

Language Learning Motivation and English Language Proficiency Among Ata-Manobo Senior High School Students

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Abstract

This study examines the levels of language learning motivation and English proficiency among Ata-Manobo senior high school students, focusing on both integrative and instrumental motivation. The findings reveal that students exhibit a very high level of motivation in both indicators, emphasizing the significance of English for cultural integration, social interactions, career opportunities, and academic success. The study also shows that integrative motivation has a significant positive correlation with English proficiency. Conversely, instrumental motivation, which is driven by practical benefits such as career advancement and academic success, does not show a significant relationship with proficiency. This suggests that students who are intrinsically motivated to learn English for social and cultural purposes tend to perform better in language skills. Furthermore, despite the high levels of motivation, the results indicate that students remain at the Beginning Proficiency level in vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. This highlights a gap between motivation and actual language proficiency, suggesting that external factors such as access to resources, quality of instruction, and home environment may play a crucial role in language acquisition. Moreover, demographic factors such as gender do not significantly affect motivation or proficiency levels, but family income and parental educational attainment show a notable impact on students' English proficiency, implying that socioeconomic factors influence language learning outcomes. However, the lack of proficiency despite high motivation indicates that additional factors contribute to students' language development.

Keywords: Integrative motivation, Instrumental motivation, Language proficiency, Ata-Manobo students

INTRODUCTION

English has become the world's most influential language (David, 2003). It has been viewed as a convenient means of communicating with people and cultures, particularly in terms of building bridges across nations. According to Parupalli (2019), English, often considered the first global lingua franca, is the most widely used language in the world. Language learning proficiency ranges from novice with basic skills to advance with high fluency and nuanced understanding (Schwieter & Benati, 2019). However, it is essential to recognize the crucial role that motivation plays in language learning. Even individuals with exceptional abilities may struggle to achieve long-term goals without motivation, regardless of the curriculum or the teacher involved (Samad et al., 2012).

In a global context, particularly in China, numerous studies have investigated the correlation between language learning motivation and students' English proficiency. A study conducted by Chuane et al. (2023) revealed significant findings on how motivation relate to English performance. It found a significant link between intrinsic motivation and students' English proficiency, but no significant link with extrinsic motivation.

The acquisition of the English language, particularly for non-native speakers, has become increasingly difficult. In the Philippines, it has become a lot more challenging due to the two-year learning gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though the Philippines is regarded as one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world (Mariñas, 2023), the Education First (EF) English Proficiency Index has shown a gradual decline in recent years. From a 14th rank in 2018, the Philippines dropped to 27th in 2020. Though it improved to 22nd out of 116 countries and second among 23 Asian nations in the most recent 2024 EF Proficiency Index, it remains far from its 13th place standing in 2016.

As observed in the locality of Talaingod, there have been instances of Ata-Manobo Senior High School students acquiring English as a second language. This acquisition is facilitated through the use of English as the medium of instruction within the classroom. Consequently, this has raised various inquiries regarding the process of acquisition, particularly in becoming proficient language users. As reported by UNESCO (2003), the education situation for Ata-Manobo children is a matter of concern. It is evident that these indigenous children are being instructed in languages that are unfamiliar to them, leading to significant learning difficulties. The inadequate provision of education is a key factor contributing to this issue, further contributing to the challenges faced by these children in English language acquisition. In fact, based on the recent English proficiency result conducted in the Talaingod district, the average English proficiency level of Junior high school students is determined to be 70.90%, indicating beginning proficiency. However, it is important to note that this result encompasses all Junior High School students in the district regardless of their cultural backgrounds, without an exclusive record of the English proficiency level intended for Ata-Manobo high school students only.

With the problem stated in the study, the following null hypotheses will be tested at a 95% level of significance: 1. There is no significant difference in the level of language learning motivation when respondents are grouped according to Gender, Socio-economic Status (Family's Monthly Income), Educational Attainment (Head of the household) and Learning Resources. 2. There is no significant difference in the level of proficiency when respondents are grouped according to Gender, Socio-economic Status (Family's Monthly Income), Educational Attainment (Head of the household) and Learning Resources. 3. There is no significant relationship between learning motivation and English proficiency.

Literature and Studies

Language Choice

Language choice among bilingual and multilingual individuals is influenced by various sociocultural factors, including the demographic profiles of speakers. A study by Fasya and Sari (2021) identified key determinants such as speech participants, situation, purpose, subject matter, and norms, with elements like gender, age, education level, social status, and intimacy level playing significant roles. Similarly, Granhemat et al. (2015) found that ethnicity significantly influences language selection among Malaysian undergraduates in transactional settings, while gender does not. These findings suggest that individuals often prefer their first language due to greater fluency and familiarity, facilitating more comfortable communication and expressing cultural identity and language loyalty. Consequently, language choice can

impact the acquisition of additional languages, as it is shaped by demographic factors such as ethnicity, age, and education level.

Demographic Profile

Understanding the demographic profiles of students is essential for evaluating characteristics such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, and learning resources which significantly influence educational outcomes. For instance, a study by Dizon et al. (2022) highlighted that factors like gender, availability of learning devices, internet access, parental education, and household income play a crucial role in students' academic achievements during modular distance education. Similarly, Duque et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of considering students' demographic backgrounds when assessing academic performance in rural educational settings. Additionally, research by Yasmin (2022) demonstrated that socio-demographic factors, including employment status and marital status, are associated with motivational characteristics and academic success in distance learning environments.

