

English Proficiency of Bachelor of Science in Office Administration Students of the State University

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Abstract

This paper aims to determine the English Proficiency of the 161 Bachelor of Science in Office Administration students at the State University enrolled in the First Semester of the A.Y. 2022-2023. A 70-item proficiency test was used as an instrument in gathering the data. Findings revealed that the category with the highest percentage of the correct answer was the Synonyms category, indicating that the participants are on the Upper level of proficiency. However, the Reading comprehension category got the lowest percentage of the correct answer, indicating a Beginner level of proficiency. The overall percentage of the level of English proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration was the Intermediate level. Moreover, no significant difference was found in the participants' English proficiency level in terms of age, year level, academic strand, and last school attended.

Keywords: analogy, antonyms, cloze test, english proficiency, idiomatic expression, reading comprehension, sentence completion, synonyms

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I. INTRODUCTION

English is spoken by more than one billion people worldwide, either as a first language, a second language, or a third language. It serves as the universal tongue for communication, commerce, politics, and entertainment (Daif-Allah & Aljumah, 2020) [8]. English Proficiency is a critical component of a successful modern society. Being the world's third most spoken and widely taught language English is also known as the "global language," and the "lingua franca of the modern era." English is used in over 100 countries as a first language by more than 300 million people and as a second language by over 600 million. He also stated that English skills are essential for any country to benefit from global commerce fully; access the latest science, technology, and innovation; and exert influence worldwide (Runde, 2017, as cited in Torreces & Brillantes, 2022) [31, 40]. As stated by (Mendoza, 2012, as cited in Sasan, 2022), the Philippines is highly regarded for its people's fluency in English; in fact, the Philippines was declared one of the greatest countries in the world for business English proficiency in 2012 and 2013 by the results of its annual Business English Index (BEI), even surpassing the United States [22, 34].

However, recent findings showed that there is a gradual deterioration in the use of the English language not only in academe but also in the business world. In 2016, the English proficiency of the Philippines ranked 13th; in 2017, it was 15th; in 2018, it was 14th; and in 2019, it was 20th (CNN Philippines Staff, 2020) [7]. 2020 also saw a decline for the Philippines, according to the English Proficiency Index (EPI), from position 20 to position 27 (Baclig, 2020) [2]. In another study done by Hopkins International Partners, the Philippines' official representative in the organization Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), college graduates from the Philippines have lower levels of English proficiency than the desired English proficiency of high school students in Thailand (Manuel, 2022) [18]. According to Santos et al. (2022), a report by Andrew King, country director for the Philippines of IPD Education, revealed his disappointment with the overall average score of Filipino IELTS takers because many of them were supposedly "educated" [33].

Based on the aforementioned gap, the researchers assessed the English proficiency level of BSOA students in a State University. This is important because the English language gaps encourage many researchers to continue seeking reason as well as solutions to improve, maintain and level up every Filipino's English language skills. In conducting this study, the researchers were able to know how well students in this university can use the English language. Hence, in relevance to this situation, the researchers would like to determine the English proficiency of the BSOA students of the State University, a program focusing on clerical and office-related jobs. Office Administration students are required to have higher knowledge or intelligence in English as they are to face most tasks that involve local and international business transactions. At the end of this assessment, the researchers should be able to identify the level of English proficiency of BSOA students in a

state university. As a result, the researchers hoped that this research study might contribute to developing better methods for teaching and learning the English language.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

This chapter presents the various concepts connected to the topic. The researcher gathered mainly the research studies conducted and published from various materials such as journals, the internet, and articles related to the present study.

2.1. English Proficiency

As one of the primary objectives and expected outcomes in English language teaching and learning, as well as serving as the foundation for establishing the initial English curriculum for future progress, the importance of English proficiency is too clear to be ignored. English proficiency is frequently, to some extent, employed as a standard language capacity of a person to be able to execute particular duties or achieve specific goals. It is also used to gauge the performance of a language program or school. (e.g., studying overseas, tour guide, etc.) (Waluyo, 2019) [42].

The University of Southern Queensland (2021) defines English Proficiency as “the student's ability to use the English language to make and communicate meaning in spoken and written contexts while completing their program of study. English is currently listed in the Philippines' constitution as one of the official languages [41].

It is the primary medium of instruction in education (Cabigon, 2015, as cited in Santos et al., 2022) and the language of business, science, technology, government, and international communication [5,33]. The Philippines is one of the major ESL destinations, with two-thirds of the population fluent in English (Santos et al., 2022) [33]. The EF English Proficiency Index, which ranks people annually according to their level of English proficiency, shows that while most Filipinos speak English at least somewhat fluent, there has been a continuous decline over the years. The Philippines' rating fell from 14th in 2018 to 20th in 2019 and 27th in 2020. The Philippines moved up to position 18 in 2021, although that is still a long way from their position of 13th in 2016 [33].

