



NEXUS OF PHILOSOPHY-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AMONG PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS

Eric D. Palmerolaⁱ,

Eden Stephanie B. Bolido

University of Southeastern Philippines,

Davao City, Davao del Sur,

Philippines

Abstract:

This study examined Philosophy-based Language Teaching (PBLT) and its association with language competence among English pre-service teachers in higher education institutions in Davao de Oro, Philippines. Its specific goal was to determine the level of PBLT and language competence, as well as the significance of the relationship between the variables. A descriptive-correlational design was used, with 200 respondents drawn from five institutions by stratified sampling. The data were evaluated using mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's r moment correlation. The results showed that the overall level of PBLT was high ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.513$), with Perception and Attitudes having the highest mean ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.612$), followed by Awareness ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.555$) and Usage and Application ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.580$). Similarly, language competence was rated high overall ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.539$), with Reading rating the highest ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.591$) and Speaking scoring the lowest ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.595$), albeit both were still in the high category. The study demonstrated a moderate positive relationship between PBLT and linguistic competency ($r = 0.527$, $p < .001$), thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. The findings show that greater participation in philosophical inquiry and dialogic teaching approaches is linked to higher levels of language proficiency. The study concludes that PBLT is a valuable and intellectually stimulating approach to language training in teacher education. Structured training and classroom integration of PBLT is recommended to improve pre-service teachers' communication competence.

Keywords: language competence, philosophy-based language teaching, pre-service teachers, teacher education training

ⁱ Correspondence: email edpalmerola01610@usep.edu.ph

1. Introduction

Philosophy-based language teaching (PBLT) has emerged as an innovative approach to language education, integrating philosophical traditions into instructional methods. This approach emphasizes using language as a communication tool and as a means to explore complex ideas and cultural perspectives. PBLT encourages students to engage with the target language through philosophical inquiries, promoting authentic and meaningful communication. Studies have shown that incorporating philosophical discussions in language lessons significantly improves students' critical thinking skills and cultural awareness (Puzatykh, 2022). Moreover, research indicates that students in philosophy-based lessons demonstrate increased motivation and willingness to communicate in the target language, highlighting the potential of PBLT to enhance language production and student engagement (Arwan *et al.*, 2024; Darvin & Norton, 2021).

Several studies have investigated the effects of philosophy-based approaches on students' critical thinking abilities and language competence. Lam (2020) evaluated the implementation of a Philosophy in Schools (PIS) program and found that it significantly enhanced students' critical and creative thinking skills and language proficiency. Palmerola (2024) observed a notable improvement in student engagement in English for Specific Purposes courses following the integration of PBLT. These findings suggest that incorporating philosophical elements in teaching and learning can improve students' language competence, engagement, and higher-order thinking skills (Ab Wahab *et al.*, 2022).

Research has also explored the application of philosophical approaches in literature teaching and teacher development. Arwan *et al.* (2024) found that applying an existentialist philosophy to language and literature instruction enhanced students' engagement with the material, improved their understanding of literary works, and strengthened their ability to reflect on and evaluate moral themes. In the realm of teacher development, Lam's (2022) research on Philosophy for Children (P4C) demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing teachers' capacity for dialogic and inquiry-based instruction, contributing significantly to their professional growth. Additionally, studies by Acar and Arslan (2023) and Balcı and Eryılmaz (2024) showed that P4C techniques improved critical thinking and speaking skills while reducing student anxiety.

The PBLT approach has shown particular promise in enhancing students' speaking proficiency. Research indicates that philosophical questions facilitate discussion and active group participation and significantly improve students' speaking abilities in academic and social contexts (Rustam *et al.*, 2018). Teachers generally viewed the implementation of PBLT positively, recommending the use of philosophical issues and the creation of an inquiry-based classroom community to enhance students' language skills (Ntakarutimana & Fazilatfar, 2022). Furthermore, Anjarani *et al.* (2023) found that students who take more risks have better speaking abilities, and the PBLT approach provides an excellent framework for teaching speaking skills.

