



ENGLISH ORAL PROFICIENCY OF TCNHS STUDENTS: BASIS FOR A SPEECH MANUAL

Luna, Mary Grace T.
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ABSTRACT

This study was a descriptive-correlational method of research and was conducted at Tangub City National High School during the school year 2023-2024. The respondents of the study consisted of the junior high school students who were enrolled in the same school year. The study utilized participants' background questionnaire, SILL, and SPEAK tests and data were treated using frequency and percentage distribution, weighted mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The emergence of insignificant relationship between the respondents' level of perception on the strategies they employed in learning different lessons through English as measured in SILL and each of the components of SPEAK test genuinely proves that the respondents who want to learn a new language would always experience foreign accent, for they do not notice subtle differences in phonetic elements which lead them to demonstrate cadences of the two language. Therefore, utilization of a speech manual substantively sensitive to their needs is a dire need. With the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum and in line with its released guide, this thesis emphasizes the acquisition of oral English proficiency through activities applicable to Learning modules to both published and yet to be developed.

Keywords: Descriptive-correlational, SILL, SPEAK, Relationship, Phonetic elements, MATATAG Curriculum, Speech Manual, English, Proficiency

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I. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

“The gift of language is the single human trait that marks us all genetically, setting us apart from the rest of our life.”

• LEWIS THOMAS, *The lives of a Cell*

Man’s speaking ability makes him unique. However, he tends to take this for granted just as he takes for granted the air he breathes and emits. He does not know that the ability of speaking is equally important with the air he breathes and emits, since speaking is one of his basic and indispensable tools in acquiring and expressing knowledge. Speaking, as a skill, enables man to produce genuine utterances which involve expression of ideas and opinions, expressions of a wish or desire to do something; negotiating and/or solving a particular problem; and establishing and maintaining social relationship and friendships. To achieve these speaking purposes, man needs to activate a range of appropriate expressions and exerts effort to enhance and improve his speaking skills so as to fulfil those particular purposes (McDonough and Shaw in Carrol, 2004).

In this modern world, people often make out their own criteria of a good English speaker. The lack of English oral proficiency is believed to have great effect on one’s personality. According to Menoy (2010), an effective speaker possesses a good command of language; hence, he ought to be proficient orally. This proficiency is manifested in the grammaticality of his sentences, the preciseness of his words, the correctness of his articulation, and the smoothness of the flow of his thoughts.

The English Language in the Philippines, according to the sociolinguistic context written by Bernardo (Bautista & Bolton, 2009), is well entrenched in the Philippine formal

education by the American colonizers who aimed at developing the English language proficiency of Filipinos to ensure wider expansion of intellectual horizons and for the formation of future leaders. As this develops, English has become the language used in the most ‘controlling domains’ in the Philippines. Controlling domains, according to Sibayan (1994), refer to the domains of power and prestige, which control the national and individual lives of people.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

English Oral Proficiency. Lucas (2001) characterized this term to refer to one’s ability to: (1) speak without abnormal hesitation; (2) articulate and enunciate clearly; (3) associate words with experiences; and (4) talk in simple sentences. In this study, it refers to the skillful use of the respondents’ oral English proficiency gauged by the SPEAK test in terms of appropriateness of pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility.

Alcantara’s study as cited by Lector (1997) indicates that assessing the oral proficiency of the students plays a vital role in providing a useful and relevant information in order to improve English instruction. As depicted, assessment is a positive force in giving the students the opportunity to note possible gaps that block their progress. In this way, language can be well facilitated and even maximized to suit the students’ needs.

Loban as cited by Thompkins and Hoskisson (1990) documented the language growth and development of a group of 338 students from kindergarten through 12th grade (ages 5-18). His findings indicated positive correlations among the four language modes – listening, speaking, reading and writing. Furthermore, he found that students with less effective oral language (listening and talking) abilities tended to have less effective written language (reading and writing) abilities; and likewise identified a strong relationship between student’s oral

ability and their overall academic ability. Thus, Loban's seminal study demonstrates a clear relationship among the language modes, hence, emphasizes the need to teach oral language arts in the curriculum.

