

Language learning styles, motivations, and strategies of senior high school remote learners

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Abstract

This aimed to investigate English language learning skills of senior high school remote learners in Batangas City this pandemic. More specifically, this study intended to assess the learners' language learning styles; determine the learners' motivations for English language learning; evaluate the learners' language learning strategies; test the significant relationship between English language learning styles and motivations, as well as strategies, along with motivation and strategies for English language learning, and propose an English communication skills intervention program for the enhancement of English language skills for flexible remote learning this pandemic. This research, participated by 386 randomly selected senior high school students, used quantitative data and descriptive research technique for analysis. The study found that the learners' dominant English language learning style is project orientation while their motivation is mainly unwillingness – based with meta-cognitive strategies employed in English language learning. Furthermore, holistic English language learning considers learners' learning styles, motivations, and strategies wherein an intervention program for the enhancement of English communication skills for flexible remote learning was proposed. As such, curriculum designers may provide provisions for group activities maximizing internet connectivity like social media that emphasize teaching - learning activities enabling socialization and collaboration among learners. Even more, DepEd may promote English language learning as a fun and worthwhile skill while English language teachers may devise teaching – learning activities that highlight vocabulary enhancement. In support, English language coordinators may enforce use of teaching – learning strategies relevant to learners' information needs and generation characteristics and future researchers may consider comparing results of current investigation with other learning modalities to be implemented by the education department while transitioning to the new normal. More so, the proposed intervention program may be considered and implemented.

Keywords: strategies, motivation, learning style, remote learners

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1. Introduction

English language is envisioned to drive business and education throughout the world as nations work together towards globalization. With trade and communication technology come the demands for English language learning in training workers equipped with skills necessary for communicating and collaborating effectively. As such, English language proficiency becomes the forefront of global success as opportunities for becoming a global work force abound alongside the chance for improving the quality of life. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic came the new normal in education. In 2020, an estimated 376 million students (UNESCO, 2020) in 188 countries (Toquero, 2020) are affected globally. Among these are more than 28 million Filipino learners learning at home through emergency remote learning (Distance Education – Philippines, n.d.) conforming with the Philippine government’s quarantine measures (Joaquin, et.al., 2020) in keeping with the United Nations Agency for Child Welfare’s (UNICEF) instructions (Prahani, 2020). As face - to - face instructions were canceled (Hew, et. al., 2020), the Commission on Higher Education and Department of Education implemented a flexible model of blended learning throughout the country (Navarosa & Fernando, 2020) with synchronous and asynchronous sessions (Remote Learning, 2021) or a pseudo–virtual approach (Manila Bulletin, 2021) promoting the spirit of “bayanihan,” which concentrates on design and delivery together with learning interventions (Joaquin, 2020).

Remote learning entails teaching and learning at a distance where teachers give learning opportunities synchronously and promote independent study asynchronously (What is remote learning and how effective can it be?). Through remote learning, students remained connected and engaged while at home despite learner’s issues with online infrastructure and teacher support (Alvarez, 2020), peer interaction and physical and mental health (Rotas & Cahapay, 2020), beside online teacher’s issues relevant to training and experience (Garcia, 2020) associated with content design and delivery (Kebritchi, 2017) that further highlighted societal injustice and inequality other than the widening digital divide (Bozkurt, 2020).

All learners employ their best learning styles as they adapt to education this pandemic (Carlton, 2021). Learning styles or the preferred ways may be factors, behaviors, or attitudes (What are Learning Styles? n.d.). Subsequently, teaching style needs to support student’s learning style that encourages flexibility, advances student-centered learning (Mukhtar, et al., 2020), inspires collaboration (Battalio, 2009), develops autonomous and self-restraining reflective learners (Thiele, 2003), and promotes engagement (Rajabalee, et.al., 2020) that positively affects satisfaction, motivation, and performance (Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

Motivation may be intrinsic and extrinsic and regarded as an “engine of learning” and “affects in what, how, and when of learners’ learning” (Gustiani, 2020). Though “interest, perception, desire, self-confidence, self-esteem, patience, and persistence” may also influence learning, they may also resolve challenges with problems of attrition and participation” (Meşe & Sevilen, 2021). Additionally, motivation is significant in second language learning directly influencing learner’s achievement and strategies (Rahardjo & Pertiwi, 2020).

