
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Level, Relationship and Predictive Capacity of Grammatical and Discourse Competence to Communicative Competence of Pre-service Teachers

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| ABSTRACT

This study investigated the levels, relationships, and predictive capacity of grammatical, discourse, and communicative competence among pre-service teachers. The descriptive statistics indicated the pre-service teachers were rated moderately competent in overall communicative competence ($M=3.50$) and grammatical competence ($M=3.18$). The pre-service teachers were rated competent in discourse competence ($M=3.69$). The correlation analyses indicated that pre-service teachers showed a strong positive relationship between grammatical competence and overall communicative competence ($r = 0.551, p < 0.001$), suggesting that an understanding of grammar is a prerequisite for effective communication across various social contexts. A strong positive correlation between discourse competence and overall competence was observed ($r = 0.531, p < 0.001$), underscoring the need to organize longer stretches of language for effective communication. The linear regression findings presented that grammatical competence and discourse competence were statistically significant positive predictors of overall communicative competence. Grammatical competence predicted a unique variance of 30.3%, and discourse competence was also a unique predictor of 28.2%. Therefore, the study's findings suggest that grammatical competence and discourse competence are both significant, foundational, and vital contributors to a pre-service teacher's overall communicative competence. The researcher recommends that teacher education programs integrate grammar instruction with discourse-based tasks to better prepare pre-service teachers for classroom communication challenges.

| KEYWORDS

Communicative Competence, Discourse Competence, Grammatical Competence, Pre-service Teachers, Philippines

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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Introduction

In the Philippines, particularly in education, the importance of communicative competence for professional educators cannot be overstated. Given the country's language diversity, with different languages spoken in practically every area, developing teachers' communicative competence is important to facilitate an effective teaching and learning process. Communicative competence refers to the ability to communicate messages and meaning in a variety of communicative situations to establish the relationship between the sender and the receiver. Communicative competence is important for teachers to effectively convey the content of their lessons to students and the larger educational community.

Dell Hymes presented a framework for understanding communicative competence, divided into four subcomponents: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Canale and Swain took this theoretical construct of communicative competence, particularly grammatical competence and discourse competence. Grammatical competence refers to the ability to use appropriate syntax, understand morphology, and the basic rules that govern language

structure. Each of these rules is key to teaching, especially in the Philippines, where English is considered the medium of instruction in most subjects. Additionally, grammatical competence is significant because grammar in speaking and writing helps effectively communicate the lesson's content and message to the audience (Prystai, 2022). Discourse competence emphasizes coherence, cohesion, and organization. This competence creates value for meaningful interaction, which is vital in classroom practice, and provides students with the structure to formulate coherent arguments and a basis for dialogue (Hui, 2021).

In the Philippines, where English is highly valued in both the school and workplace, awareness of grammatical competence serves not only to help teachers present information in a way that is understandable but also to enhance students' learning achievement. Within the umbrella of grammatical competence, teachers are primed to prepare students with the grammatical knowledge to navigate a globalized world. Grammatical competence supports the relevance of discourse competence. Therefore, teachers can involve students in peer discourse and promote critical thinking. Discourse competence is becoming more important in educational contexts.

The preparation of pre-service teachers is a policy designed to develop these competencies, as it provides the most impactful context for teachers to acquire significant professional knowledge and skills. Teacher education programs in the Philippines are slowly recognizing the need to equip teachers with a robust curriculum that develops communicative competence, in addition to pedagogical practice. The inclusion of these skills will prepare teachers not only to know the content but also to understand learners' linguistic needs (Prystai, 2022). There must also be professional development opportunities that improve discourse skills, reflective practice, and pedagogical skills to prepare future teachers who can address the varying language needs of Filipino students (Hektoen & Wallin, 2024; Becher, 2024)

In general, enhancing communicative competence across the Philippine teaching profession is important for facilitating effective teaching and learning practices. Foundation frameworks, such as those posited by Hymes and built upon by Canale and Swain, can help practitioners identify the various components of competence, in particular grammatical and discourse competence, that can have an impact on student learning. Developing pre-service teachers is undoubtedly an important step toward improving teachers' competencies and the quality of teaching within various linguistic and cultural contexts.

This research seeks to assess the relationship between Grammatical Competence and Discourse Competence to Communicative Competence of pre-service teachers from a private institution in Santiago City, Isabela, Philippines. Specifically, this study examines how grammatical and discourse competence affect pre-service teachers' communicative competence. Therefore, this research consequently tries to answer the following questions:

RQ1. What is the level of Grammatical Competence, Discourse Competence, and Communicative Competence in various contexts of the pre-service teachers?

RQ2. Is there a significant relationship between Grammatical Competence and Communicative Competence?

RQ3. Is there a significant relationship between Discourse Competence and Communicative Competence?

RQ4. Can Grammatical Competence and Discourse Competence collectively predict Overall Communicative Competence?

Literature Review

Theoretical Concept of Communicative Competence

Dell Hymes originally conceived the term Communicative Competence in the late 1970s to emphasize social aspects of language. Hymes proposed that knowing a language meant more than knowing the appropriate forms of grammar; it also included the ability to use language appropriately within a given context (Belasoto, 2021). Hymes' model of communicative competence emphasized input factors in language, both linguistic and socio-cultural, thereby creating an original model of communicative competence.

