

*Reflections of AB-English Students on Their English Language Learning Experiences*

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**Abstract**

This study seeks to investigate the language learning experiences of the thirty-nine AB-English majors who were selected through fish-bowl technique from the 157 students enrolled in the AB-English program. Findings taken from the diary, questionnaire and unstructured interview revealed that motivation, learners' belief, self-monitoring, language anxiety, activities and strategies were the prevailing factors that influenced the learning of English of the participants.

Keywords: Diary, English Language Learning Experiences

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## **Introduction**

Language is the most effective medium of communication, which allows a person to explain and express his thoughts and ideas may it be in oral or written form; hence, language is essential in every activity of man. This among other reasons spurred the need to study how language is learned by non-native language learners and the need to better understand the factors that facilitate learning as one of the requirements to help learners approach their language experiences. These factors come in a variety of situations and forms that are exploited by human beings as input of the target language.

Among the studies conducted on language learning involve the perspectives of the learners themselves. Understanding the perspectives of students on what helped them learn English as a second language has pedagogical values. The factors that contributed their language experiences suggest ways on how the teachers should instruct their learners. The teachers could look for strategies that best suit for the type of learners in their classes. Also, the students will be able to assess their language learning experiences that could be used by those who want to design programs that consider the students' perspectives. Indeed, taking into consideration the learners' perspective is a useful tool in understanding the factors that contribute to effective language learning.

Studies have shown that learners of English are capable of identifying the sources of learning by looking at their reflections, especially when they are given diary prompts that guide them to reflect on their language experiences (Curtis & Bailey 2009; Fong 2005; Matsuda 2004; Matsumoto 1996; Mori 2007). These studies have demonstrated the learner's ability to identify the factors that helped them learn the target language. Most of these studies however, focused on foreign language learners. There are still no studies conducted as to the language learning experiences of second language (L2) learners of Bukidnon State University (BSU). Thus, a link to research in this area would greatly help teachers on how they will instruct Cebuano learners in English.

In this study, the researcher is focused on the language experiences of L2 learners and the factors that assisted them in learning English. Also, this study presents valuable information on the field of English language studies. Thus, the researcher hopes that this study will would help both L2 learners and teachers in learning and teaching English effectively.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This part explains the theories that support the conduct of the study.

The first theory is the socio-cultural. The socio-cultural theory operates on the assumption that human cognitive development is highly dependent upon the social context where the language is used. It also occurs as a result of meaningful verbal interactions between novices and more knowledgeable interlocutor such as parents, peers, or teachers as well as the mediating technologies (Vygotsky, 1980). This means that learning a language is facilitated through interactions and use of mediating tools like reading materials, computer, educational videos and other forms of media. This proposition is based on the assumption that people take part in communication and

that they sometimes use tools to express themselves and to learn more about the ideas of others.

This study also capitalizes on the social learning theory explains that humans are capable of observational learning. Learners acquire knowledge by observing others – their styles, efforts and successes. Social learning also involves four stages: the attention phase in which the learners observe a model, the retention phase in which they processes what they observed, the reproduction phase in which learner repeats the behavior that has been modeled and the reinforcement phase in which learner reinforced as they repeat such behavior (Bandura, 1997). This signifies that a learner of a language often imitates the behavior of others. Learners are keen observers and the language expressions that they hear and the content of communication serve as language inputs. They, therefore, learn not only by actively getting involved in the process of communication but also by listening, reading and observing the use of language.

Another theory is on engagement. Engagement theory provides direction to educators on how to help students become more engaged in learning. It also emphasizes motivational, conceptual, and social aspects of learning in which learners became more engaged in learning. This theory also states that engaged learners are those who are intrinsically motivated to learn and frequently engaged to activities related to it (Guthrie 2004; Guthrie & Wigfield 1997, 2000). This implies that language learning takes place when students become more engaged in the lessons or topics or when they are intrinsically driven to learn the language. This proposition is based on the assumption that learners are also self-propelled. They have their own objectives in learning a language and this can prompt them to do tasks that will help them learn a language.