Gatenby as cited by Allen and Campbell (in Lector, 1997) made his inference regarding the governing factors of speech achievement. According to him, the rate of progress depends obviously upon the amount of time that can be allotted to the language. With three or four hours a day, both children and adults become proficient in speech in less than a year. In like manner, Carroll's (in Alcantara, 2013) investigation of the foreign language proficiency achieved by the language majors pointed out that factors such as teachers' traits and teaching methodologies, and students' profile do not affect the students' speech achievement. However, the amount of time spent on the language, according to her, correlated with the students' oral proficiency.

On the other hand, Stewart, et.al (in Alcantara, 2013) pointed out that for genuine communication to occur, every teacher should always foster a viably friendly environment so that the students feel at ease in the situation. Such notion typically supports the affective filter theory of Krashen which allows students to speak freely, participate, and be themselves. As exemplified, interrelationship among students and between teacher and students affect the success of every communicative interaction. Likewise, feeding positive thoughts about learning, Gold (1988) emphasized, will greatly help students to learn the English language better. Affective factors as well as motivational factors as shown help determine what is meaningful and absorbing for students to learn in a particular instance.

In a local setting, Salcedo's (in Lector, 1997) study on the factors affecting the English proficiency of elementary school teachers in Cagayan de Oro City during the school year 1981-82 indicated that personal factors such as educational qualifications, age, earned units in

English, experience, socio-economic status, and language used at home were found to have significantly affected the teachers' English proficiency. In the areas of listening, reading and writing, teachers were identified to have an average level of proficiency. However, in the area of speaking the teachers were found to have low proficiency level.

Yerro (in Prejoles, 1997) who made an assessment among college freshmen on their English proficiency found out that majority of the students had higher proficiency levels in the area of speaking. Her findings showed that home and classroom atmospheres are the contributing factors in acquiring oral proficiency. If these settings (home and classroom) are well set, parents and teachers who would have positive attitude towards English language could easily influence the students to desire to develop their oral proficiency. Chavez' (1991) endeavor, on the other hand, revealed that the education freshmen's oral English proficiency was only *fair*. However, her study disclosed a significant relationship between the respondents' English oral proficiency and the following independent variables: attitudes towards oral English, socio-economic status, teacher's traits and teacher's methodology. Frequency of language use and type of school graduated from, nonetheless, did not influence the respondents' English oral proficiency.

In another study, Bola (in Prejoles, 1997) discovered that the oral proficiency of the students who had formal instruction in English for almost 10 years at St. Theresa College, Tandag, Surigao del Norte had not acquired a substantial command of the language. With her findings, she then proposed a program integrating speech in *English Ia* to improve the students' oral skills.

The study conducted by Boniao (1994) on the English language proficiency of college freshmen at MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, on the other pole, showed that college freshmen's level of proficiency in English was significantly related to their CAT scores, types of school attended during elementary and high school years and college they were enrolled in.

In like manner, she also found out that students with better English-speaking proficiency were those from private schools with professional working parents, with adequate exposure to English through media and through a good language environment, and had been taught by efficient English teacher, and with positive attitude towards English as a subject.

Trayvilla's (1994) study, on one hand, revealed that the use of communicative activities, has substantially enhanced the language learning motivation of the students to speak the language thereby enriching their innate expressive potentialities as expound by Chomsky and Lenneberg (1970).

Functional Speech Workbook. The Merriam Dictionary (2009) describes functional as an idea designed primarily in accordance with criteria determined by use, rather than according to canons of taste. In this study, it pertains to a usable speech manual to be used by grade 9 LSU students containing techniques and ways for changing characteristics of voice to improve intelligibility for transmission stressing on English language proper pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility.

Examining the literatures and studies cited, an effective and efficient mentor could readily realize that the various variables involved in the study could really affect one's English oral proficiency.

