UC Journal, e-ISSN 2774-9401, Vol. 6, No. 1, May 2025, pp. 43-55

UC Journal: ELT, Linguistics and Literature Journal
http://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/UC
Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

AN EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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https://doi.org/10.24071/uc.v6i1.12017
received 27 March 2025; accepted 15 May 2025

Abstract
Technology has significantly influenced student learning and empowered them to cope with modern learning strategies. Technology will work if the implementation is done well, where students use digital tools to aid learning rather than become dependent on them. This paper is anchored by a qualitative library-research design to review the challenges and opportunities in English language teaching in terms of integrating research digital tools, content-based, classroom management, and cultural and social differences. Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is better for teaching English as a second language than other traditional conventional methods. Even though there are some challenges like financial limits and cultural barriers, CBI is very flexible and practical, and will be a nice way to learn, creativity, and participation. Furthermore, interactive techniques such as role-playing, debate exercises, and peer tutoring create an immersive learning environment, letting students learn by application instead of memorization. However, some challenges remain due to several factors such as large class size and limited resources. The government advocates for the accessibility of knowledge for everyone, particularly for the underprivileged, which allows all individuals to have equal access to English language education regardless of social and cultural status.

Keywords: challenge, English language teaching, literature review, opportunity

Introduction
In the Philippines, it has been observed that a 10-year basic education remains congested, and students who graduate from this lack competency in various subject areas (Barrot, 2018; Calderon, 2014). The primary approach is the curriculum reform, the K to 12 Curriculum through Republic Act No. 10533, otherwise known as the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013," that focuses on strengthening the foundation of the core subjects, including language (Aranda, 2022). However, altering the curriculum poses challenges to English language teaching, as it fails to satisfy both students' and teachers' teaching and learning needs, and this also lacks a sense of direction in content and practice (Menozo, 2020). Over the years, this has made a questionable impact, however, with the use of different teaching and

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learning approaches such as the Hybrid Flexible (HyFlex) Learning Modality, this pedagogical strategy can still be adapted and improved. Through this, students and teachers can use the English language for better communication in which also plays a key role in the academic field, as it is the main medium around the world (Rao, 2019). Thus, choosing appropriate approaches like HyFlex is important in addressing educational needs (Bondarchuk et al., 2025), particularly in English Language teaching and learning.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic struck the Philippines, prompting the Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to provide alternative learning solutions, paving a pathway for the HyFlex Learning Modality. HyFlex Learning is a teaching method combining hybrid and blended learning that enables students to attend face-to-face classes, online classes, or hybrid classes (Alvarez & Alberto, 2024). This learning modality allows students to learn the English language amidst the pandemic. Some students gave positive feedback on HyFlex learning as it improves their interpersonal skills, comprehension levels, and fosters collaborative learning (Bartolata et al., 2024). However, some find traditional face-to-face learning modality better, as the HyFlex learning poses challenges such as technical difficulties, low levels of engagement, among others (Kodangos et al., 2023). In the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 24% of students in the Philippines attained Level 2 or higher in reading, and nearly none scored at Level 5 or higher in reading, ranking the Philippines sixth from the bottom with an average score of 347 in reading. With this, CHED pledged to work more closely with the DepEd to improve the performance of Filipino students in international large-scale assessments (Montemayor, 2023). Nonetheless, learners are confident in face-to-face learning. About 52% of students feel confident or very confident in using video communication programs, and 68% feel confident or very confident in motivating themselves to do schoolwork (PISA, 2022). Moreover, HyFlex Learning Modality continued to provide students with opportunities to acquire knowledge of the English language. It was shown in the recent 2024 edition of the English Proficiency Index (EPI) by the international education company, that the Philippines are still 'highly proficient' in the English language even after the pandemic, ranking 22nd out of 116 countries with 570 points and a proficiency tag as "high" (Education First's English Proficiency Index, 2024).

