
Artificial Intelligence Resource Reliance and Strategic Learning as Predictors of Linguistic Competence of Pre-service English Teachers

Genesis Z. Tayanés, MAED¹, & James L. Paglinawan, PhD²

¹College of Education, Tagoloan Community College, Philippines

²Department of Professional Education, Central Mindanao University, Philippines

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Abstract

This study investigates how artificial intelligence (AI) reliance and strategic learning collectively influence linguistic competence among 302 pre-service English teachers in a local community college in the Philippines. Using a descriptive correlational-predictive research design, the study employed a validated survey questionnaire to measure participants' levels of AI resource reliance, strategic learning behaviors, and linguistic competence. Correlation and regression analysis were utilized to determine the relationships among variables and identify significant predictors of language competency. Findings show that while pre-service teachers use AI resources moderately, they express concerns about overreliance. Participants exhibit strong strategic learning skills, particularly in organizing information and sustaining motivation. Strategic learning appears as the strongest predictor of linguistic competence, with motivation and cognitive engagement showing significant positive effects. Moreover, frequent AI use correlates with lower competence, whereas perceiving AI as a useful tool enhances linguistic performance. Findings indicate that factors under strategic learning serve as the essential foundation for effective language development, whereas the educational benefits of AI hinge on its purposeful and critical use. Teacher education programs are therefore encouraged to strengthen motivational and cognitive strategy training and promote AI literacy that emphasizes mindful and intentional technology integration. This balanced approach ensures that digital tools support, rather than substitute, the core pedagogical skills required for successful language teaching. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct longitudinal or experimental studies to further examine how sustained AI integration and evolving learning strategies influence linguistic competence over time, across diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Strategic Learning, Linguistic Competence, Pre-service Teachers, AI Resource Reliance, Learning Strategies, Regression Analysis.

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping education, especially in the preparation of pre-service English teachers who must adapt to technology-rich classrooms. In the Philippines, the Department of Education has launched AI centers and promoted the use of AI-powered resources in teacher training. This reflects a broader movement toward digital transformation in language education (DepEd, 2025). Mediodia (2025) notes that AI tools are now present in both curricular and co-curricular activities, supporting language instruction and assessment. Internationally, Celik et al. (2022) describe similar trends. Teacher education programs worldwide are integrating AI to enhance linguistic competence and digital literacy.

However, the integration of AI brings a range of issues and concerns. De Guzman, Tenedero, Gapas, and Deabanico (2024) report that Filipino pre-service teachers often feel anxious about the ethical use of AI, data privacy, and the reliability of automated feedback. Far Eastern University (2025) highlights that many pre-service teachers in the Philippines have only moderate confidence in using AI, despite positive attitudes toward its potential. Lacuna (2025) finds that gaps in digital infrastructure and uneven access to technology further complicate AI adoption. These local challenges mirror international findings. Holmes et al. (2019) identify insufficient training and preparedness as barriers to effective AI use in teacher education. Satvati, Kamali, Safian Boldaji, Khodadadi, and Akhondi (2025) point to persistent gaps between the capabilities of AI and teachers' classroom practices. The rapid spread of generative AI tools, as discussed by Cabato (2025), raises new questions about professional identity and ethical practice for future teachers. Cambridge University Press (2025) also emphasizes the need for clear guidelines and support for teachers navigating these changes.

Research in the Philippines shows that pre-service teachers recognize the value of AI for lesson planning and student engagement. Many still struggle with confidence and readiness to use these tools effectively (Lacuna, 2025; De Guzman et al., 2024). Mediodia (2025) observes that professional training and clear guidelines are needed to help teachers balance AI resource reliance with traditional pedagogical strategies. Alaga-Acosta (2022) and Gutierrez (2020) highlight the importance of strategic learning, such as self-regulation and motivation, in supporting communicative competence, especially when technology is involved. International studies reinforce these points. Oxford (2017) and Dawit (2020) argue that strategic learning skills are essential for maximizing the benefits of technology in language education. Celik et al. (2022) and Xu, Zhang, and Zou (2021) find that self-regulation and motivation help mediate the impact of AI on language learning outcomes. Satvati et al. (2025) note that teacher identity and professional development are shaped by the interplay of technology use and strategic learning.

