

COURSE PLAN IN ACADEMIC WRITING: ENHANCING GRADE 11 STUDENTS' WRITTEN DISCOURSE COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to design an academic course plan for senior high school, anchored on Jim Cummins' Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) concerning the level of respondents' academic writing performance in English and Filipino in writing argumentative essays. Multistage sampling technique was used to obtain the thirty sampled Grade 11 student respondents from six public secondary schools. A standardized rubric was adopted from The *Common Core State Standards Writing Rubrics in 2012* whose components include claim, cohesion, development of ideas (coherence), and style and conventions excluding audience criterion. Correspondingly, quantitative approach using descriptive-correlational design was employed to determine the level of the respondents' written discourse in composing argumentative essays in Filipino and English. Descriptive design was used to describe the respondents' ability to write argumentative essays in Filipino and English, while correlational design was utilized as the researcher assessed the relationship of the respondents' first and second language in terms of writing argumentative essays in Filipino and English. The results revealed that the respondents' first language (Filipino) written discourse competence did not have significant relationship to their second language (English) written discourse competence in support of Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP), except for development of ideas in English and claim in Filipino. Likewise, the respondents' written discourse competence in Filipino (L1) did not predict their written discourse competence in English (L2).

Keywords: Common Underlying Proficiency, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, Argumentative essays, Separate Underlying Proficiency

INTRODUCTION

Cummins (1984) claimed that cognitive and literacy skills established in the mother tongue or L1 will transfer across languages and this theory is known as Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP). However, there are schools with English-Only Institutional Policies (EOIPs) which prohibit their students to use the first language within and beyond the classroom thinking that the continued use of the first language (L1) would hinder the development of their second language acquisition (McMillan & Rivers, 2011).

Ilocos Times columnist Herdy Yumul recounted in August 2013 the story of 3 Grade 8 students, who were reportedly dismissed from Saviour's Christian Academy (SCA) for speaking in their mother tongue as this was deemed a violation from the school's English Only Policy. McMillan

& Rivers in 2011 stated that many EOIPs require teachers and administrators to enforce policies, rules, and guidelines as regards student's language use

Regarding the use of Filipino and English, the Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) according to Bernardo as cited in Sibayan (2000) had been blamed for the deteriorating English proficiency of Filipino students, as well as the poor proficiency in the Filipino language. Indeed, the BEP was being lamented as having produced a generation of semi-linguals. This happened when the students were encouraged to use their mother tongue (L1) and their second language (L2) as this language policy negatively affected the development latter (Sibayan, 2000 as cited in Bernardo, 2005).

But based on language-related researches, L2 acquisition shows that when a child masters the first language, learning another language becomes less problematic in the habits of speech, listening, reading, and writing (Ndamba 2008 citing Cummins, 1981; Hawes, 1979). Also, a study conducted by Sison in 2011 related to Bilingual Education Policy revealed that using the mother tongue in the early grades builds the learners' second language competence; hence, the more knowledge and skills one has developed in the first language, the easier for him/her to acquire and learn another language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2003 as cited by Rai, et al., 2011).

According to Romaine (2009) positive transfer occurred when previous knowledge facilitated the learning of new material. Negative transfer referred to cases where previous learning interferes with or had detrimental effects on the learning of a new and independent linguistic categories corresponding to articles and prepositions.

Regarding the high school students' ability to compose academic writing in English, several researches on writing reveal that many of the second language learners have been in constant struggle communicating cohesively and coherently in technical and academic writing reflected in their poor academic performances and in the increasing rate of unemployment and underemployment (Saladino, 2009).

Also, one academic writing requirement that senior high school students need to accomplish in English for Academic and Professional Purposes is the academic essay. An academic essay is a document that has a defined structure – an introduction, a body and a conclusion. In writing the academic essay, students are required to present a thesis statement and support it with details and evidences. (Pablo & Lasaten in 2018). However, according to Pablo & Lasaten in 2018 it is evident that the high school students' academic writing performance is weak in spite of the writing opportunities being given to them.

