English Language Programs (Pre-K to 12) impact on Social and Academic Engagements: the case of a Philippine university

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Abstract

Considering the curricular changes in the Philippines caused by the shift from K to 10 to K to 12, the study determined the impact of the ESL Programs of the old curricula (Pre-K to 12) to the university students’ academic and social engagements in a comprehensive university. Evaluating the ESL Programs in the old curriculum would enable curriculum planners and policymakers to determine the need of language programs in the university level. In the study, the characteristics, which may refer to motivation, stress, and anxiety, of the students were also investigated as moderators in the engagements. Eight hundred sixty-six (866) university students from various disciplines participated in the research following the framework of Fox, et.al. (2014). Quantitative in nature using the structural equation model (SEM) in analyzing the data, the results showed that the ESL language programs have impact on the academic and social engagements of the students with the learning outcomes as moderators. Anxiety, as one of the student characteristics, played significantly in moderating the course outcomes and the engagements. Students perceive the programs to have more impact on their academic engagement than their social engagement. Implications for the inclusion of the English language programs in the university level are upheld.

Key words: English language program; academic engagement; social engagement; structural equation model (SEM); English as a Second Language (ESL)

Introduction

The Enhanced Education Act of 2013 (Philippine Gazette, 2013) redefined the educational system of the Philippines. This act changed the K to 10 curricula of the country to K to 12 where the following set of policies were drawn (Sarvi, et.al., 2015, p. 28):

a. K+6+4+2. The law configures the school education system as: at least 1 year of kindergarten, 6 years of primary education, and 6 years of secondary education. Secondary education includes 4 years of lower secondary school (LSS) and 2 years of upper secondary school (USS).

b. Ages at entry. The threshold age of entry for kindergarten is 5 years, the age of entry to grade 1 is typically 6 years, 12 for grade 7, and 16 for grade 11.

c. Kindergarten through grade 12. This is defined as compulsory education.

With the changing landscape in Philippine education in 2013 due to the K to 12 implementations, universities would have to adapt to the changes by reprogramming their course offerings and refining the program curricula. The changes, which are brought about by the full implementation of the K to 12 curricula in 2017, included the integration of the general education (GE) courses from the higher education programs to the senior high school subjects. According to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the governing body that takes care of all concerns of the higher education, such integration is necessary:
“In pursuit of the ongoing educational reforms that include the enhanced basic education curriculum through K to 12 which in its consideration of the College Readiness Standards (CEB Resolution No. 298-2011) has integrated GE courses of the higher education program to the senior high school core courses, thus, has created a window for the revision of the current GE curriculum (CHED Memorandum 59, Series of 1996). The new GE Curriculum aims to expose undergraduate students to various domains of knowledge and ways of comprehending social and natural realities, developing in the process, intellectual competencies and civic capacities (CHED Memorandum Order 20 Series of 2013).”

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has circulated the memorandum that specifically identified the new general education curriculum that replaced the existing one for the higher education level. Based on the new curriculum, the courses were reduced to 36 units from the 64-unit course in 1997 (Official Gazette, 1997). The new general education curriculum did not include any English language program.

Besides the reduction of the language courses in higher education, the biggest challenge for the English language program is the loss of the English courses as required courses for all programs in the university or tertiary level. With the re-assignment of the English courses to Grades 11 and 12 in the senior high school, the new curricula in the tertiary level will no longer include any English course unless the program is a bachelor’s degree in English as a major or a specialization.

The decrease in the English language course offerings is not helping the country regain its edge as one that has a high proficiency index. Recent results on the English proficiency of the college graduates have generated interest among tertiary education institutions. Although in the current English Proficiency Index released in 2021, the Philippines ranked 18 among 88 countries, second among 24 Asian countries. The same report has indicated that in Asia, the English proficiency scores have remained high though erratic despite the great investments placed on its development (EF English Proficiency Index, 2021). This report is supported by the statement of the British Council Philippines that though the Philippines’ standing is still high, it might be losing its competitive edge to other Asian countries (Cabigon, 2018).

