, thus, will have the chance for self-correction.

The aforementioned persistent problem among Japanese learners led to the conduct of this study as there is a need for language schools to analyze the verb errors in the written outputs of Japanese ESL learners to improve their discourse

competence in writing. Providers of various programs on ESL diploma courses and international certifications like Business English Certificates (BEC), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), Clark Institute of the Philippines, Inc. and other language academies will have the advantage to further their curriculum and choice of instructional designs and strategies that ensure higher satisfaction among learners.

Given the abovementioned scenario, this study analyzed the verb tenses in sentences of ESL Japanese learners. The merits of the study offer theoretical contributions to scholarly literature and research traditions in the ESL enterprise, as well as practical bases for new policy formulations and guidelines to further the effectiveness of instruction, design of materials, and all other aims of the ESL education system as a whole. Moreover, the study provides insights into how and which verb errors are commonly made. Likewise, Japanese learners may access this study as it provides a log of commonly committed grammatical errors to heighten their sensitivity to error avoidance and self-correction. Finally, this study's findings can support the need for instructional material designers and publishers to re-examine their current educational materials and enable them to identify their restrictions and limitations in scope that make certain materials relatively ineffective to deal with the specific needs of particular groups of learners. Since this study provides intensive qualifications and log to the types and extent of errors that Japanese learners are susceptible, then these can be treated as bases for planning book contents and design to reinforce their general appeal to a varied spectrum of Asian learners of English.

## **Related Studies**

The following discussions highlight the conceptual framework and findings of other studies conducted in foreign and local contexts that were found to have bearing on the conceptual design of this study.

Research studies done on errors in written English committed by Japanese ESL learners have shown that the most common type of errors are grammatical errors and verb form errors. Grant (2000) found that verb tense errors occurred with the highest frequency. Thus, this current study was conceptualized having been inspired from a queue of previous researches such as that of Grant and others which found a very vivid isolation of tense-related verb errors committed by Asian ESL and EFL learners. These previous studies and their findings were taken as bases for the delimitation in this current to concentrate on verb tense errors.

In addition, Lin (2002), who studied 100 essays written by Japanese ESL

learners, found that there were no statistically significant differences in the use of verb tense between the younger and older beginners. She found that the errors with highest frequencies were selection forms, omission, followed by addition. Surprisingly, it was found out that the learners, regardless of age, the learners had difficulty choosing the correct simple present tense form of a verb.

The above stated study by Lin (2002) gave the cue for this researcher to consider the use of Corder's typology of errors in classifying and describing the errors in verb tense committed by the learners of this study. The error categories "omission, selection, and addition" are associated to Corder's Error Analysis Methodology as discussed in the foregoing paragraphs. Moreover, Lin's study takes up an even more intensive investigation of differences in verb-related errors as accounted for by older and younger learners. Lin (2002) controlled the sampling of the research population to purposively select older and younger learners to comprise the population. This current study did not employ such sampling method considering the limited number of Japanese ESL learners in the research locale which does not enable a balanced distribution of older and younger learners. Nevertheless, due to some noted differences in the age of the learners, the researcher included "age" among the variables in the profile of the learners. This was also included among the variables correlated in the error analysis results to discover the probability of its association with the learners' susceptibility to commit verb-tense errors.

Wee (2005) studied the errors made by 50 Malay ESL students in Sarawak. The results indicated that the most frequently committed errors are those in the category of selection, followed by errors under omission, and addition. Unlike Lin (2002), Wee (2005) found out that Malay students' highest commission of verb tense errors was in present progressive tense followed by simple past tense of the verb.

The above stated findings of Wee inspired the researcher to test the generalizability of such conclusions when projected to the case of Japanese ESL learners. Wee's (2005) analysis of errors were also anchored on Corder's Error Taxonomy, although Wee (2005) did not limit the analysis of errors merely on verb tense. The findings of this current study are, indeed, parallel to Wee's (2005) findings, thereby indicating certain adjacent weaknesses in English skills between Malay ESL students and Japanese ESL learners.

In accordance to omission errors, a study conducted by Kam (2001) had shown that this type of error occurs in the present progressive form of verbs. His study include Chinese ESL students.

Further, the study of Alawi (2014) on error analysis on academic writing: A look into the interlanguage of university students described the interlanguage or the learners' knowledge of language via the analysis of errors made by first-year students of Surigao del Sur State University. It located areas of linguistic

difficulty in order to suggest remedial actions in terms of syllabus design, instructional materials preparation, curriculum review, and teaching strategies. Written compositions in English 101 (Basic Study and Thinking Skills) lessons were subjected to error analysis which concentrated on establishing the error density index (EDI) and error production frequency. The results showed that, among the 18 error categories, the top three in terms of frequency production are errors in verb usage (20%), followed by punctuation (16%), and capitalization (11%). Along the error typology, selection were the most committed, followed by omission and then addition.

The above stated findings of Alawi somehow reinforced the researcher's view that the outstanding emphasis of errors on verb tense is not only a phenomenon reported by foreign studies but even in local studies conducted among Filipino students. With the completion of this current study and in view of this researcher's own findings, it may be inferred that some characteristic grammar errors associated to ESL Japanese learners are encountered by Filipino learners as well. This reinforces further interest to synthesize the findings across studies dealing with Asian EFL learners which will enable a comparative and contrastive analysis of grammar errors among different Asian learners of English.

Moreover, the study of Gustillo & Magno (2012) explored the impact of Filipino learner's grammar errors in the ratings of their academic essays as rated by their teachers. Findings exposed that sentence-level errors have a noteworthy role in essay scores. The evaluators still have the grammar accuracy model when scrutinizing essays, although it is just measured secondary to other features of writing such as the capacity to address the prompt and organize the ideas logically.

The above mentioned study cued on one of the significance of grammar proficiency in English as it affects students' ratings in certain academic-related tasks such as essay writing, which remains to be a common type of test or course requirement prescribed by teachers across different academic subjects. Gustillo & Magno noted that the rubric used by teachers maintained the use of the grammar accuracy model as integrated into the rest of other criteria for rating essays. This added to the researcher's justification of the exigency of partaking in the research tradition in the area of Error Analysis to contribute to the further exploration of ESL learners' difficulties in their English skills which serves as basis for identifying concentrations and focus in instructional efforts and ESL curriculum design to address such problems. One of the major reasons in dealing with such problems is the apparent effects and impact that English language proficiency has on the performance of students in certain academic tasks.

Finally, the study of Mabuan (2015) investigated grammatical errors in a corpus of 58 blog posts written through weblogs. The participants were freshman University students enrolled at a Study and Thinking Skills class at Lyceum of the



Philippines University –Manila. Data come from students' blog posts, survey, and focus group interviews. Results show that the most pervasive errors committed by the participants were tenses, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, morphology, articles, verbs, and pronouns.

