

Assessing the English proficiency of education students: Basis for Intervention

Cynthia M. Sanchez *, Viverly E. Mata, Camille A. Sese, Grace Alison M. Manglallan and Jermaine P. Mendoza

College of Education, Bulacan Agricultural State College, Pinaod San Ildefonso, Bulacan, Philippines.

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2025, 27(01), 569-582

Publication history: Received on 27 May 2025; revised on 03 July 2025; accepted on 05 July 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2025.27.1.2435>

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between English proficiency and academic achievement among undergraduate education students at BASC. Results indicate that most students have advanced English proficiency, while a notable number are at an intermediate level. This distribution reflects a strong foundation in English, though further development is needed for intermediate students to fully meet future teaching demands. Academic performance, as measured by the General Weighted Average (GWA) from the previous school year, shows a positive trend, suggesting that the current curricula and support systems effectively facilitate student learning and content mastery. The study also reveals a significant correlation between English proficiency and academic achievement, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of .319 and a p-value of .000. This highlights the crucial role of English skills in academic success. Education students acknowledge the importance of English proficiency for their teacher education, emphasizing that effective communication is vital for teaching. In response, the study proposes a matrix of interventions to enhance English proficiency. Recommended programs include targeted language support, workshops, and resources focusing on specific language areas such as grammar, pronunciation, and reading comprehension. These interventions are designed to build on students' existing strengths and address language gaps, preparing them effectively for their future roles as educators

Keywords: English Proficiency; Academic Achievement; Teacher Education; Language Support; Grammar; Pronunciation; Reading Comprehension

1. Introduction

English maintains its paramount significance in today's interconnected global landscape, serving as an indispensable tool for effective communication across diverse cultural contexts. The significance of proficient communication remains beyond dispute, assuming an essential role in the academic and professional lives of individuals. Owing to its pervasive usage and expansive global reach, English has firmly entrenched itself as the preeminent global lingua franca. Currently, English boasts a staggering user base exceeding 1.5 billion individuals worldwide, positioning it as the most widely adopted second language. Moreover, its status as an official language in numerous countries and its ubiquity as a medium of instruction in academic institutions worldwide further underpin its indispensability. From diplomatic negotiations and scientific discourse to commercial interactions and international tourism, English remains the preferred conduit for effective cross-cultural exchange.

Within the Philippines, English serves as a secondary language, complementing the official national language, Filipino. Furthermore, English exerts influence in the domains of science and technology, aiming to foster competence in both Filipino and English on a nationwide scale. The integration of English as the primary medium of instruction constitutes a pivotal facet of the Philippine education system. Its pervasive influence permeates virtually every aspect of communication. Notably, the nation's strengths encompass its commendable English proficiency, a factor that has catalyzed economic growth and positioned it as a leading provider of voice outsourcing services. However, a worrying pattern emerged that is marked by a decline in English competence among both teachers and students. The decline in

* Corresponding author: Cynthia M. Sanchez

English proficiency among teachers and pupils, however, is a concerning trend that has been identified. Regrettably, the English proficiency of the Filipino workforce has exhibited a downturn, potentially attributed to graduates' attainment of only basic working proficiency levels (Jugo, 2020).

The ability to use English effectively is no longer a mere skill but a critical tool that can significantly influence both personal and academic success. Asio and Quijano (2023) unveiled a noteworthy connection between English proficiency and academic performance. They discussed that students who are proficient in the language tend to excel academically, as this proficiency equips students with the tools necessary for comprehending and interpreting complex academic texts. Moreover, Panado (2023) asserted that proficiency in the four language skills plays a vital role in academic performance. This enables the students to understand and express themselves confidently, which leads to improved learning outcomes and academic success.

In a significant response to this mounting concern, the Philippine Senate Resolution 622 (2018) was introduced, advocating for a comprehensive investigation into the diminishing English proficiency levels among Filipino students. Reports from sources like Hopkins International Partners and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages served as inspiration for this call to action. According to the Hopkins International Partners study, college graduates in the Philippines had lower levels of English proficiency when compared to those required of Thai high school students and even Dubai cab drivers. Additionally, according to data from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, university graduates from the Philippines have competence levels comparable to those of students in the fifth and sixth grades in English-speaking nations (Oducado et al., 2020).