While critical thinking skills typically develop during adolescence, many students still struggle to present arguments and support their opinions with evidence. Studies have shown a correlation between critical thinking proficiency and the use of complex grammar, literate, and narrative and explanatory language. This suggests that explicit instruction in critical thinking skills could benefit teenagers, including those with language difficulties and those with typical language development (Nippold & Marr, 2022).

Effective teaching strategies are crucial in language instruction, and PBLT offers a novel approach through philosophical question-and-answer exercises. Fenuku (2024) analyzed various philosophical viewpoints influencing instructional strategy and emphasized the need for various philosophical perspectives in successful language teaching. Recommendations for implementing PBLT include developing life syllabi for English language instruction and modifying typical activities to incorporate philosophical inquiries about life (Dabbagh & Noshadi, 2016, as cited in Fenuku, 2024). These approaches aim to help students view themselves as active members of local and global communities. Teachers have generally received the introduction of PBLT positively, advocating for philosophical issues and creating a community of inquiry in the classroom to enhance students' language proficiency (Ntakarutimana & Fazilatfar, 2022).

Despite its benefits, implementing philosophy-based approaches in education presents unique challenges. Michalik (2023) highlights the importance of ambiguity in philosophical inquiry, which contrasts with mainstream education's focus on certainty, standardized skills, and competencies. This tension poses a challenge for both students and teachers engaging in philosophical inquiry in the classroom. Additionally, Kryshtanovych *et al.* (2022) examined the intellectual foundations of language competence, emphasizing the role of the philosophy of language in providing a systematic explanation of language's relationship to human cognition and society.

Current language teaching methodologies often fail to capture the complex, multidimensional nature of language teaching and learning. Traditional approaches typically focus narrowly on linguistic skills, overlooking the profound connections between language, critical thinking, and in-depth understanding. The primary objective of this research was to establish the relationship between Philosophy-based Language Teaching and Language Competence. This study helped understand how it can improve language competence in a particular cultural and educational context, especially in the Philippines' teacher preparation program.

3. Material and Methods

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design to examine associations among variables without establishing direct causation or prediction. According to Arif and MacNeil (2022) and Rohrer (2017), this method can detect patterns and forecast correlations in observational data, but it cannot demonstrate causal mechanisms or direct

effects between variables. The study strategically chose respondents from five (5) CHED-accredited higher education institutions in Davao de Oro province that offered a Bachelor of Secondary Education with an English concentration.

The inclusion criteria selected respondents based on specific considerations: officially enrolled in a Bachelor of Secondary Education program majoring in English, exposed to the PBLT introduction during coursework, and used it for instruction in actual demonstration teaching. A former student attending classes in a school where teachers modeled PBLT, considering their dual role as students themselves and would-be teachers. Conversely, the exclusion criteria systematically excluded respondents who lacked practical teaching experience, had not been deployed for an internship, and could not consistently participate throughout the study. These precise criteria helped the researchers maintain data quality, ensure respondent relevance, and create a focused, information-rich sample that yielded meaningful, contextually grounded perspectives on the research topic.

The respondents were chosen using a stratified sampling technique. Stratified sampling is a probability sampling strategy in which units are randomly selected from each stratum, proportional to their representation in the population after it is split into discrete subgroups or strata. This ensured representative and proportional respondent selection, offering an efficient way to select English pre-service teachers across five institutions systematically. To distribute respondents in a controlled and fair manner, this technique first divided the population into five different strata, one for each institution.

Moreover, the research instruments used in this study consisted of one (1) validated researcher-made questionnaire, the Philosophy-based-Language Teaching Profile Scale, and one (1) adapted research instrument: the English Language Competence Questionnaire by Edgar Eslit (2023). These questionnaires were carefully selected to gather comprehensive data on philosophy-based language teaching and language competence among English pre-service teachers.

In conducting this study, the researchers considered research ethics principles, ensuring the integrity and accountability of the research, especially given its involvement of human respondents. To ensure this, the study followed established ethical principles. As a result, the research process was carried out with transparency, fairness, and respect for the respondents. The study protocol underwent an expedited research ethics review. It was submitted to a Research Ethics Committee. Data collection was initiated only after this formal approval was secured.

