

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES IN AN ESL PROGRAM: A LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION

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Abstract

This study attempted to assess the English language proficiency of international students who were trained in an ESL program. Using the criterion-referenced sampling, six international students were selected to participate in the study. Interviews were transcribed, and students' errors were analyzed using both the Linguistic Category Taxonomy and the Surface Strategy Taxonomy rubrics. Five themes emerged from the analysis, namely: English as government compliance, English in college, second language (L2) acquisition through integrated learning; from language acquisition to academic achievements, and improving the ESL program.

Findings in this study show that international students have problems in morphology and syntax, particularly the English tense system, word order, and sentence formation, vocabulary, and phonology, as evaluated using the Linguistic Category Taxonomy. In the Surface Strategy taxonomy, findings also show that students have problems in constructing sentences (misformation) and word order (misordering). Several errors were also noted under omission and addition.

The study found that the ESL program has generally aided the international students in their present education; however, a program review may be considered to improve the course further.

Key words: Efficiency, instrument, public secondary schools

INTRODUCTION

Studies show that hundreds of millions of people speak English as their lingua franca (mother tongue) or as their first language (L1), while hundreds of millions more speak English as their second language (L2) (Crystal in Stevens et al., 2006). In the European Union, it is observed that about 89 percent of schoolchildren study English as a foreign language, while several non-English speaking countries claim to use English as their second language. The Netherlands avows that 87 percent of its population speaks English, Sweden, on the other hand, has 85 percent, Denmark 83 percent, Luxembourg 66 percent, Finland 60 percent, Slovenia 56 percent, Austria 53 percent, Belgium 52 percent and Germany 51 percent. Other countries such as Norway and Iceland claim that the majority are competent in English, while 100 percent of the younger generation speaks English (Pardede, 2010).

Similarly, Asian countries like Hong Kong claim that the drive for learning and teaching the English language has consequently changed the country's educational system. Since the year 2000, Hong Kong's educational curriculum has started introducing the English language, specifically in secondary education (Mak & Chik, 2011). Japan, on the other hand, in 2003, mandated the study of foreign languages, particularly the English language, making it a compulsory subject for upper secondary schools. Since then, Japan's educational system recognizes the importance of English as an "international language." Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology was also enforced to implement the new course (Atsuta, 2003).

These data affirm that the English language has indeed rapidly spread globally, and it is prominently used in the world as the language of commerce, science, and technology (Graddol, 2000). Studies also attest that globalization and the English language are interrelated as the latter was proven to have a significant impact on the employment and labor market (Debra & Smith in Roshid, 2013). Further, proficiency in English has deeply influenced the job market, affecting job placement and salary bracket (Dustmann & Fabbr cited in Roshid, 2013).

The prominence of the English language is increasing not because users of the language are escalating, but because it is the most commonly spoken second language in the world (Graddol, 2000) and is being used by a large number of people to unite one culture or nation and to satisfy the global and local communication needs (Mckay, 2003).

It is in these accounts that non-English speakers dominate foreign classrooms to learn the English language, which often results in migration to other countries who are speakers of English. Programs such as English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) have been offered to different universities, institutions, and language centers to cater to the upsurging migrant population. However, the emerging question is, how effective are these programs or courses in training the ESL learners? How much did these learners learn after their English program?

Acquiring the English language will not only be attributed to the strength and effectualness of the ESL/ELL programs but also the appetency of the learners to learn the language. Learners' motivations in acquiring English may be identified as integrative or learning the language for the genuine interest of wanting to communicate to others effectively and to develop a close contact and understanding with other people and their culture; and instrumental motivation or learning the language for the advancement on one's goals and employment prospects (Gardner & Lambert in Kim, 2006).

Integrative motivation holds that learners perceive the acquisition of the English language as an opportunity to acquire a new code that corresponds to understanding and living a new culture that changes how they relate to others and their perceptions of the world. Learners with this kind of motivation affirm that knowledge of the new language changes how they live their lives and how they experience themselves and others (Harama & Roth, 2000).

Industrialized nations like Japan, South Korea, and China argue that the English language plays a crucial role in their economy and their educational systems; this motivation is then an example of an instrumental motivation. English in these nations is a pre-requisite for government and business jobs, and this language is considered a requirement for entry and advancement in professional and managerial occupations (Mckay, 2003). In some prestigious universities, students are required to present proof of their English proficiency before they are accepted in college while graduating students need to take an English proficiency test before receiving their degree (Steven, Jin & Song, 2006).

Whether learners' motivation in acquiring the English language is integrative or instrumental, forces of globalization and the society in general, mandate them to be communicatively competent and push him to participate in the political, economic, scientific and technological spheres that are dominated by the English language (Graddol, 2000).

The global setting reflects that a competitive market requires a good command of English in workplaces, as this serves as a decisive factor in employment opportunities with higher earnings. Studies attest that proficient users of English make advancements in both local and international companies that lead to the improvement of their technical knowledge and skills; in contrast, incompetent users face difficulty in finding jobs, specifically high paying jobs (Roshid, 2013).

Similar findings were also noted on the importance of English language proficiency in employment. In a study, it was found that there is a significant earning gap between fluent and non-fluent ethnic male and female minorities in Britain, which is greatly affected by the lack of English language fluency (Lindley cited in Roshid, 2013). In another study, it was noted that English deficiency affects the earnings and occupational mobility of both Hispanic and Asian immigrant men (Kossoudji in Roshid, 2013). In a parallel study, the language was compared to human capital as it affects the earnings of foreign-born ethnic groups. Lack of skill in using the language hampers opportunities for getting jobs that fully recognize an individual's qualifications (Trainer in Roshid). This was also seen in a US study, which claims

that the majority of their immigrants with limited English proficiency see themselves at a severe disadvantage. The study contends that these immigrants are employed in low wage jobs with limited job advancements (Soares cited in Lyttle, 2011).

Knowledge of the English language does not only affect and influence various prospects of employment that contribute to the possibility of securing better jobs or positions, but also allows learners to communicate effectively to those from other cultures and to participate in their growing global community.

Fluency in the English language will generally mean "global literacy" because it is regarded as an essential ladder in advancing to higher education and is being used as a tool for international communication, whether in technology, business, politics, science, and others (Mckay, 2003). Consequently, more and more universities, schools, and language institutions have opened their doors to migrants who quench for English as their second language (ESL). However, teaching and learning ESL is difficult, as everyone learns and teaches differently.

English Language Learners (ELL) follow different strategies in acquiring and mastering the English language. ELL teachers, on the other hand, use several techniques in teaching the target language. In the study of Levine and McCloskey (2009), teachers of ESL programs were observed teaching the target language using the learners' natural, innate language-acquisition mechanisms to help them learn the language.

In a similar study, it was found that ELLs construct their own grammatical rules for the new language in a way similar to that of the first language, which is known as the "natural approach," a theory developed by Krashen and Terrel (1983). This approach illustrates five different theories: acquisition-learning, natural order hypothesis, input hypothesis, affective filter hypothesis, and monitor hypothesis.

Acquisition-learning explains that ELLs pay less attention to the grammatical form of the language and only focus on understanding and making meaningful messages. This pattern will serve a head start for the internalization of the language structures and rules. In the Natural Order Hypothesis, learners acquire the language rules in predictable order – learning the grammar structures first (Dulay & Burt cited in Levine & McCloskey, 2009). However, this process may lead to the intrusion and influence of the first language (L1) to the arrangement of morphemes in the second language (L2) (McLaughlin cited in Levine & McCloskey, 2009). On the other hand, the Input Hypothesis explicates that ELLs learn the target language through several oral language or reading activities, which help them in forming meanings in the communication or learning process. The Affective Filter Hypothesis expounds that conditions such as social and emotional variables affect the learners' language acquisition. According to this hypothesis, learners with a low-anxiety environment with high motivation and good self-esteem have a lower affective filter, which means learners readily embrace or accept input from others and can easily interact with excellent speakers. Finally, the Monitor Hypothesis explains that through writing exercises, ELLs spend enough time

reflecting the formal rules because the activity forces them to focus on the form of the language (Krashen cited in Levine & McCloskey, 2009).

In other studies, theories such as constructivist theory, psycholinguistics theory, and classroom research theory are found to describe the learning process of ELLs (Ambe, 2011). The Constructivist Theory argues that learners construct their learning through reflection and experience, which is possible through their constant interaction with the new educational system and with others who are speakers of the target language and their involvement in social engagements (Vygotsky, 1978).

The acquisition of knowledge and how it is learned is the main focus of Psycholinguistic theory. Other researchers explain this as the utilization of the previous knowledge in the acquisition process and the influence of this pre-acquired knowledge in the learners' perception of the second language data (Beebe, 1988). Elaborating this further, Seliger (1988) differentiated process and acquisition. According to him, processing involves the psychological mechanisms, where learners understand the second language utterances and help them in producing similar utterances using their language. Acquisition, on the other hand, describes how an ESL user acquires the interlanguage (IL) system or the language used by the learner, which developed because of the interaction between the L1 and L2.

In a similar study, it was found that IL develops due to the transfer of rules from learners L1 to his L2 or because of the several language drills that are used in the classroom. Another possible reason for developing the IL is the overgeneralization, commonly known as the general rule created by the learner, which is often caused by the many examples heard in the environment or his application in the speaker-listener conversation. An example of IL is the statement "He goed outsider" (Selinker cited in Ambe, 2011), where the learner is confused with the rules of morphology or the formation of words.

Another theory that describes the learning process of the ELL in the Classroom Research Theory, which examines the relationship between the context of learning and levels of proficiency. One relationship is the similarity between the IL of learners who are instructed (classroom) formally and those who do not have formal instruction but learned the language naturally. In a study conducted to compare the relationship between the two learners, it was learned that both instructed and uninstructed learners show common processes like transfer, however, instructed learners have lesser possibilities in committing overgeneralization and other IL features in the long term (Long cited in Ambe, 2011).

