

The Linguistic Competence of College Freshman Students on Board Courses of Basilan State College

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Abstract— This study was conceptualized in order to gather information to benefit a number of students in different board courses of Basilan State College particularly Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSED), BS Criminal Justice, and Bachelor in Nutrition and Dietetics (BSND). This study used the descriptive quantitative research designed. The respondents of this study were the college freshman students of the BEED/BSED, BS Criminology, and BSND of Basilan State College. Purposive sampling was used to determine the sample size of the student-respondents since there are only thirty-nine (39) students who are enrolled in four board courses. Findings revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean scores in the linguistic competency test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to gender, and courses, but there are no significant differences in the mean scores in the linguistic competency test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to ethnicity.

Keywords— Basilan State College, College Freshman Students, Linguistic Competence.

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the tasks of higher education institutions (HEIs) is improving students' linguistic competence. The term linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of grammar that allows a speaker to use and understand a language, also known as grammatical competence. Hence, linguistic competence is important for communicative competence because without a strong command of whatever language one speaks, one cannot communicate clearly what he wants to say. If one knows the language, he can communicate effectively to a wide audience. In other words he cannot effectively communicate without being linguistically competent [4].

Although English language has been the medium of instruction in school since elementary years, as observed nowadays, many college students particularly at Basilan State College still have the difficulty in expressing themselves because of their fear to commit grammatical errors in English language. Leyaley [3] opines that a skill that most teachers have noted when asked regarding the skills that our students who are enrolled in college need to develop is the English language skill. In today's global world, the importance of English cannot be denied and ignored since English is the most common language spoken everywhere [1]. With the help of developing technology, English has been playing a major role in many sectors including medicine, engineering, and education, which believed to be the most important field where English is needed. For instance, the English

comprehension and reading competencies of some elementary learners were on frustration level [2].

Although English language has become part of the curriculum in school since elementary year, but sad to note many college students are struggling to speak the language. It has been observed that most of them have difficulty in organizing their grammar causing them to stutter to speak the language.

Studies have shown that Filipinos' skill in the English language has declined over time. Presidential Order 210, which directs the Department of Education to employ English as a second language in the elementary grades and as the primary language of instruction in high school, was issued as a result of the drop. Additionally, it requires teachers to take remedial English classes. Despite numerous studies showing that students and pupils in basic education have weak or fair English language skills, the issue has persisted. And when it remains continuously and students will remain unchecked, they will be a source of problem because these students who chose to become teachers or any professionals for that matter will be contributory to the poor performance of their pupils and students and will have less opportunity for employment, and worst will hamper the endeavors of parents and the graduates in achieving their dreams [3].

Thus, this study was conceptualized in order to gather information to benefit a number of students in different board courses of Basilan State College particularly Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSED), BS Criminal Justice, and Bachelor in Nutrition and Dietetics (BSND). They are taken part of the present study in order to help the researcher plan to address the deteriorating English proficiency skills of the students that greatly affect their performances in the different national and international assessment examinations and even for their employment in the future.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study was conducted to determine the linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the students?
2. What is the overall level of the linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College in terms of:
 - a. Subject – verb agreement?
 - b. Correcting errors?

- c. Giving instruction using preposition?
- d. Reported speech?
- 3. What is the overall level of the linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to:
 - a. Gender?
 - b. Ethnicity?
 - c. Board courses?
- 4. Is there a significant difference in the linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to:
 - a. Gender?
 - b. Ethnicity?
 - c. Board courses?

III. METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive quantitative research designed. The respondents of this study were the college freshman students of the BEED/BSED, BS Criminal Justice, and BSND of Basilan State College, school year 2017-2018. Purposive sampling was used to determine the sample size of the student-respondents since there are only thirty-nine (39) students who are enrolled in four board courses.

