



Learner Autonomy and Attitudes toward Philippine English: Predictors of Grammar Performance among College ESL Students

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ABSTRACT

Persistent concerns about Filipino students' grammatical accuracy remain evident despite the Philippines' long-standing exposure to English and its consistently high ranking in global proficiency indexes, which underscores the need to identify factors that shape grammar performance among tertiary learners. This study examined how learner autonomy and attitudes toward Philippine English relate to and predict the grammar performance of ESL students enrolled in a local college in Misamis Oriental. Using a descriptive-correlational predictive design and employing validated autonomy and attitude scales alongside a grammar test patterned after the Oxford Quick Placement Test, the study found that students demonstrated high autonomy and positive attitudes across all dimensions, yet their grammar performance remained at the B1 Intermediate level. Correlation results revealed that only Decision Making in Learning was significantly associated with grammar performance, and regression analysis confirmed it as the sole significant predictor, indicating that strategic learning behaviors exert greater influence on grammatical accuracy than general autonomy or attitudinal orientations. The findings emphasize the need to strengthen explicit grammar instruction and promote strategic decision-making skills within the local college context, where learners balance academic demands with varied linguistic backgrounds. These results provide important insights for curriculum design, teacher training, and future research on cognitive and sociolinguistic influences on ESL grammar development.

Keywords: Learner Autonomy, Philippine English, Grammar Performance, Decision Making, ESL Learners

INTRODUCTION

English remains a central instrument of education, employment, and communication in the Philippines. It functions as both a second language and a medium of instruction in most higher education institutions. Despite this high level of exposure, recent assessments show that many Filipino learners continue to struggle with grammatical accuracy in both spoken and written English. Although the Philippines remains within the High Proficiency band of the EF English Proficiency Index, its rankings have gradually declined, which suggests emerging gaps in linguistic competence, including grammar-specific skills. Grammar is a core component of language competence, and persistent weaknesses in grammatical performance indicate that linguistic accuracy is influenced by cognitive, affective, and sociolinguistic factors. Two variables that may help explain these outcomes are learner autonomy and attitudes toward Philippine English. Learner autonomy refers to the capacity of learners to manage, regulate, and monitor their own learning, while attitudes toward Philippine English involve learners' perceptions and evaluations of the localized English variety that has developed within the Philippines. This study examines how these two variables predict the grammar performance of ESL students enrolled in a local college in Misamis Oriental.

A growing body of research demonstrates the importance of autonomy as a driver of language achievement. Tamano (2023) found that Filipino learners exhibit strong reflective and responsible learning behaviors, which suggests that autonomy is an active component of language development. International studies reinforce this connection. Viberg and Kukulska Hulme (2021) identified learner self-regulation as a significant predictor of language performance in mobile learning environments. Lai, Saab, and Admiraal (2022) reported that



autonomous learners who employ metacognitive and social strategies perform better in self-directed language learning tasks. Teng and Zhang (2018) found that self-regulated learning strategies significantly enhance L2 writing performance among university students. Similarly, Bai and Wang (2020) demonstrated that autonomy-supportive practices improve grammar learning outcomes among EFL students in East Asia. Another study by Raza, Khan, and Ali (2020) found that self-regulated learning behaviors were strong predictors of English academic performance among Asian university students. Taken together, these studies indicate that autonomy is a measurable contributor to language proficiency, although few Philippine studies have examined its direct relationship to grammar performance.

Parallel to the growing focus on autonomy is the increasing scholarly attention on attitudes toward Philippine English. Philippine English is now widely recognized as a legitimate variety within the World Englishes paradigm, and attitudes toward it influence learners' confidence, identity, and communication patterns. Prejoles et al. (2025) found that Filipino ESL learners generally express positive attitudes toward Philippine English. Umayam et al. (2022) reported that college students accept Philippine English as an authentic linguistic identity marker. Hernandez (2020) observed similar findings among graduate students, who showed openness to teaching educated Philippine English. Internationally, attitudes toward localized English varieties have also been shown to influence communication. For instance, McKenzie and Gilmore (2017) found that learners' evaluations of localized accents affected their willingness to engage with English. Fang (2019) demonstrated that positive attitudes toward China English increased learners' communicative confidence. Alsulami (2023) reported that attitudes toward English varieties influenced Saudi students' motivation and engagement in academic communication.

Despite these expanding bodies of research, the relationship between learner autonomy, attitudes toward Philippine English, and grammar performance remains underexplored, particularly in the context of local colleges. Most studies have focused on general proficiency, speaking, or communicative competence, rather than grammatical accuracy, which remains a crucial foundation for academic and professional communication. The lack of empirical studies that link autonomy and attitudes directly to grammar performance highlights a significant research gap.

