

Original Article

Virtual Webinars, Real Skills: A Case Study on the VELE Series and English Language Macro Skills Development

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Abstract. The increasing use of virtual learning platforms in higher education has created new opportunities for language instruction and skill development, particularly in English language education. Webinar-based extension programs have become valuable tools for supporting students' communication competence by providing accessible, interactive learning experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting. In line with this development, this study investigated the effectiveness of the Virtual English Language Educator (VELE) Webinar Series, an extension program of the Department of Languages and Literature (DLL) of Isabela State University, in enhancing the four macro skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing – of thirty (30) fourth-year Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies (BAELS) students at Isabela State University, Main Campus, Echague, Isabela. Employing an explanatory case study design with pre- and post-test and semi-structured interviews as data collection tools, the study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a holistic understanding of the program's impact. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and average gain, were computed to measure changes in participants' performance across the four macro skills. The grand mean increased from 3.279 (Average) on the pre-test to 4.065 (Above Average) on the post-test, with an overall gain of 0.786. Furthermore, the program received an overall evaluation grand mean of 4.836, interpreted as Excellent, indicating high participant satisfaction. Qualitative findings revealed four key themes corresponding to improvements in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, largely attributed to exposure to a native English-speaking resource person, interactive activities, and real-life language application. The study recommends continuing and expanding similar virtual extension programs, with improvements in session structure, interactivity, and technical support to maximize participants' language development.

Keywords: Case study; English language macro skills; Extension program; VELE Webinar Series; Virtual learning.

One out of five people around the world can speak English, making it the universal language. With English as the global lingua franca, learning and developing proficiency in it is essential, as it can significantly affect one's performance in both academic and professional contexts.

English language proficiency (ELP) refers to an individual's level of competence in effectively using the English language for communication and academic purposes (Kanamitie et al., 2023). Being proficient in a language means individuals can write, speak, read, and comprehend English with ease and clarity. English language proficiency is not only vital in academic settings but also a key determinant of employment opportunities and career advancement (Durga, 2018). Learning English plays a crucial role in enhancing how people express their thoughts verbally and orally, especially in the modern world (Zahratul, 2022). According to (Ahmad & Khan 2023), the ability to communicate effectively in English is key to becoming a global entrepreneur. With the vast opportunities available to English speakers, the number of English-language learners has increased significantly. Over 750 million people worldwide speak English as a foreign language, and roughly 375 million speak it as a second language (Head, 2015).

Given the evident importance of English-language learning in both academic and professional contexts, improving access to high-quality language instruction is vital. Innovation in education has made it possible to accommodate the growing number of English language learners through virtual or online learning as a viable alternative to traditional face-to-face instruction. Virtual learning is at least as effective as, if not superior to, face-to-face learning in terms of academic performance (Quoc Hung & Quoc Bao, 2023). Virtual learning, or e-learning, is a mode of education that uses digital technologies and leverages internet access to provide educational resources, instructional materials, and platforms for student-teacher interaction (Jayanthi et al., 2023). Among the various forms of virtual learning, webinars – online seminars conducted through platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet – have emerged as effective tools for reaching participants across geographical boundaries. According to Maletina and Melnik (2022), webinars offer clear advantages for distance-based teacher training and instruction. Despite the increasing body of literature on the effectiveness and positive implications of virtual learning, there is still a notable gap in studying the specific impact of webinar-based extension programs on the four macro language skills of the participants: speaking, listening, reading, and writing, particularly in the Philippine higher education context, where most studies focus on virtual learning broadly rather than on context-specific program outcomes.

Java et al. (2022) found that virtual learning not only improves students' English language proficiency but is also positively perceived by students for enhancing their language competencies. However, virtual learning is not without challenges. Poor interaction is identified as the greatest challenge in virtual learning, followed by student motivation, internet accessibility, and technical support (Anggraini, 2023; Zydney & Hord, 2023). Additionally, difficulties in monitoring student output and the infrequent use of collaborative activities in online lectures have been noted as persistent concerns (Rajitha, 2022). These challenges have led some students to perceive online learning as more stressful and less effective than traditional face-to-face instruction.

