ESL students' affective filter and language learning strategies in online classes

Kimbie C. Bunghanoy[1], Gino G. Sumalinog[2]
[1]*Department of Education, Cebu City, Philippines*
[2]*Cebu Normal University, Philippines*
Corresponding author: sumalinogg@cnu.edu.ph

Abstract

The shift from face-to-face to distance learning has challenged English Language teaching and learning. The present study aims to determine the ESL students' affective filter level and the varied language learning strategies they employed to aid their learning in English online classes. The descriptive-quantitative research design was employed in this study since it used the mean percentage and the mode of the data gathered. The researchers employed a total remuneration sampling technique to select 48 respondents of the study and utilized two research instruments: Modified Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0. As a result, it was found that ESL students have a low affective filter in English online classes. However, students were able to come up with their language learning strategies as ways of enhancing their language competence. Therefore, teachers may provide suitable learning activities in online classes, and students need to enhance their usage of language learning strategies to facilitate their learning. Parents may also support and encourage their children's goals to learn the English language.

Keywords: Affective filter, ESL students, language learning strategies, online classes

Introduction

Education is a lifelong teaching and learning process that comes in different forms, whether physical or virtual. The new normal introduced people to embrace the distance learning modality in our education system. Department of Education Republic of the Philippines (2020) emphasized that teachers and learners do not necessarily have to come to school physically and may devise different ways to guarantee that alternative delivery modes are available for learners in these challenging times. Due to this, many schools in the Philippines opted to conduct online classes to ensure students continue their academic endeavors.

This sudden shift to the new normal wherein students are learning within the borders of virtual reality has led to huge challenges in English Language Teaching. Payne (2020) claimed that the interaction between learners and teachers functions when it is done online. Hence, Moorhouse (2021) suggested that teachers should provide particular learning competencies that students need to achieve in English online classes to deliver quality instruction. Moreover, Winthrop (2020) identified other challenges in online classes, such as equity gaps, compromised learning opportunities, and anxiety toward online activities that may affect the student's emotional state. Teachers may find the students motivated, confident, or anxious in an online environment which can be reasons for looking into the level of an affective filter of the learners. An elevated affective filter impedes learning as it disturbs students' thoughts and concentration (Gonzalez, 2020). The filter is composed of variables such as students' emotions that either allow a comprehensible input to pass through or stand in the way, so the filter needs to be lowered to ensure language learning. In online English classes, students perform extemporaneous speaking, reporting, and oral reading. It has been proven by the study by Chametzky (2013) that some students struggle and become frustrated in performing activities in online classes.

The internet connectivity of the Philippines is the lowest in Asia, which can limit the learners' availability to join online classes and contribute to their anxiety. In addition, Niemi and Kousa (2020) stated that the learners' challenges in virtual classes would give them anxiety that reduces their motivation to learn and would have tremendous effects on their academic performances. The challenges above are just a few determinants of the common causes of students' affective filters. On the brighter side, despite the different challenges that online classes may have, the students also exert effort in trying to respond to their academic needs. The shift from physical to online learning modality also depicts that students nowadays have become much more responsible in their learning. Given their affective filter in online English classes, students help themselves by utilizing strategies they find helpful.

According to Mohammed Mahib ur Rahman (2020), there are language learning strategies that experts have used for years, such as social, metacognitive, memory, cognitive, compensation, and effective strategies in learning a second language are the particular steps that the learners perform in meeting their academic needs. In other words, these strategies are the things that students do to aid their learning in response to their emotions in classes and each student may use different strategies from one another.

In connection with this, the present study aims to address the gaps in English online classes by determining the ESL students' affective filter level and language learning strategies employed in English online courses. Knowing the affective filter level of the students opens opportunities for the teachers to provide suitable learning activities that can get the best out of the learners. It is believed that teachers who are well-versed in how affective filters affect online learning become fully aware of the consequences and positive impacts of a high and low level. They may also be more patient and creative in crafting meaningful learning experiences while being conscious of the affective filter level of the learners. Aside from this, the students can reflect on their learning styles and can tailor fit their strategies to improve their language competence.

Statement of the problem

This study aims to determine the level of the student's affective filter and language learning strategies in an online ESL classroom. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the affective filter level of the students in online classes?

2. What is the extent of prevalence of the common causes of the students' high affective filter?; and
3. What are the language learning strategies employed by the students?

