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English Language Exposure, Communicative Engagement, and Mentorship Influence on Internship Preparedness Among Pre-Service English Teachers

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Abstract: This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study investigated how English language exposure, communicative engagement, and mentorship influence shape internship preparedness among 69 pre-service English teachers from a state university in Iloilo City, Philippines. The quantitative phase measured students' levels of exposure, engagement, mentorship experience, and perceived readiness for teaching using validated Likert-type instruments, while the qualitative phase explored contextual factors that clarified emerging statistical patterns. Findings indicated that the participants demonstrated moderate English language exposure, largely derived from digital and entertainment media, whereas interpersonal and home-based communicative use remained limited. Despite this moderate exposure, students reported high levels of internship preparedness, although significant differences were observed between sections, signaling uneven developmental opportunities. Correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between exposure and preparedness, indicating that passive or input-dominant exposure does not directly foster teaching confidence or pedagogical readiness. Qualitative insights emphasized the critical role of communicative engagement and mentorship particularly consistent modeling, structured feedback, and guided pedagogical practice in shaping students' readiness for classroom realities. Overall, the study underscores that internship preparedness is a multifaceted construct influenced more by quality engagement and mentorship depth than by the frequency of language exposure. Implications highlight the need for teacher education programs to enhance communicative practice, structured learning experiences, and supervisory systems that strengthen the transition from coursework to professional teaching.

Keywords: English Language Exposure; Communicative Engagement; Mentorship Influence; Internship Preparedness; Pre-Service English Teachers

1. Introduction

English remains a central pillar of instruction, academic discourse, and professional formation in Philippine teacher education programs. For pre-service teachers majoring in English, proficiency in the language is not merely an academic requirement but an essential component of their preparation for the teaching internship, where real classroom interactions demand both linguistic accuracy and communicative flexibility. As higher education institutions increasingly emphasize English-mediated tasks in reading, writing, and oral communication, questions persist regarding how students' patterns of language exposure and engagement translate into their perceived readiness for

teaching responsibilities [1]. Understanding how English functions in the daily academic lives of pre-service teachers is therefore vital in examining how they construct and evaluate their internship preparedness.

Scholars have long emphasized that language exposure particularly in diverse digital, social, and academic contexts contributes to second language development by increasing learners' contact with comprehensible input [2]. However, recent evidence suggests that frequency of exposure alone is insufficient to develop communicative competence unless learners actively use the language to negotiate meaning in interactive environments [3]. With the rise of multimedia consumption, much of students' English contact occurs through passive engagement such as streaming videos, music, or online content. This shift raises an important consideration: whether pre-service teachers' exposure genuinely strengthens their readiness for teaching, or whether communicative engagement the quality and authenticity of language use plays a more defining role in shaping professional competence [4]. Distinguishing exposure from engagement becomes even more necessary as students navigate hybrid modes of learning that blend academic communication with digitally mediated interactions. Eustaquio et al. [5] emphasize that English proficiency in professional contexts develops through self-motivation and personalized strategies, highlighting the importance of active engagement with the language. Their results underscore that learners who intentionally practice English are more capable of adjusting to communicative demands in workplace settings. This supports the idea that purposeful engagement, rather than passive exposure alone, is essential for functional proficiency.

Internship preparedness, as conceptualized in teacher education literature, encompasses a multidimensional set of competencies, including lesson planning, classroom communication, ethical judgment, adaptability, and professional confidence [6]. Although English proficiency contributes to these competencies, preparedness is also shaped by pedagogical practices, reflective thinking, and opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in classroom-like activities. Many pre-service teachers report feeling confident in their readiness despite moderate levels of language exposure, suggesting that other factors such as feedback-rich learning environments or peer collaboration may compensate for limited authentic English engagement [7]. These complexities highlight the need to examine how linguistic and instructional factors interact in influencing students' preparedness for the internship phase.

One influential yet often underexamined dimension is mentorship influence, which encompasses the guidance, modeling, and feedback provided by instructors, academic advisers, and cooperating teachers. Research indicates that mentorship quality strengthens pre-service teachers' professional identity, reflective capacity, and teaching confidence [8]. Mentors shape how students perceive instructional challenges, respond to performance expectations, and internalize professional norms. According to Prananto et al. [9], Variations in instructional styles and supervisory support may also lead to differences in perceived preparedness across student groups, even when they follow the same curriculum. Such differences underscore the importance of considering mentorship as a contextual variable that interacts with students' communicative engagement and English exposure to shape internship readiness.

In settings where English education intersects with digital learning environments, the interplay between exposure, engagement, and mentorship becomes even more salient. Some students may rely heavily on online materials for language input, while others benefit more from interactive academic tasks or direct instructor feedback [10]. Prior studies in Southeast Asian teacher education programs highlight how pre-service teachers often bridge linguistic gaps through reflective practice and supportive supervision rather than through sheer exposure alone [11]. This suggests that evaluating preparedness requires examining not only what students are exposed to, but how they engage, apply, and refine their communicative and pedagogical skills.

