

Teachers' Perceptions on the Oral Language Development of Early Learners at Valencia City Central School

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the oral language development of early learners at Valencia City Central School during the School Year 2025–2026. It aimed to describe how early learners communicate during conversations in terms of language use, vocabulary usage, sentence construction, expression of ideas, and interaction skills, and to determine the factors that influence their oral language development. A qualitative descriptive research design was employed in this study. Three Grade 2 teachers were selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that the communication patterns of early learners are characterized by multilingual flexibility and code-switching across Mother Tongue, Filipino, and English. The study further identified a reliance on contextual and environmental vocabulary, structural simplicity in oral speech, and narrative descriptive expressions that utilize non-verbal cues. Additionally, social dynamics and conversational patterns were found to be driven by peer imitation and teacher-led scaffolding. The study determined that oral language development is significantly shaped by the home and family microsystem, school-based scaffolding and socialization, and external media influence.

Overall, the study concluded that oral language development among early learners is a collaborative and adaptive process shaped by the combined influence of home, school, and digital environments. These findings suggest that supporting early learners requires bridging their domestic linguistic habits with structured classroom interventions and emotional security.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Oral language development is essential in early childhood because it helps children communicate their thoughts, understand others, and participate actively in classroom learning. Among young learners, spoken communication is closely linked to cognitive growth, social interaction, and later academic success. When children are able to use oral language effectively, they can express ideas, ask questions, respond to teachers, and build meaningful relationships with peers and adults. For this reason, the development of oral language in the early grades is considered a strong foundation for lifelong learning and school readiness.

Globally, concerns about children's oral language development continue to grow, especially in the early years when communication skills should be rapidly developing. Research shows that early language exposure and meaningful interaction significantly influence children's vocabulary growth, comprehension, and overall oral performance. Yang et al. (2021) emphasized that language development is shaped by biological, environmental, and social factors, while Feldman (2019) explained that early language learning depends on the interaction between a child's abilities and the surrounding environment, including active social engagement and early intervention. These studies suggest that oral language development does not happen naturally in isolation; rather, it is strengthened through supportive communication and responsive interaction.

In the Philippine context, oral language development is especially important because learners are exposed to different languages at home, in school, and in the community. The country's multilingual setting makes it necessary for children to develop spoken language abilities that allow them to understand and use language in various situations. Concepcion (2021) noted that multilingual exposure may enhance cognitive flexibility and learning, while the University of the Philippines Department of Linguistics (2023) explained that linguistic practices in multilingual communities affect comprehension and interaction among learners. In early education, this means that children may use different languages during conversation depending on their home background, peer interaction, and classroom environment. Such language variation creates both opportunities and challenges for teachers who observe and guide learners in developing effective oral communication

At the school level, teachers play a vital role in observing how early learners use spoken language and in supporting the development of their oral communication. Classroom interaction, teacher guidance, and the learning environment can influence how children express themselves and how confidently they participate in oral exchanges. Fitria (2020) found that the classroom environment affects language development, while Zheng et al. (2025) reported that teacher interaction is crucial in shaping young children's language learning. Similarly, Pobadora and Samon (2024) emphasized that teaching strategies influence language and literacy development among Filipino learners. These findings show that early learners' oral language growth is not only influenced by home and community factors but is also perceived and shaped by the instructional support they receive in school.

Despite the importance of spoken communication in early education, limited local studies have focused on how Grade 2 teachers perceive and observe the oral language development of early learners in actual classroom settings. Most existing studies tend to emphasize literacy, reading, or general communication, while fewer studies examine how learners communicate during conversations and the factors that influence their oral language development. This gap suggests the need to explore teachers' perceptions on how early learners develop oral language in a multilingual classroom context and how teachers experience this process in daily instruction. Understanding these aspects may provide valuable information for improving classroom practices and supporting more responsive oral language instruction.

This study aimed to explore the teachers' perceptions on the oral language development of early learners at Valencia City Central School. Specifically, it sought to examine how early learners communicated during conversations and determine the factors that influenced their oral language development based on the experiences and observations of Grade 2 teachers. The findings of this study may contribute to a better understanding of learners' oral language growth and may serve as a basis for developing more effective teaching strategies that support spoken communication in early grade classrooms.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to explore the teachers' perceptions on the oral language development of early learners at Valencia City Central School, focusing on the experiences of Grade 2 teachers in observing and guiding their learners' oral communication.

Specifically, this study sought to:

Describe the oral language development of early learners during conversations as perceived by teachers in terms of:

- a. Use of language
- b. Vocabulary usage
- c. Sentence construction
- d. Expression of ideas
- e. Interaction skills

Determine the factors that influenced the oral language development of early learners based on the observations of Grade 2 teachers.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore the teachers' perceptions on the oral language development of early learners at Valencia City Central School. It focused on the experiences of Grade 2 teachers as they observed and supported their learners' oral language.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

How do teachers perceive the oral language development of early learners during conversations in terms of:

- a. Use of language
- b. Vocabulary usage
- c. Sentence construction
- d. Expression of ideas
- e. Interaction skills

What factors influenced the oral language development of early learners based on the experiences of Grade 2 teachers?

Significance of the Study

This study would provide a significant contribution to the following stakeholders:

First, teachers would be provided with a deeper understanding of how early learners develop and use oral language during classroom interactions. The findings would give them insights into learners' communication in terms of language use, vocabulary, sentence construction, expression of ideas, and interaction skills, which may help them improve their teaching strategies and classroom practices.

The school would have a clearer understanding of how oral language develops among early learners and the different factors influencing this process based on the perceptions of the faculty. Hence, appropriate programs and interventions may be designed to strengthen oral language instruction and support learners' communication development.

With this, early learners would be given more appropriate support that could enhance their ability to communicate effectively and participate actively in spoken classroom interactions.

Additionally, parents would gain better awareness of the importance of meaningful communication and interaction at home in supporting their children's oral language development, encouraging them to be more involved in their children's learning.

