LLT Journal, e-ISSN 2579-9533, p-ISSN 1410-7201, Vol. 24, No. 2, October 2021

LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching
http://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/LLT
Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

RECONCEPTUALIZING ENGLISH EDUCATION OF FILIPINO ESL LEARNERS FROM PUBLIC SECONDARY LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Orlyn Joyce Dollente Esquivel
University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines
correspondence: odesquivel@up.edu.ph
DOI: 10.24071/llt.v24i2.3281
received 10 April 2021; accepted 29 October 2021

Abstract
This study examined the results of a survey questionnaire on 300 Grade 10 Filipino ESL (English as a second language) learners, randomly selected from two public secondary learning institutions in the Philippines. The survey was used to investigate the students' attitudes toward the English language and their own learning experiences. For the data collection, the survey questionnaire consists of 20 statements, in which every five statements belong to one particular category of the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills). Overall findings of the descriptive-quantitative analyses unveiled that most of the students elicited a high degree of negative attitudes toward the English language. This paper concludes with educational implications to help develop 'positive attitudes' in English language learning which are not only limited to Filipino ESL students, but also to other ESL learners across the world.

Keywords: Language attitudes, English as a Second Language (ESL), English Language Education (ELE), English in the Philippines

Introduction
English has definitely come of age as a universal language (Crystal, 2003). With an extensive number of speakers using it as a first language, as a second language, and as a foreign language, English has become the preferred *lingua franca* in all means of communication. It is currently the undisputed language of science and technology, media, business, international trade, and transportation. As such, in many countries, the English language is being used as a medium of communication and instruction in formal education. In the Philippines, it is a core subject that is being taught in all levels of both private and public learning institutions. Whereas, to make the Filipino students acquire the essential English skills and to be competitive in the globalized society. The need to develop the quality of education and to prepare the Filipino students to a globally competitive level is the focus of the Department of Education and of the sectors of educators concerned. Through the surveyed learning experiences and attitudes, this paper attempts to provide the present status of the English language learning among Filipino ESL learners in Philippine public high schools.

English Language Education in the Philippines

The Philippines is internationally known as one of the prevalent English-speaking nations. Majority of its populace are using English as a second language (L2). The English language was introduced to Filipinos as a medium of instruction in the formal educational system when the United States occupied the country. On April 7, 1990, U.S. President William McKinley dispensed a Letter of Instruction promulgating that English should be the language used in teaching at all levels of the public educational system in the Philippines (Nutley, 1954). It was believed that English could amalgamate the Filipinos since there are various local languages in the country (Martin, 1999). Henceforth, the U.S. government sent American teachers (called Thomasites) to establish the new public school system, and to teach the language to the Filipinos.

According to Koo (2008), the status of education, as observed in 1914, displayed a low level of English language proficiency. The Monroe Commission on Philippine Education, led by Paul Monroe, looked on schools all throughout the Philippines, interviewing a total of 32,000 pupils and 1,077 teachers. The commission enunciated that the Filipino students are struggling with English-language related subjects. In 1925, George Counts (a member of the commission) wrote in *The Elementary School Journal* that "Half of the children were outside the reach of schools. Pupil performance was generally low in subjects that relied on English, although the achievement in Math and Science was at par with the average performance of American schoolchildren..." (p. 26). The commission, however, commended ways to subjugate the "foreign language handicap" (Monroe, 1925).

When the United States granted full independence to the Filipinos in 1946, the Philippine schools sustained to implement English as the medium of instruction. Nevertheless, the government then permitted the use of the local language for Experimental Bilingual Education. The Revised Philippine Program (RPEP) was introduced in 1957, it demanded the usage of local vernacular for the Grade I and II pupils alongside the national language (named Pilipino in 1959). According to the Bureau of Public Schools (1957), English was taught as a subject in Grades I and II and utilized as a medium of instruction starting in Grade III through the tertiary level.

In 1974, the Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) was established through Department Order No. 25. The BEP enacted the use of English in instructing Mathematics and Science subjects, and Pilipino in the teaching of all other subjects both in elementary and secondary schools (Pascasio 1975).

In 1987, the Philippine constitution was redrafted during the administration of President Corazon Aquino wherein Section 6, Article 16 of the 1987 constitution promulgated in conclusive terms that 'The national language of the Philippines is Filipino (formerly Pilipino). In fact, "Filipino, unlike Tagalog or Pilipino, signaled the 'non-exclusivist and multilingual character' of the national language" (Nolasco 2010, p. 171). The BEP was modified to refer Filipino as the language of literacy and scholarly discourse while English is indicated to as the international language and non-exclusive language of science and technology (Bernardo, 2004).

During the governance of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2003, an Executive Order established a policy to strengthen English as a second a language

in the education system. Subsequently, the ability to use English is an important skill for global communication and global competitiveness, Arroyo's position led to fears that bilingual education caused the weakening of Filipinos' English skills and lessens the venture to work abroad.

Through fears of losing the English language, Congressman Gunigundo proposed a new bill in the Philippine Congress in 2008. House Bill 3719 (Multilingual Education and Literacy Act of 2008) propositioned the use of mother tongues (not just English or Filipino) as media of instruction in education. Nolasco (as cited in Mahboob & Cruz, 2013) stated that "HB 3719 was filed, and at least two prominent studies had already been conducted on mother-tongue education, both showing overwhelmingly favorable results with students educated in their mother tongue getting higher scores in all of the subjects" (p. 6). These studies, plus Gunigundo's argument have stipulated a promising case for L1 learning (Mahboob & Cruz, 2013). Mahboob & Cruz (2013) also added that "HB 3719 assumes that if Filipinos can learn literacy skills in their L1, then learning English and other skills demanded by global labor requirements will not be a problem" (p. 6).

