Enhancing General Academic Stand (GAS) 11 Students' Oral Communication Skills through Suggestopedia and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approaches

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Abstract

Developing oral communication skills is crucial for students to communicate effectively. However, students struggle to express their ideas using the English language. This study aimed to enhance the oral communication skills of Grade 11 students under General Academic Strand (GAS) by employing Suggestopedia and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approaches. This study employed the quasi-experimental design. Seventy Grade 11 students were chosen via the simple random sampling method. The researcher conducted a pretest and post-test through an impromptu speech, which was assessed using the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM). Descriptive statistics were utilized to present the results, a t-test for paired samples was used to show the significant differences in the participants' oral communication skills performance before and after the interventions, and Mann Whitney U test was utilized to see if there are significant differences in the rating increments of the two groups. Data revealed that there is a worthwhile improvement in the two groups of participants' oral communication skills performance after the interventions. Suggestopedia and Communicative Language Teaching approaches have significant influence on enhancing students' oral communication skills. However, CLT approach appeared to have better results as compared to the Suggestopedia approach specifically in the comprehension component. It is recommended that teachers implement interactive activities, such as fun filled activities with incorporation of music and CLT activities.

Keywords: oral communication skills, suggestopedia approach,
communicative language teaching approach

Introduction

Oral Communication is one of the most essential 21st Century Skills which plays an integral role in students' success in today's world. This skill is critically salient to develop effective communication in English Language, especially as students in Senior High School transition to college, the workforce, and in preparation to adult life. This perspective is supported by the K–12 Basic Education Curriculum Framework of the Department of Education, which outlines the importance of improving students' oral communication skills in order to prepare them to become globally competitive individuals (Cruz, 2019). Thus, it is very important for the students to develop effective oral communication skills.

According to Lucanus (2017), effective oral communication is the process of exchanging knowledge, thoughts, opinion, and ideas so that a particular message is conveyed, received, and understood with clarity and purpose. Raba (2017) added that an effective oral communication also requires a considerable deal of effort to learn because it calls for the expert integration of various linguistic elements like vocabulary, proper syntax, sentence structure, and perfect pronunciation. With this, the need for a suitable technique of language teaching methodology is as critical as ever to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skill of how and when to communicate effectively.

In the Philippine context, the Senior High School Program included a required subject called the Oral Communication in Context for Grade 11 students in response to the appeal of equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills of communicating effectively. Hence, Oral communication is regarded as a vital component in the English language competencies that the SHS students should master. However, it is indisputable that the existing educational system faces a wide range of problems and difficulties particularly when it comes to helping students improve their communicative ability in using the English language. Despite the additional two years that learners spent attending English focused subjects in Senior High School, it is evident that there are still many learners in the Philippines that do not demonstrate proficiency in English language, and they continuously struggle to communicate in English discourses.

The researcher being an English teacher herself, observed that most students under General Academic Strand (GAS) are having difficulty in expressing and communicating their ideas through Oral Communication. Based on this premise, Raba (2017) says that this difficulty is rooted from lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes and fear of embarrassment. Additionally, participants in Labicane's study (2021) reported the highest level of speaking nervousness due to their limited interaction with their teachers and peers, poor learning resources and lack of opportunities for learners to progress across communicating effectively.

Moreover, in the study conducted by Candilas (2016), it was stipulated that a variety of factors could be responsible for the current difficulties in oral communication, particularly in the Philippine setting. Filipinos do not speak English as a first language and there might not be much exposure to the target language. Aside from that, they find the principles governing the grammar's structure to be more complicated. Then, the bilingualism policy mandates that English and Filipino must be used separately as the medium of instruction in specific subject areas. Since Filipinos have more than one language at their disposal, these differences sometimes may cause

students to make errors in their oral discourses. Most of them find it difficult to communicate in English naturally and would rather code switch to their native tongue. When language learners are not sufficiently exposed to the target language, this problem is more likely to occur.