TABLE I. The Distribution of the Respondents/Sample Size of the Study

| Course | No. of Students | | |
|--|-----------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Bachelor in Elementary Education | 7 | 10 | 17 |
| Bachelor in Secondary Education | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| Bachelor of Science in Criminology | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| TOTAL | 16 | 23 | 39 |

There are two instruments were used in this study. The first instrument used in this study was developed by Ablanque (2009). This instrument consists of two parts. First part of the instrument drew information about the socio-demographic profile of the students which includes: gender, ethnicity, and board courses, and the second part is the questionnaire for the giving instruction using prepositions and reported speech. This is a 30 – item multiple choice tests on giving instruction using preposition, and reported speech which is adopted from Ablanque (2009) and was used in the study of Ismael (2009).

The second instrument is a questionnaire for subject-verb agreement and correcting error. This instrument was prepared by Transparent Language and is available and used by all U.S. Government personnel, language schools, and language programs via a program of the Department of Defense’s language portal, Joint Language University. The questionnaire was further floated to the second year college students for its validity and reliability. This is a 30 – item multiple choice test on linguistic competence on subject-verb and agreement, and correcting errors.

The instrument for the linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College was checked. The respondents’ responses were computed in order to determine the levels of linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State

College as the respondents of the study. The highest scores indicate the level of their competence. The scoring procedure for rating the level of the competence of the respondents is shown below.

TABLE II. The Scoring Procedure for the 10 – Item Components (Giving Instruction Using Preposition and Reported Speech) of the Linguistic Competence Test

| Score | Percent (%) | Descriptive Meaning |
|-------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 0-4 | 0 - 20 | Not Competent |
| 5-8 | 21 - 40 | Least Competent |
| 9-12 | 41 - 60 | Moderately Competent |
| 13-16 | 61 - 80 | Highly Competent |
| 17-20 | 81 - 100 | Very Highly Competent |

In each component, a score of 0-2 would mean that the students are not competent. A score of 2-4 would signify that the students are least competent. A score of 5-6 would be interpreted that the students are moderately competent. A score of 7-8 implies that the students are highly competent. Finally, a score of 9-10 would indicate that the students are very highly competent.

TABLE III. The Scoring Procedure for the 20 – Item Components (Subject – Verb Agreement and Correcting Errors) of the Linguistic Competence Test

| Score | Percent (%) | Descriptive Meaning |
|-------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 0-2 | 0 - 20 | Not Competent |
| 2-4 | 21 - 40 | Least Competent |
| 5-6 | 41 - 60 | Moderately Competent |
| 7-8 | 61 - 80 | Highly Competent |
| 9-10 | 81 - 100 | Very Highly Competent |

In each component, a score of 0-4 would mean that the students are not competent. A score of 5-8 would signify that the students are least competent. A score of 9-12 would be interpreted that the students are moderately competent. A score of 13-16 implies that the students are highly competent. Finally, a score of 17-20 would indicate that the students are very highly competent.

TABLE IV. The Scoring Procedure for the Overall Linguistic Competence of College Freshman Students on Board Courses of Basilan State College Students

| Score | Percent (%) | Descriptive Meaning |
|-------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 0-12 | 0 - 20 | Not Competent |
| 13-24 | 21 - 40 | Least Competent |
| 25-36 | 41 - 60 | Moderately Competent |
| 37-48 | 61 - 80 | Highly Competent |
| 49-60 | 81 - 100 | Very Highly Competent |

As a whole, a score of 0-12 would mean that the students are not competent. A score of 13-24 would signify that the students are least competent. A score of 25-36 would be interpreted that the students are moderately competent. A score of 37-48 implies that the students are highly competent. Finally, a score of 49-60 would indicate that the students are very highly competent.

After the research instruments were prepared, permission to conduct the study was asked from College President through the Dean of the Graduate School and subsequently from Deans of the Colleges of the four board courses where the respondents are enrolled. After approval, the researcher

distributed the research instrument to the students at a given time schedule. They were asked to answer each item in the instruments. Then the data gathered were tabulated, coded, analyzed and interpreted.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data gathered will be interpreted in this section. The discussions will be according to the objective of the study.