Despite these insights, there is a research gap regarding how AI resource reliance and strategic learning together predict linguistic competence among pre-service English teachers, particularly in local and lower-resource contexts such as Philippine state universities and community colleges. Alaga-Acosta (2022) and Gutierrez (2020) observe that most studies focus on either technology adoption or strategic learning in isolation. Far Eastern University (2025) and Lacuna (2025) call for more empirical research on the interaction of these variables in real classroom settings. Internationally, Celik et al. (2022), the *International Journal of Language Learning and Teaching* (2025), and Xu et al. (2021) highlight the need for studies that explore the complex relationships among AI use, strategic learning, and linguistic competence.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the predictive relationship of AI resource reliance and strategic learning to linguistic competence among pre-service English teachers in a local community college in the Philippines. The research situates these variables within ongoing debates about digital readiness, teacher identity, equitable access, and the effective blending of technology with core language teaching strategies. The study draws on both local and international perspectives.

2. Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine the level of pre-service teachers' reliance on Artificial Intelligence resources, their use of strategic learning strategies, and their level of linguistic

competence. It further seeks to assess the relationship among these variables and to establish which factors best predict linguistic competence. To address these objectives, the study is guided by the following questions:

1. What is the level of pre-service teachers' reliance on Artificial Intelligence Resource in terms of:
 - a. Frequency and AI Resource Usage;
 - b. Perceived Usefulness of AI Resource;
 - c. Degree of Dependence on AI Resources; and
 - d. Concerns about AI Overreliance?
2. What is the level pre-service teachers' strategic learning in terms of:
 - a. Metacognitive Strategies;
 - b. Cognitive Strategies;
 - c. Resource Management Strategies; and
 - d. Motivational Strategies?
3. What is the level of pre-service teachers' linguistic competence in terms of:
 - a. Oral Proficiency;
 - b. Written Proficiency; and
 - c. Reading and Comprehension Skills?
4. Is there a significance relationship between the pre-service teachers' Linguistic Competence and:
 - a. Artificial Intelligence Resource Reliance; and
 - b. Strategic Learning?
5. Which of the variables, singly or in combination, best predict the Linguistic Competence of the Pre-Service Teachers?

3. Methodology

This chapter details the methodology used in the study Artificial Intelligence Resource Reliance and Strategic Learning as Predictors of Linguistic Competence of Pre-service English Teachers.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive correlational-predictive research design to explore the relationships among artificial intelligence (AI) resource reliance, strategic learning, and linguistic competence among pre-service English teachers. This design was deemed appropriate because it not only describes existing conditions but also examines the degree of association among variables and determines the predictive capacity of selected independent variables on a dependent variable. Through this method, the study aimed to identify whether the extent of reliance on AI-based learning tools and the level of strategic learning behavior can significantly predict the linguistic competence of future English educators. Such an approach provides valuable insights into how emerging technologies and learner strategies interact to influence language proficiency and professional preparation. This research design also aligns with Celik et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of investigating the dynamic interplay between technology integration and learning strategies within the context of teacher education, particularly as AI continues to reshape the landscape of language teaching and learning.

3.2 Participants

Researchers participants were 302 pre-service English teachers enrolled in Bachelor in Secondary Education Major in English in a local community college. In determining the sample size, the study employed a probability sampling method specifically simple random sampling carried out using an online random sampling generator (Randomizer.org) to ensure equal opportunity to be selected in the study.

3.3 Instruments

The data for this study were gathered using a 76-item survey instrument divided into three distinct sections. Part I was designed to measure AI Resource Reliance, Part II assessed Strategic Learning, and Part III evaluated Linguistic Competence. To ensure the instrument's validity, it underwent rigorous examination by three field experts who verified its content, face, and construct validity. Furthermore, the questionnaire was subjected to pilot testing, which demonstrated strong reliability with an overall Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.882 and a standardized alpha of .854. These values substantially exceed the conventional threshold of .70, indicating excellent internal consistency for the combined measures. When analyzed separately, each section maintained strong reliability: both Part I ($\alpha = 0.854$) and Part II ($\alpha = .852$) showed reliable consistency, while Part III demonstrated particularly high reliability ($\alpha = 0.940$), confirming the instrument's robustness in measuring linguistic competence.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Upon receiving clearance from the Research Ethics Committee, the researchers obtained formal approval to conduct the study from the College President through the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Subsequently, coordination was established with the College Program heads to confirm participation and scheduling of data collection sessions. Following this administrative preparation, the researchers proceeded to administer the survey directly to participants during their regularly scheduled class sessions. The researchers obtained informed consent from all participants, emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any time. Clear instructions were provided regarding the survey completion, and participants were assured that all data collected would be used strictly for the stated research objectives and would be treated with the utmost confidentiality throughout the research process.