Methodology

Research design

To obtain the necessary information from the research instrument, this study used a descriptive quantitative research design to determine the mean percentage and mode of the data collected. Moreover, the said research design is utilized to identify ESL learners' language learning strategies in online English classes.

Research environment and respondents

The researchers chose Cebu Eastern College, a private basic education institution, as the school respondent of this study since the institution had never tried implementing online learning before, and the pandemic made it possible for the said school to do so. Using the students as respondents would give an idea to other institutions that they could do the same if they were willing. The Grade 10 level had the highest number of enrollees in the Junior High School for S.Y. 2020-2021 and comprised sections 1 and 2, namely Diamond and Opal, respectively. Each section had 24 students. There were 48 student-respondents in this study, divided into 21 girls and 17 boys.

Table 1. *Respondents' Profile*

Section	Male	Female	Total
Grade 10- Diamond	10	11	21
Grade 10 - Opal	17	10	27
			48

Research instruments

The researcher administered two research instruments in the present study. The first instrument was the Modified Version of the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) by Kaya (1995), a 5-Likert point type scale. The present researcher further revised the first part of Kaya's instrument and based the items on Gardner's original version. The researcher also included statements to gauge the extent of the common causes of the ESL students' affective filter. The instrument has 40 questions that focus on motivation intensity, anxiety, self-confidence, and the extent of the common causes of affective filters.

Meanwhile, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0, established by Oxford in 1989 and intended for ESL and EFL students, was the second instrument used in this study. It had 50 items grouped into six categories focused on ESL learners' memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Three experts validated the first instrument in this study. The first evaluator was a guidance counselor in the academe with vast knowledge of gauging anxiety. The second evaluator was a language expert who published research related to English Language Teaching, especially on listening anxieties in the case of international students and more. The third evaluator of the instrument was a language expert who published studies on mother tongue-based instruction and many others related to English Language Teaching. Moreover, since the instrument was

altered and modified, it underwent pilot testing wherein the Cronbach Alpha value was 0.784. The questionnaire was distributed online using Google Forms.

Data gathering procedures

Pre-data gathering stage

During the pre-data gathering stage of the study, the researchers submitted the requirements to get the approval of the Research Ethics Committee (REC) to conduct the study, provided that the research respondents are minors. After the study and the rest of the requirements were reviewed thoroughly, a certification was given to the researchers as approval. Then, three language experts validated the research instrument's content.

Actual data-gathering stage

During the actual gathering stage, the researchers explained the informed assent and consent form to the students using Cebuano-Visayan and English. The students were then instructed to ask questions for clarification. They were given a day to get the approval of their parents to participate in the study. On the day of the data gathering, the Google Forms link was posted in MS Teams, and the students were given one hour to answer the questionnaires in the presence of the English teacher and the researcher. There were only forty (40) student respondents in this study. After validating the students' responses, the researcher gave a token of gratitude, a twenty-peso regular load to each respondent through the mobile numbers they provided in the link.

Data management stage

After the data collection, the researcher ensured that the data was treated with the utmost confidentiality. With the guidance of a data analyst, the researcher interpreted the raw data collected and presented in this study.

Findings and discussion

The affective filter level of the students in online classes

Even before the abrupt switch from conventional physical to virtual classes, there had been issues concerning the emotional status of the learners. Many students felt various emotions that affected their English language acquisition and learning. It was necessary to look into the different affective filter levels of the learners in online classes so that the teachers and students would share their parts toward fruitful language learning activities. The students' affective filter level in English online classes is determined according to three factors: first is motivation, second is anxiety, and third is self-confidence.

Table 2. *Affective Filter Level*, n = 40

Affective filter level based on	Values	Affective filter level
Motivation	3.74 (0.56)	Low (high motivation)
Anxiety	2.57 (0.78)	Low (low anxiety)
Self-confidence	3.28 (0.77)	Low (high self-confidence)

Note. Values are presented in Mean (Standard Deviation); n=40

Table 3. *Affective Filter based on Motivation and Self-confidence*

Ranges	Descriptive of the affective filter level (based on motivation and self-confidence)
1.00 – 2.99	High
3.00 – 5.00	Low

Table 4. *Affective Filter based on Anxiety*

Ranges	Descriptive of the affective filter level (based on anxiety)
1.00 – 2.99	Low
3.00 – 5.00	High