Considering all of these background and gap, the main goal of this study is *to determine the relationship among learner autonomy, attitudes toward Philippine English, and grammar performance among ESL students*. This study also aims to [1] describe the levels of learner autonomy, attitudes toward Philippine English, and grammar performance; [2] to determine the degree of correlation among these variables; and [3] to identify the extent to which learner autonomy and attitudes toward Philippine English predict grammar performance. These objectives are aligned with recent empirical and pedagogical priorities in English language education, which emphasize the integration of cognitive, affective, and sociolinguistic variables in understanding language learning outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three major theoretical traditions in applied linguistics, which together explain how cognitive, affective, and sociolinguistic factors influence grammar performance among Filipino ESL learners. The first foundation is Zimmerman's **Self-Regulated Learning Theory** (2000), which states that learners achieve higher performance when they consciously regulate their cognition, motivation, and behavior. Self-regulated learners set goals, plan their learning tasks, monitor their progress, evaluate outcomes, make decisions regarding learning strategies, and maintain motivation throughout the learning process. These processes directly correspond to the components of learner autonomy examined in this study. Research has shown that students who demonstrate higher levels of autonomy are more capable of monitoring their errors, applying feedback, and engaging in deliberate practice, all of which support improved grammatical accuracy (Viberg and Kukulska-Hulme, 2021; Cabugsa, 2022). Thus, Self-Regulated Learning Theory provides a cognitive and behavioral explanation for the potential influence of autonomy on grammar performance.

To contextualize autonomy within the Philippine setting, the study also draws on Tamano's **5R Model of Language Learner Autonomy** (2023). This model identifies five dimensions of autonomous behavior, identified as Readiness, Responsibility, Resourcefulness, Reflection, and Resilience. These dimensions



describe how Filipino learners initiate, manage, and sustain their language learning. They parallel the elements of self-regulated learning but highlight cultural tendencies such as strong responsibility and reflective practices among Filipino students. Studies conducted by Tamano (2023) and Iñigo (2018) indicate that Filipino learners often value autonomy but may still rely on teachers for guidance. This model therefore strengthens the relevance and interpretation of autonomy in this study by providing a localized explanation of how autonomy manifests in Philippine academic contexts.

Affective factors are explained through **Gardner's Socio-Psychological Theory of Language Attitudes**, which posits that learners' evaluative beliefs about a language influence their motivation, confidence, and overall language performance (Gardner, 1985). In the Philippine context, attitudes toward Philippine English shape how learners view linguistic correctness, legitimacy, and identity. Positive attitudes may reduce anxiety and resistance toward English use, which can promote stronger engagement with grammar learning. Studies by Prejoles et al. (2025), and international work by Mohd Adnan et al. (2022) support this claim by showing that favorable attitudes toward localized English varieties enhance learners' willingness to communicate and their acceptance of locally grounded English norms.

The last one, the **Concentric Circle Model of World Englishes** by **Barj Kachru (1985)** provides the sociolinguistic foundation of this study by recognizing Philippine English as a legitimate and nativized variety within the global English landscape. The paradigm explains why learners' attitudes toward a local English variety matter. Attitudes influence how students perceive linguistic correctness and whether they view their own variety of English as acceptable or inferior. According to Kachru and later expansions by Bautista and Bolton, users of English in Outer Circle countries negotiate identity and linguistic legitimacy as part of their daily language use. The downward trend of the Philippines in global proficiency rankings intensifies the need to understand how cognitive and affective factors influence grammar performance within this localized context.

Taken together, these theories explain the conceptual relationship among learner autonomy, attitudes toward Philippine English, and grammar performance. Self-Regulated Learning Theory explains how autonomy supports cognitive and behavioral processes that improve grammar. The 5R Model provides a culturally grounded view of how autonomy is expressed by Filipino learners. The Socio-Psychological Theory of Language Attitudes explains how attitudes influence motivation and engagement. The World Englishes paradigm provides the sociolinguistic lens that situates attitudes toward Philippine English within issues of identity and legitimacy. These theoretical linkages justify the study's focus on determining the levels of autonomy, attitudes, and grammar performance, as well as examining their relationships and predictive power among ESL students in a local Philippine college.

Statements of the Problem

1. What is the level of respondents Autonomy in terms of:

- 1.1 Goal Setting and Planning,
- 1.2 Self-Monitoring and Evaluation,
- 1.3 Decision Making in Learning, and
- 1.4 Motivation and Responsibility?

2. What attitudes towards the usage of Philippine English in terms of:

- 2.1 Awareness and Knowledge of Philippine English;
- 2.2 Acceptance of Philippine English;
- 2.3 Attitudinal Disposition Towards Usage; and



2.4 Perceived Impact on Grammar Performance?

3. What is the level of Grammar Performance among Respondents?
4. Is there a significance relationship between the respondents' Grammar Performance and:
 - 4.1 Level of Autonomy; and
 - 4.2 Attitude Towards Usage of Philippine English?
5. Which of the variables, singly or in combination, that best predict the Grammar Performance of the respondent?

METHODOLOGY

Design

The study will employ a descriptive-correlational predictive research design because it aims to describe existing conditions and determine the extent to which *learner autonomy* and *attitudes toward Philippine English* relate to and predict *grammar performance* among ESL students. This design is most appropriate since the study does not involve manipulating variables or implementing experimental treatments; rather, it seeks to analyze naturally occurring differences and relationships among variables as they exist in the learning environment.

