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RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Analysis of Core Claims, Assumptions, and Silences: A Basis for Re-designing the Enacted K-12 English Curriculum and Reconceptualizing Communicative Competence

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the core claims, assumptions, and silences of the enacted K-12 English curriculum in the Philippines, guided by three important questions: *What does the curriculum claim will happen to those using or exposed to it? What does the curriculum say about the English language and learning it? What does the curriculum say nothing about?* These questions generate an understanding of how Philippine English (PE) and communicative competence are conceptualized in the written English curriculum currently running in the country. How the enacted curriculum (dis)regards Philippine English and how it (mis)construes communicative competence are problematized in this paper that is conceptual or polemical in nature. The insights generated, in turn, serve as input for redesigning the written curriculum with PE as an inspiration and a reconceptualized communicative competence as its aspiration. This paper argues that the English curriculum and its overarching goal must be grounded not only on global but also on local sociolinguistic realities.

**Keywords:** Philippine English, K-12 English Curriculum, enacted curriculum, written curriculum, communicative competence, dispositional competence, English language teaching

The teaching and learning of English in the Philippines is a tale to tell. Several enacted English curricula have been implemented in the country since English was formally learned, taught, and used as a medium of instruction in schools. The English

curriculum implemented in the Philippines, as the decades went by, underwent a transformation from content-based, literature-based, skills-based, and competency-based to outcomes-based. It has undergone several revisions in consonance with the realization of

the following macro curricula: 1984–2002 National Elementary School Curriculum (NESC), 1991–2002 New Secondary Education Curriculum (NSEC), 2002 Revised Basic Education Curriculum (RBEC), 2012 Secondary Education Curriculum (Understanding By Design); and the 2012 K-12 Enhanced Basic Education Curriculum.

The enacted or written curriculum is sanctioned and approved by the national government for classroom instruction and “put down in writing and documented for teaching” (William and Mary School of Education, 2021, para. 2). Curriculum specialists are commissioned to draft, propose, and finalize the enacted curriculum, which is handed top-down from the national government down to school administrators, curriculum directors, and the teachers for classroom implementation. The enacted curriculum, as part of formal instruction, also has “mediating, standardizing and controlling functions” (Abdallah, n.d., para. 3). At times, the enacted curriculum is more narrowly described as a lesson plan or syllabus the teachers developed (Grathon, 2000, as cited in Alviar, 2015). These lesson plans or syllabi, however, must adhere to the minimum requirements spelled out in the state-prescribed curricula.

The enacted English curriculum implemented in the Philippines at present is the 247-page 2016 K-12 English curriculum which is based on the following philosophy, rationale, and guiding principles:

1. Language is the basis of all communication and the primary instrument of thought;
2. Language is the foundation of all human relationships;
3. All languages are interrelated and interdependent;
4. Language acquisition is an active process that begins at birth and continues throughout life;
5. Learning requires meaning;
6. Learners learn about language and how to use it effectively through their engagement with and study of texts;
7. Successful language learning involves viewing, listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities; and
8. Language learning involves recognizing, accepting, valuing, and building on students' existing language competence, including the use of non-standard forms of the language and

extending the range of language available to students (see Department of Education's K-12 Curriculum Guide English Grades 1-10, 2016).

The said curriculum is implemented from Grade 1 to Grade 10 and has three major components: language learning process, effective language use, and making meaning through language and holistic assessment. It covers the following domains: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing. The Bureau of Curriculum Development, under the wing of the Department of Education, is responsible for the development of the national curriculum standards for basic education, such as the K-12 English curriculum.

The K-12 English curriculum has been in effect for half a decade; thus, it has been a common subject and object of analysis to gather more insights that Philippine ELT may use as a basis for curriculum revision and refinement. One of the most recent and comprehensive examinations of the K-12 English curriculum is that by Barrot (2018). The said study analyzed the Philippine K to 12 English curriculum from the 21st-century learning perspective in both general and ELT-related terms and revisited its specificity and coherence. It also looked into how the K-12 English curriculum is consistent with and aligned with well-known language teaching and learning principles. On the whole, Barrot (2018) argued that “the current curriculum may need to improve its clarity, specificity, and internal coherence as well as the integration of some essential principles of 21st century learning and language teaching and learning” (p. 12). The study by Albuero et al. (2019) echoed the same findings after they examined the secondary English curriculum. In the said study, it was found that several elements in the secondary English curriculum still need clarification and specification and that need further improvement as far as the integration of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century principles of teaching and learning is concerned.

What these studies have not substantially taken into account, however, is how the World Englishes (WE henceforth) paradigm has gained inroads into the K-12 English curriculum. Plata and Quinto (2022) argued that “the description of the English curriculum of the country's most recent reform in the basic education is silent on [PE] – whether it is a target standard or if it is, in fact, considered to be part of the ‘non-standard form’ mentioned in the curriculum” (p. 308). This observation reiterates Bernardo's (2017) questions

after he had presented an initial examination of the K-12 English curriculum in relation to the pedagogical norm(s): “whose syntactic (as well as phonological, lexical, and discourse) conventions will be adhered to? whose linguistic norms or rules will be internalized? are the local norms referred to? which variety of English should be the target – is it Philippine English, American English or different varieties of English?” (p. 120).