Based on the ESL students' motivation and self-confidence, Table 2 demonstrated that ESL students had a low affective filter level in their English online classes. A learner's emotional state might operate as a filter, obstructing or blocking vital input for language acquisition. It was emphasized that students needed to feel relaxed and secure while studying so that they could absorb all of the information provided by the facilitator. It is necessary to have motivation and confidence, for it has been over the years that a high confidence level yields positive and greater results (Lin & Lin, 2020; Gasang Sumalinog, 2019). The affective filter hypothesis supported the notion that learners with high self-confidence, high motivation, and low anxiety have a low affective filter. In the context of language learning, a low affective filter was significant since it indicated that learners are more likely to learn understandable information in their language studies. If the affective filter rises, acquiring language becomes more challenging. An elevated affective filter impedes learning as it disturbs students' thoughts and concentration (Gonzalez, 2020; Rivera Gallardo & Matts, 2021).

In this study, the students had low affective filter levels, which implied that ESL students were motivated and confident that they were learning well in their English online classes. They had low anxiety, making them enjoy online classes' teaching and learning experiences. Therefore, encouraging ESL learners to collaborate in virtual classes and to communicate with their classmates and peers were possible ways to assist them in maintaining their low affective filter in their classes. Rojas (2020) agreed that teachers should utilize lively interactions so students could collaborate in a less tense environment. Instructors may also need to tap into the students' prior knowledge, employ teaching methods that best fit the student's learning styles, and engage the students in a partnership that makes them feel safe and welcome (Wyman, n.d.). Moreover, The level of the affective filter may be lowered if teachers can patiently wait for students to interpret questions, play their answers, and process their thoughts (Spina, 2021). Teachers' roles are significant in the student's progress.

As implications for online ESL classrooms, teachers may provide language learning activities to enhance students' motivation. Despite having a low affective filter in online English classes, students deserve quality instruction. This is why lesson exemplars are indeed crucial in the educational field. Teachers must carefully plan the lessons to maintain the ESL students' low affective filter. Moreover, teachers should consider the learners' digital capabilities that make them independent (Rojas, 2020). The learners may be encouraged to share their thoughts on tackled lessons and be provided with immediate feedback. It would greatly help students when the learning activities given were tailored to inspire them and improve their confidence so that they could savor their fruitful learning experiences in online English language learning.

Extent of the causes of the affective filter

In the classroom, the extent and prevalence of the students' affective filters also deserve attention so that teachers can find ways to counter them with strategies. The very low, low, average, high, and very high extent come with specific causes.

Table 5. *The Extent of Prevalence of the Common Causes of High Affective Filter*

No	Common causes of affective filter	Values	Extent
1	I want to improve myself, so I have to do well in my English online class.	4.35 (0.77)	Very high
2	I am afraid that my internet connectivity might not work well until the end of the online class.	4.15 (0.98)	High
3	I know that there is a possibility of being mocked in the online class.	3.63 (1.00)	High
4	My English-speaking skills affect my performance in online classes.	3.38 (1.21)	Average
5	My English teacher's presence and feedback make me conscious of my performance.	3.25 (1.24)	Average
6	My parents always monitor my progress in online classes.	3.20 (1.24)	Average
7	My English skills may not meet my teacher's expectations.	3.15 (0.98)	Average
8	I am cautious about what my classmates will say about me when participating in online English classes.	3.08 (1.21)	Average
9	The opinion of my relatives, family, friends, and other people about my performance affects my online classes.	3.08 (1.27)	Average
10	My performance in an online class might leak and get posted on social media.	2.73 (1.20)	Average

Note. Values are presented in Mean (Standard Deviation); *n = 40*

Table 6. *Range and Extent of Common Causes of Affective Filter*

Ranges	Extent
1.00 – 1.80	Very low
1.81 – 2.60	Low
2.61 – 3.40	Average
3.41 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Very high

Table 5 showed that self-improvement and internet connection were the most common causes of the students' high affective filter in English online classes. It could be explained that the students wanted to improve themselves to a very high extent which pressured them to do well and participate in their online classes. Many students were seriously concerned about their learning, especially in private schools. However, putting much pressure on oneself could also give a feeling of constantly racing to meet self-induced expectations. These could either be satisfying or disappointing for learners based on the outcomes of their academic performance. The pressure to do well in school might harm their confidence and could be one of the leading causes of stress, failure, and depression (Geeta Jain & Manisha Singhai, 2018; Gasang Sumalinog, 2022). This is why teachers and parents need to support

the academic endeavor of the learners and look for possible ways to lessen the anxiety that students feel toward learning.