Embedded in the theory of engagement is motivation. Motivation is the drive of people to reach their goal or to accomplish something (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Thus, if students are motivated enough to achieve their purpose they are more likely to engage in classroom activities to enhance their skills. Also, being engage means they are more enthusiastic to learn in class and practice at home to attain their goals.

These theories are very much helpful in the study, since they talk about how learning takes place. Specifically, the said theories can be used to support language learning.

### **Statement of the Problem**

What are the reflections of the AB-English students about their English language experiences?

### **Methodology**

This study used phenomenological research design. This design is concerned with the study of experiences from the perspective of an individual.

This study was conducted in Bukidnon State University, particularly in the College of Arts and Sciences. This college offers five courses. One of these is Bachelor of Arts major in English. The first semester of academic year 2011-2012 was the

implementation of the new curriculum of AB-English which is far different from that of the previous curriculum that is more focused on literature. The new curriculum focuses more on courses concerning the study of language.

There were the thirty-nine AB-English students who participated in the study. These students were drawn from 157 enrollees of the AB-English program of the College of Arts and Sciences in the academic year 2011-2012, 25% of the enrollees were selected to participate in the study. In selecting the participants from each year level, the researcher used the fish-bowl technique. Except from a thirty-four year old student, the age bracket of the participants ranged from 16-26 years old. Table 1 below presents the number of students included in this study including the number of male and female participants.

Table 1.  
*Description of participants in the study*

Level	Selected No. of Participants	Gender	
		Male	Female
1 <sup>st</sup> year	12 students	4	8
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	12 students	3	9
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	12 students	1	11
4 <sup>th</sup> year	3 students	2	1
<b>Total</b>	39 students	9	30

The researcher employed triangulation in gathering the data. Triangulation is employing various techniques in answering the research problem to ensure validity of result.

First, the researcher used the diary as the main data gathering tool. As gleaned from the review, the researcher provided guide questions. These questions were patterned from the questions used by Fong (2006) in his study. These questions only served as their guide in writing their diary.

The reflections were gathered during class hours. The researcher asked permission from the instructor of the participants to conduct the study in the classroom during the teacher's instructional time. Before the participants answered their diary using the diary prompts, the researcher oriented the participants to recall all their experiences in the language. They were also allowed to write their answers in Cebuano, Filipino or English; they can also code switch. Second, the researcher used a questionnaire to further capture the participants' experiences in learning English. The questionnaire is modified from the questionnaire of Narayanan et al. (2008) on factors affecting English language learning. The participants responded to 27 items about the different causes that affect their English learning (see Appendix 1). The use of this questionnaire is intended to support the diary to make sure that the different language learning experiences are indeed captured.

Lastly, the unstructured interview was used. Unstructured interview is an informal conversational form of interview in which the participants were asked open-ended questions on their English language experiences. The questions were based on items

that were not fully explained in the diary. A voice recorder was used to document the interview making it easier for the researcher to transcribe their responses.

Average and percentage were applied for checking the factors that affect language learning such as, motivation, learners' belief, language anxiety, activities and strategies and social factors. The results gained in this questionnaire were used to support the qualitative account of the study.

In presenting the results of questionnaire, the researcher used the percentage computation and not the Likert's computation. This is because the study was focused on the number of students who have responded to an item. Thus, it is relevant to look into the range of students agreed to a particular factor.

The diary of the learners was evaluated by three raters. The researcher with the help of the research mentor has undergone training on how to code the entries.

Aside from the researcher, two instructors from Bukidnon State University were selected by the thesis committee to read and identify the diaries, if it supports the concepts of the study.