The above mentioned study made use of blog posts (in the internet) as corpus for the task of error analysis. In contrast, this current study's methodology presupposed a more controlled production of the corpus that was subjected to error analysis. The Japanese ESL learners were made to compose sentences in their written discussions of certain topics provided by the researcher for them to expound. Caution was taken so as not to divulge to the learners the purpose or the criteria in which their written compositions will be evaluated. This ensured that the written outputs resulted from the students' spontaneous expressions of their thoughts using English. In the case of using blogs as corpus, there is a possibility that the articles may have previously undergone expert mentoring and external editing. Thus, the blogs may not necessarily reflect the authentic writing skills of the students. Likewise, since the articles were intended as blog posts, extra efforts may have been considered by the students to purify their articles from errors. Hence, this current study preferred the use of an alternative corpus in which the criterion of authenticity was highly considered. The description of ESL learners' errors was supposed to be more authentic if their spontaneous utterance or writings in English are the ones employed as units of analysis. Moreover, Mabuan's study generated an inventory of pervasive errors found in the learners' writings (i.e. blogs), in which verb-tense errors was primarily stated in the rank of error categories noted. Such finding by Mabuan further reinforced the justification of research focus on the details and factors that explain the high rate of susceptibility in verb tense errors of ESL learners, which this current study also investigated.

## **Methodology**

This study used the descriptive and correlational methods of research where the results of the instrument used by the Japanese ESL learners are conducted, collected and rated by the evaluators. Correlation was used to find the relationship between the learners' performance in identifying morphological and syntactical errors and variables from the learners' profile, namely: age, sex, educational level, years of exposure to English, and hours spent per day on different mass media in English.

Descriptive research was used because it is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation. This type of research method is not simply amassing and tabulating facts but includes proper analyses, interpretation,

comparisons, identification of trends and relationships (Aggarwal, 2008). Correlational research, on the other hand, determines if there is a relationship or correlated variation between the two variables, a similarity between them, not a difference between their means (Waters, 2010).

### **Respondents of the Study**

This study analysed data that were sourced from thirty (30) Japanese ESL learners at Clark Institute of the Philippines, Inc.-Angeles City, Pampanga, who were enrolled at the time this study was conducted. The aforementioned number of learners represent the total number of enrollees at that time.

The learners were made to respond to the research's survey questionnaire as the means to retrieve their profile data along learner-related variables namely, age, sex, years of exposure to English, educational level, and hours spent per day on different mass media in English.

### **Data-Gathering Instruments**

The sets of data analysed in this study presupposed retrieval of prior-existing data and those that are research-induced generated data. To secure these data, several instruments were employed. These are described as follows:

**Survey Questionnaire on Learner Variables.** This is a researcher-developed instrument composed of six (6) items, in which the questions involved the learners' selection from a set of choices provided. No content-validation procedure was further required for this instrument since it inquires on basic profiles such as age, sex, years of exposure to English, educational level, and hours spent per day on different mass media in English. A copy of this instrument appears in Appendix B. Data gathered with the use of this instrument were analysed in view of answering the first research question. The same set of data was employed in the correlational computation presupposed under the third research question.

**Error Analysis Corpus-Elicitor.** The purpose of this instrument was to induce or generate the corpus for the error analysis, i.e. samples of written compositions in English from the Japanese ESL learners. The corpus-elicitor is a set of two (2) writing activities (see Appendices D and E). The first activity invokes the skill for reading comprehension in which the respondents were exposed to a reading selection with a set of questions formulated to test their comprehension of the text. This part of the instrument was adopted from Go ESL Writing Worksheets, Book 1 by Maria Niven (2011). The second activity

presupposed visual comprehension ability in which the respondents were asked to write their comprehension about a photograph. This part of the instrument is adopted from The Offstage Training Writing Worksheets by Jann Huizenga (2016). All written compositions generated from both activities were collated and treated as corpus for the error analysis, focused on the respondents' usage of verb tense. Three (3) English language experts were invited to evaluate the content validity of the instruments, i.e. (1) the Training Director from the school's academic team; (2) an IELTS/TOEFL Trainer from the school's Special Course team; and (3) a TESOL Trainer from TESOL Asia, Philippines. Both the content validity questionnaire (see Appendix D) and the result of the ratings (see Appendix E) are attached. Data set generated from this instrument is in aid of answering the second research question, and utilized again for the requirement of correlational computation under the third research question.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The proposal of this study, inclusive of its problem, methodology, and data-gathering instruments, was initially approved by the researcher's Thesis Committee. Upon the approval of the Committee, permission was obtained from the management of the target research locale, i.e. Clark Institute of the Philippines, Inc., (CIP), for the conduct of the study that will employ their Japanese ESL enrollees and the retrieval of research needed data from the latter. Permission was easily secured since the researcher is a faculty of the institution at the time this study was conducted. A copy of the formal letter of request to conduct the study indicates transparently the objective of the study and its supposed benefits to the research locale, as well as the consideration of research ethical principles in the retrieval and processing of data (see Appendix B).

The research instrument: Error Analysis Corpus-Elicitor was subsequently processed for content validation. Letters of invitation were sent to each of the three (3) evaluators (see Appendix C). Recommendations and comments from the evaluators were carefully integrated by the researcher in the final outline of the instrument.

A definite schedule was arranged with the Management of the research locale to gather the Japanese ESL learners for the researcher to administer to them the Error Analysis Corpus-Elicitor. The respondents were complete and very cooperative. It took approximately 30 minutes for all the respondents to accomplish the writing activities. The duration already includes the researcher's verbal introduction and explanation of the directions. Data were immediately retrieved at the end of the activities.

The researcher initially conducted her error analysis of the corpus based on the respondents' written compositions. However, to strengthen the reliability

of the error analysis, the researcher further employed the services of three (3) English language experts. These were the same persons invited to evaluate the content-validity of the instrument. The grammar criteria in Cambridge Grammar of English Language were considered as bases for the error analysis. The EA evaluators were further provided with specially prepared spread sheets to enable them to enlist the verb tense errors under their appropriate classification in the error typology.

### **Statistical Treatment of Data**

Various modes of data treatment were employed for data analysis corresponding to the requirements set for each of the research questions.

Data set for research question no. 1 concerning the profile of the Japanese ESL learners along learner-related variables, i.e. their age, sex, years of exposure to English, educational level, and hours spent per day on different mass media in English were collated and statistically analysed using frequency count, percentage and ranking. The findings were tabulated and reflected in Chapter 4 as reference for data presentation and interpretation.

Data set for question no. 2 was processed using Corder's Error Analysis Method. As such, the concrete manifestations of verb tense errors were noted and registered and classified across the three (3) error types. This enabled statistical processing by determining the frequency and ratio of concrete manifestations of errors distributed into the three error types. These findings were tabulated and reflected in Chapter 4 as reference for data presentation and interpretation.