In Asian countries, including the Philippine public and private school context, students have to deal with various types of written discourse including narration, description, exposition, and argumentation. Among the academic written discourse patterns (narrative, expository, descriptive, persuasive and argumentative) argumentative writing has been found the most challenging for most of the students both the native and non-native speakers of English at any grade level (Saito, 2010)

At Claro M. Recto Sr. High School where the researcher is teaching, all the researcher's colleagues in the English Department consistently have observed that their students overgeneralize the features of narrative and descriptive composition and that even constructing argumentative essays have shades of biases or personal ideas. The students' compositions are

not research-based, albeit they were given ample time to do thorough research on the given topic. The students' arguments are not supported with pieces of evidence—unaware of the goals or features of argumentative writing.

In view of these, the researcher was inspired to conduct a study which examines the relationship between the respondents' first language (L1) written discourse competence and their second language (L2) written discourse competence. Moreover, this study examined whether the respondents' written discourse competence in English predicted their written discourse competence in Filipino or not. Jim Cummins' Common Underlying Proficiency (2000) was used as a way to explain the respondents' academic writing performance in English and Filipino in writing argumentative essays.

The findings of this investigation could help revisit the English-Only Institutional Policy and provide strategies on how the respondents' ability to write argumentative essays in English and Filipino can be improved.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main objective of this study was to design an academic writing course plan for senior high school students.

Specifically, this study addressed the following interrelated questions:

1. What is the level of the respondents' written discourse in Filipino and in English in terms of:
 - 1.1 Claim;
 - 1.2 development of ideas;
 - 1.3 Cohesion; and
 - 1.4 Style and conventions?
2. What is the relationship between the level of respondents' written discourse competence in English and Filipino?
3. Does the respondents' written discourse competence in Filipino predict their written discourse competence in English?
4. How may the findings be utilized in designing an Academic Writing Course Plan for Senior High School students?

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The quantitative approach and descriptive-correlational design were used in this study. The former was used to determine the level of the respondents' written discourse competence by an assessment of the respondents' argumentative essay outputs. This qualitative approach was also used to examine if the respondents' written discourse competence in Filipino significantly predicted their written discourse competence in English through a statistical treatment called linear regression (Bernard, 2012).

Correspondingly, descriptive design was used to describe the respondents' present level of written discourse competence in Filipino and English considering the expected competencies that the respondents should have achieved by Grade 11, while correlational design was utilized

as the researcher investigated the relationship of the respondents' first and second language in terms of writing argumentative essays in Filipino and English.

To objectively assess the respondents' level of written discourse competence in writing argumentative discourse in Filipino and in English, the researcher adapted a standardized rubric from The Common Core State Standards Writing Rubrics in 2012. One hour was allotted to writing an essay in English, while another hour was rendered to composing an essay in Filipino. All the sessions for essay compositions took place in the morning for five consecutive weeks to address the principles of test reliability.

The respondents were chosen through a multistage sampling technique which used Simple Random Sampling (SRS) (drawing three strips of paper in a box containing the name of the strands/classes from each of the pre-assigned schools) and Stratified Random Sampling (SRS) to select five respondents from the remaining strips of paper. A total of 30 sampled Grade 11 students from the Academic Track were the respondents of the study.

Aligned with the qualitative approach, the researcher also sought the assistance of five Filipino English teachers and five English teachers who all have Master's degree aligned to the demands of assessing argumentative essays. Inter-rater test of reliability for the ten (10 raters) along with (a) Mean and Standard deviation, (b) Spearman Brown formula, (c) Regression Analysis, and (d) T-statistics were the statistical tools used in analyzing and interpreting the result.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents the research findings on the areas of difficulties and strengths of the respondents in writing argumentative essays in English and in Filipino. Sample excerpts were provided to show supporting evidence related to the respondents' level of written discourse competence.