Besides the loss of the English programs in the university level (except for programs which major in the English language), there are no studies in English language program evaluation in the tertiary level. Research regarding program evaluation is mostly focused too on the basic education level (Barrot, 2018 & Gonzales, 1987); or broadly addressing Philippine education (Bernardo, 2004; Chang, 2011; & Turmudi & Hajan, 2020)

The reduction or loss of the units in the English language program and the lack of studies evaluating the tertiary English language programs have prompted this study.

The study of Fox et al. (2014) have identified the “direct, positive impact of language programs to students’ engagements (p.77)” . Studying the EAP and ESP programs in Canada, they were able to establish that the English language programs were important as they supported students’ academic and social activities. Flynn (2014) also supported that academic and social engagements of university students matter as research showed that they were beneficial: “embracing programs that increase academic engagement, social engagement, or both is beneficial as demonstrated by both institutional-level and nationally represented analyses.
(p.491)” It was found that students who are both academically and socially engaged were most likely to graduate or finish their degrees.

Considering all these changes in the curriculum and the removal of the English language programs from the universities in the aftermath of the K to 12 implementations, it is best to reflect upon the impact of the English courses taught in the university level, hence, program evaluation is conducted. Thus, this study aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. Is there evidence that English language programs have a direct effect on ESL students’ academic and social engagement?
2. Do course outcomes (defined in this study as goal-setting and other goal-directed practices, English language use, and strategy use) mediate academic and social engagement?
3. Do student characteristics (i.e., levels of anxiety; stress caused by pressure from parents, finances, etc.; and motivation) moderate course outcomes?

Besides determining the impact of these English courses to engagements, the study investigated the characteristic of learners that mediated their engagements.

**Literature Review**

**Program Evaluation**

The concept of program evaluation is not new. In fact, almost all disciplines including education have investigated the assessments of programs. Program evaluation is “conducted for decision-making purposes and it examines programs to determine their worth and to make recommendations for programmatic refinement and success” (Spaulding, 2008, p. 5).

Specifically, Brown (2001) defines program evaluation as “the ongoing process of data gathering, analysis, and synthesis, the entire purpose of which is constantly to improve each element of a curriculum on the basis of what is known about all other elements, separately as well as collectively (p.15)”. According to Frye and Hammer (2012), such investigation on specific parts is anchored on the theory of reductionism which is explained as “the whole (or an outcome) can be understood and thus predicted by investigating and understanding the contribution of the constituent parts (p. 290)”. Furthermore, the concept of evaluation is not only explained by reductionism but was also clarified by the system theory proposed by Bertalanffy (1972 as cited by Frye and Hammer, 2012) which provided that “a set of elements standing in interrelation among themselves and with the environment (p. 290)”. To be able to understand how a program works well, there should be consideration of the whole and its parts and see into the relationships that exist between the parts.

One model of program evaluation proposed by Frechtling (2007) is called logic model. The theory of change underlies the model, and it presents the project through a system of elements that show the components and connections with context as an integral qualification. As an approach to program evaluation, the logic model helps in understanding the program by asking questions which are answered as the evaluation progresses. Coupled with the understanding is the identification of evaluation questions and fine tuning these questions in the process. It is a model that continuously improves the evaluation, ensuring that outcomes are products of the whole system through checks and balances.
One established model is that of the Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model which was developed by the Phi Delta Kappa Committee on Evaluation in 1971 (cited from Tokmak et al., 2013). Attributed to its creator, Daniel Stufflebeam, the CIPP model was developed to improve programs through its proactive stance in “guiding needs assessments, goal setting, planning, implementation, and quality assurance (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 6). A CIPP Context evaluation study identifies and defines program goals and priorities by assessing needs, problems, assets, and opportunities relevant to the program (Frye & Hammer, 2012, p. 296).

In English language program evaluation, Read and Von Randow (2013) investigated students in New Zealand universities. The study did not only focus on learners who are not native speakers of the language but also learners whose native language is English. They have identified that graduates of secondary school may not have the necessary academic language proficiency that is required in the university level. Thus, the Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA) was created by the University of Auckland and was later adopted by other universities. The DELNA, which was made up of a 3-part testing, aims to identify the academic language proficiency of incoming university students and the results are used to help students enrich their proficiency. DELNA, since its inception in 2002, has so far provided positive feedback from students and it continued to support language learners in achieving academic language proficiency.

