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## Evaluating the Macro Skills Proficiency of Out-of-School Youth and Adults

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### Abstract

*This study aimed to evaluate the macro skills of the Out of School Youth and Adults enrolled in the Alternative Learning System of the City of Mati, Davao Oriental. Included in the macro skills are listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing which are relevant to develop critical thinking, learning and effective communication. The OSYA are individuals who have not finished formal schooling due to a variety of reasons but are students of non-formal education. There are 100 respondents chosen by simple random sampling from the Mati North District and Mati Central District. Through a checklist, it was discovered that the OSYA have high levels of macro skills wherein listening is the highest while speaking is the lowest. This was based on their self-evaluation and analysis. Based from the results, it was concluded that listening is the most useful skill since it is relevant in understanding and participating in daily conversations. On the other hand, even though speaking has a high result, it still showed activities that are inconsistently executed. It is important that each macro skill should be developed to increase their competence in the language. Even though the study yielded high results, it is still significant to undergo additional investigation to further examine their macro skills. This research is also important to help the OSYA and ALS mobile teachers to strengthen their learning and teaching process.*

**Keywords:** Language Teacher Education; Literacy in Language

### Introduction

Developing macro skills has been considered vital in delivering effective communication and everyday interaction. It is significant in the fields of work, commerce, and academics. These skills include reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. Having a high level of the aforementioned abilities will help individuals in sustaining and adapting to the changes brought about by the current times. To obtain these macro skills, students are taught at a young age through performance and written evaluations to achieve mastery. However, Bangen and Kambo (2023) revealed that students received a low proficiency rating on language and communication grouped content areas. Additionally, Pregoner (2025) highlighted that this happened due to limited real-life exposure, difficulty adjusting, and influence of digital distractions among others.

In Ethiopia, English instruction has been found to inadequately address learners' individual needs and lacks integration with content, creating a gap between graduates'

training and the proficiency expected of them (Arficho et al., 2022). Similarly, in Batangas, despite the dedication and initiatives of English teachers, students' achievement in the five macro skills remained low in subsequent grading periods. This underperformance, compounded by the disruption of schooling during the global pandemic, highlights the urgent need to strengthen students' proficiency in the macro skills (Mapalad & Bautista, 2021). In Ilocos Sur, the effects of the pandemic have further contributed to learners' difficulties in coping with lessons, as many intermediate learners struggle to comprehend new topics and show limited improvement despite existing interventions (Empleo, 2025).

In the City of Mati, the research focused on the macro skills out-of-school youth and adults enrolled in the Alternative Learning System (ALS). This is due to the observation of their utilization of their macro skills through daily interaction. Hence, this study focused on evaluating their macro skills in the fields of listening, speaking, viewing, reading, and writing.

## **Review of the Literature**

Communication skills consist of four related macro skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening, all of which undergo complex processes to achieve their goals. Reading is the decoding of written symbols. Listening is a combination of hearing what another person is saying, while taking into account the psychological involvement of the person speaking. Writing is a process of accessing one's thoughts and discovering them; a process of making meaning. Speaking is interpreting and communicating meaning through verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts (Tizon, 2018).

The Swedish National Agency for Education (2016) states that literacy is not only knowing how to read and write a text, but also how to use this knowledge for specific purposes in different contexts. In literacy, the focus is on people's skills, such as the contexts in which they use reading and writing. In the field of text, when talking about the ability to read and write, it is often necessary to show that it includes complex and diverse competencies.

According to Wibowo (2020), the lack of basic reading and writing skills is a major disadvantage. Literacy not only enriches the life of the individual but also creates opportunities for people to hone their skills that can help themselves and their families. People with macro skills can obtain higher education and contribute to the economy and community. The foundation of a country is based on the education of its people. Therefore, when people cannot read or write, the country will surely be at a loss. That is why many countries consider literacy as a human right.

The study by Ismail and Aziz (2020) defined listening as the process of selecting and assigning meanings to sounds. In this process, students select the important information they hear. This is proven in everyday life where listeners do not prioritize recognizable sounds unless these sounds are relevant and significant. Listening also plays an important role in learning. Speaking, reading and writing occur after listening. The importance of listening in formal education has resulted in how to facilitate student learning through effective methods. However, in the informal context of lifelong learning, it is often overlooked. As a result, its potential to be used effectively is insufficient. A clear understanding of listening as a process and various listening activities can help with listening skills in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts throughout life (Deveci, 2018). Additionally, Hadijah and Shalawati (2016) added that good listening skills are having the ability to understand information in listening activities or transfer information in written or oral communication. It is related to the ability to understand, communicate, and respond to what is heard. A research conducted by Palma et al. (2020) found that students at Western Visayas State University have High Advanced proficiency in all specific micro skills at the literal listening level. However, at the inferential and evaluative levels, students have Low Advanced to Advanced proficiency. They still need to develop their ability to form conclusions and make correct judgments from the materials heard and avoid simple writing and understanding of information at the evaluative listening level. This may be due to unfamiliar vocabulary, unfamiliar tone of the speaker, lack of knowledge of the topic, and lack of interest in listening which they still need to develop.

