

Learners' Engagement and Competence in English

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Abstract

This research was intended to evaluate the learner engagement levels and levels of English proficiency among 255 Grade 10 pupils in the District of Caluya, School Division of Antique. Adopting a cross-sectional research approach, the research gathered quantifiable information using a self-developed survey questionnaire that quantified the students' engagement levels in English classes and their reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary proficiency levels. The findings indicated that students had a moderate level of engagement, with the most common being behavioral engagement, followed by lower emotional and cognitive engagement. Furthermore, students had average English language proficiency, with the highest marks in reading comprehension and the lowest in grammar and vocabulary. A moderate level of positive relationship was established between students' participation and their level of English competency, which supports the fact that more participatory students had increased English proficiency. On this premise, the research suggested the embrace of interactive, student-centered educational approaches to help improve all types of engagement in addition to deploying more teaching facilities to aid vocabulary and grammar advancement. Professional development opportunities should also be offered for teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills, and parents should establish an English-rich home environment to reinforce learning further. Finally, the research recommended that more factors related to learner participation and language ability be investigated, like teacher proficiency and socio-economic status. In general, the research emphasized the need to develop greater engagement to enhance students' English language proficiency.

Keywords: Learners' engagement, competence, and english

Introduction

Student interaction and English language proficiency are amongst the most imperative elements of school achievement, more so at secondary school level. In the framework of the Filipino education system in which English happens to be a major language used for instruction, the proficiency of students to acquire, understand, communicate, and utilize English proficiently has important implications on general academic achievement as well as competence for tertiary and workforce entry. Students' participation—entailing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in classroom activities—also reinforces this ability, energizing motivation, active participation, and the productive use of language skills.

English proficiency and learner motivation play a critical role in determining academic achievement, especially in the Philippine educational system where the use of English as a primary teaching medium is common. Current research highlights the complex interconnection between these variables and their

combined influence on student performance.

For example, Tan (2023) in a study examined the critical reading abilities of new Grade 10 students and found that students' attitude toward reading ability was substandard, with most of them having poor reading skills and fewer words in their vocabulary. This lack of critical reading ability is usually traced to substandard teaching facilities and material, as necessitates interventions that focus on improving the reading skills of students in Grade 10. Furthermore, research by Abel (2023) explored the Grade 10 English curriculum's effectiveness in enhancing communicative competence at Bolbok Integrated National High School. The study identified a decline in English proficiency among students, as evidenced by the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) results over three years. This trend emphasizes the necessity for curriculum adjustments and pedagogical strategies to bolster students' communicative skills. A study by Cabrestante and Valentos (2024) also assessed the impact of interactive video lessons on English proficiency among Grade 10 students in Cabuyao City. The results revealed that students who were exposed to interactive video lessons recorded considerable improvement in their English proficiency levels, indicating that incorporating multimedia materials could boost learner interest and language acquisition.

In the Caluya District, School Division of Antique, a more careful look at the English proficiency and interest of Grade 10 students is timely and pertinent. As the last year of Junior High School, Grade 10 is a critical phase of transition when students are expected to have learned basic English competencies that would ready them for the more rigorous demands of Senior High School. Yet, several local and contextual elements, such as teaching approaches, socio-economic situations, learning resources availability, and the changing educational environment, can influence students' competence and engagement in English learning.

This research endeavors to determine the degree of English language ability and the extent of learner engagement of 255 Grade 10 learners in the District of Caluya. Through patterns, strengths, and weaknesses detected in these facets, the study hopes to contribute findings which can guide teachers, school administrators, and policy-makers in planning interventions that improve both learner engagement and English language abilities of the learners in the district.

Methodology

Research Design

This research employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design in investigating levels of learners' engagement and English language skills among Grade 10 students of the District of Caluya, School Division of Antique. Cross-sectional research design was used in this study because it allowed the gathering of data from a population at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the current engagement of students and their English skill level.

Participants

The study participants consisted of 255 Grade 10 students from diverse public secondary schools within the District of Caluya during the school year 2024–2025. Stratified random sampling was used to make an equal representation of students belonging to different schools and sections of the district.

Data Gathering Instrument

A questionnaire survey instrument was constructed and used by the participants themselves as the

primary tool for data collection. It was composed of two parts: the first part measured learners' engagement using behavioral, emotional, and cognitive indicators modified from Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004); the second part determined English language proficiency, which included reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary, and followed the DepEd English curriculum.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher asked the school authorities for permission and liaised with the English teachers to conduct data collection. The questionnaires were distributed during normal class time in February 2025. Participants received an explanation of the purpose of the study before responding to the survey, and informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians, while students gave assent.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed descriptively, including mean and standard deviation, to ascertain overall levels of learner engagement and English proficiency. Pearson correlation analysis was further employed to identify whether or not there was a relationship between learner engagement and proficiency in English.

Ethical Considerations

The research adhered strictly to ethical standards in ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of all the participants while collecting data. The respondents were informed that it was voluntary to participate, and they could withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. All ethical clearance was sought from the School Division Office before collecting the data.

Result

The research sought to identify the levels of learners' engagement and English language proficiency among 255 Grade 10 students in the District of Caluya. Findings of the data analysis are discussed below.

