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## ACADEMIC GRIT AND SPEAKING SKILLS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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### Abstract

*This study examined the levels of academic grit and speaking skills of Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English students and determined the relationship between these variables using a mixed-methods design. Data were collected from 117 English majors at the College of Teacher Education, Cagayan State University-Aparri through a validated researcher-made questionnaire, supplemented by qualitative insights. Results indicated that sex, ethnicity, availability of learning materials at home, exposure to speaking activities, and general weighted average were significantly related to students' speaking skills. Additionally, exposure to speaking activities and English academic performance were significantly associated with academic grit. A significant positive relationship was found between academic grit and speaking skills, suggesting that students with higher levels of perseverance and sustained effort tend to demonstrate stronger oral communication abilities. The findings highlight the importance of integrating grit-enhancing strategies and consistent speaking activities in English instruction to improve learners' oral proficiency and overall academic performance.*

**Keywords:** Academic Grit; Speaking Skills; English Language Learners; learning materials; grit-enhancing activities

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In everyday communication, speaking skills are required and are considered vital to inform, deliver and express. If we are to check how individuals, students in particular, make conversations in school and even outside the learning institution, they consume more speaking than writing what they have in mind. However, there are

students who don't have the right skills to speak up. But is this all about possessing and/or acquiring the speaking skills?

According to Brown, D. (2001), experts have proposed various aspects of speaking skills and these are fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary. In light of the first aspect, speaking

fluency pertains to the ability to produce the spoken language without undue pausing or hesitation (Skehan, 1996). Second is accuracy which is defined as the ability to produce error-free speech (Housen & Kuiken, 2009). Thirdly, pronunciation refers to the ability to use the correct stress, rhythm, and intonation of a word in a spoken language. Due to factors such as the area where the students grew up, in which they now live, speech or voice disorder, ethnic groups, and education, a simple word may be spoken differently by these students. Lastly, vocabulary means the set of familiar words within the language one uses for communication. With a wide range of vocabulary, it's easier to make the other person in a particular conversation understand things clearly.

Looking into classroom scenarios, students are encouraged and challenged to communicate with their classmates and teachers through speaking. Repetition of rhymes, look and say, oral composition, pronunciation drills, read aloud, open ended stories, narration, description (festivals, celebrations, occasions) are important practices to improve speaking skills (Jyothsna & Rao 2009). Additionally, according to Kumari (2014), a variety of function-based activities and tasks can be used to develop speaking skills which are given as under dialogue, roleplay, opinion/ideas, groupwork problems, surveys and interviews, visual comprehension, dreams or ambitions, rhymes and tongue twisters, and songs.

With these activities, students will be able to improve their speaking skills. According to Rao (2012), the experts believe that speech brings fluency, correction then accuracy among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. As mentioned earlier, these are aspects in the respective macro skill. If acquired by the learners, will it be enough to be good in speech communication? Having these skills, will the learners be successful in the academe? Going back to the question, is this all about possessing and/or acquiring the speaking skills? Or is it about grittiness that could predict variety of positive performance outcomes including success in school as specified by Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth and Quinn, 2009; Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014.

Concerning grit, this is the combination of passion and perseverance and, author Angela Duckworth says, is the biggest predictor of achievement. It is considered by scholars as a performance character strength, drawn upon to achieve one's potential in a particular challenge (Soutter & Seider, 2013). Also, it is a measure of emotional intelligence and well-being. However, the definition of general grit (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009) was revised such that academic grit was defined as an individual characteristic or skill encompassing determination, resilience, and focus in the pursuit of challenging long-term goals within the domain of education.

Delving in, academic grit has been linked to many adaptive outcomes of students and to the development of school-based interventions. It is clearly observable how grit is recommended to achieve success, specifically in school. The world is filled with what could have been, and talent is in no short supply. Grit is what turns talent into skill, and turns potential into reality. We all know somebody who had tons of smarts, or great athletic ability, but for whatever reason did very little with it. We also know that person who surprised us all; nothing seemingly out of the ordinary about them, but their hard work and persistence over time focused towards their goals and produced incredible results. When talent meets grit, the potential can be realized as per Clark and Malecki (2019).

Relating academic grit to speaking skills of the students, communication is not competitive enough without grit. Students, in spite of acquiring the aspects of speaking skills (fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary), if there's no courage and perseverance to make things happen and possible, they will not be able to speak well. How can students execute fluency, accuracy and proper pronunciation if they are afraid to utter words before the public? How can students prove their wide vocabularies if they let opportunities to speak and be heard pass too many times? Clearly, those students who give up are often thought of having no grit. And as what has been emphasized, grit is the only with effort that talent becomes a skill that leads to success (Duckworth 2016).

In consideration to this, the researcher finds it very interesting and timely to know how academic grit affects the speaking skills of the English major students in the College of Teacher Education. Most of these students are expected to be good communicators and so, it is necessary in to look into the difficulties why they fail to communicate well and how grit turns failure to success. The researcher noticed that a lot of these students have anxiety when asked to speak. Since in their field of specialization, spoken communication is more frequently used to convey message, begin and complete tasks, demonstrate teaching and influence people, this study will reveal the speaking performances as well as their level of grittiness.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

A mixed-method descriptive–correlational design was used to determine the levels of academic grit and speaking skills and examine their relationship.

### 2.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted at Cagayan State University-Aparri, Aparri, Cagayan. CSU-Aparri offers the programs BSEd (English, Math, Science), BEEd, BS Criminology, BS Accounting and Information System, BS Industrial Technology, BS Fisheries and Aquatic Science, BS Information Technology and BS Hospitality Management. It is manned by 46 personnel and 97 faculty members (66 regular and 31 part-time) giving service to at least 3,000 students. The institution is located at Maura, Aparri, Cagayan, two (2) kilometers away from the town proper. Aparri is popular of its two-week long celebration of Aramang Festival.

### 2.3 Participants

A total of 117 BSED-English students from 1st- to 4th-year English majors at the College of Teacher Education, Cagayan State University – Aparri Campus, participated in the study, which focused on assessing their academic grit and speaking skills.

### 2.4 Instruments

This study utilized the following data-gathering instruments to collect relevant, reliable, and valid data.

- The Profile Questionnaire elicited the demographic profile of the students in terms of age, sex, dialect spoken, ethnicity, general weighted average, English performance, available learning materials at home, and speaking exposure. This questionnaire included multiple-choice, multiple-response, and supply-type items.
- The Inventory Questionnaire for Academic Grit was used to quantify the academic grit of the students. The tool was a modified and contextualized version of the instrument originally developed by Angela Duckworth.

