

Teaching English among Secondary School Teachers in the Southern Districts of Eastern Samar

Christopher A. Duran, Ed.D., Juliet C. Ogana, MAEd, April Mae R. Villarazo, MAEd

coed.essusalcedo2024@gmail.com

Eastern Samar State University – Salcedo Campus, Salcedo, Eastern Samar, 6807, Philippines

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the English language teaching (ELT) in the southern district of the Division of Eastern Samar. In teaching English, the junior high school English teachers are utilizing a mixture of the structural and communicative approaches, they regard their roles as teachers and the needs assessments favorably. Moreover, a good teacher is one who is most knowledgeable of his/her subject matter and that a good learner is one who performs and completes class assignments. On the issue of factors on why students fail in learning English, they regarded student claim they have no talent to use the language. Finally, English teachers still utilize multiple choice type of test for more objective nature of assessment and they conduct such assessment to primarily measure the level of learning of the students. This study recommends the following: a sustained updating of teaching methodologies may be provided to the teachers to be abreast with the pedagogical demands of the modern times; an extension project like a training-workshop may be initiated by language professors in the university to assist basic education teachers with the changing trends of English language teaching; and a follow up study with focus on teaching methodologies with the use of digital tools may be conducted to ensure capacity building for all language teachers in teaching English in the 21st century.

Keywords: Quality of Teacher Education Programs; 21st century skills; English Language Teaching; assessments

1. Introduction

According to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2015), the schools across the nation are responding to political, economic, social and technological needs. These schools respond to students' needs and become more concerned about how learners become responsive to the futures' challenges and demands and assume their societal roles. Thus, educators are directed to use various teaching methodologies because the success of the educational outcomes depends on teachers' instructional activities.

In the vibrant educational landscape of Eastern Samar, Philippines, teaching English presents both unique opportunities and challenges. The region, known for its rich cultural heritage and resilient communities, is committed to enhancing its educational framework to better equip students with essential language skills. Effective teaching strategies in English are crucial for fostering communication proficiency, critical thinking, and global connectivity among students.

Such prominent language skills are necessary for learning other skills is reading. Correspondingly, problems relative to reading comprehension among young learners are a perennial concern. Serious consequences anticipate learners with reading deficiency. Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) as cited by Miñoza and Montero (2019) contended that if students fail to master reading and effectively comprehend, social and economic progress would not come easy. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

reported that Philippines got lowest in Reading out of 79 countries. It furthered that only one in five Filipino learners aged 15 achieved at least the minimum proficiency level in Overall Reading Literacy (Philippine News Agency (2022).

Furthermore, Duran's (2023) study on Reading Capacities, Interests, and Experiences of Junior High School Students: A Multi-Case Analysis revealed that teaching methodologies of the teachers and difficulties in reading of the students were of the most common experiences that may affect reading performances of the poor readers. With the three case groups, teaching methodologies showed varying points which identified unique experiences among the three case groups.

To validate such findings about the impact of teaching methodologies in language learning, uncovering the English language teaching in the Secondary Schools is imperative. Essentially, this scientific investigation would like to address the research and extension agenda of the Eastern Samar State University on its 3rd thematic area, "Quality Education and Human Capital Development", particularly the research and extension program of the Bachelor of Secondary Education of the College of Education of Eastern Samar State University Salcedo Campus labelled as Program HINANG (Holistic Initiatives and Advocacies to Nurturing Graders) which acknowledges the offering of quality education through commendable trends in teaching disciplines like English to the students. Additionally, this study will provide an extension project where an avenue for training on pedagogical practices in the 21st Century will be provided for faculty members— hence the intent of having this study proposed.

1.1. Objectives

The purpose of this study was to investigate current trends in English language teaching (ELT) in the southern district of the Division of Eastern Samar. Specifically, this faculty research aimed to:

1. identify the preferred teaching methodology of the junior high school teachers;
2. determine the perceptions of the junior high school teachers regarding:
 - 2.1 the role of teachers in the classrooms?
 - 2.2 the role of pre-course needs assessment?
 - 2.3 the characteristics of good teachers and good learners?
 - 2.4 the causes of learners' failure to reach a high level of English proficiency; and,
3. classify the functions of traditional and non-traditional modes of assessment.

