Assessment of Students' English Oral Proficiency Based on Degree Programs: Implications for Admission Examinations

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Abstract

Set in a Philippine state university, this study sought to investigate if there is a significant difference between college students' English oral proficiency when they are grouped according to their current degree programs. The sample was drawn from 147 sophomore college students who belong in one of the eight (8) degree programs. These students have taken a Speech Communication class during the previous semester. Using an oral proficiency test patterned from and a modified form of the Texas Oral Proficiency Test (TOPT), the students' English oral proficiency was assessed in terms of function, content, vocabulary, grammar, comprehensibility and fluency. A one-way ANOVA test of Equality of means in oral proficiency was used to analyze the data. This was followed by Post Hoc Analysis of each aspect of oral proficiency in relation to each degree program. Results show that there is a highly significant difference in the oral proficiency level of students in all areas, given by the significance value of 0.000 with 5% level of significance. Research results serve as basis for recommendations geared towards revisiting the language usage (LU) requirement set by the university in each degree program.

Keywords: language assessment, English oral proficiency, language usage in admission exams

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INTRODUCTION

Learning and developing proficiency in the English language has become a necessity in the 21st century. This is a reality that is also corroborated by Ellis as cited by Bandiala (2013) who states that "the capacity to use English in an appropriate manner as well as the knowledge of syntax and lexis is basic to survival today". It has even become a prerequisite for an individual to become part of the international society (Lee, n.d.). In fact, this language is studied at every school level in 112 countries where it is not a native language and is either a foreign or second language (Quirk et al., 1985 in Mamhot et al., 2013).

This reality about the importance of good English proficiency specifically in the speaking skills is relevant especially in the discussions in the ASEAN context. Hengsadeekul, Hengsadeekul, Koul, & Keawkuekool wrote in 2010 that "English is no longer a matter of preference but a necessity" (p.1) especially during the start of ASEAN community merging in 2015 which will lead to a tighter competition among ten nations. In fact, different Asian countries strive to address English language proficiency problems. In Malaysia, for example, Zaaba (n.d.) mentions that in a survey conducted by the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers, one of the major reasons why some graduates are not able to land a job is due to their low speaking proficiency in the English language (as cited in Arsad, Buniyamin & Manan, n.d).

According to Xi, Bridgeman and Wendler (2014), in the 20th century foreign university admissions, it has become a common practice to consider the applicants' language proficiency so that "Typically, a minimum cut score on English language tests is established to screen applicants who are non-native speakers of English" (pp. 318–319). This practice has required prospective international students to take the TOEFL or IELTS which are two of the globally accepted standard English language tests.

In the Philippine Higher Education context, university entrance exams that serve as admission criteria or "keys" to opening doors for students to be enrolled in a certain degree program include 'Language Usage / English Language Usage items. It is evident that the setting of such cut- off scores rests upon the widely accepted

assumption that a certain level of language proficiency is necessary for academic success (Cotton & Conrow, 1998; Kerstjens & Nery, 2000 as cited in Yan and Cheng, 2015). This proficiency in the language also interplays with other factors that shape academic success including personal qualities, cultural background, previous education, teaching, and support (Carroll, 2005; Feast, 2002 as cited in Sawir, 2012).

Recent researches in the Philippine context have explored Filipino students' English proficiency and its relationship to academic success. Magbanua (2016) determined the English proficiency of 305 college students across various degree programs and findings reveal that they have very satisfactory proficiency in terms of grammar, satisfactory in terms of spelling but are not proficient in terms of vocabulary. Racca and Lasaten (2016) found a significant relationship between the high school students' satisfactory English language proficiency and their academic performance in Science, Math and English.

Though these researches have determined the English proficiency of students, there has been a dearth of studies in the Philippine context that explored the difference of English proficiency of college students, primarily oral proficiency, across degree programs and examined its implications in the language usage requirement of the university admission examination. Thus, this study aims to explore the latter and contribute to the existing body of literature in applied linguistics and language pedagogy in the Philippine context, particularly in Mindanao State University System, one of the biggest state universities in the country.

This study is grounded in Dell Hymes' Communicative Competence Theory and Cummin's Theory of Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS).

