Macro and Micro Context Factors in English Language Learning in Modular Distance Learning

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Abstract

English proficiency has been a complex skill to develop in a face-to-face setting, especially in the remote learning modality. This descriptive-correlational study aims to determine the various macro and micro context factors in English language learning of secondary students (n=189) under modular distance learning. Factor analysis is utilized in extracting the following factor loadings for macro-context: a) lack of assistance from more knowledgeable others, b) unconducive-to-learning environment, c) cultural influence, d) poor feedback mechanism, e) insufficient resources, and f) low quality of the self-learning kit. Micro-context factors constitute the following: a) lack of exposure and practice, b) lack of perceived competence, c) lack of motivation and d) lack of interest. Students employed self-regulated strategies and managed to overcome these challenges through a) commitment to practice the skill, b) self-evaluation strategies, and c) social strategies. Students' context should be considered in the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: modular distance learning, factors in learning, English language learning, factor analysis

1.0 Introduction

As the world of work becomes more competitive for every graduate, English language proficiency serves as leverage for better career opportunities. Superficial knowledge of this language is insufficient since English, as a field, is much broader and consists of different branches such as morphology, syntax, grammar, phonology, semantics, and linguistics, among others. The guidance and skillful facilitation of knowledgeable others in English language learning is needed now more than ever. However, the emergence of the global public health crisis put into mainstream remote learning modalities making it the only option for both learners and teachers. The benefits the technology brings forth in language education in promoting active learning and engagement (Parvin & Salam, 2015; Gilakjani, 2017) and its ability to be tailored-fit to their needs and interest (Costley, 2014) are incontestable. The other side of the coin poses disparaging conditions to those learners under the modular approach. Modular

distance learning is the most viable solution for continuity of learning. Young in its implementation, there are unidentified gaps between the learners and their ability to learn the English language effectively under this scheme. Furthermore, the availability of technology is a consideration as it posits significant effects before, during, and after the learning process (Al-Khazaalia, 2020).

Modular distance learning utilizes individualized instruction, which allows learners to adapt to the current situation through self-learning by print or electronic media without the constant guidance of a teacher. Sadiq and Zamir (2014) describes self-learning modules as a form of individual-use instructional learning designed to provide learning opportunities to develop a set of skills (Sadiq, 2014). The modular approach to learning is more effective than the traditional teaching modality since the students learn at their own pace and style (Sadiq & Zamir, 2014). Other studies reported contrasting findings. The lack of constant feedback on students' performance from the teacher is a limitation since feedback is the most crucial aspect of the teaching and learning process (Natalia & Julia, 2018). Distance learning has its fair share of both advantages and disadvantages to the learners. One of its advantages is that it makes learning opportunities available to the students all day that gives them tremendous influence over their learning schedules and allows them to engage actively in making decisions about their learning process (K. Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Such a scenario minimizes students from asking questions and sharing nonverbal signs with the teacher.

Recognizing the aspects of English language learning in this remote education modality is just as essential as the learning process itself (Khan, 2016). Theoretically, there are two classifications of factors that impede the English language learning of students. Macro-context factors pertain to the learning environment, social status, cultural diversity that are external and significantly influence the learning of the students as they reduce students' objective of acquiring the language (Al-Khazaalia, 2020). Family income levels, health, family makeup, community, and parent involvement (Racca & Lasaten, 2016) add to this category. On the other hand, micro-context factors are the internal factors that impede learning which include but not limited to the following: confidence, motivation, current knowledge, and exposure to language or text-related pedagogy. For instance, problems in learning English among students with limited English proficiency show heightened levels of anxiety (Phuong & Vo, 2019; Jugo, 2020). Students must first overcome such barriers to learning the English language (Frans, 2016). Despite the Philippines' recognition as one of the best English-speaking nations, recent tests and surveys report otherwise (Jugo, 2020). The country's regressing proficiency in English (Jugo, 2020), the emergence of a pandemic, and the implementation of a new learning approach, all raise a new set of challenges in terms of English language learning that warrant further investigation.

Objectives

This study aims to determine the macro and micro-context factors that contribute to the English Language Learning (ELL) of students under modular distance learning (MDL). Specifically, it seeks to identify how these factors affect students' ability to learn English and what various techniques or strategies students have employed to overcome these factors. Likewise, their perception of their English language performance under modular distance learning is also determined.