The raters read each diary and label the parts that contributed to the English language learning of the students. The researcher compared the coding of the coders. The researcher did not meet the intercoders anymore after the papers were returned to him because in general, the raters agreed in the coding. In cases where a rater had a different coding, the researcher followed the rating of the two coders.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Language Learning Experiences of AB-English Students

The table below presents the result.

Table 2.  
Factors that affect English language learning are motivation, learners' belief, teacher's role, language anxiety, activities and strategies and social factor

Factors	n = 39				
	5 (Strongly Agree)(%)	4 (Agree) (%)	3 (Neutral) (%)	2 (Disagree)(%)	1 (Strongly disagree)(%)
<b>A. Motivation</b>					
1. I do enjoy learning English.	<b>53.8</b>	43.6	5.13		
2. English will help me acquire new ideas and broaden my outlook.	<b>69.2</b>	28.2	2.56		
3. I can learn more about the world through learning English.	<b>51.3</b>	38.5	10.3		
4. English is necessary to get a good job.	<b>59</b>	35.9	7.69		
5. English will be helpful for my future career.	<b>87.2</b>	10.3	2.56		
6. English will help me to pass my exams and graduate from the college.	<b>69.2</b>	20.5	7.69		2.56
7. English will help me if I should ever travel abroad.	<b>74.4</b>	23.1	2.56		
8. I can reach my goals and dreams in life if I learn English.	<b>56.4</b>	35.9	7.69		
9. I study English for me to get higher grades.	<b>33.3</b>	<b>38.5</b>	20.5	5.13	2.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>61.53</b>	30.5	7.40	0.57	0.56
<b>B. Learners' Belief</b>					
10. If I have high English proficiency, others think I am cool.	17.9	<b>41</b>	30.8	23.1	
11. It is natural for me to learn English	<b>46.2</b>	41	12.8		
12. Learning English can boost my confidence in school	<b>46.2</b>	35.9	17.9		
13. I feel confident when asked to participate in English language class.	25.6	<b>30.8</b>	<b>51.3</b>	10.3	
<b>Total</b>	33.98	<b>37.18</b>	28.2	8.35	
<b>C. Teacher's Role</b>					
14. My teacher helps me in learning English by giving effective strategies	<b>56.4</b>	38.5	2.56		2.56
15. I learn more in English when the teacher is approachable.	<b>64.1</b>	23.1	12.8		
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.25</b>	30.8	7.68		1.28
<b>D. Language Anxiety</b>					
16. I feel anxious if someone asks me something in English.	10.3	25.6	<b>43.6</b>	15.4	5.13
17. I can hardly explain my answers in class using English.	7.69	20.5	<b>46.2</b>	23.1	2.56
18. I feel nervous when I speak English.	7.69	23.1	<b>46.2</b>	20.5	2.56
19. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our English language class.	2.56	25.6	<b>38.5</b>	20.5	12.8
20. I am afraid the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	17.9	<b>30.8</b>	28.2	20.5	2.56
21. I feel more tense and nervous in English language class than in other classes.	20.5	<b>46.2</b>	28.2	2.56	2.56
<b>Total</b>	11.11	28.63	<b>38.48</b>	17.09	4.70
<b>E. Activities and Strategies</b>					
22. Instructional materials are really helpful in learning English.	<b>69.2</b>	25.6	2.56		2.56
23. Reading books can enhance my ability in using English	<b>87.2</b>	10.3	2.56		
24. I try to use English as much as possible in class time.	33.3	<b>48.7</b>	15.4		2.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>63.23</b>	28.2	6.84		1.71
<b>F. Social Factor</b>					
25. I prefer to learn English with someone's help.	20.5	<b>38.5</b>	25.6	12.8	2.56
26. I can socialize with others if I learn English.	25.6	<b>48.7</b>	23.1	2.56	
27. I learn English because I have friends who are speaker of English on the web.	5.13	17.9	<b>33.3</b>	30.8	12.8
<b>Total</b>	17.08	<b>35.03</b>	27.33	15.39	5.12

Note: Boldface indicates the highest percentage given to a particular scale.