In response to these challenges, the Department of Languages and Literature (DLL) of Isabela State University, Main Campus, Echague, Isabela, developed the Virtual English Language Educator (VELE) Webinar Series – an extension program designed to enhance students' English language skills through technology-mediated instruction. The VELE program leverages advances in digital technology to provide high-quality English instruction, real-time feedback, and engaging, interactive activities, transcending geographical barriers between teachers and learners.

This study addresses this gap by investigating the effectiveness of the VELE Webinar Series on the four macro-English language skills of thirty (30) fourth-year BAELS students at Isabela State University. Employing an explanatory case study design, this study is bounded by the VELE program as the unit of analysis. It uses both quantitative pre- and post-test data and qualitative interview data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the program's impact.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed an explanatory case study design to investigate the effectiveness of the VELE Webinar Series in enhancing the four macro skills of BA English Language Studies students. As Yin (2018) defines it, a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident. This design was deemed most appropriate as it allowed for an in-depth examination of a bounded, real-world educational

intervention — the VELE Webinar Series — within its specific institutional context. Both quantitative data (pre- and post-test scores) and qualitative data (semi-structured interviews) were collected and analyzed to provide a holistic understanding of the program's effectiveness on the four macro-English language skills.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The case is bounded by the VELE Webinar Series conducted at Isabela State University, Main Campus, Echague, Isabela, from April 22 to July 13, 2024, during School Year 2023–2024. The participants of this study are thirty (30) fourth-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies (BAELS) under the College of Arts and Sciences who participated in the VELE program. The 30 participants represent the total population of BAELS fourth-year students who participated in the program, making this a holistic single-case study and a census of the available program cohort. As Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2019) assert, studying the entire available population is a legitimate and rigorous approach in educational research, particularly when the population is small, specific, and bounded by a defined program or intervention. For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was used to select participants for the semi-structured interviews, targeting individuals who could provide rich, relevant information on the research questions.

Research Instrument

This study utilized two existing instruments from the VELE Webinar Series: (1) pre- and post-tests administered before and after each webinar session to assess participants' knowledge and skill development across the four macro skills, and (2) a program evaluation form used to measure participant satisfaction and perceived effectiveness of the webinar series. Additionally, the researcher developed semi-structured interview questions, guided by a priori codes derived from the research objectives, to explore participants' lived experiences and the perceived impact of the VELE program on their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. The pre- and post-test instruments were existing evaluation tools developed and validated by the VELE program coordinators in collaboration with the partnering agency, the United States Department of State's Regional English Language Office. These instruments were reviewed for content validity by language education specialists prior to their use in the program. The program evaluation form was similarly reviewed to ensure alignment with the program's learning objectives and participant competencies.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering procedure was conducted in the following sequence: First, the researcher sought and obtained approval from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and permission from the subject teachers involved in the VELE program. Second, the researcher accessed and compiled the existing pre- and post-test data and program evaluation results from the VELE Webinar Series, which were administered to all 30 participants before and after each webinar session, respectively. Third, the researcher tallied and organized the existing quantitative data for descriptive analysis. Fourth, for the qualitative phase, the researcher developed semi-structured interview questions guided by a priori codes derived from the research objectives and relevant literature. Fifth, written informed consent was obtained from all interview participants prior to data collection. Sixth, the researcher provided participants with background information about the study to ensure informed and contextualized responses. Seventh, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted, audio-recorded with participants' consent, and subsequently transcribed verbatim by the researcher. To ensure the accuracy and completeness of the interview data, the transcripts were returned to the respective interviewees for member checking — a process wherein participants verified that their statements were accurately and completely captured, with no additions or omissions. Furthermore, the English translations of the transcripts were reviewed and validated by faculty members and language experts from the Department of Languages and Literature to ensure linguistic accuracy, semantic equivalence, and fidelity to the original responses. Finally, the transcriptions were translated into English where necessary, and thematic coding was applied following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework to identify recurring themes in the participants' responses.

Data Analysis Procedure

The researcher compiled and tallied all existing pre- and post-test scores and program evaluation results, then subjected them to descriptive analysis. Consistent with the nature of case study research, descriptive statistics were employed rather than inferential analyses, as the focus of this study is on depth of understanding within a bounded context rather than statistical generalization (Yin, 2018). The following descriptive statistical treatments were used: 1. Mean: This was used to determine the average scores of the participants per category in the pre- and post-tests, 2. Percentage: This was used to express the proportion and distribution of responses per item, and 3.