Educators and institutions play a pivotal role in nurturing English language skills, as they serve as platforms that facilitate the acquisition of language skills, offer guidance, and provide a supportive community for language learners. As recommended by Clark et al. (2021), an intensive language program can be offered to improve the skills of the students. This program should address the needs of various disciplines, helping students not only communicate but also excel in their chosen fields of study. On the other hand, Ouyang and Han (2017) focused on the specific situations of college students, and they suggested that improving the teaching plan, adding special supplements to English learning, and building a college English culture are some of the methods that can be done to help students develop their proficiency.

The present state of the English language among Filipino learners, particularly in written form, lays bare a discernible decline. Alarming, concerns have emerged encompassing grammatical inaccuracies, lexical deficiencies, punctuation discrepancies, capitalization errors, and the incoherent progression of ideas. These disconcerting trends have garnered the attention of English educators, curriculum planners, and governmental entities alike (Tanpoco et al., 2019). In the impending future, pre-service educators within the basic education system will shoulder the fundamental responsibility of shaping the linguistic proficiency of grassroots learners. The profound impact of their endeavors cannot be understated, considering the extensive cohort of students they are poised to educate (Torres & Alieto, 2019). Moreover, the transition from pre-service teachers to full-fledged educators positions them as vital agents in policy implementation, thereby conferring upon them a role as examples in determining the linguistic standards within educational settings (Alieto, 2018).

Given the urgency of the matter, a comprehensive study is imperative to assess the strengths and vulnerabilities encompassing the English language skills of education students at BASC. This scholarly endeavour seeks to find possible interventions for improving English language competence in the context of teacher education. Thus, it is important to look at the relationship between undergraduate students' English proficiency, academic achievement, and perceptions.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between English proficiency and the academic achievement of first to third year Education students of BASC. Specifically, it aims to determine the connection between undergraduate education students' English proficiency, academic performance, and perceptions with the aim of identifying potential interventions for enhancing English language skills in the context of teacher education.

Specifically, the study aims to seek answers to the following questions:

- How may the level of English proficiency of undergraduate education students be described?
- How may the academic achievement of education students be described in terms of their general weighted average (GWA) during the preceding school year?

- Is there a correlation between the level of English proficiency of the education students and their academic achievement?
- What are the perceptions of education students about the importance of English proficiency in their teacher education?
- What intervention could be crafted based on the results of the study?

2. Methodology

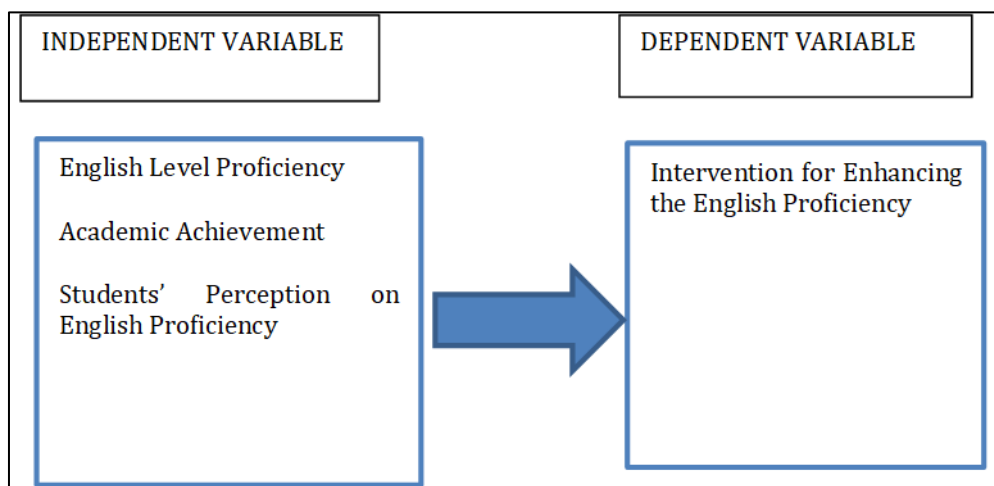
After securing the necessary permits and approvals from the Research, Extension, Production, and Development (REPD) office at BASC, the researchers developed a comprehensive questionnaire to assess various English skills, including grammar, punctuation, spelling, pronunciation, and reading comprehension. This questionnaire was initially reviewed and validated by five English teachers from the Institute of Arts and Sciences, who provided constructive feedback. Based on their suggestions, the researchers revised the instrument and submitted it for final approval before administering it to the respondents.