Level of Written Discourse Competence in Filipino and English

Table 1. Written Discourse Competence in Filipino and English

Written Discourse Competence	English			Filipino		
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Claim	2.90	.31	Proficient	2.03	.32	Proficient
Development of Ideas	3.47	.57	Skilled	1.90	.31	Developing
Cohesion	2.16	.15	Proficient	2.40	.50	Proficient
Style and Conventions	2.87	.34	Proficient	2.87	.35	Proficient

Legend: 4.01-5.00 = Exceptional, 3.01-4.00 = Skilled, 2.01-3.00 = Proficient
1.01- 2.0 = Developing, 0.00-1.0 = Inadequate

The table 1 shows that the highest mean of the respondents' written discourse competence in English is on the development of ideas (coherence) with a 3.47, verbally interpreted as skilled; whereas their competence in Filipino written discourse yielded 2.87 on style and convention as the highest mean, verbally interpreted as proficient.

Student Number 11 (Essay in English): “Censoring one’s posts on social media is against our democracy as reflected in our Philippine constitution... We should voice out our opposition to whatever attempts of removing our freedom as this would affect many Filipinos who wish to improve the government ...”

Student Number 11 (Essay in Filipino): “Ang pagharang sa karapatan ng mamayan na magbigay argumento o pananaw patungkol sa ating gobyerno ay naayon sa ating batas. Ito ay isang bagay na nagbibigay kapangyarihan sa atin para mapaunlad ang serbisyo ng ating gobyerno... Ang Pilipinas ay kinikilalang nagbibigay galang sa karapatan ng bawat isa dahil mayroon tayong kalayaan...”

The writer of essay number 1 provided supporting details that were logically relevant to his thesis “*Censoring one’s posts on social media is against our democracy as reflected in our Philippine constitution*”. Coherence as defined by Halliday and Swain was the “Logical connection of ideas from one sentence to another; from one paragraph to another...” The sample excerpts above were meaningfully connected in terms of the development of the respondents’ ideas. The writer was consistent with his main argument as evidenced by respondent’s first and second sentences which consistently adhered to his main argument.

On the other hand, the table revealed that the respondents’ least mastered competency of the English written discourse was development of ideas, verbally interpreted as proficient with a mean of 2.16, while the respondents’ least mastered competency in Filipino written discourse is on the development of ideas, but verbally interpreted as developing.

Student No. 17 (Essay in English): “Proliferation of fake news is increasingly becoming uncontrollable nowadays which result in conflict in communication between teachers and students, lawmakers and other politicians, bosses and their lower employees... I remember my mother thought that there would be no classes the next meeting, so she told my brothers about it. My brother did not go to school until my mother discovered it was just fake news...”

Student No. 17 (Essay in Filipino): “Ang paglaganap ng maling impormasyon gamit ang Internet, lalu na sa social media, ay mistulang hindi na mapipigilan. Sa totoong buhay, kahit ang mga guro at istudyante, mga politiko o empleyado ng gobyerno, kabilang ang mga nasa opisina kagaya ng amo at ng kanyang mga tauhan ay nagiging biktima na ng fake news... Naalala ko pa nga ang nangyari sa aking ina at kapatid. Inakala nilang walang klase kinabukan, pero huli na nang malaman nilang hindi totoo ang kanilang nabasa...”

These two argumentative essays were written by the same respondents show incoherent ideas—specifically between the writer’s thesis (Proliferation of fake news is increasingly becoming uncontrollable nowadays) and its supporting detail (I remember my mother thought

that there would be no classes the next meeting). The writer's main argument was irrelevant to the succeeding narratives regardless of discourse writing patterns used by him.

The supporting statements should be the reasons or pieces of evidence that underscored the stated thesis. What made it uncontrollable? What were the attempts made by the readers to identify fake news from the authentic ones? He should have mentioned: "Despite applying critical thinking skills such as determining the writer's background, knowing the date of publication, language use, the writer's purpose, etc. one may still be a victim of fake news. In fact, even the established newspaper outlets or the nation's leading newspaper networks were once victimized of black propaganda..."

The respondents' strengths in English argumentative writing showed that they are skilled in using words, phrases and clauses that link the introduction, body and conclusion (major sections of the texts) in writing argumentative essays in English (cohesion level). On the other hand, the respondents' Filipino argumentative writing showed that they are proficient in presenting an appropriate, formal and objective tone in writing argumentative essays in Filipino (Argumentatibong Sanaysay) as they demonstrated standard conventions of usage and mechanics (style and conventions).

