

Understanding the Relationship between Linguistic Competence and Academic Performance from Students Perspectives

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Abstract

Language is vitally important to students academic success, especially in cases where the method through which we teach is not students first language. In college or university settings, learners are expected to read textbooks, write assignments, give presentations and take exams in a language. Linguistic competence refers to whether an individual uses a language correctly. It involves reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and vocabulary, among others. This language can aid in grasping what the students are learning and the idea that they need to express. But students learn, engage with, and perform at optimal learning, with the help of strong language support, if they are successful in understanding lectures followed by reading the words you tell them, completing well designed academic coursework. But if these students have weaker language skills, they are possibly going to have trouble grasping lessons, writing assignments and speaking up in class. Proficiency in language can be highly effective in student academic performance. The association between language skills and school performance has recently become the focus of much debate in education. Many today's classrooms feature students from diverse linguistic backgrounds and cultures. The students do, in fact, learn in a second or third language, in many cases it becomes more difficult to study. They might even struggle to express their understanding of a topic if they do not have confidence in the teaching language it is in but still understand it.

Academic performance is often evaluated using assignments, tests, presentations and classroom participation, all of which demand language skill sets. So students proficiency at using language can directly impact their performance in their studies. Knowing this relationship is significant as this will help them as well as the institutions better support students. The objective of this research is to explore the students perspective on the linguistic competence vs academic performance relation. Rather than focusing solely on grades or exam scores, the study seeks to probe how students themselves believe that language skills influence academic learning and achievements. The main research focus is on how students perceive the link between language proficiency and their academic performance. The study focuses on student experiences and views so as to better understand the dilemmas students encounter and how language shapes learning. The research is conducted in three principal questions. This is done with the aim of clarifying students perceptions towards their language competence in school context. This reflects their confidence levels around reading academic texts, writing assignments, speaking in class, and comprehending lectures. The second aim is on the impact of proficiency in a language on students comprehension of their course materials and performance of academic exercises. These

activities are things like reading textbooks, writing essays, jotting down notes during lectures, sharing thoughts, and the like.

The third goal is to understand how students think their language skills impact their overall academic performance. The study attempts to illustrate the importance of language competence in the educational experiences of students in order to study these objectives. In order to achieve these goals, the research employs a qualitative research strategy. Qualitative research is concerned with the qualitative experience of the people and understanding their insights over time. Rather than just taking numbers or statistics, this approach enables a researcher to delve into students thoughts and experiences in a more thorough way.

The study is based on surveys and semistructured interviews among undergraduate students of various academic backgrounds. The survey collects general information about students experiences with language in the classroom, and the interviews facilitate indepth description of students perspectives and experiences. Using openended questions, students can describe the challenges they face, how language impacts their learning, and how they are attempting to master their language. Secondary sources of information such as books, research articles, and previous studies published on language learning and academic performance are also used as we are collecting the data from the student population. These sources allow the researcher to understand more about the issue at hand and compare this study with previous works. The data from the surveys and interviews are analysed in terms of identified common ideas and patterns in students answers.

This approach gives the researcher insight into the principal themes that emerge from students accounts and views. Findings of the study suggest that students generally understand that linguistic competence is a significant predictor of academic performance. Many students note that, having good language skills, they can understand lectures better and follow teacher explanations. They find it easier to read textbooks or academic papers. Better language skills enable students to write their assignments clearly and organise their ideas better. Confident students who feel empowered around their language abilities are more likely to have a voice in class discussions, ask questions, and share their opinions. Students with a clear grasp of language help them to contribute in class discussions, have more confidence, question and express things to their classmates.