In the present time, the K to 12 Program is the newly implemented curriculum of the Philippines. One of the changes in Basic Education Curriculum brought by the new program was the introduction of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), which required all schools throughout the country to administer mother tongues in early year's education.

Status of English in the Philippines

According to the Social Weather Stations, in 2008, (as cited in Nolasco, 2008) emphasized that, "about three fourths of Filipino adults (76%) said they could understand spoken English; another 75% said they could read English; three out of five (61%) said they could write English; close to half (46%) said they could speak English; about two fifths (38%) said they could think in English; while 8% said they were not competent in any way when it comes to the English language" (p. 2).

Victorino (2018) in his thesis entitled, *Department of Education's budget utilization: Its impact on National Achievement Test results* showed that the NSAT MPS in English of Grade 10 students from 2009 to 2015 was 51.80%, which is far below the minimum threshold of 66%-85% level (interpreted as "Moving Towards Mastery") set by the Department of Education in the Philippines. In spite of the reputed position that English has gained over a number of decades now (Finegan, 2011; Phillipson, 1992, 1996; Yule, 2014), the language appears to be meeting some new confronts as more and more importance is placed on mother-tongue based and multilingual education, consequently, in the primary education (UNESCO, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, 2010).

Table 1. National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT) Scores in English of Grade 10 Students in the Philippines for 2003 to 2012

School Year (S.Y.)	Mean Percentage Score (MPS)
2003 to 2004	50.08%
2004 to 2005	51.33%
2005 to 2006	47.73%
2006 to 2007	51.78%
2007 to 2008	53.46%
2008 to 2009	52.90%
2009 to 2010	46.95%
2011 to 2012	51.80%

Source: Department of Education

Table 1 indicates the NSAT scores (English area) of the Grade 10 students from 2003 to 2012. According to the table, S.Y. 2007 to 2008 shows the highest average at 53.46%. On the other hand, S.Y. 2009 to 2010 has the lowest average with 46.95%.

Table 2. National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT) Score Interpretation

Percentage	Descriptive Equivalent
96% - 100%	Mastered (M)
86% - 95%	Closely Approaching Mastery (CAM)
66% - 85%	Moving Towards Mastery (MTM)
35% - 65%	Average Mastery (AM)
16% - 34%	Low Mastery (LM)
5% - 15%	Very Low Mastery (VLM)
0% - 4%	Absolutely No Mastery (ANM)

Source: Department of Education

Table 2 reveals the test score interpretation for NSAT. In the Philippines, the standard benchmark set by the Department of Education in terms of achievement level is 75%, which is the national target. An MPS below 75% describes that the examinees' test performance does not belong to the upper average of the total number of test-takers (Victorino, 2018).

Therefore, using the given score interpretation, the initial results of the NSAT scores (English area) of the Grade 10 students from 2003 to 2012 did not satisfy the required percentage or the national target. These data increase some concerns about the capability of Filipino secondary students with the English language.

Language Attitudes

Language attitudes are the perceptions or beliefs that people have about their own language variety or the languages or language varieties of others. According to Agheyisi & Fishman (1970), "The study of attitudes has long been a central concern of the behavioral sciences; and a large portion of sociological and social psychological literature is devoted to theoretical and methodological formulations about attitudes" (p. 137). The idea of 'attitude' has been defined in several ways and distinguished by almost every theorist or researcher who has concerned

himself with the studies of attitudes. Obiols (as cited in Melander & Dalarna, 2003) stated that the language attitudes can "predict a given linguistics behavior: the choice of a particular language in multilingual communities, language loyalty, language prestige…" (p. 2). Romaine (1980) indicated that the basic principle of attitude measurement underlies the dimensions along which individual attitudes are classified.

Nevertheless, Romaine (1980) also pointed out "the translation of attitude from the subjective domain to something objectively measurable is a common problem in any research that involves social categorization and/or perceptual judgments" (p. 213). Language attitudes cannot be directly characterized but can be observed through actual behaviors. For instance, how people treat speakers of other languages (positively or negatively) or with their willingness (or not) to learn another language. Studies about attitudes can help classify how a people view the status of speakers of another language, and how they connect themselves with other varieties of languages. Since attitudes cannot be directly described, the assessment of language attitudes requires asking questions of different aspects.

Relationship of Language Attitudes and Language Learning

The important aims of education are to impart factual knowledge, skills, and topics about academic subjects, and to encourage students to have interests with these subjects. According to Lamb (2004), in order to promote encouragement to the mastery of factual knowledge, skills, and topics toward the academic subjects, education systems should rely on authentic assessment and examinations. Thus, certain researches have shown that people's goals can be powerfully influenced by their attitudes toward a task (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013). The same process goes along with the relationship between the students' attitudes and their language learning. Kara (as cited in Abidin, Alzwari & Mohammadi, 2012) emphasized that "attitudes towards learning besides opinions and beliefs have an obvious influence on students' behaviors and consequently on their performance" (p. 119). Nonetheless, substantial studies have been brough about to assess the effect of attitudes on language learning. Truitt (as cited in Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013) elicited in his study entitled, *Beliefs about language learning: A study of Korean University students learning English* that "the students' beliefs and attitudes toward language learning may vary based on cultural background and previous experiences" (p.12). It is claimed that the students who own positive beliefs and opinions about language learning have a propensity to increase more positive attitudes toward language learning. Diversely, the students who own negative beliefs and opinions concerning language learning may lead to class anxiety, low cognitive achievement, and negative attitudes (Victori & Lockhart, 1995). Overall, the positive or negative attitudes do not progress unintentionally but have some reasons for their occurrence (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013).