The descriptive component of the design allows the researcher to obtain a clear profile of the students' current levels of learner autonomy, attitudes toward Philippine English, and grammar performance. Through descriptive statistics (such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution), the study will provide a comprehensive overview of how these variables manifest among college ESL learners in the Philippine context.

Meanwhile, the correlational-predictive component focuses on examining the strength and direction of the relationships among the three variables and determining whether learner autonomy and attitudes toward Philippine English significantly predict grammar performance. Using correlational analysis and multiple regression, the study will identify which independent variable contributes more strongly to the dependent variable. This approach aligns with the research objectives, which are to (1) describe, (2) correlate, and (3) predict all without altering existing conditions or assigning participants to treatment groups.

Furthermore, a descriptive-correlational predictive design is suitable for behavioral and educational studies where factors such as motivation, attitude, and proficiency interact in complex ways that cannot be easily controlled. This design supports evidence-based interpretation of how internal learner characteristics and sociolinguistic attitudes combine to influence linguistic performance, thus making it the most logical and ethical choice for this research.

Participants

College students from a local college in the province of Misamis Oriental enrolled for school year 2025-2026 will serve as the participants of this study because they represent a diverse and authentic population of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners who actively use English for both academic and social communication. Local college students are typically enrolled in general education or English proficiency courses where English serves as a medium of instruction, making them ideal subjects for examining the relationships among *learner autonomy*, *attitudes toward Philippine English*, and *grammar performance*.

Moreover, students in local colleges often come from varied linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, reflecting the multilingual nature of Philippine classrooms. This diversity allows the researcher to capture a more realistic picture of how internal factors such as autonomy and attitudes influence grammar proficiency in a setting where English functions both as an academic tool and as a marker of social mobility.



The accessibility of this group also ensures ethical and logistical feasibility, as the researcher can administer the survey questionnaires and grammar tests efficiently within the school setting.

Selecting local college students is also pedagogically relevant: as emerging adult learners, they are expected to demonstrate growing independence in learning (learner autonomy) and to form more mature perspectives toward English, including the local variety known as *Philippine English*. Investigating their attitudes and grammar performance provides valuable insights that can inform English language teaching practices, curriculum design, and policy development in similar tertiary institutions across the country.

Sampling Procedure

From a population of 512 college students, the required sample size of 223 respondents was computed using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error. A total of 214 valid responses were obtained, representing 95.96% of the target sample. The small difference was due to non-response and incomplete questionnaires and does not affect the adequacy or validity of the study. Participants were selected using probability sampling method specifically, simple random sampling. Simple random sampling was employed in this study. The selection of respondents was facilitated using EpiTools (<https://epitools.ausvet.com.au>), a computer-based randomization tool, which ensures that each member of the population had an equal and independent chance of being selected. This approach is conceptually equivalent to the traditional fishbowl method of simple random sampling but was adopted to guarantee higher efficiency and accuracy in selecting the participants.

Instrument

The research instrument is divided into three sections each anchored in the research problem statements. Part I and Part II are Survey Questionnaires for respondents' Autonomy and Attitudes towards the Usage of Philippine English. Both Parts are patterned from C. Soliman's (2024) Learner Autonomy Questionnaire and L. Cruz (2024) Attitudes Towards Philippine English Questionnaire respectively. Each Instrument has its own set of sub-variables with 10 indicators answerable on a 5-point Likert scale (1- Strongly Disagree to 5- Strongly Agree).

On the other hand, Part III of the instrument is a 45-items Multiple Choice Grammar Performance Test Questionnaire patterned from the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) with test items focusing on Verb Tenses and Aspects, Subject–Verb Agreement, Articles and Determiners, Prepositions, Modals and Auxiliaries, Conditionals, Pronouns and Agreement, and Sentence Structure / Word Order.

Scoring Procedure

All data will be organized and interpreted using the three tables below. Problem 1 and Problem 2 Survey questionnaires will be scored and interpreted using the scoring procedures in table 1 and table 2 respectively.

Table 1. Scoring Procedure for Respondents' Level of Autonomy

| Score | Range | Descriptive Rating | Qualitative Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 1.00 – 1.50 | Strongly Disagree (SD) | Very Low Level of Autonomy |
| 2 | 1.51 – 2.50 | Disagree (D) | Low Level Autonomy |
| 3 | 2.51 – 3.50 | Undecided (U) | Moderate Level Autonomy |
| 4 | 3.51 – 4.50 | Agree (A) | High Level Autonomy |
| 5 | 4.51 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree (SA) | Very High-Level Autonomy |



Table 2. Scoring Procedure for Attitudes Towards the Usage of Philippine English

| Score | Range | Descriptive Rating | Qualitative Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 1.00 – 1.50 | Strongly Disagree (SD) | Very Negative Attitude |
| 2 | 1.51 – 2.50 | Disagree (D) | Negative Attitude |
| 3 | 2.51 – 3.50 | Undecided (U) | Moderate Attitude |
| 4 | 3.51 – 4.50 | Agree (A) | Positive Attitude |
| 5 | 4.51 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree (SA) | Very Positive Attitude |