2.0 Methodology

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive approach described the factors that affect the English language learning of students, while the correlational method looked into the relationships between and among these factors. The respondents of this study composed of 189 high school students from public high schools who are currently taking their English subject under the modular distance learning for the school year 2020-2021. The selection of the respondents through purposive sampling was based on the inclusion-selection criteria as follows: 1) must be under modular approach and must be high school students as they are the most suitable population with direct experience on modular distance learning for the entire school year 2020-2021. Furthermore, since students were not allowed to report to class physically, an online survey was conducted to adhere to safety protocol. Table 1 shows the attributes of the participants of the study. The sample size was based on the assumption of Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) that states the general rule for factor analysis is 5-10 participants per variable or question.

This study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire composed of four sections. The first section consisted of questions about the respondent's socio-demographic profile. The second and third sections, which both have 16 statements in a four-point Likert scale, contained the macro and micro-context factors that the respondents choose. The fourth section had 8 statements in a Likert scale response type which focused on students' strategies on self-directed learning of English to overcome those challenges. The research instrument was developed by extracting significant findings reported in the studies of Al-Khazaalia (2020) and Khan (2016) whose respondents were tertiary first-year Saudi Arabian learners ranging from ages 18-22 learning English as a foreign language and taking up intensive English courses.

To establish the content validity of the instrument, two English professors and one research professor in a state university evaluated the instrument independently to examine whether the statements truly measured what they intend to measure and were suitable to the context of the study. To establish the reliability of the research instrument, the questionnaire was pilot tested to a group of 25 students who had the same characteristics as the target respondents of the study. The reliability test revealed at 0.73 Cronbach's alpha value, which indicated that the research instrument is reliable. This study secured the institutional Ethics Review Committee certificate code 588/2020-11.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy or KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy explains the suitability of data for factor analysis. High values, especially those close to 1.00 mean that factor analysis is an appropriate tool in analyzing data while a value of <0.50 means otherwise. Based on the data, the KMO value of macro-context, micro-context, and strategies and techniques sections are 0.658, 0.769, and 0.626, respectively. These values are higher than 0.50, suggesting that factor analysis is a suitable tool for analysis for this study. On the other hand, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity determines if the variables have equal variances and if the significance level in the results is less than 0.05, suggesting that factor analysis is helpful and appropriate in analyzing data with a significance level at <0.001, which is lesser than 0.05. All the analysis were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27.

Table 1. *Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Characteristics	Variable	f	%
Sex	Male	62	33
	Female	127	67
Age	13-16	87	46
	17-20	100	53
	21-24	2	1
Social Class	Middle Class	135	71
	Lower Class	54	29
No. of Siblings	0-2	76	40
	3-6	102	54
	7-10	9	5
	11-13	2	1
Grade Level	8	27	14
	10	2	1
	11	157	83
	12	3	2
Parent's Employment Status	Yes (Parent/s is/ are employed)	44	23
	No (Parent/s is/are not employed)	145	77
Student's Part-Time Employment	Yes (Working part-time)	11	94
	No (Not working part-time)	178	6
Helping the Family Financially	Yes	16	9
	No	173	91
Recent English Grade	90-100	62	33
	85-89	68	36
	80-84	35	19
	75-83	23	12
	Below 75	2	1
Perception of Learning Under MDL	Better	10	5
	Worse	85	45
	Same	94	50

3.0 Results and Discussion

Macro-Context Factors in English Language Learning

Table 2 presents the frequency of respondents' responses. Among the predetermined macro-context factors, the three most common variables affecting the English language learning of the respondents are instability of the internet connection (X=.67; SD=.473), the lack of English language tutor (X=.50; SD= .501) and English language not their first language (X=.50; SD=.501). It can be gleaned that access to external resources other than the given self-learning kit, including the internet, assistant, conduciveness of homes, and exposure to the target language, play a vital role in language learning. These results mirror the findings of Misbah et al., (2017) and Al- Khazaalia (2020) wherein the availability of technology and exposure to English are significant predictors towards their English performance. Moreover, this study supported Musingafi et al. (2015) report that some challenges encountered by students under distance learning include lack of adequate time to study, accessibility and availability of ICT, and financial constraints. The similarities of the factors identified may be attributed to the socioeconomic status of these students as majority of them belong to low to middle-income families with a strikingly high number of their parent/s having no stable job (77%). Additionally, the number of siblings that these students have could have affected the conduciveness of homes since majority of them have more than two siblings and it may affect the equitable access to online learning resources.