Average Gain: This was used to determine the gain and changes between pre- and post-test scores. The second phase involved thematic analysis of semi-structured interview responses, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to standard ethical protocols for research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured approval from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and obtained permission from the subject teachers involved in the VELE program. Written informed consent was obtained from all thirty (30) participants prior to the conduct of the interviews, ensuring voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and all data collected were used solely for academic research purposes. The audio recordings and transcriptions were stored securely and accessed only by the researcher.

Limitations of the Study

As a single-case study, the findings are specific to the VELE Webinar Series conducted at Isabela State University, Main Campus, Echague, Isabela. They may not be directly generalizable to other institutions or English language programs. This is consistent with the nature of case study research, wherein depth and contextual understanding are prioritized over breadth and generalizability (Yin, 2018). Future studies may replicate this case study across multiple institutions or with larger participant pools to establish broader applicability of the findings.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Findings

Effectiveness of Extension Programs Virtual English Language Educator (VELE) Webinar Series 2024

The VELE webinar series is an extension program of the Department of Languages and Literature in partnership with the United States Department of State's Regional English Language Office. To enhance the participants' academic and professional skills in English language education, students from the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies (BAELS) program of Isabela State University Echague (ISUE) participated in this webinar series held from April 22, 2024, to June 10, 2024. The pre- and post-test items were organized around the specific topics covered in each VELE webinar session, with participants' familiarity scores serving as proxies for their knowledge and skill development across the four macro language skills.

The pre- and post-test scores were rated on a five-point Likert scale with the following verbal interpretations: 4.21–5.00 = Excellent/Outstanding; 3.41–4.20 = Above Average; 2.61–3.40 = Average; 1.81–2.60 = Below Average; 1.00–1.80 = Poor. Average gain was interpreted as follows: 0.81 and above = High Gain; 0.61–0.80 = Moderate Gain; 0.40–0.60 = Low Gain; below 0.40 = Negligible Gain.

Table 1. *Familiarity with the VELE Topics*

Statements	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Average Gain	
	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Academic Writing Skills	3.286	Average	4.054	Above Average	0.768	Moderate Gain
Critical Reading Skills	3.339	Average	4.071	Above Average	0.732	Moderate Gain
Academic Vocabulary	3.179	Average	4.071	Above Average	0.892	Moderate Gain
Listening and Note-taking	3.589	Average	4.179	Above Average	0.590	Moderate Gain
Speaking and Presentation	3.286	Average	4.089	Above Average	0.803	Moderate Gain
Grammar and Syntax	3.018	Average	3.946	Above Average	0.928	Moderate Gain
Research Skills	3.036	Average	4.000	Above Average	0.964	Moderate Gain
Academic Culture	3.232	Average	4.018	Above Average	0.786	Moderate Gain
Critical Thinking	3.393	Average	4.143	Above Average	0.750	Moderate Gain
Cross-cultural Communication	3.268	Average	4.054	Above Average	0.786	Moderate Gain
Digital and Media Literacy	3.446	Average	4.089	Above Average	0.643	Moderate Gain
Grand Mean	3.279	Average	4.065	Above Average	0.786	Moderate Gain

Table 1 presents data comparing pre- and post-test mean scores with respect to participants' familiarity with the topics in the Virtual English Language Educator (VELE) webinar series. The mean scores in the pre-test ranged from 3.589 (listening and note-taking) to 3.018 (grammar and syntax), with the verbal interpretation of average. The post-test results show an apparent improvement in the mean scores. The mean scores increased, ranging from 4.179 (listening and note-taking) to 3.946 (grammar and syntax), with the verbal interpretations now being above

average. With all post-test mean scores having increased compared to the pre-test, "research skills" shows the largest increase, from 3.036 (average) to 4.000 (above average), a gain of 0.964. The statement "Listening and Note-taking" has the lowest increase at 0.590. All statements show an increase in mean score. The table also shows that the pre-test grand mean increased from 3.279 to 4.065 in the post-test, with the verbal interpretation shifting from average to above average. The data reveal that prior to the intervention, participants perceived their familiarity with the topics in the VELE webinar series as average. The post-test shows that after the VELE webinar series, participants gained higher familiarity with the topics, indicating an overall improvement. The data in Table 1 demonstrate the positive impact of the VELE webinar series on participants' language skills, indicating that this extension program effectively enhances the four macro skills.

