

Influence of the pre-service teachers' language proficiency to their teaching competence

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Abstract: One of the often-overlooked competencies of a global teacher in the Philippines is language proficiency. The use of English as a medium of instruction in primary education occurs in Grade 4, succeeding the mother tongue-based instruction from K1-Grade 3. This research analyzed the impact of the language proficiency of the pre-service teachers to their teaching competence. The language proficiency is divided into two categories: linguistic performance and paralinguistic features. The former is the verbal skills in communication while the latter encompasses body language, facial expression, gestures, and voice. Pre-service teachers were observed and assessed during class facilitation. Most have received an 'Average Proficiency' rating in linguistic performance although pronunciation rating is the lowest due to phonological features that are influenced by first language. The assessment on voice projection and their pronunciation rating proved to have significant impact to their teaching competency. The coefficients suggest that pronunciation is positively associated to teaching competency while voice factor is negatively associated to teaching competency and good pronunciation increased their teaching competency; however, voice projection negatively affects their teaching competency. Their overall experience in using English as medium of instruction proved to be helpful to them as it helped bridge the gap between them and the students. It is recommended that pre-service teachers may go through an intensive communication enhancement program to prepare themselves before they are exposed to actual practice of teaching.

Keywords: language proficiency, pre-service teachers, teaching competence

INTRODUCTION

One of many practical benefits of the K-12 system is to develop the skill competency of the Filipino students in the global job market. In the international arena, this would provide students much greater opportunity to compete with other nationals with their exposure to international educational standards. In large number of countries, the English language is regarded as the *lingua franca* and an invaluable tool in education. The English language, due to non-native speakers who are learning the language, has now been regarded as the official language of several countries across the globe and is the primary language used in the global marketplace, therefore, its importance cannot be understated.

Right at an early age, a lot of Filipino children started to learn English even before they start their formal education; however, many young students experience anxieties using the second language. One common factor is their fear of making mistakes and being ridiculed by others, or perhaps being ostracized by speaking a language not native to one's tongue, thus being labeled as unpatriotic. Over time, students learned that to avoid getting embarrassed, they would rather withdraw themselves from participating in communication activities, especially when they are being assessed on their fluency and accuracy. To mask their anxieties, the only way to overcome fear and apprehension were to prepare and rehearse as much as they can until it becomes a natural manifestation. Personal challenges do vary and if the same students who experienced these anxieties in oral communication will eventually become future educators, it needs an intervention. Teachers specializing one particular subject, for example, English, will have to keep in mind that it takes more than knowing the language itself, but also to be able to use it in spoken communication with ease.

According to the Department of Education statement released in October 2016, the fundamental step in developing a strong foundation in education is to be able to master the semantics of the first language before learning another language. Learning in mother tongue develops speaking, reading, and writing skills. In fact, mother tongue is used as the language of instruction until Grade 3, except, Filipino and English courses.

The moment they proceed to Grade 4, English, as an instructional language, becomes apparent. Although these primary students take English from Grade 1 to 3, Science and Math utilize MTB-MLE and will eventually shift to English instruction as they progressed to more complex level of the subject. This is the transitional period where a student gradually learns to speak a second language. If the fundamental knowledge of mother tongue dialect has been well-established, the knowledge of the first language can easily be replicated to the second language, especially if the exposure is evident and that there is motivation of learning it. Thus, Grade 4 teachers are much of a help especially when the students acquire the second language through communicative delivery as used in the real-world context.

Fortunately for these teachers, they were given the experience and skills for professional development. This research hopes to investigate and suggest methods of preparing the pre-service teachers for the job by understanding the influence of their language proficiency to their teaching competence during their teaching demonstration, developing their skills needed for the tasks, and evaluating their performance for their professional development to objectively assess the oral communication skills of pre-service teachers specializing the subject. The researchers intend to identify possible additional reinforcement on their teaching methods and help enhance their language proficiency and teaching competence to prepare them for the job in the real world.

The Communicative Language Teaching is focused towards maximizing the communicative competence of an individual learning a language. The sociologist, Hymes (1967, 1972), who debunked the concept of Chomsky's (1965) idea of competence which he believed was too bounded with impractical rules, suggested "communicative competence" as an apt term. In 1972, Savignon backed up the term coined by Hymes (1967), that the communicative competence can manifest in a situation where there is dynamic exchange of language in a communicative setting and that the language is fluid. She further discussed that the competency of the use of language varies in different situation. In this regard, the context of in class using English language, regardless of the subject taught, is necessary.

As early as pre-school, the English language is already introduced to children, considerably because it has become an official language of the country for formal communication, aside from Filipino being the national language. Due to the duality of languages, code-switching may not be avoided. The competence in using the language is greatly influenced by the local languages, an interference of L1 (first language) or in linguistics term "language transfer". A speaker who is not fully immersed to a foreign language tend to think in their native and then translate rather than to think directly in the target language. Thus, the strange words, awkward sentence construction, or even strange accent as influenced in their local dialects manifest during conversation, prompting Filipinos to criticize any hints of first language influence. The effect is greatly felt by most English language learners who feel ostracized whenever they commit mistakes, whether in school or even outside school (most especially on social media), where the intellectual capacity of the person is judged based on how an individual expresses one's ideas fluently in English, leaving no opportunity for those who are still learning to be more comfortable using the language, when others find errors in the slightest thing.