WE as an intellectual tradition, since its inception in the 1980s (see Kachru, 1985), continues to be an interesting area for further theorizing. In the Philippines, an ESL country and a member of the Outer Circle in the Kachrurian framework, a nativized variety of English, that is, Philippine English (PE henceforth), has been born and has been used most especially for intranational communication. Studies that describe its idiosyncratic features abound (see Bautista, 2000, 2008; Borlongan, 2008, 2011) and the literature espousing that PE be celebrated as a legitimate variety continues to grow (see Bautista, 2010; Dimaculangan, 2019; Madrunio, 2010). However, how both WE and PE have served as a theoretical anchor in the written curriculum still remains to be seen.

Policarpio (2021), on the one hand, recently proposed what she called “several bases for integration of Philippine English into the English curriculum in the Philippines” (p. 1.) It appears, however, that the only bases she cited in her paper are (a) Butler’s criteria for a variety to be considered legitimate and (b) unawareness and unconsciousness of Filipinos in using the local variety. Policarpio (2021) also enumerated some generic suggestions to integrate Philippine English into the curriculum. Bernardo (2022), on the other hand, proposed an endocentric pedagogic approach for teaching English through the concentric circles of the three levels of instructional conceptualization—approach, method, and technique. In this instructional framework, Bernardo (2022) posited that the WE paradigm and Philippine English:

provide a theoretical foundation for a principled approach to language teaching. WE and PhE are both situated as an overarching platform in bringing into line ELT approach, method, and technique. Under this framework, there is a conscious effort for the language teacher to select a WE and PhE-inspired pedagogic guidepost, a well-sequenced teaching procedure

and activities constructively aligned with one another. (p. 287)

Bernardo (2017), in an earlier study, proposed a PhE-aware five-stage teaching procedure for teaching English. These stages, which include notice, compare, comment, encourage, and familiarize, are applied in a sample lesson in English grammar. One may therefore say that the number of studies about PE—both theoretical and applied—continues to grow; however, how it is openly, formally, and officially treated in the enacted curriculum still remains elusive. For this reason, it is imperative that the enacted curriculum be taken as a point of departure for further problematization of PE, particularly in the written K-12 English curriculum. This established intellectual tradition seems to be hardly used as a benchmark for examining the enacted English curriculum in the Philippines, and it is on this note that this paper commences by analyzing the core claims, assumptions, and silences of the written K-12 English curriculum against the backdrop of WE in general and PE in particular.

This paper is polemical or conceptual in nature and proceeds by examining the core claims, assumptions, and silences of the K-12 English curriculum. Furthermore, this paper also takes a closer look at the curriculum’s conception of communicative competence, the K-12 English curriculum’s overarching goal. It is necessary that communicative competence be problematized as this is what the curriculum endeavors to hone among the learners after 12 years of going through it. Beginning with a clarified end-in-mind is a promising take-off point for the K-12 English curriculum revision. Finally, this paper presents further suggestions for integrating PE into the enacted curriculum and syllabus design.

### **Core Claims, Assumptions, and Silences of the K-12 English Curriculum**

The macro-analysis of the English curricula in the Philippines was undertaken by unpacking its *core claims*, *assumptions*, and *silences* following the curriculum review framework purported by Jansen and Reddy (n.d.). Table 1 presents the Philippine ELT curricula’s core claims, assumptions, and silences. In examining its claims, the fundamental question addressed was: “What does the curriculum claim will

happen to those using or exposed to the curriculum?” In looking into its assumptions, “What does the curriculum say about the English language and the learning of it?” served as the overarching question. Finally, to reveal its silences, the key inquiry that guided the analysis was: “What does the curriculum say nothing about?”

### Core Claims

Table 1 allows one to construe that (a) the ELT curricula, as its core claims, harness the learners’ communicative competence (grammatical, discourse, strategic, sociolinguistic, intercultural, multimodal), macro-skills, and multiliteracies by engaging them with varied text types and genres—literary, academic, and professional to name a few—and with authentic and simulated communicative situations; (b) the ELT curricula assume that communicating through the English language is purposive, context-based, strategic,

and requires mastery of skills with varying levels of complexities; and (c) the ELT curricula seem to be silent about the WE paradigm and its ramifications. It is only in the college English curriculum (Purposive Communication) where global communication and how it relates to WE are tackled. However, in the said course blueprint, the role of the local variety of English (PE) in intranational communication remains unapparent.

### Silences

It may be posited that the ELT curricula hardly speak about Englishes in general and PE in particular. Despite the fact that the literature and the present-day ELT have been calling for the integration of WE in the curriculum (see Kirkpatrick, 2013) since it was first introduced by B. Kachru in 1985 and for the formal teaching of PE since it was empirically described as “standard” in the groundbreaking study conducted

**Table 1**

*English Curricula in the Philippines: Assumptions, Claims, and Silences*

Curricula	Claims	Assumptions	Silences
K-10 English Curricula	After completing the English curricula, learners are expected to develop and demonstrate communicative competence and multiliteracy skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective language use is demonstrated through the language macro-skills (K to 12 Curriculum for English, p. 9). Language is the major instrument in communication (oral and written), and the heart of which is the exchange of meaning.</li> <li>Language learning should focus on guiding students to make meaning through language for different purposes on a range of topics and with a variety of audiences (K to 12 Curriculum for English, p.10)</li> <li>The use of text types and literary appreciation are instrumental in learning a language and introduces them to their own culture as well as the culture of others.</li> <li>Language variation is expressed in different ways.</li> <li>Language learning as a process requires the selection and use of strategies guided by their understanding of how language works.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective language use is demonstrated through the language macro-skills (K to 12 Curriculum for English,</li> <li>The K-10 curricula are silent about the World Englishes paradigm and about the norm(s) to adhere to in learning the English language.</li> <li>The K-12 curricula hardly explicitly or implicitly mention anything about Philippine English.</li> <li>The K-12 curricula scarcely consider that communicative competence varies across contexts.</li> </ul>