Their active participation in learning allows them to learn better and perform better academically. But when students are not confident enough about their language skills they have many hurdles to surmount. Some say they sometimes understand the basic idea of a lecture but cannot fully understand all the details because of language barriers. Others struggle to analyse challenging academic texts that contain unfamiliar words or difficult sentence structures. Students also struggle with writing assignments, due to the fact that it is often difficult for them to state their ideas clearly and employ proper grammar. In exams, students with weaker language skills may be unable to clarify their answers even when they know the topic. Due to these struggles, their academic success does not always correspond with what they actually know or how capable they are. Another interesting finding of the study is that students often try to find their own ways to improve their language skills. Some students use dictionaries, translation tools, and online learning platforms to understand difficult words and concepts. Others try to improve their language by reading more books, watching educational videos, or practising writing regularly. Other students study alongside each other, discussing hard topics with one another to get more understanding of the topic and the language. These strategies demonstrate that language is not only important, but for students to do so in a healthy way, they must know that it matters with what they learn

and would strive to work towards it. Educational institutions also need to help students master their language abilities, research indicates. This report is a testament to those students who feel colleges and universities should provide language support, writing workshops, and academic skills training services. These kinds of programmes contribute in some way to improving students reading, writing, and communication skills. Teachers also can offer supportive guidance by being able to articulate difficult concepts clearly, prompt students to ask questions, and give constructive feedback on tasks. When teachers employ supportive teaching methods, learners are more inclined to engage in class and improve their language skills. To cut to the chase, the study finds that linguistic competence is closely related to student academic performance. Good language skills do not only improve understanding they are, from the students point of view, also important for reading lessons and academic materials, writing assignments, and performing well in exams. For both groups, weaker language skills in turn can produce problems that affect students capacity to properly demonstrate knowledge and understanding. This work reveals that language abilities are extremely important for each learner when considering their perspectives, as is emphasized by the article. Schools must learn that proficiency in language is not just a communicative skill, but a vital asset for academic achievement. Providing language support and encouraging students to develop their linguistic abilities can make the learning environment better and improve the quality of education for everyone. Students who grow their language skills as linguistically capable members will actively study and do better than others who do not speak the language confidently and participate in their studies.

Keywords: Linguistic Competence, Academic Performance, Students Perspectives, Language Proficiency, Higher Education.

1. Introduction

Language is, therefore, of particular importance in education, as it represents the primary medium of knowledge transmission for learning. At university, students must be able to read, write, listen and speak fluently to contribute to learning and learning activities. Language competence has been considered particularly important when it comes to students' success, as students are more capable of achieving higher academic performance with language proficiency (Solina, 2022; Li, 2025). But for a number of students, learning in a second or even third language poses various challenges. This is particularly true for many students who struggle to conceptualize complex ideas, acquire academic vocabulary, and articulate their thoughts. Research suggests that nonnative language learning erodes understanding and low academic achievement results from limited proficiency in a target language (Bilpub Group, 2024). Thus, the aim of this study is to explore how students selfevaluate their linguistic skills and what impact this process has on their educational achievement. The key aims are to investigate students' selfassessments of language skills as well as to determine the influence of language proficiency on comprehension and academic tasks, as well as to examine its overall influence on academic performance. It explores the questions around students' perceptions of linguistic competence; how competence as a communicator of language influences learning and academic performance. It matters because this study helps educators and institutions recognize the importance of support students in a second language can obtain, and this can be seen in other educational settings. Similarly, it contributes to enhancing teaching practices and policies. But the study's limitations include that it may rely on students' selfreported data, which at times are not totally accurate and can contain small errors or bias.

Because language experiences vary across contexts also, results may not generalize to other educational settings. This study seeks a better understanding yet is still somewhat limited.

- **Objectives of the Study**

The three primary goals of this study are:

- To explore students' perception of their linguistic competence, including their confidence in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.
- To examine how linguistic competence affects students' academic tasks such as understanding lectures, reading academic texts, writing assignments, and participating in class.
- To identify the challenges faced by students in using a second or third language and to understand the strategies they use, along with the role of institutional support in improving their language skills and academic performance.