Conceptual framework

Hymes' Concept of Communicative Competence

Chomsky (1965) has clearly defined the general notion of communicative competence where all speakers in the same community have full grasp of the language. His ideal perception of competence is further explained by Hymes (1972) in which not only their grammatical competence is a direct result of their communicative competence but also the sociolinguistic aspect of it. This further established that competency in speaking the language is based from how it was spoken and understood in the community using set of rules without being explicit with the said rules. Moreover, Hymes (1972) argued that Chomsky's definition of competence is one-sided, and performance competency should not be based from the communicative competency alone because of several variables that may affect it. Hymes (1972) proffered that the individual's social life may be taken into consideration and that the actual performance on how the language is applied and used in the community holds more importance than the measurement of one's competency in language that is set by the rules.

Hymes (1972) acknowledged that linguistic competence is based on the standard rules and communicative competence is the practical application of the language in a given situation. Therefore, Hymes' idea of "communicative competence" is summed to understanding the rules and knowing when to appropriately apply it in a sociocultural context.

Linguistic Performance

Matthews (2014) posited in his study that Chomsky's description of linguistic performance is ensued from the appropriate usage of language in a particular situation. Also, according to Reishaan (2008), the term is used to describe the actual behavior of the language produced by an individual. It is the mental adeptness of the speaker for the language (Carlson, 2013). Speech errors can set performance and competence apart. While having a full grasp of the language, the actual performance is still subjected to several flaws, albeit unintentional, in actual situations caused by several factors that can impact the production and perception (Myers, 2011). The competence of the speaker relies heavily on one's mastery of the language while its performance leans on the veritable behavior of the language when applied in a given situation. Simply put, competence is to knowledge, the integral intellect of sound-meaning of linguistic rules, while performance is the actual behavior of the language in phonetic-semantic discourse. The latter needs several factors to become proficient such as speaker's cognizance with the audience and the surrounding context, which will affect how the speech is perceived. Other possible distractions are also considered.

Paralinguistic Features

The aspect for non-lexical or non-linguistic is coined as Paralinguistics. This may refer to body language, facial expression, gestures, and even the vocal varieties such as tone, inflection, stress, rhythm or pitch. While language competency provides the meaning of the language used, paralinguistic features provide depths to the language, hence it may even change the meaning entirely. Tone and pitch of voice are part of linguistic competency but the manner in how they are displayed are examples of non-verbal elements (British Council, Teach English, n.d.).

Floyd and Guerrero (2006) stated in their study that a certain linguist, George L. Trager has classified paralinguistic features to three classifications, namely (1) voice set, (2) voice qualities, and (3) vocalization, where the first is classified as the context of the speaker's message in a socio-cultural factors, the second being the parameters of good voice quality such as volume or projection, rhythm, articulation, and accent, and finally, the style and manner of how the message is delivered. In fact, the term paralanguage is also referred to body language, which has a significant role in communication. Voice modulation and its other properties are considered paralinguistic even those of sign language or lip reading.

Reflective Assessment

Feedback coming from a teacher always has a significant impact to students' learning and skill development. Likewise, teachers also need mentoring from their supervisors regarding their instruction and facilitation styles and methods, classroom management, interaction and engagement with students, and even their questioning skills for their own professional development (Furney, 2014). The opportunity to receive constructive feedback helps bridge positive relationships, be it with student-teacher relationship or teacher-mentor relationship.

One of the most effective tools used in providing feedback is a video-recorder. The use of video recording will provide an opportunity for the assessor and the subject to understand and critique behaviors objectively by reviewing the actual events that occurred. Tochon (2011) reiterated that video provides information on oneself: it is both witness and analytical tool. Video feedback has impacts both on language learning and teaching activities, and in teacher education.

Low Affective Filter

Krashen's five input hypotheses in 1985 included affected filter hypothesis, which was first introduced by Dulay and Burt in 1977. Krashen contended that when people have low anxiety and other affects, included but not limited to motivation, attitude and confidence, they attain higher comprehensible input. Facilitating a lesson in front of students—with less or minimal teaching experience—can be intimidating, especially if one is teaching a language not native to one's tongue and is compelled to be fluent when using the target language.

A lot of Filipino historical leaders, such as Jose Rizal, preferred speaking in English over their mother tongue, so it is surprising to note that at present times, people who are more comfortable speaking in English are considered unpatriotic. Even some of the teachers have mentioned that they are discouraged by their school heads to speak in straight English because the students are Filipinos, thus should be addressed in a language that is native to them. This ideal has led to several cases of transliteration and coinage of contextualized terms from local dialect or what commonly known as Philippine English, which often confuses native English speakers. With this mindset, it is no wonder that despite the country's prominence as the English-speaking nation in the in Asia, many still find communicating using the language challenging, with several pronunciation slips and heavily-accented style in speaking.

Teaching using the second language is not an easy task. It requires adequate knowledge of the grammar rules, context comprehension, and excellent communication skills to show credibility of teaching the subject. This study focuses on linguistic and paralinguistic communication and delivery skills of the selected Grade 4 pre-service teachers in regard to their linguistic performance and paralinguistic features. Subjects included in the study were English, Science, and Math.