Curricula	Claims	Assumptions	Silences
Senior High School Curricula: Oral Communication	After completing the English curricula, learners are expected to develop listening and speaking skills and strategies for effective communication in various situations.	Communication is context-based.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The curriculum is silent about the World Englishes paradigm and about norms to adhere to in communicating orally.</li> <li>The K-12 curricula hardly explicitly or implicitly mention anything about Philippine English.</li> </ul>
Reading and Writing Skills	After completing the English curricula, learners are expected to develop reading and writing skills as applied to a wide range of materials other than poetry, fiction, and drama.	Writing is purposeful, context-dependent, have requisites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The curriculum is silent about the World Englishes paradigm and about norms to adhere to in formal, academic, and professional writing.</li> <li>The K-12 curricula hardly explicitly or implicitly mention anything about Philippine English.</li> </ul>
English for Academic and Professional Purposes	After completing the English curricula, learners are expected to develop communication skills in English for academic and professional purposes.	The acquisition of appropriate reading strategies results in a better understanding and production of various genres of academic texts.	<p>The curriculum is silent about the World Englishes paradigm and about norms to adhere to in producing various text types and academic texts.</p> <p>The K-12 curricula hardly explicitly or implicitly mention anything about Philippine English.</p>

by Llamzon in 1969, the ELT curricula appears to be mum about Englishes and PE. The WE paradigm, which recognizes, appreciates, and celebrates the different varieties of English, has been very vocal in its advocacy that it grounds ELT pedagogies. Nero (2006, as cited in Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019), for example, suggested that ELT practices, aims, and approaches be reconceptualized to be attuned to the position of English in today's world and to better arm the language learners with skills and competencies they need to participate in international and intercultural

communication. There have been several recent attempts as well to promote not only appreciation and respect of but also the formal teaching of Englishes in different parts of the globe (see Song & Drummond, 2009; Mack, 2010; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2010; Lee, 2012; Galloway, 2013; Bhowmick, 2015; Kato, 2016; Vettorel, 2015; Bernardo & Madrunio, 2015, but, unfortunately, PE, the most extensively studied local variety of English in Southeast Asia (Tay, 1991), remains rather unseen and unheard in the ELT curricula implemented in the Philippines. WE and PE are hardly

“readily specified as a teaching and learning construct” (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017, as cited in Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019, p. 254) in the written or enacted curricula, which makes it rather tightlipped about the sociolinguistic realities surrounding ELT and the use of English in the Philippines. How this national policy document conveys the message that PE should be taught, or at least spoken about in the classroom, remains unobserved. As a written curriculum, it standardizes what is taught in schools, and if it does not say that PE must be taught or at least formally recognized, then it is likely that they will not be sanctioned and approved.

### *Assumptions*

The unpacking of the English curricula likewise points to the conjectures that: (a) the language learners are expected to possess the same level and all the composite elements of communicative competence and multiliteracies; (b) the learning process presumably takes into account the individual capacities of the language learners in acquiring communicative competence and multiliteracies; (c) the language teachers all come from the same or uniform perspective as far as the notion of communicative competence and multiliteracies is concerned; and (d) the teaching and learning process considers that teachers are able to employ pedagogies that are grounded on appropriate communicative competence and multiliteracy frameworks. In reality, however, it is (a) rather unrealistic to assume that all language learners will achieve exactly the same degree and all the composite aspects of communicative competence and multiliteracies after completing the curricula, (b) that the teaching and learning process—which is affected by a score of contextual factors—is able to account for language learners’ individual differences that impact their acquisition of communicative competence and multiliteracy skills, (c) all English teachers have shared understanding, definition, and conceptualization of the nature of communicative competence and multiliteracy, and that (d) classroom practices draw inspiration from the same theoretical anchor, methodological principles, and pedagogical moorings that ground communicative competence and multiliteracy. In short, the curricula make these assumptions about the learners and the teaching and learning process “without any validation of these assumptions” (Spack, 2004, as cited in Mina & Cimasko, 2020, p. 65).

### **K-12 English Curriculum and Its Conception of Communicative Competence**

The analysis of the core claims, assumptions, and silences of the ELT curricula also raises the following interrelated issues or questions: (a) Will completing the program of study guarantee the development of the learners’ communicative competence, and if so, against what benchmark will they be evaluated?; (b) How have the said curricula addressed the need for a changed perspective as far as the plural nature of communicative competence is concerned?; and (c) Have the ELT curricula been vocal about the norms or standards against which the learners’ communicative competence will be judged?

It may be tenable to say that the English curricula hardly take into account the plural nature of communicative competence (Berns, 1990). Decades back, Berns (1990) posited that communicative competence varies across contexts. In other words, communicative competence is *multicentric*. This suggests that communicative competence should not be defined singularly and should also be characterized based on the local sociolinguistic milieu and by using the local standards as a benchmark. If communicative competence is variable, that is, there is no single model for communicative competence, and context-dependent, then it may be right to argue that it be described, assessed, and measured based on an appropriate model that is representative of the language learners’ context of the situation, that is, a model that suits the local linguistic ecology, a model that fits a setting largely populated by non-native speakers of English, and a model “reflective of how language is used today” (Galloway & Numajiri, 2019 p. 121).

