Investigating the Use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Strategies to Promote Innovative Teaching and Learning Approach

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A B S T R A K

Pembelajar bahasa Inggris dari Filipina juga menghadapi kesulitan dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Terlepas dari kenyataan bahwa mayoritas penduduk Filipina memiliki beberapa tingkat kefasihan berbahasa Inggris, penurunan bertahap dapat diamati berdasarkan Indeks Kemahiran Bahasa Inggris EF (peringkat tahunan berdasarkan tingkat kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka) selama beberapa tahun terakhir. Tujuan penelitian ini yaitu menyelidiki penggunaan strategi pengajaran bahasa komunikatif (CLT) untuk mempromosikan pendekatan pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang inovatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Metode pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara, pencatatan dokumen, dan kuesioner. Instrumen pengumpulan data menggunaan lembar kuesioner. Teknik analisis data menggunakan teknik analisis deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa penggunaan CLT oleh guru SHS terbukti dalam dorongan mereka terhadap penggunaan bahasa praktis dan melibatkan siswa dalam kegiatan komunikatif seperti bermain peran dan berbagi pendapat, selaras dengan penelitian yang ada yang menyoroti kemanjuran pendekatan tersebut dalam meningkatkan keterampilan komunikasi siswa, berpikir kritis dan perolehan kosa kata. Studi ini mencatat adanya variasi dalam penerapan CLT di kalangan guru yang menunjukkan perlunya pengembangan dan dukungan profesional lebih lanjut untuk memastikan penerapan prinsip-prinsip CLT secara konsisten dan efektif, yang pada akhirnya memberikan manfaat pada hasil belajar siswa.

A B S T R A C T

English learners from the Philippines also face difficulties in learning English. Even though most Filipinos have some level of fluency in English, a gradual decline can be observed based on the EF English Proficiency Index (annual ranking based on their level of English proficiency) over the past few years. This research investigates using communicative language teaching (CLT) strategies to promote innovative teaching and learning approaches. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method using a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach. Data collection methods use interviews, document recording, and questionnaires. The data collection instrument uses a questionnaire sheet. The data analysis technique uses qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. The results of the study revealed that SHS teachers' use of CLT is evident in their encouragement of practical language use and engaging students in communicative activities such as role-playing and opinion sharing, in line with existing research that highlights the efficacy of the approach in improving students' communication skills, critical thinking and acquisition of vocabulary. This study noted variations in CLT implementation among teachers, indicating the need for further professional development and support to ensure consistent and practical application of CLT principles, ultimately benefiting student learning outcomes.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is regarded as one of the largest English-speaking nations as stated by Santos in her paper, entitled "the English language proficiency in the Philippine" (2022). In fact, English is recognized as one of the two official languages of the country, the other of which is Filipino (Santos et al., 2022; Torres & Santos, 2021). In addition to this, English is primarily used for official partaking in administration, law,

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business, education, media, and other areas or fields (Litovchenko & Shmeleva, 2020; Ngu et al., 2021). Cabigon added that it is spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos and more importantly, it is the principal medium of instruction in education from primary to tertiary education (Aranda, 2022; Turmudi & Hajan, 2020). Philippines continue to position itself as one of the world's leading English-speaking countries (Espino et al., 2021; Suzuki, 2022). That this is the very reason that foreigners still pursuit to study English in the country (Belhiah et al., 2020; Choi, 2021).

But not most people from other countries know that English learners from the Philippines are also facing difficulties in learning English (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020; Turmudi & Hajan, 2020). Despite the fact that the majority of the Philippine population has at least some degree of fluency in the English language, a gradual deterioration can be observed based on the EF English Proficiency Index (an annual ranking by their level of English) over the past years (Manuel, 2022; Santos et al., 2022). From 14th place in 2018 to 20th in 2019, the Philippines' ranking dropped to 27th in 2020. Though in 2021, the Philippines climbed up to rank 18, it is still far from its 13th ranking way back in 2016.