1.2. Significance of the Study

The proponents assume the benefits of this study to the following sectors:

Junior High School English Teachers. Teachers handling English subjects in the Junior High Schools will essentially get advantages from this study as they are provided sound data on the preferences of teaching methodologies, they and other teachers have in teaching English. Having provided with ideas in the teaching practices, junior high school teachers are able to qualify whether such methodology would fit to the needs of their learners, therefore catering the intended learning of the students. Realizations such as retooling and/or intensification of

the teaching strategies and the demands of the 21st century learners would impact better English language learning.

Junior high school students. The English language learners in the secondary level greatly benefit from this study as the findings resonate rich opportunities for language learning as teachers are guided with ideas on the instructional practices applicable the needs and preferences of the students. Moreover, as recipients of the impact of teaching methodologies, the students become productive language users, benefitting them with skills essential for their key roles in their respective future careers and workplaces.

School heads and Principals. The outcome of this study provides school heads and principals the needed administrative function to impose policies and programs to improve English language teaching of learners.

Co-researchers. Outcome of this study provides knowledge and insights to future researchers to undergo related studies on the present research. In fact, this study ascertains a Phase 1 type of study. Hence, series of updating studies can then be conducted to address the dynamics of pedagogy in the quest for English language teaching and learning.

1.3. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study centers on assessing the current trends in English language teaching. All Junior High School English teachers in the national high schools in the southern districts of DepEd Eastern Samar Division serve as respondents to answer a survey questionnaire adopted from Renandya, et al., (2014).

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The current investigation utilized the descriptive research design. Manjunatha (2019) defined descriptive research as a research method that describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon that is being studied. This methodology focuses more on the “what” of the research subject rather than the “why” of the research subject. In other words, descriptive research primarily focuses on describing the nature of a demographic segment, without focusing on “why” a certain phenomenon occurs. In particular, this study is survey in nature as it seeks to determine responses through a questionnaire where English teachers will reveal their trends in teaching English.

2.2. Respondents and Sampling Methods

All Junior High School English teachers in the national high schools in the southern districts of DepEd Eastern Samar Division are the target respondents of this study. Complete enumeration was considered as this study intended to cater responses addressing concerns in English language learning through the teaching methodologies and practices of the teachers.

2.3. Instrument and Data Gathering Procedure

The quantitative data, on the respondents' trends in teaching English were taken from the survey questionnaire adopted from Renandya, et al., (2014). This questionnaire comprises a combination of both closed- and open-ended question formats was used. The questionnaire had two parts: Part I asked respondents for some basic biographical data; Part II sought to find out how the respondents characterized their teaching and testing practices and what their motivations behind these practices were. As to the gathering of data, upon approval of the research panel member, a letter of request to conduct the study was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd Eastern Samar, District Supervisors, and school principals of the research site. Once permission is granted, the researchers will administer the questionnaire on the agreed date with the respondents.

2.4. Measurement of Variables

For the response mode, this study used a 5-point Likert Scale as shown in table with the scoring guide:

Scale	Ranges	Interpretation
1	1.00 – 1.79	Strongly Agree
2	1.80 – 2.59	Agree
3	2.60 – 3.39	Neutral
4	3.40 – 4.19	Disagree
5	4.20 – 5.00	Strongly Disagree

2.5. Data Analysis

As this study is survey in nature, the results will come in scales and ranks and/or percentages and will be computed via descriptive statistics.

3. Results and Discussion

Investigating current trends in English language teaching (ELT) of Junior High School English teachers in the southern district of the Division of Eastern Samar was the main objective of this study. Certain specific questions derived details of responses from the English teachers. Forty-four (44) teacher-respondents from all target junior high schools responded and gave insights about the trends in their teaching of English.

3.1. Preferred Teaching Methodology of the Junior High School Teacher

Table 1 narrates the description of the teacher-respondents in their teaching approaches/methods whether structural or communicative. On a scale of 1 to 10, (1 being completely structural and 10 being completely communicative in approach) most respondents (79.54%) clustered around the midpoint, leaning towards the

communicative end (5 – 8), indicating that most used a mixture of the two approaches with a tendency to favor more communicative activities.

Table 1. The teaching methodology of the junior high school teacher

Scale	N	%	Interpretation
10	2	4.51	Communicative
9	5	11.36	Communicative
8	5	11.36	Communicative and Structural
7	14	31.82	Communicative and Structural
6	7	15.91	Communicative and Structural
5	9	20.45	Communicative and Structural
4	1	9.09	Structural
3	1	9.09	Structural
	44	100.00	Communicative and Structural

Meanwhile, only a few percentages of the respondents declared they are purely structural or purely communicative in their teaching approaches in English.