Data set for question no. 3 presupposed the use of the statistical tools: Spearman Rho and Pearson r in determining the degree of association or relationship between the errors committed by the learners and their profile along the learner-related variables. Level of significance was initially set at 0.05. The results of the statistical computation were tabulated and reflected in Chapter as reference for data presentation and interpretation.

In addressing the concern of problem number 4, the researcher proposed a set of practice exercises which concentrated on improving the competence of the students. The practice exercises focused on simple present, present progressive and simple past tense. These further concentrated on selection, omission and addition, respectively.

### **Results and Discussion**

This study dealt on the description and classification of errors in verb tense as accounted for by Japanese ESL learners, particularly in their usage of verb tense in written composition. The analytical procedure followed the Error

Analysis (EA) methodology of Corder, and also adopted Corder's tripartite typology of language errors. The frequency and types of verb tense errors were also statistically correlated to a set of learner variables to determine their degree of association. The research process involved the participation of the entire batch of Japanese ESL learners enrolled at Clark Institute of the Philippines Inc. (Angeles City, Pampanga) at the time of this study was conducted. They are treated as respondents relative to the manner in which data were obtained from them. The following pages provide a summary of the salient points in the research findings.

### **Profile of the Japanese ESL learners along learner-related variables**

The research population is comprised of male and female learners who subscribed to the ESL instructional services of Clark Institute of the Philippines Inc., with a larger fraction female learners (63 percent). Comprising the majority of the learners are the combined population of those in their teen age years, i.e. 11 to 20 years old (33.33 percent) and those in their early adult years (33.33 percent). Majority of the learners' exposure to English (i.e. their history of ESL learning) range from 5 years but not exceeding 7 years (66.67 percent). Considering the differences in the age of the learners, some of them reported as having been exposed to English for only 1 to 5 years and even less than a year. Majority of the learners (53.33 percent) are University graduates or are still in university, with some having finished as far as Graduate level (6.67 percent) and Post-Graduate level (6.67 percent). As to the remainder of the population, many of them are Elementary School graduates (23.33 percent). In terms of their exposure to varied English-infused mass media types, the learners' exposure to "music" stands out from the rest on a constant rate of 1 to 2 hours, on daily basis (60 percent), or even as long as 3 or more hours daily (6.67 percent). However, the most dense media exposure of the learners is that of the internet that they access for 1 to 2 hours daily (46.67 percent) or 3 or more hours daily (26.67 percent). They have due access or exposure to all the rest of the media types in the inventory, although in lower rates compared to music and internet.

### **Japanese ESL Learners' Errors in Verb Tense**

As to the distribution of the learners' errors in the different verb tenses, they manifested a total 224 incidences of error in all the types of verb tenses namely, Present Tense (simple, progressive, and perfect progressive), Past Tense (simple, progressive, and perfect progressive), and Future Tense. Their total number of verb tense errors is broken down into errors in specific verb tenses, in which the most dense accounts of errors fall under the verb tense types: (a)

Simple Present Tense (94 or 42 percent); (b) Present Progressive Tense (61 or 27 percent); and (c) Simple Past Tense (52 or 23 percent). The learners' errors in the other verb tenses only represent a rate of 0.9 percent to 2 percent to the total number of errors.

As to the distribution of the learners' errors in the three error types of Corder's Error Typology, the learners accounted for verb tense errors across the three (3) types, i.e. selection errors (107 or 48 percent), omission errors (88 or 39 percent), and addition errors (29 or 13 percent).

### **Relationship of the Japanese ESL Learners' Verb Tense Errors and their Profile along Learner Variables**

None of the learner variables were significantly related to the learners' selection errors and addition errors, thereby implying the rejection of this study's hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance. On the contrary, the learners' exposure to internet as an English-infused mass media type is significantly related to their omission errors.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the merits of the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Japanese ESL learners who subscribe to the services of Clark Institute of the Philippines, Inc. are male and female, of various age range, have varied extent of exposure to English, have varied levels of education, and are exposed to varied types of English-infused mass media.
2. Japanese ESL learners manifest verb tense errors in their written composition across error types in selection, omission, and addition in simple present tense, simple past tense and present progressive tense, respectively.
3. Exposure to internet as an English-infused mass media type is significantly related to the commission of omission errors in verb tense.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. The Management of Clark Institute of the Philippines, Inc. should consider maintaining a databank of student profiles that includes the set of learner-variables employed in this study.
2. This study recommends reinforcing not only error correction by teachers but most importantly, self-correction by the ESL learners that should work to reduce their errors in verb tense.
3. Japanese ESL learners are advised to use the Internet to reduce their

omission errors in their verb tense usage

4. Practice exercises highlighting selection errors in simple present, omission errors in present progressive and addition in present progressive must be prepared in order to improve the performance of the students in using verb tenses

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# **Intercultural Understanding in Foreign Language Learning in an Indonesian Higher Education**

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## **Abstract**

This research paper aims to explore: a) learners' perceptions of intercultural understanding within foreign language learning; b) challenges to promote intercultural understanding within foreign language learning. This qualitative case study uses semi-structured interviews and observation of 15 learners who have participated in intercultural understanding training for six months. Data are analyzed through thematic analysis approach. The findings show that there are four categories of learners' perceptions on intercultural understanding: a) high support of intercultural understanding promotion; b) medium support of intercultural understanding; and c) low support of intercultural understanding. The finding of this study extends the debates of intercultural understanding issues within foreign language contexts. The implication of this study is that learners who have limited and non-supportive to promotion of intercultural understanding should be invited to intercultural understanding programs so that they become intercultural minded persons.

## **Introduction**

Intercultural understanding is an important global issue particularly in globalized and technological development era. Stephen May (2009) defined intercultural understanding as "a critical strategy that can unhelpfully to essentialize and reify particular ethnic and cultural difference" (p.69). It means that intercultural understanding is a key to establish good relationship with any particular culture and ethnic communities.

Research in intercultural in Indonesian context has been done by several researchers. For example: intercultural competence in Indonesian bilingual education context (Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2018), cultural factors influencing the implementation of bilingual instruction (Abduh, 2018), cultural awareness and commitment of internationalization of higher education (Abduh, Rosmaladewi, &

Basri, 2018), vocabulary and ICT that relates to cultural issues (Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2017) and cognitive concept in the Indonesian national language assessment (Ramly & Abduh, 2018). All of these studies have focused on intercultural awareness, cognitive concept exploration, commitment and competence. Therefore, very few information is related to the intercultural understanding in foreign language contexts. This study fills this knowledge gap by exploring students 'perception on intercultural understanding of in foreign language classes in an Indonesian higher education context.

This study has both theoretical and practical significances. Theoretically, this study contributes to the debates on the issues of intercultural issues. Practically, this study can be a source of information for teachers and practitioners in EFL contexts.

## **Literature review**

The literature review contains two sections: a) concept of language and culture; and b) previous research in intercultural understanding.