Aside from self-improvement, other outside factors contributed to students' high affective filter in online classes. Notably, while students tried to improve their skills, they could only participate in the synchronous online meeting if the internet connection was stable. Hence, students felt the need to secure their internet connection at home. However, Rivera Gallardo and Matts (2021) mentioned that even if technological equipment and online facilities are present, some students still do not feel motivated if their teachers do not use technology such as videos and online presentations during online classes. When they feel less motivated, they start losing interest, forfeiting their learning chance. Their anxiety and low self-confidence can manifest in students' high affective filter. Some factors include their inability to accomplish tasks during online classes. As a result, they become frustrated (Sharmine Arisha Saifu Zaman et al., 2022; Wyman, n.d.). However, based on the study, some students were uncomfortable that their outputs got exposed to social media.

In a nutshell, the extent of prevalence of the common causes of students' high affective had to be considered in teaching language learners, especially nowadays, wherein there are significant changes in the country's educational system. As a result of these different changes, the students also tried to explore their ways of dealing with the difficulties they may encounter in English online classes.

ESL students' language learning strategies employed by the students

According to Gonzalez (2020), the teacher's role is to lessen the anxiety to allow students to comprehend and give sensible answers. To lessen anxiety, teachers should show flexibility and leniency so students will have enough time to complete their tasks and assignments. Students should feel comfortable in their environment (Sharmine Arisha Saifu-Zaman et al., 2022). However, students are diverse, and they learn differently from one another. Every learner may not perceive one strategy in learning as effective to them, so teachers use many teaching strategies to cater to the student's needs. Students should also be aware of their academic needs and explore varied language learning strategies that suit them. The various language learning techniques aided the students in language learning and guided them to become independent learners. These strategies had the goal of assisting students in developing their communicative competence.

In connection with this, a summary table was provided below to show the ESL students' language learning strategies. The values were presented in mean (standard deviation) with the extent of use. The strategies were arranged according to the extent the which ESL students in English online classes utilized them.

Table 7. *ESL Students' Language Learning Strategies*

Language learning strategies	Values	Extent of use
Metacognitive	3.60 (0.68)	Highly used
Cognitive	3.54 (0.50)	Highly used
Compensation	3.45 (0.62)	Highly used
Social	3.40 (0.77)	Moderately used
Memory	3.13 (0.70)	Moderately used
Affective	3.08 (0.88)	Moderately used

Note. Values are presented in Mean (Standard Deviation)

Table 8. *Range and Extent of ESL Students' Language Learning Strategies*

Ranges	Extent of use
1.00 – 1.80	Very low
1.81 – 2.60	Low
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
3.41 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Very high

Metacognitive strategies

Table 7 shows the ESL students' extent of usage of the language learning strategies. Metacognitive strategies were highly used in English classes as they allow ESL students to take an integral part of the educational practices, control and enhance learning, and choose the most effective ways to display and enhance their learning. Metacognitive strategies are the tools students use to regulate and reflect on their thinking (Drew, 2023; Sword, 2021). In ESL online classrooms, students had an advantage in processing and storing additional information better to assess their performance, desired outcomes, and accomplishments. The student's year level also affected their preference for language learning strategies. Because the respondents of this study belonged to the highest year level of Junior High School, they were already used to manifesting their high-order thinking skills and could think about their learning. It has been found that when someone spoke the English language, the ESL learners displayed their interest by listening attentively. In consonance, metacognitive strategies improve higher-order thinking skills and aid students in attaining maximum progress (Drew, 2023). ESL learners must concentrate on their English online classes to become successful language learners. Due to this, getting the learners' attention had always been a challenge for the English teachers since there were many distractions, particularly at home, where the students study.

