

Let Takers' Syntactical Proficiency Vis-A-Vis Language Productive Skill: Analysis on Course Alignment

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Abstract

This research assessed the syntactical proficiency and productive language skills of the students who will take the Licensure Examinations for Teachers in Cebu Technological University- Moalboal Campus in consonance to their course alignment during the S.Y. 2022-2023.

This quantitative study adopts a descriptive-correlational design where an adopted test questionnaire and criteria were used. To determine the sample size of the respondents, simple random sampling was utilized using Slovin's formula. The statistical treatments applied in the study were simple percentage, weighted mean and standard deviation, and Pearson's R correlation. After, the questionnaire was administered the questionnaire was then gathered and the data was classified, tabulated, computed, treated, analyzed, and interpreted to come up with a reliable conclusion, recommendations, and an action plan.

Results show that both aligned and misaligned areas have high percentages of female students where the majority of both groups of respondents are in the age bracket 19-21. Among the 186 respondents, wherein 112 are aligned and 74 are misaligned, results revealed that despite having a positive outlook on the English language with a weighted mean of 3.94 for the aligned and 3.99 for the misaligned both described as AGREE, the two group of respondents exhibits poor mastery of syntactical proficiency. However, the respondents, in terms of their language productive skill, the aligned group exhibited average mastery whereas the misaligned group displayed outstanding mastery. The test on the significant relationship revealed that there is no relationship between the student's syntactical proficiency and productive language skill and failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Based on the results and conclusion of this study, it is recommended to implement the proposed action plan to improve the mastery of the respondents' syntactical proficiency and to further enrich their productive skill.

Keywords: Course Alignment, Language Productive Skill, Syntactical Proficiency, LET Takers

Introduction

The English language is viewed as the most spoken language in the world. This has been used extensively and widely in a variety of contexts, including business transactions, call center jobs, medical fields, and most especially in the education realm. The English language greatly affects the Philippine educational system when it comes to education. It is the primary medium of instruction from primary to tertiary level; hence, it helps each learner understand English as a second language, notwithstanding the influence of the Filipino language (Turmudi & Hajan, n.d.) Therefore, the 10-year primary education in the Philippines has been shifted and transferred into the K-12 curriculum. The new educational system in the Philippines has eight learning areas, with 15 subjects in the SHS core curriculum (DepEd Order No. 21, S. 2019). English is one of the core subjects that students may apply to and use in their everyday lives and career aspirations by incorporating the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) and General Academic Strand (GAS) in the new curriculum.

Furthermore, under the mandate of Republic Act 7836, passing the Licensed Education for Teachers or LET is a prerequisite requirement for teachers to be certified and eligible to teach. Individuals who take the LET must obtain a score of at least 75 percent on average for each of the three areas of the LET: General Education (Gen Ed), Professional Education (Prof Ed), and major courses or specialized courses. In a study conducted by Diamante (2022), the majority of students received low percentiles for both BEED and BSED programs for more than three years in a row from 2017 to 2019. Additionally, among the three BSED programs, BSED-English had the lowest rate of performance.

Meanwhile, one of the language's productive skills that is frequently overlooked is writing. It is generally misused as a 'key activity' during performance activities (Gandeza & Unciano, 2022). Additionally, there are many factors that hampered the students' syntactic knowledge and proficiency, which also impacted their writing competency. In a study conducted by Labicane and Oliva (2022), they revealed that problems with syntactic arrangement were the areas of writing the participants were most challenged with. It can be seen from this that the relationship between syntax and writing has a conflict that is still evident and prevailing up until now.

Literature Review

The idea of an education system refers to how educational provision is typically organized and approached at the national level, the most significant level at which formal education is governed (Hatos, 2014). To ensure that students have met the standards in the curriculum and are prepared for postsecondary education and training or the workplace, Hong Kong extended compulsory school to include six years of secondary school in 2009, and 2012, it upgraded teacher and school leader preparation. At the same time, Hong Kong expanded vocational education offerings and better aligned them to changing industry needs (Hong Kong - NCEE, 2022). The new secondary English language curriculum in Hong Kong emphasizes task-based learning strategies consistent with current trends in English language teaching (ELT) (Wong, 2009). The country's educational system mentioned is similar to the Philippine education, with six mandatory years for primary education and six for secondary education. The Philippines' education system has grown across multiple eras, with the addition of the previous curriculum for two years in a row, resulting in a twelve-year Basic Education curriculum by Republic Act No. 10533.

The Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) is a professional board test administered by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) that confirms the qualifications of teachers permitted to teach in a classroom. The Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) is the national government's licensing and regulatory body to exercise regulated professions (gov. ph). The Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) is a requirement of the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994 before any individual can work as a teacher, administrator, or supervisor in any elementary or secondary school within the nation (University of the Philippines, Open University). LET is only open to graduates with undergraduate degrees in education. However, graduates without a degree in education are permitted to take the LET under the following qualifications (University of the Philippines, Open University). A bachelor's degree in the arts or sciences with at least 18 units of professional education is required for teachers in the secondary grades.

The usage of English is spreading across many academic areas, and many higher education institutions are Englishizing their curricula to implement internationalization (Galloway & McKinley, 2021). Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan defined linguistic competency as the capacity to use language correctly and appropriately in both written and oral contexts. On the other hand, writing is one of the main difficulties L2 English language learners face since it requires complicated structures to represent academic concepts and the intricate relationships between the ideas and concepts found in academic disciplines (Kamasak et al., 2021). Only when one is included in the process of learning will the outcome be finished (Golkova & Hubackova, 2014). Likewise, grammar and syntax are strong predictors of writing and reading abilities (Logan, 2017). The relationship between syntactical proficiency and language productive skills is closely interrelated, as agreed by Atashian & Al-Bahri (2018), who state that grammar teaching is related to producing written academic text. A student's problem with grammar correlates to his writing capability (Handayani & Johan, 2018).

However, studies like Febrianti (2017) state the opposite; he says there is no correlation between grammar and writing. In addition, Septiani (2014) also claims that "students' minimum grammar does not mean that they also get poor achievement in writing." Accordingly, writing proficiency is not a direct outcome of knowing grammar rules (Oandasan, 2016).

The 10-year primary education transitioned into 12 years, with high school divided into two sections, the junior and senior high school, with different tracks and strands offered for the final two years of primary education. The K12 curriculum in the Philippine Curriculum was created to give Filipino students opportunities by equipping them with information and crucial life skills to remain globally competitive (Mohammad, 2016, as quoted by Dizon et al., 2019). To better handle the high demands and expectations of higher education, especially when studying in the medical area, students should choose a senior high school strand that matches their course (Malaga & Oducado, 2021).

In the article published on the CIIT- College of Arts and Technology website, students pursuing English-related courses must take either the Humanities and Social Sciences or General Academic strand in their senior high school. HUMSS and GAS strands are considered aligned strands for linguistic-related courses. Additionally, the students taking education courses in their tertiary education are expected to have taken the General Academic strand or STEM (for BS Math) during their senior high school. Similarly, the article posted by Candy Magazine in 2023 considered the HUMSS strand as an aligned strand for English-related courses. Lastly, an article posted by Jose Maria College Foundation Inc. stated the similar claim.

Strand mismatch presents a considerable disadvantage for students and necessitates the appropriate reaction, claims Martin (2013). A quantitative study by Alipio (2020) found that, although a student's SHS strand only sometimes determines their academic success, those students who had strands that did not correspond with their course adjusted much poorer than those who did not. The SHS strand undoubtedly has a moderating effect on academic achievement and adjustment (Alipio, 2020)

The concept of mismatched or misaligned strands has taken a considerable issue since other schools have offered bridging classes for misaligned students. For instance, if a student wants to major in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in college, the student must take additional coursework after completing the ABM strand in the SHS (Acedios, 2018). These extra classes, also refers to "bridging classes," are typically taken either in the first year of college or few weeks prior to the start of school. Mismatched students may need to exert more time to get a degree (Bound et.al., 2010). According to Ozbay (2015), for students enrolled in high schools whose curricula generate more exposure to English, there is a significant difference in their math, science, and language proficiency performance. In the study entitled English Proficiency of First Year College Students: A Case of Colegio Del Sagrado Corazon De Jesus (2015) revealed that social work students are more concerned with the technical aspect of the language, while Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management students focus more on the applied skills. Nevertheless, the degree of influence may depend on how English is used within the academic context where students are immersed (Agirdag & Vanlaar, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

This study assessed the LET Takers' syntactical proficiency and language productive skill in consonance to their course alignment at Cebu Technological University Moalboal Campus for the school year 2022-2023 as the basis for an action plan.