2. Literature Review

The idea of linguistic competence is very crucial in education, especially in second language learning, by which students use language for comprehension and communication. Linguistic proficiency is the ability to use grammar, vocabulary, and meaning appropriately in authentic contexts. A strong correlation can be identified between linguistic competence and academic achievement and it is established that students with better language skills perform better in English subjects and overall at school (Solina, 2022). In theoretical perspective, it is suggested in previous review studies that there are multiple factors that influence language learning: interaction, environment and psychological factors. Zhao (2024) emphasizes in a systematic review that social, educational and individual influences are all significant determinants of student language proficiency. Likewise, He (2025) by means of scoping review also describes that second language learning process is intricate and is reliant on preparation, exposure and learning procedures. These theories illustrate that language acquisition is not an easy process but rather is one that is interrelated. Extensive research provides a clear correlation between language ability and performance. As Mshelia (2025) suggests that proficiency in English is highly significant for students and is necessary to learn in classes and enhance his or her performance in various subjects. Similarly, Yu (2025) also revealed that language ability helps an individual to adapt to more academic and social demands of higher education. As Maarouf (2024) mentioned academic language skills are the key in performance on test as well as to all learning results. These studies demonstrate the consistent relationship between language proficiency and educational success. But students that are in multilingual classrooms are up against countless hurdles. Grammar skills, writing practice, sentence structure, etc., suffer when learning in a second language, which takes a toll on their academic work (Sciedu Press, 2025). However, these challenges hinder students making clear and effective ideas on paper and completing schoolwork. As noted in review studies, lack of accurate language support or different strategies can pose challenges and cause lower levels of confidence in students. Consequently, many students are no longer comfortable joining classroom discussions. Previous studies focused on learners' perspectives suggest that many do think that language ability is necessarily related to their academic success.

Solina (2022), weak learners' linguistic competence impairs their achievement in language-oriented teaching subjects. Zhao (2024) also shows that motivation and confidence are strongly correlated with language proficiency, and students with low proficiency may have a decreased confidence in situations where learning is required. The results indicate that the perception of learners is relevant to interpret

their effects on language acquisition. Although a multitude of studies exist, there is a research gap to fill. The majority of these studies study outcomes, often measurable in nature as test data measures, but not in terms of students' own perceptions of their own linguistic ability. Similarly, most research emphasizes on general language skills, yet not directly links them to students personal encounters and academic effectiveness at all. Thus, it is necessary to conduct this study to investigate students' views and a new picture as to how linguistic competence influences students' academic life. In the general overview, the literature offers valuable information but some areas need still more research and investigation in several aspects.

3. Methodology

As a qualitative research approach was carried in this study, one way students' experiences and perceptions of students' views as well as their perceptions, such as their lived experiences may be understood and understood in depth. Qualitative research is interpretative rather than quantitative in nature and is not so much so that the researcher can dive into the more complex phenomenon of linguistic competence on topics as something that can be discussed in more depth. It is especially relevant in cases where the goal is to discern participants' perspectives and experience phenomena as real-life events (Creswell, 2022). Uwe Flick (2022) also notes that qualitative research allows for broad flexibility and allows an in-depth investigation into social and educational issues from a wider audience. This research process uses qualitative methodology, as such the researcher is then able to see what students' views of language abilities related to academic performance and hence, academic achievement. This study's participants are undergraduate students from two Delhi-based institutions in Delhi, who have been selected to offer valuable experiences and relevant perspectives. The institutions that participated in the investigation are St. Stephen's College (North Delhi) and Jamia Millia Islamia (South-East Delhi). The sample size is 10 students. Five students from each institution are enrolled in overall. Selected purposively; these students share their study experience in multilingual school. According to Sharan B. Merriam (2022), engaging participants who have experienced the topic firsthand leads to meaningful and rich data collection. For data collection, this study will only employ semi-structured interviews. To better understand students' experiences in depth, interviews were conducted. The interviews are formatted as open-ended interviews and allow participants to comment and express themselves without limitation in thoughts and opinions. Interviews are recorded (with the participants' permission), then transcribed. Transcripts of these interviews are the main source of material for analysis, lending accuracy and richness in comprehending participants' responses. Thematic analysis is used in data analysis. In qualitative research, thematic analysis is a common methodology for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes in data and is used extensively. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2022) state that thematic analysis presents a systematic yet flexible method for categorizing qualitative data. In this work, the researcher reads the interview transcripts, recognizes patterns, codes the data and clusters the relevant codes to themes from a larger perspective. Such themes provide insights on important aspects of students' linguistic competency and their academic experiences. There are ethical considerations involved in this research that cannot be overlooked. Subjects are fully briefed about the objective of the study, and informed consent is secured prior to conducting the interviews (Graham A. Gibbs, 2022). The participants' identity is kept anonymous and their personal information is ensured confidentiality of data. Participation is optional and students can withdraw from the study at any time, without duress. Such ethical principles help this research is done justice and in a