The theories above describe how ELLs acquire their target language; however, some studies claim that the learning process of ELLs dramatically depends on their motivations in learning the language. One study argued that learner's motivations are categorized as Integrated Motivation or a motivation driven by the learner's desire to learn more about the target-language group and its culture and be identified with it; and the Instrumental Motivation, where learners focus on the utilitarian value of the language for personal achievements such as securing a better position, finding a job, and accepting higher earnings (Gardner cited in

Rabia, 2001). According to this study, learners are found to be more successful in learning the target language if they have the integrative motivation because it reflects a high level of drive to acquire the language of the target community and allows the learner to participate in the communication of that group.

A similar study has proven these findings and further suggests that the learning of the L2 will be grounded on the following conditions: students should be motivated and realize their need to learn the target language, the target-language speakers should support the second-language learners, and target-language speakers and learners should have frequent social contact (Wong-Fillmore cited in Rabia, 2001).

ESL teachers also play an essential role in having a successful ESL learning process. ESL teachers should understand that they hold the key role in ESL education and should articulately incorporate the language principles in all their teachings. These principles should be based on sound researches on how the ELLs learn the language and what works best in supporting language development in the classroom (Levine & McCloskey, 2009). As proven by several studies, it is a daunting task to educate and empower vast numbers of students who do not speak the majority of the language (Miller, 2007).

One of the effective means of teaching the language is the ABC Model, which covers nine (9) principles on how a target language is taught (Levine & McCloskey, 2009). The first principle is the Active Engagement, where teachers allow their learners to play enjoyable, engaging, and active roles in the learning experience. In this principle, the language and literacy development are facilitated in a comfortable atmosphere, which provides the appropriate level of challenge to motivate and engage the learners.

ABC Model's second principle is the Cultural Relevance, which explains the teacher incorporates the learners' culture in the classroom while helping them in understanding a new culture of a community, the school, and the classroom. According to this principle, when ESL teachers develop a climate of trust in understanding student's social and cultural needs, ESL students will be encouraged to participate in class, which will lead to language improvement (Yoon cited in Levine & McCloskey, 2009) actively. This principle encourages teachers to develop an environment where ESL students are included in classroom activities, conversations, and are treated as essential members of classroom learning communities.

The third principle in the ABC Model is Collaboration, which allows learners to develop and practice the language in collaboration with others and their teachers. Other studies referred to this as a tool for meaning-making, where communication and thinking are developed through using the language to accomplish things (Vygotsky cited in Levine & McCloskey, 2009) and as a tool in improving learning, which is known as learning cooperatively (Kessler in Levine & McCloskey, 2009). These studies suggest that instructions should be organized to facilitate interaction and collaboration, provide two-way experiences through which learners solve problems, negotiate meaning, and demonstrate what they have learned.

Another principle is Learning Strategies, which explains that ESL teachers should help ESL learners to develop different learning strategies to enhance their language learning. Examples of strategies are the use of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) and mental activities such as visualization or positive thinking (Levine & McCloskey, 2009).

Comprehensible Input with Scaffolding, this fifth principle claims that ESL teachers should provide support to the learners and give them productive and appropriate inputs that can be easily understood (Krashen cited in Levine & McCloskey, 2009). Suggested strategies are face-to-face oral communication activities that allow the learners to watch their mouths and facial expressions; teachers need to speak slowly and articulate the words, increase the wait time, or the time given to students to respond after a question. Teachers should use text with rich graphic elements in writing exercises and should teach students to use alternative print sources (several references) to understand concepts.

The sixth principle is the Prior Knowledge, which suggests that teachers should help learners to use their prior knowledge or background knowledge of language, content, and the world to develop new languages to increase their learning to easily understand concepts (Marzano cited in Levine & McCloskey, 2009). According to studies, if learners are not familiar with topics in oral discussion or of written text, difficulty in comprehension takes place (Carrell & Eisterhold cited in Levine & McCloskey, 2009). Suggested strategies in this principle are: drawing connections between the learners' previous knowledge and the new learning, choosing topics that are familiar with the learners, providing necessary background information about new topics using L1, teaching the content in two languages (for bilingual classrooms or using two languages in teaching L2), and allowing learners to read or listen in L1 before reading in L2 (for monolingual classrooms or using L1 in teaching L2).

The Content Integration principle of Levine and McCloskey's (2009) ABC Model explains that language learning is associated with meaningful, relevant, and useful content that is appropriate for the age and grade levels of learners. This principle encourages teachers to teach and use different instructions according to the language and learning levels of the learners. To illustrate, if an ESL teacher explains the concept of "How things work," she needs to explain about the materials, tools, and other sets of equipment, but she can add lessons in vocabulary, the English tense and aspect systems and inflections of nouns. This way, the teachers can use content integration, where she can teach all her students, including the newcomers.

The ABC Model's eighth principle Differentiation explains that if learners lack English comprehension, teachers may use input through other means--- like using pictures, gestures, sounds, movements, or graphics that will help and encourage learners to participate in the classroom conversation. Effective differentiation will then mean exploring and expanding the dimensions of learning across different learning styles –verbal, auditory, kinesthetic, and different intelligence (Levine and McCloskey, 2009).

The last principle is the Clear Appropriate Goals and Feedback, which involves the setting of attainable goals for learners and giving them appropriate and constant feedback to attain these goals. This principle explains that ESL teachers shall inform the learners about their expectations and how they are essential to them. It is also encouraged to allow learners to evaluate their progress in accomplishing their goals to help them become independent and self-motivated learners (Levine and McCloskey, 2009).

Another theory of teaching ESL is Krashen's Theory, which explains that L1 and L2 are similar in terms of the acquisition process. This theory posits that L1 acquisition is an incremental process that is based on receiving and understanding messages, creating a listening vocabulary, and gradually attempting to produce verbal language sounds in a highly supportive and non-stressful situation. Teachers, in teaching the L2 should be reminded of the same process and should provide understandable language along with the necessary support and approaches in order for students to understand the message and help them in their learning process (Krashen cited in Herrel, 2000). It is further suggested that learners must first hear and understand the messages in the target language and build a listening vocabulary before they are expected to produce spoken language. Teachers, on the other hand, should provide activities that are structured and appropriate for ESL learners, which will allow them to participate at a level of comfort (Krashen & Terrel, 1983).

Peer Tutoring is also considered as a good strategy in teaching ESL. This strategy suggests that learners should be paired or grouped by age or ability (English-only, bilingual, or limited English proficient) in working on a specific task while assuming the roles of the tutor and tutee or "coach and player" (Lyttle, 2011). As proven by several studies, this strategy is effective because tutees learn better with the tutors' guidance, who can help them learn faster and more confidently (Cichon cited in Lyttle, 2011). It is further encouraged that teachers who are using this strategy should screen tutors carefully and use a reward system to encourage ESL students to achieve better scores.

In supporting this method, other studies suggest that ESL teachers can help the learners improve their comprehension by using learning logs, writing pupil-driven assignments, reading the course material aloud, and discussion groups (Hirsch cited in Lyttle, 2011). This was confirmed in the study of Szpara as cited in Lyttle (2011), who found that tutors' involvements help in developing awareness and understanding of learners and can aid in the practice of cross-cultural communication.

Peer tutoring has helped the learners in developing awareness of their attitudes and those of the writers, awareness of different culturally-based writing styles, and awareness of the different forms of non-verbal communication in different cultures (Szpara cited in Lyttle, 2011).

A similar study describes this strategy as the Vygotsky's Theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which expounds that learners' language learning develops when they work in collaboration with slightly more competent others or peers. The ZPD claims that

working in pairs or small groups enables ESL learners to use academic English with more capable peers, which provides them the opportunities to practice constructions and receive meaningful feedback (Colombo & Furbush, 2009).

There have been several studies made to help ESL learners to acquire the target language and assist ESL teachers to teach the language effectively. However, the learning process does not stop on the teaching-learning method, but on the assessment of the language proficiency of learners to evaluate if the process is effective.

Several researchers have been finding methods on how to assess the language proficiency of ESL students. If these assessments were proven valid, reliable, and fair for the learners, they could lead the teachers in creating frameworks for teaching the ESL students (Gottlieb, 2006).

One effective means to assess the language proficiency of students is through Error Analysis (Corder cited in Hideyuki, 1997). Errors are derived from learner's competencies that reflect a transitional state of developing grammar, while Mistakes are errors of performance, which are considered as results of 'chance circumstances' that are similar to native speakers' slips of the tongue (Hideyuki). Other studies viewed errors as a flawed side of learner's speech or writing or as deviations from conversation parts or composition in the accepted norms of language performance (Dulay et al. cited in Pardede, 2010; Krashen cited in Kafipour & Khojasteh, 2011).

Language errors can be committed by both native speaker and language learner; however, the difference between the two is that the native speaker commits a mistake because of fatigue, inattention, stress, or tiredness while the language learner commits it because he lacks mastery of the language. Further, if given a chance, the native speaker can correct his/her mistakes, whereas a language learner cannot correct his/ her errors because of his limited language knowledge (Dulay et al. cited in Pardede, 2010). Teachers accept the fact that committing errors are part of the learning process, and they agree that error analysis has helped them in making significant changes in teaching practices (Dulay et al. cited in Kafipour & Khojasteh, 2011).

Error Analysis has been used by several researchers to identify, classify, and systematically interpret the mistakes of the language learners. These errors have helped teachers and linguists to know where to base their understanding of language learning. (Pinker cited in Kafipour & Khojasteh). In similar studies, learners' errors have served as indicators on how the language is acquired and have provided natural and immediate feedback to improve the ESL teachers' methods (Corder cited in Pardede, 2010).

Error analysis is a work process that follows specific steps or stages known as the Methodology of Error Analysis. These steps involve selecting a corpus of language that will include activities in deciding the sample size, the sampled data and the sample's homogeneity; identifying the errors in the corpus that deviate from the language rules;

categorizing the errors into groups based on proper criteria; explaining the errors through a psycholinguistic cause of errors; and evaluating the errors or assessing the seriousness of the errors that will lead to accurate decisions in reducing and preventing the recurrence of the errors (Ellis cited in Pardede, 2010).