Table 3. Scoring Procedure for Respondents' Grammar Performance based from CEFR-Level of Interpretation

| Score Range | Qualitative Description |
|-------------|---|
| 0-17 | Below B1 (Basic Grammar Performance) |
| 18-27 | B1- Intermediate Grammar Performance |
| 28-37 | B2 - Upper Intermediate Grammar Performance |
| 38-45 | C1 - Advanced Grammar Performance |

Grammar test scores were interpreted using CEFR-aligned proficiency bands based on grammatical control, accuracy, and sentence complexity. The score ranges were criterion-referenced rather than evenly distributed, as higher CEFR levels require greater grammatical precision and control. Learners scoring below B1 were classified as basic grammar users, while higher scores corresponded to B1, B2, and C1 proficiency levels.

Furthermore, although the CEFR framework spans proficiency levels from A1 to C2, many empirical studies limit CEFR reporting to levels that align with the respondent profile and the measurement scope of the instrument (Council of Europe, 2001; Alderson, 2007). A1 and A2 levels are commonly excluded in tertiary-level ESL research because college learners typically possess prior formal instruction in English and exceed beginner-level descriptors (Hulstijn, 2012; Fulcher, 2010). Similarly, C2 is often omitted in grammar-based, objective placement tests, as near-native proficiency (Which is not the case of mostly ESL students) requires discourse-level and productive assessment beyond discrete-item formats (Weir, 2005; Green, 2014). Consequently, grammar performance in this study was interpreted using CEFR-aligned proficiency bands ranging from below B1 to C1, consistent with established assessment practices.

Validity and Reliability

All research instruments underwent a systematic process of validation and reliability testing to ensure accurate measurement of the constructs under investigation and to minimize potential sources of measurement bias. The survey instruments for Learner Autonomy and Attitudes Toward Philippine English were adapted from previously validated scales and contextualized for the Philippine ESL setting. To reduce response bias associated with self-reported measures, particularly social desirability bias, the questionnaires were designed to emphasize anonymity and voluntary participation, and items were phrased in a neutral, non-evaluative manner. Respondents were informed that there were no correct or incorrect answers and that their responses would be used solely for research purposes.

Three experts in English language teaching and applied linguistics evaluated the survey items for clarity, relevance, cultural appropriateness, and alignment with the study variables. Their evaluations were quantified using the Content Validity Index (CVI). Items that did not meet the acceptable CVI threshold of 0.80 were



revised or refined based on expert feedback. The Grammar Performance Test, patterned after the Oxford Quick Placement Test, was reviewed by the same panel to ensure that the items adequately represented core grammatical domains, including tense usage, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, and sentence structure. These procedures established strong content and face validity and ensured that the instruments were appropriate for Filipino ESL learners.

A pilot test involving 30 ESL students from departments not included in the main sample was conducted to establish reliability. The internal consistency of the Learner Autonomy and Attitudes Toward Philippine English scales was examined using Cronbach's alpha. The results yielded high reliability coefficients of 0.89 and 0.91, respectively, indicating very good internal consistency across all subscales. The Grammar Performance Test, consisting of objectively scored items, was analyzed using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20) and obtained a coefficient of 0.86, reflecting strong reliability and stable item functioning. Items that demonstrated weak discrimination during pilot testing were revised prior to final administration.

Although self-reported measures are inherently susceptible to response bias, the combination of expert validation, pilot testing, anonymity assurance, and the inclusion of an objective grammar performance measure helped mitigate this limitation. The use of multiple instruments capturing both perceptual and performance-based data further strengthened the overall robustness of the findings.

Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

The researcher observed all ethical standards required in the conduct of academic research in Target Local College. Before the study began, the researcher submitted the research proposal to the College Research Ethics Committee for review and approval. The Committee examined the study's objectives, methodology, and data-gathering procedures to ensure compliance with institutional and national ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Data collection started only after the Committee granted ethical clearance.

The researcher secured written permission from the College Administrator and the Dean of the College Department to conduct the study among enrolled ESL students. A formal communication was also made to the English instructors to coordinate the schedule of data collection. All respondents were informed of the nature and purpose of the study before their participation.

Each participant received an informed consent form. The form described the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the expected time commitment, and their right to decline or withdraw from participation at any time. The researcher explained that participation was voluntary and that refusal to participate would not affect their academic standing. Respondents were encouraged to ask questions before signing the consent form. Only those who gave written consent were included in the study.

Confidentiality of responses was strictly maintained. The researcher did not collect identifying information such as names or student numbers in the survey or grammar test. Each participant was assigned a numerical code for data entry and analysis. All completed questionnaires and test papers were stored in a sealed envelope and kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to the researcher. Electronic data were stored in a password-protected device.

Moreover, the researcher ensured that no physical, emotional, or psychological harm would result from participation. The study did not involve any form of deception, manipulation, or intervention that could affect the welfare of participants. The instruments used contained no sensitive or offensive content. The activity took place during regular class hours and within the school premises to minimize disruption.