One of the most effective tools used in capturing authentic behavior is video-recorder. The use of video recording will provide an opportunity for the assessor and the subject to understand and critique behaviors objectively by reviewing the actual events that occurred. Tochon (2011) reiterated that video provides information on oneself: it is both witness and analytical tool. Video feedback has impacts both on language and instructional activities, as well as in teacher education. The recording device is not a new device, albeit a less explored feature on many smartphones and other electronic gadgets. Yet it is a powerful tool where possibilities for its users are endless.

Teaching in front of students, with less or minimal teaching experience, can be intimidating—especially if one is teaching a language not native to one's tongue and is compelled to be fluent when using the target language. The study aimed to provide pre-service teachers additional reinforcement on their teaching methods and help enhance their communication styles. The study evaluated the pre-service teachers' readiness of the profession, since they were about to embark on a professional career after graduation and in the hope to discern the needs, identify common challenges, and provide support to enhance, develop, and prepare them for the job in the real world.

Research objectives

The study aimed to evaluate the influence of language proficiency to the teaching competence of the pre-service teachers. The study focused on the followings;

1. the language proficiency level of the pre-service teachers with regard to the (a) linguistic performance and (b) paralinguistic features;

2. the teaching competence of the pre-service teachers according to the (a) teaching strategies and (b) classroom management;
3. the relationship between the pre-service teachers' language proficiency and teaching competence;
4. the experiences of the pre-service teachers in teaching English, Science and Math; and 5. the relevant proposal to address the findings of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The quantitative approach focuses on the performance ratings of the participating student teachers based on their language proficiency and teaching competence. Rubrics were utilized in assessing the pre-service teachers' performance where the linguistic competence and paralinguistic features were measured using numeric rating scale from 1 to 5 while the teaching competence rubric was assessed using the modified performance appraisal sheet for student teachers from Integrated Laboratory School. Based on the scores from the rubric forms, responses were tallied to generate the results for the problem. Moreover, this study also employed a qualitative approach through focus group discussion and interviews where they were asked to share meaningful experiences in teaching all three subjects in Grade 4 classes.

Respondents of the study

The selected pre-service teachers in this research came from one single location, Cebu Normal University, specifically the Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEEd) pre-service teachers in Grade 4 level teaching English, Science, and Mathematics subject. Pre-service teachers were chosen because the moment that they become professional teachers, their knowledge with the language and their ability to speak it with much competence has a significant impact to Filipino students. Due to MTB-MLE policy, subjects taught in primary education, with the exception of English and Filipino subjects, schools have implemented the mandate. By 4th grade, students slowly shift to being taught in English instruction in most subjects. A total of 6 pre-service teachers from College of Teacher Education (CTE) participated in the study.

Research Environment

The study was conducted in an Integrated Laboratory School in Cebu Normal University. The laboratory school is where the participants complete their practice teaching program. They are under the mentorship with seasoned professional mentors. The Integrated Laboratory School is operated by the university and used especially for student teaching and the demonstration of classroom practices in both elementary and secondary education.

Research Instrument

Recording instruments were used to address problems 1 and 2: video and audio recorder (e.g. smartphone camera and/or DSLR camera) to capture the actual facilitation skills both in oral and communicative delivery of the participating student teachers. To measure objectively the oral skills and communicative delivery skills of the pre-service teachers for the next two problems, rubrics scoring sheet was utilized according to the identified variables in the study. Lastly, survey questionnaires were used to address the training needs analysis in order to propose comprehensive communication training module for pre-service teachers in elementary education.

Data Collection

To initiate the study, a transmittal letter addressed to the supervisor of the Integrated Laboratory School was endorsed for permission to allow the researcher to observe classes in Grade 4 level particularly in English, Science, and Mathematics subjects. Since there were two sections in Grade 4 ILS, ten pre-service teachers in English, Science, and Mathematics from one section were observed for twelve sessions, approximately one hour for each lesson, equally appropriated from Monday to Thursday for a three-week period. Consent forms were provided to gain permission from the participants.

Table 1: Schedule of Classroom Observation

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
1	English (1)	English (1)	English (1)	English (1)
	Science (1)	Science (1)	Science (1)	Science (1)
	Math (1)	Math (1)	Math (1)	Math (1)
2	English (1)	English (1)	English (1)	English (1)
	Science (1)	Science (1)	Science (1)	Science (1)
	Math (1)	Math (1)	Math (1)	Math (1)
3	English (1)	English (1)	English (1)	English (1)
	Science (1)	Science (1)	Science (1)	Science (1)
	Math (1)	Math (1)	Math (1)	Math (1)

Based on Table 1 above, the selected pre-service teachers were observed four times per week for a three-week period to gather twelve classroom facilitation videos for each participant teaching English, Science, and Mathematics. Each observation covered one hour to gather adequate data.

To answer the first problem, the researcher conducted the observations and assessments using a video recorder (smartphone camera and/or DSLR camera) to capture the communicative competencies and paralinguistic features during facilitation and their corresponding variables. To answer the succeeding question, the selected pre-service teachers were assessed on their teaching competencies using the rubrics adapted from Integrated Laboratory School's Teaching Competency Rating Sheet. The assessment was completed by the researcher at the same time

received assistance of two other raters to validate. Moreover, to find the relationship between the communicative competencies and teaching competencies of the pre-service teachers for problems 3 and 4, the results were tabulated. Lastly, to answer problem 5, focus group discussion was facilitated to the participants to gauge their experience and underscore their successes and challenges encountered during classroom teaching. The data from the survey was collated and tabulated to extract information that will be of use to the study.