Hence, this clearly projects the integral and impactful use of the varied teaching approaches in teaching English. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as it prioritizes meaningful communication in language learning and emphasizes learners' active engagement. CLT is done by encouraging interactive activities, such as role-plays, debates, and problem-solving tasks, to simulate real-life language use. Furthermore, the teacher acts as a facilitator, fostering a learner-centered environment where learners practice collaboratively and error correction focuses on communicative effectiveness rather than merely pointing out mistakes (Sukavateea & Khlaisang, 2023). Additionally, the preference on communicative language teaching approach is heightened due to the fact that most of the teacher-respondents are acquainted to the development of the pedagogical views in language teaching. Furthermore, the implementation of the CLT approach fosters the development of student autonomy, enhances critical thinking skills, and cultivates problem-solving ability (Qasserras, 2023). Finally, it could be realized that CLT remains as the most popular, almost the default, ELT framework in the Philippines. Lesson plans and textbooks continue to be written following the principles of CLT (Karami & Zamanian, 2016).

3.2. Junior High School Teachers' Perceptions regarding the role of teachers in the classrooms

The second specific objective of this study centers on the perceptions of the junior high school teachers regarding: 1. the role of teachers in the classrooms; 2. the role of pre-course needs assessment; 3. the characteristics of good teachers and good learners; and, 4. the causes of learners' failure to reach a high level of English proficiency.

A teacher's role in the classroom involves instruction, curriculum delivery, and creating a positive learning environment. In addition, they also act as mentors, role models, and facilitators of student learning, providing individualized support, managing behavior, and assessing progress to help students achieve academic and personal goals.

Table 2 shows the responses of the Junior High School teachers regarding their perceptions on their roles as teachers in the classrooms. It can be observed that all of the statements were responded either 'agree' or

'strongly agree' by the teachers which generally provide a vivid picture of how the teachers acknowledge the nature and breadth of their job especially in the teaching-learning activities.

Table 2. The role of teachers in the classrooms

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. To pass on knowledge and language skills to my students	1.63	Strongly Agree
2. To help my students discover effective strategies of learning	1.83	Agree
3. To provide a model of correct language usage	1.71	Strongly Agree
4. To help my students pass examinations	1.98	Agree
5. To direct and control learning	2.54	Agree
6. To help my students become self-directed learners	1.75	Strongly Agree
7. To correct learners' errors	1.92	Agree
8. To provide useful learning experiences	1.58	Strongly Agree
9. To give rules and explanations about English	1.92	Agree
Grand Mean	1.87	Agree

The statement, "To provide useful learning experiences" garnered the highest response (1.58) suggesting a strong agreement of the role of teachers in the classroom a facilitator of learning. This regard suggests that in respect of cognitive skills and learning styles, learners are different, and they bring to a learning situation their schemata, different beliefs, habits and attitudes, and the right amount of life experiences, hence, making teachers invest in dealing teaching via experiential approaches.

On the other hand, the statement, "To direct and control learning" earned the least rating (2.58) although interpreted as "agree". The grand mean was 1.87 which reflects an agreeable regard from the teacher-respondents concerning on their impactful roles in the classrooms. This finding simply supports the integral functions of teachers in the classroom. Significantly, a classroom environment and learning activities are affected mainly by a teacher's characteristic traits, beliefs, and modes of teaching (Siddiqui & Ahamed, 2020).

3.3. Junior High School Teachers' Perceptions regarding the role of pre-course needs assessment

Aside from the role of the teachers, the role of needs assessment is greatly considered in this study. What types of needs assessment did teachers carry out?

Table 3. The role of pre-course needs assessment

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Assessing learners' communicative needs	1.94	Agree
2. Assessing learners' learning styles and strategies	2.06	Agree
3. Finding out learners' interests	2.02	Agree
4. Finding out learners' preferred activities in the classroom	2.15	Agree

5. Finding out learners' goals and objectives of learning	2.04	Agree
Grand Mean	2.04	Agree

As reflected in Table 3, teachers carried out needs analysis to assess learners' communicative needs (1.99), to find out learners' interests (2.02), to find out learners' goals and objectives of learning (2.04), to assess learning styles and strategies (2.06), and to find out their preferred activities in the classroom (2.15). All of these responses were interpreted an agreeable regard on the teachers' perception on conducting needs assessment.