After the data analysis, results were presented in summary form only. No individual responses were reported. The researcher observed honesty, accuracy, and transparency in data reporting and acknowledged all sources of information used in the study. Upon completion, the collected data and consent forms were retained securely for one year, after which they were permanently disposed of according to institutional policy.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learners' Autonomy

Table 1. Summary Result of ESL Students' Level of Autonomy per Sub-Variable

| Sub-Variable | Overall Mean | Std. Deviation | Qualitative Interpretation |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Goal Setting and Planning | 3.87 | 0.44 | High Level Autonomy |
| Self-Monitoring and Evaluation | 3.82 | 0.42 | High Level Autonomy |
| Decision Making in Learning | 3.94 | 0.44 | High Level Autonomy |
| Motivation and Responsibility | 3.97 | 0.46 | High Level Autonomy |
| Total | 3.90 | 0.34 | High Level Autonomy |

The results in Table 1 indicate that the ESL students demonstrate a high level of autonomy across all sub-variables, with an overall mean of 3.90. Among the four dimensions, Motivation and Responsibility registered the highest mean (3.97), suggesting that students are strongly driven to take ownership of their learning tasks and outcomes. This is closely followed by Decision Making in Learning (3.94), showing that students actively participate in choosing strategies, resources, and learning paths that align with their needs. Goal Setting and Planning (3.87) and Self-Monitoring and Evaluation (3.82) also fall within the high-autonomy range, indicating that students can set clear learning objectives and consistently assess their progress. The relatively low standard deviations (0.34–0.46) further show that perceptions of autonomy are consistently high across the group, reflecting a generally empowered and self-regulated cohort of ESL learners.

The findings reveal that ESL students possess a consistently high level of learner autonomy, as reflected in the overall mean score of 3.90. The highest sub-variable, Motivation and Responsibility ($M = 3.97$), suggests that students understand their role as active agents in the learning process and willingly assume accountability for academic tasks. This aligns with the idea that intrinsic motivation is a central driver of autonomous behavior. Similarly, Decision Making in Learning ($M = 3.94$) indicates that students exercise considerable control over how they engage with lessons, select strategies, and utilize resources, pointing to a learning environment that supports independence and student choice.

Meanwhile, Goal Setting and Planning ($M = 3.87$) and Self-Monitoring and Evaluation ($M = 3.82$) also fall within the high range, although slightly lower than the other sub-variables. This suggests that while students are motivated and capable of making decisions, they may still need guidance in setting more structured goals or conducting systematic self-evaluations. Nevertheless, the narrow range of standard deviations (0.42–0.46) indicates a uniform pattern of high autonomy across participants, highlighting a cohort that is generally confident, self-directed, and capable of managing their learning processes.

The high level of autonomy demonstrated by ESL students carries several important implications for teaching and curriculum design. First, teachers can leverage student motivation by integrating more self-directed learning activities, such as project-based tasks, choice-driven assignments, and independent research. Since students already exhibit strong decision-making skills, instructors may provide greater opportunities for them to plan learning pathways, select materials, and set personal performance targets. Second, the slightly lower scores in goal setting and self-monitoring suggest areas for instructional enhancement. Teachers may incorporate structured reflection tasks, learning journals, or progress trackers that help students articulate goals and evaluate their own growth. Doing so will further strengthen their metacognitive skills and deepen their autonomy. Lastly, the findings imply that institutional policies should continue promoting learner-centered approaches, as students clearly respond well to environments that value autonomy, responsibility, and active participation. Providing flexible assessments, open-ended tasks, and technology-supported platforms may further empower students to take control of their learning.



Attitudes Towards Philippine English

Table 2. Summary Table of ESL Students' Level of Attitudes Towards Philippine English per Sub-Variable

| Sub-Variable | Overall Mean | Std. Deviation | Qualitative Interpretation |
|---|--------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Awareness and Knowledge of Philippine English | 3.79 | 0.44 | Positive Attitude |
| Acceptance of Philippine English | 4.05 | 0.52 | Positive Attitude |
| Attitudinal Disposition Towards Usage | 3.84 | 0.47 | Positive Attitude |
| Perceived Impact on Grammar Performance | 3.86 | 0.46 | Positive Attitude |
| TOTAL | 3.89 | 0.39 | Positive Attitude |

The results in Table 2 reveal that the ESL students hold an overall positive attitude toward Philippine English, as reflected in the total mean score of 3.89 (SD = 0.39). All four sub-variables likewise fall within the "Agree" range of 3.51–4.50, indicating consistent positive perceptions across different dimensions of Philippine English.

Among the sub-variables, Acceptance of Philippine English obtained the highest mean (4.05, SD = 0.52), suggesting that students strongly recognize Philippine English as a legitimate and acceptable variety of English. This aligns with recent developments in the World Englishes paradigm, where learners increasingly acknowledge the validity of localized English varieties in educational and social communication. High acceptance may also suggest that students feel comfortable using Philippine English features in their daily interactions.

