



A glimpse on the practice teachers' common European framework of reference for languages: Basis for competency-based program

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Abstract

A helpful technique for language learners to evaluate their abilities and monitor their development is self-assessment, often known as self-evaluation. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a widely recognized framework that provides a common basis for describing language proficiency levels across different languages. The purpose of this study was to assess the CEFR Level of the practice teachers in Pamantasan ng Cabuyao. This attempted to measure the respondents' level of English proficiency. The findings showed that the respondents' level of CEFR is in the upper intermediate and advanced levels. This study is regarded as a helpful resource in identifying the CEFR level of preservice teachers enabling curriculum alignment, targeted language support, effective communication, appropriate placement, and tailored professional development. It helps ensure that preservice teachers have the necessary language skills to succeed in their teaching careers and effectively engage with diverse learners and educational contexts.

Keywords: English Proficiency, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), self-assessment, competency-based assessment

Introduction

Assessing one's own proficiency in the English language, also known as self-assessment, is a valuable tool for language learners to gauge their skills and track their progress. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a widely recognized framework that provides a common basis for describing language proficiency levels across different languages. It was developed by the Council of Europe and has become the standard reference for language learning and assessment in Europe. The CEFR divides language proficiency into six levels, from A1 to C2, which represent increasing levels of competence and proficiency. Here's a brief overview of each level:

A1 (Beginner): At this level, learners can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and basic phrases. They can introduce themselves and others, ask and answer simple questions about personal details, and interact in a basic way if the other person speaks slowly and clearly.

A2 (Elementary): Learners at this level can understand and use simple, everyday expressions related to common concrete situations. They can describe their background, immediate environment, and basic needs. They can also interact in a simple way in familiar situations.

B1 (Intermediate): At the B1 level, learners can understand the main points of clear, standard speech on familiar matters. They can handle most situations likely to arise while traveling, express opinions on familiar topics, and describe experiences, events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions.

B2 (Upper Intermediate): Learners at this level can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics. They can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible. They can also produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects.

C1 (Advanced): At the C1 level, learners can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognize implicit meaning.

They can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much searching for expressions. They can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes.

C2 (Proficient): This is the highest level of language proficiency. At the C2 level, learners can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. They can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstruct arguments, and present them coherently. They can express themselves spontaneously, precisely, and fluently, differentiating finer shades of meaning.

The CEFR is widely used in language education, curriculum development, language assessment, and setting language learning goals. It provides a common framework for learners, teachers, and institutions to assess and compare language proficiency levels across different languages.

Identifying the CEFR Level of practice teachers is of significant importance in the field of language education, especially in recent years. This assessment ensures that practice teachers possess the necessary language proficiency to effectively teach and communicate in the target language, aligning with current standards and expectations. This allows for accurate placement and assignment. Educational institutions can match teachers' language proficiency with appropriate teaching positions, ensuring they are best suited to deliver instruction at the desired CEFR levels. This alignment creates a conducive learning environment where students can receive accurate language modeling and interact effectively with their teachers. Also, assessing the CEFR Level informs curriculum design and implementation. By knowing the proficiency of practice teachers, curriculum developers can create materials, activities, and assessments that align with the expected language outcomes for each CEFR level. This ensures that the curriculum is appropriately challenging and caters to the specific needs of learners, facilitating their language development and progression. Moreover, assessing the CEFR Level supports targeted instruction and differentiated teaching strategies. Practice teachers can tailor their teaching approaches to address the diverse learning needs and language proficiency levels of their students. This personalized approach enhances student engagement, promotes effective language acquisition, and supports individualized language growth. This contributes to quality assurance in language education. It helps maintain consistency and standardization in language instruction by ensuring that practice teachers possess the necessary language competence to effectively teach the target language. This, in turn, enhances the overall quality of language education programs and improves student outcomes.

With that, assessing the CEFR Level of practice teachers plays a crucial role in ensuring effective language instruction and promoting student success. By accurately determining teachers' language proficiency, educational institutions can make informed decisions regarding placement, curriculum design, instructional strategies, and quality assurance, ultimately enhancing the overall language learning experience for students.

However, despite the numerous studies investigated, no study yet had been conducted particularly in a local university in the City of Cabuyao, Laguna that investigated the level of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the practice teachers in the aforementioned locale.

Thus, these studies piqued the researcher to assess the level of Common European Framework of Reference for

Languages among selected practice teachers in Pamantasan ng Cabuyao. This study was conducted at Pamantasan ng Cabuyao in the province of Laguna. The respondents were selected from the aforementioned locale.