Data Analysis

This study applied descriptive statistics where simple computation in percentage was used to measure and analyze the inputs from the respondents. The responses of the pre-service teachers were classified through quantitative methods for frequencies and percentages to determine the specific descriptors for their oral and communicative delivery skills. The descriptive analysis, on the other hand, interpretation was made possible through the data by using mean rating. In this manner, it can help describe the level of competencies in speaking the second language and the apportioning of percentages to sum up the proportion of views and preferences in the classroom. To find the relationship between their communicative competence and teaching competence, the researcher used multiple regression analysis. The test statistic with P-value less than 0.05 is considered significant. The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Speaking another language can be ominous to some, more so when one does not use the second language as often as the first. Communication, according to Silver (2018), is an important tool in teaching. Some of the skills required to teach effectively involve listening and speaking, among others, as they prepare themselves for their professional role. The language proficiency is measured in linguistic performance and paralinguistic features of the participants, while their teaching competence is through their teaching strategies and classroom management.

The results of the study of Bambaeroo and Shokrpour (2017) indicated that there was a significant impact to the students' learning experience based on the teacher's ability to express in both spoken and written language. In fact, when there is an absence in vocabulary, the message can still be conveyed with the use of non-verbal signals. Hence, in language proficiency, linguistic performance and paralinguistic features must go hand in hand. Likewise, Li (2011) also proffered that in classrooms, the exchange of messages between the teachers and the students involved a mix method of communication, that is, in both verbal and non-verbal language. Therefore, non-verbal behaviors need to be observed as well. The classroom observation lasted for eight school days. Due to the nature of teaching in elementary education where teachers instruct all subjects in Basic Education, the aforementioned pre-service teachers were observed during their facilitation in English, Science, and Math subjects. The scores presented were based from the classification of the scoring sheet used found in Appendix C which explains how each pre-service teacher was rated on Linguistic Performance.

Table 2: The Linguistic Performance Proficiency Level of the Pre-Service Teachers

Proficiency	Values	Level Description
Linguistic Performance	3.05 (0.44)	AvP
Fluency	3.13 (0.56)	AvP
Grammar	3.30 (0.48)	AvP
Pronunciation	2.85 (0.43)	AvP
Vocabulary	2.92 (0.43)	AvP

Note: Values reported as Mean (Standard Deviation)

Ranges	Description
1.00 – 1.80	(BP) Below Proficiency
1.81 – 2.60	(LP) Limited Proficiency
2.61 – 3.40	(AvP) Average Proficiency
3.41 – 4.20	(AAP) Above Average Proficiency
4.21 – 5.00	(HP) High Proficiency

The data in Table 2 shows that while the participating student teachers are subject matter experts, their ability to communicate using their second language showed varied results depending on the topic and the subject matter. Although they were able to use English during classroom discussion, some of the vocabulary they used were basic and repetitive and solely based on the text as lifted from the reference materials. During their facilitation, it has been observed that their use of language was simplified to match the comprehension level of Grade 4 pupils, thus their sentences were basic yet direct to the point. Needless to say, that among the four metrics, the pre-service teachers performed best in grammar, followed by fluency, vocabulary, and lastly, pronunciation. This can be attributed to Philippine education where English language is used in communication and is also a subject where students are required to learn the rules and nuances of it. However, in the form of classroom instruction for Grade 4 students, contexts are simplified and grammar is at its basic form so students can easily follow the lesson. Furthermore, due to the country's bilingual or multi-lingual nature, English conversation in real life situation is often mixed with other languages, therefore words and terms may tend to confuse the speakers. This is also true to the influence of the tone and pronunciation where some instances, a few of the pre-service teachers spoke in English, but the pronunciation of words is heavily influenced by their native tongue. The pre-service teachers showed an Average Proficiency (AvP) rating in terms of their linguistic performance.

To wit, several studies have shed light on some unique traits of the phonological sounds production of Filipino English. Due to prominent features of the local dialect, some phonological sounds produced are heavily evident in their speech (Tayao, 2004; Dayag, 2007; Bautista & Bolton, 2008). This explains why among the four sub-categories in Linguistic Performance, pronunciation received the minimal rating of 2.85. Despite these conditions, it is no surprise that the observed participants were rated Average Proficiency (AvP) in their Linguistic Performance. In retrospect, it seems that due to their lack of experience, they showed slight hesitation in their delivery, with some grammatical slips, albeit understandable, with simple vocabulary choice and accent that is slightly noticeable with local intonation. Moreover, it is observable as well that there are pre-service teachers who have strong command of the language, specifically in fluency and grammar. On the other hand, almost everyone showed low in performance in pronunciation or accent and vocabulary.