The explanations for the above results may be drawn from the theoretical view of Jim Cummins concerning Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Students who have not yet developed their cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) will more likely meet difficulties and problems in fulfilling academic-related tasks (Racca and Lasaten in 2016). Hence, several sentences in the respondents' argumentative essays in Filipino were incoherent (developing), whereas the respondents' sentences in English were logically interrelated (skilled).

Relationship between the Respondents' Claim in English and their Filipino Written Discourse Competence

Table 2. Correlation between the Respondents' Claim in English and their Filipino Written Discourse Competence

Argumentative Essay Components	Correlation (r)	Significance Level (p-level)	Verbal Interpretation
Claim in English	.04	.85	Not Significant
Claim in Filipino			
Claim in English Development of Ideas in Filipino	.26	.16	Not Significant
Claim in English Cohesion in Filipino	.27	.15	Not Significant
Claim in English Style and Convention in Filipino	.11	.55	Not Significant

Table 2 illustrates that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' ability to provide a clear, arguable statement that could be supported by reasons and evidence (claim in

English) and their ability to write argumentative essays in Filipino. The level of respondents' English written discourse competence in writing an introduction with clearly defined thesis (claim in English) was not influenced by their ability to compose argumentative essay in Filipino in the four components (claim, cohesion, development of ideas and style and conventions).

This may be explained through a linguistic concept called Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) whose premise suggests that no such relationship exists between the first and other languages and that languages worked independently in the central processing system. Hence, the respondents' English argumentative essay writing with a clear, arguable thesis statement was not influenced by their level of written discourse competence in Filipino as the two languages were perceived to be operating in the second language learner's mind independently.

Relationship between the Respondents' Development of Ideas in English and their Filipino Written Discourse Competence

Table 3. Correlation between the Respondents' Development of Ideas in English and their Filipino Written Discourse Competence

Argumentative Essay Components	Correlation (r)	Significance Level (p-level)	Verbal Interpretation
Development of Ideas in English	.42	.02	Significant
Claim in Filipino			
Development of Ideas in English	.15	.44	Not Significant
Development of Ideas in Filipino			
Development of Ideas in English	.27	.15	Not Significant
Cohesion in Filipino			
Development of Ideas in English	.26	.17	Not Significant
Style and Convention in Filipino			

Table 3 indicates that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' development of ideas and all the components of Filipino written discourse competence (development of ideas, cohesion and style and convention, except for claim ($r=.42$, $p>.05$)).

The non-significant finding above may be attributed to Separate Underlying Proficiency which assumes that the two languages operated independently. That no transfer occurs between them. With this perspective, providing culturally linguistically diverse students with resources, instruction, or literacy development in their native language would be a futile effort (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2010).

On the other hand, the significant correlation between the development of ideas in English and claim in Filipino can be attributed to the cognitive processes required to meet fulfill such argumentative written discourse components. The former required one's ability to synthesize ideas into a coherent whole (an argumentative writing where the writer's ideas in introduction until conclusion are logically interrelated), thus demanding higher order thinking skills.

On the contrary, the latter required one's ability to provide a clearly defined thesis statement in Filipino aligned with the given writing prompt, thus demanding a low level of understanding or language learning because the title explicitly states the writer's stand. Also, at this stage, the writer is not yet required to provide research-based explanations or proofs in support of his position.

Development of Ideas in English and Filipino (*coherence issue*)

Student Number 1 (Essay in English): "President Rodrigo Duterte should not be using foul words or expression in all his public speeches. Firstly, He is talking to different diplomats from various countries. The situation is very formal and therefore his speech should be dignified. Secondly, there are words are words that may be used in one situation but not in another situation..."

Student Number 1 (Essay in Filipino): "Hindi nararapat na ang ating Presidente ay nagmumura o nagsasalita ng mga hindi naangkop na salita sa pormal na okasyon dahil lalu na kapag sya ay nakikipag usap sa mga diplomats ng iba't ibang bansa... Dahil ba ito sa kanyang war against drugs na halata naming ang mga mahihirap lang ang kanyang pinagtutuunan ng pansin at hindi ito paraan para ibagsak ang mahihirap..."

