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English Language Proficiency of Elementary Pupils

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Abstract: ***The English language is known to be a universal language as it is used in different parts of the world. It connects nations, links people from different places, is widely used in education and the business world, and is most notably used for globalization. Although people were given all of the chances and opportunities to study the said language, some were still struggling to use it orally or in writing. With all the interventions made, others are yet to improve and have a low or poor English language proficiency. Hence, the objective of this descriptive study is to determine the English language proficiency of elementary pupils. The respondents of the study were all of the grade IV pupils enrolled in the school year 2020- 2021 at one private institution in the Northern Philippines. The results revealed that the overall English language proficiency of the pupils is at an advanced level, regardless of whether they are in the transitional year from using their mother tongue to using the English language, which is grade IV. Meanwhile, the profile variables included in the study were not significantly associated with the pupils' English language proficiency. Thus, a manifestation that respondents' profile does not prompt pupils' proficiency level because no relationship was revealed as suggested by the results of this study.***

Keywords: English Language Proficiency, Reading Comprehension, Grammar, Profile, Elementary Pupils.

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language is considered the lingua franca [1]. The said language is used widelyas a means of communication in the world. In numerous divisions such as the business world, politics, medicine, engineering, and education, English has played a severe role in numerous divisions such as the business world, politics, medicine, and education, which are known by

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far as those where the said language is required [2]. It was mentioned that English is the international language, hence the Philippines is not an exemption. The government issued Executive Order 210, which orders the Department of Education to utilize English as a second language as soon as possible. It is deemed a significant subject and is taught in the Philippines from grade one to college and is the means of instruction in many schools [2], which signifies that Filipinos should be capable of using the said language [3]. However, despite all theexposure, the low English proficiency of students is still becoming a big issue [4].

Moreover, the mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) institutionalization was issued by the Department of Education in 2009. It demands the utilization of the mother-tongue of the learners as the medium of instruction for all their subjects, from kindergarten to grade three, with English and Filipino taught as separate subjects [5]. Furthermore, in 2013, Republic Act No. 10533, known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act, was approved. This law mandates DepEd to follow the MTB-MLE's principles and framework. Here, it is required for kindergarten and grades 1 to 3 to receive instruction, teaching, materials, and assessments in their respective regional or native language [6] with a mother language transition program from grades four to six [5]. Hence, grade 4 is a transitional year, wherein the mother tongue will only play a supportive role in teaching English in all the subjects rather than using it as the medium of instruction [7]. However, the mother-tongue- based multilingual education may bring inauspicious effects to the learners' proficiency in English as it lessens their amount of exposure to the said language [8]. Learners who are struggling with the English language may encounter a myriad of problems in communication and their academic performance [9]. In addition, it may cause these learners to trouble other subjects that use English as the means of instruction [5], which can become a more severe problem.

This study was conducted in the elementary department and focused on the grade 4 pupils because it is a transitional year from using their mother tongue to using the English language. Therefore, the researchers wanted to examine whether pupils encounter difficulty learning and mastering the second language at this level. Thus, this study aimed to determine the English language proficiency of grade IV elementary pupils focusing on their reading comprehension and grammar.

2. METHOD

This study utilized a quantitative type of research employing descriptive method. The study was conducted at a private institution in Northern Philippines. All of the grade IV pupils enrolled in the school year 2020-2021 of the said institution were invited to become the respondents of this study. However, only forty-three grade IV pupils responded to the questionnaire due to the limitations brought by the current pandemic.
Two research instruments were used in the gathering of data. The first instrument is the survey questionnaire, and the second instrument is the English proficiency test. The first instrument, which is the survey questionnaire, was made by the researchers. The respondents were given a link in order to access the survey questionnaire in Google forms. It gathered the pupils' profile such as name, age, gender, language used at home, attitudes towards studying

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English (10 items), attitudes towards reading (6 items), exposure to television or movies (8 items), exposure to social media (7 items), and exposure to computer or mobile games (6 items). It was graded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never to always.

Likert Scale Descriptors:

1	Never	Do not do at all
2	Seldom	Do, but rarely
3	Sometimes	Do, but occasionally
4	Often	Do almost all of the time; Very often
5	Always	Do at all times

The second instrument, the English proficiency test, is a teacher-made test used during the grade IV pupils' synchronous third grading period examination. They were given 1 hour to finish the exam in the school's Learning Management System. Likewise, their answers are automatically checked by the said learning management system. The test measured the reading comprehension and grammar capabilities of the respondents. It was a multiple-choice type test. Grammar is composed of items 1-15 and 21-35, while reading comprehension can be found in items 16-20.

