GRAMMATICAL, DISCOURSE COMPETENCE AND PRODUCTIVE SKILLS AMONG FIRST YEAR ESL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the grammatical, discourse, and productive competence of 210 first-year ESL students enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences at the Cagayan State University (CSU) in the second semester of the academic year 2021. Using a descriptive-correlational methodology, the study focused on respondents' profile like sex, parents' highest level of education, the type of high school, ethnicity, and media exposure that may help explain variations in the respondents' levels of grammatical and discourse competence, writing, and speaking skills. Results revealed that respondents' overall grammatical and discourse competence, speaking, and writing ability were rated as "average," "competent," and "sufficient" to "good" respectively. A significant correlation between grammatical and discourse competence and the respondents' parental education and media exposure were found. Speaking skill differences were only accounted by course that the respondents enrolled in, while writing skill variations were not explained by any profile variables. Further, grammatical competence was significantly correlated with speaking and writing ability, but not discourse competence. The findings can be used to create a writing and speaking task-based language enhancement programme focused on discrete grammar and discourse topics.

Keywords: competence; performance; productive skill; discourse competence; grammatical competence

Introduction

English language proficiency is highly valued. Students are expected to master English to a high degree of accuracy because it is the language that is most frequently used in international trade, media and entertainment, international telecommunications, printed materials, and—most significantly—for the internationalisation of education (Rahman et al., 2021; Rao, 2019 as cited in Islam & Stapa, 2021).

Nonetheless, according to a study done by Hopkins International Partners, the official Philippines representative for a group called Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), college graduates from the Philippines have lower levels of English proficiency than the target English proficiency of high school students in Thailand (GMA News Online, 2018). A rather alarming concern is Philippine's English Proficiency Index (EPI), which slid from the 20th to the 27th position, according to the global education firm Education First (EF). This index demonstrated a steady decline in the nation's rating since 2016. The Philippines fell from 13th place in 2016 to 15th place in 2017, 14th place in 2018, then 20th place in 2019 (Baclig, 2020).

Many students found writing and speaking English challenging. As Nunan (2009) opined, writing skills are highly demanding. Speaking-wise, Separa et al. (2018) found that difficulties with speaking English stem from, but are not limited to, lack of linguistic proficiency.

Language learners' grammatical and discourse competence are directly tied with their productive skills. Tuan (2017) discovered that students who are linguistically proficient in the entire language system (consisting of syntax, morphology, inflections, phonology, and semantics) possess a propensity for conversing or writing authoritatively about a subject.

Although communicative competence has been the subject of extensive research over the past few decades, there is a dearth of studies associating specific types of communicative competence with both writing and speaking capacities. The current study offers insights into the specific link between grammatical and discourse competence and writing and speaking. This paper will assess the discourse and grammatical competences of first-year students at the Cagayan State University (CSU), ascertain whether the competences predetermine students' speaking and writing performance, and determine whether scores in discourse and grammatical competence as well as productive skills significantly differ across certain profile variables.

Literature Review

Communicative Competence

It is useful to understand grammatical and discourse competence by referring to Canale and Swain's (1980) model of Communicative Competence, with emphasis on Noam Chomsky's characterisation of "competence" and "performance". "Competence" refers to the underlying grammatical system that is claimed to be

intuitively known by all native speakers of a language and "performance" refers to actual language use in real situations (Flowerdew, 2013). Based on this conceptualisation, Canale and Swain (1980) defined communicative competence in the context of second language teaching and referred to it "as a synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social settings to perform communicative functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse" (Yano, 2003, p. 76).

Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence is broken down into three subcomponents: grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic and discourse competence. Grammatical competence is the knowledge and skills concerning lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics, and phonology. Discourse competence refers to the knowledge and skills in combining linguistic elements to achieve a unified textual whole. In brief, the theory suggests that knowledge (competence) can be demonstrated in real communicative settings (e.g., speaking and writing). This study focuses on grammatical and discourse competence.

Grammatical Competence

To be communicatively competent, one must demonstrate a certain level of command of morphology, syntax, grammar, semantics, and phonology. As grammar permeates all language skills, Farhady et al. (2006, as cited in Ahangari & Barghi, 2012) state that it is the most common language component in language assessment. Studies in these areas, however, showed that learners' levels of proficiency are low. Learners remain unable to learn and develop both grammatical and syntactic skills (Merza, 2022; Sioco & De Vera, 2018). Moreover, ESL learners lack morphological awareness and perform significantly worse than the native speakers of English in semantics (Chiu, 2009; Hasani et al., 2014; Naseeb & Ibrahim, 2017; Sarfraz et al., 2018).