Specifically, this research aims to answer the following:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. age;
 - b. sex;
 - c. senior high school strand
 - d. honors received in senior high school and
 - e. course alignment?
2. What is the respondent's level of interest in the English language?
3. What is the respondent's level of syntactical proficiency in terms of:
 - a. parts of speech;
 - b. tenses;
 - c. subject-verb agreement;
 - d. dangling and misplaced modifiers, and
 - e. sentence according to function, pattern, and structure?
4. What is the respondents' level of proficiency in language productive skill in terms of:
 - a. content;
 - b. organization; and
 - c. mechanics?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' syntactical proficiency and language productive skills?
6. Based on the findings, what action plan can be produced

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the study was set at 0.05 level of significance.

H_o : There is no significant relationship between the respondents' syntactical proficiency and language productive skills.

Methodology

This research paper aimed to determine the alignment of the SHS strand with the LET takers' syntactical proficiency and language productive skills. This quantitative study adopts a descriptive-correlational design, utilizing an adopted test questionnaire and criteria. Thus, it integrated a descriptive-correlational design to describe the relationship between the variables. 186 student respondents participated in the study who are students officially enrolled in Cebu Technological University - Moalboal Campus, for the school year 2022-2023.

The respondents included students from the courses Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education (BTLED), Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education Major in Mathematics (BSED-Math), and Bachelor of Arts in English Language (BAEL), in the year levels 1, 2, and 3. The sample size and respondent sample size were determined using simple random sampling, where the researchers utilized Slovin's formula. The dissemination of questionnaires was randomized using various methods.

Discussion and Findings

Age Demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Age Demographic Characteristics

Aligned		Profile	Misaligned	
f	%		f	%
		Age		
0	0	25 years old and above	1	1.351351351
12	10.71428571	22-24 years old	7	9.459459459
94	83.92857143	19-21 years old	59	79.72972973
6	5.357142857	18 years old and below	7	9.459459459
112	100.00	Total	74	100.00

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the majority or 83.92 percent of aligned respondents and 79.72 percent of misaligned belonged to ages 19-21 years old, followed by students aged 22-24 years old, where aligned respondents garnered a percentage of 10.71 percent, and 9.45 percent for misaligned. Meanwhile, there is only 1.35 percent for aligned and 0 percent in misaligned for those aged 25 years and above. The result of the data explains that most of the respondents are in the late adolescence stage.

Sex Demographic Characteristics

Table 2: Sex Demographic Characteristics

Aligned		Profile	Misaligned	
f	%		f	%
Sex				
22	19.64285714	Male	18	24.32432432
90	80.35714286	Female	56	75.67567568
112	100.00	Total	74	100.00

As shown in Table 2, most respondents were females, comprising 80.35 percent of the total aligned and 75.67 percent of the misaligned respondents. In comparison, 19.64 percent of the aligned respondents are males, and 24.32 percent in the misaligned. Result clearly shows that majority of the respondents are females.

Senior High School Strand

Table 3: Senior High School Strand

Aligned		Profile	Misaligned	
f	%		f	%
Senior High School Strand				
48	42.85714286	HUMSS	0	0
64	57.14285714	GAS	0	0
0	0	ABM	23	31.08108108
0	0	STEM	23	31.08108108
0	0	Home Economics	15	20.27027027
0	0	ICT	8	10.81081081
0	0	Industrial Arts	1	1.351351351
0	0	EIM	2	2.702702703
0	0	Caregiving	1	1.351351351
0	0	Old Curriculum	1	1.351351351
112	100.00	Total	74	100.00

Table 3 above depicts that 42.85 percent of students were from the HUMSS strand and 57.14 percent were from GAS, both of which are on the academic track. These two strands are considered aligned respondents, while the remaining ABM and STEM strands under the same track are referred to as misaligned, which holds 62.16 percent of the total misaligned respondents' corresponding to 31.08 percent for ABM and another 31.08 percent for STEM. As a result, the majority of the respondents are in the HUMSS and GAS strands, which both are academic tracks.