Gender. Several studies have examined the influence of gender on English language proficiency, highlighting notable differences between male and female students. As observed in the study of Erviona and Arsyad (2022) they have found that female students outperformed their male counterparts in comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation, while males excelled in grammar and fluency. Likewise, Lasekan (2018) observed that female learners exhibited higher English proficiency, attributing this to their stronger attitudes toward language education and greater self-confidence. Additionally, Nurlindawati et al. (2022) reported significant gender-based differences in mastering English skills, with female students demonstrating superior performance, potentially due to lower anxiety levels compared to male students. These findings suggest that gender plays a significant role in language acquisition, potentially influencing students' English proficiency levels.

Socio-economic status (SES). Socioeconomic status is a multifaceted construct that reflects an individual's or family's social and economic standing within a society. Contemporary research commonly assesses SES using a combination of indicators, including income, education, and occupational status, as these factors collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of one's social position. A study conducted by Ming et al. (2020) employed parents' education levels, occupations, and family income to evaluate SES, highlighting its significant role in children's academic achievements. Comparably, research by Werang et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of parental SES in influencing students' academic performance, underscoring the interconnectedness of financial resources, educational attainment, and professional standing in shaping educational outcomes. These studies underscore the importance of considering multiple dimensions of SES to fully grasp its impact on individual development and family dynamics. To classify the respondents based on their family's monthly income, the researcher utilized the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) income classification table to categorize the monthly income of Ata-Manobo families. According to PIDS (2022), household income is classified into seven categories: (1) poor (<₱10,957), (2) low income (but not poor), (3) lower middle class, (4) middle class, (5) upper middle income, (6) high income (but not rich), and (7) rich (≥₱219,140). These classifications served as the basis for determining the respondents' socio-economic status.

Educational Attainment. Recent research continues to explore the distinct roles of parental education in influencing children's academic outcomes. In the study of Lim (2021), it examined the relationship between parental involvement, parents' education levels, and students' academic achievement among middle-class, dual-earner families in the United States. The findings indicated that while certain

dimensions of parental involvement correlated with children's academic success, the parents' education level alone did not significantly impact academic performance when controlling for active parental engagement. Similarly, a study conducted by Almira et al., (2024) investigated the influence of parental education level, socioeconomic status, and learning motivation on high school students' academic performance. The results revealed no significant impact of these factors on academic outcomes, suggesting that other variables may better explain performance variability.

Learning resources. Learning resources are crucial for students who are learning the English language for several reasons. They offer a wide range of materials and tools that cater to different learning styles and preferences. This, in turn, enhances engagement and comprehension. For instance, a study by Herwanis et al. (2023) highlights the effectiveness of online tools in augmenting English learning, noting that students frequently utilize these resources to access educational materials, thereby improving their language skills. Similarly, research by Li et al., (2025) demonstrates that aligning sentence simplification with learners' proficiency levels can facilitate language acquisition, emphasizing the importance of tailored learning materials. Furthermore, a study by Haq (2023) explores the impact of augmented reality systems on elementary school ESL learners in rural China, finding that such technologies can significantly boost motivation and engagement, leading to improved language outcomes. Collectively, these studies affirm that integrating varied and technologically advanced learning resources can substantially enhance English language learning experiences.

Language Learning Motivation

Motivation, from a cognitive perspective, involves understanding why individuals choose to act in specific ways and the factors that influence their decision-making. It also encompasses determining the level of effort individuals are willing to put in to achieve their goals. Recent studies continue to underscore the complex nature of motivation in language learning, highlighting its critical role in learners' engagement and success. In the study of Pham (2021), it showed how essential the attitude and motivation in language acquisition, with motivation encompassing learners' orientations, attitudes, and aspirations that significantly influence learning outcomes. Ruziyeva (2024) also discussed the importance of motivation in language learning, examining various types of motivation and their psycholinguistic aspects. Furthermore, Soriano et al. (2021) explore factors influencing students' motivation in learning English, identifying elements such as teacher influence, enjoyment, desire to learn, parental influence, and classroom environment as significant contributors. Collectively, these studies reinforce the understanding that motivation in language learning is a complex interplay of internal desires and external influences, all of which are crucial for effective language acquisition.

Integrative motivation. It refers to a learner's desire to learn more about the cultural community of the target language or to assimilate to some degree in the target community. It involves a desire to increase affiliation with the target community. Recent studies have continued to explore the role of integrative motivation in second language (L2) acquisition, emphasizing its significance in learners' engagement and success. As viewed in the study of Makesavanh and Min (2022), they have investigated gender differences in integrative motivation among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Their findings revealed no significant gender differences in overall integrative motivation; however, variations in sub-constructs such as integrativeness and motivation suggest that cultural and gender-specific factors may play a role in shaping L2 learning motivation.

The high level of integrative motivation observed among Indigenous senior high school students aligns with recent studies on language learning motivation within Indigenous communities. For instance, Permangil (2024) reported that Indigenous college students in Davao del Norte demonstrated a high level of motivation to learn English, which positively impacted their English proficiency. Similarly, Dedel et al. (2022) found that Indigenous students at the University of Mindanao exhibited high levels of motivation and gratitude in their English learning, which were linked to their academic performance. These studies, along with the current findings, emphasize the importance of social integration and cultural engagement as key drivers of language learning motivation among Indigenous students.