Communicative Competence was a term introduced by Dell Hymes into discussions of language use and second or foreign language learning in the early 1970s (Savignon, 1987). Dell Hymes (2003) define Communicative Competence as "the ability that enables a person to communicate functionally and interactively" (as cited in Tao, 2011, p.13). Robles (2011, p. 20) also cites Hymes by explaining the term as

"the interaction of grammatical (formally possible), psycho-linguistic (feasible), sociocultural (contextually appropriate) systems of language".

Hymes (1972) in Salleh (2000) offers a description of communicative competence as a term that refers to the capabilities of a person that include knowledge about the correct language use. He also elaborates that the role of non-cognitive factors also determines one's competence. It is also dependent on ideas and language use.

Competence is defined by Savignon (1987) in terms of the "expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning and looks to both psycholinguistic and socio-cultural perspectives in second language acquisition (SLA) to account for its   development"   (p.134).She used the   term communicative competence to characterize the ability of classroom language learners to deal with other speakers, to make meaning, different from their ability to recite dialogues or perform on tests of grammatical knowledge.

James Cummins introduced the theoretical constructs of BICS and CALP in the 1980s in the field of Bilingual education. Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) describes the development of conversational fluency in the second language, whereas Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) describes the use of language in decontextualized academic situations ("BICS/CALP: Basic Interpersonal…", n.d.).   As Cummins explains it,

> "CALP or academic language proficiency develops through social interaction from birth but becomes differentiated from BICS after the early stages of schooling to reflect primarily the language that children acquire in school . . . The notion of CALP is specific to the social context of schooling, hence the term "academic". Academic language proficiency can thus be defined as "the extent to which an individual has access to and command of the oral and written academic registers of schooling" (Cummins, 2000, p. 67).

According to Baker (2006) BICS occurs in face-to-face `context embedded´ situations. CALP, on the other hand, is said to occur in 'context reduced' academic situations which use higher order thinking skills.

These two constructs by Cummins are utilized in the various speaking tasks of the oral proficiency test used to assess the college students' English oral proficiency,

Statement of the Problem

1. What is the English oral proficiency level of the second year students who have taken English 3 in the previous semester in the specific oral sub-component skills: function, content, vocabulary, grammar, comprehensibility and fluency?
2. Is there a significant difference in the English oral proficiency level of the students when grouped according to course / degree program?

Statement of Hypothesis

Below is the hypothesis of the study which was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the English oral proficiency level of the students when grouped according to their degree program.

METHODOLOGY

This study set in one of the campuses of the Mindanao State University System employed a Quantitative- Correlational research design. Using Sloven's formula, a sample size of 147 sophomore college students during the 2nd semester of 2014 out from the 284 sophomore students who have taken the Speech Communication class during the previous semester (2nd semester, A.Y. 2012-2013) was determined. The degree programs in the university were not well represented since not all degree programs take the Speech Communication class every second semester. However, most of them are from the College of Education. The number of respondents based on the population was determined through the use of stratified random sampling. The distribution of the students per class is shown in Table 1 in page 46.

The main research instrument is patterned from Texas Oral Proficiency Test (TOPT) 2007. The TOPT is a simulated oral proficiency interview which was developed in French and Spanish as a test of speech skills to be used by the state in

America as part of its certification testing program for French, Spanish, and bilingual education teachers (Stanfield and Kenyon, 1991). This study utilized a shortened version in English which lasted from 7-10 minutes and used to assess each of the student's English oral proficiency in terms of oral sub-component skills: function, content, vocabulary, grammar, comprehensibility and fluency. It can be argued that the TOPT is also an appropriate tool for this study since these students are bilingual and even multilingual speakers. The tasks were limited and categorized only into three: picture speaking tasks, topic speaking tasks and situation speaking tasks. Each task category has a set of three specific tasks. These tasks which were considered appropriate for the level of the second year students include describing an activity, narrating in past time, narrating in future time, giving instructions, stating advantages and disadvantages, hypothesizing on a personal topic, speaking with tact, persuading someone and giving advice. Furthermore, each specific task has a speaking prompt which did not anchor to any lesson plan but were formulated by the researcher. Also, students' experiences and activities were considered in creating these prompts. The students were given 20 seconds to read the speaking tasks presented. They also had a prescribed thinking time and answering time for each prompt which were indicated in each of the speaking tasks. The time depended on the complexity of the task or prompts.

