

## Reality Bites: A Systematic Literature Review of K to 12 English Language Teaching in the Philippines

Paolo Napal Menozo

English Faculty, Northwest Samar State University, San Jorge Campus, San Jorge, Samar, Philippines

**Corresponding Author:** Paolo N. Menozo, E-mail: [paolo.menozo@nwssu.edu.ph](mailto:paolo.menozo@nwssu.edu.ph)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

**Received:** November 08, 2020

**Accepted:** December 17, 2020

**Volume:** 3

**Issue:** 12

**DOI:** 10.32996/ijllt.2020.3.12.11

---

### KEYWORDS

English language teaching,  
systematic literature review, K  
to 12 curriculum

---

### ABSTRACT

Language teaching in the Philippines has been rapidly evolving since the K to 12 Curriculum was passed into law in 2013. However, the question lies on whether this evolution has made significant impacts over the years among Filipino language learners. This study was conducted in order to examine the status of English language teaching in the Philippines. It utilized the qualitative approach using systematic literature review (SLR). 21 papers were placed under careful scrutiny using 4 inclusion and exclusion criteria. As a result, 10 papers have qualified and were selected as samples. The findings of this literature review reveal that the K to 12 English language teaching in the Philippines apparently 1.) fails to satisfy both the students' and teachers' ESL teaching and learning needs and that 2.) the curriculum lacks the sense of direction in content and practice. However, further studies are suggested to validate these results.

---

### 1. Introduction

Today, no one could argue that English has become an international language (Choi & Lee, 2008). According to Crystal (1997), English is the language that spread all over the world having so much importance in a number of important fields such as commerce, education and communication. However, the debate as to whether English is used as first, second or foreign language depends greatly on the attitude of speakers towards English, considering political, economic and socio-cultural ideologies (Rahman, 2007).

In education, the primary goal of teachers of English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) is for learners to acquire desired levels of English language communication skills that will enable them to fulfill their goals, either to travel to English-speaking countries experiencing other cultures or to qualify for certain jobs for professional advancement or simply to improve their performance in the various subjects in school (Bernardo & Gaerlan, 2011).

Contextually, the Philippines is known globally as one of the largest-speaking nations with majority of its populations exhibiting a certain extent of fluency in the language. Spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos, English has been used as the country's language of commerce and law, as well as the medium of instruction in education. Proficiency in the language, as one of the country's strengths, has helped boost the economy, making the country the top voice outsourcing destination in the whole world (Cabigon, 2015).

While English is used as lingua franca of the world, it serves as second language in the Philippines especially in science and technology (Department of Education, 1987) whose aim is to cultivate learners' communicative competence in English and Filipino at the national level. Thus, teaching English as the medium of instruction, is a necessary component in the Philippine educational system. In fact, one of the reasons why Philippines became the top provider of voice outsourcing, which drive the

economy of the country, is because of Filipinos' proficiency in English (Tinsley & Board, 2013). In a report published by Global English Corporation (2014), the Philippines was branded as the world's best country in business English proficiency in two consecutive years. Based on the 2012 BEI report, only the Philippines has obtained a score of 7.0, a high proficiency range, which indicates an ability to perform business discussions and complex tasks.

However, several studies and reports have also revealed that the country's quality of education is continuously declining over the years. This is based on results obtained from national achievement tests, proficiency examinations and board examinations (Racca & Lasaten, 2016). In an article published by Philstar (2002), the study of HA Cervantes Knowledge Inc. revealed that the examinees of the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) possessed an English Proficiency level that was against "international benchmark". A similar report published by Cabigon (2015) in Philippine Daily Inquirer emphasized on the "decline of the quality of English in the Philippines and the growing number of unfilled jobs in various industries that require certain levels of English Communication skills"; while the report of Tima (2018) in 24 Oras, GMA News stressed that the English proficiency of both teachers and students are lagging according to the survey conducted by the Hopkins International Partners. These reports put the country into an alarming situation since the Philippines' unwavering competitive advantage in the business world lies on the proficiency of its skilled workers in the English language (Marcelo, 2010). Numerous and varied studies have been conducted in order to find out the reason of this phenomenon, and curriculum is just but one. According to Stotsky (2012), curriculum is a "plan of action that is aimed at achieving desired goals and objectives. It is a set of learning activities meant to make the learner attain goals as prescribed by the educational system."