Instrumental motivation. On the other hand, instrumental orientation is more utilitarian, driven by learners' desire to learn the language in order to accomplish non-interpersonal goals such as passing an exam or advancing a career. In addition, instrumental motivation, which involves learning a language for practical benefits such as career advancement or educational requirements, has been shown to positively impact language learning outcomes. For instance, a study by Liu and Yu (2021) found that instrumental goals significantly contributed to students' engagement in test-oriented activities, which, while improving test performance, may not necessarily enhance overall language proficiency. Conversely, integrative motivation, characterized by a genuine interest in the language and culture, has been associated with deeper learning strategies and long-term language retention. Research indicates that learners with integrative motivation are more likely to employ deep learning strategies and exhibit greater persistence in language study.

Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that both types of motivation can positively influence language proficiency. In fact, research by Zhang et al (2020) demonstrated that these motivational orientations significantly impact English language performance. In the same way, Qui and Xu (2023) explored the role of demographic factors in L2 listening and speaking motivation, emphasizing the importance of considering individual learner differences in language acquisition. These findings underscore the importance of integrating both motivational types and acknowledging learner diversity to enhance language outcomes. These studies collectively emphasize the multifaceted nature of language learning motivation, suggesting that both social integration and career-oriented goals play crucial roles in motivating students to learn English, particularly among Indigenous and minority groups. Educational programs designed to address these motivational factors can help enhance student engagement and proficiency in English.

English Language Proficiency

English proficiency is widely recognized as a gateway to enhanced educational and employment opportunities, serving as a global lingua franca that connects diverse populations. Proficiency in English opens doors to career opportunities on both local and international scales, with many employers prioritizing applicants who possess strong English language skills, regardless of their specific field or specialization (TESOL, 2024).

Language proficiency encompasses the accurate and appropriate use of language in both oral and written forms across various contexts. Various studies have expanded this definition to include multiple dimensions. For instance, Zhu et al. (2023) discussed the application of language proficiency scales in educational contexts, emphasizing the importance of frameworks like the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in assessing linguistic competence. Additionally, Torrevillas (2022) highlighted the significance of oral language proficiency, focusing on components such as comprehension,

fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and non-verbal communication. These studies stressed that true language proficiency involves not only mastery of linguistic elements but also the ability to apply language skills effectively in diverse situations, demonstrating critical thinking and cultural awareness.

Vocabulary. Vocabulary plays a critical role in language acquisition in L2 learning, emphasizing its impact on communication and comprehension. Zhang and Ma (2024) conducted a meta-analysis revealing that textual glosses significantly enhance L2 vocabulary acquisition, with a medium effect size. However, they noted that this effectiveness diminishes over time, suggesting the need for sustained reinforcement. Similarly, Mohsen et al. (2023) found that multimedia glosses have a substantial positive effect on vocabulary learning, though the impact varies based on learners' proficiency levels. On the contrary, Allal-Sumoto et al. (2023) highlighted that productive vocabulary knowledge—actively using words—accelerates sentence comprehension more effectively than mere recognition, indicating that depth of vocabulary knowledge is as crucial as breadth. Furthermore, Michael (2023) compared vocabulary acquisition methods among Filipino university students, concluding that flashcards and online platforms were more engaging and effective than direct teaching methods. These findings collectively suggest that while expanding vocabulary is vital for L2 proficiency, the methods of acquisition and the balance between receptive and productive knowledge significantly influence learning outcomes.

Grammar. Grammar serves as the foundational framework of a language, encompassing its sound, structure, and meaning systems. Recent studies have emphasized the integral role of grammar in language acquisition and communication. Aguion et al. (2021) highlighted that grammar acquisition is essential in second language teaching and learning, facilitating effective communication and comprehension. Similarly, Aggabao (2020) underscored the importance of understanding grammatical structures, noting that ESL students' use of nominals, adverbials, and adjectivals varies between written and oral modes, reflecting their grasp of language mechanics. These insights emphasized that a comprehensive understanding of grammar, encompassing the rules governing word arrangement and sentence construction, is crucial for effective communication and language mastery.

Moreover, recent studies have explored the interplay between grammar instruction methods and student motivation in second language acquisition. Berhe et al. (2023) investigated the impact of Focus on Form Instruction (FFI) on Ethiopian EFL students' motivation to learn grammar. Their findings suggest that structured output activities within FFI significantly enhance learners' motivation by promoting active engagement and communicative use of grammatical structures. Conversely, Gofurjanov (2024) examined the role of external incentives combined with simplified grammar instruction among unmotivated students. The study concluded that while external rewards can temporarily boost engagement, they may not lead to sustained motivation or deep learning unless integrated within a structured and supportive educational framework.

Reading Comprehension. A lot of researchers have delved into the intricate relationship between reading comprehension and students' motivation in language learning, revealing both convergent and divergent findings. Li and Gan (2022) conducted a study among Chinese university EFL students, identifying that intrinsic motivation factors, such as reading efficacy and enjoyment, significantly enhance reading comprehension. They also found that vocabulary knowledge, encompassing both breadth and depth, plays a crucial role in comprehension. Interestingly, their study noted that while high achievers benefited from monitoring strategies and deep vocabulary knowledge, these factors did not significantly impact average and low achievers, suggesting that metacognitive strategies may be more effective among proficient readers.

