

## FOSTERING ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN FILIPINO LANGUAGE: TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL INITIATIVES

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### ABSTRACT

This study scrutinized teachers' pedagogical initiatives in improving oral communication skills of elementary learners in Filipino language instructions. This study employed a phenomenological research design which aims to determine the experiences and perceptions of the eight (8) participants. The emerging themes on the experiences of teachers in developing oral communication skills of students in Filipino language under positive experiences were improvement in social and interpersonal skills developing word proficiency, while the themes under negative experiences were social anxiety and limited target language exposure outside the classroom. The emerging themes on the pedagogical initiatives were encouraging students for public speaking, establishing a positive classroom environment, and building confidence by personally choosing topics. Lastly, the emerging themes on educational management were sharing practice and assistance, implementing assessment and feedback mechanisms, and establishing parental participation. These themes implied that educators, parents, and society should collectively emphasize the significance of oral communication, empowering students to become confident communicators who can positively impact the world around them. Moreover, the results generated provided comprehensive data in conducting future research with similar scope. This study may be published in a reputable research journal.

**Keywords:** Oral communication, pedagogical initiatives, Filipino language, coping strategies, Davao del Sur

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Learning a language is learning how to communicate culturally, socially, and academically in appropriate ways consistent with the norms and customs of the target language users. Communication is a process of making meaning through interactions between people. The more interactions among students as well as between the teacher and students, the better the language learning achieved by students. Teachers play a critical role in promoting interactions among students and engaging them in the learning process. When oral communication is effective, both the student and the teacher benefit. Communication makes learning easier, helps students achieve goals, increases opportunities for expanded learning, strengthens the connection between student and teacher, and creates confidence between them (Tan, 1999).

Nevertheless, despite the efforts of schools and teachers, there are still students who fail to become fluent and accurate in the use of Filipino language despite the many years of study. The decrease in the ability of students to use Filipino language has become prevalent during pandemic times, now that the classes are slowly getting back to normal modality, this learning gap has been noticeable.

However, the oral communication proficiency of students in Filipino Language instruction is yet unexplored. There is little, if none, study and discussion tackling teachers' strategies in dealing with the dilemma of improving oral communication skill, as it is essential to be developed among students to gear them with appropriate knowledge on presentations. Being communicatively competent likewise boosts marketability and viability for work in a variety of careers in the future, thus reiterating the essential of being equipped. It is due to this premise that the researcher investigated the teachers' pedagogical initiatives in improving oral communication skills of elementary learners in Filipino language instructions. The similarities of their experiences shed light to meaningful recommendations for effective communication programs in Filipino Language.

#### Oral Communication Proficiency

Oral communication is a unique and learned rhetorical skill that requires understanding what to say and how to say it. Speech in more formal environments does not come naturally. What should be learned is how to critically think about how to present oneself as a speaker in all occasions and also how to function in a variety of speaking environments (Palu, 2016; Akinola, 2016).

Oral communication skills are a highly sought skill compared to writing and reading. It is because learning to speak is an important goal. It equips students with a set of skills they can use for the rest of their lives. Oral communication is the mode of communication most often used to express opinions, make arguments, offer explanations, transmit information, and make impressions upon others (Asubiojo et al., 2005).

An adequate vocabulary and mastery of syntax are needed to speak in another language. However, linguistic competence is not sufficient for someone who wants to communicate competently in another language. The speaker needs

communicative competence which includes not only linguistic competence but also a range of other sociolinguistic and conversational skills which help him/ her know how to say what to whom and when. In the use of second language students need communicative competence to participate in and learn from their classroom experience (McDonough and Shaw, 2012).

Students need to speak well in their personal lives, future workplaces, social interactions, and political endeavors. Soon they will become professionals and workers and they will have meetings to attend, presentations to make, discussions and arguments to participate in, and groups to work with. If basic instruction and opportunities to practice speaking are available, students would be able to position themselves to accomplish a wide range of goals and be useful members of their communities (Crandall, 2000).

Companies and industries are looking for individuals who have a high oral communication skill and are considered orally proficient. It has become imperative for graduates to be proficient in oral communication skills so that they can function effectively in the academic and professional setting. It is because oral communication covers a wide area, ranging from formal presentations to participation in meetings. Oral communication skills classes and subjects are included in elementary, secondary and tertiary levels (Littlewood, 2007).

Oral communication is a dynamic interactive process that involves the effective transmission of facts, ideas, thoughts, feelings and values. It is not passive and does not just happen. Speakers actively and consciously engage in communication to develop information and understanding required for effective group functioning (Palu, 2016).

Communication is symbolic because it involves not only words but also symbols and gestures that accompany the spoken words because symbolic action is not limited to verbal communication. Communication is an interactive process. The two communication agents involved in the communication process are sender and receiver. Both the communication agents exert a reciprocal influence on each other through inter stimulation and response. At its most basic level, oral communication is the spoken interaction between two or more people. The interaction is far more complex than it seems (Gass, 2013).

#### Sub-skills of Oral Communication

From a linguistic point of view, the overall skills of oral communications can be dichotomized into its component-skills namely, listening skills and speaking skills. These two skills can stand independently in their respective significance as macro skills of English. However, they are viewed in this study as indicators of oral communication skills. The two skills are discussed below their roles in oral communication.

**Listening Skills.** Steinberg (2007) said that listening is more complicated than merely hearing. It is a process that consists of four stages: sensing and attending, understanding, and interpreting, remembering, and responding. Similarly, Morreale et al. (1998) defined listening as the ability to receive, construct meaning from, and respond to spoken and non-verbal messages. Active listening involves literal and critical comprehension of the ideas and information being communicated orally. Listening is a vital component of oral communication or the interactive process in which the individual takes the roles of speaker and listener through a verbal and non-verbal component. It means that the ability of a person to communicate effectively depends on his listening skills. De Vera (2005) said that an active listener responds appropriately to what is said and fosters a productive exchange.