III. Research Questions

This study aims to determine the English oral proficiency of Tangub City National High School students during the school year 2023-2024.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 1. age,
 2. gender,
 3. language used at home,
 4. grades in English (first and second grading), and
 5. English proficiency as they perceive it?
2. What is the level of the respondents' perceptions on the strategies used in acquiring and learning of the different lessons through English?
3. What is the level of English oral proficiency of the respondents in the SPEAK test in terms of:
 1. pronunciation,

2. grammar,

3. fluency, and

4. comprehensibility?

4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' profile and their level

of English oral proficiency in terms of the four components of SPEAK test?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' level of English oral proficiency in SPEAK test and their level of perception on the strategies they employed in acquiring and learning of different lessons through English?

6. Based on the findings of the study, what functional speech workbook could be evolved?

IV. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

In this study, two variables will be considered: the independent variables which involved the respondents' age, gender, language used at home, grades in English (first and second grading), and the level of perception on strategies they used in acquiring and learning various lessons through English while the level of proficiency on pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility will be the dependent variable.

An important limitation of this study will be the exposure of the samples to other courses outside English which in one way or another affect the result of the endeavor.

Another significant limitation is on the respondents' awareness of their involvement in the study. Again, such knowledge might influence their performance in English.

Furthermore, the presence of modern facilities in the samples' houses like TV, radio, and video set and the availability of reading materials like newspaper, magazines, journals, books, encyclopedia and others might have significant bearing in their ability to perform the oral test, SPEAK test.

Finally, the instruments used in identifying the respondents' proficiency in oral English communication and in determining the level of the students' perceptions on the strategies they used in acquiring and learning different lessons through English, which were the SPEAK and SILL tests, respectively, were basically western in orientation.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a. Sampling Technique

This study shall use convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of sampling where the first available primary data source will be used for the research without additional requirements. In other words, this sampling method involves getting participants wherever you can find them and typically wherever is convenient. In convenience sampling no inclusion criteria identified prior to the selection of subjects. All subjects are invited to participate.

b. Data Collection

The following instruments will be utilized to gather data in this study:

1. ***Participants Background Questionnaire***. To gather some feasible information about the participants' background, the researcher constructed a participant background questionnaire. Such instrument will be used to gather information on the respondents' age, gender, language used at home, perception about their overall oral proficiency in English, and the samples' obtained grades in English during the first and second grading periods of the school year.
2. ***Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Test***. This is a fifty - item standardized test designed by Oxford (1989). This test provides an index on the kind of strategies learners prefer in varied situations capitalizing English.

Furthermore, the test utilizes a five-point scale in determining the level of the students' strategies in using English in different contexts. Thus, 5, means English is always or almost always used by the respondents; 4, means English is usually used by them; 3, means English is sometimes used by them; 2, means English is generally not used by them; and 1, means English is never or almost never used by the respondents.

3. ***Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit (SPEAK) Test.*** This is a twenty-minute oral test produced by the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) program aimed to evaluate the spoken proficiency of non-native speakers of the English language.

The test provides direct testing of speaking proficiency in English among the examinees who are required to actually speak in English pursuing a format that retains a high degree of validity inherent in face-to-face interview procedures while virtually eliminating subjective measurement problems associated with direct interviewing. Questions are not to be taken on any particular discipline, employment or other specialized use situation (Clark and Swinston, 1979). Consequently, the test will allow every examinee to exhibit a generalized speaking proficiency in English.

The test, moreover, as cited in the work of Roble (1992) contains seven (7) sections which each requires a different activity, to name:

- a. *Warm-up (unscored).* This section will require the examinee to respond orally to few brief biographical questions.
- b. *Passage Reading.* Every examinee first reads passage of about 125 words quietly by himself, then loudly for recording. Scoring will be based on pronunciation and over all clarity of speech.

