

Suggestive-Simulative Learning Activities (SSLA) in the English Lessons for College Students

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Abstract: *SSLA stands for Suggestive-Simulative Learning Activities using the principles of Suggestopedia and Simulation. Positive suggestion and enhancement of the learner's behavior and learning environment coupled with simulated activities are used to help the students discover the fun and challenges of learning a second language.*

This month-long experiment sought to determine the effect of SSLA in the communication behavior and English proficiency of a special group of noticeably inhibited students in learning English as a second language. The Data gathering procedures with the use of observation, interview, self-report and rating scale were done in three stages namely before the introduction of the SSLA to the subjects, just after the termination of the SSLA and a week after the SSLA which is considered the treatment period.

Comparing the students' communication behavior and English proficiency from the first data gathering stage with the two subsequent data gathering stages after the termination of SSLA, the students showed remarkable improvements in their learning behavior particularly the lessening of their inhibition while their English Proficiency steadily improved.

As far as this study is concerned' SSLA is a promising strategy in targeting to eliminate specific learning barriers related to second language learning. It may be possibly tested to other groups of learners with whole new different language learning related issues to be addressed. Extension of the treatment period and added variations on the activities can be the enhancements to be introduced.

Keywords: English Lessons, English Proficiency, ESL, SSLA, Suggestopedia

Introduction

Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to students from ethno-linguistic groups generally characterized by excessive communicative shyness is challenging to say the least. A normal English class in Mountain Province State Polytechnic College (MPSPC) is composed of several learners who have different levels of behavior and proficiency in listening, reading, speaking and writing in English. In any circumstance, the lesson has to start in a certain topic where others could have already been knowledgeable of while others regard it as too unfamiliar. It is, therefore, the teachers' responsibility to find a way to make their lessons more inclusive and the objectives more attainable for most if not for everyone.

Few students in class can functionally express their thoughts in spoken or in written English while most have difficulties in even expressing simple ideas such as their reason why they were late or absent. This may not be necessarily caused by not knowing how to say it. Instead, these students could be too unreasonably shy to express their thoughts in English—blame it to culture.

If a teacher ignores these seemingly minor communication difficulties and proceeds on executing the lessons that was laid in a pre-planned syllabus even before meeting the students; chances are, the teacher and his/her students will be having a difficult time attaining the objectives of teaching-learning activities.

This study which is an avenue to validate, investigate and discover breakthroughs in making the English lessons more acceptable to students under enhanced learning settings specially for students who have culturally-engrained issue on shyness or inhibition.

The Suggestive-simulative Learning Activities (SSLA) is conceptualized as an offshoot of Lozanov's Suggestopedia theory (1978) and the principles of teaching-learning through simulation. Positive suggestion and development of the learner's positive behavior and revolutionizing the learning environment coupled with learner-friendly simulated activities are used to help the students discover the desire and challenges of learning a second language.

The term "Suggestopedia" is a combination of the words "suggestion" and "pedagogy", in which the main focus is accelerating the learning process by eliminating psychological barriers while superimposing positive suggestions. The lessons take place in a relaxed environment and to the extent, slightly detaching the learners from reality therefore replacing the traditional classroom learning environment with a simulated, more informal and learning-conducive setting (Lozanov, 1978).

In a previous undertaking conducted by the same researcher prior to this current study wherein SSLA was initially put to test, the erstwhile long-process suggestopedic lessons were condensed while sustaining the focus of immersing the students in a learning situation to accelerate their training in using the English language as a tool in oral communication.

The researcher has discovered a stumbling block in the course of the earlier study in which participants with different culture and language have manifested lesser improvement than what the majority achieved. This discovery created a new direction but of the same theory and concept which revolves around communication behavior, proficiency in English as a Second language, and the students who belong to ethno-linguistic groups that are generally characterized by shyness and self-consciousness (Madalang, 2000).

One way to overcome a learner's inhibition is to motivate the students to participate in unsupervised learning activities. Hawkins (2017) espouses group learning activities to encourage self-initiated motivation in the classroom. SSLA provides instructions and points out the target learning objectives then lets the learners accomplish the rest in their own volition and plan without the perceptible interference or supervision of the teacher.

Chen (2015) says that despite the term 'self-regulate', an effective learning plan should still be guided by goals, performed in a strategic process and outcomes should be assessed.

SSLA also encourages the learners to self-regulate to keep them on track. The elimination of the teacher's role, who becomes just a mere observer, makes the learners largely independent but they should still be provided with learning objectives to attain, procedures to follow and should manifest outcomes to be evaluated at the end of each session.

Spolsky (1972) believe that in order for the learners to effectively acquire the skills in using the target language, they should be taught to use the language instead of teaching the language to them.

This makes SSLA brim with interactive activities under simulated conditions to provide the learners with enough sessions where they can speak, listen, write and read between and among themselves using the English language. Nicolas and Blair (2018) acknowledge the fact that with the absence of an authentic environment where students can put their English knowledge and skills to practice such as engaging in an oral conversation with someone who speaks only in English to encourage them to use solely the target language, the second-best approach for an ESL teacher is to create a simulated setting.

To rev up the motivation of learners to learn English, SSLA needs to apply positive suggestion to them. Lee and Kim's (2021) study observes that the highly motivated learners are those that have received positive encouragements. Motivation for college students can come in the form of inspiration such as suggesting a future scenario that they have already finished their courses and are already successful professionals.

As earlier mentioned, some students, specifically those who studied in private (mostly parochial) secondary schools are knowledgeable on definitions of English grammatical terms. They can even enumerate functions and purposes of these terms but would automatically shy away when asked to use them in sentences according to the functions that they stated.

For example, one student would outstandingly define ‘infinitive’ as ‘combination of the word to and a verb as in to write and functions as a noun in a sentence like subject, direct object or subjective complement’. But when asked to use an infinitive phrase as a direct object in an S-V-O sentence, most of them are clueless.

Another linguist has influenced the conceptualization of this research. Brendan Carrol (1980) stated that the problem of language testing (in this case, language teaching) is strongly influenced by the place accorded to usage and use in interpersonal communication. Usage is concerned primarily with formal language patterns, whereas use is concerned with communicative function, with how the language is used. Carrol (1980) however gave caution that usage and use can be easily interchanged and confused as in the case of students who are excellent in defining and enumerating the rules in grammar but can hardly express themselves orally in English.

