

Performance of Senior Tourism Students in Using Foreign Language

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Abstract - The study generally intended to reckon the previous and present condition of senior tourism students with regards on their foreign language class. Specifically, it described the profile of the professors teaching foreign language; determined the senior tourism student's performances on their foreign language class; assessed the teaching strategies used by the professors; tested the significant relationship between the performances of the students to the teaching strategies used; and lastly, proposed an action plan to help tourism students in the study of foreign language. The researchers used the descriptive method of research, with one hundred seventy-eight (178) respondents composed of all senior tourism students who are enrolled in foreign language class. The result of the study revealed that the professors who are teaching foreign language are 61 years old and above, masters degree holder, 10 years and above, with a unit of 21 and can speak Spanish. Also, the students are able to speak and comprehend Mandarin, French and Spanish. The teaching techniques used by the professors in teaching the language was giving and evaluating student's performance more often. Moreover, the performances of the students in foreign language are affected by the teaching strategies used by the professors. And a proposed plan was formulated to improve foreign language subject of the study.

Keywords: Tourism Students, Foreign Language, Teaching Strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism today is a driving force with enormous global impact being defined as the world's major industry which is in large part responsible for much economic growth employment and regional balance in a particular country. It is a very complex industry known far and wide conquering all the areas from land to air and till the seas. And, with this, are the high standards expected from the workforce. Mostly, the workforces are expected to have learned and are able to utilize a foreign language since it is very much associated with globalization.

Knowledge of a foreign language is said to be a luxury nowadays. That is, mainly because, unlike before, it is not included in the secondary level curriculum anymore, that for most people, are the highest educational attainment one can have. And unlike any other subject codes that may require a little amount of attention, this is something that one should really put an effort into to learn. It is mostly motivation that may provide the wall among the learners in terms of understanding and utilization of what they have to learn. The importance of learning a foreign language develops one's skills and broadens one's job options. It

is an important aspect of the basis preparation for a wide variety of careers.

The College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management is dedicated to be the leader in the tourism and hospitality education sustaining the International Center of Excellence. And along with this is the continuous offer of vast range of knowledge which includes foreign languages such as Mandarin, French and Spanish. It is included in the curriculum since it is essential for the students' career. It will provide as their stepping stone to easily be acquainted to the foreign community whom is a part of the internationalization.

In the present state, as LPU continuously grow, the College of International and Hospitality Management met the stringent assessment criteria of THE ICE Standard of Excellence and is now a proud accredited member of the International Center of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE ICE). LPU was acknowledged and commended most notably for the conducive learning environment, excellent culinary and teaching facilities, excellent leadership, efficient system and administrative producers, and quality

internship and placements (The Philippine Star News, 2013).

Given all these, the researchers have seen that foreign language is a simple matter but not given too much attention that leads to the undernourishment of the young professionals on the communication department nowadays. The study is conducted as to become a basis for program enhancement that the students will benefit from, since it is one thing that is greatly weighted for better employment in the future.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study generally intended to reckon the previous and present condition of senior tourism students with regards on their foreign language class.

Specifically, it is designed to know the profile of the professors teaching foreign language, determined the senior tourism student's performances on their foreign language class, assess the teaching strategies used by the professors, test the significant relationship between the performances of the students to the teaching strategies used and lastly, to propose an action plan to help tourism students in the study of foreign language.

III. METHODS

Research Design

The researchers used the descriptive research design in the study, Efficiency of Senior Tourism Students in Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas in Using Foreign Language: An Assessment to analyze the data gathered. It employed the qualitative approach of research in order to gather pertinent data and information.

Descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way (Shuttleworth, 2008). The researchers utilized the descriptive design that describes the nature of the phenomenon. The design answers questions and satisfies curiosity about a certain condition.

Participants of the Study

The main respondents of this study were the 178 Senior Tourism students which were the total population whom have finished Mandarin and French and were currently enrolled in Spanish subject at the Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas to determine their competencies regarding the utilization of foreign languages (eg., Mandarin, French and

Spanish) and the 3 foreign language professors of the senior tourism students.

