

# SECOND Language Acquisition, Learning of English, and Classroom English Proficiency of Private Senior High School STUDENTS

Angel Grace L. Dayola<sup>1</sup>, John Rey A. Aleria<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty, Philippine Academy of Sakya Davao Inc.,  
Angeldayola0219@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Graduate School Department, University of the Immaculate Conception, Davao City,  
Philippines  
jaleria@uic.edu.ph

## ABSTRACT

The quantitative study employed a descriptive correlational design to determine whether Second Language Acquisition and Learning of English could predict the students' classroom English proficiency among private senior high school students in Davao City. The researcher purposively selected 232 respondents using simple random sampling. The researcher adopted survey questionnaires to assess Second Language Acquisition, Learning of English, and Classroom English Proficiency. Data analysis involved calculating the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ), and conducting multiple linear regression analyses. The study's results indicated that the Second Language Acquisition, and Learning of English of Private Senior High School students are high, and the classroom English proficiency is also high. Notably, the study found a significant and positive correlation between the respondents' Second Language Acquisition and Classroom English Proficiency, as well as between Learning of English and Classroom English Proficiency. The findings underscore the significant impact of both individual and combined predictors. Thus, second language acquisition and Learning English independently and collectively contribute significantly to the classroom English proficiency of private senior high school students.

**KEYWORDS:** *Second language acquisition, learning of English, classroom English proficiency, Davao City, Philippines*

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## INTRODUCTION

Classroom English Proficiency includes the ability to understand, speak, read, and write in English. Proficiency in English is seen as critical for academic achievement since it is the medium of teaching in many educational institutions.

It is also viewed as a factor influencing good classroom communication between students and teachers. There is a lot to be said about English Language Proficiency and the process through which individuals attain competence in it, considering its status as the global lingua franca. In today's world, the significance of acquiring proficiency in English cannot be overstated. Knowing the possibilities of how students become proficient in the English language is interesting, and what makes it more interesting is how they became proficient even if it was their second language. The Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and learning of English (LoE) are entirely independent of one another, yet both are essential in developing Classroom English Proficiency (CEP). Teachers and language experts are naturally interested in the topic of how to learn a second language or an English language and become proficient in the language. As linguists become more interested in primary linguistic data, the acquisition of second language learners and how to do so have also come to the forefront of their thinking.

In the global setting, it has been revealed in the study of Anggarista and Wayudin (2022) that the use of different learning strategies gauge learners to be proficient in English. The study concluded that there is a relationship between English Proficiency Test (EPT) and the different learning strategies composed of Memory Strategy, Cognitive Strategy, Metacognitive Strategy, Compensation Strategy, Affective Strategy, and Social Strategy. However, the results reveal that the learning strategy most commonly employed by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students is the metacognitive strategy, whereas the least used is the affective strategy, which students rarely utilize.

In the Philippines, a descriptive research conducted by Torreces and Brillantes (2022) aimed to evaluate how well 112 pre-service students were acquiring English. It focused on several factors: sex, field of specialization, family monthly income, and place of residence. Additionally, the study assessed the students' speaking proficiency to help develop enhancement programs. The data were gathered using a validated questionnaire, which had a reliability coefficient of 0.87, and an impromptu speech to measure speaking proficiency. Personal factors like attitude, motivation, and exposure to the language, along with social factors such as socio-economic status, played a role in English language acquisition. It was enhanced through activities like reading, watching, listening to relevant materials, and using the language in practice. The research recommended further studies to explore the influence of both school-based and external inputs on students' English language acquisition.

In Davao City, the study of Bravo (2022) examined the demographic profiles of the respondents and evaluated their self-regulated learning skills and English proficiency levels. The study found that gender and age did not influence students' proficiency in listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English. However, family income significantly impacted their English skills. Additionally, the study revealed a very weak but positive and significant relationship between students' self-regulated learning skills and their English proficiency.

These findings underline the importance of English proficiency for students, as English is the universal language used worldwide. To support this, it is essential to understand the relationship between SLA and LoE, and how these elements contribute to CEP. Despite numerous studies on language proficiency, the specific relationship between SLA and LoE, and their combined effect on CEP, has not been thoroughly investigated among private senior high school students in Davao City. It remains uncertain whether SLA alone, LoE alone, or a combination of both, influences the CEP of private school students in Davao City. Further research is needed to clarify these relationships and guide effective language education strategies.