Because of Hymes' impact, a range of models have been developed based on Hymes' model of language competence. For example, Canale and Swain (1980) divided communicative competence into grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (Chen, 2022). Grammatical competence refers to knowledge of syntax, morphology, and phonology; sociolinguistic competence refers to the rules and norms related to the use of language in some context. Discourse competence refers to the logical connection of ideas and sentences, and to using language appropriately in context. Strategic competence refers to the strategies people use to overcome communication problems. Hymes' model has significantly changed the world of language education and continues to guide curriculum and instructional approaches.

New ideas in the discipline acknowledged other areas of complexity in linguistic and communicative competence, including cultural competence, meaning learners are now working across intercultural contexts. Additionally, it emphasized the idea that communicative competence is not predetermined. It evolves through active learning, much as language evolves in the functional context of society. This contemporary notion adopts a more comprehensive approach to language learning, acknowledging cognitive psychology and educational theory as frameworks for understanding skills shaped by acquisition and language use.

In examining studies that connected grammatical and discourse competence, authors suggested cognitive connections between the pre-service teacher's grammatical knowledge and the ability to create coherent, cohesive discourse (Lavadia, 2023). Grammatical knowledge, particularly with complex structures, enabled students to engage with more complex forms of discourse, thereby enhancing their ability to communicate in educational and professional settings. This descriptively outlined the rationale for providing opportunities to build grammatical competence to enhance general communicative competence, which is a sound rationale for educators to consider when teaching through the language of instruction (Retnowaty, 2022).

Grammatical Competence

Grammatical competence is a vital dimension of language ability that encompasses knowledge of syntax, morphology, and phonology. Syntax is concerned with the ordering of words and phrases into well-formed sentences. Morphology is concerned with how words are formed and what the meaningful parts of words are. Phonology, in contrast, is concerned with how a language sounds and the rules that govern how sounds are organized. Grammatical competence is essential for communication because it enables coherence of expression, comprehension, and language production. These connections have long been documented in the literature, and scholars agree that reliable communication cannot occur without the corresponding grammatical competence. Nanquil (2021) claimed that the development of grammatical competence is important not just for students in an academic setting but also for individuals, as it equips them with capabilities crucial in professional settings that rely on grammatical knowledge for communicative success.

With respect to grammatical competence, it is of utmost importance to use language accurately. Accuracy is the ability to use language correctly and relates to effective communication. Research indicates that as language accuracy increases, so does communication quality. For example, Sadeghi and Mogaddam (2021) explained that explicit grammar instruction enhances grammatical competence and communication effectiveness. This indicates that, if grammar-focused teaching or interventions are incorporated into instruction, the student will become more effective in their communicative skills. In a related sense, Jahan noted that without some knowledge of grammatical rules and mastery, the learner may not be able to communicate at all, especially because we convey complex communication through grammatical expertise. In sum, instruction in grammatical competence will assist with norms and confidence in the communication process.

Research indicates that new approaches to grammar instruction, including those with a technology component and within a communicative language teaching (CLT) framework, can affect learners' grammatical competence. There is a large body of research, particularly in the Philippines, on the issues surrounding grammar teaching during the pandemic. As an indication, there was a need for more flexible pedagogical frameworks that can promote both grammatical competence and communicative competence (Nanquil, 2021). In addition, this has been strengthened by studies that have focused on metacognitive strategies and the explicit teaching of grammar concepts to facilitate awareness of grammar, which have shown results in enhanced performance in both writing and speaking (Rijt et al., 2022). Nguyen's results also indicated that valued engagement activities, like dictogloss, demonstrated an improvement in grammatical competence, and motivation suggested that engagement, and any interactive experience, is connected to the learning process. The overall evidence supports the idea that ongoing revision and development of grammar teaching are important for pre-service and practicing teachers to develop grammatical competence and effective communication skills.

Discourse Competence

Discourse competence is an important element of successful communication, especially in educational settings, as it relates to the ability to construct cohesive, coherent spoken or written texts. Based on its structural components, i.e., cohesion, coherence, and organizational structure, discourse competence will be critical when ensuring that ideas are presented logically and are cohesively

tied together in a specific context (Teng & Zhou, 2020). Cohesion refers to the grammatical and lexical linking that occurs in the texts that tie, or connect, statements in the case of spoken texts or sections of texts in the case of written texts, together and coherence the entire organizational structure and logical flow of ideas, which allows the discourse to make sense. This foundational knowledge is essential for pre-service teachers in the Philippines, as it governs their ability to communicate effectively with students and to structure and present information sequentially for instructional purposes.

Numerous researchers describe the value of teachers developing a discourse skill set to enhance the quality of teaching. For example, Ashdown and Bernard observed that when social-emotional learning instruction is more explicit, it enhances the quality of teacher performance, suggesting that the difference arises from a more systematic approach to teaching. Research examining discursive strategies in preservice teacher education has shown that effective strategies yield a more systematic approach to lesson delivery and the ability to provide explicit clarification, both of which support engagement and understanding in the learning context (Aduko & Akayuure, 2025). Similarly, in Wiyono et al. (2020), critical thinking models and a coherent lesson plan were used to develop a coherent organizational structure. In doing so, they illustrated that students will develop good work habits (Wiyono et al., 2020).