Furthermore, the ESL students were aware of their mistakes in English and used this information to improve their performance. Students could reflect on their learnings and fix themselves after recognizing their errors. Jacoby and Wahlheim (2013) that mistakes could have a facilitative impact if they were linked to recalling the original episodic event in which both the right response and the mistake were incorporated. Individuals may be able to recall the context in which they committed a specific mistake, as well as the wider context in which it was made and that the corrective action was the expected response. According to Loveless (2022), metacognition allows students to assess the task and apply strategies to solve the problem. In addition, applying metacognitive strategies also helps the learners control their thoughts and actions (Drew, 2023). It is done by self-questioning, meditation, reflection, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, awareness of learning styles, mnemonic aids, thinking aloud, and planning.

On the contrary, planning their schedule and looking for someone who could speak English had low usage among ESL learners in online English classes. Because of the distance learning modality, students found it difficult to manage and balance the time for household chores and other obligations at home. Thus, it is an implication to ESL classrooms that there were no other significant reasons to plan their schedule to study more, and there were also distractions from gadgets and fun activities at home. Moreover, the pandemic made it difficult to talk with peers and friends physically, so communication using English mostly happens online. Teachers may consider the learners and provide them with ways to schedule their study time. Therefore, to better understand the learners' emotions, looking into their affective strategies in English online classes would be necessary. Understanding the students' feelings would give the teachers ideas on handling the students in online classes.

Cognitive strategies

ESL students also highly utilize cognitive strategies in online classes to increase their capacity to retain knowledge quickly, transfer and integrate information to new contexts, and learn effectively. Cognitive strategies employ comprehension, memory, and application. These strategies enhance learning, boost confidence, enhance comprehension, improve problem-solving skills, help learn new things faster, and teach to form concept formation (Valamis, 2022). In the study, it has been implied that students were serious about connecting their previous learnings to the new concepts they learned in online classes. According to Imam Suyitno (2017), cognitive strategies were highly used by students, especially in reading texts. The various cognitive strategies were helpful for reading comprehension, and as a result, students achieved high scores in reading assessments. Students, especially in private schools, considered the English language learning important, so they utilized cognitive strategies to improve themselves.

The students highly used cognitive strategies in their English online classes, with a grand mean of 3.54 (0.50). The ESL students' extent of watching English television shows and going to cinemas as their strategy to learn the English language was very high. This further implied that ESL learners find it a good strategy to enjoy learning the English language as they also expressed their interest in English movies.

Nitha Vera Liando et al. (2018) asserted that movies improved students' listening and speaking skills. According to Kalra (2017), students may realistically learn English and gain confidence in utilizing it by seeing native speakers in movies. In addition to watching movies, students also took down notes, messages, and letters in English classes as a supplement to learning. Therefore, it can be implied in online ESL classrooms that film showing and presenting videos could help the teachers get the attention and interest of the students in English classes, as the ESL learners would greatly appreciate these.

On the contrary, the ESL students needed help finding patterns and dividing English into parts that they understood. According to Ways (2022), the knowledge of diving thoughts into chunks allows learners to read and comprehend bigger chunks of utterances into comprehensible groups. Therefore, learners should activate their cognitive strategies, for they are pedagogical initiatives that learners can use to manage their learning. They manifest their learning through the use of interventions that they have stored in their brains Galindo (2020). This brings back the point that cognitive strategies are useful in lessening online learning anxieties.

Compensation strategies

ESL learners in English online classes also highly used compensation strategies to generate alternatives in the context of communication. When the specific meaning of a message was not apparent, the students used non-verbal communication to convey meaning. Mona Fareed Mohamed Ragab et al. (2021) insisted that compensation strategies have a positive effect in terms of enhancing media translational skills during online classes. The learners highly used compensatory strategies because they related them to the context of language learning in ESL online classes. The students were fond of using compensation strategies to fill in the knowledge gaps in the target language. These were helpful to compensate for their lack of speech intonation and facial expression when expressing their thoughts online.

The table showed that the students highly used compensation strategies with a grand mean of 3.45 (0.62). This further implied that when ESL students could not think of a word to say in an English discourse, they tended to utilize gestures. Therefore, adopting gestures could assist them in expressing what they want to say in the target language. So, when learning

by hearing and understanding words becomes complicated, teachers and students can resort to compensation strategies. Compensation strategies can be a good substitute, especially when students lack the right vocabulary (Hartini A Pasumbu & Yuliana Dg Macora, 2020). Aside from utilizing gestures, the students also used similar words or phrases and even made guesses when they could not express the specific words they wanted to say. Thus, it can be implied in ESL online classes that to keep the conversation going, the learners employed the strategies above in dealing with verbal communication, as learners frequently struggle to convey their thoughts when conversing.