The same methodologies were presented in the study of Corder as cited in Hideyuki (1997), which involves collecting data, identifying errors, identifying classified errors, explaining the causes of psycholinguistic errors, and ranking of the evaluated errors.

Among the steps of error analysis, classification of errors is often the most complicated step because it entails the crucial evaluation of the learner's environmental factors such as the training procedure, communication situations, socio-cultural factors; other aspects like L1 transfer; and the classification of errors or Error Taxonomies (Pardede, 2010).

Error Taxonomy being the most popular method in classification of language errors is categorized into four classifications: Linguistic Category Taxonomy, which classifies errors according to the language components the error affects; Surface Strategy Taxonomy that describes how the surface structures change; Comparative Taxonomy is the comparison between the structure of L2 errors and other types of constructions; and Communicative Effect Taxonomy, which explains the effect of these errors to the listeners or readers (Dulay et al. in Pardede, 2010).

Of the four taxonomies, the Linguistic Category Taxonomies are commonly used as the basis for error taxonomies to classify language components errors such as phonology (pronunciation), syntax, and morphology (grammar), semantics and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary) and discourse (style). The most common Linguistic Category Taxonomy is the one that Politzer and Ramirez (1973) proposed, which is composed of Morphology or word formation such as inflection, derivation, and compounding; and Syntax or how words are put together to form phrases, clauses or sentences (Pardede, 2010).

Another commonly used rubric is the Surface Strategy Taxonomy that was developed by Burt and Kiparsky (cited in Kafipour & Khojasteh, 2011). Studies explain that this taxonomy makes us aware that the errors committed by the learners are not due to laziness or sloppy thinking, but of the learners' use of temporary principles to produce the language. This taxonomy uses four classifications, namely: Omission, Addition, Misformation, and Misordering. Omission is the absence of an item that should appear on a well-structured sentence or utterance. At the same time, Addition is further classified into three subcomponents: Double Marking, the failure to delete some items that are not needed in some linguistic construction (ex. he didn't went instead of he didn't go); Regularization or the application of some rules to some groups of exception (e.g. sheeps instead of sheep); and Simple Addition, referring to other simple additions (ex. it is consist of instead of it consists of). Misformation or the wrong usage of morpheme or structure involves three forms: Regularization, the use of regular markers for irregular ones (e.g., runned instead of ran); Archi-forms are characterized by a member of the class of forms to represent others classes

(e.g., that dogs instead of that dog); Alternating forms or the free alteration of various members of the class with each other due to the persistent usage of Archi-forms (e.g., those dogs, this cats). In contrast, Misordering is incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance (e.g., all the time in He is all the time late) (Kafipour & Khojasteh, 2011).

There have also been local studies that explain how ESL should be taught or learned. In a study conducted by Dizon as cited Macasaquit, (2008), he posits that language is learned successively and should be accomplished by doing at one's pace or speed. This confirms the study of Levine and McCloskey (2009), which explains that learners should be taught in ways that are comfortable to them.

In another study, it was concluded that in learning the second language, strategies/techniques used in acquiring the first language should be applied (Ziganay cited in Kim, 2006). This also proves the experiences of Levine and McCloskey, where teachers use the learners' instinctive language-acquisition mechanisms to help them learn the target language.

Learning the English language has become an integral part of the global community, and because people want to be globally competitive, many non-speakers of the language seek education in other countries who are speakers of English. In the Philippines alone, over 60,000 international students were granted student visas in 2011. However, this does not include the number of international students who are enrolled in small institutions that offer short-term English courses. According to the Bureau of Immigration (BI) in the academic year 2010-2011, more than 19,000 foreigners were enrolled in different colleges and universities in the Philippines. Topping this list are South Koreans, Chinese, Iranians, and Americans ("Emerging Education," 2012).

Emerging as a newly independent country, East Timor (Timor-Leste) also responds to the universal need of the English language. Although the country has already boosted its education since its independence from Indonesia in September 1999, the majority of the school-aged children do not attend school, two-thirds of adult women are illiterate while 60 percent of its total population did not attend school (Nicolai, 2004). Since its independence, the government has been sending students to different English speaking countries to study and become proficient in the English language. As proven in a study of Patricio (2009), English in Timor Leste plays a vital role in the different aspects of their lives, particularly in their economy. It was found that many Timorese get jobs easily if they can understand and speak English, while those who cannot speak nor understand the language are not recognized as intellectual persons.

This study was able to seek the participation of six Timor Leste scholars who were sent to the Philippines to study ESL and to finish their bachelor's degrees. As part of the agreement with their government, they need to complete an ESL program for six months before formally starting their collegiate studies. The students are requested to return to East

Timor to work either in the government or in other private institutions upon the completion of the undergraduate program.

A major objective of this study is to assess the English language proficiency of these international students and their experiences in the ESL program; the findings shall be used as inputs to enhance or enrich the said program. Answers to the following objectives were sought: determine the English language proficiency of international students in a conversation as regards linguistic taxonomy with emphasis on morphology and syntax, phonology, and vocabulary; determine the English language proficiency of international students in a conversation as regards surface strategy taxonomy with emphasis on the omission, addition, misformation and misordering, and describe the highlights of the experiences of the international students about their ESL training in a discourse that imply improving English proficiency.

The findings of the study are hoped to be useful to ESL students as they covered various discussions on how students learn, improve, and effectively acquire the target language. ESL teachers/ instructors may also benefit from this paper because it provides discussions to deeply understand the attitudes of ESL students, which may guide them in teaching the language. The inputs derived from this study may also help them in reviewing, updating, and improving their strategies in teaching English. This paper is also hoped to give School Administrators a deeper understanding of the importance of having positive outputs in offering the ESL program to international students. Moreover, these outputs may provide substantive inputs to support the improvement of their ESL program. It is also hoped that this study would give insights to ESL curriculum developers in formulating and improving their ESL program.

Meanwhile, discussions presented in this study are envisioned to assist readers in understanding the perspectives of the learners and the ESL instructors to provide useful insights to persons who are in charge of creating activities that would appropriately meet the needs of the students. Finally, may this paper be of use to future researchers in conducting further studies about ESL learners and teaching ESL to international students.

The study was conducted in a Higher Education Institution in the Philippines, catering to an ESL program to international students who are non-speakers of English. It focuses on the English language proficiency of international students in the spoken form and delimits in their language proficiency in the written aspect. Analysis of their English language proficiency was drawn from the conversation the researcher had with them.

The main focus of this study delved into the linguistic description of the participants' discourses as regards linguistic and surface strategy taxonomies. Their experiences in the ESL program also gave additional inputs in describing their responsiveness to learning the English language. However, this study did not evaluate the program itself as to its effectiveness and validity.

METHOD

This is a purely qualitative study that employed linguistic description, and a scheme applied to describe and examine how people use a specific language objectively. It attempted to assess the English language proficiency of international students who were trained in an ESL program. It further aimed to describe the highlights of their experiences in training.

Criterion-referenced sampling was employed to select the participants. The following criteria were considered in choosing the participants: 1) they should have been enrolled in an institution's ESL program; they 2) should have been enrolled in the same program for three months and 90 hours; 3) are currently enrolled in any bachelor degree/ program; 4) have participated in the pre-test, post-test evaluation of the ESL program; and 5) they are Timorese nationals.

An interview guide was prepared and subjected to content validation by a research instrument expert to ensure that questions are aligned to the objectives of the study. The interview questions were structured to obtain answers that will describe the ESL program, the participants' experiences in learning the target language, their views on the importance of the program, and their recommendations for improving the program.

The gathering of data started by obtaining the permission of the Director of International Affairs to allow the accession (records were about the exams and nationalities of the students) of the International students' files. Lists of International students (Timorese) were then secured from different colleges to start the sampling technique.

The participant-students were asked of their daily class schedules to invite them to participate in the study personally. They were oriented about the importance and the objectives of the study before the interview. The proponent also secured an informed consent agreement after discussing all the pre-set conditions, which were agreed upon by the participants. The interview commenced when all the necessary documents were collected. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed into individual files for further analysis.

Participants were interviewed with the use of the validated interview guide. The interview was an open conversation with the researcher. This procedure was used to allow rooms for further probing thus, allowing opportunities to obtain data to assess the participants' proficiency in speaking the English language.

The study made use of the linguistic description to assess the English language proficiency of international students. Oral discourses were transcribed and analyzed to describe their experiences in the ESL program.

The study adopted two error taxonomies in assessing the students' language proficiency, namely linguistic and surface strategy taxonomies. The Politzer and Ramirez's linguistic taxonomy (1973), together with the improved model of Hideyuki Taura (1997), was used in this study. Transcribed conversations were analyzed based on Morphology (word

formation), syntax (sentence formation), vocabulary, and the additional category of Taura, which is phonology. In analyzing and identifying the errors of the participants, the researcher used different colors to identify the codes: green-morphology, orange-syntax; neon green-vocabulary; blue-phonology. Also used in this research is the Adobe Audition (professional audio software for editing) to double-check the mispronounced words of the participants, the color violet was used to identify these words.

The Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's surface strategy taxonomy, as cited in Taura (1997), was also adopted to analyze the same audio files. The errors committed were categorized as omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Similarly, the error codes were identified using different colors: neon green--- omission, orange--- addition; green--- misformation; and blue--- misordering.

Lastly, the content analysis was employed to describe the experiences of the Timorese students in the ESL program. The study adopted the Quality Analysis Process (a grounded theory) of Creswell (2007). Keypoint coding, deduction of concepts, and induction of concepts were used to identify the themes.

FINDINGS

The results of the study are presented according to the sequence of the objectives as stated in the Introduction: items which may form part of the first draft of the school efficiency scale instrument, soundness of the draft instrument based on experts' assessment and item analysis, and calculated reliability and construct validity.

