

7 | English Language Teaching, Curriculum Innovations and Implementation Strategies: Philippine Experience

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INTRODUCTION

The term ‘curriculum’ refers to all the planned learning activities or experiences provided by an educational program to a group of learners or target audience. As such, it may include objectives, content, learning activities, materials, teaching aide and evaluation means and tools. In a narrow sense, a curriculum may refer solely to the core contents or content outline of a particular program or field. The term also connotes coherence and continuity in determining educational objectives and in assessing their effectiveness in terms of program objectives.

Curriculum development is a dynamic and continuous process. It is dynamic in the sense that it is never static. It has to keep on growing and changing if it is to keep pace with the changing needs, interests and conditions of the target audience for which it has been developed. It should be flexible enough to accommodate new developments and ideas if it is to be relevant and up-to-date. Curriculum development should not be a one-man job. Rather, it should be a participatory process all the way from situational analysis through the revision. It should be a joint collaborative effort of an interdisciplinary team and representatives of target audience whose experiences and expertise are utilized in the development of a relevant and sound curriculum. It is in this context that the Philippine experience in English language teaching (ELT), curriculum innovations and strategies will be presented.

ELT in the Philippines is one hundred six years old. When the Philippine educational system was established on January 21, 1901, through Education Act No. 74 or the 1901 Educational Act, English was made the sole medium of instruction in Philippine schools (Bureau of Education, 1901). The English curriculum from 1901 to the present has undergone several innovations and a

number of implementation strategies have been tried and used. These innovations, changes, deviations, modifications and restructuring with their implementation strategies were aimed to improve the achievement level of learners and to make English instruction more effective. These date back to the periods or movements in the history of English in the Philippines. These are:

1. Period 1 (1901–1925): The Speak, Read and Write Movement
2. Period 2 (1925–1935): The Indigenization of English Movement
3. Period 3 (1935–1950): The Vernacular and Wikang Pambansa (Local and National Language) Movement
4. Period 4 (1950–1974): English as a Second Language Movement
5. Period 5 (1974–1993): The Bilingual Education Movement
6. Period 6 (1993 to the present): Communicative Language Teaching Movement

This chapter will present and discuss the changes in the English curriculum in terms of learning competencies or expected outcomes; teaching approaches, strategies/techniques; instructional materials particularly textbooks, time allotment and subject offerings from 1901 to the present. Implementation strategies of the different innovations, changes, enrichments will likewise be presented according to the movements.

PERIOD 1 (1901-1925): THE SPEAK, READ AND WRITE MOVEMENT

At the beginning of the American regime (1901-1925), there was a need to use a common medium of instruction throughout the archipelago in order to get the work of opening schools done fast and efficiently. The authorities found out that the people spoke regional languages and Spanish was limited to very few Filipinos. Thus, it was decided that the English language would be the medium of instruction. The decision to use English proved to be a gesture of goodwill. The Americans willingly offered to teach their language. The Thomasites were the first American teachers. They were selected by the United States Civil Service Commission.

This period describes the introduction of English as the medium of instruction in schools. The period is also characterized by the experimentation in the use of textbooks and materials, including a curriculum that was continually revised. English was the only language allowed to be spoken in the school

premises, hence, it was called the period of ‘Speak, Read and Write English Only’ movement.

With the issuance of Education Act 74, President William McKinley of the United States instructed the Philippine Commission that English shall be the common language of people to unify the regions. Act No. 74 also served as the framework for the creation of the Bureau of Public Schools, now the Department of Education. The use of English as the sole medium of instruction started the ‘Americanization’ of the Filipinos and the total immersion of the Filipino child in the learning of English in the schools.

The Development of the Curricula

The Primary Curriculum

The Primary Curriculum underwent various phases/revisions from 1901-1925. The first formal curriculum was a three-year tentative curriculum for the primary schools (Grades I to IV) in 1901. The subjects were reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, physiology, music, drawing, physical education, manual training and nature study. The teaching of English was the one given emphasis (Fresnoza, 1950). The primary course in 1907 was lengthened to four years because a great majority of students would not go beyond the primary grades. In 1910, the English curriculum by grade level had language, consisting of reading, conversation and spelling. Grades I to III had varying time allotment of 75 to 120 minutes. Grade IV had language and reading for 60 minutes daily. Language and reading were formally separated. In 1913, the curriculum was revised to lengthen the recitation periods. Phonics or pronunciation was added to the curriculum. The first Course of Study for the primary grades was published in 1915 by the Bureau of Education. This contained the subject matter in each grade and subject, method of teaching, expected accomplishments of each grade at the end of the school. It was considered as the beginning of the development of a Philippine ‘pedagogical idiom’ in English (Sibayan & Gonzales, 1990).

The Primary Curriculum of 1924-1925 included information about language, conversational English, good manners and right conduct (GMRC), civics, hygiene and sanitation, opening exercises, phonics and writing. The time allotment varied from 10-20 minutes daily to 50-minutes weekly.

Modifications were also made such as reducing the time allotment for industrial work and elementary drawing to give more time for silent reading.

The conversation English period was replaced by a 5-minute check-up period after the seatwork in reading, language and arithmetic. This gave time for the teacher to check the work of students. Spelling for Grades II and III was given 15 minutes in 1928. In 1929, the weekly time allotment for language, conversational English was reduced to 450 minutes in Grade I, 235 minutes in Grades II and III and 250 minutes in Grade IV. Reading time was increased to 400 minutes in Grades I and II and 350 minutes in Grades III and IV.

Strategies Used During the Period

The language teaching strategies used during this period were the following (Freer, 1906).

