Journal of Business, Economics and Sustainable Systems (JBESS)

Issue 1, June 15, 2026,

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Research Article

IMPACT OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN DELHI NCR, INDIA

Abstract

English Language Proficiency (ELP) plays a crucial role in shaping the academic outcomes of international students. This research, examines the relationship between language proficiency and academic performance among the international students. As English is the medium of instruction in universities, a good command of English is essential for effective learning and academic attainment. Quantitative research methodology will be employed to collect data from 132 international students studying at various universities in the Delhi NCR, India.

The findings reveal ELP scores of most students are ranged between beginner and intermediate level. This suggests that most students have difficulties in understanding lectures, participating in class discussion, and academic writing. There is a significant relationship between the ELP levels and academic success ($r = 0.623$, $p < 0.001$). The R^2 shows that the English language proficiency accounts for about 39 percent of the variance in academic performance ($R^2 \approx 0.388$). While overall effectiveness can be considered limited, the institution's proposed solution can be characterized as moderately effective.

1. Introduction

Over the past years, the percentage of foreign students has grown significantly globally, with India becoming a major hub for higher education. In particular, the Delhi NCR region has witnessed a steadily increase in foreign student enrollment alongside the expansion of educational institutions and academic opportunities.

English Language Proficiency (ELP) emerged as an important variable affecting the academic success of foreign students studying at English medium educational institutions. ELP is important for the comprehension of lectures and classroom discussions and effective use of academic sources by students. Foreign students who lack English language proficiency usually find themselves facing difficulties in academic writing, advanced or complex vocabulary usage, and classroom interactions.

Existing literature suggests a strong favorable correlation association between ELP and academic success. They further noticed that higher educational institutes lacked an appropriate linguistic support system for international students.

Hence, the current research seeks examine how ELP affects the academic success of foreign students in Delhi-NCR region, and recommendations have been provided to improve the language support system and

institute policy formulation in educational instituitions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview of English Language Proficiency (ELP):

The proficiency in English serves as one of the key determinants that led to the success of foreign students undertaking their studies in various English medium instruction (EMI) types of conditions. It determined comprehension, participation, and academic achievement. Several studies consistently maintained that performance in the academic subject areas improved with improvement in proficiency in the English Language.

2.2 Key Themes in Literature:

(a) Impact of English Proficiency on Academic Achievement

Azkiyah et al. (2023) acknowledged that advanced mastery of English was very important for any academic success, especially in medical courses that would be more dependent on the difficult academic content. According to research conducted by Bo et al. (2023), English proficiency was the strongest predictor for performance in the humanities and social sciences since the disciplines were heavily dependent on language-based learning. Grain et al. (2022) indicated that multilingual students with higher English proficiency attained better grades because improved language skills improved their cognitive flexibility.

(b) Challenges Faced by Non-Native English Speakers

Apart from that, Lolley (2024) and Malik et al. (2022) identified numerous challenges encountered by non-native speakers in academic and social contexts. The poor learning abilities in the speaking and writing aspects adversely influenced their adjustment in both environments, as well as the outcome of their other academic performances. According to Nasirudeen and Xiao (2020), reading books as well as writing assignments took much of a toll on nursing students, preventing them from fully capitalizing on their coursework.

(c) Significance of Institutional Support Programs

Heeren (2024) used the Post-Entry Language Assessments to detect students with language difficulties from the very beginning of their studies and make special provisions for assistance. Gunasekara and Senaratne (2022) advocated for organized English for Academic Purposes programs for pupils hailing from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

(d) Motivation and Personal Learning Strategies

Psychological or behavioral factors, i.e., motivation and self-confidence, play important roles in overcoming language barriers. The role of motivation has been underscored by recent research by Aizawa, et al. (2023) into effective ESP programs for Japanese students by addressing their English learning motivation. As Qu (2023) noted further, students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) or desire to engage in particular situations with others in the second language can promote language acquisition in classroom situations and/or language programs where students interact with each other and with a teacher in meaningful and communicative ways.

(e) Disciplinary-Specific Challenges

Shi (2023) observed that language differences impact on language as an academic discipline in distinctive ways from other subject areas. On the one hand, Chinese students in UK universities may encounter certain issues with English vocabulary within language studies. On the other hand, students encounter particular

linguistic features of teaching language in academic contexts of their subject disciplines. From the student's perspective, Mathew (2024) found that for the group of students with higher levels of English proficiency, particularly in reading and writing, they performed better in STEM technical subjects, which require more technical understanding of subject-specific terminology in order to obtain better academic performance. Sadia et al. (2021) recommended that the most effective language support involves providing discipline-specific courses to support students' reading and writing academic skills.

