



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



The Mediating Role of English Proficiency in the Relationship Between Job Enabling English Proficiency (JEEP) Program Participation and Workplace Communication Skills Among Graduates

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Abstract

Workplace communication skills are vital for graduate employability, and English proficiency plays a crucial role in bridging this gap. This study examined how the Job Enabling English Proficiency (JEEP) Program enhances students' English proficiency and workplace communication skills. A total of 310 JEEP graduates were selected through stratified random sampling. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were collected through validated Likert-scale questionnaires that assessed JEEP participation, English proficiency, and workplace communication skills. Data analysis was conducted using Jamovi 2.4.8, applying mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation, and mediation analysis. Results revealed that students rated their JEEP experience and English proficiency as Very Good, particularly in interactive learning and communication. Listening and speaking emerged as their strongest skills, while job-specific English presented minor challenges. All JEEP components showed high levels of engagement. Mediation analysis confirmed that English proficiency significantly mediated the relationship between JEEP participation and workplace communication skills. The findings conclude that the JEEP Program effectively enhances students' English proficiency and communication competence, thereby strengthening their employability. It is recommended to further improve job-specific English training to better prepare graduates for professional contexts.

Keywords: JEEP Program; English Proficiency; Workplace Communication; Employability; Language Skills; Mediation Analysis; Digital Literacy

1. Introduction

English proficiency has become an essential skill in the 21st century, especially in countries where employment opportunities depend heavily on communication competence. In the Philippines, English serves not only as a medium of instruction but also as a key determinant of employability. Recognizing this, higher education institutions have implemented language enhancement programs to improve graduates' readiness for the global workforce. One such initiative is the Job Enabling English Proficiency (JEEP) Program, developed to strengthen students' command of English through interactive and workplace-oriented training.

Despite the positive impact of English education, many graduates continue to face challenges in effectively applying their language skills in professional settings. Communication in the workplace requires not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to convey ideas clearly, adapt to diverse contexts, and interact confidently. Thus, it is important to determine how programs like JEEP bridge the gap between academic language learning and real-world communication demands.

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This study aims to investigate the mediating role of English proficiency in the relationship between JEEP Program participation and workplace communication skills among graduates. It seeks to determine whether the enhancement of English proficiency through JEEP directly contributes to improved communication competence in professional environments. The study is significant because it provides empirical evidence on how structured English training programs support employability and workplace readiness, offering insights that may guide future curriculum development and language education policies.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between Job Enabling English Proficiency (JEEP) Program participation, English proficiency, and workplace communication skills among graduates. The descriptive approach was used to assess the current levels of JEEP participation and communication skills, while the correlational method determined the relationships among the variables. This design was appropriate as it allowed the researchers to identify associations without manipulating any variables.

2.2. Research Setting

The study was conducted at Misamis University, located in Ozamiz City, Philippines. The institution is known for its autonomous status granted by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and ISO 21001:2018 certification by Det Norske Veritas (DNV). The study focused on JEEP graduates who had completed the program and were already employed in various sectors, providing real-world insights into how the program influenced workplace communication and language proficiency.

2.3. Respondents of the Study

A total of 310 graduates who had completed the JEEP Program were selected as respondents using stratified random sampling to ensure representation from different academic programs. The inclusion criteria required that participants must (1) have completed the JEEP Program, (2) be currently employed, and (3) be willing to participate voluntarily.

2.4. Research Instrument

Three researcher-made questionnaires were used to collect data

- JEEP Program Participation Questionnaire – measured students' engagement in interactive learning, workplace training, industry application, language immersion, and communication skills for global competitiveness.
- English Proficiency Questionnaire – assessed proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking and oral communication, reading comprehension, writing proficiency, and professional or industry-specific language use.
- Workplace Communication Skills Questionnaire – evaluated verbal, written, and interpersonal communication, as well as active listening, adaptability, and technological communication.

