

Evaluating Instructional Effectiveness in Grade 6 English Teacher Practices and Classroom Challenges in Dupax Del Norte II

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Abstract: Developing English oral proficiency among elementary learners remains a significant educational concern, particularly in multilingual learning environments where instructional and environmental conditions influence language acquisition. This study assessed the instructional and environmental factors influencing the oral proficiency of Grade 6 pupils at Kakiduguen Elementary School, Kasibu West District. Specifically, it examined the respondents' demographic profile, determined their segmental and suprasegmental phonemic difficulties, identified the factors affecting oral proficiency acquisition, and evaluated the overall level of oral proficiency difficulties. A descriptive-survey research design was employed involving 40 Grade 6 pupils selected through total enumeration. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed and validated questionnaire and analyzed through frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation. Results revealed that most respondents were 12 years old, female, and primarily spoke Tagalog at home. The pupils demonstrated moderately serious segmental phonemic difficulties ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.73$), with vowels and consonant clusters emerging as the most challenging areas. Likewise, suprasegmental phonemic difficulties were found to be moderately serious ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.83$), with stress identified as the most problematic feature. Instructional and environmental factors affecting oral proficiency were rated very serious ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.49$), indicating that learner characteristics, classroom instruction, and learning environments influence English oral communication skills. Strengthening pronunciation instruction, increasing meaningful speaking opportunities, fostering supportive classroom environments, and promoting collaboration among teachers, parents, and school administrators are essential to improving pupils' oral proficiency and communicative competence.

Keywords: *oral proficiency, phonemic difficulties, English language learning, instructional factors, Grade 6 pupil*

INTRODUCTION

Oral proficiency is essential for global interaction in academic, professional, and social settings. Mastery of these skills facilitates fluency and practical language use, which is critical for successful communication (Dewan & Sharma, 2025). As a lingua franca, English connects diverse populations, enabling access to academic resources, career prospects, and international collaboration (Aimen & Khadim, 2024; Goodman et al., 2024). Global concerns persist regarding learners' speaking proficiency, particularly phonological competence, which impacts communicative effectiveness (Alvarez et al., 2024; Dewan & Sharma, 2025). Language acquisition theories emphasize that cognitive, sociolinguistic, and affective factors—including exposure and motivation—shape phonological development (Ramana et al., 2025). Furthermore, task-based learning and technology integration enhance speaking abilities (Dewan & Sharma, 2025; Hasan, 2025). A supportive environment with skilled teachers and authentic practice is fundamental to fostering proficiency and overcoming affective barriers (Alvarez et al., 2024; Lobanova et al., 2022). These elements underscore the need for pedagogical strategies that nurture language acquisition in a globalized world.

English language education in the Philippines holds a complex position in the educational system and the socio-economic fabric. The K-12 English curriculum emphasizes oral communication to strengthen practical language skills and improve fluency for academic and professional success. However, Filipino learners still show varying English oral proficiency, with challenges in pronunciation and phonological competence partly linked to their multilingual backgrounds and mother tongues (Alemania et al., 2022; Tungul & Lapinid, 2024). Multilingualism and mother tongue use in early education affect English pronunciation, often transferring phonological features from native languages and causing segmental and suprasegmental errors in classrooms. This underscores the need for tailored instructional strategies. Educators, schools, and families are critical to oral skill development, as they increase English exposure through scaffolded learning and communicative practice (Alemania et al., 2022; Mulaudzi et al., 2026). At Kakiduguen Elementary School, Grade 6 pupils are multilingual, with mother tongue influences shaping their English oral production. Observations show misarticulation, prosodic challenges, limited English exposure, scarce resources, large classes, and few targeted speaking opportunities, necessitating a focused investigation into local factors affecting oral communication capabilities among pupils in this school context (Mulaudzi et al., 2026; Tungul & Lapinid, 2024).

Most prior studies have individually addressed English proficiency, phonological awareness, and the instructional strategies. Few studies have simultaneously explored the instructional and environmental factors influencing oral proficiency among elementary pupils. Additionally, segmental and suprasegmental phonological difficulties among Grade 6 pupils in rural public schools in the Philippines remain under-researched. Empirical data involving pupils from Kakiduguen Elementary School or similar multilingual communities are limited. This study fills these gaps by examining the instructional and environmental determinants of oral proficiency and identifying learners' phonological challenges to inform evidence-based interventions for teachers and school administrators in the future.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the instructional and environmental factors influencing the oral proficiency of grade 6 pupils at Kakiduguen Elementary School in the Kasibu West District. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions.