Lastly, future researchers would gain valuable information from this study, which may serve as a reference for conducting further research related to teachers' perceptions and oral language development among early learners.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study was delimited to the Grade 2 teachers of Valencia City Central School during the School Year 2025–2026. It focused exclusively on exploring teachers' professional perceptions, firsthand experiences, and classroom observations regarding the oral language development of early learners. The investigation of these communicative patterns was specifically bounded within five sub-areas of spoken interaction: language use,

vocabulary usage, sentence construction, expression of ideas, and interaction skills. Additionally, the study was delimited to identifying the environmental, school-based, and media-driven factors that influence early oral language growth based on the participants' professional diagnostic assessments.

The participants were selected using purposive sampling, choosing specific Grade 2 educators who serve as primary pedagogical proxies. Consequently, early learners were not directly involved as respondents, and direct primary data collection methods—such as classroom audio recordings, behavioral observations, or standardized student language proficiency testing—were excluded due to institutional scope and ethical data safeguards regarding minor demographics. Furthermore, this baseline qualitative inquiry focused on the general communicative behaviors of the classroom and did not categorize or differentiate findings based on varying individual student socioeconomic backgrounds or specific linguistic proficiency levels. Therefore, the findings of this study reflect the rich, deep contextual insights of the selected participants within this specific institutional setting, and are not intended to be statistically generalized to other schools, grade levels, or broader student populations.

Definition of Terms

To ensure a clear understanding of the concepts used in this study, the following key terms are defined operationally:

Early Learners refer to children in the early grades of elementary education, specifically Grade 2 pupils at Valencia City Central School whose oral communication is the focus of this study.

Expression of Ideas is the ability of learners to clearly convey thoughts, feelings, and messages during spoken interaction as observed by their teachers.

Interaction Skills is the ability of learners to participate in conversations, including responding, asking questions, and taking turns during oral exchanges.

Oral Language Development refers to the process by which early learners develop and improve their spoken communication abilities, including vocabulary usage, sentence construction, expression of ideas, and interaction during conversations.

Language Use is the specific language or languages (such as Bisaya, Filipino, or English) used by learners during spoken conversations in the classroom.

Multilingual Setting refers to a learning environment where multiple languages, such as English, Filipino, and local dialects, are used for communication and instruction.

Sentence Construction is the way learners organize words into phrases or complete sentences when speaking, as perceived by the Grade 2 teachers.

Teachers' Perceptions refer to the personal observations, insights, and professional reflections of Grade 2 teachers regarding the oral language development and communication patterns of their students.

Vocabulary Usage is the range and type of spoken words used by learners in expressing their ideas during communication.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY LEARNERS

The oral language development of early learners is complex and multifaceted, representing the functional ways children navigate their linguistic environment to express needs and establish social connections. These patterns are not limited to speech alone but encompass a variety of verbal and non-verbal strategies that allow children to participate in social and academic dialogue. Research suggests that during the early years, oral language is

characterized by flexibility and adaptation, as learners utilize their available vocabulary and interaction skills to achieve social belonging in the classroom. From the perspective of educators, understanding these behaviors requires exploring the specific dimensions of language use, vocabulary usage, sentence construction, expression of ideas, and interaction skills.

Use of Language

Foreign literature highlights that spoken language use in early childhood is increasingly shaped by policy shifts and cognitive motivation. Sibanda and Tshehla (2025) observed that in multilingual settings, the transition from mother tongue to a second language like English is a complex process influenced by school policy. This is supported by Zhang and Xu (2025), who found that a learner's cognitive motivation significantly dictates how and when they choose to use a specific language. Furthermore, Otto and Otto (2024) emphasize that early oral language use is a foundational developmental milestone that requires structured support. Locally, Dreisbach and Demeterio III (2021) found that Filipino learners naturally engage in code-switching to meet their communicative needs. This is further complicated by recent national shifts, as Orbeta et al. (2025) discussed the evolving language of instruction in the Philippines. Overall, these studies demonstrate that the use of language among early learners is highly adaptive, moving fluidly between dialects to ensure functional oral communication as observed by teachers.

Vocabulary Usage

The development of oral vocabulary is a critical predictor of academic success and is influenced by explicit instructional interventions. Kansizoglu and Bekiroglu (2025) showed that targeted vocabulary interventions significantly improve cognitive outcomes. Similarly, Sahin and Yavuz (2025) found that fostering effective vocabulary retention requires approaches tailored to the child's environment. In the Philippines, Fabregas (2024) observed that multilingual children exhibit lexical biases, while Cornelio (2026) emphasized that the level of learning support provided by teachers directly correlates with the English vocabulary skills of learners. Cabantac-Lumabi and Maleon (2022) also noted distinct differences in the English and Tagalog vocabularies of preschoolers. Overall, the literature suggests that vocabulary usage is not just about the number of words known, but about how children actively select spoken words from their diverse linguistic environments.

Sentence Construction

Sentence construction in oral language reflects the learner's ability to organize thoughts into logical structures. Hu and Maechtle (2021) identified that input distribution is key to how children learn constructions in a foreign language. Furthermore, Hung (2023) noted that mastering basic sentence structures is a primary hurdle, while Haim et al. (2024) found that the ability to construct sentences is linked to creativity. In the Philippine setting, Jainar (2025) found that gamified interventions improve the sentence construction skills of pupils. This aligns with earlier findings that learners often rely on short, routine-based phrases before transitioning to complex grammar. Julaika et al. (2025) also explored student awareness of sentence construction, noting the role of phrases in early development. Overall, research indicates that oral sentence construction is a developmental process where learners move from simple patterns to more structured expressions.