First Draft of School Efficiency Scale

Table 1 presents the Table of Specification of School Efficiency, and its possible components and sub-components with corresponding definitions and item placement. The first draft was made based on existing instruments that measure school system efficiency.

School efficiency can be described as having seven components from the original construct of the instrument, namely: School Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment, Parent Involvement and Community Partnership, School Management and Operations, Personal and Professional Attributes and Interpersonal Effectiveness.

Table 1
Table of Specifications of the First Draft of the Items

Indicators of Efficiency in Public School	Item Placement	Total No. of Items
I. School Leadership		
<p>School leadership is the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically toward achieving school goals and objectives. It is determined by personal traits and skills that make others want to follow the direction set and is anchored on principles which define the characteristics and behavior of school leaders.</p>		
Developing and Communicating Vision , Mission, Goals , and Objectives	1,2,3	3
Data-based Strategic Planning	4,5	2
Problem Solving	6,7	2
Building High Performance Teams	8,9,10,	3
Coordinating with Others	11,12,13,14,15	5
II. Instructional Leadership		
<p>It is developing a productive and satisfying work environment for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for students. It can enable the school to maximize the capacity of each student by developing their minds and touching their hearts; thus transforming them holistically.</p>		
Assessment for Learning	16	1
Developing Programs &/or Adopting Existing Programs	17	1
Implementing Programs for Instructional Improvement	18,19,20,21 ,22,23	6
III. Creating a Student-centered Learning Environment		
<p>It refers to the support services and actual learning processes being delivered by the school for student development.</p>		
Setting High Social and Academic Expectations	24,25,26,27, 28,29,30,31,32	9
IV. Human Resource Management and Professional Development		
<p>It is the art and science of acquiring, motivating, maintaining, and developing people in their jobs in light of their personal, professional, and technical knowledge, skills, potentials, needs and values and in synchronization with the organization philosophy, resources and culture for the maximum achievement of individual, organization and society goals.</p>		

Table 1 continued...

Indicators of Efficiency in Public School	Item Placement	Total No. of Items
Creating a Professional Learning Community	33,34,35,36	4
Recruitment and Hiring	37	1
Managing Performance of Teachers and Staff	38,39	2
V. Parent Involvement and Community-Partnership		
Any collaboration and relationships established between and among educators, students, families and the community at large to work together in bringing about better and improved school performance.		
Parent Involvement	40	1
External Community Partnership	41	1
VI. School Management and Operations		
It refers to supervision of daily operations management of personnel, finances, facilities, and other matters of the school		
Managing School Operations	42,43	2
Fiscal Management	44,45	2
Use of Technology in Management and Operations	46	1
VII. Personal and Professional Attributes and Interpersonal Effectiveness		
It refers to personnel and teachers' qualities manifesting uncompromising adherence to the ethical code of behavior and maintaining standards of personal and professional conduct.		
Professionalism	47	1
Communication	48	1
Interpersonal Sensitivity	49	1
Integrity	50	1
TOTAL		50

Experts' Validation on the Components of School Efficiency

Table 2 shows the components, sub-components, with their corresponding definitions of school efficiency. The table illustrates that Human Resource Management and Professional Development was changed to Human Resource Management because Professional Development is definitely under Human Resource Management. And School Management and Operations were also replaced to School Management because School Management

really entails operations. All other components were accepted. However, several suggestions of the experts on the definitions of the components were considered and revisions were made as shown in the table except for component III: Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment; component VI School Management and Operations; and Component VII Personal and Professional Attributes and Interpersonal Effectiveness.

Table 2
Experts' Validation on the Components of School Efficiency
and Their Corresponding Definitions

Original Components and Their Original Definitions	Revised Components and Their Revised Definition
<p>I. School Leadership</p> <p>School leadership is the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically toward achieving school goals and objectives. It is determined by personal traits and skills that make others want to follow the direction set and is anchored in principles which define the characteristics and behavior of school leaders.</p> <p>A. Developing and Communicating Vision ,Mission, Goals , and Objectives</p> <p>B. Data-based Strategic Planning</p> <p>C. Problem Solving</p> <p>D. Building High Performance Teams</p> <p>E. Coordinating with Others</p>	<p>School Leadership</p> <p>School leadership is the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically toward achieving school goals and objectives. It is determined by personal traits and skills that make others want to follow the direction set.</p> <p>Accepted</p> <p>Accepted</p> <p>Accepted</p> <p>Accepted</p> <p>Accepted</p>
<p>II. Instructional Leadership</p> <p>Instructional Leadership is developing a productive and satisfying working environment for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for students. It can enable the school to maximize the capacity of each student by developing their minds and touching their hearts; thus transforming them holistically.</p>	<p>II. Instructional Leadership</p> <p>Instructional Leadership is developing a productive and satisfying working environment for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for students. It enables the school to discover and maximize the capabilities of students by developing the four H's –head, heart, hands, and health thus transforming them holistically.</p>

Table 2 continued...

Original Components and Their Original Definitions	Revised Components and Their Revised Definition
A. Assessment for Learning B. Developing Programs &/or Adopting Existing Programs C. Implementing Programs for Instructional Improvement	Accepted Accepted Accepted
III. Creating a Student-centered Learning Environment	Accepted
A student-centered learning environment refers to the support services and actual learning processes being delivered by the school for student development.	
A. Setting High Social and Academic Expectations	Accepted
IV. Human Resource Management and Professional Development	IV. Human Resource Management
Human Resource Management is the art and science of acquiring, motivating, maintaining, and developing people in their jobs in light of their personal, professional, and technical knowledge, skills, potentials, needs and values and in synchronization with the organization, philosophy, resources and culture for the maximum achievement of individual, organization and society goals.	Human Resource Management is the art of acquiring, motivating, maintaining, and developing people in their jobs in light of their personal, professional, and technical knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in synchronization with the philosophy, organization, resources and culture for the maximum achievement of individual, organization and societal goals.
A. Creating a Professional Learning Community	Accepted
B. Recruitment and Hiring	Accepted
C. Managing Performance of Teachers and Staff	Accepted
V. Parent Involvement and Community-Partnership	V. Parent Involvement and Community-Partnership
Any collaboration and relationships established between and among educators, students, families and the community at large to work together in bringing about better and improved school performance.	Any collaboration and relationships established between and among educators, students, parents and the community at large to work together in bringing about better and improved school performance.

Table 2 continued

Original Components and Their Original Definitions	Revised Components and Their Revised Definition
A. Parent Involvement	Accepted
B. External Community Partnership	Community Partnership
VI. School Management and Operations School Management and Operations refers to supervision of daily operations management of personnel, finances, facilities, and other matters of the school	VI. School Management Definition Accepted
A. Managing School Operations	Accepted
B. Fiscal Management	Accepted
C. Use of Technology in Management and Operations	Use of Technology in Management
VII. Personal and Professional Attributes and Interpersonal Effectiveness refers to personnel and teachers' qualities manifesting uncompromising adherence to the ethical code of behavior and maintaining standards of personal and professional conduct.	Accepted
A. Professionalism	Accepted
B. Communication	Accepted
C. Interpersonal Sensitivity	Accepted
D. Integrity	Accepted

Experts' Evaluation and Validation on the Behavioral Indicators and Preliminary Draft of Items for the Instrument

Illustrated in Table 3 is the experts' evaluation and validation on the preliminary list of behavioral indicators of school efficiency. It reveals that only indicators no.4, 5, and 11 were further elaborated based on the suggestions of experts and twelve other items were accepted. Under Instructional Leadership, three out of eight indicators were also revised namely indicators no.16, 18, and 21. Moreover, indicators no.25, 26, and 32 were also revised. However, it shows that all behavioral indicators from item 33-40 were accepted by experts. On the other hand, item no.41 was clarified as to the specifics of the word stakeholders, while item 42-48 and 50 were accepted and item 49 was specified as to the word empathy.

Table 3
Experts' Suggestions and Comments on the Behavioral Indicators and Preliminary Draft of Items for the Instrument

Indicator No.	Indicator	Suggested Revisions/Remarks
1	The school's vision, mission, goals and objectives are formulated by all stakeholders	Accepted
2	There is active involvement of stakeholders in achieving the vision and mission of the school	Accepted
Indicator No.	Indicator	Suggested Revisions/Remarks
3	Programs and projects are anchored on the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the school	Accepted
4	The school has established BEIS/SIS and baseline data of all performance indicators	The school has established Basic Education Information System/School Information System and baseline data of all performance indicators
5	All stakeholders are involved in developing the SIP/AIP	All stakeholders are involved in developing the School Improvement Plan/Annual Improvement Plan
6	Problems are being resolved at the school level through the School Grievance Committee and	Accepted
7	A proactive approach to problem solving is being practiced in the school	Accepted
8	There is active involvement of stakeholders in meetings and deliberations for decision making	Accepted
9	There are opportunities for growth and development of members as team players	Accepted
10	The school implements a system of rewards and benefits for teachers and staff	Accepted
11	There is a collaboration among staffs on the planning and implementation of programs and projects	There is a collaboration among teaching and non-teaching personnel on the planning and implementation of programs and projects

Table 3 continued...

12	There is proper allocation and utilization of resources (time, fiscal, human, IMS, etc.)	Accepted
13	Innovations are being introduced in the school to achieve higher learning outcomes	Accepted
14	There is regular monitoring and evaluation of change programs in the SIP/AIP	Accepted
15	Teachers and personnel are empowered to identify, initiate, and manage changes	Accepted
16	Traditional and non-traditional assessment tools are used to evaluate learning processes and outcomes	Traditional (Multiple-choice type, Matching type, Completion type, Essay type) and non-traditional assessment (Performance type, Task-based, Many correct answers, student self-evaluation) tools are used to evaluate learning process and outcomes
17	Research-based school program is developed and adopted	Accepted
18	The school offers varied co-curricular programs like SPA,SPS ,SFL, and SPED based on local needs	The school offers varied co-curricular programs like Special Section for Arts, Special Section for Sports ,Special Section for Fast Learners, and Special Education based on local needs
19	Lesson plans as well as classroom and learning management are evaluated	Accepted
20	The school provides technical and instructional support to teachers through In-service trainings , seminars, and workshops	Accepted
21	Instructional time or academic learning time is maximized	Instructional time or academic learning time is maximized(i.e. classes are started and ended on time)
22	Teachers employ varied teaching strategies to develop students' higher order thinking skills	Accepted
23	Teachers and learners utilize technology to facilitate the teaching-learning process	Accepted

Table 3 continued ...