Moreover, discourse competence links to teachers' pedagogies, which potentially influences teachers' practices. Wei-Chi's study points to a genre-based pedagogy to develop students' use of discourse markers, which supports students' potential for programmatic structure in their communication (Wei-Chi, 2023). This is beneficial for students' discourse competence but also empowers teachers to use practices that create this competence for students in the classroom. Furthermore, this points out that teachers' capacity to structure discourse in student interactions can be significantly improved by structured feedback practices and self-assessment strategies similar to lesson study models (Supeno et al., 2022). The evidence from both studies collectively supports the claim that strong discourse competence is essential for achieving positive teaching outcomes.

As teachers develop their skills in discourse, they often experiment with different approaches across different areas of teaching, adapting their methods to the varying needs of students. For example, when we think about teachers' writing and discourse orientations, we see how combining more anticipated forms of writing with more contemporary discourse approaches makes a teacher more effective. Likewise, when we think about lessons, we know that a teacher using connected, integrated pedagogical practices can support these kinds of connected moments, creating experiences for students to be brave and to be educators in discourse. This is an example of the two-way linkage we can see in action when skilled discourse competence supports both the teacher's pedagogical style and the discourse the teacher designs, and is used to improve students' learning experiences.

Relationship Among Competencies

The relationship among grammatical competence, discourse competence, and communicative competence has attracted considerable attention in the literature, particularly in relation to language education, as noted in the preceding section. Grammatical competence is usually characterized as the ability of the user to produce and reinterpret grammatically correct forms. By contrast, discourse competence is defined as the ability of the user to use language appropriately across a variety of discourse contexts. All related, grammatical, and discourse competences together represent an individual learner's overall communicative competence, a necessary skill for communicating in a language. Research suggests that grammatical and discourse competencies are essential for developing communication skills in language learners. For example, Lavadia defines grammatical structures as included in discourse, stating, "without a mastery of grammar one cannot possess discourse competence" (Lavadia, 2023). Furthermore, research on the performance of English as a Second Language (ESL) students has also shown a strong connection between grammatical complexity and the performance of practical discourse. In fact, some researchers believe that utterance norms associated with grammatical understanding imply better manifestations of discourse ability.

Studies have also revealed substantial connections between these competencies in preservice teachers. For example, Prystai (2022) suggests that preservice teachers' grammatical competence is one of the key influences on their overall communicative competence, indicating that the ability to assess the various components of a language is central to developing preservice teachers' communication skills. Aksak and Çubukçu (2020) found a correlation between language aptitude and preservice language teachers' academic achievement, further supporting the notion that preservice teachers' language competence is a foundation for teaching competence. Lastly, the study provides essential examples of how discourse knowledge is applied in English as a foreign language

(EFL) teacher education and defines the extent to which writing grammatically accurate, logically arranged texts contributes to preservice teachers' communicative competence in the classroom.

The emphasis on pre-service teachers across various studies suggests that teacher education should prepare teachers who can address the interdependent nature of these competencies. The survey by Belasoto argues that college English teachers need to demonstrate communicative competence that goes beyond grammatical knowledge, clearly showing that the three competencies (sociolinguistic and strategic) work in unison for effective instruction (Belasoto, 2021). Similarly, Afifah and Wirza's work demonstrates how pre-service teachers can leverage their understanding of cultural diversity to improve their communicative practices and pedagogical skills, thereby enhancing their efficacy as teachers in multicultural classrooms (Afifah & Wirza, 2021). This represents the fundamental notion of communicative competence: the use of language knowledge while demonstrating competence across multiple sociolinguistic contexts.

In summary, the significance of these affiliations extends beyond establishing professional identity to the enactment of pedagogical practice in teacher education contexts and to the direct instruction that enhances pre-service teachers' pedagogical identity and focused grammar and discourse competencies. For instance, Li (2022), in her work on the preparation of teacher candidates across a variety of linguistic contexts, has provided evidence of this type of development through community-based projects, leading to the extensive development of sociolinguistic awareness and communication competencies relevant to effectively teaching in diverse classrooms. Learning about sociolinguistic awareness and communicative competency is an objective in many educational contexts, where these competencies are intertwined with the ability to add complexity through multiple linguistic experiences within the rigors of acknowledged prior experiences. Some objectives are explicit in preparation, with intercultural communicative competence attracting attention through teacher candidates' language education preparation that invests in developing their educational language competencies (Khokhar et al., 2020). The findings, through integration, reveal the inter-relatedness and overlapping significance of grammar capacities, discourse capacities, and communicative capacity for teacher training and the competencies of teachers in training.

Research Gap

The current body of research emphasizes the importance of communicative competence for improving the teaching and learning experience in a Filipino context. However, there are still gaps that need further study. Although scholars, including Dell Hymes, have developed foundational frameworks that have been more closely worked out by Canale and Swain, there is a lack of empirical research that empirically links these frameworks to the specific linguistic realities of the Philippines' pre-service teachers. Current research has focused on grammatical competence and discourse competence. Still, more research is needed to examine how they work together in context to support the overall development of actual teacher education programs that reflect the linguistic reality of the Philippines (Lavadia, 2023). Also, while studies highlight the need for grammatical accuracy in communication, they do not specify pedagogical practices to develop these competencies in pre-service teachers, particularly given the second-language nature of English in the Philippines (Rubio & Saenz, 2023).