Honors Received in Senior High School

Table 4: Honors Received in Senior High School

Aligned		Profile	Misaligned	
f	%		f	%
Honors Received in Senior High School				

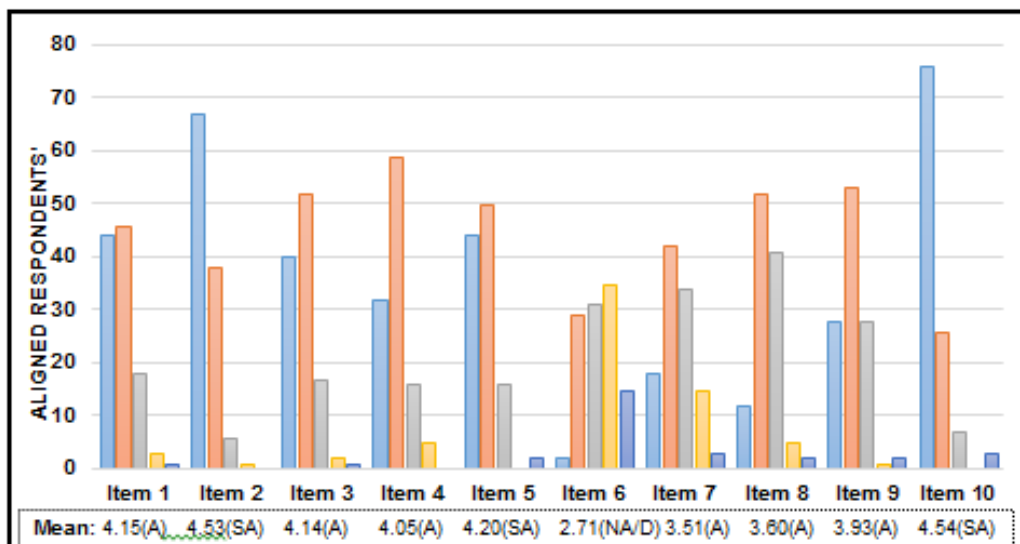
2	1.785714286	With Highest Honors	2	2.702702703
21	18.75	With High Honors	28	37.83783784
58	51.78571429	With Honors	32	43.24324324
31	27.67857143	None	12	16.21621622
112	100.00	Total	74	100.00