In the context of the Classroom English proficiency among SHS in Private schools in Davao City, the researcher has not come across to study about this matter. Therefore, this study aims to determine if there is a relationship between Second Language Acquisition and Learning of English to Classroom English proficiency among private school students in Davao City.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative design using a descriptive correlational approach. This approach, known as a non-experimental design, involves the exploration of the relationship between two or more variables in a natural environment without any manipulation or control by the researcher.

### **Research Locale**

This research was carried out in Davao City. Three secondary private schools specifically designated as School A, School B, and School C, are the study's particular places of research. These educational institutions were selected

due to the fulfillment of the same inclusion criteria.

## **Research Respondents**

This research's respondents are private SHS students for the academic year 2023-2024. Respondents were selected through a stratified sampling strategy with a total population of 282.

## **Research Instruments**

This study utilized three sets of adapted questionnaires to collect data from the respondents. These questionnaires had undergone validity by a field of experts, reliability analysis, and pilot testing.

The first tool is the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) questionnaire developed by Evans (2016). The Cronbach alpha is .768. The choices were given numerical values on a five-point Likert scale rating the questionnaire: 5 strongly agree; 4 as agree; 3 as neither agree nor disagree; 2 as disagree, and 1 as strongly disagree.

The second research tool is the Learning of English (LoE) a survey questionnaire adopted from Victori and Tragant (2013) This instrument was a five-point Likert scale consisting of items distributed in each of its indicators rating the questionnaire: 5 always; 4 as often; 3 as sometimes; 2 as seldom, and 1 as never. This tool was reported to have a Cronbach Alpha-score of 0.88 as a measure of the scale's internal consistency.

Lastly, the Classroom English Proficiency (CEP) Scale adopted from the Education Bureau of Hong Kong (2011) is used to measure the level of Classroom English Proficiency among the respondents. This is a 12-item questionnaire with four indicators: items 1-3 for Grammatical and lexical accuracy, items 4-6 for pronunciation, stress, and intonation, items 7-9 for language interaction, and items 10 -12 for language instruction. For each statement, respondents are instructed to select one of five options on a Likert scale, rating the questionnaire: 5 always; 4 as often; 3 as sometimes; 2 as seldom, and 1 as never.

## **Ethical Statement**

The Ethics Review Committee of the University of Immaculate

Concepcion thoroughly checked the study to guarantee strict adherence to ethical guidelines. This process was intended to ensure the safety of the respondents and validate the accuracy of the research findings. The researcher diligently safeguards the confidentiality of all gathered data throughout the study. The researcher provided clear and detailed information about the respondent's involvement in the study and emphasized the importance of data confidentiality.

Respondents had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point, as their participation was purely voluntary. Furthermore, the respondents were given ample time to complete the survey questionnaires.

## RESULTS

### Level of SLA of private SHS Students

**Table 1**

*Level of SLA of private SHS Students*

INDICATORS/STATEMENTS	Mean	SD	DESCRIPTION
<b>1.1 Internal Factors</b>			
1. Age	3.13	1.21	Moderate
2. Personality (outgoing, loner, positive-minded, attitude etc.)	3.61	1.09	High
3. Willingness, interest, and purpose for learning (intrinsic motivation)	4.24	0.92	Very High
4. Experiences	4.12	0.90	High
5. Level of intelligence (language aptitude like skills in learning a language)	4.09	0.89	High
6. Native language (either Filipino or local dialects like Bikolano, Waray, Ilokano etc.)	3.89	0.97	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>1.2 External Factors</b>			
7. The K12 Curriculum understanding reading materials.	3.75	1.06	High

8. Teacher's method of instruction (teaching style and strategy)	4.09	0.93	High
9. Socioeconomic status (rich, middle income, poor)	3.22	1.11	Moderate
10. Rewards and encouragement from other people (extrinsic motivation)	3.67	1.00	High
11. Contact or interaction with English native speakers	4.06	0.97	High
12. Media (television, radio, internet, magazines etc.)	4.31	0.87	Very High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 1 shows the level of SLA of private SHS students. The overall mean of SLA is 3.85 with a description of oftentimes evident. It also has a standard deviation of 0.57, which is less than one, indicating that the respondent's consistency of responses has minimal variations only. The result affirmed the study of Wang (2021) which stated students' views on the nature of language learning and their experiences in the foreign language had an impact on willingness to communicate (WTC) both within and outside of the learning environment. This suggested that both internal factors and external factors influenced the process of students' second language acquisition. Also, these factors significantly impact the effectiveness and speed of language acquisition.

