

The Impact Of Studying English As An International Language On First-Year Civil Engineering Students In Batangas State University

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Abstract: The aim of this descriptive quantitative study was to assess the impact of studying English as an international language on first-year civil engineering students in Batangas State University. The data gathering instrument utilized was a questionnaire. The data analyzed were from surveying two hundred thirty-four (234) out of five hundred forty-five (545) first-year civil engineering students during the S.Y. 2021-2022. The researchers analyzed the students' attitudes toward English as an international language and its impact on students in terms of communication skills, personal development, and cultural awareness. The result of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the attitude of the students towards learning English and the profile variables of the respondents. It also showed that there is a significant difference in the extent of studying English as an international language when grouped according to the profile variables of the respondents.

Keywords: English language, attitude, communication skills, personal development, cultural awareness

1. Introduction

Evidently, the English language has paved the way for communicating beyond geographical locations. In the context of a globalized world, where there is growing interdependence of the world's cultures and economies, the emergence of international languages such as English is speculated to facilitate communication among people of different backgrounds. English has been a vibrant language, as twenty (20) percent of the world's population already utilizes English as their native tongue and second language. Specifically, more than three-hundred fifty (350) million people speak English as a native language while more than four-hundred thirty (430) million speak it as a second language. The English language has been perceived as a lingua franca or a global language by people across the globe. Twenty (20) percent of the world's population already utilizes English as their native tongue and second language. One hundred forty-two (142) countries mandate English as one of the national education policies concerning public education. Many research has stated several factors that can reveal the influence of English among students in multiple dimensions. Language attitudes refer to the opinions, ideas, and prejudice that the speaker has directed toward a language. This includes other main aspects: communication, employment, knowledge and thinking, personal development, lifestyle, and relationships. Learning English impacts communication as it motivates communication between people of different linguistic backgrounds, not only in environments with native speakers but also in international contexts. One of the reasons for studying a language is because it is part of the curriculum and the belief that it provides an opportunity for advancement. The impact of studying the English language on individuals' learning and wider lives is under-reported. There have been many research findings made available across the globe, however, not much has been directed towards students that are not English majors. Assessment is the systematic collection of data utilized to measure the extent to which a particular learning program's goals are achieved (COE, 2017).

2. Methods

This study utilized a descriptive and a correlational quantitative method of research. Use survey questionnaires and Likert scale as data gathering instruments to provide the necessary information of the study. To interpret the data collected, frequency, percentage, ranking, weighted mean, standard deviation, composite mean, t-test, and Pearson rank correlation coefficient were the statistical tools that were used. Articles, theses, and online references are secondary sources used to validate the different data collected for the progression of the study. The respondents in the study were 234 civil engineering students from Batangas State University. Used simple random sampling to produce accurate results since the researchers are considering the availability of the respondents.

3. Results and Discussion

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

1.1 Age of the Respondents

Table 1 Distribution of the profile of Respondents According to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
19 years old	119	50.85%	1
18 years old	80	34.19%	2
20 years old	29	12.39%	3
21 and above	6	2.56%	4
TOTAL	234	100%	

Table 1 shows the distribution of the profile of respondents according to age. It revealed that the majority of the respondents are 19 years old having 50.85% of the sample, followed by 18 years old with 34.19%, and 20-years old accounting for 12.39%. The remaining were 21 years old and above, showing 2.56% of the respondents. According to the study of Gawi (2011), it was discovered that age affects English Language Learners because early exposure to language and its instructions results in enhancing their skills and better performance.

1.2 Sex of the Respondents

Table 2 Distribution of the profile of Respondents According to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Female	128	54.70%	1
Male	106	45.30%	2
TOTAL	234	100%	

Table 2 presents the distribution of the profile of respondents according to sex. It showed that most of the respondents were female having 54.70% of the respondents, while the remaining were male which accounted for 45.30% of the sample. Research has discovered that quantitatively, 57% of women evaluate their pronunciation accurately compared to about 50% of men according to Ali (2016). Backed by Wahyuningsih (2018), wherein he discovered that “women had stronger preference for standards forms than men”. Generally, according to Alnasser (2018) beliefs regarding English policies and rules are developed stronger in females as compared to males.