A. Demographic Profile

Shown in Table 5 is the profile of the Thirty Nine (39) college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College, who served as participants of the study.

TABLE V. Demographic Profile of the Students (N = 39)

| Demographic Variable | Frequency (F) | Percent (%) |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Gender | f | % |
| Male | 16 | 41.0 |
| Female | 23 | 59.0 |
| Ethnicity | f | % |
| Yakan | 7 | 17.9 |
| Sama | 0 | 0 |
| Tausug | 14 | 35.9 |
| Chavacano | 5 | 12.8 |
| Bisaya | 10 | 25.6 |
| Others | 3 | 7.8 |
| Course | f | % |
| BEED | 17 | 43.6 |
| BSED | 9 | 23.1 |
| BS Criminal Justice | 10 | 25.6 |
| BSND | 3 | 7.7 |
| Total | 39 | 100% |

Table V shows that majority of the students (59.0%) are Female. More than a third of the participants (35.9%) are Tausugs. And a little more than a fourth of the students are taking BS Criminal Justice.

B. Linguistic Competence

Table VI shows the means, and overall mean score of the students in the linguistic competence test.

TABLE VI. Means, and Overall Mean Score of the Students' Scores in the Linguistic Competence Test (N = 39)

| Linguistic Competence Component | Mean Score | Percent (%) | Competency Level |
|---|------------|-------------|----------------------|
| A. Subject – Verb Agreement | 10.4103 | 52.05 | Moderately Competent |
| B. Correcting Errors | 9.9744 | 49.87 | Moderately Competent |
| C. Giving Instruction Using Preposition | 3.2308 | 32.31 | Least Competent |
| D. Reported speech | 0.2564 | 2.56 | Not Competent |
| OVERALL | 23.8718 | 39.79 | Least Competent |

The students were moderately competent in the Subject – Verb Agreement and Correcting Errors components, and not competent in the Reported Speech component of the linguistic competence test.

The overall mean score of the students in the linguistic competence test reveals that they are least competent in terms of Subject – Verb Agreement, Correcting Errors, Giving Instruction using Prepositions, and Reported Speech.

Gender

Shown in Table VII are mean scores in the linguistic competence test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to gender.

TABLE VII. Means, and Descriptions of the Scores in the Linguistic Competence Test of the Students, Classified According to Gender (N = 39)

| Gender | Mean Score | Description |
|--------|------------|-----------------|
| Male | 23.0625 | Least Competent |
| Female | 24.4348 | Least Competent |

Although the female students have numerically higher scores than the male students, both groups are categorized as least competent in linguistic skills.

Ethnicity

Shown in Table VIII are mean scores in the linguistic competence test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to Ethnicity.

TABLE VIII. Means, and Descriptions of the Scores in the Linguistic Competence Test of the Students, Classified According to Ethnicity (N = 39)

| Ethnicity | Mean Score | Description |
|-----------|------------|----------------------|
| Yakan | 25.4286 | Moderately Competent |
| Sama | NA | NA |
| Tausug | 24.0714 | Least Competent |
| Chavacano | 21.4000 | Least Competent |
| Bisaya | 24.7000 | Moderately Competent |
| Others | 20.6667 | Least Competent |

The Yakan and Bisayan students, who are described as ‘Moderately Competent’, are more competent in linguistic skills than the students from the other ethnic groups, who were all categorized as least competent.

Course

Shown in Table IX are mean scores in the linguistic competence test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to Course.

TABLE IX. Means, and Descriptions of the Scores in the Linguistic Competence Test of the Students, Classified According to Course (N = 39)

| Course | Mean Score | Description |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|
| BEED | 21.7059 | Least Competent |
| BSED | 28.3333 | Moderately Competent |
| BS Criminology | 21.0000 | Least Competent |
| BSND | 30.0000 | Moderately Competent |

Both the BSED and BSND students, who are described as ‘Moderately Competent’, are a level more competent in linguistic skills than the students from the other courses, who were all classified as least competent.