The findings in reading comprehension in the Philippines are align with the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, which revealed that the Philippines ranked lowest among 79 countries in reading comprehension. This highlighted a broader challenge in Filipino students' ability to understand and analyze written texts. In relation, Cabural and Infantado (2023) identified significant difficulties in reading comprehension among Grade 10 students, with many struggling to grasp textual information effectively. These studies underscored the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve reading comprehension skills among students. These perspectives are associated with findings from other studies, such as Leaño et al. (2019), which identified challenges in vocabulary, phonological awareness, and phonics recognition among Indigenous learners. These difficulties were attributed to limited exposure to English and insufficient foundational skills. Similarly, Tran and Mai (2020) explored the impact of vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension on English proficiency among high school students in underserved communities, including Indigenous groups. Their study revealed that students with limited vocabulary and weak grammar skills faced significant challenges in reading comprehension. The research emphasized that vocabulary knowledge is essential for understanding written texts, while a strong grasp of grammar is necessary for constructing meaningful sentences and effectively conveying ideas. Students with limited vocabulary struggled to connect words and ideas, ultimately hindering their ability to comprehend texts.

Ata-Manobo Students

The Ata-Manobo are an indigenous group residing primarily in the southern Philippines, particularly on the island of Mindanao. They trace their origins back to Paquibato, Davao City, and their ancestral domain encompasses areas in the municipalities of Kapalong, San Isidro, Sto. Tomas, and Talaingod in Davao del Norte. The Ata Manobo language, also referred to as Ata of Davao and Langilan, is a Manobo language spoken in northeastern Mindanao (Rovillos & Morales, 2002). Eighty percent (80%) of the inhabitants of Talaingod are Ata-Manobo (Municipal Planning and Development Office, 2023). Just like other communities, the Ata-Manobo people in Talaingod deserve attention due to their potential contributions to the pool of socio-cultural and scientific knowledge. They also deserve attention for their role in the development of a special education curriculum that can directly address their unique cultural qualities and needs. Villaluz et al. (2021) emphasized the need for Indigenous Peoples to strengthen language learning and cultural sustainability. Through community engagement, their study developed orthography and reading materials in the indigenous language, enhancing literacy while preserving cultural identity.

As mentioned by Namoc (2023), Ata-Manobo students faced various challenges that affect their academics, social lives, and emotional well-being. These challenges stem from issues such as boredom and sleepiness in class, struggles with mathematics and science, difficulties in memorization and pronunciation, low self-esteem, and frequent absences lasting up to a week. Additionally, social and emotional distractions include engaging in drinking sessions with peers, excessive communication with a girlfriend through calls and texts, fulfilling parental responsibilities, lack of family support, and constant thoughts about their family back home. These issues hamper them to the brighter future.

To summarize, the reviewed literature highlights the significant role of demographic factors such as gender, SES, parental education, and access to learning resources in shaping language learning motivation and English proficiency. While some studies suggest that female students tend to exhibit higher English proficiency due to lower anxiety and greater confidence, others report no significant gender differences. High-SES students typically have better access to learning resources, enhancing motivation, although

access to private tutoring and parental involvement can play a more direct role than income alone. Parental education is frequently linked to academic performance, but parental involvement may have a stronger influence on students' language learning outcomes. These findings underscore the complex interplay of demographic factors and call for more localized research on Indigenous and rural communities to tailor educational interventions effectively.

METHODS

Study site

This study explores English language learning motivation and proficiency among Ata-Manobo Senior High School students in Talaingod, Davao del Norte. The research covers seven schools offering Senior High programs: Butay Integrated School, Cabadiangan Integrated School, Dagohoy National High School, Datu Jose A. Libayao National High School, Mesolong Integrated School, Naseco Integrated School, and Palma Gil Integrated School.

This study employs a quantitative, non-experimental descriptive-correlational design to examine the relationship between English language learning motivation and proficiency. Quantitative methods allow for numerical data analysis using statistical techniques (Apuke, 2017), while the descriptive-correlational approach identifies statistical associations between variables (Creswell, 2009). The scope of this study was on the responses of the 112 respondents based on the modified questionnaires. These 112 respondents were chosen using universal purposive sampling, and each identified school within the Municipality of Talaingod, Davao del Norte were part of the sampling distribution. Universal sampling, also known as complete enumeration, is a purposive sampling technique in which the entire population with specific characteristics is examined (Lund Research, 2012).

DATA ANALYSIS

All the necessary data taken from the respondents' responses to the questionnaire has been collected, then, the tabulation and analysis process began. The results were analyzed and interpreted in the light of the purpose of this study using the appropriate statistical treatment. Frequency distribution was used to succinctly summarize and condense demographic data, including gender, socio-economic status, educational attainment, and learning resources. The mean was used to assess whether the Ata-Manobo senior high school students have achieved a high or low level of Motivation and their level of English language proficiency. Additionally, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) determined significant differences in motivation and proficiency based on socio-economic status, educational attainment, and learning resources.

To examine the relationship between language learning motivation and English language proficiency, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength and direction of their association. Pearson's r assessed whether a significant relationship existed between language learning motivation and English language proficiency among Ata-Manobo senior high school students, with a p -value of < 0.05 considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows the Demographic Profile of the Respondents which is categorized according to their gender, socio-economic status or the Family's monthly income, educational attainment of the household head, and

learning resources available at home.

Table 1: Respondents’ Demographic Profile

Profiles	Category	Frequency (n=112)	Percentage (100%)
Gender	Male	47	41.96
	Female	62	55.36
	LGBTQIA+	3	2.68
Family’s Monthly Income	Less than P10,957	107	95.54
	Between P10,958 and P21,193	5	4.46
Highest Educational Attainment of the Head of Family	Elementary Level	76	67.86
	Elementary Graduate	5	4.46
	High School Level	17	15.18
	High School Graduate	9	8.04
	College Level	5	4.46
Learning Resources Available at Home	Books Only	15	13.39
	Dictionary Only	2	1.79
	Smartphones Only	14	12.50
	Books and Dictionary Only	7	6.25
	Books and Smartphones Only	28	25.00
	Books, Dictionary, and Smartphones	39	34.82
	Books, Dictionary, Smartphones, and Computer	4	3.57
	NONE	3	2.68

Gender

Table 1 shows the respondents’ total population which consists of 112 respondents, with 47 males (41.96%), 62 females (55.36%), and 3 LGBTQIA+ individuals (2.68%).