1.3 Number of English subjects taken since elementary years

Table 3 Distribution of the profile of Respondents According to the Number of English Subjects taken since Elementary Years

Number of English Subjects taken since Elementary Years	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Above 12 English subjects	170	72.65%	1
12 English subjects	64	27.35%	2
TOTAL	234	100%	

Table 3 shows the distribution of the profile of respondents according to the number of English subjects taken since elementary years. It is revealed that most of the sample have taken above 12 English subjects which have 72.65% and the rest have taken 12 English subjects accounting for 27.35% of the sample. As stated by Leyaley (2016), students are expected to be proficient in English with the amount of English language they have taken before they enter college. In addition, based on BOT resolution no. 811, s.2011, an entrance examination given by the College university must be passed by all freshmen where they must not have a grade

lower than 80 in English with the written exam and interview.

2. Attitude of Civil Engineering Students towards English as an International Language

This section highlights the different attitudes of Civil Engineering students toward English as an International language Table 4 shows the mean distribution of the attitudes of civil engineering students towards English. The highest weighted mean is 3.46 from enjoying studying in English more than in other languages which gives an interpretation of “Strongly agree”. The gathered data also showed that choosing to speak in English to your friends, family members, and relatives with a weighted mean of 2.82 and a rank of 10th with a verbal interpretation of “Agree”. However, all indicators pertaining to the attitude of civil engineering students toward English as an international language was evident among the response of 234 respondents for it has composite mean of 3.178 and verbally interpreted as “Agree”.

Table 4 Mean Distribution of the Attitudes of Civil Engineering students towards English

Attitudes	Weighted Mean	Rank	Verbal Interpretation
1. I enjoy studying in English more than in other languages.	3.46	1	Strongly Agree
2. I speak in English to classmates.	2.92	9	Agree
3. Write in English when making personal notes.	3.19	6	Agree
4. When someone speaks to me in English, I respond in English.	3.32	2.5	Agree
5. When sending messages through email and text messages, I communicate in English.	3.24	4	Agree
6. I greet people in English.	3.16	7	Agree
7. I choose to speak in English to friends, family members, and relatives.	2.82	10	Agree
8. I have great interest in learning to speak fluently in English.	3.32	2.5	Agree
9. I like it when my teacher teaches in English.	3.22	5	Agree
10. I pay more attention to someone speaking in English more than in other languages.	3.13	8	Agree
Composite Mean	3.178		Agree

3. Extent of studying English as an International Language affects university students

3.1 Communication Skills

This section highlights the extent of studying English as an international language affects university students in terms of communication skills.

Table 5 Effects of Studying English as an International Language in terms of Communication Skills

Communication Skills	Weighted Mean	Rank	Verbal Interpretation
1.Developing good communication skills	3.53	1	Strongly Agree
2.Becoming more fluent in speaking in English	3.27	9	Strongly Agree
3.Starting conversations with ease	3.23	10	Agree
4.Expressing myself better through written words	3.42	2	Strongly Agree
5.Understanding others' verbal messages easily	3.38	3	Strongly Agree
6.Reading and understanding written messages and ideas easily	3.37	4	Strongly Agree
7.Providing feedback with ease	3.28	8	Strongly Agree
8.Becoming better in answering questions of my listeners and avoiding misunderstanding	3.32	5.5	Strongly Agree
9.Becoming more engaged in discussions	3.32	5.5	Strongly Agree
10.Controlling emotions better	3.29	7	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	3.34		Strongly Agree

Table 5 presents the mean distribution of the extent of studying English as an international language affects university students in terms of communication skills. All the gathered data results in a composite mean of 3.34 and a verbal interpretation of strongly agree. These results indicate that learning English as a foreign or second language generally improves one's communication skills for the respondents which include different types of language communication skills namely, speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

3.2 Personal Development

This section highlights the extent of studying English as an international language affects university students in terms of personal development.