Tanpoco et al. (2019) claimed that there is currently evidence of a decline in Filipino learners' usage of the English language, particularly in written form. English teachers, curriculum designers, and even the government are now concerned about errors in grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, capitalization, and idea transitions, among other things. According to their research, first-year college students only possess a fair amount of grammar proficiency. Students' language abilities may change depending on the course they are attending [39]. Moreover, Suarez (2020) mentioned that the English used by Filipinos has “deteriorated” because there is a lack of (good) model input in and out of the classroom. As observed by the same researcher, even some English teachers do not have the same great command of the language as before because, in the past, there had been Native English Speakers as teachers. Students in their 30s and 40s had the opportunity to study with them and acquire the language. This has implications for language teaching because this suggests that the input students receive may include grammatical and pronunciation errors. Looking at the scenario in ESL classrooms and the current English classroom situation might help the researchers investigate and identify the basis of this problem [38].

A study also emphasized that college graduates in the Philippines receive an average score of 631.4 in English proficiency, which was lower than the 650 goals established for taxi drivers in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. This was found in the preliminary results of a two-year study based on TOEIC measures, which showed that Filipino graduates' English proficiency was inferior to that of Dubai cab drivers (Morallo, 2018) [24].

2.2. Sentence Completion

Park et al. (2018) stated that sentence completion is a gap-filling task that aims to choose the best word or phrase from the options provided to fill in the blank to complete a sentence. Despite its simplicity, sentence completion can assess diverse abilities, including linguistic proficiency, shared knowledge, and logical reasoning at different levels. Their study expands with extensive experiments on various sentence completion methods based on neural language models task of sentence completion, which aims to infer the missing text of a given sentence which was carried out to assess the reading comprehension level not only to humans but also to machines [28]. A study by Liu et al. (2022) stated that there are three categories: narrow, intermediate, and general for the language proficiency evaluation tasks. Wherein sentence completion is well-studied as one of the classic representatives for the intermediate task category. Thus, this study emphasizes that the majority of students studying English as a second language (ESL) utilize sentence completion questions [17]. Another study by Narathakoon et al. (2020) examined English teachers' perceptions of classroom assessment. In terms of classroom assessment, the teachers who participated in the study strongly believed that sentence completion

could be used to assess students' English proficiency. This study suggests several implications, including assessment policy, educational and training programs for learners, and language assessment [25].

Furthermore, Chen & Liu (2020) investigated the role of vocabulary breadth and depth in the performance of second language learners in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) reading tests in China. The number of words that the learner knows, or at least some aspects of the meaning, is referred to as vocabulary breadth, and the quality of the meaning that the learner knows is referred to as vocabulary depth. An intriguing finding was that vocabulary depth was more highly correlated with questions requiring learners to provide answers with words or phrases, such as Short Answer Questions and Sentence Completion. It was discovered that vocabulary depth was significantly related to IELTS reading test scores. However, it also indicated that a significantly larger vocabulary was required to improve certain IELTS band scores. Theoretical implications for broadening the conceptualization of vocabulary depth, as well as pedagogical implications for supporting students' second language reading development, are discussed in this study. Hence sentence completion questions were more related to vocabulary depth because they required implicit information comprehension [6].

2.3. Synonyms

In Khazaal (2019), he sought to investigate and analyze students' errors and difficulties with English synonyms. According to the study's findings, college students had difficulty using synonyms and made numerous mistakes. These were caused by students' inability to acquire synonyms and their unawareness of the different types of words and their usage. This study proposed that to enhance English proficiency; students must learn enough new vocabulary by remembering two synonyms for each word. Synonyms are considered to be a crucial tool for learning English. It is crucially significant in our everyday speech. Because English possesses such a large vocabulary, many synonyms are immensely beneficial because they can demonstrate different variations of the same understanding [16].

It corresponds with Boontam's (2022) study, which showed that problems occur when learners apply synonyms in the wrong context. Therefore, not all words in a set of synonyms are completely interchangeable in all contexts. This study suggested that vocabulary knowledge can improve learners' English communication skills and self-confidence. Nonetheless, using synonyms is one of the most effective approaches to teaching vocabulary [4]. Furthermore, another study by Ganieva & Moxichexra (2022), revealed that vocabulary is the most important element in the English language. This implies the importance of learning vocabulary; students who want to improve their English must understand how to use synonyms appropriately [12].

2.4. Antonyms

Many academic disciplines highly value antonyms, including linguistics, psychology, literature, psycholinguistics, and children's language development. It reveals opposition or defines opposite words. It represents binary opposition in all communication modalities and registers, including spoken language, writing, factual and fictional content, and official and informal language use (Oripova, 2020) [27]. As shown in the study of Daniarti et al. (2020), students got a difficulty level of 30% on synonyms and antonyms, the highest percentage among other indicated questions in the said study. This indicated that students found it difficult to answer antonym questions, among other vocabulary-related questions [9]. Meanwhile, the study of Yen & Hoai (2022), shows that using synonyms and antonyms helped enhance the student's writing skills [44].