2.3 **Synthesis of Literature :**

- The current literature demonstrates that English language proficiency is consistently upheld by the touchstone that it remains an important predictor of academic performance across disciplines and educational contexts. Institutional support by way of comprehensive programs, targeted interventions, and even motivational practices provided for use by students remained essential avenues through which students could surmount the limitations imposed by language. Consistent with all the literature was the assertion that academic performance and ELP were associated.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach:

The study will use a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between ELP and academic performance of foreign students in Delhi NCR region. This methodology is appropriate for this study since it facilitates the measurement and analysis of various variables.

Table 1: Summary of Research Design

Aspect	Description
Research Approach	Quantitative
Research Design	Non-experimental, Correlational
Data Type	Primary Data
Data Collection Method	Structured Questionnaire
Sampling Technique Used	Convenience Sampling
Size of the Sample	132 International Students
Study Area	Delhi NCR, India

Source: Author Constructed

3.2 Development of Hypotheses:

The hypothesis of the study is formed on the basis of its objectives and literature reviewed earlier:

- **- H_0 (Null Hypothesis):** No significant relationship exists between English Language Proficiency and their performance (CGPA) among Delhi NCR international students.
- **- H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis):** A significant positive relationship exists between English Language Proficiency and their performance (CGPA) in Delhi NCR

3.3 **Data Collection Method:**

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was formulated with the research objectives and relevant literature in accordance was used as the primary method of data collection. The questionnaire had several parts including demographics, English Language Proficiency levels, academic performance (assessed using

CGPA), and language-related problems faced by international students. The questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms.

3.4 Population and Sample:

The study's target population includes foreign students studying in universities within the Delhi-NCR region.

The sample size used in the research was 132 students. Convenience sampling method was used in the sample selection.

Variables of the Study:

This study emphasis on the following variables:

- - Independent Variable (IV): English Language Proficiency (ELP)
  (Beginner = 1, Intermediate = 2, Advanced = 3)
- - Dependent Variable (DV): Academic Performance (measured through CGPA)

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques:

Statistical techniques like descriptive and inferential both were utilized to analyze the gathered data. Respondents' demographic information and English Language Proficiency (ELP) scores were described using descriptive statistics like frequency count and percentages.

Pearson correlation coefficient was employed in determining the strength of the relationship between the English Language Proficiency (ELP) level and the performance in academics.

3.6 Validity and Reliability:

Validity was assured by designing the research tool on the basis of reviewed literature and the objectives of the study.

4. Results

4.1 Respondent Profile:

The study included 132 foreign students enrolled in educational institutions residing in Delhi NCR region.

Table 2: Demographic Distribution (Selected Variables)

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Nationality	African Region	37.9
	Middle East	31.8
	South Asia	14.4
	Others	15.9
Age Group	18–22	42.4
	23–27	46.2
	28+	11.4
Gender	Male	50.8
	Female	48.5

Source: Author Constructed

4.2 English Language Proficiency (ELP):

Table 3: Distribution of English Language Proficiency

ELP Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Beginner	54	40.9
Intermediate	70	53.0
Advanced	8	6.1
Total	132	100

Source: Author Constructed

4.3. Academic Performance (CGPA):

Table 4: Academic Performance Distribution

Range of CGPA	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 5.0	3	2.3
5.0 – 6.9	72	54.5
7.0 – 8.9	51	38.6
9.0 – 10	6	4.5
Total	132	100

Source: Author Constructed

4.4. Language-Related Challenges:

Table 5: Major Language Challenges

Challenge	Percentage (%)
Academic Writing	62.1
Class Discussions	52.3
Lecture Comprehension	50.8
Accent Understanding	29.5

Source: Author Constructed

4.5. Correlation Analysis:

The Pearson Correlation method was employed to establish the connection between academic achievement and proficiency in English Language.

Table 6: Correlation Results

Variable Pair	Correlation (r)	p-value
ELP & CGPA	0.623	< 0.001

Source: Author Constructed

Based on the findings, there exists a positive relationship between the two variables

4.6. Coefficient of Determination:

$R^2 = 0.3887$

It shows that about 38.87% of the variations in academic achievement can be accounted for by English Language Proficiency.

4.7. Hypothesis Testing:

Table 7: Hypothesis Test Summary

Parameter	Value
Correlation (r)	0.623
Sample Size (n)	132
t-value	9.092
p-value	< 0.001
Decision	Reject H_0

Source: Author Constructed

Null hypothesis will be rejected, whereas alternate hypothesis will be accepted as the p-value is less than 0.05.