English language education in the Philippines has evolved several times to continuously address the ever-changing demands in the development of language competencies and academic achievement among Filipino learners. However, with the implementation of new policies and educational framework, several debates have heated up regarding the design of the curriculum vis-à-vis language teaching (Alipasa, 2016). Along with this evolution is the conception of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act 10533) also known as K to 12 Curriculum. This enhanced curriculum covers Kindergarten and 12 years of basic education to provide enough time for the mastery of skills and concepts and develop lifelong learners prepared for tertiary education, middle-level skills development, employment and entrepreneurship (Official Gazette of the Philippines, 2013)

## **2. English in the K to 12 Curriculum**

The implementation of Republic Act 10533 in the Philippines also known as Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, has given birth to a more contextualized and in-depth learning experience for Filipino students, especially in the area of English Language Arts. Teachers in basic education were trained through various conferences and symposia specifically dubbed as Mass Training of Teachers (MTOT) in order to introduce the practice of using curriculum guides and strategies that will make learning more efficient (Dela Rosa and Lintao, 2018). However, Pazzibugan (2013) of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, stressed in this article that trainings have improved but are not enough.

With the aim of revolutionizing English Language Education in the Philippines, Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum has been developed in the K to 12 in order "to produce graduates who apply the language conventions, principles, strategies and skills" that are demanded in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, the lack in resources and technology accessibility in various marginalized sectors and rural areas particularly in some barrios in Mindoro, hinders the ultimate success of the program, which includes the achievement of desired level of listening and viewing skills (Alipasa & Lalatag, 2014). Thus, the 2013 LAMC can neither be functional nor feasible without further support coming from the government, researchers, publishers, authors and school owners to address the needs of hundreds of Filipino learners (Alipasa, 2016).

Alongside these developments is the review and enhancement of the English curriculum established in order to take the lead in producing a pool of talents with adequate command of English (Barrot, 2019). However, some textbook writers and classroom teachers reported that they experience difficulties in implementing the K to 12 English curriculum for various reasons (Pazzibugan, 2013; Valerio, 2015). For one, teachers reported that they were confused on re-planning their daily lessons due to changes in the curriculum (Valerio, 2015). Some authors also reported difficulties in matching suggested competencies per week into a consolidated and unified lesson. Thus, there is a need for the new English curriculum to be "clear, specific, coherent, and aligned to the established pedagogical principles of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning" (Barrot, 2019) in order to fully understand the basic concepts and implications of the curriculum in classroom practice (Carless, 1998; Rahman, 2014; Smit, 2005) as well as the pedagogical principles it advocates (Wang, 2008).

### 3. English language teaching in the Philippines

The constitution of the Philippines defines two official languages: Filipino and English (Bernardo, 2006). English education was first introduced in the country when Spain ceded it to the United States in 1989 and when it was declared as the country’s medium of communication by the US Government (Hayashi, 2000). At first, English language started to be taught in the first year of elementary school where it was used as the medium of instruction in Mathematics and other science-related subjects both in elementary and secondary schools and in all subjects in Higher Education institutions (Nakahara, 2006). In 2010, the Department of Education, through Education Secretary Jesli Lapus stated, “As the primary medium of instruction, the percentage of time allotment for learning areas conducted in the English language should not be less seventy percent of the total time allotment for all learning areas in all year levels”. This made English the dominant language in different areas such as education, business, commerce, politics and even the mass media (Hayashi, 2000). In fact, it has become one of the compulsory subjects in the Philippine educational system (Porciuncula, 2011).

However, in the contemporary times, a lot of students can hardly find the right strategies to learn a foreign language despite the long years of schooling and engaging in meaningful activities. Only a few students are able to succeed as well as learn the language. Thus, teachers should be concerned on helping students learn how to acquire the English language effectively (Akbari, 2015). According to Davis (2016), teachers must adjust to students’ learning needs. They must know how to detect problems that arise in the classrooms as well as create solutions to address them.

Currently, reports show that the English language education in the Philippines is marked with low academic performance from a number of Filipino learners, which is due to a number of factors enumerated by (Madrurnio, Martin, & Plata, 2016) such as facilities, qualified teachers, and learning resources. Likewise, scholars also affirmed that these same factors contributed to the low results in functional literacy skills obtained by students, which is apparent in the Program for International Student Assessment data (PISA 2018 results, 2019).

### 4. Statement of the Problem

Hence, this study was conducted in order to systematically review and analyze the existing implementation of English language teaching in the Philippines since the enactment of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 otherwise known as the K to 12 Curriculum. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the question below.