The data gathered was analyzed using the following:
Frequency and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents, specifically gender, age, and language used at home.

Range	**Qualitative Description**
90-100	Advanced
85-89	Proficient
80-84	Approaching Proficiency
75-79	Developing
below 75	Beginning

Mean was used to describe the profile of the respondents along Attitude Towards Studying English and Reading & Exposure to Television or movies, Social Media, and Computer or Mobile Games.

Range	**Qualitative Description for Attitude Towards Studying English**	**Qualitative Description for Exposure to Television or movies, social media, and Computer or Mobile Games**
1.00-1.49	Not Favorable	No Exposure
1.50-2.49	Less Favorable	Less Exposure
2.50-3.49	Favorable	Moderate Exposure

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3.50-4.49	Highly Favorable	High Exposure
4.50-5.00	Very Highly Favorable	Very High Exposure

Chi-square test was used to measure the significance of association between the profile of therespondents and their English language proficiency level.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency (n=43)	Percentage (%=100.00)
Gender		
Male	21	48.80
Female	22	51.20
Age		
9 years old	12	27.90
10 years old	27	62.80
11 years old	4	9.30
Language Used at Home		
Tagalog	36	83.70
English	6	14.00
Itawes	1	2.30
Attitude towards Studying English		
Very Highly Favorable	1	2.30
Highly Favorable	21	48.80
Favorable	17	39.50
Less Favorable	4	9.30
Not Favorable	0	0.00
Mean	**3.43**	
Qualitative Description	Favorable	
Attitude towards Reading		
Very Highly Favorable	1	2.30
Highly Favorable	21	48.80
Favorable	19	44.20
Less Favorable	2	4.70
Not Favorable	0	0.00
Mean	**3.40**	
Qualitative Description	Favorable	
Exposure to Television or Movies		
Always	12	27.90
Often	24	55.80
Sometimes	7	16.30

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Seldom	0	.00
Never	0	.00
Mean	**4.00**	
Qualitative Description	**High Exposure to Television or Movies**	
Exposure to Social Media		
Always	2	4.70
Often	26	60.50
Sometimes	15	34.90
Seldom	0	.00
Never	0	.00
Mean	**3.67**	
Qualitative Description	**High Exposure to Social Media**	
Exposure to Computer or Mobile Games		
Always	9	20.90
Often	16	37.20
Sometimes	15	34.90
Seldom	3	7.00
Never	0	.00
Mean	**3.63**	
Qualitative Description	**High Exposure to Computer or Mobile Games**	

It can be shown from the results in terms of gender that a more significant number of female Grade IV pupils have responded to this study than the male pupils. As regards age, mostof the respondents are ten (10) years old, some are nine (9), and a few are eleven (11) years old. The majority of the respondents use the Tagalog/Filipino language in their households. Some use the English language, and only one (1) respondent answered that Itawes is their dialect at home. It signifies that the English language is being utilized rarely or not at all in their respective houses [15]. As to attitude towards studying English and attitude towards reading, it can be seen that the computed mean score is 3.43 and 3.40, which is equivalent to favorable. Therefore, it implies that the respondents have a positive attitude towards reading and studying the English language. Furthermore, it means that they see English as something meaningful in their lives. Moreover, results revealed that the grade IV pupils have a mean score ranging from 3.63-4.00, which means high exposure to television or movies, social media, andcomputer or mobile games. Therefore, it implies that the respondents mostly spent their time watching, using different social media platforms, and playing games that need technology.

Table 2. English Language Proficiency of the Respondents

Areas	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Reading Comprehension		
Advanced (90-100)	35	81.40
Proficient (85-89)	3	6.98

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Approaching Proficiency (80-84)	0	0.00
Developing (75-79)	3	6.98
Beginning (below 75)	2	4.65
Mean Score	**4.26**	**93 % (Advanced)**
Grammar		
Advanced	30	69.77
Proficient	3	6.98
Approaching Proficiency	0	0.00
Developing	3	6.98
Beginning	7	16.28
Mean Score	**27.11**	90 % (Advanced)
Overall English Language Proficiency	**31.37**	**93% (Advanced)**

Table 2 shows that most of the respondents have advanced reading comprehension. Only a few belong to the proficient, developing, and beginning levels. In general, English language proficiency along with reading comprehension of the grade IV pupils garnered a 4.26 mean score equivalent to 93%. It signifies that the English proficiency of the pupils, along with reading comprehension, is at the advanced level. The results also revealed that the English language proficiency of the respondents along with grammar accumulated a 27.11 mean score, which is equivalent to 90%. It is 3% lower than their reading comprehension skills. Thirty grade IV pupils are at the advanced level, three respondents each are at the proficient and developing stages, and seven grade IV pupils are at the beginning stage. The 90% corresponds to their advanced grammar ability. As a whole, the grade IV respondents garnered an overall English language proficiency of 31.37, which is equivalent to 93%. It means that the respondents are at the advanced level in both reading comprehension and grammar ability. Reading comprehension and grammar capabilities are essential, especially in academic endeavors, because they help students become proficient and thrive, not just in one subject but also in other fields [10-13]. Comprehension and grammar should be taken seriously by all students. It has a significant role to play in their educational endeavors and their everyday encounters. In addition, it is essential that even at a young age, the students should already know and understand the significance and benefit of learning or knowing the English languagein their daily lives [14].