Three qualified raters assessed individually the English oral proficiency of the 147 respondents; thus each respondent was rated by three raters. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the inter-rater reliability and found a significant difference of α value < 0.00) which implies that the ratings are independent and reliable. In the next page is the scoring scale adapted from Mamhot et al. (2013).

Scoring Scales and Interpretation

English Oral Proficiency Mean Equivalent

Scale	Proficiency Level	Verbal Description
5	4.5 - 5.0	Excellent
4	3.50 – 4.49	Very Good
3	2.5 - 3.49	Good
2	1.5 - 2.49	Satisfactory
1	1.0 - 1.49	Failure

One-way ANOVA test and T-test for Equality were used for the test of significant difference. Also, Tukey B was used for the Post Hoc analysis. Furthermore, it was also used to determine if there was a significant difference in the English oral proficiency of the students when grouped according to course / degree program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Course / Degree Program

Table 1 in the next page shows the distribution of respondents by course or degree program. Students from Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) major in Marketing had the greatest number of respondents with 16.33%. Degree programs such as Bachelor of Science in Secondary education (BSE) major in Biology, BSE Chemistry, BSE Drafting Technology (DT) and Technology and (BSE) Livelihood Education (TLE) all come from the College of Education (CED). It shows that a great bulk of the students who have taken English 3 in the previous semester come from this college.

Table 1: Students' Course or Degree Program

Course	Frequency	Percent
BS Marketing	24	16.33%
BS Accountancy	23	15.65%
DEST	12	8.16%
BSE Bio	19	12.93%
AB English	23	15.65%
BSE Chem	20	13.61%
BSE TLE	7	4.76%
BSE Drafting	19	12.93%
Total	147	100.00%

English Oral Proficiency Level

In general, the over-all English oral proficiency level of the sophomore students is 2.9116 as shown in Table 2.

Function has the highest mean, followed by comprehensibility, grammar and content. Moreover, the last two ranks are occupied by vocabulary and fluency, respectively.

Table 2. Mean Distribution of the Oral Proficiency Level
of the Respondents

Oral Proficiency	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Verbal Description
Function	147	1.67	4.83	2.9984	Good
Content	147	1.33	4.83	2.9098	Good
Vocabulary	147	1.33	4.83	2.9048	Good
Grammar	147	1.33	4.17	2.9107	Good
Comprehensibility	147	1.33	4.83	2.9391	Good
Fluency	147	1.33	4.83	2.8095	Good
Over-all Mean	147	1.39	4.53	2.9116	Good

Based on the scoring scale, the mean proficiency of 2.9116 falls in the range between 2.5 - 3.49 which has a verbal description of Good. It is also evident in Table 2 that all sub-oral component skills fall also in this description.

A speaker who obtains a mark of 3 in a scale of 1-5 based on the Texas Oral Proficiency Test Rubric is described as an Advanced Speaker. A speaker who obtains 3 possesses the following description based from the Texas Oral Proficiency TestTM (2007).

> The level 3 (or Advanced) speaker is able to satisfy the requirements of everyday situations and routine school and work requirements. He or she can handle with confidence, but not with facility, complicated tasks and social situations, such as elaborating, complaining, and apologizing. The Advanced speaker can narrate and describe with some details, linking sentences together smoothly. He or she can communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary. Shortcomings can often be smoothed over by communicative strategies, such as filling pauses, stalling, and using different rates of speech. Circumlocution that arises from vocabulary or syntactic limitations very often is quite successful, although some groping for words may be evident. The Advanced-level speaker can be understood without difficulty by most native speakers of the language.