Literature Review

The related literature and studies which have been conscientiously organized and presented directed the researcher in conceptualizing the study. Initially, the reviewed literature focuses on assessing the English proficiency of the practice teachers in Pamantasan ng Cabuyao (University of Cabuyao).

As regards the said variable, Smith (2019) ^[10] examines the English proficiency of pre-service teachers in a specific teacher education program. It explores the implications of English proficiency levels for teacher education and suggests strategies for improving language skills among pre-service teachers. Also, Johnson (2021) ^[7] investigates the relationship between English language proficiency and teaching effectiveness among 4th year Education students. It explores how language skills influence instructional practices and student outcomes. According to a literature review of Brown (2020) ^[11], it provides an overview of the existing research on the English proficiency of pre-service education students. It discusses various assessment methods, challenges, and implications for teacher education programs. Nguyen (2022) ^[9] also examines the current practices and approaches to assessing English language proficiency in Education students. It discusses the validity and reliability of assessment methods and suggests potential improvements for measuring language proficiency in teacher education programs.

The research conducted by Villegas and Lucas in 2018 emphasizes a significant aspect of language proficiency in the context of culturally inclusive teaching. Their study underscores how preservice teachers' English language skills play a pivotal role in promoting an inclusive educational environment that respects and values linguistic diversity. This aspect holds particular relevance in the modern educational landscape characterized by multicultural classrooms. Culturally inclusive teaching aims to acknowledge and integrate diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students into the educational process. Language is a key conduit through which cultural identity is expressed and understood. Preservice teachers who possess strong English language skills are better equipped to engage with students from various linguistic backgrounds, thereby enhancing their ability to create an inclusive and culturally responsive classroom environment.

Understanding the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students is vital for effective communication and comprehension. Preservice teachers with proficient English skills can more easily grasp the nuances of students' communication patterns, expressions, and language-related challenges. This understanding enables them to facilitate clearer interactions and offer tailored support to students, fostering a sense of belonging and confidence in their educational journey. Additionally, preservice teachers with strong English language proficiency can effectively tailor their instructional approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners. They can adapt their language use, choose appropriate teaching strategies, and provide linguistic scaffolding to ensure that all students comprehend and engage with the curriculum. This flexibility in language use allows teachers to bridge potential

language gaps and create equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Villegas and Lucas's research underscores the significance of language proficiency beyond mere linguistic competence. It highlights the interconnectedness of language, culture, and inclusive teaching practices. Preservice teachers who possess strong English skills are better poised to recognize and celebrate the linguistic diversity in their classrooms, fostering an environment where students feel valued and understood. This underscores that preservice teachers with strong English language proficiency play a crucial role in creating culturally inclusive classrooms. Their language skills enable them to understand students' linguistic backgrounds, communicate effectively, and adapt instructional strategies, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and equitable educational experience for all students.

The study conducted by Menken in 2018 highlights a critical issue in the realm of education – the impact of language barriers on equitable access to quality education. Language serves as a significant bridge between teachers and students, and when language barriers exist, they can become significant obstacles to effective teaching and learning. This is particularly true in culturally diverse and multilingual classrooms, where students may come from various linguistic backgrounds.

Language barriers have the potential to exacerbate educational inequalities. When preservice teachers lack the necessary English language proficiency, it can hinder their ability to communicate clearly, deliver content effectively, and engage in meaningful interactions with students. This can lead to a range of challenges: (1) Limited Comprehension: Students may struggle to understand lessons, assignments, and instructions when presented in a language they are not proficient in. This can result in reduced comprehension, hindered participation, and ultimately, compromised learning outcomes. (2) Exclusion: Language barriers can inadvertently exclude students from classroom discussions and activities. Students who are not proficient in the language of instruction might feel marginalized and disconnected from the learning process. (3) Miscommunication: Inadequate language proficiency can lead to miscommunication between teachers and students. Misunderstandings may arise, affecting the accuracy of assessment, feedback, and support provided to students. (4) Unequal Access: Students who share the same linguistic background as the teacher might benefit more from classroom instruction, inadvertently creating unequal learning opportunities for those from different linguistic backgrounds.