Filipino English proficiency has been descending for years because of some specific reasons. Some of these factors are motivation, support at home/parental involvement, comprehensive input, age, socio-economic factor, learning environment and teaching strategies (Journal et al., 2020; Santos et al., 2022). Among these factors, learning environment and teaching strategies are key factors that are highly dependent on the teacher (Ferreira et al., 2020; Toropova et al., 2021). English as a second language is acquired through an effective teaching strategy in the appropriate learning environment. They also supported the earlier study of Magno (2009) as he found out that English is learned through the process of socialization which occurs between the learner and other external events (Getie, 2020; Rivki et al., 2020). This socialization process is characterized by the combined role of the family, media, role of others in language formation (friends and teachers), environmental cues, and seeking assistance (Omar et al., 2020; Ragelienė Supervisor et al., 2021). Moreover, teaching strategies have long been recognized as an integral part of classroom teaching. Using the target language in the learning environment is essential and is already proven by several researchers as an effective way (Brevik & Rindal, 2020; Seven, 2019).

Closely akin to this, the Philippines is adapting bilingual education as an observance to Department Order 52, s. 1987, the 1987 Policy on Bilingual Education. Usually, the language is used in giving topics and scenarios for the students to role-play and engage them in group work (Berry & Kowal, 2022; Najjemba & Cronjé, 2020). Aside from it being easy to facilitate, group work also provides opportunities and encourages students to engage in communication (Agustina & Setiawan, 2020; Poort et al., 2022). Group work and role-play do not motivate students to perform better. The teachers who participated in the study were asked about their perception of what is still lacking for the students to improve (Bencic & Rosenkvist, 2020; Saptono et al., 2020). One response was that the topics chosen by the teacher are easy and do not challenge the students. With the evolving world and different generation of new learners, identifying the best teaching strategy to improve English language education in the Philippines is of utmost importance (Nuncio, 2020; Saro et al., 2022).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is one of the most important and applicable teaching and learning theories in the contemporary language teaching profession (Adem & Berkessa, 2022; Sasstos, 2020). Additionally, within the situation practices, teachers tend to develop some related activities within student living communities and societies. With these clear and familiar backgrounds and with understanding of the vocabulary and application of the sentences, students are more likely to share their thinking with their peers (Pastushenkov et al., 2021; Wood et al., 2021). Also, the situational practices in speaking may not have a strong focus on grammar and sentence translation accuracy. However, with these approaches, students may increase their understanding and knowledge of language use, feasibility and communication abilities (Bin-Tahir et al., 2020; Sasstos, 2020).

One of the other significant advantages of the CLT approach is the interaction between teachers, students and peers. For the CLT approach, the relationships between both peers and teachers are significantly increased and highly considered (Alharbi, 2021; Sasstos, 2020). The CLT approach allows both teachers and students to transfer their traditional teaching and learning beliefs into an innovative teaching and learning approach (Haliwanda, 2021; Ng, 2020). Also, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a teaching method that emphasizes communicative output. This approach has been widely known worldwide since it was first introduced in the 1970s because of the demand for communication skills of language learners (Sukavatee & Khlaisang, 2023; Wang et al., 2022). For instance, a well-known educator in language learning advocated that today's students like to use technological-assisted materials and tools for language learning, such as social media platforms and internet chat groups (Alghamdi, 2021a; Mahmud et al., 2022). In order to meet the needs of these students, such visual and interpersonal communicative tools must be created and employed (Alshumaimeri & Alhumud, 2021; Martyushev et al., 2021).

The pressures and requirements of standard examination guidelines may also influence the application and employment of the CLT approach. Many of these university entrance examinations do not require any type of oral language proficiency (Kurzinski et al., 2022; Nahar, 2024). Therefore, learners may not have any strong interest in participating in additional communicative training due to the requirement of these examinations (Amoah & Yeboah, 2021; Getie, 2020). Furthermore, classroom size and student enrolment numbers for each individual classroom significantly influence the outcomes and performances of the CLT approach (Abdelmageed et al., 2020; Haliwanda, 2021). In some circumstances, language learning courses could enrol more than 50 students in a large sized lecture hall. Such large sized lectures offer no opportunities for students to interact and communicate with their peers, as in a silent and concentrated environment (Querol-Julián, 2021; Scottish Water, 2020). Also, teachers can usually not handle additional demands, questions, improvements or corrections for each individual student (Querol-Julián, 2023; Tjcd- et al., 2022) More so, determine the use of the Communicative Language Teaching approach in the English classroom and the strategies and resources used by the teachers to improve students' oral skills (Adem & Berkessa, 2022; Phoeun & Sengsri, 2021). This research made use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The data was collected via a questionnaire and class observations. Modeling, repetition, pair and group work are the key tactics teachers employ to improve communicative competencies. These tactics were employed often, but not enough to increase class engagement (Andersson et al., 2022; Hung & Mai, 2020).