Perceived Impact on Grammar Performance ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.46$) and Attitudinal Disposition Toward Usage ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.47$) likewise indicate positive views, showing that students believe Philippine English supports, rather than hinders, communication and grammatical development. These perceptions may reduce linguistic anxiety and foster confidence, which literature has associated with improved performance outcomes in language learning contexts.

Moreover, the lowest, though still positive, sub-variable mean is Awareness and Knowledge of Philippine English ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.44$). This suggests that while students have a favorable view of Philippine English, their understanding of its historical development, linguistic features, and sociolinguistic status may not be as strong as their acceptance of it. This echoes findings in prior studies where learners express openness toward Philippine English but show limited formal knowledge of its structural and sociocultural dimensions.

These results indicate that learners possess a uniformly positive orientation toward Philippine English across all dimensions, with slightly higher endorsement of acceptance and perceived usefulness. This positive attitudinal profile is theoretically important, since favorable attitudes are known to enhance motivation, reduce anxiety, and support communicative competence, which can indirectly influence grammar performance. Moreover, The consistently positive attitudes exhibited by the ESL students toward Philippine English align closely with Gardner's Socio-Psychological Theory of Language Attitudes. Gardner (1985) argues that learners' evaluative beliefs toward a language or language variety influence their motivation, confidence, and overall engagement in language learning. The high mean scores in acceptance, attitudinal disposition, and perceived impact suggest that students view Philippine English as legitimate and valuable in their linguistic development. According to the theory, such positive affective orientations lower the affective filter and facilitate greater willingness to use the target language in both academic and social contexts. This pattern is consistent with findings by Prejoles et al. (2025), who observed that ESL learners with favorable attitudes toward Philippine English exhibit stronger linguistic self-esteem and communicative comfort. The current



results reinforce Gardner's assertion that attitudes function as powerful motivational forces that can shape performance outcomes, including grammar accuracy, by influencing learners' openness to feedback, persistence in learning tasks, and tolerance for linguistic variation.

Taken together, the findings from Tables 1 and 2 reveal a learner profile characterized by both high autonomy and positive attitudes toward Philippine English. The high autonomy scores indicate that students are capable of planning, monitoring, and regulating their learning behaviors, while the positive attitudes suggest that they approach English use with confidence and openness. This combination is theoretically significant because autonomy and attitudes are complementary predictors of performance. Self-regulated learners who maintain positive affective orientations are more likely to persist in grammar study, utilize feedback, and engage in deliberate practice, all of which are essential for improving grammatical accuracy.

Furthermore, the uniformly positive results suggest that affective and cognitive dimensions of learning are aligned in a favorable direction. While autonomy supports the internal processes involved in grammar learning, attitudes influence the motivation and willingness to use English across different contexts. The synergy between the two constructs provides a strong foundation for understanding why some learners may excel in grammar tasks. It also supports the study's premise that these variables, individually or in combination, may significantly predict grammar performance among Filipino ESL students.

Grammar Performance

Table 3. Frequency Distribution Table on the Level of Grammar Performance Among ESL Students

| Score Range | Qualitative Description | f | % |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------|--|
| 0-17 | Below B1 (Basic Grammar Performance) | 44 | 20.56 |
| 18-27 | B1- Intermediate Grammar Performance | 120 | 56.07 |
| 28-37 | B2 - Upper Intermediate Grammar Performance | 47 | 21.96 |
| 38-45 | C1 - Advanced Grammar Performance | 3 | 1.40 |
| TOTAL | | 214 | 100 |
| Overall Mean | | | 22.98 |
| Std. Deviation | | | 6.27 |
| Qualitative Interpretation | | | B1 – Intermediate Grammar Performance |

The frequency distribution of grammar performance shows that the majority of ESL students fall within the B1 – Intermediate Grammar Performance category, with 120 students (56.07 percent) scoring within the 18–27 range. This indicates that most learners possess a functional but developing command of grammar, sufficient for basic academic tasks but still limited in precision and complexity. A notable portion of the students, 47 individuals (21.96 percent), reached the B2 – Upper Intermediate level, suggesting that roughly one-fifth of the cohort can use grammar with greater accuracy and flexibility. Meanwhile, 44 students (20.56 percent) were classified as Below B1 (Basic Grammar performance), demonstrating significant difficulties with grammatical structures typically expected in college-level communication. Only 3 students (1.40 percent) achieved the C1 – Advanced level, showing that high grammatical proficiency is relatively rare within the sample.

The overall mean score of 22.98 ($SD = 6.27$) corresponds to the B1 – Intermediate level, reinforcing the observation that students generally possess mid-range grammatical competence. This pattern is consistent with national and local findings reporting that Filipino college learners often operate at intermediate levels of



English proficiency despite long exposure to English in educational settings. The clustering of scores around the intermediate band suggests that while learners have foundational grammatical knowledge, they may struggle with higher-order grammar skills required for advanced academic writing and complex oral communication. These results highlight the need for instructional interventions that strengthen explicit grammar instruction, deepen metalinguistic awareness, and promote strategic learning behaviors that support movement from intermediate to higher proficiency levels.