Cultural background and mother tongue of an English Language Learner (ELL) can significantly influence his behavior in learning the English language. Formality causes most of the MPSPC students to clam up since formality does not have any place in their culture. This may also be the reason why people in this particular region have a difficult time addressing people with formal titles like ‘sir’ or ‘madam’. Everyone is considered a peer or close associate if not relative.

In the case of body language, people from this part of the country are not demonstrative with their emotions or ideas unlike their lowland counterparts. Handshakes, hugging or even patting one’s shoulder are rarely used even among close friends or relatives. They simply are not part of the Igorot culture and make one uneasy if hugged or patted.

Diversity in culture causes behavioral misinterpretations, language barriers and uneasiness among the students. Learners with diverse cultural upbringings may not be able to freely consider the frame of mind of their classmates as cultural differences may bring about miscommunication among themselves. SSLA may be the appropriate approach to make these kinds of students appreciate English language learning.

Objectives

This study attempted to seek a contributory solution to the declining English proficiency of the local college students both in written and spoken communication, in this case, caused by negative behaviors towards the language. The behavior is in turn influenced by the students’ unique ethno-linguistic upbringing.

Since this study is chiefly interactive, the positive attitudes that it will hopefully develop in both teachers and students may encourage or inspire them in their teaching-learning in other disciplines. Also, the result of this study may pave a way for educators to find ways in improving or developing the existing educational system especially in the field of English language teaching.

Finally, the researcher hopes that the results of this study will encourage future educators and academicians to embark on similar studies to formulate if not to improve existing teaching strategies that could answer the changing needs of the present educational system. This study therefore intended to evaluate the effect of Suggestive-Simulative Learning Activities (SSLA) on the communication behavior and English Proficiency of the participants in which the assessment’s results will serve as a basis in rewriting the instructional plan for the English language subjects.

More specifically, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the pre-treatment baseline data on the participants
 - a. In their Communication Behavior?
 - b. In their English Proficiency?
2. What are the students' Communication Behavior Level and English Proficiency level upon termination of the treatment period?
3. What are the students' Communication Behavior Level and English Proficiency level two weeks after the termination of the treatment period?
4. To what extent does the effect of the SSLA differ before and after their exposure to the treatment activities?
5. To what extent do the students' Communication Behavior and English Proficiency levels differ from the first post-test to the next?

Procedure/Methodology

On the onset of the study, the Communication Behavior and English Proficiency of the students were measured through oral and written pre-tests with the use of a scale patterned after the rating scales devised by Brendan Carrol (1980) to measure the baseline condition of the student-subjects in their Communication Behavior and English Proficiency. The ethno-linguistic profile of the student-subjects was the basis for the formulation of the SSLA that was administered during the treatment period. Treatment period starts right after the pre-test.

There were five Suggestive-Simulative Learning Activities (SSLA) integrated in the regular lessons. During formal lessons, mechanics in grammar, writing, speech or sentence construction were discussed in class through the traditional lecture-discussion-question-and-answer method. The SSLA comes in during the application or practicum part of lessons wherein they replaced the usual drills, seatwork or board work.

The ethno-linguistic profile of the student-subjects served as a parameter in devising the SSLA lessons to make the student-subjects 'feel comfortable' in their familiar settings and familiar subjects or topics and with the recommendations that the activities are to be done in a natural manner as opposed to 'pure simulation' or role-playing.

Right after an approximately five-week implementation of the SSLA, the first post-test was conducted and after another week, the second post-test followed. Using the paradigm below (Figure 1) as the guide, the experimental research method known as the A-B-A-A Pre and Post-Test Time Series One-way Experimental Design consistent with Figure 2 was used in the measurement of the variables.

Figure 1: Paradigm of the Study

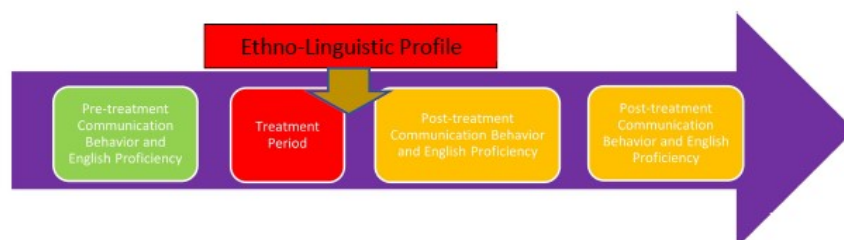
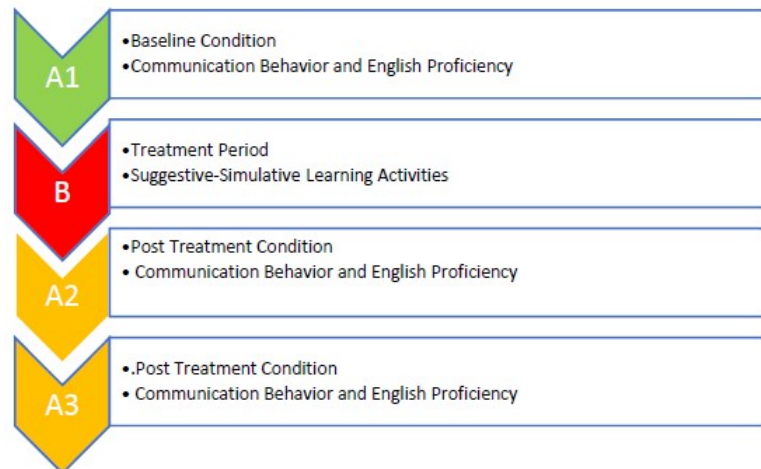


Figure 2: The Sequence of Variable Measurement



The Communication Behavior and English Proficiency baseline data (0_1) of the student-subjects were measured through a standardized rating scale before the implementation of experimental lessons (B) which are based on the needs and the characteristics of the baseline data and the ethno-linguistic profile of the student-subjects. After the treatment (B), two post-tests were administered. The first post-test (0_2) was administered upon the termination of the treatment (B). The second post-test (0_3) was administered two weeks after the first post-test (0_2).

This kind of design compared the pre-treatment baseline measure (0_1) with the two post treatment measures (0_2 and 0_3) to determine if there is a significant difference between pre and post treatment Communication Behavior and English Proficiency. The two post treatment results (0_2 and 0_3) were in turn compared to determine the degree to which the impact of the treatment reverted to the pre-treatment baseline measure through the passage of time after the termination of the treatment.

A stratified random sampling was used to ensure that each ethno-linguistic group was proportionately represented. Using the Slovin's sampling formula, 103 samples were picked through Table of Random Numbers. The data gathered in this experiment were the Communication Behavior and English Proficiency levels of the subjects during the four stages of the study (A₁, B, A₂ and A₃).