3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize variable levels. Pearson correlation analysis identified relationships among AI resource reliance, strategic learning, and linguistic competence. Multiple linear regression determined which variables were predictors of linguistic competence. This statistical analyses were highly recommended by for studies measuring technology impacts and learning strategies (Celik et al., 2022).

3.6 Ethical Consideration

Researchers followed strict ethical procedures to protect the participants of the study. They obtained informed consent for participation and maintained confidentiality by anonymizing all data during processing. All research procedures followed institutional guidelines.

4. Results and Discussions

Table 1: Level of Pre-Service English Teachers' Reliance on Artificial Intelligence Resources

Sub-Variable	Overall Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Concerns on Overreliance	4.09	0.53	Highly Reliance	High Reliance
Perceived Usefulness	3.80	0.56	Highly Reliance	High Reliance
Frequency & Usage	3.49	0.57	Moderately Reliance	Moderate Reliance
Degree of Dependence	3.16	0.64	Moderately Reliance	Moderate Reliance
Overall Mean	3.64	0.40	Moderately Reliance	Moderate Reliance

Legend:

Score	Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
5	4.51 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Reliance
4	3.51 – 4.50	Agree	Highly Reliance
3	2.51 – 3.50	Undecided	Moderately Reliance
2	1.51 – 2.50	Disagree	Low Reliance
1	1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very Low Reliance

Table 1 presents mean scores and standard deviations for how pre-service teachers use Artificial Intelligence (AI) resources across four areas: frequency and usage, perceived usefulness, degree of dependence, and concerns about overreliance. The overall mean score for AI resource reliance is 3.64 (SD = 0.40), showing moderate reliance on AI for academic support while students keep some independence in their learning.

The mean score for Frequency and AI Resource Usage is 3.49 (SD = 0.57), indicating that students use AI tools moderately and selectively. This pattern is similar to occasional use seen in earlier research by Alaga-Acosta (2022). Perceived Usefulness of AI Resources has the highest mean at 3.80 (SD = 0.56), which suggests that students view AI as helpful for improving accuracy and efficiency, echoing findings by Holmes et al. (2019) and Xu et al. (2021). Moreover, the Degree of Dependence measures at 3.16 (SD = 0.64), reflecting moderate reliance. Despite frequent exposure to AI tools, students continue to use independent reasoning and rely on personal skills. Concerns about AI Overreliance have the highest score at 4.09 (SD = 0.53), indicating that students are aware of risks such as reduced creativity and potential issues with academic integrity.

The trends identified show that students maintain a measured approach in using AI resources. They benefit from AI but remain cautious about relying too heavily on these technologies. Instructional planning can build on this by providing guidance on responsible AI use and fostering critical thinking about ethical considerations and personal skill development.

Table 2: Level Pre-service English Teachers' Strategic Learning

Sub-Variable	Overall Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Cognitive Strategies	4.25	0.45	Highly Strategic Learning	High Strategic Learning
Metacognitive Strategies	4.19	0.47	Highly Strategic Learning	High Strategic Learning
Motivational Strategies	4.17	0.47	Highly Strategic Learning	High Strategic Learning
Resource Management	4.02	0.47	Highly Strategic Learning	High Strategic Learning
Overall Mean	4.16	0.37	Highly Strategic Learning	High Strategic Learning

Legend:

Score	Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
5	4.51 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High Strategic learning
4	3.51 – 4.50	Agree	Highly Strategic learning
3	2.51 – 3.50	Undecided	Moderately Strategic learning
2	1.51 – 2.50	Disagree	Low Strategic learning
1	1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very Low strategic learning