Instrument

The researchers constructed two sets of survey questionnaires modified from related research and individual questions formed by the researchers to know the demographic profiles of the professors teaching foreign language. The other one consists of 2 parts with a likert scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 4 (Strongly Disagree) which are related to the participant's perception regarding their performances on the three languages and the techniques and strategies that are used in teaching foreign language.

Procedures

The researchers devised two sets of survey questionnaire as a primary source for the evaluation and acquisition of the relevant data needed in the study. The researchers have it checked by the adviser and statistician. The first set was validated by the respondents and distributed to 178 number of senior tourism students after finalizing. The second set was validated and distributed to the 3 foreign language professors.

Data Analysis

The needed data was tallied and interpreted using different statistical tools. This includes frequency distribution, weighted mean and Pearson-r which was used based on the objectives of the study. All data was treated using PASW version 18 to further analyze the results.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Performance of Students in Using Mandarin

In using Mandarin, the respondents generally agreed on their performances in learning the Mandarin language. The appreciation of the language and culture ranked first which got a mean of 3.18, followed by their writing of basic sentences which got a mean of 3.07. This means that the respondents can appreciate the language and culture through learning and along with this; they can easily construct basic sentences using the Mandarin language. The least of them with a weighted mean of 2.94, was the pronunciation of words closer to its native sound, which means they find difficulty in pronouncing Mandarin words similar to how it is really sounding.

The appreciation of the language and culture got the highest rank for the reason that upon the lessons given

by the professors, they are as well giving the students a little bit of everything regarding the culture of the Chinese. And within the lectures are lots of writing activities using the language to which provides the students a bit of accuracy. The pronunciation of words closer to its native sound, got the lowest rank for the reason that there may be an underlying reason to why that is, such as the environment, which makes it difficult for them to hear the pronunciation made by the professor once they are to repeat it.

“Assisting Students with Foreign Language Learning Difficulties in School” (Ganschow, et al., 2006) stated that the degree of difficulty a student is likely to experience depends, to a large extent, on the nature and severity of his/her language problems in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students who have moderate to severe difficulties in most or all of these language systems in the native language are likely to experience the most problems learning a foreign language, particularly in language classrooms that emphasize an oral communication approach. And, problems can occur in any combination and at different levels of severity in three areas of language in learning a foreign language: the phonological/ orthographic area (sounds and sound-symbol relationships, letter combinations), the syntactic area (grammar, how words connect in sentences), and the semantic area (meaning of words and word parts). Later, as they study a foreign language, they may have difficulty learning to pronounce, read, and spell words.

The teachers have a direct relationship to how the students have difficulty in pronouncing words, since they are the ones who teaches the students on the right way to how it is pronounced. And as Education and Ethics (2010) suggested, the voice of the teacher, contributes to or destroys the comforts of the pupil. The round, full, adequate voice, cheerful, forceful, reassuring is a big factor in securing attention, in inspiring confidence, in promoting good order.

Performance of Students in Using French

In using French, it shows that the respondents generally agreed on their usage of the French language, the appreciation of the language and culture got a mean of 2.79, followed by the identification of things, persons and events using vocabularies in various situations with a mean of 2.69. Last of them was the precision in writing basic sentences with a weighted mean of 2.52, making it their weakness point.

There seems to be a difficulty to most students in writing basic sentences in French because there is a certain pattern to be followed in writing as well as the

conjugation of verbs that is a common problem to them. Nonetheless, they agreed on their performances with the appreciation of the language and culture as well as the identification of things, persons and events using the language. This is because the respondents are very well attracted with the French culture and they are also engrossed in learning it, making it easier for them to be motivated in studying it.

The study, “Cross-Cultural Awareness of Hotel and Restaurant Management and Tourism Students in Singapore An Assessment” (Velasquez, et Al., 2007), suggested that among the most often cited barriers to conflict-free cross cultural business communication is the use of different languages. It is difficult to underestimate the importance that an understanding of linguistic differences plays in international business communication. Given this reality, business consultants counsel clients to take the necessary steps to enlist the services of a good translator. Language failures between cultures typically fall into three categories: (1) Gross Translation problems; (2) Subtle distinctions from language to language; and (3) Culturally-based variations among speakers of the same language.