Considerable studies explored the language learners' perception, level of proficiency and teaching practices in improving Oral Communication Skills (Candilas, 2016; Cavanagh et. al., 2019; Raba, 2017 & Bruner et. al., 2015). However, rather less attention has been paid to other types of effective approaches and strategies that are tailored-fit to the learning needs of students in the context of Oral Communication particularly in Philippine setting. This gap limits the language teachers' knowledge about other effective approaches and strategies that educators can utilize in the teaching and learning process and address issues on poor performance in oral communication.

Considering the foregoing issues and concerns, the need for a suitable technique of language teaching methodology is as critical as ever to meet the ever-growing need for effective oral communication skills in English. Hence, the researcher applied Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Suggestopedia to help students under General Academic Strand (GAS) minimize the problem in expressing and communicating appropriately and thus improve their Oral Communication Skills. The researcher utilized two approaches to compare the effectiveness of both techniques in improving students' oral communication skills. In addition, the researcher also aimed to ascertain which of the two instructional approaches is more effective in addressing the oral communication difficulties that students in the research location encounter.

In a nutshell, this study was carried out due to pressing issues and concerns about students' difficulties in verbally expressing and articulating their ideas. Finally, by offering information on effective teaching strategies for Filipino students and insights into the efficacy of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Suggestopedia Approaches, this study helped expand the body of knowledge on oral communication skills interventions. It also clarified the applicability and suitability of these approaches in the context of local education.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Suggestopedia Approach and Communicative Teaching Approach on enhancing students' oral communication skills. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are two groups of participants' Oral Communication Skills Performance before and after the intervention in terms of:

    1.1 Comprehension;

    1.2 Fluency;

    1.3 Vocabulary;

    1.4 Pronunciation; and,

    1.5 Grammar?

2. How do the participants in each group compare in their Oral Communication Skills performance before and after the interventions?

3. How do the two groups of participants compare in their Oral Communication Skills performance increments?

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental design and examined the effect of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Suggestopedia Approaches in Oral Communication. As defined by Thomas (2020), quasi-experimental design aimed to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between an independent and dependent variable.

Research Participants

The participants in this study were the Grade 11 Senior High students under the General Academic Strand (GAS) from one of the National High Schools in the Division of Bukidnon Philippines in the academic year 2023-2024. A total of 70 students coming from two General Academic Strand (GAS) sections were chosen as participants of the study. The inclusion criteria for the selection of the participants of this study were the following: the participants were under the General Academic Strand (GAS) taking the Oral Communication 11 subject and they were under the Oral Communication in Context subject class of the researcher during the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024.

Sampling Procedure

The participants were selected through Simple Random Sampling to establish equalities. Thomas (2020) described Simple Random Sampling as a sampling method, in which each member of the population has an exactly equal chance of being selected which helps ensure high internal validity. In the context of this study, simple random sampling was applied through using the assigned class numbers of students in each section ranging from numbers 1-50. The experimental group was selected through odd numbers, while the control group was selected through even number to establish fairness.

Research Instrument

The Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) was used. This was adapted from the Riverside County Seal of Multiliteracy. This matrix assessed the participants' Oral Communication Skills specifically in the areas of comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

Data Collection

There were two groups of participants in the study namely the experimental group and control group. The interventions were implemented in the Oral Communication in Context subject for six (6) weeks from September 4, 2023, to October 13, 2023. It began in the First Quarter of the school year with four (4) learning sessions every week (40 minutes per session). To identify the two groups of participants' Oral Communication Skills Performance before the intervention, a pretest was conducted. K to 12 competency-based question revolving the topic "Oral Communication" was asked to the participants, and they have answered it through an impromptu speech. The topic was anchored on DepEd K to 12 Most Essential Learning. Specifically, in the pretest and post-test, students were asked about "What is an effective communication and how will you apply it in your life as a student?" During the process of answering the said question in the pretest, the researcher utilized the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) an adapted Teacher Observation tool from the Riverside County Seal of Multiliteracy which seeks to measure

participants' Oral Communication Skills Performance in terms of comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

Statistical Treatment of the Data

The problem statement, as presented in the first chapter of this study, was subjected to statistical analysis. In the analysis of data for problem number 1, descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean, frequency distribution, and standard deviation were used. In the second problem, a t-test for paired samples was used to show the significant differences in the participants' oral communication skills performance before and after the interventions. Finally, in question 3, Mann Whitney U test was utilized to see if there are significant differences in the rating increments of the two groups.