The VELE extension program of the DLL consists of numerous sessions conducted via online meetings, maximizing the use of technological advancements to deliver an effective extension program and thereby improving participants' digital and literacy skills. Regarding participants' writing skills, there are sessions in the VELE webinar series where the speaker discusses writing research papers, offering guidance on conceptualizing ideas, crafting strong research statements, and writing academic papers. During those sessions, the speaker discusses coherence and cohesion, as well as the correct citation of references in APA 7 format. The speaker also introduces and shares various modules on English for academic purposes, enabling students to read and practice their reading comprehension. Since this extension program is held through online sessions, the participants are forced to rely on their listening skills, focusing on the discussion of the teacher, how they express their ideas, paying attention to the explanation, and writing it in their notes for them to remember that valuable information, resulting in the improvement of participants' listening and note-taking skills. The keynote speaker for the VELE program was a native English speaker; her accent differed from that of non-native speakers, which is another reason participants need to listen attentively to enhance their active listening skills. Since the speaker was a Native American, the participants are now exposed to an environment where they can listen to native speakers, enhancing their cross-cultural communication and overall speaking skills by adopting native speech. There are also opportunities for the participants to practice their English-speaking skills. This is because every session includes recitations and open forums that encourage participants to interact with the speaker in English.

The participants improve their language skills by being exposed to a learning environment where they can speak and listen to the native teacher and engage with new instructional material, thereby enhancing their reading and writing skills. This is especially evident in the participants' research skills. The participants' responses align with the quantitative data, indicating that the VELE webinar series enhances participants' knowledge across various topics through an engaging learning environment and real-life practice. This implies that attending this kind of program nurtures and enhances their knowledge and skills.

As some of the participants stated:

"Yes, I would say that the program is effective because it provides well-rounded training in the four macro skills through interactive and hands-on learning experiences. It allows participants to practice what they learn in real-life situations."

*"The program helped me to speak the English language more fluently because, as Ma'am G***I is an American native speaker, for us to have an interaction with her, we need to also speak in English."*

"The writing activities helped me think more creatively. Before, I used to worry too much about making mistakes, but now I focus more on getting my ideas out first and editing later. I wrote an opinion essay in one of the sessions, and I felt proud because I was able to organize my thoughts clearly."

These statements above support the results of the quantitative data. This implies that the increased grand mean scores on the test are due to participants being exposed to an environment where they can interact with and learn from native speakers. The conduct of programs that enable participants to actively engage in activities is also vital to their language skill development, especially the writing activity, which boosts participants' confidence and provides opportunities to practice and improve their writing.

The quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that the VELE program is effective. It provides an opportunity to enhance participants' four macro skills and offers an environment in which they can practice their language skills and participate in discussions. Enhancing participants' language skills will help them in their daily lives

and even during their internships.

Table 2. *Effectiveness of VELE Webinar Series*

Statement		Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1.	I achieved the objectives of the training.	3.786	Above Average
2.	I came across a lot of new ideas, which are useful to me.	3.875	Above Average
3.	As a result of going through this training, I was able to improve the way I do my current job.	3.768	Above Average
4.	I can make innovations at the workplace/classroom using the information learned in this training.	3.696	Above Average
5.	The knowledge/skills and information gathered during this training helped me play a bigger role than before.	3.821	Above Average
6.	This training was helpful in upgrading my skills.	3.804	Above Average
7.	This training contributed to improving the overall performance of our unit.	3.768	Above Average
8.	After the training, I think that I can be of great help in maintaining a cordial and orderly atmosphere in the unit.	3.661	Above Average
9.	I felt the need for the training before attending it.	3.750	Above Average
10.	The training was relevant to my growth and development.	3.893	Above Average
11.	To a large extent, the training was relevant to my field.	3.857	Above Average
12.	Several relevant cases/examples/live situations were discussed.	3.821	Above Average
13.	My belief in the usefulness of the training has been reinforced.	3.786	Above Average
14.	I feel the training program should be taken more seriously.	3.786	Above Average
15.	The training contributed to a large extent to improving my confidence and commitment as a student/educator.	3.857	Above Average
Grand Mean		3.789	Above Average

Table 2 reveals that the VELE webinar series was effective in enhancing the language skills of the participants, with all of the statements receiving mean scores ranging from 3.661 to 3.893, with verbal interpretations of “above average.” The statement “The training was relevant to my growth and development” received the highest mean rating of 3.893, while the lowest-rated statement was “After the training, I think that I can be of great help in maintaining a cordial and orderly atmosphere in the unit,” with a mean of 3.661.