Among the two indicators of SLA, both factors (internal and external) got a mean score of 3.85 which means that the SLA of private SHS students is oftentimes evident. For the internal factor, willingness, interest, and purpose for learning (intrinsic motivation) has the highest mean score of 4.24 which is described as very high with a standard deviation of 0.92. In contrast, the age got the lowest mean score of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 1.21 which is described as high. Although, age plays a critical role in language learning, other factors such as motivation, the capabilities of a learner, sufficient exposure to target language, interaction with the physical world and social environment, time available for learning, socioeconomic status, and linguistic and cultural backgrounds are seen to be more influential in some instances (K. Hyland & F.

Hyland, 2019).

## Level of LoE of private SHS Students

**Table 2**

*Level of LoE of Private SHS Students*

INDICATORS/STATEMENTS	Mean	SD	DESCRIPTION
<b>2.1 Improving General Level</b>			
1. I review what we have done in English class, or I test myself on my own.	3.71	0.97	High
2. When I see short texts in English, I try to figure out what they mean.	4.33	0.82	Very High
3. When I hear someone speak in English, I make an effort to see what I can understand.	4.50	0.74	Very High
4. I pay attention to the errors that I make when I write or speak in English.	4.44	0.82	Very High
5. I do English exercises, sentences, or dictations to practice on my own.	3.68	1.06	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>2.2 Vocabulary Learning</b>			
6. I write down the English word as it sounds or make some sort of annotation to remember its pronunciation.	3.71	1.06	High
7. I repeat the English words out loud several times.	3.78	1.06	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>2.3 Studying Grammar</b>			
8. I write summaries or outlines of the English structures that we are learning.	3.54	1.00	High

9. I review the English structures mentally or out loud.	3.90	0.98	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>2.4 Reading in English</b>			
10. Before I start reading, I look at what the English text is about.	4.31	0.83	Very High
11. I relate what I know about the topic with what the English text is about.	4.19	0.80	High
12. I pay attention to the English words that appear next to what I do not understand in a text.	4.31	0.84	Very High
13. I try to understand the structure of the English sentence.	4.49	0.74	Very High
14. I pay attention to the key words or the words that I already know in English.	4.57	0.69	Very High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>Very High</b>
<b>2.5 Writing in English</b>			
15. Before I start writing in English, I first think about what I want to say.	4.64	0.67	Very High
16. I review what I have written carefully in English.	4.44	0.73	Very High
17. I use some English books or the class notebook.	3.86	1.04	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>Very High</b>
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>High</b>

From the results presented in Table 2, the respondents' level of the LoE obtains a general mean score of 4.06 which is described as high with a standard deviation of 0.54 which is below one and shows that there are few significant differences in the respondents' consistency of answers.

Among the five indicators of LoE, reading in English got the highest mean score of 4.37 which is described as very high and a standard deviation of 0.58. This supports the idea of Laličić and Dubravac (2021) and Isaqjon (2022) that effective reading strategies help students improve their reading skills, leading to better overall English learning.

On the other hand, studying grammar has the lowest weighted mean of 3.72 with a standard deviation of 0.86. This signifies that the learners' efforts and initiative to vocabulary learning is sometimes practiced. This conforms to the study of Effendi et al. (2017) which indicates that the Learning of English in terms of Studying Grammar among students is oftentimes evident since both the study and the finding suggest that the current approach to teaching grammar might need adjustments to improve their understanding. The finding of "fair" learning might also imply that there's room for improvement in how students learn grammar.