While communication skills in teaching play a vital role of a teacher’s success, some students have varying levels of strengths and weaknesses in grasping the lessons. Thus, non-verbal communication skills of the teachers are equally important as their verbal competencies. The pre-service teachers were assessed on the non-lexical elements of communication by speech or Paralinguistic Features. The openness to new ideas and suggestions and being able to express one’s thoughts help communication become a vessel of effective language competency. The competency of the pre-service teachers are then measured by their non-verbal language, including facial expression and gestures. Moreover, body gestures and voice proved to be vital ingredients in effective communication and they can enhance the delivery of the lesson to the class. Aspiring teachers almost always have the confidence to speak in front of an audience, in this case, the students, and naturally have good control in vocal projection. It was no surprise then that from the four metrics in Paralinguistic Features, the Grade 4 pre-service teachers scored the highest in ‘voice’, followed by ‘body language’ and ‘gestures’ and lastly, ‘facial expression’ as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: The Paralinguistic Features Proficiency Level of the Pre-Service Teachers

Proficiency	Values	Level Description
Paralinguistic Features	3.42 (0.45)	AAP
Body Language	3.43 (0.46)	AAP
Facial Expression	3.35 (0.50)	AvP
Gestures	3.42 (0.42)	AAP
Voice	3.48 (0.56)	AAP

Note: Values reported as Mean (Standard Deviation)

Ranges	Description
1 – 1.80	(BP) Below Proficiency
1.81 – 2.60	(LP) Limited Proficiency
2.61 – 3.40	(AvP) Average Proficiency
3.41 – 4.20	(AAP) Above Average Proficiency
4.21 – 5.00	(HP) High Proficiency

It is interesting to note that among the different characteristics of Paralinguistic Features, majority received better ratings in ‘voice’. In terms of class delivery, they have confidence in projecting their voices, with or without the aid of a lapel, they were able to consistently deliver their lessons in a loud voice where students can clearly hear them. Moreover, their ‘body language’ and ‘gestures’ were rated almost the same. It shows that both features complement with each other and the gestures are congruent with the message.

Teachers use their voice as primary method in delivering the lesson. In fact, it is one great factor in measuring effectiveness in classroom learning. According to the study of Roy (2011), the configurations in classroom are mostly overlooked when preparing for class. The way the classroom has been set-up, several considerations must be in place, such as noise, echoes, reverberation, and room arrangement, which will directly impact the quality of classroom delivery in order for the teacher to be heard clearly and understood by the students without any unnecessary interference. When teachers exert vocal intense during lecture for extended periods, there is a noticeable tendency for the students in the class to no longer pay attention as everyone in the room tends to speak louder to be heard as well, in consequence, affect their job performance. While they

were able to hit the mark for voice projection, the impact it gives to their teaching strategies and classroom management may say otherwise.

The data on Table 4 showed the teaching competency level in terms of their teaching strategies and classroom management.

Table 4: The Teaching Competency Level of the Pre-Service Teachers

Teaching Competency	Values	Level Description
Teaching Strategies	5.36 (0.63)	AC
Classroom Management	1.56 (0.19)	BC
Overall	4.52 (0.52)	LC

Note: Values reported as Mean (Standard Deviation)

Ranges	Description
1.00 – 2.80	(BC) Below Competency
2.81 – 4.60	(LC) Limited Competency
4.61 – 6.40	(AC) Average Competency
6.41 – 8.20	(AAC) Above Average Competency
8.21 – 10.00	(HC) High Competency

Looking at the breakdown of their teaching competency performance, the pre-service teachers have displayed better scores in their strategies of teaching. This means that the technicalities in the subject gave them an opportunity to be more focused in their teaching with less difficulty. Considering that these pre-service teachers were provided with sufficient support and adequate resources to prepare them for each lesson, there was no doubt that they come unprepared. While there are still some areas for improvement and other opportunities to explore, the results in their teaching strategies show better results than their classroom management as they were not able to focus on the subject matter and effective methods in the delivery of the learning materials to the students. Understandably, they need more exposure and experience to develop their skills and improve their competencies.

Among the three subjects, Math has been thought of as an area with minimal language demands and there is always at least basic language of mathematics that makes it easier for both the teachers and students alike to communicate without getting lost in translation. The results of the teaching competency showed that they have the highest performance results when teaching Math subject, with Science subject tailing behind English.

Finally, to become an effective teacher in terms of classroom facilitation using the second language, a strong relationship between their language proficiency and teaching competence should ideally be established. The data in Table 4 show the relative results of the impact in the pre-service language proficiency to their teaching competencies, both in their teaching strategies and in classroom management.

Accordingly, around 78% of the variance of the teaching competency is explained by the language proficiency factors. Among these factors, only pronunciation and voice are statistically associated to teaching competency. The coefficients suggest that pronunciation is positively associated to teaching competency while voice is negatively associated to teaching competency. This means that if the pronunciation score is increased, the teaching competency's score increases. On the other hand, if the voice's score is increased, the teaching competency's score decreases. Thus, the highly competent pre-service teacher is expected to have better pronunciation

proficiency and poor in voice proficiency. The tabulated data of the regression analysis of language proficiency and teaching competence is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: The Regression Analysis of Language Proficiency and Teaching Competency

Predictors	Coefficient	T	P
Language Proficiency			
Fluency	-0.4984	-1.32	0.213
Grammar	0.1225	0.32	0.752
Pronunciation	1.4068	2.36	0.038**
Vocabulary	0.2731	0.63	0.544
Body Language	0.4070	0.90	0.385
Facial Expression	-0.1688	-0.42	0.682
Gestures	0.6659	1.48	0.167
Voice	-0.8382	-2.46	0.031**
S		0.3202	
R-Sq		78.3%	
R-Sq(adj)		62.5%	

Note: ** Significant at 0.05

When a novice teacher delivers a lesson demonstration, it is common that they turn up the volume because they believe that the louder they are, the better their students will listen. Alas, it is always not the case especially when one teaches in primary level. Linsin (2011) claimed that students tune out teachers who bark commands and instructions. To them, they perceive it as nuisance or that their teacher acts authoritatively in class. This may also make students feel that they are not smart enough to follow along the lessons. This causes students to grudgingly follow directions or ignore them altogether. In fact, during the classroom observation, students tried to increase their voices to match or even outmatch the sound emitted by the teacher. Therefore, making the overall learning experience sounds confusing and noisy. Although inconclusive, excellent voice projection does not necessarily mean excellent classroom management. Therefore, in order to be have higher competency in teaching, pre-service teachers are highly encouraged to be proficient in pronunciation and grammar, and may speak in modulated voice where it can demand respect but in non-threatening manner.