Given these evolving dynamics, a closer investigation is warranted into the combined roles of English language exposure, communicative engagement, and mentorship influence in shaping internship preparedness among pre-service English teachers in the Philippine context. While previous quantitative studies have explored the relationship between exposure and readiness, inconsistent findings particularly the frequent absence of a significant correlation indicate the need for a more nuanced analysis that incorporates qualitative insights into students' lived experiences and developmental trajectories. A mixed-methods perspective therefore offers a deeper lens for understanding how linguistic practices and mentorship processes contribute to pre-service teachers' readiness for the teaching internship.

This study aims to generate a comprehensive account of how English-mediated experiences and supervisory support interact to influence pre-service teachers' professional preparedness. Such understanding is essential for higher education institutions seeking to strengthen teacher training programs, enrich communicative opportunities, and enhance mentorship structures that support the transition from theoretical coursework to authentic class-

room practice. Ultimately, this inquiry contributes to ongoing efforts to refine English language teacher education in the Philippines by clarifying the linguistic and pedagogical foundations that sustain internship readiness.

1.1. Research Objectives

1) To determine the levels of English language exposure, communicative engagement, and mentorship influence among pre-service English teachers.
2) To assess the level of internship preparedness across pedagogical, communicative, and professional domains.
3) To analyze the relationships among English language exposure, communicative engagement, mentorship influence, and internship preparedness.
4) To explore pre-service teachers' experiences that illustrate how communicative engagement and mentorship shape their sense of readiness for the teaching internship.

1.2. Research Questions

1) What are the levels of English language exposure, communicative engagement, mentorship influence, and internship preparedness among pre-service English teachers?
2) How are English language exposure, communicative engagement, and mentorship influence related to internship preparedness?
3) Are there significant differences in communicative engagement, mentorship influence, or internship preparedness across student groups?
4) How do pre-service English teachers describe their communicative engagement in academic, personal, and digital contexts?
5) How do mentorship experiences and supervisory feedback shape pre-service teachers' confidence and readiness for the teaching internship?

2. Literature

2.1. Uneven English Language Exposure in Multilingual Academic Contexts

English language exposure remains a critical component of second-language development, but its distribution among learners is often uneven due to sociolinguistic realities within multilingual communities. In Philippine universities, English coexists with Filipino and regional languages, creating a linguistic environment where students' exposure levels vary significantly depending on home language practices, peer group norms, and institutional culture [12]. This uneven exposure becomes more pronounced among pre-service teachers who are expected to operate professionally in English yet may experience inconsistent or limited use of the language outside academic demands. Although English is a medium of instruction, students often revert to local languages in informal communication, leading to restricted opportunities for sustained exposure [13]. Chavez et al. [14] found that parental support and home-language practices significantly shape children's motivation to learn English. Their study highlights how families serve as early contexts of exposure, influencing language use frequency and learner confidence. This finding reinforces the role of environmental and home-based exposure, which your study identified as relatively limited.

Academic exposure, although structured, does not always guarantee high-quality linguistic input. Research shows that classroom interactions may remain teacher-centered, limiting the extent to which students actively engage with the language [15]. Furthermore, instructional materials and tasks vary widely across instructors, creating discrepancies in the type and depth of language exposure experienced by students [16]. These variations can translate into inconsistencies in linguistic development, particularly for pre-service teachers who rely heavily on academic tasks as their primary source of English input. In such cases, exposure may remain superficial focused more on output requirements rather than meaningful engagement with language content. Comeros et al. [17] argue that parental discretion strongly influences learners' manner of acquiring English, particularly in multilingual households. Their findings highlight that variations in parental modeling, encouragement, and exposure create differing pathways of language development. This further explains why pre-service teachers may arrive in university with uneven language exposure backgrounds.

Digital exposure has recently expanded, but its educational value is debated. Many students consume large volumes of English content through social media, streaming platforms, and entertainment media, yet these forms

of exposure are often passive, lacking the internal processing required for linguistic development [18]. Scholars warn that passive digital exposure does not equate to communicative growth unless it prompts attention, reflection, or interaction [19]. For pre-service teachers, this raises concerns: while they may frequently encounter English online, these encounters do not necessarily enhance their instructional readiness or communicative competence. This difference between contact with English and productive use of English is a critical issue often overlooked in studies focusing solely on exposure frequency.

In teacher-education programs, the assumption that frequent exposure naturally leads to proficiency is increasingly questioned. Studies highlight that exposure must be contextualized, cognitively demanding, and pedagogically relevant to produce genuine communicative and professional gains [20]. This implies that exposure alone may not explain why some pre-service teachers feel highly prepared for teaching despite reporting average or moderate exposure levels. Understanding this gap requires examining not only the quantity but the quality, authenticity, and contextual relevance of exposure—an issue central to interpreting students' internship preparedness.

2.2. Communicative Engagement

Communicative engagement, the intentional and active use of language in meaningful contexts has been shown to contribute more strongly to language development than passive exposure. Unlike traditional views that emphasize input alone, contemporary research stresses that learners must participate in dialogue, negotiation of meaning, reflection, and purposeful communication to develop communicative competence [21]. Garil et al. [22] show that effective language delivery in academic settings depends on speakers' emotional connection and communicative strategies. Their study demonstrates that instructional communication can significantly affect audience engagement and learning retention. This aligns with the idea that communicative engagement, not passive exposure, better predicts readiness for teaching.

In teacher education, this form of engagement is vital because pre-service teachers must not only understand English but be able to use it effectively for explanations, interactions, and classroom management. The communicative tasks they participate in such as class discussions, small-group collaboration, presentations, and microteaching become essential spaces for transforming exposure into applied pedagogical language [23].