The study started a week after the start of the semester with the profiling of the students' ethno-linguistic backgrounds as a preliminary lesson in self-introduction done both in written and oral introductions. This was the time the researcher was given the time to plan on what to include in the treatment lessons. During the oral introduction, there was a part where they had to describe their culture and the characteristics of their mother tongue. The researcher observed unique characteristics of each ethno-linguistic group.

The *Kalinga* students speak with unusually soft and hardly audible words in contrast with the *Bontok* students who possess loud voices and heavy accent coupled with bodily manifestations of nervousness like shaky hands and staring away from the listener.

After the pre-test was concluded through written exercises and interlocution, the five-week-long SSLA lessons were implemented as the treatment period in addition to regular traditional learning activities such as lectures, forum, discussion or drills. Two days upon termination of the treatment, the first post-test was conducted followed by the next post-test two weeks later to determine if there was a reversion of the results to the baseline data. Measurement of these conditions was done through informal interviews, observations and written examinations. The researcher used a rating scale to record on-the-spot

observable behaviors that could not be recorded on audio recorders such as shaking, fidgeting or eye to eye contact. The table below summarizes the data gathering process.

Table 1: Data Gathering Process

	Stage	Data Gathered	Instruments Used
A1	Pre-treatment Stage	Communication Behavior English Proficiency Level	Observation/Interview Self-report Rating Scale
B	Treatment Stage		
A2	Post-treatment Stage 1	Communication Behavior English Proficiency Level	Observation/Interview Self-report Rating Scale
A3	Post-treatment Stage 2	Communication Behavior English Proficiency Level	Observation/Interview Self-report Rating Scale

Procedure of the Experiment

Ethno-linguistic Profiling: During the first meeting, the researcher as a classroom teacher introduced himself in a very inclusive manner to provide them with a ‘comfortable’ amount of information about the person they are about to open themselves to. This is the usual practice of the researcher because he believes that if the students know some details about their teacher’s personal, professional, educational and cultural backgrounds, they tend to relate or relax more in sharing their own personal information—a rapport is to be established during the first meeting.

Since majority of the students belong to an ethnic group, they tend to write and talk more about their culture and dialect than any other things. During the first meeting, no one among the students was willing enough to go to the front and talk about himself so the researcher suggested that they write their personal introduction in a piece of paper and they will be called individually to read their paper either in their seat, standing or in front.

The guide questions were provided to accelerate the activity and to aid others with what to write while giving a limit to some students who tend to include information that may be unnecessary or too personal to be shared: a. What is your name? b. Where do you live? c. What can you say about your hometown? d. What are the unique practices in your community that may not be present anywhere else? e. How do you describe yourself? f. What do you expect to learn from this subject?

Conduct of Pre-treatment Baseline Measurement: Based on the models taken from Jane Dickies (1987) and Myint (1993), the researcher measured the subjects’ pre-treatment Communication Behavior and English Proficiency. This was done through the help of a native English Speaker (a US Peace Corp Volunteer) who served as the interlocutor playing the role of a tourist wanting to visit each student’s hometown.

The interlocutor and the subject engaged in a casual English conversation by the corner of the school lobby while the researcher stayed in a discreet distance observing the student’s behavior while an audio recorder was recording the conversation. Both the interlocutor and the researcher were taking down notes using the Oral Communication Observation Matrix (Figure 3) and the Interview Assessment Scale (Figure 4) to guide them on how to rate the student’s Communication Behavior and Oral English Proficiency.

The interlocutor’s rating is added to the researcher’s divided by two to arrive at an average for the final rating of each measured variable. To complete the assessment, the subject was asked to write a brief essay

about the conversation. The rating that the student receives from this was based on the Academic Writing Scale (Figure 5) and added to the rating from the Interview Assessment Scale (Figure 4) divided by two to arrive at the English Proficiency Rating which was later interpreted in the General Assessment Scale (Figure 6). All of the ratings each student received were recorded in the Individual Rating Card.

Implementation of the SSLA: The syllabi used by the researcher during the study were enhanced with SSLA in a five-week-long duration. The regular lecture/discussion activities about particular topics were punctuated with SSLA in line with the subject matter. In the process, no new lessons were introduced after the pre-test was administered until the conduct of the first post-test (A2).

There were two subjects involved in this study. The English 11 (Study and Thinking Skills) of the Teacher Education Department and the English 14A (Technical Report Writing) under the Criminology Department who were paired off toward the end of the treatment period. The students have to be informed about the experiment and they have to mentally prepare (internalize) for each of the activities to avoid the feeling of unease or discomfort. After the treatment period, they should also be equally informed that regular class activities will resume and there should be no more pretending, role-playing or play-acting to make them ready for the post test.

The following is the summary of the planned lessons during the SSLA.

English 11 – (Study and Thinking Skills – First Year TED Students)

First Week: Subject Matter-Descriptive Writing: Each student has an imaginary friend from any of the English-speaking countries such as USA, Canada, UK, Australia or New Zealand. They communicated through text or email. Each one sent an email to his/her friend (researcher's email address) describing himself and his/her culture especially the rituals and cultural practices in their hometown. The friend (the researcher) replied for clarifications in case the student did not satisfactorily 'create a picture' in his/her friend's imagination. Courtesy was observed in the correspondence all the time.

Oral sharing was done later in the classroom regarding the flow of the correspondence.

Second Week: Subject Matter-Persuasive Writing: Each student persuaded his/her friend (through Skype) to visit the Philippines particularly his/her hometown. Students wrote the script on what to say to his/her friend and read it in class (use of webcam was recommended so that they can observe their facial expressions and behavior while speaking) with the following guide questions: Why would you like your friend to visit your place? What are the special things to see and activities to experience? Why would you think your friend will enjoy the visit?

Third Week: Subject Matter-Expository Writing: The foreign friend came to visit. As they went around the community and watched and participated in special rites and festivals, the student explained things such as: Why are the rice fields designed in such a way? Why do the public transports and other public places like restaurants play country music? Why is there a group of men gathering by the edge of the river butchering chicken? Why are those men wearing peculiar costumes? What are the activities in the community exclusively done by women or girls?

Prior knowledge is very important in this particular lesson because they have to explain things properly and correctly. The researcher/teacher acted as the 'friend'.

Fourth Week: Subject Matter-Narrative Writing: Back to reality situation, students wrote a narrative on how they spent their time with their 'friends' who came to visit, the places they visited and the festivals and events they attended. The researcher/teacher checked the compositions, returned them to the students so they had time to read and master. On the next meeting, the students orally presented their narrative in class but were not allowed to read straight from the paper. They were allowed to glance at their papers for chronology but they should appear as if they were narrating on-the-spot.

