

## ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF MINDANAO TAGUM COLLEGE

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### ABSTRACT

English proficiency needs to be essential for academic achievement. The quality of English instruction in high schools is closer to that of a primary school, which is insufficient to enable students to advance academically on their own. Thus, English proficiency is considered as part of the weighted process. This is a descriptive correlational study designed to find a significant relationship between junior high school students' English proficiency and academic achievement. Results showed that there is indeed a great correlation between the two variables in the study with a p-value of 0.00776, hence the null hypothesis was hereby rejected. With this, the findings could serve as guidance for English teachers in terms of data on the degree of students' language proficiency and academic success. Students are likewise urged to look into other elements such as learning styles, instructional approaches, education-learning technologies, exposure to the English language, as well as other contextual and environmental factors that may influence students' academic achievement and English proficiency. Following these recommendations would not only benefit schools by satisfying the demands and expectations of students while simultaneously improving the institutions' overall retention and school academic rates.

**Keywords:** Academic Achievement, English Proficiency, Oral Communication, Scholastic Performance, Written Communication

**Biographical Notes:** Genesis G. Genelza is currently a faculty member at the University of Mindanao Tagum College teaching Junior High School subjects, General Education, Professional Education, and Major Subjects in English. He has been a Model United Nations ambassador and a delegate, receiving major awards for best position paper for UNHRC, UNICEF, and UNESCO; a special mention for WHO and UNESCO; and an honorable mention for UNICEF. Furthermore, his passion for learning and commitment to growing professionally, spiritually, and personally has been his constant priority and consideration.

### INTRODUCTION

It was observed that students who spoke English well and had accomplished more in their high school education institutions that used English as their native tongue performed better academically. It did not, however, have any hard evidence to back up this claim. The ability to communicate effectively in English should be crucial for academic achievement. High school English classes are taught at a relatively primary school level, which is insufficient on its own to help students advance academically. English proficiency is therefore taken into account as

part of the weighted method. But despite its limitations, English instruction was thought to improve students' performance on formative assessment tasks like homework since they had more time to prepare. Hence, it will be crucial to provide students with more comprehensive English language instruction that combines reading, writing, speaking, and listening in real-world medical settings so they can truly apply language learning to their academic achievement (Kaliyadan, Thalamkandathil, Parupalli, Amin, Balaha, & Ali, 2015).

According to Lee (2013), a professor at the University of Arizona, social participation is essential for achieving academic success in college. Implementing initiatives that give overseas students chances to interact with overseas students and form relationships would not only aid in their adjustment period but also improve their language abilities. Many overseas students arrive with strong reading and writing skills in English, but owing to a lack of prior practice, they lack speaking and listening abilities. Interactions with local students would aid foreign students in becoming proficient, particularly in speaking and listening, which are essential in face-to-face classroom settings.

Another recent research published findings from a meta-analysis of 22 studies on the connection between English language competency and academic success of foreign students at American higher education institutions (Wongtrirat, 2010). The studies under consideration used the TOEFL score as a measure of English language ability and the GPA and course completion rates as indicators of academic performance. They were carried out between 1987 and 2009. The meta-findings analyses led to the conclusion that "TOEFL has a small predictive ability on academic accomplishment of overseas students, whether assessed by GPA or the completion of courses".

Furthermore, in the Philippines, academic achievement and English proficiency are closely associated. Language usage is frequently required in academic courses like Science, Mathematics, and English. The language functions are crucial to the critical and analytical thinking that is required in math and scientific classes. Students' ability to think more effectively increases as they become more proficient in more linguistic functions. Thus, students are more likely to achieve well in their academic disciplines the more adept they are in the English language (Racca, & Lasaten, 2016). The majority of students lament their inability to comprehend other languages, despite their best efforts to master them. Even if their teachers are fluent in the language, they find it difficult to pick up the language.

With this, the study looked into how competently Junior High School students at the University of Mindanao Tagum College spoke English and how well they performed scholastically. The objective was to find out more about this relationship in order to inform supervisors or faculty and staff who want to encourage students' educational excellence. In addition, in order to address a gap in the existing literature, the study also looked into the relationship between the two variables.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study is anchored to the theory of Jim Cummins' Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and that of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). This theory states that the "average student can develop conversational fluency within two to five years, but that developing fluency is more technical, academic language can take from four to seven years

depending on many variables such as language proficiency level, and the degree of support for achieving academic proficiency.

The continuous cycle begins with English language proficiency. First, and after achieving proficiency in the language, students will be able to correctly manipulate language forms and patterns for easy understanding of academic lessons presented in English. This results to high academic performance, which will also augment students' proficiency in the language. The more proficient one is in English, the more academically good one becomes and the more one achieves academically, the more one becomes proficient in English. Genelza (2022) noted that it is also advised that institutions, stakeholders, and the workplace environment collaborate, with an emphasis on communication and having a clear line to them, focusing on the growth side and giving them good opportunities.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study attempts to determine the relationship between English Proficiency and Academic Performance of Junior High School Students at University of Mindanao Tagum College. The questions presented below are considered for thorough discussion.

