

English Proficiency Level of Technical Writing Students: Basis for Teaching and Learning Enhancement

Danilo A. Tabalan, Ph.D.

Abstract

Proficiency in any language especially in English is not always 100% perfect. Some may have a reading and speaking proficiencies, but not writing proficiency. To improve one's proficiency, it takes practice. This is a descriptive-evaluative study made used of survey in the investigation of the English proficiency level of the technical writing students. Non-probability sampling procedure, specifically the purposive sampling technique was employed in this research. The results of the study revealed that majority of the respondents are generally good in English grammar and reading but had poor level of proficiency in writing. Of the three English proficiency levels, only grammar had shown influence to the respondents' sex profile. The study further revealed that the English proficiency levels (grammar, reading and writing) are statistically not significantly related to the academic achievement of the respondents. It is recommended that deeper evaluation and analysis should be undertaken to come up with real variables and predictors that would really affect and influence the students' level of proficiency and academic achievement and eventually create and produce the best teaching and learning enhancement program.

Keywords: Proficiency, Technical Writing, learning enhancement

1. Introduction

English is the universal language known and accepted worldwide nowadays. It is the second language used as a way to communicate in business, negotiations and in academics by most people. English plays a very significant role in the education, most importantly to speaking, reading, writing, and grammar (Kumar, 2009). A country has to build familiarity and friendship and has to collaborate with other countries and other places as well in reality. It is the government's obligation to give good quality of education for global competitiveness (Alave, 2006).

Proficiency in any language especially in English is not always 100 percent perfect. Some may have a reading proficiency, but not speaking proficiency. With the desire to improve the quality of English proficiency level in AMAIUB, the researcher attempted to investigate the English proficiency level of technical writing students of AMA International University - Bahrain. The results will further enhance the teaching-learning process and the goal of English education.

General Objectives

This study investigated the English proficiency level of the technical writing students of AMA International University - Bahrain. The results further enhanced the teaching-learning process and the goal of English education.

2. Research Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study is a descriptive-evaluative research using a survey to seek the English proficiency level of the technical writing students of AMA International University-Bahrain. The study is also relational in the sense that it sought the correlation between the respondent's English proficiency level and (a) their identified profile variables – age, sex, grades in prelim and midterm periods, and dialects spoken at home, (b) identified macro skills – reading, writing and grammar.

2.2 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were the identified technical writing students who were enrolled in Technical Writing of AMA International University - Bahrain.

2.3 Sampling Techniques

Non-probability sampling procedure was employed, specifically the purposive sampling technique. Students' average grades in prelim and midterm periods were the marks considered in the academic achievement of the respondents of the study.

2.4 Research Instrument

The pertinent data needed for the study were collected with the use of the following data-gathering instruments. Personal Data Sheet (PDS) – This was administered by the researcher for the purpose of getting the respondents'

profiles and which will likewise serve as the personal variables in this study. This is comprised of questions that seek for the background of the respondents. These are the following; age, sex, rating in English 1, learning style, and language and/or dialects spoken at home.

English Proficiency Test Questionnaire. The English Proficiency test was composed of 80 items, with three different types of test such as; Reading (20 items), and Writing (30 items), and Grammar (30 items).

2.5 Statistical Treatment of Data

To answer the specific questions in this study, the following statistical treatments were employed.

Frequency and Percentage. This was used to determine the respondents' profile.

Mean. This was employed to establish the respondents' language proficiency in the English language.

Pearson – r Correlation Analysis. This was utilized to determine whether the respondents' profile correlates with their English proficiency level.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the English Proficiency Level of the Respondents in Grammar

English Proficiency Level Grammar	Frequency	Percent
Poor	2	6.1
Good	26	78.8
Very good	5	15.2
Total	33	100.0

The table clearly shows that 15.2% or five (5) of the respondents are very good in English and only 6.1 % or two (2) of them are poor. Majority of the respondents are generally good in English grammar. It is shown by its percentage of 78.8 and its number of 26 respondents. This implies that their attendance and consistence in attending the lectures could have helped their acquisition of English proficiency in grammar.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the English Proficiency Level of the Respondents in Reading

English Proficiency Level Reading	Frequency	Percent
Poor	2	6.1
Good	28	84.8
Very good	3	9.1
Total	33	100.0

The table shows that only 3 or 9.1% of the respondents got the very good proficiency level in reading and similar to grammar, only 2 or 6.1% of the respondents got poor proficiency level in reading. Of the 33 respondents, 28 or 84.8% of them got the good proficiency level. This could mean that, similar to their acquisition of proficiency in grammar, their attendance to classes and lectures had contributed to their reading proficiency.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the English Proficiency Level of the Respondents in Writing

English Proficiency Level Writing	Frequency	Percent
Poor	28	84.8
Good	5	15.2
Total	33	100.0

From the given table above, it can be gleaned that only 5 or 15.2% of the 33 respondents got the “good” proficiency level in writing and the 28 or 84.8% of the respondents had the poor level of proficiency in writing. It could also be observed further that nobody got the “very good” level of proficiency in writing.