Speaking is the process of constructing and communicating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols. It is often unplanned, changing, and contingent. The manner and meaning of speaking depend on the situation in which it occurs; who is involved and their purpose; familiarity, and understanding. When a child feels something, he or she wants to express it to an audience. Whenever he or she communicates, he or she constructs a meaningful message. In the communication process, it is assumed that the child understands what he or she is saying so that interaction can take place (Leaño et al., 2019). Furthermore, Le (2019) viewed speaking as an interactive process of creating meaning that includes the generation, reception, and processing of knowledge. In this way, learners can express their wishes, share their opinions and emotions, as well as understand and ask questions. These learners are also able to choose the right words and organize them in relation to a particular topic or situation. Moreover, speaking can be used in both formal situations involving business or academic matters, and informal conditions, with people close to the speaker. In research conducted in schools, evidence continues to be seen that peer interaction contributes to students' performance outcomes. A particularly important skill in the modern context is the ability to exchange ideas effectively. One measure of this is speaking, which is an important skill in professional and casual settings (Shafipour et al., 2018). According to the results of the study by Mallillin and Gilbang (2019), students have a good level of language proficiency while their level of performance in debating is average. In addition, one of the learning tools is through debate because it develops speaking skills and through this process, they can improve their language skills.

Reading and listening traditionally cover the receptive skills that students need to develop in the classroom. Since the 1990s, with the growing importance of audiovisual images and texts in everyday life and the increasing integration of audiovisual materials in the classroom, viewing and audiovisual comprehension have been included as receptive skills (Surkamp & Viebrock, 2018). In addition, viewing is now the fifth macro skill. It refers to recognizing, analyzing, interpreting, and deriving meaning from visual images. It is essential for improving comprehension of printed and non-printed materials. This is the skill that will be taught as students are exposed

to multimedia. To be possible, they must have strong media and visual literacy. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to be knowledgeable about teaching viewing. As with the traditional teaching of macro skills, teachers experience difficulties in teaching viewing. However, there are factors that may hinder the effective teaching of competencies under this skill (Carolina & Queroda, 2018).

Reading is a process that involves recognizing words, which leads to the development of comprehension. It is defined as an activity between the reader and the text. Furthermore, reading is an activity that does not only take words from the text but also requires the reader to interpret what is happening in it. In addition, Nilawati (2020) noted that reading is an activity that involves the interaction of the reader, the text, and the interaction of both the reader and the text with the aim of obtaining a message. Reading to learn from online information, often referred to as online research and comprehension, requires specific skills and strategies in finding, analyzing, and constructing online information as well as communicating one's own knowledge to others. Although research has begun to identify specific skills and strategies for online reading, there is still a need to better understand how traditional reading skills contribute to solving problems with online information. Understanding the consequences of poor literacy skills can help teachers design activities and support for students with varying literacy skills (Kanniainen et al., 2019). According to Sathapong (2018), reading is an essential skill in the education system that has a large share and is used in the world for the purpose of seeking knowledge, generating ideas, making decisions and solving problems. In addition, reading can help students develop quick and broad academic thinking both inside and outside the classroom. Eighty to ninety percent of the activities of academic institutions are focused on reading and students are shown to be skilled in persuasion as well as in acquiring knowledge. Otherwise, reading can improve individual employability skills needed for a knowledge-based society.

According to Ekarista (2018), it is clear that writing is more than the production of graphic symbols, just as speaking is more than the production of sounds. Symbols must be arranged, according to certain conventions, to form words, and words must be

arranged to form sentences. Writing is one of the four basic language macro skills along with listening, speaking, and reading. It is believed that the skill of writing is the highest in the hierarchy and is only developed after the other three skills are learned or acquired. This is why it is called the secondary skill. As a secondary skill, it is not given much attention by ordinary people; However, for the educated and scholars, it is considered a symbol of knowledge, intelligence, and upright personality (Gautam, 2019). Research by Graham (2019) indicates that writing is a basic skill. More than 85 percent of the world's population is able to write. Writers use this skill to generate new ideas, persuade others, record information, create unique worlds, express feelings, entertain others, heal emotional wounds, narrate experiences, and discover the meaning of events and situations. In school, students write about reading material or present it to the class to improve their understanding. At work, workers in various industries use writing to carry out their work. At home, writing is a way to initiate and maintain personal connections, through tweets, texts, e-mails, and friendships with each other using social networks and media. In a study conducted by Fati (2013) on Moroccan EFL students, they were found to have high writing skills. The majority of students had a high level of writing skills, which was 47 percent. Thirty-five percent of the students had a moderate level of writing skills and only 17 percent had a low level of skills. This shows that there is a clear difference in the level of students, especially in writing. In addition, in an investigation conducted by Raofi et al. (2017), it was found that students with higher writing skills used more significant metacognitive, cognitive, affective and effort regulation strategies than those with lower writing skills.