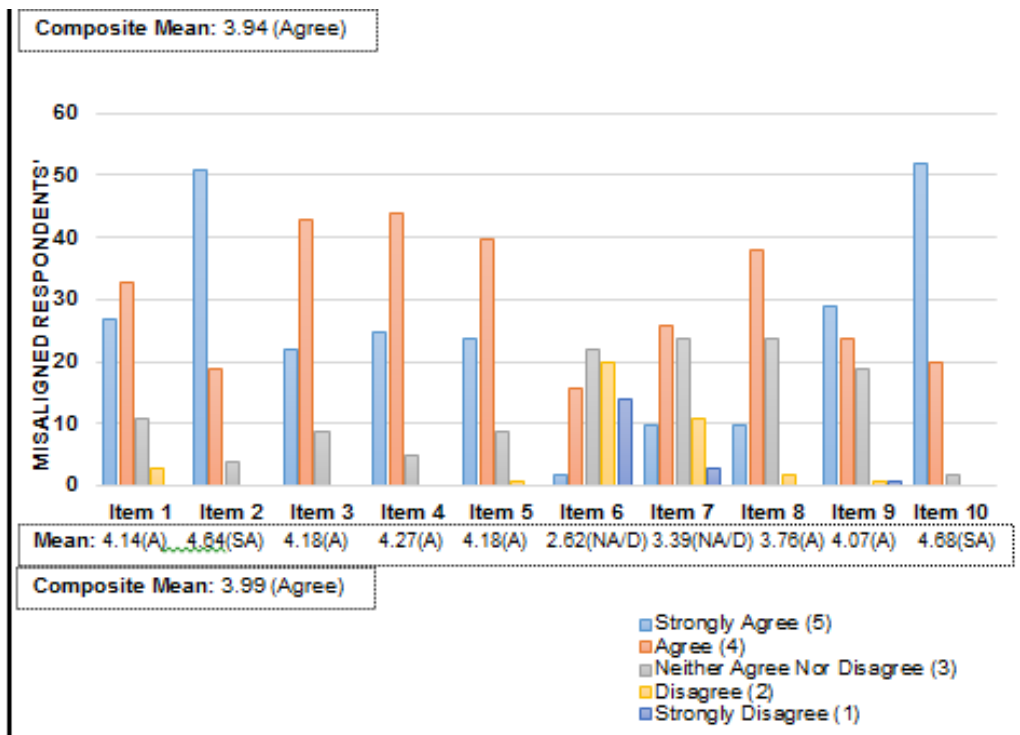
Table 4 shows that 2.70 percent of the misaligned respondents received With Highest Honors during their senior high school, while 1.78 percent of the aligned respondents received the same award. The next rank after the With Highest Honor is With High Honor. As shown in the table, many misaligned respondents received this award, holding 37.83 percent of the total misaligned respondents, compared to aligned students, who only hold 18.75 percent of the total respondents. This rank (With High Honor) is followed by With Honor; 51.78 percent received this award in the aligned respondents, whereas in the misaligned respondents, only 43.24 percent. On the other hand, 27.67 percent of aligned respondents and 16.21 percent of misaligned respondents did not receive any of the awards mentioned above. The results mirrored that compared to misaligned, aligned respondents have a higher percentage of respondents who did not receive awards in senior high school and a lower percentage who received honor awards.

Course Alignment

The result is divided into two sub-groups of respondents, the aligned and misaligned respondents, whereas among the 186 respondents, 112 are aligned while 74 are misaligned. These aligned respondents are students who took up the HUMSS and GAS strands in SHS. On the other hand, the 74 misaligned respondents are products of the TVL track and the two remaining academic strands (STEM and ABM). As a result, the majority of the respondents are aligned with their course.

Respondents' Level of Interest in the English Language





Respondents' Level of Interest in the English Language

The survey questionnaire, composed of 10 questions, aims to gauge the level of interest that two groups of respondents have in the English language. Based on the figure, the two groups of respondents showed a high level of interest in the English language, with a composite mean of 3.94 for aligned and 3.99 for misaligned. As reflected in the result, aligned and misaligned respondents considered the importance of grammar in writing for practical and clear expression of ideas. Aligned and misaligned respondents expressed either Strong Agreement or Agreement for all items except items 6, and 7.

Respondents' Syntactical Proficiency: Parts of Speech

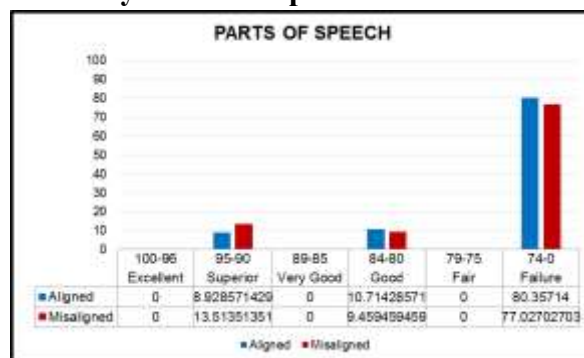


Figure 2: Respondents' Syntactical Proficiency: Parts of Speech

As seen in Figure 2, only 8.92 percent of the aligned respondents got a score inside the score bracket 95-90, labeled as SUPERIOR, whereas the misaligned group of students in the same score bracket got 13.51 percent. However, in the 84-80 score bracket, 10.71 percent of the aligned group of respondents can be labeled as GOOD, whereas there is only 9.45 percent for the misaligned respondents.