Table 2. *Macro-Context Factors in English Language Learning*

Item	Mean	SD
MAC 1 - I do not have a conducive area in the house to study in.	.47	.500
MAC 2-I do not have a stable internet connection.	.67	.473
MAC 3 - My parent/s or guardian do not help me in answering my English modules.	.34	.476
MAC 4 - I do not have enough time to study and answer my English modules**.**	.17	.381
MAC 5 - I do not help my sibling/s in answering their English modules as well.	.11	.315
MAC 6 - I do not have an English tutor who helps me in answering my English modules.	.50	.501
MAC 7 - I do not live in a quiet and peaceful neighborhood.	.49	.501
MAC 8 - My family and I are not able to eat at least three meals a day.	.04	.189
MAC 9 - We do not have electrical connection.	.01	.103
MAC 10 - I cannot contact my teacher whenever I have to ask questions about my English modules.	.18	.385
MAC 11 - I do not have sufficient school supplies at home.	.14	.839
MAC 12 - My family and other people living in the house do not know how to converse using the English language.	.09	.287
MAC 13 - The contents inside my English modules are not enough for me to learn.	.20	.402
MAC 14 - My first language is not English.	.50	.501
MAC 15 - I do not have gadgets at home that can help me in learning the English language.	.10	.302
MAC 16 - I was not exposed to English materials when I was younger such as movies, books, songs, textbooks, etc.	.29	.455

n = 189 student respondents under modular-based learning modality

Table 3 shows the correlation matrix of the 16 variables of the macro-context factors. The purpose of the correlation matrix is to see how the variables are associated with each other. The denoted r values in the table are statistically significant which means that these items are associated with each other that an increase of one variable, increases the other. For instance, items MAC1 (I don't have a conducive area in the house to study) and MAC2 (I don't have a stable internet connection) are positively correlated and statistically significant suggesting that they are associated to each other in terms of affecting students' performance in learning English in the modular set-up. This association may be attributed to either the unconducive nature of their respective home as a learning space that can be due to a noisy environment or a lack of learning resources such as a strong internet connection that is indispensable in this mode of learning. As students answer their learning modules independently, they can only rely on the internet to access and read information about their lesson and having unstable internet connection is a deterrent to their academic performance. Additionally, items MAC3 (My parents/guardian do not help me in answering my English modules) and MAC12 (My family and other people living in the house do not know how to converse using English language) also showed remarkable association. This observation suggests the importance of support group for students under MDL regardless of the subject that they are taking. These findings

confirmed Phuong and Vo (2019) report that students demonstrated higher academic and behavior levels, showed increased aspirations, and displayed positive school behaviors when parents are knowledgeable, encouraging, and involved. A probable cause of this lack of parental involvement and support from the family members could be because their family members do not have conversational ability towards English language. The learners' context and circumstances (Joaquin et al., 2020) are some aspects that need attention in the implementation of this new mode of learning. Moreover, these challenges are on top of the obvious issues such as absence and intermittent internet connection, material costs, and the familial challenges that these students had to endure. In line with this, Joaquin et al. (2020) recommends that policy responses and learning developments should be focused on a deeper understanding of distance learning and be responsive to the call of the time.

Table 4 shows the total variance explained and the eigenvalues obtained after using the varimax rotation. There were six-factor loadings from the 16 variables extracted as indicated by an eigenvalue greater than or equal to 1.00. The total cumulative percentage of these six factors makes up 55.202% of all the variables.

Table 3. *Correlation Matrix of the Macro-Context Factors*

	MAC1	MAC2	MAC3	MAC4	MAC5	MAC6	MAC7	MAC8	MAC9	MAC10	MAC11	MAC12	MAC13	MAC14	MAC15	MAC16
MAC1																
MAC2	**.165***															
MAC3	.106	**.205***														
MAC4	.102	.118	**.195***													
MAC5	.041	.107	**.240***	.059												
MAC6	.069	**.165***	**.394***	.044	**.288***											
MAC7	**.343***	**.172***	.075	.054	-.007	.132										
MAC8	.098	-.099	-.024	-.016	.020	.085	.033									
MAC9	.007	.073	.034	.089	-.037	-.103	.003	-.020								
MAC10	**.143***	**.156***	**.241***	.111	.097	**.140***	.095	-.092	.086							
MAC11	-.027	.049	-.013	-.009	.002	-.088	.080	.068	-.017	-.028						
MAC12	**.189***	**.144***	**.162***	.050	**.183***	**.205***	**.175***	.036	-.033	.093	.059					
MAC13	.061	.075	**.165***	**.152***	.009	.082	**.145***	.028	-.052	**.177***	-.004	.119				
MAC14	**.196***	.097	**.238***	-.012	.086	**.365***	.047	.029	.001	.085	-.075	.131	.082			
MAC15	.111	.124	.091	.032	.106	**.195***	.097	.028	-.035	.072	**.239***	**.202***	.052	.090		
MAC16	.056	.058	.125	-.111	**.144***	**.225***	.099	-.064	-.066	.094	-.050	.043	**.173***	**.388***	.018	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level*

Table 4. *Total Variance of Macro-Context Factors Explained*

Factors	Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.979	12.371	12.371
2	1.588	9.924	22.295
3	1.394	8.715	31.010
4	1.378	8.611	39.622
5	1.324	8.273	47.894
6	1.169	7.308	55.202

After using the varimax rotation, Table 5 shows the rotated component matrix, which reveals six variables that are strongly correlated with each factor loading. The identified factors are described in detail.