Table 6 Effects of Studying English as an International Language in terms of Personal Development

Personal Development	Weighted Mean	Rank	Verbal Interpretation
1.Understanding myself better now that I have a better understanding of culture and language	3.31	6	Strongly Agree
2. Learning English improves my reading skills and concentration.	3.25	10	Strongly Agree
3.Learning English boost my brain and problem-solving skills	3.30	8.5	Strongly Agree
4.Having a lot of self-confidence	3.33	3	Strongly Agree
5.Enhancing my memory because of the time it takes to memorize the spelling, pronunciation, and meaning of the words	3.30	8.5	Strongly Agree
6.Enhancing my thinking skills, as well as my mental flexibility and decision-making abilities	3.31	6	Strongly Agree
7.Helping me to think outside the box	3.32	4	Strongly Agree
8.Learning English allows me to meet new people and form new friendships.	3.31	6	Strongly Agree
9.Becoming more eager to break the comfort zone	3.34	2	Strongly Agree
10.Building my determination and strong character	3.38	1	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	3.315		Strongly Agree

Table 6 presents the mean distribution of the extent of studying English as an international language affects university students in terms of personal development. Based on the data above, the statement that ranks first is "Building my determination and strong character" with a weighted mean of 3.38 and a verbal interpretation of Strongly Agree. The gathered data is related to the insights of Velu & Dr. M. Farook (2021). They stated that several benefits can be gained from learning English as a second language. Learning English allows you to communicate with anyone in the world. Acquiring English knowledge can boost a person's self-confidence and courage. Aside from that, learning English improves one's personality. Learning English is highly valued in society due to the dominance of the English language throughout the world. Furthermore, if people learn English well, they can excel in any field.

3.3 Cultural Awareness

This section highlights the extent of studying English as an international language affects university students in terms of cultural awareness.

Table 7 Effects of Studying English as an International Language in terms of Cultural Awareness

Cultural Awareness	Weighted Mean	Rank	Verbal Interpretation
1.Developing meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds	3.46	1	Strongly Agree
2.Becoming more socially concerned	2.92	9	Agree
3.Becoming more aware of the importance of the complexity of culture	3.19	6	Agree
4.Starting to think beyond race and ethnicity	3.32	3	Strongly Agree
5.Allowing myself to explain culture's influence on our own worldview	3.24	4	Agree
6.Understanding the differences shaped by our diverse cultural backgrounds	3.16	7	Agree
7.Increasing my motivation and my interest in the target culture and its people	3.22	5	Agree
8.Providing a lot of opportunities in terms of cultural awareness to study the English language with purposes	2.82	10	Agree
9.Starting to feel more comfortable and safer with these differences later in life	3.32	2	Strongly Agree
10.Giving me access to different societies and cultures	3.13	8	Agree
Composite Mean	3.1783		Agree

Table 7 presents the mean distribution of the extent of studying English as an international language affects university students in terms of cultural awareness. Based on the data above, the respondents strongly agreed on "Developing meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds" which received the highest rank with a weighted mean of 3.46. Meanwhile, the statement "Providing a lot of opportunities in terms of cultural awareness to study the English language with purposes" gathered the lowest rank with a weighted mean of 2.82 and a verbal interpretation of Agree. All the gathered data results yield a composite mean of 3.178 and a verbal interpretation of Agree.

4. Relationship between the Respondents' Profile Variables and their Attitudes towards English as an International Language

Table 8 Relationship between the Respondents' Profile Variables and Their Attitudes towards English as an International Language

Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Age	0.1323	1.23583E-64	Reject	Significant
Sex	-00002	4.30436E-91	Reject	Significant
Number of English Subjects taken	0.2122	5.16643E-95	Reject	Significant

Table 8 presents the correlation between the three variables of respondents' profile and the attitudes towards English as an International Language. With age having an r-value of 0.1323 and a p-value of 1.23583E-64, sex with -0.0002 r-value and 4.30436E-91 p-value, and the number of English subjects taken having 0.2122 r-value and p-value of 5.16643E-95. The result shows that the p-value is less than the significance level ($p < 0.050$) which tells us that the null hypothesis is rejected. A significant relationship between the variables can be observed in the study of Chan (2018) and Huwari (2021) that concluded that sex differences have implications on attitudes toward English language education together with the design of English language teaching materials and evaluations. Language attitudes are also affected by personality, educational, and social factors such as age and sex (Getie, 2019).