Expression of Ideas

The expression of ideas serves as the bridge between a child's internal thoughts and their social world. Curtis and Carter (2026) argue that early childhood environments must be designed to transform how children learn to express themselves. Gerde et al. (2022) further emphasized the importance of creating meaningful speaking experiences so young children can share their ideas. Locally, Riad et al. (2023) and Pobadora and Samon (2024) identified that children who feel emotionally secure are more likely to express their ideas clearly. Bautista et al. (2021) advocated for curriculum frameworks that allow for "glocal" expressions. Overall, the literature confirms that the expression of ideas is a multisensory process where learners use verbal and non-verbal tools to ensure their messages are understood in an oral context.

Interaction Skills

Social interaction is the primary engine of oral language growth. Yusuf et al. (2023) found that high-quality early childhood centers significantly impact pre-schoolers' social interaction levels. Washington-Nortey et al. (2022) and Erdemir and Brutt-Griffler (2022) both highlighted that peer interactions are a major source of vocabulary development. Locally, Finders et al. (2023) and Yang et al. (2021) emphasized that the quality and responsiveness of teacher-child interactions significantly affect how children learn to communicate effectively. Muhonen et al. (2022) noted that educational talk determines how well children learn to take turns. Overall, these findings suggest that interaction skills are nurtured through social play and teacher scaffolding, forming a core component of a child's oral language development.

Factors Influencing Oral Language Development

Foreign studies emphasize that early learners' oral language development is influenced by a wide range of interrelated factors, including social environment, health conditions, family background, and learning experiences. Likhar et al. (2022) explained that early childhood development is shaped by social determinants such as family income, parental education, and access to quality learning environments, all of which significantly affect spoken language acquisition. Similarly, Zhu et al. (2025) found that children's oral language outcomes are influenced by multiple interacting factors, including cognitive ability, early intervention, and environmental stimulation, highlighting that communication delays often result from a combination of biological and environmental conditions. The impact of external circumstances was further emphasized by Feijoo et al. (2023) and Zuniga-Montanez et al. (2025), who reported that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected children's oral language due to reduced social interaction and limited exposure to rich language environments. In addition, Karani et al. (2022) identified excessive screen time as a factor that may hinder oral language development, as it reduces opportunities for direct verbal interaction with caregivers and peers. Riad et al. (2023) also noted that children's well-being and emotional security are closely linked to their ability to develop spoken communication skills, suggesting that supportive and nurturing environments promote better outcomes. Furthermore, Capelli et al. (2024) highlighted the role of familial history and early expressive vocabulary as predictors of oral language, while Bosire (2026) emphasized that strong collaboration between parents and educators enhances the home learning environment. Cameron-Faulkner et al. (2025) added that children with health conditions may experience differences in oral language, further illustrating that both internal and external factors contribute to these outcomes. These studies collectively show that the development of spoken communication is a complex process shaped by biological, environmental, and social influences.

In the Philippine context, local studies highlight that oral language development among early learners is strongly influenced by home environment, educational practices, and systemic factors within the school system. Santos et al. (2022) provided an overview of English proficiency in the Philippines and emphasized that exposure to multiple languages can both support and challenge learners' oral development, depending on the quality of instruction. Lavador et al. (2024) found that early literacy skills among kindergarten learners are influenced by both school readiness and access to resources, indicating that children's early experiences play a crucial role in shaping their communication abilities. Similarly, Abella et al. (n.d.) highlighted the importance of parental practices, noting that active parental involvement and consistent oral interaction at home significantly enhance children's development. This is supported by findings from the Pantao Journal (2025), which emphasized that stimulating activities and responsive communication from parents contribute to better language readiness. At a broader level, national frameworks such as the EDCOM II National Education Plan (2026) and the Department of Education's Quality Basic Education Development Plan (2025) stressed that both home and school environments are essential in supporting foundational oral language development. Aranas and Paglinawan (2024) further identified resource availability and parental involvement as key factors, while studies from the University of the Philippines (2024) highlighted that teacher training significantly affects the quality of instruction delivered. Additionally, Hayag et al. (2025) pointed out that social and emotional learning also plays a role, as emotionally supportive environments encourage learners to express themselves more confidently. These studies demonstrate that oral language in the Philippine setting is influenced by a combination of family, school, and policy-related factors.

Overall, both foreign and local studies consistently show that oral language development among early learners is shaped by multiple and interconnected factors rather than a single influence. Foreign studies emphasize the

role of social determinants, health conditions, and environmental stimulation, while local studies highlight the importance of parental involvement, teacher competence, and national educational policies within a multilingual context. The convergence of these findings suggests that oral language development is a dynamic process that requires support from both the home and school environments. These studies are highly relevant to the present research, as they provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the different factors that may influence the oral language of early learners. By examining these factors through the perceptions and observations of Grade 2 teachers, this study can offer deeper insights into how environmental, social, and instructional elements shape learners' communication skills. This connection directly supports the study's objective of determining the factors that influence oral language development, which may serve as a basis for improving teaching practices and creating more supportive environments in early grade classrooms.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), which explained that children develop language through social interaction with more knowledgeable individuals such as teachers, parents, and peers. According to Vygotsky, learning occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the gap between what a child can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance. Through scaffolding or guided support, children gradually developed oral language development areas such as vocabulary usage, sentence construction, and interaction skills. This theory emphasized that spoken language is both a tool for communication and a foundation for cognitive development.

In this study, Sociocultural Theory provided a basis for understanding how early learners developed their oral language through interaction and participation in classroom conversations. The way learners used language, expressed ideas, and interacted with others reflected the influence of social engagement and teacher guidance within the learning environment, as observed and perceived by the educators.

Furthermore, this study was supported by Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which explained that a child's development is influenced by different environmental systems. At the microsystem level, direct interactions within the child's immediate environment, such as family, school, and peers, played a significant role in shaping oral language development. The mesosystem, which involved the relationship between home and school, also contributed to learners' spoken communication skills. In addition, broader systems such as community practices, cultural norms, and educational policies influenced the language environment in which children developed.

In relation to this study, Ecological Systems Theory helped explain the different factors that influenced the oral language development of early learners, including home environment, peer interaction, classroom practices, and exposure to multiple languages. These factors shaped how learners communicated and developed their spoken abilities.