Comparative research indicated that grammatical competence scores of students varied when grouped according to the courses that they took (Razmjoo & Movahed, 2009; Tuan, 2017). Grammatical competence has also been found to be positively correlated with writing. According to Mulyaningsih et al. (2013), the decrease or increase in students` grammatical competence leads to the decrease or increase in writing ability. In a study by Shattah (2008), the overall performance of students on grammar and writing tests was found to be poor, with the most grammatically competent students proving to be the best student-writers.

Discourse Competence

Another aspect of communicative competence is discourse. Discourse competence is the ability to combine language elements to create a unified spoken or written text. Tuan (2017) looked into the discourse strengths and weaknesses of Vietnamese students and found that among the components of discourse competence, the respondents were the weakest in coherence. According to Tuan (2017), the very low

index of coherence mastery implied that the respondents found it difficult to link the meanings of utterances in written or spoken texts. A study by López-Montero et al. (2014, as cited in Eccius-Wellmann & Santana, 2020) demonstrated that discourse competence differed across school types and courses, depending on access to cultural capital such as books, computers, and internet access .

Where grammatical competence is associated with writing, discourse competence is correlated to both writing and speaking. Such association can be best explained by the theory of transfer of learning. Transfer of learning, Leberman and Doyle (2006) explained, occurs when prior-learned knowledge and skills affect the way in which new knowledge and skills are learned and performed. The notion of learning transfer asserts that knowledge can be transferred from one activity to another (e.g., from training to performance) if the two activities are comparable and have a lot in common. The degree of resemblance between the original context of the training and the intended context of the performance also affects the level of transfer (Hajian, 2019).

Productive Skills

There are four known language macro skills, namely, listening, reading, writing, and speaking, with viewing added later. According to Saville-Troike (2012), when considering the purposes for which learners learn a second language, a distinction between two types of communicative competence must be made. On one hand, there is academic competence (knowledge needed by learners who want to use L2 primarily to learn about other subjects such as the acquisition of vocabulary, developing the ability to engage successfully in academic listening, etc.). On the other hand, there is interpersonal competence, which refers to knowledge that is required from learners who plan to use L2 in face-to-face interaction with other speakers. Saville-Troike (2012) labelled the activity of speaking and writing as productive skills, and recognised that learners' academic and interpersonal competence which underlie their ability to engage in different activities usually develop to different degrees, and there is no necessary reason for one type to precede or outpace the other.

Researchers have also studied productive skills. Sermsook et al. (2017) showed that interlingual interference, intralingual interference, limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, and carelessness were found to be the major sources of writing errors. Meanwhile, the English writing performance of the Grade 11 students in Malasiqui National High School, Malasiqui, Pangasinan was found to be good alongside mechanics, vocabulary, content, and grammar (Domantay & Ramos, 2018).

Regarding speaking, several studies have shown that learners' poor proficiency can be attributed to linguistic factors, such as limited vocabulary, inadequate grammar knowledge, poor pronunciation, among others (Fitriani & Wardah, 2015; Heriansyah, 2012; Mahripah, 2014).

Studies have also attempted to determine whether productive skills varied across selected profile variables. Betonio (2017), for example, found that there was a highly significant difference in the oral proficiency level of students across courses.

In terms of writing quality, Woods (2016) and Al-Saadi (2020) found contradictory results, with the former suggesting no differences between writing factors across gender, and the latter indicating that women did better than men. Apart from gender differences, type of school was also reported to influence writing. dos Santos and Hage (2015) compared writing performances of students from public and private institutions and reported that students from private institutions performed better than those from public.

Mass media exposure has also been found to influence productive skills. Sioco and De Vera (2018) found that exposure to mass media types is significantly related to speaking skills. Albayrak and Yanar (2013) investigated the effect of mass media authentic materials on EFL students' success in speaking accurately and fluently and determined that students' access to mass media rendered positive impacts on their English-speaking skills.