Despite the challenges posed by the K-12 curriculum, which also expresses priorities and ideas that influence an education system (Erstad & Voogt, 2018), the learning and teaching approach of HyFlex Learning aspires to help Filipino students improve academically, specifically in English. Even though there are existing studies about the effects of HyFlex Learning in academics (Alvarez & Alberto, 2024; Anjarwati, 2022; Villanueva & Caalim, 2024), merging it with English Language Teaching is still limited. Hence, this fills the gap in the literature to investigate its effects further, and it may be the start to achieving a standard competence in teaching and learning, not only for the K-12 curriculum but even with its effects at the collegiate level. Most importantly, the approach of HyFlex Learning is crucial to the 21st-century learners in the Philippines for their academic progress, which is highly relevant to local development that addresses the current needs of the educational sector (Suaco & Sta Maria, 2024).

Method

This article reviews the challenges and opportunities in English language teaching. Moreover, the method employed is a descriptive library-research design, which required the writer to collect the object materials from the previous studies related to English language teaching. Jones (1993) advocated that this type of research design would assist the researcher in attaching and identifying the factual sources or personal ideas to answer related research questions.

The sources in this research include published papers on challenges and opportunities in English language teaching from 2014-2025 in integrating research digital tools, content-based, classroom management, cultural and social differences. Furthermore, the main focus of the writer in this paper is on the challenges and opportunities in the English language.

The research utilized descriptive research anchored by a library research design. The data was analyzed through Conceptual Analysis by Furner (2004) of the published papers regarding English Language Teaching. The analysis of Furner (2004) allowed the researcher to evaluate the concept of evidence to improve understanding of archival concepts. The researcher's analysis involves identifying the gap in English Language Teaching in terms of challenges and opportunities, the research selection extracts keywords and content. The data gathered and analyzed through summarizing, synthesizing, or comparing different sources. Lastly, the evaluation of sources involves identifying the research credibility, publication date, and the relevance of the paper.

Findings and Discussion

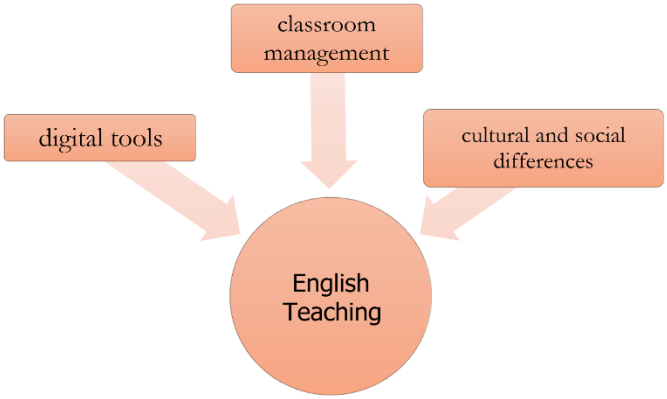


Figure 1. A review structure of English language teaching

Figure 1 presents the connection of ELT with regard to its challenges and opportunities. This includes the digital tools, content-based, classroom management, cultural, and social differences.

Integrating research digital tools

Integrating research tools and digital literacy into the educational framework in the Philippines is necessary to respond to the challenges surrounding English teaching and the preparation of students for a digital and global society. In light of the existing problem of literacy and research skills, ICT integration has become an indispensable element of contemporary education. The emergence of Hybrid

Flexible (HyFlex) learning, which hinges upon the combination of in-person and online learning settings, obviously justifies the need. The classroom experience could be enhanced by using computer and internet resources to gain access to countless online tutorials and research materials rather (Palines, 2025).

The technologies also narrow down learning gaps as they provide opportunities for flexible learning beyond school (Lock et al., 2021). Technologies like STARBOOKS and national literacy initiatives like "Brigada Pagbasa" and "Every Child a Reader Program" are used to increase students' research and reading abilities As online learning is growing in importance, technology has moved from an enabling tool for education to being a must for preparing students for the flexibilities and requisites of the 21st century (Ascione, 2023).

