

The Relationship Between English Proficiency and Academic Performance Among Senior High School Students in RSEL C

Jim Boy P. Fernandez, LPT and Wilson E. Gamao

Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc.

Abstract. This study explores the relationship between English proficiency and academic performance among Senior High School (SHS) students at Rizal Special Education Learning Center (RSEL C). Recognizing English as a crucial medium for communication and education, the research aims to identify challenges that hinder students' academic success due to their English language skills. The study assesses proficiency across four macro skills—writing, reading, listening, and speaking—while also examining students' study habits and attendance rates. Utilizing a descriptive-correlation survey approach, the findings indicate that students exhibit good proficiency levels, particularly in listening ($\bar{x} = 2.86$), followed by reading and writing, with speaking having the lowest mean score. Additionally, academic performance is high, with attendance rate ($\bar{x} = 3.91$) being the most significant factor, closely followed by study habits. The results reveal a significant positive relationship between English proficiency and academic performance, suggesting that higher proficiency levels contribute to improved academic outcomes. This research underscores the importance of enhancing English language skills to foster better academic success among students.

KEY WORDS

1. English proficiency
2. academic performance
3. language skills
4. communication skills
5. education outcomes

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1. Introduction

The English language has emerged as a global medium of communication, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries. As the most widely spoken language in the world, English serves as an official language in numerous countries and is integral to education, business, and technology (Hirsch, 2011; Crystal, 2012). In the Philippines, English is not only an official language but also the primary medium of instruction in schools, making proficiency in the language crucial for academic success (Suelto, 2012). However, despite

its significance, many students—particularly those in specialized educational settings such as the Rizal Special Education Learning Center (RSEL C)—struggle with English fluency.

Research consistently identifies language skill development as a predictor of academic success (Hirsch, 2011; Crystal, 2012). In countries such as Germany and Brazil, strong communication skills, particularly in English, are linked to better relationships and opportunities in business and employment (Jenniferc, 2014; Torres, 2011). Mastery of English is widely

regarded as a key component for achieving success and fostering understanding across cultures, positioning language proficiency as a foundational academic and professional asset.

In the Philippine context, research echoes these global findings. Racca and Lasaten (2016) investigated students at the Philippine Science High School and found a significant relationship between English proficiency and academic performance in subjects such as Science, Mathematics, and English, concluding that enhanced English skills contribute to better understanding across disciplines. Similarly, Mendoza (2023) explored this relationship among Philippine Science High School students, emphasizing the necessity of English proficiency for academic success in specialized educational settings. These studies highlight the critical role of English language skills in the academic achievement of Filipino students.

Focusing on the Davao region, several studies have examined this correlation. Dionson (2021) conducted research at UM Panabo College, revealing a significant relationship between English language proficiency and academic performance among Grade 11 students, and noting that students with higher proficiency in grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension tended to achieve better grades in English, Science, and Mathematics. Lanugan (2019) explored this relationship among English 201 students at the same institution, finding that grammar and vocabulary proficiency positively impacted academic outcomes. Genelza (2022) studied junior high school students at the University of Mindanao Tagum College, concluding that English proficiency is crucial for academic achievement and recommending that educators consider students' language skills when developing instructional strategies.

The reviewed literature situates the four macro skills and two performance indicators of this study within established scholarship. Listening, though often under-emphasized, is essential to comprehension and is strengthened by strategy instruction and self-assessment (Sabuori, 2016; Goh, 2015). Reading proficiency, influenced by first-language literacy and extensive reading, is closely tied to overall academic performance (Bernhardt, 2015; Bamford & Day, 2016; Gabejan et al., 2021). Speaking is assessed through communicative ability, fluency, and accuracy, and benefits from interaction and exposure to spoken language (Blount, 2016; Negara, 2021). Writing requires mastery of multiple linguistic components and is well served by performance-based assessment (Aliyu, 2020; Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2019). Beyond language skills, study habits and attendance are both established correlates of achievement (Gbore, 2016; Hancock et al., 2016).

This study aims to explore the relationship between English proficiency and academic performance among SHS students at RSELC, focusing on how language skills influence educational outcomes while addressing the gap in understanding this relationship in a specialized learning setting. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the level of English proficiency of the respondents in terms of reading, listening, writing, and speaking? (2) What is the level of academic performance of the respondents in terms of study habits and attendance rate? (3) Is there a significant relationship between English proficiency and academic performance? The corresponding null hypothesis, tested at the 0.05 level of significance, states that there is no significant relationship between English proficiency and academic performance.

2. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach, specifically a descriptive-correlation survey method, to explore the relationship between English proficiency and academic performance among senior high school students. The descriptive-correlation method involves collecting information without altering the subjects or their environment, relying on survey responses and existing records to describe variables and examine their association.