Learners employ different strategies or conscious mental activities revealing engagement or the “quantity and quality” of commitment to learn at their own initiatives (Drapeau, 2020). A study by Millar, et. al. (2021) cited the necessity of continuous engagement as they report that online students’ engagement is greater than “400% when assessment is due”. In a study in the Philippines, Avila, et al. (2020), said students were motivated to employ learning strategies in their online class. In second language learning, student’s strategies entail carefully chosen actions for improving and/or using language (McDonough, 1999).

A comprehensive study on flexible remote learning may benefit education sector stakeholders. Specifically, an exhaustive investigation on how English language competencies among students are developed may address related issues with input, process, and feedback in the educative process of this current set up. More so, educators and curriculum designers may use the outcomes of this investigation as guide in revisiting the existing curriculum prior to planning, revising, and integrating of teaching-learning activities suited for flexible remote learning. Even more, administrators may have bases on the development and enforcement of an English communication skills program for holistic training of flexible remote students that may ensure alignment to the expected essential learning competencies. Current and future researchers may benefit immensely on this research investigation as the outcomes of this endeavor may facilitate further understanding of the context which may inspire advocacies for the upscale of teacher trainings and research efforts on the nature and practice of English language communication skills teaching in flexible remote learning and in the other learning modalities which may be implemented by the Department of Education in support of its effort to transition to the new normal.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The research aimed to examine English language learning skills of senior high school remote learners in Batangas City this pandemic. More specifically, this study intended to assess the learners' language learning style in terms of project orientation, group activity orientation and individual activity orientation. Additionally, this determined the learners' motivation for English language learning in terms of unwillingness-based, intrinsic, anxiety-based, future-oriented, and praise-oriented. More so, this evaluated the learners' language learning strategies in terms of memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective, and social. Additionally, this tested the significant relationship between English language learning styles and motivations, in addition to strategies along with motivation and strategies for English language learning. This study also proposed an English communication skills intervention program for the enhancement of English language skills for flexible remote learning this pandemic.

2. Methods

Descriptive-correlational research was used to investigate English language learning skills of senior high school remote learners in Batangas City this pandemic as basis for an English communication skills intervention program for the enhancement of English language skills for flexible remote learning. The participants were 386 randomly selected senior high school students officially enrolled from the top three most populated private and public senior high schools in Batangas City during academic year 2020 - 2021. From the total participants, 193 were from three public senior high schools whereas 193 came from three private senior high schools. These participants experienced flexible remote learning this new normal.

The data for this research undertaking were collected in compliance with the government-imposed health and safety protocols through an electronic form (Google Form) whose link was shared with the help of respective authorized persons from the participating schools. The first part, which was researcher-made, established the profile of remote learners. The second part adapted the English Language Learning Style instrument from an Analysis of One Learning Styles by Wintergerst, et al. (2002) The third part, adopted from Motivation of Students for Learning English in Rwandan Schools by Takahashi, (2018), determined the learners' motivation for English language learning. Then the last part has been adapted from Language Learning Strategies and Self-Efficacy Beliefs as Predictors of English Proficiency in a Language Preparatory School by Açıkel (2011), evaluated the learners' language learning strategies.

Actual data gathering was conducted among 386 randomly selected senior high school students from private and public schools in Batangas City through a Google Form link from June 3-23, 2021. Then responses were evaluated with the help of the University statistician using SPSS. Mean and ranking were used to assess the learners' language learning style as well as to determine motivation for English language learning. Furthermore, Spearman Rho was used to test the significant relationship between English language learning style and

motivation as well as strategies along with motivation and strategies for English language learning.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 summarizes the assessment on the English language learning styles with a 3.11 composite mean and verbally interpreted as Often. Project orientation with 3.17, then individual activity orientation with 3.15 and group activity orientation with 3.01 assessed as Often.