The study utilized a sequential explanatory research design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the relationship between English proficiency and academic achievement among education students at Bulacan Agricultural State College (BASC). The design was implemented in two phases: quantitative and qualitative.

In the quantitative phase, all first to third-year education students for the 2023-2024 academic year were targeted, with 553 out of 577 students participating in a 100-item English Proficiency Test. Developed and validated by language faculty, the test assessed grammar and reading comprehension. The results were analyzed using Pearson's correlation to determine the relationship between English proficiency levels and students' General Weighted Average (GWA) from the previous year.

The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with a subset of students to explore their perceptions of the importance of English proficiency in teacher education. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and insights from these interviews, complementing the quantitative findings and providing a deeper understanding of factors affecting academic performance.

2.1. Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework for this study encompasses a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between English proficiency, academic achievement, and perceptions among education students at Bulacan Agricultural State College (BASC). At its core, this framework is underpinned by key independent variables, including the students' proficiency in the English language and their academic performance based on their general weighted average (GWA) from the preceding academic year. These variables serve as the foundational elements upon which the study's investigations were anchored. Another variable included was the students' perceptions regarding the importance of English proficiency in their pursuit of teacher education. This subjective perspective, derived through surveys and interviews, played a vital role in shaping their self-assessment of competency and their motivation towards mastering the language.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the theoretical framework of the behaviorist theory of learning, which states that learning a language includes the acquisition of learning habits that can be influential in learning another language. In addition, it states that as learners commit errors, they can overcome those mistakes if the errors are pointed out to them. Joo, Bong, and Choi (2021) also mentioned self-efficacy, a central concept in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, to refer to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks or accomplish goals. In the context of learning and self-efficacy pertains to a student's confidence in their capacity to successfully complete academic tasks, overcome challenges, and achieve learning objectives.

3.1. Sources and materials

The researchers from the Institute of Education were the ones who administered the English Proficiency Test through a Google Form. The researchers obtained a list of education students for the academic year 2023-2024 from the program chairs of the Institute of Education.

The research team gathered the needed data with the help of a computer or laptop, an internet connection, bond papers, pens, envelopes, and a printer. Written interview surveys were used to gather other relevant information.

The answers to the interview questions and thematic analysis were done to identify patterns, themes, and trends related to their perceptions of the students' English proficiency. This analysis provided a deeper understanding of the factors that may influence academic performance.

The integration of data was done through a sequential explanatory design. Sequential explanatory research combines quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in two separate phases: the first phase is quantitative, and the second phase is qualitative. This design is used to provide a deeper understanding of the quantitative results by gathering qualitative data to explain or elaborate on the findings.

Recent literature continues to validate the sequential explanatory design as a crucial methodology in mixed methods research, particularly for its ability to integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches. Creswell and Creswell (2020) highlight its importance in fields like education and healthcare, where combining broad quantitative analysis with in-depth qualitative exploration provides a more refined understanding of complex issues. Almeida and Faria (2021) similarly emphasize the design's systematic approach, which allows researchers to connect statistical trends with participants' lived experiences, making the findings more comprehensive and actionable.

Schoonenboom (2022) and Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2023) further illustrate the design's adaptability in addressing complex research questions across various domains. They point to its effectiveness in uncovering the underlying factors behind quantitative results, such as in educational policy and health sciences. Maxwell (2024) adds that the sequential explanatory design ensures a coherent link between qualitative and quantitative phases, enhancing the depth and applicability of the research. These recent contributions collectively underscore the design's continued relevance in producing robust, contextually rich findings that are directly applicable to real-world challenges.

3.2. Intervention/s to be done/used

The results of this study were used to determine the levels of proficiencies of the Education students and for crafting the intervention to be used in improving more the different English macro skills being acquired by the future educators.

3.3. Data collection techniques, sampling procedures

A 100-item English Proficiency Test, developed by the proponents and validated by BASC Faculty members specializing in Language. The instrument was administered to all first- to third-year education students to assess their proficiency level. Additionally, students responded to a question to gauge their perceptions of the importance of English in their education.

For the quantitative data, a descriptive analysis was conducted. The study utilized valid English proficiency test results, which were converted to their Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) equivalents to enable a more unified and relevant analysis. This approach was adapted and modified from Meniado (2019). The CEFR standards were employed as benchmarks due to their comprehensive descriptors that are reflective of academic settings. A slight modification was made to the CEFR scale to categorize proficiency levels as follows: Beginner (0-20), Elementary (21-40), Intermediate (41-60), Advanced (61-80), and Proficient (81-100).