Methodology

The study employed descriptive-correlational design to investigate the respondents' grammatical and discourse competence level and the relationship of these components with productive skills. The study conforms to the policies and guidelines set forth by the Graduate School of Cagayan State University, Andrews Campus (embodied in the Revised University Code through Resolution No. 90, s. 2017) and was approved by the defence panel of the Doctor of Philosophy in Education in the English Language Education programme, the College of Arts and Sciences in February 2021.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Profile

Category		Frequency (n = 210)	Percent
Sex			
	Male	36	17.1
	Female	174	82.9
Type of High School			
	Public	154	73.3
	Private	56	26.7
Course			
	Psychology	49	23.3
	Political Science	21	10.0
	Economics	5	2.4
	Human Services	7	3.3
	Physics	2	1.0
	Mathematics	12	5.7
	Chemistry	9	4.3
	Biology	56	26.7
	Environmental Science	15	7.1

English Language Studies	11	5.2
Communication	12	5.7
Industrial and Commercial Communication	11	5.2
Ethnicity		
Tagalog	44	21.0
Itawes	33	15.7
Ilocano	112	53.3
Ybanag	14	6.7
Others	7	3.3
Father's Highest Educational Attainment		
Elementary Level	24	11.4
Elementary Graduate	18	8.6
High School Level	18	8.6
High School Graduate	47	22.4
College Level	37	17.6
College Graduate	60	28.6
Master's Degree	5	2.4
Doctorate	1	.5
Mother's Highest Educational Attainment		
Elementary Level	15	7.1
Elementary Graduate	10	4.8
High School Level	25	11.9
High School Graduate	47	22.4
College Level	42	20.0
College Graduate	55	26.2
Master's Degree	15	7.1
Doctorate	1	.5

Table 1 shows that females outnumbered males by a wide margin. Most respondents graduated from public schools. BS Biology and BS Psychology programs have the most respondents, while the BS Human Services, AB Economics, and BS Physics were the least represented in the study. Most respondents had parents who were college diploma holders. Ethnicity-wise, the majority of the respondents were Ilokano while some were Tagalog, Itawes, and Ibanag.

The first instrument used was a researcher-constructed competence test. The grammatical component consisted of 60 items distributed evenly across the domains of morphology, grammar, phonology, syntax, lexicon, and semantics. Meanwhile, the discourse component consisting of 40 items were subdivided into two domains, namely, spoken and written discourse. The second and third instruments used were adapted speaking and writing rubrics, respectively. The rubrics were used to determine the respondents' productive skills level. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, data gathering was conducted exclusively online. Results of the Intraclass Correlation (ICC) revealed that the three evaluators' ratings were reliable.

Results and Discussion

Table 2
Respondents' Mass Media Exposure

Category	Weighted Mean	Description
Amount of Time Spent for Mass Media		
Television	2.20	Less than an hour
Radio	2.18	Less than an hour
Magazines	2.61	Less than an hour
Newspapers	2.64	Less than an hour
Internet	4.37	4-5 hours
Category Mean	2.80	1-2 hours
Extent of Attention Given to Mass Media		
Television	4.78	Limited Attention
Radio	3.32	Limited Attention
Magazines	2.80	Limited Attention
Newspapers	2.92	Limited attention
Internet	7.80	Much Attention
Category Mean	4.32	Limited Attention
Credibility of Advertisements in Mass Media		
Television	5.78	Average Credibility
Radio	4.76	Low Credibility
Magazines	3.92	Low Credibility
Newspapers	4.35	Low Credibility
Internet	7.13	Average Credibility
Category Mean	5.19	Average Credibility
Frequency of Clicking Advertisements on Mass Media	Frequency	Percentage
Always	11	5.2
Often	63	30.0
Occasionally	46	21.9
Seldom	47	22.4
Rarely	43	20.5

Table 2 shows that in terms of mass media exposure, the respondents reported spending more hours on and paying attention to the Internet than they did other mass media. They also found advertisements in Television and Internet more credible than other media and they clicked on advertisements often.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Grammatical Competence