Socio-economic Status

Table 1 also presents a family’s monthly income. Data shows that 95.54% of respondents have a family income below P10,957 per month, indicating that most belong to the low-income sector. Only 4.46% earn between P10,958 and P21,193, indicating that very few families have slightly higher financial stability.

Educational Attainment

Furthermore, the data in table 1 shows that most household heads have low educational attainment, which may contribute to the observed low-income levels. A majority (67.86%) only reached elementary school, with just 4.46% completing it. However, Elementary graduate and College level have 4% of the total

respondents. Similarly, 15.18% attended high school but did not graduate, while only 8.04% completed high school. Lastly, only 4.46% pursued college education, which indicates a very small percentage of family heads had access to higher education.

Learning Resources

Table 1 has shown varied access to learning resources among respondents. While 13.39% have only books, 12.50% rely solely on smartphones, and 1.79% have only dictionaries. Some students benefit from multiple resources, with 6.25% having both books and dictionaries, 25.00% possessing books and smartphones, and 34.82% owning books, dictionaries, and smartphones, indicating that these families have a mix of traditional and digital learning materials, potentially providing well-rounded educational support.

Level of Integrative Motivation

The table underneath shows that Indigenous senior high school students exhibit a Very High level of Integrative Motivation, with an overall mean score of 4.48. The standard deviation (SD) is less than 1 across all indicators, indicating a high degree of consistency in their responses.

Table 2: Levels of Language Learning Motivation in terms of Integrative Motivation

Statements	Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Learning English is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with my classmates who speak English inside the school.	4.69	0.76	Very High
2. Learning English enables me to discuss interesting educational topics in English with my classmates and friends from other ethnic backgrounds even in foreign countries.	4.56	0.76	Very High
3. Learning English is important because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.	4.63	0.88	Very High
4. Learning English is important because it will help me get many friends in school.	4.16	1.09	High
5. Learning English enables me to transfer my knowledge to other people, e.g., giving directions to tourists.	4.31	1.07	Very High
6. Learning English is important because it allows me to understand the content of books, films, music, and other content in English.	4.63	0.85	Very High
7. Studying English enables me to communicate like native English speakers: e.g., using English expressions.	4.24	1.01	Very High
8. Learning English enables me to appreciate English arts and literature.	4.49	0.82	Very High
9. Studying English helps me to be an open-minded and	4.52	0.84	Very High

sociable person like other students.

10. Working to achieve maximum proficiency in English. I am determined to study to the best of my ability.	4.54	0.72	Very High
Overall	4.48	0.60	Very High

Table 2 shows the highest-rated statement, "Learning English is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with my classmates who speak English inside the school" which has a mean of 4.69 which is described as very high. This connotes that the level of integrative motivation of Indigenous senior high school students is very extensive. Additionally, students agree in the statement, "Learning English is important because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups" with a mean of 4.63 and a descriptive level of very high. However, the lower mean rating is 4.16 which belongs to the statement, "Learning English is important because it will help me get many friends in school," with a descriptive level of high. The lowest-rated statement, "Learning English is important because it will help me get many friends in school," implies that while English can facilitate friendships, other social dynamics play a more significant role in forming relationships.

Level of Instrumental Motivation.

Table 3 indicates that Ata-Manobo senior high school students exhibit a Very High level of Instrumental Motivation, with an overall mean score of 4.62. The standard deviation (SD) is less than 1 across all indicators, signifying consistent responses among students.

Table 3: Levels of Language Learning Motivation in terms of Instrumental Motivation

Statements	Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Learning English is important because I will need it for my academic life since it will enable me to search and access more literature resources and reading materials.	4.66	0.82	Very High
2. Learning English is important because it will make me more knowledgeable and educated.	4.66	0.72	Very High
3. Learning English is important because I can easily pass exams and get a good ranking.	4.53	0.83	Very High
4. Learning English is important because I will need it for my future career.	4.71	0.67	Very High
5. Learning English is important because it can open doors to career opportunities.	4.78	0.63	Very High
6. Learning English is important because it will be useful for getting a better paying job.	4.66	0.67	Very High
7. Learning English is important because I can continue my education to a higher level.	4.56	0.83	Very High
8. Learning English is important because I will need to	4.48	0.84	Very High

use it on my overseas trips.			
9. Learning English allows me to connect with people from diverse backgrounds.	4.56	0.77	Very High
10. Being proficient in English is essential for unlocking my full potential and professional growth.	4.56	0.74	Very High
Overall	4.62	0.49	Very High

Table 3 presents the statement "Learning English is important because it can open doors to career opportunities" which received a Very High mean rating of 4.78 which connotes that the level of instrumental motivation of Ata-Manobo senior high school students is very extensive. This was followed by the statement, "Learning English is important because I will need it for my future career," with a mean rating of 4.71 and a descriptive level of very high.

The statement with the lowest mean rating is "Learning English is important because I will need to use it on my overseas trips," with a mean of 4.48 with a descriptive level of very high. This was followed by the statement, "Learning English is important because I can easily pass exams and get a good ranking," with a mean of 4.53 and a descriptive level of very high.