- c. *Sentence Completion.* Every examinee will complete a series of ten partial sentences in a way that will transmit meaning and is grammatically correct.
- d. *Story Telling.* The examinee will study first the six (6), lines drawing that will answer questions about the picture.
- e. *Answering Questions.* The examinee will answer questions that will intend to elicit somewhat free lengthy responses. Scores will be based on the linguistic quality and adequacy of communication, not the factual content of the responses.
- f. *Answering Questions.* The examinee looks at a single line and answers about the picture shown in the test booklet.
- g. *Explaining a Schedule.* The examinee studies a printed schedule, then describes it.

Four different scores will be given to each examinee for the four parts of the test. For pronunciation, grammar and fluency, scores will be from 0.0 to 3.0. A high score will indicate a high speaking ability/proficiency. The overall comprehensibility scores will be based on a single scale ranging from 0 to 30. A high score also will indicate a student's better performance on the comprehensibility of the oral test.

SPEAK and SILL Administrations

In the SILL administration, all respondents were asked to answer the test in terms of how well each statement in test-item describes them. They were given a test

questionnaire and a separate worksheet where they could put their answers. They were only given twenty to thirty minutes to complete the whole test. After completion of the SILL test, the researcher scheduled the students for the SPEAK test.

In the SPEAK test, the researcher used USB digital recorder to record all the data needed in the study.

c. Ethical Issues

Curriculum approval and parental consent shall be sought prior to the conduct of the study. Confidentiality of data shall also be assured.

d. Plan for Data Analysis

The researcher will use the results of SILL and SPEAK Tests, respectively.

VI. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study attempted to determine the English Oral Proficiency of students of Tangub City National High School during the school year 2023-2024. The obtained data generated the following findings:

A. Respondents' Profile

It was disclosed that majority of the students of TCNHS were in their adolescent age, female and Cebuano. Likewise, they obtained better marks during the first and second grading periods in English.

As regards with their perceived oral proficiency in English, most of them claimed that they were fair in using the target language, English.

B. Level of the Respondents' Strategies used in acquiring and learning lessons through English (using SILL test)

The average level of the respondents' strategies use in acquiring and learning of different lessons through English was *usually true of themselves* as revealed in their obtained average mean rating of 3.78. In short, English is generally employed by the respondents in learning other lessons.

C. Level of the Respondents English oral proficiency in the four components of the SPEAK test (pronunciation, grammar, fluency and comprehensibility)

In the context of the respondents' level of English oral proficiency in the SPEAK test, it was found out that the respondents' pronunciation had some consistent phonemic errors and foreign stress and intonation patterns but speakers were intelligible. As for the respondents' grammar, the result exhibited that they had generally good control in all constructions with grammatical errors that did not obstruct with intelligibility. For the respondents' fluency, it was found out that there were some non-active pauses they employed, however, they did not hinder with intelligibility. At

one hand, the respondents' comprehensibility was generally comprehensible but with frequent errors in pronunciation, grammar, choice of vocabulary items and with some pauses or rephrasing.

D. *Relationship Between Independent Variables of the Study and the Four Components of the SPEAK test*

As found out, the respondents' age did not have significant relationship with the components of grammar, fluency and comprehensibility of the SPEAK test but had a significant relationship with pronunciation.

With regard to the relationship between the respondents' pronunciation, fluency, and comprehensibility and their gender, the result revealed insignificant relationship but had significant relationship with grammar.

In the context of the respondents' pronunciation and grammar and their language used at home, the finding exemplified no significant relationship. But in the aspects of fluency and comprehensibility and the language used at home of the respondents, it displayed a significant relationship.

With regard to the relationship between the respondents' pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility and their grades in first and second grading, it was disclosed that no relationship surfaced.

On the other hand, a very insignificant relationship existed between the four components of the SPEAK test (pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility) and the respondents' perceived English oral proficiency.