To assess academic performance, the students' general weighted average (GWA) from the previous school year was utilized. The average of the students' GWA from the first and second semester was categorized using the verbal descriptors from the BASC Student Handbook. The categories are as follows: Excellent (1.0), Very Good (1.25 - 1.5), Good (1.75 - 2.0), Satisfactory (2.25 - 2.5), and Passing (2.75 - 3.0).

Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationship between the two variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient is an appropriate statistical tool for examining the relationship between English proficiency results and the general weighted average (GWA) of college students because it measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. Both English proficiency scores and GWA are typically treated as continuous data, making Pearson's correlation suitable for this analysis. Additionally, educational research often assumes a linear relationship between language proficiency and academic performance, where higher proficiency might correspond to higher academic achievement, as supported by studies like those by Graham (2020) and Rodriguez and Carrasquillo (2021). Pearson's correlation is widely used in similar studies due to its straightforward interpretation and its effectiveness in identifying significant relationships in educational data, further justifying its use in this context.

In the qualitative analysis, the researchers reviewed the interview responses and performed a thematic analysis to determine the perceptions of Education students about the importance of English proficiency in their teacher education. According to Caulfield (2023), "thematic analysis is a method in analyzing qualitative data that is usually applied to a set of texts." The researchers followed the six steps which includes familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up.

The study involved a total enumeration of all first- to third-year education students at BASC during the 2023-2024 academic year, focusing on their English proficiency, which is crucial for their future licensure examination as teachers. Out of 577 enrolled students, 553 were able to take the exams.

The table below shows the number of students enrolled in different programs, like BEED and BSSED, and how many of them took the exam. It breaks down the data by program and specialization, giving a clear picture of student participation and commitment. This helps identify trends in engagement and areas that might need improvement.

Table 1 Distribution of Student Respondents

Section	Enrolled	Exam takers	Percentage of takers (%)
BEED 1A	33	24	73
BEED 1B	29	24	83
BSSED English 1A	39	38	97
BSSED English 1B	49	49	100
BSSED -Science 1A	50	46	92
BEED 2A	38	38	100
BEED 2B	39	38	97
BSSED English 2A	46	46	100
BSSED English 2B	46	44	97
BSSED -Science 2A	25	25	100
BEED 3A	58	58	100
BSSED English 3A	36	36	100
BSSED English 3B	38	36	95
BSSED -Science 3A	22	22	100
BSSED -Science 3B	29	29	100
TOTAL	577	553	96

The data presented indicates a strong overall participation rate among students across various educational sections, with a total of 577 enrolled students and 553 exam takers, resulting in an impressive overall percentage of approximately 95.84%. This high level of engagement reflects the students' commitment to their academic pursuits and suggests effective instructional strategies and support systems in place within the program. Notably, many individual sections achieved participation rates of 100%, particularly in the second- and third-year levels, highlighting a culture of accountability and motivation among students. However, 24 students were unable to participate, citing reasons such as illness, plans to transfer to other schools, or intentions to shift to other courses, which may warrant further investigation to understand the factors influencing these outcomes. Overall, the data underscores a positive trend in student involvement, which is crucial for fostering a successful learning environment.

The following tables analysed the English proficiency and academic performance among BASC teacher education students, covering aspects like proficiency levels, academic performance (GWA), the link between proficiency and achievement, student perceptions on English importance, and strategies to enhance language skills. This overview highlights key findings and suggests areas for improvement in English proficiency within teacher education.

Table 2 Level of English Proficiency of Undergraduate Education Students

YEAR LEVEL	Beginner	Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced	Proficient	TOTAL
1ST	0(0%)	6(3.68%)	52(31.9%)	112(68.29%)	11(6.71%)	181
2ND	0(0%)	2(1.1%)	42(23.3%)	132(73.3%)	15(8.3%)	191
3RD	0(0%)	1(0.57%)	20(11.49%)	134(77.01%)	26(14.94%)	181
TOTAL	0(0%)	9(1.63%)	114(20.61%)	378(68.35%)	52(9.41%)	553

The table above shows the distribution of proficiency levels among first- to third-year students, revealing that the majority, 68.29%, are at the advanced level, while a significant proportion, 31.9%, are at the intermediate level. A small percentage of students are at the elementary (3.68%) and proficient (6.71%) levels, with none at the beginner level. This pattern aligns with recent findings that emphasize the importance of early academic preparation and college readiness, where students entering higher education with strong foundational skills are more likely to perform well, thus explaining the high percentage of students at the advanced level (Schneider & Preckel, 2017).