2.5. Analogy

A study claims that whereas analogy has frequently been cited as a mechanism for language development, its explanatory capacity is still debatable, mostly because there is a dearth of independent data on how analogy functions in language evolution. It was proposed that analogical support influences how a transformation proceeds, leaving traces in its wake (Markey et al., 2018) [20]. It has been established that analogy is a universal way of thinking that makes it possible to recognize the lexical components of a language belonging to one group using a mediator. Experimental evidence supports the dissociation principle's validity based on remembering the unusual and unique (Slukhai et al., 2020) [37]. In the process of learning a language, an analogy is created by the learner using the structure of other forms they are familiar with. Word comparisons enable students to connect well-known ideas with new ones. Ideas are past encounters with fresh information. Students use this technique to deal with two connected and are asked to describe the nature of their connection in words (Rangkuti, 2021) [29].

An effective strategy for promoting conceptual understanding and transfer to different domains is an analogy. Analogical comparisons that are carefully designed highlight the causal-relational structure of stem concepts and offer a potent tool for concluding a known source domain that can be applied to an unknown target domain. Nonetheless, it is important to use analogies while taking into account pupils' past knowledge and cognitive abilities. We quickly examine the theoretical and empirical evidence in favor of using analogies in

education and suggest five general rules to apply to optimize the potential advantages (Gray & Holyoak, 2021) [13].

2.6. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is one of the people's most complex cognitive processes, making teaching, assessing, and studying challenging. Word reading ability, working memory, inference creation, comprehension monitoring, vocabulary, and prior knowledge are just a few of the linguistic and cognitive processes that must function together to understand the information being read (Elleman & Oslund, 2019) [10].

In the Philippines, among the 79 participating countries and economies at the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), boys' and girls' performances in reading comprehension both ranked lowest among PISA-participating countries. According to the 2018 summary of findings, "reading proficiency is vital for a wide variety of human activities, from following instructions in a manual to understanding the five W's questions such as "who, what, when, where, and why" of an event to conversing with individuals for a specific purpose or transaction" (San Juan, 2019) [32]. However, a study by Oclarit & Casinillo (2022), concluded that using context clues increases the students' reading comprehension. Students that are modeled context clue strategies over a period of time improve their ability to locate clues in the text and alleviate their comprehension level. This suggests that the practice of close passages invites new words into the student's life and can assist in bridging the achievement gap between frustration, instructional, and independent students. They also stated that students with higher reading levels, by having a good vocabulary, will grow faster and gain understanding quickly of the text and even the different learning areas [25].

2.7. Idiomatic Expression

According to a study, learning the figurative language well is one of the more difficult aspects of learning a second language. Understanding idioms is essential for developing figurative fluency and ability. As a key sign of communicative competence, mastery of these formulaic sequences enables speakers to utilize the language both fluently and idiomatically (Yunus & Hmaidan, 2021) [45]. One of the biggest difficulties that English language learners have is idioms. Therefore, it is important to pay more attention to developing the pupils' knowledge of and proficiency with these terms (Ennebati, 2021) [11].

Although idiomatic phrases like "smell a rat," "jump the gun," and "go cold turkey" are frequently used in oral English and are important for both first- and second-language (L1) acquisition, little is known about how well assumption techniques work when idiomatic phrases are involved (Baier Schmidt, 2022) [3]. The research findings gave useful insights for EFL teachers, students, and curriculum designers although they attempt to address the problem of how English idioms can be learned and taught in the language classroom. It is advised that English teachers get more familiar with and use more adaptable and interesting educational techniques, such as using short videos to teach idiomatic idioms to their students. The burden of learning idioms can be further reduced by using short videos as supplemental teaching materials, which can also improve the learner's motivation and atmosphere for learning (Aljebreen & Alzamil, 2022) [1].

2.8. Cloze Test

According to Yaseen & Rasheed (2022) a cloze test is a straightforward assessment that consists of particular text or sentences with omitted words, symbols, signs, or phrases. It is also known as a filling space assessment or a deletion test. A study found that cloze test results were lower than those from the other forms of deletion test. The results showed that the cloze test type might accurately and dependably assess discourse, vocabulary, and grammatical components of academic language. Furthermore, nearly all students believed that multiple-choice cloze tests seemed preferable for evaluating written performance since they could anticipate the answer [43]. Traditional cloze tests may be unreliable indicators of comprehension abilities that extend beyond simple text comprehension (Jensen et al., 2022) [15].