Socio-educational model

The researcher adopted the socio-educational model (see *Figure 1*), a model that illustrates a phenomenon in which, learners' integrativeness, and learners' attitudes toward the learning situation influence their level of motivation in learning a language. Integrativeness is the learner's interest with the target language community. On the other hand, attitudes on the language situation are

the learner's perceptions toward the school environment, school materials, language teacher, and target language. The model was developed by Howard Earl Gardner, an American developmental psychologist from Scranton, Pennsylvania, United States.

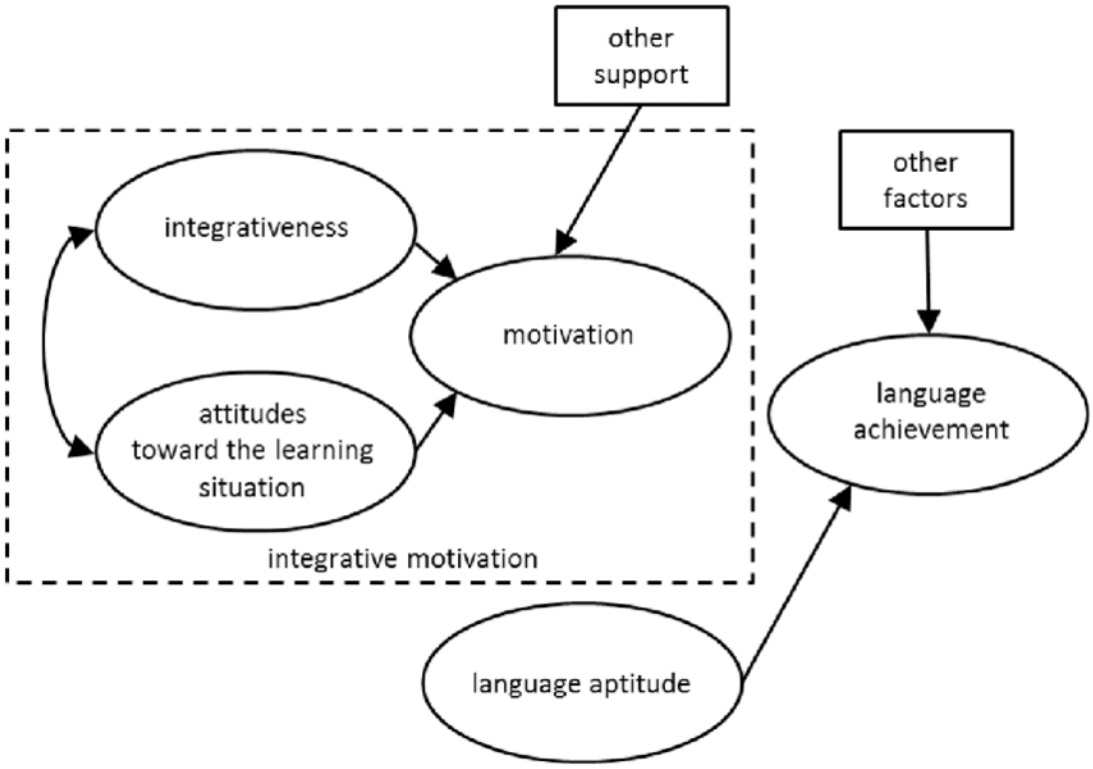


Figure 1. Socio-educational model of second language acquisition (Gardner, 2001)

As a theoretical basis, the researcher used this model to address that attitudes play an important role in motivating or demotivating a student to acquire and learn the English language.

Research Questions

This research provides insights to teachers regarding the current attitudes and beliefs of Filipino ESL students (in secondary public schools) toward the English language in general, which may help them evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching strategies and to aid the needs of the students. By providing the insights, this study stands as an overview to sectors of educators with the present status of English education and English language learning in Philippine secondary public schools. The two specific questions are as follows:

1. What are the attitudes of Filipino ESL learners (in public high schools) toward the English language within the four language skills?
2. What are the status of English education and English language learning in public secondary learning institutions in the Philippines?

Method

Participants

The survey questionnaire was dispensed to a sample of 300 Grade 10 students from two Philippine public high schools. A number of 150 respondents were selected from each of the schools through a random purposive sampling. Moreover, 160 respondents were female (53.33%) and 140 respondents were male (46.67%) – with ages ranging between 15-16 years old. All of the participants provided their permission for the researcher to investigate their responses.