Technology integration in education had a positive impact seen through students' participation in literacy on the internet, e-books, and learning apps (William et al., 2025). Since its introduction in 2011, STARBOOKS has granted pivotal access to education resources in isolated communities, extending benefits to marginalized groups (Development Academy of the Philippines, 2022). Technology has immensely increased literacy levels, especially reading comprehension and vocabulary development, through interactive e-tools. Although collaboration and digital storytelling have moderately developed writing skills, feedback from teachers has been more influential. Computer literacy has significantly grown, particularly for students with minimal previous exposure to computers, yet specific teaching measures are still vital for achieving optimal benefits (William et al., 2025).

Technologies such as STARBOOKS and national literacy initiatives like "Brigada Pagbasa" and "Every Child a Reader Program" would nurture research and reading skills of students Some technologies serve the purpose of enabling education; others throughout time—such as now—are the norm and requirement in equipping students for the flexibilities and requisites of the 21st centuries (Ascione, 2023).

In general, technology has significantly influenced student learning in the K-12 curriculum and empowered them to cope with modern learning strategies. Technology will work for them only if implementation is done well, where students use digital tools to aid learning rather than become dependent on them. There are ample upsides associated with digital innovations, but it is equally important to stick to traditional methods of learning, like using books and teaching directly by teachers, to keep things in balance.

Digital tools have triggered a revolution in English language teaching, and the variety of learning media available has greatly increased. However, Rural schools usually lack the teaching facilities and infrastructure as well as teaching resources available in urban and town schools (Shan & Aziz, 2022). The discrepancy in availability of learning resources and facilities between rural and urban schools must be dealt with to give equal opportunities to rural students regarding the teaching of English (Halik & Nusrath, 2020).

Content based

Teaching the English language in today's society has various challenges and opportunities. However, different teaching styles such as English as a Second Language (ESL) methodologies, Project-Based Learning (PBL), Content-Based

Instruction (CBI), and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) have been used on how the English language was taught onto non-native speakers (Oktavia et al., 2022). These educational approaches differ from the traditional grammar-focused learning as they use a combination of language learning with other subjects (e.g, history, science, art). Challenges such as cultural differences, language barriers, and poor teaching materials require more enhanced teacher training and modifications to the curriculum (Ortizano, 2024; Tang, 2020). To add, the use of colloquial expressions and complicated languages in everyday life becomes a hurdle to learners' understanding and academic success.

Content-Based Learning (CBL) is an educational approach that focuses on the applications and practices that teach students to learn a language through learning about specific subjects rather than as the core of the instruction. "It acts as the primary vehicle for learning rather than the language as being the center of the lesson" (Why Language Teachers Love Content-Based Language Instruction, 2025). As per Vanichvasin and the Canadian Center of Science and Education (2019), CBL in real-world contexts uses real-world contexts such as the analysis of global issues, community engagement projects, and solving practical issues to teach the English language. For example, learners can learn the language by exploring environmental issues or talking about cultural differences.

CBL is recognized as a more promising teaching method compared to alternatives such as English as a Second Language (ESL), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), and English-Medium Instruction (EMI). Sibulkin (2018) observed that the academic performance of ESL students has noticeably enhanced with Content-Based Instruction (CBI), a kind of Content-Based Learning (CBL). The data showed that students who received the CBI method achieved a higher GPA than those who did not. Furthermore, according to the research by Shohani et al. (2023), over two- thirds of students (81.3%) from other programs, including nursing, perceived the CBL method as superior to alternative educational strategies; 60% of male students and 62% of female students reported that the CBL method enhanced their self-confidence.

Tang (2020) highlights how well Content-Based Instruction (CBI) improves academic performance and linguistic competency among Thai, Indian, and Tamil Nadu students. With regards to the Philippines, CBI can also improve the learning of the English language of the students, compared to using old traditional learning methods. The results have also shown higher test scores and academic performance. These areas in which the CBI has shown effectiveness have been in developing both Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).

Moreover, the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is better for teaching English as a second language than other traditional conventional methods of PBL, ESL, and EMI. This is an approach that students can learn with real-world and meaningful information (Tang, 2020; Vanichvasin, 2019). Even though there are some challenges like financial limits and cultural barriers, CBI is very flexible and practical, and will be a nice way to learn, creativity, and participation.