However, the correlation between students' cloze test performance and language proficiency was favorable, indicating that the cloze test may be a useful tool for enhancing the vocabulary of EFL learners (Han, 2022) [14]. Another comparative study by Yaseen & Rasheed (2022), stated that students' performance had shown to be higher on a multiple-choice cloze than on a standardized test. Most students discovered that the story of the book or the question is simpler to understand in cloze tests. This indicates that the cloze test improved the comprehension of students on the narrative text [43]. However, many students still have trouble completing the cloze questions because of lacking vocabulary and are unfamiliar with the text's subject matter or plot (Rizki, 2022) [30].

III. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

A descriptive research design is used in this study. According to McCombes (2022), descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon; thus, the present study describes and quantifies the English proficiency level of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration students along with sentence completion, synonyms, antonyms, analogy, reading comprehension, idiomatic expression, and cloze test. It can answer what, where, when, and how questions, but not why questions [21].

3.2 Locale of the Study

This study was conducted at a State University in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental. The researchers conducted the survey in December 2022, the First Semester of the Academic Year 2022-2023.

3.3 Participants

The study participants were the 269 students enrolled in Bachelor of Science in Office Administration at a State University in the First Semester, Academic Year 2022-2023.

3.4 Sampling Technique

To determine the respondents of this study, stratified random sampling was used. Shin (2022) disclosed that stratified random sampling starts by dividing a population into groups with similar attributes. Then a random sample is taken from each group. This method ensures that different segments of a population are equally represented [36].

3.5. Research Instrument

This study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire dealt with the profile of the participants, namely age, year level, academic strand from senior high school, and last school attended. The second part was a 70-item multiple-choice English proficiency test divided into seven categories. The first category was composed of 10 item test focusing on sentence completion. The second category was composed of 5 items focusing on synonyms. The third category was about antonyms with 5 items; Analogy in the fourth category with 10 items, and Reading comprehension in the fifth category with 8 items. Moreover, the sixth category was composed of 10 items focusing on idiomatic expressions, and lastly, the seventh category was about the cloze test with 22 items. All 7 categories of the second part of the survey questionnaire used percentage and frequency. The adapted survey questionnaire did not anymore undergo content validation. The content of the adapted survey questionnaire was obtained from the work of Mr. Denton Caballero. This study tested reliability on 32 respondents from the State University in Bacolod City who enrolled in Bachelor of Science in Office Administration and were not part of the survey. Cronbach's Alpha of .083 was obtained during the pilot testing. Hence, the instrument is reliable.

3.6. Data-Gathering Procedure

To get the information of the students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration program for the first semester of the Academic Year 2022-2023, the researchers requested authorization from the Office of the Students' Affair of the College of Business Management and Accountancy. The data were gathered using the adapted- survey questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. First, the researcher asked permission from the Dean of the College of the State University to conduct the survey. After the approval was granted, the researchers sought consent from the respondents. Afterward, the researchers gave them adequate information regarding the study and informed them of their roles and rights. The researchers then distributed the survey questionnaire. After the survey, the gathered data were subjected to analysis and interpretation.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

The responses to the survey questionnaire by the 161 respondents were statistically analyzed with the data requirements of the study. Using the adapted-survey questionnaire, the researchers gathered answers ranging from below beginner, beginner, elementary, intermediate, upper, advanced, and proficient. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentage were utilized to compute the replies in each choice after responses were collected via Google Forms. The research data was sorted, recorded, and processed for analysis and interpretation. For problem 1, to determine the profile of the respondents, such as age, year level, academic strand (senior high school), and last school attended (public or private), the researchers used the frequency count and percentage. For problem 2, to determine the level of English proficiency of the office administration students in CHMSU in terms of sentence completion synonyms, antonyms, analogy, reading comprehension, idiomatic expression, and cloze test, the percentage was used.

The scale below was used to determine the participants' English proficiency level. This was based on the type of proficiency levels in learning English by English 100.

Percentage	Interpretation
1-10	Below Beginner
11-30	Beginner
31-40	Elementary
41-50	Intermediate
51-60	Upper
61-70	Advanced

For problem 3, to determine if there is a significant difference in the level of proficiency when participants are

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-21 years old	116	72.0
	22-29 years old	45	28.0
	1 st	52	32.3
	2 nd	28	17.4
	3 rd	42	26.1
Year Level	4 th	39	24.2
	ABM	94	58.4
	HUMSS	29	18.0
	GAS/STEM	7	4.3
Academic Strand	OTHERS	31	19.3
	Public	108	67.1
Last School Attended	Private	53	32.9

grouped according to the profile variables, Mann-Whitney U Test was used for age, and last school attended. For the year level and academic strand, Kruskal Wallis was used. For problem 4, the proposed training plan for English Proficiency was based on the study's results.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

In this study, a letter of consent was sent to the participants whether they would allow the researchers to write their personal information, such as their name (optional), age, year level, academic strand, and last school attended on the questionnaire intended in gathering data for the level of English proficiency. The participants' information was treated with the highest confidentiality in the letter, and the responses were only used for research purposes. The participants were also informed that they were free to halt at any time during the activity if questions upset or offended them. Furthermore, a month after the completion of the study, the completed questionnaire was deleted and discarded.