Category	Frequency (n = 210)	Percent
Grammar		
Very Low (0-2)	115	54.76
Low (3-4)	73	34.76
Average (5-6)	18	8.57
High (7-8)	4	1.90
Very High (9-10)	0	0.00
Mean = 2.51 SD = 1.54		
Vocabulary		
Very Low (0-2)	28	13.33
Low (3-4)	52	24.76
Average (5-6)	54	25.71
High (7-8)	55	26.19
Very High (9-10)	21	10.00
Mean = 5.37 SD = 2.39		
Morphology		
Very Low (0-2)	7	3.33
Low (3-4)	23	10.95
Average (5-6)	53	25.24
High (7-8)	64	30.48
Very High (9-10)	63	30.00
Mean = 6.94 SD = 2.08		
Semantics		
Very Low (0-2)	29	13.81
Low (3-4)	33	15.71
Average (5-6)	47	22.38
High (7-8)	70	33.33
Very High (9-10)	31	14.76
Mean = 5.91 SD = 2.57		
Syntax		
Very Low (0-2)	55	26.19
Low (3-4)	105	50.00
Average (5-6)	43	20.48
High (7-8)	7	3.33
Very High (9-10)	0	0.00
Mean = 3.50 SD = 1.52		
Overall Grammatical Competence		
Very Low (1-12)	1	0.48
Low (13-24)	40	19.05
Average (25-36)	87	41.43

High (37-48)	71	33.81
Very High (49 -60)	11	5.24
Mean = 28.22 SD = 8.07		

Table 3 shows that the overall mean for the grammatical competence of the respondents is 28.22, which fell into the average range. In the domain of grammar, 115 out of 210 test-takers got very low scores (0-2/10 items), 73 scored low (3-4/10 items), 18 obtained average scores (5-6/10 items), and only four test takers got high scores (7-8/10 items). Pertaining to scores in the semantics dimension of the grammatical competence test, the categorical mean is 5.91, which also fell into the average range (fair user of English). Grammar test scores and syntax test scores were relatively close.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Discourse Competence

Category	Frequency (n = 210)	Percent
Spoken		
Very Low (1-4)	4	1.90
Low (5-8)	34	16.19
Average (9-12)	125	59.52
High (13-16)	46	21.90
Very High (17-20)	1	0.48
Mean = 10.65 SD = 2.52		
Written		
Very Low (1-4)	5	2.38
Low (5-8)	49	23.33
Average (9-12)	97	46.19
High (13-16)	55	26.19
Very High (17-20)	4	1.90
Mean = 10.66 SD = 3.07		
Overall Discourse Competence		
Very Low (1-8)	2	0.95
Low (8-16)	26	12.38
Average (17-24)	130	61.90
High (25-32)	51	24.29
Very High (33-40)	1	0.48
Mean = 21.31 SD = 4.74		

Table 4 shows that the mean scores for both spoken and written discourse competence were nearly identical at 10.65 and 10.66. Again, both fell under the description of “average”. This gives an overall discourse competence mean of 21.31 (average).

Table 5

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Level of Speaking Skill

Category	Frequency (n = 50)	Percent
Content		
Beginning (1.00-1.75)	0	0
Developing (1.76-2.50)	10	20
Competent (2.51-3.25)	18	36
Accomplished (3.26-4.00)	22	44
Mean = 3.01 SD = 0.56		
Grammar		
Beginning (1.00-1.75)	2	4
Developing (1.76-2.50)	14	28
Competent (2.51-3.25)	20	40
Accomplished (3.26-4.00)	14	28
Mean = 2.82 SD = 0.57		
Vocabulary		
Beginning (1.00-1.75)	4	8
Developing (1.76-2.50)	14	28
Competent (2.51-3.25)	16	32
Accomplished (3.26-4.00)	16	32
Mean = 2.73 SD = 0.66		
Organization		
Beginning (1.00-1.75)	5	10
Developing (1.76-2.50)	10	20
Competent (2.51-3.25)	17	34
Accomplished (3.26-4.00)	18	336
Mean = 2.84 SD = 0.68		
Fluency		
Beginning (1.00-1.75)	12	24
Developing (1.76-2.50)	11	22
Competent (2.51-3.25)	14	28
Accomplished (3.26-4.00)	13	26
Mean = 2.55 SD = 0.76		
Overall Productive Skill (Speaking)		
Beginning (1-5)	0	0
Developing (6-10)	7	14
Competent (11-15)	24	48
Accomplished (16-20)	19	38
Mean = 13.95 SD = 2.89		

Table 5 indicates the productive speaking skill with an overall mean of 13.95, which was in the “competent” category. Considering the different speaking

components evaluated, the speaker-respondents are “competent” in all dimensions i.e., Content (3.01), Grammar (2.82), Vocabulary (2.73), Organisation (2.84), and Fluency (2.55).