### **Concept of language and culture**

Language is perceived as an abstract entity, psychological dimension, and social concept (Santana, 2012). Culture can be refer to cultural, political, symbolic, and structural dimensions of lives (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The connection of language and culture has been long studied by in the area of foreign language. The global understanding of language and cultural connection relates to an early seminal study of Whorfian hypothesis where language is part of culture (Imai, Kanero, & Masuda, 2016).

The concept of language and cultures exist reciprocally. The relationship between language and culture is illustrated by Kashima, Kashima, & Kidd (2014, p.2):

Imagine a world without a language, then try to build a parliamentary democracy, a legal system, a stock exchange, a banking system, and myriad other infrastructures of everyday life that we have come to take for granted. Given that these institutions are cultural products, it is easy to see the role that language must have played in the constitution of human culture

The meaning is that every part of lives is only understandable and learnable when it is connected with the language. The every section of lives is part of cultural materials and values. These cultural materials and values are deciphered by the use of languages.

## **Previous studies in intercultural understanding**

Research into intercultural understanding has been widely conducted particularly in western contexts. It is also the focus of many researchers who are concerned with foreign language learning in many different contexts. There are several important studies to be reviewed including (Rosmaladewi & Abduh, 2017), Prihatin (2018), and Bacala (2018).

Rosmaladewi and Abduh (2017) investigated the collaborative culture in Indonesian polytechnics. This case study employed case study research design exploring English lecturers perception on collaborative culture. The findings of this research show that contrived collegiality has become part of the English collaborative culture that exists in Indonesian polytechnics. This study recommends that future study is important to conduct within larger setting.

Prihatin (2018) explored cross-cultural understanding syllabus and how to design syllabus that accommodate the intercultural understanding issues. Prihatin investigated 47 students and 6 teachers in an Indonesian university setting. The findings shows that there is limited representation of intercultural issues in aspect of syllabus including, lesson planning, books, competencies outcomes, and recommendation for resources book for teachers and students. The researcher recommends that a further investigation for students and teachers' perceptions of intercultural issues.

Bacala (2018) reviewed L1 and cultural interference in L2 learning. The study indicates that the intercultural interference has been limited in the context of L2 teaching and learning. Therefore, it is important for other researchers to investigate some issues of intercultural understanding within larger setting from different perspectives: teachers, students, government and intercultural activists.

From the review above, earlier studies suggest that it is recommended to conduct further study of intercultural understanding because there is still limited information of IU from non-western context. It is obvious that there is a need for an investigation into intercultural understanding particularly from students' perspectives. Therefore, this study aims to explore students' views on intercultural understanding from non-western context, particularly in Indonesian higher education context.

## **Research method**

This is a qualitative case study. The reason of choosing case study because the phenomena or the case in this research occurs in a natural setting (Yin, 2013). The case in this study is the intercultural understanding in foreign language class in Indonesian higher education contexts.

This study uses semi-structured interviews of 15 learners in an Indonesian

university who have participated in intercultural understanding class for six months. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. The researchers initially ask the students voluntary concern on participating the research. Then, once they approved, the researchers contacted the participants to arrange the time and place for interviews. After the interviews were transcribed completely, the researchers send the transcripts back to the participants. These process can help the strengthen the validity of the transcript content (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). These students have enrolled in cross culture understanding subject. The analysis used thematic analysis by following steps: a) reading whole transcripts of interviews; b) initial coding of the data; c) identifying the category; and d) identifying major theme.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The findings show that there are four categories of learners' perceptions on intercultural understanding: High support of intercultural understanding activities, medium support of intercultural understanding, and low support of intercultural understanding.

### ***High support of intercultural understanding activities***

This is a strong initiative to promote intercultural understanding. There are indicators of high support of intercultural understanding. Several students indicate that:

Learning other cultures and anything about others are very important (Student 1)

I believe having intercultural conversation and dialogue is strongly important (Student 3)

I like to support any intercultural activities such as dialogue and sharing (Student 6)

Whatever the issues and activities of intercultural understanding, I strongly support them (Student 8)

We have created a forum that supports intercultural dialogue among university students (Student 11).

It can be seen from the excerpts of the students that learners who are keen and strongly support the intercultural understanding activities have very positive attitude towards intercultural issues. The significance activities from learners who strongly support the intercultural understanding are not only classical classroom learning of other cultures, but more importantly intercultural conversation and dialogue, intercultural activities including intercultural festivals and celebrations. These cultural celebrations and festivals are seen as form of symbolic cultures

(Bolman & Deal, 2008) that symbolizes different ethnic and cultural dimensions.

### ***Medium support of intercultural understanding***

The second categories of students are those who supports on intercultural understanding, issues and activities. The indicators of this category reflect in their perceptions as follows:

I like to participate in any intercultural workshop if there is an invitation, I don't really strong on it (Student 2)

I like learn and participate for example training to learn other culture, it is good" (Student 4)

I support them [any activities in intercultural understanding] let say not much but medium Student 5)

I support, in medium term, for any intercultural activities such as movie and any creative project (Student 7).

This indicates that some students' perceptions on intercultural understanding activities have medium support for example in the project like movie that contains cross cultural issues. The examples of supportive activities in this category are watching intercultural movies, intercultural training, and intercultural invitation events. These cultural events reflect the connection between language and culture (Imai et al., 2016) where language plays important roles in developing and shaping the values and material cultures.

### ***Low support of intercultural understanding***

The indicators of low support on intercultural understanding have shown by some participants in this research as follows:

As long as no conflict, no need to learn other culture (Student 14)

Learning other culture depends on every individual, we don't need to push it (Student 15)

I join it when I have time, no need to plan it (Student 12)

No really support, but if any activities [intercultural activities], I will join (Student 13)

My culture is important so no need to learn other culture (Student9)

They need to learn our culture first, so that we can learn others (Student 15)

It shows that individual understanding of other culture is part of individual responsibility. Low participation on intercultural activities and issues rely on each student's decision whether to participate or not on intercultural issues.

The findings above add the debates of issues on intercultural understanding. This particularly important findings by the extension of previous studies (Abduh, 2018;



Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2018) on the issues of intercultural understanding. In addition, this study provides further information on intercultural understanding from students perspective that is suggested by earlier researchers (Bacala, 2018; Prihatin, 2018). The implication of this study is that students can identify some perceptions of those who support and those who do not the intercultural understanding. For teachers, it is an important tool to understand the category of students' views on intercultural issues.

The results of the perceptions on intercultural understanding of students can affect their support on their subjects. The impact is that learners who have high support on appreciating cultural differences can respect any cultural dissimilarities occurring around them. On the contrary, the limited support to cross cultural understanding can still participate to their subjects with low enthusiasm to other learn others.

