

Jovenel B. Dadulla

Capitol University, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

Joel D. Potane

Capitol University, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

Self-Concept and English Oral Proficiency of Senior High School Students

Abstract

The study intended to determine if self-concept predicts senior high school students' English oral proficiency level. The correlational research design was used to describe the relationship of the variables. Forty (40) students were randomly chosen as a sample from the population. A self-concept questionnaire and an oral proficiency interview were administered. The data were analysed using frequency count, computation of mean, Pearson product-moment correlation, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and simple linear regression analysis. The findings revealed that the respondents have an above-average self-concept in the social and family dimensions. Further study showed that only the physical, psychological, academic, and family dimensions predict oral proficiency in the English language. On the contrary, it was statistically determined that the social dimension does not predict oral proficiency. With the study's findings, it can be concluded that speech development programmes must be holistic to cater not only the communicative abilities of the students but also their affective domains. It could help improve the quality of English language education in the country in terms of oral proficiency development.

Keywords: *self-concept, oral proficiency, English Language Education, speech development*

Introduction

The Philippines, one of the largest English-speaking countries globally, considers English a significant subject in its K-12 Curriculum. The said curriculum aims to

develop English language proficiency among Filipino students to become globally competitive. Consequently, most of the country's population has some degree of oral fluency (Cabigon, 2015). In fact, Education First (2020) has recently reported in their English Proficiency Index that the Philippines remain highly proficient in English. Among 100 English-speaking countries, Filipinos ranked 27th.

Nonetheless, further comparison of these findings to the previous years would reveal that the rank of the Philippines has been declining since 2016. It provides a reason to examine the various factors affecting language learning among Filipino students to better design speech development programmes for the English language. While many researchers have attempted to describe proficiency with several factors including anxiety and motivation (Pangket, 2014; Henter, 2014), curriculum and instruction (Madrunio et al., 2016), and learning environment (Magno, 2011), it was not enough to provide enough information on the internal factors affecting oral proficiency. One crucial aspect to examine is self-concept as an affective factor. This study intended to determine if self-concept, as an affective factor, is a predictor of oral proficiency. The findings of this study can be used in designing a speech development programme to improve English oral proficiency among Filipino students.

Self-Concept and Oral Proficiency

Self-concept is how people perceive themselves according to their behaviour, capabilities, and characteristics (Cherry, 2021). For humanist psychologists, one way to understand personality is to know their level of self-concept. Moreover, psychologists believe that self-concept develops over time. Ackerman (2020) asserts that a person continuously “regulates our self-concept as we grow.” It means that a person's experiences affect how they perceive themselves over time. In Carl Roger's Self-concept Theory on Personality (as cited in Ackerman, 2021), self-concept influences and serves as a framework for personality. It must match with the realistic conditions that are happening around a person in order to achieve self-actualisation. Accordingly, self-actualisation is achieved if they reached their full potential, including oral proficiency, as an effect of the conditions they are experiencing.

On the other hand, oral proficiency is the ability to speak a language well fluently and accurately (Strutt, n.d.). Fluency is speaking a language smoothly in a way that is comfortable and easy to understand. At the same time, accuracy is the correctness in terms of standard rules of the language. It may include grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation (British Council Indonesia Foundation, 2021).

The relationship between self-concept and oral proficiency can be gleaned from Krashen's (1982) Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory. In this theory, he stressed motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety in his Affective Filter hypothesis. Accordingly, a comprehensible input higher than the level of oral proficiency of the learner helps in the development of the second language. Nevertheless, this input is filtered by the factors mentioned previously. Motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety are all factors that can affect how input is processed in language learning. Krashen (1982) proposed that to promote language learning and acquisition, the environment must be suitable to provide a low filter of these variables. Hence, an L2 teacher must provide a situation that diminishes anxiety and improves motivation and self-confidence. That, in turn, helps improve self-concept. The more positive one's self-concept, the better self-confidence. Increased motivation and decreased anxiety were found to improve oral proficiency in L2 (Henter, 2014). Both factors are indicators of self-esteem, which is a component of self-concept. Thus, it can be implied from Krashen's SLA theory that improving self-concept would consequently result in better language learning since self-confidence can be enhanced as an affective filter.

Research Methodology

General Background of Research

This study examined if self-concept can predict the level of oral proficiency. The correlational research design was used to do this. The researchers believe this design will help reveal and analyse the relationship of the study's variables. The method used was the survey method. The researcher used a questionnaire and a structured oral proficiency interview to identify respondents' self-concept and oral proficiency levels, respectively. A regression analysis was then employed to determine which dimension of self-concept predicts oral proficiency.