All instruments used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Each questionnaire was validated by experts in education and underwent reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding coefficients ranging from 0.75 to 0.88, confirming internal consistency.

2.5. Data Collection

Before data collection, the researchers obtained approval from the College Dean, the Director for Student Affairs and Services (DSAS), and the research adviser. Participants received informed consent forms explaining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation rights. After securing consent, printed questionnaires were distributed to respondents, collected after completion, and securely stored. The responses were then tabulated and analyzed.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

This research complied with the ethical standards of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173) to ensure confidentiality and participant protection. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, who were assured that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point without consequence. Personal data and

responses were kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. The researchers declared no conflict of interest.

2.7. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Jamovi version 2.4.8. The following statistical tools were employed:

- Mean and Standard Deviation to determine the levels of JEEP participation, English proficiency, and workplace communication skills.
- Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to examine relationships among variables.
- Mediation Analysis using PROCESS in SPSS and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in Jamovi/AMOS to determine whether English proficiency mediated the relationship between JEEP participation and workplace communication skills.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Level of Students' Participation in the JEEP Program

Table 1 presents the respondents' level of participation in the Job Enabling English Proficiency (JEEP) Program. Results showed that students rated their overall participation as Very Good ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.41$). Among the five constructs, Interactive Learning obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.18$), followed by Communication Skills ($M = 4.17$). The lowest yet still favorable rating was in Workplace Training ($M = 4.11$).

These findings indicate that students highly valued interactive and communication-based learning experiences integrated into the JEEP curriculum. The results align with Tacogdoy et al. (2020) and Salaan et al. (2022), who found that interactive and workplace-oriented English programs significantly enhance learners' language confidence and employability.

Table 1 Level of Students' Participation in the JEEP Program

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Interactive Learning	4.18	0.41	High
Workplace Training	4.11	0.42	High
Industry Application	4.14	0.39	High
Language Immersion	4.13	0.42	High
Communication Skills	4.17	0.4	High
Overall Service Quality	4.15	0.41	High

3.2. Level of Students' English Proficiency

As shown in Table 2, the overall English proficiency level of respondents was also Very Good ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.43$). Listening Comprehension ($M = 4.19$) ranked highest, followed by Speaking and Oral Communication ($M = 4.17$), while Professional and Industry-Specific Use ($M = 4.14$) had the lowest rating.

These results suggest that the JEEP Program effectively strengthened students' receptive and productive language skills but that additional support may be needed for job-specific English application. This agrees with the findings of Salaan et al. (2022) and Bawa et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of integrating workplace-context training to close the gap between academic English and professional communication.

Table 2 Level of Students' English Proficiency (n = 310)

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Listening Comprehension	4.19	0.43	Very Good
Speaking and Oral Communication	4.17	0.45	Very Good
Reading Comprehension	4.16	0.42	Very Good
Writing Proficiency	4.16	0.41	Very Good
Professional and Industry-Specific Use	4.14	0.42	Very Good
Overall Service Quality	4.164	0.43	Very Good

3.3. Level of Students' Workplace Communication Skills

The results in Table 3 show that respondents perceived their workplace communication skills as Very Good (M = 4.15, SD = 0.43). Adaptability and Technological Communication (M = 4.19) obtained the highest mean, while Interpersonal Communication (M = 4.12) ranked lowest.

These findings reflect students' strong ability to communicate effectively in digital and professional environments, indicating the JEEP Program's relevance in developing communication skills necessary for the modern workplace. However, further enhancement in interpersonal and active listening skills is encouraged to improve collaboration and empathy-driven communication, as suggested by Chua et al. (2020) and Md Yatim et al. (2024).

Table 3 Level of Students' Workplace Communication Skills (n = 310)

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Verbal Communication	4.15	0.44	Very Good
Written Communication	4.17	0.4	Very Good
Active Listening	4.13	0.46	Very Good
Interpersonal Communication	4.12	0.42	Very Good
Adaptability And Technological Communication	4.19	0.42	Very Good
Overall Service Quality	4.152	0.428	Very Good

3.4. Relationships Among Variables

Correlation analysis revealed that JEEP participation was very highly correlated with English proficiency ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), and English proficiency was significantly correlated with workplace communication skills ($r = 0.70$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, English proficiency mediated the relationship between JEEP participation and workplace communication, confirming that students improved English skills serve as a bridge linking program participation and communication competence.