The overall Very High mean rating of 4.62 confirms their strong motivation and positive attitude toward English learning. The lowest-rated statement, "Learning English is important because I will need to use it on my overseas trips," suggests that while students see English as useful for travel, they prioritize academic and career-related advantages more highly.

English Language Proficiency

The data presented in the table 4 illustrates the distribution of proficiency levels based on numerical values of the 112 respondents in terms of the three indicators: Vocabulary, Grammar, and Reading Comprehension.

Table 4: Level of Students' English Language Proficiency

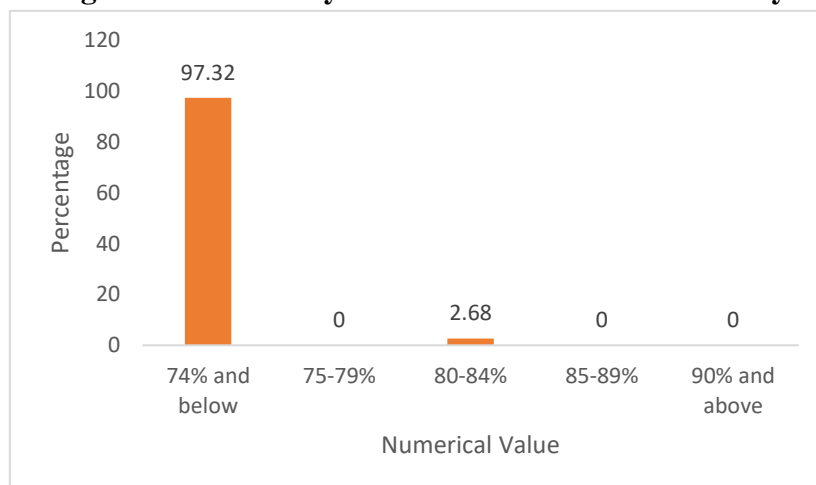
Indicators	Numerical Value	Frequency (n=112)	Percentage (100%)	Mean	Level
Vocabulary	74% and below	110	98.21	30.27%	Beginning
	75-79%	0	0		Developing
	80-84%	2	1.79		Approaching
	85-89%	0	0		Proficient
	90% and above	0	0		Advanced
Grammar	74% and below	111	99.11	25.63%	Beginning
	75-79%	0	0		Developing

	80-84%	1	0.89		Approaching
	85-89%	0	0		Proficient
	90% and above	0	0		Advanced
	74% and below	110	98.21	29.64%	Beginning
Reading Comprehension	75-79%	0	0		Developing
	80-84%	2	1.79		Approaching
	85-89%	0	0		Proficient
	90% and above	0	0		Advanced
	Overall			28.51%	Beginning Proficiency

Vocabulary

Table 4 shows that in the vocabulary indicator, 98.21% of students with numerical value of 74% and below are at the Beginning level. This indicates that most of the students can only understand short utterances in communication. On the contrary, a small percentage of 1.79% with a numerical value of 80-84% is categorized as Approaching Proficiency. This suggests that only a minimal number of learners have developed a moderate level of competency, students can understand standard speech delivered in most settings. The results presented in Table 4 are visually depicted in Figure 1.

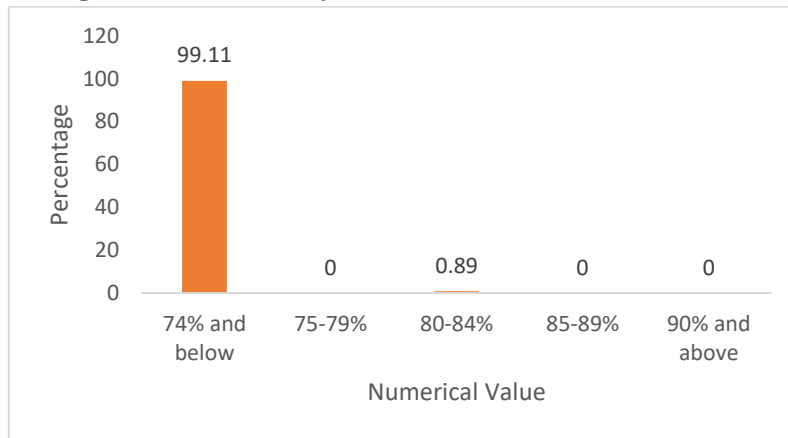
Figure 1: Proficiency Level of Students in Vocabulary



Grammar

On the other hand, the Grammar results in table 5 reveal that 99.11% of students with a numerical value of 74% and below are at the Beginning level. This means that they can only understand short utterances in communication that exhibits significant difficulties in grammar proficiency. Only one student (0.89%) managed to reach the Approaching Proficiency level, having a numerical value of 80-84% demonstrating moderate competency, while no students achieved Developing (75-79%), Proficient (85-89%), or Advanced (90% and above) level. The results presented in Table 4 are visually depicted in Figure 2.