Assessing preservice teachers' English proficiency is essential for addressing these challenges and promoting equitable education. When preservice teachers possess strong English language skills, they are better equipped to break down language barriers and facilitate effective communication. This, in turn, contributes to a more inclusive classroom environment where all students can participate, understand, and thrive academically. Through this, the English proficiency of preservice teachers, teacher education programs can take proactive steps to ensure that future educators are adequately equipped to meet the needs of diverse learners. Equipping teachers with the necessary language skills empowers them to provide clear explanations, offer targeted support, and create an inclusive classroom environment that fosters equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds. With

that, Menken's study underscores that assessing preservice teachers' English proficiency is pivotal for dismantling language barriers that hinder equitable access to quality education. Language proficiency among teachers is a catalyst for inclusive teaching practices, effective communication, and ensuring that every student can fully engage and benefit from the learning experience.

The assertion that language skills contribute significantly to ongoing professional development is supported by the research of Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2019) ^[1]. In the context of teaching, language proficiency goes beyond its basic role in communication – it becomes a key factor in fostering effective reflective practice and continuous learning among educators. In essence, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin's research emphasizes that language skills are a catalyst for meaningful professional development. Teachers who possess strong language abilities are more likely to engage in reflective practice, collaborate effectively, access diverse resources, pursue continuous learning, and actively contribute to the educational discourse. As language proficiency empowers teachers to engage more comprehensively with their profession, it becomes an essential tool for their ongoing growth and impact.

Effective communication between parents and teachers is a cornerstone of student success and a thriving educational environment. The significance of this partnership is underscored by the research of Fan and Chen (2021) ^[4], who highlight that preservice teachers with proficient English language skills possess a distinct advantage in engaging with parents and fostering a strong home-school connection. Parent-teacher communication serves as a bridge between the two pivotal spheres of a student's life: home and school. It facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the child's holistic development, enabling educators to align classroom strategies with the student's individual needs and circumstances. Preservice teachers equipped with strong English skills can communicate more fluently and effectively with parents, ensuring that vital information regarding academic progress, behavior, and extracurricular activities is conveyed accurately and comprehensively. A language barrier can hinder communication, leading to misunderstandings and incomplete exchanges of information. Preservice teachers who possess proficient English skills can alleviate this barrier, enabling them to discuss students' achievements, challenges, and growth areas with parents in a nuanced and transparent manner. This, in turn, cultivates a sense of trust and collaboration between parents and teachers, as parents feel empowered to actively participate in their child's education. An effective parent-teacher communication fosters a supportive learning environment. Parents who understand classroom goals, expectations, and activities can reinforce these at home, creating a cohesive educational experience. Preservice teachers who can articulate these aspects clearly in English are better poised to involve parents in their child's learning journey, whether through assisting with homework, attending school events, or participating in parent-teacher conferences. Fan and Chen's research highlights that preservice teachers with proficient English language skills are well-equipped to initiate meaningful conversations with parents from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This ability transcends language barriers, enabling educators to recognize cultural nuances, address concerns sensitively, and create a partnership based on shared goals for the student's success. In an era where collaboration

between educators and parents is paramount, preservice teachers' English proficiency emerges as a valuable asset that nurtures a collaborative home-school relationship, ultimately contributing to enhanced student achievement and overall well-being.

In an era characterized by the increasing globalization of education, the role of teachers has transcended traditional boundaries. The need for educators to be prepared for international contexts has become paramount, and this paradigm shift is underscored by García's observations in 2019. García points out that language proficiency holds a pivotal role in enhancing preservice teachers' readiness to effectively engage in global educational exchanges and collaborations. As education transcends geographical borders, educators are called upon to navigate a diverse array of cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical contexts. Language, as a unifying tool, becomes an essential facilitator of communication and collaboration. Preservice teachers with a strong command of the English language are better positioned to engage in cross-cultural dialogues, connect with educators from around the world, and actively participate in global educational networks. Language proficiency is more than a practical necessity; it embodies cultural sensitivity and adaptability. In international educational contexts, teachers must comprehend the nuances of different languages and cultures to bridge potential misunderstandings and foster meaningful interactions. Preservice teachers equipped with robust language skills can better understand and respect diverse perspectives, leading to more harmonious and effective collaborations with peers from various parts of the world. Globalization has led to an interconnected world where educators often find themselves participating in international conferences, joint research projects, and collaborative initiatives. Effective participation in these activities requires the ability to communicate fluently, contribute thoughtfully, and comprehend complex ideas presented in English. Language proficiency empowers preservice teachers to engage in these exchanges with confidence, ensuring that their voices are heard and their insights are valued on a global stage.