In an explanation by Rost (2004), he drew a particular list of components to master when dealing with listening skills. They are as follows: (a) discriminating between sounds; (b) recognizing words; (c) identifying stressed words and grouping of words; (d) identifying functions (such as apologizing) in conversations; (e) connecting linguistic cues to paralinguistic cues (intonation and stress) and to non-linguistic cues (gestures and relevant objects in the situation) in order to construct meaning; (f) using background knowledge and context to predict and then to confirm meaning; (g) recalling essential words, topics and ideas; (h) giving appropriate feedback to the speaker; and (i) reformulate what the speaker has said.

Furthermore, Stepanovienė (2012) in his book, “Barrier to Academic Listening: Research Perspectives”, stated that the most difficult obstacle to listening comprehension was the lack of knowledge of vocabulary while the least difficult factor was sequencing of information in a text. The most difficult reason which is poor vocabulary is in relation with Kutlu, O. & A.E. Aslanoglu (2009)’s findings that “number of juvenile books at home”, “number of books at home”, “time spent reading books”, “time spent reading newspaper” and “time spent listening to radio” have significant effects on students’ success in their listening performance for it is expected that through exposure to the said media platforms, students can develop wider range of vocabulary.

**Speaking Skills.** Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its forms and meanings are dependent on the context in

which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Language functions (or patterns) that tend to recur in certain discourse situations (e.g., declining an invitation or requesting time off from work), can be identified and charted.

Finally, speech has its skills, structures, and conventions different from a written language. A good speaker synthesizes this array of skills and knowledge to succeed in each speech act. A speaker's skills and speech habits have an impact on the success of any exchange. Speakers must be able to anticipate and then produce the expected patterns of specific discourse situations. They must also manage discrete elements such as turn taking, rephrasing, providing feedback, or redirecting. It is necessary that a learner must know the usual pattern used in interaction and access his knowledge as the exchange progresses. He must also choose the correct vocabulary, rephrase or emphasize words for clarification, and use appropriate facial expressions.

Other skills and knowledge that instruction might address include the following: producing the sounds, stress patterns, rhythmic structures, and intonations of the language; using grammar structures accurately; assessing characteristics of the target audience, including shared knowledge or shared points of reference, status and power relations of participants, interest levels, or differences in perspectives; selecting vocabulary that is understandable and appropriate for the audience, the topic being discussed, and the setting in which the speech act occurs; applying strategies to enhance comprehensibility, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, or checking for listener comprehension; using gestures or body language; and paying attention to the success of the interaction and adjusting components of speech such as vocabulary, rate of speech, and complexity of grammar structures to maximize listener comprehension and involvement (Burns & Joyce, 1997).

#### The Communicative Classroom

Hedge (2002) describes the communicative classroom as where one develops the students' communicative language ability in five key components: (1) Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to know how to use the language to achieve communicative goals. (2) Linguistic competence refers to knowledge of the language itself (spelling, vocabulary, pronunciation etc.). (3) Discourse competence refers to the ability to know how ideas are linked across utterances (linguistically and between sentences). (4) Strategic competence refers to using communicative strategies to express oneself. (5) Fluency refers to the ability to communicate easily without hesitation and "inappropriate" slowness. Thus, the teacher's role in a communicative classroom goes far beyond presenting and providing the students with a new language. They need to build the students' competence as well as their confidence. Furthermore, Hedge (2000) clearly states that "the communicative classroom will need to expose learners to input which they can attend to, and opportunities to produce output in more controlled activities". The concept 'controlled activities' refers to activities where the focus on language is made conscious for the students, while the teacher still has control of the students' output to a large extent.

Hedge (2000) raises four needs that must be fulfilled to create these 'controlled activities. Firstly, one needs to contextualize the activity by demonstrating the link between linguistic form and communicative function. That is, to find a suitable situation for when the current structure would be applied in real life. Secondly, the activities need to allow the students to personalize their language to freely express their own ideas, feelings, and opinions. Thirdly, the students need to become aware of the social use of language, which means understanding which language and social behavior is suitable in a specific situation. Lastly, the teachers need to help the students develop their confidence, for them to learn how to produce language automatically and quickly. By letting students work and try out their language together, the teacher is creating a positive climate for classroom communication where the students' confidence can develop.

#### Experiences of Teachers in Developing Oral Communication skills in Filipino Language

Social Anxiety. In many classes, some students prefer to keep their ideas to themselves when their oral participation may cause unpleasantness and embarrassment, while others hesitate to participate in the discussion simply because they are afraid of being continually corrected by the teacher for every slip they make. However, students 'mistakes are to be corrected, but when the student is attempting to encode his thoughts, he should be interrupted as little as possible. Instead, the teacher notes one or two errors of pronunciation or grammar which would affect communication or is unacceptable to a native speaker and brings these to the attention of the whole class for later practice. Developing oral communication proficiency in the foreign language can be done only in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where students feel at ease with the teacher and with each other. The teacher must adopt a motivating attitude in such a way that all students are involved in the learning process (Garton et al., 2011).

The problem that the students often encounter is inhibition. When students try to say things in a foreign language in the classroom they are often inhibited. They are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face. They are shy of the attention that their speech attracts. Next, learners often complain that they cannot think of anything to say, and they are not motivated to express themselves. Research found that the learners have nothing to express, maybe because the teacher had chosen a topic which is not suitable for him or about which he knows very little. It is difficult for many students to respond when the teachers ask them to say something in a foreign language because they might have little ideas about what to say, which vocabulary to use, or how to use the grammar correctly (McGrath, 2013).