The degree of difficulty a student is likely to experience depends, to a large extent, on the nature and severity of his/her language problems in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students who have moderate to severe difficulties in most or all of these language systems in the native language are likely to experience the most problems learning a foreign language, particularly in language classrooms that emphasize an oral communication approach (Ganschow, et al., 2006).

Performance of Students in Using Spanish

In using Spanish, the respondents agreed on all items. Specifically, the highest rank with weighted mean of 3.29, is the comprehension as he/she listens. Their appreciation of the language and culture got a weighted mean of 3.27. The precision in writing basic sentences using the Spanish language got the lowest rank with a weighted mean of 3.16. This means that the respondents taking up the Spanish subject are able to comprehend words and phrases in Spanish language as they hear it and are able to appreciate the Spanish culture and language as it is taught to them. Their weakest point is the precision in writing the basic sentences.

The comprehension as he/she listens and the appreciation of the language and culture got the 2 highest ranks for the reason that the students are able to appreciate more about the Spanish language and culture

since it has been already a part of our culture somehow and some of our words are very much alike to it. However, because of the same process to how French sentences are formed, this is a common problem that most students encounter.

Language problems can range on a continuum from mild to moderate to severe. Students who have difficulties learning a foreign language are sometimes referred to as "at-risk" because of their struggles in the regular foreign language classroom. Some of these students may have been classified by the school as having language learning disabilities or dyslexia. These problems can occur in any combination and at different levels of severity in three areas of language: the phonological/ orthographic area (sounds and sound-symbol relationships, letter combinations), the syntactic area (grammar, how words connect in sentences), and the semantic area (meaning of words and word parts). In the study of a foreign language, they may struggle to conjugate verbs (that is, selecting the correct ending for a verb related to the subject of the sentence). They may have difficulty matching the correct masculine or feminine pronoun with a noun or placing the adjective in the proper order in a spoken or written sentence. Students who had both weak grammar and semantics (meaning) skills in the native language may have had difficulty comprehending the meaning of what was said to them in the native language when listening to others speak, or problems comprehending what they read. (Ganschow, et al., 2006).

Table 1. Grade Performance of Students in Foreign Language (N = 178)

Subject	f	%
Mandarin		
1.00-1.25	8	4.50
1.50-1.75	89	50.00
2.00-2.25	74	41.60
2.50-2.75	7	3.90
French		
1.00-1.25	4	2.20
1.50-1.75	83	46.60
2.00-2.25	83	46.60
2.50-2.75	8	4.50

Based on Table 1, regarding the respondents' grades who took up Mandarin, the item that got that the highest frequency with a percentage of 50 is the range of 1.50-1.75. This means that half of them got an average ranging from 90 to 95.

And for French, the highest frequency got tied at 1.50-1.75, and 2.00-2.25 with 46.60 percent. This generally means that most students got a grade ranging from 84 to 95. For Canasa, (2011), there are numerous factors contributing in effective classroom instruction, but it is the teacher that is recognized as having the greatest influence on the programs' success. Assessing the performance of teacher then seems to be as important as a assessing the student's or learners. The most widely used technique to measure teacher's competence inside the classroom is through student evaluation or student rating.

Table 2. Teaching Techniques Used by Professors as Perceived by the Students (N = 178)

The foreign language teacher..	WM	VI	Rank
1. provides activities (eg. ice breaker, role plays, carolings, video presentations) to encourage students' participation	2.99	Agree	4
2. introduces an interactive computer and online activities for the students	2.38	Disagree	10
3. provides supplementary copies for additional inputs	2.91	Agree	5
4. uses various instructions such as CD's, DVD's, magazines/comics, Youtube videos and flash cards	2.40	Disagree	9
5. initiates arrangement for exchange student program abroad	2.49	Disagree	8
6. provides websites for language research (Chinese/French/Spanish songs, poem, Short stories, mini-dialogues)	2.62	Agree	7
7. provides additional time for student's consultation	2.87	Agree	6
8. assign group activities for oral discussion using the foreign language	3.02	Agree	3
9. conducts oral recitation most of the time	3.10	Agree	2
10. gives an evaluation to assess the student's performance more often	3.11	Agree	1
Composite Mean	2.79	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 presents the teaching strategies used by the professors of foreign language. As shown in the table, most of the respondents agreed on the items. The item gives an evaluation to assess the student's performance more often got the highest mean of 3.11, followed by the conduction of oral recitation most of the time with a weighted mean of 3.10, which means that the professors conduct oral recitation in class to enhance the students' performance. The lowest rank is the introduction of an interactive computer and online activities for the students with a weighted mean of 2.38.