A respondent's essay No. 1 in English showed logically consistent interrelationship of ideas; previous sentence was relevant to the succeeding ones. The respondent showed smooth flow of ideas facilitated with the proper use of transitional devices such as firstly and secondly.

In contrast, her essay No. 1 in Filipino of the same topic was irrelevant in terms of providing supporting details. The writer's main argument was illogically backed up with issue on President Duterte's war against drugs when the main argument was about the respondent's inability to use appropriate words and expression or acceptable speech patterns in formal situation. The writer should have only focused on President Duterte's lack of awareness or knowledge of public speaking.

Relationship between the Respondents' Cohesion in English and their Filipino Written Discourse Competence

Table 4. Correlation between the Respondents' Cohesion in English and their Filipino Written Discourse Competence

Argumentative Essay Components	Correlation (r)	Significance Level (p-level)	Verbal Interpretation
Cohesion in English	.29	.12	Not Significant
Claim in Filipino			
Cohesion in English	.08	.68	Not Significant
Development of Ideas in Filipino			
Cohesion in English	.05	.80	Not Significant
Cohesion in Filipino			
Cohesion in English	.32	.09	Not Significant
Style and Conventions in Filipino			

Table 4 shows that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' ability to use lexical and grammatical cohesive devices in combining the introduction, body and conclusion in their English argumentative essays and the respondents' ability to compose argumentative essays in Filipino.

Issues on Cohesion Level

Student Number 4 (Essay in English): "Senior high school students should constantly use English language as it helps them prepare for their job demands, eventually. Also, the use of English language in most classes surely increases their reading comprehension..."

Student Number 4 (Essay in Filipino) "Nararapat lang na gumamit ng Ingles ang mga senior high school students dahil sigurado ito ay makakatulong **sa kanyang** college life at lalu na kapag **silá** ay maghahanap ng trabaho..."

A respondent's essay No. 4 in English observed the correct usage of cohesive devices such as the pronoun 'them' referring to 'senior high school students; the use of 'also' in addition to the positive idea expressed in the first sentence, making it clearly comprehensible. On the contrary, a respondent's essay No. 4 in Filipino incorrectly used the pronoun 'kanya' instead of 'kanila' as the respondent, senior high school students, was plural in form and meaning.

The respondents experience difficulties in pronoun-antecedent agreement in number (singular or plural). They might not be familiar with the variety of pronouns used in formal communication or correspondence such as when and how to use the personal, indefinite, relative, reciprocal and reflexive pronouns appropriately based on the context.

Relationship between the Respondents' Style and Conventions in English and their Filipino Written Discourse Competence

Table 5. Correlation between the Respondents' Style and Convention in English and their Written Discourse Competence in Filipino

Argumentative Essay Components	Correlation (r)	Significance Level (p-level)	Verbal Interpretation
Style and Conventions in English Claim in Filipino	.04	.83	Not Significant
Style and Conventions in English Development of Ideas in Filipino	.20	.30	Not Significant
Style and Conventions in English Cohesion in Filipino	-.08	.67	Not Significant
Style and Conventions in English Style and Conventions in Filipino	.13	.49	Not Significant

Table 5 shows that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' ability to present a formal tone that demonstrated standard English conventions of usage and mechanics (style and conventions in English) and the respondents' ability to compose argumentative essays in Filipino.

Style and Convention in English Filipino

Student No. 9 (Essay in English), “Legitimizing same-sex marriage in the Philippines could corrupt the minds of many Filipinos. It will ruin the real purpose of marriage and destroy the sanctity of the holiness of marriage. This will only promote evil than good...”

Student No. 9 (Essay in Filipino), “Ang kasal ay isang napaka sagradong bagay kaya hindi nararapat na hayaang ikasal ang dalawang tao na may parehong kasarian dahil ito ay kawalang respeto sa Diyos at hindi ito naaayon sa turo ng simbahan kahit ano relihiyon ang iyong kinabibilangan kaya patuloy ang pagtutol ng simbahang Katoliko dito.”