Correlation ESL Student's Level of Autonomy and Level of Attitude Towards Philippine English and their Grammar Performance

Table 4. Summary Result of Correlation Between ESL Student's Level of Autonomy and Level of Attitude Towards Philippine English and their Grammar Performance

| Independent Variables | Pearson Coefficient (r-value) | Probability (P-Value) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Level of Autonomy | | |
| Decision Making in Learning | .143 | .037 |

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed that **Decision Making in Learning** was the only sub-variable that demonstrated a statistically significant relationship with grammar performance ($r = .143, p = .037$). Despite its coefficient reflecting a weak correlation, its statistical significance carries important theoretical and pedagogical implications. The positive direction of the correlation indicates that students who are more engaged in making decisions about their learning, such as selecting appropriate learning strategies, planning how to approach grammar tasks, and evaluating which materials best support their learning, tend to achieve slightly higher levels of grammatical accuracy. This suggests that even incremental improvements in decision-making ability may contribute meaningfully to students' mastery of grammar.

The prominence of this sub-variable aligns strongly with Tamano's (2023) emphasis on the centrality of reflective responsibility within the 5R Model of Language Learner Autonomy. According to this model, decision-making serves as a functional core through which learners transform motivation into concrete learning actions. Similarly, Viberg and Kukulska-Hulme (2021) emphasized that self-regulated behaviors, particularly decisions about how and when to learn can predict enhanced performance in technology-supported language learning environments. In the context of the present study, the significant correlation suggests that ESL students who exercise greater control over their learning decisions are better positioned to internalize grammar rules, monitor their errors, and apply corrective strategies that lead to improved grammatical accuracy.

It is also noteworthy that other sub-components of autonomy, such as goal setting, self-monitoring, and motivation, did not show significant correlations with grammar performance. This highlights the possibility that not all forms of autonomy exert equal influence on grammar development. Instead, the aspect of autonomy most closely tied to active learner agency and strategic action like decision making, appears to be the component that meaningfully connects with grammar achievement. This finding echoes earlier observations by Iñigo (2018), who argued that although Filipino learners may express positive attitudes toward autonomous learning, they often struggle to translate these attitudes into autonomous behaviors unless guided by structured opportunities.

This significant correlation between Decision Making and grammar performance underscores the importance of fostering strategic autonomy rather than merely encouraging general independent learning. The result suggests that learners benefit most when they are supported in making informed choices about how they study grammar, how they use feedback, and how they regulate their learning progress. This highlights a crucial pedagogical implication: grammar instruction should incorporate learning activities that provide students with meaningful opportunities to practice and strengthen their decision-making abilities, as this appears to be the autonomy dimension with the clearest relationship to improved linguistic accuracy.



Multiple Regression Analysis on Learner Autonomy and Attitude Towards Philippine English as Predictors of Grammar Performance

Table 5. Summary Table of Regression Analysis on Learner Autonomy and Attitude Towards Philippine English as Predictors of Grammar Performance

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 20.66 | 5.30 | | 3.90 | .000 |
| Autonomy | | | | | |
| Goal Setting and Planning | -1.891 | 1.221 | -.133 | -1.548 | .123 |
| Self-Monitoring and Evaluation | -.694 | 1.316 | -.046 | -.527 | .599 |
| Decision Making in Learning | 3.167 | 1.215 | .221 | 2.606 | .010 |
| Motivation and Responsibility | -1.044 | 1.264 | -.077 | -.826 | .410 |
| Attitude Towards Usage of Philippine English | | | | | |
| Awareness and Knowledge of Philippine English | .204 | 1.200 | .014 | .170 | .865 |
| Acceptance of Philippine English | .910 | 1.247 | .075 | .730 | .466 |
| Attitudinal Disposition Towards Usage | -.623 | 1.388 | -.047 | -.449 | .654 |
| Perceived Impact on Grammar Performance | .493 | 1.382 | .036 | .356 | .722 |
| R= 0.221 | R2= 0.049 | F= 1.311 | p-value=.240 | | |

Table 5 shows that the multiple regression analysis revealed that the combined predictors explained only a small proportion of the variance in students' grammar performance ($R^2 = .049$) and that the model was not statistically significant ($F = 1.311$, $p = .240$). Among the predictors, only Decision Making in Learning emerged as a significant positive predictor of grammar performance ($\beta = .221$, $p = .010$). This indicates that students who actively participate in making learning-related decisions tend to achieve higher grammar scores. All other autonomy components and all attitude variables toward Philippine English yielded non-significant results ($p > .05$), suggesting that these factors do not meaningfully contribute to variations in grammar performance within the sample. Overall, autonomy related to decision-making appears to be the only meaningful predictor in the model.