The participants were senior high school students from the Rizal Special Education Learning Center (RSELC) in Davao City. A random sampling technique was used so that each student had a known probability of being selected. Inclusion criteria specified that participants be enrolled in the academic year 2024–2025 and be of an appropriate age to respond to the survey questions. A total of 50 students were randomly selected to participate, and the completed questionnaires were collected for analysis.

Data were collected using a self-developed survey questionnaire validated by an expert in research methodology. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: one covering the demographic profile of the respondents (age, gender, and year level) and the other assessing English proficiency across the four macro skills and academic performance in terms of study habits and attendance. Respondents indicated their answers by checking the boxes corresponding

to their choices.

Responses were interpreted using a four-point descriptive scale for both English proficiency and class performance: 3.28–4.00 (Proficient), 2.52–3.27 (Good), 1.76–2.51 (Basic), and 1.00–1.75 (Poor). For English proficiency, these levels ranged from proficient use of the language down to minimal knowledge and poor utilization. For class performance, the same ranges described study habits and attendance, from excellent and consistently high down to poor habits and frequent absences.

The data collection procedure began with obtaining permission from the school principal and research adviser. After securing consent, the researcher explained the survey process to the respondents and distributed the questionnaires, then collected them for analysis once completed.

For data analysis, statistical techniques including percentage, mean, and the Pearson r correlation coefficient were employed, supplemented by regression analysis. The mean was used to interpret English proficiency levels and academic performance, while the Pearson r and regression coefficients measured the strength and significance of the relationship between the variables. Ethical safeguards were observed throughout, including securing institutional permission, explaining the study to respondents, and obtaining their consent before participation.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings are presented according to the three research questions. Three tables summarize the level of English proficiency, the level of

class performance, and the regression analysis of their relationship. The discussion interprets the results in relation to the reviewed literature.

3.1. Level of English Proficiency

Table 1. Summary of the Level of English Proficiency

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Level
Reading	2.73	Good
Listening	2.86	Good
Writing	2.60	Good
Speaking	2.30	Good
Overall	2.62	Good

Descriptive Level: 3.28–4.00 (Proficient); 2.52–3.27 (Good); 1.76–2.51 (Basic); 1.00–1.75 (Poor).

Table 1 shows the level of English proficiency among students based on four indicators: reading (2.73), listening (2.86), writing (2.60), and speaking (2.30). Listening recorded the highest mean, while speaking recorded the lowest. The overall proficiency level was rated as Good (2.62).

The relative strength of listening suggests that students comprehend spoken English reasonably well, consistent with the view that listening is foundational to language acquisition and benefits from exposure and strat-

egy use (Sabuori, 2016; Goh, 2015). Reading and writing follow closely, reflecting the established links between reading proficiency, first-language literacy, and academic learning (Bernhardt, 2015; Aliyu, 2020). The lower speaking score identifies oral communication as the weakest macro skill for these students, indicating that productive spoken language, which depends on fluency, pronunciation, and interactive practice (Blount, 2016; Negara, 2021), is the area most in need of targeted support.

3.2. Level of Academic Performance

Table 2. Summary of the Level of Class Performance

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Level
Study Habits	2.94	Good
Attendance Rate	3.91	Proficient
Overall	3.42	Proficient

Descriptive Level: 3.28–4.00 (Proficient); 2.52–3.27 (Good); 1.76–2.51 (Basic); 1.00–1.75 (Poor).

Table 2 shows the level of class performance based on study habits (2.94) and attendance rate (3.91). Attendance rate was rated as Proficient, while study habits were rated as Good. The overall class performance was categorized as Proficient (3.42).

The high attendance rate indicates strong participation and consistent presence in class,

a well-documented correlate of academic success (Hancock et al., 2016). Study habits, while rated Good, fall below attendance and point to room for improvement in how students organize and sustain their learning outside formal instruction. Because effective study strategies are strongly associated with achievement (Gbore, 2016), strengthening study habits rep-

resents a practical avenue for consolidating broader academic gains. the students' already strong attendance into

3.3. Relationship Between English Proficiency and Academic Performance

Table 3. Regression Analysis of the Relationship Between English Proficiency and Academic Performance Among SHS Students in RSEL

Dependent / Independent	Coeff.	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Study Habits (Constant)	0.70	0.44	1.59	0.12	
Age	0.00	0.01	-0.40	0.69	0.00
Writing	0.07	0.14	0.48	0.64	0.19
Speaking	0.24	0.12	1.97	0.05	0.24
Listening	0.56	0.12	4.63	0.00	0.44
Attendance Rate (Constant)	0.90	0.59	1.52	0.14	
Age	0.01	0.02	0.82	0.42	0.01
Writing	0.24	0.19	1.30	0.20	0.10
Speaking	-0.20	0.16	-1.27	0.21	0.02
Listening	0.65	0.16	3.98	0.00	0.30
Reading (Constant)	0.81	0.58	1.40	0.17	
Age	0.00	0.02	-0.02	0.99	0.00
Writing	0.28	0.18	1.51	0.14	0.24
Speaking	0.48	0.16	3.01	0.00	0.34
Listening	0.04	0.16	0.24	0.81	0.08