respectful way. On the whole, qualitative approach presents a transparent and systematic approach in revealing students' experience. Yet, the findings may not be applicable to all students due to the relatively small number of institutions and size of the sample.

4. Data Analysis

The results of this research are grouped according to the students' responses and experiences. First, perceptions of the students' linguistic competence indicate that students have a mixed level of confidence that they can handle language tasks, especially in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Some students find it easy to communicate basic language but struggle with academic language. (Solina, 2022) Students with high confidence in language development perform well academically compared to students with low confidence who have difficulties in expressing their knowledge. There is less confidence when talking and more confidence in reading, yet, some participants tend to blunder, which impacts comprehension. The effects on academic tasks is a second theme. Language proficiency determines how well they study, whether one understands lectures or not, how well they read academic texts, how well they write assignments, and how well they can participate in class; students said. In fact, Zhao (2024) has stated that academic language proficiency directly affects academic engagement and comprehension, particularly in higher education. When teachers include complex vocabulary or talk quickly, many students said they struggle to keep up with their lectures. Academic texts are challenging because they contain new words and sentences that are difficult to understand. Writing assignments are the major problems. Students have problems with good grammar and organizing their thoughts. Participation in class is also limited. A related theme, the difficulties students are having to deal with, was also noted. Many students reported that comprehending difficult academic language is a particular challenge for them. They also experience difficulty in expressing their thoughts in straightforward language, particularly in writing. Second language learners usually find comprehension of academic language difficult, but doing so while simultaneously using other types of language results in difficulties in producing and understanding academic language (He, 2025). In addition, some students said their exam result is affected since they cannot understand the question or articulate the answer correctly. All of these difficulties lead to frustration and lowering in students confidence in their academic capacity. The next theme is student approaches to enhancing linguistic skills. In order to better their linguistic proficiency, many students employ different techniques.

Typical strategies are to check dictionaries and translation tools, practice reading and writing and learn from peers. Rahmawati (2025) suggests students learn by using multiple strategies to improve their language proficiency step by step. Peer learning can also be beneficial, students being able to discuss with classmates are more willing to learn with classmates. Some students said reading books, articles and resources online daily gives them an excuse to practise vocabulary and comprehension, albeit slowly and with effort. The final theme refers to institutional support. A lot of students feel that these English improvement efforts could be reinforced by university support.

The same goes for language programs and academic workshops, which are examples of the kind of institutional support Maarouf (2024) argues can substantially improve students' academic performance. Participants indicated that workshops focusing on academic writing, speaking and communication should be organized periodically. Teacher support is critical too, because the students want clear explanations and straightforward language as well as constructive feedback. Mshelia (2025) explains, supportive teaching practices can address the language barrier and thus facilitate learning outcomes.

Overall, the results reveal the strong influence of linguistic competence on student academic life and suggest that both individual efforts and help from the institution are required for improvement, although there are also some differences in the experience.

1. Perceived Linguistic Competence

The findings indicate that students have varying levels of confidence in their linguistic competence. Most participants described their English proficiency as average or weak, especially in speaking and writing. While some students reported being comfortable with reading, they expressed hesitation in speaking and writing in academic contexts.

For instance, one participant stated, “My English is average. I understand it, but speaking and writing are not strong” (Riya). Similarly, another participant shared, “My English is weak, especially for technical terms” (Rohit).