Fifth Week: Subject Matter-Reporting a Crime (Combination of descriptive, expository, persuasive and narrative skills)

The students were paired off with the criminology students taking Technical Report Writing in a simulated situation: The English 11 student was a victim of a crime. He/she had to decide what crime would that be according to what is comfortable with him/her. He/she had to create the scene in his/her mind including details such as time, description of the perpetrator, details of missing items (if it is robbery or theft), and other details to make the situation realistic. The 'victim' reported the incident to the 'police officer' (the criminology student). The school lobby or quadrangle or even the nearby town plaza were the convenient places to undertake this activity to eliminate the classroom atmosphere.

For purposes of grading, the student had to get the name of the 'police officer on duty' for the teacher to compare the details reported by the 'victim' with the crime narrative report written by the 'police officer'.

English 14A – (Technical Report Writing – 2nd Year Criminology Students)

First Two Weeks: Subject matter – Review of Descriptive, Expository, Persuasive and Narrative Writing

Teacher sent the students to a particular area within the school compound (which the teacher earlier inspected and took notes of the physical details) and asked them to take note of everything they see or notice even the minutest details (e.g. brand of the red tiny candy wrapper near the flagpole). Students wrote their descriptive report. Discussion in comparing notes followed for them to agree with the most appropriate descriptions such as if it is maroon or dark red, Nissan Frontier or Nissan Safari, large or big, face down or face up and so on. They each wrote their descriptive composition of the place

Students were asked to group according to ethnicity. They discussed in groups the different rituals and practices that they do in their communities. After thorough discussion, each one wrote his own explanation (expository writing) why they do practice the said rites in relation to their beliefs. Compositions were presented in class the next meeting.

Third Week: Subject matter – Data Gathering Procedure: The students were asked to watch a developing crime report on the television or listen to a radio news broadcast or read in the national dailies or even from a legitimate online news website. After following the news for three days, they became 'witnesses' to be interrogated by the researcher as the 'police investigator'. This allowed them to observe what questions to ask and how questions were asked. Behaviors of the 'police investigator' were also noted.

Assessment on the above activity was discussed in the class focused on: As witness being interrogated, what were the characteristics of the 'police investigator' that you appreciate? What were the behaviors that you did not like? How were the questions asked? Were the important questions asked? If you were the police investigator, how would you ask the 5 w's and 1 h questions?

Fourth Week: Subject matter – Writing a Report According to the Data Gathered: Students were assigned to obtain a copy of a police blotter and other reports from their local police precincts with names of persons and addresses blotted out. The documents are inspected in class noting the characteristics and contents and how the reports were written. A simulated situation is presented wherein one outsider comes in and report a crime committed against him/her. The students interview the 'victim'. After the interview, the students are asked to write a narrative report. For grading purposes, grammar, style and correctness (completeness) of the report are considered.

Fifth Week: Noting Details from a Reported Crime and Basics of Questioning: The students were paired off with the TED students who were taking English 11 in a simulated situation: The TED student was a 'victim' of a crime. The Criminology student was the 'police officer' on duty. The 'police officer' wrote down the statement given by the 'victim' and asked questions if necessary. A crime report was to be passed after the activity to be compared with the written statement of the 'victim' for data comparison.

Conduct of Post-tests: After the conclusion of the SSLA, the first post treatment measurement was undertaken in the same manner as the pre-test. However, new sets of questions although of the same context and degree of difficulty as what were used in the pre-treatment baseline measurement were given. The purpose of the changing the questions was to avoid getting answers that were previously prepared.

The same cycle of measurement with another set of questions was done two weeks after the first post-test to measure the second post treatment data on the students' Communication Behavior and English Proficiency.

Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation of the Data: The following were used in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

1. Based on the distribution of the subjects' Communication Behavior and English Proficiency levels, the mean of each measurement was computed to answer the required data for problems 1, 2 and 3 including the sub-problems.
2. An Analysis of Variance was employed to find out if the baseline condition significantly differed from each of the two post treatment conditions; a follow-up hypothesis test in the form of Least Significant Difference (LSD) was used to determine which among the tested pairs there a significant difference. The data obtained here was used in answering problems 4 and 5.

Discussion of Results

The presentation and interpretation of the data resulting from the study is consistent with the order of the specific problems enumerate earlier. In the students' Pre-experimental Communication Behavior and English Proficiency prior to the execution of the SSLA, two variables of interest pertaining to the student-subjects of the experiment were measured. These are their baseline Communication Behavior and English Proficiency levels. Table 1-A presents the frequency and relative frequency distribution of the 103 student-subjects to the different levels of Communication Behavior during the pre-treatment period.

Table 1-A: Distribution of the Subjects' Pre-treatment Communication Behavior (N=103)

Level	Band	Frequency	Score	Relative Frequency
Extremely Inhibited	1	17	17	.165
Very Inhibited	2	37	74	.359
Marginal or Inhibited	3	34	102	.33
Least Confident	4	9	36	.087
	5	0	0	0
Less Confident				
Modestly Confident	6	5	30	.048
Confident	7	1	7	.009
More Confident	8	0	0	0
Very Confident	9	0	0	0
		103	266	
Mean=2.582				

The pre-treatment Communication Behavior of the 103 subjects ranged from Extremely Inhibited to Confident which corresponds to the point values 1 and 7. As such, the student-subjects are characteristically unsatisfactory in their Communication Behavior because basically they encountered difficulties in communicating using the English language as evidenced by their flawed pronunciation, missing stress as they are also hesitant in responding to the person they were talking to. There were much fidgeting and other nervous behaviors among most of the subjects while they were facing the interlocutor.

Only one (1) of the 103 subjects or .9% of the samples was able to manifest a level of confidence where he participated in the conversation articulately. He did not display any problem in using English

vocabularies although he shows some hesitation and repetition due to stress and pitch patterns. He was also the only one who had at least tried occasional eye to eye contact with the interlocutor.

Seventeen (17) of the 103 subjects or 16.5% fall under the 'Extremely Inhibited' category during the pre-treatment period. These subjects are generally characterized with behaviors such as catching only part of the normal speech speed and unable to produce continuous and accurate discourse. No comprehensible stress and pitch in their voices while their answers to questions are single-words or in phrase forms. They focus their eyes on distant objects while speaking.

