

Attitude Towards The Filipino Language And Communicative Competence Of Senior High School Students In Samar National School

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Abstract

Enhancing communicative competence in the Filipino language classroom is an ongoing endeavor that demands comprehensive understanding and strategic intervention. The recent study conducted at Samar National School (SNS) delved deep into the attitudes and proficiency levels of Senior High School (SHS) students, revealing a multifaceted landscape characterized by both promising strengths and notable areas for improvement. Within this dynamic context, the study uncovered a prevailing positive attitude towards the Filipino language among student-respondents, signaling a fertile ground for linguistic development and cultural engagement. However, compared against this optimism were evident deficiencies in grammatical and linguistic competence, highlighting a pressing need for targeted interventions to fortify foundational language skills. Amidst these challenges, the study also unveiled strengths in discourse and strategic competence, suggesting a nuanced proficiency profile within the student cohort. The correlation identified between students' attitudes towards the Filipino language and their grammatical competence underscores the intricate interplay between affective factors and linguistic proficiency, emphasizing the importance of cultivating a positive disposition towards language learning. The study advocates for the implementation of evidence-based intervention plans that address identified deficiencies while leveraging existing strengths, thereby fostering a more holistic approach to language education that empowers students to navigate effectively in the Filipino language, enriching their educational journey and cultural identity in the process.

Keywords: Attitude, communicative competence, grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, Filipino language

Introduction

Language serves as the cornerstone of interpersonal connections because it is predicated on their capacity for efficient communication. It is through language that students can deepen their understanding of the world in which they live and expand their individual perspectives on the global community. Students who are proficient in a language are better equipped to interact with larger groups, access and absorb information, and learn about the importance of language in both their own and other cultures [1]. Therefore, the goal of any language classroom is for the students to be proficient communicators in a language, with instruction focused on organizational, pragmatic, methodical, and psychomotor skills. In light of this, actual language and real-world tasks give students the chance to see how classroom activities relate to their long-term communicative goals, particularly if the emphasis is on usage, fluency, realistic language contexts, and application in everyday settings. Encouraging students to take advantage of their strategic commitment in language acquisition helps them to conceive of methods to become more proficient in the language through active participation in the learning process [2].

Dell Hymes created the term communicative competence to challenge Chomsky's theory that competence is limited to grammatical understanding [3]. On this idea, the term refers to the capacity to combine utterances and knowledge of communication functions in a discourse-rule compliant manner, comprehend how language is employed in social contexts to fulfill communicative purposes, and synthesize basic grammatical notions [4]. The employment of communicative competence as an approach to language proficiency was essentially a remedial attempt in order to overcome the limitations of current structural syllabi, materials, and procedures. According to Canale and Swain [5], communicative competence is the culmination of an underlying system of knowledge and skill required for communication. Knowledge is defined as an individual's conscious or unconscious understanding of language and its various facets, while skill is the ability

to apply the knowledge in real-world communication. Thus, it is the ability of students to utilize language to communicate successfully.

Four distinct components emerged from Canale and Swain's definition: a) grammatical competence, which includes knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence, grammar semantics, and phonology; b) discourse competence refers to the capacity to connect sentences in discourse segments and create a coherent whole from a sequence of utterances; c) sociolinguistic competence or the comprehension of the social context in which language is used by people; and d) strategic competence, which includes verbal and nonverbal competencies that may be used to make up for communication breakdowns caused by performance variables or insufficient competence [6]. As a result, it is a multifaceted, intricate socio-psychological idea that includes the students' capacity to plan speaking activities in accordance with tasks and particular communication contexts in light of their knowledge and abilities [7].

Nonetheless, literature on the psychology of language frequently addresses issues related to the development of communicative competence, and as a result, education systems are searching for methods to facilitate the students' acquisition of communicative competence through the examination of variables that influence it. One socio-psychological component that affects language acquisition is attitude. Attitude is a multifaceted, long-lasting tendency that predisposes a person to act in a particular manner [8]. Gardner [9] described attitude as the culmination of a person's sentiments and instincts regarding any given subject. It is characterized as a conceptual framework that explains how people behave or react to various context-related stimuli. As a result, attitude is considered to have a significant impact on a student's capacity to learn a language and is a primary factor that influences how well they learn it [10]. In this situation, students with optimistic attitude are more likely to fit in well with the language and actively work toward their goals of language acquisition. Conversely, a negative mindset makes it more difficult to learn a language and become proficient in it.