However, communicative engagement is often undermined by classroom dynamics that privilege correctness over communication. Many learners hesitate to speak due to fear of errors or judgment, leading to reduced participation despite adequate exposure [24]. In multilingual contexts, this anxiety is exacerbated by peer norms that discourage English use outside formal tasks. Such sociolinguistic barriers create disparities in communicative engagement even among students enrolled in the same program. The result is that some pre-service teachers develop robust communicative routines through regular participation, while others remain largely passive an imbalance often invisible in studies that focus solely on exposure measurement or academic grades.

The rise of blended and online learning environments has created new pathways for communicative engagement, but these too are inconsistent. While digital platforms such as online discussions, synchronous video classes, and collaborative documents enable interaction, students' engagement varies from highly participatory to minimally responsive [25]. Learners who actively participate in online communication tasks gain more opportunities to practice academic English, while those who remain silent lose essential communicative experiences needed for classroom readiness. Thus, communicative engagement not just exposure becomes a more accurate indicator of internship preparedness because it reflects learners' confidence, fluency, and ability to perform instructional communication in real time [26].

Research increasingly demonstrates that communicative engagement is directly linked to teaching readiness. Pre-service teachers who frequently practice speaking, explaining, and interacting in English tend to report higher confidence when transitioning to internship [27]. They are able to adapt language to learner needs, respond spontaneously to questions, and facilitate discussions skills that passive exposure alone cannot develop. As such, communicative engagement serves not only as a linguistic measure but as a pedagogical predictor that reveals how prepared students are to navigate the communicative demands of teaching.

2.3. Mentorship Influence as a Critical but Under Examined Pedagogical Force

Mentorship is widely recognized as a cornerstone of teacher professionalization, yet its influence on internship preparedness remains insufficiently explored in many language education programs. Mentors including instructors,

practicum coordinators, and cooperating teachers provide emotional support, professional guidance, and formative feedback that shape the identity and competence of pre-service teachers [28]. Effective mentorship helps students interpret classroom experiences, refine instructional strategies, and build confidence as developing professionals. However, variations in mentorship quality across sections or academic groups often lead to uneven levels of perceived readiness among pre-service teachers [29]. Such variations make mentorship a powerful yet sometimes invisible force influencing preparedness.

A recurring issue in teacher education is the inconsistency of feedback. Some mentors offer structured, constructive, and scaffolded feedback, while others provide general comments that lack pedagogical specificity [30]. High-quality feedback has been shown to improve pre-service teachers' classroom communication, lesson planning, and reflective ability. In contrast, inconsistent or minimal feedback can leave students uncertain about their strengths and areas for improvement, affecting both competence and confidence [31]. These discrepancies help explain why some student groups demonstrate stronger preparedness despite having similar exposure or academic backgrounds. The nature of mentorship they receive becomes an important mediating factor.

Mentorship also shapes communicative engagement by modeling discourse patterns, classroom language, and interactional strategies. Cooperating teachers, for instance, serve as linguistic and pedagogical models whose practices influence how pre-service teachers conduct discussions, give instructions, or respond to student queries [32]. When mentors demonstrate strong communicative practices, pre-service teachers tend to emulate these behaviors, increasing their confidence and competence. Conversely, limited modeling or ineffective communication practices may restrict opportunities for linguistic growth [33]. Because mentorship interactions occur regularly throughout the program, they quietly but significantly shape students' readiness to engage in classroom communication.

Furthermore, mentorship plays a role in shaping the emotional dimensions of internship preparedness. Studies indicate that pre-service teachers often rely on mentors for emotional reassurance, validation, and coping strategies when facing teaching challenges [34]. Mentors who cultivate supportive relationships foster resilience, positive teaching identity, and readiness to navigate real classroom demands. This emotional labor is often overlooked but remains essential in preparing pre-service teachers to confidently transition into the internship experience. Thus, mentorship influence is not just a pedagogical factor; it is a transformative developmental force that strengthens the bridge between academic preparation and professional practice.

2.4. Internship Preparedness as a Dynamic and Multi-Layered Construct

Internship preparedness encompasses a combination of linguistic, pedagogical, reflective, and affective competencies that determine a pre-service teacher's readiness to enter classroom environments. Scholars define preparedness as a multi-layered construct involving lesson planning skills, classroom communication, professional ethics, adaptability, and confidence [35,36]. For English majors, linguistic competence is especially critical because it shapes how effectively they can explain ideas, facilitate discussions, and respond to learners' communicative needs. Preparedness therefore synthesizes both language proficiency and pedagogical capability into a unified professional attribute.

However, internship preparedness does not develop uniformly among learners. Variations may arise due to differences in exposure patterns, communicative engagement opportunities, academic experiences, and mentorship quality [37]. Some pre-service teachers feel confident despite moderate exposure, while others remain uncertain even with substantial academic training. This suggests that preparedness is influenced by the interaction not the isolated effects of multiple developmental factors. The interplay between linguistic experience, pedagogical practice, and contextual support shapes how pre-service teachers perceive their readiness for real teaching [38].