Struggle in finding appropriate words. In attempting to use the Filipino language to express their own thoughts, students find themselves struggling to find appropriate words where their choice of expression is severely limited. When students are learning the Filipino language, they are unable to express their thoughts in orally mature vocabulary. Thus, finding themselves now limited to expressing themselves in childishly simple language, they feel frustrated and uncomfortable. The teacher's awareness of this psychological factor and consciousness of the contribution in the process of teaching is important. He must know, although they are limited in their powers of expression, they are not really the immature people this deficiency might make them appear to be (Barrass, 2006).

Developing word proficiency. It is vital that the students have a strong vocabulary to express their thoughts or ideas. The importance of vocabulary is also expressed by Czifra (2013) who emphasized that vocabulary is needed for a learner to be able to transmit a message. Moreover, the teachers discussed the connection between students' vocabulary and their confidence. This can be related to Hedge (2000) who states that vocabulary is needed for a student to express their own personalized language, which is one of the necessities in a communicative classroom. He further discusses the link between speaking activities and anxiety within students where she mentions that a teacher can reduce the risk of anxiety by giving the students the scope to develop their proficiency, and thereby increasing their self-confidence. Gass et. al's (2013) statement regarding vocabulary building. It is a time-consuming process. However, letting the students encounter the words frequently and hear the words used in different contexts will lead to the word becoming a part of the students' own vocabulary.

Limited Target Language Exposure Outside the Classroom. without exposure to the target language in real-life situations, students may struggle to develop fluency and natural conversational skills. Classroom settings provide a structured environment for language learning, but they often lack the spontaneity and authenticity of real-world communication. Students need exposure to native speakers, different accents, colloquial expressions, and the intricacies of everyday conversations to enhance their oral communication skills. The absence of such exposure outside the classroom creates a gap between the controlled environment of language instruction and the dynamic nature of language use in the real world (Yule, 2002).

#### Strategies in Fostering Oral Communication Skills in Filipino Language

Encouraging students for public speaking. Participating in public speaking can increase students' oral communication skills because they are rehearsing and presenting information to people, whether it's a small or large audience. Classmates, teachers, or audience members can give them feedback on how to improve their oral skills for their next public speaking event. The more they present speeches, the more they may improve their speaking skills. They may also find that their improved oral skills transfer into their everyday conversations with others. Here are a few ways to improve students' oral communication skills: use concise language, consider using a professional tone, use active listening, pay attention to the audience's body language, and speak with confidence (Bailey, 2015).

Moreover, public speaking provides students with a platform to develop their self-confidence and overcome the fear of speaking in front of an audience. For many individuals, the mere thought of addressing a group of people can be intimidating. However, through regular practice and exposure to public speaking, students gradually build confidence in expressing their ideas effectively. As they conquer their anxieties and gain confidence, their oral communication skills naturally improve. This newfound confidence transcends beyond the realm of public speaking and positively influences their overall ability to communicate with others in different settings (Tracy, 2012).

Establishing a positive classroom environment. The foremost aspect one must consider before any oral communication can take place is the classroom environment. That is, without a classroom environment that allows a student to feel safe enough to make mistakes, learning will not happen. Furthermore, the classroom environment must be a space where the student feels that his or her thoughts are valued. It is vital that the classroom environment is a positive space for the students to develop their oral skills without the fear of doing 'wrong'. As Hedge (2000) claims, creating a positive classroom environment and letting students try and work out the language together can develop student's confidence. Harmer (1993) touches upon when he discusses the impact students have on each other due to the fear of making



mistakes in front of one's peers. One way of solving this problem is by what he calls 'peer approval'. That is, the teacher must create a classroom where the peers are assets to the learning environment rather than critics.

Building confidence by personally choosing topics. The students felt that they gained confidence when they were speaking about topics they were interested in as well as when they had the opportunity to choose topics by themselves. That is, students considered the choice of topic as important factors for developing their speaking skills. This relates to Harmer's (1993) statement that keeping the students' interests in mind could in fact lead students to feel more motivated so successful second language learning can take place. Moreover, the research done by Boonkit (2010) came to the same conclusion as in this study: the participants felt more confident, comfortable and motivated when they had selected topics themselves.

#### Obtaining Good Communication Skills

There are some characteristics of effective verbal communicators which are very necessary, including active listening, adaptability, adapting one's communication styles to support the situation, clarity, confidence and assertiveness, constructive feedback to giving and receiving it, emotional intelligence for identifying and managing teacher emotions, as well as students emotions, empathy, interpersonal skills as social skills which are especially useful in building strong arguments, interpretation of language, open-mindedness, patience, simplifying the complex, and storytelling.

The way to obtain a good proficiency in verbal communication is to mention attributes concerning both the teacher and learners. Essentially, there are a lot of techniques and tools that teachers can use to improve students' verbal communication skills.

Watching films that model conversation skills. Conversation is one of the most basic and essential communication skills. It enables people to share thoughts, opinions, ideas, and receive information. Although it may appear simple on the surface, effective conversations include a give-and-take exchange that consists of elements such as language, eye contact, summarizing, paraphrasing, and responding.

Students can learn the fundamental elements of the conversation by watching films or videos about interactions taking place. The teacher can pause the video and ask questions such as, "What message is the listener sending by crossing his arms? What else can you tell by observing the language expressions in the conversation?"

Reinforce active listening. Communication is not just about speaking, but also about listening. The teacher can help their students to develop listening skills by reading a selection of text, and then having the class discussion and reflecting the content by the student's explanations. Active listening also means listening to understand rather than a reply. Reinforce building good listening skills by encouraging students to practice asking clarifying questions to fully understand the speaker's message.