Research Sample

Forty senior high school students from a private school in the Philippines participated in the study. They were chosen through a probability sampling technique. It has been observed that despite being taught under the new curriculum standards set by the government, many of them are still not proficient in the use of the English language. By the next school year, they will move to college, introducing

new competencies founded on the competencies they were taught in secondary school. Thus, the researchers aim to help improve their oral proficiency by investigating the affective factors affecting their oral language development, specifically self-concept.

Instrument and Procedures

The researchers sent out a Self-Concept questionnaire to the respondents. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers and underwent validity and reliability tests. It consists of 30 statements that correspond to specific dimensions of self-concept. Using a Likert scale, their choice was scored 1-4 based on how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Their level of self-concept was measured by computing the total score for each dimension. A virtual oral proficiency interview then followed the survey on self-concept. The interview was patterned from the standard language testing system measuring the respondents' oral proficiency level (OPL). The OPL of the respondents was identified using a checklist for rating. The checklist was divided into six components of oral proficiency: fluency, comprehension, communication, vocabulary, accuracy, and accent. The respondents were scored according to the descriptors for each component of oral proficiency, with the highest possible score for oral proficiency being 30 and 5 points as the highest possible score for each component.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using frequency count and computation of mean. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to identify a significant relationship between the variables. Simple linear regression analysis was also employed to examine the predictive relationship of the variables. Finally, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done to check the significance of the computed value.

Research Results

Self-Concept as a Predictor of English Oral Proficiency

The data collected from the self-concept questionnaire and the oral proficiency interview were correlated and underwent a regression analysis. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Regression Analysis Results of Self-Concept and English Oral Proficiency Level of the Respondents

Dimension	Multiple r	r2	Coefficients		P-value	Interpretation
			Intercept	Dimension		
Physical	0.56	0.31	11.23	0.44	0.00022	Significant
Social	0.24	0.06	14.22	0.23	0.13451	Not Significant
Psychological	0.49	0.23	12.56	0.37	0.00147	Significant
Academic	0.58	0.33	10.07	0.48	0.00011	Significant
Family	0.41	0.17	11.93	0.35	0.00922	Significant

P-value≤0.05

It can be seen from the table that of all the dimensions of self-concept, only the social dimension was revealed to be insignificant as a predictor of oral proficiency.

Discussion

From the data presented, it can be implied that all dimensions of self-concept can predict oral proficiency except for the social dimension.

The data from the table indicates that physical self-concept predicts oral proficiency. Physical self-concept is how the respondents perceive their physical selves, such as how they look or sound. It is crucial to examine developing self-confidence because self-concept impacts the former (Terrell, 2019). During the interviews, respondents with high physical self-concept tend to speak more confidently and respond to the questions more comfortably. Their self-confidence affected their fluency in the language as they became more focused on what they said.

On the other hand, the data also implies that psychological self-concept predicts oral proficiency. It proves the study of Henter (2014) that affective factors affect oral proficiency. In her research, motivation and anxiety are strongly linked to English oral proficiency. Both of these are indicators of psychological state. That could explain why respondents with high physical and psychological self-concept find it easier to converse in English. They are more confident and less anxious.

In addition to physical and psychological self-concept, academic self-concept also predicts oral proficiency. It has the highest correlation coefficient among the other dimensions, meaning there is a substantial relationship between academic self-concept and English oral proficiency. It is because curriculum and teaching strategies are significant factors in students' oral proficiency (Pangket, 2019). It can

be gleaned from this finding that the respondents' experience in the classroom has affected their level of oral proficiency since it has consequently improved or downgraded their academic self-concept. This experience refers to teacher approaches or learning activities that encourage or discourage the respondents. It proves that teaching strategy is a factor in language learning (Magno et al., 2014). The interview with the respondents revealed that they have a positive experience in school; hence, they are either good or very good speakers of English. These results indicate that their level of academic self-concept has affected their level of oral proficiency. However, it must be noted that the status of Philippine ELE still faces problems, including curriculum improvement and teacher training (Madrunio et al., 2016). Thus, it is recommended that this finding may be further investigated in other contexts.

Another dimension considered in this study is the family self-concept. Based on the data presented, the respondents' family self-concept level also predicts their proficiency level. It can be explained by how Filipinos value their families. Filipinos still consider their families a foundation for social life (Cultural Atlas, 2022). Therefore, the respondents feel positive about their family relationships.

Moreover, as adolescents, the respondents can feel more socially connected and happy with their families (Schacter & Margolin, 2019). Their long periods of engagement with their families can increase their motivation which is a factor in both self-concept and oral proficiency development. Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory (1982) states motivation is an affective filter for language learning and acquisition. Improving motivation means lessening the filter that may impede the learning and acquisition of the language. Thus, the amount of motivation received by the respondents from their families affects their development of oral proficiency.