(Level **3**)

Figure 1. Excerpt from Texas Oral Proficiency Test Manual (2007)

Oral Proficiency Sub-Component Skills

The first oral sub-component skill is function which refers to the task's communicative purpose. Based on Table 2, in terms of function, the mean proficiency is 2.9984. Thus, these students completed the task stated with "clear description, narration, explanation, advice advantages/   disadvantages, summary and apology" (Texas Oral Proficiency TestTM, 2007). The second aspect is content which is a feature of oral proficiency that deals with the adequacy and organization of information (TOPTTM,2007). Results show that the content mean proficiency is 2.9098. This value still falls in the scale of 3. Thus, the content was "appropriate, sufficient, complete, and clear (TOPTTM,2007). Further, vocabulary is the third feature of oral proficiency. This deals with the "appropriateness of word choice" (TOPTTM, 2007). Students earned an average of 2.9048 which still falls in the scale of 3. This means that the students used "adequate words..., and most words were formed correctly although regionalism was still evident" (TOPTTM, 2007). The fourth one is Grammar which refers to "syntax, usage and errors related to them" (TOPTTM,2007). In this oral sub-component skill, students obtained a mean rating of 2.9107 which still falls in the scale of 3. The student showed "fairly accurate forms appropriate to task although there were some errors in verb tense..." (TOPTTM,2007). Nonetheless, these "errors were handled well by most of the respondents" (TOPTTM,2007). Comprehension deals with the respondents'

"pronunciation,   structure   (answer)   and   the   way   the   ideas   are expressed..."(TOPTTM,2007). The result shows that the mean rating is 2.9391 which still fails in the scale of 3. A rating of 3 means that majority of the students showed "generally appropriate pronunciation, intonation, enunciation; volume can be understood by anyone" (TOPTTM,2007). Lastly, (in terms of fluency, the student earned the lowest mean rating which earned the lowest mean rating which is 2.8095 but which still falls in the scale of   3. This means they showed a "general flow of idea.

This means they showed a "general flow of ideas with occasional hesitation and rephrasing; Also, with moderate quantity of speech for task" (TOPTTM,2007).

Table 3. Mean Distribution of the Oral Proficiency Level of Students
Grouped According to their Course

Course	N	Function	Content	Vocabulary	Grammar	Comprehensibility	Fluency	Over-all Description	Verbal Description
BS Marketing	23	3.13	3.0	3.04	3.06	3.12	2.93	3.04	Good
BS Accountancy	23	3.31	3.28	3.12	3.23	3.18	3.11	3.21	Good
DEST	12	2.58	2.28	2.36	2.5	2.39	2.03	2.36	Good
BSE Bio	20	3.02	2.83	2.98	2.85	2.93	2.78	2.90	Good
AB English	23	3.44	3.47	3.39	3.36	3.38	3.34	3.40	Good
BSE Chem	21	2.65	2.64	2.62	2.66	2.67	2.67	2.65	Good
BSE TLE	6	2.73	2.61	2.67	2.33	2.56	2.61	2.59	Good
BSE Drafting	19	2.63	2.54	2.54	2.58	2.69	2.40	2.56	Good

Significant Difference in the English Oral Proficiency Level of the Students When Grouped According to Course / Degree Program

The students with the highest mean oral proficiency level are students enrolled in AB English while the students with the lowest mean oral proficiency level are those who are enrolled in DEST. All respondents, except those students taking up DEST, were rated to be of good oral proficiency level. To further analyze if these figures have a significant difference, one-way anova test was used.

Table 4 shows that there is a highly significant difference in the oral proficiency level of students in all oral sub-component skills given by the significance value of 0.000 with 5% level of significance. This implies that the oral proficiency of the students are significantly different when students were compared from one course or degree programs.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA Test of Equality of Means in
Oral Proficiency

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Function	Between Groups	14.842	7	2.120	12.672	.000
	Within Groups	23.257	139	.167		
	Total	38.098	146			
Content	Between Groups	20.238	7	2.891	12.878	.000
	Within Groups	31.205	139	.224		
	Total	51.443	146			
Vocabulary	Between Groups	15.167	7	2.167	10.110	.000
	Within Groups	29.790	139	.214		
	Total	44.956	146			
Grammar	Between Groups	15.095	7	2.156	11.569	.000
	Within Groups	25.909	139	.186		
	Total	41.004	146			
Comprehensibility	Between Groups	13.795	7	1.971	10.881	.000
	Within Groups	25.176	139	.181		
	Total	38.972	146			

Table 4. (Cont'd.)