Social strategies

Furthermore, it has been found in the present study that ESL learners moderately used social strategies in their English online classes. As an implication of online ESL classrooms, the learners needed help using social strategies because of the difficulties they encountered in doing online group activities. Online classes, unlike traditional classes, limit social involvement. Fuentes Hernandez & Silva Florez (2020) claimed that peer engagement in speaking sessions was insufficient for learners to practice their abilities. Even though teachers engage ESL students in interesting and enjoyable activities that encourage them to speak in class, it is difficult to do so in online classes because not all students are comfortable with the said mode of learning, and it is even more challenging for the teachers to get feedback from passive online learners (Dalvinder Kaur &Azlina Abdul Aziz, 2020; Gasang Sumalinog, 2020). It can also be implied that teachers are important in encouraging students to communicate with peers using online platforms. Learners must enhance their communication skills, especially during the new normal.

ESL students moderately used social strategies in their English online classes, with a grand mean of 3.40 (0.77). In this connection, the social strategies highly utilized by the online ESL students included asking questions using the English language and requesting a speaker to slow down when misunderstandings occur in conversations. ESL students can ask others questions, so it would be of great importance for teachers to help build students' confidence in formulating inquiries. Activities like interviews, peer discussion, and providing space for students' inquiries in classes were important in the teaching-learning process.

Providing the learners the chance to ask questions for clarifications or corrections was an important aspect of language learning. Students felt more comfortable asking questions or acknowledging that they did not comprehend anything while working in pairs or small groups with peers in their classes. In reality, studying under pressure was unproductive and harmful; hence group projects needed to be encouraged to alleviate tension and overcome language learning difficulties. In connection with this, Soiferman (2019) suggested that if teachers wanted to involve the students in learning, not just acquiring knowledge, it was significant to let students be confident in asking questions when they did not understand English conversation. Asking a person to slow down and asking other people questions were ways to establish good communication. It was necessary to establish effective communication skills to express one's intent in English. The emphasis on the relevance of social environment and communication was the most significant contribution of social strategies to the language learning process. In this context, the teacher played a huge role in encouraging student cooperation.

Memory strategies

Memory strategies were also moderately used in English online classes. Due to this, it could be implied that ESL learners need to explore ways to associate their learnings with real-life scenarios to store memory for a long time. In this regard, the learners could not connect what they already know to the new information they learned because of the different distractors of learning from home. ESL learners tend to multitask while attending online classes, disregarding the importance of focus and attention in language learning. According to Wong (2021), memory strategies are not a substitute for understanding. They are surface level of acquiring learning but do wonders when mastered.

The table showed that the ESL students moderately used memory strategies in their English online classes with a grand mean of 3.13 (0.70). They had a high extent of incorporating new English words into sentences to help them better remember the specific words. Hence, activities like unlocking the meaning of the word, providing word charts in sentences, and finding context clues must be carefully carried out in classes. Specifically, words learned through sentence composition were easier to retain than the ones taught through lists.

In addition, the learners also employed a high extent of associating mental images in learning new English words to aid language learning. They associated the sound of a new English word with an image or a picture to help the learners recall certain words. ESL students had a low extent of using flashcards to remember English words. It is an implication to online ESL classrooms that most of them were technology savvy, and instead of using flashcards, they could note the unfamiliar vocabulary and other information on their smartphones and laptops. Moreover, the students also had a low extent of physically acting out the English words. Since they had access to the internet, they could look for videos. Available online to help them better understand unfamiliar English words and sentences without physically acting them out. However, Richards (n.d.) suggests that memory strategies help the brain retain its innate capacity to remember things and connect them to similar concepts.

Affective strategies

Affective strategies were moderately used in English online classes as well. It can be implied in online ESL classrooms that students were employing their emotions while learning during their English class. The present study's findings revealed that learners moderately used effective strategies as they improved their English language skills and handled themselves well in terms of communication.

ESL learners moderately used effective strategies in their English online classes, with a mean of 3.08 (0.88). It further implied that students employed effective strategies like encouraging themselves to speak English and being relaxed when they feared speaking or committing mistakes in the English language. In addition, it was relevant that they were aware when they felt frightened or stressed when studying the target language because students' self-motivation might change depending on the environment where the language learning took place. ESL students also needed to explore their motivations to benefit from them. Therefore, giving activities that would enhance the students to practice self-encouragement and maintain composure by managing one's emotions were highly encouraged in the learning environment.