In addition to the post-test, the evaluation of results on effectiveness shows that the VELE webinar series was effective, attaining a grand mean of 3.789, with a verbal interpretation of above average. This implies that participants consistently agreed that it contributed positively to their skills, performance, and professional growth. The results indicate that participants found the training useful, relevant, and beneficial to both their individual roles and their specified field.

The content of the VELE webinar series enhanced participants' individual skills. This extension program enabled the participants' growth and development. For example, during the webinar, participants are exposed to native speakers, listen to how they speak, and acquire new ideas and information through the lectures. Explaining the different real-life applications of the English language proves useful to the participants. With participants in the VELE program ranging from college students to English instructors, the lectures on using English for academic purposes and the teacher training to gain more teaching strategies are seen to have a positive impact on participants' individual growth and career development. The VELE webinar series not only enhances participants' four macro skills but also significantly improves their skills, performance, and professional growth.

The VELE webinar series proves effective for participants. The interview reveals that participants perceive the VELE program as an intervention that helps them develop their four macro skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This result is due to participants' exposure to a learning-oriented environment, which provides opportunities to enhance their language skills through active participation. The inclusion of real-life situations in interactive, hands-on learning experiences provides participants with an environment to apply and practice what they have learned during the VELE program.

As previously cited in the discussion of Table 1, participants consistently affirmed the overall effectiveness of the VELE program. Their responses highlighted how the program's interactive design, exposure to a native English-speaking resource person, and real-life language application directly contributed to their growth across all four macro skills. These qualitative responses align with and reinforce the quantitative finding reflected in Table 2, wherein the grand mean of 3.789 confirms that participants perceived the program as above average in terms of its contribution to their skills, performance, and professional development.

Table 3. Evaluation of VELE

Evaluation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Learning Service Provider		
Mastery of the Subject Matter	4.750	Excellent
Presentation was clear and comprehensible	4.732	Excellent
Duration of presentation is reasonable	4.786	Excellent
Learning process was enjoyable and able to sustain interest in the topic	4.750	Excellent
Group Mean	4.754	Excellent
Training Coordinators		
Facilitation	4.821	Excellent
Responsive to the needs of the participants	4.893	Excellent
Time management	4.857	Excellent
Group Mean	4.857	Excellent
Overall Assessment		
Mastery of the Subject Matter	4.893	Excellent
Presentation was clear and comprehensible	4.875	Excellent
Duration of presentation is reasonable	4.893	Excellent
Learning process was enjoyable and able to sustain interest in the topic	4.929	Excellent
Group Mean	4.897	Excellent
Grand Mean	4.836	Excellent

Table 3 shows that the participants are satisfied with the outcome of the VELE webinar series, with all categories having a grand mean interpreted as excellent. This indicates that the program is successfully conducted and satisfies the participants in terms of the training proper, resource speakers, training coordinators, timeliness, and overall assessment. These results highlight that the training was highly successful, with participants appreciating both the content and the facilitation provided.

The table shows that the learning service provider, training coordinators, and overall assessment received a grand mean of 4.836, with a verbal interpretation of excellent. Within the learning service provider category, the statement "Duration of presentation is reasonable" received the highest mean (4.786). In the training coordinators category, the statement "Responsive to the needs of the participants" got the highest mean (4.893). For the overall assessment, the statement "Learning process was enjoyable and able to sustain interest in the topic" received the highest mean (4.929).

The evaluation of the VELE program's conduct, with a verbal interpretation of "excellent," implied that the participants found the program satisfactory. They perceived that the lecturer demonstrated expertise in explaining the topics in a way that was easy for the participants to understand and provided engaging activities that kept them interested in the session. The participants perceived the extension program's conduct as excellent. This is because they enjoy the VELE program and find it useful, and because they have acquired new knowledge and skills necessary for their growth and development.