This data can be furthered that needs analysis in English language teaching is crucial to answer communicative skills similar to the views of Ulum (2015) which centered on problems and needs in listening skills and concentrated on the improvement of listening and speaking and that of Parnawati and Ulinuha's study (2019) where skill levels on each English language skill and students' needs and wants for English language learning at the higher education level were studied.

3.4. Junior High School Teachers' Perceptions regarding the characteristics of good teachers and good learners

Characteristics of teachers and learners impact the teaching approaches of English teachers. Table 4a displays the responses of the Junior High School teachers as to what qualities make a good teacher. In ascending order, the teacher-respondents qualified that a good teacher should be knowledgeable of his/her subject matter (3.10), has good proficiency in English (3.40), is willing to experiment and learn (4.0), motivate students and diagnose students' weaknesses (4.5), is hardworking (5.00), helps students become autonomous learners (4.90), is well-organized (5.20), and finally, makes sure students get enough assignments (7.80).

Table 4a. Qualities of a Good Teacher

Statements	Ave	Rank
1. Make sure students get enough assignments	7.80	9
2. Be well-organized	5.20	8
3. Be able to motivate students	4.10	4.5
4. Be able to diagnose students' weaknesses	4.10	4.5
5. Help students become autonomous learners	4.90	7
6. Be hardworking	5.00	6
7. Be proficient in English	3.40	2
8. Be willing to experiment and learn	4.00	3
9. Know his/her subject matter well	3.10	1

The knowhow of teachers in their subject matter is supported in the study by Dincer, Ali, Aysegul & Mine (2013) as mentioned by Guspita, Mustajib, and Ardian (2023) which emphasizes that subject matter knowledge can be interpreted that English teachers must have a fairly broad knowledge especially knowledge of English subjects. Furthermore, the subject matter knowledge of a teacher is essential for effective teaching and learning, as it allows them to provide accurate and comprehensive explanations, guide students' learning,

and facilitate meaningful discussions (Jain, 2023). Indeed, the quality of teachers is positively correlated with the degree of students' English proficiency (Seebruck, 2015; Wang, 2021).

Aside from having good teachers, good learners are seen contributory in any teaching approaches utilized by teachers. Shown in Table 4b are the responses of the Junior High School teachers in how they ranked the qualities of a good learner. According to the teacher-respondents, a good learner is one who completes class assignment (1.10), follows instructions (1.23), is motivated (1.31), asks questions (1.37), is not afraid to make mistakes (1.48), interacts with other students (1.58) and can plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning as well as is active and can speak out (1.65).

Table 4b. Qualities of a Good Learner

Statements	Ave	Rank
1. A learner who asks a lot of questions	1.37	4
2. A learner who can plan monitor, and evaluate their own learning	1.65	7.5
3. A learner who interacts with other students	1.58	6
4. A learner who is not afraid of making mistakes	1.48	5
5. A learner who is motivated	1.31	3
6. A learner who follows teachers' instructions	1.23	2
7. A learner who completes class assignment	1.10	1
8. A learner who is active and speaks out	1.65	7.5

These qualities ranked by English teacher-respondents that learners being able to complete tasks make their English language learning meaningful. English as a task-based discipline would demand the active effort of learners in accomplishing tasks even those taken at home for reinforcement purposes.

3.5. Junior High School Teachers' Perceptions regarding the causes of learners' failure to reach a high level of English proficiency

Table 5 summarizes what teachers thought to be factors that contributed to learners' failure to acquire high proficiency in English.

Table 5. Causes of learners' failure to reach a high level of English proficiency

Statements	Ave	Rank
1. Inefficient learning strategy	1.29	3
2. Below normal IQ	1.25	2
3. No talent	1.08	1
4. Frequent absences from class	1.65	10
5. Fear to make errors	1.37	7.5
6. Not enough opportunity to use the language in real life	1.46	9
7. Unfavorable attitude towards the target language	1.35	5
8. Inability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning	1.35	5
9. Lack attention in class	1.37	7.5
10. Lack of effort	1.35	5

Based on the responses, learners fail to reach a high level of English proficiency because of having no talent (1.08), having below normal IQ (1.25), inefficient learning strategy (1.29), unfavorable attitude towards the target language, inability to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning, as well as lack of effort (1.35), fear to make errors and lack attention in class (1.37), lacking opportunity to use the language in real life (1.46), and, frequent absences from class (1.65). These ranked causes of failures among learners in using English language generally centers on lack of practice, knowledge, skills and competence as demarcated by Chanda (2021), Ahmed (2015) and Soki (2020).