- The speaking skills of the students were quantified by having them undergo extemporaneous speaking on one of the following topics: (1) Racism; (2) Global Warming; (3) COVID-19 Pandemic; (4) Press Freedom; and (5) Poverty. The Rubrics on Speaking Skills were used to assess their performance. This analytic rubric included five criteria: (a) comprehension, (b) content, (c) pronunciation, (d) fluency, and (e) grammar and vocabulary, with four rating scales representing the levels of speaking skill: (1) weak, (2) satisfactory, (3) good, and (4) excellent.

## 2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

After approval of the research proposal, necessary revisions were made to the manuscripts and questionnaires, and permission to collect data was obtained from the Campus Executive Officer and CTE Dean. Respondents were contacted online via Facebook Messenger, email, text, and other means. Profile and academic grit data were collected through Google Forms, while speaking skills were assessed through a combination of face-to-face and virtual extemporaneous speech. Confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents were ensured.

## 2.6 Statistical Treatment

Descriptive statistical tools like frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations will be used to describe the profile of the students in terms of age, sex, dialect spoken, ethnicity, general weighted average, English performance, available learning materials at home, and speaking exposure.

Five-point rating scales and weighted means will be used to describe the academic grit of the students. It will be interpreted as follows:

Scale	Statistical Limit	Response	Interpretation
5	4.20 – 5.00	Very much like me	Very high grittiness
4	3.40 – 4.19	Mostly like me	High grittiness
3	2.60 – 3.39	Somewhat like me	Average grittiness
2	1.80 – 2.59	Not much like me	Low grittiness
1	1.00 – 1.79	Not at all like me	Very low grittiness

The speaking skills of the students will be based on the rating they will obtain from the rubrics for speaking skills. Each criterion will be rated as follows:

Scale	Interpretation
4	Excellent
3	Very Satisfactory
2	Fair
1	Poor

Bivariate correlation analysis using Pearson  $r$ , point-biserial and Spearman  $\rho$  will be used to determine significant relationships among the variables. Categorical variables will be transformed into pseudo-numerical codes to use these tests. All hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

# 3. Results and Discussion

## 3.1 Profile of Respondents

Table 1. Profile of the BSEd-English students in terms of age

Age (in years)	Frequency (n=117)	Percentage
24 or above	3	2.6
22 to 23	29	24.8
20 to 21	45	38.5
18 to 19	40	34.2
Mean = 20.41 years old		S.D. = 1.65

Table 1 presents the profile of the BSEd-English students in terms of age. Results below show that out of the total population, 40 respondents (34.18%) were at the age of 18-19 years old, 45 respondents (38.46%) were at the age of 20-21, 29 respondents (24.78%) were at the age of 22-23 and 3 respondents (2.56%) were at the age above 24. Hence, the study findings showed that majority of the respondents' age is 20-21 years.

This implies that the BSEd-English students possess the average age of a college student. The young mean age, on the other hand, is due to the distribution of respondents to which majority are 1st year students.

Table 2. Profile of the BSEd-English students in terms of sex

Sex	Frequency (n=117)	Percentage
Female	85	72.6
Male	32	27.4

Table 2 presents the profile of the BSEd-English students in terms of sex. The study findings show that out of the total population, 85 of the respondents (73%) were female and 32 respondents (27%) were male. Therefore, there are more female respondents than male.

This also confirms that in the teaching profession, there are more female student teachers than male. The results, at some point, supports the notion that teaching is a female dominated profession. As mentioned by Regalado (2017) census data show that more women are enrolled in education courses and there are more female teachers.

Table 3. Profile of the BSEd-English students in terms of dialect spoken

Dialect Spoken	Frequency*	Rank
Iloco	107	1
Tagalog	95	2
Ybanag	20	3
Others	8	4

\*multiple response

Table 3 shows the dialect used by the respondents. Among the 117 respondents, 107 (91%) speaks Iloco, 95 (81%) uses Tagalog, 20 (17%) knows Ybanag and 8 (7%) expresses themselves in other dialects.

With respect to the data presented, it is clearly stated that most of the respondents are bilingual or multilingual. Considering that the

school is located in Region 2 or the Cagayan Valley which is strategically located on the northeastern part of mainland Luzon, majority of the students are Ilocano people who speaks Iloco.

Tagalog ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in terms of the dialect spoken by the English students. This is because Tagalog is the most widely spoken language in the Philippines. Most people in Luzon tend to speak Tagalog, and it is also the national language of the Philippines (Regina and Joe, 2022). In relation to, the internal migration also has something to do with this, putting Ybanag dialect on the 3<sup>rd</sup> position. Lastly, there are eight (8) students who speak other languages, placing it 4<sup>th</sup> as shown below.

Table 4. Profile of the BSEd-English students in terms of ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency (n=117)	Percentage
Ilocano	91	77.8
Ibanag	18	15.4
Tagalog	8	6.8

#### Ethnicity

Table 4 specifies the ethnicity of the BSEd- English students. Out of the total number of respondents, 91 are proud Ilocano, 18 are Ibanag, and 8 are Tagalog. This only shows that majority of the students are Ilocano.

Consequently, the Cagayan Valley, where these English students are studying, is known to be the home of Ilocano. The data below reveals that 77.8% of the respondents are Ilocano, followed by Ibanag with 15.4% who are considered one of the oldest inhabitants of Cagayan Valley in northern Luzon (Ethnography of Cagayan, [www.cagayan.gov.ph/](http://www.cagayan.gov.ph/)). Tagalog students are 8 in number with 6.8%.

In addition, this implies that Cagayan State University all-encompassing as it caters all ethnic groups.

Table 6. Profile of the BSEd-English students in terms of academic performance

Performance	English Subjects		General Weighted Average	
	Freq. (n=117)	Percentage	Freq. (n=117)	Percentage
Excellent (95 or above)	0	-	0	-
Very satisfactory (90 to 94)	70	59.8	69	59.0
Satisfactory (85 to 89)	39	33.3	45	38.5
Fair (80 to 84)	8	6.8	3	2.6
Poor (75 to 79)	0	-	0	-
<b>Mean</b>	<b>89.65 (Very satisfactory)</b>		<b>89.82 (Very satisfactory)</b>	
<b>S.D.</b>	<b>3.12</b>		<b>2.74</b>	

Table 6 presents the profile of the BSEd-English students in terms of academic performance. Results reveal that out of 117 respondents, 70 (59.8%) have a very satisfactory performance in their English subjects; 39 (33.3%) with a satisfactory performance and 8 (6.8%) with poor English performance. Meanwhile, in terms of the General Weighted Average, 69 (59%) have a very satisfactory performance; 45 (38.5%) have satisfactorily completed their academics; and 3 (2.6%) have a fair performance.