Classroom management issues

The Philippines was proven to rank low in global English assessment proficiency in 2018. This shows the significant challenges faced by Filipinos in

teaching and learning; however, with the current situation, it was announced by Parungao (2023) that the Philippines earned a high proficiency rating, ranked 20th out of 113 countries. In opposition, the Philippines may have ranked high in 2023, but the reasons are not aligned with academic efforts; it was found by De Ramos (2024) that the English fluency of the Philippines is due to English media and culture, and not because of school engagement.

When it comes to teaching English, it was researched by Da La Fuente (2022) that the K-12 learning curriculum in the Philippines is far more extensive, comprising 14,171 learning competencies, which is more demanding than other countries. Additionally, the author said that there is a weak pedagogy for 21st-century skills, which only focuses on problem-solving and critical thinking, and is observed to be teacher-centered instruction, rather than active student-teacher engagement. As a result, the students are only good at English fluency when it comes to writing and assessment, but in terms of real-life applications, they have little to no experience. This was proven by Llego (2024). Furthermore, it was deduced that after the pandemic, the teacher specialization dropped drastically, and most educators were lacking professional development. They lacked the capability to entertain students interactively, they focused on their instructional delivery. The adaptation to new teaching techniques gave teachers a hard time instructing students. It was shown by Ghafar (2023) that students are more skilled digitally than most professional educators; this is another reason why students may disrespect teachers. Classroom management for educators who are yet to be developed had a hard time managing behavior for students, especially due to the lack of discipline and disrespect for the teachers (Anonuevo et al., 2022).

Students face a lot of challenges inside the classroom, leaving their confidence behind. It is stated by Akbari and Sahibzada (2020) that confidence is one of the keys to learning more proficiently, but due to bullying and constant discrimination towards students, confidence inside the classroom is low. The educators have no control over the students' discipline; this was proven by Oestar (2022). To discipline students, educators called out their names and made the students self-conscious, creating a psychological trauma that makes the students behave more differently. These traumas can be a reason for low student engagement and the cause of depression, stress, and anxiety that act as obstacles to learning (Abrams, 2022).

English as a secondary language is easy to learn, but hard to apply when speaking fluently. That is why educators should improve their professional development and be confident in what they teach to influence the children positively. In addition, educators should use involvement, hinting, discussion, and recognition in disciplining students to avoid psychological trauma and make their learning proficient; this is proven to work by Oestar (2022). Additionally, research by Candelaria (2022) shows that guided practice for students is a form of interactive teaching that impacts the learners' self-efficacy, self-regulation, social awareness, and social skills and improves classroom management through behavior and learning proficiency.

The effective classroom management in the Philippines is another key to enhancing English language learning. That is why the educators must use a student-centered strategy rather than a teacher-centered strategy, as stated by Afalla and Fabelico (2020). Some strategies implement engagement, such as collaborative

learning, differentiated instruction, and task-based language teaching (TBLT) to interact with the students and gain real-time experience. Research by Gamelo and Roy (2024) shows how these are implemented using code-switching practices. It is a common but effective way that allows students to gradually transition from the Filipino language to the English language by adapting and slowly making it a habit. Furthermore, it was stated that interactive techniques such as role-playing, debate exercises, and peer tutoring create an immersive learning environment, letting students learn by application instead of memorization. However, some challenges remain due to several factors such as large class size and limited resources.

Social and cultural differences

English was long introduced in the Philippines as a primary language in government, business, and education after it became an officially unincorporated territory of the United States following the conclusion of the Philippine-American War in 1902 (Salazar, 2025). The emergence of the English language presented inequalities in identity development, significantly influencing social and cultural status, which increased diversity due to amplified cultural and social differences (Blasco & Elizalde, 2024). Nonetheless, English language education in the 21st century is open to everyone despite the distinction in source and access convenience. Various factors, such as a free public education system, media and technology utilization, and social interaction, enable education in the English language to be accessible for everyone regardless of their status in terms of cultural and social aspects.