- By means of object and action lessons

The teacher holds up an object, says 'ball' and have the children repeat the name after him individually. Then the class repeats the word a number of times and at the same time, then the teacher writes the word on the blackboard.

- By repetition

The idea is written and spoken repeatedly to ensure that it is retained in the child's mind. The names of other objects were taught in the same manner.

It could be deduced that these strategies are features of the Direct Method.

The Intermediate Curricula

The Intermediate Curriculum of 1904

An intermediate curriculum for three years was introduced in 1904 in response to the need for instruction higher than the primary. This curriculum for Grades IV-VI was offered in provincial high schools and in municipalities with available buildings and personnel. The curriculum from Grades IV-VI covered Language and Grammar with 40 minutes a week.

The Revised Intermediate Curricula of 1909

In response to the need for adequate vocational training, the intermediate course was expanded in 1909. Five other curricula were offered in addition

to the general curriculum with the school year 1909–1910. These were teaching, farming, trade, housekeeping and household arts and business. Since Grade IV has been transferred to the primary, another grade level, Grade VII was added. The different curricula were Grammar and Composition and Reading and Spelling for Grades V to VII with 200 minutes a week.

Revised Intermediate Curricula of 1913

A committee appointed by the Director of Education in January 1912 revised the intermediate curricula which were prescribed in the school year 1912-1914. The General Teaching Curricula had the following subjects in English: Grammar, Reading, Spelling, Composition and Writing.

Revised Intermediate Curricula of 1917

During the start of the educational system, there was no prescribed curriculum yet. The General Superintendent of Public Instruction sent out a list of subjects to be taught. There was a need to prepare Courses of Study from the Central Office. In 1917, the English subjects in the General and the Teaching Curricula were: Grammar and Composition, Conversational English, Reading, Spelling, Phonics and Writing. There was a need to prepare Courses of Study from the Central Office. The Course of Study for Intermediate Grades was first published and distributed to schools in 1917. This gave the aim of the course in Conversational English, Composition and Grammar as ‘to increase the pupil’s ability to express his thoughts in correct, clear and concise language, both orally and in writing.’

The Revised Intermediate Curriculum of 1922

The intermediate curriculum was again revised in 1923 based on the recommendations of teachers and administrators. During the school year 1922-1923, the skeleton of the curriculum was introduced to the schools. The English subjects which were offered twice a week were Reading, Phonics, Language, Spelling and Conversational English, while those that were offered thrice a week were Good Manners and Right Conduct and Civics.

The Secondary Curricula

The Secondary Curriculum Previous to 1904

Since the administration of provincial high schools before 1904 was left in the hands of division superintendents, there was no uniformity in the

secondary curriculum. The high schools provided tertiary instruction to these secondary school graduates who wished to study in the colleges or universities. The academic curriculum was the basic curriculum and instruction in normal, commercial and business lines was given as special courses. The City of Manila used the following curricula in English (Fresnoza, 1950).

First year:	Advanced Grammar and Composition
Second year:	Composition and Rhetoric
Third year:	American Literature
Fourth year:	English Literature

The Secondary Curriculum of 1904

The following curricula were prescribed for public secondary schools in 1904.

1. A secondary general curriculum for four years
2. A secondary normal curriculum for two years
3. A commercial curriculum for four years
4. A trade curriculum for two years
5. A three-year agricultural curriculum

The English subject offered in these curricula was English Literature from first year to fourth year.

The Secondary Curricula of 1906

In 1906, the secondary curricula were revised. The English subjects in each curriculum were the following.

First year and second year:	Prose and Poetical Selections and Advanced Grammar
Third year:	Rhetoric and Drama; the Novel
Fourth year:	The Oration and Argumentative Literature

The Revised 1910–1911 Secondary Academic Curriculum

The revised curriculum had Literature, Composition and Rhetoric from first year to fourth year.

The 1912 Revised Secondary Academic Curriculum

The English subjects in the revised curriculum are as follows.

First year: English Literature
English Composition
Second year to fourth year: English

The 1913 Revised Secondary Academic Curriculum

This revised curriculum was prescribed up to 1918. The English subjects included were as follows.

First year: Literature
Second year and third: English
Fourth year: Literature
Composition and Rhetoric [first semester]
Business English [second semester]

The 1916 Two-Year Secondary Normal Curriculum

Figure 1 presents two-year and four-year normal secondary courses from 1916 to 1922.

FIGURE 1
Two-Year and Four-Year Normal Secondary Courses from 1916-1922

English Subjects Taught	Two-Year Normal Secondary Course		Four-Year Normal Secondary Course	
	1916	1922	1916	1918
<u>First Year</u>				
Literature & Composition	√	√		
Reading	√		√	√
Writing	√		√	√
Current Events		√		
<u>Second Year</u>				
Literature and Composition	√			
Story telling, Dramatization	√			
Plays and Games				
Current Events		√		
Reading		√		
Grammar		√	√	
<u>Third Year</u>				
Literature and Writing			√	√
<u>Fourth Year</u>				
Literature and Composition			√	√
	The two-year secondary normal curriculum was authorized to be offered in Mountain Province and Nueva Viscaya. The English subjects were Literature and Composition in the First and Second Year. Current Events was included in 1922.		The 1916 and 1918 four-year normal secondary curriculum offered Literature and Composition in all levels. Grammar was included in the second year and writing was added in the third year.	

The changes in the Secondary Curricula in Period 1 were part of an experimentation as to what really were the options for high school graduates who could not continue to college. Some of these were good for the needs of the times, but in some provinces or divisions, they did not prove successful. Thus, there were still changes made in the succeeding periods.