1. What is the status of English Language Teaching in the Philippines under the K to 12 Curriculum?

### 5. Methodology

This study utilized the qualitative research approach using systematic literature review (SLR) to “identify, select and appraise research in order to answer a clearly formulated question” (Dewey & Drahotka, 2016). Samples were selected using purposive sampling. Related literature and studies were carefully examined in terms of the following inclusion and exclusion criteria: 1. Literature and studies are specifically scoped in the Philippines and whose respondents are Filipino English language learners and/or teachers; 2. Literature and studies are focused on examining the English curriculum; 3. Literature and studies are conducted from 2013 up to present; and 4. Literature and studies are conducted among learners from either Basic or Higher Education. From 21 potential related literatures, 10 have qualified using the criteria indicated above. They were carefully examined, reviewed, and analyzed to derive relevant themes regarding the status of K to 12 English language teaching in the Philippines.

### 6. Results and Discussion

**Table 1. Status of K to 12 English language teaching in the Philippines**

Author/s	Area of Study	Findings	Recommendations
Separa, Generales, Medina (2015)	Oral Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 58% cannot express their thoughts in English</li> <li>• Majority cannot pronounce words properly</li> <li>• 45% are shy to speak in English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous language learning and acquisition through varied ways of exposures</li> </ul>

Valerio (2015)	Factors Affecting English instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior teachers prefer the old curriculum.</li> <li>• English instruction is most affected by module factor, teacher factor, parent factor, and student factor.</li> <li>• There is significant difference between teachers' perception of English instruction and their age and length of time teaching English.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All modules should be completed for utilization from first quarter to fourth quarter.</li> <li>• The school must provide necessary trainings for teachers about the changing curriculum.</li> <li>• Teachers should manifest sensitivity on their students' proficiency in English</li> </ul>
Leyaley (2016)	English Language Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The English language proficiency of the respondents is described as "Early Intermediate" regardless of the type of school they came from and the program they are enrolled in.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A remedial program must be established for their students.</li> <li>• A similar study be conducted to validate the success of the remedial program.</li> </ul>
Racca and Lasaten (2016)	English language proficiency and academic performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is significant relationship between English Proficiency and academic performance in English, Science and Mathematics.</li> <li>• Students with good to high English proficiency level tend to exhibit better academic performance compared to those with lower English proficiency level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers must be updated on new strategies and techniques in teaching English.</li> <li>• Promote the English language in classes.</li> <li>• The administration should develop a means to monitor their students' English proficiency.</li> </ul>
Dela Rosa and Lintao (2018)	Curriculum guide evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reading content of the curriculum guide hardly meets the criteria for the ELA reading component and that the design of the material needs more clarity in relation to the language used and to its overall presentation or format</li> <li>• "Overlapping, repetitive and too many objectives" were perceived as problems by the teachers, as well as inadequacy on the content in terms of developing learners' multilingual, multiliteracies, and grammar skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers must be involved in the processes of creating, selecting and evaluating curriculum materials.</li> </ul>
Barrot (2018)	Issues and challenges of English curriculum reform in the Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current curriculum needs to improve its specificity, internal coherence, and integration of some essential principles of 21st century learning and language teaching and learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future studies may be conducted to examine the pedagogical framework that language teachers use and bridge the gap between their beliefs and the new English curriculum.</li> <li>• Develop an evidence-based curriculum.</li> <li>• Future researchers may conduct a multidimensional qualitative research using classroom observation, teacher interview, and lesson plan analysis to determine the actual challenges</li> </ul>

			that English language teachers encounter in implementing the new English curriculum.
Pangket (2019)	Factors affecting learner's oral proficiency development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main factors affecting the oral proficiency of the pupils are motivation, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.</li> <li>• The teaching strategies and curriculum are not carefully planned and properly executed to suit the learners' needs which resulted to poor performance of the pupils.</li> <li>• The current curriculum also requires teachers too many paper works which led to a less focus to their function in instruction</li> </ul>	
Leano, Rabi, and Piragasam (2019)	Speaking difficulties of Philippine Indigenous learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alphabet knowledge inadequacies comprised arranging words alphabetically, distinguishing between Filipino and English alphabets, and sounding beginning consonant of words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an intervention program to cultivate fundamental skills in English phonology.</li> </ul>
Jugo (2020)	Language anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reveals that speaking activity, error correction, and communicating with English speakers are sources of high anxiety of the Filipino learners, while writing activity, negative self-perception, and noncomprehension are sources of moderate anxiety.</li> <li>• All sources of anxiety have significant relationship with language anxiety.</li> <li>• Through regression analysis, foreign language anxiety is a significant predictor of English proficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers must be adequately equipped to observe excessive amount of anxiety among learners.</li> <li>• Teachers must provide varied opportunities for students to practice speaking English.</li> </ul>
Talidong and Liu (2020)	Teaching methods in English language instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture and brainstorming are two commonly used methods used by teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Come up with more contextualized and innovative strategies in teaching English.</li> <li>• Teachers should be sent to various seminars and trainings to update their knowledge of other methods of teaching.</li> </ul>

