

## A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE CHALLENGES IN COLLOQUIAL COMMUNICATION AMONG PRACTICE TEACHERS

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**ABSTRACT:** This study explores the challenges faced by practice teachers in colloquial English communication during the academic year 2023-2024. Through a phenomenological approach, five purposively selected practice teachers from Batangas Eastern Colleges were interviewed to identify key themes and subthemes related to their English language difficulties. Data were gathered through the conduct of semi-structured interview. Respondents were interviewed by the researcher, then, another language expert was asked to do focus group interview among the respondents using the same set of questions. The research findings indicate that participants have limited exposure to English language use, resulting in struggles with vocabulary, anxiety, and difficulty in expressing ideas. Their primary motivation for improving English skills is to enhance academic performance rather than practical communication. This suggests a need for educational interventions that focus on vocabulary enhancement and increased opportunities for English practice. Implementing language support programs could facilitate vocabulary growth and proficiency monitoring, which are essential for academic success. The study emphasizes future research directions, including in-depth investigations into underlying factors affecting language challenges, longitudinal studies to monitor skill development, comparisons across student populations, and intervention studies to assess program effectiveness. These findings underscore the importance of tailored language programs to support practice teachers' English language development and future teaching capabilities.

**keywords :** *Challenges in Colloquial Communication, English Language*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is widely recognized as a key indicator of language proficiency. In the Philippines, where English is one of the official languages, speaking English fluently is often equated with being proficient in the language. This belief underscores the importance of developing students' English communication skills within educational institutions. English is not only crucial for academic purposes but also broadens students' minds, develops emotional skills, and enhances their quality of life by providing better job opportunities (LanguageLabSystem.com, 2022).

Globally, English serves as the primary medium for communication across many countries. It is the predominant language used in literature and media because of its widespread understanding among readers. In the Philippines, English is seen as a tool for power and progress, valued for its functionality, practicality, and affordability. Proficiency in English can significantly boost an individual's career prospects, making it a critical skill for professional advancement (Kurt, 2020).

However, despite the growing demand for English language proficiency, challenges persist. The prominence of English in the Philippines faces several obstacles, particularly in colloquial communication among practice teachers. Fluency and spontaneity in English are essential for anyone aiming to excel in their academic or professional endeavors, especially for future language teachers. Good command of English is not only advantageous in the job market but also enhances teaching effectiveness (TeacherAcademy.eu, 2021).

In the context of teacher training, understanding the challenges associated with colloquial communication is crucial. Despite the emphasis on effective communication skills in educational settings, there is limited research on the lived experiences and perceptions of practice teachers regarding these challenges. This phenomenological study aims to investigate the nuanced difficulties practice teachers encounter in colloquial communication during their teaching experiences. By exploring these challenges from their perspective, this research seeks to provide insights that can inform educational practices and interventions to enhance communication skills among educators.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the challenges faced by practice teachers in colloquial communication during their teaching experiences. By investigating the lived experiences and perceptions of practice teachers, this research aims to identify specific communication obstacles encountered in educational settings using individual interviews and follow-up interviews among teacher education students. The findings from this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the nuanced challenges in colloquial communication among practice teachers and inform the development of targeted interventions and strategies to enhance their communication skills within the classroom environment. Specifically, this study aims to:

- Identify the most common difficulties among practice teachers in speaking English.
- Determine the specific causes of these difficulties in speaking.
- Recommend teaching pedagogies to motivate students to speak and use the English language in the classroom and in daily conversation.

By addressing these objectives, the study seeks to provide valuable insights that will help improve the communication skills of practice teachers, thereby enhancing their effectiveness and confidence in the classroom.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a qualitative research design, focusing on exploring and understanding the experiences of practice teachers with colloquial communication in educational settings. Qualitative research enables a deep dive into the personal experiences and perceptions of individuals, providing insights into real-world problems from their perspectives. The research employed an interview method to gather data, using semi-structured questionnaires to explore the challenges practice teachers face in speaking English, the causes of these difficulties, and possible pedagogical strategies to improve their communication skills.

The study involved five Bachelor's Degree students majoring in English, who are enrolled at Batangas Eastern Colleges for the school year 2023-2024. Given the small number of eligible participants (14 students), total enumeration was used to include all students in the research. These participants underwent one-on-one interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire to collect detailed responses.

Batangas Eastern Colleges is a private, non-sectarian educational institution in San Juan, Batangas, founded in 1940. It offers various degree and technical-vocational courses, with a commitment to developing future leaders and responsible global citizens.

The primary data collection instrument was a semi-structured interview questionnaire, designed to elicit detailed and nuanced responses from participants. Semi-structured interviews combine structured and unstructured elements, allowing flexibility in question phrasing and order while adhering to a thematic framework. The questionnaire included open-ended questions such as:

1. When did you start using English, and what can you say about the experience?
2. Do you feel speaking English as a medium of communication is difficult? What are the problems or difficulties you have when speaking English?
3. What situations cause stress or nervousness when speaking English?
4. What do you think are the reasons for feeling nervous or scared when speaking English?
5. Do you use any methods or strategies to overcome nervousness when speaking English?
6. What activities would you suggest for use in English language classrooms to reduce nervousness and anxiety?

Data collection involved multiple sources to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. The primary methods were individual student interviews and focus group interviews, complemented by feedback and assessments from cooperating teachers.

Individual interviews were conducted to capture the essence of students' thoughts and feelings about speaking English. These interviews were transcribed and reviewed with participants to ensure accuracy. The data were stored securely in both printed and electronic formats.