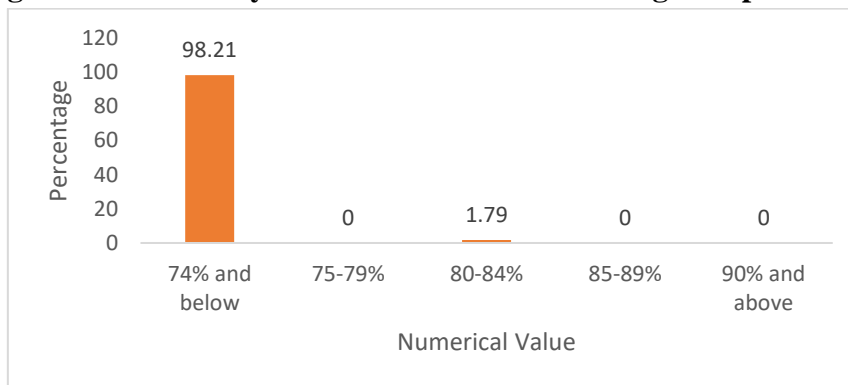
Figure 2: Proficiency Level of Students in Grammar



Reading Comprehension

Table 5 also shows data on reading comprehension proficiency reveals that 98.21% of the students fall within the Beginning level, with a numerical value of 74% and below. Only 1.79% (80-84%) reached Approaching Proficiency, indicating minimal improvement. As observed, no students scored in the Developing (75-79%), Proficient (85-89%), or Advanced (90% and above) categories, indicating a complete absence of higher-level comprehension skills among the group. The results presented in Table 4 are visually depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 2: Proficiency Level of Students in Reading Comprehension



Level of Language Motivation across their Demographic Profile

The table underneath shows the analysis of variance on the level of language motivation across the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance on the Level of Language Motivation of the Students across their Demographic Profile

Profiles	Category	Mean	SD	F	p	Remarks
Gender	Male	4.54	0.50	.002	.998	
	Female	4.55	0.54			

	LGBTQIA+	4.55	0.20			There is no significant difference
Family's Monthly Income	Less than P10,957	4.54	0.52	.353	.554	There is no significant difference
	Between P10,958 and P21,193	4.68	0.30			
Highest Educational Attainment of the Head of Family	Elementary Level	4.50	0.57	.856	.493	There is no significant difference
	Elementary Graduate	4.58	0.42			
	High School Level	4.56	0.39			
	High School Graduate	4.75	0.25			
	College Level	4.81	0.08			
	NONE	4.50	0.57			

Table 5 shows the mean scores, standard deviations (SD), and statistical significance (F and p-values) for gender identity, family income, and household head's educational attainment. This analysis aims to identify any significant differences in language motivation based on these demographic factors. The results indicate no significant difference in language motivation based on gender ($p=.998$), family income ($p=.554$), or household head's educational background ($p=.439$). This suggests that motivation levels remain consistent across all gender identities, income levels, and parental education backgrounds, implying that external demographic factors have minimal influence on students' language learning motivation.

Level of Language Proficiency across their Demographic Profile

Table 6: Analysis of Variance on the Level of Language Proficiency of the Students across their Demographic Profile

Profiles	Category	Mean	SD	F	p	Remarks
Gender	Male	28.30%	15.37	.773	.493	There is no significant difference
	Female	30.65%	13.17			
	LGBTQIA+	36.67%	20.82			
Family's Monthly Income	Less than P10,957	29.44%	14.33	3.731	.048	There is a significant difference
	Between P10,958 and P21,193	38.00%	10.95			

Highest Educational Attainment of the Head of Family	Elementary Level	24.87%	10.77	27.703	<.001	There is a significant difference
	Elementary	22.00%	4.47			
	Graduate	37.06%	6.86			
	High School	41.11%	10.54			
	Graduate	68.00%	13.04			
	NONE	24.87%	10.77			

Table 6 presents mean scores, standard deviations (SD), and statistical significance (F and p-values) to assess differences in language proficiency based on gender, socio-economic status, and household head's education. The findings indicate that students' English language proficiency does not significantly vary by gender ($p=.493$), meaning male, female, and LGBTQIA+ students have similar proficiency levels. However, family income ($p=.048$) and the educational attainment of the household head ($p<.001$) do have significant difference. That is, students from higher-income families tend to have better proficiency, suggesting that financial resources might provide better learning opportunities.

Relationship between Language Motivation and English Language Proficiency

The following analysis presented in the table below examines the relationship between English language proficiency and different types of motivation, specifically Integrative Motivation and Instrumental Motivation.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis between Language Motivation and English Language Proficiency among Students

	Overall English Language Proficiency		
	r-value	p-value	remarks
Integrative Motivation	.561	.042	Significant
Instrumental Motivation	.101	.332	Not Significant
Overall Language	.136	.152	Not Significant

Table 7 results show that students who are motivated to learn English for social and cultural integration (integrative motivation) tend to have higher English proficiency, as indicated by the significant positive correlation ($r=.561$; $p=.042$). This means that students who genuinely want to connect with others through the language tend to perform better. However, motivation driven by practical benefits, such as career or academic goals (instrumental motivation), does not show a significant relationship with proficiency ($r=.101$; $p=.332$). Overall, language motivation as a whole is not strongly linked to English proficiency ($r=.136$; $p=.152$), suggesting that while personal interest in the language may help, other factors, which are not part of this study, could play a bigger role in students' proficiency. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, which means that there is no significant relationship between Language learning motivation and English language proficiency.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that demographic factors influence students' learning experiences. The higher percentage of female respondents compared to males aligns with global trends, where females generally demonstrate higher academic engagement and performance. This observation is consistent with findings from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) 2022, which emphasized the role of parental involvement and socioeconomic status in academic achievement.

In addition, a significant majority of families earning less than P10,957 monthly highlighted the prevalence of low-income households. This socioeconomic status was closely linked to limited access to educational resources. The PIDS (2023) study underscored that quality education is often accessible primarily to middle and high-income families, suggesting that lower-income households may face challenges in providing adequate educational support.