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Level of Writing Skill

Category	Frequency (n = 50)	Percent
Organisation		
Non-college work (1-5)	0	0
Unacceptable (6-11)	10	20
Fair to Adequate (12-14)	16	32
Adequate - Good (15-17)	21	42
Good to Excellent (18-20)	3	6
Mean = 14.23 SD = 2.82		
Logical Development		
Non-college work (1-5)	0	0
Unacceptable (6-11)	9	18
Fair to Adequate (12-14)	18	36
Adequate - Good (15-17)	18	36
Good to Excellent (18-20)	5	10
Mean = 14.31 SD = 2.86		
Grammar		
Non-college work (1-5)	0	0
Unacceptable (6-11)	17	34
Fair to Adequate (12-14)	19	38
Adequate - Good (15-17)	12	24
Good to Excellent (18-20)	2	4
Mean = 13.10 SD = 2.70		
Punctuation, Spelling, Mechanics		
Non-college work (1-5)	0	0
Unacceptable (6-11)	8	16
Fair to Adequate (12-14)	17	34
Adequate - Good (15-17)	20	40
Good to Excellent (18-20)	5	10
Mean = 14.44 SD = 2.55		
Style and Quality of Expression		
Non-college work (1-5)	0	0
Unacceptable (6-11)	6	12
Fair to Adequate (12-14)	15	30
Adequate - Good (15-17)	22	44
Good to Excellent (18-20)	7	14
Mean = 14.93 SD = 2.61		
Overall Productive Skill (Writing)		

Non-college work (1-25)	0	0
Unacceptable (26-55)	7	14
Fair to Adequate (56-70)	15	30
Adequate - Good (71-85)	20	40
Good to Excellent (86-100)	8	16
Mean = 71.01 SD = 12.94		

Table 6 shows that the overall writing skills mean of the respondents is 71.01, falling under the category of "adequate-good". Based on the scores of the respondents in the specific domains of the evaluated writing, it appeared that all areas were rated fair to adequate, that is, Organisation (14.23), Logical Development of Ideas (14.31), Grammar (13.10), and Punctuation, Spelling, Mechanics (14.44), except for Style and Quality of Expression which received a mean of 14.93 described as adequate to good.

Table 7

Comparison of the Grammatical Competence of the Respondents Grouped by Selected Profile

Variables and Groups	Group Mean	Statistic	df	Computed Value	Probability
Type of School		T	208	1.767	0.08
Public	8.356				
Private	7.058				
Course		F	11/198	5.923	.000**
Psychology	32.47				
Political Science	29.10				
Economics	30.40				
Human Services	28.14				
Physics	35.00				
Mathematics	24.25				
Chemistry	30.33				
Biology	27.05				
Environmental Science	21.33				
English Language Studies	32.45				
Communication	29.25				
Industrial and Commercial Communication	18.09				
Ethnicity		F	4/208	1.098	.359
Tagalog	27.05				
Itawes	27.27				
Ilocano	28.40				
Ybanag	31.14				

Others	31.43				

Note: *significant at 0.05 level; **significant at 0.01 level

Table 7 reveals that there was a significant difference in the respondents` grammatical competence when grouped according to course; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Grammatical competence scores did not differ when grouped according to type of school graduated from and ethnicity, with probability values of 0.08 and .359 (p>.05).

Table 8

Comparison of the Discourse Competence of the Respondents Grouped by Selected Profile

Variables and Groups	Group Mean	Statistic	df	Computed Value	Probability
Type of School		T	208	2.137	0.034
Public	4.417				
Private	5.417				
Course		F	11/198	4.660	.000**
Psychology	23.24				
Political Science	22.57				
Economics	20.00				
Human Services	21.43				
Physics	25.00				
Mathematics	19.75				
Chemistry	22.44				
Biology	20.11				
Environmental Science	17.53				
English Language Studies	23.91				
Communication	23.92				
Industrial and Commercial Communication	16.82				
Ethnicity		F	4/208	.664	.618
Tagalog	21.20				
Itawes	20.70				
Ilocano	21.32				
Ybanag	23.14				
Others	21.14				

Note: *significant at 0.05 level; **significant at 0.01 level

Table 8 shows that there was a significant difference in the respondents` discourse competence when grouped according to type of school graduated from and course; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings revealed that

students who graduated from private institutions scored comparatively better than those who graduated from public schools in the discourse competence test influence concerning whether, what, and how any individual learns a language.