Table 5. Learning materials available for the BSEd-English students at home

Learning Materials	Frequency*	Rank
Mobile Phones	107	1
Laptops	66	2
Dictionaries	62	3
Televisions	58	4
Books	55	5
Educational videos	43	6
Tablets	23	7
Computer software and apps	19	8
Radios	17	9
Others	2	10

\*multiple response

Table 5 represents the learning materials available for the BSEd-English students at home. Clearly, the results show that mobile phones are the most available resource with 107 responses out of 117; laptops with 66 responses; dictionaries with 62 responses; television with 58 responses; books with 55 responses; educational videos with 43 responses; tablets with a frequency of 23; computer software and apps with a frequency of 19; radios with a frequency of 17; and others with 2 responses.

With mobile phones and laptops being the top 1 and 2 learning material available respectively, this indicates that these are the most convenient gadgets the English students have. Evidently, modern technology motivates and engages the learner when students have a choice in their assignments, see the relevance or can self-assess with teacher-feedback intertwined, student motivation increases (C. O'Hara and Pritchard, 2010).

Additionally, the results find no students with highest (excellent with a grade 95 and above) and lowest (poor with grades 75 to 79) performance indicators. This indicates that the grading system is not too high nor too low; and that the English students are not too competitive nor passive. Hence, the results reveal that there is an impressive (very satisfactory) performance of the English students with an overall weighted mean of 89.65 for English subjects and 89.82 for General Weighted Average.



Table 7. Speaking activities experienced by the BSEd-English students

Speaking Activities	Frequency*	Rank
Classroom reporting	114	1
Virtual presentations	100	2
Extemporaneous speech	93	3
Classroom Demonstration	76	4
Speaking in outside school activities	52	5
Public speaking in meeting de avance	32	6
Others	5	7

\*multiple response

Table 7 discusses the exposure of the BSEd-English students to speaking activities. Based on the results, classroom reporting ranked 1<sup>st</sup> as the most frequent speaking activity with a frequency of 114.

This is followed by the virtual presentation with 100 responses; extemporaneous speech with 93 responses; classroom demonstration with 76 responses; speaking in outside school activities with 52 responses; public speaking in meeting de avance with 5 responses; and other speaking activities with 5 responses.

Evidently, the results show that English students are most exposed to classroom reporting, one of the vital preparations in the field as future educators. 97% of the respondents already experienced reporting (individual and group), helping them to practice and improve their communication skills and of course, boost confidence. Moreover, in consideration to their major, the virtual presentation, extemporaneous speech, classroom demonstration, speaking in outside the school activities, and public speaking in meeting de avance improve English proficiency and speaking skills. Besides, the skill involved is one of the most important language skills and can be developed and enhanced as an effective means of communication (Morozova, 2013).

### 3.2 Level of Academic Grit of the BSEd-English Students

Table 8. Level of academic grit of the BSEd-English students

Statements	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
1. I accept criticisms positively, particularly on the way I speak.	4.26	Very much like me
2. I am the spokesperson of myself.	4.16	Mostly like me
3. I am diligent. I never give up in practicing how to speak properly.	4.09	Mostly like me
4. I believe that I have to leave my comfort zone to be heard.	4.09	Mostly like me
5. I am a hard worker especially in enhancing my communication skills.	4.07	Mostly like me
6. I'll regret not pursuing if I don't get started.	3.97	Mostly like me
7. Setbacks don't discourage me. I don't give up easily.	3.96	Mostly like me
8. I regret not trying my best to use my voice to inform, influence and learn at the same time.	3.96	Mostly like me
9. I finish whatever I begin.	3.88	Mostly like me
10. I have overcome barriers in speaking such as ethnicity, dialect spoken and English performance to conquer an important challenge which is ideal communication.	3.76	Mostly like me
11. I am confident in my speaking skills right now.	3.40	Mostly like me
12. I have become so accustomed to doing well that I don't know how to cope with the risk of failing.	3.33	Somewhat like me
13. Knowing how speaking skills are vital in communication, I do not fear the crowd and their judgment anymore.	3.33	Somewhat like me
14. *My interest in speaking isn't consistent as I consider this unnecessary.	3.23	Somewhat like me
15. *I have been obsessed with speaking activities for a short time but later lost interest.	2.99	Somewhat like me
16. *New ideas and projects that challenge my speaking skills sometimes distract me from previous ones.	2.69	Somewhat like me
17. *I have a difficulty in maintaining my focus on oral speech projects that take more than a few weeks to complete.	2.59	Mostly like me
18. *When I fail to express my ideas, I tend to stop voicing out.	2.58	Mostly like me
19. *I often set a goal to improve the way I speak but later choose to pursue a different one.	2.37	Mostly like me
20. *Anxiety affects the delivery of my speech.	1.97	Mostly like me
<b>Overall weighted mean</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>High</b>

**Legend:**

4.20-5.00 &gt;&gt; Very much like me (Very high)

1.80-2.59 &gt;&gt; Not much like me (Low)

3.40-4.19 &gt;&gt; Mostly like me (High)

1.00-1.79 &gt;&gt; Not at all like me (Very low)

2.60-3.39 &gt;&gt; Somewhat like me (Somewhat high)

*\*Negative statements are interpreted in reversed manner.*

Table 8 presents the level of academic grit of the BSEd-English students. The tool used by Angela Duckworth to check the level of academic grit was modified and contextualized as realized in the following questions. On a random manner, questions no. 1-13 are positive statements which were scored 5 as the highest and 1 as the lowest, with a descriptive value of Very much like me, Mostly like me, Somewhat like me, Not much like me, and Not at all like me respectively. The weighted mean of the first 13 statements falls within a range from 3.33 to 4.26 with descriptive values of 'somewhat like me', 'mostly like me', and 'very much like me'.

For questions 14 to 20, the scoring is 1 to 5 with corresponding descriptive values of Very much like me, Mostly like me, Somewhat like me, Not much like me, and Not at all like me respectively. The weighted mean of the said statements ranges from 1.97 to 3.3326 with descriptive values of 'mostly like me' and 'somewhat like me'.