A model, as Berns (1990) intimated, “...implies linguistic ideal which the learner and the teacher keep in mind in the course of language instruction. The model represents a norm or standard for language use at all levels, from the phonological to the discoursesal” (p. 215). Because the English curricula analyzed in this paper are, generally, meant for non-native speaker-learners, it goes without saying that their communicative competence is to be measured against a “homegrown” model because the communicative competence they are expected to demonstrate is that which is not of a native speaker of English but that of an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) speaker of English. Berns (1990) underscored the same point

when he said: “The variety used by a speaker (or writer) represents a distinct communicative competence with its own set of sociolinguistic rules that determine what, how and to whom something is said” (p. 212). Having mentioned this, the Filipino ESL learners’ communicative competence to be honed through the national English curricula should consider their ability to communicate that, which they intend to communicate in the variety, that is, PE or in the varieties of English they have acquired and know best. Put in another way, they should be able to communicate not only a language but languages (Galloway & Numajiri, 2019, not only a variety of English but varieties of it.

However, the analysis would show that whether communicative competence should be defined vis-à-vis the features of everyday language (i.e., PE) is neither explicit nor implicit in the state-drafted and state-promulgated curricula. Berns (1990, p. 215) argued that the “[s]election of a model is a key decision in language teaching because the model determines the communicative competence learners are to develop and the speech community to whom they will be intelligible.” It appears that in the English curricula examined here, there is nothing seen and heard about the model against, which the learners’ communicative competence will be described, assessed, and measured. That makes both the benchmark and the desired outcome nebulous, if not undefined.

### ***Reconceptualizing Communicative Competence in the K-12 English Curriculum***

Communicative competence, coined by Hymes (1967), has been the central objective of English language teaching since it gained prominence and importance several decades ago. Because it may be deemed as a “work in progress,” the notion of communicative competence (see Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Bachman, 1990; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995; Hymes, 1972; Littlewood, 2011) continues to evolve across spans and different intellectual traditions look at it as a concept to be (re)interpreted, (re)fashioned, and “...adapted to the context of its use”(Bagaric & Djigunovic, 2007, p. 100). An examination of these representations or models of communicative competence suggests that “...despite some slight terminological differences, they share the same general concepts, and with the passage of time, researchers have tried to enhance and develop the models proposed by previous scholars” (Eghtesadi,

2017, p. 35). In fact, communicative competence, needless to say, is now known by other names: “language proficiency, communicative proficiency, communicative language ability, communicative language competence” (Bagaric & Djigunovic, 2007, p. 100), communicative capability (Widdowson, 2003) and, more recently, intercultural communicative competence (Wiseman, 2002; Byram, 2012, as cited in Sitthitikul & Prapinwong, 2020). Regardless of the other labels communicative competence has, Bagaric and Djigunovic (2007) argued that there is a concurrence among theoreticians that “a competent language user should possess not only knowledge about language but also the ability and skill to activate that knowledge in a communicative event” (p. 100).

The more recent models of communicative competence, borrowing the words of Elder et al. (2017), explicate “the multiple components of language ability in detail and have served as a framework of reference...” (p. 15). However, because it is rather challenging to provide a universally acceptable singular definition of communicative competence, these models, even if they “consist of detailed specification of language-related components” (Elder et al., 2017, p. 15), have been continuously (re)defined and (re)conceptualized by breaking this huge construct down into composite competencies such as shown in Table 2.

Ho (2020) more recently put together the different components of communicative competence as follows: linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, strategic competence, interactional competence (e.g., conversational skills), and formulaic competence, that is, fixed, methodic, foreseeable patterns in dialogues or systematic pair-up with phrases, sentences, and vocabulary (Celce-Murcia, 2007, as cited in Ho, 2020). Coccetta (2018) added multimodality as another component of communicative competence. However, in the English curricula analyzed in this paper, there is nothing explicit about which model of communicative competence both teachers and learners are expected to operate. This silence makes the goal of the English curricula indiscernible, and thus the teachers and the learners aim to achieve an unclearly defined goal—communicative competence without a face and without a name. Although it is implied in the curricula that learners are expected to demonstrate grammatical, discourse, strategic, sociolinguistic, intercultural, and



**Table 2***Communicative Competence Models and Their Composite Competencies*

<b>Canale and Swain (1980)</b>	<b>Canale (1983)</b>	<b>Bachman and Palmer (1996)</b>	<b>Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1995)</b>	<b>Littlewood (2011)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammatical Competence</li> <li>• Sociolinguistic Competence</li> <li>• Strategic Competence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammatical Competence</li> <li>• Discourse Competence</li> <li>• Sociolinguistic Competence</li> <li>• Strategic Competence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textual Knowledge</li> <li>• Grammatical Knowledge</li> <li>• Functional Knowledge</li> <li>• Sociolinguistic Knowledge</li> <li>• Strategic Competence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discourse Competence</li> <li>• Grammatical Competence</li> <li>• Actional Competence</li> <li>• Sociolinguistic Competence</li> <li>• Strategic Competence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linguistic Competence</li> <li>• Discourse Competence</li> <li>• Pragmatic Competence</li> <li>• Sociolinguistic Competence</li> <li>• Sociocultural competence</li> </ul>

multimodal competence, there are several questions that surface: To who are the learners communicative competent? Are the learners supposed to demonstrate the communicative competence of a student or a would-be professional, that is, in an academic or occupational setting? What level of communicative competence is acceptable? Should the learners exhibit general or specific communicative competence? More importantly, within which English variety are the learners expected to demonstrate grammatical, discourse, strategic, sociolinguistic, intercultural, and multimodal competence?