3.6. Functions of Traditional and Non-Traditional Modes of Assessment

The third specific objective of this study classifies the functions of traditional and non-traditional modes of assessment in English language teaching. Teachers are mostly required to assess their students' progress and achievement as part of an educational system and that is why assessment is also a part of a teacher's job. Formal assessment and informal assessment both help motivate students in their learning (Phongsirikul, 2018). Table 6a presents the kinds of tests ranked by the teacher-respondents. Essentially, these Junior High School teachers sort to conduct assessments in multiple choice (2.47), essay questions (3.92), true/false (4.63), fill in the blank (4.98), matching (5.04), composition test (5.71), cloze test (5.98), and dictation (7.04).

Table 6a. Kind of tests do you usually use in your classroom

Tests	Ave	Rank
1. Multiple choice	2.47	1
2. Matching	5.04	5
3. Fill in the blank	4.98	4
4. Cloze test	5.98	7
5. True/False	4.63	3
6. Essay questions	3.92	2
7. Dictation	7.04	8
8. Composition test	5.71	6
9. Know his/her subject matter well	5.02	5

Findings of this study affirm Alsaedi's (2024) study emphasizing that multiple choice (MC) type of test is the most common way of testing grammatical knowledge. This is because MC tests can cover many grammatical points and at the same time is easy to score using technologies, yet it also offers greater objectivity in grading compared to other testing formats. MC questions (MCQs), in their simplest form, require the selection of a correct answer from a set of alternatives.

Table 6b. The Primary Functions of Tests in English

Tests	Ave	Rank
1. To assess students' learning difficulty	2.59	2
2. To place students into different groups	4.78	6
3. To motivate students	4.06	5

4. To identify areas for re-teaching	3.51	4
5. To find out how much students have learned	1.71	1
6. To assess students' weekly or monthly progress	3.14	3

Meanwhile, Table 6b discusses the primary functions of tests in English. According to the findings, these Junior High School teachers conduct assessment to find out extent of student learning (1.71), to assess learning difficulty (2.59), to assess students' progress (3.14), to identify areas for re-teaching (3.51), to motivate students (4.06), and, to place students into different groups (4.78).

This ranking is supported by the findings of Ali (2019) which stressed that in language teaching and learning contexts, testing plays a pivotal role in assessing language learners' progress in a language classroom and can also be a tool to determine an individual's performance on achievement tests.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

Based on the results and findings of the study, it can be concluded that:

1. The English Junior High School teachers utilize mixtures of teaching methodologies from structural to communicative approaches. This is basically a reality especially when they deal with a number of students with a variety of needs and interests.

2. The English Junior High School teachers have a clear understanding of their roles in the classroom as disseminators and facilitators and agreeably considers the importance needs assessments in English language teaching. Meanwhile, mastery of subject matters and the capacities of performing class activities are seen most important asset for a good teacher and good learner respectively. Finally, students are viewed to fail learning English because they realize their lack of innate talent and skill in the use of the language.

3. The English Junior High School teachers still recognized multiple choice type of test as the most used test type because of its objectiveness and ease to administer and rate. Moreover, they primarily conduct assessment for the purpose of measuring the extent of learning obtained by the students.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, it can be recommended that:

1. A sustained updating of teaching methodologies may be provided to the teachers to be abreast with the pedagogical demands of the modern times.

2. An intervention regarding failures of students to learn English may be properly devised and eventually, to be implemented to lessen such failures or difficulty in language learning.

3. An exposure to varied assessment formats may be facilitated to language teachers such as training so that they accurately and appropriately measure language learning.

4. An extension project like a training-workshop may be initiated by language professors in the university to assist basic education teachers with the changing trends of English language teaching.

5. A follow up study with focus on teaching methodologies with the use of digital tools may be conducted to ensure capacity building for all language teachers in teaching English in the 21st century.

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