

SECOND LANGUAGE FACILITY OF STUDENT TEACHERS IN THE PHILIPPINES: AN OPPORTUNITY OR A CHALLENGE?

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Abstract

In the 21st century, effective communication is considered the bedrock towards globalization. In the Philippines, English communication is made the medium of instruction. Some state universities and colleges in the country like Cebu Normal University Integrated Laboratory School, students in the elementary and high school department are taught in English by the student teachers. Observations noted that the latter still lack the proficiency of the language. It is therefore the aim of this study to assess the Bachelor of Secondary Education and Bachelor of Elementary Education-student teachers' English communication skills in oral and written discourses and their teaching performance. Using the Pearson r correlation, finding revealed that both groups are comparatively better in oral than in written communication. As regards teaching performance, both groups show satisfactory results. There is however a low relationship between the English communication skills and the student teachers' teaching performance. If a student teacher is equipped to teach, he/she can still perform well with the consciousness that facility of the language still needs to be continually enhanced. Based on the mentors' comments and students' observations, the student teachers' second language facility serves as an opportunity for the latter towards wider exposure in various oral communication setting as well as a challenge to realize the need for more comprehensible communication of ideas. With the belief that facility of the language helps usher meaning learning, then appropriate and relevant training is a potent avenue to ensure consistency of purpose.

Keywords: Student teachers, communication skills school - based management intervention, teaching performance

Introduction

Effective communication is the bedrock towards globalization. The world being the real market where intense competition is experienced, using

one language for common understanding is vital in promoting unity and progress across cultures. In the Philippines, English is the made the official language and the medium of instruction. Teachers being the facilitators of knowledge should not only be concentrated on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the teaching-learning process but on the proficiency of the English language as well. Basic to this, Hymes (1987) opines that prospective teachers should be good users of the English language because it is believed that if they are able to convey their ideas to the students with clarity, ease and competence, learning is enhanced. Observations however noted that teachers find it difficult to make students learn and use the language. One attribute to this as pointed out by Chomsky (1983) is that language proficiency is one's competency in communicating one's ideas effectively in realistic, meaningful situations both orally and in written. Many of them are observably still wanting in exposure to this effect.

The education students particularly the pre-service teachers (student teachers), according to the feedback of their mentors, although they are good in the preparation of instructional materials and are equipped with appropriate strategies, many are still wanting in their ability to communicate. It is a common knowledge that since these students who are prospective teachers are human communicators before they become facilitators of knowledge, then they need guidance and support to reach this goal. Thus, teachers of professional education courses, teachers of English and student teaching mentors should extend concerted efforts so that these student teachers will acquire the facility of the language which is highly contributive to the successful delivery of instruction. If education is the flagship of the institution, communication skills being an important parameter should be strengthened so that the Teacher Education Institutions (TEI's) can continually provide the best manpower the academic society needs today.

Objectives of the Study:

The main aim of the study is to assess whether the student teachers' (BEED and BSED) oral and written communication skills serve as an opportunity or a challenge to their teaching practice. This specifically examines the extent of student teachers' proficiency both in their oral and written communication skills; finds out the mentors' assessment of the student teachers' performance; determines the relationship between the student teachers' English communication skills and their teaching performance and proposes school-based management interventions to improve student teachers' facility of the English language.

Methodology:

The fifty (50) BEED and fifty (50) BSED student teachers are the subject-respondents of the study. Using the qualitative-quantitative research design, this research focused on the student teachers' English communication skills composed of oral interview while the written skill was based on the proficiency test and the checked lesson plans. On the other hand, their teaching competency was solely based on their teaching performance done in-campus.

Findings:

The Table below presents the data on the student teachers' oral and written communication skills:

Oral Skills*	BEED		BSED		Combined Average	
	Mean	DR	Mean	DR	Mean	DR
1. DELIVERY						
• Eye Contact	3.45	VG	3.56	VG	3.51	VG
• Clarity of Voice	3.21	G	3.51	VG	3.36	G
• Manner of Speaking	3.05	G	3.14	G	3.10	G
• Posture and Gesture	3.15	G	3.42	VG	3.29	G
• Confidence	3.06	G	3.17	G	3.11	G
Overall Mean	3.18	G	3.36	G	3.27	G
2. COMMUNICATIVE ABILITY						
Pronunciation	2.58	F	2.82	G	2.70	G
Speaking Without Hesitation and Repetition	2.33	F	2.47	F	2.40	F
Grammar and Vocabulary	2.4	F	2.51	F	2.46	F
Overall Mean	2.44	F	2.60	G	2.52	F
3. ORGANIZATION						
• Introduction	2.31	F	2.61	G	2.46	F
• Development of Ideas	2.58	F	2.93	G	2.76	G
• Transition	2.37	F	2.37	F	2.37	F
• Conclusion	2.61	G	2.79	G	2.7	G
Overall Mean	2.47	F	2.68	G	2.58	F
Total	2.70	G	2.88	G	2.79	G