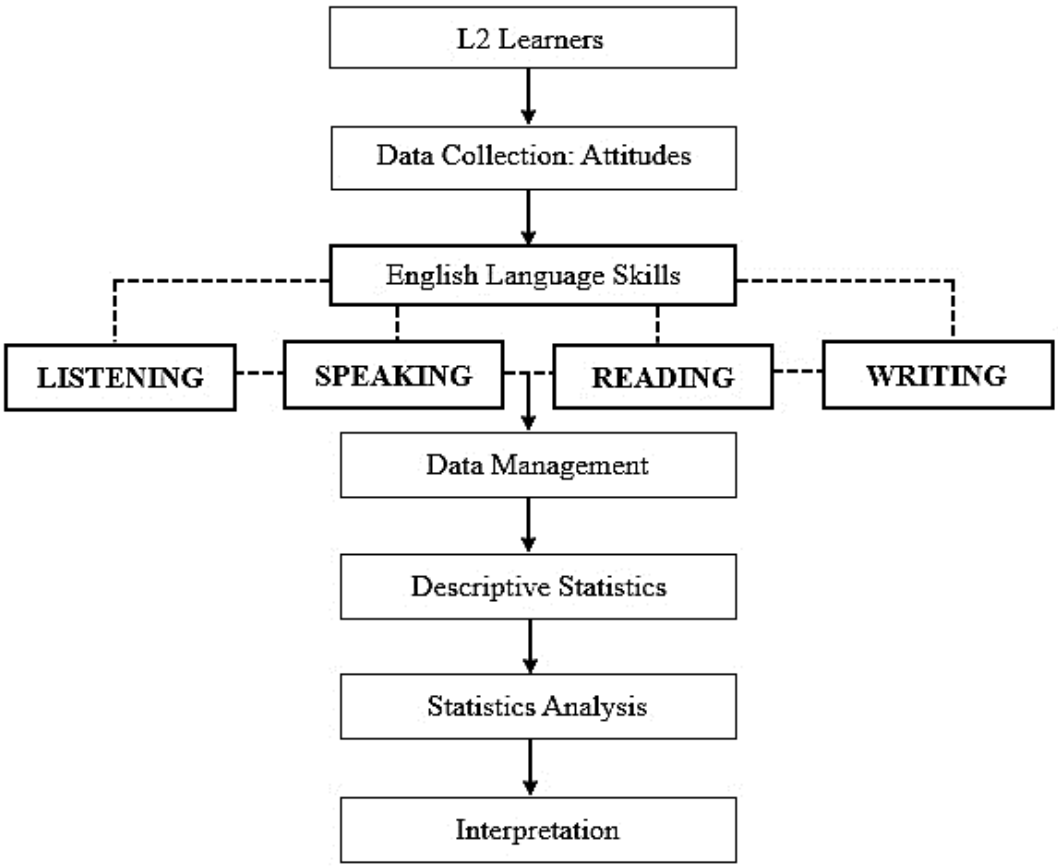


Figure 2. Research Paradigm

Research Design

The design of the study is descriptive and quantitative in nature. Thus, a survey questionnaire was employed as a measuring instrument. The selected respondents were required to provide answers to all items in the questionnaire. Moreover, the researcher utilized a research paradigm (see *Figure 2*) to visualize an accurate portrayal of the systematic analyses done with the results.

Instrument

The measuring instrument was a 20-item survey in which divided into four sections, each section relating to one particular category of the four English skills: (1) listening skill, (2) speaking skill, (3) reading skill, and (4) writing skill. Under

each section, there are five items that are related to a particular skill Overall, the items were positive questions. The survey questionnaire was designed and patterned to obtain adequate information concerning the learners' attitudes toward the English language.

Moreover, the instrument used a standardized 4-point Likert scale to quantify the data. The respondents answered the survey by placing a check mark on the box that corresponded to their answers for each item. The options were as follows: strongly disagree (SD), one point; disagree (D), two points; agree (A), three points; and strongly agree (SA), four points. The scale of the statistical value adopted to assess their attitude is as follows:

Weighted Mean	*Arbitrary Value*	*Verbal Interpretation*
3.51 – 4.00	4	Strongly Agree
2.51 – 3.50	3	Agree
1.51 – 2.50	2	Disagree
1.00 – 1.50	1	Strongly Disagree

Content Validity

The content validity of the questionnaire was validated by (n=4) educational experts having strong backgrounds of either English language teaching or quantitative research. These reviewers were asked to rate the 20 survey items on a five-point rating scale ranging from 1-not important to 5-very important; to fittingly validate and examine the items assembled. Moreover, descriptive feedbacks were also obtained from the reviewers. The questionnaire was improved according to the feedbacks accredited by the experts, thus, to make the items appropriate to the students' level of comprehension. Finally, the survey questionnaire was ready for pilot testing.

Pilot testing

The survey questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure the reliability level of its content. A group of (n=60) Grade 10 students were randomly selected from a different public high school for a similar context situation. To clarify, these students did not take part in the actual study. Before doing the pilot testing, the participants were given an orientation about the purpose of the study and then were asked to provide feedbacks about the questionnaire. The participants were given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Moreover, the survey questionnaire gained positive feedbacks from the students. Thus, the researcher did not do further revisions after the pilot testing.

Survey questionnaire administration

The researcher distributed the 20-item survey questionnaire to the (n=300) randomly selected students. The respondents were also given 20 minutes to finish the questionnaire. It should be noted that permission forms were distributed by the researcher to the students before they answered the survey.

Reliability of the questionnaire

By using Wessa's (2017) Cronbach alpha (v1.0.5) statistics software, the reliability of the survey questionnaire was determined. The standard range of internal consistencies of Cronbach's Alpha adopted is as follows:

Cronbach's alpha	*Internal consistency*
$0.9 \leq \alpha$	Excellent
$0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$	Good
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$	Acceptable
$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$	Questionable
$0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha < 0.5$	Unacceptable

The overall internal consistency of the questionnaire was 0.9534, which describes that it is an excellent tool in measuring the students' attitudes. In addition, the researcher also provided the estimation of the reliability coefficient for each of the sub-scales (see *Table 3*).

Table 3. Results of Cronbach's Alpha and related statistics

Sub-Categories	**No. of Items**	**Alpha Value**	**Std. Alpha**	**G6 (smc)**	**Average R**
Listening skills	5	0.953	0.954	0.989	0.521
Speaking skills	5	0.949	0.951	0.988	0.504
Reading skills	5	0.951	0.952	0.988	0.512
Writing skills	5	0.949	0.9509	0.988	0.505
Grand values	20	0.953	0.954	0.989	0.510

Table 3 indicates the reliability of the questionnaire items in terms of the four language skills separately. The value of Cronbach's Alpha regarding the listening skill sub-scale is 0.953, the speaking skill sub-scale obtained 0.949, the reading skill sub-scale had 0.951, and the Cronbach's Alpha value of the writing skill sub-scale is 0.949.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequency, frequency percentage, mean, standard deviation, and variance) was utilized for the quantitative data, particularly data from the survey questionnaire. The researcher manually encoded the individual scores onto an Excel spreadsheet, after which, the quantitative statistics were acquired using the same software. The items were put in a 4-point Likert scale from Level 1: Strongly Disagree to Level 4: Strongly Agree.