Lack of assistance from more knowledgeable others (MKOs). These learners under MDL may be considered to be mature and self-dependent to a great extent however Khan (2016) asserted that the teachers' role and presence cannot be ignored at some points of the distance education process. Teachers in the Philippines are bombarded with clerical tasks, which consumes their time and energy to follow up with their students and provide tailored-fit feedback. A provision of remedial teaching and counseling should be made to facilitate the learners. Furthermore, the importance of an online-based learning community is underscored in this finding to help facilitate students' performance and confidence in using the English language for communication. For instance, Lin and Hwang (2018) reported the effectiveness of an online community-based flipped instruction to students' English oral performance using mobile devices. The authors also reported that students exhibited interactive behaviors and greater satisfaction with the presence of online community. Students in this mode of learning should seek for assistance from others because they are isolated from classmates and instructors hence; they need to use technology and other means effectively in order to reduce the social distance (Kirmizi, 2014).

Unconducive to learning environment. The importance of conducive to learning environment is already an established fact (Mosha, 2014). This factor is characterized by students conditions at home as their learning space. Living in a crowded household negatively affected student performance (Harb & El-Shaarawi, 2007). This result supported the classification of macro-context factors that pertained to family income levels and family make-up (Racca & Lasaten, 2016) along with the limited home support environment and poverty (Mosha, 2014) were contributing factors for poor English performance.

Cultural influence. This factor has something to do with the students' cultural orientation such that the mother tongue is their dialect and English is a second language that is learned at school. Misbah et al. (2017) explained that the strong influence of first language contributed to English language difficulty. Generally, this nature of learning barrier is social in nature (El-Omari, 2016) that influences students' achievement in ELL. In the context of MDL, learners' exposure to English language use is lessened which could be brought by the absence of interaction among peers and between teachers during classroom discussion. Harb and El-Shaarawi (2007) explained that students' participation in class discussion affected their competence in speaking English.

Accessibility to Information/Resources. While Sadiq and Zamir (2014) describes the strength in terms of learners' autonomy in their learning process, poor and sometimes absence of feedback from teachers is one of the disadvantages of modular approach (Natalia & Julia, 2018). There are potential reasons of this observation on the context of this study. The factors identified here are somewhat interrelated given that the lack of resources such as laptop, cellphone, and internet connection hinders students to communicate with their teachers as to the feedback of their output or learning progress.

Lack of Basic Needs and Educational Resources. This factor supports the findings of

El-Omari (2016) and Misbah et al. (2017) that socio-economic status of the family affected English performance. Hence, Al-Khazaalia (2020) identified these characteristics as macro-context factor since it is an external aspect of learning yet it significantly influences student's learning. In this study, the learners opted MDL probably due to the unavailability of gadgets and other online learning resources. Furthermore, online class may also entail a budget allocation for internet load allowance. When students cannot access the internet to search for additional input to clarify ambiguous concepts, it reduces their English proficiency such as with the proper use of grammar and syntax.

Low quality of the self-learning kit. The nature of MDL provided learners with uniform learning materials in the form of modules developed by experts in that particular content area. This scheme may serve contrasting effects. On a positive note, they become independent and self-reliant to perform the embedded task and take charge of their learning process. The drawback here is that activities are not tailored-fit to students' learning style and context. As evidenced by the students perception of their learning under MDL reported in Table 1, they felt worse (45%) while others had felt no changes in their learning experiences in both face-to-face and modular classes. Arguably, this finding partially disagrees with Sadiq and Zamir (2014) characterization that modular approach is more effective than traditional teaching modality. In the Philippine context, insufficient affordances to social, emotional, cognitive, and psychological domains of learners must be highly considered.