The bulk of the group (n=37) are in 'Very Inhabited' category just above the lowest band. They manifested dialogues punctuated with much hesitation and even stuttering. Too much fidgeting and shaking is also very evident.

Similarly, numerous (n=34) are those in the 'Marginal or Inhibited' level which is characterized by pronunciation, stress, and pitch difficulties. They are hesitant in answering questions and answer in short sentences. There is much fidgeting and some nervous behaviors are evident while speaking such as crackling of knuckles, crossing and uncrossing of legs or shifting the body weight from one side to the other.

The nine (9) 'Least Confident' (8.7%) subjects during the pre-treatment measurement were able to maintain a dialogue but rather in passive manner. They have difficulty following the target language at a normal speed and occasionally, they slip in wrong use of words. Their fidgeting is uncontrollable and never had eye to eye contact with the interlocutor.

The five (5) students (4.8%) who achieved the second highest level of Communication attained by the participants during the pre-treatment were considered 'Modestly Confident'. Although the gist of their dialogue is relevant and can be basically understood, they have obvious difficulties in the use of target language as manifested by their occasional changing of some words that were used. They hesitate longer and repeat words more often. Their eye to eye contact was seldom.

One case (.9%) was on top of the group having the only one who can participate in a conversation coherently and constructively. He did not have any problem with the use of English vocabularies coherently and constructively. He showed some hesitation and repetition due to a measure of language restriction like limited vocabulary and difficult stress and pitch patterns. There is an occasional eye to eye contact with the person he was speaking with but tends to look away every time there were hesitations or repetitions in responding.

Taken as a group, the 103 students have 'Very Inhabited' to 'Marginal or Inhibited' level of Communication Behavior before they were given the SSLA as evidenced by the mean of 2.582. The student-subjects' Communication Behavior could be characterized as being heterogeneously distributed about the mean.

The following table (Table 1-B) presents the data on the subjects' English Proficiency level prior to their exposure to the SSLA. The students' English Proficiency level prior to their introduction to the SSLA ranged from 'Intermittent User' to 'Good User' of the English language in either writing or speaking. As reflected in Table 1-B, 49 cases or 47.5 of them were 'Intermittent Users' of the English language as characterized by their oral and written performance well below the level of a working day-to-day knowledge of the language. Communication, especially in speaking, occurs only sporadically.

Twelve (12) cases or 1.16% of the 103 participants were 'Extremely Limited Users' of the English language. They do not have a working knowledge of the language for day-to-day purposes, but better than an absolute beginner. Neither productive nor receptive skills allow them continuous communication. These subjects cannot use the English language in communication but they can understand very few

spoken or written words. Just above these ‘Extremely Limited Users’ are the fifteen (15) students Or 1.45% of the 103 participants who were classified as ‘Marginal Users’ who lack in style, fluency and accuracy and are not easy to communicate with. Their accent, pronunciation and usage cause misunderstandings although they generally can get by without serious breakdowns.

Table 1-B: Distribution of the Subjects’ Pre-treatment English Proficiency Level (N=103)

Level	Band	Frequency	Score	Relative Frequency
Non-user	1	0	0	0
Intermittent user	2	49	98	.475
Extremely Limited user	3	12	36	.116
Marginal user	4	15	60	.145
Modest user	5	12	60	.116
Competent user	6	7	42	.067
Good user	7	8	56	.077
Very good user	8	0	0	0
Expert user	9	0	0	0
		103	352	.996
Mean=3.417				

Like in the extremely limited speakers, there are also twelve (12) or 1.16% of the participants who were categorized as ‘Modest Users’. The ‘Modest Users’ can manage in general, to communicate but they often use inaccurate or inappropriate language such as saying, “I will meet you by and by.” Instead of saying: “I will see you later.” The things that my family did las vacation was to visit our uncles and aunties in the city.” Instead of “Last vacation, my family visited our relatives in the city.”

Seven (7) or .67% were considered ‘Competent Users’ as far as English Proficiency is concerned during the pre-treatment measurement. This particular group of students copes well with most situations they are likely to meet in communicating using the English language but they are somewhat deficient in fluency and accuracy and will have occasional misunderstanding or significant errors.

On top of the group during the pre-treatment measurement of English Proficiency are eight (8) students or .77% of the entire participants who qualified as ‘Good Users’ of the English language. They can cope in most situations in an English-speaking environment but with occasional slips and restrictions of language which do not impede communication anyway.

‘Good Users’ communicate well using the English language but their lack of English idiomatic expressions or misunderstanding them give them away as non-native users of English. Altogether, the 103 student-subjects’ pre-treatment level of English Proficiency is within the levels between ‘Extremely Limited User’ and ‘Marginal User’ as indicated by their mean of 3.417.

Post Experimental Measures of Students’ Communication Behavior and English Speech Proficiency: These post-experiment measures were conducted to determine the impact of the SSLA on the Communication Behavior and English Proficiency of the student-subjects. The first measurement was done upon termination of the experiment. The second measurement was done two weeks after the first.

Table 1.B presents the data on the subject’s Communication Behavior immediately after their exposure to the SSLA. Immediately after the termination of the SSLA, the researcher together with the help of the interlocutor measured the Communication Behavior of the subjects in a manner similar to what was done before the subjects were introduced to the SSLA. This time, the subjects’ Communication behavior level ranged from ‘Very Inhibited’ to ‘Modestly Confident’ when previously the range was from ‘Extremely Inhibited’ to ‘Modestly Confident’.

Three (3) students (2.9%) from the 103 subjects speak in English with much hesitation and stuttering. They were considered ‘Very Inhibited’ because they still manifest too much fidgeting and shaking even

after the SSLA. If it would be reflected, still could still be a sign of encouragement because before the SSLA, there were 37 students (35.9%) who were in this 'Very Inhibited' condition while seventeen (17) students (16.5) were even worse that they in under 'Extremely Inhibited'.

Table 2-A: Distribution of the Subjects' Communication Behavior during the First Post-Test (N=103)

Level	Band	Frequency	Score	Relative Frequency
Extremely Inhibited	1	0	0	0
Very Inhibited	2	3	6	0.029
Marginal or Inhibited	3	9	27	0.087
Least Confident	4	34	136	0.33
Less Confident	5	45	225	0.436
Modestly Confident	6	7	42	0.067
Confident	7	5	35	0.048
More Confident	8	0	0	0
Very Confident	9	0	0	0
Mean=4.573		103	471	0.997

There were nine (9) students or 8.7% of the total subjects who exhibited difficulties in pronunciation, stress and pitch as they are assigned to 'Marginal or Inhibited' classification. They were hesitant in answering questions as they answer in short sentences. There was much fidgeting and some nervous behaviors are still evident while speaking like cracking of knuckles, crossing and uncrossing of legs or shifting the body weight from one side to the other.