Findings and Discussion

The following section shows the descriptive and inferential results of the 20-item survey questionnaire directed to the respondents. The results are shown through descriptive statistics, which includes the frequency, frequency percentage, mean, standard deviation, and variance. Thus, followed by the detailed descriptions of the findings.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the students' attitudes toward the English language in the listening skills category

Questionnaire Data on Listening Skills								
No.	**Statements**	**SD** ***f*** **(%)**	**D** ***f*** **(%)**	**A** ***f*** **(%)**	**SA** ***f*** **(%)**	**(μ)**	**(σ)**	**(σ^2)**
1	I do not use English subtitle texts while watching English films.	46 (15.33)	164 (54.67)	68 (22.67)	22 (7.33)	2.22	0.791	0.625
2	I can understand the varieties of spoken English.	13 (4.33)	196 (65.33)	75 (25.00)	16 (5.33)	2.31	0.639	0.408
3	I receive sufficient training for English listening comprehension in my school.	27 (9.00)	149 (49.67)	95 (31.67)	29 (9.67)	2.42	0.785	0.617
4	I listen to English conversations, or watch American/British films and television channels to improve my English.	49 (16.33)	161 (53.67)	55 (18.33)	35 (11.67)	2.25	0.866	0.749
5	I get good marks in English listening activities.	19 (6.33)	197 (65.67)	72 (24.00)	12 (4.00)	2.26	0.630	0.397

*** 1- Strongly Disagree (SD), 2- Disagree (D), 3- Agree (A), 4- Strongly Agree (SA), Mean (μ), Standard Deviation (σ), Variance (σ^2)*

Table 4 shows the results of the descriptive statistics for the first category of the 20-item survey questionnaire. The mean score for statement no. 1 is 2.22 (SD= 0.791), the mean score for statement no. 2 is 2.33 (SD= 0.639), the mean score for statement no. 3 is 2.42 (SD= 0.785), the mean score for statement no. 4 is 2.25 (SD= 0.866), and the mean score for statement no. 5 is 2.26 (SD= 0.630). Based on the data, most of the students have negative attitudes toward the five statements in the *listening skills category*.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the students' attitudes toward the English language on the speaking skills category

Questionnaire Data on Speaking Skills								
No.	**Statements**	**SD** ***f*** **(%)**	**D** ***f*** **(%)**	**A** ***f*** **(%)**	**SA** ***f*** **(%)**	**(μ)**	**(σ)**	**(σ^2)**
6	I find that English speaking is an exciting classroom activity.	26 (8.67)	160 (53.33)	74 (24.67)	40 (13.33)	2.43	0.827	0.685
7	I have no doubts and feel confident to speak in English in class.	11 (3.67)	166 (55.33)	94 (32.33)	29 (9.67)	2.47	0.718	0.516
8	I am searching about 'ideas' rather than 'words or grammars' while speaking in English.	17 (5.67)	172 57.33)	91 (30.33)	20 (6.67)	2.38	0.694	0.482
9	I am comfortable speaking English with a native speaker.	34 (11.33)	187 (62.33)	63 (21.00)	16 (5.33)	2.20	0.704	0.495
10	I get good marks in English speaking activities.	12 (4.00)	174 (58.00)	101 (33.67)	13 (3.67)	2.38	0.635	0.403

*** 1- Strongly Disagree (SD), 2- Disagree (D), 3- Agree (A), 4- Strongly Agree (SA),Mean (μ), Standard Deviation (σ), Variance (σ^2)*

Table 5 statistically elicits the results for the second category of the 20-item survey questionnaire.

The mean score for statement no. 6 is 2.43 (SD= 0.827), the mean score for statement no. 7 is 2.47 (SD= 0.718), the mean score for statement no. 8 is 2.38 (SD= 0.694), the mean score for statement no. 9 is 2.20 (SD= 0.704), and the mean score for statement no. 10 is 2.38 (SD= 0.635). Based on the findings, a large number of the students have negative responses toward the five statements in the *speaking skills category*.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of the students' attitudes toward the English language on the reading skills category

Questionnaire Data on Reading Skills								
No.	**Statements**	**SD** ***f*** **(%)**	**D** ***f*** **(%)**	**A** ***f*** **(%)**	**SA** ***f*** **(%)**	**(μ)**	**(σ)**	**(σ^2)**
11	I used to read English books since childhood.	12 (4.00)	139 (46.33)	97 (32.33)	52 (17.33)	2.63	0.812	0.659
12	I like to read books in English better than in any other languages.	9 (3.00)	143 (47.67)	106 (35.33)	42 (14.00	2.60	0.761	0.579
13	I have a regular habit to read English books/comics/newspapers/magazines.	13 (4.33)	150 (50.00)	99 (33.00)	38 (12.67)	2.54	0.767	0.588
14	I find that reading English books are fun and interesting.	57 (19.00)	154 (52.33)	60 (20.00)	29 (9.67)	2.20	0.858	0.735
15	I get good marks in English reading activities.	35 (11.67)	206 (68.67)	57 (19.00)	2 (0.66)	2.09	0.326	0.571