Teachers' application of CLT is one representative of the communicative approach. In applying the communicative approach, English teachers must be adaptable to the situation that they face. Communicative approach application highly varies according to teaching and teacher conditions (Goh & Sigala, 2020; Vermote et al., 2020). Materials in CLT should support teachers to give communicative competence to students which could be begun from a formal textbook (Kurniawan & ., 2022; Nguyen & Le, 2020). It is because the application in a formal education must apply to the official textbook. The integration of foreign language textbooks and classroom practice. Teachers' task is to adapt teaching methods with the textbook. Based on interview results, learners have difficulty transferring what they have got from traditional grammar teaching in real-life situations (Çiftci & Özcan, 2021; Draxler et al., 2020). In addition, the eclectic approach should be applied to combine communicative with traditional teaching grammar.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) has some potential benefits to be applied for English language teaching. This teaching strategy is promising to be implemented in the Philippine setting. Hence, this research is focused on examining the use of Communicative Language Teaching strategies utilized by Senior High School language teachers as these would yield to the inputs to developing the curriculum, with a focus on communicative language teaching which could greatly aid the language teachers in creating meaningful and fulfilling communicative tasks for the students.

2. METHOD

This study employed a descriptive-qualitative with the use of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach. Qualitative descriptive research produces data that provides subjective descriptions of events or experiences, focusing on the individuals involved and the details of what and where an event took place. The researcher gathered the data through the conduct of interview and data recording from the SHS language teachers, to record their responses as well as provide insights on the needed data. The research was conducted at the public high schools where the Senior High school language teachers are found. Teacher-respondents were purposely selected. The sampling method used was criterion or purposeful sampling, coupled with chain sampling or snowball. That the snowball method, a widely embraced technique will be useful for locating persons who know people. Focus group discussion was also utilized where a researcher assembled the teachers in sharing their experiences, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes in the utilization of CLT strategies. Questionnaire was also used for getting their profile and targeted CLT strategies by these teachers in their teaching pedagogies.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the English language teachers communicative language strategies employed in the classes. It can be gleaned from the table that all of them are using role playing, opinion sharing, communicative activity as well as fluency activity while only few used scavenger hunt and mechanical practice activity.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the English Language Teachers Communicative Language Strategies Employed in the Classes

Communicative Language Strategies	ƒ	%
Role Playing/Dialogues	12	100.00
Interviews	10	83.33
Information Gap	8	66.67
Opinion Sharing	12	100.00
Scavenger Hunt	4	33.33
News Reporting	8	66.67
Task-Completion Activity (Puzzle and Map Reading)	10	83.33
Reasoning Gap Activity	8	66.67
Charades (Pinoy Henyo)	6	50.00
Mechanical Practice Activity	4	33.33
Information-Transfer Activity	10	83.33
Communicative Activity	12	100.00
Information-Gathering Activity	11	91.67
Fluency Activity	12	100.00
Accuracy Activity	7	58.33
Meaningful-Practice Activity	10	83.33
Total	**12**	**100%**

Found out that similar to role playing, opinion sharing is another commonly employed strategy among English language teachers. This approach fosters communication skills and encourages critical thinking by allowing students to express their thoughts and perspectives. In a similar fashioned way, revealed that drama helped the learners engage in learning new vocabulary in non-constructed learning environment, and facilitated vocabulary acquisition effectively and accurately in various contexts. These data underscore the prevalence of communicative activities in language classrooms, with all teachers utilizing this strategy. This only means that communicative activities promote interaction and meaningful communication among students, aligning with the principles of communicative language teaching. More so, in the conduct of these activities' students will feel more comfortable talking and sharing during other communicative activities, thus the expected learning would exist. Based on data analysis showed the frequency and percentage distribution of the English language teachers in handling classes according to their work experience. Results show that 6 or 50% have 21 years above work experience while only none of them have a work experience of 11-15 years.