Under the 'Least Confident', 34 subjects (33%) were observed. These students were able to maintain dialogue but need a lot of prodding to respond. They have difficulties in following the target language at a normal speed while they occasionally slip into wrong use of words. Their fidgeting is uncontrollable as they do not engage in eye-to-eye contact with the interlocutor.

Most of the participants (n=45 or 43.6% of the subjects) possess 'Less Confident' Communication Behavior. They have comprehensible conversations with the interlocutor but punctuated with difficulties in using some words in their proper context. They fidget involuntarily but efforts were done to control physical manifestation of nervousness. Their eye-to-eye contact with the person they are talking to is few and far between.

Seven (7) students or 6.7% of the participants were considered 'Modestly Confident' who can engage in understandable and relevant dialogue. Still, they manifest difficulties in some areas in using the target language. They occasionally change some words they use they hesitated longer and repeated words more often. Their eye-to-eye contact was seldom.

Finally, if there was only one student who was considered as 'Confident' during the time when the students were yet to be exposed to SSLA, just after exposure; there were five (5 or 4.8%) of the 103 subjects who qualified for the 'Confident' category. They can participate in a conversation coherently and constructively and they do not have any problem with the use of familiar English vocabularies although they show some hesitations due to their limited supply of vocabulary. Their eye-to-eye contact is occasional and they tend to look away when there are hesitations.

Over all, the subjects' mean in their Communication Behavior just after the SSLA was 4.573 which is between 'Less Confident' and 'Least Confident' levels.

The following table presents the data on the subjects' English Proficiency gathered upon the termination of the SSLA. Upon the termination of the SSLA, only one case (.9 of the 103 participants) remained in the 'Intermittent User' level previously occupied by 49 students before the SSLA. This student still exhibited a performance that was well below level of a working day-to-day knowledge of the language

and communication with this student occurs only sporadically. Table 2-B presents the distribution of the subjects' English Proficiency level during the first post treatment measurement.

Table 2-B. Distribution of the Subjects' English Proficiency Level During the First Post-test (A2) N=103

Level	Band	Frequency	Score	Relative Frequency
Non-user	1	0	0	0
Intermittent user	2	1	2	.009
Extremely Limited user	3	5	15	.048
Marginal user	4	59	236	.572
Modest user	5	26	130	.252
Competent user	6	8	48	.077
Good user	7	4	28	.038
Very good user	8	0	0	0
Expert user	9	0	0	0
Mean=3.417		103	459	.996

There were five (5) students (4.8% of the 103 subjects) who still do not have a working knowledge of the language for day-to-day purposes, but better than an absolute beginner. Neither their productive nor receptive skills allow continuous communication. They fall under the 'Extremely Limited User' category.

A total of 59 or 57.2% of all the 103 subjects in this experiment are considered 'Marginal Users' after the termination of the SSLA. They were still lacking in style, fluency and accuracy in using the English language in communicating. They are considered not easy to communicate with, as their accent, pronunciation and usage cause misunderstandings. However, they can generally get by in getting their message across without serious interruptions.

There were 26 students or 25.2% of the participants who are 'Modest Users' of English in communicating as soon as the SSLA ended. This group can manage in general to communicate, but often use inaccurate or inappropriate words due to insufficient vocabulary.

Eight (8) students or 7.7% of the total number of the subjects were 'Competent Users' during this point of the study. They can be considered to cope well with most situations they are likely to meet during communication using the English language but they are somewhat deficient in fluency and accuracy and will have occasional misunderstanding or significant errors.

During the first post treatment measurement of the subjects' English Proficiency level, four (4) students (3.8%) were registered under the 'Good User' category. This was the highest level of English Proficiency the subjects reached at this point in time. The four students under this could cope in most situations in an English-speaking environment and their occasional slips and restrictions of the language will not impede their communication process.

All in all, the subjects' mean on their English Proficiency level measured just after the termination of the SSLA is 3.417 which is generally characterized by a basic capability to communicate in English but word usage, accent and pronunciation pose challenges to their skills.

Table 3-A: Distribution of the Subjects' Communication Behavior during the Second Post-Test (N=103)

Level	Band	Frequency	Score	Relative Frequency
Extremely Inhibited	1	0	0	0
Very Inhibited	2	1	2	0.0097
Marginal or Inhibited	3	10	30	0.097
Least Confident	4	3	12	0.29
Less Confident	5	28	140	0.27
Modestly Confident	6	49	294	0.47
Confident	7	5	35	0.048

More Confident	8	7	56	0.67
Very Confident	9	0	0	0
Mean=5.524			573	1.854

Table 3-A presents the results of the researcher's gathered data on the students' Communication Behavior two weeks after the SSLA was terminated and the first post-test was conducted.

From the original 37 students (35.9%) before the SSLA to the three (3 or 2.9%) students just after the SSLA, only one case (.9%) remained under the 'Very Inhibited' level during the second post treatment measurement on the students' Communication Behavior. This lone student's dialogue was still a drawn-out affair punctuated with much hesitation and even stuttering. Too much fidgeting and shaking were also evident. No one though returned to the 'Extremely Inhibited' category which was originally occupied by seventeen (17 or 16.5%) students during the pre-treatment Communication Behavior measurement or before their exposure to the SSLA.

Ten (10) students or 9.7% of the 103 subjects are in the 'Marginal' or 'Inhibited' level of Communication Behavior. Previously when the SSLA were not yet introduced to the subjects, there were 34 (33%) students who were classified under this particular level while nine (9 or 8.7%) were classified as such just after the termination of the SSLA.

Three (3) students or 2.9% of the 103 participants in the experiment were 'Least Confident' as far as their Communication Behavior is concerned during the second post-treatment measurement of the said variable two weeks after the termination of the SSLA. During the first post-treatment measurement of the subjects' Communication Behavior, 34 (33%) were considered 'Least Confident' while before the SSLA were introduced to the subjects, only 9 (8.7) were classified under this level. This does not mean though that the situation of the subjects' Communication Behavior was worsened due to this increase because those who were previously under the 'Marginal' or 'Inhibited' level have gone up one level to 'Least Confident' level.

There were 28 students or 27.1% of the participants who were registered under 'Less Confident' Communication Behavior during the second post-treatment measurement. Before the SSLA was introduced to the subjects, no one was under this level because most of the subjects were below this level while during the first post-treatment measurement of the subjects' Communication Behavior, the number has skyrocketed to 45 students or 43.6% in the 'Less Confident' level.