In an article posted on EdSource website, Adams (2017) discussed some of the observations made by an education professor at California State University that there is a powerful impact if teachers speak in a tone as if one is conversing in a normal manner. Inflections and vocal variation would always yield positive responses. Teachers who are categorized as ‘yellers’ or ‘too soft spoken’ may contribute to the students getting bored pretty easily. In fact, this was also backed up by another teacher that there is a theatricality to a classroom”. In Borg’s (2005) case study, to effectively give instructions to students, specific instructions should stand out from the rest of the message like implementing tone variation in the deliver, changing the speed or increasing the pitch and quality of tone, or adding emphasis of important phrases. From the classroom observations conducted, what was mostly noted was the steady volume of the voice, delivered in an authoritative manner (and may be considered a teacher yeller), and no theatrical elements in the delivery that can manage to pique the interest of the students.

Aside from classroom observations, the entire group huddled for a discussion. Their inputs were collected and both the researcher and the respondents were able to discuss the overall

experience of their practice teaching. The summary of the discussion below presents the overall experience of the pre-service teachers for English, Science, and Math in primary education. It should be noted that the transcribed statements were not edited and are reported according to how they were originally articulated.

Advantages in Teaching Using the English Language

The consensus of the pre-service teachers is primarily on the fact that teaching the subjects in second language made the discussion and facilitation of the lessons easier for them. That is due to the fact that most students in the class, being fluent in English, use it as their first language. Some also pointed out that there are terms in Science and Math subjects that do not have any vernacular equivalent of them. Hence, teaching in second language can benefit the student teachers.

Student Teacher 1:

Using English in teaching is really important since majority of Grade 4-J students are English speakers. With the use of the language, students were able to understand the lesson easily. They easily grasp the ideas taught with them (sic).

One pre-service teacher also expressed that speaking in English helped them improve their communication. It made them more cautious in speaking the language and they hope that they do not cause confusion among their learners. They found it easier to deliver the lessons as well since most students speak the language fluently.

Student Teacher 2:

The advantages I see in teaching English using the second language to Grade 4 students is that they correcting grammar when you speak in English because in CNU-ILS students are almost fluently to speak in English. As a teacher you should take care when speak in front. They are curious when they cannot understand they are a lot of questions of you (sic).

Student Teacher 3:

I think the advantage in teaching English using the English language to Grade 4 students it is easy to teach because most of them are from the family that the first language is English (sic).

Student Teacher 4:

It's easy to teach them because most of them used English as their first language (sic).

Furthermore, using the English language helped build their vocabulary in the long run.

Student Teacher 5:

For me the advantages are it will help you to improve your vocabulary and also teaching English using second language (English) will help to pronounce those different words that is difficult for me to say (sic).

The advantages maybe you know what are those different terms that can be used in teaching Science and it will open your mind those new learning in w/c it has a big help for my future (sic).

Student Teacher 8:

There are terms in Science that only when you speak English you can easily explain to the students (sic).

There are also terms that are more familiar in English than its local terms. Even if these pre-service teachers speak their local dialect as their mother tongue, some borrowed words are more common than their counterparts.

Student Teacher 6:

Same in Science subject, in Mathematics we usually talks about numbers and maybe in shapes and we commonly use 1,2,3,4,5 or circle, triangle, square, or any polygons. Instead of using usa, duha, tulo, or tatsulok, parihaba, etc. so it's easier to use English language in Math (sic).

Student Teacher 8:

As a teacher, it is easy to teach Math using the second language because using other language can make things complicated and also it is hard to translate the terms being used, for example "polygon", "square root" (sic).

It is worth noting that as a bilingual country, the Philippines is divided between its people who speak their own dialect and others who speak English as first language despite that they live in the country their whole lives. In fact, some only get to learn the local dialect as their second language by the time they attend school and interact with those who speak vernacular as their mother tongue. Regardless of the proficiency of the teachers in the target language, their first language will always have influence towards their second language. Even more so with the pre-service teachers, hence their anxiety increases when they teach the second language to students, resulting to a dwindling language proficiency performance in their delivery (Madriñan, 2014).

Challenges in Teaching Using the English Language

While they asserted that speaking the target language proved to be helpful during their facilitation, they were mostly challenged with their pronunciation and grammar. This hindered them from fully expressing their ideas as some had to struggle for a better way to phrase their ideas comprehensively. A few of them admitted that they are not confident in speaking the second language especially when they need to explain concepts, theories, or ideas with the students due to their proficiency level in vocabulary and grammar.

Student Teacher 1:

"The most challenging part is when you try to explain a topic and you don't know what exact words to use in order to let your students understand it well (sic)."