*** 1- Strongly Disagree (SD), 2- Disagree (D), 3- Agree (A), 4- Strongly Agree (SA),Mean (μ), Standard Deviation (σ), Variance (σ^2)*

Table 6 reveals the results of the descriptive statistics for the third category of the 20-item survey questionnaire. The mean score for statement no. 11 is 2.63 (SD= 0.812), the mean score for statement no. 12 is 2.60 (SD= 0.761), the mean score for statement no. 13 is 2.54 (SD= 0.767), the mean score for statement no. 14 is 2.20 (SD= 0.858), and the mean score for statement no. 15 is 2.09 (SD= 0.326). With the data, a great extent of the students had negative attitudes toward the five statements in the *reading skills category*.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of the students' attitudes toward the English language on the writing skills category

Questionnaire Data on Reading Skills								
No.	**Statements**	**SD** ***f*** **(%)**	**D** ***f*** **(%)**	**A** ***f*** **(%)**	**SA** ***f*** **(%)**	**(μ)**	**(σ)**	**(σ^2)**
16	I used to write in English since I was young.	20 (6.67)	152 (50.67)	102 (34.00)	26 (8.67)	2.45	0.744	0.554
17	I have my own regular habit of writing in English (diary, poem, article, book, etc.).	19 (6.33)	172 (57.33)	73 (24.33)	36 (12.00)	2.42	0.781	0.610
18	I do not feel afraid and anxious when writing in English.	10 (3.33)	176 (58.67)	81 (27.00)	33 (11.00)	2.46	0.731	0.535
19	I find that writing in English is fun and interesting.	44 (14.67)	149 (49.67)	77 (25.67)	30 (10.00)	2.31	0.841	0.707
20	I get good marks in English writing activities	33 (11.00)	167 (55.67)	83 (27.67)	17 (5.67)	2.28	0.731	0.535

*** 1- Strongly Disagree (SD), 2- Disagree (D), 3- Agree (A), 4- Strongly Agree (SA),Mean (μ), Standard Deviation (σ), Variance (σ^2)*

Table 7 statistically illustrates the overall responses of the learners in the fourth category of the survey questionnaire. The mean score for statement no. 16 is 2.45 (SD= 0.744), the mean score for statement no. 17 is 2.42 (SD= 0.781), the mean score for statement no. 18 is 2.46 (SD= 0.731), the mean score for statement no. 19 is 2.31 (SD= 0.841), and the mean score for statement no. 20 is 2.28 (SD= 0.731). Moreover, almost all of the learners had negative attitudes toward the five statements in the *writing skills category*.

Table 8. Overall descriptive statistics of the students' attitudes toward the English language within the four language skills

Sub-Categories	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Variance**
Listening skills	10.26%	57.80%	24.33%	7.60%	2.29	0.742	0.559
Speaking skills	6.67%	57.26%	28.40%	7.73%	2.37	0.716	0.516
Reading skills	8.40%	53.00%	27.93%	10.87%	2.41	0.705	0.626
Writing skills	8.40%	54.40%	27.73%	9.47%	2.38	0.766	0.588
Grand Value	8.43%	55.62%	27.10%	8.92%	2.37	0.732	0.573

Table 8 shows the overall descriptive statistics of the learners' responses to all of the statements in the survey questionnaire. The total percentage of respondents who answered that they *Strongly Disagree* is 8.43. The total percentage of participants who responded that they *Disagree* is 55.62. The total percentage of participants who answered that they *Agree* is 27.10. The participants who responded that they *Strongly Agree* is 8.92. Moreover, the total mean score for all of the four language skills categories is 2.37 (SD= 0.7422). According to the findings, most of the learners had negative attitudes than the number of learners who had positive attitudes toward the statements in the survey.

Discussion

What are the attitudes of Filipino ESL learners (in public high schools) toward the English language within the four language skills?

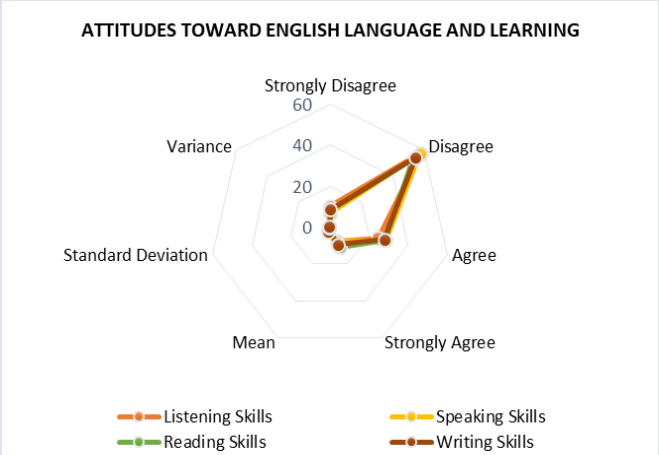
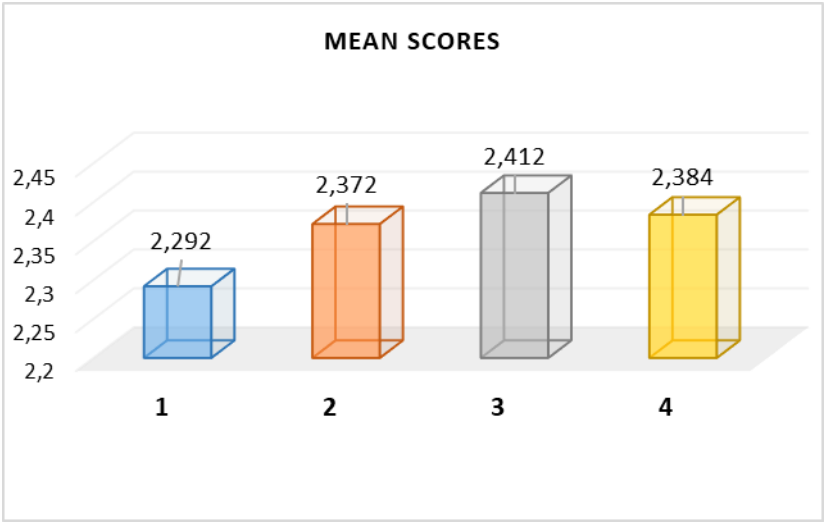