Most of the subjects (n=49) or 47.5% of the participants were registered under the second post-treatment measurement. During the pre-treatment of the subjects' Communication Behavior, there were only five (5) or 4.8% of the participants who were 'Mostly Confident' in their Communication Behavior but after the SSLA was introduced to them and the first post-treatment measurement was undertaken, the number rose to seven (7) or 6.7% of the participants who became 'Modestly Confident' in their Communication Behavior.

There were five (5) students or 4.8% of the participants who were 'Confident' in their Communication Behavior during the second post-treatment of their communication behavior. During the pre-treatment measurement of the same variable before the SSLA was introduced to the subjects, only one student (.9%) was 'Confident' but during the first post-treatment measurement of the subjects' Communication Behavior just after the SSLA, the number rose to five (5) or 4.8% of the participants were 'Confident'.

Seven (7) students (6.7%) reached the 'More Confident' level during the second post-treatment measurement of the subjects' Communication Behavior two weeks after the termination of the SSLA. These students did not show any problem with the use of English vocabularies functionally but were rather less flexible, less fluent and less self-assured than Band 9 but they can respond to main changes of tone or topic. They maintained eye to eye contact but punctuated with occasional blinking and looking

away. During the pre-treatment measurement, no one among the students reached this level of Communication Behavior.

With a Communication Behavior Mean of 5.524, the subjects generally exhibited a great improvement in their Communication Behavior. They transformed from having an 'Inhibited' behavior during the pre-treatment measurement to 'Less Confident' behavior during the first post-treatment measurement to the 'Modestly Confident' behavior during the last post-test measurement.

Table 3-B presents the data gathered on the subjects' English Proficiency level distribution during the second post-treatment measurement. During the second post-treatment measurement of the subjects' English Proficiency, no one was registered under the 'Non-user' and 'Intermittent User' levels as compared to during the pre-treatment measurement wherein no one was a 'Non-user' but 49 or 47.5% of the participants were 'Intermittent Users'. During the first pre-treatment measurement of the subjects' English Proficiency just after the termination of the SSLA, no one registered under the 'Non-user' and only one student (.9%) was classified as an 'Intermittent User'. Four (4) students (3.8%) however were still considered 'Extremely Limited Users'. But as compared to the pre-treatment measurement of the same variable before SSLA was introduced to the subjects, twelve (12) or 47.5% of the participants were considered 'Extremely Limited Users' and during the first post-treatment measurement, five (5) or 4.8% of the participants were classified under this category.

Table 3-B: Distribution of the Subjects' English Proficiency Level during the Second Post-test (A3) N=103

Level	Band	Frequency	Score	Relative Frequency
Non-user	1	0	0	0
Intermittent user	2	0	0	0
Extremely Limited user	3	4	12	.038
Marginal user	4	42	168	.407
Modest user	5	53	265	.514
Competent user	6	2	12	.019
Good user	7	2	14	.019
Very good user	8	0	0	0
Expert user	9	0	0	0
Mean=3.417		103	471	0.997

There were 42 students or 40.7% of the participants who were considered to be 'Marginal Users' during the second post-treatment measurement of the subjects' English Proficiency level. As compared to the pre-treatment measurement, there were 15 students (14.5%) who were at this particular level but during the first post-treatment measurement, the number rose to 59 (57.2%) as the students who were formerly considered 'Intermittent Users' and 'Extremely Limited Users' during the pre-treatment measurement were elevated to 'Marginal Users'.

Most of the students (53) or 51.4% during this stage were classified as 'Modest Users' of English in their communication. Before the SSLA was introduced to the subjects, the 'Modest Users' numbered at twelve (12) or 11.6% of the participants. The number rose to 26 (25.2%) after the termination of SSLA when the first pre-treatment measurement was conducted.

There were two (2) students (1.9%) who were qualified to be classified as 'Competent Users' when the students' English Proficiency level was measured for the second time after the SSLA. They were considered as such because although they coped well with most situations, they are likely to meet in English communication; they were still somewhat deficient in fluency and accuracy and manifested occasional misunderstanding or significant errors. There were seven (7) or 6.7% 'Competent Users' before the SSLA treatment was introduced to the students while there were eight (8) or 7.7% of the subjects who were 'Competent Users' during the first post-treatment measurement.

The English Proficiency mean of the subjects during the second post-treatment measurement two weeks after the SSLA registered at 4.573, which is between ‘Marginal User’ and ‘Modest User’. The mean of the same variance before the SSLA was in 3.417 while just after the SSLA, the first post-treatment measurement of the students’ English Proficiency was in 4.456.

Comparison of the Students’ Pre-Treatment and Post-Treatment Levels of Communication Behavior and English Proficiency: Earlier, it was noted that from their pre-experimental levels of Communication Behavior and English Proficiency, the students showed an improvement as a result of their exposure to the SSLA. To address specific problem number 4, a test of Significant Difference between the means of the students’ Communication Behavior and English Proficiency from the experimental period to the last post-experimental period was required. For the purpose, the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used.

Table 4-A is the data of interest in the test. With the observed F value of 160.64 and a tabular value of 3.04 at .05 level, the null hypothesis, “There is no significant difference between the measures of the students’ Communication Behavior levels from the pre-test to the two post-tests” is rejected. As such, the ANOVA explicitly shows that a highly significant difference exists between each of the post-treatment measures of the students’ Communication Behavior and the pre-treatment measurement.

Table 4-A: ANOVA of the Students’ Communication Behavior Levels from the Pre-test to the Two Post-tests

Specifications	Pre-test	Post-Test 1	Post-Test 2
Number of Students	103	103	103
Sum of Scores	266	471	569
Group Mean	2.583	4.573	5.524

Computed F-value = 160.62

Critical Value (0.05, df – 2,306) = 3.04

Source of Variance	Sum of Scores	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares
Between Groups	438.812	2	219.406
Within Groups	417.942	306	1.3658

F-Value

Computed

[Tabular@0.05](#)

160.64

3.04

Interpretation: Highly Significant

To determine which pairs of means are significantly different from each other, a follow-up test was performed by computing the significant difference using John W. Tukey’s formula. The following table presents the results of pairing the pre-treatment group score with each post-test group score.

Table 5-A presents the comparison of the three test measurements on the students’ Communication Behavior with the order of pairing: Pre-test group score and post-test 1 group score; pre-test group score and post-test 2 group score. Finally, the third pair of post-tests 1 and post-test 2 group scores is to test the null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between the two post-test measures of the students’ Communication Behavior levels”.