This means that there is a lack of introduction of various computer activities by the professors that will help enhance the knowledge of the students in the foreign language. But, with the strategies used by the professors such as the giving of assessment to the

students and the oral recitations, it can clearly affect the students learning of the different foreign languages.

Teaching quality matters. In fact, it is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement. The teaching performance includes the different techniques being used by teachers in order to share and inculcate knowledge to their students. The way they teach reflects the way the students learn. Teaching is a contract between a student and a teacher. This implies that teachers and students have an agreement and some distinct obligations to one another. There is also an agreement to give the teaching obligation the best shot, and to expect the same from all the learners. Good teaching is hard work and every class meeting is a performance. (Canasa, 2011)

Table 3. Relationship between the Performances of the Students and the Teaching Strategies used

Performance in	r-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Mandarin	0.412	0.000	Rejected	Highly Significant
French	0.360	0.000	Rejected	Highly Significant
Spanish	0.327	0.000	Rejected	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Based from the result, all computed r –values indicates moderate positive correlation and the resulted p-value were less than 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the performance of the students in Mandarin, French and Spanish and teaching strategies is rejected. This means that the student's performance is affected by the professors teaching strategy.

From the results provided, it means that there is a high significance between the strategies used by the professors to the 3 foreign languages. The students are highly motivated in learning the language, but with the strategies used, it is a means for them not to be able to fully understand the medium of instruction.

According to Ganschow (2006), sometimes students need extra time to learn a foreign language concept, a slower pace of instruction, and special attention to specific aspects of the foreign language, such as the sounds and special symbols of the language and grammatical rules. Sometimes students need extra tutoring in the language. They may need a distraction-free learning environment and explicit guidance about language concepts. These accommodations may not be available. Another challenge might be the need for students to recognize and acknowledge their own unique learning difficulties. This may necessitate putting in considerable extra effort to complete the foreign language requirement successfully, asking for

support from various resources (teachers, tutors, peers), and frequently requesting the additional explanations they may need to understand a concept.

In addition to this, teachers have always been expected to set a good example for learners, to provide a model of behavior. What seems a good example in one time or place, a given context of situation, may seem quite strange or inappropriate in another time or place. And so it is with language teaching. Times change, fashions change. What may one appear new and promising can subsequently seem strange and outdated. (Celce-Muria, 2006)

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Professors who are teaching foreign language are 61 years old and above, Masters Degree holder, 10 years and above, with a unit of 21 and can speak Spanish. The students are able to speak and comprehend French, Mandarin and Spanish. The teaching strategies used by the professors in teaching foreign language was giving and evaluating students' performance more often. The performances of the students in foreign language are affected by the teaching strategies used by the professors. A proposed plan of action was formulated to improve foreign language subject of the study.

The researchers recommend that the foreign language professors should innovate their way of

teaching by undergoing training, most especially in computer-based program regardless of their profiles. The CITHM department may allot additional time for the foreign language subject such as two (2) semesters for the students to have the right knowledge in foreign language they may use in the future. The professors may continue giving assessment such as written examinations and oral recitations to know the performances of the students in foreign language. The researchers suggest that the professors may organize their lessons as to teaching the basics, focusing on the difficult parts of the lessons, and then introduce the subject to an advanced level. They should also keep track of the student's performances and focus on teaching the lessons that are immensely regarded by students as difficult. The CITHM department should provide materials such as a special room for FL classes that contains charts, pictures and learning materials that may help the students in becoming familiar with the language. There should be available listening materials (eg. voice recording, and manuals) for Mandarin. And a devised module in French and Spanish that is easy to be comprehended by the students.

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