IV. Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

Table 1 Profile of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration Students.

Note: 1-10 Below Beginner, 11-30 Beginner, 31-40 Elementary, 41-50 Intermediate, 51-60 Upper, 61-70 Advanced, 71-100 Proficient

The results revealed that when the participants were grouped according to their age, the age between 18-21 years old got a frequency of 116 with a percentage of 72.0, while the age between 22-29 years old got a frequency count of 45 with a percentage of 28.0. This implies that the age between 18-21 years old dominates the population of the participants in this category.

When the participants were grouped according to their year level, the 1st year got a frequency of 52 with a percentage of 32.3, 2nd year got a frequency of 28 with a percentage of 17.4, the 3rd year got a frequency count of 42 with a percentage of 26.1 and the 4th year got a frequency of 39 with a percentage of 24.2. The data showed that the 1st year dominates the population of the participants under this category.

When the participants were grouped according to their academic strand, ABM gained a frequency of 94 with a percentage of 58.4, HUMSS with a frequency of 29, equivalent to a percentage of 18.0, GAS/STEM got a frequency of 7 with a percentage of 4.3, and the other specified academic strand got a frequency of 31 with a percentage of 19.3. The data showed that ABM dominates the population of the participants under this category.

When the participants were grouped according to their last school attended, the public school garnered a frequency of 108 with a percentage of 67.1, while the private school garnered a frequency of 53 with a percentage of 32.9. This implies that those who came from public schools dominates the population of the participants under this category.

Table 2 Level of English Proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration Students

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
Sentence Completion	68	41.93	Intermediate
Synonyms	95	59.01	Upper
Antonyms	64	39.50	Elementary
Analogy	55	33.86	Elementary
Reading Comprehension	35	21.97	Beginner
Idiomatic Expression	86	53.66	Upper
Cloze Test	76	47.22	Intermediate
Average	68	42.45	Intermediate

Note: 1-10 Below Beginner, 11-30 Beginner, 31-40 Elementary, 41-50 Intermediate, 51-60 Upper, 61-70 Advanced, 71-100 Proficient

Findings showed that the category with the highest percentage of the correct answer was the Synonyms category, with a percentage of 59.01, indicating that the participants in this category are on the Upper level of English proficiency. However, the category with the lowest percentage of having the correct answer was found in the Reading Comprehension category, with a percentage of 21.97, indicating that the participants in this category are at the Beginner level of English proficiency. The overall percentage of the level of English proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration was 42.45, which indicates that their proficiency is at the Intermediate level.

This result of the study is supported by Tanpoco et al. (2019), stating that although first-year college students have average skills in grammar, students' language skills may vary according to the course they are taking. Therefore the deterioration in English proficiency of the Filipinos is evident [39]. Suarez (2020) also emphasized that the English used by Filipinos has "deteriorated" because there is a lack of (good) model input in and out of the classroom [38]. These studies are also aligned with Morallo (2018) when he revealed the early findings of two-year research-based on TOEIC measurements, which indicated that Filipino graduates' English abilities were below compared to the taxi drivers in Dubai [24].

Table 2.1 Level of English Proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration Students in terms of Sentence Completion

Statements	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1. She is well-loved by the people for being	130	80.7	Proficient
2. Davidlee is an __ diver. He always wins the gold medal.	49	30.4	Beginner
3. The __ student __ going to school.	134	83.2	Proficient
4. The reporter was adjudged guilty of __ for spreading false accusations.	68	42.2	Intermediate
5. Ewan played the violin with such __, everyone was amazed.	95	59.0	Upper
6. Today, Alfred Wegener's theory is __; however, he died an outsider treated with __ by the scientific establishments.	11	6.8	Below Beginner
7. The revolution of art has not lost its steam; it ___ on as fiercely as ever.	84	52.2	Upper
8. Biological clocks are of such __ adaptive value to living organisms, that we would expect most organisms to __ them.	49	30.4	Beginner
9. The peasants were the least __ of all people, bound by tradition and __ by superstitions.	25	15.5	Beginner
10. The conclusion of his argument, while __, is far from __.	30	18.6	Beginner
Average	68	41.93	Intermediate

Note: 1-10 Below Beginner, 11-30 Beginner, 31-40 Elementary, 41-50 Intermediate, 51-60 Upper, 61-70

Advanced, 71-100 Proficient

Findings showed that the item with the highest percentage of the correct answer was item number 3, with 83.2 percent, indicating that participants in this section are proficient in English. Meanwhile, the item with the least correct answers was item 6, with a percentage of 6.8 which indicates that their level of English proficiency is below beginner level. The overall percentage of 41.93 indicates that the BSOA students' proficiency level in terms of sentence completion is on the Intermediate level.