Accordingly, the overall weighted mean is 3.44 with a descriptive value 'High'. This means that the academic grit of the BSEd-English students is high. Based on the observations of the researcher, these students are exposed to a lot of learning activities and performances which improve their self-esteem and boost fighting spirits. Moreso, in this field of career, there is really a need of courage to stay, continue and survive. Courage enhances our abilities, it strengthens our mindset, enables us to believe in ourselves and effectively utilize the knowledge and skills we have acquired. It fuels performance, as well (Kevin Kopald, 2018).

### 3.3 Distribution by Level of Academic Grit

Table 9. Distribution of the BSEd-English students in terms of level of academic grit

Level of Academic Grit	Frequency (n=117)	Percentage
Very high	4	3.4
High	61	52.1
Somewhat high	52	44.4
Low	0	-
Very low	0	-

Table 9 discusses the distribution of the BSEd-English students in terms of level of academic grit. Out of 117 respondents, 4 English students (3.4%) have a very high level of academic grit; 61 (52.1%) have high level of academic grit; and 52 (44.4%) have somewhat high level of academic grit. Hence, majority of the respondents' level of academic grit is high.

Also, no respondents have been declared with low or very low level of academic grit. This clearly shows that the English students are competitive and confident when it comes to their academic standing.

In general, the results presented imply that the BSEd-English students have high mental strength and courage, which are important skills to achieve academic success. Grit, as what Duckworth (2016)

says, has been introduced as a distinctive feature noticeable in successful learners; and it is a conception that should be regarded as both social and emotional and certain attention is paid to it concerning one's success in his life (Brooks and Seipel, 2018).

### 3.4 Level of Speaking Skills of the BSEd-English Students

#### 3.4.1 Comprehension

Table 10. Level of speaking skills BSEd-English students in terms of comprehension

Level of Speaking Skills (Comprehension)	Frequency (n=117)	Percentage
Excellent (4)- <i>Makes few mistakes understanding questions, responses and questions are mostly clear.</i>	52	44.4
Very satisfactory (3)- <i>Interaction takes place despite some mistakes when asking and answering questions.</i>	49	41.9
Fair (2)- <i>Makes significant mistakes understanding questions, responses are somewhat clear; questions are grammatically poor and misunderstanding takes place.</i>	14	12.0
Poor (1)- <i>Interaction doesn't take place; does not understand the question, responses are unclear.</i>	2	1.7
<b>Mean = 3.29 (Excellent)</b>		<b>S.D. = 0.74</b>

Table 10 shows the level of speaking skills of BSEd-English students in terms of comprehension. the results display that out of 117 respondents, 52 are excellent in comprehension with a percentage of 44.4%; 49 students (41.9%) have a very satisfactory level of comprehension; 14 (12%) have a fair level of comprehension; and 2 (1.7%) have a poor comprehension level.

This indicates that majority of the English students have an excellent level of speaking skills in terms of comprehension and an overall mean of 3.29. As English students, they are expected to become good communicators, hence, comprehension is vital to understand contexts when communicating. If the other party cannot comprehend the message, it's more likely to be lost in translation, said Giovanni Knight (2020).

#### 3.4.2 Content

Table 11. Level of speaking skills BSEd-English students in terms of content

Level of Speaking Skills (Content)	Frequency (n=117)	Percentage
Excellent (4)- <i>Most of the ideas that the students present, regarding their</i>	42	35.9

<i>opinion are supported by additional information or explanation.</i>		
Very satisfactory (3)- <i>Some ideas that the students present, regarding their opinion are supported by additional information or explanation.</i>	47	40.2
Fair (2)- <i>The ideas regarding the opinion of the students are not supported by additional information or explanation.</i>	22	18.8
Poor (1)- <i>Questions and answers don't have any relationship with the task.</i>	6	5.1
<b>Mean = 3.07 (Very satisfactory)</b>	<b>S.D. = 0.87</b>	

Table 11 presents the level of speaking skills of BSEd-English students in terms of content. The data below shows the 42 out of 117 respondents have an excellent level of speaking skills in terms of content; 47 of which has a very satisfactory rating; 22 students have a fair level when it comes to creating content; and 6 have a poor rating.

Based from the results, there is a very satisfactory level of speaking skills in terms of content as reflected in the overall weighted mean of 3.07. This implies that English students have satisfactorily presented their ideas with support or additional explanation. With respect to their major, exposure to literature pieces and social issues online contribute to their awareness on the topics.

On the observations made by the researcher, the pressure of the time given to organize their thoughts and the lack of enough knowledge on the given topic affected their performance in extemporaneous speech.

### 3.4.3Pronunciation

Table 12. Level of speaking skills BSEd-English students in terms of pronunciation

Level of Speaking Skills (Pronunciation)	Frequency (n=117)	Percentage
Excellent (4)- <i>Pronunciation and intonation generally accurate, errors do not cause misunderstanding.</i>	45	38.5
Very satisfactory (3)- <i>Some inaccuracy in pronunciation and intonation. Problems with voiced/voiceless consonants, for example.</i>	47	40.2
Fair (2)- <i>Frequent inaccuracies in pronunciation and intonation. Mother tongue interference apparent.</i>	22	18.8
Poor (1)- <i>Control of the sound system so weak that comprehension is difficult.</i>	3	2.6

<b>Mean = 3.15 (Very satisfactory)</b>	<b>S.D. = 0.81</b>
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Table 12 presents the level of speaking skills of BSEd-English students in terms of pronunciation. Evidently, 45 out of 117 English student respondents have an excellent level of pronunciation; 47 have a very satisfactory level of pronunciation; 22 with satisfactory rating; and 3 with poor level of pronunciation.

The overall weighted mean of 3.15 is acknowledged to be a very satisfactory level. 40.2% of the population committed some inaccuracies during the delivery of the extemporaneous speech but still have good pronunciation skills. When combined with the 38.5% (excellent students in terms of pronunciation), almost 79% of the respondents have a commendable performance specifically in pronunciation. This infers that the training of the college is creditable as it also offers courses such as Speech and Theatre Arts and Introduction to Linguistics which teach these English students the right speaking skills.