Focus group interviews provided additional insights and allowed for the exploration of diverse viewpoints. These interviews highlighted challenges such as lack of exposure, fear of speaking, and language anxiety. The responses were transcribed and analyzed alongside individual interview data.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. This method involves reading through the data to identify patterns and themes. The process included:

**Transcription:** Converting interview recordings into text for analysis.

**Bracketing:** Setting aside preconceptions to approach the data objectively.

**Immersion:** Repeatedly reading transcripts to familiarize with the data.

**Identification of Significant Statements:** Highlighting important statements that capture the essence of participants' experiences.

**Clustering and Theming:** Organizing data into meaningful categories and themes.

**Textual and Structural Descriptions:** Describing both surface-level details and underlying structures of the participants' experiences.

**Validation:** Seeking feedback from panel members, teachers, the research adviser, and participants to ensure credibility and trustworthiness.

The research began with selecting participants using total enumeration sampling. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed to guide the interviews. The interviews were conducted in a casual manner to avoid bias and ensure spontaneity. Responses were analyzed and themed to identify the types of difficulties and causes of anxiety in speaking English. Suggestions for improving confidence in using English in classroom and daily conversation were also explored.

By following this methodology, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges practice teachers face in colloquial communication and inform the development of strategies to enhance their communication skills.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

English is a globally dominant language, serving as a lingua franca in many international contexts. For Filipino students, proficiency in English is crucial for effective communication in a globalized world (languageabsystem.com, 2022). The study presents three main themes and seven sub-themes from the analysis of practice teachers' experiences in using English for communication: necessity and opportunity drive exposure, diverse perspectives on challenges, and self-induced stereotype standards.

**Table 1: Main Themes and Sub Themes of the Challenges in Colloquial Communication among Practice Teachers**

Themes	Subthemes
1. Necessity and Opportunity Drive Exposure	Exposure to language Resource Utilization Motivation and Academic Context
2. Diverse Perspective on Challenges	Emotional and Social Challenges Subjective Difficulty
3. Self-Induced Stereotype Standards	Unfamiliar Words and Vocabulary Battle within self-belief

##### A. Necessity and Opportunity Drive Exposure

Participants reported limited exposure to English, primarily during elementary and high school English classes, with increased exposure during tertiary education. They highlighted the advantage of English proficiency for teachers (teacheracademy.eu, 2021) and the need for more exposure to improve their speaking abilities.

###### a.1. Exposure to Language

Participants' exposure to English began at different educational stages but was generally limited. Speaking English is advantageous for teachers, emphasizing the need for future English teachers to develop strong English skills. Limited exposure led to difficulties in speaking, as reflected in participants' responses. For example, one participant began learning English in grade one, which helped in communicating with relatives abroad, while others had significant exposure only in high school or college.

###### a.2. Resource Utilization

Practice teachers faced difficulties with colloquial communication due to limited resources. Greenhill (2010) and Brown (2014) highlight the importance of exposure, practice, and reinforcement in developing language proficiency. Participants used various strategies to improve their speaking skills, such as reading books and occasional practice.

###### a.3. Motivation and Academic Context

Motivation is crucial for language learning, influencing fluency and daily communication. Strong interpersonal communication skills are vital in teaching (Khan, 2017). Participants were often driven by academic requirements to use English. For instance, one participant found learning English beneficial for communicating with relatives abroad, while others were required to speak English in college or during high school recitations.

##### B. Diverse Perspectives on Challenges

Fluency and confidence in speaking English are significant challenges, often due to limited practice opportunities (Chand, 2021). Mancilla and Hisona (2019) identified factors such as lack of confidence, shyness, anxiety, and limited opportunities.

### b.1. Emotional and Social Challenges

Participants faced emotional challenges, such as nervousness during recitations and difficulties with spoken English due to limited vocabulary. For example, one participant struggled to express ideas due to a limited vocabulary, while another found it hard to respond to complex questions.

### b.2. Subjective Difficulty

Participants had varied perceptions of English difficulty. Some found it manageable with sufficient vocabulary, while others struggled in specific contexts. For instance, one participant initially found speaking English difficult, while another found it challenging only when faced with complex vocabulary.

## C. Self-Induced Stereotype Standards

Participants often accepted stereotypical norms, believing that limited vocabulary hindered their communication. Adi (2023) discussed that vocabulary problems are common in learning English. Participants acknowledged that a lack of vocabulary made speaking English a struggle.

### c.1. Unfamiliar Words and Vocabulary

Fluency in English requires a wide vocabulary. Nunan (1991) emphasized the importance of vocabulary knowledge for fluency. Participants struggled with unfamiliar words, hindering their ability to express themselves.

### c.2. Battle within Self-Belief

Participants' self-perception affected their willingness to use English. Ur (1991) noted that lack of confidence and language anxiety are barriers to speaking proficiency. Participants reported difficulties using English due to limited practice and fear of criticism, often not answering interviews in English. For example, one participant found it hard to use English at home but expected to improve with face-to-face classes.

Overall, the study highlights common struggles among practice teachers in using English, including limited exposure, anxiety, lack of confidence, and motivation. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing their speaking abilities and overall language proficiency.

## V. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that most participants had limited exposure to using English in communication, making it difficult for them to express themselves in the language. This underscores the need for targeted educational interventions to enhance their competency as future English teachers. Improving vocabulary acquisition and providing more opportunities for English practice are essential steps. Participants who lack practice can benefit from language support programs that offer additional immersion opportunities. Regular assessment and monitoring of vocabulary growth and language proficiency are crucial for tracking progress and identifying areas needing further support. Addressing vocabulary and practice deficiencies requires a multifaceted approach, incorporating educational interventions and language support programs. Proper implementation of these programs and strategies is vital for the academic success of practice teachers.

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