Offer group presentations and assignments. Team-building exercises can also help students sharpen both oral and written communication skills. Not only does it offer students the chance to work in small groups, thereby reducing some of the pressure, but it also allows them to debate their opinions, take turns, and work together towards a common goal.

Ask open-ended questions. On the occasion where students require more than a one or two-word response, open-ended questions are vital for inspiring discussion and demonstrating that there are multiple ways to perceive and answer a question. A teacher might set a timer for students' informal conversations and challenges to use open-ended questions. For example, teachers can show children the difference in how much more information they can obtain by asking, "What did you like best about the song?" rather than simply "Did you like the song?"

Use tasks and activities that foster critical thinking. Another task-based method for improving student communication skills is through critical thinking exercises. These can be done verbally or through written assignments that give students the chance to answer questions creatively using their own words and expressions.

Offer reflective learning opportunities. Recording students reading selected text or videotaping group presentations is an excellent method for assessing their communication strengths and weaknesses. Students can reflect on their oral performance in small groups. Then, ask each student to analyze the others so that they can get used to receiving constructive criticism. Besides these techniques and methods, there are other activities for improving students' verbal communication skills, such as role-playing, which showed effective results from previous experiences.

#### Theoretical Lens

The linguist Stephen Krashen (1985) put forward a theory called the Input Theory, where he claimed that a learner must build comprehensive knowledge of the target language before any spoken language can occur. His stance was based on an approach called the Comprehensive Approach which meant that, if output is produced before input, a learner could make errors which persisted. However, if input knowledge of a language is acknowledged before output is produced, these errors can be avoided. Though input is important for a second language learner, it is not enough. However, Merrill

Swain (2005) took a different stance by arguing for Pushed Output. She claimed that pushing students to produce language would help them notice gaps in their language knowledge. 'Pushed output' is basically when a learner must produce language that "pushes" them to perform outside their normal comfort level. Several speaking tasks can lead to a pushed output with a desirable result. For example, research shows that when learners are given the opportunity to prepare a speaking task, it can in fact lead to improvements in fluency and grammatical complexity. Furthermore, repetitions of task preparation permit the learner to develop their performance continuously (Nation 2005).

In addition, this study is also anchored on the Social Learning Theory of Lev Vygotsky (1962) which points out that individuals learn as they interact and communicate with other people. Vygotsky examined the influence of social environments on the learning process. He viewed language as an essential tool for communication and that culture and behavior was understood through language. Vygotsky also highlighted the critical role that language plays in cognitive development. His theory says that social interactions help children develop their ability to use language.

This study is also pinned on the Experiential Learning Theory based on the early works of theorists Piaget, Lewin and Dewey but was popularized by David Kolb (1984). This type of learning can be defined as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes how experiences influence the learning process. The experiential learning theory works in four stages—concrete learning, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The first two stages of the cycle involve grasping an experience, the second two focus on transforming an experience. Kolb argues that effective learning is seen as the learner goes through the cycle, and that they can enter the cycle at any time. Concrete learning is when a learner gets a new experience or interprets an experience in a new way. Reflective observation comes next, where the learner reflects on their experience personally. They use the lens of their experience and understanding to reflect on what this experience means. Abstract conceptualization happens as the learner forms new ideas or adjusts their thinking based on the experience and their reflection about it. Active experimentation is where the learner applies the new ideas to the world around them, to see if there are any modifications to be made. This process can happen over a short period of time, or over a long span of time. Kolb (1984) went on to explain that learners will have their own preferences for how they enter the cycle of experiential learning, and that these preferences boil down to a learning cycle.

Lastly, the Psychosocial Theory of Eriksson (1950) claims that practicing prepared oral production is a forgotten activity in second language classrooms. He states that motivation can increase when learners are able to express their own ideas and opinions in the target language. Creating personal meanings is essential for communication; we need something to communicate about. Besides, Eriksson states that oral activities are of importance. Therefore, students should be provided with repeated opportunities to express content of their own when practicing the target language. This can be achieved by having students prepare speeches with unfamiliar content to the listeners. The reason behind having students deliver a speech on an unknown topic is to create a communication gap. This gap will create a natural communication situation between the student conducting the speech and the other students listening to the speech. This can start from an intermediate stage from prepared speeches and go to higher levels of spontaneous speeches. This is a creative communicative activity, which takes away the focus from accuracy and correctness.

The conceptual framework of the study is presented in figure 1. Based on the figure, there are three interconnected variables. These variables are (1) Experiences of teachers in developing oral communication skills of students in Filipino language, (2) Pedagogical initiatives of teachers to address the challenges in developing oral communication skills of students in Filipino language, (3) education management insights gained from the experiences of teachers.

## 2. METHODS

In this study, the researcher relied on voices and interpretations of the participants through extensive quotes, themes that reflected their words and provided evidence of different perspectives. The answers of the participants to the study were coded and analyzed to build and construct for the commonality and discreteness of responses. It was made sure that the responses of the participants were carefully coded to ensure the reliability of the result. The researcher upheld the authenticity of the responses and precluded from making personal biases as the study progressed.

This study employed a qualitative approach to research, specifically a phenomenological research design since it will focus on the lived experiences of teachers' in improving oral communication skills of elementary learners in Filipino language instructions. According to Creswell, (2012), phenomenology was an approach to qualitative research that focused on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the phenomenon. Typically, interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. Other forms of data such as documents, observations and art were also used. The data were read and reread and were culled for phrases and themes that was

grouped into clusters of meanings. Through this process, the researcher was able to construct the universal meaning of the event, situation or experience and arrived at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon.