Table 1

Summary table on English language learning style

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Project Orientation	3.17	Often	1
2. Group Activity Orientation	3.01	Often	3
3. Individual Activity Orientation	3.15	Often	2
Composite Mean	3.11	Often	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Always; 2.50 – 3.49 = Often; 1.50 – 2.49 = Sometimes; 1.00 – 1.49 = Never

English language learners at the senior high school belong to the cultural generation --- iGen or Gen Z who learn best through collaboration and learning by doing. Provisions to work with others in the performance of learning activities is the preferred learning style by English language learners. Aksela and Haatainen (2019) found that teachers prefer project – based learning as it encourages students’ or teachers’ learning, motivation, and collaboration in addition to supporting student – centredness and teacher - adaptability. Furthermore, Kokotsaki, et al. (2016) realized several features of project - based learning benefitting both students and teachers by way of information and communication literacy, superior teamwork, successful managing of students’ learning with the guidance of the teachers, maintaining balance between teaching and inquiry approaches and assessing properly.

Table 2

Summary Table on Motivation for English Language Learning

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Unwillingness - Based	3.25	Agree	1
2. Intrinsic	2.77	Agree	4
3. Anxiety - Based	2.63	Agree	5
4. Future - Oriented	3.04	Agree	3
5. Praise - Oriented	3.09	Agree	2
Composite Mean	2.96	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 2 summarizes the assessment on the motivations for English language learning with 2.96 composite mean, verbally interpreted Agree. Unwillingness – based with 3.25, praise - oriented with 3.09, future – oriented with 3.04, intrinsic with 2.77 and anxiety – based with 2.63. Gen Z learners succeed in a learning environment that fosters self - reliance and capacity to self–educate. Motivations for learning English, though considerably affected by reluctance or hesitancy, is strengthened by the perceived usefulness of English language skill in personal future endeavor of learners who consciously seek recognition to overcome threatening learning situations. Al Othman and Shuqair (2020) suggested that language learning may also be driven by negative attitudes whereby students take advantage of the prestige associated with its proficiency though positive attitudes support motivation.

Table 3 reveals the summary of strategies for English language learning with 3.92 composite mean and assessed usually true of me. Meta – cognitive (4.05), cognitive (4.00), compensation (3.94), affective (3.87), memory (3.85) and social 3.79) hence evaluated Usually true of me. English language learners at the senior high school this new normal belong to the cultural generation --- iGens or Gen Zs who constantly promote changes in society. Gen Zs or the first digital natives, love working independently but oftentimes lack creativity in contrast with others who do not belong to their generation. They have “globally universal attitude towards learning” as

they enjoy flexibility and practicability of gamified language learning in addition to micro-learning in blended or flipped learning circumstances (Paisley, 2019).

Table 3*Summary Table on Strategies for English Language Learning*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Memory	3.85	Usually True of Me	5
Cognitive	4.00	Usually True of Me	2
Compensation	3.94	Usually True of Me	3
Meta-cognitive	4.05	Usually True of Me	1
Affective	3.87	Usually True of Me	4
Social	3.79	Usually True of Me	6
Composite Mean	3.92	Usually True of Me	

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 = Almost Always of me; 3.50 – 4.49 = Usually true of me; 2.50 – 3.49 = Somewhat true of me; 1.50 – 2.49 = Usually not true of me; 1.00 – 1.49 = Almost Never true of me

Metacognitive strategies make Gen Z learners mindful of the learning process and the strategies for the achievement of language goals resulting to learning autonomy. Anthony (2021) pointed out that students who use these strategies during online learning can evaluate their understanding of content and regulate learning process while retaining focus and attention, hence increasing performance. Even more, Maqbool, et al. (2020) mention being multi – tasking and visual learners who are exposed to favorable reinforcement or rewards as attributes of a successful language learner.

Gen Z English language learners generally rely on technology in communicating with peers and social groups showing the value they hold on to personal relationships as well as indicating that learning is both personal and social. Gen Z thrives in the online environment where “they are given the opportunity for a fully immersive educational experience and they even enjoy the challenges of being a part of it” (Cook, n.d.). In consonance, collaborative activities through social media are considered effective for connecting students with different skills to interrelate with peers in English motivating them to learn the language (Akbari & Chalak 2019). Social strategies, among Gen Zs, involve combined “social interactions and technology that simulate real – life work or community outreach projects” (Nicholas, 2020).