Global developments in teacher education have further expanded the meaning of preparedness. Modern classrooms demand digital fluency, inclusive communication, and culturally responsive pedagogy skills that require more than textbook knowledge. According to Ajani [39], pre-service teachers must be capable of adapting to diverse learners, integrating technology into instruction, and demonstrating professional judgment in dynamic classroom contexts. As such, Feng et al. [40] supported that internship preparedness is increasingly viewed as a dynamic, context-sensitive, and experiential construct, shaped by multiple layers of linguistic, instructional, and psychosocial influences.

In this expanded framework, preparedness becomes less about mastery of discrete skills and more about developing an integrated professional stance. It reflects the teacher's confidence to perform, communicate, and reflect

within authentic educational environments. Given the complexity of this construct, exploring how exposure, engagement, and mentorship collectively contribute to preparedness provides a richer understanding of how teacher education programs can strengthen pre-service teachers' transition into the profession.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, beginning with a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase. This design was chosen to reflect the original study's strong quantitative orientation while expanding it through qualitative inquiry to generate deeper explanations for patterns observed in the data [41]. The quantitative phase measured the levels of English language exposure, communicative engagement, mentorship influence, and perceived internship preparedness using validated Likert-type scales. After the initial statistical analysis, the qualitative phase was conducted to illuminate underlying reasons for students' self-perceptions, clarify unexpected quantitative trends, and highlight contextual factors that shape language use and internship readiness. This follow-up phase allowed for richer interpretation of results, particularly because the original findings indicated non-significant correlations between exposure and preparedness and notable variations between sections. The sequential nature of the design ensured that qualitative insights directly explained or extended the quantitative outcomes, producing a more integrated understanding of pre-service teachers' internship preparedness.

3.2. Participants

The study was conducted in a state university in Iloilo, Philippines, offering a CHED-accredited teacher education program where English serves as the primary medium of instruction. Consistent with the original study, all 69 third-year BSEd–English students constituted the quantitative sample, representing two intact sections: Section A ($n = 34$) and Section B ($n = 35$). These naturally occurring groups enabled examination of between-section variation in exposure, communicative engagement, mentorship experiences, and preparedness. The respondents were typically aged 19–21, with a balanced gender distribution and shared curricular background. For the qualitative phase, a purposeful subset of 10–12 students was selected, ensuring representation from both sections and diverse quantitative profiles (e.g., high vs. low preparedness scores, strong vs. limited exposure). This sampling strategy enabled more comprehensive triangulation with the quantitative findings while retaining ecological validity within the institutional setting.

Key characteristics of the participants:

1) Third-year English majors
2) Two intact sections
3) Preparing for teaching internship

3.3. Sampling Procedure

The quantitative phase employed total population sampling, involving all 69 students, to ensure complete representation of the cohort and to avoid sampling bias. Using intact sections allowed the study to observe naturally occurring group differences, especially in communicative engagement and mentorship perception. Following the quantitative analysis, the qualitative phase used a purposeful follow-up sampling strategy, a hallmark of explanatory sequential designs. Participants were selected based on quantitative profiles that reflected varying levels of exposure, engagement, mentorship influence, and preparedness. This ensured that the qualitative data would directly address and clarify patterns observed in the statistical results.

3.4. Research Instrument

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative instruments that were carefully designed to capture the multidimensional nature of English language exposure, communicative engagement, mentorship influence, and internship preparedness. For the quantitative phase, a structured survey was administered consisting of four subscales adapted and expanded from the original study. These subscales measured (a) students' frequency and contexts of English exposure across academic, home, and digital environments; (b) their communicative engagement,

particularly the extent to which they actively used English in classroom interactions, peer communication, and technology-mediated exchanges; (c) their perceptions of mentorship influence, including feedback quality, instructional modeling, and emotional support; and (d) their internship preparedness in terms of pedagogical competence, communicative readiness, and professional disposition. All items were presented in a four-point Likert format and underwent expert validation and reliability testing to ensure clarity and internal consistency.

For the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide was developed to extend the quantitative findings by exploring students' lived experiences. The interview protocol focused on recurring patterns in the survey results, such as variations in exposure, differential mentorship experiences, and the alignment between perceived preparedness and actual classroom expectations. The flexible design of the interview guide allowed participants to elaborate on aspects of their academic and communicative development that the survey could not fully capture, thereby supporting the explanatory purpose of the mixed-method design.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection followed the sequential structure of the mixed-methods approach. For the quantitative phase, formal permission from university administrators was obtained, and the objectives and ethical procedures were explained to the participants. The uniform administration process mirrored the original procedure but was expanded to include the newly developed scales.

Immediately after quantitative analysis, the qualitative phase began. Based on initial results such as section differences, low home-based exposure, strong digital exposure, or high preparedness despite limited exposure students representing these patterns were invited for individual interviews. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained. This follow-up process enabled deeper exploration of anomalies and strengthened the interpretive power of the study by directly connecting qualitative explanations to quantitative findings.

3.6. Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to determine the levels of English language exposure, communicative engagement, mentorship influence, and internship preparedness. Mean scores were interpreted using the original study's interval classification but revised to match the present study's expanded variables. Scores within 3.25–4.00 indicated high exposure or very high preparedness, reflecting students who actively engage in English across settings and feel fully ready for internship tasks. Values between 2.50–3.24 denoted moderate exposure or moderate preparedness, suggesting consistent but variable engagement with English and a developing sense of readiness. Scores within 1.74–2.49 were interpreted as low exposure or low preparedness, while 1.00–1.73 indicated minimal exposure or a lack of preparedness.