Table 2 presents strategic learning scores among students, with an overall mean of 4.16 (SD = 0.37). This matches findings from Alaga-Acosta (2022) and Xu et al. (2021), both of which highlight the prominence of strategic learning among pre-service English teachers. Cognitive Strategies have the highest mean at 4.25 (SD = 0.45), indicating that students organize, summarize, and analyze information to improve understanding. Metacognitive Strategies follow with a mean of 4.19 (SD = 0.47). Students show strong ability to plan, monitor, and review their learning. This aligns with Dawit (2020) and Gutierrez (2020), who likewise point to the role of metacognitive engagement in language learning. Motivational Strategies earn a mean of 4.17 (SD = 0.47). Students demonstrate persistence and intrinsic motivation, consistent with Mediodia (2025), who links learning success to sustained self-regulation. Resource Management Strategies yield a mean of 4.02 (SD = 0.47). Students effectively use study aids, manage their time, and select helpful environments, similar to observations by Celik et al. (2022). Patterns in the data suggest that students balance cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and resource management skills in their approach. Instructional efforts can reinforce this by integrating tasks that combine these strategy types, providing opportunities for reflective learning and resource planning within teacher preparation programs.

Table 3: Level of Pre-service English Teachers' Linguistic Competence

Sub-Variable	Overall Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Reading & Comprehension	3.72	0.63	Very Good	High Competence
Written Proficiency	3.55	0.61	Good	Moderate Competence
Oral Proficiency	3.35	0.66	Good	Moderate Competence
Overall Mean	3.54	0.57	Good	Moderate Competence

Legend:

Score	Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
5	4.51 – 5.00	Excellent	Very High Linguistic Competence
4	3.51 – 4.50	Very Good	High Linguistic Competence
3	2.51 – 3.50	Good	Moderate Linguistic Competence
2	1.51 – 2.50	Fair	Low Linguistic Competence
1	1.00 – 1.50	Poor	Very Low Linguistic Competence

The data in Table 3 present the linguistic competence of pre-service English teachers in three areas: oral, written, and reading. The overall mean score of 3.54 (SD = 0.57) reflects a good level of competence across these domains. Reading and Comprehension shows the highest mean of 3.72 (SD = 0.63), interpreted as very good. This pattern indicates that the respondents can understand and analyze written texts effectively. Frequent engagement with academic materials appears to reinforce comprehension and vocabulary depth, a finding consistent with Gutierrez and Panas-Espique (2020), who emphasized that reading exposure strengthens conceptual understanding in language learning. The result implies that sustained reading practice may help pre-service teachers process written input more critically and efficiently. Written Proficiency ranks second with a mean of 3.55 (SD = 0.61), classified as good. Respondents can organize ideas and express them in writing, though some limitations remain in vocabulary range and grammatical accuracy. De La Cruz (2023) notes similar trends, observing that pre-service teachers often display structured writing but struggle with stylistic consistency and complex syntax. The data suggest that more targeted exercises in contextual writing and peer feedback can refine written accuracy and expression.

Moreover, Oral Proficiency records the lowest mean of 3.35 (SD = 0.66), still within the good range. Respondents can articulate ideas but encounter challenges in fluency, pronunciation, and confidence during spontaneous speech. Punongbayan et al. (2025) identified comparable difficulties among pre-service teachers, linking them to limited communicative practice and exposure to authentic speaking situations. Incorporating more interaction-based speaking tasks and microteaching sessions could help address these gaps.

Across sub-domains, reading emerges as the strongest skill, while oral communication remains the weakest. Differences among these areas highlight the need for more balanced practice across modalities. Structured reading enhances comprehension and supports written expression, but communicative competence develops more effectively through applied oral interaction and performance-oriented activities. Integrating these modes within teacher education curricula can foster more consistent linguistic growth aligned with professional teaching demands.

Table 4: Correlation Result between Linguistic Competence and Artificial Intelligence Resource Reliance and Strategic Learning and its Respective Sub-Variables

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Significance
AI Resource Reliance and Linguistic Competence			
- Frequency and AI Resource Usage	-.132	.021	Significant
- Perceived Usefulness of AI Resources	.154	.007	Significant
- Degree of Dependence on AI Resources	-.024	.684	Not Significant
- Concern About AI Overreliance	.299	.000	Significant
Strategic Learning and Linguistic Competence			
- Metacognitive Strategies	.259	.000	Significant
- Cognitive Strategies	.418	.000	Significant
- Motivational Strategies	.452	.000	Significant
- Resource Management Strategy	.360	.000	Significant