Qualitative Themes

Improvement in Speaking Skills

The Virtual English Language Educator (VELE) Webinar Series of the Department of Languages and Literature (DLL) proved effective in enhancing participants' speaking skills. Interview data reveal noticeable improvements in participants' English-speaking abilities, which they attribute to the program's interactive components. Participants highlighted oral presentations, open discussions, and exposure to native English speakers as key elements that supported their development. VELE program provides a supportive environment where participants are encouraged to practice speaking, whether through recitations, open forums, or interactive sessions. Additionally, participants are exposed to native English-speaking teachers, helping them become familiar with the American accent and pronunciation. As a result, participants tend to mimic and eventually adopt the correct pronunciation of words and phrases, further improving their fluency and confidence in speaking English. As some of the participants stated:

"Through oral presentations and open discussions – of course, in open discussions, you really get pushed to think and speak on your feet. So that experience somehow helped me become more comfortable speaking in front of others."

"Before, I used to have a difficult time speaking English. But when I attended this kind of seminar, like VELE, my pronunciation improved. During class discussions or reports, I was able to speak more clearly, and I could pronounce the words correctly."

*"The program helped me to speak the English language more fluently because, as Ma'am G***I is an American native speaker, for us to have an interaction with her, we need to also speak in English."*

This theme suggests that consistent exposure to speaking opportunities, especially those involving interaction, performance, and engagement with native speakers, plays a significant role in improving learners' speaking proficiency. These experiences not only helped participants overcome initial difficulties, such as fear or pronunciation issues, but also built their confidence and fluency in real-world communication. This finding is consistent with Budiana and Yutanto (2020), who established that webinars are an effective strategy for enhancing the speaking skills of non-native English speakers.

Improvement in Reading Skills

The extension program also enhanced participants' reading skills. Through exposure to new reading materials and instruction in specific reading techniques, participants became more strategic and confident readers. The participants developed skills in skimming and scanning, which are crucial for efficiently identifying important information in texts. The participants also gained more knowledge about how to analyze context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, a fundamental reading strategy that improves vocabulary comprehension and text analysis. Participation in the DLL's VELE program improves participants' reading speed and comprehension. As some of the participants stated:

"Yes, I can read and understand texts much faster after the program. I've learned to skim for main ideas and scan for key details, which helps me process information more easily."

"Definitely. I can read faster now compared to before, and I understand the text more easily – even when just skimming."

"Before, when I didn't know the meaning of a word, I would just make up my own meaning. But after joining the program, I learned some techniques, like using context clues."

These responses suggest that the extension program did more than expose participants to reading tasks; it taught them how to read more effectively. The incorporation of specific strategies, such as skimming, scanning, and using context clues, helps participants approach texts with confidence and skill. The participants' responses clearly imply that the program was effective in enhancing reading skills. By incorporating practical reading strategies, such as skimming, scanning, and using context clues, the program helped participants become more strategic and efficient readers. The improvements reported by participants suggest that the program not only increased their exposure to texts but also equipped them with the necessary tools to understand and analyze reading materials more effectively. This finding aligns with Grabe (2009), who emphasizes that explicit instruction in reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, and context clue analysis significantly improves reading comprehension and fluency among second language learners.

Improvement in Listening Skills

The VELE program also proved effective in enhancing participants' listening skills. One of the key factors behind this improvement was the exposure to English accents and speaking styles during the Webinar. Participants were exposed to native English accents, which challenged their listening skills and helped them focus on what they heard, thereby enhancing their active listening.

"Through the workshops, I was exposed to different English accents and speaking styles. That helped train my ears to understand different speech patterns, and I learned to focus on key words and intonation rather than trying to understand every single word."

"Listening to a native speaker regularly helped me understand how certain words are naturally pronounced, especially things like intonation, stress, and connected speech. For example, I became more aware of how Americans link words together in sentences and how their tone can change depending on the context."

These statements show that the participants improved their listening skills not only through content but also

through real-time practice and exposure. This indicates that repeated exposure to native accents helped the participant improve comprehension of fast-paced or unfamiliar speech through better focus and adaptation. This emphasizes that exposure to the different speaking styles of Native English speakers enhanced the participant's ability to adapt and comprehend spoken English more effectively.