Indicator No.	Indicator	Suggested Revisions/Remarks
24	Learning environment is very conducive that makes every student capable of harnessing his/her own potential	Accepted
25	Teachers and learners utilize technology to facilitate the teaching-learning process	Teachers and students work together to achieve set learning goals and standards
26	Basic student services are available to students with ample materials and human resources to address the needs of the students.	Basic services are available to students with ample materials and human resources to address their needs (guidance, library, medical, food services).
27	Students are well-disciplined, showing high regard for fellow students, teachers and administrators	Accepted
28	Student records and profiles are updated and well-	Accepted
29	Academic achievement of students is above 75%	Accepted
30	There is active participation and involvement of student in school activities and decision making.	Accepted
31	Learners are encouraged to pursue further learning through various guidance programs.	Accepted
32	The school gives recognition to performing learners, teachers, parents and other stakeholders	The school gives recognition to performing learners, teachers, parents and other stakeholders (donors, benefactors, guests, etc.)
33	There is unity and interaction among teachers in achieving higher learning outcomes	Accepted
34	The Teacher Induction Program is institutionalized/implemented	Accepted
35	Teachers are required to make an Individual Plan for Professional Development	Accepted
36	The school develop the potential of staff by providing professional development through trainings and other development programs	Accepted
37	The school implements a selection and recruitment system based on merit, competence and fitness.	Accepted

Table 3 continued ...

Indicator No.	Indicator	Suggested Revisions/Remarks
38	Teaching and working assignments are based on competence and specialization.	Accepted
39	Teachers are monitored and evaluated based on the accomplishment of their performance targets.	Accepted
40	There is an effective management of school programs which enhance school-parent partnership for the improvement of student learning	Accepted
41	The school receives sufficient support from external stakeholders.	The school receives sufficient support from external stakeholders (non-government organizations, alumni, local government units, retirees)
42	Fund appropriation is sufficient for the improvement and maintenance of school physical facilities and equipment.	Accepted
43	Regular monitoring on the implementation of specific programs to meet SIP/AIP is being	Accepted
44	The school budget is based on the SIP/AIP	Accepted
45	School resources are judiciously spent following government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.	Accepted
46	Functional data-based on personnel and student tracking system is utilized(IPMS)	Accepted
47	Teachers and personnel serve as models of Ethical Leadership and live in adherence with the Code of Ethics for Teachers and Public Officials	Accepted
48	There is open communication among stakeholders both in oral and written forms	Accepted
49	Stakeholders demonstrate empathy with others.	Stakeholders demonstrate empathy with others (examples: sensitivity to the needs of others, spend time to involve in addressing needs of others)
50	Stakeholders are made accountable for their own actions	Accepted

Results of Factor Analysis

Based on the factor analysis results, Table 4 reveals that 37 items though loaded in other dimensions also loaded under original dimension such as item 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,24,25,27,29,31,34,35,36,37,38,39,42, 43,44,45, and 46. Meanwhile, one (1) item though loaded in its predetermined dimension also loaded highly in another dimension. Items 28 and 30 did not load in the discarded dimension. Finally, there were ten items specifically items 23, 26, 32, 33,40,41,47,48,49,50 did not load under predetermined dimensions where these items were initially assigned.

Table 4
Summary of Table of Before and After Factor Analysis

Factors and items Before Factor Analysis	Highest Factor Loadings	Factor	2 nd Highest Factor Loadings	Alternative Factor
1.The school's vision, mission , goals and objectives are formulated by all stakeholders	.687	1		
2.There is active involvement of stakeholders in achieving the vision and mission of the school	.741	1		
3. Programs and projects are anchored on the vision, mission goals, and objectives of the school	.715	1		
4. The school has established Basic Education Information System (BEIS) and baseline data of all performance indicators	.637	1		
5. All stakeholders are involved in developing the School Improvement Plan/Annual Improvement Plan (SIP/AIP)	.709	1		
6.Problems are being resolved at the school level through the School Grievance Committee and School Governing Council	.656	1		
7. A proactive approach to problem solving is being practiced in the school	.613	1		
8.There is active involvement of stakeholders in meetings and deliberations for decision making	.575	1	.301	7

Table 4 continued...

Factors and items Before Factor Analysis	Highest Factor Loadings	Factor	2nd Highest Factor Loadings	Alternative Factor
9. There are a opportunities for growth and development of members as team players	.590	1		
10. The school implements a system of rewards and benefits for teachers and staff	.441	3	.416	1
11. There is a collaboration among personnel(teaching and non-teaching) on the planning and implementation of programs and projects	.407	1		
12. There is proper allocation and utilization of resources (time, fiscal, human, IMS, etc.)	.392	4	.391, .345	1,3
13. Innovations are being introduced in the school to achieve higher learning outcomes	.495	4	.396	1
14. There is regular monitoring and evaluation of change programs in the SIP/AIP	.473	4	.359, .315, .307	1,2,3
15. Teachers and personnel are empowered to identify, initiate, and manage changes	.499	4	.371, .312	1,5
16. Traditional (Multiple-choice type, matching type, Completion type, Essay type) and non-traditional assessment(Performance type, Task-based, Many correct answers, student self-evaluation) tools are used to evaluate learning processes and outcomes	.603	4		
17. Research-based school program is developed and adopted	.509	4	.428	5

Table 4 continued...

Factors and items Before Factor Analysis	Highest Factor Loadings	Factor	2 nd Highest Factor Loadings	Alternative Factor
18. The school offers varied co-curricular programs like Special Section for Arts, Special Section for Sports ,Special Section for Fast Learners, and Special Education based on local needs	.476	4	.431, .347	7,3
19. Lesson plans as well as classroom and learning management are evaluated	.647	4	.349, .305	6,1
20. The school provides technical and instructional support to teachers through Inset, seminars, and workshops	.555	4	.358	6
21. Instructional time or academic learning time is maximized (i.e. classes are started and ended on time)	.475	6	.391, .308	4,3
22. Teachers employ varied teaching strategies to develop students higher order thinking skills	.481	4	.373, .345	6,2
23. Teachers and learners utilize technology to facilitate the teaching-learning process	.512	5		
24. Learning environment is very conducive that makes every student capable of harnessing his/her own potential	.489	6	.358	5
25. Teachers and students work together to achieve set learning goals and standards	.540	5	.450	6
26. Basic services are available to students with ample materials and human resources to address their needs (guidance, library ,medical, food services)	.419	6	.380	4
27. Students are well-disciplined ,showing high regard for fellow students, teachers and administrators	.735	5		

Table 4 continued...

Factors and items Before Factor Analysis	Highest Factor Loadings	Factor	2 nd Highest Factor Loadings	Alternative Factor
28. Student records and profiles are updated and well-kept	.327	6		
29. Academic achievement of students is above 75%	.616	5		
30. There is active participation and involvement of student in school activities and decision making.	.680	7		
31. Learners are encouraged to pursue further learning through various guidance programs.	.527	5		
32. The school gives recognition to performing learners, teachers, parents and other stakeholders (donors, benefactors, guests, etc.)	.335	3	309	2
33. There is unity and interaction among teachers in achieving higher learning outcomes	.454	5		
34. The Teacher Induction Program is institutionalized/implemented	.356	1	.337, .305	3,4
35. Teachers are required to make an Individual Plan for Professional Development (IPPD)	.560	3	.315	2
36. The school develops the potential of staff by providing professional development through trainings and other development programs	.593	3		
37. The school implements a selection and recruitment system based on merit, competence and fitness.	.514	3	.409, .350	2,1
38. Teaching and working assignments are based on competence and specialization.	.679	3		
39. Teachers are monitored and evaluated based on the accomplishment of their performance targets.	.635	3		

Table 4 continued...

Factors and items Before Factor Analysis	Highest Factor Loadings	Factor	2 nd Highest Factor Loadings	Alternative Factor
40. There is an effective management of school programs which enhances school-parent partnership for the improvement of student learning	.604	3		
41. The school receives sufficient support from external stakeholders (non-government organizations, alumni, local government units, retirees)	.602	2		
42. Fund appropriation is sufficient for the improvement and maintenance of school physical facilities and equipment.	.576	2		
43.Regular monitoring on the implementation of specific programs to meet SIP/AIP is being undertaken	.751	2		
44.The school budget is based on the SIP/AIP	.746	2		
45. School resources are judiciously spent following government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.	.757	2		
46. Functional data-based on personnel and student tracking system is utilized(IPMS)Information Program Management System	.684	2	.329	3
47.Teachers and personnel serve as models of Ethical Leadership and live in adherence to the Code of Ethics for Teachers and Public Officials	.435	4	.363	2
48. There is open communication among stakeholders both in oral and written forms	.483	2	.309, .302	1,3,4
49. Stakeholders demonstrate empathy with others (examples: sensitivity to the needs of others, spend time to involve in addressing needs of others	.528	2	.336	5
50. Stakeholders are made accountable for their own actions	.445	2	.338, .335	3,5

Final Results of Factor Analysis

Results revealed in Table 5 that two out of seven components were eliminated, namely: Parent Involvement and Community Partnership, and Personal and Professional Attributes and Interpersonal Effectiveness. These components were discarded based on the results of factor analysis, as it showed that item 40 in Parental Involvement and Community Partnership loaded in Human Resource Management while item 41 loaded in School Management. Moreover, items of Personal and Professional Attributes loaded to other domain item 47 to Instructional Leadership, while 48-50 loaded to School Management.