Fox, et.al. (2014) conducted a study evaluating the language program of students at Canadian universities. Using structural equation modeling (SEM) to determine the relationships between language program emphasis and students’ personal background characteristics in influencing academic and social engagement, the study confirmed the use of the moderated mediation model by Wu and Zumbo (2008 as cited by Fox, et.al., 2014). The model identified that the language strategies used by students as learned from the language programs mediated the academic and social engagements. Student characteristics’ which include motivation, stress, and anxiety were found to have mediated the outcomes for using or developing learning strategies, accessing social/academic resources, and adapting to individual field of study. The study confirms that ESL/EAP programs have positive impact on the mentioned engagements.

In a Turkish university, Civan and Coskun (2016) found that the use of English as a medium of instruction has negatively affected the academic performance of students. Grappling with a language that is not their own, the students tend to have difficulty in their academic courses. Notably, regular students seem to have been negatively affected using English as medium of instruction, while scholars are positively affected by the same language of instruction. The authors attribute this difference in the motivation and preparation for education since scholars have higher motivation and have been exposed to the English language earlier. This was contradicted by Karabiyik (2019) who found student engagement to be positively correlated to student achievement thus encouraging students to actively participate in activities related to English language communication.

**English as a Second Language (ESL) and English for Academic Purpose (EAP)**

Globalization required a language that would be understood by many for communication, trade, and business purposes. This need has increased the growing popularity of the English language which is being adapted by many non-English speaking countries and is the language of expected from those migrating into countries whose native language is English.
For purposes of determining the English that must be taught, Kachru as cited by Bernardo (2011) identified the teaching of English as English as a native language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). He defines ESL as “spoken in countries where English is an important and usually official language, but not the main language of the country. These countries are typically ex-colonies of the United Kingdom or the United States. Nigeria, India, Malaysia, and the Philippines are examples of countries in which English is said to be spoken and used as a second language (p. 8)”.

The ESL and EAP are views about English learning that is highly dependent on context. In Indonesia, for example, Solikha (2013a) defined EAP as a compulsory course in most universities “to measure students’ academic skills in English (p. 121)”. In the study of the EAP programs in selected Indonesian universities, it was found that complexities arise and were attributed to the different types of implementations and the variety of models used by the universities. It was suggested that an ideal model be identified and used consistently by these universities. In the most recent study by Solikha (2020b), the situation seemed the same as “EAP practices in Indonesia are diverse, with each describing teaching materials and analyses of EAP programs that are mismatched (p. 6)”.

English as used in a Mexican university translates beyond the teaching and learning of the language. Torres-Olave (2012) tied up the teaching of English in the university with identity of the students as Mexicans. Among the teachers and students who were interviewed, it was found that in spite using English as language of instruction in classes, students still used Spanish when they get out of the classroom. Most recognized English for internationalization purposes but cautions universities to address the need to prioritize identities and learning experiences over the language being learned.

Fox, et.al. (2014) provided definitions of ESL in the Canadian context as follows:

“The goals of ESL programs are typically related to increasing communicative capability (citing Savignon, 2002) and tend to emphasize speaking activities and social interaction (e.g., role-plays, conversation gaps, group work) while fostering a sense of belonging, community, and connection with the new (Canadian) context and culture.”

EAP programs, on the other hand, are explicitly concerned with the skills and strategies in English that are “required for study purposes in formal education systems” (English-Teaching Information Centre, cited in Jordan, 2004, p.1). They have been typically characterized by activities that simulate academic work; for example, reading academic texts and taking notes; writing research reports or essays; making formal seminar presentations; and acquiring strategies to increase comprehension by scanning, skimming, and evaluating academic texts” (Cheng, et. al., 2004).

In the Philippines, English is an official language as clearly indicated in the Philippine constitution and is widely used in business and communication thus enjoying the status of the second language in the Philippines. English is always part of the core subject in the basic education curriculum as shown in the various curricular reforms (Vizconde, 2005). As such, the teaching of English has remained and as evidenced in the curricular reform for 2013, the subject English for Academic Purpose (EAP) is included as one of the subjects in Grade 11.
Academic and Social Engagements

Academic and social engagements have always been part of the university students’ experiences. Although different in terms of activities, both types of engagements seem to have impacted on the performance of students as found in most studies (Flynn, 2012; Kahu, 2013; Lei, et.al., 2015; and Maguire, et.al., 2017).