The participants' statements suggest that the VELE program plays a significant role in developing listening skills, particularly through exposure to native speakers and diverse accents. Listening to native speakers allowed the participants to adjust their comprehension strategies, such as identifying main ideas, recognizing intonation patterns, and focusing on context. This is consistent with Vandergrift and Goh (2012), who assert that repeated exposure to authentic listening input, particularly from native speakers, enhances learners' ability to process natural speech patterns, intonation, and connected speech.

Improvement in Writing Skills

The VELE program significantly enhanced participants' writing skills through structured activities, practical lessons, and technology integration. This demonstrates growth in confidence, creative thinking, and the ability to organize ideas clearly, highlighting a foundational improvement in the writing process. This shows how exposure to academic writing practices, such as logical sequencing and cohesion, helped strengthen participants' ability to structure formal written outputs. This highlights the program's effectiveness in developing academic writing, particularly through digital tools and structured guidance on formal writing. As some of the participants stated:

"Before, when I wrote essays, they were messy and unorganized. But now, I follow a proper structure – like an introduction, body, and conclusion."

"I think yes. When I attended VELE with Ma'am Gonul, she taught us the rules of grammar and how to apply them in writing. I learned grammar rules and how to improve writing skills."

The Virtual English Language Educator Webinar Series effectively enhances participants' writing competence. The improvement is seen not only in technical aspects such as grammar and sentence structure but also in idea development, cohesion, logical flow, and organization of thoughts. The implication is that structured writing tasks, real-life applications, and technology integration in Webinars and programs can lead to measurable improvements in writing performance in both creative and academic contexts. This suggests a need for continuous writing-focused interventions. This finding supports Graham and Perin (2007), who found that structured writing instruction, including explicit teaching of organization, grammar, and revision strategies, significantly improves students' writing quality.

Conclusion

The Virtual English Language Educator (VELE) Webinar Series, an extension program of the Department of Languages and Literature of Isabela State University, was found to be effective in enhancing the four macro-English language skills – speaking, listening, reading, and writing—of fourth-year Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies students. Pre- and post-test results revealed a notable improvement in participants' performance, with the grand mean increasing from 3.279 (average) on the pre-test to 4.065 (above average) on the post-test, for an overall gain of 0.786. Qualitative data further supported these quantitative findings, gathered through semi-structured interviews, which revealed four key themes corresponding to improvements in each of the four macro skills.

Specifically, speaking skills improved through consistent engagement with a native English-speaking resource person, oral presentations, and open forum interactions. Reading skills were enhanced through exposure to reading tasks and explicit instruction in strategies such as skimming, scanning, and context clue analysis. Listening skills developed through real-time practice and repeated exposure to native English accents and diverse speech patterns. Writing skills improved through structured lessons on academic writing, grammar, cohesion, and research writing.

The program evaluation further affirmed the success of the VELE Webinar Series, with all categories, Learning Service Provider, Training Coordinators, and Overall Assessment, receiving grand means with verbal interpretations of excellent, indicating high participant satisfaction across all key areas of program delivery.

As a single-case study bounded by the VELE program at Isabela State University, the findings demonstrate the potential of virtual webinar-based extension programs as viable and effective platforms for English language skill development in higher education. These results suggest that similar programs incorporating native speaker engagement, interactive activities, and real-life language application can meaningfully contribute to students' academic and professional growth. Future research is encouraged to replicate this case study across multiple institutions and diverse learner populations to establish the broader applicability of these findings and to explore the long-term retention of language gains following participation in virtual extension programs.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. The Department of Languages and Literature is encouraged to continue and expand the VELE Webinar Series, incorporating additional sessions focused on the four macro skills with improved interactivity and technical support.
2. Similar virtual extension programs should be developed and implemented in other departments and institutions, particularly those serving students in English language education programs.
3. Future studies may replicate this case study across multiple institutions or with larger participant pools to establish broader applicability of the findings and to further validate the effectiveness of webinar-based language instruction.
4. Program coordinators should address challenges related to internet accessibility and technical support to maximize participant engagement and learning outcomes in future iterations of the program.

Contributions of Authors

Author 1: conceptualization, writing, data gathering, data analysis

Author 2: writing, supervision, and revision

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Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest.

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