The participants of this study were the eight (8) teachers of Matanao Central Elementary School, Matanao 1, Davao Del Sur. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the service for at least 3 years- regardless of age, sex, marital status and ethnicity; and (2) must have a very satisfactory rating in the new normal IPCRF, (3) must be teaching Filipino subjects.

The researcher utilized the purposive sampling design since the participants were chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). It was also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings were authentic (Marshall, 1996).

In gathering data, the researcher utilized an in-depth interview questionnaire. The researcher developed the interview questionnaire and answered the participants orally. These researcher-made interview questionnaires developed upon consultation and validation by the experts and underwent several processes to accommodate their suggestions. The components validated include the language and the conceptual levels of questions if suited to the participants' level of understanding, the suitability of the items to the research design in which there should be no leading questions, and the alignment of the interview questions to the objective of the study.

### 3. RESULTS

The emerging themes on the experiences of teachers in developing oral communication skills of students in the Filipino language. The themes under positive experiences were improvement in social and interpersonal skills developing word proficiency. The themes under negative experiences were social anxiety and limited target language exposure outside the classroom. These themes implied that improving oral communication skills in Filipino leads to better language proficiency. Students become more fluent, articulate, and confident speakers, enabling them to express themselves effectively in various settings and contexts. The benefits extend from personal growth and academic success to cultural preservation and national identity. Despite the challenges encountered, investing in the development of students' oral communication skills in Filipino is a worthwhile endeavor with long-lasting positive impacts on both the individual learners and the broader Filipino society.

The emerging themes on the pedagogical initiatives of teachers to address the challenges in developing oral communication skills of students in Filipino language which were encouraging students for public speaking, establishing a positive classroom environment, and building confidence by personally choosing topics. These themes imply that teachers who encourage and support their students' language growth create a trusting and nurturing learning environment, leading to better student outcomes. Students become enthusiastic participants in their language learning journey, eagerly participating in discussions, presentations, and debates. This active engagement fosters a positive attitude towards language learning. The emerging themes on the educational management insights gained by experiences of the teachers which were sharing practice and assistance, implementing assessment and feedback mechanisms, and establish parental participation. These themes implied that educators, parents, and society should collectively emphasize the significance of oral communication, empowering students to become confident communicators who can positively impact the world around them.

### 4. DISCUSSIONS

Familiarization with the data was common to all forms of qualitative analysis, the researcher immersed herself in, and became intimately familiar with, their data; reading and re-reading the data and noting any initial analytic observations. Coding was also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis, involved generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis. Coding was not simply a method of data reduction; it was also an analytic process, so codes captured both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher coded every data item and ended this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts.

Searching for themes was coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The researcher ended this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme.

Reviewing themes. The researcher reflected on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data and began to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes. Defining and naming themes: The researcher prepared a detailed analysis of each theme identifying the 'essence' of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme.

Writing-up involved weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature. The researcher made sure that the experiences

of teachers' in improving oral communication skills of elementary learners in Filipino language instructions were presented comprehensively.

The framework analysis of this research was flexible to allow the researcher to either collect all the data and then analyze it or do data analysis during the collection process. In the analysis stage, the gathered data was sifted, charted and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes. This involved a five-step process: (1) familiarization; (2) identifying a thematic framework; (3) indexing; (4) charting; and (5) mapping and interpretation (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Familiarization referred to the process during which the researcher became familiarized with the transcripts of the data collected (i.e. interview or focus group transcripts, observation or field notes) and gained an overview of the collected data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). In other words, the researcher became immersed in the data by listening to audiotapes, studying the field or reading the transcripts. Throughout this process, the researcher became aware of key ideas and recurrent themes and made a note of them. Due to the sheer volume of data that were collected in qualitative research, the researcher was not able to review all the material. Thus, a selection of the data set was utilized. The selection depended on several aspects of the data collection process. For example, the mix of methods used (e.g. interviews, documents, observations).

Identifying a thematic framework, the second stage, occurred after familiarization when the researcher recognized emerging themes or issues in the data set. These emerging themes or issues had arisen from a priori themes were issues, however it was at this stage that the researcher allowed the data to dictate the themes and issues. To achieve this end, the researcher used the notes taken during the familiarization stage. The key issues, concepts and themes that had expressed by the participants now formed the basis of a thematic framework that were used to filter and classify the data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Indexing meant that one identifies portions or sections of the data that corresponded to a particular theme. This process was applied to all the textual data that has been gathered (i.e. transcripts of interviews). For the sake of convenience, Ritchie and Spencer recommend that a numerical system be used for the indexing references and annotated in the margin beside the text (1994). Qualitative data analysis tools were ideal for such a task.

The final stage, mapping and interpretation, involved the analysis of the key characteristics as laid out in the charts. This analysis was able to provide a schematic diagram of the event/phenomenon thus guiding the researcher in his/her interpretation of the data set. It was at this point that the researcher was cognizant of the objectives of qualitative analysis, which were: "defining concepts, mapping range and nature of phenomena, creating typologies, finding associations, providing explanations, and developing strategies" (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994:186). Once again, these concepts, technologies, and associations were reflective of the participant. Therefore, any strategy or recommendations made by the researcher echoed the true attitudes, beliefs, and values of the participants.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

### Experiences of Teachers in Developing Oral Communication Skills of Students in Filipino Language

Oral communication skills are the cornerstone of effective communication and play a pivotal role in a student's personal, social, and academic development. In the Philippines, fostering oral communication skills in the Filipino language holds immense significance as it connects individuals to their cultural heritage and enables them to thrive in various aspects of life. This section focused on the experiences of teachers in in developing students' oral communication skills of students in Filipino language. The responses provided by teachers were condensed to generate overarching themes and subthemes, which were meticulously analyzed and formulated based on the accounts and reflections shared by the informants.