With the procedure of evaluation and validation, the final instrument was revised where the original construct of seven components were reduced into five, namely: 1) School Leadership 2) School Management 3) Human Resource Management 4) Instructional Leadership 5) Creating a Student- Centered Learning Environment, and 48 items out of the initial 50 items behavioral indicators.

Table 5
Final Results of Factor Analysis

Factors	Factor Loading
I. School Leadership	
1.The school's vision, mission , goals and objectives are formulated by all stakeholders	.687
2.There is active involvement of stakeholders in achieving the vision and mission of the school	.741
3. Programs and projects are anchored on the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the school.	.715
4. The school has established Basic Education Information System/SIS and baseline data of all performance indicators	.637
5. All stakeholders are involved in developing the School Improvement Plan/Annual Improvement Plan	.709
6.Problems are being resolved at the school level through the School Grievance Committee and School Governing Council	.656
7. A proactive approach to problem solving is being practiced in the school	.613
8.There is active involvement of stakeholders in the meetings and deliberations in decision making	.575
9. There is an opportunity for growth and development of members as team players	.590

Table 5 continued ...

Factors	Factor Loading
10. There is a collaboration among personnel (teaching and non-teaching) on the planning and implementation of programs and projects	.407
11. There is proper allocation and utilization of resources (time, fiscal, human, IMS, etc.)	.392
12. Innovations are being introduced in the school to achieve higher learning outcomes	.396
13. There is regular monitoring and evaluation of change programs in the SIP/AIP	.359
14. Teachers and personnel are empowered to identify, initiate, and manage change	.371
II. School Management	
15. The school receives sufficient support from external stakeholders (non-government organizations, alumni, local government units, retirees)	.602
16. Regular monitoring of the implementation of specific programs to meet SIP/AIP is being undertaken	.751
17. There is open communication among stakeholders both in oral and written forms	.483
18. Stakeholders demonstrate empathy with others (examples: sensitivity to the needs of others, spend time to involve in addressing needs of others)	.528
19. Stakeholders are made accountable for their own actions	.445
20. The school budget is based on the SIP/AIP	.746
21. Fund appropriation is sufficient for the improvement and maintenance of school physical facilities and equipment.	.576
22. School resources are judiciously spent following government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.	.757
23. Functional data-based on personnel and student tracking system is utilized (IPMS) Information Program Management System	.684
III. Human Resource Management	
24. The school implements a selection and recruitment system based on merit, competence and fitness.	.514
25. The Teacher Induction Program is institutionalized/implemented	.337

Table 5 continued ...

Factors	Factor Loading
26. Teachers are required to make an Individual Plan for Professional Development	.560
27. The school develops the potential of staff by providing professional development through trainings and other development programs.	.593
28. There is an effective management of school programs which enhances school-parent partnership for the improvement of student learning	.604
29. Teaching and working assignments are based on competence and specialization.	.679
30. Teachers are monitored and evaluated based on the accomplishment of their performance targets.	.635
31. The school implements a system of rewards and benefits for teachers and staff	.441
32. The school gives recognition to performing learners, teachers, parents and other stakeholders (donors, benefactors, guests, etc.)	.335
IV. Instructional Leadership	
33. Traditional (Multiple-choice type, matching type, Completion type, Essay type) and non-traditional assessment(Performance type, Task-based, Many correct answers, student self-evaluation) tools are used to evaluate learning processes and outcomes	.603
34. Research-based school program is developed and adopted	.509
35. The school offers varied co-curricular programs like Special Section for Arts, Special Section for Sports ,Special Section for Fast Learners, and Special Education based on local needs	.476
36. Basic Services are available to students with ample materials and human resources to address their needs (guidance, library, medical, food services)	.380
37. Lesson plans as well as classroom and learning management are evaluated	.647
38. The school provides technical and instructional support to teachers through Inset, seminars, and workshops	.555
39. Instructional time or academic learning time is maximized (i.e. Classes are started and ended on time)	.391
40. Teachers employ varied teaching strategies to develop students' higher order thinking skills.	.481

Table 5 continued ...

Factors	Factor Loading
41. Teachers and personnel serve as models of Ethical Leadership and live in adherence to the Code of Ethics for Teachers and Public Officials.	.435
V. Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment	
42. Teachers and learners utilize technology to facilitate the teaching-learning process	.512
43. Learning environment is very conducive that makes every student capable of harnessing his/her own potential	.358
44. Teachers and students work together to achieve set learning goals and standards	.540
45. Students are well-disciplined ,showing high regard for fellow students, teachers and administrators	.735
46. The Academic achievement of students is above 75%	.616
47. Learners are encouraged to pursue further learning through various guidance programs.	.527
48. There is unity and interaction among teachers in achieving higher learning outcomes	.454

Final Form of the Table of Specifications

Table 6 presents the final form of the Table of Specifications. With the procedure of validation, the instrument ended with 48 items out of the initial 50 items. The final items in the instrument under each domain are presented in Table 6 with the Table of Specification 14 items (1-14) are under School Leadership, 9 items (15-23) fall under School Management, 9 items (24-32) are under Human Resource Management ,9 items (33-41) are under Instructional Leadership and lastly,7 items (42-48) are under Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment.

Table 6
Final Form of the Table of Specifications

Indicators of Efficiency in Public School	Item Placement	Total No. of Items
I. School Leadership		14
<p>School leadership is the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically toward achieving school goals and objectives. It is determined by personal traits and skills that make others want to follow the direction set and is anchored in principles which define the characteristics and behavior of school leaders.</p>		
A. Developing and Communicating Vision ,Mission, Goals , and Objectives	1,2,3	
B. Data-based Strategic Planning	4,5	
C. Problem Solving	6,7	
D. Building High Performance Teams	8,9	
E. Coordinating with Others	10,11,12,13,14	
II. School Management		9
<p>It refers to supervision of daily operations management of personnel, finances, facilities, and other matters of the school.</p>		
A. Managing School Operations	15,16,17,18,19	
B. Fiscal Management	20,21,22	
C. Use of Technology in Management	23	
III. Human Resource Management		9
<p>Human Resource Management is the art of acquiring, motivating, maintaining, and developing people in their jobs in light of their personal, professional, and technical knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in synchronization with the organization philosophy, resources and culture for the maximum achievement of individual, organization and societal goals.</p>		

Table 6 continued ...

Indicators of Efficiency in Public School	Item Placement	Total No. of Items
A. Recruitment and Hiring	24	
B. Creating a Professional Learning Community	25,26,27,28,29	
C. Performance of Teachers and Staff	30,31,32	
IV. Instructional Leadership		9
<p>Instructional Leadership is developing a productive and satisfying work environment for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for students. It can enable the school to maximize the capacity of each student by developing their minds and touching their hearts; thus transforming them holistically.</p>		
A. Assessment for Learning	33	
B. Developing Programs &/or Adopting Existing Programs	34,35,36	
C. Implementing Programs for Instructional Improvement	37,38,39,40,41	
V. Creating a Student-centered Learning Environment		7
<p>A student-centered learning environment refers to the support services and actual learning processes being delivered by the school for student development.</p>		
A. Setting High Social and Academic Expectations	42,43,44,45,46,47,48	
TOTAL		48

Overall Reliability of the Instrument

After regrouping as a result of factor analysis, the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha to determine how well a set of items measure a single latent construct.

Table 7 presents the summary of computing the overall reliability of the instrument on the evaluation of school efficiency. Data reveal that the instrument is highly reliable based on the minimum reliability index of 0.7. The domain that yielded the highest reliability coefficient of .919 is School Management followed by the School Leadership with .909, Instructional Leadership .884, Human Resource Management .879 and the domain under Creating a

Student-Centered Learning Environment got the lowest reliability coefficient of .817 compared to other domains.

Table 7
Overall Reliability of the Instrument

DOMAINS	Number of Items	Number of Cases	Cronbach's Alpha *
School Management	10	697	.919
School Leadership	12	641	.909
DOMAINS	Number of Items	Number of Cases	Cronbach's Alpha *
Instructional Leadership	11	603	.884
Human Resource Management	8	644	.879
Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment	7	562	.817

* Minimum reliability index: 0.7

DISCUSSION

Employing both Linguistic and Surface Strategy Taxonomies in analyzing the language errors of ESL students, this study was able to show that international students have difficulty in using the English tense system, particularly the use of regular and irregular past tense. Common among these findings is the error in the use of morphological inflection, adding "d" or "ed" at the end of the verbs. Similarly, these mistakes are often the most committed errors among Filipino students. These lapses may be attributed to different factors: the speaker does them because he/she is not mindful of his/her grammar due to other psychological (involving of other mental activities) or physiological (on human needs/wants) reasons; or the imperfect mastery of the English language. As the first factor may be referred to as mistakes commonly committed by a native or a fluent speaker of the English language, the latter may be ascribed to L2 learners. Language errors are common to native speakers and L2 learners. The only difference is that a native speaker commits mistakes unintentionally, or sometimes it is due to stress and fatigue. However, these mistakes can be corrected if the speaker is given a chance to do so. On the contrary, an L2 learner commits mistakes because

of inadequate knowledge of the target language. Moreover, the L2 learner cannot correct his/her mistakes even if he has a chance to do it (Perdede, 2010).

Lack of mastery of the English language is often an adverse effect of the inter-lingual and the intra-lingual transfer of languages. Inter-lingual is the transfer or use of the native language to the target language (or vice versa), while intra-lingual refers to the transfer of items within the target language (Ambe, 2011; Pardede). Confusion of the use of the English tenses can be attributed to the language differences and interferences of the learners' native language (mother tongue) and their target language. Unlike in English, the participants' native language, Tetum (Tetun), does not have morphological inflection; the past tense, however, is simply inferred in the sentence. To express past actions, the adverb "*ona*" (*already*) is often included at the end of the sentence--- "*Ha'uhanetu ona*" (*I've [already] eaten rice*). This explains the errors in the use of tenses.