## **Conclusion**

These four attitudes of students have significant implications for teaching and learning: high support of intercultural understanding promotion; medium support of intercultural understanding; low support of intercultural understanding; non-support of intercultural understanding. These findings have practical information for researchers and become references for educators on indicators students 'category on intercultural issues. The implication is that it is important to provide intercultural activities that are enjoyable and involving many students from different ethnic and cultural background. It is important to conduct further research within multiple sites and larger samples.

The findings of this study has the global relevance to study of the connection between language and culture in Japan (Imai et al., 2016) and language and culture (Kashima et al., 2014), and intercultural competence (Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2018). The findings of this study extend intercultural understanding the previous studies by adding category of learners' attitudes toward intercultural dimension: high, medium and low support to intercultural understanding.

The recommendation is that it is important for teachers and learners to promote intercultural understanding within the scope of foreign language learning. In addition, educational institutions may identify groups of learners who are strongly supportive to intercultural understanding to become volunteers to promote cross culture understanding. The educational institution may also encourage learners to learn other cultures through series of cultural performance, workshops, seminars and cultural exchange programs.

## Pedagogical implication

The limited understanding of other cultures has pedagogical implications: a) there is potential judging other culture based on their own values; b) there is limited appreciation of culture; c) limited understanding of other cultures may lead to limited acknowledgment and teaching of other cultures.

On the other hand, The strong understanding of other cultures has several pedagogical implications: a) learners will appreciate differences and acknowledge similarities of other cultures; b) learners will possess strong motivation and spirit of experiencing and living in cultures other than their own ones; c) teachers can teach and facilitate learners easily about harmony and conflict in certain cultures; d) the respect and tolerance among cultural diversity may exist not only in school or university contexts, but also in wider community settings.

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# The Modal Must in Philippine English: A Corpus-Based Analysis

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## Abstract

The present study investigated the dominant verb-phrase structure and the semantic functions of the modal *must* in research papers. It also determined whether the modal *must* conforms to or deviates from the standard modal usage in American English. A total of 122 graduate research papers were analyzed. The findings revealed that the dominant-verb phrase structure of the modal *must* was *must* + base form of the verb and Filipino graduate student researchers most favor the obligation/ compulsion/ advisability function of the modal *must*. Moreover, the results of the present study substantiated Morales' (2015) linguistic assumption that the obligation function of the modal *must* has a continuous usage in Philippine English and further confirmed the findings of Gustillo (2011) that the modal *must* in Philippine English maintains its conformity to the standard modal usage in American English.

**Keywords:** Modal *must*; Philippine English; research papers; corpus-based analysis.

## Introduction

The study of the system of modality in the English language has long been a significant focus of interest for some applied linguists (e.g., Abdul-Fattah, 2011; Gustilo, 2011; Hernández-Guerra, 2013; Morales, 2015) regarding its use in different varieties of English. Modality, as defined by Radden & Dirven (2007), is concerned with the codification of the speaker's attitude towards or with the "speaker's assessment of, or attitude towards the potentiality of a state of affairs." Moreover, modal verbs may express more than one type of modality and form an essential role on the grammar and semantics of most languages (McEnery and Kifle, 2002).

For students and researchers to recognize the significance of academic writing and reading, many linguists have studied the grammatical, lexical and rhetorical traits of research papers which include modality (Hyland, 2006). Research papers are tools used for disseminating new discoveries, knowledge, and

findings. Despite the notion that academic writing must have a neutral tone and should be objective and impersonal, the authors of research papers must aim to present their topics in a manner that their views and stand on the findings should encourage the readers to actively read and evaluate the text (Hyland, 2005).

With the use of various linguistic sources such as wordings which are commonly grouped into modality and hedging, the stance of the authors and the engagement of the readers can be encouraged and expressed (White, 2003). These wordings include modal verbs which are used to express modality and which through their modal meanings can express the author's qualification of commitment to or detachment from the claims they make.

There are different approaches to study modality in research papers. In a cross-linguistic or cross-disciplinary approach or a combination of both, some studies investigate the dichotomy between deontic and epistemic modality (e.g., Piqué-Angordans, Posteguillo, & Andreu-Besó, 2002), modalities of obligation (e.g., Giltrow, 2005) and the use of epistemic modality markers for hedging (e.g., Vold, 2006).

During the 1990s, the use of corpus linguistics in analyzing modal verbs has dramatically expanded (Schneider, 2000). This cutting-edge development regarding scientific techniques and methods lends itself to various investigations involving large quantities of data. The relevant information about the use of modal verbs in the different varieties of English is now available because of systematic corpus-based study.

For instance, Schneider (2000) used the Kolhapur Corpus to compare Indian English with British and American English through the investigation of subjunctives. His analysis revealed that the modal *should* is the dominant structural alternative to the subjunctives in the Kolhapur Corpus. Moreover, Indian English is more similar to British English than American English.

In 2010, Bautista replicated the study of Schneider (2000) using the ICE-SI and ICE-PHI. Philippine English and Singaporean English were compared to Indian English. In contrast to Schneider's findings, her analysis revealed that the modal *should* is not the dominant structural alternative to the subjunctive in ICE-SIN and ICE-PHI. Also, the two Englishes adhere more to the American English than to British English.

Likewise, Bautista (2004) conducted a corpus-based analysis on the modal *would* using local journals and newspapers. Her study showed the presence of the nonstandard usage of *would* in the data because of the writers' difficulty to recognize the nonstandard usage of *would* as revealed in the grammaticality test.

Gustilo (2011) described the semantic functions of nine modal verbs and examined if the features of these modal verbs conform to their usage in American and British English. The categories of text used in the study were editorials, social science, skills and hobbies, and humanities. The findings revealed that most of the

modal verbs conform to the standards of the American English except on the modal verbs *would* and *shall*. The association of *shall* with the 3rd person subject deviates from the exonormative use of *shall* which associates it with the first person subject.

Also, Morales (2015) attempted to determine the semantic functions of the modal *must* and identify its conformity to or deviation from the standard usage in American English. His analysis showed that there was a continuous usage of the modal *must*'s semantic function of obligation in Philippine English whereas the said usage steadily declines in American English (Jacobsson, 2008). This result provided partial explanations about the semantic functions of the modal *must* in the printed texts of persuasive writing. Thus, further studies should be conducted to substantiate the linguistic assumption of the modal *must* in Philippine English, thereby, further intellectualizing the Philippine English variety. Moreover, Morales (2015) recommended future researchers to investigate the modal *must* in research article introductions and any other subgenres of research articles written by Filipino academic writers.

Hence, as a contribution to filling this gap, the present study aimed to shed light on the use of the modal *must* in graduate research papers and ascertain the semantic functions of the modal *must* and its conformity to or deviation from the standard usage in American English. Moreover, the present study answered the following questions:

1. What are the dominant verb-phrase structures of the modal *must* in the graduate students' research papers?
2. What semantic functions attached to the modal *must* were identified in the graduate students' research papers?
3. Are there distinctive features found in the use of the modal *must* in the said research papers that do not conform to the standard modal usage in English?