### 3.4.4Fluency

Table 13. Level of speaking skills BSEd-English students in terms of fluency

Level of Speaking Skills (Fluency)	Frequency (n=117)	Percentage
Excellent (4)- <i>Speaks fluidly, few to no breaks. Fluent and spontaneous, but occasionally needs to search for expressions or compromise on saying exactly what he/she wants to.</i>	25	21.4
Very satisfactory (3)- <i>Speaks mostly fluidly, semi-frequent short or a few long breaks; speaking in soft voice but can be understood, good facial expression, and communicative enough.</i>	54	46.2
Fair (2)- <i>Speaks somewhat fluidly, frequent short and a few long breaks; speaking in soft voice but not really clear, flat facial expression, and less communicative.</i>	32	27.4
Poor (1)- <i>Does not speak fluidly, frequent short and long breaks; speaking in volume which is almost inaudible, no facial expression, and do not communicative.</i>	6	5.1
<b>Mean = 2.84 (Very satisfactory)</b>	<b>S.D. = 0.82</b>	

Table 13 displays the level of the speaking skills of BSEd-English students in terms of fluency. 21% of the total respondents are evaluated as excellent speakers in terms of fluency; 46.2% have a very satisfactory rating; 27.4% have a satisfactory level of fluency; and 5.1% have a poor level of fluency. Moreover, the overall weighted mean 2.84 with an equal difference of 0.82 means a very satisfactory performance.

This result shows that almost half of the respondents have a satisfactory level of fluency. They speak mostly fluidly, semi-frequent short or a few long breaks; speaking in soft voice but can

be understood, good facial expression, and communicative enough. This also implies that the speaking fluency activities (and reading experiences) such as drama, role plays, debates, simulation, discussion, and jigsaw activities especially for the English major students are effective (S.Abdulayeve, L.Yu Mirzoyeva, 2014).

### 3.4.5 Grammar/Vocabulary

Table 14. Level of speaking skills BSEd-English students in terms of grammar and vocabulary

Level of Speaking Skills (Grammar/Vocabulary)	Frequency (n=117)	Percentage
Excellent (4)- Strong grammar and a varied and relatively complex vocabulary.	21	17.9
Very satisfactory (3)- Moderately strong grammar and a varied, but basic vocabulary.	60	51.3
Fair (2)- Basic grammar and not varied basic vocabulary.	33	28.2
Poor (1)- Poor grammar and minimal vocabulary.	3	2.6
<b>Mean = 2.85 (Very satisfactory)</b>	<b>S.D. = 0.74</b>	

Table 14 presents the level of speaking skills of BSEd-English students in terms of grammar and vocabulary. From the total number of respondents, 21 are excellent when it comes to grammar and vocabulary; 60 are in the satisfactory level; 33 have fair level of speaking skills in terms of grammar and vocabulary; and 3 have poor skills in grammar and vocabulary.

The computed mean 2.85 shows that these English students have a very satisfactory performance in terms of their grammar and vocabulary skills. In the extemporaneous speech activity, most of the students are aware of their grammar as they correct themselves immediately after few errors. This implies that the majority of the English students, 51.3% in particular, have a moderate, strong grammar skills and varied but basic vocabulary.

On top of what has been stated, this may be a result of the comprehensive teaching of the English teachers in the college, as well as the learning activities given to the students. Structures of English, Introduction to Linguistics, Developmental Reading, and Campus Journalism are some of the courses where the abovementioned skills are honed.

### 3.5 Summary of the Level of Speaking Skills of the BSEd-English Students

Table 15. Summary of the level of speaking skills BSEd-English students

Speaking Skills	Mean Rating (SD)	Level
Comprehension	3.29 (0.74)	Excellent
Content	3.07 (0.87)	Very satisfactory
Pronunciation	3.15 (0.81)	Very satisfactory
Fluency	2.84 (0.82)	Very satisfactory
Grammar/Vocabulary	2.85 (0.74)	Very satisfactory
<b>Overall Speaking Skills</b>	<b>3.04 (0.80)</b>	<b>Very satisfactory</b>

Table 15 reveals the summary of the level of speaking skills of the BSEd-English students. The mean rating and equal difference for the overall speaking skills 3.04 and 0.80 respectively means that the level of speaking skills of the respondents is Very Satisfactory. The breakdown per speaking skills are as follows:

The comprehension level of the English students is 'Excellent' with a mean rating of 3.29; levels of the content, pronunciation, fluency, and grammar/vocabulary skills are all 'Very Satisfactory' with a mean rating of 3.07, 3.15, 2.84, and 2.85 respectively; and standard deviations of 0.87, 0.81, 0.82, and 0.74 correspondingly.

This indicates that the English students have commendable speaking skills and that they are good language communicators. During the extemporaneous speech, the researcher observes that most of the English respondents are comfortable with the language. Despite English is a foreign and second language, these students are really good in expressing their ideas. They are able to construct and deliver their speech in a laudable way. Actually in 2008, the Hongkong University Press stated that the Philippines is one of the most significant and most interesting English-using societies in Asia, where there has been a general awareness and recognition of a localized variety of English characterized by its own distinct lexicon, accent, and variations in grammar.

Additionally, this commendable performance is due to the exerted efforts and efficiency of the English teachers in the college. Good instruction including classroom management and varied competencies (in oral communication) has its impact on student achievement (specifically in speaking skills). Better learning happens in a dynamic setting in which teachers offer explicit active instruction than in situations in which teachers do not actively guide instruction and instead turn control over content and pace of instruction to students (Hattie, 2009).

### 3.6 Difference between the Academic Grit of the BSEd-English Students when grouped according to their Year Level

Table 16. Comparison test result between the academic grit of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob.	Stat. Inference
Between Groups	0.052	3	0.017	0.120	0.948	No significant
Within Groups	16.215	113	0.143			
Total	16.266	116				
<b>Post-hoc test not necessary</b>						



*\*tested at 0.05 level of significance*

Table 16 presents the ANOVA table of the comparison between the academic grit of BSEd-English students by year level. The computed F-value of 0.120 with a probability of 0.948 suggests that there is no significant difference between the academic grit of the students when grouped according to their year level. This finding implies that the academic grit of the students does not differ as they advance by year level. This is because grit comes no year.

In relation to this, grit is a mixture of perseverance and passion and even the youngest individual can be gritty if he's passionate and

persistent towards a goal. In addition, if a person is pursuing a goal that is aligned with his personal interests and have a passion for the subject, that individual will persist to overcome challenges and achieve that goal without the concern of the year level (Duckworth, 2017).