E. *Relationship Between Respondents' Level of perception in the Strategies Employed in Learning English lessons as measured in SILL and each of the components of SPEAK test*

There was significant correlation existed between the level of perceptions in the strategies used by the respondents in acquiring and learning different lessons through English as gauged in SILL and each of the components of SPEAK test (pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility).

Conclusions

The JHS students of Tangub City National High School whose language at home is Cebuano display a moderate(average) level of English oral proficiency as gauged by the SPEAK test. Although English is predominantly used in the school as the medium of instruction, however, it cannot warrant that the TCNHS JHS students can easily learn and become proficient in the English language since they merely used English, their second language, sometimes in comprehending other lessons in English.

On the other hand, the good grades of the respondents obtained during the first and second grading periods cogently support that they are good in English as one of their academic subjects. Such evidence typically indicates that they have high level of interest in learning the English language.

The emergence of insignificant relationship between the respondents' level of perception on the strategies they employed in learning different lessons through English as measured in SILL and each of the components of SPEAK test genuinely proves that the respondents who want to learn a new language would always experience *foreign accent*, for they do not notice subtle differences in phonetic elements which lead them to demonstrate cadences of the two language. Therefore, utilization of a speech manual substantively sensitive to their needs is a dire need.

With the above atmosphere and upon the influences of the theories of Skinner and Pavlov, Chomsky (in the works of Brown, 2006), Ausubel (1968), Krashen (1982), and the

works of Saussure (in the works of Fisher, 1987), Hutchinson and Waters as cited by Badinas (1988) and studies of Wardaugh (1975), Gonzales (1976), Carnhart (in the works of Dechant, 1982), Salcedo (1983), Gupit (1986), Bola (1988), Loban as cited by Thompkins and Hoskisson (1990), Chavez (1991), McDonough and Shaw (1993), Rodriguez (1997), Alcantara (in Lector, 1997), and others, *a functional speech manual* based on one's English oral proficiency is evolved to improve the oral proficiency of the students.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been inferred by the researcher:

1. Oral proficiency in English language be properly given prominence by teachers in order to produce communicatively competent students.

2. In obtaining English oral proficiency among students, every teacher should function as a viable model for the students to imitate enable to develop their pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility.

3. The intensification of the English oral proficiency among the students largely depends on the various strategies they used in learning the language. As such, every teacher should be cognizant to his student styles of learning for him to easily present innovations so that his students would be able to learn to love the English language without tears or difficulty.

4. The success of any educational endeavour/interaction is contingent on one's ability and proficiency. Nevertheless, to attain such ability and proficiency, it is, therefore, imperative that the students' interest be capitalized by English teachers as the very core in English language teaching.

5. In as much as it is the desire to communicate orally that gives impetus to language learning, it is then vital that teachers should adopt a more feasible – functional and challenging therapeutic speech manual to help augment the speech prowess of the students.

6. As found out, the JHS students of Tangub City National High School have good command in English language particularly in their speaking skills. With this, it is suggested and recommended that the evolved *speech manual* in this investigation be properly utilized by both the English teachers and students to easily facilitate learning the language thereby yielding orally proficient English students.

7. With the results of this study as springboard, related studies be conducted to compare if they would yield similar results.

VIII. PLANS FOR DISSEMINATION AND ADVOCACY

1. Presentation of Results to TCNHS Academic Community
2. Adaptation of Assessment to other levels/schools
3. Crafting of Functional Speech Workbook (for Innovation Project)

IX. FINANCIAL REPORT

RESEARCH PHASE	PRINCIPAL COST COMPONENT	AUXILIARY/ CONTINGENCY COST COMPONENT	TOTAL COST ESTIMATE
Demographic Profiling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bond papers 1 box • Ballpen 20 boxes 	1,000.00	500.00	1,500.00
	500.00	500.00	1,000.00
Conduct of SILL/SPEAK Tests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printer Inks set 	1,500.00	500.00	2,000.00
Researcher Contingency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee ☐ 	2,000.00	500.00	2,500.00
		OVERALL TOTAL	7,000.00

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