To address the objectives of this study, several statistical techniques were used to analyze the gathered data. The mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of PBLT and language competence, while Pearson's r moment correlation was used to assess the relationship between the studied variables.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Level of Philosophy-based Language Teaching

Table 1 presents the level of Philosophy-based Language Teaching (PBLT), with an overall level ($M=3.76$) which indicates a positive incorporation of philosophical dialogic inquiry into language teaching and learning. The Perception and Attitudes indicator had the highest mean score ($M=4.06$), suggesting teachers' receptivity and appreciation of PBLT's significance in nurturing students' critical thinking and active engagement in language learning. Though scores are slightly lower for Awareness ($M=3.63$) and, most remarkably, Usage and Application ($M=3.58$), they expose a likely gap in actual classroom implementation. This result suggests that though teachers find PBLT valuable, they come across difficulties, such as curriculum inflexibility or a lack of instructional pedagogies for regular classroom application.

Table 1: Level of Philosophy-based Language Teaching

	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
Awareness	3.63	0.555	High
Perception and Attitudes	4.06	0.612	High
Usage and Application	3.58	0.580	High
Overall Mean	3.76	0.513	High

The conversion from theoretical conceptualization to practical implementation in PBLT discloses an ultimate systemic challenge (Ntakarutimana & Fazilatfar, 2022). Specialized development patterns must go beyond mere hypothetical introduction and focus on creating distinct, contextually responsive pedagogical frameworks that empower teachers to effectively integrate groundbreaking educational methods (Arif & Yusuf, 2025; Puzatykh, 2022).

Empirical studies corroborate the transformative likelihood of concerted professional learning situations. These cooperative spaces act not only as knowledge-exchange platforms but also as crucial academic networks where teachers can cooperatively critique, scrutinize, and improve language-focused teaching practices (Ramdani & Gao, 2023). By nurturing an ecosystem of philosophical practice and joint knowledge-building, such groups can efficiently bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and the real-world classroom implementation of PBLT (Chaleila, 2025; Kao, 2023).

While teachers show notable academic acceptance of novel teaching approaches, the effective implementation of PBLT requires methodical, scaffolded support mechanisms (Palmerola, 2024; Ntakarutimana & Fazilatfar, 2022). The contemporary language education landscape suggests that moving from theoretical enthusiasm to consistent pedagogical practice requires specialized professional development that involves steady, discipline-specific supervision (Pae & Beckett, 2024; Mouni, 2022). This method distinguishes between maintainable instructional change and intended,

cooperative progressions that allow teachers to co-create meaningful and flexible teaching strategies (Holdinga *et al.*, 2024; Zhu *et al.*, 2024).

The reassuringly high overall score across PBLT indicators signals a hopeful direction for philosophical methods in language teaching and learning. Future investigation should focus on entrenching philosophical analysis within task-based and content-integrated language teaching, providing tangible operational pathways that strengthen the link between critical academic exchange and language learning purposes. This deliberate method will eventually enable more robust and dependable conversion of hypothetical understandings into classroom application (Palmerola, 2024; Ntakarutimana & Fazilatfar, 2022; Puzatykh, 2022).

4.2 Level of Language Competence

Table 2 demonstrates a high overall perception of Language Competence (M=3.75) among English pre-service teachers, but the variation among indicators follows a consistent pattern: receptive skills (Reading, M=3.96; Comprehension, M=3.79) scored higher than productive skills (Writing, M=3.71; Speaking, M=3.62). The findings show that, while English pre-service teachers usually regard themselves as highly competent, they have more confidence in receptive skills than in productive skills, indicating a relative need to improve speaking and writing skills.