In similar findings, sentence completion is believed to assess diverse abilities, including linguistic proficiency, common knowledge, and logical reasoning at different levels (Park et al., 2018). It was stated that sentence completion is well-studied as one of the classic representatives for the intermediate task category. Thus, this study emphasizes that the majority of students studying English as a second language (ESL) utilize sentence completion questions [28].

Table 2.2 Level of English Proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration Students in terms of Synonyms

Note: 1-10 Below Beginner, 11-30 Beginner, 31-40 Elementary, 41-50 Intermediate, 51-60 Upper, 61-70

Advanced, 71-100 Proficient

Findings showed that the item with the highest percentage of the correct answer was item number 5, with 77.0 percent, indicating that participants in this section are proficient in English. Meanwhile, the item with the least correct answer was item 4, with a percentage of 36.6, indicating that their level of English proficiency is on an elementary level. The overall percentage of 59.01 indicates that the BSOA students' proficiency level in terms of synonyms is on the Upper level.

This result clashes with Khazaal's (2019) findings, stating that college students had difficulty using synonyms and made numerous mistakes. This was caused by students' inability to acquire synonyms and their unawareness of the different types of words and their usage [16]. It also corresponds with the study of Boontam (2022), which showed that problem tends to occur when learners apply synonyms in the wrong context. Therefore, not all words in a set of synonyms are completely interchangeable in all contexts. This study suggested that vocabulary knowledge can improve learners' English communication skills and self-confidence. Nonetheless, using synonyms is one of the most effective approaches to teaching vocabulary [4].

Table 2.3 Level of English Proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration students in terms of Antonyms.

Statements	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1. The mother has been <u>doleful</u> every when she lost her son.	86	53.4	Upper
2. Juan Carlo <u>acquiesced</u> to his friends' plan of going to Baguio comes February.	44	27.3	Beginner
3. John Dan's house is full of a <u>motley</u> collection of furniture, including antiques, woodcrafts, and glasswares.	64	39.8	Elementary
4. Jeric Angel's nervousness was <u>palpable</u> despite the confident façade he was showing.	52	32.3	Elementary
5. He had learned that everything in life is <u>evanescent</u> .	72	44.7	Intermediate
Average	64	39.50	Elementary

Note: 1-10 Below Beginner, 11-30 Beginner, 31- 40 Elementary, 41-50 Intermediate, 51-60 Upper, 61-70 Advanced, 71-100 Proficient

Findings showed that the item with the highest percentage of the correct answer was item 1, with 53.4 percent, indicating that participants in this section are in the Upper level of English proficiency. Meanwhile, the item with the least correct answer was item 2, with a percentage of 27.3, indicating that their English proficiency is

Statements	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1. The <u>virulent</u> drug he had mistakenly taken killed him in an instant.	114	70.8	Advanced
2. Argentina is one of the world's leading honey-exporters. It maintains a large <u>apiary</u> .	99	61.5	Advanced
3. Eugenio Joshua admires his teacher's <u>deportment</u> during class.	80	49.7	Intermediate
4. His recommendation was rejected because it might be <u>inimical</u> to the company.	59	36.6	Elementary
5. Marvin Jay's supervisor asked him to <u>elucidate</u> his proposal during the presentation.	124	77.0	Proficient
Average	95	59.01	Upper

on the beginner level. The overall percentage was 39.50, indicating that BSOA students' proficiency level in terms of antonyms is on the Elementary level.

This result aligned with the study of Daniarti, Taufiq, and Sunaryo (2020), which shows that students got a difficulty level of 30% on synonyms and antonyms, the highest percentage among other indicated questions in the said study. This indicated that students found it difficult to answer antonym questions, among other vocabulary-related questions [9]. Meanwhile, the study of Yen & Hoai (2022), shows that using synonyms and antonyms helped enhance the students' writing skills [44].

Table 2.4 Level of English Proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration Students in terms of Analogy.

Statements	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1. Articulate :: Speech	63	39.1	Elementary
2. Inception :: Conclusion	77	47.8	Intermediate
3. Scintillating :: Dullness	69	42.2	Intermediate
4. Shard :: Pottery	53	32.9	Elementary
5. Prosaic :: Mundane	35	21.7	Beginner
6. Attenuate :: Signal	20	12.4	Beginner
7. Salacious :: Wholesome	66	41.0	Intermediate
8. Penury :: Money	50	31.1	Elementary
9. Mason :: Stone	91	56.5	Upper
10. Repel :: Lure	79	49.1	Intermediate
AVERAGE	55	33.86	Elementary

Note: 1-10 Below Beginner, 11-30 Beginner, 31-40 Elementary, 41-50 Intermediate, 51-60 Upper, 61-

70 Advanced, 71-100 Proficient

Findings revealed that the item with the highest percentage of the correct answer was item number 9, with 56.5 percent, indicating that participants in this section have the Upper level of English proficiency. Meanwhile, the item with the least correct answer was item 6, with a percentage of 12.4, indicating that their English proficiency is at the beginner level. The overall percentage was 33.86, indicating that the level of proficiency of the BSOA students in terms of analogy is at the elementary level.