### Level of CEP of private SHS Students

**Table 3**

*Level of classroom English proficiency of private Senior High School Students*

INDICATORS/STATEMENTS	Mean	SD	DESCRIPTION
<b>3.1 Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy</b>			
1. I can understand the lecture with correct English grammatical structures.	4.31	0.74	Very High
2. I can use a broad range of English vocabulary.	3.54	0.86	High
3. I can use accurate English words to express my ideas.	3.72	0.90	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>3.2 Pronunciation, Stress, and Intonation</b>			
4. I can speak English clearly with no systematic errors in pronunciation.	3.27	0.89	Moderate

5. I know how to stress English content words in pronunciation.	3.51	0.88	High
6. I can use English intonation naturally to convey meaning.	3.59	0.90	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>3.3 Language of Interaction</b>			
7. I can use appropriate English to ask questions or to provide clues and hints.	3.91	0.83	High
8. I can use appropriate English to respond to teachers' questions, such as seeking clarification, giving confirmation, and asking for repetition.	3.80	0.83	High
9. I can give feedback skillfully in English, such as acknowledging, evaluating, and commenting on my peers.	3.59	0.87	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>3.4 Language of Instruction</b>			
10. I can explain concepts, terms, or lesson content in clear English.	3.62	0.86	High
11. I can understand clear instructions in English when conducting activities, giving homework, and classroom discussion.	4.20	0.76	Very High
12. I can use appropriate English signals (e.g., first, second, next) when communicating and participating in our class discussion.	4.07	0.85	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 3 presents the level of the CEP of private SHS students per indicator. There are 4 indicators measured in this variable – grammatical and lexical accuracy, pronunciation, stress, and intonation, language of interaction, and language of instruction. The indicators' mean ranges from 3.45 to 3.96. The

overall mean score obtained is 3.76 with a standard deviation of 0.61 which is described as high. This data means that the level of classroom English proficiency of the respondents is above average.

Among the four indicators of CEP, language of instruction has the highest mean of 3.96 with a standard deviation of 0.66 which is described as high. Margić and Vodopija-Krstanović (2018) affirms that the conceptualization of language for instruction seems to be meaningful for EMI teacher's language training that's why students how to use fixed sentence structures to explain concepts, terms, or lesson content, and how to give clear instructions in English when conducting activities, appropriate English signals when communicating (Wang, 2021).

Meanwhile, pronunciation, stress, and intonation obtained a lowest mean of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 0.76 described as still high. The result of the study is described as high which implies that students rarely commit mispronunciations, stress, and intonation errors. Moreover, this confirms the study of Kobilova (2022) that Pronunciation is something that many learners and speakers of English need to focus on improving. Some of them disregard it or undervalue it.

### *Correlation of Variables*

**Table 4**

*Correlation of Variables*

<b>Variables paired with Classroom English Proficiency of Private Senior High School Students</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Second Language Acquisition	0.224	0.000	Significant
Learning of English	0.423	0.000	Significant

*\*Significant at 0.05*

Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between SLA and CEP among private SHS students. The correlation analysis conducted at the significance level of alpha indicates that SLA has a significant relationship with CEP with an r-value of 0.224 and p-value of 0.000. The analysis shows a statistically significant, but weak, positive correlation between SLA and CEP.

This means that there is a slight tendency for people with higher scores in SLA to also have higher scores in CEP.

Also, the data revealed that there is a significant relationship between LoE and CEP obtained with an r-value of 0.423 and p-value of 0.000. This means that there is a moderate positive correlation between LoE and CEP. This indicates that as LoE scores increase, CEP scores also tend to increase. This study found clear evidence that students who learn more English (LoE) tend to perform noticeably better in terms of using English skills in the classroom (CEP). The findings of this study are consistent with the study of Anggarista and Wahyudin (2022) revealed that there is a relationship between students' English Proficiency Test score with Language Learning utilization. This indicates that an increase in English Proficiency is also an increase in Language Learning. On the other hand, it has been found that the basic function of Language Acquisition programs is to gauge learners to acquire proficiency in the English Language (California Teachers Association, 2024).

**Influence of CEP of private SHS students**

**Table 5**

*Influencers of Classroom English Proficiency*

Individual Predictors	Standard Coefficient Beta	t	p-value	Remarks
Second Language Acquisition	0.159	2.76	0.006	Significant
Learning of English	0.444	7.26	0.000	Significant
<b>Holistic Model</b>				
Predictors Combined	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p-value	Remarks
	0.448	35.1	0.000	Significant

*\*Significant at 0.05*

Table 5, underscores the significant impact of both individual and combined predictors. SLA exhibits a positive causal relationship, with a standardized coefficient beta value of 0.159 and a significant t-value of 2.76 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the increased level of SLA corresponds to an increased

level of CEP of private senior high school students. The increased change in the level of SLA of private senior high school students is directly causing an increased change of about 15.90% in their level of CEP.