Respondents' Syntactical Proficiency: Tenses

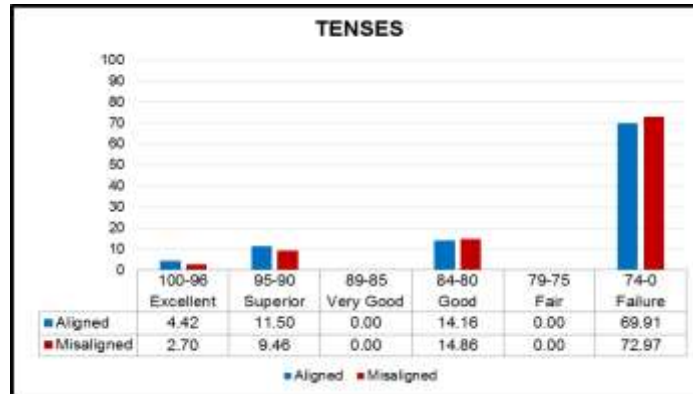


Figure 3: Respondents' Syntactical Proficiency: Tenses

As seen in Figure 3, 4.42 percent in the aligned group are labeled as EXCELLENT, while there are only 2.70 percent for the misaligned. For the SUPERIOR, there is 11.50 percent of the aligned population, whereas there is 9.46 percent for the misaligned. This result explains that the aligned group of respondents recorded higher percentages in the Excellent and Superior categories, with a gap of 1.72 and 2.04 percent, respectively. Thus, more aligned students exhibit exceptional, outstanding mastery of syntactic proficiency with a profound understanding of grammar tenses.

In the Good category, both groups of respondents recorded an almost equal percentage, with 14.16 percent for the aligned and 14.86 percent for the misaligned. However, most aligned and misaligned respondents are in the Failure category, wherein the aligned group recorded 69.91 percent and 72.97 percent in the misaligned group. The misaligned group of respondents reflected 3.06 percent higher than the aligned group in the Failure category. This indicates that more misaligned respondents have weak mastery of syntactic proficiency and have a limited understanding of grammar tenses.

Respondents' Syntactical Proficiency: Subject-verb Agreement

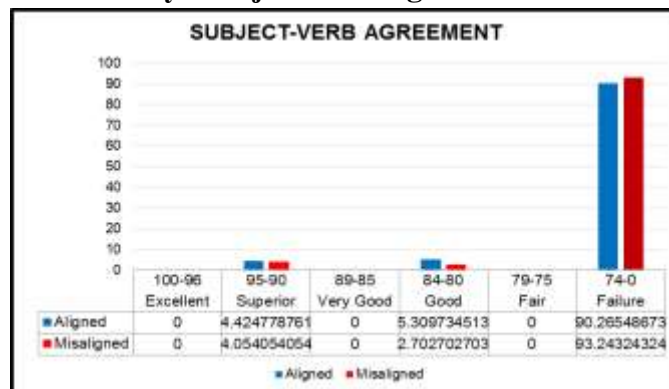


Figure 4: Respondents' Syntactical Proficiency: Subject-verb Agreement

Figure 4 shows that the aligned group of respondents had 4.42 percent of SUPERIOR respondents, while for the misaligned group, the group had 4.05 percent. In addition, the number of respondents under the label GOOD for the aligned is 5.31 percent, whereas in the misaligned group of respondents, there is 2.70 percent of their population. This means that more students in the aligned group of respondents exhibit outstanding and average mastery of syntactic proficiency. Compared to the misaligned respondents, the aligned group indicates a deep and good understanding of the subject-verb agreement.