The data suggests a varied distribution of work experience among English language teachers. While there is representation across different experience levels, it's notable that a significant proportion (50%) of teachers have 21 years or more of experience. This could indicate a relatively stable and experienced teaching staff, which may have implications for teaching quality, mentorship opportunities for newer teachers, and the overall institutional knowledge base. Additionally, the absence of teachers with 11-15 years of experience may reflect attrition or career progression trends within the teaching profession. This interpretation aligns with contemporary research on teacher experience and its impact on teaching effectiveness. Mean and Standard Deviation Distribution of the SHS English Language Teachers Utilization of CLT in their Classes in terms of Curriculum Guide Implementation on Goals showed in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation Distribution of the SHS English Language Teachers Utilization of CLT in their Classes in terms of Curriculum Guide Implementation on Goals

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
To prepare students to be confident communicators in different real-life context	4.00	0.00	Always Practiced
To have repetitive oral practices and student-student cooperation	3.92	0.29	Always Practiced
To let the students communicate real meaning	3.83	0.39	Always Practiced
To support learning atmosphere and select personalized tasks for students in terms of their individual level, needs, and interest	3.75	0.45	Always Practiced
To encourage students to prioritize fluency and communication	3.92	0.29	Always Practiced
For each student to be constantly exposed to the target language	3.75	0.45	Always Practiced
Overall	**3.86**	**0.31**	**Always Practiced**

Table 2 displays the mean and standard deviation distribution of the SHS English language teachers' utilization of CLT in their classes in terms of curriculum guide implementation on goals and overall, they always practiced it as indicated by the overall mean of 3.86 and standard deviation of 0.31. Mean and Standard Deviation Distribution of the SHS English Language Teachers Utilization of CLT in their Classes in terms of Curriculum Guide Implementation on Content showed in Table 3.

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation Distribution of the SHS English Language Teachers Utilization of CLT in their Classes in terms of Curriculum Guide Implementation on Content

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
I focus on meaning as opposed to grammar	3.50	0.52	Sometimes Practiced
I use a learner-centered instruction	3.92	0.29	Always Practiced
I use pair and small groups	3.83	0.39	Always Practiced
I use authentic instructional materials	3.75	0.45	Always Practiced
I integrate language skills in my lessons	4.00	0.00	Always Practiced
Overall	**3.80**	**0.33**	**Always Practiced**

Table 3 displays the mean and standard deviation distribution of the SHS English language teachers' utilization of CLT in their classes in terms of curriculum guide implementation on content and overall, they always practiced it as indicated by the overall mean of 3.80 and standard deviation of 0.33. The high mean scores of the indicator, *"I integrate language skills in my lessons,"* indicate a strong commitment to CLT principles in curriculum content delivery, reflecting a pedagogical approach that prioritizes student engagement and communicative competence development. Mean and Standard Deviation Distribution of the SHS English Language Teachers Utilization of CLT in their Classes in terms of Curriculum Guide Implementation on Language showed IN Table 4.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation Distribution of the SHS English Language Teachers Utilization of CLT in their Classes in terms of Curriculum Guide Implementation on Language

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
I let my students use the target language (English)	3.64	0.661	Always Practiced
I encourage my students to communicate with peers using English	3.68	0.652	Always Practiced
I use English materials to supplement their language use	3.68	0.652	Always Practiced
Overall	**3.67**	**0.655**	**Always Practiced**

Table 4 displays the mean and standard deviation distribution of the SHS English language teachers' utilization of CLT in their classes in terms of curriculum guide implementation on language and overall, they always practiced it as indicated by the overall mean of 3.67 and standard deviation of 0.655.

Discussion

The overall mean score of 3.86 suggests that SHS English language teachers consistently incorporate communicative language teaching (CLT) principles in their classes, particularly in alignment with curriculum guide goals (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020; O. Alharbi, 2020). That CLT emphasizes the importance of communication and interaction in language learning, focusing on real-life tasks and meaningful language use. In the same respect, that CLT provides learners with more opportunities to develop their communicative ability and increase the role of learners in teaching and learning second language classroom activities, which is hard to find in other old teaching methods (Alghamdi, 2021b; Pitikornpuangpetch & Suwanarak, 2021). The results of the high mean score, which is, "To prepare students to be confident communicators in different real-life context," indicates a strong adherence to CLT principles in curriculum implementation, reflecting a pedagogical approach that prioritizes student-centered, communicative activities over traditional methods. This aligns with contemporary trends in language education that advocate for communicative competence and proficiency-based learning outcomes (Purpura, 2021; Ulfa, 2020).