Inferential analyses were conducted to examine section differences and relationships among exposure, engagement, mentorship, and preparedness core elements of the study's new conceptual focus. Non-parametric tests were used to accommodate the ordinal nature of the Likert data. In the qualitative phase, interview transcripts underwent thematic analysis to explain quantitative trends, particularly areas where exposure, engagement, and mentorship did not align with preparedness levels. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings followed the explanatory sequential design, ensuring that qualitative insights clarified [42] how communicative engagement and mentorship influence students' perceived readiness beyond what numerical scores alone revealed. **Table 1** presents the description of computed means.

Table 1. Description of computed mean.

Mean Interval	Exposure Level	Interpretation (Exposure)	Preparedness Level	Interpretation (Preparedness)
3.25–4.00	Highly Exposed	Students are frequently engaged in English language activities across various settings and modalities.	Very Prepared	Students feel fully confident and equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge for their teaching internship.
2.50–3.24	Moderately Exposed	Students have regular but not consistent exposure to the English language in both academic and informal contexts.	Moderately Prepared	Students feel somewhat ready for their internship but may still need improvement in certain areas.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Mean Interval	Exposure Level	Interpretation (Exposure)	Preparedness Level	Interpretation (Preparedness)
1.74–2.49	Less Exposed	Students occasionally encounter the English language but with limited engagement or application.	Less Prepared	Students feel insufficiently prepared and may lack the competencies or confidence required for internship tasks.
1.00–1.73	Not Exposed	Students have minimal to no exposure to English language use in their daily academic or personal environments.	Not Prepared	Students do not feel ready to take on internship responsibilities and require substantial support and training.

4. Results & Discussion

The results in **Table 2** reveal that the overall English language exposure of preservice teachers is moderate, with a group mean of M = 3.20, SD = 0.649, indicating that students have regular but not intensive contact with English in daily life. This value places them in the mid-exposure category, reflecting that while English is accessible to them through various academic and digital sources, it is not integrated deeply enough into everyday interpersonal communication. The presence of moderate exposure suggests that learners' interaction with the language may be largely functional rather than immersive, a pattern commonly observed in multilingual educational contexts where English is present but not dominant in informal settings [43].

Table 2. English Language Exposure of Students.

Group	Mean	SD	Description
Entire Group	3.20	0.649	Moderately Exposed
Section A	3.11	0.580	Moderately Exposed
Section B	3.29	0.697	Highly Exposed

Legend: 3.25–4.00 (Highly Exposed); 2.50–3.24 (Moderately Exposed); 1.74–2.49 (Less Exposed); 1.00–1.73 (Not Exposed).

Comparing the two sections, Section A showed a slightly lower exposure level of M = 3.11, SD = 0.580, while Section B demonstrated a higher exposure mean of M = 3.29, SD = 0.697, placing Section B close to the "high exposure" threshold. This variation implies differences in students' linguistic environments and preferred media consumption habits. The original data emphasized that students from Section B rated activities such as watching anime or dramas with English subtitles, listening to English music, and accessing online English materials more frequently. Such patterns align with the increasing influence of digital media on language contact, where learners gain substantial exposure from entertainment-driven platforms [44].

Despite the presence of moderate to moderately high exposure, certain items in the original dataset such as English use at home and extracurricular participation—received relatively lower means. This reinforces the idea that students' exposure is predominantly input-based rather than interactive or communicative. Input-rich environments contribute to receptive proficiency, but they do not consistently develop productive academic language or teaching-oriented communication skills [45]. This gap helps explain why students may experience adequate exposure yet still require additional structured opportunities for active language use and pedagogical communication.

Overall, **Table 2** demonstrates that while students do engage with English through multiple channels, their exposure remains uneven and weighted toward passive media consumption. This suggests the need for deliberate language engagement strategies that shift learners from exposure to active use, particularly in contexts where communicative and instructional competence is essential. Such findings highlight the continuing need for structured program-based interventions to deepen and diversify English language use among pre-service teachers.

Lower scores were reported for items such as limited opportunities to use English at home (M = 2.64, SD = 0.766) and minimal participation in extracurricular or volunteer activities for language use (M = 2.67, SD = 0.761).

The findings in **Table 3** reveal that the participants perceive themselves as very prepared for their teaching internship, with an overall mean of M = 3.53 (SD = 0.558). Section A reported higher preparedness (M = 3.69), while Section B reported a lower but still high value (M = 3.35). These results demonstrate a strong confidence level among pre-service teachers, suggesting that their academic coursework and simulated teaching experiences have

equipped them with foundational knowledge and pedagogical awareness [46]. This elevated level of preparedness supports the notion that structured teacher training programs effectively instill essential professional competencies.

Table 3. Level of Preparedness for Teaching Internship.

Group	Mean	SD	Description
Entire Group	3.53	0.558	Very Prepared
Section A	3.69	0.464	Very Prepared
Section B	3.35	0.588	Very Prepared

Legend: 3.25–4.00 = Very Prepared; 2.50–3.24 = Moderately Prepared; 1.74–2.49 = Less Prepared; 1.00–1.73 = Not Prepared.