A respondent’s essay No. 9 in English correctly applied the use of punctuation marks, capitalization, and spelling. On the contrary, a respondent’s essay No. 9 written in Filipino was considered run-on sentence due to the absence of punctuation marks to separate the independent from dependent clauses. The sentences did not have punctuation marks such as period or comma to clearly separate the varying ideas from one sentence to another.

The findings shown in tables 2, 4 and 5 may be attributed to the following: poor quality of instruction of Filipino teachers, low regard to Filipino language (social factor), and development of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

Regarding the poor quality of instruction, according to Badayos as cited in Ortiz (2017), that high school students’ frustration, lack of motivation, and inability to write well-formed sentences were due to their Filipino language teachers’ poor teaching strategies.

Also, the finding may be ascribed to the growing issue that many Filipino professionals, not just the students, place high regard to English language while the Filipino language is neglected. This was further explained in a literature entitled, “Pagtatangi sa Ingles at pagmamaliit sa wika, hadlang sa intelektuwalisasyon ng Filipino” (Santos, 2016).

Similarly, English is the perceived language for socio-economic advancement and is the language of aspiration in the controlling domains such as in education, government, literature, international relations, law, medicine, science and technology, etc. Hence, Filipino is not (yet) an intellectualized language (Sibayan, 1991)

Most significantly, the tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 show significant relationship findings which may be explained by the development of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). In conceptualizing bilingual proficiency, Cummins and other researchers suggested that it takes learners approximately two to five years or longer for some bilingual learners to achieve a level of academic linguistic proficiency (Baker, 2006).

Hence, it can be inferred that the respondents may not have sufficient exposure and motivation to the first language (Filipino) despite having reached their grade level which is beyond the seven-year requirement to develop CALP. Because English language is the medium of instruction, the language used in instructional materials and tests, and the language in almost all domains in various institutions and services such as in religion, politics, entertainment, business and commerce, etc. (Sibayan, 1991).

Table 6. Regression Analysis of Filipino Written Discourse Competence to English Claim

Argumentative Essay Components	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance	Interpretation
	B	Standard Error	Beta			
Claim	.28	.16	.33	1.78	.09	Not Significant
Development of Ideas	.28	.19	.25	1.50	.15	Not Significant
Cohesion	.17	.14	.20	1.16	.26	Not Significant
Style and Convention	.17	.20	.14	.83	.42	Not Significant

Legend: Dependent Variable: English Discourse Competence in Claim

Table 6 reveals that respondents' competencies in Filipino written discourse did not predict the respondents' ability to produce argumentative essays in English with a clear, arguable statement that could be supported by reasons and evidence (claim). This means that one's Filipino written discourse competence did not influence his/her written discourse competence in terms of writing an introduction with clearly defined thesis statement in English.

Table 7. Regression Analysis of Filipino Written Discourse Competence to English Development of Ideas

Argumentative Essay Components	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance	Interpretation
	B	Standard Error	Beta			
Claim	.02	.07	.06	.28	.78	Not Significant
Development of Ideas	.13	.08	.31	1.56	.13	Not Significant
Cohesion	.04	.06	.14	.66	.51	Not Significant
Style and Conventions	-.02	.09	-.06	-.27	.79	Not Significant

Legend: Dependent Variable: English Discourse Competence Development of Ideas

Table 7 records that the respondents' competencies in written discourse in Filipino did not predict their ability to provide sufficient data and evidence to back up the claim as well as conclusion in English. This means that a language learner's written discourse competence in Filipino did not influence his/her ability to produce the said competency in writing argumentative essays in English.

Table 8. Regression Analysis of Filipino Written Discourse Competence to English Cohesion

Argumentative Essay Components	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance	Interpretation
	B	Standard Error	Beta			
Claim	-.30	.27	-.25	-1.12	.27	Not Significant
Development of Ideas	-.19	.32	-.12	-.60	.56	Not Significant
Cohesion	.25	.25	.22	.99	.33	Not Significant
Style and Conventions	.11	.35	.07	.31	.76	Not Significant

Legend: Dependent Variable: English Discourse Competence Cohesion

Table 8 shows that the respondents’ competencies in Filipino written discourse did not predict the respondents’ ability to use transitional devices, conjunctions and other lexical and grammatical cohesive devices in writing English argumentative essays.