In relation to the findings, Maris (2014) revealed that most students still have problems defining statements as clues on word analogies. It also stated that analogy teachers, using word analogies to improve the students' vocabulary can help them develop their higher-level thinking and language skills. Analogy, or likely one thing to another based upon similarity, is often given on the standardized test [19].

Table 2.5 Level of English Proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration students in terms of Reading Comprehension.

Statements	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1. The author implies that the answers to the questions in sentence two would reveal that human beings ____.	27	16.8	Beginner
2. The author would apparently agree that playing poker is ____.	39	24.2	Beginner
3. The author makes his main point with the aid of ____.	37	23.0	Beginner
4. In the context of the final sentence the word "subtle" most nearly means	30	18.6	Beginner
5. The first sentence of Passage 3 contains an element of?	30	18.6	Beginner
6. By calling America an "imaginary country" the author of passage two implies that ____.	45	28.0	Beginner
7. Both passages make the point that ____.	57	35.4	Elementary
8. Both passages list a series of places, but differ in that the author of passage three ____.	18	11.2	Beginner
Average	35	21.97	Beginner

Note: 1-10 Below Beginner, 11-30 Beginner, 31-40 Elementary, 41-50 Intermediate, 51-60 Upper, 61-70 Advanced, 71-100 Proficient

Findings revealed that the item with the highest percentage of the correct answer was item number 7, with 35.4 percent, indicating that participants in this section are at the Elementary level of English proficiency. Meanwhile, the item with the least correct answer was item number 8, with a percentage of 11.2, indicating that their English proficiency was at the beginner level. The overall percentage was 21.97, indicating that the level of proficiency of the BSOA students in terms of reading comprehension is at the beginner level.

The present study is supported by the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment results. It states that among the 79 participating countries, the Philippines has the lowest rank in reading comprehension (San Juan, 2019) [32]. However, a study by Oclarit & Casinillo (2022), concluded that using context clues increases the students' reading comprehension. Students that are modeled context clue strategies over a period of time improve their ability to locate clues in the text and alleviate their comprehension levels. They also state that students with higher reading levels, by having a good vocabulary, will grow faster and gain understanding quickly of the text and even the different learning areas [26].

Table 2.6 Level of English Proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration Students in terms of Idiomatic Expression.

Statements	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1. We are affected as much as you are by the rising prices of gasoline; we are all "in the same boat".	112	69.6	Advanced
2. The members of the public are demanding for better public infrastructure and more public services, but at the same time they are demanding for lower taxes. It is becoming a "Catch-22 situation".	78	48.4	Intermediate
3. That lady should not have become a war correspondent. She is a "square peg in a round hole".	74	46.0	Intermediate
4. "It slipped my mind" that I will have with Davidlee tonight.	105	65.2	Advanced
5. The idea of expansionism "has not taken root" in the Philippines.	79	49.1	Intermediate
6. Ewan Gregory does not mind how much resistance he causes; he like "sailing against the wind".	52	32.3	Elementary
7. Although Marvin Jay had only a minor role in the play, he "stole the thunder from" the lead actor.	100	62.1	Advanced
8. I had a "heart to heart talk" with my teacher on my plans to study Linguistics or Microbiology at the university.	124	77.0	Proficient
9. Juan Carlo decide "to keep his peace" until he finished examining the situation.	85	52.8	Upper
10. The company needs a couple of million pesos for its expansion. It is likely that the Php 100 000.00 the partner has offered is "a drop in the ocean".	55	34.2	Elementary
Average	86	53.66	Upper

Note: 1-10 Below Beginner, 11-30 Beginner, 31-40 Elementary, 41-50 Intermediate, 51-60 Upper, 61-70

Advanced, 71-100 Proficient

Findings showed that the item with the highest percentage of a correct answer was item number 8, with 77.0 percent, indicating that participants in this section are at the Proficient level of English proficiency. Meanwhile, the item with the least correct answer was item number 6, with a percentage of 32.3, indicating that their English proficiency is on the Elementary level. The overall percentage was 53.66, indicating that the level of proficiency of the BSOA students in terms of idiomatic expression is at the Upper level.

However, this result was challenged when according to a study, learning the figurative language well is one of the more difficult aspects of learning a second language. Understanding idioms is essential for developing figurative fluency and ability (Yunus & Hmaidan, 2021) [45]. One of the biggest difficulties that English language learners have is idioms. Therefore, it is important to pay more attention to developing the pupils' knowledge of and proficiency with these terms (Ennebati, 2021) [11].