Table 5. *Correlation of Variables in the Macro-Context Factors Using Rotated Component Matrix*

Factors	Items/Variables	Item Correlation
Lack of Assistance from more knowledgeable others (MKO)	I do not have an English tutor who helps me in answering my English modules.	.728
	My parent/s or guardian do not help me in answering my English modules.	.665
	I do not help my sibling/s in answering their English modules	.650
Unconducive Learning Environment	I do not have a conducive area in the house to study in.	.796
	I do not live in a quiet and peaceful neighborhood.	.700
	I do not have a stable internet connection.	.528
Cultural influence	I was not exposed to English materials when I was younger such as movies, books, songs, textbooks, etc.	.594
	My first language is not English.	.580
Accessibility to Information/Resources	I do not have gadgets at home that can help me in learning the English language.	.751
	I cannot contact my teacher whenever I have to ask questions about my English modules.	.512
Lack of Basic Needs and Educational Resources	My family and I are not able to eat at least three meals a day.	.660
	I do not have sufficient school supplies at home.	.690
Low Quality of Self-Learning Kit	The contents inside my English modules are not enough for me to learn.	.807

Micro – Context Factors in English Language Learning

Table 6 displays the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses to the predetermined micro-context factors affecting ELL. The lack of fluency (X=.66; SD=.474) and the lack of confidence in speaking the English language (X=.66; SD=.487) dominantly reported variables. Moreover, other factors with low mean are the following: disliking the English subject, poor understanding of English conversations, and inability to translate the English language to the native language. These findings support Ghadirzadeh et al. (2012) factor analysis result of the demotivating factors for English language learning among university students, specifically the lack of perceived individual competence and lack of intrinsic motivation. This suggests that the insufficient background knowledge of the students on the English language and the lack of motivation may affect their academic performance and language skill acquisition. While the emergence of e-learning and distance education is considered a significant milestone in education, the challenge it poses to learners is very evident in terms of effective development of skills and competencies. To illustrate, students in an English class are supposed to develop mastery in communication skills specifically oral proficiency through constant interaction with their peers and teachers, but due to the modular learning approach, they are confined in their own bubble, which may affect their ability to communicate in English articulately. This scenario may in turn manifest in their lack of confidence to speak the language and their English language proficiency as a whole. Marcum and Kim (2020) emphasized that for distance English-language learning program to be successful in promoting oral proficiency, support such as ensuring a meaningful dialogue with teachers or qualified tutors must be implemented.

Table 6. *Micro-Context Barriers of English Language Learning*

Item	Mean	SD
MIC 1 - I dislike the English subject.	.09	.287
MIC 2 - I am not confident in using the English language.	.66	.487
MIC 3 - I am not motivated to study the English language by myself.	.26	.439
MIC 4 - I feel anxious in answering my English modules.	.48	.501
MIC 5 - I feel physically tired in studying and answering my English modules.	.25	.433
MIC 6 - I feel mentally tired in studying and answering my English modules.	.35	.478
MIC 7 - I do not have a wide prior knowledge of the English language.	.44	.498
MIC 8 - I cannot translate the English language into my native language and vice versa.	.17	.376
MIC 9 - I do not have enough sleep.	.38	.487
MIC 10 - I am not good/fluent at speaking the English language.	.66	.474
MIC 11 - I am not good in comprehending and writing English texts.	.29	.453
MIC 12 - I am not good in understanding conversations in English.	.16	.366
MIC 13 - I am not performing well in the English subject in class in terms of my grades.	.21	.406
MIC 14 - I am not capable of learning the English language without teacher's supervision	.29	.453
MIC 15 - I am not equipped with a wide vocabulary of the English language.	.44	.498
MIC 16 - I am not frequently using/practicing the English language outside of school.	.47	.500

n = 189 student respondents under modular-based learning modality

Table 7 shows the correlation matrix of the 16 variables of the macro-context factors to examine how the variables are associated with each other. While the denoted r values in the table are statistically significant, it is notable that the highest correlation value is .319 among all the significant values in the table suggesting a weak correlation. To illustrate, items MIC1 (I dislike the English subject) and MIC2 (I am not confident in using the English language) are significantly correlated with each other. It means that these two variables have explanatory influence to the micro-context factor however their correlation value is only .222. This weak correlation may be influenced by other factors such as the self-directed nature of instructional approach embedded in the module, the learners' limited access to resources and facilities to enhance English proficiency, the lack of opportunity to practice English as a second language considering that it is the medium of instruction in most subjects offered. These on top of other factors may have potentially lead to the frustration of students in this new learning modality thereby affecting their perception and attitude towards the subject.

Table 8 shows the variance explained by the rotated factors using varimax rotation to reduce complexity and make the data easier to interpret. Out of the 16 variables, it was reduced to 4 factors.