Moreover, these findings provide important implications for grammar instruction in Philippine higher education especially to local colleges. The results show that among all predictors, only Decision Making in Learning significantly contributed to grammar performance. This suggests that the autonomy component most strongly tied to active learner agency plays a meaningful role in developing grammatical accuracy. This aligns with Tamano's (2023) 5R Model, which emphasizes responsibility and reflection as central to self-regulated learning, and with Viberg and Kukulska-Hulme's (2021) finding that self-regulation predicts academic



performance in digital and mobile learning contexts. The present results indicate that autonomy becomes pedagogically relevant not merely as a learner disposition but as a set of strategic actions, particularly when students make deliberate choices about how they study grammar. This reinforces earlier observations by Iñigo (2018) that Filipino learners value autonomy but often require structured opportunities to practice it. Therefore, English programs may need to strengthen instructional practices that allow students to make learning decisions, evaluate their progress, and manage their own grammar development.

Results also show that attitudes toward Philippine English did not significantly predict grammar performance. This result is notable because prior research, such as Prejoles et al. (2025) has documented overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward Philippine English, including its role in shaping identity, confidence, and communicative effectiveness. While these affective and sociolinguistic benefits are supported by existing scholarship, the present findings suggest that such attitudes may not directly influence linguistic accuracy, particularly in rule-governed aspects like grammar. This distinction highlights the complexity of English learning in the Philippines, where Philippine English is recognized as a legitimate variety within the World Englishes framework, yet academic settings continue to assess grammar based on standardized norms. The results therefore suggest that curriculum designers and instructors should recognize the value of positive attitudes toward localized English varieties while also acknowledging that improving grammar performance requires explicit pedagogical strategies, targeted practice, and learner autonomy that emphasizes decision-making rather than attitudinal orientation.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to determine how learner autonomy and attitudes toward Philippine English relate to and predict the grammar performance of ESL students enrolled in a local college in Misamis Oriental. The results revealed a unique learner profile shaped not only by cognitive and affective factors but also by the contextual realities of a provincial higher education institution where English functions as both an academic requirement and a tool for social mobility.

The students demonstrated a consistently high level of learner autonomy and uniformly positive attitudes toward Philippine English, indicating that they possess strong motivational, reflective, and sociolinguistic orientations toward English learning. Despite these strengths, the grammar performance of the cohort remained at the B1 Intermediate level, showing that many students continue to struggle with grammatical accuracy expected in college communication. This misalignment between favorable attitudes, strong autonomy, and only moderate grammar competence is particularly significant in the local college context, where learners often come from linguistically diverse and multilingual backgrounds and may not have had access to high-quality grammar instruction prior to tertiary education.

The correlational and regression analyses identified Decision Making in Learning as the only significant predictor of grammar performance. This suggests that grammar development is influenced less by general autonomy dispositions and more by students' ability to make informed, strategic choices about how they study and engage with grammar tasks. The prominence of this autonomy dimension is important in a local college setting where students often balance academic responsibilities with work, family obligations, and limited academic resources. Their capacity to make productive decisions about their learning becomes a crucial factor in achieving grammatical accuracy.

By contrast, the highly positive attitudes toward Philippine English did not significantly predict grammar performance. This indicates that while students embrace Philippine English as a legitimate linguistic identity, such attitudes do not directly affect their mastery of standardized grammatical structures. This finding is meaningful in the local college environment, where learners navigate the dual expectations of expressing their linguistic identity while meeting the academic standards of English required for employment and further study.

Hence, the study concludes that strategic autonomy, rather than general autonomy or language attitudes, plays the most meaningful role in grammar performance among local college ESL learners. Grammar instruction, therefore, must move beyond promoting positive attitudes and general independence and must instead cultivate deliberate, strategic learning behaviors.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are offered to strengthen grammar instruction and support ESL learners in the local college context. First, teachers should place greater emphasis on fostering strategic autonomy, since Decision Making in Learning emerged as the only significant predictor of grammar performance. Instructional activities must therefore allow students to make informed choices about learning strategies, materials, and study routines. Guided opportunities for self-evaluation, structured reflection, and planning can help students develop the strategic habits necessary for improving grammatical accuracy. At the same time, there is a need to enhance explicit grammar instruction, particularly because most students performed at the intermediate level. English departments may consider revising their curriculum to provide more focused instruction on persistent problem areas such as verb tenses and aspects, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, and sentence structure. Enrichment modules and remediation programs would also be beneficial for learners who fall within the basic or lower-intermediate proficiency bands.

Furthermore, while students demonstrated positive attitudes toward Philippine English, these attitudes did not significantly predict grammar performance. This finding suggests that *teachers should strike a balance between affirming Philippine English as a legitimate variety and ensuring that students achieve competency in standardized academic grammar*. Integrating discussions on World Englishes may reinforce students' sociolinguistic confidence, but instruction must still emphasize the grammatical norms expected in academic and professional contexts. The local college context also indicates the importance of providing targeted support to learners from linguistically and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds. Diagnostic assessments, peer tutoring, and scaffolded instructional interventions can help address disparities in grammar preparation and proficiency.

The modest explanatory power of the predictive model suggests that *future studies should explore additional variables that may influence grammar achievement*. These may include grammar self-efficacy, metalinguistic awareness, feedback processing, or instructional practices. Conducting similar research in other local colleges or regional institutions would enrich the understanding of grammar development among Filipino ESL learners and contribute to the creation of more responsive and evidence-based language programs.

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