In the second year, 73.3% of the students are at the *advanced level*, with 23.3% at the *intermediate level*. A negligible percentage of students are at the *elementary* (1.1%) and *proficient* (8.3%) levels, with none at the *beginner level*. The theory of academic momentum, which suggests that students building on early successes tend to maintain higher performance levels, explains this distribution (Attewell & Monaghan, 2016).

By the third year, 77.01% of students are at the *advanced level*, with 14.94% at the *proficient level*. A smaller portion of students are at the *intermediate level* (11.49%), with almost none at the *elementary and beginner levels*. The increase in students achieving *proficient levels* alongside those at the *advanced level* can be attributed to cumulative learning, as students advance in their academic programs and accumulate knowledge and experience, leading to higher proficiency levels, particularly as they near the completion of their studies (Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013).

Across all year levels, the *advanced level* has the highest concentration, while the *intermediate level* decreases from the first year to the third year.

This trend suggests that students generally progress to higher proficiency levels as they advance in their studies. The structured curricula effectively support learning progressions, enabling students to advance from simpler to more complex levels of understanding throughout their academic careers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). The increasing number of students reaching the proficient level in the third year reflects contemporary research on expertise development, suggesting that students are mastering the content as they gain more in-depth knowledge and experience (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). Finally, the overall strong progression from lower to higher proficiency levels observed across the years can be linked to the growing recognition of self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies, which are crucial for student success, as they empower learners to take control of their education, leading to significant advancements in proficiency (Panadero, 2017).

Table 3 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Students' General Weighted Average (GWA) of Education Students during the Academic Year 2023 – 2024

Level	1 st Year		2 nd Year		3 rd Year	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent (1.0)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Very Good (1.25 – 1.5)	2	1%	5	2.57%	2	1.09%
Good (1.75 – 2.0)	64	32%	132	68.04%	112	61.20%
Satisfactory (2.25 – 2.5)	124	62%	56	28.87%	69	37.70%
Passing (2.75 – 3.0)	10	5%	1	0.52%	0	0%

As shown in the table above, none of the first-year students (0%) achieved an excellent grade. Meanwhile, there are two (1%) students who achieved a very good grade. On the other hand, 64 (32%) students fell into the good category. The majority of 1st year students, or 124 students, are at a satisfactory level, which indicates that most are passing but may need improvement. Lastly, 10 (5%) students are at the passing level, which means that they are just meeting the minimum requirements. There are several factors which contribute to first year students achieving only passing grades, and one of them as what Oguntunde et al, (2018) found in their study is change in environment and peer pressure can cause students to lose focus. Another factor, as stated by Butcher et al. (2022) strict policies during the first year of studies may lead to decreased student effort and lower grades.

For the second-year students, no one got an excellent grade, while five (2.57%) students achieved a very good grade. The majority of the second-year students, 132 (68.04%), fall into the good category. There are 56 (28.87%) students who are at the satisfactory level, and only 1 (0.52%) student is in the passing category. Overall, the major population of the second-year students shows a significant improvement in their GWA as compared to the first-year students. This improvement can be attributed to having been adjusted to the environment of higher education (Mthimunya et al., 2017). Additionally, Cahyono and Sajuni (2022) explained that personal interests in the chosen field of study which developed during the first year of studies significantly impacts academic performance.

When it comes to the 3rd year students, no one achieved an excellent grade, and there are 2 (1.09%) students who got a very good grade. As for the good level, there are 112 (61.20%) students who fall into this level, which is slightly lower than the 2nd year students but is still indicative of a strong academic performance. On the other hand, 69 (37.70%) students achieved a satisfactory grade, while no one got a passing grade. The data implies that academic performance of 3rd year students is slightly lower than the 2nd year students. Considering this situation, Magallanes (2021) reported that students in the higher year levels struggle with time management due to increased workload and financial stress. Furthermore, Jimenez et al. (2024) stated that the higher years involved research works and academic paper and many students encounter difficulties in academic writing, including grammar usage, information organization, and vocabulary.