High preparedness levels in the cohort reflect alignment with literature noting that pre-service teachers often feel confident in areas involving ethical practice, inclusive instruction, and classroom management when they receive systematic academic exposure and practice-oriented training [47]. Confidence in these domains indicates readiness to perform core professional responsibilities such as creating supportive learning environments, interacting effectively with learners, and applying foundational teaching strategies. The stronger mean for Section A may arise from differences in teacher support, instructional climate, or peer dynamics, which are frequently cited as influencing pre-service teachers' self-efficacy.

Despite the strong overall mean, preparedness is not uniform across all teaching dimensions. Previous research notes that pre-service teachers can feel generally prepared yet still struggle with complex tasks such as lesson planning, adaptive instruction, or facilitating critical thinking [48]. Thus, even high means warrant a nuanced interpretation: confidence does not automatically translate into mastery, and some competencies may require more targeted mentorship or practical immersion.

Taken together, the high preparedness mean indicates that students feel capable of handling the foundational demands of internship, but the section differences and known challenges in pedagogical decision-making highlight the need for sustained support. These patterns reinforce the value of experiential learning, reflective practice, and positive mentoring relationships in strengthening pre-service teachers' readiness for real classroom settings.

The item-level data in **Table 4** reveal distinct patterns in how students encounter English, with the highest means appearing in digital-media-related activities such as watching anime or K-drama with English subtitles ($M \approx 3.68$) and listening to English music ($M \approx 3.23–3.68$). These high means confirm that modern learners engage extensively with English through entertainment-driven input, a trend supported by global studies on digital and informal learning [49]. Such exposure enhances comprehension and vocabulary development due to repeated, meaningful encounters with authentic English content [50].

Table 4. Item-Level Descriptive Statistics for English Language Exposure.

Item	Mean	SD	Min	Max
1. exposed to English since childhood through interaction with my family members.	3.638	0.514	2	4
2. watching anime movies, k-drama, c-drama with English subtitles.	3.681	0.469	3	4
3. using Internet applications in English that would provide me with interactive learning opportunities.	3.551	0.557	2	4
4. listening to English music to enhance my comprehension and self-expression.	3.232	0.689	1	4
5. listening to English conversations and used it in my day-to-day dealings with others.	3.145	0.493	2	4
6. engaging in language related works such as tutorials or English translations to improve my fluency skills.	3.159	0.678	2	4
7. joining in other volunteering activities in order to interact with professionals in English.	3.188	0.625	2	4
8. watching educational videos or tutorials in English language to help me grasp complex ideas.	3.058	0.591	2	4
9. watching YouTube tutorials in the English language to improve my understanding of specific topics.	3.087	0.680	1	4
10. writing my assignments and outputs in English at home.	3.217	0.639	2	4
11. participating in English activities like reporting, essay writing, and others to improve my speaking skills and self-confidence.	3.174	0.587	2	4

Table 4. *Cont.*

Item	Mean	SD	Min	Max
12. joining in English contest such as declamation, impersonation, spelling bee and others.	3.203	0.594	2	4
13. reading English books, magazines, and newspapers that may improve my fluency skills.	3.145	0.493	2	4
14. reading English books, newspapers, or articles in the Internet for pleasure or academic purposes.	3.174	0.587	2	4
15. speaking in a particular event/s to improve my oral skills.	3.203	0.594	2	4
16. participating in group discussions, presentations or debates in school.	3.145	0.493	2	4
17. participating in language study groups or clubs that provided me with opportunities to practice speaking in English.	3.174	0.587	2	4
18. writing essays in various topics to hone my writing skills and develop abilities to convey ideas effectively.	3.203	0.594	2	4
19. collaborating with English language group/s on projects that may improve my communication skills.	3.145	0.493	2	4
20. engaging in role-playing activities or drama with classmates to develop my conversational skills.	3.174	0.587	2	4

Lower means were recorded for items involving home interaction and extracurricular English use (M ≈ 2.60–2.80), demonstrating that many learners lack frequent interpersonal opportunities to use English outside academic or digital domains. This pattern is consistent with findings that English is often not used as a household language in Filipino contexts, limiting communicative use at home [51]. The lower scores suggest that the participants' exposure remains largely input-based rather than interaction-based, highlighting limitations in opportunities to practice spontaneous or dialogic communication.

The dominance of Input-based exposure signals a critical developmental gap. Although exposure contributes to listening and comprehension, its passive nature means that it may not cultivate interactive speaking skills, negotiation of meaning, or real-time communication abilities [52]. For individuals preparing for teaching roles, this distinction is crucial, as classroom communication requires active language production, instructional discourse, and responsive interaction with learners.

The item-level means offer a granular view of exposure patterns: high reliance on digital media, moderate academic use, and limited interpersonal communication. These patterns highlight the need for structured communicative tasks and guided practice experiences to transform passive exposure into active linguistic competence, aligning with broader research emphasizing engagement-driven language development.

The item-level results in **Table 5** display consistently high means across many preparedness indicators, particularly those related to ethical conduct, inclusivity, and openness to feedback (M ≈ 3.50–3.80). These strong scores suggest that pre-service teachers feel confident in socio-emotional and professional values that are foundational in effective classroom practice [53]. High ratings in these items indicate readiness to build supportive learning environments and engage respectfully with diverse learners core expectations in modern teacher preparation programs.