Overall, the integration of Sociocultural Theory (1978) and Ecological Systems Theory (1979) provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the oral language development of early learners. Sociocultural Theory explained how learners developed spoken language through interaction and guided learning, while Ecological Systems Theory explained how environmental factors influenced this development. Together, these theories supported the study in examining how early learners communicated and what factors influenced their oral language development based on the experiences and observations of Grade 2 teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presented the research design, setting of the study, participants of the study, research instrument, data gathering procedure, data analysis, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness of the study.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. This design was appropriate because the purpose of the study was to explore and describe the teachers' perceptions on the oral language development of early

learners. The qualitative approach allowed the researchers to gather detailed and meaningful information based on the participants' own words, insights, and perspectives. It focused on understanding real classroom situations and teacher observations regarding the learners' oral language, specifically in terms of language use, vocabulary usage, sentence construction, expression of ideas, and interaction skills. This design was suitable for capturing the complexity of spoken communication patterns and the different factors influencing development in a natural classroom setting, rather than relying on numerical data.

Setting of the Study

This study was conducted at Valencia City Central School during the School Year 2025–2026. The school is one of the public elementary schools in the division that offers complete elementary education from Kindergarten to Grade 6. It caters to a diverse group of learners who use English, Filipino, and local dialects in their daily communication.

The school was selected as the setting of the study because it provided a suitable environment for examining the teachers' perceptions on the oral language development of early learners within a multilingual classroom context. It allowed the researchers to explore how spoken language was used in actual classroom interactions and how teachers supported learners' oral communication development.

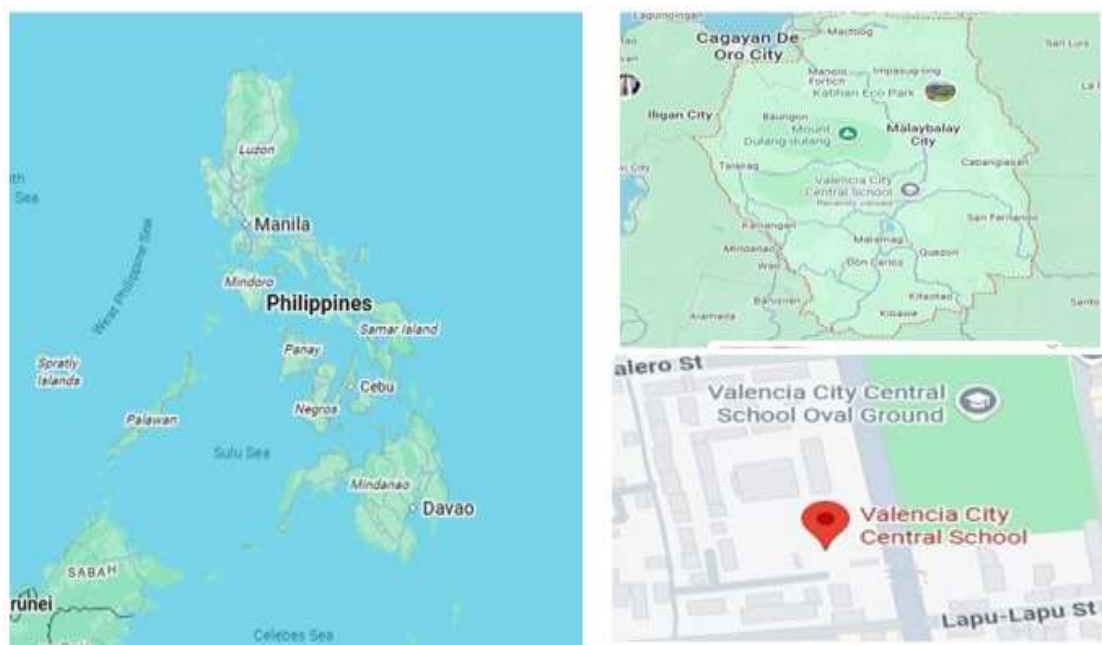


Figure 1. Location map of the study site: (A) Map of the Philippines; (B) Map of Valencia, Bukidnon (C) Map of the Valencia City Central School

Participants of the Study

This study involved three (3) Grade 2 teachers from Valencia City Central School. The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct pedagogical experience, specialized professional knowledge, and immediate relevance to the research topic. These teachers were directly responsible for facilitating and monitoring the early learners' oral communication growth and were uniquely positioned to observe firsthand the students' spoken language use, structural speech habits, and interactive challenges during daily classroom discourse.

While a sample size of three participants may appear small from a quantitative stance, it is methodologically justified and epistemologically robust for this qualitative descriptive inquiry. In qualitative research, the primary objective is not statistical representativeness or empirical generalization, but rather the acquisition of deep, nuanced, and information-rich narratives (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Braun and Clarke (2021) emphasize that small, purposive samples are highly effective for thematic analysis when the participants possess high

"conceptual power"—meaning they hold deep, direct experience with the phenomenon under study. Because the selected Grade 2 teachers serve as expert professional proxies who engage with multiple classrooms of early learners daily, their intensive, concentrated narratives provided the necessary depth and dense contextual insights required to fully address the research objectives. The selection criteria strictly ensured that data-rich insights were gathered based on years of firsthand classroom observation, satisfying the qualitative requirement for informational adequacy over numerical volume.

Selection Criteria

The participants of this study were selected based on a specific set of criteria designed to ensure the collection of high-quality, relevant data. To be included in the study, participants were required to be currently employed as Grade 2 teachers at Valencia City Central School for the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, the criteria required that each participant must have at least five (5) years of professional teaching experience in the early grades. This specific timeframe was established to ensure that the teachers have sufficient pedagogical experience and have observed various stages of oral language development across multiple cohorts of learners.