In a very narrow sense and in the context of English language teaching and learning, to possess communicative competence means to be able to communicate competently in English. But because English is a plural language (i.e., Englishes), the model of communicative competence to be used as a reference will have to take into account its multifarious identity and the “multivoiced and plural nature of English itself” (Renandya & Tupas, 2020, p. 47). Only after infusing “multilingual English” (Renandya & Tupas, 2020, p. 51) into the nature of communicative competence, the ultimate goal of English language teaching and learning in the Philippines, can it achieve or occupy a definite shape or form, and only then can it be clearly defined. If the targeted communicative competence is hardly articulated in the English curricula, the teachers and the learners will strive to achieve something undefined, pedagogically irrelevant, and culturally inappropriate. They will aim to develop communicative competence that is unachievable, unrelatable, and inapplicable.

This paper takes the position that there are as many models of communicative competence as there are wide varieties of English that exist and evolve. Communicative competence should be construed as (a) multidialectal, that is, learners can use more than one dialect or a variety of the same language and the “capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication” (Canagarajah, 2006a, p. 233), (b) multi-voiced, and (c) local norm-based. It should take into account the learner’s right to use and communicate (in) their own variety, hence communicative competence (e.g., in Singapore English, Malaysian English, Hong Kong English, Philippine English(es)). This fundamental shift in the conceptualization of communicative competence further resonates with the following: first, a “new orientation to judging communicative competence” (Elder et al., 2017, p.19); second, the call to define competency or proficiency as “the ability to engage in meaningful social and institutional functions in multilingual communities according to local conventions” (Canagarajah, 2006a, p. 230), and, third, the clamor for “reconceptualizing the ‘E’ in ELT” (Renandya & Tupas, 2020, p. 47). To further articulate Renandya and Tupas’s (2020) argument, “E” in the present-day ELT should no longer stand for *English* but for *Englishes*. The E in ELT may refer to English as a monolithic entity, yet it should refer to Englishes (i.e., English as a pluricentric language). Although English grammar may prohibit Englishes functioning as an adjective in “English Language Teaching”—so one cannot say Englishes Language Teaching—one must always be aware that E ought to be Englishes.

As stated above, communicative competence is not only competence in English but in Englishes. This, as Canagarajah (2006a) articulated, hardly suggests that “one needs production skills in all the varieties of English” (p. 233) as it may be impossible to master all varieties of English that exist; instead, “[o]ne needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication” (p. 233). To do this, this paper takes the position of Canagarajah (2006a) that one has to be *multidialectal*: not only does he or she adhere to endogenous and exogenous norms but is also prepared to communicate with speakers of other Englishes, negotiate differences, exhibit speech accommodation, employ creative rhetorical acts, and “shuttle” between different varieties. It is necessary to emphasize that shuttling from one variety to another does not equate to shifting from one variety to another, back and forth (see Canagarajah, 2006a; 2006b; 2009). Canagarajah (2013, pp. 7–8) eloquently operationalized shuttling by arguing that a person can shuttle between varieties when:

He or she is able to shuttle between different norms, recognizing the systematic and legitimate status of different varieties of English in this diverse “family of languages....All this leads to the view of English as a heterogeneous language with multiple norms, each coming into play at different levels of social interaction. Proficiency in the world of postmodern globalization requires the ability to negotiate this variability....Multilinguals have the capacity to decode the changing norms in different contexts, shape their language to accommodate the norms of their interlocutors, and achieve intelligibility.

The above perspective indeed changes the way one looks at proficiency. The same perspective, however, may be applied in further re-conceptualizing communicative competence. What the conversation on communicative competence has failed to account for is the fact that it is not complete yet and is still inchoate. Relevant to this observation is the fact that employing strategies of negotiation, demonstrating language awareness, and manifesting sociolinguistic sensitivity are “dispositions”; thus, communicative competence should be interpreted as constitutive of the ability to communicate with “dispositional competence.” Dispositions may be defined as “enduring habits of mind and action...the tendency to respond to

situations in characteristic ways” (Aistear, 2009, p. 1). Dispositional competence, therefore, borrowing the words of Cupach and Spitzberg (1983, p. 366), is “a person’s proclivity to behave in a certain way.” In the context of communicative competence, the dispositions to *adapt*, *accommodate*, and *appreciate* are indeed fundamental, as will be explained in the succeeding section.

### ***Dispositional Competence as Goal of the K-12 English Curriculum***

What the model of communicative competence ESL learners may strive to achieve is which one represents their identity as non-native users and speakers of English. Although it is uncontested that identity is fluid, the variety of English one speaks is a potent key to understanding the “linguistic self” of, for instance, Filipino learners. Their accent and pronunciation, lexical and grammatical choices, and linguistic repertoire make them part of a speech community that speaks the local variety of English (i.e., PE or, in a more realistic sense, a speech community that uses a hybrid of nativized and native varieties). In terms of syntactic choices, for example, Bernardo (2017) found that English language learners and teachers in the Philippines use and propagate both American and Philippine Englishes in the classroom. This (socio) linguistic phenomenon turns the majority of the language learners into speakers of two Englishes—one parent variety, American English, and one nativized variety, Philippine English. In ESL countries or outer-circle members such as the Philippines, this observation holds true: “exonormative standards have been replaced by their own endonormative standards...widely used within the country, for official or semi-official use for a variety of functions and domains” (D’Angelo, 2012, p. 294). It is, therefore, not presumptuous to say that the English language classrooms are now both endocentric and exocentric in orientation. The input model the learners acquire and approximate is a colonial English and an English that has been appropriated, indigenized, and localized.