A common pattern observed is that students feel more confident in reading than in speaking, while writing remains a challenge due to grammar and vocabulary limitations. Some participants, such as Anjali, indicated gradual improvement: “I feel better than before, but still not fully confident.”

These findings support Solina (2022), who suggests that students often manage basic communication but struggle with academic language.

2. Impact on Academic Performance

Language proficiency was found to have a direct influence on students’ academic performance. Participants reported that their ability to understand lectures, complete assignments, and perform well in exams is significantly affected by their language skills.

Many students mentioned difficulty in following lectures due to fast delivery and complex vocabulary. For example, one participant noted, “I miss some points when teachers speak fast” (Riya), while another stated, “Fast lectures make it harder to understand everything” (Ahmed).

Writing assignments were identified as a major issue. One participant explained, “I cannot express answers properly, so my marks get affected” (Rohit). Another added, “Writing takes more time because I have to find correct words” (Ahmed).

These findings align with Zhao (2024), who emphasizes that academic language proficiency directly affects comprehension and engagement in higher education.

3. Language-Related Difficulties

Participants reported several challenges related to language use, particularly in understanding academic content and expressing ideas clearly. These include difficulties with vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension of complex texts.

For example, one participant shared, “Many things I do not understand in lectures” (Pooja), while another stated, “I understand half of the lecture and read again later” (Simran).

A recurring issue is the inability to express knowledge despite understanding concepts. As one participant explained, “I know the answer but cannot write properly” (Riya). Similarly, another mentioned, “I cannot express answers clearly in exams” (Rohit).

These challenges also affect students emotionally. Many participants expressed feelings of frustration and low confidence. One participant stated, “I feel very low confidence and sometimes stressed” (Rohit), while another said, “I feel left behind compared to others” (Pooja).

This supports He (2025), who explains that second-language learners often face difficulties in both understanding and producing academic language.

4. Coping Strategies and Self-Improvement

Despite these challenges, students reported using various strategies to improve their language skills. The most common strategies include using translation tools, seeking help from peers, and practicing through reading and online resources.

For instance, one participant noted, “I use Google Translate and YouTube videos to understand topics” (Riya). Another stated, “I ask my friends for help and revise again” (Vivek).

Some participants emphasized the importance of self-practice. One participant shared, “I practice speaking alone and watch videos” (Kavya), while another mentioned, “I translate everything to understand better” (Pooja).

Peer learning also emerged as an important strategy. Students felt more comfortable discussing problems with classmates. These findings support Rahmawati (2025), who highlights the role of multiple strategies in improving language proficiency.

5. Institutional Support and Needs

The final theme highlights the lack of sufficient institutional support for language development. Most participants expressed the need for structured programs and guidance from their institutions.

Several participants noted the absence of formal support. For example, one participant stated, “There is no proper support from college” (Ahmed), while another said, “Students manage on their own” (Rohit).

Participants suggested the need for workshops and language classes. One participant mentioned, “Speaking practice sessions and extra classes would help” (Kavya). Another added, “Teachers should explain more clearly and give guidance” (Simran).

These findings are consistent with Maarouf (2024), who argues that institutional support such as language programs and workshops can significantly improve academic performance. Similarly, Mshelia (2025) emphasizes the importance of supportive teaching practices.

5. Discussion

This report discusses the study and its findings in relation to the extant literature. Students’ language competence has a strong effect on academic performance and learning experiences according to the results. Many students reported that they are not fully confident in their language skills, especially in speaking and writing, which affects their ability to perform well in academic tasks. Solina (2022) described that linguistic proficiency contributes substantially toward the academic success of students, whereby students with weaker language skills tend to struggle more. The study also revealed that students find it difficult to understand lectures, academic texts and writing tasks, confirming the conclusion of Zhao (2024) that language competence is essential to the understanding and participation in higher education. Existing literature has also found out that this study lends support to several previous research findings. He (2025) indicated how the second language learners frequently confront difficulties of comprehending and expressing academic content as this study directly reflects this situation. Maarouf (2024), Students in this study also described challenges when it comes to the comprehension of complex language and expression of ideas, which is also a consistent position who argues that academic language is sometimes a struggle for students who are struggling with a low proficiency. Such parallels illustrate that linguistic proficiency is a fundamental problem which is universal and transposes in the educational field. This study also gives much more attention to the students’ experience which is maybe less often addressed in other studies. It also describes the impact of linguistic competence on academic performance. Students who are more proficient in language skills can