Table 4 Correlation between the Level of Proficiency and Academic Achievement of Education Students

		English Proficiency	Academic Achievement
English Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	0.319**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	553	553
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	0.319**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	552	552

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The data suggests a general trend of academic improvement from 1st year to 2nd year, with a significant number of students moving from satisfactory level to good level. However, in the third year, while a majority remains in the good

category, there is a slight decline in the number of students in this category compared to the 2nd year, and there is an increase in those in the satisfactory level. This implies a slight decline in academic performance as students' progress to higher levels of their studies.

The table above shows a Pearson correlation coefficient of .319 which indicates a highly significant relationship between English proficiency and academic achievement among the 553 students studied. The p-value of .000 is less than the alpha level of 0.01, confirming the statistical significance of

this relationship. This suggests that higher English proficiency is associated with better academic performance, as reflected in the students' general weighted average, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. This finding reinforces the idea that language skills play a crucial role in educational success.

The following studies collectively support the critical link between English proficiency and academic performance across diverse educational contexts. Rudd and Honkiss (2019) found a robust positive correlation between English proficiency and GPA among 2,026 students in Thailand, a relationship consistent across different demographics. Similarly, Izatullah, Nasir, and Gul (2022) and Devi (2023) reported significant positive correlations between English proficiency and academic achievement in undergraduate and postgraduate students, respectively, reinforcing the importance of language skills in academic success.

Chen (2021), however, highlighted the complexity of this relationship, noting that English proficiency's role in academic performance is intertwined with identity and other factors, suggesting a more nuanced understanding is necessary. Lopez (2023) and Oducado et al. (2020) further emphasized the predictive power of English proficiency, linking it to mathematics competency among Filipino students and success in nursing licensure exams, respectively. Bo, Fu, and Lim (2022) extended this analysis to Singaporean university students, where English proficiency was found to significantly predict academic performance, though the effect varied slightly across academic disciplines.

In summary, while English proficiency consistently emerges as a significant predictor of academic success, its impact can be influenced by other contextual and individual factors, necessitating a holistic approach to understanding its role in educational outcomes.

The table below summarizes the codes retracted by the researchers from the students' responses and is organized into themes. The significant statements from the respondents are also presented.

Table 5 The Perceptions of Education Students about the Importance of English proficiency in their Teacher Education

Codes	Major Themes	Significant Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springboard for effective communication • Expression of oneself • Opportunity to meet people • An advantage to easily understand others and share ideas and thoughts • Being as fluent as the children • Aid for the teaching-learning process 	Relevance for Communication	<p><i>"English is a bridge to express myself and interact with other people both at home and in school."</i></p> <p><i>"Being proficient in English makes the sharing of ideas and thoughts easier."</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bridge to success • Professional Growth • Bridge toward becoming a professional teacher • Comprehension of English subjects • To produce good speakers of English in the future • Medium of Instruction 	Academic Success and Professional Growth	<p><i>"English is the medium of instruction in schools. Being proficient in English will serve as a bridge towards my success in my field."</i></p> <p><i>"I wish to be more proficient because my students may not learn from me since I struggle to express myself in English."</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge to be efficient in imparting knowledge 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tool for being competitive • To be a globally literate educator • Living out the vision to be globally engaged • Expanding knowledge and connections 	Global Competitiveness	<p><i>"English is the universal language, and so I should master the language to be able to go into places, and live-out the college's vision- to produce globally competitive graduates."</i></p> <p><i>"Learning and knowing English opens up international or global opportunities to attain global standards in the teaching profession."</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used in future career • A working pass to work abroad • Building confidence 	Personal Advancement	<p><i>"The institutes prepare us to be confident by helping us to speak and understand English."</i></p> <p><i>"This helps me to plan for my future. Being able to speak in English will allow me to find work, preferably abroad."</i></p>

3.3.1. Theme 1: Relevance for Communication

Education students believe that English proficiency is a relevant tool for achieving effective communication, not only in terms of personal communications but more so in their professional teaching contexts. As a student has expressed, *"English is a bridge to express myself and interact with other people both at home and in school."*

This agrees with Hingne (2013), who states that as a global language, English facilitates interaction across regions and countries, serving as a universal subject discipline. *"Being proficient in English makes the sharing of ideas and thoughts easier."* A few have expressed that since children nowadays are fluent in speaking English, teachers should be more fluent than anyone else in the class for better facilitation of the teaching and learning process. The relationship between language proficiency and teaching ability has implications for language assessment and teacher training programs (Richards, 2017).