Table 2 shows the result of the survey conducted among 39 AB-English students. As shown in the table, the students' learning of English was an outcome of a host of factors. Among these factors, the students agreed that in general, the activities and strategies of both the teachers and students were helpful in learning English. This is followed by motivation and teacher's role in English language learning. Thus, L2 learners tend to be more effective in learning English when their teachers gave relevant activities and strategies that suit the learner's interest.

The findings are in consonance with the statement that there are numerous factors that affect language learning (Fong 2005; Narayanan et al. 2008; Matsuzaki 2006). The table above also supports the factors which were revealed by the students in their summative diary. These factors are presented and discussed further below. Data from the interview are also provided.

### 1. *Motivation*

In the diaries of the participants it was revealed that students were extrinsically motivated. The study of Fong (2006) had the same findings pertaining to extrinsic motivation. This extrinsic motivation is caused by several factors. This includes the aims of the students to increase their job opportunities in the country and even abroad and to earn good grades in school. This is also evidenced by the percentage of students who recognized that English is instrumental in looking for a good job and finding a better career in the future (see Table 2). Gonzales (2010) supports this finding that learners were extrinsically motivated because they wanted to gain in return and for their future occupation. Also, students were motivated because of their teachers and families. This is also proven true in the theory of Vygotsky (1980) that the interaction of learners with their teachers and parents or any family members can facilitate the learning process. What follows are unedited extracts from the students' diaries.

#### A. Job Opportunities and Travel Abroad

Students were extrinsically motivated in their language learning as summed up in their diaries. One of which is the aim to have a good job after college and a greater chance to work abroad.

##### Entry # 1

*"As what they've said, they really want me to have a nice job in my future. And taking up AB English Language is the best way for me to learn more in English."*

The extracts show that English is a vehicle to increase the participants' chances of looking for a high paying job within and outside the country. They also recognized the need to learn English so they can communicate effectively. In the questionnaire on motivation, item numbers 5 and 7 were the highest rated statements which only support the instrumental value of English in the field of employment and travel. This is perhaps due to the fact that in the Philippines, English language has received the status of prestige; it is the language of business and institutions. Also, one of the most lucrative places to work is found in English-speaking countries. Gonzales (2010) supports this finding that Filipinos are extrinsically motivated learners because of career development and the chances of working abroad.

### B. Earn Good Grades

Some students reported that their aim of having good grades in the subject is what motivated them in their learning.

Entry # 3

*“ I am eager to learn when my subject is difficult and what motivated me most in my English learning is to gain more knowledge and to aimed higher grades.”*

Kong (2009) also found out that students study in order to get higher grades and an achievement in class. In the questionnaire, the answers of participants in items number 2, 6, and 9 (see Table 2.) support the reported qualitative finding that learning English is important to earn good grades and to acquire more knowledge. In college, majority of the subjects are taught in English and those students who are good in using the English language are at an advantage because they can better understand the content and express themselves than those whose English skills are poor.

### C. Teacher's Role

It is evident on the diaries of the learners that their teacher has an important role in their English learning.

Entry # 12

*“I failed in our examination but he told me if you want to learn more about English just practice yourself by reading books and also watching English movies to make practice your skills in English...”*

As revealed on their diaries, they were motivated because their teachers were helping them in all aspects of the course in order to learn English. Also, students were also adaptable in learning when the teacher has a good characteristic towards the students. Students have also pointed out that they were also encouraged when the teacher is really proficient in teaching English. In fact, students find it remarkable to encounter such teacher that motivates them to learn more. In items number 14 and 15 (see Table 2.) from the questionnaire, the results are also true and in consistent with what revealed from the reflections. Thus, it is important to note that the teacher who encourages the learners to make good in the subject and provides a harmonious relationship in the classroom has an upgrading effect in the learning progress of the students. Dornyei (1988) and Fong (2005) support this finding that teachers are very much important in the learning process since they can influence the performance of the students in learning English.