THE MONROE EDUCATIONAL SURVEY IN 1925

Acts No. 3162 and No. 3196 of the Philippine Legislature enacted on March 8, 1924 created the Board of Educational Survey to make a survey study of education and all educational institutions in the Philippines. This was the first comprehensive educational survey undertaken to evaluate the Philippine Educational System. It was known as the Monroe Survey Commission (MSC) because it was headed by Dr. Paul Monroe of Columbia University.

Some of the findings and recommendations of the Survey Commission related to the English language in Philippine schools were as follows.

- **English as Language of Instruction**
The Commission concluded that English should be retained as the language of instruction because the introduction of dialects would have a divisive influence. Also, MSC said that the cost of the preparation of textbooks, etc. in the dialects was prohibitive. Because the use of English created considerable handicaps to the instructional program, the Commission recommended the use of the local dialect in teaching Character Education in the lower grades. Dialects are the first languages spoken in a particular town, province or region.
- **Elementary School Curriculum**
The elementary curriculum was found to be inadequate to meet the learners' needs. The textbooks used were not adapted to the interest and capacities of the students and as a consequence much verbalistic learning went on. School subjects were being studied in isolation of each other. The time allotted to some of them was not in proportion to their importance. The MSC recommended some changes in language, the content subjects and occupational work and problems. It also recommended that the materials in the textbooks be adapted to conditions obtaining in Philippine life and to the experience common to Filipino children.

- The Teaching of Phonics

The Commission also found out that the teachers of Phonics in the Philippines had no training and that many of the English consonants and vowels were particularly difficult for the Filipino teacher to master. It was suggested that teachers be given training in Phonics by American teachers who teach the subject in teachers' institutes. In the early stages of the Philippine Educational System, most of the Filipino teachers were untrained. The resident American teachers, the Thomasites, were requested to conduct in-service training for teachers. All teachers in each province or school division were trained once a year for five to eight weeks. They were also trained/retrained in English, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Civics, Science and Educational Methods. The training involved regular teachers and those seeking appointments who were called 'aspirants.' This was managed by the Division Schools Superintendents. The training in teachers' institutes facilitated the effective teaching of English which could have contributed to English taking root in the educational system.

- The Teaching of Conversational English

The MSC observed that the period devoted to Conversational English was frequently wasted since the teacher had no definite worthwhile topics for the children to talk about. The Commission recommended that either real live topics be used for the period or the period be discontinued and the time saved be spent as occasions in talking about things which come up in connection with other subjects.

- The Teaching of Technical Grammar

The survey disclosed that the language period in the third and fourth grades was spent in the study of technical grammar. The Committee on Language suggested that children be given opportunities to fix habits of correct speaking since knowledge of technical grammar does not cause one to speak correctly. It was also recommended that the study of grammar as a help in correct speaking and writing be delegated to the intermediate grades and high schools.

- Secondary School Curriculum

The Commission noted that majority of the students were taking the academic curriculum which did not prepare them for life after graduation. It recommended training in agriculture, commerce and industry.

- English Composition and Literature

The MSC administered tests and standardized reading tests. The tests showed that while the students' knowledge of correct language usage and their vocabulary range considerably increased during the high school period, their gain in reading power was slight. The achievement of fourth year students in paragraph reading was practically the same as the fifth grade in the United States. Moreover, the gain in reading power between the first and last years of high school was no greater than the gain from the fourth to the fifth grade for American children. Members of the Commission had repeatedly observed the difficulties which the students had in both oral and written speech. The language handicap retarded the progress of every recitation.

The English course in the high school was divided into composition and literature. It was discovered that the textbooks used in composition were not suited to the needs and experiences of Filipino high school students. A great emphasis on poetry was also noted particularly in the books used by teachers.

PERIOD 2 (1925–1935): THE INDIGENIZATION OF ENGLISH MOVEMENT

In Period 1, the Filipino child was 'Americanized' through the sole use of English as medium of instruction in all levels of education. In Period 2, books which reflected American culture were indigenized or Filipinized. Books expressing Filipino ideals, sentiments and attitudes started to be published. Thus, this was called the indigenization of English Movement by Sibayan and Gonzalez (1990).

At the time of the Monroe Survey in 1925 the existence of Filipinized English was spoken by Filipino teachers and students with pronunciation and enunciation being greatly influenced by the first language of the learner, a case of mother tongue interference (Monroe, 1925).

The publication of Philippine Prose and Poetry in 1927 was followed by the Philippine Public Schools, a professional magazine for teachers in January, 1928. This publication, however, was discontinued in 1932 (Galang, 1980).

Further Development of the Curricula

The curricula were further developed and had some changes. This was the main responsibility of the curriculum divisions of the Bureau of Elementary Education and the Bureau of Secondary Education of the Department of Education. The changes were based on feedback from the schools, districts and school divisions. The results of national achievement tests and studies were also considered in the modifications, improvements and changes of the curriculum.

The Primary Curriculum

The Primary Curriculum prescribed in June 1924 was used up to School Year 1933–1934. This was included in this period because it was used for a longer time in Period 2.

The 1934–1935 Primary Curriculum

The 1924 Curriculum was greatly overhauled in 1934. The English subjects in this curriculum were as follows (Fresnoza, 1950).