Results and Discussion

Problem 1. What are two groups of participants' Oral Communication Skills Performance before and after the interventions?

Table 1 displays a concise overview of the participants' oral communication skills before and after the interventions in both the Suggestopedia and Communicative Language Teaching approaches.

Table 1

Participants' Oral Communication Skills Performance before and after the Interventions Overall

Oral Communi-cation Skills	SUGGESTOPEDIA						COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING					
	Pretest			Post-test			Pretest			Post-test		
	M	Int	SD	M	Int	SD	M	Int	SD	M	Int	SD
Comprehen-sion	2.03	D	0.71	3.11	D	0.83	2.14	D	0.77	3.54	P	0.85
Fluency	2.31	D	0.53	3.00	AP	0.73	2.46	D	0.56	3.23	AP	0.81
Vocabulary	2.26	D	0.51	3.00	AP	0.73	2.54	AP	0.56	3.17	AP	0.79
Pronuncia-tion	2.40	D	0.55	3.14	AP	0.81	2.63	AP	0.55	3.14	AP	0.77
Grammar	2.40	D	0.55	2.94	AP	0.73	2.29	D	0.83	3.09	AP	0.74
OVERALL	**2.19**	**D**	**0.58**	**3.04**	**AP**	**0.74**	**2.40**	**D**	**0.59**	**3.24**	**AP**	**0.73**

Legend: Ad- Advanced: 4.51-5.0   P -Proficient: 3.51-4.50   AP- Approaching Proficiency: 2.51-3.50   D- Developing: 1.51-2.50   B- Beginning: 1.0-1.50

Based on the result, it is evident that both the Suggestopedia and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approaches initially led to improvements in students' oral communication skills, particularly in the *Comprehension* aspect. In the pretest, both approaches showed participants at the *Developing level*, while in the post-test, Suggestopedia increased to *Approaching Proficiency level*, and CLT improved to the *Proficient level*. On the other hand, in the *Fluency* component, students exhibited a comparable distribution in the pretest, with both groups at the *Developing level*, and post-test results showed both groups at the *Approaching Proficiency level*.

While Suggestopedia significantly enhanced *Vocabulary* skills, progressing from *Developing level* to *Approaching Proficiency level*, while CLT maintained an *Approaching Proficiency level* in both pretest and post-test. In terms of *Pronunciation* skills, improvements were noted in both approaches, students under Suggestopedia approach improved from *Developing level* to *Approaching Proficiency level*, and students assigned in CLT approach consistently achieved *Approaching Proficiency level*. Moreover, both groups displayed progress in *Grammar*, transitioning from *Developing level* in the pretest to *Approaching Proficiency level* in the post-test, highlighting the effectiveness of both interventions in enhancing participants' oral communication skills.

Furthermore, both groups attained the lowest mean score in grammar component, which garnered 2.94 and 3.09 in the post-test respectively. During the implementation of the intervention to the two groups of participants, the researcher being an English teacher, observed that both groups had difficulty in the aspect of grammar. The observation conforms to the study of Debata (2013) who asserts that in learning English grammar in context, the students cannot keep away from their first language (L1) and it is a crucial problem for them.

Moreover, students usually depend on their L1 in cases such as making sentences, translating sentences, describing words, etc. With these, L1 can interfere with learners 'grammar error. In that case, learners tend to create a sentence in their L1 then translate it into L2. This seems relatable because many sentences make more sense in the students' native language than in English due to direct translation from L1 into English.

Problem 2. How do the participants in each group compare in their Oral Communication Skills Performance before and after the interventions?
Ho1. The participants' oral communication skills performance in each group does not significantly differ before and after the interventions.