Student Teacher 3:

"Its constructing idea, that to be exact word or grammar. And art of questioning that have the correct grammar (sic)."

Student Teacher 4:

"There are some Math terms that are difficult for the students to understand, instead of translating it to Bisaya, which they don't understand too, we give examples instead (sic)."

Student Teacher 5:

"Many challenges that I've encounter, these are the following.

- 1. pronunciation*
- 2. my fluency in speaking English*
- 3. my vocabulary is limited (sic)*

The challenges I've encounter is only what is the vernacular terms of those words that is difficult for my student to understand (sic)."

Student Teacher 6:

"There are some particular terms that I don't know exactly how to use or when to used. Responding immediately to their questions are some of the challenges I usually encountered and I am usually hesitant about. My grammar and how I delivered it (sic)."

Filipinos are known to be English speakers in Asia. So it is natural that communicating in the language may be effortless for some while others have adequate knowledge of the language. In hindsight, even without proper education, the post-colonial Filipino can easily discern the English language. This idea was echoed from the work of Debata (2014) that even without proper

education, grammar can still be learned through interactions with the community. Communicating in an academic environment, on the other hand, is another story, as one needs to be conscious on the technicalities of the language. During the facilitation of the lessons, it is apparent that a number of them feel anxious with their communication skills. This resulted to the way they managed their facial expression since they were too conscious about their proficiency in communication, a skill set that is noticeable with the slightest mistake.

Comfort Level in Teaching Using English as Medium of Instruction

Unsurprisingly, 9 out of 10 pre-service teachers rated themselves at 3 in their comfort level when teaching in English language on a scale of 1 to 5. Since they understand that the roles and expectations of a teacher are to teach in a medium that is best for the students among others, they find it convenient to teach in the language; however, as mentioned prior, they also acknowledged that they still lack enhancements in their pronunciation and sentence construction.

Student Teacher 1:

“For me, I would rate my level of comfort as 3. I can speak English but not as fluent as Sir Dy and I am not confident speaking English specially when there are a lot of people. I am comfortable if the people surrounding me speaks English well (sic).”

Student Teacher 3:

“3, because sometimes I use vernacular in expressing on the spot idea (sic).”

Student Teacher 4:

“3 – because I know I'm not good in using the language though I understand it (sic).”

Student Teacher 5:

“3 – because I know myself that I am not fluent in speaking English especially those terms that is difficult for me to understand. But I know and understand English (sic).”

Student Teacher 6:

“3 I guess. Actually in terms of pronunciation, it's not really an issue for me but it is about on construction of English grammar (sic).”

Student Teacher 7:

“3, I am not really comfortable in using the second language especially when talking to my students because I am afraid that they will correct me (sic).”

Student Teacher 8:

“3, because I am not really comfortable in speaking English because I know from myself that I'm not really good at it and I'm afraid that they will correct me (sic).”

Student Teacher 9:

“3 because I can't speak fluent and my grammar is not so good (sic).”

Student Teacher 10:

“3 because to be honest I am not really comfortable when I used English language in front of the class (sic).”

There is one student teacher who rated himself 2 in terms of his proficiency level in the use of the English language. This pre-service teacher did not trust himself enough with his proficiency level and is aware of his shortcoming in terms of language competence.

Student Teacher 2:

“Maybe 2, because I'm not a good constructing English directly. Using English was comfortable and make your confidence good to communicate people (sic).”

When teaching students who are fluent in English language, the confidence of the pre-service teachers a classroom setting will have an effect on them (Wessels et.al., 2017). To manage this condition, Souto-Manning (2013), as cited by Wessels et.al., (2017), suggested that pre-service

teachers must examine their own cultural experiences, beliefs, and values and acknowledge the way that their own attitudes shape their teaching. It is understandable that the aforementioned may still have their confidence to be yet developed. With enough teacher education experience in classroom setting and enough exposure in their practicum experiences, their attitudes and confidence toward working with students can become a more exciting experience for them.

Students' Response to the Pre-Service Teachers Using English as a Medium of Instruction.

Despite the challenges they felt in their language proficiency during classroom lectures, they favored speaking the target language in their discussion because it made the students more participative and responsive.

Student Teacher 1:

Students are more participative because they understand better using the English language. They are not hesitant to answer and were very confident in answering the teacher's question (sic).

Student Teacher 3:

They can respond easily because they grow with the English language as their first language (sic).

Student Teacher 7:

The students here in ILS where I am practicing is really using English as their first language. So, it is not hard to communicate with them when your teaching English subject. They can easily understand the lesson (sic).

Student Teacher 9:

Students listen to teacher when we are speaking English, unlike when we speak Bisaya they don't listen to us (sic).

Student Teacher 10:

They had active participation in the class since they could understand what the teacher and students say. They can communicate well because English is their first language at home (sic).

It is anticipated that despite the level of confidence and proficiency in the language, they would still prefer the second language, especially when the students in class speak English as their mother tongue. In fact, some of the Grade 4 students could not understand several local terms but are very much familiar in English. With the influence of digital media and the students' exposure to Western culture via social media apps and the internet, more and more students in the new generation, especially those who are exposed with digital gadgets, have challenges in speaking Filipino. In fact, in some schools, special Filipino classes for local residents are being offered aside from Filipino subject for foreigners to address the language situation of some students (Reyes, 2018). In 2013, the Department of Education (DepEd) mandated that the early primary years of the students' education must be in the students' mother tongue, however since English is used thereafter, and the same language is used officially in the government, institutions, and even media, there is low exposure of the students to use the local language.