Grades I and II

Language:

Grade I 350 minutes per week

Grade II 450 minutes per week

Reading and Phonics: 450 minutes per week

Writing: 75 minutes per week

Grades III and IV

Language and Spelling:

Grade III 275 minutes per week

Grade IV 250 minutes per week

Reading and Phonics:

Grade III 450 minutes per week

Grade IV 400 minutes per week

Writing:

Grade III 75 minutes per week

Grade IV 100 minutes per week

Phonics was given 15 minutes in this curriculum in Grades I–III. Spelling was given 75 minutes per week in Grades II and III and 250 minutes in Grade IV. The formal teaching of Spelling in Grade I was eliminated as recommended by MSC.

The Intermediate Curriculum

The Revised Intermediate Curriculum of 1922 was used up to 1933–1934 followed by the Revised Intermediate Curricula of 1934. The 1922 curriculum was used because it was still relevant.

The Revised Intermediate Curricula of 1934

In these curricula, Conversational English, GMRC, Civics, Hygiene and Sanitation were replaced by Character and Health Education in Grades V and VI. In Grade VII, Conversational English was replaced by Character Education.

The English subjects in the three remaining curricula were: language and spelling for 250 minutes, and reading and phonics for 250 minutes, for Grades IV–VII; and writing for 100 minutes for Grades V and VI.

The Trade Curriculum and Agriculture Curriculum

The English subjects in this Curriculum were Language and Spelling and Reading and Phonics for 250 minutes weekly for Grades V and VI.

The Secondary Curricula

The 1924 Trade Curriculum was used up to 1931. In 1932, the Secondary Trade Curriculum was revised and used until 1941.

The 1932 Secondary Trade Curriculum

The English subjects in this curriculum included the following.

First year:	Literature, Current Events, Composition
Second year to fourth year:	Literature and Composition

The 1935 Type A General Secondary Curriculum

The general secondary curriculum which took the place of the academic curriculum in public schools was experimented in Batangas and Capiz High Schools. This became the standard curriculum for all the non-vocational public secondary schools in 1941.

The English subjects in this curriculum were:

First year :	Literature, Current Events, Composition
Second year to fourth year:	Literature and Composition

COURSE OF STUDY

During the school year 1929, the Course of Study in Phonics for the Primary Grades was issued for general use by the Bureau of Education. The bases of the course were auditory perception and speech condition (Bureau of Secondary Education, 1989a).

Secondary English Courses

The 1927 Secondary Course in English Composition

The work in English to be mastered by the students was divided into units in this Course of Study. In teaching each unit, the following procedure was recommended: to give a preliminary test, teach the result, adapt further procedure and teach and test again to the point of mastery. Mastery of each unit meant the ability to identify the unit under study, recognize errors in usage and correct such errors, and use the unit in communication activities.

The 1929 Course in English Composition

A detailed discussion of oral and written themes was provided in this Course. Among the points discussed was the preparation necessary in developing a topic.

It was suggested that teachers undertake with the students ample planning and organization before the class was asked to write a formal theme. Oral work was preceded by written work. For example, to direct attention to 'vivid word pictures' the class was made to listen to models furnished by books on literature.

The value of outlining was equally stressed. It was pointed out that, 'if a pupil can make one good sentence, he can make many, if he can write a good paragraph he can write a good composition.' Therefore, teachers were directed to begin from the most basic task of developing 'sentence sense.'

The 1931 Course of Study in English for High School

This Course of Study devoted a considerable portion to the discussion of activities involving sound production. It was pointed out that one of the most difficult tasks of the English teacher was to correct faulty pronunciation, the so-called Philippine accent. This was due to the mispronunciation of long and short vowels. The Filipino students gave the Spanish or dialect pronunciation to the English words. Moreover, the Filipino high school students, for the first time, came in contact with native speakers as English teachers (Bureau of Education, 1931).

Methods of Teaching English

In reading, the ‘thought-getting’ method of silent reading was used. Reading silently without vocalization was emphasized. The reminders of teachers to ‘read with the eyes instead of the lips’ and ‘don’t point with your fingers’ predominated English classes during the period. For this purpose, several supplementary silent reading books were provided and used. In language, the grammar analysis method of teaching was gradually replaced by spoken English of functional grammar focused on fixing habits of correct speaking. The memorization of poetry and study of poems for the reinforcement of grammar, declamation, participation in plays, and storytelling, however, continued to be used (Sibayan & Gonzalez, 1990). The Horn Method in Teaching Spelling was also used.

PERIOD 3 (1935–1950): THE VERNACULAR AND WIKANG PAMBANSA (LOCAL AND NATIONAL LANGUAGE) MOVEMENT

This was called the Vernacular and Wikang Pambansa Movement because the vernaculars or local dialects were allowed to be used as auxiliary medium of instruction in the primary grades. The Wikang Pambansa or National Language was ordered to be taught in all secondary and normal schools.

Important historical events were simultaneously happening during this period which greatly affected the status of English Language Teaching. These were the adoption of the 1935 Constitution, the birth of the Commonwealth of the Philippines in 1925, the transition government (1935-1946), the Japanese occupation during World War II (1941–1945), and the establishment of the Republic of the Philippines. Such events gave rise to the emergence of nationalism through language. Efforts, then, were made to have a common national language and to use the vernacular.

Changes in the English Curriculum and Requirements

Primary School English

With the establishment of the Commonwealth government on 15 November, 1935, the national aims of education were defined in Article XIV, section 5, of the Constitution. These fundamental goals of education might have affected the instructional objectives, the curriculum, as well as the content of textbooks. One of these influences might have led to the

change in the primary curriculum during the school year 1938–1939.