Table 7. *Micro -Context Factors Correlation Matrix*

	MIC 1	MIC 2	MIC 3	MIC 4	MIC 5	MIC 6	MIC 7	MIC 8	MIC 9	MIC 10	MIC 11	MIC 12	MIC 13	MIC 14	MIC 15	MIC 16
MIC 1																
MIC 2	**.222***															
MIC 3	**.236***	**.145***	_													
MIC 4	**.178***	**.420***	**.276***													
MIC 5	**.247***	.130	**.358***	**.181***	_											
MIC 6	.080	.016	**.250***	**.205***	**.452***	_										
MIC 7	.057	**.319***	**.206***	**.278***	**.157***	**.157***										
MIC 8	.105	**.232***	**.184***	**.356***	**.197***	**.143***	**.340***									
MIC 9	.058	.129	**.182***	**.094**	**.305***	**.294***	.074	**.169***								
MIC 10	.108	.460	.117	.287	.024	.032	**.408***	**.204***	.032							
MIC 11	**.251***	**.303***	**.294***	**.328***	.097	.053	**.337***	**.214***	.107	**.304***	_					
MIC12	.066	**.218***	**.239***	**.277***	.015	**.168***	**.170***	**.229***	.047	**.158***	**.398***					
MIC 13	.114	**.173***	**.206***	**.241***	**.221***	**.230***	**.155***	**.293***	**.138***	**.282***	**.314***	**.387***				
MIC 14	.088	**.255***	**.187***	**.258***	**.178***	.102	**.148***	**.245***	**.179***	**.329***	**.222***	**.142***	**.256***			
MIC 15	.094	**.144***	.085	**.171***	.132	.112	**.334***	.112	.118	**.273***	**.148***	-.034	**.155***	**.290***		
MIC 16	.037	**.210***	**.168***	.088	**.144***	.109	**.340***	**.281***	.046	**.249***	**.201***	.083	**.226***	**.201***	**.297***	

Table 8. *Total Variance of Micro-Context Factors Explained*

Factors	Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.445	15.284	15.284
2	2.029	12.680	27.964
3	1.993	12.458	40.423
4	1.713	10.709	51.132

Table 9 shows the rotated component matrix using varimax rotation. The 16-item micro-context section of the questionnaire yielded four-factor loadings having their variables that strongly correlate to them. Micro-context factors refer to the internal or personal challenges that the students feel. More importantly, these inherent disputes play a significant role towards learning the English language. These factors are discussed in detail.

Lack of exposure and practice. In a study by Alizadeh (2016), she found out that some factors affecting the students' English language learning include students' background knowledge in English. Salie et al. (2020) also added that exposure to native language communication served as barrier. Consequently, students lacked mental dedication to defining grammatical variables to communicate ideas both in written and oral communication outputs (Frans, 2016). The deficiency of the students to construct correct sentences in English and the limited given time in English courses play a vital role in English language learning. In other words, since students are not pressured to construct, expand and refine oral language to enhance their written performance in the self-directed nature of MDL, the growth of students' awareness of language features was lacking. Moreover, infrequent use of English language at home and school (Mosha, 2014) lessens their exposure to the language.

Lack of perceived competence. Students' perception of the English language is one of the crucial factors in the English learning process. If the students have a negative view of the language and their language skills, the more likely they neglect the learning of the language. Jiang et al. (2019) reported that students' perception has a significant impact on their motivation, and vice versa. It is also crucial for the conceptual understanding of some English skills and concepts perceived to be difficult (Picardal, 2019). This factor supports Harb and El-Shaarawi (2007) and Ghadirzadeh et al. (2012) claim that the most important factor affecting students' English performance is their lack of perceived individual competence as manifested in the speaking ability. One of the reasons attributed to this factor is probably due to the language anxiety level (Jugo, 2020) that students associate with English language use. Another probable reason could be the poor language facility in the form of vocabulary (Misbah et al., 2017)

Lack of motivation. Alizadeh (2016) purported that students had negative attitudes toward English learning as they lack motivation due to their inadequate English language skills. Gaerlan (2016) stated Filipino high school students are not motivated to use or learn in English especially when they do not see it as an essential skill for their future. If they do, they do not seem to want to exert too much effort using the language. This factor could be due to the untimely and unconscientious feedback mechanism from teachers (Misbah et al., 2017). This scenario reduces the pressure and challenge to excel, as they do not know if they did right or their performance needs improvement. The absence of fun and engaging activities may have caused the lack of motivation to learn English because contrary to traditional classroom set up, under MDL students had to complete the embedded tasks along most of the time. Most importantly, this study ruled out that the significant predictor of their level of motivation is their mental and physical state. Most of the students reported that they are already burnout with too many activities and tasks that needed to be completed in a limited timeframe.