Furthermore, the selection prioritized teachers who have direct, daily experience in facilitating and monitoring spoken classroom interactions, vocabulary usage, and the expression of ideas among their pupils. This ensured that the participants possessed the firsthand knowledge and professional expertise necessary to identify the specific factors influencing the learners' oral communication patterns. Finally, the selection was limited to those who expressed a voluntary willingness to participate in the semi-structured interviews and share their lived experiences and perceptions regarding the oral language development of early learners. This rigorous selection process was essential to fulfilling the study's objective of gathering rich, meaningful narratives for thematic analysis.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in the study was a semi-structured interview guide prepared by the researchers. This instrument was designed to gather detailed information about the teachers' perceptions and observations regarding early learners' oral language development. The interview questions were aligned with the research objectives and focused on how early learners communicated during spoken conversations and the factors that influenced their oral language development. The instrument allowed participants to freely express their insights and experiences.

The interview guide was validated by an expert in the field of education to ensure its clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study, specifically focusing on the five sub-areas of oral communication.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data gathering, the researchers sought permission from the school principal of Valencia City Central School to conduct the study. After approval was granted, the researchers selected the participants using purposive sampling based on their relevance to the study. The selected participants were informed about the purpose and objectives of the research, as well as the procedures involved. They were assured that their participation was voluntary and that all information gathered would be treated with confidentiality.

The researchers then conducted semi-structured interviews at a time and place convenient for the participants to ensure comfort and openness during the discussion. With the participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in data collection regarding their perceptions on the oral language development of early learners. After the interviews, the recorded responses were transcribed verbatim and organized according to the research questions. The collected data were then prepared for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the participants were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researchers carefully reviewed the transcribed responses and identified significant statements related to the research questions. These statements

were then coded, and recurring patterns were grouped into themes.

The themes were analyzed and interpreted to describe teachers' perceptions on how early learners communicated in terms of language use, vocabulary usage, sentence construction, expression of ideas, and interaction skills. Furthermore, the analysis determined the factors that influenced the oral language development of the learners. The findings were validated through member checking and by ensuring that the interpretations accurately reflected the participants' responses and firsthand observations.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the conduct of the study. Prior to data gathering, permission was obtained from the school authorities of Valencia City Central School. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. Informed consent was secured before conducting the interviews.

The participants were assured that their responses regarding their perceptions and observations would be treated with strict confidentiality and would be used solely for academic purposes. Their identities were kept anonymous by using codes instead of real names to protect their professional privacy. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were allowed to withdraw at any time without any consequences. All recorded data and transcriptions were stored securely to maintain the integrity of the teachers' shared insights.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the qualitative rigor, validity, and robustness of the findings, the trustworthiness of this study was systematically established through the criteria of credibility, dependability, and confirmability, as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Credibility was strictly maintained to ensure that the constructed themes accurately represented the real-world experiences of the informants. This was achieved by utilizing a peer-reviewed and validated semi-structured interview guide tailored directly to the research objectives. To neutralize subjective bias and ensure data fidelity, the researchers employed member-checking, a process wherein the verbatim transcriptions and summarized thematic profiles were returned directly to the three Grade 2 teachers. This allowed the participants to review, verify, and confirm that the transcribed narratives perfectly aligned with their intended meanings and professional observations, thereby eliminating researcher misinterpretation.

Dependability was secured through a transparent and exhaustive operational audit trail. The researchers carefully documented every phase of the investigative process—spanning from initial purposive participant selection and interview scheduling to the precise verbatim audio-to-text transcriptions. This comprehensive documentation ensures that the qualitative research path is clear, visible, and structurally stable, allowing the study's analytical framework to be scrutinized and replicated by future investigators.

Confirmability was preserved to guarantee that the final results emerged directly from the lived realities of the participants rather than the subjective biases, pedagogical preconceptions, or personal inclinations of the researchers. To achieve this, the researchers maintained a reflexive stance during the coding process, continually cross-referencing every derived sub-theme against raw textual excerpts and direct quotes. All audio files, transcripts, and thematic matrices were securely archived and systematically organized, ensuring an absolute data-to-finding tracking mechanism that reinforces the objective integrity and transparency of the entire inquiry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the study. Data from the participants' narratives were analyzed through thematic analysis and presented according to the research objectives established in the study.

Language Communication Patterns of Early Learners

Table 1

Major theme	Sub-Theme
Multilingual Flexibility and Code-Switching	Dominance of Mother Tongue and Filipino Strategic Use of English via Media Exposure Functional Code-Switching as a Linguistic Bridge
Contextual and Environmental Vocabulary	Reliance on Concrete and Familiar Vocabulary Home-Based Word Acquisition
Structural Simplicity in Oral Speech	Use of Short, Simple, and Routine-Based Phrases Grammatical Approximation
Narrative Descriptive and Concrete Expression	Utilization of Gestures and Non-Verbal Cues Use of Repetitive Patterns
Social Dynamics and Conversational Patterns	Context-Driven Expression and Social Interaction Peer Reaction and Imitation-Based Interaction

Table 1 illustrates the themes identified regarding the language communication patterns of early learners. Three major themes emerged: 1) Multilingual Flexibility and Code-Switching, 2) Simplicity in Linguistic Structure, and 3) Interactive and Non-Verbal Communication.

Multilingual Flexibility and Code-Switching

The findings reveal that the language form used by learners is characterized by a fluid transition between various linguistic systems, with a clear dominance of Mother Tongue and Filipino in the classroom. Because the classroom is a diverse space with students from various ethnic backgrounds, they rely on a shared dialect to connect, while simultaneously demonstrating a strategic use of English influenced by digital media exposure. P3 noted that students often mix languages, stating, "Even though Bisaya is our official mode of instruction, the children don't strictly stick to it. They often mix it with Filipino." Similarly, P2 shared that many students actually prefer speaking in English due to their habits at home, mentioning, "Most of our students, they prefer speaking in English, especially those who are into gadgets and watching YouTube." This behavior results in functional code-switching as a linguistic bridge, where children combine languages to ensure clarity, such as when a student might say, "Teacher, paki-check sa aking work, finish na ko."