## **Methodology**

The chosen research design is descriptive quantitative. This is a systematic investigation that focuses on quantifying variables and describing the characteristics of a population or phenomenon without manipulating any variables. Its primary goal is to observe, measure, and report on the status or level of the variables of interest, often using surveys, tests, or structured questionnaires to gather numerical data. This design is particularly useful when researchers aim to identify patterns, trends, or relationships but do not seek to determine causal effects (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The

descriptive method was appropriate for this research since the researcher wanted to know the numerical status of the macro skills of the OSY and adults.

The respondents of the study were one hundred (100) students enrolled in the Mati North District and Mati Central District in the Alternative Learning System of the City of Mati, Davao Oriental. The selection method used was simple random sampling. Ochoa (2017) defined simple random sampling as a method of obtaining respondents in which all elements in the population, as well as all units of the sampling frame, have an equal chance of being selected to be a sample. The respondents of this study are OSY and adults from various levels and ages from 18 years old and above. In collecting data in this study, the researcher used a checklist where they will determine their level of knowledge in each skill through a Likert Scale by choosing the following: 4 as Very High; 3 as High; 2 as Low; 1 as Very Low.

### Findings and Discussion

Table 1 presents the level of macro skills of OSY and adults in the fields of listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing, which can be seen from the results of their answers to the checklist. All indicators obtained high levels but listening is the leading skill with a mean of 3.08. This means that OSY and adults definitely have a high level of knowledge in listening and on how to use it effectively every day. In addition, this skill is accompanied by being knowledgeable in answering questions, being critical and restating heard texts, details and statements.

**Table 1.** Level of Macro Skills of Out of School Youth and Adults

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
Listening	3.08	High
Reading	3.04	High
Writing	2.90	High
Speaking	2.88	High
Viewing	2.98	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>High</b>

The study by Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) stated that the most important skill in language learning is listening since it is widely used in daily life. Listening is easier to develop than other skills and helps in the development of other skills.

Consequently, students should have high knowledge of this skill because it is the most used and foundation of other macro skills.

The next highest result is reading with a mean of 3.04. This means that students are observed to have sufficient reading skills. It can also be assumed that they are able to understand the important information of the text they read and even be able to provide their own perspective on the news, works or information they read with analysis. This is contrary to the results of the report that the Philippines has the lowest reading comprehension among 79 countries in the 2018 PISA global survey (San Juan, 2019). One possible reason for the conflicting results is that the students were based on their own assessment. In this research, their responses were based on the self-assessment of their abilities, leading to a high proficiency.

The third high proficiency with a mean of 2.98 is viewing. The scope of having this high level is that students have the ability to present, analyze, and discuss the documentaries, videos, and others they have watched. In addition, they are also able to give their own impressions from what they have witnessed. Research has found that the average student spends 6-7 hours a day using media, and watching television for 3-4 hours per day. Some research proponents have suggested teaching children to be critical viewers, giving them the ability to study the formation of isolated images, to think critically about the composition of images, and improve their ability to read the words and the world (Isidor, 2013). Long-term exposure to viewing images, videos, and other platforms helps to hone this skill.

The fourth skill, but still considered high is writing with a mean of 2.90. From the data presented, it can be concluded that students have high skills in writing works about current issues. They can also write suggestions, opinions and editorials on various topics with a follow-up outline. Writing is one of the four basic language skills along with listening, speaking, reading and writing. This develops only after listening, speaking and reading have been learned or acquired (Gautam, 2019).

Speaking, though considered one of the most used skills, is last on the list. It is also high and has a mean of 2.88 where students have high knowledge of this skill. In speaking, OSY and adults are able to argue and formulate suggestions in a neat and clear manner. Studies in schools consistently find that peer interaction contributes to

student performance outcomes. A particularly important skill in the modern context is the ability to communicate effectively. One measure of this is speaking, which is an important skill in professional and casual settings (Shafipour et al., 2018). Hence, students' interaction with their peers is a reason for having high communication skills.

Overall, Table 1 shows that the level of macro skills of out of school youth and adults is high because it has a mean of 2.98. Therefore, it can be expected that students have adequate knowledge of the skills presented that they use in their daily lives. It can also be realized that students have enough knowledge to perform the skills in the right and logical context. The high level of macro literacy of students is supported by a report that approximately 91.6 percent of Filipinos aged 10 to 64 were functionally literate in 2019 on the Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). This means that approximately 73.0 million out of 79.7 million in the same age group are considered to be able to read and write at a functional level. This refers to the ability of a person to participate in all activities where literacy is required for the effective functioning of his or her group and community and also to enable his or her continued use of reading, writing and numeracy for personal and community development (UNESCO, 2020).

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that listening is the most used skill in everyday life. Due to this, students develop it over time. On the other hand, speaking, although still used, only occurs in the field of communication. There are instances in which the individual engages in verbal communication, while at other times they remain silent. Therefore, the level of knowledge of out-of-school youth and adults is highest in the field of listening compared to others. Nevertheless, it is important to note that honing these macro skills is an enduring progress. Hence, educators should focus on its application to the curriculum with the provision of supplementary materials to enhance students' knowledge. Students should be able to utilize these in real life and everyday activities. It is also recommended that there should be more research on the level of modern literacy skills of out of school youth and adults, along with their higher level of comprehension.

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