1. What is the level of English Proficiency of Junior High School students in terms of:
  - 1.1 Written Discourse;
  - 1.2 Oral Communication?
2. What is the level of Academic Achievement of Junior High School students in terms of:
  - 2.1 Scholastic Performance?
3. Is there a significant relationship between English Proficiency and Academic Performance of Junior High School students at University of Mindanao Tagum College?

#### Null Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant relationship between English Proficiency and Academic Performance of Junior High School Students at University of Mindanao Tagum College.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research study used quantitative, non-experimental design. Moreover, a descriptive-correlational method is employed in unfolding the level of English Proficiency in terms of written discourse and oral communication; and the level of Academic Achievement in terms of scholastic performance. Besides, this method also determined the significant relationship between English Proficiency and Academic Achievement of Junior High School students in UMTC.

Furthermore, the respondents of this research study are the Junior High School Students at the University of Mindanao Tagum College done by means of total enumeration technique sampling method: Grade 7 – 77; Grade 8 – 63; Grade 9 – 82; and Grade 10 – 88. Thus, there are 310 students who are the sole respondents of this research study.

In this research study, a questionnaire that the researcher created was employed. This was done in an easy approach, but with a brief and specific remark. The College Dean granted the scholar permission to undertake research at UM Tagum. The researcher directly handed the questionnaire to the Junior High School students once the petition was granted, asking them

to complete it, and assuring students that any data collected during the research would be treated with confidentiality and only used for educational reasons.

The data gathered by the research instruments were totaled, tabulated, interpreted, and evaluated using the descriptive statistics listed below:

**Mean** was used to designate the level of English Proficiency and Academic Achievement of Junior High Students in UMTC.

**Pearson** was used to quantify the significant relationship of English Proficiency and Academic Achievement of Junior High Students in UMTC.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### The Level of English Proficiency of Junior High School Students in UMTC

As shown in Table 1 is the level of English proficiency of Junior High School students in UMTC. The highest between the two indicators of the variable is written discourse with a mean score of 4.41 described as very high. This means that having been proficient in English means higher skills in written discourse. This can be noted that having written discourse skills are a good manifestation of being proficient in English.

**Table 1.** The Level of English Proficiency of Junior High School Students in UMTC

Indicators	Mean	Description
Written Discourse	4.41	Very High
Oral Communication	4.37	Very High
<b>Over-all</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>Very High</b>

#### Legend:

4.30 – 5.00	Very High
3.50 – 4.20	High
2.70 – 3.40	Moderate
1.90 – 2.60	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low

Additionally, the indicator oral communication has a mean score of 4.37 which can also be interpreted as very high descriptive equivalent. This also indicates that having oral communication skills means having been proficient in English. Hence, the higher the oral communication skills the higher proficiency in English.

The way we write, act, dress, and manage our duties influences how others see us, our businesses, our products, and our level of professionalism. Therefore, communication is just as crucial as what we say. In a nutshell, our interpersonal communication skills. Successful people understand how to communicate effectively. They are adept at communicating clearly and achieving their goals without offending others with whom they interact. You must have an excellent communication style since you interact frequently with peers, outside groups, customers, employees, and superiors. Despite our best efforts and planning, there are always dangers involved in communicating; we can never be completely certain of our success. No message ever reaches its destination in the exact form that the sender intended. Furthermore, no matter how hard you try, the message is always what they hear, not what you say. But if you follow a strategy, you may at least cut the risk and increase your chances of success. In order for communication to take place, there must be a two-way exchange of thoughts, sentiments, and values as well as the clarification of signals and the honing of skills (Prabavathi & Nagasubramani, 2018).

As a result, offering students opportunities to interact and develop relationships with other students will not only help them adapt but also enhance their language skills (Genelza, 2022). Overall, the English proficiency has an overall mean score of 4.38 which can be described as very high. This shows that having proficiency with the two indicators mentioned in this study give contributing factors in achieving higher proficiency and performed academically in an English language class.

### The Level of Academic Achievement of Junior High School Students in UMTC

Table 2 shows the level of academic achievement of Junior High School students in UMTC. The result shows that the academic achievement with the indicator scholastic performance has an overall mean of 4.45 which can be interpreted as very high. This means that in order to have academic achievement, students must perform academically in school.

**Table 2.** The Level of Academic Achievement of Junior High School Students in UMTC

Indicators	Mean	Description
Scholastic Performance	4.45	Very High

#### Legend:

4.30 – 5.00	Very High
3.50 – 4.20	High
2.70 – 3.40	Moderate
1.90 – 2.60	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low

Additionally, both teachers and learners must cooperate and work together in their classrooms to build learning environments that are secure and sound, based on shared objectives, materials, and designs as well as norms for involvement as true students of the school. In their interactions with one another, teachers and students adopt specific identities and roles, which helps them to develop interpretations of what learning is both as a process and as a body of knowledge (GENELZA, 2022).