Table 4 on the correlation of variables shows a critical hierarchy of factors influencing linguistic competence among pre-service English teachers, with strategic learning variables demonstrating overwhelmingly positive relationships (All four sub-variables with Positive Correlations) while AI reliance shows a more complex, dual-natured impact that echoes the concerns raised by De Guzman et al. (2024) regarding ethical use and effectiveness. The analysis of Pearson coefficients identifies a number of statistically significant correlations in the dataset that demand attention, particularly the strong positive relationship between Motivational Strategies and linguistic competence ($r = .452$, $p = .000$) underscoring the vital role of intrinsic motivation (Alaga-Acosta 2022; Gutierrez, 2020) as crucial for Filipino pre-service teachers. Similarly, Cognitive Strategies ($r = .418$, $p = .000$) and Resource Management Strategies ($r = .360$, $p = .000$) show substantial positive associations, establishing strategic learning as the dominant factor in language development and validating Dawit's (2020) emphasis on strategic competence in overcoming linguistic challenges in today's AI driven classrooms. Moreover, these patterns suggests that students' internal drive and active engagement with learning materials form the essential foundation for linguistic achievement. This result further supports Celik et al.'s (2022) call for enhanced pedagogical competence in teacher education.

AI Resource Reliance variables present a revealing contrast that reflects the awareness-utilization gap among respondents. Concern About AI Overreliance shows a significant positive correlation ($r = .299$, $p = .000$), indicating that mindful, critical engagement with technology benefits learners, whereas Frequency of AI Resource Usage demonstrates a significant negative relationship ($r = -.132$, $p = .021$), empirically validating International Journal of Language Learning and Teaching's (2025) concerns about how overreliance may hinder intrinsic skill development. The consistent statistical significance across all strategic learning variables ($p = .000$) and the clearly divergent patterns within AI reliance, where Perceived Usefulness shows modest benefits ($r = .154$, $p = .007$) while Frequency shows clear drawbacks, creating a compelling narrative about quality versus quantity that resonates with Xu et al.'s (2021) findings on AI's mixed impacts in language learning.

Table 5. Summary of Overall Correlation Result between Linguistic Competence and Artificial Intelligence Resource Reliance and Strategic Learning

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Significance
AI Resource Reliance and Linguistic Competence	.096	.095	Not Significant
Strategic Learning and Linguistic Competence	.468	.000	Significant

Table 5 shows the summary result for the correlation analysis reveals that strategic learning demonstrates a statistically significant relationship with linguistic competence ($r = .468$, $p < .001$), whereas artificial intelligence resource reliance shows no significant relationship ($r = .096$, $p = .095$). Traditional self-regulated learning strategies serve as a substantially stronger predictor of language skills development than reliance on AI tools among pre-service English teachers. This findings is align with Celik et al.'s (2022) emphasis on pedagogical competence over technological proficiency where is was argued that strategic learning provides the foundational skills necessary for linguistic development that AI reliance cannot replace. Hence, the non-significant relationship with AI resources further supports concerns raised in recent literature about the potential for AI tools to function as substitutes rather than enhancers of deep learning processes (International Journal of Language Learning and Teaching, 2025), highlighting the continued importance of fostering intrinsic strategic learning capabilities of pre-service teachers regardless of the rapid evolution of educational technology.

Table 6. Regression Analysis on AI Resource Reliance and Strategic Learning as Predictors of Linguistic Skills

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.010	.359		-.026	.979
AI Resource Reliance					
- Frequency and AI Resource Usage	-.338	.059	-.340	-5.738	.000
- Perceived Usefulness of AI Resources	.349	.058	.358	5.973	.000
- Concern About AI Overreliance	.213	.051	.200	4.136	.000
Strategic Learning					
- Cognitive Strategies	.260	.070	.205	3.719	.000
- Motivational Strategies	.340	.065	.282	5.210	.000
R=0.611	R2=0.373	F=35.26	Prob.= 0.000		

Table 6 shows the regression model is statistically significant and reveals that both AI Resource Reliance and Strategic Learning are powerful, multifaceted predictors of linguistic skills. The

strong multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.611$) indicates that a combination of AI reliance and strategic learning factors can predict pre-service teachers' linguistic skills. Additionally, the coefficient of determination reveals a practical explanatory power, showing that 37.3% ($R^2 = 0.373$) of the total variance in linguistics skills can be accounted for by specific AI Resource Reliance and Strategic Learning sub-variables used in this model. Results also reveal a strong association from its F-statistics ($F=35.6$) and p-value ($p=0.000$) indicating that the regression model is statistically significant and reliable overall. These findings thus confirm that the analysis highlights a nuanced "double-edged sword" effect of AI use and confirms the robust, positive impact of core strategic learning strategies.