Table 2 presents the results of the test of difference in the participants' oral communication skills performance before and after the Suggestopedia and Communicative Language Teaching interventions. The null hypothesis (Ho1) postulates that the oral communication skills performance of the participants in each group does not significantly differ before and after the interventions. Based on the data, the null hypothesis can be rejected for both groups.

The p-values for all categories in both Suggestopedia approach and Communicative Language Teaching approach were statistically significant at the 0.01 level, suggesting that there are differences in oral communication skills levels before and after the interventions in both groups. The results show that both instructional strategies significantly improve the participants' oral communication abilities. Z-scores, p-scores, ties, positive and negative ranks, and other data are displayed in the table.

Table 2

Result of the Test of Difference in the Participants' Oral Communication Skills Levels before and after the Interventions

	SUGGESTOPEDIA						COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING					
	Nega-tive Ranks	Posi-tive Ranks	Ties	Z	p	Effect size	Nega-tive Ranks	Posi-tive Ranks	Ties	Z	p	Effect size
Comprehen-sion	0	31	4	5.16**	.000	0.87	0	35	0	5.34**	.000	0.90
Fluency	0	20	15	4.18**	.000	0.71	0	35	0	4.67**	.000	0.79
Vocabulary	0	22	13	4.40**	.000	0.74	0	24	11	3.95**	.000	0.67
Pronuncia-tion	0	20	15	4.10**	.000	0.69	0	18	17	4.03**	.000	0.68
Grammar	0	29	6	5.17**	.000	0.87	0	17	18	4.94**	.000	0.83
OVERALL	**0**	**31**	**4**	**4.60****	**.000**	0.83	**0**	**35**	**0**	**5.18****	**.000**	0.88

Legend: Negative Ranks: Post test < Pretest   Positive Ranks: Post test > Pretest   Ties: Post test = Pretest

** significant at 0.01 level

In the context of Suggestopedia approach, the p-values for Comprehension, Fluency, Vocabulary, Pronunciation and Grammar are all statistically significant at the 0.01 level, in which all components fall under the same p-values of .000. These results suggest that the Suggestopedia Approach led to highly significant improvements in participants' oral communication skills across all components. Conversely, the Communicative Language Teaching approach also possessed noticeable increase. All components yielded p-values of .000, indicating highly considerable gains in oral communication skills.

The study's results demonstrate a noteworthy distinction in p-values between the two groups, suggesting that both therapies had a good impact on improving all aspects of oral communication abilities. The results validate the claim made by Kussin et al. (2018), Suggestopedia and Communicative Language Teaching approaches, for example, are particularly valuable for language learning because they facilitate active, self-directed movement, which is necessary for the development of communicative competence. Teachers who educate their pupils to apply language learning strategies can help them become better language learners in addition to enhancing their communication ability. One of the valued qualities of a competent language instructor might be assisting students in understanding effective language learning techniques and educating them to create and apply such effective language learning strategies. Although both interventions contributed meaningfully to the

improvement of students' oral communication skills in terms of p-values, it is also perceivable that Communicative Language Teaching approach is notably better in terms of overall Z-score (5.18**) and a positive rank (35) than the overall Z-score (4.60**) and positive rank (31) of Suggestopedia approach which demonstrated that CLT approach has substantial enhancements in students' oral communication skills.

Furthermore, upon examining the effect sizes of the Suggestopedia approach (0.83) and the Communicative Language Teaching approach (0.88), it is evident that both methodologies yield positive effects on language learning outcomes, with Communicative Language Teaching demonstrating a slightly higher effect size. These positive effect sizes suggest that learners exposed to either the Suggestopedia or Communicative Language Teaching approach tend to experience notable enhancements in language acquisition. The marginal difference between the effect sizes implies that both methods are relatively effective.