Scores in discourse competence test did not differ when grouped according to ethnicity as the probability value (.618) was higher than 0.05 level of significance; hence, the hypothesis was accepted.

Table 9

Comparison of Respondents' Productive Skills Grouped by Selected Profile

Variables and Groups	Group Mean	Statistic	df	Computed Value	Probability
Sex		T	48	1.254	0.196
Female	2.98				
Male	2.74				
Type of School		T	48	0.838	0.406
Public	2.72				
Private	2.97				
Course		F	10/39	2.397	0.025*
Psychology	2.68				
Political Science	2.92				
Economics	2.47				
Human Services	2.83				
Mathematics	1.98				
Chemistry	3.27				
Biology	2.85				
Environmental Science	2.84				
English Language Studies	3.22				
Communication	3.53				
Industrial and Commercial Communication	2.16				
Ethnicity		F	4/45	0.089	0.985
Tagalog	2.73				
Itawes	2.83				
Ilocano	2.81				
Ybanag	2.87				
Others	2.63				

Note: *significant at 0.05 level; **significant at 0.01 level

Table 9 shows that respondents' speaking performance differed significantly only when grouped according to course but not with other selected profile variables such as sex, type of school, and ethnicity.

Table 10
Comparison of Respondents' Writing Skill - Grouped by Selected Profile

Variables and Groups	Group Mean	Statistic	df	Computed Value	Probability
Sex		T	48	0.838	0.406
Female	14.78				
Male	14.04				
Type of School		T	48	0.373	0.711
Public					
Private					
Course		F	10/39	1.672	0.123
BS Psychology	15.22				
AB Political Science	14.15				
AB Economics	15.87				
BS Human Services	11.47				
BS Mathematics	13.98				
BS Chemistry	15.10				
BS Biology	12.96				
BS Environmental Science	13.22				
AB English Language Studies	15.64				
AB Communication	17.20				
BS Industrial and Commercial Communication	12.29				
Ethnicity		F	4/45	0.960	0.439
Tagalog	13.21				
Itawes	13.82				
Ilocano	14.72				
Ybanag	14.00				
Others	15.80				

Note: *significant at 0.05 level; **significant at 0.01 level

In Table 10, the respondents' writing performance did not vary significantly when grouped according to sex, type of school graduated from, course, and ethnicity.

Table 11
Relationship between Respondents' Grammatical and Discourse Competence and Select Profile Variables and Mass Media Exposure

Variables	Grammatical Competence		Discourse Competence	
	r-value	p-value	r-value	p-value

Father's Highest Educational Attainment	.354**	.000	.291**	.000
Mother's Highest Educational Attainment	.328**	.000	.247**	.000
Time Spent to Mass Media				
TV	.096	.166	.019	.782
Radio	.162*	.019	.062	.373
Magazine	.040	.561	.022	.752
Newspaper	.054	.440	.001	.994
Internet	.144*	.037	.084	.223
Overall	.059	.398	.045	.518
Attention Given to Mass Media				
TV	.182**	.008	.188**	.006
Radio	.142*	.040	.181**	.009
Magazine	.215**	.002	.170*	.014
Newspaper	.255**	.000	.233**	.001
Internet	.204**	.003	.159*	.021
Overall	.248**	.000	.232**	.001
Credibility of Advertisements in Mass Media				
TV	.355**	.000	.314**	.000
Radio	.398**	.000	.360**	.000
Magazine	.407**	.000	.352**	.000
Newspaper	.461**	.000	.413**	.000
Internet	.057	.413	.026	.710
Overall	.402**	.000	.363**	.000
Frequency of Clicking Ads in Mass Media	.281**	.000	.289**	.000
Overall Mass Media Exposure	.369**	.000	.336**	.000

df = 209

Note: *significant at 0.05 level; **significant at 0.01 level

The data also revealed that grammatical competence was significantly correlated to the respondents' parents' highest educational attainment with correlation coefficients or r-values of .354 and .328 for father`s highest educational attainment and mother`s highest educational attainment, respectively at 0.01 level of significance (Table 11). This means that the higher the level of parental education, the more grammatically competent the respondents would be. Media exposure and students' grammatical and discourse competence were also positively correlated as indicated by the overall correlation coefficients of .369 and .366, respectively.