5. Discussion

The findings obtained in this research highlights a strong connection between ELP and academic success among overseas students in Delhi NCR, India. It was found that there exists a highly positive association ($r = 0.623$) between ELP and academic success. It means students with high proficiency can perform better academically, a claim that has been supported by other studies, like Azkiyah et al. (2023) and Bo et al. (2023).

Moreover, the descriptive analysis indicated that most students have an intermediate to beginner level of English proficiency skills. Despite their ability to comprehend the academic content, these students face problems in performing more complex academic activities. The results are consistent with the results reported by Grain et al. (2022) in their study, which found out that proficient students exhibit higher cognitive flexibility, thus improving their academic outcomes.

In addition to the abovementioned aspects, the investigation has revealed a few problems related to the use of language, such as academic writing, discussion, and comprehension of lectures. This statement is justified by the findings of previous studies conducted by Lolley (2024) and Malik et al. (2022), stating that ineffective communication skills impact learning outcomes. Likewise, Nasirudeen and Xiao (2020) indicated that reading and writing challenges influence learners' academic performance.

Despite the presence of linguistic support courses in institutions, there appears to be a gap in addressing the needs of international students. This idea is aligned with the opinions of Gunasekara and Senaratne (2022), who highlighted the significance of EAP courses. The outcomes reveal the necessity of tailoring language support based on each discipline, as recommended by Sadia et al. (2021).

Moreover, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 \approx 0.388$) shows that English Language Proficiency significantly predicts academic achievement. Nevertheless, it means that apart from English Language Proficiency, other aspects, including motivation and learning strategies among others, can influence academic performance. This corroborates the findings of Aizawa et al. (2023) and Qu (2023), where motivation and willingness to communicate are critical for success.

In conclusion, this study finds that ELP acts as a determining factor in academic success. However, in order to maximize the benefits associated with language proficiency among international students, institutions

should consider offering supportive programs that will enhance learning experiences of pupils.

6. Conclusion

The study highlights the significance of ELP in determining their academic success of foreign students in education institutions in the Delhi NCR region. It was observed that a considerable proportion of students possess beginner to intermediate levels of English Language Proficiency, which limits their capacity to comprehend lessons, communicate with tutors, and accomplish academic tasks, especially academic writing.

The statistical analysis further supports these findings, as a significant positive link was observed between ELP and academic performance. The Pearson correlation coefficient $(r = 0.623, p < 0.001)$ shows that as the ELP increases, academic performance, measured through CGPA, also improves.

The value of $R^2 \approx 0.388$ shows that about 38% of the variance in academic achievement is caused by ELP. Despite the availability of language support programs or workshops in higher education institutions, the findings indicate that these services are not fully effective in addressing the diverse needs of international students, thereby creating a gap between their availability and effectiveness.

- Thus, it can be deduced that proficiency in the English language is not an additional requirement but a vital factor that impacts the success of a learner within an English-speaking educational environment. Enhancing ELP through structured development programs can significantly improve academic performance, boost students' confidence, and support both academic and social integration.

7. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 **Limitations**

The results that have been obtained in this study must be interpreted keeping in mind certain limitations, which include the following. First, the geographical area covered by this study is confined to the Delhi NCR only, thus making the results less generalizable to other regions in India. Second, while 132 respondents are enough for conducting the analysis, they do not fully represent the total population of international students.

Self-reporting methods are used to measure ELP, which can lead to biases in responses provided. Moreover, cross-sectional study design means that the measurement of proficiency and performance occurs at one point in time and ignores any changes that might take place.

The measurement of performance was done based on CGPA only. It cannot capture the complete performance of students because it did not include assessment of students' assignments, presentations, and class participation. The influence of motivation, culture, quality of instruction, and mental health on academic performance is not taken into consideration.

7.2 Recommendations

The following suggestions are put forth to enhance international students' academic performance based on the findings:

- - Implement entry-level language diagnostics to assess proficiency and design personalized learning pathways.
- - Integrate real-time lecture support tools (e.g., subtitles/translation) to enhance comprehension.
- - Establish Academic Communication Labs for practice in presentations, discussions, and viva.

- - Introduce structured academic writing programs focusing on referencing, critical analysis, and plagiarism awareness.
- - Launch a Language Buddy Program to promote peer learning and social integration.
- - Develop micro-learning modules (app-based) for continuous, flexible skill-building.
- - Encourage language-sensitive teaching practices (simplified explanations, visual aids, interactive methods).
- - Organizing accent and pronunciation training workshop to reduce diverse accent related issues.
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Overall, a shift toward student-centered and technology-enabled language support systems is essential to address language barriers and enhance academic success.

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