Furthermore, the literature suggests a pressing need for professional development focused on developing discourse competence to prepare future teachers to engage in meaningful interaction in their classrooms (Trinh et al., 2024). Much of the existing literature has focused on teachers' self-efficacy and digital competencies, while neglecting to consider what these concepts mean conceptually in relation to communicative competence as a whole (Thaanyane & Jita, 2024). Furthermore, the literature has mainly underexplored the sociolinguistic aspects of establishing teacher education, particularly regarding how cultural sensitivities can influence communicative practices in multilingual contexts. This reinforces the importance of future research that combines and incorporates grammatical, discourse, and sociolinguistic competencies in the training and education of pre-service teachers. This overall exploration not only advances theoretical understanding but also informs meaningful and effective pedagogies towards meeting the challenges of contemporary education in the Philippines.

Methodology

This study employed a Descriptive-Correlational Research Design to thoroughly investigate the levels of grammatical, discourse, and communicative competence among pre-service teachers at a private institution in Region 2. Descriptive Research is a pertinent

approach that aims to gain understanding and clarity of prevailing conditions when no manipulation of variables is involved; correlational analysis will be used to determine relationships between multiple competencies. This technique aligns with the research objective to assess and illuminate competencies in grammatical, discourse, and various communicative situations that future teachers would encounter, as evidenced by other research in the field (Lavadia, 2023; Abdelrahman et al., 2022).

Participants

The research site is located at a Private Institution in Santiago City, Isabela, Philippines, offering Bachelor's degree programs in Secondary and Elementary Education. The population consists of 70 respondents, fourth-year pre-service teachers majoring in English, Mathematics, Science, and Elementary Education. To ensure that participants possess the competencies needed for this study, the researchers used a purposive sampling technique to collect data in accordance with educational research standards. The respondents were chosen because they will use English as their medium of instruction in their chosen field.

Research Instrument

The researcher used an adopted research questionnaire coming from various published works as a research instrument to attain the purpose of this study. The research instruments were listed as follows:

1. Grammatical Competence & Discourse Competence: This section used a self-assessment instrument based on Manalastas (2023), which examined the respondents' understanding of their own grammatical knowledge and their use of English. Furthermore, this instrument also assessed the degree to which respondents can communicate practical ideas in a contextually appropriate manner.
2. Communicative Competence: This section will use the Self-perceived Communicative Competence Scale (McCroskey, 1988) to measure overall perceptions of communication effectiveness across various contexts.
3. The content and face validity of the instrument were evaluated by experts and through pilot testing before the study. Reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, which is widely accepted by researchers as a measure of internal consistency in educational assessment (Shobikah, 2020; Poon & Feng, 2023).

Data Collection Process

Before beginning, permission and ethical approval from the institution's ethics board were obtained to ensure that all stages of the educational research were ethically compliant. Upon receiving the approval, the following procedures took place:

1. A small, similar demographic group will be used for pilot testing to refine the assessment instrument for clarity and appropriateness.
2. The research instrument was administered after these changes had been made. The respondents received standardized instructions to maintain parity throughout the survey. Participants completed the assessments in a distraction-free environment to reduce variability.
3. Data were scored and compiled systematically to prepare for analysis per procedures established in educational research. The researcher used Microsoft Excel and Jamovi Statistical Application to treat the gathered data.

Data Analysis

The analysis consisted of several statistical procedures in an effort to answer the research questions:

1. Means and Standard Deviations will be calculated to describe the levels of each competence (Research Question 1). This fundamental descriptive analysis will help illuminate how competencies are distributed throughout the sample.
2. Pearson's r will be used to find significant relationships among grammatical, discourse, and communicative competences (Research Questions 4 and 5). There is academic confidence in employing the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, based on studies to identify both the strength and direction of correlation in student and adult studies (Guillent-Gómez & Mayorga-Fernandez, 2020).
3. A Linear Regression Analysis will be used to examine the predictive relationships between grammatical and discourse competence and overall communicative competence (Research Question 6). The rationale for conducting a linear

regression will coincide with established methods in the literature (Titasari et al., 2023). It will contribute to understanding complex relationships among variables when controlling for them.

Ethical Consideration

This research adhered to ethical principles to respect participants’ rights and maintain confidentiality. The study obtained informed consent from participants, who were forewarned of the research’s purpose, the voluntary nature of the study, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. They were also assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Data were anonymized, and no identifiable information was included in the analysis or odd reports of the findings. The ethics committee at the study site obtained ethical approval.

Results

The findings were displayed according the four research questions posed in the study.