Meanwhile, the ESL learners had a low extent of writing down their emotions in their diaries and moderately utilized sharing their thoughts or feelings when learning English. The results found in the table implied that ESL learners needed to be more expressive about their feeling, whether written or spoken. This showed the importance of using journal entries in ESL classrooms to inspire the students to write their feelings and share their thoughts orally

with classmates or peers once they are ready. It can be implied in ESL online classes that students may share their emotions about language learning to ease their tensions. Nowadays, when schools are implementing distance and online learning, there is a need to strengthen the learners' skills to manage their emotions, and one way to do it is to encourage social interaction.

Therefore, to shed some light on the welfare of the learners, data were collected regarding the ESL students' social strategies employed in language learning. The next table showed values that were presented in mean (standard deviation), and the items were ranked based on the extent the which ESL learners utilized them in English online classes.

Conclusion

In light of the study's findings, it can be concluded that ESL students had a good academic performance in their English online classes. However, factors that caused the students' high affective filter were inevitable, so students utilized their language learning strategies to facilitate their learning. They could reflect on their independent practices that helped them learn the English language. Therefore, the teacher's preparedness was significant in establishing and offering the ESL learners the best instruction in an online classroom.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion presented in this study, the following are recommended:

1. The teachers may provide learning activities that can reduce the student's anxiety level in the classroom and, at the same time, maintain or enhance the students' motivation and confidence.
2. The parents may support their children's goals and encourage them to communicate with others using English.
3. The students may enhance their usage of language learning strategies to improve their communication skills and capabilities.
4. Future researchers may conduct research that is related to the present study:
    a) The Students' Affective Filter Level in Blended Learning Modality
    b) Students' Anxieties and Coping Mechanisms in English Online Activities
    c) The Language Learning Strategies of Senior High School Students in Cebu City
    d) The Correlation Between Affective Filter and Language Learning Strategies in ESL Classrooms
    e) The Effect of Language Learning Strategies on ESL Learners' English Proficiency

Acknowledgments

References

Chametzky, B. (2013). *Offsetting the affective filter: A classic grounded theory study of post-secondary online foreign language learners* (3570240) [Doctoral dissertation]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Dalvinder Kaur, & Azlina Abdul Aziz. (2020). The use of language game in enhancing students' speaking skills. *International Journal Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *10*(12), 687-706. https://doi.org/jxxk

Department of Education Republic of the Philippines. (2020). *Policy guidelines for the provision of learning resources in the implementation of the basic education learning continuity plan* (018, s.2020). https://rb.gy/rlkrmy

Drew, C. (2023, February 17). *13 Examples of metacognitive strategies*. Helpful Professor. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/emyd81

Fuentes Hernandez, S. S., & Silva Florez, A. N. (2020). Online teaching during Covid-19: How to maintain students motivated in an EFL class. *Linguistics and Literature Review*, *6*(2), 227-241. https://doi.org/jxxf

Galindo, I. (2020, February 26). Four cognitive strategies for student engagement. *Wabash Center*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/ze9jef

Gasang Sumalinog, G. (2019). Comprehension in the second language: How do students learn? *International Journal of Science and Research*, *8*(6), 978-983. https://rb.gy/njru1z

Gasang Sumalinog, G. (2020). English language teachers in diaspora: A Heideggerian phenomenology. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *19*(11), 283-295. https://doi.org/jxx4

Gasang Sumalinog, G. (2022). Barriers of online education in the new normal: Teachers' perspectives. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *21*(1), 33-50. https://doi.org/jxx5

Geeta Jain, & Manisha Singhai. (2018). Academic stress amongst students: A review of literature. *Prestige e-Journal of Management and Research*, *4-5*(2-1), 58-67. https://rb.gy/lwlsew

Gonzalez, V. (2020, September 22). What is the affective filter, and why is it important in the classroom? *Seidlitz Education*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/onad05

Hartini A Pasumbu, & Yuliana Dg Macora. (2018). Compensation as a strategy in teaching reading to EFL junior high school students. *Sintuwu Maroso Journal of English Teaching*, *4*(1), 39-42. https://rb.gy/jvo1nr