In an earlier study of Hu and Wolniak (2010), it was found that among STEM graduates and non-STEM graduates of the University of Chicago, academic and social engagements matter in varying degrees when related to early career. Although there were differences in impact, social engagement has significant impact on the early career earnings of the STEM graduates but has no impact on non-STEM graduates while academic engagement has significant relationship with non-STEM graduates as opposed with STEM graduates. Although such variance was observed, the study showed empirically that engagements influence in the earning power of college graduates.

Academic engagement was found to be a factor among multicultural students in the study of Shcheglova (2019). Following the framework of Alexander Astin, the study focused on engaged students which was, “defined as one who actively participates in class, which can be characterized as engaging in class discussions; applying knowledge, ideas, and concepts from different courses; devoting more time to completing class assignments than non-engaged students” (p. 668). Based on the study of students enrolled in the US, Russia, Japan, China, and United Kingdom (26,648 students), it was determined that culture and personal values played important roles in engagements. The culture and basic values of the students have significantly defined their behaviors in the university.

Pather and Dorasamy (2018) found that social and academic engagements were also crucial in students’ success in the university. Working on a study among South African university students, the research identified these engagements as critical as these may result to academic failure or high dropouts. This was identified in the study after finding the gap between students’ expectations and students’ experiences in the university.

In the context of Korean college students learning the English language, DeWaelsche (2015) found student engagement to be related to higher order questions and group discussions. Students actively participated in activities where they were tasked to talk to classmates and communicate on topics within their Korean culture or environment. Students were encouraged to make connections to their Korean culture but admitted that though they participate actively in the group discussions, they still prefer a teacher dominated classroom.

Finally, studies in the Philippines regarding engagements with the English language focused on motivation (Lucas, et.al., 2015) and anxiety (Mamhot, et.al., 2013, and Berowa, 2018) and none were found on social or academic engagements in particular.

Anxiety in learning English was the focus of the study of Mamhot, et.al. (2013) on 40 college students in EFL and ESL classes. Based on the research, students felt that they are anxious because of their self-perceived linguistic competency which might not be proficient enough. Students worry about how others perceive them when they use the English language, and they also worry about the use of English in their daily lives. Anxiety seemed to be related to students’ oral communication skills. These results were validated by Berowa (2018) who also studied the anxiety of college students in a southern university in the Philippines. The neutral level of anxiety was found in both studies.
The study of Lucas, et.al. (2015) found the correlation of amotivation regarding the English language and student activities inside and outside the school. It was determined that students who use less of the English language outside the school may reflect a negative attitude towards the English language thus resulting to the reasons why students are amotivated in the English language classes. Furthermore, it was concluded that “those who use English less and use Filipino more in their social and personal activities outside the English language classroom are more likely to report lower ability beliefs (p. 116).”

**Theoretical Framework**

Dominantly based on the study of Fox, et.al., (2014), the study investigated the factors that interplay in the evaluation of the English language program. The factors considered were course outcomes, social engagement/academic engagement, and language program characteristics. The English language program (either EFL or ESL) is usually created to address the language needs of students. The program includes the teaching and the development of the English language following the four macro skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and these are taught individually or aggregately. As a language program and based on the learning outcomes, it also intends to assist students (directly or indirectly) in the completion of their academic tasks (such as writing of reports and research or reading of journals) or their personal/social activities (talking to friends or participating in extra-curricular activities). The language program, though, does not only assist students in the fulfilment of their academic tasks but also enabled them to participate effectively in social environments. As posited by Fox, et.al., (2014, p. 62):

“These results suggest that language program support activities (ESL or EAP) may be linked to academic engagement and satisfaction with life in Canada, and that the academic acculturation process is mediated by course outcomes (e.g., increased English language use, strategy use, goal setting). At the same time, the results suggest that the impact of language support is moderated (i.e., strengthened or lessened) as a result of a student’s personal characteristics (e.g., motivation, stress due to external pressures, individual [internal] feelings of anxiety).”