Table I shows the consolidated findings and recommendations from the 10 related literature samples selected to show the status of K to 12 English language teaching in the Philippines. From these data, two themes have emerged: 1.) The K to 12 curriculum apparently fails to satisfy both students' and teachers' ESL learning and teaching needs; and 2.) English language teaching in the Philippines shows overwhelming decline due to K to 12 curriculum's lack of direction in content and practice. Note that the success of any language program depends on how it is carefully planned, organized, and implemented with huge considerations put on the fulfillment of needed support of any kind. The K to 12 English language teaching curriculum's failure to organize its content in terms of specificity, internal coherence and integration of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as found evident in the study of Barrot (2018) and to align it to ELA design (Dela Rosa & Lintao, 2018) has affected the students' English proficiency (Pangket, 2019; Separa & Generales, 2015). It can also be gleaned from the table that among the recommendations proposed, the need to capacitate teachers with new, innovative, contextualized, and need-driven teaching methods, approaches, and

strategies was deemed necessary in order to effectively carry out the K to 12 English language teaching curriculum. Talidong and Liu (2020) supports this as it was found out that even with the advent of technology, teachers still tend to use lecture method and brainstorming as means to teach English. This appears to contradict with the tenets of K to 12 curriculum being learner-centered, inclusive and developmentally appropriate (Official Gazette of the Philippines, 2013). Thus, the result of this literature review implies that the K to 12 curriculum itself, its content and implementation, has a big influence on the sudden decline of the English proficiency of Filipino English language learners.

## 7. Conclusion

English language teaching and learning is central to the Philippines' economic growth and stability. With Filipinos' English proficiency level, the country became the top outsourcing destination in the world (Cabigon, 2015) after being declared as the "Call Center Capital of the World" (The Manila Times, 2013). Thus, the K to 12 curriculum planners and implementers must recognize how important English is in the contemporary and competitive world of market and industry. This goes without saying that English must be protected, promoted, and saved from its imminent dissolution caused by uncaredful planning and execution of the curriculum. This systematic literature review of the 10 selected literature and studies on the K to 12 English language teaching curriculum in the Philippines, seems to present two important themes that arise after careful examination of the data gathered from different studies. Foremost, it was found out that the K to 12 curriculum in the Philippines fails to meet the supposed needs of students and teachers in an English language and teaching program. Future researchers could be made in order to validate these findings and also to find out all possible causes of this phenomenon from the perspectives of teachers, students, administrators, etc. Lastly, it was found out that the continuous decline of Filipinos' English proficiency was seen to have been caused by the K to 12 curriculum's lack of direction both in content and practice. On one hand, it lacks alignment with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (Barrot, 2018); on the other hand, its curriculum guide appears un-correlating with ELA design (Dela Rosa & Lintao, 2018). This lack of alignment in content alone affects every teachers' implementation of the curriculum.