García's insights highlight that language proficiency is an indispensable asset for preservice teachers preparing to engage in international educational landscapes. As educators increasingly find themselves as global citizens, language proficiency becomes a gateway to cross-cultural understanding, collaboration, and impactful contributions to the global educational discourse.

Foltýnek et al. (2019) research underscores that language proficiency is pivotal for transforming technology from a mere tool into a pedagogical asset. Preservice teachers who possess strong English language skills are better positioned to harness the potential of technology, ensuring that its integration is seamless and instructionally valuable. Their proficiency enables them to leverage technology as an instrument for interactive learning, collaborative projects, and innovative approaches, ultimately enriching the educational experience for students in the digital age.

This illuminates the critical role of language proficiency in the effective integration of technology into instructional practices. As technology continues to reshape the educational landscape, preservice teachers' language skills emerge as a determining factor in their ability to harness technology's potential and create engaging, technology-enhanced learning environments.

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher utilized the descriptive method of research with the help of a standardized questionnaire as the main source of data. Through this design, this study gave emphasis on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages among selected practice teachers in Pamantasan ng Cabuyao. The statistical method was used to give credence and reliability to the study. This is one in which information is collected without changing the environment (i.e., nothing is manipulated). It is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The methods involved range from the survey which describes the status quo, the correlation study which investigates the relationship between variables, to developmental studies which seek to determine changes over time (Yango et. al, 2019).

Respondents of the Study

The study aimed to determine the level of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages among selected practice teachers in Pamantasan ng Cabuyao consisting of 222. The sample size was 132 practice teachers in Pamantasan ng Cabuyao using the Raosoft sample size calculator with 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A purposive sampling technique was used in the study. The study was conducted during the 2nd semester, Academic Year 2022-2023.

Instruments

The research used a standardized questionnaire. The research questionnaire was composed of 20 questions divided into two sections: reading and listening. Each section has 7.5 minutes as an allotted time. This attempted to determine the level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages among selected practice teachers in Pamantasan ng Cabuyao

Data Collection

The researcher secured a letter of request asking permission from the concerned officials in Pamantasan ng Cabuyao (University of Cabuyao) to conduct the study. Upon the approval of the request, the questionnaires were administered by the researcher to the respondents of the survey following the safety protocols which are the use of face masks, as well as the enforcing social distancing to adhere to the health protocols set by the Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) related to the COVID - 19 pandemic through sending the website. The researcher explained to the respondents the nature of their participation in the investigation and discussed the instructions to follow for easy and convenient ways of answering the survey forms. The respondents were assured that the information they provided to the researcher would be treated with confidentiality as part of the ethical considerations of the study. Individual consent of the respondent was obtained explaining to them that this investigation was simply an academic requirement and would be kept with utmost privacy. The accomplished questionnaires were collected right after they had been answered by the respondents and the gathered data were tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted.

Data Analysis

Frequency as well as the CEFR table were used to determine

the level of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages among selected practice teachers in Pamantasan ng Cabuyao (University of Cabuyao).

Table 1: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Level

CEFR Level		Scores
< A1		1-10
A1	Beginner	11-30
A2	Elementary	31-40
B1	Intermediate	41-50
B2	Upper intermediate	51-60
C1	Advanced	61-70
C2	Proficient	71-100

Results and Discussion

Discussion of the practice teachers' Common European

Framework of Reference for Languages is presented in the succeeding tables and textual presentations.

Table 2: Table of the Respondents

Program	Sample Size	Rank
Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED)	30	2.5
Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English (BSED-E)	38	1
Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Filipino (BSED-F)	30	2.5
Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Mathematics (BSED-M)	22	4
Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Social Studies (BSED-SS)	12	5
Total	132	

Table 2 shows the number of respondents. Practice Teachers from Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English (BSED-E) ranked first with a sample size of 38. Moreover, practice teachers from Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Filipino (BSED-F) were respectively ranked 2.5. Practice Teachers from Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Mathematics (BSED-M) ranked 4 and Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Social Studies ranked 5. To sum up, there were 132 practice teachers who actively participated in the data gathering.

This supports the report of Lee (2019) which investigates the English proficiency levels of preservice teachers and explores the implications for teacher preparation programs. It highlights the importance of English proficiency in effective teaching and suggests strategies for improving language skills among preservice teachers. This implies that language skills can enhance instructional effectiveness, facilitate effective communication with students and colleagues, and contribute to overall professional competence. It is important for teachers to be proficient in the language of instruction to effectively convey concepts, engage students, and create an inclusive learning environment.