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, and language spoken at home?
2. What is the level of segmental phonemic difficulties among Grade 6 pupils in terms of vowels, consonants, diphthongs, consonant clusters, and consonant digraphs?
3. What is the level of suprasegmental phonemic difficulties among Grade 6 pupils in terms of stress, pitch, juncture, and intonation?
4. What is the level of influence of instructional and environmental factors on the acquisition of oral proficiency among Grade 6 pupils?
5. What is the overall level of oral proficiency difficulties among Grade 6 pupils based on their segmental and suprasegmental phonemic difficulties?

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-survey research design to determine the instructional and environmental factors influencing the oral proficiency of Grade 6 pupils at Kakiduguen Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026. The descriptive survey design was deemed appropriate because it systematically describes existing conditions, characteristics, and relationships among variables without manipulating them. Specifically, the study examined pupils' demographic profiles, segmental and suprasegmental phonological difficulties, and other instructional and

environmental factors affecting oral proficiency. This design enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data that accurately reflected the respondents' current language-learning conditions and served as the basis for identifying appropriate instructional interventions.

Research Locale

This study was conducted at Kakiduguen Elementary School, West District, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, during the School Year 2025–2026. The school serves learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds, making it an appropriate setting for investigating oral proficiency development. Most pupils are exposed to multiple languages at home and in the community before learning English in school. This multilingual environment provides a valuable context for examining how instructional practices and environmental conditions influence learners' phonological development and oral communication skills. Furthermore, the school continuously implements programs aimed at improving literacy and English language proficiency, making it an ideal locale for this investigation.

Research Respondents

The respondents of the study consisted of the entire population of forty (40) Grade 6 pupils enrolled at Kakiduguen Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026. A total enumeration sampling technique was employed because the target population was relatively small and manageable. Including all Grade 6 pupils ensured complete representation of the population, minimized sampling bias, and increased the reliability of the findings. The respondents provided relevant information regarding their phonological difficulties, oral proficiency, and the instructional and environmental factors influencing their English language development.

Research Instrument

The study instrument was a researcher-developed structured questionnaire, designed after a review of related literature and studies on oral proficiency, phonological awareness, and language acquisition. The questionnaire had two parts. Part I gathered respondents' profile, including age, gender, and language spoken at home. Part II assessed pupils' segmental difficulties (vowels, diphthongs, consonants, and consonant clusters), suprasegmental difficulties (stress, intonation, pitch, and juncture), and instructional and environmental factors affecting oral proficiency. The questionnaire employed a structured response format to facilitate quantitative analysis. Before administration, the instrument underwent content validation by experts in English language education and educational research to ensure relevance, clarity, and appropriateness. A pilot test was conducted among Grade 3 pupils from a school with characteristics similar to the respondents to determine reliability. The questionnaire's internal consistency should be established using Cronbach's alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher, considered acceptable for educational research.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before conducting the study, the researcher secured approval from the Dean of the Graduate School and obtained written permission from the Schools Division Superintendent, Public Schools District Supervisor, and School Principal of Kakiduguen Elementary School. After approval, informed consent was obtained from the respondents and their parents or guardians. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to ensure uniformity in data collection and to clarify instructions whenever necessary. Adequate time was provided for the respondents to complete the instrument, after which all questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, organized, encoded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
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Age	11 years old	18	45.00
	12 years old	22	55.00
Gender	Male	14	35.00
	Female	26	65.00
Language Spoken at Home	Tagalog	28	70.00
	Iloko/Mangyan	12	30.00

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 40 Grade 6 pupils who participated in the study. Most of the respondents were 12 years old (55.00%), while 45.00% were 11 years old, indicating that the participants were within the expected age range for Grade 6 learners. In terms of gender, female pupils comprised 65.00% of the respondents, whereas 35.00% were male, showing that girls outnumbered boys in the study population. Regarding the language spoken at home, most pupils (70.00%) reported speaking Tagalog, while 30.00% spoke Iloko/Mangyan. This finding suggests that the respondents came from a multilingual environment where different home languages may influence their English oral language development. Overall, the demographic profile indicates that the respondents represent a typical group of Grade 6 learners in a multilingual rural setting, providing an appropriate basis for examining the instructional and environmental factors influencing their oral proficiency.