#### Positive Experiences

Improvement in social and interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills are the skills we use every day when we communicate and interact with other people, both individually and in groups. They include a wide range of skills, but particularly communication skills such as listening and effective speaking. They also include the ability to control and manage one's emotions. According to the participants, developing oral communication skills in Filipino language can help students improve their social competence, which is essential for building relationships and interacting with others.

Oral communication in Filipino creates opportunities for students to engage in discussions about cultural norms, practices, and traditions. As they learn about diverse perspectives within the Filipino community, students develop empathy and a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of their culture. This understanding fosters a sense of unity and inclusivity, promoting harmonious relationships among individuals from different backgrounds.

The responses of the participants corroborate with Cherry (2021) that developing oral communication skills in Filipino enhances students' ability to work effectively within groups and teams. It encourages them to contribute actively, engage



in discussions, and consider diverse viewpoints. Effective oral communication fosters cooperation and understanding, enabling students to collaborate harmoniously and achieve common goals.

Effective oral communication in Filipino equips students with the tools to address conflicts and disagreements constructively. By expressing themselves clearly and actively listening to others' perspectives, students can find common ground and seek resolutions amicably. This skill promotes peaceful conflict resolution, strengthening interpersonal bonds and promoting a harmonious community (Karns & Myers, 2015).

Oral communication skills in Filipino help students navigate various social challenges that arise throughout life. From forming new friendships to networking for future career opportunities, effective communication builds the foundation for successful social interactions (O'Sullivan, 2018)

Developing word proficiency. Language proficiency is a vital aspect of a student's educational journey, as it shapes their ability to express ideas, communicate effectively, and comprehend complex concepts. In the Philippines, emphasizing the development of oral communication skills in the Filipino language not only enhances social interactions but also plays a significant role in strengthening word proficiency. According to the responses of the participants, oral communication allows students to learn new words in context, which enhances their understanding and retention. In the process of communication, students grasp the meaning and usage of words through the cues provided by the conversation. This context-driven learning helps them retain the knowledge effectively, making it more likely for them to incorporate these words into their everyday speech and writing.

The responses of the participants, justifies the argument of Boileau & Friedrich (2000) that human speaking skills must be continually modified and improved through learning new vocabulary, developing distinctive speaking patterns, and most importantly discerning which talk can be used to achieve foals. Vocabulary enrichment is a crucial aspect of developing oral communication skill. Actively learning and incorporating new words into their speech, students can expand their vocabulary and improve their word proficiency in Filipino language.

It is vital that the students have a strength of vocabulary to express their thoughts or ideas. The importance of vocabulary is also expressed by Czifra (2013) who emphasized that vocabulary is needed for a learner to be able to transmit a message. Moreover, the teachers discussed the connection between students' vocabulary and their confidence. This can be related to Hedge (2000) who states that vocabulary is needed for a student to express their own personalized language, which is one of the necessities in a communicative classroom. He further discusses the link between speaking activities and anxiety within students where she mentions that a teacher can reduce the risk of anxiety by giving the students the scope to develop their proficiency, and thereby increasing their self-confidence. Gass et. al's (2013) statement regarding vocabulary building. It is a time-consuming process. However, letting the students encounter the words frequently and hear the words used in different contexts will lead to the word becoming a part of the students' own vocabulary.

Negative ExperiencesSocial anxiety.

Oral communication is a crucial skill that enables individuals to express themselves, connect with others, and navigate various social situations. In the context of the Philippines, where Filipino language proficiency holds significant cultural and societal importance, developing oral communication skills in Filipino is particularly essential. However, social anxiety can pose a significant challenge for students, hindering their ability to engage confidently in oral communication. Social anxiety can cause individuals to fear judgment from others, making it difficult for them to speak up and express themselves. This fear can hinder their ability to participate actively in oral communication activities, as they may worry about saying something wrong or being negatively evaluated by their peers.

In many classes, some students prefer to keep their ideas to themselves when their oral participation may cause unpleasantness and embarrassment, while others hesitate to participate in the discussion simply because they are afraid of being continually corrected by the teacher for every slip they make. However, students 'mistakes are to be corrected, but when the student is attempting to encode his thoughts, he should be interrupted as little as possible. Instead, the teacher notes one or two errors of pronunciation or grammar which would affect communication or is unacceptable to a native speaker and brings these to the attention of the whole class for later practice. Developing oral communication proficiency in the foreign language can be done only in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where students feel at ease with the teacher and with each other. The teacher must adopt a motivating attitude in such a way that all students are involved in the learning process (Garton et al., 2011).

The problem that the students often encounter is inhibition. When students try to say things in a foreign language in the classroom they are often inhibited. They are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face. They are shy of the attention that their speech attracts. Next, learners often complain that they cannot think of anything to say, and they are not motivated to express themselves. Research found that the learners have nothing to express maybe because the teacher had chosen a topic which is not suitable for him or about which he knows very little. It is difficult

for many students to respond when the teachers ask them to say something in a foreign language because they might have little ideas about what to say, which vocabulary to use, or how to use the grammar correctly (McGrath, 2013).

Limited target language exposure outside the classroom. Oral communication is an integral aspect of language learning, and its development greatly relies on consistent practice and exposure to the target language. In the case of developing oral communication skills in Filipino, students face a significant challenge when there is a lack of target language exposure outside the classroom since the language often use is the mother tongue language. For the participants, without exposure to real-life interactions in Filipino, students may struggle to adapt their oral communication skills to various contexts, hindering their fluency and spontaneity in the language.