Table 4. Difference between the Respondents' English Proficiency Level and their Age

English Proficiency Level	Age	N	Mean	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Grammar	19-24 years old	27	8.9630	-.2037	.815	Not significant
	25-30 years old	6	9.1667			
Reading	19-24 years old	27	5.2593	.0926	.854	Not significant
	25-30 years old	6	5.1667			
Writing	19-24 years old	27	3.5556	-.7778	.267	Not significant
	25-30 years old	6	4.3333			

It could be gleaned from the above table that none of the grammar, reading and writing proficiencies is not significantly related to their age. This could only mean that age is not a factor that could affect their English proficiency in grammar, reading and writing.

Table 5. Difference between the Respondents' English Proficiency Level and their Sex

English Proficiency Level	Sex	N	Mean	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Grammar	Male	18	9.6667	1.4667	.024	significant
	Female	15	8.2000			
Reading	Male	18	5.1667	-.1667	.669	Not significant
	Female	15	5.3333			
Writing	Male	18	3.5000	-.4333	.427	Not significant
	Female	15	3.9333			

Table 5 presents the difference between the respondent's English proficiency level and their sex. It could be observed that of the three English proficiency levels, reading and writing were found to have no significant relationship with the respondent's sex. Only grammar had shown to have significant relationship with the sex of the respondents.

Table 6. Difference between the Respondents' English Proficiency Level and their Spoken Dialect/Language at Home

English Proficiency Level	Dialect Spoken at Home	N	Mean	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Grammar	Arabic	25	9.0800	.3300	.674	Not significant
	Arabic-English	8	8.7500			
Reading	Arabic	25	5.2800	.1550	.732	Not significant
	Arabic-English	8	5.1250			
Writing	Arabic	25	3.4800	-.8950	.153	Not significant
	Arabic-English	8	4.3750			

Table 6 presents the difference between the respondent's English proficiency level and their spoken dialect/language at home. It is revealed on the above table that the dialect spoken at home has no significant relationship with the English proficiency in grammar, reading and writing. This implies that the dialect spoken at home showed no influence in the respondents' grammar, reading and writing proficiencies. It is not a determiner of the respondents' English proficiency.

Table 7. Relationship between the Respondents' Academic Achievement and their English Proficiency Level.

Academic Achievement	Correlations	English Proficiency Level		
		Grammar	Reading	Writing
	Pearson Correlation	-.224	.133	-.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.210	.460	.940
	N	33	33	33
	Interpretation	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant

Table 7 presents the relationship between the respondents' academic achievement and their English proficiency

level. From the given table above, it could be gleaned that the English proficiency levels (grammar, reading and writing) are statistically not significantly related to the academic achievement of the respondents. The results of -.224 for grammar, .133 for reading and -.014 show low degree of correlation to the academic achievement of the respondents. This implies that the English proficiency level on grammar, reading and writing does not strongly influence the respondent's academic achievement. Based from the results of the study, the summative test on grammar, reading and writing should be improved to be at par as the standardized English proficiency test.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

English proficiency could be best achieved by consistently attending classes and lectures inside the classroom yet the respondents' English proficiency in writing was not achieved. Writing is a skill, which cannot be achieved by simply attending classes and lectures in the classroom. Age and the dialect spoken at home did not affect the English proficiency of the respondents in grammar, reading and writing. Sex influenced the English proficiency in grammar.

The English proficiency level of the respondents in grammar, reading and writing is statistically not significantly related to the respondents' academic achievement. The proficiency level is not a strong indicator of the students' performance inside the classroom.

4.2 Recommendations

Participation and listening to lectures and class sessions would strongly help and enhance the knowledge and skills of the students in technical writing. Formative assessment must be strengthened and more exercises, practices and exposure on writing must be made to develop and improve the skill in writing. The results and conclusions should be reviewed and analyzed to come up with the real variables and predictors that would really affect and influence the students' level of English proficiency and academic achievement. Further research and study should be made on the student's level of English proficiency to be able to create and produce the better, if not the best, teaching and learning enhancement program.

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