![Figure 1](Image)
The English as a Second Language (ESL) program referred in the model would generally be applied in the context of the Philippine universities as English is considered as a second language in the Philippines. The status of English as a second language is clearly indicated in the Philippine Constitution -Article XVI, Section 7 (Official Gazette, 1997), which states the following:

“For purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law, English. The regional languages are the auxiliary official languages in the regions and shall serve as auxiliary media of instruction therein. Spanish and Arabic shall be promoted on a voluntary and optional basis.”

Such proclamation has made it possible for English to enjoy the status as a second language in the Philippines. This has also served as bases for many of the Department Orders and Memoranda coming from the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education including the recent Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 or Republic Act 10533 which still included English to be taught from Grades 4-10 (Section 4, R.A. 10533).

It is the intention of the study to determine the impact of the English language program and its activities in the university to the academic and social engagements of the students while recognizing the students’ personal characteristics as possible moderating variables.

Unlike the Canadian study, the ESL and EAP labels are not clearly defined in the Philippine context as English courses were offered in the college level for the development of the four macro skills, i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Thus, the use of ESL in the study would encompass all English courses regularly offered as general education courses for all programs.

**Method**

**Research Setting**

The study was conducted in a comprehensive university in the Philippines. Enjoying an autonomous status, the university offered programs that included three to four English courses general courses taken by all students. The English courses were designed to develop and enhance skills in listening and speaking (Oral Communication Course), and reading and writing (Managing Skills in Communication, Academic Writing and Reading and Critical Thinking). These courses were taught in English though generally, most courses, whether technical or professional courses use English as the medium of instruction. The local language, Filipino, is used in teaching some courses in social sciences and Filipino language courses.

**Participants**

A total of 866 college students who have finished the English language programs were considered for the investigation. Majority considered Filipino (90.2%) as their first language and English as the second language (85.1%). They came from various disciplines, and most were graduating students. The distribution showed that majority come from Education (15.1%), followed by Architecture (14.5%), Tourism and Hospitality Management (13.6%), Commerce/Business (13.5%), Accountancy and Rehabilitation Sciences (11.7%), Science (10.2%), Arts and Letters (4.7%), and Food Technology and Nutrition (4.5%). Majority have
both parents finishing their college degrees: Father at 84.5% and Mother at 86.5%. Most (96.3%) finished their high school in the Philippines.

Among the students, 77.9% have not taken any language proficiency test. Many considered their career goals (63.6%) as a very important factor in choosing the school followed by the academic program at 62.8%. Majority of the students get their financial support from their family (86%).

**Instrument**

Quantitative in nature, the study made use of a survey-questionnaire adopted from the study of Fox, et.al. (2014). The questionnaire was designed to illustrate the relationships between the demographic information, the factors influencing the students’ choice of university and other affective factors which include motivation, stress, anxiety, language use, strategy use, goals, and satisfaction with academic and social life in the University.

The tool was divided into four sections. The first section sought to gain information about the students’ profile, including the language of the parents (Items 1-7). The second section investigated the factors that influenced the students’ choice of program and university (Items 8-19). The items here followed a Likert scale format with 6 measures/degrees (1 as not important and 6 as very important) and a Yes/No format. The third section pursued information on the motivation, stress, anxiety, language use, strategy use, goals, and satisfaction with academic and social life in the university (Items 20-55). This section followed a Likert scale type with 6 measures/degrees (1 as strongly disagree and 6 as strongly agree). The fourth section included both a Likert scale type of question and an open-ended type of questions which focused on the students’ perceptions about the English courses they took in the university (Items 56-63).

The instrument was administered to 33 students as pilot-testing. The alpha coefficient for Part 3 is .836 and alpha coefficient .944 for Part 4 which suggest that the items show good internal consistency.

The structural equation model (SEM) was used to determine the impact of the language course and course outcomes on academic engagement and social engagement. It was also through SEM that the mediation of the student characteristics was also determined. SEM is used to establish linear relationships among variables which may be measured variables (MV) or latent variables (LV). MacCallum and Austin (2000, p. 202) state that:

“A structural equation model, then, is a hypothesized pattern of directional and nondirectional linear relationships among a set of MVs and LVs. Directional relationships imply some sort of directional influence of one variable on another. Nondirectional relationships are correlational and imply no directed influence. In the most common form of SEM, the purpose of the model is to account for variation and covariation of the MVs.”