In line with the aforementioned discussions, studies on language attitudes are conducted to track how society views a language or its variants, which can be useful in various contexts [11]. This suggests that studies on students' attitudes toward a particular language are essential, particularly in the Philippines where language policy has been changed due to the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), implemented in kindergarten through third grade since the school year 2011-2012, as a new multilingual policy in the K to 12 Curriculum under Republic Act Number 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 [12]. Due to the perception that English was a secret obstacle to students' academic success, the mother tongue was used as the medium of instruction (MOI) for these grade levels. Additionally, this suggests that by the time students enter the two years of senior high school (SHS), they will already be proficient in their mother tongue, Filipino, and English, respectively, as their first, second, and third languages [13].

As a consequence, the new curriculum envisions creating graduates who can utilize language norms, principles, methods, and abilities to interact with others, comprehend and learn other subject areas, and succeed in their chosen field [14]. Moreover, it considers communicative competence, reflective thinking, and value placed on learning literature as prerequisites for students in the twenty-first century. Given these language goals in the new curriculum, it might be difficult for students to develop communicative competence in Filipino because, according to de Chavez and Metrillo [15], students are constantly encouraged to use English as a medium of communication in the classroom, including when writing and creating documentation.

The Filipino language functions as a particular, systematic, and universal language, encompassing a wide variety of dialects. As a result, the teaching of the Filipino language continues at various levels from kindergarten to SHS. For example, language study at the junior high school (JHS) level is centered on various literary works. On the other hand, SHS Filipino study focuses more on using language in research. However, because they are only able to use these words in their Filipino language classes, students have been using deep Filipino words in their speech much less frequently in recent years [16]. Therefore, the objective of this study was to ascertain the attitude toward and competence with the Filipino language in communication of the SHS students.

Objectives Of The Study

This research determined the attitude toward the Filipino language and the communicative competence of the Senior High School (SHS) students in Samar National School (SNS), Schools Division of Catbalogan

City, during the School Year 2023-2024. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions: 1) What is the attitude toward the Filipino language of the student-respondents? 2) What is the communicative competence in the Filipino language of the student-respondents along linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence? and 3) How does student-respondents' attitude toward the Filipino language impact on their communicative competence in the said language?

Methodology

This study used a quantitative-descriptive design to determine the attitude toward the Filipino language and the communicative competence of SHS students. Three hundred thirteen SHS students enrolled during the school year 2023-2024 at Samar National School were selected as respondents, with 177 from Grade 11 and 136 from Grade 12. This study used stratified random sampling, as shown in Table 1.

Talahanayan Blg. 1. Ang Mga Mag-aaral na Tagasagot		
Pangkat/Track	Kabuuan	Sample
BAITANG 11		
Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM)	97	21
General Academic Strand (GAS)	308	67
Humanities and Social Studies (HUMSS)	312	67
Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL)	66	14
Communication and Information Technology (CIT)	39	8
Kabuuan ng Mag-aaral sa Baitang 11	822	177
BAITANG 12		
Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM)	110	24
General Academic Strand (GAS)	189	40
Humanities and Social Studies (HUMSS)	245	53
Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL)	53	11
Communication and Information Technology (CIT)	38	8
Kabuuan ng Mag-aaral sa Baitang 12	635	136
Kabuuan	1,457	313

A questionnaire and test were used to gather data from the respondents. The study was conducted by seeking approval from the principal of SNS and consent from the student-respondents. The data collected were quantitatively analyzed using appropriate statistical tools.

Results And Discussions

Attitude toward the Filipino Language of the Student-Respondents

Table 2 shows the student-respondents' attitude toward the Filipino language.

Table 2. Attitude toward the Filipino Language of the Student-Respondents

Saloobin	Tamtaman	Kahulugan
1. Ang Wikang Filipino ay simbolo ng pagiging isang mamamayang Pilipino.	4.83	LNS
2. Ang paggamit ng Wikang Filipino ay isang mabuting gawi ng isang mag-aaral.	4.58	LNS
3. Ang Wikang Filipino ay marka ng pagkakakilanlan bilang isang mamamayang Pilipino.	4.72	LNS
4. Ang Wikang Filipino ay komplikado lalo na ang palabaybayan ng mga salita.	3.64	SA

5. Nangangailangan ng mas malawak na plataporma ang paggamit ng Wikang Filipino.	3.90	SA
6. Nangangailangan ng masusing pag-aanalisa sa mga salitang banyaga na hiniram ng Wikang Filipino upang mas lalong mapalapit ang wikang ito sa mga mag-aaral.	4.14	SA
7. Ang Wikang Filipino ay kinakailangang maging bukas sa mga pagbabagong nagaganap sa mundo lalo na sa harap ng integrasyon ng iba’t ibang mga bansa sa pandaigdigang isyu.	4.23	SA
8. Ang Wikang Filipino ay kailangang pagyamanin at ipagsalin lahi sa kabila ng maigting na mga pagbabago sa larangan ng pakikipagkomunikasyon gamit ang iba’t ibang midya.	4.38	SA