An endonormative communicative competence model, therefore, draws theoretical and conceptual moorings from local sociolinguistic realities—that Filipino learners speak and write in a variety of English that is neither purely American nor purely British but a one that is normed or established or judged in reference to how English is appropriated in their local

contexts. By basing communicative competence on an endonormative communicative competence model, one looks within, one looks inward, and one relies on local forms or norms in describing proficiency and ability to communicate. Reference to a local model interrogates the understanding that there is only one communicative competence that applies to all, which may not “serve people well in the complex acts of communication they engage in” (Elder et al., 2017, p. 20). There is a need, therefore, for a communicative competence model that is indigenous to the communicative context.

In terms of grammatical and articulatory competence, the learners are expected to demonstrate their knowledge of accent and pronunciation, grammar, lexis, morphology, syntax, and semantics of not only American English variety but also that of PE variety, which they use in wide-ranging communicative situations. Central and typical phonological, lexical, morphosyntactic, and syntactic features of the local variety are employed without censorship and fear and with much confidence in communicative situations, which allow the creative and unrestricted use of these idiosyncratic features of PE.

In terms of discourse competence, the learners should be able to demonstrate knowledge of how to produce and comprehend oral or written texts (textual competence, for example, fiction and non-fiction, narratives, instructional materials, other forms of written communications written in Englishes) to create longer and more interchanges when necessary, adhere to local rules on how to make sense out of what others aim to convey or write to them, how to take turns in a conversation between Filipinos and speakers from other cultures, how to be polite, how to keep a conversation going, and how to tell when things that sound like questions are not really questions in the local variety (Thompson, 2003) and the ability to demonstrate a full range of both communicative and rhetorical styles, shifting lects depending on their co-interlocutors, role relationships, and topics (Elumba-Sanchez, 1993). To be discourse competent, the learners should be able to understand what is said by a range of speakers, be able to express their thoughts to an audience in a very logical manner, and be able to process a wide range of idiomatic or slang phrases in different varieties of English with ease (Leverkuhn, 2020).

Sociolinguistic competence is achieved when learners are able to “adjust their speech to fit the

situation in which it is said” (Mizne, 1997, p. 3); when they are fully aware of cultural differences and uses the rules of speaking in different varieties when communicating in English; when they are cognizant of the communicative functions of the local variety of English and use it “to move from one speech to another level through the opening up of communication channels across the sociolects” (Muniandy et al., 2010, p. 147); and when they are aware of formal and informal language use and when to use the appropriate variety of English depending on the context, that is, “shuttle between the different varieties of English and different speech communities” (Canagarajah, 2006b p. 233) through dialect differentiation, code-switching, style-shifting, interpersonal communication, conversation management, among others (McKay, 2005, as cited in Canagarajah, 2006a). Sociolinguistic competence, finally, covers sensitivity to the use of Englishes, such as the local varieties.

Strategic competence refers to the deployment of compensatory strategies in case of grammatical, sociolinguistic, or discourse limitations. Some strategies that help repair communication breakdown include but are not limited to the use of reference sources, grammatical and lexical paraphrasing, requests for repetition, clarification, use of gap fillers, slower speech, or problems in addressing strangers when unsure of their social status or in finding the right cohesion devices. It is important to note that strategic competence should likewise cover code-switching, code-mixing, and variety-switching if and when necessary.

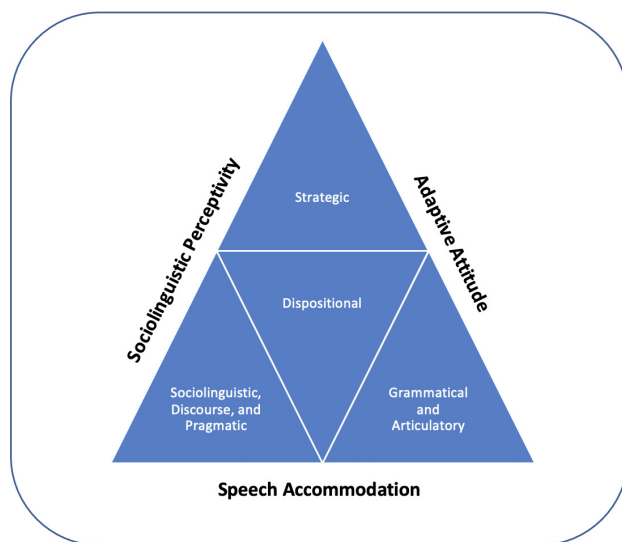
An endonormative communicative competence model, however, addresses both the cognitive (e.g., grammatical and discourse) and non-cognitive competencies. One criticism that may be waged against the current communicative competence framework ELT adheres to is that it relegates to the background or reduces the importance of the “non-linguistic, cognitive, affective and volitional factors” (Elder et al., 2017, p. 15), which fall under dispositional competence. Dispositional competence refers to dispositional outcomes (Kosbab, 2003) such as attitudes, values, beliefs, preferences, interests, appreciation, and habitual inclination. In relation to one’s disposition towards variety use, the learners should be able to demonstrate a positive attitude towards the use of the local variety of English and a welcoming disposition towards dialectal variation,

demonstrate a willingness to communicate roles and identities (e.g., regional identities), and exhibit adaptive aptitude and mindset as far as the use of Englishes is concerned. This competence also calls for not only awareness of but also respect for different varieties of English and confidence in communicating in the local variety.