Without exposure to the target language in real-life situations, students may struggle to develop fluency and natural conversational skills. Classroom settings provide a structured environment for language learning, but they often lack the spontaneity and authenticity of real-world communication. Students need exposure to native speakers, different accents, colloquial expressions, and the intricacies of everyday conversations to enhance their oral communication skills. The absence of such exposure outside the classroom creates a gap between the controlled environment of language instruction and the dynamic nature of language use in the real world (Yule, 2002).

Exposure to the target language outside the classroom can also contribute to students' motivation to improve their oral communication skills. Real-life interactions and experiences can serve as a driving force for students to actively seek opportunities to practice and engage with the language (Aislinn, Lenis & Separa, 2019). Additionally, according to Lucanus (2017) interacting with native speakers is invaluable for developing oral communication skills. However, reduced cultural immersion can mean limited access to native speakers of Filipino, which can hinder students' ability to develop accurate pronunciation, intonation, and cultural understanding.

Pedagogical Initiatives of Teachers to Address the Challenges in Developing Oral Communication Skills of Students in Filipino Language Developing oral communication skills in Filipino is essential for students to become confident and effective communicators, both academically and socially. However, students often face challenges such as social anxiety, limited target language exposure outside the classroom, and the dominance of their mother tongue language. To address these challenges, teachers play a crucial role in implementing pedagogical initiatives that foster a supportive and immersive language learning environment. This section presents the pedagogical initiatives of teachers to address the challenges in developing oral communication skills of students in Filipino language. The responses provided by teachers were condensed to generate overarching themes and subthemes, which were meticulously analyzed and formulated based on the accounts and reflections shared by the informants.

Encouraging students for public speaking. Effective oral communication skills in Filipino are vital for students to express themselves confidently, engage in meaningful conversations, and connect with their cultural heritage. For the participants, public speaking serves as an excellent strategy to enhance these skills, as it requires students to articulate their thoughts and ideas clearly and persuasively in front of an audience. This helps students overcome stage fright and boosts their self-confidence. As they practice delivering speeches or presentations in Filipino, they become more at ease with speaking in front of others, which translates to increased confidence in various social and academic settings.

Public speaking activities create an authentic language environment within the classroom. Students are encouraged to use Filipino to prepare and deliver speeches, allowing them to experience the language in a meaningful and relevant context.

Participating in public speaking can increase students' oral communication skills because they are rehearsing and presenting information to people, whether it's a small or large audience. Classmates, teachers, or audience members can give them feedback on how to improve their oral skills for their next public speaking event. The more they present speeches, the more they may improve their speaking skills. They may also find that their improved oral skills transfer into their everyday conversations with others. Here are a few ways to improve students' oral communication skills: use concise language, consider using a professional tone, use active listening, pay attention to audience's body language, speak with confidence (Bailey, 2015).

Moreover, public speaking provides students with a platform to develop their self-confidence and overcome the fear of speaking in front of an audience. For many individuals, the mere thought of addressing a group of people can be intimidating. However, through regular practice and exposure to public speaking, students gradually build confidence in expressing their ideas effectively. As they conquer their anxieties and gain confidence, their oral communication skills naturally improve. This newfound confidence transcends beyond the realm of public speaking and positively influences their overall ability to communicate with others in different settings (Tracy, 2012).

Establishing a positive classroom environment. The classroom environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' language development, particularly in oral communication. For students learning Filipino, a positive classroom setting can significantly impact their confidence, motivation, and proficiency in speaking the language. Creating a supportive

and encouraging atmosphere fosters a sense of belonging and helps students overcome language barriers. According to the participants, a positive classroom environment empowers students to take risks and experiment with their language skills in Filipino. When students feel safe and supported, they are more willing to speak up, make mistakes, and learn from their experiences. This confidence-building process is vital in developing their oral communication skills, as it allows them to express themselves without fear of judgment or embarrassment.

The foremost aspect one must consider before any oral communication can take place is the classroom environment. That is, without a classroom environment that allows a student to feel safe enough to make mistakes, learning will not happen. Furthermore, the classroom environment must be a space where the student feels that his or her thoughts are valued. It is vital that the classroom environment is a positive space for the students to develop their oral skills without the fear of doing 'wrong'. As Hedge (2000) claims, creating a positive classroom environment and letting students try and work out the language together can develop student's confidence.

Harmer (1993) touches upon when he discusses the impact students have on each other due to the fear of making mistakes in front of one's peers. One way of solving this problem is by what he calls 'peer approval'. That is, the teacher must create a classroom where the peers are assets to the learning environment rather than critics. Students benefit from a supportive peer community that collaborates and helps each other in language learning. A positive classroom environment promotes teamwork, active listening, and empathy, encouraging students to support one another in their language development journey.

Building confidence by personally choosing topics. Building confidence is a fundamental aspect of developing oral communication skills, especially for elementary students learning a new language like Filipino. When students feel connected to the topics they are discussing, it sparks their interest and motivation to communicate effectively in the language. Allowing elementary students to personally choose topics for oral communication activities can be a powerful strategy in enhancing their language proficiency.

The participants affirmed further that when students have the autonomy to choose topics, they are passionate about, it creates a personal connection to the subject matter. They are more motivated to research, prepare, and speak on a topic they genuinely care about. This intrinsic motivation fuels their enthusiasm and eagerness to express themselves in Filipino.