Table 12

Relationship between Respondents' Productive Skills, Selected Profile, and Mass Media Exposure

Variables	Writing		Speaking	
	r-value	p-value	r-value	p-value
Father's Education	.209	.144	.255	.074
Mother's Education	.257	.071	.337*	.017
Time Spent on Mass Media				
TV	.072	.622	.071	.625
Radio	.004	.976	.264	.064
Magazine	.039	.789	.002	.989
Newspaper	.113	.435	.051	.727
Internet	.248	.082	.028	.849
Overall	.024	.866	.120	.406
Attention Given to Mass Media				
TV	.206	.151	.178	.216
Radio	.116	.424	.310*	.029
Magazine	.225	.116	.236	.099
Newspaper	.254	.075	.231	.106
Internet	.200	.164	.169	.239
Overall	.252	.077	.281*	.048
Credibility of Advertisements in Mass Media				
TV	.291*	.040	.304*	.032
Radio	.154	.285	.389**	.005
Magazine	.401**	.004	.429**	.002
Newspaper	.420**	.002	.353*	.012
Internet	.020	.890	.110	.447
Overall	.319*	.024	.350*	.013
Frequency of Clicking Ads in Mass Media	.291*	.040	.304*	.032
Overall Mass Media Exposure	.302*	.033	.292*	.040

df = 49

Note: *significant at 0.05 level; **significant at 0.01 level

With a correlation coefficient of .337 at 0.05 level of significance, mother's highest educational attainment was found to be significantly correlated to speaking performance. The table further shows that exposure to mass media influenced writing and speaking performance as reflected in the overall correlation coefficients of .302 and .292, respectively.

Table 13

Relationship between Respondents' Grammatical Competence and Discourse Competence

Grammatical Competence	Discourse Competence			
	Spoken		Written	
	r-value	p-value	r-value	p-value
Grammar	.257**	.000	.318**	.000
Vocabulary	.377**	.000	.454**	.000
Phonology	.235**	.001	.297**	.000
Morphology	.405**	.000	.493**	.000
Semantics	.425**	.000	.521**	.000
Syntax	.177*	.010	.305**	.000
Overall	r- value = 0.433** p –value = 0.000			

df = 209

Note: *significant at 0.05 level; **significant at 0.01 level

In addition, Table 13 shows that there was a significant relationship between grammatical competence and discourse competence. This suggests that respondents' knowledge in the domains of grammar, vocabulary, phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax were related to their knowledge of spoken and written discourse. As scores in specific grammatical competence domains increase, the scores in spoken and written discourse also increase.

Table 14

Relationship between Respondents' Grammatical Discourse Competence and Productive Skills

	Productive Skills			
	Speaking		Writing	
	r-value	p-value	r-value	p-value
Grammatical Competence				
Grammar	.076	.601	.396**	.004
Vocabulary	.136	.348	.237	.098
Phonology	.256	.073	.505**	.000
Morphology	.239	.094	.423**	.002
Semantics	.328*	.020	.596**	.000
Syntax	.232	.105	.546**	.000
Discourse Competence				
Spoken	.379**	.007	.320*	.022
Written	.444**	.001	.435**	.002
Overall	r- value = .433** p –value = .000			

df = 49

Note: *significant at 0.05 level; **significant at 0.01 level

Table 14 shows that grammatical competence was significantly correlated with writing skill, while discourse competence was significantly correlated with speaking and writing skill. The results further suggested that grammatical and discourse competence were closely associated with speaking and writing as ascertained by the overall correlation coefficient of .433, which was significant at 0.01 level.

The micro-skills, subsumed under grammatical competence except for vocabulary, showed positive linear relationship with writing skill. This means that the higher the scores in grammar, phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax, the better the performance of the respondents in the writing task.

A positive linear relationship between discourse competence and the productive skills of respondents was also established by the findings, as reflected by the correlation coefficients, which were significant at 0.01 and 0.05. This implies that one's ability to combine and interpret meanings and forms to achieve unified text in different modes by using cohesion devices to relate forms and coherence rules to organise meanings and the ability to select sequence and arrange words, structures, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken message (discourse competence) can manifest in real communicative situations such as in writing and speaking.