Further analysis shows how each sub-variable contributes to linguistic skills. For AI resource reliance, frequent AI use is linked to lower linguistic competence ($\beta = -0.340$, $p = .000$). In contrast, perceived usefulness of AI tools offers the strongest positive effect ($\beta = 0.358$, $p = .000$), while concern about AI overreliance also predicts better language skills ($\beta = 0.200$, $p = .000$). These results suggest that simply using AI often can be detrimental, but seeing value in the tools and maintaining a critical approach helps support language development. For strategic learning, motivational strategies ($\beta = 0.282$, $p = .000$) and cognitive strategies ($\beta = 0.205$, $p = .000$) both positively impact linguistic competence, with motivation serving as the strongest factor. Overall, linguistic skills improve when strong internal motivation and engagement are combined with careful, purposeful use of AI resources.

The regression analysis confirms that AI Resource Reliance and Strategic Learning are key predictors of linguistic skills among pre-service English teachers in the Philippines. The significant correlation coefficient suggests that integrating technology with strategic learning practices provides essential support for language development (Celik et al., 2022). These findings highlight the importance of developing digital competence and AI literacy within teacher education programs. This compelling suggestion is echoed by Holmes et al. (2019) and Mediodia (2025), who argue that future teachers must be equipped to leverage digital tools effectively and judiciously in their instructional practice.

The data further reveal a double-edged sword effect of AI use. In one hand, frequent reliance on AI resources predicts lower language proficiency, which highlights risks like reduced independent language production and critical thinking skills (Cabato, 2025; De Guzman et al., 2024). Apparently, this finding aligns with recent research on AI anxiety and readiness. Filipino pre-service teachers and students often feel uncertain about excessive AI use and worry about its impact on genuine linguistic competence (De Guzman et al., 2024). Addressing these challenges requires targeted digital literacy training and ethical guidelines for technology use.

On the other hand, perceiving AI as essentially useful has a positive influence on linguistic skills. This reinforces the role of purposeful and reflective technology integration in effective language learning. When pre-service teachers understand and value the educational benefits of AI, they become more adept at selecting and applying tools that match pedagogical goals (International Journal of Language Learning and Teaching, 2025). Communication skills and self-regulation, as emphasized by Punongbayan et al. (2025) and Oxford (2017), also moderate this effect. These skills enable future English teachers to balance technological support with strategic learning practices.

Strategic learning factors, particularly motivational and cognitive strategies, are robust predictors of linguistic competence. Motivation, engagement, and self-regulation have long

been established as foundations of successful language acquisition (Alaga-Acosta, 2022; Zimmerman, 2002; Oxford, 2017). In the Philippine context, strengthening these skills in pre-service education programs is important because they equip future teachers to foster learner autonomy and adapt to technology-driven environments (Gutierrez, 2020; Gutierrez & Panas-Espique, 2020).

These findings suggest that teacher education institutions in the Philippines should design curriculum and training modules that develop both strategic learning and responsible technology use. Such interventions will help pre-service English teachers harness the benefits of AI, mitigate risks, and support communicative competence and professional readiness for contemporary classrooms (Xu et al., 2021).

5. Conclusion

This study establishes that strategic learning serves as the fundamental predictor of linguistic competence among pre-service English teachers, with motivational and cognitive strategies demonstrating the strongest positive impact, aligning with Alaga-Acosta's (2022) emphasis on self-regulation; however, AI reliance presents a nuanced relationship where frequent use correlates negatively with proficiency while perceived usefulness shows a positive effect, supporting Celik et al.'s (2022) observation of technology's value through purposeful application. The data confirm that students primarily rely on strategic learning while maintaining cautious moderation toward AI, reflecting the balanced integration Holmes et al. (2019) advocated. Consequently, teacher education programs should strengthen instruction in motivational and cognitive strategies while developing critical AI literacy that emphasizes purposeful application, ensuring pre-service teachers become self-regulated learners who utilize technology effectively without compromising their foundational language skills, thereby providing Philippine teacher education with research-based guidance for balancing technological integration with pedagogical competence.

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