Table 2: Level of Language Competence

	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
Reading	3.96	0.591	High
Writing	3.71	0.601	High
Speaking	3.62	0.595	High
Listening	3.69	0.608	High
Comprehension	3.79	0.605	High
Overall Mean	3.75	0.539	High

This sequence occurs across a variety of teaching environments, indicating that input is prioritized over meaningful, ordered output application. According to Selimović-Korjenić (2025), students' nervousness and high mental demands during real-time production are associated with lower perceived competence in speaking (Mora *et al.*, 2023; Bashori *et al.*, 2020; Hanifa, 2018). This finding has clear pedagogical consequences, indicating that, to achieve balanced competence, opportunities for guided oral and written practice should be prioritized (Lai *et al.*, 2025; Azmy & Nanda, 2024).

The favorable assessment across all five areas indicates a strong foundation of pupils' language competency. However, the pointed gap indicates a targeted developmental need (Vergel & Valle, 2020; Lervåg *et al.*, 2018). Students can be thoroughly scaffolded through collaborative output activities to increase fluency in other language abilities, building on their excellent comprehension capacity (Homayouni, 2022; Such, 2019).

This result has explicit educational implications, suggesting that to achieve a balanced competence, opportunities for assisted oral and written practice should be given priority (Lai *et al.*, 2025; Azmy & Nanda, 2024). Research shows that using tasks in language teaching emphasizes how deliberately constructed output tasks enhance students' productive skills (Qizi, 2025; Payne, 2020). Providing answers to these problems is crucial for students to achieve competence, where their ability to speak fluently matches their understanding (Anito *et al.*, 2025; Wei & Zhao, 2024; Pham & Huyen, 2021).

4.3 Significant Relationship between Philosophy-based Language Teaching and Language Competence

Table 3 presents an analysis of the relationship between Philosophy-based language teaching and the language competence of pre-service English teachers, yielding a statistically significant positive correlation. The Pearson-r moment correlation examined the strength and direction of the relationship between pre-service English teachers' exposure to and engagement with PBLT pedagogies and their language competence. The table shows a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.527$, which is significant at the $p < .001$ level, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This means that the association is not attributable to chance, and the positive correlation confirms that higher levels of PBLT engagement are associated with higher levels of language competence among pre-service English teachers.

Table 3: Significant relationship between Philosophy-based Language Teaching and Language Competence

	Pearson's-r	df	p-value	Decision
Philosophy-based Language Teaching x Language Competence	0.527	198	< .001	Reject H_0

The moderate positive relationship between Philosophy-based Language Teaching (PBLT) and language competency indicates a significant association, suggesting that participation in PBLT significantly improves language learning outcomes. This link aligns with constructivist theories, which emphasize active knowledge construction through dynamic student participation rather than passive reception. Because PBLT emphasizes dialogic inquiry and critical thinking, students must use English for strenuous cognitive activities such as reasoning and assessing, which promotes deeper processing of language input. Such intellectual engagement gives authentic communicative opportunities that promote total language ability by integrating critical thinking and language use (Lam, 2020; Lam, 2019). Research also shows that PBLT fosters motivation and active engagement by involving students in discussions of real-life philosophical issues, thereby supporting the development of speaking and writing skills (Palmerola, 2024; Ntakarutimana & Fazilatfar, 2022). Thus, PBLT's cognitive depth and interactive character are anticipated to increase language competency by creating

meaningful, context-rich learning experiences (Al-Seghayer, 2025; Widistari & Nurhayati, 2025).

The strong positive association between Philosophy-based Language Teaching (PBLT) and language ability has crucial implications for language curriculum development and teacher education. Traditional language instruction frequently focuses on functional communication, grammar, and vocabulary while overlooking higher-order thinking skills. PBLT tackles this by incorporating philosophical inquiry and encouraging students to use language as a tool for critical thinking, identity development, and intellectual agency rather than merely a series of codes to memorize. This approach creates a stimulating and motivating educational environment in which philosophical questions and conversations foster deeper cognitive engagement, thereby improving both language proficiency and critical thinking (Puzatykh, 2022; Lam, 2022; Lam, 2019). According to Al-Seghayer (2025), incorporating PBLT into curricula promotes a change toward understanding language learning as a whole process that builds communicative competence as well as thinking and reflection skills. As a result, including PBLT principles into teacher preparation programs can help educators better prepare to facilitate meaningful, dialogic, and intellectually stimulating language education (Ntakarutimana & Fazilatfar, 2022).