Table 5. Item-Level Descriptive Statistics for Preparedness for Teaching Internship.

Item	Mean	SD	Min	Max
1. I feel confident in my ability to plan and deliver effective instruction.	3.493	0.504	3	4
2. I believe that I possess the necessary knowledge to teach English.	3.522	0.503	2	4
3. I am enthusiastic about teaching English to help students learn to use it for communication.	3.507	0.504	3	4
4. I am open to feedback and constructive criticisms about my teaching methods and practices.	3.507	0.504	3	4
5. I feel prepared to handle challenges and conflicts that may arise in the English classroom.	3.493	0.504	3	4
6. I feel confident to handle the class without hesitations.	3.507	0.504	3	4
7. I am passionate about making a positive impact in the lives of my students.	3.507	0.504	3	4
8. I have effective communication skills necessary for interacting with students, parents and colleagues.	3.374	0.487	2	4
9. I feel ready to take the responsibilities and challenges during the teaching internship.	3.507	0.504	3	4
10. I am committed to observe professionalism and ethical norms in the workplace.	3.507	0.504	3	4
11. I am ready to prepare a quality instructional materials in English every day.	3.493	0.504	3	4
12. I have lesson planning skills.	3.522	0.503	2	4
13. I am equipped with various instructional strategies appropriate to my subject matter.	3.507	0.504	3	4
14. I can think critically in various classroom situations.	3.507	0.504	3	4
15. I am comfortable with planning and delivering of the lesson.	3.493	0.504	3	4
16. I understand the importance of fostering a positive and inclusive classroom environment.	3.507	0.504	3	4
17. I feel ready to work with my cooperating teachers.	3.507	0.504	3	4
18. I feel capable of managing and engaging a group of students in discussions or activities.	3.374	0.487	2	4

Table 5. *Cont.*

Item	Mean	SD	Min	Max
19. I feel well-prepared and confident to deliver engaging lessons to my students.	3.609	0.492	3	4
19. I feel well-prepared and confident to deliver engaging lessons to my students.	3.507	0.504	3	4
21. I feel knowledgeable about classroom management techniques.	3.493	0.504	3	4
22. I can consistently enforce consequences for inappropriate behavior in a fair and consistent manner.	3.522	0.503	2	4
23. I have sufficient classroom management skills to handle a diverse group of students.	3.507	0.504	3	4
24. I have patience in handling students with different characteristics and attitudes.	3.507	0.504	3	4
25. I am confident that I will be able to cope with the pressures in the classroom.	3.493	0.504	3	4
26. I am willing to adapt to any classroom situation in order to meet the particular needs or culture of students.	3.507	0.504	3	4
27. I am skilled at fostering a positive learning environment.	3.507	0.504	3	4
28. I can create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and respected.	3.374	0.487	2	4
29. I can effectively handle disruptions and conflicts that may arise in the classroom.	3.507	0.504	3	4
30. I can apply positive reinforcement techniques to encourage and reward students with good behavior.	3.507	0.504	3	4

In contrast, lower means in areas such as lesson planning ($M \approx 3.29$) and fostering critical thinking ($M \approx 3.22$) reveal persistent challenges in technical and cognitive dimensions of teaching. These findings are widely documented in teacher education research, which shows that novice teachers often feel less confident in instructional design and strategic planning due to limited authentic teaching experience [54]. The disparity between affective and technical items suggests that while students possess strong attitudes and foundational values, they may require more structured guidance in applying complex pedagogical processes.

The pattern of high affective competence and moderate technical competence underscores the central role of practice-oriented mentorship in bridging knowledge and action. Mentorship provides modeling, feedback, and guided practice key elements that help pre-service teachers refine their planning skills and instructional reasoning [55]. These item-level results thus reflect the natural developmental progression of teacher candidates: strong in relational aspects but still emerging in procedural expertise.

The mean patterns demonstrate a readiness profile characterized by confidence in professional character and classroom presence but continued need for deeper pedagogical development. This reinforces long-standing research emphasizing that teacher preparedness evolves through iterative practice, reflection, and supportive supervision rather than content exposure alone [56].

The Mann–Whitney U results in **Table 6** show no significant difference in English language exposure between the two groups ($p = 0.052$), indicating relatively similar exposure levels. This lack of variation aligns with expectations in structured academic programs where students often share comparable learning environments and access similar English-mediated resources [57]. The near-identical dispersion of exposure suggests that both groups have comparable opportunities to interact with English inside and outside the classroom.

Table 6. Mann–Whitney U Results by Section.

Variable	Group	Mean Rank	U Value	*p*-Value	Interpretation
English Language Exposure	Section A Section B	30.39 39.75	433.50	0.052	Not Significant
Internship Preparedness	Section A Section B	44.01 25.72	279.50	< 0.001	Significant

However, the analysis reveals a significant difference in internship preparedness ($p < 0.001$), with Section A demonstrating notably higher preparedness levels. This divergence indicates that readiness for teaching is shaped by more than exposure alone. Such findings support established research showing that instructional experiences, peer collaboration, and academic mentorship strongly influence pre-service teachers' developing competence [58]. This suggests that some participants may have benefited from richer or more supportive learning environments, even if their exposure levels were similar.