3.3.2. Theme 2: Academic Success and Professional Growth

This theme highlights the students' perception that English proficiency is essential both for academic achievement and professional growth. Students perceive English proficiency as a vital aspect of their education since tertiary courses are taught and delivered in English, and that supports their understanding of their course materials/modules and enhances their future careers as well. *"English is the medium of instruction in schools. Being proficient in English will serve as a bridge towards my success in my field."*

On the other hand, many students have also expressed that their pedagogical preparation as well as the transfer of learning or knowledge is affected by their English proficiency level. *"I wish to be more proficient because my students may not learn from me since I struggle to express myself in English."* This aligns with the studies indicating that many pre-service teachers have elementary to low intermediate English proficiency levels, which may be inadequate for effective teaching (Tanjung et al., 2020; Hadi, 2019). As it is recommended, a focus on improving students', particularly pre-service teachers', English proficiency and gaining practical teaching experience to enhance professional growth is needed. (Tanjung et al., 2020; Tüfekçi Can, 2019).

3.3.3. Theme 3: Global Competitiveness

Aside from academic achievement and professional advancement, students look to their English proficiency as a springboard for global engagement and competitiveness. *"English is the universal language, and so I should master the language to be able to go into places and live out the college's vision—to produce globally competitive graduates."* In addition, others have added that *"Learning and knowing English opens up international or global opportunities to attain global standards in the teaching profession."*

Moreover, they believe that English proficiency contributes to expanding knowledge and building connections. Students see it as an essential skill for gaining and understanding new concepts.

Studies have shown that proficient English speakers demonstrate better performance in the global market. Further, English proficiency also enhances other 21st century skills such as cross-cultural communication skills and access to global resources, preparing students for international challenges (Haryadi & Aminuddin, 2023).

3.3.4. Theme 4: Personal Advancement

This theme highlights how English proficiency contributes to achieving confidence. *“The institutes prepare us to be confident by helping us to speak and understand English.”* Students view English as a means to build their self-esteem and prepare for future professional opportunities, enhancing their overall effectiveness as educators. *“This helps me plan for my future. Being able to speak English will allow me to find work, preferably abroad.”*

Developing English skills can lead to increased courage, improved interpersonal relationships, and positive attitudes (Leng & Kapong, 2021). A study has shown that there is a correlation between students' self-esteem and their performance on English proficiency tests, suggesting that higher self-esteem contributes to better language outcomes (Gultom & Oktaviani, 2022). To enhance students' confidence in English classrooms, educators can implement strategies such as incorporating additional speaking activities and encouraging peer collaboration (Cadiz-Gabejan, 2021).

Table 6 Summary of the Average Proficiency of Education Students in English Skills

YEAR LEVEL	Grammar	Punctuation	Spelling	Pronunciation	Reading Comprehension	General Average
1 ST	56.45	60.32	74.25	49.72	75.24	43.50
2 ND	60.66	60.64	76.83	54.96	82.36	67.09
3 RD	65.48	51.55	77.41	92.12	72.46	71.81
General Average	60.86	57.50	76.16	65.60	76.69	60.80

The data presented in the table reveals varying levels of English proficiency among students across different year levels highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement. In terms of grammar, scores are relatively low, particularly in the 3rd year level, where students achieved a score of 65.48. Punctuation also presents a challenge, with the highest score being 60.64 in the 2nd year, indicating a need for focused intervention in this area. Conversely, spelling emerges as a strong point, with all year levels scoring above 74, suggesting that students have a solid grasp of spelling fundamentals. Reading comprehension shows a broader range of performance, with the 3rd year students excelling at 92.12, indicating effective understanding and engagement with texts. However, pronunciation is notably weak, especially in the first year, where the score is just 49.72, pointing to a significant area for development. Overall, while students demonstrate commendable skills in spelling and reading comprehension, targeted interventions are necessary to enhance their grammar, punctuation, and pronunciation abilities, ensuring a more balanced proficiency in English.

The results of this study are supported by the findings of a similar study by Ramos and Gaucho (2020), which stated that students can experience difficulty writing essays and paragraphs because of grammar. In addition, Ramos & Gaucho further confirmed that aside from grammar, students also experienced difficulty applying punctuation rules. This further implies that improvement of their grammatical skills and punctuation marks will be necessary to improve their written outputs.