Fluency	Between Groups	20.003	7	2.858	12.647	.000
	Within Groups	31.406	139	.226		
	Total	51.408	146			
Over-all Mean Oral Proficiency	Between Groups	15.892	7	2.270	16.768	.000
	Within Groups	18.820	139	.135		
	Total	34.712	146			

This is in consonance to Razmjoo and Movahed (2009) findings which showed a significant difference between the participants' language proficiency when grouped according to their majors. Iranian students with different majors were different with regard to their proficiency levels and this difference was both significant and meaningful. The students of Humanities and Social sciences, engineering and architecture outperformed other students

Specifically, the significant difference in the oral sub-component skills across the degree programs was also determined with the use of Tukey B as the statistical tool for Post hoc analysis. In terms of function, Table 5 shows that the students enrolled in the Diploma in Electronic Systems Technology (DEST), BSE Drafting Technology (BSEDT), BSE Chemistry (BSE Chem), BSE Technology and Livelihood Education, and BSE Biology (BSE Bio) do not differ in their function oral proficiency level. Similarly, the students enrolled in BSE Biology, BS in Business Administration (BSBA), and BS Accountancy (BSA) do not differ in their function oral proficiency level. Likewise, students in BS in Business Administration, BS Accountancy and AB English have the same function oral proficiency level.

The significant difference in the mean function oral proficiency levels among the respondents grouped according to course was explained by the significant difference of the mean function levels of the students taking up DEST, BSE DT, BSE Chem and BSE TLE from the students enrolled in BSBA, BSA, and AB English. Students enrolled in the latter courses have a higher function oral proficiency level when compared to the other students.

Table 5. Post Hoc Analysis on the Significant Difference of
Means in Function

		Subset for alpha = 0.05		
Course	N	1	2	3
DEST	12	2.5825		
BSE DT	19	2.6316		
BSE Chem	21	2.6519		
BSE TLE	6	2.7250		
BSE Bio	20	3.0165	3.0165	
BSBA	23		3.1309	3.1309
BSA	23		3.3122	3.3122
AB English	23			3.4439

Means for groups in homogenous subsets are displayed.

In terms of content as shown in Table 6, it is evident that DEST students obtained the lowest mean of 2.2775 which has a high significant difference from the highest mean 3.4726 obtained by the AB English students. Moreover, the mean obtained by BSBA students does not differ from the mean obtained by the Education majors (subset 1 and BSE Bio). Also, only the BSA students' function mean does not differ from the program with the highest mean, AB English.

Table 6. Post Hoc Analysis on the Significant Difference
of Means in Content

		Subset for alpha = 0.05			
Course	N	1	2	3	4
DEST	12	2.2775			
BSE DT	19	2.5437	2.5437		
BSE TLE	21	2.6117	2.6117		
BSE Chem	6	2.6357	2.6117		
BSE Bio	20		2.8345	2.8345	
BSBA	23		3.0000	3.0000	
BSA	23			3.2826	3.2826
AB English	23				3.4726

Means for groups in homogenous subsets are displayed.

Table 7 below shows that the same group of degree courses / programs (subset1 and subset2) that did not differ in content also do not differ in terms of vocabulary. It is interesting to note that BSE TLE's mean vocabulary does not differ from BSBA, BS Bio, BSA and English. Still, the vocabulary mean obtained by BSBA students does not differ from the mean obtained by the Education majors (subset 1 and BSE Bio). Likewise, BSE Bio, BSBA, BSA, AND AB English students have the same vocabulary mean. This is in contrast to the findings of Magbanua (2016) which reveal that college students in a certain university are not proficient in terms of vocabulary. Out of 305 respondents, only 71 students were rated as satisfactory.

Table 7. Post Hoc Analysis on the Significant Difference
of Means in Vocabulary

		Subset for alpha = 0.05			
Course	N	1	2	3	4
DEST	12	2.3608			
BSE DT	19	2.5442	2.5442		
BSE Chem	21	2.6186	2.6186		
BSE TLE	6	2.6667	2.6667	2.6667	
BSE Bio	20		2.9830	2.9830	2.9830
BSBA	23		3.0357	3.0357	3.0357
BSA	23			3.1230	3.1230
AB English	23				3.3926

Means for groups in homogenous subsets are displayed.