The system of free education in the Philippines, through the establishment of public schools by the government, advocates the accessibility of knowledge for everyone, particularly for the underprivileged, which allows all individuals to have equal access to English language education regardless of social and cultural status. However, it is inevitable to admit that inequalities occur between learners depending on their position in the cultural and social aspects, even if insignificant, which is why imbalances in quality education exist. The study of Bacolod et al. (2022) highlights the difference between the received treatment in the education of students with different social statuses, which influences the quality of English learning. Some examples include the advantage of the privileged in adapting to the English language in school, due to their environment, where they became accustomed to this language. In contrast, the underprivileged are only familiar with their dialect while utilizing limited learning materials, in addition to the shortage of skilled teachers in remote areas, which might degrade the quality of education. On the bright side, people with suitable cultural values have the advantage in English learning by optimizing their nature and cultural ties for better comprehension. Likewise, some people with strong values in language preservation contradict the ability to learn the English language, which might result in difficulties in adapting (Garcia & Lau, 2022).

Technology utilization offers convenience in data access, especially using media. This innovation enables the recording of information for everyone, but access to this knowledge also differs depending on social and cultural status. People with higher social status tend to gain privilege in premium media platforms containing more details about the English language, which enhances the quality of education. Meanwhile, the impoverished, mostly in rural areas, have limited

gadgets that pose barriers to accessing quality media for decent education (Calixtro, 2023; Thim, 2025). Additionally, the absence of interest in foreign content on social media due to local bias in the cultural aspect hinders the potential to learn the English language. Nevertheless, with the quality of appreciating foreign content, such as code-switching, which integrates the dialect with the English language to enhance understanding, the association of media with one's cultural identity can be used as an advantage (Olobia, 2024; Rabongue et al., 2024).

Optimizing the ability of humans to interact with one another in learning English is also a factor, proving the widespread accessibility of learning English regardless of cultural and social status. Yet, the peers that a person is communicating with matter since they significantly affect the quality of gathered information throughout the conversation. Such a factor is affected by social and cultural status, supported by Chavez (2022) and Santos et al. (2022), stating that children in higher social classes tend to participate and socialize using the English language to improve their academic competence, while the lower social class has fewer opportunities in English-speaking interactions. Meanwhile, in terms of cultural aspects, those with an open mindset on their values can seamlessly adapt to learning the English language. On the other hand, some strict cultural norms and practices might discourage the utilization of the English language, which affects the effectiveness of learning (Aliwadang et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, Filipinos' bilingual literacy development is shaped by the interaction of their home language, school language, and social interactions (Olabiyi et al., 2025). With the emergence of the English language, inequalities were also presented, which portrays its influence on the social status and cultural identity of the Filipinos. Despite the diversity due to amplified cultural and social differences, it does not change the fact that English is the universal language that is beneficial when learned (*English as a Universal Language*, n.d.). English language education in the Philippines is accessible for everyone through the means of the free public education system, media and technology utilization, and social interaction. Therefore, social status and cultural differences are not an obstacle to having access to English language education.

Conclusion

There are ample upsides associated with digital innovations, but it is equally important to stick to traditional methods of learning, like using books and teaching directly by teachers, to keep things in balance. Digital tools have triggered a revolution in English language teaching, and the variety of learning media available has greatly increased. Even though there are some challenges like financial limits and cultural barriers, CBI is very flexible and practical, and will be a nice way to learn, creativity, and participation.

It is a common but effective way that allows students to gradually transition from the Filipino language to the English language by adapting and slowly making it a habit. Furthermore, it was stated that interactive techniques such as role-playing, debate exercises, and peer tutoring create an immersive learning environment, letting students learn by application instead of memorization. However, some challenges remain due to several factors such as large class size and limited resources. English language education in the Philippines is accessible for everyone through the means of the free public education system, media and technology

utilization, and social interaction. Therefore, social status and cultural differences are not an obstacle to having access to English language education.

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