Lack of interest. The attitudinal aspect of learners is one of the emphasized factors that influence student achievement (El-Omari, 2016). The lack of interest is one (Salie et al., 2020). Interestingly, Genc and Aydin (2011) found out that the only variable statistically significant in their study

was the degree of importance of learning English that students ascribe. This goes to say that, when students perceive ELL as important, they will show interest in learning it thereby manifesting positive behaviors and increased academic performance. In this regard, this may be contradictory to Gaerlan (2016) with their findings among Filipino learner respondents. While it is found in this study that the lack of interest is a factor to ELL, these inconsistencies may be attributed to the nature of MDL being multifaceted. For instance, the lack of interest could stem from the absence of interaction with their peers, lack of constructive feedback from their teachers, worsened socioeconomic status hampered by the emergence of pandemic, and many more.

Table 9. *Correlation of Variables in the Micro-Context Factors Using Rotated Component Matrix*

Factors	Items/Variables	Item Correlation
Lack of Exposure and Practice	I am not equipped with a wide vocabulary of the English language.	.592
	I do not have a wide prior knowledge of the English language.	.590
Lack of Perceived Competence	I am not good in understanding conversations in English.	.616
	I am not performing well in the English subject in class in terms of my grades.	.560
	I am not good in comprehending and writing English texts.	.601
	I am not good/fluent in speaking the English language.	.571
	I am not confident in using the English language.	.578
Lack of Motivation	I feel physically tired in studying and answering my English modules.	.655
	I feel mentally tired in studying and answering my English modules.	.625
Lack of Interest	I dislike the English subject.	.683

Strategies to Overcome Barriers in ELL under MDL

Effective use of language learning strategies has particular importance for distance language learners who do not have direct face-to-face contact with their tutors (Altunay, 2014).This section revealed the strategies and techniques the respondents utilized and practiced to overcome the challenges encountered in English language learning under MDL. The table shows that the most frequent strategy and technique used was to look for unfamiliar lessons and English terms (X=.89; SD=.315). This result is contrary to Altunay (2014) wherein Turkish students frequently used cognitive strategy such as saying or writing new English words several times and guessing the meaning strategy to understand unfamiliar words. This disparity could be attributed to the use of English language as a medium of instruction from pre-elementary level until tertiary unlike in Turkey that they predominantly use their first language in most of their affairs. On the other hand, since these students are under MDL, they somehow rarely asked their teachers for help and feedback in performance in the English subject as evidenced by its low mean (X=.26; SD=442). One of the plausible reasons of this trend is that students had to become independent in their learning process and they may be hesitant to communicate with their teachers out of shyness, indifference, or nonchalance most especially if their teachers are not that familiar to them.

Table 10. *Strategies Used to Overcome the Barriers*

Item	Mean	SD
Strat1 - I look up in the internet any lesson or English terms that I am not familiar.	.89	.315
Strat2 - I read English texts during my free time.	.53	.500
Strat3- I ask for help from my friends or family members in practicing the English language.	.57	.497
Strat4 - I sometimes use the English language in communicating at home.	.48	.501
Strat5 - I practice writing using the English language.	.63	.484
Strat6 - I mimic native English speakers.	.47	.500
Strat7 - I ask my teachers for help and feedback in terms of my performance in the English subject.	.26	.442
Strat8 - I assess my own knowledge of the English language by answering exercises on the internet.	.65	.725

Table 11 shows the correlation matrix of the eight (8) variables of the strategies and techniques to examine how the variables are associated with each other. The denoted r values in the table are statistically significant given a large sample size of 189 respondents. However, correlation values indicate weak positive correlation (with only .316 as the greatest r-value). To illustrate, STRAT1 (I look up in the internet any lesson or English terms that I am not familiar) and STRAT6 (I mimic native English speakers) have positive weak correlation, hence they are categorized under the theme a commitment to practice the skill (Table 13). This observation suggests that although learners have the tendency to look up to unfamiliar words in the internet as a measure to support their learning process, it does not necessarily mean that they also have to mimic native English speakers. It simply means that these two strategies happened to be related to a strategy to improve English proficiency in the context of modular distance learning modality. This coincides with Magno et al. (2011) finding that understanding one's own thought processes and taking proactive actions to improve one's skill are some of the significant predictors for oral proficiency in English. Moreover, these strategies are indicators of goal orientation, which is an important component of self-regulated learning and an important element of academic performance (Kirmizi, 2014).

Table 12 shows the variance explained by the rotated factors using varimax rotation to reduce complexity and make the data easier to interpret. There were 3 factor loadings generated out from the 8 variables for this section.