Imam Suyitno. (2017). Cognitive strategies use in reading comprehension and its contributions to students' achievement. *IAFOR Journal of Language Learning*, *5*(3), 107-121. https://doi.org/jxx3

Jacoby, L. L., & Wahlheim, C. N. (2013). On the importance of looking back: The role of recursive remindings in recency judgments and cued recall. *Memory and Cognition*, *41*, 625-637. https://doi.org/jxxg

Kalra, R. (2017). The effectiveness of using films in the EFL classroom: A case study conducted at an international university in Thailand. *Arab World English Journal*, *8*(3), 289-301. https://doi.org/gh6mn4

Kaya, M. (1995). *The institute of economics and social sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of arts in teaching English as a foreign language* (29046076) [Master's thesis]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Lin, Y., & Lin, Y. (2020). The enlightenment of affective filter hypothesis and risk-taking on English learning. *Studies in Literature and Language*, *20*(2), 51-57. https://doi.org/jxxm

Loveless, B. (2022, April 12). *Using metacognitive strategies in education: The complete guide*. Education Corner. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/trem5k

Mohammed Mahib ur Rahman. (2020). EFL learners' language learning strategies: A case study at Qassim University. *Advances in Language and Literacy Studies*, *11*(5), 6-11. https://rb.gy/ylnbqc

Mona Fareed Mohamed Ragab, Azza Hamdy El-Marsafy, & Amal Mansour Abdu-Allah. (2021). The effectiveness of compensation strategies for developing some media translation skills for media students at the faculty of specific education. *Journal of Studies and Searches of Specific Education*, *7*(1), 882-891. https://doi.org/jxxv

Moorhouse, B. L. (2021). Beginning teaching during COVID-19: Newly qualified Hong Kong teachers' preparedness for online teaching. *Educational Studies*, 1-17. https://doi.org/gmmz9q

Niemi, H. M., & Kousa, P. (2020). A case study of students' and teachers' perceptions in a Finnish high school during the COVID pandemic. *International Journal of Technology in Education*, *4*(4), 352-369. https://doi.org/ghn3pg

Nihta Vera Liando, Ray Jusuf Sahetapy, & Gidion Maru. (2018). English major students' perceptions towards watching English movies in listening and speaking skills development. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, *5*(6), 1-16. https://doi.org/j3b4

Oxford, R. (1989). *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)* [Measurement instrument]. Retrieved March, 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/rmpeou

Payne, J. S. (2020). Developing L2 productive language skills online and the strategic use of instructional tools. *Foreign Language Annals*, *53*(2), 243-249. https://doi.org/jxxt

Richards, R. G. (n.d.). *Memory strategies for students: The value of strategies*. LD Online. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/g80igl

Rivera Gallardo, X. P., & Matts, J. (2021). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the affective filter of EFL learners in an online classroom. *Conciencia Digital*, *4*(4.2), 42-59. https://doi.org/j3bw

Rojas, E. (2020, August 27). How to keep down the affective filter in virtual learning. *Language Teaching Bloggers*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/q5s62z

Sharmine Arisha Saifu Zaman, Naqib Lutfi, & Hishalini Ganesan. (2022). The levels of affective filter in online language learning among TESL students in universities in Selangor. *Selangor Humaniora Review*, *6*(1), 61-78. https://rb.gy/kbfvzr

Soiferman, L. K. (2019). The art of asking questions: What lessons we can teach our students. *ERIC*. https://rb.gy/4s8wzc

Spina, C. (2021, November 23). *Lowering the affective filter in classrooms*. Teach Better. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/maoghz

Sword, R. (2021, March 17). *Metacognition in the classroom: Benefits & strategies*. High Speed Training. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/kh7sf0

Valamis. (2022, February 28). *Cognitive learning*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/8kqpyd

Ways, M. (2022, February 22). *How to read groups of words-Chunking*. Speed Reading Lounge. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/l5w9fw

Winthrop, R. (2020, April 10). *Top 10 risks and opportunities for education in the face of COVID-19*. Brookings. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/tbowjn

Wong, D. (2021, October 21). *The complete list of 23 best memory techniques for studying*.
        Daniel Wong. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/hgq1qs
Wyman, K. (n.d.). *To help English learners, you need ways to reduce their affective filter*.
        Resilient Educator. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://rb.gy/nebiv4