The two post-treatment Communication Behavior levels of the students are significantly higher than their pre-experiment baseline condition by at least 205 which is far higher than the least significant difference of 48.86. This means that the SSLA contributed to the improvement of the students’ Communication Behavior.

Table 5-A: Comparison of the Three Test Measurements on the Students' Communication Behavior
(Using the Tukey's Honest Significant Difference)

Between Tests	Differences of Group Scores	Critical Difference	Interpretation
Pre-test and Post-test 1	205	48.86	Significant
Pre-test and Post-test 2	303	48.86	Significant
Post-test 1 and Post-test2	98	48.86	Significant

The comparison between two post-test results yielded yet again another difference of 98 which is higher than 48.8. This is indicative of a significant difference between the students' Communicative Behavior measurement just after the termination of the SSLA and the students' Communication Behavior measurement two weeks after the termination of the SSLA. Null hypothesis 2 is rejected.

To test the null hypothesis stating that "There is no significant difference between the measures of the students' English Proficiency levels from the pre-test to the two post-tests", the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied. The summary of the statistical test is presented in the following table.

Table 4-B. ANOVA of Students' English Proficiency Levels from the Pre-test to the Two Post-tests

Specifications	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
Number of students	103	103	103
Sum of Scores	352	459	471
Group Mean	3.417	4.456	4.573

Computed F-value = 52.64

Critical Value (0.05, df – 2,306) = 3.04

Source of Variance

Sum of Scores

Degree of Freedom

Mean Squares

Between Groups

-143.052

2

-71.526

Within Groups

415.806

306

1.3588

F-Value

Computed

[Tabular@0.05](#)

-52.64

3.04

Interpretation: Highly Significant

With the observed F value of 52.64 and a tabular value of 3.04 at .05 level, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the measures of the students' English Proficiency levels from the pre-test to the two post-tests" is rejected. As such, the ANOVA explicitly shows that a highly significant difference exists between each of the post-treatment measures of the students' English Proficiency level and the pre-treatment measurement.

To determine which pairs of means are significantly different from each other, a follow-up test was performed by computing the significant difference using John W. Tukey's formula. The following table presents the results of pairing the pre-treatment group score with each post-test group score.

Table 5-B presents the comparison of the three test measurements on the students' English Proficiency level with the order of pairing: Pre-test group score and post-test 1 group score; pre-test group score and post-test 2 group score. Finally, the third pair of post-test 1 and post-test 2 group scores is aimed to test the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between the two post-test measures of the students' English Proficiency levels".

Table 5-B. Comparison of the Three Test Measurements on the Students' English Proficiency Level
(Using the Tukey's Honest Significant Difference)

Between Tests	Differences of Group Scores	Critical Difference	Interpretation
Pre-test and Post-test 1	107	48.74	Significant
Pre-test and Post-test 2	119	48.74	Significant
Post-test 1 and Post-test2	12	48.74	Not-significant

It is evident that the two post-treatment English Proficiency levels of the students are significantly higher than their pre-treatment baseline condition. Each post-test result differed from the pre-test condition by at least 107 which is far higher than the least significant difference of 48.74.

This means that the SSLA contributed to the improvement of the students' English Proficiency. However, the comparison between two post-test results yielded a difference between the Students' English Proficiency measurement just after the termination of the SSLA and the students' English Proficiency measurement two weeks after the termination of the SSLA. Null hypothesis 2 for this particular variance is accepted.

Summary

The above discussions can be summarized with the following:

1. As evidenced by the results presented, the subjects have very inhibited Communication Behavior and were extremely limited users of the English language in communication prior to the implementation of the SSLA.
2. After their introduction to the SSLA as manifested by the data collected, the students' level of Communication behavior improved from extremely inhibited to marginal or inhibited and improved further to less confident towards the second measurement done two weeks after the termination of the SSLA. Meanwhile, the students' level of English Proficiency registered to marginal user after they were introduced to the SSLA and maintained level of proficiency when they were tested two weeks after the termination of the SSLA.
3. There was a significant improvement in the students' Communication Behavior from the first post-test which was done right after the SSLA to the second post-test conducted two weeks after the SSLA. On the other hand, the students' English Proficiency did not significantly improve within the duration of the post-test data gathering period as it did not revert to the baseline condition.
4. Asked with what they thought after their encounter with SSLA, here are some notable students' reflections:
 - a. I always look forward to SSLA lessons because I always feel comfortable speaking in English when the teacher is not around.
 - b. During the activities, I tried to participate but always get terrified to be ridiculed or laughed at. But as I observe my classmates, they did not care if they have errors in speaking so I joined in and found out that it is just ok.
 - c. My confidence in using English has improved. I even try speaking English at home to my younger brothers and sisters or even to our cat and dog but not to my mother because she might kill me. She is an illiterate and gets insulted easily every time she hears someone speak in strange dialect especially in English.
 - d. It is difficult to speak in English in front of my group mates who do not cooperate so I have to inspire and encourage them so that we will all learn the language at the same time.

- e. I wish my elementary and high school teachers had introduced us to this kind of lessons before, maybe speaking and writing in English would not be as challenging now.

Conclusion

The following are the conclusions drawn from the study:

1. The SSLA significantly improved the students' Communication Behavior and English Proficiency scores.
2. In terms of the students' Communication Behavior, it continued to improve even after the SSLA were terminated while in their English Proficiency, there was only a noted retention but no further improvement after the SSLA as indicated in the results.
3. The SSLA may be integrated in the regular English lessons to provide the students opportunities to use the English language in day to day communication.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. College English subjects that deal with teaching grammar, communication skills, writing and speaking may consider incorporating SSLA. The subject matter for each lesson should focus on a single topic that is relevant to such social and current issues as peace and order, climate change or culture. The said learning activities can culminate with extemporaneous speaking, rehearsed oration, or round table discussion about a chosen subject matter to provide students with a variety of communication activities. In conducting SSLA, a venue and other required facilities should be provided to make the students aware of the change of their learning environment.
2. Similar studies may be undertaken in such collegiate and secondary English subjects with varied focus such as composition writing, oral communication and public speaking, journalism and others to determine the relevance of the alternative methods in enhancing the development of the students' behavior and proficiency.
3. Since this study took special consideration on a group of subjects who are particularly culturally shy and withdrawn, a similar study may yield a different result if it were conducted to a more confident and more gregarious group of learners.

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