Respondents' Syntactical Proficiency: Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

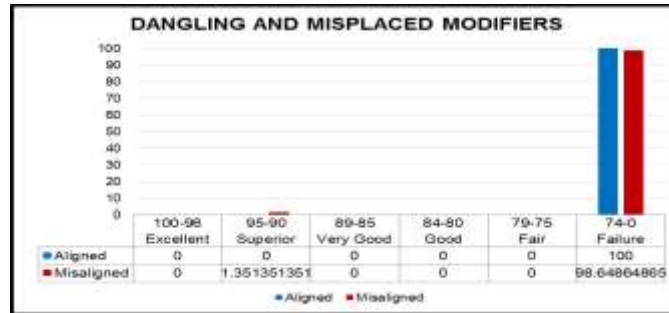


Figure 5: Respondents' Syntactical Proficiency: Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

As reflected in Figure 5, only 1.35 percent of the whole group of respondents, which is under the misaligned group, passed the 10-item test on the Dangling and Misplaced Modifier test. This 1.35 percent is in the Superior category, exhibits outstanding mastery of syntactic proficiency, and deeply understands dangling and misplaced modifiers.

Respondents' Syntactical Proficiency: Sentence According to Function, Pattern & Structure

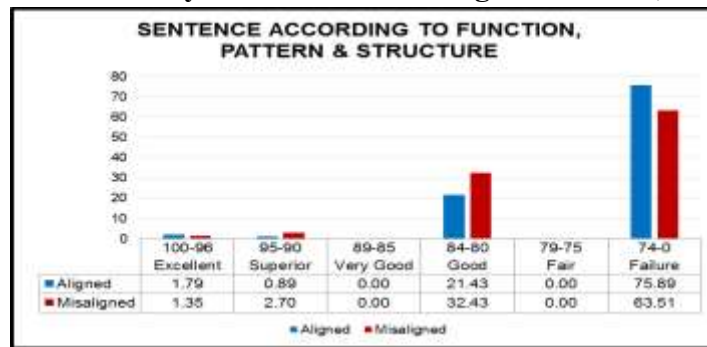


Figure 6: Respondents' Syntactical Proficiency: Sentence According to Function, Pattern & Structure

As reflected in Figure 6, the percentage of students under EXCELLENT totals to 3.14 percent, wherein the aligned group of respondents has 1.79 percent, whereas the misaligned group has 1.35 percent. For the SUPERIOR, the aligned group of respondents' population is 0.89 percent, while the misaligned group has 2.70 percent. The GOOD have 21.43 percent of the population of the aligned group, while there is 32.43 percent for the misaligned. The total percentage of the respondents who passed is 60.59 percent, wherein the aligned group has 24.11 percent and 36.48 percent for the misaligned.

Respondents' Level of Proficiency in Language Productive Skill: Content

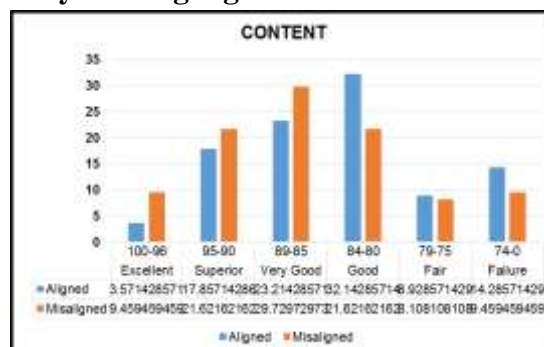


Figure 7: Respondents' Level of Proficiency in Language Productive Skill: Content

As shown in Figure 7, misaligned students fall to the majority of the three higher categories which are Excellent (9.959 percent), Superior (21.62 percent), and Very Good (29.73 percent) while the aligned students garnered the three lower categories which are Good (32.14 percent), Fair (8.22 percent), and Failure (14.26 percent). It can be observed that the misaligned students outperformed the aligned students when it comes to the relevance of content.

The misaligned dominated the majority of the aligned students, as per reviewing their answered survey questionnaire they had higher scores compared to the aligned. It was observed that they significantly recognized the content of their writings.

Based on Figure 7, it can be said that the misaligned students are competent in terms of their language productive skill compared to the aligned.