Notably, the results show that social self-concept does not predict oral proficiency level of all dimensions. There could be several reasons for this. One of these is that in social settings where the respondents are engaged, English is not a language of communication. Peers and other people surrounding the respondents do not speak English in regular day-to-day conversations. In Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis, exposure to a proficiency level higher than a person's current level could help improve oral proficiency. However, since there were few to no opportunities for exposure to English, the social interactions of the respondents cannot significantly affect their oral proficiency in the language. When the respondents engage in social interactions, other people speak to them in their vernacular language. The primary setting where the respondents are exposed to English is the school. Abutalebi (2008 in Verga & Kotz, 2013) asserts that L2 acquisition is

different in adults compared to children acquiring their L1. Accordingly, children acquire their L1 primarily through social interactions. On the other hand, adults primarily acquire the L2 through formal training. In this study, social interaction may not be as relevant as academic learning as the context where the learner is situated does not speak the L2. Since there were little to no opportunities for exposure to the English language in the social context, social self-concept does not significantly affect oral proficiency.

Hence, the data gathered from the survey does not have considerable relevance. On the contrary, Li and Jeong (2020) argue that “social interaction is good for language learning.” They propose that children and even some adults learn a language by interacting with other people. This interaction is an opportunity to integrate signals such as linguistic forms, meaning, and non-verbal cues to learn a language consequently. Moreover, Magno et al. (2011) proposed that one way to learn a language is to expose oneself to it.

Nonetheless, this information is relevant only if the students are highly exposed to English as a second language. On the contrary, the respondents of this study are less exposed to English in social contexts. The limitations in social interaction experienced by the respondents make the acquisition of L2 difficult. Therefore, it would explain the findings.

Overall, the findings affirmed the Second Language Acquisition theory of Krashen and the Self-concept theory of Rogers. Affective filters such as self-concept and its dimensions are linked to language acquisition and learning.

Conclusion

The study revealed that self-concept is a factor in language learning. It supports the Self-concept theory of Rogers that self-concept is related to self-actualisation or achieving one’s potential. Moreover, it also endorsed Krashen’s Second Language Acquisition theory, specifically on the affective-filter hypothesis. This study revealed that self-concept, which is affected by motivation, anxiety, and self-esteem, predicts oral proficiency. Further analysis of the context of English Language Education in the Philippines would imply a need to improve the learning delivery of the language.

Language learning is not only about exposure to the language and thorough discussions on grammar rules. The problem must also be handled on the affective level. Therefore, students should be given an opportunity to improve their self-concept. To do this, teaching strategies must include activities promoting self-esteem

and self-confidence. Learners with low self-concept may find it challenging to learn the language since it can impede learning acquisition as an affective filter.

Moreover, the learning environment must be nurtured to encourage a positive self-concept. Students must be taught to take care of their bodies, socialise, think positively, focus on studies, and realise the importance of family. These factors contribute to their overall self-concept as adolescents.

Furthermore, future researchers can use the data gathered in this study to investigate further the role of self-concept in developing oral proficiency. They may focus on one dimension to have a clearer view of this. A thorough investigation of the factors that affect self-concept may also be conducted to explore deeper on this aspect. It is also recommended that the same study may also be done in a different locale and with a more significant number of respondents.

With all these insights from this study, it is therefore essential for speech development programmes to be holistic to develop the student's self-esteem and self-image and encourage them to have an attainable ideal self. Moreover, speech development programmes must involve peers, family, and other stakeholders to make them more inclusive and contextualised.

References

- ABS-CBN News. (2020, August 20). *Philippine English is legitimate, says Oxford English dictionary editor*. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/life/08/20/20/philippine-english-is-legitimate-says-oxford-english-dictionary-editor>
- Ackerman, C. (2020, October 21). *What is self-concept theory? A psychologist explains*. PositivePsychology.com. <https://positivepsychology.com/self-concept>
- British Council Indonesia Foundation. (2021). *Fluency vs accuracy*. British Council Indonesia Foundation. <https://www.britishcouncilfoundation.id/en/english/articles/fluency-vs-accuracy>
- Buehler, C. et. al. (2015). Perceptions of School Experiences During the First Semester of Middle School. *School Community Journal*, 25(2). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1085657.pdf>
- Cabigon, M. (2015, November). *State of English in the Philippines: Should we be concerned?* British Council Philippines. <https://www.britishcouncil.ph/teach/state-english-philippines-should-we-be-concerned-2>
- Chan, R. (2019, June 19). How Filipinos' English language communication skills become a strategic business advantage. *EnterPH*. <https://enterph.com/blog/filipinos-english-language-skills-strategic-business-advantage/>
- Cherry, K. (2021, April 18). *What is self-concept and how does it form?* Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-concept-2795865>