Finally, the relationship between grammatical and discourse competence and the productive skills was reinforced by the overall correlation coefficient which is significant at 0.01 level.

Discussion

Based on the findings, although the students' grammar competence was average, scores in specific dimensions of grammatical competence such grammar and syntax were poor. The poor results in the grammar test supported findings indicating that learners' performance in grammar and syntax was generally poor (Merza, 2022; Sioco & De Vera, 2018). When it comes to morphology, the result suggested that the respondents were generally aware of the rules of morphological affixation. This negated that of Naseeb and Ibrahim (2017), Sarfraz et al. (2018) and Hasani et al. (2014) who found that learners lack morphological awareness. The scores in the semantics dimension of the grammatical competence test meanwhile returned an average categorical mean. Relative to this, Chiu (2009) reported that even high-level ESL learners performed significantly worse than native speakers of English. The study also revealed differences in grammatical competence scores of students when grouped by course which concur with other studies (Razmjoo & Movahed, 2009; Tuan, 2017).

In terms of discourse, the students' competence was average. The results illustrated that they had an average knowledge regarding spoken and written discourse. Discourse competence scores were also found to vary across school type and course. As López-Montero et al. (2014, as cited in Eccius-Wellmann & Santana, 2020) pointed out, access to cultural capital in the form of books, computers, and internet access, "may have a profound influence upon whether, what, and how any individual learns a language" (p. 3).

On the other hand, the speaking test revealed encouraging results as students' performance was described "competent", while their writing skills were rated "adequate-good". It is important to note that speaking performance differed significantly only when grouped according to course. This result was similar to Betonio (2017), who assessed students' English oral proficiency based on degree programmes and found that there was a highly significant difference in the oral proficiency level of students when compared using the academic courses that they were enrolled in.

The study also revealed an association between grammatical competence and discourse competence. These two competences appeared to interact with each other. The recognition and production of grammatically correct sentences as well as comprehension of their propositional content are critical in the creation of discourse (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2007; Flowerdew, 2013). Elements at the lexical and grammatical levels are united in the formulation of discourse. Hence, both grammatical and discourse competence reflect the use of the grammatical system itself (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2007).

In terms of writing, the results confirm as well as negate results from studies that explored writing performance and errors of ESL and EFL students when language dimensions and select profile variables are considered. No significant structural differences between writing factors across the gender group was found by Woods (2016), contradicting Al-Saadi (2020) who found that women did better than men in terms of writing fluency and text quality. dos Santos and Hage (2015) reported that students at private institutions had better writing abilities than those at public institutions. Exposure to mass media helped students in their speaking skills (Albayrak & Yanar, 2013; Sioco & De Vera, 2018).

The main concern of this research, however, was whether grammatical and discourse competence are correlated with the productive skills of speaking and writing. Results revealed that grammatical competence, in general, showed positive linear relationship with writing skill. Mulyaningsih et al. (2013) confirmed that there was a positive correlation between grammatical competence and writing ability. They explained that the decrease or increase in the students` grammatical competence led to the decrease or increase in writing ability. Moreover, the most grammatically competent students proved to be the best student-writers (Shattah, 2008). One's ability to combine and interpret meanings and forms can manifest in real communicative situations such as in writing and speaking. In the context of the theory of the transfer of learning, the present study suggests that the respondents` grammatical and discourse knowledge facilitate, contribute, or was translated to speaking and writing performance.

Conclusion

The first-year students of the College of Arts and Sciences, Cagayan State University have an average competence level along with grammatical competence and discourse competence. While they were competent in speaking, they were only adequate to good in writing. The course they were taking was a contributory factor and correlated significantly in grammatical competence, discourse competence, and

speaking. Parents' highest educational attainment and mass media exposure were found to be significantly correlated with both grammatical and discourse competence, while for discourse level, only the type of school one graduated from was found to be significant. There was also a significant relationship between linguistic competence and discourse competence. Finally, grammatical competence was found to be significantly correlated with writing skill, while discourse competence was significantly correlated with speaking and writing skills. Grammatical and discourse knowledge facilitated both the productive skill of speaking and writing and were established as vital for better written and spoken language outputs. Future research can include sociolinguistic and strategic competences, two promising areas for further investigation in the present area.

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