However, conjunction with the relatively low standard deviation of 0.31 suggests a degree of consistency among SHS English language teachers in their utilization of CLT, with minimal variability in practice across teachers (Gonzales, 2020; S. Zhang, 2023). This consistency may indicate shared understandings of CLT principles, effective professional development initiatives, or clear curriculum guidelines that support CLT implementation. To be deemed effective, that CLT approach should emphasize an interactive and communication that is largely grounded on tasks or activities considered to be authentic

(Adem & Berkessa, 2022; Ljubas, 2024). This data would suggest that the results of the SHS English language teachers' utilization of CLT in curriculum implementation highlights a strong commitment to communicative language teaching principles, indicating a student-centered approach focused on meaningful language use and communicative competence.

Incorporating communicative activities, group work, and task-based learning into curriculum content, teachers create opportunities for students to use language in meaningful contexts and develop their language skills effectively (Al Kandari & Al Qattan, 2020; Rodríguez-Peñarroja, 2022). Ideally, this teaching approach should result in language fluency and accuracy which would allow the learners to communicate in different settings and real-life situations. This is because the approach boosts learners' speaking skills and allows them to connect meaningfully and make genuine communication as the focal point of language learning (Kim, 2020; Nguyen Van Huy et al., 2024).

Contrariwise, the relatively low standard deviations of 0.33 suggest a degree of consistency among SHS English language teachers in their utilization of CLT across different aspects of curriculum implementation. This consistency may be attributed to shared understandings of CLT principles, effective professional development initiatives, or clear curriculum guidelines that support CLT integration. Increasing expectations for virtuous communication skills for any types of communication context, CLT is still becoming relevant in the teaching of English in the Asian schools in this until today (Khoiroini et al., 2003; Tiwari, 2021). The results above infer that the SHS English language teachers' utilization of CLT in curriculum content delivery and overall teaching practices underscores a strong commitment to communicative language teaching principles, promoting meaningful language use and student engagement in language learning (Anderson, 2020; Z. Zhang, 2020).

Both indicators, I encourage my students to communicate with peers using English and I use English materials to supplement their language use would show that on average, SHS English language teachers consistently integrate communicative language teaching principles into their language instruction. This implies that teachers are designing activities and lessons that prioritize student interaction, authentic language use, and meaningful communication tasks, aligning with the goals of CLT and promoting language proficiency development among students (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020; Rouffet et al., 2023).

On the same note, the results of the standard indicate some variability or dispersion in the teachers' utilization of CLT. While the mean score reflects a general trend of consistent CLT implementation, the standard deviation suggests that there is some variability among teachers in how effectively they implement CLT principles in their language instruction. Variability could stem from differences in teaching styles, classroom contexts, or levels of experience among teachers (Ginja & Chen, 2020; Studies & 2019, 2019). The yielded results manifest that that SHS English language teachers generally demonstrate a strong commitment to incorporating CLT principles into their language instruction, but there may be opportunities for further professional development and support to ensure more uniform and effective implementation across all teachers. Addressing the variability observed in the standard deviation could help to enhance the quality and consistency of CLT practices in SHS English language classrooms, ultimately benefiting student learning outcomes. This research contributes to the understanding of the role of CLT in language education and highlights areas for further improvement and development. By continuing to prioritize CLT principles, providing support for teachers, and fostering a student-centered approach grounded in communicative language teaching, institutions can empower students to become confident and proficient communicators in an increasingly interconnected world.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings align with existing research, emphasizing the effectiveness of communicative activities such as role-playing, opinion sharing, and drama-based activities in enhancing communication skills, critical thinking, and vocabulary acquisition among students. The results highlight the importance of incorporating CLT methods into language curricula to create interactive and engaging learning experiences, ultimately promoting meaningful communication and language proficiency. Furthermore, the analysis highlights various aspects crucial to the successful implementation of CLT in SHS English language education. These include the dedication of teachers to CLT principles, the importance of materials selection and assessment practices aligned with CLT, and the need for ongoing professional development and support to address variability in CLT implementation among teachers.

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