Level of Grammatical Competence, Discourse Competence and Communicative Competence of the Pre-Service Teachers

The first research question (RQ1) aimed to assess the level of grammatical competence of fourth (4th) year pre-service teachers in a private institution in Santiago City, Isabela, Philippines. To answer this, an adopted and validated research instrument from Manalastas (2023) and Wiemann (1977) was utilized and administered to 70 participating pre-service teachers. The instrument used a 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire designed to measure grammatical competence (17 statements), discourse competence (36 items), and Communicative Competence (7 contextual situations). Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the results.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics of Pre-service Teachers’ Competence

Pre-service Teachers’ Competence	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
Grammatical Competence	3.18	Moderately Competent
Discourse Competence	3.69	Competent
Communicative Competence (Public)	3.43	Moderately Competent
Communicative Competence (Meeting)	3.18	Moderately Competent
Communicative Competence (Group)	3.61	Moderately Competent
Communicative Competence (Dyad)	3.77	Moderately Competent
Communicative Competence (Stranger)	3.16	Moderately Competent
Communicative Competence (Acquaintance)	3.39	Moderately Competent
Communicative Competence (Friend)	3.95	Moderately Competent
Overall Communicative Competence	3.50	Moderately Competent

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for pre-service teachers’ competence; the Overall Communicative Competence is rated as Moderately Competent (Mean=3.50). This conclusion is supported by a clear pattern of Moderately Competent interpretations across nearly all specific sub-competencies and situational contexts of Communicative Competence (Public, Meeting, Group, Dyad, Stranger, Acquaintance, and Friend). Grammatical competence was also rated as moderately competent with a mean of 3.18. The one exception to this pattern is Discourse Competence (Mean=3.69), which stands out as the one area interpreted as Competent. These results indicate that, while all primary aspects of language proficiency are at least moderately developed, the pre-service teachers have a relative strength in their capacity to organize and structure extended language compared to their grammatical foundation and overall language proficiency in specific social contexts.

Significant Relationship between Grammatical Competence and Communicative Competence

The research question number 2 determines if there is a significant relationship between the grammatical competence and communicative competence in various contexts of the fourth (4th) year pre-service teachers. To answer this question, the researcher used Pearson’s r to determine the relationship of these variables. Table 2 presents inferential statistics on the relationship between the given variables.

Table 2.

Significant Relationship of Grammatical Competence and Communicative Competence

Correlation Matrix		Grammatical Competence	SPCCS Public	SPCCS Meeting	SPCCS Group	SPCCS Dyad	SPCCS Stranger	SPCCS Acquaintance	SPCCS Friend	Overall Communicative Competence
Grammatical Competence	Pearson's r	—								
	df	—								
	p-value	—								
SPCCS Public	Pearson's r	0.376 **	—							
	df	68	—							
	p-value	0.001	—							
SPCCS Meeting	Pearson's r	0.621 ***	0.718 ***	—						
	df	68	68	—						
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—						
SPCCS Group	Pearson's r	0.485 ***	0.787 ***	0.707 ***	—					
	df	68	68	68	—					
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	—					
SPCCS Dyad	Pearson's r	0.470 ***	0.717 ***	0.681 ***	0.764 ***	—				
	df	68	68	68	68	—				
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—				
SPCCS Stranger	Pearson's r	0.344 **	0.753 ***	0.782 ***	0.793 ***	0.751 ***	—			
	df	68	68	68	68	68	—			
	p-value	0.004	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—		
SPCCS Acquaintance	Pearson's r	0.628 ***	0.787 ***	0.777 ***	0.754 ***	0.776 ***	0.603 ***	—		
	df	68	68	68	68	68	68	—		
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—	
SPCCS Friend	Pearson's r	0.456 ***	0.773 ***	0.677 ***	0.795 ***	0.721 ***	0.554 ***	0.626 ***	—	
	df	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	—	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—
Overall Communicative Competence	Pearson's r	0.551 ***	0.901 ***	0.877 ***	0.914 ***	0.878 ***	0.863 ***	0.866 ***	0.830 ***	—
	df	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	—
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

The findings in the Correlation Matrix (Table 2) reveal a strong association between Grammatical Competence and Communicative Competence among pre-service teachers. In particular, Grammatical Competence is positively and significantly correlated with all nine dimensions of Communicative Competence that were measured, including Overall Communicative Competence (r=0.551*** p<0.001). Pearson's r values obtained for specific contexts ranged from 0.344** (SPCCS Stranger) to 0.628*** (SPCCS Acquaintance), indicating that a higher level of grammatical competence is associated with higher overall communicative competence and higher levels of communicative competence in specific contexts. In addition, all the sub-dimensions of Communicative Competence were very strongly significantly related to the Overall Communicative Competence (r range 0.877*** to 0.901***) and strongly correlated to each other as well (r=0.603*** or better). This tells us that grammatical competence is a foundational element that supports a wide-ranging, yet highly integrated set of communicative competencies for pre-service teachers.

Significant Relationship between Discourse Competence and Communicative Competence

Research question number 3 examines the relationships between discourse competence and communicative competence among fourth (4th) year pre-service teachers at a private institution in Santiago City, Philippines. The researcher used Pearson's r to determine the relationship of these variables. The researcher uses Jamovi, a statistical application, to analyze the gathered data. Table 3 shows the significant relationship of the variables.

Table 3.