### D. Self-motivated Learner

There were only two students who have reported that they were intrinsically motivated in learning English.

Entry # 31

*“I enjoy learning English, that is why I enrolled this course. I love English and wanted to learn more about it.”*

As revealed in entries #25 and #31, the students enrolled in an English course because they just want to learn the language. According to Kong (2009), intrinsic motivation is the willingness of the student to learn the new knowledge in order to fulfill the

purpose of their curiosity. Thus, it is the need to know and to enhance their self-growth that motivated the students to learn. There are only two students reported that they want to enhance their skills in English.

## 2. *Language Anxiety*

The identified sources of anxiety in the study of Cubukcu (2007) were also found in the current study. The anxiety of learners is caused by making mistakes in using English, the teacher's behavior and the difficulty of the activities in the classroom. These factors are also documented in the diaries of the students.

### A. Teacher's Role in Student's Anxiety

English language learning involves different components, and as discussed earlier, teacher has a crucial function in the learning process. However, the teacher cannot only be the source of motivation but they can also be a source of anxiety in the learning environment.

#### Entry # 2

*"I afraid the english especially the teacher talk to me."*

*"Before my teacher during the high school is very strict, that's why many student not like him and afraid those teacher."*

As revealed in this diary, the teacher hinders the student from learning English because of how the student was treated by the teacher. Crawford (1993) explains that the environment in the classroom must be convenient for students to learn and that interaction must be free flowing so learners can really give their best in class. Also, teacher must keep the class unthreatening to learners because it can augment learners' performance.

### B. Class Activities that Causes Anxiety

Activities in the classroom can also be a source of learning (Guthrie 2004; Guthrie & Wigfield 1997, 2000). However, there are also students who are anxious because of the activities done in the classroom.

#### Entry # 29

*"...in speech I am not good to deliver my speech in front of many people because I feel so nervous..."*

As accounted in the entries above, students were afraid to express themselves in English during their class because they were scared if others would give negative comments and criticize their grammar. Cubukcu (2007) supported this finding on language anxiety that students were anxious to submit themselves in class because of the inability to express one's self, presenting in class and the committing of mistakes. It is then threatening for learners if there are a large number of students in the class. It affects their confidence that there are others watching and listening to them. Thus, learning is hampered and activities became useless.

### 3. Learners' Beliefs

English learning has viewed to be multi-factorial in nature. One of these factors is learners' belief. This includes how the student sees himself as a language learner. Accordingly, optimistic learners have higher chances of acquiring the language. The more confident they are, the more active they will be in using the language (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003).

#### A. Good Language Learner

There are only a few students who have optimal belief about themselves as language learners. These are summed up on their reflections below:

Entry # 17

*"I think of myself as a good student of English language because I know that I could already compete with others and hopefully I could also be globally competitive soon."*

As revealed in their diaries, students who have positive belief as learners of English tend to look at their language skills as more superior than others which also mean that they can do better with language related tasks than their peers who are not confident as they are. Kong (2009) discussed that learners form their learning progress on how they perceive themselves as language learners. In fact, learners belief can also build the motivation of the learners as stated on entry # 17. The positive belief of a language learner raises his motivation in learning English (Kong, 2009).

#### B. Poor Language Learners

Most of the students identified themselves as poor language learners of English. These can be seen on the entries below and how these students conceive themselves as a language learner:

Entry # 35

*"I think I am poor English learner because of all the subject. English has my lowest grade. I can just understand English but don't know how to speak and write."*

Evidently, students who are reported to be poor language learners pointed out their weaknesses in the language are in the aspects of writing, speaking, and understanding English. Their performances were also their bases on how they look at themselves as language learners. This finding was also true in the study of Ajzen (1988) that performance is also a determinant of the learners' belief.