Figure 1 presents this model of communicative competence where dispositional competence plays an important role. This representation imparts that for language learners to be communicatively competent in Englishes (or languages for that matter), they should be able to develop and demonstrate not only grammatical and articulatory, strategic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and pragmatic competence but also dispositional competence. Dispositional competence requires one to possess an adaptive attitude or communicative adaptability, that is, “the ability to perceive socio-interpersonal relationships and adapt one’s behavior accordingly” (Duran et al., 1981, p. 1), to exhibit a positive mindset toward speech accommodation and to demonstrate sociolinguistic perceptivity. Demonstrating adaptive attitude means that language learners are able to negotiate meaning and able to adapt to the situation through varied ways (e.g., code-switching, strategizing, and use of other attitudinal resources). Manifestations of speech accommodation include: adjusting speech styles, showing a stronger preference for the appropriate variety that fits the context, identifying with groups that speak the local variety, demonstrating a positive attitude towards

variation, exuding a positive attitude towards Englishes, taking pride of one’s local variety, and asserting and maintaining distinct linguistic identity. To show cultural appreciation, language learners should be able to demonstrate increased awareness of Englishes, show respect for cultural differences, sound less native and more non-native, demonstrate a willingness to learn about another variety to connect with others cross-culturally, and recognize different pragmatic norms for different contexts of communication (Mckay, 2005).

The model suggests that grammatical and articulatory competence are tied with dispositional competence needed for speech accommodation. Sociolinguistic, discourse, and pragmatic competence require dispositional competence for learners to be sociolinguistically perceptive. Dispositional competence is needed for learners to be strategic and in developing an adaptive attitude. Looking at communicative competence in this manner allows ELT to capitalize on the students’ translingual disposition, which “recognizes that language use is fluid; for instance, speakers and writers often move between languages, modes, and other affordances as they see fit for their own communicative and rhetorical success in a given context” (Mina & Cimasko, 2020, p. 63). It is, therefore, tenable to say that dispositions are a language learners’ key to effectively shuttle not “to and from” and “either this or that” but “between and within” and “both and more” varieties.



**Figure 1.** Endonormative Communicative Competence Model

## Integrating Philippine English in the K-12 English Curriculum

There is much to be done to see the impact of a newer understanding of “E”LT in the level of teaching methods and strategies, and in the level of syllabus development and lesson planning. In a comprehensive Philippine university, it is important to note that WE and PE have started to gain inroads into its language curriculum. In one of the courses offered in that 410-year old academic institution, Purposive Communication, global communication, and how it relates to global Englishes is tackled, and the notion of communicative competence is re-examined. It is also interesting to know that PE is taught as a separate course in its BA in English Language Studies program.

In a learning task assigned to freshman Journalism majors, they were asked to watch the video “Philippine English in OED” and to answer this question in dyads: *What is your take on the use of Philippine English in communication, e.g. context of journalistic writing? Highlight your major argument and provide supporting arguments.* Dispositions apparent in the following extracts taken from the students’ responses are worthy of attention:

*Student A:* “One of the points that is thoroughly implied is that Philippine English is a legitimate variety of English; it is not slang nor is it wrong English. This really made me re-think what I wrote in my answer on the previous activity’s question about communicative competence. In that activity, I explained how I still have a long way to go in the aspect of communications because of my limited intellectual capacity in vocabulary and grammar. This Webinar made me realize how terrified I am of making mistakes or not fitting the British English standard. That, in a way, I have been invalidating Philippine English. The Webinar made me realize that individuals of different origins adapted English to become their own English and to suit the way that people need to communicate in their own country. Things that we do like code switching, are normal. We should not fear because it is not threatening our language, but rather we simply do these things because us Filipinos are multilingual individuals.”

*Student B:* “The more that the Philippine English language is being used in communication and Journalistic writing context in the Philippines, the more that we educate ourselves. It is better to use the Philippine English in journalistic writing for the reason that daily news will be comprehensible and will leave an impact on readers. In this case daily news and issues in the Philippines will be retentive to the minds of the viewers. Encountering Philippine terms and words prove that our country has a rich culture. If we maximize using our own words and terms, we are able to introduce our country’s development to the current generation and future generations.”

*Student C:* “When a journalist delivers news, it is still a way of communicating with his/her readers. Therefore, mutual understanding is important. The Philippine news concerns the Filipino people, therefore, rules and terms of the English language that most Filipinos are familiar with should be used. Also, a news article should be concise, specific and be understandable by the citizens who are concerned with it. We have been exposed to the Philippine English language ever since we were young. This is the English variety that we grew up with. Therefore, we believe that this is also the English variety which everyone would easily understand.... Given these, Philippine English should then be used in journalism when the audience, or at least majority of them are Filipino, for there are certain terminologies that are exclusive only to Filipinos -- words that somehow lose the depth of their meaning when translated, such as *mabuhay*, *gigil*, *torpe*, and so much more. Although these may be explained using the English language, not enough words or adjectives can quite fathom what they mean the way Filipinos understand them, making the writing’s impact much sincere and genuine.”