Table 11. *Strategies Correlation Matrix*

	STRAT 1	STRAT 2	STRAT 3	STRAT 4	STRAT 5	STRAT 6	STRAT 7	STRAT 8
STRAT 1								
STRAT 2	-.060							
STRAT3	.132	.082						
STRAT 4	-.034	**.274***	.065					
STRAT 5	-.062	**.316***	**.147***	**.183***				
STRAT 6	**.229***	.021	**.175***	**.257***	**.211***			
STRAT 7	.098	**.223***	**.283***	.125	**.162***	**.162***		
STRAT 8	.109	**.165***	.050	**.138***	**.190***	**.216***	.057	-

Table 12. *Total Variance Explained of Strategies used to overcome the Macro-Micro Context Factors*

	Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1679	20.985	20.985
2	1.394	17.426	38.410
3	1333	16.668	55.078

After using varimax rotation, 3-factor loadings came out and are as follows: commitment to practice the skill, self-evaluation strategies, and social strategies. These findings support Shum et al. (2011) report that students employed varied techniques in English language learning such as metacognitive, cognitive, social, memory, and affective aspects. It implies that learners have higher language proficiency with more diverse language learning strategies. Each of the factor is discussed in detail.

Commitment to practice the skill. A fundamental component of self-regulated learning is the commitment of the student to improve one skill through practice. In this study, learners reported to practice reading, writing, and looking in the internet the meaning of a particular word. All these manifestations of language learning strategies are essential factors in improving language proficiency and performance. Learners with high metacognitive awareness can concentrate on their work more effectively and eliminate inadequate learning strategies. This finding corroborates that of Lestari and Wahyudin (2020) that metacognition has been the most frequently used strategy followed by social and compensation strategies by Indonesian EFL undergraduate learners. This probably explained why 50% of the respondents signified no change in their perception of their ELL experience for traditional and modular based learning because they have adapted though these strategies.

Self-Evaluation Strategies. This factor is considered one of the crucial elements for learners to cope with the challenges of distance education. In this strategy, individuals evaluate their personal effectiveness in relation to a specific learning tasks (i.e., learning English language) which make them more self-regulated learners. Self-evaluation is essential in guiding the learning process on the part of distance education students as they are isolated from other classmates, and have to direct their own learning themselves (Kirmizi, 2014). Teachers in this situation can promote students' self-evaluation by guiding them on how to monitor their learning objectives and strategy well, and give them feedback on where they have to improve in these objectives.

Social Strategies. This is almost similar to the findings of Altunay (2014) wherein the social strategies used by their respondents was "If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again". While this strategy may seem to be contradictory to the above macro context factors in particular the lack of assistance from MKOs and poor feedback mechanism, it suggests that these students maximized self-regulated learning strategies available to them as the need arises to be able to adapt to the changing learning system. Learners in this study demonstrated help seeking strategies. This strategy is an important distinguishing characteristic of self-regulated learners as it allows them to seek academic help in an adaptive manner to promote learning and higher achievement (Kirmizi, 2014).

Table 13. *Correlation of Variables in the Strategies Using Rotated Component Matrix*

Factors	Items/Variables	Item Correlation
Commitment to practice the skill	I read English texts during my free time.	.728
	I practice writing using the English language.	.656
	I sometimes use the English language in communicating at home	.606
	I look up in the internet any lesson or English terms that I am not familiar.	.660
Self-evaluation Strategy	I mimic native English speakers.	.734
	I assess my own knowledge of the English language by answering exercises on the internet.	.565
Social strategies	I ask for help from my friends or family members in practicing the English language.	.767
	I ask my teachers for help and feedback in terms of my performance in the English subject.	.749

Generally, this study identified various macro and micro context factors that affected their performance in English in this remote learning set-up. It is also evident that students lacked assistance or feedback and resources to use in their learning process. Most of them have little to no motivation to learn more about their English subjects due to inadequate fluency and confidence in using English. Notwithstanding that these students encountered challenges in learning English, they employed and utilized different strategies to cope with their situation to maximize the effective learning process under the new learning modality.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Remote teaching and learning have become a viable alternative to ensure continuity of learning amidst the global health crisis. The current research provides information on the factors and reasons contributing to students' difficulties in English language learning in this new learning modality. It also provides insights into understanding the aspects of autonomous learning such as modular distance learning and implies that in order to maximize English language proficiency among secondary students, fostering collaboration, social interaction even in an online platform, as well as feedback must be considered by teachers as they design their lesson and prepare the learning materials for their students. Future research direction can be focused on the effect of establishing an online community for students to interact and share their insights of the subject matter and learning experiences to their performance, attitude, and competence in the use of English.

In the light of the findings and conclusions, the researcher recommends the continuous provision of training and guidelines to teachers handling classes under modular distance learning in terms of giving effective assessment and feedback to students' output and performance. Teachers are also encouraged to promote socio-emotional learning with students so that the latter will be encouraged to express themselves with the learning content and their learning experiences so that those factors identified in this study which in one way or another affected their learning may be addressed.

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