Significant Relationship of Grammatical Competence and Communicative Competence

Correlation Matrix

		Discourse Competence	SPCCS Public	SPCCS Meeting	SPCCS Group	SPCCS Dyad	SPCCS Stranger	SPCCS Acquaintance	SPCCS Friend	Overall Communicative Competence
Discourse Competence	Pearson's r	—								
	df	—								
	p-value	—								
SPCCS Public	Pearson's r	0.419***	—							
	df	68	—							
	p-value	<.001	—							
SPCCS Meeting	Pearson's r	0.486***	0.718***	—						
	df	68	68	—						
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—						
SPCCS Group	Pearson's r	0.429***	0.787***	0.707***	—					
	df	68	68	68	—					
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	—					
SPCCS Dyad	Pearson's r	0.572***	0.717***	0.681***	0.764***	—				
	df	68	68	68	68	—				
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—				
SPCCS Stranger	Pearson's r	0.249*	0.753***	0.782***	0.793***	0.751***	—			
	df	68	68	68	68	68	—			
	p-value	0.038	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—		
SPCCS Acquaintance	Pearson's r	0.590***	0.787***	0.777***	0.754***	0.776***	0.603***	—		
	df	68	68	68	68	68	68	—		
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—	
SPCCS Friend	Pearson's r	0.563***	0.773***	0.677***	0.795***	0.721***	0.554***	0.626***	—	
	df	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	—	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—
Overall Communicative Competence	Pearson's r	0.531***	0.901***	0.877***	0.914***	0.878***	0.863***	0.866***	0.830***	—
	df	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	—
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 3 presents a Correlation Matrix that assesses the relationship between Discourse Competence and Communicative Competence, and it demonstrates a significant positive relationship between Discourse Competence and Overall Communicative Competence ($r=0.531^{***}$, $p<0.001$). In fact, Discourse Competence is significantly and positively correlated to all nine specific contexts of Communicative Competence, with Pearson's r values typically falling within the moderate to strong range. For instance, the Pearson's r values range from a low of 0.249* with SPCCS Stranger ($p=0.038$) to a high of 0.590*** with SPCCS Acquaintance ($p<0.001$), indicating that a pre-service teacher's ability to organize extended language is consistently associated with their communicative skills across a variety of social contexts. Moreover, all of the subcomponents of Communicative Competence are very firmly and highly significantly associated with Overall Communicative Competence ($r\geq 0.800^{***}$) and strongly correlated with one another ($r\geq 0.603^{***}$). Altogether, these results indicate that Discourse Competence is an important explanatory variable associated with a pre-service teacher's strength of overall and contextual communicative competence.

Grammatical Competence and Discourse Competence collectively predict Overall Communicative Competence.

Research question 4 seeks to determine whether grammatical competence and discourse competence predict communicative competence. To answer this question, the researcher used linear regression analysis. Table 4 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 4. Linear Regression Analysis of Grammatical Competence and Overall Communicative Competence

Model	R	R ²
1	0.551	0.303

Note. Models estimated using a sample size of $N=70$

Model Coefficients – Grammatical Competence

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	1.211	0.368	3.29	0.002
Overall Communicative Competence	0.564	0.104	5.44	<.001

The Linear Regression Analysis results in Table 4 suggest that Grammatical Competence is a statistically strong positive predictor of Overall Communicative Competence in pre-service teachers. The Model Summary indicated an R value of 0.551 and $R^2=0.303$, indicating that Grammatical Competence alone accounted for 30.3% of the variance of Overall Communicative Competence. The outcome from the Model Coefficients section also supported this evidence of significance: the p-value for Overall Communicative

Competence is <0.001 , which indicates statistical significance, and the optimistic standardized estimates (0.564) suggest that Overall Communicative Competence is predicted to increase in Grammatical Competence, by approximately 0.564 (or 56% of a unit), for every one-unit increase in Overall Communicative Competence. Consequently, the hypothesis was supported: Grammatical Competence can statistically predict a large portion of the variance in a pre-service teacher's Overall Communicative Competence.

Table 5. *Linear Regression Analysis of Discourse Competence and Overall Communicative Competence*

Model	R	R ²
1	0.531	0.282

Note. Models estimated using sample size of $N=70$

Model Coefficients – Discourse Competence

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	1.941	0.3427	5.67	<0.001
Overall Communicative Competence	0.498	0.0964	5.17	$<.001$

The Linear Regression Analysis that appears in Table 5 indicates that Discourse Competence is a significant positive predictor of Overall Communicative Competence among pre-service teachers. The model's correlation coefficient (R) equals 0.531, and the R² value equals 0.282, signifying that Discourse Competence accounts for approximately 28.2% of the variance in Overall Communicative Competence. The model's predictive ability is statistically significant, as indicated by the p-value (<0.001) for Overall Communicative Competence in the Model Coefficients section. In addition, the optimistic standardized estimate (0.498) indicates that for every one-unit increase in Discourse Competence, a pre-service teacher's Overall Communicative Competence is predicted to increase by 0.498 units. These findings confirm that a teacher's ability to construct and organize language beyond the sentence level is a significant component of their overall communication.

Discussion

The findings of this investigation make substantial contributions to our understanding of the level of grammatical, discourse, and communicative competence among pre-service teachers in their 4th year. It also contributes to knowledge about the relationships involving grammatical and discourse competences and the respondents' communicative competence. The investigation also addresses whether grammatical and discourse competences could serve as indicators of overall communicative competence. The discussion below situates these findings within the broader educational development framework for education in the Philippines and provides a basis for a series of suggested steps to improve.