Figure 3. Students' overall responses to the sub-categories of the survey questionnaire

Concerning the first question, Figure 3 displays that most of the participants have responded that they *Disagree* with all of the statements in the survey. Thus, a large number of Filipino ESL learners in public high schools have negative attitudes toward the English language within the four language skills. According to Oxford and Shearing (1994), the attitudes toward a task can also be identified by the degree of the resapondents' motivation. Therefore, the findings reveal that the students do not have enough motivation concerning English language learning. Brown (2000) added that second language learners' negative attitudes are products of decreased motivation. Moreover, decreased motivation comes from different extrinsic factors. Baker (1988) said that negative attitudes "develop in early childhood and are the result of parents' and peers' attitudes, of contact with people who are different in any number of ways, and of interacting of different factors in human experience" (p.193).

Similarly, Colaste (2018) in his paper entitled, *The Impact of Students' Attitude towards English Language on Academic Achievement* reported that the respondents in his study have negative attitudes toward English as a subject. His respondents were Grade 9 Filipino students (n= 88) from a public high school in the Philippines. The students in Colaste's (2018) study admitted that "they dislike English as a subject because they find it difficult to express themselves using the language as a medium communication" (p.1). However, Brown (2000) stated that negative attitudes could be emended, for example, by often exposure to reality and to actual persons from other cultures.

What are the status of English education and English language learning in public secondary learning institutions in the Philippines?



*** 1- Listening skills category, 2- Speaking skills category, 3- Reading skills category, 4- Writing skills category*

Figure 4. Total mean scores per sub-category of the survey questionnaire

The inferential statistical analysis was implied to answer the second question in regards to the status of English education and English language learning in public secondary learning institutions in the Philippines. Figure 4 displays that the total mean scores per sub-category indicate low-level arbitrary values. Thus, the findings and even the previous NSAT scores (English area) suggest that the Philippine public high schools are somehow facing challenges concerning English education, in which students seem to have problems dealing with English language learning. Therefore, the overall picture indicates the need to change or upgrade the methods in which English language literacy is taught to Filipino ESL learners. According to John & Ehow (as cited in Souriyavongsa, Rany, Abidin and Mei, 2013), students' low-level English language proficiency have derived from "many different factors in different environments such as school resources, class size, quality of teachers, and the school attendance of learners" (p.182). In addition, Koo (2008) also stated that low-level English language proficiency "has very much to do with the attitude towards the language, particularly about whether the English is important in the global world" (p.31).

Conclusion

Attitudes (whether positive or negative) contribute to the way students behave toward language learning. Students' attitudes affect how they perform and how they treat a specific language. Thus, having positive attitudes enable students to learn the language effectively. Otherwise, having negative attitudes inhibit the students to be motivated with L2 learning. In a bigger picture, Gardener's (2001) *socio-education model of second language acquisition* displays how attitudes and motivation are linked together in achieving and learning a second language. According to Hosseini and Pourmandia (2013), Gardner believes that the learners'

attitudes toward second language learning and their integrativeness have the strongest impact on the learners' level of motivation and consequently also on their achievements. The learners' attitudes toward the learning situation can be perceived through their assessment of the course, of the teacher, of the materials and/or of the teaching environment. Hosseini and Pourmandia (2013) also added that "to elaborate on motivation, Gardner calls it a goal-directed behavior and again consider it as a combination of three components: expanded effort, the desire to be proficient in the foreign language, and the effect experienced when learning the language" (p.67). However, following the findings, most of the Filipino ESL learners' responses and with their previous experiences, do not display the three components that elaborate motivation.

Therefore, the students' obvious negative attitudes toward the English language are undeniably concerned by different factors. Gardner (2001) concluded that it is clear that "the teacher, the class atmosphere, the course content, materials, and facilities, as well as personal characteristics of the student, will influence the individual's classroom learning motivation" (p.3). Accordingly, students are highly diverse, and each one of them has different needs, have unique learning strategies, and have distinct cognitive capacities. Regarding English teachers, it is notable to indicate that they need to have a strong foundation on the English language content, they should be always aware of their students' backgrounds and needs, and they are capable of doing effective teaching strategies. Hutchinson and Waters (2001) stated that if the teacher's teaching approach did not match the student's needs and interests, therefore it is not effectual. Consequently, a highly proficient English teacher can help the students to behave productively in the class, (decisively) to focus on the language study, and to build positive attitudes toward the language.

Moreover, the Philippines is not the only ESL country that is experiencing challenges with English language learning. Thus, the researcher intends to globally create awareness using this study for the sectors of educators concerned to cautiously examine how ESL is theorized in educational context, and make essential changes in able to promote suitable curriculum design, appropriate teaching materials, and strategies, and to provide the students with a conducive environment for English language learning. As the results conclude that most of the Filipino students lack motivation and have negative attitudes with the English language, the researcher suggests that the students should receive utmost support such as motivational encouragement, meaningful language experiences and other correlated variables to guide them with ESL learning.