## **Methodology**

### **Corpus**

The study utilized 122 unpublished theses of the graduate students of the Pampanga State Agricultural University.

### **Analytical Framework**

Coding of the semantic functions of the modal *must* was based on the chart of modal verbs by Azar (2001) which was modified by Gustilo (2011).

### **Unit of Analysis**

The dominant verb-phrase structures and semantic functions of the modal must were manually analyzed. Furthermore, sentences served as the units of analysis in the study.

### **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distributions of verb-phrase structures of the modal must in the graduate students' research papers. As shown in the table, the verb-phrase structure must + base form of the verb obtained the highest frequency among other verb-phrase structures. This finding suggests that some Filipino graduate students may have chosen to write simple sentence structures in the active voice as shown in [14] and [15]:

[14] *The teachers must continue to enhance their professional competence.*

[15] *School administrators must involve the other stakeholders in conceptualizing programs for school development.*

Modal Structure	Sample Text	Frequency	Percentage
<i>must + be</i>	[16] The communication system in the school must be transparent and open to provide the teachers with precise information.	7	5.74
<i>must + base form of the verb</i>	[30] The DepEd must monitor the pre-school programs to determine their effectiveness in the total development of the child.	84	68.85
<i>must + be + past participle</i>	[82] The proposed career guidance must be presented to the school head and guidance counselor for refinement and implementation.	30	24.59
<i>must + have + past participle</i>	[19] The learner must have employed a good profile for establishing and maintaining a good level of fitness.	1	0.82
<b>Total</b>		122	100%

***Table 1. The frequency of Verb-phrase Structures of Modal Must in the Graduate Students' Research Papers***



Table 2 illustrates the frequency and percentage distributions of the semantic functions of the modal *must* in graduate students' research papers. The data in Table 2 were adopted from Gustillo's (2011) study.

As shown in the table, the semantic function of obligation/ compulsion/ advisability, which is exemplified in [34] and [42], is most favored by Filipino graduate student researchers.

[34] *For school heads to liquidate early, they must prepare the required documents for cash advance ahead of time.*

[42] *Remedial classes must be conducted to the low achievers in Mathematics.*

**Table 2. The frequency of Semantic Functions of Modal Must in the Graduate Students' Research Papers**

Modal Function	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Obligation/ Compulsion/ Advisability</i>	122	100%
<b>Total</b>	122	100%

Similarly, the results of the present study further confirmed the findings of Gustilo (2011) and Morales (2015) that most of the modal verbs in Philippine English conform to the norms of the dominant English varieties especially American English.

The findings of the present study further substantiated the claim of Morales (2015) that Filipino writers most favor the employment of the obligation function of *must* and it is widely accepted in Philippine English, which is an outer circle English variety.

## Conclusion

The study attempted to examine the dominant verb-phrase structure and the semantic functions of the modal *must* to determine its conformity to or nonconformity from the standard usage in the English language. The findings

revealed that the dominant-verb phrase structure of the modal *must* was *must* + base form of the verb and Filipino graduate student researchers most favor the obligation/ compulsion/ advisability function of the modal *must*.

The study further substantiated Morales' (2015) linguistic assumption that the obligation function of the modal *must* has a progressive usage in Philippine English. Moreover, the modal *must* in the research papers of the graduate students did not yield nonconformity from its standard usage in American English. Hence, Gustilo's (2011) claim that the modal *must* in Philippine English maintains its conformity to the standard modal usage in American English was confirmed.

The findings above have implications for ESL/EFL teaching and future research. First, there is a need for language teachers to inform their students about the functions of the modal *must* in research articles written by Filipino writers and to make them aware of the distinct features of Philippine English and compare them with the norms of other varieties of English.

Second, further studies should be conducted to substantiate the linguistic assumption of the modal *must* in Philippine English by analyzing published research articles written by Filipino or Asian academic writers.

Lastly, since corpus-based analysis of language seems to be an effective approach to linguistic description, more studies of this nature must be done.

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# **Attitude of Grade 12 SHS Academic Tracks Students Towards Speaking in English**

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## **Abstract**

The matter of learner's attitude is acknowledged as one of the most important factors that impact on learning language. Hence, this study aimed to determine the attitude of students toward speaking in English as it employed descriptive-correlational method to describe their profile and their attitude. It also ascertained the relationship between the students' attitude towards speaking in English and their profile variables and the difference of their attitude when grouped by strand and by sex. The data were collected from Grade 12 Senior High School Academic Track students with the use of the English Speaking Attitude Questionnaire (ESAQ). Results show that both HumSS and ABM strand students have positive attitude towards speaking in English and that speaking in English is important to them in general. Interestingly, however, these students admitted that they do not speak English well, are worried about making mistakes when they speak English and are afraid of being laughed at when they make mistakes in speaking. The students also believe that they need to learn speaking in English because they might need it in their future job and that practicing it will make them better speakers of English. The study found no significant difference in the attitude of the students towards speaking in English when grouped according to strand and sex. The implication of these results redounds to the emphasis on the importance of classroom motivation to improve students' attitude towards speaking in English.

**Keywords:** attitude towards speaking in English, academic track, Senior high school, HumSS, ABM

## **Introduction**

English as the global language has undoubtedly dignified its standing in global communication essentially targeting both oral and written skills. In the Philippines however, as observed by the researcher, speaking in English seems to be very difficult most especially to students in the secondary level.

There are various factors that affect the learning of speaking in English, one of which is attitude. Attitude is determined by the individual's beliefs about outcomes or attributes of performing the behaviors (behavioral beliefs), weighted by evaluations of those outcomes or attributes. The concern on the learners' attitudes towards the target language was emphasized by Gardner (1985). He stated that the learners' attitudes towards learning another language play a key role in enhancing and motivating them to learn that language.

Kara (2009) as cited by Abidin (2012) stated that attitudes towards learning besides opinions and beliefs have an obvious influence on students' behaviors and consequently on their performance. It is argued that those students who possess positive beliefs about language learning have a tendency to increase more positive attitudes towards language learning. Attitude is considered as an essential factor influencing language performance and received considerable attention from both first and second and language researchers.

There are many reasons why student's attitude toward language learning is important. Attitude is one of the factors that influence foreign language learning because how much effort students put into language learning depends partly on attitude (Gardner, Lanlonde and Moorcroft, 1985). Thus, it can be inferred that learners with positive attitude towards speaking English will be more involved in speaking activities and may try to make use of more strategies that help them deal with their difficulties in the course of conversation; and learners with negative attitude will be less willing to participate in speaking activities. Conversely, negative beliefs may lead to class anxiety, low cognitive achievement, and negative attitudes (Victori & Lockhart, 1995).