Level of Grammatical Competence, Discourse Competence and Communicative Competence of the Pre-Service Teachers

Based on the data shown in Table 1, pre-service teachers demonstrate varying levels of competence in the grammatical, discourse, and communicative competencies required for their professional development in teaching contexts. All of these results reflect the intricacy and interconnectedness of communicative competencies. As Lavadia emphasizes, grammatical competence is closely aligned with discourse competence, as discourse is only practical when communicators understand the language thoroughly (Lavadia, 2023). The idea that linguistic, communicative, and interaction competencies shape the realities of foreign language teaching and learning is alarming. The moderate performance in communicative competencies aligns with the idea that pre-service teachers are developing the capacity to engage in meaningful, contextualized interactions, which should be further developed by improving their grammatical understanding to support their communicative competencies (Nešić & Hamidović, 2022).

Furthermore, the context in which these capabilities occur is crucial. Kristoffersen and Oftedal discuss how the educational discourse could impact communicative competence (Kristoffersen & Oftedal, 2023). Accordingly, the academic context that pre-service teachers are in ought not just to prepare them for pedagogies for the content areas, but also pedagogies that enhance competencies in all areas. Effective instructional models that promote engagement may support the pedagogies that advance grammatical and discourse competence. These findings support the view that they foster more competent grammatical knowledge and discourse structuring models in preservice teacher education.

Relationship between Grammatical Competence and Communicative Competence

The findings show a substantial correlation between grammatical and communicative competence among pre-service teachers. In other words, the Correlation Matrix indicates that grammatical and communicative competence are strongly positively correlated in these contexts. Therefore, having an adequate grasp of grammatical competence is essential for overall communicative competence to be heightened. Goodwin et al. have stated that good teacher education, especially in language fields, is based on content knowledge plus a linguistic element. Aufa affirms that students require grammatical and pragmatic proficiency to communicate effectively in a language-learning environment (Aufa, 2016). Hymes makes a similar argument to Belasoto (2021) that communication can only occur with a broad understanding of grammar. Hymes argues, in this specific context, that the procedural and functional aspects of grammar contribute to and rely upon communicative capacity.

The correlation coefficients documented in the study indicate that an improvement in grammatical skills will lead to an improvement in contextual communication skills. For example, as Prystai (2022) referenced, language competence, which might be defined as grammatical knowledge or awareness, is an influential dimension in building Communicative Competence. This reinforces the idea that grammatical competence is not just a contributor to language competence; it is pivotal for language use in different social situations as part of the complex Conversational Competence. Recent pedagogical frameworks that view linguistic dimensions as essential are also supported by this notion, in which grammatical competence is the first dimension in communicative languages, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

Also noting that some of the sub-dimensions of Communicative Competence within the results align with the previous literature, specifically some linguistic competence indicators that emphasize structural complexity within the general premise of communicating effectively. Faminiano and Yango (2023) reiterated the importance of a grammatical base when discussing how the contribution of structurally correct knowledge, or grammatical knowledge, facilitates communicative efficiency as well as the ability to recognize grammatical sentences in social contexts routinely, certainly, setting a foundation where communicative competencies are integrated and driven by grammatical competence.

In conclusion, the strong correlation indicates the need to develop pre-service teachers' grammatical proficiency as a significant aspect of their communicative competence. Future instruction should focus on a joint approach to integrating grammatical instruction and communicative practice, enabling pre-service teachers' overall development of their communicative competence. This suggests that the frameworks that have been developed progressively support the important links between a teacher's language ability and their students' language learning, with the ability to use grammar-related skills inseparable from the teacher's overall effectiveness.

Significant Relationship between Discourse Competence and Communicative Competence

The connection between pre-service teachers' Discourse Competence and Communicative Competence suggests a particularly strong positive relationship for both competencies, emphasizing the connection between Discourse Competence and overall Communicative Competence and its remarkable role in communicative competence in the classroom. It has been theorized that Discourse Competence is the ability to organize language appropriately in extended discourse and has a considerable impact on a learner's ability to communicate productively in social contexts.

Prior studies have suggested that Discourse Competence is related to other components of the Communicative Competence model, like grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. Legak and Wahi (2020) indicated that communicative tasks are instrumental in developing all components of communicative competence, providing strong evidence for an integrated approach to creating specific competencies as well. In addition, Chambless highlights the essential relationship teachers have with their own oral proficiency and, as part of this oral proficiency, their ability to communicate more clearly and effectively in the target language is closely related to their Communicative Competence as a whole.

The connection between Discourse Competence and specific locations of Communicative Competence varies across different communicative contexts. Reports have highlighted the variability of Pearson's r values across Discourse and Communicative Competence, with implications that Discourse Competence can support communicative competence at some level, yet contextual and social conditions may influence their relationship.