This finding was also seen in Duan (2011). He found that Chinese students often get confused about using different tenses. In his study, errors in the use of the simple present and simple past tense amounted to 84.86 percent of the total errors committed by the students. He explained that Chinese students have difficulty in understanding and accepting the concept of tenses because they do not have tenses in the Chinese language. According to him, since the English language has a total of 16 tenses with different uses, Chinese students are often confused about how to use these tenses.

Likewise, the study of Dr. Khazaal (2009) showed similar findings that errors on the English tenses committed by the first-year students from the AL-Ameriya Secondary School in Baghdad are significantly affected by the inter-lingual and intra-lingual inference of the first and the second language.

Duan and Dr. Khazaal's findings are congruent with those of Thomas (2014). He found that errors committed by the first-year engineering students in Tamil, India, are greatly influenced by their mother tongue. In learning the L2, L2 learner tends to find an equivalent word for the target language from the mother tongue. It was further noted that Inter-lingual errors take place when one's L1 habits interfere, thus preventing the learner from acquiring the new language (Corder cited in Thomas, 2014).

Another significant finding in this study is the notable number of errors committed by international students in the formation of sentences in a standard conversation. In comparison, the omission of verbs, which is the second commonly committed error in syntax using the linguistic category taxonomy, is considerably very distant from former errors. The Surface Strategy Taxonomy used by the researcher yielded similar findings as regards addition, misformation, and misordering. The highest among the errors committed is the formulation of Archi-forms, also known as word structure in the Linguistic Category Taxonomy. These results implied that students have difficulty in constructing sentences, whether in speaking or in the writing format. Also, these findings show that the learners, even after being exposed to the ESL program, still lack mastery in using the language across the English domain.

Furthermore, because students' English skills are limited, they tend to produce erroneous syntactic structures when they construct sentences.

Studies show that the lack of mastery of the L2 may result in intra-lingual language transfer or the overgeneralization of the language, which involves the merging of concepts/items within the target language (Pardede, 2010; Ambe, 2011). So, it is not surprising to hear a learner saying, "he **putted** the basket theres" instead of "he placed the basket there." Seemingly, this method is considered as one of the strategies the learner needs to employ in order to express his thoughts on a communicative level. As reflected in the recorded discourses, it is observed that students pay more attention to how the listener understands his thoughts/messages rather than carefully **processing his words to produce a grammatically correct sentence.**

In the study conducted in Brown (cited in Pardede), he found that there are four major reasons why bilingual (using two languages) person commits language errors. Among these reasons is the learner's tendency to use different communication strategies to send his/her message across. He explained that learners exert all possible language means and approaches in order to be communicatively understood.

Concerning the commonality of sentence structure errors, the study in Tizon (in Kim, 2006) generated the same finding. She found that students of De La Salle University, Ozamiz City, exhibited common syntactic errors (sentence structure, fragments, run-on) and lexical errors (word choice, word form, informal usage, idiom error, pronoun error). In her study, syntactic errors accumulated the highest total number of errors, with 647, while mechanical errors such as punctuation, capitalization, and spelling were listed with 356.

Parallel to these errors, as noted in an earlier study conducted by Kraus (1957), it was found that errors in sentence structure are more severe and persistent than the mechanical errors committed to using punctuations and grammar. She explained that language development follows a genetic pattern of growth that is similar to the physical development of infants, and that language achievement is affected mainly by the individual's general mental development.

Similarly, international students can overcome these problems as they develop their English skills through time. Krashen and Terrel's (1983) study posited that L2 learner passes through several stages of language acquisition before the mastery of the target language takes place. On a similar note, Salend's study (2001) also affirms that errors such as word order, syntactic structures, and negation (lexical structures) will be corrected over time as students develop their second language skills.

Aside from the morphological and syntactical errors committed by the international students, their habitual uses of an inappropriate and repetitive word/s were highly detected. These errors may be attributed to the students' limited knowledge of English words. Considering that these students were exposed to the program for only six months with three

hours a day, it is therefore generally accepted that their vocabulary is limited to the informal and day-to-day conversation. Studies show that ESL learners need time to acquire English: A study in Reeves (2006) found that ESL learners in the secondary level need at least two years to learn the target language; Cummins (1994) in his study, argues that in two years, learners may only acquire the social language, however, it will take more than five years to develop an academic language; Krashen and Terrel (1983) argued that the time the learner takes in passing through the stages of language acquisition much depends on his/her ability to overcome each stage, in other cases, these stages might overlap.

Congruent to the time needed in order to improve the students' vocabulary skills, L2 learners also need ample time to master the English grammar rules in order to produce acceptable and comprehensible oral discourses. However, this is not the case with the participants, as they have shown several errors in morphology and syntax. The grammar of a language can change word forms, and if combined, they form sentences in that language. Therefore, if these grammar rules are to be violated and neglected, communication may suffer (Harmer cited in Patricio, 2009). In attesting to this, Stevick, as cited in Patricio (2009), explains that we use grammar to express meaning and to put words together to form oral and written sentences.

This present study also found that international students have difficulty in pronouncing English words. Findings show that participants cannot properly enunciate the initial and final sounds of some of the English words. To illustrate, words such as “she”, “through”, and “ESL” were pronounced as /si/, /to/, and /ɛl-si/; noticeably, the initial sound /ʃ/ -“sh”, /θ/ - th, and /i/ - “E” were not properly pronounced. Final sounds such as /dʒ/ in “college” and /v/ in “give” was also mispronounced.

Improper enunciation may be accounted for the difference in English and Tetum orthography and phonology. To compare, in Tetum, plosives, or stops like ‘p,’ ‘t,’ and ‘k’ are not aspirated. Production of these sounds will mean the absence of breath expulsion; however, English plosives should be properly aspirated. On the other hand, fricatives such as /v/ tend to alternate or replaced by /b/ as in [a'vo] – [a'bo], which means grandparent.

Error in pronunciation can also be seen as a sign of the learner's improving language acquisition. Piper (2003) describes these errors as “pronunciation patterns” that generally occur in the development of pronunciation among ESL students. Since the ESL program focuses mainly on the communicative competence of L2 students, teaching the rules in pronunciation is less prioritized. In the Philippine educational system, students are exposed to English speech subjects after taking up English 1 (grammar) and English 2 (writing). Likewise, learners of the English language need to pass through the basic knowledge of the grammar system before mastering the English pronunciation. As stated in Case and Taylor (2005), ESL students may struggle for years with pronouncing certain features of the English language if they have not yet developed a clear pattern of pronunciation, that is, a clear understanding of the English pronunciation rules.

In the study in Lue (2001), it was concluded that the typical patterns of pronunciation development among L2 learners are similar to articulation disorder. According to him, articulation disorder is commonly referred to as the “abnormal production of speech sound” such as “at” instead of “cat,” “bake,” instead of “cake” or “safe-u-ty” instead of “safety.” He then concluded that the development of pronunciation skills is dependent on the natural ability and motivation of the learner to use the language.

Using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy of Burt and Kiparsky, as cited in Taura (1997), international students commonly commit the omission of words in their formulation of oral sentences. The present study shows that common omitted words were pronouns, as in the phrases “Teacher asks to choose the topic,” which should be “Teacher asks **us** to choose the topic” and “sometimes misplaced,” whereas the correct form is “sometimes **it’s** misplaced.” These examples show that students are still in the early stage of acquiring the language. There are five stages of language acquisition: 1) *Silent/ Receptive/Pre-productive*. This is the stage when a learner is taking in the language input and develops his comprehension skills. Feedback from the learners will only be limited to non-verbal cues or one-word responses such as “yes” or “no”; 2) *Early Production*, learners in this stage begin to use short phrases and repetitive pattern during a conversation; 3) *Speech Emergence*, this is the stage when an ESL learner starts to communicate simple sentences and can ask simple questions that may or may not be grammatically correct. A typical example would be, “I go church yesterday,” thus, a teacher may respond with, “I went to church yesterday, too”; 4) *Intermediate fluency*, in this stage, the ESL learner is capable of using a more complex sentence when speaking and writing. Students in this stage can carry on a conversation with their teachers and fellow students; and 5) *Advanced Fluency*, ESL students in this stage have begun to engage in a non-cued conversation and is now trying to focus more on reading, writing and building academic language (Berg, Petron & Greybeck, 2012).

This finding is similar to a study conducted in Jacobson and Walden (2013). They argue that the persistence of omission errors committed by learners may be related to the additional time needed to absorb linguistic information as well as the need to increase opportunities to use the language. However, according to them, the development of the language may be dependent on the learner’s attention span, memory, and speed in processing the language input.

Findings in this study also reveal that English is not only a global communication requirement but also a *mandatory government requirement* as well. As a newly independent country, East Timor is slowly building and improving its educational system. Having only a small portion of literate people in its population, the government mandates its citizens to learn English to elevate their educational system (Patricio, 2009). Timorese are being sent to different English speaking countries such as the Philippines to support this program. In the study of Patricio, he concluded that Timorese, who can speak English fluently, is easily being hired in different establishments. This implies that the government has been requiring college students to learn the English language for the government to be globally competitive.

This is also being practiced in other countries; the English language has become a major requirement for several governments and business jobs. In the study of McKay (2003), she pointed out that in other nations such as Japan, South Korea, and China, the English language plays an important role in their economy and their educational system. She added that fluency in English had become a pre-requisite for several job opportunities.

The same finding was seen in Steven, Jin, and Song (2006). It was found that in South Korea, the English language is also considered a significant requirement in different professional and managerial positions.

In this global era, English has become the major means of international communication. It has invaded the economic and educational systems and has become a partner of global competitiveness. English proficiency is no longer considered as an advantage, but more so, it is now regarded as “a must-have” to be able to compete in this era. Proficiency in the English language is, therefore, equivalent to global competitiveness (Pardede, 2010). McKay, on the other hand, defines fluency in English as “global literacy,” which is deemed as an important ladder in advancing to higher education and is being used in several fields of the society. This is the reason why governments have been pushing that English becomes an integral part of all educational institutions. This is how *English in College*, the second theme of this study emerged.