C. Difference Between Some Demographic Profile

Gender

Shown in Table X are the significant differences of the mean scores in the linguistic competency test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to gender.

TABLE X. t-Value, and Level of Significance of the T-Test Conducted on the Scores in the Linguistic Competence Test of the Students, Classified According to Gender

| Component | t-Value | Level of Significance | Remarks |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| Subject – Verb Agreement | .147 | .884 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| Correcting Errors | -.679 | .503 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| Giving Instruction Using Preposition | -1.418 | .165 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| Reported speech | -.874 | .390 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| OVERALL | -.662 | .512 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |

Tested at 0.05 degree of significance, there is no significant difference in the mean scores in the linguistic competency test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to gender.

Thus, the linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College are at the same level, regardless of their gender.

Ethnicity

Shown in Table XI are the significant differences of the mean scores in the linguistic competence test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College students when they are grouped according to ethnicity.

TABLE XI. F-Value, and Level of Significance of the ANOVA Conducted on the Scores in the Linguistic Competence Test of the Students, Classified According to Ethnicity

| Component | F-Value | Level of Significance | Remarks |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|--|
| Subject-Verb Agreement | .573 | .684 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| Correcting Errors | .536 | .710 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| Giving Instruction Using Preposition | .576 | .682 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| Reported speech | .327 | .858 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| OVERALL | .509 | .729 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |

Tested at 0.05 degree of significance, there are no significant differences in the mean scores in the linguistic competence test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to ethnicity.

Thus, the linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College are at the same level, regardless of their ethnicity.

Board courses

Shown in Table XII are the significant differences of the mean scores in the linguistic competence test of the college

freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to course.

TABLE XII. F-Value, and Level of Significance of the ANOVA Conducted on the Scores in the Linguistic Competence Test of the Students, Classified According to Course

| Component | F-Value | Level of Significance | Remarks |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| Subject-Verb Agreement | 3.585 | .023 | Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| Correcting Errors | 8.502 | .000 | Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| Giving Instruction Using Preposition | .139 | .936 | Not Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| Reported speech | 17.778 | .000 | Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |
| OVERALL | 6.758 | .001 | Significant @ $\alpha =0.05$ |

Tested at 0.05 degree of significance, there are significant differences in the mean scores in the linguistic competence test, in the Subject – Verb Agreement, Correcting Errors, and Reported Speech test components, administered to the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to courses.

As a whole, there are significant differences in the mean scores in the linguistic competence test given to the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to courses.

Thus, the linguistic competences of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College differ, when they are grouped according to their courses.

V. CONCLUSION

The hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when data are grouped according to:

- Gender, is accepted on the basis that, tested at 0.05 degree of significance, there is no significant difference in the mean scores in the linguistic competency test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to gender. Although the female students have numerically higher scores than the male students, both groups are categorized as least competent in linguistic skills. Thus, the linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College is at the same level, regardless of their gender.
- Ethnicity is accepted on the basis that, tested at 0.05 degree of significance, there are no significant differences in the mean scores in the linguistic competency test of the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to ethnicity. Thus, the linguistic competence of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College is at the same level, regardless of their ethnicity. Hence, even though the Yakan and Bisayan students were numerically classified as ‘Moderately Competent, and the students from the other ethnic groups were all categorized

as least competent. There are no significant differences in their mean scores.

- Board Courses, is rejected on the basis that, tested at 0.05 degree of significance, there are significant differences in the mean scores in the linguistic competency test given to the college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College when they are grouped according to course. Thus, the linguistic competences of college freshman students on board courses of Basilan State College differ, when they are grouped according to their courses. Consequently, both the BSED and BSND students, who are described as 'Moderately Competent', are a level more

competent in linguistic skills than the students from the other courses, who were all classified as least competent.

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