Moreover, gender has been an important perspective under second language learning investigations; highlighting females to execute more interests, positive behaviors and performances, in comparison to the males (Keller, 1983; Aacken, 1999; Dornyei & Shoaib, 2005). These gender differences are due to students' unlike levels of motivation, attitudes and anxiety towards language learning, further influenced by their learning characteristics and styles, lesson content and teaching strategies, social environment and supportive mechanisms, family influences and peer pressures, cognition levels, and so forth (Williams, Burden & Lanvers, 2002). Thus, investigating affective aspects have become vitally important, especially under the gender perspective in order to enhance students' interests and outcomes in second language learning.

Furthermore, in the study concluded by Cabansag (2013) titled "The Attitudinal Propensity of Students towards strategies in English Language Learning" it was found out that positive attitude towards English may lead to awareness of the importance of English and learn it as a compulsory subject. Attitude concept is considered as an essential component in language learning. So, a positive attitude should be the umbrella of the language learning. It is so

important to study learner's personalities. For that reason, the effective perspective, especially attitude, should be considered in language research.

Senior High School students are expected to have better English language proficiency, especially their oral communication ability. However, as an ESL teacher that implements "Speak in English" policy inside the classroom, it was observed that most students find it hard to keep up with the class rule, thus the researcher is bounded in discovering the attitude of the students towards speaking in English.

This study looks into the concept of attitude as one of the major affective factors for success in speaking the English language amongst students. More specifically, it investigates senior high school students' attitudes towards speaking in English, taking into consideration their profile variables such as gender and strand.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

The present study aimed at investigating the attitude of the students toward speaking in English, examining whether the attitude of the students towards speaking in English significantly differs according to their profile variables such as their academic track strand and sex.

## **Methodology**

### ***Respondents***

The method of data collection employed for the present study was the stratified random sampling. There were two groups under the Academic Track, the HumSS and the ABM. The purposive sampling method was also adopted. As a result, only 47 students were selected from the two groups (30 from the HumSS and 17 from ABM) with a total of 18 males and 29 females.

### ***Instruments***

As the present study's context is the same with that of Bui and Intaraprasert (2013), their English Speaking Attitude Questionnaire (ESAQ) was used. It was constructed on the basis of the Language Learning Attitude Questionnaire (2004) and Okert's (2010) language learning questionnaire. The statements in the ESAQ specifically pertains to their feelings towards speaking in English, reasons why they speak in English, reasons why English is important to them as well as their perceived English speaking capability.

Moreover, to ensure that the respondents knew the purpose of investigation and answered the questionnaire with less fear and honesty, which, as stated by Intaraprasert (2000), is very important, the questionnaires' general instruction followed Dörnyei's (2003) suggestion. This involved providing

information on the purpose, the importance of the study, and the organization responsible for conducting the study, stating there is no right or wrong answer, requesting honest answers, promising confidentiality, and expressing appreciation.

### ***Procedure***

The ESAQ was administered to students from the two different strands (HumSS and ABM). The researchers themselves carried out the process strictly following the sampling plan so as to achieve the desired number and qualified responses.

### **Results and Discussion**

The data collected were analyzed in quantitative method such that the (1) information about the students' profile which includes strand were coded with numbers; (2) information about the students' attitude towards speaking in English were coded with numbers; (3) the data about how the attitude of the students towards speaking in English significantly differs according to strand were processed using T-Test; and (4) the data about determining the relationship between the attitude of the students towards speaking in English and their academic strand were processed through Spearman-rho .

As shown in table 1, 63.8 percent of the respondents are from the HumSS strand while 36.2 of the remaining respondents are from the ABM strand. This is because in the school where the researchers conducted the study, the population of HumSS students is three times the population of ABM students.

**Table 1. Profile of the respondents when grouped according to strand.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
HUMMS	30	63.8	63.8	63.8
Valid ABM	17	36.2	36.2	100.0
Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that 38.3 percent of the total number of respondents are male while 61.7 percent of the remaining number of respondents are female. Accordingly, there are relatively more female than male students in the two strands.

**Table 2. Profile of the respondents when grouped according to sex.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	18	38.3	38.3	38.3
Valid Female	29	61.7	61.7	100.0
Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 presents the attitude of the students towards speaking in English. As gleaned from the table, statements 11 and 17 received the highest mean. Students believe that speaking English is important because they might need it later for their job as suggested in statement number 11. In general, speaking in English is important to the students.

More so, they think that if they put much effort in practicing, they can speak English well. However, findings also indicate that the students are worried about making mistakes when speaking in English. Along this line, Batang and Temporal (2018) opined that the negative attitude of students could be ascribed to their inhibitions in using the English language especially when they are with people who speak English well. They would rather not speak than commit mistakes and be laughed at by their interlocutors. Students' feeling of intimidation could also be spelled from the worries and discomfort they experience both in and out of the classroom.

Many other studies have been conducted to explore the nature of students' attitudes towards learning foreign language in general and EFL in particular, compared with the studies concerning the attitudes towards speaking in English.

For instance, Shams (2008) conducted a study attempting to investigate students' attitudes, motivation and anxiety towards the learning of English. The findings underlined that the students had affirmative attitudes and high enthusiasm towards English. This also highlighted that most of them showed positive attitudes towards English language and its learning which, in turn, emphasized the value of English language efficiency in the daily life.

The findings of study by Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) on Petroleum Engineering students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English revealed that they had positive attitudes towards the use of English in the Yemeni social and educational contexts. They also showed affirmative attitude towards the culture of the English-speaking world.

Generally, Grade 12 Academic Track SHS students have positive attitude towards speaking in English as Speaking in English is important to them. These students are on their last year in the Senior High School and are candidates either for employment or further studies in college, thus they already realized the



importance of being able to speak in English for their future careers. Attitude is a very significant factor that could tell the success of learning something but it must not end there. As suggested by Rastegar and Gohari, 2016, improving the positive attitude of the students towards a particular academic subject may increase their desire to learn it and an ability to apply what they have been taught. The academic subject is much like Speaking in English.

According to Ellis (1985), language teachers should foster a high positive attitude in the learners by paying a lot of attention to the way the learners find their way throughout learning the language and should provide the lively and dynamic class environments where can help students learn the language as best through the creation of a positive attitude towards the language being learnt and towards the environments in which it can be learnt.

Also, the respondents admitted that they are worried about making mistakes when speaking in English and therefore afraid of being laughed at when they make mistakes at speaking in English although they are willing to learn speaking in English. It might be one of the factors why despite the “Speak in English” rule applied by the researcher inside the class, the students find it hard to keep up with the rule. This is actually not new anymore, in fact, getting students to respond in the classroom is a problem that most ESL teachers face. Tsui (1996) found that students’ reticence is attributed to students’ lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes and being laughed at. Consequently, the students were reluctant to answer in front of the whole class, and when called on by their teacher spoke in a barely audible voice.