Educational institutions have been putting up English courses to meet the increasing demand for this global medium. Learning English has been the main thrust of education to equip students in facing the challenges of globalization. In a study conducted in Harama and Roth (2000), it was claimed that learning English allows the students to understand different cultures. Moreover, upon knowing and understanding these cultures, learners can be able to relate to different people and the world.

However, the concept of learning English to be used for rising to the educational ladder and eventually to economic advancement is easier said than done. It is also important to consider how a learner acquires knowledge in order to use this skill to his advantage. Not all learners of English are successful in acquiring the language. Learning will still be grounded on how a learner accepts and react to the new language. Krashen and Terrel’s Theory of Learning (1983) hypothesize that L2 learners follow a set of strategies in acquiring and mastering the target language. It is then clearly implied that if learners failed to develop his strategy in mastering the target language, learning would not take place. Gardner’s theory of learning (cited in Rabia 2001) focuses on the motivations of the learners to learn the target language. In this theory, learners’ attitudes toward language play an essential role in language acquisition. Since learning the language is driven by the motivational attitudes of the learners, learning will not take place if students are not motivated to learn.

The theme of *English in College* greatly covers how English is useful to students in pursuing their education; the next theme that emerged from this study will explain how English is taught in the classroom. The theme, *L2 acquisition through integrated learning*, focuses on

several areas of instruction – classroom activities, teacher factor, constructive teaching, and motivational strategies.

Learning the basic foundations of grammar is very important in the development of L2 learners' learning process. These foundations are statutory requirements as they cover the rules and procedures in learning the target language. Varying classroom activities are employed to help learners understand the English system. Levine and McCloskey (2009) have indicated that teachers should understand the fact that students come from diverse cultures. Thus, he or she should be able to articulate the principles of his or her teachings clearly. The challenge now is for them to develop ESL activities that students from different cultures can benefit from. Miller (2007) concluded that empowering and educating people who are non-speakers of the language is not an easy task. This could mean exerting all possible efforts to encourage learning.

Learning shall not only cover the discussions of fundamental knowledge; effective learning should be executed comfortably and in a friendly atmosphere. ESL teachers must also understand the individual strengths and differences of their students as this will help them in finding ways to give students what they need or want. Being able to feel that students are given importance in the learning process, they will start to open up and accept new inputs. Further, if students feel that they are part of the group, they will be motivated to participate in classroom discussions and activities. This was also suggested in Levine and McCloskey (2009) in the Activity-Based teaching and Learning of the ABC Model, which guides teachers in coming up with activity-based teaching that will encourage learners to play active roles in the learning process.

Classroom activities, however, are not the only main components of the learning process. The other part is the role performed by an ESL teacher. Insights drawn from the interviews with the students confirm that their experiences with their instructors motivated them to pursue the ESL program. According to them, the teachers have helped them in bringing out their skills and have guided them to improve their language skills further. This is also reflected in the ABC Model's Learning Strategies (Levine & McCloskey), which explains that teachers should employ the SQ3R (survey, question, read, recite, review), a strategy to teach students to use their skills unconsciously. In Carell and Eisterhold (cited in Levine & McCloskey), teachers are encouraged to be flexible in teaching the students; they should be able to determine what students already know and can identify how this knowledge can be used in introducing and incorporating new inputs. This is a strategy to help students understand new knowledge without confusion.

Another ingredient of integrated learning is constructive teaching. This method offers a variety of techniques on how teachers and students contribute to the learning process. Studies show that students effectively learn when they are in a comfortable environment; being comfortable will mean learning and exploring knowledge with friends. Peer-assisted studies were proven by several studies to effectively improve the comprehension skills of ESL students (Hirsch in Lytte, 2011); this can be observed when teachers, together with the

learner's friends, correct or assess students output in a comfortable atmosphere. Students, while enjoying the activity, are not stressed or forced to absorb whatever recommendation/s collated from their friends and teachers.

Moreover, hearing comments from friends allows the learners to accept their weaknesses, thereby letting them learn some strategies or skills from friends. With this practice, learning becomes faster, and the confidence of the learners is developed. This was the same conclusion in Cichon (Lyttle), which affirms that students learn better with the guidance of competent peers, addressed as "tutors," helping them learn fast and confidently.

During the learning process, motivation helps students to strive to learn the target language. From the information gathered in the interview with participants, the proponent found that students enjoy classroom activities, especially when teachers give tokens after each activity. Students admitted that learning becomes more fun and enjoyable because they are commended with small rewards. Likewise, this strategy motivated them to study further and master the English language. Lyttle also agrees with this kind of motivation. According to her, the use of a reward system encourages ESL students. She added that several studies have proven that rewards are found to be effective in promoting better scores.

When students have learned the foundations of the English system, learners begin to develop self-confidence. Students confidently start to mingle and participate in different classroom activities and perform accordingly along with their classmates. This will now open the door to *academic achievements*. This theme covers the stage when the learner, having been provided with the basic skills, starts to use the language to achieve things. This is the stage when the learners demonstrate their skills in all aspects of English – reading, writing, and speaking. Vygotsky, as cited in Levine and McCloskey (2009), mentioned that language should be used for meaning-making and that learners should accomplish things when communication and thinking in the target language are developed. According to Kessler, as cited in Levine and McCloskey (2009), the end goals of learning a language are: allowing the learners to solve problems, negotiate to mean, and demonstrate what they have learned. These findings are similar to those of the present study because the participants attested that learning the language had helped them in coping with the academic requirements in their respective courses.

The last theme of the study is *improving the ESL program*. After six months of having exposed to the program, the learners have voiced their opinions on how to improve the program. As claimed by the participant-international students, their overall experiences in the ESL program have been beneficial to them. They opined that college would be challenging if they were not trained in the program. However, students suggest that the program should not be limited to three or six months. According to them, the number of months allotted to the program limits them in performing additional activities that will further improve their skills. They believe that learning the English language should have been effective if only they were given enough time to master the language. Findings in this study also reveal the same observation. As suggested in the reviewed literature, mastery of the target language can only be achieved

after years of studying the language. Chisman, as cited in Lyttle (2011), indicated that language could be useful if it were only learned in a long term ESL learning environment. This was asserted in Reeves (2006); it takes about seven years to use the target language as an academic language. Ambe (2011) similarly claimed that it takes about five to seven years for a non-speaker to use English well as the native speakers do.

The students also suggested that the pre-test and post-test may be reviewed further, as the exam does not reflect or assess the real skills of the students. All the participants admitted that the exam is difficult because the majority of the words used in the exam were unfamiliar to them. Students claim that this problem can be attributed to their limited vocabulary. Earlier discussions explain that vocabulary build-up can only be achieved if participants are exposed longer to the ESL program (Reeves, 2006; Cummins, 1994).

The present study concludes that language institutions have been regarded by international students who are culturally and linguistically diversified. The challenge that an ESL teacher needs to take is how to educate these students without ostracizing one from the other. It is, therefore, necessary for the teachers to understand each student and find various ways to address their needs while carrying out the objective of educating them.

Learners, on the other hand, have different reasons for acquiring the English language. Their desire to learn is driven by varying motivations. However, learning will only take place if the desire to learn is driven by the positive motivational attitudes of the learners. Their motivation to learn the language should not be limited to Instrumental Motivation but rather more on Integrated Motivation.

It is also encouraged that throughout the learning process, learners should be supported by the target-language speakers, and both should be engaged in frequent social contacts.

Information gathered from the literature reviewed in this study suggest that ESL learning should not be confined with theories alone, learning should be made fun, enjoyable, and fruitful to help learners acquire the English language effectively. ESL teachers are encouraged to observe the following: *active engagement*, where teachers employ enjoyable, engaging, and active learning activities in a comfortable atmosphere; incorporation of the learner's culture in introducing new concepts; *collaboration* or allowing learners to develop and practice the language in collaboration with others; employment of activities such as SQ3R, visualization, and other mental activities to allow learners to develop their learning strategies; making use of face to face oral communication to improve learner's understanding; incorporation of the learner's prior knowledge to develop new ones, improve learning and increase understanding; adapting activities that are appropriate for the age and grade levels of the learners; and *differentiation* or the use or varied methods of learning to address multiple intelligences such as visual, auditory and kinesthetic, among others, to improve the learners' comprehension. ESL teachers are also expected to inform their learners about their expectations and should provide constant feedback about the learners' progress.

ESL teachers are also encouraged to use *peer tutoring* or learning with peers to improve comprehension as it is proven to be an effective medium. Suggested activities are student-driven activities and discussion groups. It is also encouraged that ESL teachers shall apply the reward system to motivate learners to achieve better scores in different learning activities.

Findings in this study reflected that ESL teachers whose roles are significant in the language acquisition process should provide additional activities to address the major problems of the international students--- Morphology and Syntax (Misformation) and limited vocabulary.

This study is one with those it reviewed in suggesting that ESL learning should be an ongoing process. It is thus recommended that school administrators and ESL curriculum developers note the importance of prolonged exposure to an ESL program to acquire efficient language learning. ESL curriculum developers are also recommended to include several drills and activities to improve the learners' competence in sentence construction, word formation, and vocabulary. Further, administrators and curriculum developers are encouraged to support the teaching, as mentioned above, strategies to facilitate proper and appropriate ESL learning.

This study was able to confirm that the activities of the ESL program have been generally helpful to the students; these activities may be maintained or improved as they gave color and meaning in the learning experiences of the students.

It was learned that the pre- and post-tests do not entirely reflect the students' English language skills. It is therefore recommended that the examinations be reviewed for improvement to assess the ESL learners' language proficiency effectively.

Lastly, it is recommended that future researchers explore the possibilities of using these findings, but it is suggested to increase the number of participants and to engage students in other countries.

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