The notable improvements of students under the CLT approach confirmed the assertion of Mirakhmedova (2020), which highlighted that one of the best methods for teaching foreign languages is through CLT, which enables students to pick up the language while using it creatively in everyday situations. This study also confirmed that communicative language activities significantly improve oral communication skills. Moreover, the research conducted by Rijnan (2020) emphasized that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is hailed as a highly effective approach for enhancing oral communication skills due to its emphasis on real-life communication and learner-centered interactions which prioritizes meaningful communication. Similarly, in the Philippine context, the study conducted by Obenza et al. (2021), students' communicative competence is successfully increased by the communicative language teaching activities utilized.

On the other hand, the positive outcome of Suggestopedia approach substantiated the study of Syarifuddin et al., (2022) which indicates that Suggestopedia can be a source of motivation for language learners, and incorporating integrative motivation into language teaching techniques, especially in schools with English as the primary language, can provide beneficial outcomes. However, it is important to note that integrating music into language learning which is one of the unique features of Suggestopedia approach may also have disadvantages considering the differing learning styles of students which indicates that not all learners respond positively to music as a learning tool. Some individuals may find it distracting or may not benefit as much from auditory stimuli, leading to a less effective language learning experience for certain students (Astutik, 2019; Kharismawati, 2014; Syarifuddin et al., 2022).

In general, based on the findings, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach appeared to have better results in enhancing students' oral communication skills when compared to the Suggestopedia approach across various aspects. CLT's emphasis on real-life communication, interactive learning, and contextualized language use proves to be more effective in acquiring practical language skills. In contrast, Suggestopedia's overemphasis on relaxation and students' differing learning styles may have contributed to a language learning experience that is not as impactful as CLT approach.

The implications of this conclusion underscored the importance of adopting CLT strategies in language education, acknowledging its capacity to better prepare learners for real-world language usage and proficiency. While in the context of Suggestopedia approach, it is essential to approach music integration thoughtfully, considering the diverse needs and preferences of learners to create a more balanced and inclusive language learning experience.

Problem 3. How do the two groups of participants compare in their Oral Communication Skills rating increments?
Ho2. The two groups of participants' oral communication skills rating increments do not significantly differ.

Table 3 presents the results of the test of difference in the two groups of participants' oral communication skills performance rating increments. Overall, there is no significant difference in the oral communication skills rating increments of the two groups of participants except for comprehension. This means that the participants under the Suggestopedia and CLT approaches are generally similar in fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. However, there was a notable and meaningful difference in terms of how well the participants comprehend the information being communicated.

Table 3
Result of the Test of Difference in the Oral Communication Skills Rating Increments

Oral Communication skills	SUGGESTO-PEDIA (Mean Rank)	COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (Mean Rank)	Mann Whitney U	Z	Sig.	Effect Size
Comprehension	30.80	40.20	1046.50	2.30*	0.02	*-0.39*
Fluency	34.01	36.99	1195.5	0.68	0.50	*-0.12*
Vocabulary	37.27	33.73	1144.50	0.80	0.42	*-0.14*
Pronunciation	38.17	32.83	1034.0	1.22	0.22	*-0.21*
Grammar	37.29	33.71	953.0	0.93	0.35	*-0.16*
OVERALL	35.16	35.84	1140.0	0.14	0.89	*-0.02*

*significant at 0.05 level

The findings further indicated that in terms of fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, no significant differences were found in rating increments, suggesting overall similar proficiency levels among participants in these areas. While, a notable exception emerged in comprehension, where a significant difference in rating increments indicated varying abilities to understand and grasp communication content. Unlike the other language aspects, this difference was likely not due to chance, suggesting a genuine distinction in participants' comprehension skills.

Moreover, as shown in the table, there was an over-all effect size of -0.02 which indicated a small effect size. In the context of Oral Communication Skills rating increments, this negative effect size implied that students under Suggestopedia approach have, on average, slightly lower oral communication skills performance compared to students under Communicative Language Teaching approach. However, it is important to note that the magnitude of this effect size was small, indicating that the practical significance might be limited. In short, while there may be a statistically significant difference, the small effect size suggested that the actual impact or practical importance of this difference may be minor.