Table 3a. Significant Association between Pupils' English Language Proficiency along Reading Comprehension and their Profile Variables

Profile Variables	**X^2-value /r-value**	**p-value**	**Decision**
Gender	10.435	0.316	Accept Ho
Age	28.527	0.054	Accept Ho
Language Used at Home	11.944	0.850	Accept Ho
Attitude Towards Studying English	0.174	0.265	Accept Ho
Attitude Towards Reading	0.281	0.068	Accept Ho
Exposure to Television/Movies	0.165	0.291	Accept Ho

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Exposure to Social Media	0.278	0.071	Accept Ho
Exposure to Computer/Mobile Games	0.114	0.466	Accept Ho

It can be gleaned from the results revealed in table 3a that it accepted the hypothesis. It was found that all of the profile variables, namely; gender, age, language used at home, attitude towards studying English, attitudes towards reading, exposure to television or movies, exposure to social media, and exposure to computer or mobile games, have no significant association with the respondents' reading comprehension. It means that there is no relationshipbetween the profile and reading comprehension. None of the included profiles are influencingor affecting the reading comprehension development of the pupils. It implies that neither of thementioned profiles is an indicator of success in the pupils' language proficiency along with reading comprehension.

Table 3b. Significant Association between Pupils' English Language Proficiency along Grammar and their Profile Variables

Profile Variables	**X^2-value /r-value**	**p-value**	**Decision**
Gender	5.246	0.263	Accept Ho
Age	4.526	0.807	Accept Ho
Language Used at Home	3.623	0.889	Accept Ho
Attitude Towards Studying English	0.096	0.539	Accept Ho
Attitude Towards Reading	0.020	0.899	Accept Ho
Exposure to Television/Movies	-0.025	0.871	Accept Ho
Exposure to Social Media	0.085	0.589	Accept Ho
Exposure to Computer/Mobile Games	0.009	0.956	Accept Ho

As for table 3b, the results also showed that all the decisions accepted the hypothesis. It was reported that all of the profile variables, namely; gender, age, language used at home, attitude towards studying English, attitudes towards reading, exposure to television or movies, exposure to social media, and exposure to computer or mobile games, have no significant association along with the respondents' grammar abilities. It means that there is no relationship between the profile and grammar. None of the included profiles influence or affect the grammar development of the pupils. It signifies that neither of the mentioned profiles indicates the pupils' language proficiency along with grammar.

Table 3c. Significant Association between Pupils' Overall English Language Proficiency and their Profile Variables

Profile Variables	**X^2-value /r-value**	**p-value**	**Decision**
Gender	15.834	0.258	Accept Ho
Age	33.691	0.143	Accept Ho
Language Used at Home	18.791	0.845	Accept Ho
Attitude Towards Studying English	0.167	0.283	Accept Ho
Attitude Towards Reading	0.238	0.124	Accept Ho
Exposure to Television/Movies	0.131	0.404	Accept Ho

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Exposure to Social Media	0.251	0.104	Accept Ho
Exposure to Computer/Mobile Games	0.097	0.537	Accept Ho

Table 3c presents the findings that all the decisions accepted the hypothesis. It was revealed that all of the profile variables, namely; gender, age, language used at home, attitude towards studying English, attitudes towards reading, exposure to television or movies, exposure to social media, and exposure to computer or mobile games, have no significant association along with the respondents' overall English language proficiency. There is no relationship between the selected profile variables and their proficiency in the English language. None of the included profiles are influencing or affecting the English proficiency of the pupils. It means that neither of the mentioned profiles is an indicator of the respondents' English language proficiency.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the overall English language proficiency of the pupils is at an advanced level, regardless of whether they are in the transitional year from using their mother tongue to using the English language, which is grade IV. The results of this study suggest that profile variables, namely gender, age, language used at home, attitudes towards studying English and reading, exposure to television or movies, social media, and computer or mobile games, do not prompt pupils' English proficiency level since no relationship was revealed as suggested by the results of this study.

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