### 3.7 Difference between the Level of Speaking Skills of the BSEd-English Students when grouped according to their Year Level

#### 3.7.1 Comprehension comparison by year level

Table 17. Comparison test result between the level of speaking skills in terms of comprehension of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob.	Stat. Inference
Between Groups	3.653	3	1.218	2.276	0.084	Not significant
Within Groups	60.466	113	0.535			
Total	64.120	116				
<b>Post-hoc test not necessary</b>						

*\*tested at 0.05 level of significance*

Table 17 presents the ANOVA table of the comparison between the level of speaking skills in terms of comprehension of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level. The computed F-value of 2.276 with a probability of 0.084 suggests that there is no significant difference between the level of speaking skills in terms of comprehension of the students when grouped according to their year level. This finding implies that the comprehension of the students does not differ as they advance by year level.

Defining the level of comprehension, this refers to the type of mental representation that is made of the written text (i.e. random topic for extemporaneous speech). The learner builds a mental model in which he can integrate explicit and implicit data from the text, experiences, and previous knowledge (Kucer, 2016; van den Broek et al., 2016). This means that if an individual has an experience and has a prior knowledge on a certain issue or topic, taking no notice of the year level one belongs, then definitely he will be able to share more.

#### 3.7.2 Content comparison by year level

Table 18. Comparison test result between the level of speaking skills in terms of content of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob.	Stat. Inference
Between Groups	12.423	3	4.141	6.236	0.001	Significant
Within Groups	75.030	113	0.664			
Total	87.453	116				
<b>Post-hoc test using LSD</b>						
				Mean Differences		
	Year	Mean	S.D.	Second	Fourth	Third
	Second	3.46	0.76			
	Fourth	3.36	0.85	0.098		
	Third	3.08	0.58	0.378	0.280	
	First	2.69	0.92	<b>0.773*</b>	<b>0.675*</b>	0.394
<b>Boldfaced-values succeeded by asterisk (*) are significant</b>						

*\*tested at 0.05 level of significance*

Table 18 shows the ANOVA table comparing the level of speaking skills in terms of content of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level. Findings reveal a significant result as signified by the computed F-value of 6.236 with a probability of 0.001. This means that when comparing the level of speaking skills of the students in terms of content by year level, one

can see a significant difference. Post-hoc analysis using LSD shows that second, fourth and third year students have the same level of speaking skills by content but only 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students have significantly better skills than the freshman students. This is because as the year level advances, the content or the lessons taught become wide-ranging and inclusive. This somewhat affects how students form their insights on a certain topic. But there are of course a lot of reasons affecting content use in learning. According to Aman

Sharma (2021), the following are some of the factors affecting content use which are associated with learner: motivation, readiness and will power, ability of the learner, maturation of the learner and nature of learning materials.

Going back to the results presented, 3<sup>rd</sup> year students don't have better significant skills than freshmen. This shows that there is still an exemption and year level is no guarantee of the level of content use of the students.

### 3.7.3Pronunciation comparison by year level

Table 19. Comparison test result between the level of speaking skills in terms of pronunciation of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob.	Stat. Inference
Between Groups	15.242	3	5.081	9.368	0.000	Significant
Within Groups	61.288	113	0.542			
Total	76.530	116				
<b>Post-hoc test using LSD</b>						
Year	Mean	S.D.	Mean Differences			
			Third	Second	Fourth	
Third	3.58	0.50				
Second	3.42	0.64	0.160			
Fourth	3.23	0.87	0.356	0.196		
First	2.71	0.82	<b>0.872*</b>	<b>0.712*</b>	<b>0.516*</b>	

*Boldfaced-values succeeded by asterisk (\*) are significant*

\*tested at 0.05 level of significance

Evident in Table 19 is the comparison test result between the level of speaking skills in terms of pronunciation of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level. The computed F-value of 9.369 with a probability of 0.000 means that there is a significant difference. Post-hoc analysis indicated that the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students equal in level of speaking skills by pronunciation.

Obviously, when students advance on their year levels, age and exposure follow. And these two has something to do with developing pronunciation skills of the students. On an essay uploaded by the EducationalResearchTechniques.com, younger

students, especially 1-12 years of age, have the best chance at developing native-like pronunciation. If the student is said to be older, he will almost always retain an "accent." However, fluency and accuracy can achieve the same levels regards of the initial age at which language study began. In addition, exposure is closely related to age. The more authentic experiences that a student has with the language the better their pronunciation normally is. The quality of the exposure is the naturalness of the setting and the actual engagement of the student in hearing and interacting with the language (J.Amac, 2017).

### 3.7.4Fluency comparison by year level

Table 20. Comparison test result between the level of speaking skills in terms of fluency of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob.	Stat. Inference
Between Groups	10.542	3	3.514	5.894	0.001	Significant
Within Groups	67.372	113	0.596			
Total	77.915	116				
<b>Post-hoc test using LSD</b>						
Year	Mean	S.D.	Mean Differences			
			Second	Third	Fourth	
Second	3.15	0.78				
Third	3.08	0.58	0.071			
Fourth	2.95	0.90	0.199	0.129		
First	2.47	0.79	<b>0.687*</b>	<b>0.617*</b>	<b>0.488*</b>	

*Boldfaced-values succeeded by asterisk (\*) are significant*

*\*tested at 0.05 level of significance*

Present in the Table 20 is the comparison test result between the level of speaking skills in terms of fluency of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level. The computed F-value of 5.894 with a probability of 0.001 means that there is a significant difference. Post-hoc analysis indicated that the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students equal in level of speaking skills by fluency. The year level comes with levels of competencies and maybe this is one of the reasons why students on higher levels have better fluency skills than freshmen.

On a post by Partnership For Reading (2001), fluency develops gradually over time and through practice. And at the earliest stage

*Table 21. Comparison test result between the level of speaking skills in terms of grammar and vocabulary of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level*

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob.	Stat. Inference
Between Groups	9.352	3	3.117	6.538	0.000	Significant
Within Groups	53.878	113	0.477			
Total	63.231	116				

**Post-hoc test using LSD**

Year	Mean	S.D.	Mean Differences		
			Third	Second	Fourth
Third	3.08	0.41	-		
Second	3.08	0.80	0.006	-	
Fourth	3.05	0.84	0.038	0.031	-
First	2.49	0.66	<b>0.594*</b>	<b>0.588*</b>	<b>0.557*</b>

*Boldfaced-values succeeded by asterisk (\*) are significant*

of reading development, students' oral reading is slow and labored because students are just learning to "break the code" – to attach sounds to letters and to blend letter sounds into recognizable words. Additionally, fluency is not a stage of development at which readers can read all words quickly and easily. It changes, depending on the material, the familiarity with the words, and the amount of their practice because even very skilled readers may read in a slow, labored manner when reading texts with many unfamiliar words or topics.