#### C. Learners Perseverance Despite Negative Belief

Despite negative belief of students on how they perceive their language learning, they have also shown positive attitude in learning the language.

Entry # 7

*"I think myself as a language learner is that I'm not too good, but I try my best to become a good language learner cause, this is a challenging course that I'm taking up."*

The attitude and behavior of students toward the learning of English can help the learners improve their language skills (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003).The learners'

knowledge of who they are and what they can do with the English language can actually help them on how to improve their language skills. As seen in entry #16, the learner knows that he needs more time to learn the target language. Thus, if the learners are able to identify their strengths and weaknesses of using the language, they can capitalize on this belief to improve their skills.

#### D. Influence of Belief on Language Learning as Perceived by the Participants

Since, there are factors that are not clarified in the reflections and questionnaire in the learners' belief, the unstructured interview was conducted. The excerpt below explains the influence of belief as perceived by participants:

*How do you consider yourself as a language learner, are you a good or poor language learner?*

##### Excerpt 1

*“Average language learner ko, kay lisod pud kayo i-assume nga maayo ko kay I’m on the process pa of learning. Naa man koy salig sa akong kaugalingon, feeling baya kaayo ko nga anad ko and kung Inenglishan ko mag-inenglish pud ko.”*

Excerpt 1 shows that learners can examine their belief in using the language. In fact, the learners' positive belief as a language learner is linked on their self-confidence and on the progress of their learning. The more positive their views as language learner, the more confident they are in using the language, and the higher is the probability of using the English language. Items number 10, 11, 12 and 13 (see Table 2) verifies the quantitative finding of this account. Thus, the learner based this belief on how they experience in using English. This finding is also proven true in the study of Tanaka and Ellis (2003) that learner's belief is a factor that affects how they will learn the language.

##### Excerpt 2

*“Average language learner ko kay dili pa man gud nako ma consider akong self nga good language learner kay on the process pa man ko nga mahimo gyud kong good language learner. If ever lugar maka-meet ko ug mga sentence structure nga masabtan na nako deretso so ayha pa nako maconsider akong self nga good language learner gyud ko.”*

Similarly, excerpt 2 proves that learners' belief depends on the consideration of the learners' ability in exercising the technicalities of the language. Hence, learners can rely on how proficient they are in English. Moreover, learners' belief can uplift the intention of the learner to strive hard in order to be an effective English user. This notion is also true on the finding of Ajzen (1998) that the belief of the learner may considerably form the intention and action of the learners towards the learning process.

#### 4. Evaluation of progress and self-monitoring

Previous researches have also shown the importance of self-monitoring in English language learning since, it can be a guide to both students and teachers simultaneously in the learning process (Harris, 1997; Gardner 2000). It is good to note that students were able to evaluate their progress in reading, writing, listening, speaking and vocabulary. They have also pointed out their previous performances in various

aspects. Below are the assessments and evaluations of the students on the four macro-skills of learning English:

#### A. Reading

Entry # 1

*“At that time Before, when Im reading Books (stories), I really don’t understand what I am reading and I cant pronounce it also very well. But because of my willingness to be more progressive in Such Area.In Reading. I did it very well. Now I can fastly understand what I am reading and pronounce it correctly as well. I am progressive than Before.”*

#### B. Writing

Entry # 19

*“I rate myself in writing an essay because when our teacher in Eng 102 taught us how to write an essay and Thesis Statement. And it has different when I am in high school because if our teacher ask us to make an essay, I don’t know how to make or write in Introduction, Body and Conclusion, now when I have my Eng 102 I know how to write an Introduction, Body and Conclusion and I know how many sentence in the paragraph.”*

#### C. Listening

Entry # 25

*“I am more in listening to gather informations and formulate ideas to have a better vocabulary.”*

#### D. Speaking and Vocabulary

Entry # 4

*“It is maybe in speaking and vocabulary, Because I can already speak better, and I have learn a lot of vocabulary compared to my high school life, in the since that in high school I did not really exposed myself, Publicly or in the school campus in speaking using English, but now in my college I already exercising or exposing myself to practice conversing using English.”*

Generally, the diaries of the students provided a rich vein of information on the evaluation of their English learning. This only goes to show that students were aware of what they have learned and on what their language strengths and weaknesses are. Thus, self-monitoring can build learners’ awareness on the learning process (Harris, 1997; Gardner 2000). This is because they can assess on the particular area they need to improve or in which area they are more effective. In fact, they can even remember exact events or experiences that involved in the learning of English.