Table 9. Regression Analysis of Filipino Written Discourse Competence to Style and Convention in English

Argumentative Essay Components	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance	Interpretation
	B	Standard Error	Beta			
Claim	.15	.23	.14	.65	.52	Not Significant
Development of Ideas	.29	.27	.21	1.04	.31	Not Significant
Cohesion	-.36	.21	-.36	-1.69	.10	Not Significant
Style and Convention	.02	.30	.01	.06	.95	Not Significant

Legend: Dependent Variable: English Discourse Competence Style and Convention

Table 9 shows that the respondents’ competencies in written discourse in Filipino did not predict their ability to present a formal, objective tone that demonstrates standards English conventions of usage and mechanics when composing argumentative essays in English.

The findings on tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 do not support the theory of Jim Cummins regarding Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) in terms of transferability of written discourse competence from one’s first language (Filipino) to another (English) when composing argumentative essays.

This may be explained through the theory called Separate Underlying Principle (SUP) which said that one’s first language proficiency does not affect the development of his/her second

language because the minds of the learners operate independently (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2010, p. 55).

Bilingual or multilingual individuals who had meaningful exposure and experience with two languages in school or another environment, developed common underlying proficiency (CUP) skills which enabled the development of cognitive and academic skills in both languages (Bialystok, 2001).

Thus, as explained in the findings for tables 2, 3, 4, and 5, English language was the medium of instruction, the language used in instructional materials and tests, and the language in almost all domains in various institutions and services such as in religion, politics, entertainment, business and commerce, etc. (Sibayan, 1991). That the respondents may not have adequate exposure and motivation to master the fundamentals of Filipino academic writing such as claim, cohesion, development of ideas (coherence), and style and conventions.

Since the results support the Separate Underlying Proficiency, this implies that there are Bilingual learners, especially in higher levels, who might be classified as proficient or skilled in composing argumentative essays in English, but cannot perform well enough in Filipino academic writing tasks. This phenomenon is evident in the context of professional world as there are many employees whose English communication skills may be classified as skilled or even exceptional when composing memoranda or project proposals, but this level of competence is not reflected to their oral presentations and written output in Filipino.

In addition, the findings may be attributed to Gardner's socio-educational model and the significance of motivation as a contributing factor in second language (L2) acquisition. Motivation was defined as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language (Gardner and Lambert, 1972).

Using his theory, it may be inferred that the respondents might have instrumental motivation which means that they wished to gain some social or economic rewards through second language (L2) achievement. In short, learning English might be perceived by the respondents as more functional than learning Filipino language for this would increase their chance to become employed and to successfully fulfill their job-related functions eventually.

Despite working in the Philippines, English language is used in job interviews and in the workplace such as business and commerce, education, law, medicine and the rest of the disciplines. Therefore, English language has been the status quo that the respondents may place higher value to English language than that of the Filipino language.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

In light of the foregoing findings, the following conclusions are hereby presented:

1. The respondents' level of Filipino written discourse competence is not influenced by their level of English written discourse competence in composing argumentative essays;
2. The respondents' level of written discourse competence in English does not have significant relationship with their written discourse competence in Filipino, except for one component (claim);

3. The English written discourse competence of the respondents does not predict their Filipino written discourse competence.
4. The respondents are skilled in providing relevant and factual supporting details aligned with their thesis statement in English, whereas the respondents are considered developing in fulfilling such demands in Filipino;
5. Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) holds true in the context of the sampled Grade 11 students studying in public schools.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions, these following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. Teach learners about techniques or strategies for content-based idea generation such as using the student's first language during pre-writing stage.
2. Train them on different discourse writing patterns for them to know the salient features and purpose of each type of writing.
3. Encourage students to use their L1 (first language) in L2 writing to generate and elaborate ideas due to linguistic deficiencies.
4. Create writing programs on proper implementation and use of process-genre approach in order to develop student's ability to write argumentative essays in English and in Filipino.
5. Further researchers should identify the gaps in this study to account for the other factors that influence the learner's development of written discourse competence.
6. Evaluate the correlation between developing the high school students' cognitive academic language proficiency and their written discourse competence.

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