By way of minimizing the loss of one year of instruction in English as a result of the Educational Act of 1940, abridged courses of study in language and reading were distributed to enable students ‘to acquire knowledge of some of the fundamental facts, principles, and processes’ which they would have missed with the elimination of the seventh grade (Bureau of Elementary Education, 1940). Despite the expected changes, however, the abridged lists of objectives (Bureau of Elementary Education, 1940) in language were the same as those published in 1932.

Changes in language requirements, however, were made in 1941 affecting Grades III and IV. In the former, instead of requiring students to tell 3 or 4 stories, the number was reduced to 2 to 3. In the latter, the number of poems required was reduced from three to four to at least two poems taught in the grade (Bureau of Elementary Education, 1941). In 1941, the oral language requirements were increased in Grade VI, it being the terminal grade of the intermediate course. What used to be a requirement for the seventh grade came to be required of Grade VI, namely; that at the end of the year the students should be able to express their thoughts with ease in sentences with pleasing lengths and variety and showing ‘that the English language has become for them such a natural and adaptable vehicle of expression that they use it not as language of the classroom alone but on the playground and whenever they meet one another’ (Bureau of Elementary Education, 1941).

Since 1941, besides the requirements given in previous years, the Grade 4 students have been expected ‘to be able to write from dictation, words or sentences suited to their grades’ and to be able to write three to six sentences relative to their personal experiences (Bureau of Elementary Education, 1941). Formal theme requirements were considerably reduced from 8 to 5 every semester in 1941, in the intermediate grades. Instead of having three paragraphs in formal letters as in 1925, only two were required.

With the adoption of the one-teacher-one-class-plan in 1941, Phonics was again included in reading and was taught. This could not be interpreted, however, that the vigor in teaching phonetics lessened since the textbooks used still contained pronunciation lessons.

The absence of activities on giving and writing announcements, advertisements, etc. in the textbooks was filled in by Bureau of Elementary Education (1941), which provided for the use of advertisements and announcements in oral language work. The devices that lend themselves especially well in written work were making announcements and advertisements,

explanations, giving directions and debates. Emphasis on letter writing had remained (Bureau of Elementary Education, 1941).

The 1936 Type B Secondary General Curriculum

This curriculum was used from 1936 up to 1940 and was abolished in 1941. The English subjects were:

First year : Literature and Composition

Second to fourth year : Literature and Composition

Methods of Teaching English

Despite the changes and the movements which took place during Period 3, there was little change in the methods of teaching English. The direct method was still used in the primary grades and emphasis was still on the teaching of functional grammar, silent-reading, phonics instruction, spelling and written compositions.

PERIOD 4 (1950–1974): THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE MOVEMENT

Three overlapping phases characterized this period. These are: Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), the use of the vernacular language as medium of instruction in the first two grades from 1957 to 1974 and the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN).

The Revised Educational Program of 1957

The Revised Educational Program of 1957 adopted the use of the vernacular as the medium of instruction in Grades I and II in all public schools. Together with this move was the introduction of the ‘aural-oral approach’ or the teaching of English as a second language (Bureau of Elementary Education, 1957).

Bulletin No 2 s. 1966: Theme Writing in the Primary Grades

This Bulletin dated January 21, 1966 specified the formal theme requirements for Grades IV–VI. It has a detailed explanation on how to develop controlled compositions, the steps in theme writing and rating

themes.

The Revised Primary Education Curricula: Effective School Year 1970–1977

The time allotment of Language Arts English from Grades I–VI was as follows.

Grades I and II:	40 minutes
Grades III and IV:	60 minutes
Grades V and VI:	80 minutes

Language Arts included language and spelling, reading and phonics, speaking and writing. The 40-minute period for English in Grades I and II was devoted to Language; the 60-minute period for English in Grades III and IV was devoted to either Language or Reading or both at the teacher's discretion; and the 80-minute period for English in Grades V and VI was devoted to Language, 40 minutes, and Reading, 40 minutes.

The Revised Secondary Education Program, 1973

The curriculum in English for all high schools was Communication Arts (English) which had 60 minutes for first year and 36 minutes for second to fourth year.

PERIOD 5 (1974–1993): THE BILINGUAL EDUCATION MOVEMENT

The promulgation, implementation and evaluation of the Bilingual Education Policy (BEP), the gradual filtering of the communicative approach in language teaching as a result of national and regional seminars in English, the pilot-testing and implementation of the New Elementary School Curriculum (NESC) through Program for Decentralized Education (PRODED) and the use of the Minimum Learning Competencies, the implementation of the Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP), the Education Committee (EDCOM) report, the increased time allotment given to English, Math and Science in the elementary grades, and the giving of the National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) and the National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT) were the major programs of

this period.

This is thus, called the Bilingual Education Movement. Sibayan and Gonzalez (1990) called this the Communicative Movement because of the use of the communicative approach. In the public schools, however, the prevailing program is the Bilingual Education in the context of PRODED, NESC and SEDP.

The Elementary Learning Continuum, 1980

The Elementary Learning Continuum (ELC) is a listing of viable learning outcomes for each subject from Grades I to VI done in response to one of the recommendations of Project SOUTELE. It was piloted in 497 schools in 12 regions by 3,480 teachers in 1977–1978.

The objectives for English in the ELC were classified under the four components namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The objectives under each component were listed hierarchically by grade level from kindergarten to Grade VI. Teachers were cautioned not to finish all the listening objectives first before going to speaking, or finish all the speaking objectives before going to reading, and writing. It was expected that daily lessons cover different aspects of communication that can be integrated in a single lesson, provided that lower level objectives were taught first before the higher level ones.