On the other hand, the students' weakness in terms of their pronunciation is evident. One possible reason for this is the limited English subjects that the BSEd Science program offers, while the emphasis for the BEEd students is on generalists, making them more focused on the general subjects and less on the English language. Another important factor that can affect this is the wide scope of the purposeful subject, which is one of the English subjects provided to BEEd students.

Table 7 Matrix of Activities for Intervention

Year Level	Activity Type	Activity Description	Objective
1 st	Grammar Workshop	Interactive sessions focusing on basic grammar rules using games and visual aids.	Improve understanding of grammar fundamentals.
1 st	Punctuation Practice	Daily punctuation exercises using worksheets and online quizzes.	Enhance punctuation skills.

1 st	Pronunciation Drills	Phonetic exercises and reading aloud sessions to improve pronunciation.	Boost pronunciation confidence and clarity.
2 nd	Grammar Games	Use of educational games to reinforce grammar concepts in a fun way.	Increase engagement and retention of grammar.
2 nd	Punctuation Workshops	Group activities focusing on punctuation in writing, including peer reviews.	Foster collaborative learning and application.
2 nd	Reading Comprehension	Guided reading sessions with comprehension questions to enhance understanding.	Improve reading comprehension skills.
3 rd	Advanced Grammar	Workshops on complex grammar structures and their usage in writing.	Deepen grammar knowledge and application.
3 rd	Spelling Bee	Organize spelling competitions to make learning spelling enjoyable.	Reinforce spelling skills through competition.
3 rd	Pronunciation Feedback	One-on-one sessions to provide feedback on pronunciation and articulation.	Personalize improvement in pronunciation.

The activities will be conducted weekly, with a mix of individual and group sessions and to monitor the progress of the students, regular assessments will be made. Instructional materials such as educational games, reading materials with online and offline modality will be made available to the students.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions and recommendations were drawn:

The results of the distribution of scores in the administered English Proficiency examination determined that most of the students were in the advanced level while some in the intermediate level and a few in the proficient level. It can be concluded that these glaring scores are not satisfactory for college level and may require further study. To determine if there were factors that can affected their scores. In addition, aside from the BASCAT examination given to first year students, all incoming freshmen should be required to take the English Proficiency test to help the faculty members identify their weakness and be given an intervention program if necessary. Furthermore, all faculty members handling English subjects will be required to include remediation program focusing on grammar, punctuation, with teaching load among first year students are instructed to include drills on grammar, punctuation marks, pronunciation practice, reading comprehension and spelling in their respective subjects.

From the data on the academic achievement of the Education students, as measured by their general weighted average (GWA), reflects a positive trend, with many students attaining high performance levels. This suggests that the structured curricula and support systems in place are effectively facilitating student learning and mastery of content. The primary reason for this is the retention policy being implemented and the motivation of the students to finish the course. This signifies their commitment and determination to finish the course however, aside from the implementation of the retention policy, Project 3R, the institute may craft additional policy and may launch project to assist Education students in gaining proficiency and mastery in the lessons.

A significant positive correlation exists between the level of English proficiency and academic achievement among education students. This relationship underscores the importance of language skills in academic performance, indicating that higher proficiency in English is associated with better academic outcomes. It can be recommended that an English language development plan will be integrated in all the subjects to provide consistent language support across the curriculum. Hosting of workshops highlighting the importance of English proficiency should be included.

Based on the findings, a matrix of interventions was crafted aimed at further improving English proficiency among education students could include targeted language support programs, workshops, and resources that focus on specific areas of language development. These interventions should be designed to build on the existing strengths of students while addressing any gaps in their language skills to ensure they are well-prepared for their future roles as educators. Development of other intervention programs focusing on grammar, pronunciation, and reading comprehension can be crafted and regularly assess their effectiveness.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

The researchers would like to acknowledge the assistance given by the College President of Dr. Jameson H. Tan, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Cecilia S. Santiago, to the Dean of the Institute of Education, Maria Krisvie Abigale F. Mendoza and the REPD Vice President, Dr. Honeylet Nicolas. Also, to their statistician, Ian Charles Blas. Aside from that, the researchers would like also to extend their gratitude to the participants of the study—The Education students at the Institute of Education for their active participation in the study.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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