Table 3 presents a regression analysis of the relationships between English proficiency indicators and academic performance outcomes. Listening proficiency shows a strong, statistically significant positive relationship with both study habits (Coeff. = 0.56, $p = 0.00$), explaining 44% of the variance, and attendance rate (Coeff. = 0.65, $p = 0.00$), explaining 30% of the variance. Speaking proficiency significantly and positively influences study habits (Coeff. = 0.24, $p = 0.05$) and reading (Coeff. = 0.48, $p = 0.00$), accounting for 24% and 34% of the variance, respectively. Writing proficiency and age did not significantly affect the dependent variables.

These results confirm a significant positive

relationship between English proficiency and academic performance, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. Listening emerges as the most influential predictor, reinforcing its foundational role in comprehension and, by extension, in sustaining consistent study behavior and class attendance. The significant contribution of speaking to reading further illustrates the interdependence of the macro skills, in which oral competence supports the development of other language abilities. Collectively, the findings indicate that stronger English proficiency, especially in listening and speaking, is associated with better academic performance among these students.

3.4. Integrative Discussion

Read together, the three tables describe students who are generally competent in English and academically diligent, yet uneven across specific skills. English proficiency is Good overall, anchored by listening and weakest in speaking, while class performance is Proficient overall, anchored by strong attendance with study habits trailing. The regression analysis links these descriptive patterns: the same listening skill that is strongest descriptively is also the most powerful predictor of study habits and attendance, tying receptive language competence directly to academic engagement.

The pattern points to a clear leverage point. Speaking is simultaneously the lowest-rated

proficiency skill and a significant predictor of reading, while listening drives the performance indicators. Targeted interventions that strengthen listening and speaking are therefore likely to yield the broadest academic benefit, improving not only oral competence but also reading, study behavior, and attendance. This coherence across description and prediction supports the study’s central claim that enhancing English language skills fosters better academic success, and it aligns with the broader literature connecting language proficiency to achievement in Philippine and international settings (Racca & Lasaten, 2016; Genelza, 2022).

4. Conclusions

The study concludes that Senior High School students at RSELC exhibit a good overall level of English proficiency across listening, reading, writing, and speaking, with listening strongest and speaking weakest. Their class performance, measured through study habits and attendance rate, is rated as Proficient overall, indicating strong academic dedication and participation, particularly in attendance.

The findings demonstrate a significant positive relationship between English proficiency and academic performance, with the null hypothesis rejected. Listening proficiency was the most influential predictor of both study

habits and attendance, while speaking contributed significantly to reading. These results answer the research questions by confirming that students possess solid English language skills and that these skills correlate meaningfully with their academic performance.

The study further concludes that speaking represents the area of greatest need for development. Enhancing English language skills, especially the productive and receptive oral skills that most strongly predict academic outcomes, is therefore central to improving overall academic success among these students.

4.1. Implications and Recommendations

For school administrators, the findings support data-driven decisions in curriculum design and resource allocation that prioritize English language development, especially speaking and listening. Because listening proficiency predicts both study habits and attendance, investing in language support may yield gains that extend beyond test scores to broader academic engagement.

For teachers, the results suggest adapting instructional strategies to strengthen oral communication through interactive, practice-based approaches such as role-play and structured speaking tasks, while continuing to reinforce the strong attendance and reasonable study habits already present. Explicit instruction in study strategies can help raise study habits to the level of the students’ attendance.

For students, the findings underscore the value of taking initiative in seeking additional practice for speaking and listening, as these skills are most closely tied to academic outcomes. For future researchers, the study rec-

ommends identifying the specific factors that drive the proficiency-performance relationship and evaluating instructional interventions designed to improve speaking skills, providing evidence to guide educators and policymakers.

4.2. Limitations and Future Directions

The study relied on self-reported data, which may introduce response bias, and used a sample of 50 students from a single specialized learning center, which limits the generalizability of the findings. As a correlational and regression-based design, it establishes association rather than causation between English proficiency and academic performance.

The study also did not account for external factors that may influence academic performance, such as socio-economic status, parental involvement, or access to learning resources.

These unmeasured variables may shape both language proficiency and academic outcomes.

Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs to track changes over time, and qualitative approaches to explore students' experiences with speaking skills. Investigating the impact of specific instructional strategies on language proficiency and academic performance would further clarify how best to translate improved English skills into stronger academic outcomes.

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