References

Agheyisi, R., & Fishman, J, H. (1970). Language attitude studies: A brief survey of methodological approaches. *Anthropological Linguistics, 12*(5), 137-157. Retrieved June 04, 2019 from: http://www.ccsenet.org/ass

Abidin, M.J.Z., Mohammadi, M.P., & Alzwari, H. (2012). EFL students' attitudes towards learning English language: The case of Libyan secondary school students. *Asian Social Science*, *2*(8), 119-133. Retrieved June 06, 2019 from: http://www.ccsenet.org/ass

Baker, C. (1988). *Attitudes and language*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Bernardo, A. (2008). English in Philippine education: Solution or problem? In K. Bolton & M.L.S. Bautista (Eds.), *Philippine English: Linguistic and literary perspectives* (pp. 157-174). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. Retrieved June 03, 2019 from: http://www.jstor.org/

Brown, D. H. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4th Eds.). New York: Pearson Education.

Colaste, C. R. (2018). The impact of students' attitude towards English language on academic achievement. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development, 1*(3), 330-359. Retrieved June 12, 2019 from: http:// www.ijtsrd.com

Counts, G. (1925). Education in the Philippines. *The Elementary School Journal* (p. 26). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved June 03, 2019 from http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/

DepEd. NAT Factsheet. Pasig: DepEd Central Office, 2017.

DepEd. "National Achievement Test Results." About, 2015.

Finegan, E. (2011). *Language and its structure and use* (6th Ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Gardner, R. C. (2001). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition. In Z. Dörnyei, & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 1-19). Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.

Hosseini, S.B., & Pourmandia, D. (2013). Language learners' attitudes and beliefs: Brief review of the related literature and frameworks. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and their Implications, 4*(4), 64-74. Retrieved June 10, 2019 from: http://www.ijonte.org/

Koo, G.S. (2008). English language in Philippine Education: Themes and variations in policy, practice, pedagogy and research. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research*, *2*(1), 19-33. Retrieved June 10, 2019 from: http://www.jstor.org/

Lamb, M. (2004). It depends on the students themselves: Independent language learning at an Indonesian state school. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*, 17, 229–245.

Mahboob, A., & Cruz, P. (2013). English and mother-tongue-based multilingual education: Language attitudes in Philippines. *Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 1, 1-19.

Martin, Ma. I. P. (1999). Language and institution: Roots of bilingualism in the Philippines. In M.L.S Bautista & G.O. Tan (Eds.), *The Filipino Bilingual: A multidisciplinary perspective*. Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines, pp. 132-6.

Melander, L., & Dalarna, H. (2003). *Language attitudes: Evolutional reactions to spoken language*. 1-27. Retrieved June 10, 2019 from: http://www.jstor.org/

Monroe, P. (1925). *Survey of the educational system of the Philippines.* Manila: Bureau of Printing.

Nolasco, R. (2008). *The prospects of multilingual education and literacy in the Philippines*. Paper presented at the The 2nd International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization, and Multilingual Education in Ethnolinguistic Communities, Bangkok, Thailand. (pp. 1-3). Retrieved June 04, 2019 from http://www.seameo.org/

Nolasco, R. (2010). Filipino, Pilipino and Tagalog. In R. Nolasco, F. Datar, & A. Azurin (Eds), *Starting where the children are: a collection of essays on mother tongue-based multilingual education and language issues in the Philippines* (pp. 170–172). Quezon City: 170 + Talaytayan MLE Incorporated.

Nunan, D. (2003). The Impact of English as a Global Language on Educational Policies and Practices in the Asia-Pacific Region. *TESOL Quarterly*, *37*(4), 589-613. Retrieved June 05, 2019 from: http://www.jstor.org/

Nutley, G. (1954). English instruction in the Philippines. *CEA Critic*, *16*(4), 1-3. Retrieved June 03, 2019 from: http://www.jstor.org/

Oxford, R., & Shearin, J. (1994). Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework. *Modern Language Journal*, 78, 12-28.

Pascasio, E. (1975). The role of the Filipino bilingual in the modern world. *Philippine Studies*, 23, 370–382.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. New York, NY: Oxford University.

Romaine, S. (1980). Stylistic variation and evaluative reactions to speech: Problems in the investigation of linguistic attitudes in Scotland. *Language and Speech*, 23, 213-32. Retrieved June 12, 2019 from: http://www.jstor.org/

Souriyavongsa, T., Rany, S., Abidin, M.J.Z., & Mei, L.L. (2013). Factors causes students low English language learning: A case study in the National University of Laos. *International Journal of English Language Education*, *1*(1), 19-33. Retrieved June 10, 2019 from http://www.macrothink.org/

Truitt, H. (1995). Beliefs about language learning: A study of Korean University students learning English. *Texas Papers in Foreign Language Education*, 2, 12-28.

UNESCO. (2005a). *First language first: Community-based literacy programmes for minority language contexts in Asia*. Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2005b). *Mother tongue-based teaching and education for girls*. Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2007). *Promoting literacy in multilingual settings*. Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2010). *Why and how Africa should invest in African languages and multilingual education: An evidence- and practice-based policy advocacy brief*. Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institue for Lifelong Learning.

Victori, M., & Lockhart, W. (1995). Enhancing metacognition in self-directed language learning. *System*, 23, 223-234. Retrieved June 06, 2019 from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/

Victorino, A.J. (2018). *Department of Education's budget utilization: Its impact on the national achievement test results*. University of Asia and Pacific.

Wessa, P. (2019). Free statistics software, office for research development and education, version 1.2.1. Retrieved July 26 from: https://www.wessa.net/

Yule, G. (2014). *The study of language* (5th Ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University.