### 3.7.5 Grammar and Vocabulary comparison by year level

*\*tested at 0.05 level of significance*

Present in the Table 21 is the comparison test result between the level of speaking skills in terms of grammar and vocabulary of the BSEd-English students when grouped according to their year level. The computed F-value of 6.538 with a probability of 0.000 means that there is a significant difference. The English students in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year levels have equal performance in the level of speaking skills by grammar and vocabulary as indicated in the post-hoc analysis.

Compared to the first year English students, learners on higher levels have better grammar and vocabulary skills. As the year level advances, the proficiency in language use is expected to improve. According to Sukrawa (1990), teaching and learning of English for the sake of acquiring communicative performance means that the teacher expects his students to be able to express what they wish to say in accordance with their levels of proficiency in the course, and the meanings of their expressions or sentences can be understood. The lower their levels the less sophisticated language users they really are.

### 3.8 Correlation between the Academic Grit, Level of Speaking Skills and Profile of the BSEd-English Students

#### 3.8.1 Academic Grit \* Profile

*Table 22. Correlation test results between the academic grit of the BSEd-English students and their profile*

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Prob.	Statistical Inference
<b>Academic Grit</b>			
<b>Profile</b>			
Age	-0.064	0.492	Not significant
Sex	-0.158	0.088	Not significant
Dialect spoken			
Iloco	-0.081	0.386	Not significant
Ybanag	-0.041	0.661	Not significant
Tagalog	0.008	0.929	Not significant
Ethnicity	0.099	0.289	Not significant
Available learning materials	0.116	0.212	Not significant
Exposure to speaking activities	0.266	0.004	<b>Significant</b>
Academic Performance			

English subjects	0.193	0.037	<b>Significant</b>
General weighted average	0.159	0.087	Not significant

*\*tested at 0.05 level of significance*

Table 22 divulges the correlation test results between the academic grit of the BSEd-English students and their profile. Exposure to speaking activities and English academic performance are significantly related to academic grit.

Exposure to speaking activities is significantly related to the academic grit of the students as reckoned by the correlation coefficient of 0.266 with a probability of 0.004. This finding means that more exposure to speaking activities will relate to better academic grit among students. When an individual is exposed to a lot of speaking activities, he can practice communication skills and can overcome pressure or fear amidst crowd and criticisms. One can actually build confidence by practicing. (F. Bridges, 2017). And with confidence, one will be more confident to participate in activities which leads to better academic achievement.

Meanwhile, research has shown that gritty individuals are likely to engage in more deliberate practice (Duckworth, Kirby, Tsukayama, Berstein, & Ericsson, 2011). This is vice versa of the case presented above that with high academic grit comes a goal of improvement in the performance. Hence, exposure to speaking activities and academic grit are interrelated.

English academic performance is also significantly related to the academic grit of the students. The correlation coefficient of 0.193 with a probability of 0.037 means that higher academic performance in English relates to better academic grit among students. This can be ascribed from the fact that in the field of foreign language learning (FLP) and/or Second Language (L2) learning, some studies have found that grit can promote academic performance. Additionally, previous studies revealed that consistent practice of language skills leads to procedural knowledge and automatization (DeKeyser, 2007). Lake (2015) also found out that grittiness has a strong relationship to the measure of persistent effort for learning a second language. As for MacIntyre (2016) believe that grit is one of the most important positive personality traits that affect second language learning.

Generally speaking, academic grit affects academic performance (specifically in English). The more persistent and courageous a student is despite challenges, the more he will achieve academic success. As stated by Duckworth et al. (2007), a learner's competence to continue after complications is known as grit and the study distinguishes a positive effect of grit on persistence, self-control, and self-guideline, and it also alludes to mental strength in endeavoring toward achievements (Reed and Jeremiah, 2017).

### 3.8.2 Level of Speaking Skills \* Profile

*Table 23. Correlation test results between the level of speaking skills of the BSEd-English students and their profile*

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Prob.	Statistical Inference
<i>Level of speaking skills</i>			
<i>Profile</i>			

Age	0.159	0.088	Not significant
Sex	-0.204	0.028	<b>Significant</b>
Dialect spoken			
Iloco	0.170	0.066	Not significant
Ybanag	0.025	0.787	Not significant
Tagalog	0.110	0.237	Not significant
Ethnicity	0.186	0.045	<b>Significant</b>
Available learning materials	0.337	0.000	<b>Significant</b>
Exposure to speaking activities	0.293	0.001	<b>Significant</b>
Academic Performance			
English subjects	0.152	0.102	Not significant
General weighted average	0.218	0.018	<b>Significant</b>

*\*tested at 0.05 level of significance*

As shown in the Table 23, the level of speaking skills of the BSEd-English students is significantly related to some of their profile variables. These variables are sex, ethnicity, available learning materials, exposure to speaking activities and general academic performance.

The correlation coefficient of -0.204 ( $p=0.028$ ) indicates that sex is significantly related to the level of speaking skills of the students. This finding means that male (coded as 1) students outperform the female (coded as 2) students in speaking skills. This can be attributed from the fact that the nature of men is stronger than women. Male students are believed to be braver than females because, at some point, they don't want their ego and be beaten by females whose usual nature (but not generally speaking) is weak and shy. Bizzabo Gender Diversity and Inclusion Report (2018) revealed that in higher education, there are more male speakers than female with a percentage of 56% and 44% respectively. Bizzabo (2018) also concluded based on the results and researches that almost 70% of professional event speakers are male globally.

Ethnicity is also significantly related to the level of speaking skills of the students as suggested by the correlation coefficient of 0.186 ( $p=0.045$ ). Students whose ethnicity belongs to Ilocano (coded as 2) relates to better speaking skills as opposed to the non-Ilocano counterparts (coded as 1). Among the more dominant of the ethnic groups, they have figured prominently in the political, educational, economic, religious, and other sectors of society. This characteristic of Ilocanos have something to do with their speaking performance. Dominance and undeniably pride in their roots and language affect how they communicate in general. Additionally, the need to be proficient in the use of English among non-native speakers has become a global phenomenon (Gibbon, 2003).