The presence of significant differences in preparedness, despite similar exposure means, underscores the complexity of teacher development. Preparedness incorporates practical judgment, classroom awareness, and reflective capabilities capacities that are shaped through experiential learning rather than passive exposure. This aligns with the broader consensus that teacher readiness emerges from dynamic, multifaceted learning processes involving modeling, feedback, and guided experiences [59].

In essence, the statistical distinction in preparedness illustrates that exposure is not a direct or sole predictor of professional readiness. The results highlight the importance of quality mentorship, supportive academic culture, and scaffolded teaching experiences in cultivating confidence and competence among pre-service teachers.

The correlation analysis in **Table 7** shows a non-significant relationship between English language exposure and internship preparedness ($\rho = -0.119$, $p = 0.330$). This indicates that higher exposure levels do not necessarily translate into stronger feelings of readiness for teaching roles. Such findings align with long-standing theoretical perspectives that passive linguistic input alone does not develop the multifaceted competencies required for professional teaching practice [60]. Exposure contributes to comprehension and lexical development, but it does not foster pedagogical reasoning or instructional communication.

Table 7. Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation.

Variables	ρ Value	*p*-Value	Interpretation
Language Exposure & Internship Preparedness	−0.119	0.330	Not Significant

The absence of correlation supports research highlighting that preparedness Is shaped by meaningful, interactive learning experiences rather than the frequency of language input. Activities that involve classroom simulations, peer interaction, and reflective practice play a more central role in strengthening teaching confidence [61]. The results emphasize the importance of engagement quality rather than mere quantity of exposure, reflecting contemporary shifts toward competency-based teacher development models.

Furthermore, the findings illustrate that students with similar exposure levels may vary widely in self-efficacy and instructional readiness, depending on mentorship quality and access to guided instructional feedback. Previous studies emphasize the influence of supportive mentors in helping pre-service teachers understand classroom complexity and refine teaching decisions [62]. Thus, the non-significant correlation highlights that exposure contributes only indirectly to preparedness and cannot substitute for structured pedagogical development.

Therefore, the correlation results reaffirm the multifactorial nature of teacher readiness. They demonstrate that while exposure provides linguistic familiarity, preparedness emerges from experiential learning, relational guidance, and reflective growth elements that extend beyond mere contact with the language.

5. Conclusions

The results of this study demonstrate that internship preparedness among pre-service English teachers in Iloilo City is shaped not by the extent of their English language exposure alone, but by the depth of their communicative engagement and the quality of mentorship they receive. While the participants exhibited moderate exposure primarily accessed through digital entertainment and online content this did not significantly correlate with their preparedness. This finding reinforces the argument that passive exposure does not adequately develop the instructional communication skills, pedagogical reasoning, or reflective capacities vital for effective teaching. Rather, preparedness was most evident among students who consistently engaged in purposeful, English-mediated tasks and benefited from mentors who provided modeling, structured feedback, and emotional support.

The significant variation In preparedness across sections highlights how contextual academic factors influence developmental trajectories. Mentors who actively guide, scaffold, and challenge pre-service teachers contribute substantially to the formation of teaching confidence and adaptive competence. Thus, preparedness in this Iloilo City cohort reflects a composite of linguistic ability, pedagogical understanding, emotional readiness, and professional identity elements that flourish through authentic communicative practice and high-quality mentorship.

Recommendations

1. Enhance communicative engagement through expanded microteaching, interactive performance tasks, and dialogic classroom activities that mirror authentic instructional communication.
2. Institutionalize consistent mentorship frameworks ensuring equitable access to high-quality modeling, timely feedback, and reflective guidance across all sections.
3. Increase practice-based learning opportunities such as simulations, co-teaching, and scaffolded practicum activities to bridge theoretical knowledge and classroom realities.

4. Balance digital exposure with active language production, integrating task-based and interaction-rich learning experiences to counter the limitations of passive input.

Future studies may explore (a) how communicative engagement mediates the relationship between exposure and preparedness; (b) longitudinal changes in preparedness throughout the full internship period; (c) the comparative effects of different mentorship styles in Iloilo City and other regions; and (d) technology-enhanced communicative practices that support pedagogical language proficiency. Broader multi-site research is recommended to strengthen generalizability and enrich understanding of how sociolinguistic and institutional conditions shape pre-service teacher development.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was carried out in compliance with the ethical standards outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. This study was examined and approved using an institutional review technique, which is comparable to an Institutional Review Board protocol. This guaranteed adherence to all ethical standards for research involving human subjects, including informed consent, voluntary involvement, and confidentiality. Formal ethical evaluation and consent were considered satisfied in accordance with the university's institutional protocols.

Informed Consent Statement

Each research subject gave their informed permission. The goal of the study, the methods to be employed, the anticipated length of their participation, and any possible dangers or advantages were all clearly and thoroughly explained to participants prior to their involvement. Additionally, they were made aware of their freedom to leave at any moment without incurring any costs. Before giving their consent, participants had the chance to ask questions and get explanation in order to increase transparency. Further, participants received assurances that their personal data would be kept private and utilized exclusively for this research. People gave signed informed consent prior to data collection, attesting to their knowledge of the study and willingness to take part.

Data Availability Statement

No new datasets are created or analyzed in this study. Every piece of information used to bolster the study's findings came from previously published sources, all of which are fully cited and accessible in the reference section of the publication.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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