Table 4*Relationship Between English Language Learning Style and Motivation for English Language Learning*

Project Orientation	U / λ^2_c	p-value	Interpretation
Unwillingness-Based	.463**	0.000	Highly Significant
Intrinsic	.337**	0.000	Highly Significant
Anxiety-Based	.890**	0.000	Highly Significant
Future-Oriented	.377**	0.000	Highly Significant
Praise - Oriented	.417**	0.000	Highly Significant
Group Activity Orientation			
Unwillingness-Based	.276**	0.000	Highly Significant
Intrinsic	.342**	0.000	Highly Significant
Anxiety-Based	.558**	0.000	Highly Significant
Future-Oriented	.262**	0.000	Highly Significant
Praise - Oriented	.212**	0.000	Highly Significant
Individual Activity Orientation			
Unwillingness-Based	.333**	0.000	Highly Significant
Intrinsic	.248**	0.000	Highly Significant
Anxiety-Based	.471**	0.000	Highly Significant
Future-Oriented	.306**	0.000	Highly Significant
Praise - Oriented	.411**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

Table 4 presents the association between English language learning style and motivation. The computed rho-values indicate a moderate direct correlation, and the resulted p-values were less than 0.01 alpha level. Thus, a significant relationship exists and implies that the better the learning style, the more that the students are motivated. Students learn differently from one another as they employ personal learning style and motivation.

Although Moneva, et al. (2020) found that learning style and self-motivation have no significant relationship, students achieve their learning goals when their learning style is regarded (Agreda, 2020). In view of English language learning, Kamiludin (2019) cited that motivation and learning style are significantly connected in achieving proficiency.

Table 5*Relationship Between English Language Learning Style and Strategies for English Language Learning*

Project Orientation	U / λ^2_c	p-value	Interpretation
Memory	.442**	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive	.489**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation	.378**	0.000	Highly Significant
Meta-cognitive	.476**	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective	.427**	0.000	Highly Significant
Social	.526**	0.000	Highly Significant
Group Activity Orientation			
Memory	.347**	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive	.285**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation	.307**	0.000	Highly Significant
Meta-cognitive	.288**	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective	.323**	0.000	Highly Significant
Social	.352**	0.000	Highly Significant
Individual Activity Orientation			
Memory	.402**	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive	.435**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation	.340**	0.000	Highly Significant
Meta-cognitive	.412**	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective	.311**	0.000	Highly Significant
Social	.393**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

Table 5 displays the correlation between English language learning style and strategies. The computed rho-values indicate a moderate direct correlation, and the resulted p-values were less than 0.01 alpha level. Thus, a significant relationship exists and implies that the better the learning style, the better the students' strategies on English language learning. English language learners' style sets direction towards their acquisition of knowledge and skills. Learning styles enable students to critically identify the best way they prefer to gain and process information. In effect, learning style drives individual learners to employ strategies that ensure success in their own learning. Assessment of learning styles and strategies is necessary in understanding English language learning difficulties and learners' achievement (Qomariah, 2018). Student's styles and strategies are mainly influenced by their environment and tools for learning (Parra, 2016). Moreover, flexible learning styles as a learner characteristic, contribute to success in learning as students decide on the corresponding strategies to apply while studying a language (Griffiths, 2013).

Table 6 shows the association between motivation on English language learning and strategies. The computed rho-values indicate a moderate direct correlation, and the resulted p-values were less than 0.01 alpha level. Thus, a significant relationship exists and implies that the more motivated on English language learning, the better the students' strategies. English language learners, who are well-motivated on achieving certain goals, are inspired into actualizing their fullest potential. These learners strive harder and devote more time and resources into attaining clearly defined goals employing the best strategies. For these learners, the ideal English language learning strategies are those perceived as beneficial not only for learners' personal growth but also for being members of the learning community as they cultivate significant relationships with one another throughout the learning process.

Table 6

Relationship between motivation for English language learning and strategies for English language learning

Unwillingness-Based	U / λ^2_c	p-value	Interpretation
Memory	.445**	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive	.488**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation	.401**	0.000	Highly Significant
Meta-cognitive	.441**	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective	.387**	0.000	Highly Significant
Social	.419**	0.000	Highly Significant
Intrinsic			
Memory	.478**	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive	.393**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation	.440**	0.000	Highly Significant
Meta-cognitive	.353**	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective	.409**	0.000	Highly Significant
Social	.421**	0.000	Highly Significant
Anxiety-Based			
Cognitive	.436**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation	.467**	0.000	Highly Significant
Meta-cognitive	.370**	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective	.437**	0.000	Highly Significant
Social	.425**	0.000	Highly Significant
Memory	.517**	0.000	Highly Significant
Future-Oriented			
Cognitive	.421**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation	.497**	0.000	Highly Significant
Meta-cognitive	.406**	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective	.453**	0.000	Highly Significant
Social	.394**	0.000	Highly Significant
Memory	.442**	0.000	Highly Significant
Praise-Oriented			
Memory	.579**	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive	.650**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation	.496**	0.000	Highly Significant
Meta-cognitive	.592**	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective	.515**	0.000	Highly Significant
Social	.558**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