Moreover, the findings also have substantial implications for second language acquisition pedagogies and language education policies. It provides support in a better understanding of language learning, one that combines cognitive, social, and emotional domains (Lam, 2022). This opens new avenues for interdisciplinary partnerships. The study also offers a rationale, based on evidence, for policymakers and curriculum developers to allocate sufficient resources, especially to develop PBLT teaching materials and training programs for both teachers and pre-service teachers (Al-Seghayer, 2025; Ginting *et al.*, 2023).

5. Recommendations

Teacher education programs as well as language teachers need to further enhance the incorporation of PBLT as a fundamental pedagogical orientation in preparing prospective English educators, embedding dialogic inquiry, reflective questioning and critical engagement into everyday teaching and learning. In order to enhance productive capabilities while preserving robust receptive ability, structured speaking opportunities (such as guided discussions, debates and reflective presentations) should be prioritized. Designs for how teachers teach and assess language use cannot simply be about getting the rules of words right, if they are to achieve depth of thinking, clarity in reasoning and meaningful communication — teachers return to a position whereby language is viewed as a means through which intellectual exploration occurs rather than as merely a neat system.

Longitudinal studies might further establish the long-term effect of PBLT on language competence, especially in terms of productive skills such as speaking and

writing. Cross-institutional comparative research as well as experimental treatment vs. control studies may provide stronger causal evidence regarding the impacts of PBLT within teacher preparation contexts. While the results of studies like these contribute a quantitative assessment to classroom research, using qualitative measures—examining classroom discourse, reflective journals or teaching demonstrations—would perhaps shed more light on how philosophical inquiry may affect communicative confidence, critical thinking and generations of professional identity among English pre-service teachers.

6. Conclusion

This study's outcomes demonstrate that philosophy-based language teaching (PBLT) is significantly and positively correlated with English pre-service teachers' language competence. PBLT ($M = 3.76$) and language competence ($M = 3.75$), rated high, which meant that respondents are intensely aware of the philosophy underlying their praxis, maintain a generally positive stance towards its use in their teaching, and engage in dialogic inquiry within practice; furthermore, it also reflects upon the solid specialization in each of the five macro-skills, particularly reading and comprehension. If we consider that speaking had the lowest mean of all macro-skills, it was still at the high range, confirming an overall balanced linguistic basis but providing room for improvement in productive skills. The modest positive correlation ($r = 0.527$, $p < .001$) indicates that greater engagement in PBLT is associated with higher language competency.

Moreover, this finding illustrates that language training, which includes philosophical investigation, critical thinking and dialogic participation, enhances cognitive depth as well as communicative ability. Consequently, PBLT can be considered as a possibility for pedagogical practices in the teacher-training context, attributing language through which future owners of English present their own ideas, reflections and meaningful discussion rather than just structural linguistic devices to be learned.

Acknowledgements

This research journey represents a transformative intellectual and personal experience made possible through the collaborative support of numerous individuals and institutions who generously contributed their expertise, time, and resources. The authors would like to extend their warmest thanks to the five institutions which allowed the conduct of the study, to the respondents, and everyone who made a significant contribution in the accomplishment of this research endeavour.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

Eric D. Palmerola is a licensed professional teacher and an English instructor at Davao de Oro State College in Compostela, Davao de Oro, Philippines. He is also a graduate student pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education with a major in English Language Teaching from the University of Southeastern Philippines in Davao City, Philippines. He has been assigned many administrative responsibilities in addition to his nearly ten years of teaching expertise. He is currently the head of the Research and Development Unit at Davao de Oro State College. He also serves as an alternate scientist member of the same institution's PHREB-accredited Research Ethics Committee.

Dr. Eden Stephanie B. Bolido is a licensed professional teacher who specializes in linguistics and language instruction. She received her Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics from the University of the Immaculate Conception in Davao City, Philippines. She currently serves as a faculty member for undergraduate and graduate programs at the University of Southeastern Philippines in Davao City, Philippines.

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