- Cultural Atlas. (2022). *Filipino Culture*. <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/filipino-culture/filipino-culture-family>
- Education First. (2014). *EF EPI: EF English proficiency index*. https://www.ef.com/asset-scdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/legacy/___/~media/centralefcom/epi/downloads/full-reports/v10/ef-epi-2020-english.pdf
- Gómez-López, M., Viejo, C., & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (2019). Psychological well-being during adolescence: Stability and association with romantic relationships. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01772>
- Grabel, B. F. (2017, August). *The Relationship between Wellbeing and Academic Achievement*. Repository University of Twente Student Theses. https://essay.utwente.nl/73514/1/Gr%C3%A4bel_MA%20Positive%20Psychology%20And%20Technology_Faculty%20of%20Behavioral,%20Management%20&%20Social%20Science.pdf
- Henter, R. (2014). Affective Factors Involved in Learning a Foreign Language. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Science, 127*, 373 – 378. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.274>
- You, S. (2011). Peer influence and adolescents' school engagement. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 29*, 829-835. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.11.311>
- Koizumi, R., & In'nami, Y. (2013). Vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency among second language learners from novice to intermediate levels. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 4*(5). <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.4.5.900-913>
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon.
- Li, P., & Jeong, H. (2020, July 26). *Social interaction is good for learning a new language, social isolation is not*. npj Science of Learning Community. <https://npjscilearncommunity.nature.com/posts/social-interaction-is-good-for-learning-a-new-language-social-isolation-is-not>
- Madrunio, M. R., Martin, I. P., & Plata, S. M. (2016). English language education in the Philippines: Policies, problems, and prospects. *Language Policy, 245–264*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-22464-0_11
- Magno, C. (2011). Factors Involved in the Use of Language Learning Strategies and Oral Proiciency Among Taiwanese Students in Taiwan and in the Philippines. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 20*(3).
- Mariñas, J. (2021, March 2). *Why the Philippines is one of the top English-proficient countries*. cloudemployee.co.uk. <https://cloudemployee.co.uk/blog/it-outsourcing/why-philippines-for-business>
- Nanquil, L. (2021). Changes and Challenges in the Teaching of Grammar in the Age of Disruption. *Journal of Learning and Development Studies, 1*(1). <https://doi.org.10.32996/jlds.2021.1.1.1>
- Pangket, W. F. (2019). Oral communication proficiency in English of the grade 5 pupils. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 11*(2), 42-50. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijhss.11.2.4>
- Raising Children Network. (2019, June 12). *Body image: Pre-teens and teenagers*. <https://raisingchildren.net.au/pre-teens/healthy-lifestyle/body-image/body-image-teens>

- Reel, J., Voelker, D., & Greenleaf, C. (2015). Weight status and body image perceptions in adolescents: Current perspectives. *Adolescent Health, Medicine and Therapeutics*, 149. <https://doi.org/10.2147/ahmt.s68344>
- Schacter, H., & Margolin, G. (2019). The interplay of friends and parents in adolescents' daily lives: Towards a dynamic view of social support. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/bp647>
- Separo, L. A., Generales, L. J., & Medina, R. J. (2015). Self-assessment on the oral communication of Filipino college students. *Advanced Science Letters*, 21(7), 2312–2314. <https://doi.org/10.1166/asl.2015.6261>
- Sioco, E. C., & De Vera, P. V. (2018). Grammatical Competence of Junior High School Students. *TESOL International Journal*, 13(1). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1247221.pdf>
- Strutt, P. (n.d.). *Peter Strutt's delta pages*. Peter Strutt's Delta Pages | Yet another site about English language teaching. <https://peterstrutt.co.uk/what-is-oral-proficiency/>
- Teng, F. (2016). An In-depth Investigation into the Relationship between Vocabulary Knowledge and Academic Listening Comprehension. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 20(2). <http://www.tesl-ej.org/pdf/ej78/a5.pdf>
- Terrell, S. (2019, May 19). What is self-concept and how does it impact your confidence? *Mindvalley Blog*. <https://blog.mindvalley.com/self-concept/>
- Tomé, G. et al. (2012). How can peer group influence the behavior of adolescents: Explanatory model. *Global Journal of Health Science*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v4n2p26>
- Verga, L., & Kotz, S. A. (2013). How relevant is social interaction in second language learning? *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2013.00550>
- You, S. (2011). Peer influence and adolescents' school engagement. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 29, 829–835. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.11.311>

AUTHORS

DADULLA JOVENEL B.

Master of Arts in Education major in English student, Capitol University,
Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines
e-mail: joveneldadulla7@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0001-5287-3899

POTANE JOEL D.

PhD, Educational Management, Graduate School Faculty, Capitol University,
Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines
e-mail: potane.joel@g.cu.edu.ph
ORCID: 0000-0003-0210-8149