**Survey Administration**

Deans/heads in the university were sent communication requesting for permission to administer the survey to at least seven sections/classes. Each class has an approximately 35-45 students. Ethical considerations were considered by providing the deans and the students with
conditions about the confidentiality of identities and assurance that the participants were not to be harmed in any way.

After obtaining permission from the heads, the survey was administered to the classes by the research assistant. Questionnaires were obtained immediately after each administration. In some cases, the teacher assigned to the class administered the survey. After a period of three months, most of the survey forms were obtained from the students.

**Results and Discussion**

1. Is there evidence that English programs have a direct effect on L2 students’ academic and social engagement?

As seen in Table 1, results showed that the English program has direct effect on the academic and social engagement of the students. Showing a very strong effect is the strategy use to academic engagement as evidenced in the value ($\beta = .758$). It was followed closely by language use at $\beta = .735$. These results indicated that students find that their interactive activities coupled with the development of their academic skills and strategies have direct contribution to their academic engagement. Students realize that the development of their English language skills may improve their chances of performing better in their academic language courses and in courses other than the English courses. The direct impact of the English course is viewed to be related to student performance in their professional courses as most if not all courses made use of English as the medium of instruction thus all outputs are written or spoken in English. One’s proficiency in the English language assists students in producing the effective outcomes required in their disciplines.

Though lower in weight compared to the effect on academic engagement, the English programs have been recognized also to have direct effect on social engagement with strategy use at $\beta = .554$, followed by goal-directed practices at $\beta = .441$, and language use at $\beta = .367$. These results may be weaker compared to the effect on academic engagement which can be interpreted as students have a choice in choosing the language for communication with their families, friends, and peers. Since English is not the first language of the students, they are still able to communicate effectively among their social groups using their first language thus English is not a common choice for social engagements. They are also situated in their local communities unlike those migrants who studied in English-speaking communities and have more contact with native English speakers. This is very evident in the weak result of $\beta = .367$ in the use of the language.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Results of SEM on direct effect of ESL Programs on Academic and Social Engagements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Program</td>
<td>Regression weights</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>(.758)**Strategy use</td>
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<td>(.735)**Language use</td>
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<td>(.468)**Goal-directed practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>(.554)**Strategy use</td>
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<td>(.367)*Language use</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.441)**Goal-directed practices</td>
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***Strong  
**Moderate  
*Weak
Results support DeWaelsche (2015) who found the same results with his study among Koreans who would rather speak in their language and become interested when talking about their culture and interests. This also supports Torres-Olave’s findings (2012) among Mexican university students who made use of Spanish outside their classrooms. The use of the English language in social engagement is less especially when the first language is readily available within the community as found in this study.

2. Do course outcomes (defined in this study as goal-setting and other goal-directed practices, English language use, and strategy use) mediate academic and social engagement?

Figures 2 and 3 presented the emerging models that demonstrate how the course outcomes mediate or moderate between the language program, the course outcome and the two types of engagements. As seen in the figures, the mediation of the course outcome between the language program and the engagement was stronger in social engagement at $\beta=.791$ compared to $\beta=.613$ in academic engagement. It is possible that students find the language use and strategy use more appropriate in their social interactions rather than their academic interactions. They perceived their courses to assist them better in community-related activities. Results of the SEM showed that strategy use ($\beta=.758$) and language use ($\beta=.735$) were strong mediators and goal-directed practice was moderate ($\beta=.468$) for the mediation between ESL and academic engagement. The mediation for social engagement was weaker as strategy use was found at $\beta=.554$, goal-directed practice at $\beta=.441$ and language use was weak at $\beta=.367$.

![Figure 2: Emerging Model: Social Engagement](image)

In the context of this Philippine university, students who do not consider English as their first language seemed to see the relevance of English as a language that may be useful in their academic engagements thereby the language outcomes were more prominent and stronger in
academic engagements. They may have placed high value on the English program as a tool in their academic advancement. Although this is evident in the academic engagement, it cannot be disregarded that they see these strategies and language use is operational too in their social engagements. Results for both yield strong moderation for engagements.