Table 2. Segmental Phonemic Difficulties among Grade 6 Pupils

Segmental Phonemic Difficulty	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Vowel	3.98	0.84	Very Serious
Consonants	2.74	0.98	Moderately Serious
Diphthongs	3.20	1.13	Moderately Serious
Consonant Clusters	4.03	0.25	Very Serious
Consonant Digraphs	1.98	0.43	Slightly Serious
Overall	2.97	0.73	Moderately Serious

Table 2 presents the segmental phonemic difficulties encountered by the Grade 6 pupils. The overall mean of 2.97 (SD = 0.73) indicates that segmental phonemic difficulties were moderately serious. Among the five dimensions, consonant clusters obtained the highest score (M = 4.03, SD = 0.25), followed by vowels (M = 3.98, SD = 0.84), both interpreted as profoundly serious, suggesting that learners experienced considerable difficulty producing complex consonant combinations and vowel sounds. In contrast, diphthongs (M = 3.20, SD = 1.13) and consonants (M = 2.74, SD = 0.98) were rated as moderately serious, while consonant digraphs (M = 1.98, SD = 0.43) were considered slightly serious. These findings imply that the pupils' oral proficiency is particularly affected by the accurate production of vowels and consonant clusters, which are essential for speech intelligibility. The results support previous studies indicating that segmental pronunciation errors can reduce oral comprehensibility and communicative effectiveness, especially among learners in multilingual settings where the first language influences English sound production (Alvarez et al., 2024; Dewan & Sharma, 2025; Ramana et al., 2025).

Table 3. Suprasegmental Phonemic Difficulties among Grade 6 Pupils

Suprasegmental Phonemic Difficulty	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Stress	3.23	0.92	Moderately Serious
Pitch	2.31	1.05	Slightly Serious
Juncture	2.39	1.18	Slightly Serious
Intonation	1.73	0.16	Not Serious
Overall	2.94	0.83	Moderately Serious

Table 3 shows the suprasegmental phonemic difficulties experienced by the respondents. The overall mean of 2.94 (SD = 0.83) indicates that these difficulties were moderately severe. Among the dimensions, stress recorded the highest meaning (M = 3.23, SD = 0.92), suggesting that pupils experienced greater difficulty in applying correct word and sentence stress. Juncture (M = 2.39, SD = 1.18) and pitch (M = 2.31, SD = 1.05) were both interpreted as slightly serious, while intonation (M = 1.73, SD = 0.16) was rated as not serious, indicating that learners encountered fewer problems in using rising and falling intonation patterns. These findings suggest that while pupils demonstrate adequate control of some suprasegmental features, difficulties in stress placement continue to affect the naturalness and clarity of their spoken English. Previous studies have emphasized that mastery of suprasegmental features, particularly stress and rhythm, contributes significantly to speech intelligibility, fluency, and effective oral communication among English learners (Abdelgadir Ballal, 2023; Dewan & Sharma, 2025).

Table 4. Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Oral Proficiency (Table 15)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Oral Proficiency	3.49	0.49	Very Serious

Table 4 shows that the instructional and environmental factors influencing the acquisition of oral proficiency obtained an overall mean of **3.49** (SD = **0.49**), interpreted as **Very Serious**. This finding indicates that learners perceive classroom instruction, learning resources, teacher support, home environment, and opportunities for English communication as significant factors that affect the development of their oral proficiency. Limited exposure to meaningful speaking activities, inadequate practice opportunities, and language anxiety may hinder learners' ability to communicate effectively in English. Previous studies have emphasized that instructional quality, learner motivation, and supportive learning environments play essential roles in improving oral communication skills and language acquisition (Alvarez et al. 2024; Hijra et al. 2024). Likewise, regular speaking practice, interactive teaching strategies, and positive teacher feedback contribute significantly to the development of learners' confidence and speaking proficiency (Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2022; Kumari & Rahman, 2024). These findings suggest that strengthening classroom instruction and creating supportive school and home environments are necessary to enhance the English oral proficiency of grade 6 pupils.