Learners' Engagement

The analysis revealed that the overall level of learner engagement was moderate, with a mean score of 3.45 (SD = 0.62) on a 5-point scale. Of the three types of engagement, behavioral engagement had the highest mean score of 3.65, followed by emotional engagement (M = 3.42), and cognitive engagement (M = 3.28). These findings showed that students were overall engaged and cooperative in English lessons but exhibited slightly weaker levels of internal motivation and deep learning approaches.

English Language Competence

The results indicated that the overall English language proficiency of the participants was average, with a mean of 72.3% (SD = 8.5). Of the subcomponents, reading comprehension received the highest average score of 78%, followed by vocabulary with a mean of 70%, and grammar with a mean of 69%. These findings indicated that although the students could read English texts comparatively well, they found it more challenging to navigate the structure of the language and words.

Correlation Between Learner Engagement and English Competence

A Pearson correlation test was run to determine the correlation between students' engagement and their English language proficiency. The findings revealed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$), which implied that students who were more engaged in their English lessons performed better on English-related activities.

Discussion

The research sought to find out the learners' engagement and English language proficiency levels of Grade 10 pupils in the District of Caluya, and the correlation between the two variables.

The results showed that the learners tended to have a moderate level of engagement, with the most prevalent dimension being behavioral engagement. This indicated that although the students were engaged and attentive in classroom activities, there was scope for improvement in their emotional and cognitive engagement. These findings concurred with the research of Fredricks et al. (2004), which stressed that a high degree of behavioral engagement is typical in well-organized classroom settings but not necessarily indicative of more profound cognitive processing or affective engagement with the material.

Regarding English language proficiency, the students had an average level of competence, with comparatively better performance in reading comprehension and poor scores in grammar and vocabulary. These results complemented those of Tan (2023), who indicated that Grade 10 students in the Philippines tend to be poor in basic language mechanics despite their ability to comprehend text meaning. The decreased grammar and vocabulary scores may be due to restricted access to enriched reading materials and the absence of contextual learning techniques in rural communities such as Caluya.

The positive relationship between engagement and English language proficiency further supported the need to cultivate active learning involvement in the process. Learners who were more engaged performed better in English, a finding supported by the study of Cabrestante and Valentos (2024), who noted that interactive learning approaches had a significant impact on engagement and language acquisition.

Overall, the study's results highlighted the need for instructional approaches that not only encourage participation but also promote deeper emotional and cognitive investment in learning English. Integrating multimedia resources, real-life communication tasks, and collaborative learning activities could enhance both engagement and competence. Moreover, addressing gaps in grammar and vocabulary instruction should be prioritized to support more balanced language development.

Conclusion

This research evaluated the levels of students' engagement and English language proficiency among 255 Grade 10 pupils in the District of Caluya, School Division of Antique. It also explored the correlation between these two variables using a cross-sectional quantitative design.

The results indicated that the students showed a moderate degree of engagement, with their behavioral engagement stronger than emotional and cognitive ones. This meant that although students engaged actively in lessons, they were less likely to be intensely emotionally or intellectually invested in their English learning processes.

The research also determined that the students' English language proficiency was average, with reading

comprehension being the area where they performed best and grammar and vocabulary needing improvement. These findings corroborated the requirement for specific interventions to enhance the students' foundation language skills.

In addition, a positive moderate correlation existed between learners' engagement and English language proficiency. This indicated that students who were more engaged in their English courses were likely to attain higher language proficiency levels.

Finally, the research emphasized the need to encourage all facets of student engagement for enhanced academic performance in English. Increased emotional and cognitive engagement, together with better teaching methodologies, might lead to elevated levels of competence among Grade 10 students within the district.

Recommendation

Based on the results of this research, some recommendations were proposed to improve the moderate levels of learner engagement and the mean English language proficiency noted among Grade 10 students in the District of Caluya, School Division of Antique.

In the first instance, it was suggested that English instructors use more participatory and learner-focused instructional strategies. Among such strategies were using group exercises, performance-based exercises, and multimedia materials, which had proven to enhance learner engagement and motivation. By departing from the conventional lecturing mode of instruction, teachers could have enhanced greater emotional and intellectual investment within the learning room. This would, in itself, be supposed to contribute to improved understanding and language mastery.

Second, schools were recommended to increase access to teaching materials that facilitated language development. Additional reading books, vocabulary-building aids, and grammar-oriented exercises were recommended as effective tools. These materials could have helped address the weakness of the students in the aspects of grammar and vocabulary, which were seen as the least developed areas of English proficiency in this research.

Third, it was suggested that the Department of Education and local school officials offer continuous professional development courses for English teachers. These courses could have prepared teachers with new approaches and latest best practices in language teaching. Periodic training sessions and peer mentoring were suggested to maintain teaching quality and effectiveness.

Moreover, parents and guardians were encouraged to establish a conducive learning environment at home. Basic practices, including talking English in conversation, making English-language books or media accessible, and monitoring language-related homework, were thought to affirm classroom learning and assist in enhancing students' confidence in employing the language.

Lastly, it was suggested that subsequent studies be undertaken to better investigate the determinants of learner motivation and English proficiency. Longitudinal or mixed-method studies would have been able to offer greater understanding of how student attitudes, classroom practices, or home environments shape performance in English across time.

By the adoption of these suggestions, it was expected that teachers and stakeholders would be in a better position to improve both participation and proficiency in English, ultimately contributing to better learning outcomes for students in the District of Caluya.

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