Respondents' Level of Proficiency in Language Productive Skill: Organization

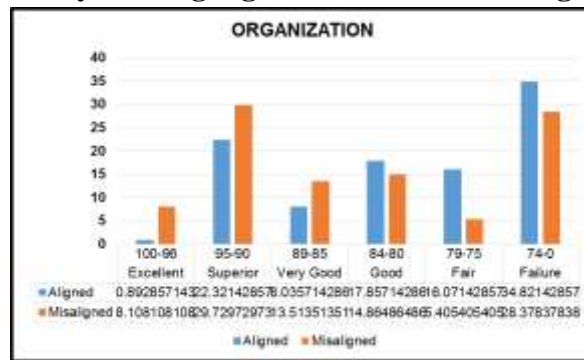


Figure 8: Respondents' Level of Proficiency in Language Productive Skill: Organization

Figure 8, illustrates the level of the aligned and misaligned students in organizing their thoughts in writing. It can be observed that the majority of misaligned belonged to the three higher categories Excellent (8.10 percent), Superior (29.73 percent), and Very Good (13.51 percent) while aligned students belonged to the three lower categories Good (17.86 percent), Fair (16.7 percent), and Failure (34.82 percent). This result is similar to the first parameter (Content) which misaligned students dominated the aligned. It can be said that misaligned are invested in their writing skill.

Respondents' Level of Proficiency in Language Productive Skill: Mechanics

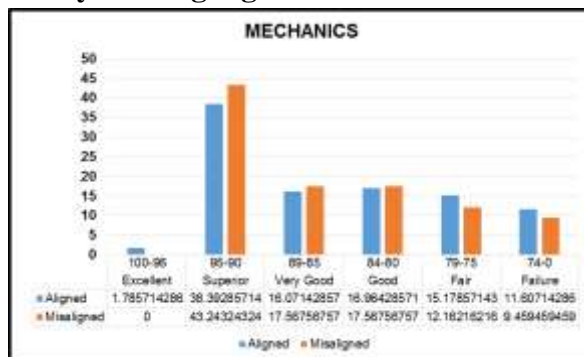


Figure 9: Respondents' Level of Proficiency in Language Productive Skill: Mechanics

Figure 9, illustrates the level of the respondents' language productive skill in mechanics. It can be observed that it had a lower percentage gap compared to the other parameter (Content and organization). Based on Figure 8, the majority of aligned students belonged to the Superior category with a total percentage of 38.39. However, in the same category, the misaligned students garnered 43.24 percent.

This was followed by misaligned students' garnered the majority of the two categories Very Good (17.56 percent), and Good (16.96 percent). On the other hand, the majority of aligned students reflected on the Excellent (1.78 percent), Fair (15.17 percent), and Failure (11.60 percent).

Test of Significant Relationship

Table #: Significant Relationship between Syntactical Proficiency and Language Productive Skill of the Aligned Students

Variables	P-value	Alpha value	Decision	Interpretation
Syntactical Proficiency and Language Productive Skill	0.147	0.05	Failed to reject null hypothesis	Not significant

As presented in Table #, the p-value of 0.147 is greater than the alpha value with a level of significance of 0.05. The table showed the acceptance of the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between student's syntactical proficiency vis-à-vis language productive skill and their course alignment. This also further shows that the alignment of the students' courses could not significantly affect their syntactical competence and writing skills.

Table #: Significant Relationship between Syntactical Proficiency and Language Productive Skill of the Misaligned Students

Variables	P-value	Alpha value	Decision	Interpretation
Syntactical Proficiency and Language Productive Skill	0.273	0.05	Failed to reject null hypothesis	Not significant

As reflected in Table 12, the p-value (0.0273) is greater than the set alpha (0.05). The table depicts that there is no significant relationship between student's level of syntactical proficiency vis-à-vis language productive skill and their course alignment. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted and all were interpreted as not significant. This also implies that the misalignment of students' courses could not significantly affect learners' syntactical competence and writing skills.

Recommendation

Based on the results and conclusion of this study, it is recommended to implement the proposed action plan which is to organize Enhancement Classes to improve the mastery of the respondents' syntactical proficiency and to further enrich their productive skill.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these results are consistent in demonstrating that there is no relationship between the respondents' course alignment, syntactical competency, and language producing skill. In summary, the respondents' background has no bearing on their writing or grammar skills because the aforementioned characteristics do not significantly relate to one another.

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