The students felt that they gained confidence when they were speaking about topics they were interested in as well as when they had the opportunity to choose topics by themselves. That is, students considered the choice of topic as important factors for developing their speaking skills. This relates to Harmer's (1993) statement that keeping the students' interests in mind could in fact lead students to feel more motivated so successful second language learning can take place. Allowing students to choose their own topics for oral communication activities can increase their engagement and motivation. When students are interested in the topic, they are more likely to participate actively and invest effort in developing their oral communication skills.

Moreover, the research done by Boonkit (2010) came to the same conclusion as in this study: the participants felt more confident, comfortable and motivated when they had selected topics themselves. Personal topic choices make language learning meaningful and relevant for elementary students. They see the practical applications of Filipino in their everyday lives, making the language learning process more enjoyable and purposeful.

#### Educational Management Insights Gained by Experiences of the Teachers

The participants shared their educational management insights, and it was narrowed down into one to emerge the themes. These themes were carefully analyzed and formulated based on what came from participants' accounts and reflections. The sub themes are shown below:

Sharing practice and assistance. Improving oral communication skills is a crucial aspect of education, as it enhances students' ability to express themselves effectively and confidently. In the pursuit of creating well-rounded learners, educators often face challenges in addressing the diverse needs of their students. Seeking assistance from colleagues can be a valuable strategy in overcoming these challenges and fostering a supportive and collaborative learning environment. According to the participants, colleagues can share their successful teaching strategies and approaches for developing oral communication skills. Each teacher brings their unique experiences and methods to the table, which can be invaluable for others seeking to enhance their instructional practices. Through learning from each other's successes, teachers can adapt and implement effective techniques in their own classrooms.

The participants' perspectives on colleague assistance align with existing literature emphasizing the significance of technical support for teachers in facilitating effective classroom instruction. For example, Adigun, Olanrewaju, & Ibukun (2009) conducted a study showing that teachers who receive support from their colleagues are more inclined to incorporate technology into their teaching practices. This assistance enables teachers to tackle challenges with greater ease, fostering confidence and driving self and professional growth.

Additionally, Bray & Maclarty (2012) assert that colleague assistance plays a crucial role in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance oral communication among students. Understanding the specific needs of teachers and providing personalized support leads to improved job performance, consequently positively impacting students' learning outcomes. The authors emphasize that incorporating technical assistance into professional development programs is essential.

Sharing their expertise means having new conversations that open what they have learnt to a new perspective, helping them and others to grow. Sharing good practice builds a teacher's reputation as a leader in your school and increases their professional value. Rather than telling people they're an expert, sharing lets other teachers discover it for themselves in a way that helps them to raise their own level of expertise (Patzner, 2023).

Implementing assessment and feedback mechanisms. Effective oral communication is a critical skill that empowers elementary students to express themselves, engage with others, and succeed in various aspects of life. Implementing assessment and feedback mechanisms is a key strategy in improving students' oral communication abilities. Assessment provides valuable insights into students' language development, while feedback offers guidance and support for their growth. Assessment in oral communication allows educators to measure students' language proficiency and identify areas that require improvement. Various assessment methods, such as oral presentations, debates, role-plays, and class discussions, can gauge students' speaking and listening abilities.

Furthermore, the participants asserted that assessment and feedback help educators identify specific language needs and challenges faced by students. This information allows teachers to provide targeted language support, such as additional language exercises, vocabulary enrichment, or pronunciation practice, to address individual language gaps effectively. Student assessment enables instructors to measure the effectiveness of their teaching by linking student performance to specific learning objectives. As a result, teachers can institutionalize effective teaching choices and revise ineffective ones in their pedagogy. With assessment teachers not only assess students' results, but also focus on the students' learning process by delivering appropriate feedback. As part of the assessment process, it is important to encourage learners to think about their own actions and performance. Self-assessment is a continuous and intentional process through which students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses so that they can adjust for improving or practicing (Maturana, 2015).

Some authors (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) define feedback as an information regarding aspects of students' performance and understanding, and a recommendation to help learners become aware of any discrepancies between what they know and what they want to achieve. In any case, feedback is intended to help students correct or improve themselves. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) state that the quality of feedback can make a difference in students' achievement of the learning goals. Therefore, they suggest some principles to provide appropriate feedback: clarify expected performance, facilitate self-assessment in learning, deliver high quality information, promote teacher and peer discussion about learning, foster motivational beliefs and self-esteem, provide opportunities to reach the desired performance, and provide information to help teachers shape teaching.

Establish parental participation. Effective oral communication is a vital skill that empowers students to express themselves, engage with others, and succeed in various aspects of life. Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children's language development and involving them in the process of enhancing oral communication can significantly benefit students. Parents can create a language-rich home environment by engaging in conversations with their children regularly. Encouraging open communication and active listening at home fosters strong language skills. Simple activities, such as discussing daily experiences, reading together, and playing language-based games, provide valuable opportunities for students to practice and improve their oral communication.

Regular communication between parents and teachers allows for a comprehensive understanding of a student's language progress and any areas that require attention.

When parents are involved in developing oral communication skills, any language challenges faced by students can be addressed collaboratively. Parental insights into their child's language development can inform educators' instructional strategies and support plans. Working together to overcome challenges ensures that students receive the necessary guidance and encouragement to succeed in their language journey (Llego, 2022).

Decades of research have made one thing clear: parental involvement in education improves student attendance, social skills, academic performance and behavior. It also helps children adapt better to school. Outside of the classroom, engaged parents more often see themselves as advocates for their child's school and are more likely to volunteer or take an active role in governance. Researchers have noted that parent involvement in school governance, for instance, helps parents understand educators' and other parents' motivations, attitudes and abilities. It gives them a greater opportunity to serve as resources for their children, often increasing their own skills and confidence. In a few cases, these parents further their own education and upgrade their job (Casey, 2022).



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