The research by Colmar, Liem, Connor, and Martin (2019) and Martinez, Youssef-Morgan, Chambel, and Marques-Pinto (2019) both consider academic accomplishment to be important (2019). According to Colmar et al. (2019), academic buoyancy—the ability of elementary school kids to bounce back from academic setbacks—was not a reliable measure of educational progress. The work by Eakman, Kinney, Schierl, and Henry (2019), which focuses on the intricacies of the psychological and social lives of returned veterans and service members, also include academic accomplishment. A thorough investigation of the relationship between learning climate support, post-traumatic stress, depression, self-efficacy, and academic challenges revealed, among other things, that learning environments that encourage autonomy and self-efficacy are positively related to achievement.

Orfan (2021) claims that these circumstances are a result of Afghan society's constraints and cultural norms. When the COVID-19 crisis broke out in some regions of the country, students' academic performance was impacted by these disparities in access to the aforementioned devices and services, and they were generally unsatisfied with online instruction. Consequently, numerous difficulties, discontent, and ambiguity regarding the application of online education were noted during the COVID-19 epidemic in Afghanistan.

### The Significant Relationship of English Proficiency and Academic Achievement of Junior High Students in UMTC

Table 3 presents the significant relationship between English proficiency and academic achievement of Junior High School students in the University of Mindanao Tagum College. Results showed that there is indeed a great significant correlation between the two variables mentioned in this study with a p-value of 0.00776 and an r-value of 0.53. This clearly means that the null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between English proficiency and academic achievement of the Junior High School students in UMTC is hereby rejected.

**Table 3.** Significant Relationship between English Proficiency and Academic Achievement of Junior High Students in UMTC

Variables	Mean	r – value	p – value	Decision $\alpha = 0.05$
English Proficiency	4.38			
Academic Achievement	4.45	0.53	0.00776	Ho rejected

\* $p < 0.05$

The study's findings are consistent with those of a previous investigation of Sahragard, Baharloo, and Soozandehfar (2011) that sought to determine whether there is a substantial correlation between the academic achievement of Iranian college students and their linguistic ability. The study concluded that there is a significant correlation between linguistic competence and academic achievement.

Also, the study's findings support those of studies of Aina, Ogundele, and Olanipekun (2013) and Garnace (2001), which sought to determine the association between English proficiency and academic achievement. Their research's findings indicated a strong correlation between academic achievement and English proficiency.

Thus, students who were more proficient in the English language did better in their lessons. Because English is the language of instruction in professional courses, students who were more proficient in it performed better in writing, speaking, grasping, and understanding the lessons and instructions that were provided to them. Teaching the course material and speaking the language of instruction fluently increases the learner's exposure to and chance to understand the course material, leading to improved student control over what is taught in class and favorable academic achievement (Genelza, 2022).

Additionally, the findings could serve as a guidance for English teachers in terms of data on the degree of students' language proficiency and academic success. They might use the crucial details to enhance their instructional strategies. Using the findings, they might design techniques and strategies for fusing the learning material with the students' present weaknesses. As a result, focus will be placed on improving the English program. Students are likewise urged to look into other elements such as learning styles, instructional approaches, education - learning technologies, exposure to the English language, as well as other contextual and environmental factors that may influence students' academic success and English language proficiency.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, it is safe to say that having English proficiency would give benefits to the academic achievement of the Junior High School. Trice (2007) noted that students' limited English proficiency was cited as one of the factors contributing to their isolation from fellow students and professors. These results suggest that students' academic achievement is indirectly related to their English proficiency.

Numerous empirical studies show that having a strong command of the English language is essential for students who are enrolled in English-medium institutions, particularly those whose first language is not English. Along with English proficiency, some culturally specific and cross-cultural issues, such as academic cultural difference brought on by a different educational system, lecture style, and relationships between students and lecturers, have been identified as factors that influence a student's likelihood of succeeding in school (Li et al., 2010). A student-friendly campus also requires constant communication between administrators, advisers for international students, and faculty members. All parties concerned will gain from improved understanding and cooperative decision-making as a result of ongoing communication, which will also benefit the Junior High School students and the institution as a whole. Additionally, constant communication would aid in the understudies' absorption into

the main stream of school life. The students won't feel alone, which will make it simpler for them to acclimatize to social situations. With this, following these ideas would not only be beneficial schools to satisfy the demands and expectations of students while simultaneously improving the institutions' overall retention and school academic rates.

The purpose of English instruction in the classroom is to teach students how to use English effectively for communication in any situation. By using a variety of teaching strategies and speaking exercises to get students to engage in discussions more actively, it is identified. English language instructors either start the conversation or select a task that calls for them to communicate their views to the class in a variety of methods (Genelza, 2021).

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