5. Difference in the Extent of Studying English as an International Language when Grouped according to the Profile Variables of the Respondents

Table 9 Difference in the Extent of Studying English as an International Language when Grouped according to Age of the Respondents

Variables	t-value	P-value	Decision on Ho	Conclusion
Age	-28.451	8.06E-68	Reject	Significant
Sex	-31.978	3.93E-74	Reject	Significant
Number of English Subjects taken	-37.057	6.54E-98	Reject	Significant

Table 9 presents the difference in the extent of studying English as an international language when grouped according to age of the respondents. Age has a t-value of -28.451 and p-value of 8.06E-68 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis will be rejected if the p-value is less than significance level and

otherwise the null hypothesis will be accepted. The variable age having a p-value less than significance level is considered rejected, meaning there is a significant difference in the extent of studying English as an international language when grouped according to age of the respondents. According to (Madli, 2016) the learners' age and gender are important factors in the learning and teaching of English. Mature students value experience more than younger students. More group and pair work are preferred by the youngest and oldest age groups. More digital lessons are preferred by the middle group. The data above shows the difference in the extent of studying English as an international language when grouped according to the sex of the respondents. The t-value is -31.978 and the p-value in terms of sex is 3.93E-74. It is shown above that the variable sex reject the null hypothesis having a p-value less than significance level of 0.050. The null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is a significant difference in the extent of studying English as an international language when grouped according to the sex of the respondents. The data gathered was related to the study of Alaga (2019), wherein in terms of sex, grade, parents' occupation, parents' educational background and language/dialect used at home of the respondents found to have a significant relationship with the level of motivation as well as their attitude towards learning English. Linking this to the idea of Dornyei of ought-to self where what an individual should become comes with external pressures. With this, it may seem as though an individual only studies to satisfy some outside source which can be detrimental to furthering language learning. The table above presents the difference in the extent of studying English as an international language when grouped according to the number of English subjects taken by the respondents. The t-value is -37.057 and the variable has p-value of 6.54E-98 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis having a p-value less than significance level is considered rejected, meaning that there is a significant difference in the extent of studying English as an international language when grouped according to the number of English subjects taken by the respondents. According to (Indah et al.,2021) internal and external factors influenced autonomous learners' English learning. Several external factors such as the family environment, school environment, and teachers were also mentioned as other factors affecting autonomous learners in learning English. The participants also explained how these factors could encourage them in learning English, because there were self-initiation, self-direction, and self-realization in themselves that stimulated them to become autonomous in learning. Based on these findings, teachers or lecturers may play a role in promoting students' learning autonomy in order to stimulate students' positive psychological behavior, English proficiency, and academic achievement.

6. Proposed Infographics Containing Guidelines that Could Enhance English skills

The researchers prepared an infographic which contained guidelines and recommendations that may be proposed to enable students to enhance their skills in using English as an international language. As the researchers create the output, which is the infographics, the researchers made certain that all relevant information was included in the product of the study and that the findings were taken into account for the content. Furthermore, in order to articulate and use the data

and knowledge gathered during the study, the researchers incorporated the research findings and recommendations of the product.

4. Conclusions

The analysis of the data obtained showed that Civil engineering students who are at the age of 18 are 34.2%, 50.9% are at the age of 19, students that are 20 are 12.4% and 21 and above are 2.56%. Males are 45.3 % while females are 54.7%. Who answered 12 subjects above have a percentage of 72.6 and the rest who answered 12 subjects taken are 27.4%. Then, civil engineering students enjoy studying in English more than in other languages and have a great interest in learning to speak fluently in English. Besides, when someone speaks in English, it is good to respond in English. Also, the extent of studying English as an international language affects university students in communication skills, personal development, and cultural awareness. Learning English will develop good communication skills, build determination and strong character, and develop meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds. Moreover, there is a significant relationship between the profile variables of the respondents and their attitudes towards English as an international language. Furthermore, there is a significant difference in the extent of studying English as an international language when grouped according to the profile variables of the respondents. Finally, based on the result the output that the researchers propose is infographics which indicate the guidelines to enable students to enhance their skills in using English as an international language.

5. Recommendations

Students must take more than 12 English subjects beginning in elementary years. Professors should prioritize teaching English over all other languages because it is where students enjoy learning the most. Educate the students regarding the importance of developing good communication skills, determination, a strong character, and meaningful relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds when studying English. Develop a positive attitude among students toward the English language, which will encourage them to participate and improve their skills in using English as an international language. Promote students' learning autonomy to improve students' English proficiency, and academic achievement. Utilize the infographics as the study's output to enable students to enhance their skills in using English as an international language.

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Author's Profile



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