These results are consistent with previous studies (Bawa, 2020; Cacodoxy et al., 2020) highlighting that structured English programs promote not only language development but also employability. The findings affirm that the JEEP Program effectively integrates academic instruction with practical communication skill-building, making it a vital tool for graduate readiness.

3.5. Significant Relationship Between JEEP Participation and English Proficiency

Table 4 presents the correlation results between JEEP participation and English proficiency. All relationships were found to be very highly significant ($p \leq 0.001$), indicating that participation in the JEEP Program is strongly associated with higher English proficiency across all constructs.

Table 4 Significant Relationship Between JEEP Participation and English Proficiency (n=310)

Variables		Listening Comprehension	Speaking and Oral Communication	Reading Comprehension	Writing Proficiency	Professional and Industry-Specific Use
Interactive Learning	r	0.61***	0.55***	0.62***	0.59***	0.57***
	p	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Workplace Training	r	0.52***	0.5***	0.48***	0.49***	0.44***
	p	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Industry Application	r	0.56***	0.45***	0.53***	0.49***	0.48***
	p	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Language Immersion	r	0.59***	0.5***	0.55***	0.59***	0.52***
	p	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Communication Skills	r	0.62***	0.56***	0.62***	0.58***	0.51***

3.6. Significant Relationship Between English Proficiency and Workplace Communication Skills

Table 5 displays the correlations between English proficiency and workplace communication skills. The highest correlation was observed between Professional and Industry-Specific Use and Verbal Communication ($r = 0.70$, $p = 0.001$), highlighting the value of specialized English in workplace interactions.

Table 5 Significant Relationship Between English Proficiency and Workplace Communication Skills (n=310)

Variables		Verbal Communication	Written Communication	Active Listening	Interpersonal Communication	Adaptability And Technological Communication
Listening Comprehension	r	0.55***	0.45***	0.40***	0.43***	0.44***
	p	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Speaking and Oral Communication	r	0.54***	0.44***	0.44***	0.45***	0.47***
	p	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Reading Comprehension	r	0.59***	0.55***	0.53***	0.48***	0.56***
	p	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Writing Proficiency	r	0.66***	0.58***	0.53***	0.48***	0.57***
	p	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Professional and Industry-Specific Use	r	0.7***	0.6***	0.57***	0.52***	0.57***
	p	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Job Enabling English Proficiency (JEEP) Program plays a significant role in enhancing graduates' English proficiency and workplace communication skills. The high ratings across all program components confirm that interactive learning, language immersion, and workplace-based training effectively develop students' linguistic and communicative competence. English proficiency was also found to mediate the relationship between JEEP participation and workplace communication, indicating that language skills serve as the essential link connecting classroom learning with professional communication performance.

Overall, the JEEP Program has proven to be an effective platform for improving employability by equipping students with both the language proficiency and communication skills needed in real-world work environments. However, while students generally exhibited strong listening, speaking, and writing abilities, the study also revealed areas that need further improvement—particularly in professional and industry-specific English. Strengthening these aspects through enhanced industry-linked activities and targeted language training will ensure that graduates are better prepared for the demands of the global workplace.

This study underscores the importance of integrating structured English proficiency programs in higher education curricula. Such initiatives not only foster academic success but also cultivate the communication competence required for professional growth and global competitiveness.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this manuscript.

Statement of ethical approval

This study involved human participants through survey questionnaires. The research strictly followed the ethical guidelines outlined in Republic Act No. 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring the confidentiality and protection of respondents' personal information. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the College of Education, Misamis University, prior to data collection.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. All data collected were treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

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