The New Elementary School Curriculum

The NESC is the first curriculum to have been tried out gradually year by year during a six-year period before its implementation. This national tryout aimed to determine the viability of the new curriculum. One unique feature of NESC is its being research-oriented and research-based (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, 1982).

A comparison of the NESC with the 1970 curriculum revealed that the old curriculum was more loaded since Grades I and II had seven subject areas, Grades III–VI had eight. In NESC, Grades I–II had only four learning areas; Grade III, six; and Grades IV–VI, seven.

The description of English as a learning area in the NESC is as follows:

This area provides for the development of competencies in listening, speaking, reading, writing and thinking in English. The listening competency includes such skills as auditory discrimination and comprehension; speaking: pronunciation,

use of expressions and grammatical structures; reading: vocabulary development, recognition, comprehension and study skills; and writing: handwriting skills, composition and mechanics. For effective teaching, the specific skills constituting these competencies were developed in communication situations using many and varied materials to the point of mastery.

In Grades I and II, the foundation cycles, mastery of the minimum learning competencies is intended for 100% of the learners. Children shall be taught with the use of appropriate literary materials such as jingles, rhymes, poems, dialogs, etc. suited to the grade. The daily period of 60 minutes in Grades I to VI in English may be divided into two periods, a 30-minute period in the morning and a 30-minute period in the afternoon.

The time allotment in English Grades I–VI in the NESC effective school year 1983–1984 was 60 minutes throughout the grades. In the 1970 Curriculum, Grades I–II had 40 minutes; Grades III–IV, 60 minutes; and Grades V–VI, 80 minutes.

Elementary School English

The Minimum Learning Competencies, 1989

The revised Minimum Learning Competencies (MLCs) listing for the seven learning areas is a result of the six-year try-out of the NESC participated in by thirteen pilot schools all over the country.

The objectives in English in this revised MLC just like the ELC and the former MLCs for specific grade levels are classified under listening, speaking, reading and writing. To teach a functional and meaningful Communication Arts Lesson, the teacher has to integrate related objectives from two or more components which compliment each other.

Secondary School English

The Secondary Education Development Program

SEDP is a response to the need to continue pupil development started by PRODED. Research findings indicate a need to improve student performance in science, math and communication arts. Findings indicate that ineffective teaching, inadequate facilities and instructional material contribute to unsatisfactory student performance, likewise the need to improve policy-making and increase the internal efficiency of the secondary

education system (Bureau of Secondary Education, 1989b) is imperative.

Just like NESC, SEDP was implemented by year level. The staggered implementation covered the following years.

- 1989–1990: First year
- 1990–1991: Second year
- 1991–1992: Third year
- 1992–1993: Fourth year

Methods of Teaching

TESL continued to be used as the main education policy in this period. Filipino authors wrote textbooks in English using the TESL approach. These were used in public and private schools.

Gradually, however, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLTA) was being introduced and used by some supervisors and teachers who attended training programs on this approach.

PERIOD 6 (1993 TO THE PRESENT): COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Communication Arts in English and Filipino in SEDP were renamed English and Filipino to reflect a broader scope that focused on content, including literature and the arts. The approach in both was functional. The learning of both languages was geared to the Filipinos' need for them in given situations in Philippine setting. The time allotment for English was 40 minutes with one unit credit.

English materials had as overall objectives "the development in the learner of the competencies in listening, speaking, reading, vocabulary, literature and writing which are aspects of communication and the use of these skills and competencies for learning science and mathematics and for further learning in college and/or a vocation, thus contributing to the development of the Filipino we want" (Language Study Center-Philippine Normal College, 1987, p. 1).

Listening, speaking, reading and writing activities focused on the language functions and their corresponding language forms, and grammar points. Vocabulary development accompanied the listening, speaking, reading, literature, and writing activities.

Skills

The skills to be worked on are a continuation of those started in the elementary school English communication arts programs. They are listed as follows.

Listening/Speaking

1. Listening for and discussing specific details in school announcements/ rules and regulations;
2. Listening to and repeating directions accurately;
3. Listening for different purposes and responding appropriately to a message received orally; and
4. Participating actively in conversations, group discussions, meetings and conventions.

Language Function/Grammar

1. Giving and following directions
2. Asking and responding to yes-no, wh-and tag questions accurately, acceptably and appropriately
3. Offering and refusing something politely
4. Making and carrying out requests graciously
5. Describing an idea, a thing, a person, a place or an event concretely
6. Explaining something clearly
7. Making conclusions for facts listened to and read
8. Making intelligent generalizations from what is seen, heard or read
9. Evaluating opinions and facts heard and read about
10. Criticizing ideas or information politely and constructively
11. Reacting to something listened to or read
12. Observing the correct verb forms in sentences used
13. Recognizing and using different sentence patterns for oral or written communications
14. Using direct and indirect speech with facility
15. Observing agreement of subject and predicate in sentences used.
16. Using verbals, conjunctions, connectives, compound words and other groups for meaningful communication
17. Using combined sentences for effective communication

Reading/Vocabulary/Literature

1. Using library resources for gathering information for various purposes
2. Demonstrating reading comprehension on the literal, interpretative, critical and integrative dimensions

3. Doing quick and study reading for specific purposes in and out of the classroom
4. Explaining data and other information contained in graphic and non-textual materials
5. Getting meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions through context, structural analysis, inferring, definitions, the synonyms and antonyms, analyzing metaphors, and dictionary work
6. Identifying and clarifying values from what is read
7. Demonstrating personal satisfaction and pleasure derived from reading literature after understanding literary symbols, devices, and points of view

Writing

1. Preparing an outline or mind map for one or more paragraphs
2. Writing an announcement, a set of instructions or directions clearly and economically
3. Writing an interesting personal letter
4. Filling out forms accurately and neatly
5. Writing a report objectively
6. Writing a personal reaction to something
7. Using different methods of paragraph development: narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative.