In general, Tsui’s (1996) findings have been supported by a number of other studies of foreign-language classroom situations (including content-based contexts) either in Hong Kong (Flowerdew et al., 2000; Jackson, 2001, 2003; Liu & Littlewood, 1997), Mainland China (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Zou, 2004), or Thailand (Thein, 1994). In Jackson’s (1999) and Liu and Littlewood’s studies, the students expressed willingness to participate in classroom discussions in the target language, but remained reticent and passive in class. Some students in Jackson’s (2002) study even perceived themselves as active in class just by listening to others.

Interestingly, although speaking English is important to them, they admit that they do not speak English well but with practice, they can improve their speaking in English. In a research done by Goktepe (2013), it was found out that the students, who were 9<sup>th</sup> grade public high school learners commonly believed that they could not speak English fluently. Therefore, these results gave us some reasons to think the students were aware of the problem.

**Table 3. Attitude of the respondents towards speaking in English.**

Statements	Mean	Description
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1) You enjoy speaking English.	1.94	Agree
2) Speaking English is fun.	1.91	Agree
3) Being able to speak English often makes you happy.	1.91	Agree
4) Being able to speak English gives you a feeling of success.	1.81	Agree
5) Speaking English is important to you in general.	1.72	Strongly Agree
6) You speak English because it will make your parents or your teacher proud of you.	2.40	Agree
7) You speak English because you want to do well on oral tests.	2.02	Agree
8) You speak English because you want to communicate with foreigners.	2.40	Agree
9) Speaking English is important to you because you want to make friends with foreigners.	2.28	Agree
10) Speaking English is important to you because you might study overseas.	2.17	Agree
11) Speaking English is important to you because you might need it later for your job.	1.30	Strongly Agree
12) You speak English because all educated people can do that.	2.21	Agree
13) You speak English because you have to do it.	1.98	Agree
14) You think you speak English well.	2.60	Disagree
15) You like to mimic other people's accents.	2.32	Agree
16) You can mimic other accents well	2.40	Agree
17) You think if you put much effort in practicing, you can speak English well.	1.51	Strongly Agree
18) At school, if you didn't know how to give an answer in English for sure, you'd still answer out loud in class anyway.	2.38	Agree
19) You are not worried about making mistakes when you speak English.	2.64	Disagree
20) You are not afraid of being laughed at when you make mistakes in speaking.	2.58	Disagree
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 4 shows the T-test result on the difference on attitude when grouped according to strand and sex. With P-values more than 0.01 and 0.05, the hypotheses are accepted.

This study similarly pictures the study of Dennison (2006) who looked into the effects of gender stereotypes in language on attitudes toward speakers which made use of 58 women and 30 men and considered the differences and relationships of their sex to their attitude.

It was found out in this study that there is no statistically significant difference on the attitude of students towards speaking in English and their sex although females have higher mean than males.

Fakeye (2010) investigated the correlation between attitude and achievement in English among 400 senior secondary students selected randomly from five secondary schools. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between attitude and achievement. Additionally, it was explored that students' attitude is not gender-related. Thus, there was not a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of male and female students. However, the descriptive results show that the attitudes of female secondary school students towards English are slightly higher than that of male ones.

**Table 4. T-test result on the difference on attitude when grouped according to strand and sex.**

Independent Variable	T-value	Prob. value	Decision
<b>Strand</b>	-.007	.995	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Sex</b>	-.299	.667	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

## Conclusion

The study concludes that Grade 12 senior high school academic track students have positive attitude towards speaking in English and that they view speaking in English as important in general. However, speaking in English is feared by most students because they are afraid of being laughed at when committing mistakes in speaking. They may not like to speak the language because they lack self-confidence on their conversational ability. Nevertheless, they think that they can speak English well if provided opportunities to practice.

## Pedagogical Implication

The present study has contributed more knowledge to the field of attitude as a factor in the success of language learning specifically of speaking in English. It suggests that attitude is again proven as an inevitable element language learning and thus should be given importance by language teachers. Indeed, a positive attitude should be the umbrella of language learning. The implication of these results redounds to the emphasis on the importance of classroom motivation to improve students' attitude towards speaking in English.

## Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, it is recommended that language teachers should maintain the positive attitude of the students towards speaking in

English. The students are already aware of the problem of why they stop speaking in English, it is because of their fear of committing mistakes and being laughed at. Learners need encouragement and they need to know when they are making mistakes that might cause other people not to understand or misunderstand them. Language teachers should therefore provide these students ample opportunity to speak with the imposition of it's alright to commit mistakes. Being aware of the importance of students' attitudes might help language curriculum and instruction designers to invent language teaching programs that generate the positive attitudes which lead to having more successful language learners (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Additionally, it can assist material writers in inventing and instructors in picking up tasks that tackle students' attitudes (Midraj, O'Neill, & Sellami, 2008).

In connection, material writers should provide more speaking tasks in the Grade 12 Academic Track curriculum since the students said that they can speak English well through practice. When speaking activities are incorporated into the curriculum, there is no way that these students will not improve their speaking skills. Also, what should be provided are meaningful tasks, create situations in class where students have real-life communication, activities related to their daily life and meaningful tasks that give them the chance to practice oral language.

Lastly, the Speak in English policy inside the class must be done not only by English teachers but by other subject teachers as well. It is still one way to increase students' chance of practicing to speak in English. Besides, every teacher is expectedly a language teacher.

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## Appendix

### ESAQ (English Speaking Attitude Questionnaire)

**Instructions:** To what extent do you agree with the following items? The following items ask about your attitudes towards speaking in English. Remember there is no right or wrong answers; just answer as accurately as possible. Please read the statements below carefully and tick the appropriate choices that reflect your attitudes and perceptions towards English language.

Use the scale below to answer the questionnaire items.

1= Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Disagree 4= Strongly Disagree

Note: Tick (✓) only one option for each item in the questionnaire.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) You enjoy speaking English.				
2) Speaking English is fun.				
3) Being able to speak English often makes you happy.				
4) Being able to speak English gives you a feeling of success.				
5) Speaking English is important to you in general.				
6) You speak English because it will make your parents or your teacher proud of you.				
7) You speak English because you want to do well on oral tests.				
8) You speak English because you want to communicate with foreigners.				
9) Speaking English is important to you because you want to make friends with foreigners.				

10) Speaking English is important to you because you might study overseas.				
11) Speaking English is important to you because you might need it later for your job.				
12) You speak English because all educated people can do that.				
13) You speak English because you have to do it.				
14) You think you speak English well.				
15) You like to mimic other people's accents.				
16) You can mimic other accents well.				
17) You think if you put much effort in practicing, you can speak English well.				
18) At school, if you didn't know how to give an answer in English for sure, you'd still answer out loud in class anyway.				
19) You are not worried about making mistakes when you speak English.				
20) You are not afraid of being laughed at when you make mistakes in speaking.				

*Thank you for your cooperation.*

### **Note on Contributors**

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