On the other hand, since these Grade 4 students are fluent with the language, one major concern the pre-service teachers have is when the students correct their pronunciation and grammar candidly. This added up to their anxieties in delivering the task for their practice teaching. Below are some of the verbatim feedbacks gathered during the focus group discussion:

Student Teacher 2:

"The students' response when I teach in subject using English as the medium of instruction is that students will observe you and then they will react your mistakes. So, during demonstration especially in English subject I also observed the way I speak in front. I afraid that they are upset when I cannot speak in English directly (sic)."

Student Teacher 4:

“Students can easily express their ideas and easily understand the topic. But sadly, some students also if they noticed your mispronouncing the word or the grammar you are using they will correct you (sic).”

Student Teacher 5:

“Sometime they correct my pronunciation. And the grammar as well (sic).”

Student Teacher 6:

“Sometimes, they can't get easily what I am trying to convey. They keep on saying, “teacher, what do you mean by blah blah...” and sometimes I feel like insulted about my English grammar (sic).”

Student Teacher 8:

“Sometimes the students will correct my pronunciation and my grammar.”

Based on their responses, the pre-service teachers feel that while they still have some shortcomings that they need to improve on, teaching the subjects in English language is helpful and advantageous for them as it allows them to facilitate their lessons better. If there is anything that they need to enhance, it will be their pronunciation and diction. Majority of them expressed that it is something they are challenged with but are more than willing to go through enhancement training if there is an opportunity.

The feedback collected proved to echo the findings of Abao (2013) regarding the language proficiency of the teachers in the country. While the data showed a low correlation between their English communication skills and teaching performance, same as the findings in this research, there are some attributes that need to be looked into, such as the manner of vocal delivery in classroom lecture, facial expression, and the pronunciation of the teachers. Therefore, there is a need to propose A communication enhancement program to help develop the communication skills of the teachers.

To provide the right support in enhancing their oral communication skills, a communication enhancement program may be rolled out to specifically address their needs. The program may focus on language proficiency targeted to enhance their vocabulary, pronunciation, voice (vocal delivery), and fluency.

With all these covered, it has been established that the need for every teacher to be competent and proficient in communication definitely plays a significant role in the academic success of the students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explored and analyzed the influence of language proficiency to the teaching competence of primary pre-service teachers who are practicing in the profession as well as their experiences during the practice teaching program. The outcomes have constituted into five thematic results: (1) the language proficiency level with regard to pre-service teachers' linguistic performance and paralinguistic features, (2) teaching competence according to the teaching strategies and classroom management, (3) the influence of language proficiency to the pre-service teachers' teaching competence, (4) experiences of the pre-service teacher's facilitating the lessons in the second language, and (5) proposal for communication enhancement program for pre-service teachers.

Results showed that the overall linguistic performance was at Approaching Proficient (AP) level with pronunciation receiving the lowest rating. On the other hand, the effectiveness of the Paralinguistic Features of the pre-service teachers received a Proficient (P) rating in this metric including its features with the exception of 'facial expression' which only received an AP mark.

The results in the teaching competence revealed that their teaching strategies proved to fare better with Approaching Competent (AC) rating compared to their ‘classroom management’ score which was at Below Competent (BC) level. This means that they are at Somewhat Competent (SC) rating and need to streamline their teaching strategies with their classroom management.

Only pronunciation and voice in the language proficiency factors that are statistically associated to their teaching competency. The coefficients suggest that pronunciation is positively associated to teaching competency while the voice factor is negatively associated to teaching competency. Furthermore, findings suggested that if the pronunciation score is increased, the teaching competency’s score increases, whereas if the voice’s score is increased, the teaching competency’s score decreases.

Based from the four thematic narratives in their focus group discussion, teaching in the target language proved to be (1) preferable for pre-service teachers; (2) challenging due to some opportunities in pronunciation and grammar which they openly acknowledged; (3) a convenient medium to use since it also helped them improve their communication skills; and finally, (4) it engaged the students more to be responsive and participative in the discussion.

Lastly, the pre-service teachers deemed it helpful and necessary if they can receive a Communication Enhancement Program that is specifically targeted to their areas of opportunities, such as vocal delivery, pronunciation and enunciation of words, grammar and vocabulary, as well as language fluency.

In conclusion, all the relevant criteria employed, the results proved that the language proficiency has an influence in the teaching competence of the pre-service teachers, particularly their pronunciation and voice projection which have direct influence to their teaching competence. This reflects the argument of Hymes (1972) that linguistic proficiency may have differential impact in a heterogeneous speech community, hence, the concern should be on the actual outcome of the performance in any given situation.

With these findings and conclusion to the problem, this research recommends the following:

1. Teacher preparation programs may require a standardized language proficiency before exposing pre-service teachers to actual teaching.
2. Language proficiency and teaching competency are recommended to be the initial preparatory requirements in practice teaching.
3. Varied techniques and approaches in classroom delivery may be focused to develop their communication skills.
4. Teacher Mentoring Programs may be complemented with Communication Enhancing Workshops to better prepare the student teachers.

Consequently, this research study is important in teacher mentoring to increase the level of confidence, develop communication skills, improve teaching competency, and provide more opportunities for them to explore their skills and capabilities.

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