Also, students have written suggestions on what they need to do in order to improve their English skills (e.g. writing, speaking, listening, reading etc.).

### 5. *Activities and Strategies*

Students can identify the activities inside and outside the school that can help them foster their English learning. Some activities that they have pointed out are tests, examinations, discussions, reading books, reporting and role playing. They also used mediating tools that keep them on track with their learning from computers, films, and

other forms of media (Vygotsky 1962, 1978). Other students used strategies in learning English such as enriching vocabulary, searching meaning for unfamiliar words when reading, and speaking English as much as possible.

#### A. Learner's Activities in Class

There are plenty of activities that the teacher utilized in class. However, it is vital to solicit the ideas of students on what particular activities they like in order for them to be motivated in learning. These activities are documented below:

##### Entry # 26

*"The aspect of the course that help me to learn best are the activities, materials and test. Because it is very helpful dahil kung wala ito hindi tayo nagkakaroon ng mga kaalaman. (because if there's no activities we cannot have knowledge. ) At ito ay nakakatulong para maimprove mo ang iyong mga kaalaman at ito ay madadagdagan pa. (And it is very helpful for us to improve our knowledge and to gain more)."*

As revealed in their diaries, students were more used to activities like having tests or written activities. This is because their papers are checked; they can immediately have the feedback. Thus, they can maximize the opportunity to reflect and to strive hard if they do not get good marks. Also, they prefer having assignments since they can review their past lessons and they find it useful when they have to do at home because it helps them recall their previous activities.

In the questionnaire, items number 22, 23, and 24 (see Table 2.) support the qualitative findings in this study that learners have their own preferences in English activities. To sum up, the preferred activities of learners should be studied carefully and as much as possible incorporate this in classroom instruction (Littlewood 2010; Spratt 2001). It is then important to note that teachers and curriculum developers should prepare activities that are suitable for English students.

#### B. Learner's Strategy

It is evident, on the learner's diaries that they have used strategies in learning English. These are shown in the entries below:

##### Entry # 4

*"The methods or strategies I have found useful in improving my English? It was applying and using the new encountered words or vocabulary. And continue practice and use them in order to gain and develop my skills in English. Aside from that I used different reading materials books magazine etc."*

When students have already identified useful strategies in learning English they often used it to develop their learning. Entry #1 used cognitive strategy in reading, when he encountered difficult words; he searched it in the dictionary and look for the meaning. On the other hand, Entry #4 used vocabulary enrichment as a learning a strategy. Thus, it is important to practice the use of English in all aspects (e.g. reading, speaking, etc.) and that learners have their specific action if in case they encounter troubles while learning the target language (Liang 2009). Others strategies that learners used are as follows: soliciting ideas from peers when they meet hard to pronounce words, taking down notes to recall important details when reading, looking for references when writing when it comes to grammar and practicing in using

English as much as possible. Hence, teachers should also incorporate learning strategies in the teaching of English in their classes.

### **Conclusion**

The results seem to show that there is no single factor that helps the learners learn English. Rather, the identified factors appear hand in hand with other factors also as documented in their diaries. It is then possible to say that learners learn better when they are strongly motivated; have low-level of anxiety towards English; have positive belief about themselves as language learners; can cope with different types activities in class and more strategic when learning English; and can monitor their progress and assess what area in learning English they are more effective.

### **Conclusion**

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