However, if BSE TLE students had shown to be at par with other degree programs with high mean in terms of function, it obtained the lowest mean in terms of grammar as shown in Table 8. Its mean grammar of 2.333 has a highly difference from the highest mean 3.3626. Still, the same degree programs in subset 1 that did not differ in function, content and vocabulary also do not differ in terms of grammar. Interestingly, BSE Chem students' grammar mean proficiency does not differ from BSE Bio and BSBA's grammar mean proficiency.

Moreover, this is the first time that DEST students did not occupy the lowest mean proficiency. Consistently, BSA, BSBA and AB English do not differ at all in their grammar mean proficiency.

Table 8. Post Hoc Analysis on the Significant Difference
of Means in Grammar

		Subset for alpha = 0.05				
Course	N	1	2	3	4	5
BSE TLE	6	2.3333				
DEST	12	2.5000	2.5000			
BSE DT	19	2.5789	2.5789			
BSE Chem	21	2.695	2.695	2.6595		
BSE Bio	20		2.8500	2.8500	2.8500	
BSBA	23			3.0583	3.0583	3.0583
BSA	23				3.2326	3.2326
AB English	23					3.2326

Means for groups in homogenous subsets are displayed.

In terms of comprehensibility, the same pattern has emerged as shown in Table 9. Still, the same degree programs in subset 1 that did not differ in function, content, vocabulary and grammar also do not differ in terms of comprehensibility. BS Bio students' mean proficiency has no significant difference with BSBA and BSA. Likewise, AB English, BSA and BSA have also no significant difference in their obtained mean. DEST is way lowest in its mean of 2.3883.

Table 9. Post Hoc Analysis on the Significant Difference
of Means in Comprehensibility

		Subset for alpha = 0.05			
Course	N	1	2	3	4
DEST	12	2.3883			
BSE TLE	6	2.5583	2.5583		
BSE Chem	21	2.6667	2.6667		
BSE DT	19	2.6853	2.6853		
BSE Bio	20		2.9250	2.9250	

Table 9. (Cont'd.)

BSBA	23			3.1152	3.1152
BSA	23			3.1813	3.1813
AB English	23				3.3783

Means for groups in homogenous subsets are displayed.

Lastly, as shown in Table 10, in terms of fluency, there is a different pattern since from the same group (subset 1 – DEST, BSE TLE, BSE CHEM and BSE DT) which consistently did not differ in terms of content, vocabulary, grammar and comprehensibility, only two degree programs remain that do not differ, DEST and BS DT. This means that, BSE TLE and BSE Chem have shown a better mark in terms of fluency compared to DEST and BS DT. Ideally, BS DT students' fluency should have differed from DEST since students from this course will be using the language more in work context in the future than DEST students.

Table 10. Post Hoc Analysis on the Significant Difference
of Means in Fluency

		Subset for alpha = 0.05			
Course	N	1	2	3	4
DEST	12	2.0275			
BSE DT	19	2.4037	2.4037		
BSE TLE	6		2.6117	2.6117	
BSE Chem	21		2.6662	2.6662	
BSE Bio	20		2.7840	2.7840	
BSBA	23			2.9274	2.9274
BSA	23			3.1083	3.1083
AB English	23				3.3404

Means for groups in homogenous subsets are displayed.

A pattern can be observed from function to fluency subsets. The degree programs which belong to the College of Education (BSE DT, BSE TLE and BS Chem) except for BSE Bio had consistently showed no difference in all the oral sub-

component skills from DEST students. This is a significant finding that needs to be addressed since these students are expected to be better than the students enrolled in a diploma program. These are Education majors -the future high school teachers. Even though they are not English majors or they will not be teaching English in the real context, competence in oral English proficiency is still imperative since English is used as a medium of instruction in high school most of the time and textbooks are written in English. To quote Robles (2011), "The teacher's competence in using the language affects constantly the learner's achievement". Moreover, Savignon (as cited in Robles, 2011) states that to ensure that the daily instruction is "meaningful, effective and functional, teachers must be equipped with the capability to function in a genuine communicative setting".