The above extracts reflect the college students’ positive attitude towards the local variety of English in the Philippines. One considers multilingualism as the ability to communicate (in) different varieties, one believes that PE is relatable and comprehensible and that the use of PE lexical items is a proof of the richness of the Filipino culture, and one intimates that PE

should be used in domains such as journalistic writing. These dispositions would not have been harnessed and considered as an intended learning outcome to be demonstrated by the learners had there been no tasks or engagements in class stipulated in the written curriculum or course syllabus.

Furthermore, it is not enough that language lessons increase the learners' awareness of Englishes; it is also important that these lessons help the learners translate their awareness into dispositions. Daily classroom pedagogies should be able to prompt the learners to interrogate the monolithic view of English and the monolithic view of competence in this language, a disposition that is much needed these days considering the plurilithic nature of English and competence. Bernardo (2022) argued that it is only when the

teaching of WE is made as a curricular content that can it be taught, and only then can the local variety of English become the "taught variety" (Kirkpatrick, 2002, p. 222). We is unsilenced in ELT if it is an integral component, more so, an overarching framework, in the written (or even in the hidden) curricula. PE cannot be silenced if, in the language classrooms, the learners talk about it, and when they engage in different communication situations, they are armed with dispositional competence, which they can use as a resource in negotiating the meaning and effecting shared understanding.

Dedicating a course that tackles the local variety of English in the tertiary curricula is also a potential option. Such a course may be described this way:

### Course Description

*Rationale:* This course aims to (re)introduce to the learners the concepts, constructs, and theories underpinning the birth, development, and features of Philippine English and the contentious issues surrounding its use in different domains.

*Focus:* This course focuses on (1) the social, linguistic, and political forces "...that have escorted English through its life cycle in the Philippines..." (Thompson, 2003); (2) the seminal and recent studies that have looked into the features of Philippine English, and (3) a number of sociolinguistic issues surrounding the use of Philippine English in various forms of discourse, in media, and in English language teaching and learning.

*Outcome:* The students should be able to produce a Philippine English-centered academic paper which may be used as a take-off point for thesis proposal writing.

The intended learning outcomes and assessment tasks may be framed in this manner:

Program Intended Learning Outcomes	Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Possible Assessment Tasks
Demonstrate the ability to lead and work independently and collaboratively with others in exercising ethical actions in resolving issues in their discipline and in extending relevant and effective community extension services	Conduct an exploratory study - either individually or collaboratively – exploring issues surrounding Philippine English(es) with the hope of raising other people's awareness not only of its features but also its value as a legitimate variety of English and intent of promoting inclusivity and respect for varieties of English;	Creating a digital story about the arrival and stay of English in the Philippines
Demonstrate a higher-order level of skills in analyzing, assessing, and communicating information relevant to their area of specialization	Distinguish the phonological, lexical, grammatical, and discourse features of Philippine English(es) from other Englishes across the globe, both in oral and written discourses;	Drawing a schematic diagram/non-schematic representation depicting the features of Philippine English
Demonstrate global awareness and understanding of diversities in responding to the needs of the profession and the industry; Demonstrate skills of critical inquiry and creative approaches in the conduct of research	Argue for or against the use, acceptability, and legitimacy of Philippine English(es), citing adequate research-informed arguments and scientific facts;	Writing a position essay about the intelligibility, acceptability, and legitimacy of Philippine English
Demonstrate updated and in-depth professional and functioning knowledge of their discipline and apply them to national and global situations; Demonstrate initiatives and self-direction to advance one's knowledge and skills in the practice of their target profession	Demonstrate understanding of the importance of participating in ongoing conversations about Philippine English(es) by engaging in various academic and scholarly forums, meetings, and discussions.	Organizing online forums which discuss prospects in Philippine English

Developing lesson exemplars and course syllabi that are WE-inspired and local-norm-based remain to be a fertile area of exploration, particularly in ESL contexts. The written curriculum's rationale, general goals, specific objectives, sequence of objectives, and kinds of learning activities are all supposed to consider that WE necessitates "a different way of looking at the language, which is more inclusive, pluralistic, and accepting, than the traditional, monolithic view of English in which there is one correct, standard way of using English [and describing competence in it] that all speakers must strive for" (Matsuda, 2003, as cited in Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019, p. 245).

## Conclusion

What now? This paper simply unpacks an ELT curriculum by looking into its core claims, assumptions, and silences with the hope of finding out whether the World Englishes paradigm has gained inroads into it. It was found that, in the case of Philippine ELT, WE is not yet treated as a serious pedagogical agenda across the curricula. Although it is interesting to note that WE grounds the course Purposive Communication and is tackled in the tertiary level, the discussion, as gleaned from the analysis, merely serves as an introductory lesson and thus classroom instruction hardly reaches the level of developing learners' dispositions toward varieties of English. It was also found that the overall intended learning outcome of the ELT curricula—proficiency in English—hardly takes into account the plural nature of communicative competence. This paper likewise looks into a curriculum's conceptualization of communicative competence to arrive at another understanding of it. It proposes another composite element of communicative competence (i.e., dispositional competence, a non-cognitive dimension), which allows the language learners to be adaptive, accommodating, and appreciative of the multivoiced and multilingual nature of English. This paper also argues that it is high time that language teachers and curriculum developers evolve with an indigenous way of interpreting and imagining E in ELT and an indigenous way of conceiving communicative competence, which language learners should be able to demonstrate after completing a national and state-prescribed curriculum. In drafting an ELT blueprint, the key players are encouraged to be considerate of

the language learners' sociolinguistic identity and of the pedagogical approaches that fit the sociolinguistic context where they can communicate competently and be communicatively competent.

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## Declaration of Possible Conflict of Interest

None.

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