![Emerging Model: Academic Engagement](image.png)

3. Do student characteristics (i.e., levels of anxiety; stress caused by pressure from parents, finances, etc.; and motivation) moderate course outcomes?

As gleaned from Figure 3, the students’ characteristics did not moderate the course outcomes in social engagement, but it did moderate in academic engagement at $\beta=.236$ (weak). This indicated that students perceived their motivation, language and academic background and anxiety to have moderated the outcomes of their English programs. Although the moderation was weak for academic engagement, still it provided information that stress, anxiety and motivation were significant. This may also indicate that students prioritize their academics, and they placed importance on their professional programs thus characteristics like anxiety or stress may be a factor in the course outcomes.

Between academic engagement and social engagement, it was observed that students’ characteristics also mediated between course outcomes and engagements with academic engagement having stronger mediation at $\beta=.462$ compared to $\beta=.399$ of social engagement. Anxiety ($\beta=.664$), motivation ($\beta=.658$) and stress ($\beta=.458$) in academic engagement are higher compared to social engagement except for stress ($\beta=.833$) where anxiety is $\beta=.404$ and motivation is at $\beta=.240$. This signified that students’ background and personal affect were highly significant in the school setting compared to their daily interactions beyond the classroom. Students may not be even aware of their anxieties and motivations when they leave the school, and their characteristics may have been heightened when dealing with academic
activities. Like the studies of Fox, et.al. (2014) and Mamhot, et.al. (2013), anxiety was also found to be the most significant characteristic that moderated the effects of the language programs in both social and academic engagements. Students were anxious that they are not proficient enough in the English language. These results, however, was cautioned by Kahu (2013) who provided a model for student engagement that should consider every possible form: affect, cognition, and behavior. These forms were further influenced by structural and psychosocial factors with proximal and distal consequences.

As gleaned in Figure 2 also was the direct impact of the ESL program to the academic engagement at β=.710 which is interpreted as strong. Students perceive that their English courses do support their academic requirements and experiences. As English remained to be a global language especially in business and health-related fields, student may see the necessity of acquiring the language for their future careers. This confirmed the results of Flynn (2012), Fox, et.al.’s study (2014), and Pather and Dorasamy (2018) that programs have direct impact on the academic engagement.

Conclusion

Based on the results, the English programs have generated a strong impact on the course outcomes and engagements of the students. It was also established that the impact was stronger in academic engagement compared to the social engagement. It was also identified that course outcomes mediate the English language program and the engagements. The students’ characteristics were found to moderate between course outcomes and both the academic and social engagement. The students’ characteristics, however, were found to moderate between the English language program and the course outcome in academic engagement but not in social engagement. Given these results, it can be determined that English language programs in the university have been perceived to have influences on the academic coursework and social activities of the students.

In the light of the changes in the curriculum of the academic programs due to the K to 12 implementations, the following recommendations are provided:

- English programs should still be included in the curriculum. They provide strong support to the academic coursework of the students. Academic requirements that need oral and written outputs in the light of the outcomes-based education approach need the skills from the language programs. The English programs, however, should support strongly the content courses, especially in the development of the critical thinking skills.
- The English program should target not only the academic engagements of the students but also the social engagement activities. The oral activities should provide enough training for students to confidently use English not only within the classroom but also beyond it. As seen in the study, stress and anxiety were high for both engagements and motivation is very modest.
- The academic programs should also consider the language programs in the planning of the curriculum. Often, programs focus more on the technical and professional courses and consider only the language courses as trappings. It must be considered that language skills are necessary skills in the workplace.
- Further research should consider new factors that may emerge following the change in the ages of learners upon their entrance in the university. The additional two years
in senior high school may have contributed to the emerging characteristics of learners which can also include the improvement or lack of it in the English proficiency.

The study is limited to only one comprehensive university and considered only the English language program. Research including other universities, especially, where Filipino is not the first language, is highly recommended.

**References**


About the Author

**Camilla J. Vizconde** is Professor 3 at the University of Santo Tomas where she is a faculty researcher under the Research Center for Social Sciences and Education and is an affiliate of the College of Education. She has authored papers in national and international journals in the fields of Language Education, Reading Education, Pre-service Teaching and Literacy. She is currently working on research related to Adult Education, Family Literacy and Health Literacy.

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