Table 2.7 Level of English Proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration students in terms of the Cloze Test.

Statements	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1. This is the School__ Plan of the East Central Elementary School, San Fabian District II, Pangasinan II Division,	95	59.0	Upper
2. was____ and	114	70.8	Advanced
3.____ through the concerted efforts of the teaching	72	44.7	Intermediate
4. ____ with the other stakeholders of education headed by the principal.	58	36.0	Elementary
5. It__ the vision or educational goals which	55	34.2	Elementary
6. __ to uplift or improve the school performance in terms of the following areas of development namely the pupil, staff, curriculum and physical facilities development	95	59.0	Upper
7. which will ____	34	21.1	Beginner
8. as the ____ for evaluating the performance of the school. It presents the school and community profile and the expected activities of the school.	24	14.9	Beginner
9. Through the____ of this School Improvement Plan, with the unwavering	109	67.7	Advanced
10.____ of the officers and members of the PTA as well as the School Governing Council and other stakeholders of education,	102	63.4	Advanced

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11. it is __ that the goals vision and mission	85	52.8	Upper
12. of the East Central Elementary School will be__.	84	52.2	Upper
13. Madam ____	78	48.4	Intermediate
14. I have the honor to request permission ____ your good office to	40	24.8	Beginner
15. an action research in Science____	123	76.4	Proficient
16.____, "Enhancing the Performance of the Grade VI Pupils in Science and Health through Counteractive Lecture "for the Grade VI pupils of Greater Heights Elementary School for this school year 2014 – 2015.	131	81.4	Proficient
17. Hoping for your____ approval.	105	65.2	Advanced
18. _____	40	24.8	Beginner
EWAN ETHAN LEE C. RIVERA Teacher			
19. 1st_____	7	4.3	Below Beginner
20. _____	113	70.2	Advanced
21. Respectfully forwarded ____ the Schools Division Superintendent	93	57.8	Intermediate
22. _____	17	10.6	Below Beginner
DAVIDLEE DV. ROMERO JR. Public Schools District Supervisor			
Average	76	47.22	Intermediate

Note: 1-10 Below Beginner, 11-30 Beginner, 31-40 Elementary, 41-50 Intermediate, 51-60 Upper, 61-70

Advanced, 71-100 Proficient

Findings showed that the item with the highest percentage of the correct answer was item number 16, with 81.4 percent, indicating that participants in this section are at the Proficient level of English proficiency. Meanwhile, the item with the least correct answer was item number 19, with a percentage of 4.3, indicating that their English proficiency is below Beginner level. The overall percentage was 47.22, indicating that the level of proficiency of the BSOA students in terms of the cloze test is at the Intermediate level.

The alignment of this result is evident when a study by Han (2022) shows that the correlation between students' cloze test performance and language proficiency was favorable, indicating that the cloze test may be a useful tool for enhancing the vocabulary of EFL learners [14]. Another comparative study by Yaseen & Rasheed (2022), stated that students' performance had shown to be higher on a multiple-choice cloze than on a standardized test. Most students discovered that the story of the book or the question is simpler to understand in cloze tests. This indicates that the cloze test improved the comprehension of students on the narrative text [43]. However, many students still have trouble completing the cloze questions because of lacking vocabulary and are unfamiliar with the text's subject matter or plot (Rizki, 2022) [30].

Table 3 Significant difference on the level of English proficiency in Office Administration Program when grouped according to their profile variable.

Variables	Computed value	p-value	Interpretation
Age	2360.500	.347	Not Significant
Year level	1.714	.634	Not Significant
Academic Strand	3.382	.336	Not Significant
Last School Attended	2450.000	.138	Not Significant

Note: 1-10 Below Beginner, 11-30 Beginner, 31-40 Elementary, 41-50 Intermediate, 51-60 Upper, 61-70 Advanced, 71-100 Proficient

Table 3 revealed that age, year level, academic strand and last school attended has no significant difference. The age got a result of .347 p-value, year level with a result of .634, academic strand that got a result of .336 and last school attended that got a result of .138. This indicates that the p-value is greater than .05. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted. It implies that the age, year level, academic strand and last school attended has no bearing significance on the level of English proficiency of the participants.

This findings is aligned to the study of Serquina and Batang (2018) which emphasizes that the result of age and gender in relation to English proficiency disprove other studies which explain that as age increases proficiency progresses and that males are more advanced in academic than girls or vice versa [35]. However, according to Meniado (2019) a study investigating the relationship between demographic variables and English proficiency of university students in Thailand found that demographic variables were significantly related to English proficiency [23].

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the researchers arrived at the following conclusion that there is no significant difference in the level of English Proficiency of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration students when grouped according to age, year level, academic strand, and last school attended.

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