## References

- [1] Alipasa, C. (2016). De La Salle University, Manila, (September), 65.
- [2] Akbari, Z. (2015). Current challenges in teaching/learning English for EFL learners: The Case of Junior High School and High School. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 394-401.
- [3] Alipasa, C.D., Dizon, S.J., and Lalatag, R. (2014). Television Watching and Language Achievement among Grade 8 Students of Angelicum Primarosa Montessori School, A.Y. 2013-2014.
- [4] Bartleby research (nd). *Curriculum Definition and Definition of Curriculum*. <https://www.bartleby.com/essay/Curriculum-Definition-And-Definition-Of-Curriculum-FKXA3JLWKPTDX>
- [5] Bernardo, A., B. I., & Gaerlan, M. J. M. (2006). Teaching English in Philippine higher education: The case of De La Salle UniversityManila. Paper presented at the Invitational Symposium 2006: Language Issues on English-medium Universities across Asia. from <http://www.hku.hk/clear/allan.html>
- [6] Bernado, A. B. I., & Gaerlan, J. (2011). Non-Native English Students Learning. *Global Perspectives, Local Initiatives: Reflections and Practices in ELT*, 1–9.
- [7] Cabigon, M. (2015). State of English in the Philippines. British Council Philippines. Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.ph/teach/state-english-philippines-should-we-be-concerned-2>
- [8] Carless, D. (1998). A case study of curriculum implementation in Hong Kong. *System*, 26, 353–368. doi:10.1016/s0346- 251x(98)00023-2
- [9] Choi, Y. H., & Lee, H. W. (2008). Current Trends and Issues in English Language Education in Asia. *THE JOURNAL OF ASIA TEFL*, 5(2), 1–34.
- [10] Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [11] Davis, J. (2016, July 28). Teaching ESL: 10 Common Problems in the Classroom. Retrieved from [owlcation.com: https://owlcation.com/academia/Teaching-ESL-10-Common-Classroom-Problems-and-Solutions](https://owlcation.com/academia/Teaching-ESL-10-Common-Classroom-Problems-and-Solutions)
- [12] Dela Rosa, J. Paul., & Lintao, R. (2018). Guided or misguided?: Teachers' evaluation of an English curriculum guide in the Philippines. *Asian Journal of English Language Studies (AJELS)*, 6(December). Retrieved from [https://ajels.ust.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/3-Guided-or-Misguided\\_-\\_Teachers'-Evaluation....pdf](https://ajels.ust.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/3-Guided-or-Misguided_-_Teachers'-Evaluation....pdf)
- [13] Department of Education, "DO 52 S.. 1987, The 1987 policy on bilingual education," 1987, <https://www.deped.gov.ph/1987/05/21/do-52-s-1987-the-1987-policy-on-bilingual-education/>.
- [14] Hayashi, K. (2000). Firipin kyouwakoku (The Republic of the Philippines) no eigo kyouiku no rekishi [The history of English language education in the Republic of the Philippines]. *Kansai Gaidai Educational Research and Report*, 1, 77–92.
- [15] Literature Review: Systematic literature review (nd). Charles Sturt University. Retrieved on November 30, 2020, from <https://libguides.csu.edu.au/c.php?g=476545&p=3997202>
- [16] Madrunio, M. R., Martin, I. P., & Plata, S. M. (2016). English Language Education in the Philippines: Policies, Problems, and Prospects. *Springer Link*, 245-264.

- [17] Marcelo P. (2010, February 21). English Proficiency is Key to Landing a Job. *Planet Philippines*. <http://planetphilippines.com/current-affairs/english-proficiency-is-key-to-landing-a-job/>
- [18] Nakahara, K. (2006). The Socio-linguistics situation in the Philippines and the future of English and Filipino in the country. *Nature-peoplesociety: Science and the humanities*, *Kanto Gakuin University* 40, 33–49.
- [19] Pazzibugan, D.Z. (2013). 'K + 12' still struggling. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/419261/kto12-still-struggling>
- [20] PISA 2018 results. (2019, December 03). Retrieved January 06, 2020, from OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA): <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/pisa-2018-results.htm>
- [21] Porciuncula, L. (2011, October 6). English as Medium of Instruction in Philippine Education: A History. Retrieved from [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu): <https://www.academia.edu/24202460>
- [22] Rahman, A. (2007). The history and policy of English education in Bangladesh. In Y. H. Choi & B. Spolsky (Eds.), *English education in Asia: History and policies* (pp. 67-93). Seoul: Asia TEFL.
- [23] Rahman, N. (2014). From curriculum reform to classroom practice: An evaluation of the English primary curriculum in Malaysia (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of York, England
- [24] Republic Act No. 10533 (2013). Official Gazette of the Philippines. Retrieved from Republic Act No. 10533 | Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines
- [25] Smit, B. (2005). Teachers, local knowledge, and policy implementation: A qualitative policy-practice inquiry. *Education and Urban Society*, 37, 292–306. doi:10.1177/0013124505275426
- [26] Study shows Filipino college students not proficient in English. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. <https://www.philstar.com/business/2002/04/10/156748/study-shows-filipino-college-students-not-proficient-english>
- [27] Tima, R. (2018, February 21). English Proficiency of Pinoy Students, teachers lagging – survey. GMA News. Retrieved from <http://www.gmanetwork.com>
- [28] The Manila Times. (2013, Oct 26). Philippines: The new call center capital of the world. Retrieved from <http://www.manilatimes.net/philippines-the-new-call-center-capital-of-the-world/47984/>
- [29] T. Tinsley and K. Board, *Languages for the Future*, The British Council, London, UK, 2013, <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/languages-for-the-future-report-v3.pdf>
- [30] Wang, L., & Coleman, J. (2009). A survey of internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education in China. *ReCALL Journal*, 21, 113–129.
- [31] What is K to 12 Curriculum? (nd). Official Gazette of the Philippines. Retrieved November 28, 2020, from <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/k-12/>
- [32] Valerio, M. (2015). Factors affecting English instruction of grade 7 K to 12 curriculum as perceived by high school English teachers of the Division of Quirino. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3,48–67.