This linguistic flexibility demonstrates that for early learners, the primary goal of communication is functional connection rather than linguistic perfection. These results mirror the research of Dreisbach and Demeterio III (2021), who found that Filipino learners in multilingual communities naturally engage in code-switching and code-mixing to meet communicative needs. Furthermore, Zhang and Xu (2025) found that a learner's cognitive motivation significantly dictates the choice of a specific language in the learning process. Overall, the use of language among early learners at Valencia City Central School is highly adaptive and context-dependent, moving fluidly between dialects and official languages to ensure they are understood within their social and academic environment.

Contextual and Environmental Vocabulary

The vocabulary usage of early learners is deeply rooted in their immediate environment, suggesting that the "word bank" of a Grade 2 learner is primarily filled by daily experiences rather than academic texts. The data reveals a heavy reliance on concrete and familiar vocabulary, as participants noted that learners are most comfortable using words they encounter in their daily routines. P1 observed that when children are asked to describe something, they stick to tangible objects, stating, "They use very basic words. If you ask them to explain something complex, they go back to the simplest terms they know, usually words for things they see at home or in

the yard." This is closely linked to home-based word acquisition, where the teachers emphasized that the influence of the domestic setting is evident in the classroom. P2 explained that the vocabulary children bring to school reflects their home life, mentioning, "The vocabulary they bring to school is the vocabulary of the house. If the parents speak a certain way or use specific local terms, that is exactly what the child will use here."

These findings highlight that vocabulary usage is not just about the number of words known, but about how children actively select spoken words from their diverse linguistic environments. The development of oral vocabulary is a critical predictor of academic success and is influenced by the child's surroundings, as Sahin and Yavuz (2025) found that fostering effective vocabulary retention requires approaches tailored to the child's environment. In the Philippine context, Fabregas (2024) observed that multilingual children exhibit lexical biases, while Cabantac-Lumabi and Maleon (2022) noted distinct differences in the vocabularies of learners across different languages. Furthermore, Cornelio (2026) emphasized that the level of learning support provided by teachers directly correlates with the vocabulary skills of learners. Ultimately, the vocabulary of early learners at Valencia City Central School is a reflection of their domestic and social reality, requiring targeted support to transition from home-based talk to academic language.

Structural Simplicity in Oral Speech

The sentence construction of early learners is primarily characterized by the use of short, simple, and routine-based phrases. In the classroom setting, teachers observe that students often communicate using basic sentence structures that are repetitive and functional rather than complex. P1 shared that when students respond to instructions or participate in discussions, they rarely use elaborate sentences, stating, "They usually talk in short phrases. Like if they want to go out, they just say 'Teacher, CR' or 'Teacher, water.' It's very direct and based on the routine we have every day." Furthermore, the data suggests a pattern of grammatical approximation, where learners prioritize the delivery of meaning over technical correctness. P3 explained that while grammar may not be perfect, the message remains clear, noting, "As long as they can tell me what they need or answer the question, we consider that a successful interaction. They are still at that stage where they are just building their confidence in forming complete thoughts."

These findings indicate that oral sentence construction is a developmental process where learners move from simple patterns to more structured expressions. Sentence construction in oral language reflects the learner's ability to organize thoughts into logical structures, a process that Hung (2023) notes as a primary hurdle in mastering basic communication. This aligns with the observations of Julaika et al. (2025), who explored the role of phrases in early development and noted that learners often rely on short, routine-based phrases before transitioning to complex grammar. Furthermore, Hu and Maechtle (2021) identified that the distribution of linguistic input is key to how children learn these constructions. In the Philippine setting, Jainar (2025) found that specific interventions can improve these skills, supporting the idea that the ability to construct sentences is also linked to creativity (Haim et al., 2024). Ultimately, the structural simplicity observed in the learners' speech is a natural stage in their oral language development.

Narrative Descriptive and Concrete Expression

Regarding the expression of ideas, the findings reveal that early learners rely on a mix of verbal and physical communication to convey their thoughts. Because students are still developing their oral range, they often use their bodies to supplement their words, ensuring their message is clear even when they lack specific vocabulary. P2 observed this behavior during classroom discussions, stating, "When they can't find the right word, especially in English, they use their hands. They point, they mimic the action, or they use facial expressions to show what they mean. The gesture helps them finish the thought that their words couldn't." Additionally, learners often use repetitive phrases or familiar "sentence starters" to organize their descriptions. P1 mentioned that this provides a sense of security, noting, "They have these favorite phrases they use over and over. If one student starts a sentence a certain way, the others will follow that same pattern to express a similar idea."

These observations confirm that the expression of ideas is a multisensory process where learners use verbal and non-verbal tools to ensure their messages are understood in an oral context. The expression of ideas serves as the bridge between a child's internal thoughts and their social world, a transition that Curtis and Carter (2026) argue

must be supported by environments designed to help children express themselves. This aligns with the work of Gerde et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of creating meaningful speaking experiences to allow young children to share their thoughts. Locally, Riad et al. (2023) and Pobadora and Samon (2024) identified that children who feel emotionally secure are more likely to express their ideas clearly. Furthermore, Bautista et al. (2021) suggested that curriculum frameworks should allow for diverse, "glocal" expressions. Ultimately, the use of gestures and descriptive repetitions allows early learners to successfully bridge the gap between their internal concepts and social interaction.

Social Dynamics and Conversational Patterns

The findings indicate that the interaction skills of early learners are characterized by context-driven expression and social dynamics within the classroom. The data suggests that learners often rely on imitation-based interaction and peer reaction to navigate conversations. Teachers observed that students are highly influenced by the social behavior of their classmates, often waiting for a peer to speak first before joining in. P3 explained this pattern, stating, "They learn a lot from each other. Sometimes one child will start a game or a conversation, and the others will just follow that same pattern of speaking. It's like they are practicing how to talk by watching their friends." Additionally, the quality of teacher-child interaction plays a vital role in how students manage conversational turns. P1 noted that without teacher guidance, students often struggle with turn-taking, mentioning, "If I don't facilitate the discussion, they all want to talk at once. But through our daily routines and group activities, they are slowly learning when to listen and when it is their turn to respond."