Table 5. Summary of Oral Proficiency Difficulties among Grade 6 Pupils

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Segmental Phonemic Difficulties	2.97	0.73	Moderately Serious
Suprasegmental Phonemic Difficulties	2.94	0.83	Moderately Serious
Overall Oral Proficiency Difficulties	2.96	0.78	Moderately Serious

This table indicates that pupils exhibit moderately serious difficulties at both the segmental (individual phonemes, such as consonants and vowels) and suprasegmental (prosody, stress, intonation) levels, resulting in an overall moderate level of oral proficiency challenge. Research highlights that segmental difficulties involve errors in phoneme production that affect intelligibility, while suprasegmental problems relate to stress patterns, pitch, and rhythm, which influence naturalness and comprehension in speech (Abdelgadir Ballal, 2023; Suzukida & Saito, 2022). Both types of difficulties notably contribute to learners' overall pronunciation and oral proficiency, as reflected in the scores above. Taken together, the nearly equivalent mean scores for segmental (2.97) and suprasegmental (2.94) difficulties reinforce the need to address both areas in oral language instruction for middle-grade learners to improve their communicative competence (Abdelgadir Ballal, 2023; Suzukida & Saito, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Grade 6 pupils of Kakiduguen Elementary School experience moderately serious oral proficiency difficulties, particularly in segmental and suprasegmental phonology. Among the segmental phonemic difficulties, vowels and consonant clusters were identified as the most challenging aspects of pronunciation, whereas stress emerged as the primary suprasegmental difficulty affecting oral communication. Furthermore, the factors influencing the acquisition of oral proficiency were perceived to be profoundly serious, indicating that instructional practices, learning opportunities, learner characteristics, and environmental conditions collectively influence pupils' ability to develop effective English-speaking skills. Overall, the findings suggest that improving pupils' oral proficiency requires comprehensive instructional interventions that strengthen pronunciation skills, increase meaningful speaking opportunities, and address both school- and home-related factors that influence language learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, English teachers should implement more interactive and communicative classroom activities that provide students with regular opportunities to practice pronunciation, speaking fluency, and oral communication. Special attention should be given to teaching vowel sounds, consonant clusters, and word stress through explicit phonics instruction, oral drills, role-playing, storytelling, and other learner-centered strategies to improve their pronunciation. School administrators should support English language instruction by providing adequate instructional materials, speech resources, and professional development programs that focus on teaching oral proficiency. Parents and guardians should also be encouraged to create supportive home environments by motivating their children to use English in everyday communication and participate in activities that strengthen language development. Finally, future researchers may conduct similar studies involving larger populations and different school settings or employ mixed-methods or experimental research designs to evaluate the effectiveness of specific instructional interventions aimed at improving pupils' oral proficiency and pronunciation skills.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to 40 Grade 6 pupils from Kakiduguen Elementary School, Kasibu West District, during the school year 2025–2026. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire, and the findings were based on the respondents' self-reported responses. Because the study was conducted in only one school with a relatively small number of participants, the results may not be generalizable to other schools or populations with different educational and linguistic contexts.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future researchers should conduct similar studies involving larger samples from different schools or districts to validate these findings. Mixed-methods or experimental research designs may also be employed to examine the effectiveness of specific instructional interventions in improving pupils' oral proficiency. Future studies should investigate other factors, such as learners' motivation, language anxiety, parental support, and technology-assisted language learning, that may influence the development of English oral communication skills.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate school authorities before data collection. Informed consent was secured from the parents or guardians of the participating pupils, and assent was obtained from the pupils. Participation was voluntary, and the respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research, and all information collected was used solely

for academic and research purposes in accordance with accepted ethical principles.

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AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

During the preparation of this manuscript, I used Google Gemini AI to assist in generating draft text, improving grammar, enhancing language clarity, and refining the overall presentation of the manuscript. After using this tool, I carefully reviewed, revised, and edited all content to ensure its accuracy, originality, and academic integrity. I take full responsibility for the content of this published work.

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