Available learning materials is also significantly related to the level of speaking skills of the students as indicated by the correlation



coefficient of 0.337 ( $p=0.000$ ). More learning materials available for the students relates to better speaking skills.

Stated in the argument made by Allwright (1990), “Learning materials should teach students to learn, that they should be resource books for ideas and activities for learning, and that they should give teachers rationales for what they do.” These learning materials are also used to help transfer information and skills to students.

In a point of fact, Bygate (1987) stated that the notion of speaking skills may be viewed into two basic aspects; those are ‘motor-receptive skills’ and ‘interaction skills’. ‘Motor-receptive skills’ involve a mastering of sounds and structures which include sound and structure recognition, and vocabulary development while ‘Interaction skills’ involve making decisions about what and how to say things in specific communication situation to convey the right situation which involve interaction, transaction and performance functions. In connection to the learning materials available at home, *gadgets, appliances and computer software and apps* help improve the interaction skills of students, while *dictionaries and books* teach students with mastery of sounds, structure and vocabulary.

Exposure to speaking activities and level of speaking skills of the students as reckoned by the correlation coefficient of 0.293 with a probability of 0.001. The more that a student is exposed to speaking activities, the better is his/her level of speaking skills will be. This is because when a student experienced a lot of speaking activities, he/she will be used in doing so, assessing his/her performances and improve the next time. The weaknesses displayed and mistakes done in the past communicative activities, when addressed properly, will be corrected and become basis for improvement.

Furthermore, when the speaking skills (comprehension, content, fluency, pronunciation, and grammar/vocabulary) are taught to students without application in real life, they will be deprived of the authentic experience and meaningful learning in communication. According to Rivers (cited in Brown, 1994, p.159), real interaction is very important to give the learners the opportunity to demonstrate what they can do in the language.

General weighted average and level of speaking activities of the students significantly relates as suggested by the correlation coefficient of 0.218 ( $p=0.018$ ). Students who academically perform well relates to having better speaking skills.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms, it is evident that students’ knowledge and skills are tested not only on pen and paper tests but more of performance activities which involve speaking or communication skills. Speaking assessments, including individual and group presentations, have also become more common, according to research by Huxham, Campbell and Westwood in 2012. And this may partly explain why students with good academic standing has good speaking skills. Without right and good speaking skills, one is maybe hesitant to participate in class discussions where he/she can attain points for recitation; one is maybe timid of voicing his/her suggestions for class presentation; one is maybe nervous of collaborating with group members; and one is maybe afraid of standing in front and deliver an output or speech with confidence. Thus, when students have good speaking skills in the assessments given by the teacher, they will more likely participative and open, leading to academic achievement or success.

### 3.8.3 Academic Grit \* Level of Speaking Skills

Table 24. Correlation test results between the level of speaking skills of the BSEd-English students and their profile

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Prob.	Statistical Inference
<i>Academic Grit</i>			
<i>Level of speaking skills</i>			
Comprehension	0.260	0.005	Significant
Content	0.251	0.006	Significant
Pronunciation	0.214	0.020	Significant
Fluency	0.225	0.015	Significant
Grammar and vocabulary	0.207	0.025	Significant
Overall	0.264	0.004	Significant

*\*tested at 0.05 level of significance*

Table 24 presents the correlation test results between the level of speaking skills of the BSEd-English students and their profile. All dimensions of the level of speaking skills of the students, whether taken singly or in combination, are significantly related to their academic grit. Their speaking skills in terms of comprehension, content, pronunciation, fluency, and grammar and vocabulary significantly relates to their academic grit as reckoned by the correlation coefficients of 0.260 ( $p=0.005$ ), 0.251 ( $p=0.006$ ), 0.214 ( $p=0.020$ ), 0.225 ( $p=0.015$ ) and 0.207 ( $p=0.025$ ) respectively. Their overall level of speaking skills is also significantly related to their academic grit as suggested by the correlation coefficient of 0.264 ( $p=0.004$ ).

These findings mean that higher academic grit relates to better speaking skills among BSEd-English students. In studies of grittier individuals, academic and non-academic performance improved, and motivation increased as they discovered meaning in the achievement of success (Von Culin et al., 2014). With added perseverance, these individuals are not only extremely motivated but also eager to concentrate on fulfilling long-term, more ambitious goals (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth, 2016). Relating these goals to speaking skills, if students are eager and confident to speak then they will have better communication skills over time.

The inclination to speak and communicate in English (second language) indicates that there is higher level of academic grit. In the first place, students will not be expressing themselves through speaking without the urge or confidence to do it. Grit pushes one to unlock a goal, to make things happen, to achieve success (in speaking). According to Lee (2020) found that the aspect of grit entailing perseverance of effort, rather than that of consistency of effort, predicted L2 willingness to communicate.

And speaking of urge and willingness, emotions play an important role in foreign language learning (MacIntyre et al., 2019b). Let’s say students have fear of speaking up. In this case, they are not expected to be good at speaking; or if they have good speaking skills, they will still not be credited and recognized to their academic performance as they will lose the chance of being evaluated properly. Also, studies revealed that anxiety has been the most widely studied in the literature on second language acquisition (Horwitz, 2010; MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012a; MacIntyre, 2017) and has been regarded as one of the emotions with the greatest influence on foreign language outcomes (Dewaele and MacIntyre,

2014). Thus, if students feel no fear in speaking (with respect to the English language) then better performance in school is anticipated. In addition to this, enjoyment and positive emotions towards language is related to L2 achievement (Dewaele and Alfawzan, 2018; Li, 2020).

Lastly, in consideration to what Edward Thorndike's Law of Exercise states, practice makes perfect. With practice, learning is retained and improved. Relating this to speaking skills, what drives students to do something is grit. With higher grit, speaking skills will be practiced more often and will result to better speaking performances.

## 4. Conclusion

The study revealed that academic grit plays a crucial role in shaping English learners' speaking abilities. Students with greater exposure to speaking activities and stronger English performance demonstrated higher levels of grit which suggests that perseverance and practice reinforce each other. Speaking proficiency is similarly influenced by grit, as learners who are determined and persistent perform better across comprehension, content, pronunciation, fluency, and grammar/vocabulary. Gender, ethnicity, and access to learning materials also contribute to differences in performance, indicating that both personal traits and environmental factors support effective communication. Ultimately, academic grit emerges as a key driver in transforming potential into tangible speaking skills which allows learners to engage confidently and competently in oral communication.

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## 7. Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest about the publication of this paper

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