Scale:

Rating	Mean Range	Descriptive Reading
5	4.20-5.00	Excellent (E)
4	3.40-4.19	Very Good (VG)
3	2.60-3.39	Good (G)
2	1.80-2.59	Fair (F)
1	1.00-1.79	Poor (P)

Table 1-A Evaluation of BEED and BSED Student Teachers' Oral communication Skills

Written Skills	BEED		BSED	
	Mean	Descriptor	Mean	Descriptor
A. Subject-Verb Agreement	13.51	Fair	14.02	Good
B. Correct Use of Pronouns, Prepositions and Adjectives	8.33	Fair	8.84	Good
C. Arranging Words, Phrases and Sentences	6.78	Very Good	7.03	Excellent
D. Word Choice and Vocabulary	11.19	Good	11.84	Very Good
E. Lexical and Sociological Competence	7.78	Poor	9.34	Poor

Table 1-B Evaluation of BEED and BSED Student Teachers' Written Communication Skills

The findings presented in Table 1-A and Table 1-B revealed that the BEED and BSED student teachers were comparatively better in their oral than in their written communication skills. Apparently through their constant interaction with the students, classmates and mentors, they felt more at home with the oral communication compared to the written activity since the latter requires a high degree of accuracy. Furthermore, for the written skills, it is evident that student teacher respondents in both BEED and BSED did not reach the expectancy level in the Lexical and Sociological competence. In here, are the application and practical ways that speakers use the language. It further shows that the respondents are only exposed to the theoretical aspects of oral and written communication. Once in use, they become confused and cluttered.

Table 2 shows the mentor evaluation on student teachers' teaching performance.

Teaching Competency Indicators	BEED		BSED	
	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Mean	Descriptive Rating
A. Lesson Planning (5)	7.50	S	7.80	S
B. Strategies of Teaching (12)	7.18	S	7.25	S
C. Classroom Management (5)	7.20	S	7.50	S
D. Communication Skills (4)	7.33	S	7.67	S
Total/Overall Mean	7.30	S	7.56	S

Table 2 Mentor Evaluation on Student Teachers' Teaching Performance

Scale (Based on CNU Performance Appraisal for Student Teachers)

9.30-10.00	Outstanding (O)
8.00-9.29	Very Satisfactory (VS)
4.7-7.99	Satisfactory (S)
2.0-4.69	Fair (F)
1.9 and below	Unsatisfactory (US)

The teaching performance of the student teachers both BEED and BSED was Satisfactory. This showed that the respondents have adequately achieved the expected performance level. Through their intensive training in the practicum, they have learned to interplay the theories and practice, thus

they acquired the basic aspects of teaching. With the unceasing quest for quality and excellence, this scenario illustrates that teaching performance although satisfactory, still needs to be strengthened.

The student teachers' communication skills have engendered both opportunities and challenges. Although they have experienced considerable difficulties in communication, this however, serves them as an avenue for further exposure to an English speaking environment as well as to engage themselves in intensive and extensive reading. Opportunities are likewise expressed as they are made conscious on the need of English in the global academic enterprise.

Table 3 presents the relationship between student teachers' communication skills and their teaching performance.

	English Communication Skills (N=70)			Teachers' Teaching Performance (N=10)			r	Significance
	Mean	%	D	Mean	%	D		
BEED(N=50)	54.59	78	Good	7.21	72	Good	.26	Low
BSED(N=50)	57.88	83	Very Good	7.48	75	Good	.20	Low
Mean based on Fisher's Z							.23	Low

Table 3. Coefficients of Correlation of Student Teachers' English Communication Skills and Their Teaching Performance

The data show a low relationship level between English communication skills and student teachers' teaching performance. Logically, to become an effective teacher, proficiency in oral and written communications is highly important. Although it doesn't really follow that if student teachers are good in their communication skills, they also perform well in teaching and vice-versa. The low relationship could be explained by the fact that teaching performance covers comprehensive teaching components of classroom management, lesson planning, strategies of teaching, and communication skills. The latter forms a part of teaching competencies. Putting things together, Tayao (1992) advocates strengthening content conveys that the teachers' command of the English language is relevant and necessary. McDowell (1982) added that although teachers use spoken English most of the time supervising classroom activities and guiding learning experiences, the nature of teaching demands that the teacher communicates in both oral and written.

It is in this context that school-based management language training program focusing on enhancing student teachers' communication skills is therefore proposed.

Conclusion:

English being the medium of instruction, apparently serves to make the whole teaching-learning process comprehensible and systematic. Therefore, it should be strengthened so that teacher education institutions can continually provide the best manpower that the academic society needs today.

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