comprehend lectures more readily, read complicated text more easily and write more clearly. In contrast, students with less competency in language face a higher prevalence of difficulties and lower performance in some exams. As Mshelia (2025) also mentioned, proficiency in language is one of the main drivers of student academic achievement. This research also indicates how language confidence can lower the participation in the class. Rahmawati (2025), that confidence and language ability are intertwined and are related to academic engagement as well. Another significant fact gleaned from this research has to do with students' experiences. Many students are feeling disheartened and insecure due to their language deficit. Some students know (sometimes well) the topic but are unable to communicate their knowledge appropriately, which has an impact on their study performance. Zhao (2024) discussed how language differences can limit students' motivation and participation. Furthermore, some students develop language with activities like reading, practice, and working with peers, indicating that students have some problem knowledge and are working to fix it. The results from this study tend to correlate with previous research, however it contributes a novel aspect by concentrating on students' perceptions and experiences. It goes on to point out that an individual and institutional approach are necessary to enhance students' language competences too. But there can be little differences in experience because students come from different backgrounds, so results may not be the same for everyone.

6. Conclusion

The study indicates the importance of linguistic competence in shaping students' academic performance and learning experience is well established today. Academic research by Wu et al. (2019) indicates this trend and it brings home why language plays a very important role in the academic performance of students. Most students said that their language ability impacts how they understand, participate and perform academic tasks. The research questions are answered since students have moderate ratings of their competence, and sense that it affects their understanding and results. Solina (2022) mentioned, linguistic competence is also highly correlated with academic success. For better or worse, the language is the key of learning, and without language skills, students can meet many learning problems at a higher level.

The results evidence that proficiency in linguistic skills is a significant influence in students' academic lives. Students of higher levels of confidence as well as of language proficiency are better able to achieve results and weaker language learners have difficulties in understanding, expression, and participation. Incorporating participants' voices lends insight into the lived experiences behind these findings, and demonstrates the way that language barriers not only hinder educational performance but also undermine the confidence and motivation of students. The study argues that it is both individual effort (self-practice and peer learning) as well as institutional assistance (language programs and teacher guidance) that are necessary for enhancing linguistic proficiency and successful study for students.

7. Recommendations

The results of the study provide some policy recommendations for students, teachers and institutions. Students need to be prepared on a daily basis and read, write and speak regularly and use tools such as dictionaries or online tools, in order to get better at language. Zhao (2024) added that practice and exposure enhance the language competency. Teachers must use straightforward language, provide concise instruction and supportive feedback to better help students think clearly. Institutions must organize workshops, language courses and student support programs. Maarouf (2024) suggests,

institutional support may contribute to student self esteem and performance although this might take time to deliver, or be implemented selectively.

8. Limitations of the Study

The present work has weaknesses to be mentioned. But first, the sample size is small, and so the results may not hold for all students. Second, the study is based on a small population in one place, and results may be inappropriate in other areas. Third, the data is collected through students' selfassessments which can be subjective or not completely reliable. Qualitative research (He, 2025) frequently has such limitations due to how they are conducted (i.e., opinions, opinions). As a result, this study offers valuable insights but also several limitations which should be treated with care.

9. Future Research Directions

Future research can take a deeper look at this issue in the forms of other means and areas. It is easy to measure the statistical data and quantify relationship between linguistic competence and academic performance with a survey questionnaire. Cross-cultural research also provides another method of looking at other countries and schools in terms of students learning from each other. Culture and educational context are significant players of language learning (Yu, 2025). Longitudinal studies may also aid in examining how students develop language skills over time. Future studies will be more detailed and generalizable, but likely require additional time and resources.

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