Similarly, the LoE displays a stronger association, with a standardized coefficient beta of 0.444 and a highly significant t-value of 7.26 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that an increase in the LoE significantly influences the CEP of private senior high school students. This further implies that the increasing change in the level of LoE classrooms of private senior high school students is directly causing an increased change of about 44.40% in their level of CEP. Considering its highest Beta standardized coefficient value, the LoE is considered the best predictor of the CEP of private senior high school students in the context of this study.

Moreover, the holistic model shows that the two predictors – second language acquisition and the learning of English elucidate approximately 44.80% of the variance in the classroom English proficiency of private senior high school students, as indicated by the model's  $R^2$  value of 0.448. Furthermore, the model exhibits statistical significance ( $F = 35.1, p < 0.05$ ), affirming the predictive power of the combined predictors. Hence, second language acquisition and the learning of English independently and collectively contribute significantly to the classroom English proficiency of private senior high school students. On the other hand, it infers that there are other combined factors equivalent to 55.20% that could significantly influence the classroom English proficiency of private senior high school students that are not covered in this study.

SLA and LoE are both vital to developing high levels of English proficiency among private SHS students. They are independently enhancing different aspects of language use, and collectively, they provide a well-rounded foundation for mastering the language. As explained in Krashen's theory of Second Language Acquisition (1979), the "acquired system" or "acquisition" is the subconscious process of learning a language through natural communication, similar to how children learn their first language. This process emphasizes understanding meaning rather than focusing on grammar. In contrast, the "learned system" or "learning" involves conscious, formal education about language rules. Thus, Victori and Tragant's (2013) study suggests that to improve overall language proficiency, learners should focus on expanding their vocabulary, studying grammar, and practicing reading, writing, and speaking in

English.

## CONCLUSION

The overall mean of SLA of private SHS students is 3.85. Both indicators (internal and external factors) got the mean score of 3.85. The overall mean score of LoE of private SHS students is 4.06. Among the indicators, Improving General level in English got a mean score of 4.13, vocabulary learning got 3.75, studying grammar got 3.72, reading in English got 4.37, and writing in English got 4.31. The overall mean score of the CEP of private SHS students is 3.76. Among the indicators, grammatical and lexical accuracy got a mean score of 3.86, pronunciation, stress and intonation got 3.45, language of interaction got 3.77, and language of instruction got 3.96.

Moreover, both independent variables, SLA has a p-value of 0.000 and LoE has a p-value of 0.000 which are higher than the alpha level 0.05 level of significance, with an R-value of 0.224 and 0.423 respectively. Thus, there is a significant relationship between SLA and the CEP, and LoE and the CEP. Also, SLA exhibits a positive causal relationship, with a standardized coefficient beta value of 0.159 and a significant t-value of 2.76 ( $p < 0.05$ ), the LoE displays a stronger association, with a standardized coefficient beta of 0.444 and a highly significant t-value of 7.26 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The holistic model shows that the two predictors – SLA and the LoE elucidate approximately 44.80% of the variance in the CEP of private senior high school students, as indicated by the model's R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.448. Furthermore, the model exhibits statistical significance ( $F = 35.1$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), affirming the predictive power of the combined predictors.

## Recommendations

It is important for teachers to continue exposing private SHS students to internal and external factors influencing SLA. Engaging students in meaningful conversational activities can enhance their comprehension skills. Students should also participate in real-life activities to acquire second language skills and be monitored to ensure academic progress aligns with real-world demands. Since studying grammar was the indicator with the lowest category mean among the indicators of LoE, English teachers can enhance results by providing practical grammar application opportunities like activities inside the class that students can engage in . Since pronunciation, stress, and intonation was the indicator with the lowest category mean among the indicators of CEP, Language teachers can improve results by fostering practical application opportunities to emphasize

the importance of mastering pronunciation, stress, and intonation. Given the result that SLA yielded significant relationship with the LoE of private SHS students, it is recommended that the school may introduce an English language program to boost students' language exposure and proficiency. This program includes teaching, remedial work, and activities. Further studies could explore other factors influencing English learning outcomes for teachers and students. Since the study found that LoE and SLA significantly influence private SHS students' CEP, it is recommended to prioritize communication skills by focusing on speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Encourage students to participate in conversations, discussions, and collaborative activities to enhance language proficiency. This research study can be a guide to the future researchers to fill the gaps of the previous result.

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