The concept of communicative competence pervades the English materials. This refers to the learners' ability to engage in spoken and written interactions with others, using appropriate and socially acceptable language forms. The end goal of language learning is communicative competence. Linguistic competence should contribute to the attainment of this goal (Language Study Center-Philippine Normal College, 1987). Communicative competence took center stage during this period because it was recognized that it was not enough to just develop linguistic competence. This was manifested in the lesson plans of teachers as well as observations of supervisors of English classes.

Implementation of the NSEC

The NSEC is the third curricular reform since 1949. The first curriculum was introduced in 1949 and implemented in 1950. The second reform in 1973 saw the introduction of the Revised Secondary Education Program (RSEP) and its implementation from 1974 to 1989. Thereafter, the NSEC

was launched.

The NSEC started in school year (SY) 1989–1990 for First Year. The Fourth Year curriculum was implemented during the SY 1992–1993. Its implementation was staggered due to the delay in the delivery of instructional materials.

The NSEC provides all students a common curriculum from First to Fourth Year. There are no core or elective subjects except in the Third and Fourth Years where students may choose one specialization area from the Technology and Home Economics (THE) subject.

English as a subject in the NSEC covers four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, the oral and written literature in order to underscore their being vital components of the English program.

The listening/speaking area is divided into three subsections: listening which singles out the skills needed in different types of listening depending on the text; oral interaction which delineates the skills needed in the different stages of conversation namely; topic initiation, turn-taking, topic maintenance and topic shift; and speaking skills designed to ensure clear oral delivery of message.

The writing area has three subsections: practical writing which covers letters, forms and the like and emphasizes the more practical use of written form; composition writing which concentrates on rhetorical patterns and macro discourse patterns in writing; and creative writing which stresses the development of the students' imagination and creativity in expressing their thoughts, feelings, emotions, motivations, desires and sentiments in writing.

Finally, the literature area groups the competencies into two subsections: general skills which are needed to meet communicative and linguistic demands of all types of literature, substance, and content. The latter is further subdivided into genre and literary craftsmanship to develop awareness and appreciation of the writer's style and values to underscore the significant insights and universal truths presented in the literary piece of the English program.

The Philippine Secondary School Learning Competencies

The Philippine Secondary School Learning Competencies (PSSLC) or the desired learning behaviors of the English Program present the program goals which run through all four years of the curriculum and indicate the profile of the learners that the curriculum seeks to develop. It also covers the terminal program competencies and the specific competencies for each year. They are enroute objectives designed to enable the learners to attain

the terminal objectives and the program goals.

The 2002 Basic Education Curriculum

The 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) was launched in SY 2002–2003 to develop in the students functional literacy and improve the quality of learning. The restructured curriculum provides for non-traditional approaches to teaching aimed at raising student achievement. These include interactive and integrative learning, values development in all learning areas, use of information and communication technology and other educational media, provision of opportunities for outdoor learning (especially in Science and Technology and Livelihood Education in high school), localization of the curriculum and emphasis on the development of higher order thinking skills. The way the students' progress is monitored and evaluated is restructured to include the use of authentic assessment measures.

The BEC streamlined the curriculum from a cluster of topics to five core subjects. The BEC move is consistent with world-wide trend to focus on fewer core subjects and achieve mastery rather than introduce too many courses with little proficiency. It aims to establish mastery among students in the five core areas: English, Science, Mathematics, Filipino and Makabayan by increasing the classroom time devoted to each.

Content-focused training in each of the core areas looked into the need for integration as an additional focus. To support the BEC, testing and assessment reforms were pushed through and instituted.

The English Language Curriculum

The Secondary English Language Curriculum for 2002 seeks to develop citizenship and to address the communication needs (i.e., interpersonal, informative and aesthetic) of Filipino students of English, which is emerging as the international lingua franca. The emerging English curriculum adopts a communicative-interactive collaborative approach to learning as well as reflection and introspection with the aim in view of developing autonomous language learners aware of and able to cope with global trends.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework underlying the curriculum is the theory of language, theory of language acquisition and pedagogical thrusts enriched by other inputs such as global trends and concomitant requirements for

global citizenship.

The English language curriculum provides for the development of language and language related skills in a meaningful, purposeful and interesting manner. This is attained through the adoption of an integrated approach in the teaching of language.

Central to the framework is the need for language learning that is contextualized, interactive and integrated and is achieved through the use of themes covering a wide range of topics to cater to varied interests and maturity levels of students.

Each of the themes provides the context in which grammar and other language-related skills are taught and learned. Themes also provide the means for the integration of the various language components. This integration makes language more purposeful, meaningful and thus, more motivating for the students. Government efforts geared towards strengthening the teaching of English in the country.

THE LANGUAGE POLICY IN PHILIPPINE EDUCATION

Department of Education, Culture and Sports (Order No 9, s. 1973) signed by then Secretary Juan Manuel announced that the vernacular of the locality shall remain the medium of instruction in Grades I and II with English and Pilipino as subjects. English shall be the medium of instruction starting Grade III. Pilipino shall be taught as a subject in order to develop the ability to speak, read and write in this language. The use of Pilipino as medium of instruction from Grade III up in certain subjects where learning may be facilitated by the use of the said language may be allowed provided the following conditions are met: 1) the teacher has the competence to teach Pilipino; 2) there are adequate teaching materials; and 3) there is readiness on the part of the students to learn in Pilipino.