The results above indicated that a substantial majority of students have parents with education up to the elementary level or lower. Parental education has been linked to children's academic outcomes. For instance, the study of Maimad et al. (2023) involving Filipino adolescents found that higher parental education levels were associated with increased academic achievement and better school adjustment.

In spite of this, the access to such resources is crucial for academic success, especially in remote learning contexts. The digital divide has been a significant issue in the Philippines, where many students lack access to technology and reliable internet, hindering their ability to participate in online education (Villaluz et al, 2023).

Ata-Manobo senior high school students show strong integrative motivation, valuing English for academic success, cultural appreciation, and global communication. This aligns with Permangil (2024), who noted high motivation among indigenous Filipino students for social integration. Similarly, Dedel et al. (2022) found that Indigenous students experienced high levels of motivation and gratitude in their English language learning, which were linked to their academic performance.

Additionally, students display high instrumental motivation, seeing English as key for career and personal development. These findings are in consonance with the study of Lumontod and Pradia (2023) who found that Manobo learners recognized the practical importance of English, acknowledging its role in accessing better job opportunities and higher education. Similarly, Permangil (2024) reported that Indigenous college students viewed English proficiency as essential for academic success and future employment, highlighting the instrumental value they place on the language.

The study reveals that most Ata-Manobo senior high school students struggle with English proficiency, particularly in vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. Eslit and Valderama (2021) found similar challenges, especially in speaking skills. Ullah et al. (2021) identified limited exposure and ineffective teaching as key barriers, while Motus (2023) highlighted weak foundational grammar skills among indigenous learners. Reyes (2021) also noted that traditional grammar-based instruction may not suit their learning styles, further hindering proficiency.

In addition, reading comprehension remains a major challenge, as many students struggle to interpret and analyze texts. The 2018 PISA ranked the Philippines lowest among 79 countries in reading comprehension, reflecting widespread literacy difficulties. Cabural and Infantado (2023) also noted significant struggles among high school students, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to enhance comprehension skills, particularly for indigenous learners.

The study suggests that language learning motivation remains stable regardless of gender, income, or parental education. This aligns with findings from Pei and Pamintuan (2024), who noted that demographic

factors had minimal impact on English speaking proficiency among Chinese college students. Similarly, Yulianti et al. (2018) and Xie et al. (2025) highlighted that parental involvement rather than socio-economic status or educational background plays a more substantial role in fostering motivation. These studies underscore that intrinsic factor, including parental support and individual characteristics, are key drivers of motivation, rather than external socio-economic factors.

The study found that family income and parental education significantly affect students' proficiency levels. Students from higher-income families and those whose parents have higher levels of education tend to perform better in English. This suggests that financial resources and parental education provide critical opportunities for better educational support, exposure to English, and access to a more enriching language environment.

These findings align with research by Shi and Lu (2021), which showed that students from wealthier families had better access to private tutoring, English-language materials, and a more supportive home environment, all of which contributed to higher English proficiency. Similarly, Zhang (2022) demonstrated that students whose parents had higher education levels were more likely to excel academically, benefiting from greater encouragement, access to educational resources, and a language-rich environment.

While the study could not determine the precise impact of learning resources due to the multiple-response format of the data, it remains clear that socio-economic factors—especially family income and parental education—are significant determinants of language proficiency. These factors contribute to a student's ability to access the educational tools and support necessary to improve language skills, thereby influencing academic success.

Overall, these findings emphasize the need for educators and policymakers to consider socio-economic factors when designing strategies to improve language proficiency. Promoting parental involvement and providing resources for lower-income families could help create a more equitable learning environment. Raising awareness about the importance of language development in the home, regardless of socio-economic background, could further enhance the educational opportunities for all students.

Likewise, students with integrative motivation tend to have better English proficiency, while instrumental motivation shows a weaker connection. This suggests that motivation alone is not the strongest determinant of proficiency. Syafrizal (2020) emphasized that the impacts of integrative and instrumental motivation on Indonesian learners of English. The study found that integrative motivation was stronger among students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study highlights a significant issue in English language learning among Ata-Manobo senior high school students in Talaingod District. While students exhibit high motivation, students' vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension remain weak, highlighting a gap between motivation and proficiency. While socio-economic factors influence proficiency, motivation is driven more by internal factors. Integrative motivation enhances proficiency, whereas instrumental motivation shows little impact. These findings stress the need for a holistic approach that addresses socio-economic barriers while fostering motivation. Educators should integrate cultural elements and real-world communication to strengthen both motivation and language skills.

Based on the conclusions, several recommendations are proposed to support the English language learning needs of Ata-Manobo senior high school students. To improve English proficiency among indigenous

students in Talaingod District, it is recommended that DepEd Davao del Norte strengthen contextualized language programs tailored to the needs of indigenous learners, offering targeted support for students from lower-income families through scholarships, subsidized tutoring, and access to digital resources. Schools should collaborate with DepEd to implement structured programs focusing on vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension, and create opportunities for real-world English use through cultural exchange programs and partnerships with local governments, NGOs, and the private sector. Teachers should adopt interactive, culturally responsive teaching strategies that connect language learning to cultural identity, while LGUs and NGOs can provide financial assistance, establish community learning centers, and organize extracurricular activities to enhance English communication skills. The Ata-Manobo community should encourage both language preservation and English learning, integrating indigenous knowledge into lessons and fostering English use in social contexts. Parents must support English practice at home, engage in school activities, and promote bilingualism, while Ata-Manobo students are encouraged to actively seek resources, engage in school and community activities, and maintain a positive attitude toward learning English, all while embracing their cultural heritage.

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