In addition, in terms of mean rank, students who were exposed to Suggestopedia approach obtained an overall mean rank of (35.16) from the component of Comprehension (30.80), Fluency (34.01), Vocabulary (37.27), Pronunciation (38.17), and Grammar (37.29). While students under the Communicative Language Teaching approach achieved 35.84 in the overall mean rank from the Comprehension (40.20), Fluency (36.99), Vocabulary (33.73), Pronunciation (32.83), and Grammar (33.71). The findings indicated that both approaches are comparably effective in enhancing students' oral communication skills.

The researcher observed that both groups had performed better when they were exposed to the different activities from the two interventions. Most of them participated and showed interest during implementation of the interventions. The use of fun filled activities in the language practice phase with the incorporation of music were utilized during the implementation of Suggestopedia Approach. The participants exposed to Suggestopedia Approach experienced engaging and pleasurable activities that ultimately reduce barriers to learning the English language. This may have contributed to their improved performance on the oral communication skills posttest.

Conversely, students who were exposed to the Communicative Language Teaching Approach made use of the English language in real-world contexts by means of communicative language activities. Additionally, rather than merely learning the language, students could become communicatively competent, which could have improved their performance in oral communication skills following the intervention, just like what happened with the other group.

These findings are consistent with the relevant scholarly works. Several studies highlighted the positive effect of Suggestopedia Approach as demonstrated in the findings from the study of Gardner (2022) which emphasized that when students feel comfortable and at ease, they would be more receptive to acquiring new information. This makes learning a language easier and better.

The influence of Suggestopedia is utilized to improve learning. It should be mentioned that Suggestopedia emphasizes the value of music and rhythmic elements in education. Music is played in Suggestopedia to encourage suggestion and create a relaxing atmosphere (Galti, 2017). Students study better and are more motivated when there is integration of music and games. Kharismawati (2014) reports that suggestopedia has been found to be useful in teaching speaking to learners.

On the other hand, the improvement of participants exposed to Communicative Language Teaching is congruent to the assertion of Mirakhmedova (2020), who believes that CLT is the most effective method of teaching foreign languages since it enables students to pick up the language while using it creatively in everyday situations. Findings indicated that using a variety of communicative language activities, such as news reporting, role plays, and interviews, thrilled and encouraged students to communicate in the English language (Rijnan, 2020).

In general, the findings of the research demonstrated that learners' oral communication skills improved through the implementation of Suggestopedia approach with worthwhile growth from Developing level to Approaching Proficiency level. Communicative Language Teaching approach, on the other hand, also improved the oral communication skills of the students from Developing level to Approaching Proficiency level. This indicated that both interventions potentially contributed to the improvement of students' oral communication skills. The result of the study also highlighted that Suggestopedia and Communicative Language Teaching approaches have significant influence on enhancing students' oral communication skills. However, CLT approach appeared to have better results across various aspects when compared to the Suggestopedia approach. In addition, with regards to the rating increments of the two groups' oral communication skills performances did not differ significantly except for the comprehension component. This means that the participants under the Suggestopedia and CLT approaches are generally similar in fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Thus, the findings not only validate the efficacy of Suggestopedia and Communicative Language Teaching approaches but also underscore its capacity to enhance oral communication skills and foster students' motivation, meaningful interactivity, and engaging learning of communication skills and foster students' motivation, meaningful interactivity and engaging learning.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. For English Teachers that they may:

1.1 expose students to suggestopedia learning approaches and communicative language teaching approaches in the teaching and learning process.

1.2 use this study as a reference to improve students' oral communication skills performance.

2. For School Administrators that they may:

2.1 encourage teachers specifically English teachers to integrate suggestopedia approach and communicative language teaching approach in the teaching and learning process; and

2.2 include suggestopedia approach and communicative language teaching approach in teachers' development trainings.

3. For Future Researchers that they may:

3.1 use this paper as a reference to conduct additional research using suggestopedia approach and communicative language teaching approach, particularly in oral communication; and

3.2 expand the period of conducting the study, and the implementation of the intervention to determine better its effectiveness.

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