The National Board of Education supports the policy of developing a bilingual nation able to communicate in Pilipino and in English.

Establishing the Policy to Strengthen the Use of the English Language as a Medium of Instruction in the Educational System

Department of Education (Memorandum No. 189, s. 2003) gives Executive Order No. 210 dated May 17, 2003 entitled 'Establishing the Policy to Strengthen the Use of the English Language as a Medium of

Instruction in the Educational System.’ It includes the following policies.

1. English shall be taught as a second language starting with the First Grade.
2. As provided in the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum, English shall be used as the medium of instruction for English, Mathematics and Science from at least the Third Grade level.
3. The English language shall be used as the primary medium of instruction in all public and private institutions of learning in the secondary level, including those established as laboratory and/or experimental schools and non-formal and vocational or technical educational institutions. The percentage of time allotment for learning areas conducted in English language is expected to be not less than seventy percent (70%) of the total time allotment for all learning areas in the secondary level.

It is the objective of the foregoing policies to develop the aptitude competence and proficiency of all students on the use of the English language to make them better prepared for the job opportunities emerging in the new technology-driven sectors of the economy.

Institutions of Higher Education including state colleges and universities are encouraged to adopt the use of the English language as the primary medium of instruction in the tertiary level. The CHED shall adopt measures to promote and encourage the use of the English language as the primary medium of instruction in the tertiary or higher education level.

The Department of Education, through the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP), Educational Program Implementation Task Force (EDPITAF), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) as well as through educational institutions in the private sector shall evaluate the proficiency of educators in the English language and conduct training programs nationwide to develop and improve it.

Necessary funding support for the provision of adequate learning materials and resources that will develop the aptitude, competence and proficiency of students in the English language shall be secured by the implementing authorities.

Self-Assessment Test: An English Proficiency Test for Secondary School Teachers

In response to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo’s call to improve the use of the English language, DepED spearheaded the National English

Proficiency Program (NEPP). The Program includes Self-Assessment Test (SAT) as Phase I and Mentor Training as Phase II.

The SAT is an English proficiency test intended for public secondary school teachers of English, Math and Science. This was administered in 2003 and this was used to give the teachers a glimpse of their own English proficiency profile.

Self-Assessment Test: An English Proficiency Test for Elementary School Teachers

The National English Proficiency Program (NEPP) on its first year of national implementation of training for elementary teachers in support of Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP), will follow the five-phased program until year 2010 when the school-based mentoring program has eventually become institutionalized. The initial activity is the conduct of Phase I – Self-Assessment Test (SAT) for Elementary Teachers of Grades 1, 2 and 3 using the Comprehensive Teacher Professional Development Program for Elementary Education (COMTEACH) of the Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE).

SAT was first given in 2005 to the teachers of the pilot schools. In April, 2007, SAT was administered to 200 primary school teachers in each of the 17 regions in the country. The top 100 scores were trained in the 10-day English Language, Reading and ‘Gabay’ mentoring on May 21 to 30, 2007. ‘Gabay,’ which means guide, is the title of the mentoring program for elementary grades teachers.

In Retrospect

Looking back at ELT in the Philippines for the past 106 years, it can be gleaned that the policies, studies and surveys in language teaching caused changes in the minimum requirements or expectancies, contents, focus, time allotment, approaches/methods or techniques and evaluation of the curricula over the years.

Through these policies, studies and surveys, the spread and usage of English is encouraged as the schools accelerated the shift from Spanish to English.

If the Filipinos adapted the English language freely and spoke it conveniently, it was probably because they wanted to imbibe the new language of the American liberators. This is because the Americans deliberately spread English to every province by making it through

legislation the only language used in schools from 1901 to 1935 and as an official language in all government agencies and transactions.

The passage of the 1901 Education Act made English the sole medium of instruction in Philippine schools. The Philippine Commission instructed to have English as the common language of the people to unify the regions since a great number of language were spoken throughout the country. It aimed to promote unity and understanding and to provide for the greatest possible progress in political economic and social affairs.

The curriculum underwent revisions until it was finally indigenized or Filipinized in 1925. The use of the vernaculars as auxiliary medium of instruction and the teaching of Pilipino in all secondary and normal schools led to the gradual displacement of English as the sole medium of instruction and the adoption of bilingual education. English was taught as a second language.

The development of Filipino as a national language, the downgrading of English during the Japanese occupation by banning the use of some books in English and by introducing Japanese to gradually replace English in schools, the use of the vernaculars, and the Bilingual Education Program were the factors that contributed to the diminishing role of English in Philippine society and in education and these also intervened in the implementation of English language teaching programs. In spite of these interludes the Filipinos as revealed in the various surveys still want to maintain English as the language of education, especially higher education.

The availability of written documents in English in all the Controlling Domains (CDs) of the language is what makes English dominant and maintained as the language of education, government, business, media, science, technology and government examinations. The controlling domains of language dictate the language and the rules that govern its use. In the Philippines the controlling domains of English are education, government, science and technology, business, industry and media.

English in the country spread more rapidly because of the supportive domains, institutions, programs and individuals. Government support is evident in the laws, policies and orders enacted to strengthen the use of the English language, thus, making it dominant because it is being used in the controlling domains of language.

One hundred six years after the United States sent the Thomasites to the country, our Filipino teachers are now being recruited to teach in the land of the now immortal Thomasites.

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