Additionally, scholars advocate incorporating discourse-based activities into language teaching as an essential approach to developing students' texts that are relevant and coherent, as research indicates that Discourse Competence is critical for producing academic writing that displays coherence and cohesion (Hoshtanar et al., 2021; Yu-min & Xie, 2022). Therefore, highlighting the pedagogical contributions of studies on Discourse Competence and communicative competence may assist teachers in prioritizing Discourse Competence in classroom instruction and enable them to expand the integrated approach to language teaching, which includes several competence constructs.

In summary, the close relationship between Discourse and Communicative Competence in preservice teachers highlights the importance of pedagogies that attend to the interactional, contextual, and discursive aspects of language use. By focusing on Discourse Competence in teachers, we prepare future educators who are not only aware of grammar but also of the full range of communicative functions needed to teach and learn effectively across different educational contexts, benefiting overall language education.

Grammatical Competence and Discourse Competence collectively predict Overall Communicative Competence.

Tables 4 and 5 offer noteworthy evidence of the predictive capacity of Grammatical and Discourse Competence for Overall Communicative Competence for pre-service teachers. The data indicated a simple, positive predictive relationship between Grammatical and Discourse Competence and Overall Communicative Competence.

The linear regression analysis, for example, revealed that Grammatical Competence was a strong predictor of Overall Communicative Competence in the sample population. Grammatical Competence accounted for a substantial amount of variability in Overall Communicative Competence ($p < 0.001$), with a positive standardized estimate. These findings have shed light on the importance of students' grammatical knowledge, including lexical knowledge, sentence structure knowledge, and the ability to produce grammatically correct utterances (reported in Seran & Nalenan, 2022; and Cabico & Sales, 2023), as an essential predictor of Overall Communicative Competence. Rodriguez's studies ([2023]) support this view, showing that language learning strategies can help develop grammatical competence, leading to greater communication effectiveness and linking grammatical accuracy to communicative competence. In addition, Prystai, (2022) urges that understanding Grammatical Competence is essential for students, and Grammatical Competence is a requirement for developing their overall Communicative Competence, supporting the need for a pragmatic consideration of the role of Grammatical instruction in teacher training.

Discourse Competence, which refers to the ability to express ideas clearly beyond the sentence level, shows a strong predictive relationship with Overall Communicative Competence. This finding deserves attention because it underscores the importance of crafting expressions within the context of coherent, relevant communication. Scholarly perspectives state that discourse competence is a principal aspect of effective communication, as it determines how messages are created and interpreted in any given communicative context (Lavadia, 2023). In addition, using coherent expressions in language involves one of the central imperatives of discourse-based activities: the successful expression of those competencies becomes the priority for pre-service teachers.

Overall, both Grammatical and Discourse Competence provide evidence that they are foundational elements of Overall Communicative Competence for pre-service teachers. Findings provide evidence for previous claims that effective teaching practice should highlight Grammatical and Discourse Competence as key components of teacher education programs, preparing teachers to respond to demands in educational and professional contexts (Chen, 2022).

Conclusions

The study indicates that pre-service teachers possess different, but intersecting, levels of grammatical, discourse, and communicative competence, confirming that these are multifaceted and substantive professional skills in teacher development. The prevalence of moderate communicative competence among pre-service teachers suggests that they are developing capacities for meaningful, contextualized interactions. However, there is still work to do, especially by building prior pedagogical grammatical understanding to form discourse. It is therefore imperative that teacher education courses not only attend to content but also propose the examination and implementation of pedagogies that explicitly develop all areas of competence, using effective instructional engagement models, specifically for the development of grammatical and discourse structuring.

Additionally, the study revealed a markedly positive correlation between grammatical and communicative competence among pre-service teachers, strongly illustrating the importance of being well-grounded in grammar for overall communicative competence. These results are consistent with the existing literature, which strongly affirms that teachers need appropriate knowledge of the language, including grammar, to communicate effectively and with complexity in the language-learning environments they will encounter. For pedagogical implications, this research indicates that future practice should take a holistic view of its pedagogy for grammatical instruction and communicative practice. It recognizes that grammatical competence is not just another aspect of 'language knowledge' but a fundamental driver of integrated and effective communicative competencies. Moreover, the findings also showed a strong positive correlation between discourse competence and communicative competence, demonstrating that the ability to organize language in extended discourse effectively plays a crucial role in pre-service teachers' overall success as communicators in the classroom. This relationship implies that discourse competence, defined as the ability to sustain coherent, relevant communication beyond the sentence level, underpins effective communication in both social and academic contexts. Thus, when preparing future educators to be teachers, it is important to consider the interactional, situated, and discursive nature of language use, embedding discourse-defined activities into pre-service teachers' preparation so that they are ready with the full range of functions of communication needed to support effective teaching and learning in diverse learning environments.

Finally, the linear regression analysis indicates that both Grammatical Competence and Discourse Competence are statistically significant positive predictors of Overall Communicative Competence for pre-service teachers as slight indicators of these two foundational aspects of their communication ability. Grammatical competence, including knowledge of lexical meaning and all aspects of sentence structure, accounted for a significant amount of variance in communicative competence. At the same time, Discourse Competence demonstrated an excellent capacity to predict overall success, as the communication was contextually coherent and relevant. These results support previous conclusions about the necessity of educational programs for teachers to include the development of the two aspects of Grammatical and Discourse Competence as key pillars to prepare them for the integrated communicative demands of academic and professional practice.

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