Saloobin	Tamtaman	Kahulugan
9. Ang Wikang Filipino ay kailangang pagyamanin at ipagsalin lahi sa kabila ng maigting na mga pagbabago sa larangan ng pakikipagkomunikasyon gamit ang iba’t ibang midya.	4.38	SA
10. Mas lalong kailangang paigtingin ang paggamit ng Wikang Filipino sa loob at labas ng klasrum bilang pangunahing wika ng bansa.	4.45	SA
11. Mahirap ang paggamit ng Wikang Filipino sa pakikipagtalakayan.	2.84	HT
Kabuuang Tamtaman	4.17	
Kahulugan	Sumasang-ayon	

Pinagmulan: 4.50-5.00	Lubos na Sumasang-ayon	(LNS)
3.50-4.49	Sumasang-ayon	(SA)
2.50-3.49	Hindi Tiyak	(HT)
1.50-2.49	Hindi Sumasang-ayon	(HS)
1.00-1.49	Lubos na Hindi Sumasang-ayon	(LHS)

Table 2 reveals that the student-respondents strongly agreed that “ang wika ay simbolo ng pagiging isang mamayang Filipino, mabuting gawi ng isang mag-aaral, at marka ng pagkakakilanlan bilang isang mamayang Filipino” based on the weighted means computed at 4.83, 4.58, and 4.72, respectively. However, the student-respondents were undecided whether “mahirap ang paggamit ng wikang Filipino sa pakikipagtalastasan” based on the value of the weighted mean, which was computed at 2.84. Majority of the indicators were agreed upon by the student-respondents based on the range of values of the weighted mean from 3.64 to 4.45.

The overall weighted mean was calculated to be 4.17, indicating agreement among student-respondents regarding the indicators of their attitude toward the Filipino language. This result implied that the student-respondents had optimism toward the Filipino language as taught in SHS. Moreover, this research highlights the critical function that attitude plays in language acquisition. Tani [17] contends that for students to acquire a language successfully, language teachers need to acknowledge the importance of attitude. Additionally, students' motivation to learn a language and their willingness to engage with other students and the community as a whole depend on their attitude toward language. Although students may develop varied attitudes toward language learning [18], Ong [19] noted that the students' attitude toward language comprises the collection of beliefs that they have regarding any language.

Sullera [20] presented that the students' keen interest in the Filipino subject stemmed from the teachers' meaningful connection with them through a variety of assignments. Nevertheless, due to the challenges associated with speaking the Filipino language, they did not see Filipino as a favored subject in their curriculum. The teachers' motivation and the desire to achieve high grades in the subject were cited by the students as the main reasons for their appreciation of the Filipino language. In another study, Calisang [21] emphasized that students only speak Filipino in the classroom where it is taught. They also found it challenging to explain complex Filipino vocabulary when speaking. In addition, when it comes to students using the Filipino language in the classroom, particularly during discussions, teachers and students frequently do not pay attention to each other when speaking using the said language.

The findings suggested that students should continue to have positive attitude toward the Filipino language because it is the foundation of language learning and the attainment of high competence in communication using the said language.

Communicative Competence in the Filipino Language of the Student-Respondents

Table 3 shows the communicative competence in the Filipino language of the student-respondents along four dimensions of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences.

Table 3. Communicative Competence in the Filipino Language of the Student-Respondents

Aspeto	Tamtaman	SD
Kakayahang Gramatika/Linggwistiko (n=18)	11	2.22
Kakayahang Sosyo-Linggwistiko (n=24)	16	2.98
Kakayahang Diskorsal (n=4)	3	0.36
Kakayahang Istratehiko (n=4)	3	0.37
Kabuuang Tamtaman (N=50)	12	
Kabuuang SD	1.48	

Table 3 shows that the student-respondents scored 11 in the 18-item test on grammatical competence, which when cumulatively computed, they had 61.11 percent, which was below the passing score of 75 percent. This indicated a low grammatical competence in Filipino of the student-respondents. As regards to the student-respondents' sociolinguistic competence, they scored 16 in a 24-item test, which indicated a cumulative score of 66.67 percent, which was below the passing score of 75 percent. This indicated a low sociolinguistic competence in Filipino of the student-respondents.