On the other hand, the 3-year program Diploma in Electronic Systems Technology has constantly occupied the bottom rank in the five oral sub-component skills except for grammar. In fact, it is the only course / program whose students were rated to have a satisfactory verbal description in their mean general oral proficiency. This result still needs to be addressed even if one can expect less from this group of students from a diploma program. Even then, these students will most probably become skilled workers working outside the country. Thus, it is even more imperative for them to have fluency in the language when communicating inside their future foreign workplace.

Table 11. Post Hoc Analysis on the Significant Difference of Means in Oral Proficiency

		Subset for alpha = 0.05			
Course	N	1	2	3	4
DEST	12	2.3575			
BSE DT	19	2.5637	2.5637		
BSE TLE	6	2.5850	2.5850		
BSE Chem	21	2.6495	2.6495		
BSE Bio	20		2.8990	2.8990	
BSBA	23			3.0435	3.0435
BSA	23			3.2061	3.2061
AB English	23				3.3974

Means for groups in homogenous subsets are displayed.

It can be inferred that the students who belong to degree programs with language use (LU) requirement in the System Admission Scholarship Examination (SASE) were able to justify their score since it was also demonstrated in their speaking test or TOPT ratings. Even if the SASE LU result was based on a written test, the result can still serve as a basis of the student's linguistic knowledge which relates also to their linguistic performance in the oral proficiency test. These degree programs that require at least 40 in the language requirement are BSA, BSBA, and AB English. It was shown clearly in Table 4 that there was no significant difference found in the English oral proficiency level of the students belonging in these degree programs.

Table 12 below shows the Language requirement (LU) or cut-off LU score required for a student to be admitted in the specific degree program.

Table 12. Language Requirement in the System Admission
and Scholarship Exam (SASE)

COURSE/DEGREE PROGRAM	LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT
BS Business Administration	**40**
BS Accountancy	**40**
Diploma in Electronics Systems Tech.	None
BSE Biology	None
AB English	**40**
BSE Chemistry	None
BSE Technology and Livelihood Education	None
BSE Drafting Technology	None

Source: Admissions Office (as of 2014)

It is also important to note that among the degree programs that have no LU requirement of 40, students from BSE Biology have shown a good oral proficiency mean that can be at par with degree programs that have an LU requirement. BSE Biology students have consistently showed no significant difference in all their oral

sub-component skills with BSA and BSBA students. There is a good implication since BSE Bio students are future teachers. Also, a few of them may have enrolled in this degree as a preparatory for medicine although BS Biology is more prevalent.

However, AB English students' mean oral competence was just the same with BSA and BSBA students. This is worth noting since these students are expected to have a highly significant difference in their oral proficiency from students in other courses because the language is their major.

CONCLUSIONS

The MSU-SASE as a University admission test is not only administered for admission purposes but also serve to place prospective students to the various programs that the university offers. This is the primary reason why certain degree programs have a specific Language Usage requirement. However, LU requirement is not implemented in all the degree programs of the university. The university admission should re-visit the setting of university language usage requirement further considering that English proficiency is a predictor of academic success.

The results have implications in the current language usage requirement set by each department / program in the university. It can provide initial groundwork in revisiting the cut-off score for language usage (LU) in the various departments. This pertains especially to the programs offered in the College of Education where students are expected to become teachers after graduation.

Furthermore, the Admissions Office can revisit the language use (LU) requirement in some degree programs that have not implemented any LU requirement for many years. This will also give them preliminary guide into examining specific degree programs that greatly need a requirement in language usage (LU). Curriculum makers can also consider the idea that students who are Education majors should be required to enroll in two to four English courses that will focus in improving their oral English skills.

Given that the MSU System aims to produce globally competitive graduates, English proficiency as a vital skill of these future members of the workforce should be considered from the start of the admission process to ensure that high academic standards are upheld. It is therefore imperative to provide a better screening procedure in the admission process by increasing the language cut off scores in some degree programs and setting language scores for the rest of the degree programs.

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