Table 3: Composite Table of the Respondents' Level of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Program	Frequency					
	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
BEED	1	5	4	9	9	2
BSED-E	0	1	6	9	20	2
BSED-F	0	3	8	10	8	1
BSED-M	1	2	1	11	6	1
BSED-SS	1	0	2	6	2	1
Total	3	11	21	45	45	7

Table 3 shows that the majority of the practice teachers in Pamantasan ng Cabuyao were respectively in the Upper Intermediate and Advanced Level of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. They can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics. They can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible. They can also produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects. At the C1 level, they can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognize implicit meaning. They can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much searching for expressions. They can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the study conclusion was drawn: practice teachers are in the upper intermediate and advanced level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusion of this study: College of Education Instructors should encourage students to immerse themselves in English language environments outside the classroom. This can include watching English movies or TV shows, reading English books or articles, and engaging in conversations with native English speakers or language exchange partners as well as incorporating authentic English materials into your teaching, such as news articles, podcasts, and videos. This exposes students to real-world language use and helps them develop their comprehension skills and vocabulary. Instructors should design communicative activities that require students to actively use English in meaningful contexts. This can include group discussions, debates, presentations, and role-plays. Encourage students to express their thoughts and ideas fluently and accurately. They should provide regular feedback on students' language use and offer targeted error correction. This helps students identify and address their language weaknesses, enabling them to make progress in their language proficiency.

Instructors can also recommend online resources, language learning apps, and self-study materials that can supplement classroom instruction. These resources can provide additional opportunities for students to practice their English language skills independently. Instructors should identify the specific areas where students need improvement and provide targeted language support. This can involve extra practice exercises, focused vocabulary expansion, or grammar review sessions as well as to encourage students to reflect on their own language learning process, set goals, and monitor their progress. This self-awareness can motivate them to actively seek opportunities for improvement and take ownership of

their language development. As for the administrators, they should provide authentic English materials as well as facilities to help improve the level of English proficiency. In fine, increasing language proficiency indeed takes time and consistent effort. It is essential to create a supportive and encouraging learning environment that fosters a growth mindset and promotes active engagement with the English language.

Implications / Action Plan

Proficient English: Empowering Practice Teachers for Competency-Based Excellence.

Table 4

Program Components	Objectives	Resources	Time Frame	Success Indicators	Monitoring and Evaluating Scheme
Language Proficiency	Attain proficient English language skills	Language learning materials	Throughout program	- Achieve CEFR B2 level (80%) - Demonstrate effective communication in English (90%)	- Language proficiency assessments
		Language learning software			- Classroom observations
		English language tutors			- Speaking and writing samples
Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills	Understand language teaching methodologies and theories	Teaching manuals	3 months	- Lesson plans (95%) - Effective instructional strategies utilized (90%)	- Lesson plan evaluations
		Educational websites			- Teaching practice observations
		Professional development			- Reflection journals
Competency-Based Education Principles	Comprehend principles of competency-based education	CEFR guidelines	2 months	- Aligned learning outcomes (85%) - Competency-based assessments developed (90%)	- Alignment checks with CEFR descriptors
		Competency-based frameworks			- Assessment rubrics
		Research articles			- Assessment task analysis
Curriculum Design and Sequencing	Design a logical and coherent English language curriculum	Curriculum guidelines	4 months	- Curriculum structure (95%) - Sequential skill progression (90%) - Appropriate resources selected	- Curriculum review and feedback
		Textbooks and materials			- Curriculum mapping
		Instructional design models			- Lesson plan integration
Assessment and Feedback	Develop and implement competency-based assessments	Assessment guidelines	3 months	- Aligned assessments (85%) - Constructive feedback provided to students (90%)	- Assessment moderation
		Rubrics and scoring guides			- Feedback analysis and improvement recommendations
		Assessment software			- Student performance analysis
Cultural Awareness and Communication	Promote intercultural competence and inclusive classrooms	Cultural sensitivity resources	2 months	- Inclusive learning environment (90%) - Effective communication skills demonstrated (95%)	- Classroom observations
		Intercultural communication			- Peer and student feedback
		Workshops and trainings			- Reflective journals
Professional Development and Reflection	Engage in continuous professional development and reflection	Professional development	Throughout program	- Participation in PD activities (100%) - Reflective practice (90%) - Professional growth (95%)	- PD attendance and participation
		Reflection tools			- Self-assessment
		Online resources			- Mentoring and coaching

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