These observations highlight that social interaction is the primary engine of oral language growth, as interaction skills are nurtured through social play and teacher scaffolding. This aligns with the findings of Yusuf et al. (2023), who found that high-quality early childhood environments significantly impact pre-schoolers' social interaction levels. Furthermore, Washington-Nortey et al. (2022) and Erdemir and Brutt-Griffler (2022) both highlighted that peer interactions are a major source of vocabulary development. Locally, Finders et al. (2023) and Yang et al. (2021) emphasized that the quality and responsiveness of teacher-child interactions significantly affect how children learn to communicate effectively. This is further supported by Muhonen et al. (2022), who noted that educational talk determines how well children learn to take turns. Overall, the interaction skills observed at Valencia City Central School form a core component of the children's oral language development, built through consistent social and academic engagement.

Factors Influencing Language Skills Development

Table 2

Major Theme	Sub-Theme
The Home and Family Microsystem	Purposeful Parental Guidance and Interaction
	Home Language Language Variety and Environment
School-Based Socialization and Scaffolding	Teacher-Child Interaction and Scaffolding
	Peer Engagement and Social Cues
	Emotional Security in the Learning Space
External Media Influence	Digital Consumption and Imitative Learning

Table 2 illustrates the themes identified regarding the factors that influence the language development of early learners. Three major themes emerged: 1) The Home and Family Microsystem, 2) School-Based Scaffolding and Socialization, and 3) External Media Influence.

The Home and Family Microsystem

The participants emphasized that the foundation of language growth is rooted deeply in the domestic setting. A primary factor identified was purposeful parental interaction and guidance, which serves as the child's first language school. P3 remarked that the quality of interaction at home is the most critical foundation, stating, "Children whose parents engage them in 'purposeful conversations'—meaning they actually talk with the child and not just at them—usually arrive in Grade 2 with a much wider vocabulary." P1 added that children who receive specific guidance in phonics and pronunciation from their parents develop significantly stronger communication skills. Furthermore, the home language environment and language variety play a dual role in shaping the child's linguistic identity. P1 shared, "Since some of them have different dialects at home, they tend to mix words, but they eventually learn how to use them properly through exposure."

These findings highlight that early expressive vocabulary and familial history are significant predictors of a child's long-term language development, as noted by Capelli et al. (2024). The family is where a child learns their first language, and while households with multiple languages may initially cause children to feel confused, this often becomes a multilingual advantage with proper guidance. The importance of this home-school connection is echoed by Bosire (2026), who emphasized that strong collaboration between parents and educators enhances the home learning environment. Overall, the literature and findings suggest that a supportive home microsystem provides the necessary linguistic input for children to develop confidence in their oral communication before and during their transition to formal schooling.

School-Based Scaffolding and Socialization

Once children enter the classroom, their language development is further shaped by teacher-child interaction and scaffolding. These professional dynamics serve as a bridge for learners who struggle with the formal curriculum or language transitions. P3 explained that when a child's home language differs from the school's mode of instruction, the teacher's ability to provide scaffolding becomes essential for their academic and social progress. This is complemented by peer engagement and social cues, where children learn through play and informal interaction. P3 observed, "They pick up slang, new Bisaya terms, and even social cues just by interacting during recess or group activities." Central to this social process is emotional security in the learning space, which determines a child's willingness to participate. P3 emphasized that if a child feels "safe" and "welcome," they are more likely to speak up, whereas fear of being teased causes them to "shut down."

This pedagogical support is particularly vital for children with varying health backgrounds; as Cameron-Faulkner et al. (2025) noted, children living with chronic health conditions may experience differences in language development, requiring more tailored and responsive instructional support. The finding regarding the social environment is further supported by Riad et al. (2023), who explained that language skills in early childhood are intimately connected to a child's well-being and emotional security, as supportive and nurturing environments promote better communication outcomes for young learners. Ultimately, the school serves as a secondary microsystem where structured guidance and positive social relationships provide the necessary framework for children to expand their oral communication skills beyond the home setting.

External Media Influence

The final factor identified involves the role of technology through Digital Consumption and Imitative Learning. P2 observed that media exposure has a massive impact on the oral language of students, stating, "Most of our students, they prefer speaking in English, especially those who are into gadgets and watching YouTube." This imitative behavior allows children to pick up specific English phrases, expressions, and cartoon-style dialogue that they might not hear in their local community. P1 noted that while educational programs can support learning, the lack of supervision can lead to the imitation of inappropriate language, explaining that "they follow the kind of language they see in their gadgets," which makes the role of the digital "third teacher" a complex one. P3 further warned that while YouTube can assist with English pronunciation, it can sometimes limit a child's ability to engage in real-time dialogue, noting that they can pronounce words correctly but struggle to use them in actual conversations with classmates.

These findings suggest that while digital media provides significant linguistic input, it must be balanced with face-to-face human interaction to ensure that language is used functionally and socially. This is supported by

Zheng et al. (2025), whose systematic review suggests that digital consumption is a powerful external force that shapes the modern child's vocabulary. However, the presence of media requires a balanced approach where technology is used as a supplement rather than a replacement for human interaction. Ultimately, the influence of gadgets and online content acts as a significant factor in the oral language development of early learners at Valencia City Central School, particularly in their shift toward English-centric communication patterns.

This section comprises the summary and discussion of the substantial results presented in relation to previously identified statements of the problem written in the first chapter. Conclusions and recommendations are hereby offered to generalize the results of the field of study.

Summary

This study explored the oral language development of early learners at Valencia City Central School. Specifically, it was intended to describe how early learners communicate in terms of language use, vocabulary usage, sentence construction, expression of ideas, and interaction skills; and to determine the factors that influence the oral language development of these early learners.