Table 3 further presents that the student-respondents scored three in a four-item test for discourse competence, which when cumulatively computed was equivalent to 75 percent, which is a passing percentage. This indicated that they were competent in using the Filipino language for discourse. The same score of three was obtained by the student-respondents in a four-item test for strategic competence, which when cumulatively computed was equivalent to 75 percent, a passing percentage. This indicated that they were strategically competent in using the Filipino language.

As a whole, the student-respondents scored 12 in a 50-item test to assess their communicative competence in Filipino. This indicated a cumulative score of 24 percent, which was way below the passing percentage of 75 percent. As a result, the student-respondents had very low communicative competence in Filipino.

The low level of grammatical competence shown in the results of this study reflected the struggle to acquire phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and lexical skills in the Filipino language of the student-respondents inasmuch as these domains constitute linguistic or grammatical competence. Likewise, the low level of sociolinguistic competence shown in the findings of this research indicated that the student-respondents were inadequate in understanding about whether a certain statement is appropriate in a given social environment. However, the student-respondents demonstrated better discourse and strategic competence, indicating that they could remain coherent and cohesive during a discourse, handle real-world communication scenarios, and maintain open lines of contact.

Overall, nonetheless, the results pointed to exceptionally low communicative competence due to poor grammatical proficiency. According to Choeda et al. [22], a person cannot be deemed communicatively competent without also being linguistically or grammatically competent. They added that a person has attained linguistic or grammatical competence, in particular, and possibly communicative competence, when they have a solid understanding of spelling, pronunciation, word formation, grammatical structure, and sentence structure. Geckin [23] also stressed that due to their interdependence, all four competencies are necessary to attain communicative competence. On the other hand, students would not be able to demonstrate proper communicative behaviors even if they were proficient in language or grammar but ignorant of the social laws of language. Similar to this, a student who is not proficient in language or grammar would struggle to express themselves in conversation since they will always be searching for the right words. Therefore, communicative competence includes knowing when to use language correctly in addition to knowing its grammatical norms in order to construct correct statements.

Impact of the Student-Respondents' Attitude toward the Filipino Language on their Communicative Competence

Table 4 shows the results of the analysis made to the impact of the attitude toward the Filipino language on the communicative competence of the student-respondents.

Table 4 reveals that the student-respondents' attitude toward the Filipino language was significantly related to their communicative competence based on the computed t-value at 2.531, which was higher than the critical t-value at ± 1.968 , and the p value of 0.000, which was lower than the level of significance at 0.05, $df=311$ for two-tailed hypothesis testing. This implied that the student-respondents' attitude has significant impact on their communicative competence in the Filipino language.

Table 4. Student-Respondents' Attitude toward the Filipino Language and Communicative Competence

Kakayahang Komunikatibo	Ugnayang Linyar		Halaga ng Pagta- tayang t ni Fisher	Halaga ng p	Ebalwasyon/ Desisyon
	Natuos na Halaga	Degri			
Saloobin Hinggil sa Wikang Filipino	.284	Mahina	2.531	0.000	M / Tanggihan ang Epotesis

Kritikal na Halaga= ± 1.968

M - Mahalaga

Degri ng Kalayaan= 311 $\alpha=.05$

DM – Di-Mahalaga

The findings of the study showed that the attitudes toward the Filipino language of the student-respondents determined how proficiently they could communicate in the said language. This finding is supported by the idea put forth by Herwiana and Laili [24] that attitude shapes how students behave when learning a language, and therefore, it is one of the key variables influencing performance in language learning of students. Corollary to this, they discovered that students who have a good attitude toward the language are more likely to be motivated to study it, while those with negative attitude are less motivated to study it.

In the same manner, Rezalou and Oktay (2021) highlighted the importance of attitude in language acquisition, stating that it will dictate students' level of motivation. They emphasized that learners will feel satisfied with the process of learning if they have positive attitudes toward language acquisition because these attitudes tend to increase communicative competence or language proficiency. Negative attitudes, on the other hand, have a negative impact on students' impressions.

Similarly, Gedamu and Kuche (2018) highlighted that a learner's attitude toward a language can either help or hinder their capacity to acquire it. They promoted the idea that students' attitudes would ultimately determine their level of success in learning to utilize a language effectively. This suggests that although

students who stick to negative thoughts find it difficult to learn, those who have positive attitudes toward the language acquire it more easily.

Conclusions And Recommendations

The study concluded that the student-respondents had a favorable attitude toward the Filipino language. The study likewise found that although the student-respondents' discourse and strategy competences were higher, their grammatical and sociolinguistic competences were lower. The student-respondents' attitude toward the Filipino language was significantly related to their communicative competence in the language. This study recommends the implementation of an intervention plan for the improvement of the student-respondents' communicative competence.

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