Students use different strategies based on their motivations for learning (Prihantoro, et al., 2018). Stark (2019) mentioned that online students have relatively lower intrinsic and extrinsic motivations compared to in - person students. Relatively, in person students employ basic to complex strategies in managing information like metacognitive schemes while seeking for peer and teacher support and interaction.

Table 7

Proposed Program for the Enhancement of English Language Skills in Flexible Remote Learning

Key Result Area/ Objectives	Strategies/Activities	Outcomes	Persons Involved
English Language Learning Style – Group activity orientation			
To design a training program for the inclusion of teaching – learning activities leading to an understanding of teaching and learning in the new normal	Promotion of collaborative teaching and learning activities through social media or learning management platforms titled “ <i>Two gather for English!</i> ”	English language skills improvement through group interactions	DepEd personnel in charge of curriculum, School administrators and teachers
To realize the functionality of online learning platforms for developing English language	Use of online learning platforms for asynchronous teaching-learning activities	Uninterrupted written communication among teachers and students	English teachers, students
To promote group interactions through virtual meetings	Use of virtual group meetings for synchronous group activities	Unrestricted group interaction through accessible and common venue for virtual meetings	English teachers, students
To encourage use of online learning platforms in building knowledge in English	Use of online learning platforms as supplemental learning management system for teaching-learning activities	Shared responsibility in building repository of TLAs in online platforms	English teachers, students
English Language Motivation – Anxiety based			
To formulate an English language	Information campaign on improving	Learner’s confidence and	DepEd personnel in charge

campaign for transformative education	English language confidence titled “ <i>Heads UP, English!</i> ”	initiative in using English for interactions	of curriculum, School administrators and teachers
To establish the role of English in personality development	Album of infographics for social media posting on the importance of developing English language proficiency.	Learner's realization of importance of English language proficiency	English teachers, students
To identify the challenges with English use	Social media posts/hashtag and poll	Identification and management of challenges in English language use	English teachers, students
To conduct a virtual English camp for personality enhancement	Students-teachers virtual English camp	Personality enhancement of English language learners	School administrators, teachers, and students
English Language Strategies – Social			
To create an English advocacy for effective cross – cultural communication	English communicative competence advocacy titled “ <i>OUR Way – English!</i> ”	Cultural sensitivity and effective cross-cultural communication	DepEd personnel in charge of curriculum, School administrators and teachers
To identify English language competencies essential for cross-cultural communication	Social media networks	Data on learners’ English language competencies through established social media networks of English language users	School administrators, teachers, and students
To determine barriers of cross-cultural communication	Social media posts (i.e. IG stories)	Data for research investigation/analysis on common English language barriers	School administrators, teachers, and students
To promote an English advocacy for cross cultural communication	Social media blogs/vlogs	Virtual/online medium for promotion of English language advocacy	School administrators, teachers, and students

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results, respondents often practice learning style and agreed that they are motivated on English Language learning. The findings revealed that there is significant relationship exists and implies that that the better the learning style, the more that the students are motivated and the better the learning style, the better the students’ strategies on English language learning. Hence the more motivated on English language learning, the better the students’ strategies. An intervention program for the enhancement of English communication skills for flexible remote learning was proposed that may be considered and implemented.

Furthermore, it is recommended that Curriculum designers may provide provisions for group activities maximizing internet connectivity like social media that emphasize teaching - learning activities enabling socialization and collaboration among learners. DepEd may promote English language learning as a fun and worthwhile skill. English language teachers may devise teaching – learning activities that highlight vocabulary enhancement. English language coordinators may enforce use of teaching – learning strategies relevant to learners’ information needs and generation characteristics. Future researchers may consider comparing results of current investigation with other learning modalities to be implemented by the education department while transitioning to the new normal.

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