The study was conducted at Valencia City Central School, Valencia City, Bukidnon, during the school year 2025-2026. A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing semi-structured interview guides to gather narratives and lived experiences from Grade 2 teachers. The thematic analysis of the gathered data revealed the intricate nature of early linguistic growth within a diverse and modern educational setting.

The study found that language communication patterns among early learners are primarily characterized by multilingual flexibility and code-switching, where children fluidly transition between Mother Tongue, Filipino, and English to ensure functional communication. Regarding vocabulary, the study revealed a reliance on contextual and environmental vocabulary, where word acquisition is rooted in concrete, familiar daily experiences. In terms of structure, the findings showed a pattern of structural simplicity in oral speech, where sentence patterns are dominated by routine-based phrases and grammatical approximation. Furthermore, the study found that the expression of ideas is narrative and concrete, with learners utilizing gestures and repetitive patterns as vital tools for connection. Finally, social dynamics and conversational patterns were found to be driven by peer imitation and teacher-led scaffolding.

The study also determined that the development of these skills is significantly shaped by the home and family microsystem, school-based scaffolding and socialization, and the pervasive influence of external media. These findings highlight that language growth is a collaborative process between immediate social environments and digital exposure, requiring a balanced approach to support the holistic development of early learners in a multilingual context.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a deeper insight into the oral language development of early learners at Valencia City Central School. Based on the findings gathered from the participants' narratives, several significant conclusions are drawn regarding the specific communication patterns and the environmental forces that shape this development.

The language communication patterns of early learners demonstrate that children are naturally adaptive and functional communicators who prioritize social connection over formal grammatical precision. The frequent use of multilingual flexibility and code-switching indicates a practical approach to communication where the goal is to be understood regardless of linguistic boundaries. This suggests that during the early years, language use is characterized by high flexibility, allowing children to navigate diverse classroom settings and achieve social belonging. Furthermore, the reliance on a contextual and environmental vocabulary and simplified sentence structures confirms that early communication is a developmental process where children use familiar daily experiences as a foundation for their speech. The heavy use of narrative descriptive expressions and non-verbal cues further demonstrates that early communication is a multisensory "survival tool" used to bridge gaps in verbal vocabulary, while social dynamics and conversational patterns are heavily influenced by the immediate reactions of peers and teachers.

The factors influencing oral language development reveal that linguistic growth is a collaborative process requiring consistent scaffolding from the home, school, and external environments. The synergy between the home and family microsystem, teacher-led instructional support, and positive peer socialization determines how effectively a child transitions from simple phrases to meaningful expression. Finally, while modern media serves as a significant source of linguistic input and imitation, it cannot replace the essential role of face-to-face human interaction and emotional security. These elements remain the most effective catalysts for encouraging early learners to develop their language skills with confidence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered to enhance the oral language development of early learners:

To support the language communication patterns of early learners, educators are encouraged to utilize bridging strategies and translanguaging techniques in the classroom. By creating a supportive space where children feel safe to use their available vocabulary—including multilingual flexibility and code-switching—teachers can help foster overall communicative confidence. Furthermore, instructional materials should be designed to bridge contextual and environmental vocabulary with academic terms, ensuring that the child's home-based word acquisition is used as a foundation for learning. Classroom activities should also account for the structural simplicity in oral speech by providing scaffolds that help children transition from routine-based phrases to more complex sentence construction.

To enhance the narrative descriptive and concrete expression of ideas, it is recommended that teachers incorporate multisensory approaches, such as the use of gestures and visual aids, which allow children to communicate effectively even when verbal vocabulary is still developing. Additionally, creating opportunities for purposeful social dynamics and conversational patterns through group play and turn-taking exercises will help nurture the interaction skills necessary for effective communication.

To address the factors influencing oral language development, it is recommended that parents prioritize purposeful conversations within the home and family microsystem, transforming daily routines into language-rich learning opportunities. Schools should strengthen the home-school connection by providing school-based scaffolding through workshops for parents on how to balance external media influence and digital consumption with active face-to-face dialogue. These programs should emphasize that imitation from gadgets should be guided by adult interaction to ensure emotional security and linguistic progress.

Finally, to advance the academic literature and build upon the boundaries of this study, it is recommended that future researchers pursue the following paths:

1. **Longitudinal Assessment and Evolution:** Conduct longitudinal studies to observe how these specific communicative patterns, particularly the reliance on non-verbal cues and media-based imitation, structurally evolve as learners progress through higher primary grade levels.
2. **Data Triangulation and Multi-Perspective Approaches:** Incorporate diverse, direct primary data sources—such as naturalistic classroom audio recordings, direct student behavioral observations during peer play, or child-centered language performance assessments—to directly capture student behavior and cross-verify teacher interview narratives.
3. **Sample Expansion for Representativeness:** Expand the participant sample size significantly to include a wider pool of Grade 2 educators across multiple schools, administrative districts, and grade levels to increase the demographic breadth and depth of the data.
4. **Socioeconomic and Proficiency Stratification:** Explicitly investigate how varying family socioeconomic backgrounds, household income brackets, and students' baseline language proficiency levels act as independent variables that affect early oral language growth within contemporary multilingual school environments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix B. Interview Questionnaire

QUESTIONS:

1. How do your learners typically use language during classroom conversations?
2. Can you describe situations where learners switch between languages? Why do you think they do this?
3. How would you describe the range of vocabulary used by your learners?
4. How do learners construct their sentences when speaking?
5. How do learners express their thoughts and ideas during discussions?
6. How do learners interact with their peers during conversations?
7. Can you describe how they respond, ask questions, or take turns in speaking?
8. Based on your experience, what factors influence the language development of your learners?
9. What role does teacher support or classroom instruction play in their language development?
10. How do peer interactions influence the way learners communicate?

Appendix C. Documentation



Appendix D. Plagiarism Checker

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21

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Spelling	✓	Punctuation	2
Conciseness	5	Readability	✓
Word choice	6	Additional writing issues	4

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