

Perceived Oral Communication Skills and Classroom Participation of Introverted Senior High School Students in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Activities: Basis for a Quiet-Learner CLT Program

Emira S. Oku

Master of Arts in Education, Major in English, University of Perpetual Help System DALTA, Manila, Philippines

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Email of Corresponding Author: emiraoku08@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined the perceived oral communication skills and classroom participation of introverted senior high school students in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities as basis for developing a Quiet-Learner CLT Program. Anchored on the Communicative Competence framework and the Willingness to Communicate model, the study focused on grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence, as well as students' participation in role-playing, debates, group activities, pair work, and oral presentations. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was used. The respondents were 126 self-identified introverted senior high school students from a private university in Valenzuela City, Philippines. Data were gathered through a researcher-developed survey questionnaire that measured demographic profile, perceived oral communication skills, and perceived classroom participation in CLT activities. The instrument underwent expert validation and reliability testing. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance, Tukey post hoc test, and Pearson product-moment correlation. Findings showed that the respondents generally perceived themselves as good in grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence, but only fair in discourse competence and strategic competence. In terms of CLT participation, students showed stronger engagement in pair work and group activities, while participation in role-playing and debates was relatively limited. Significant differences in oral communication skills were found when respondents were grouped according to selected demographic variables, particularly age, gender, academic strand, and socio-economic background. Participation in CLT activities also differed according to age, gender, and socio-economic background, while academic strand did not consistently influence participation patterns. Correlation results revealed that sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence had significant positive relationships with participation in CLT activities, whereas grammatical competence showed weak and non-significant relationships with participation variables. These findings indicate that communicative, interactional, and strategy-based dimensions of language competence are more closely related to classroom participation than grammar alone. The study concluded that introverted learners need structured, supportive, and progressively scaffolded communicative activities that strengthen discourse and strategic competence while encouraging participation in low-pressure classroom settings. It recommended the implementation and further evaluation of the proposed Quiet-Learner CLT Program to support inclusive English language instruction. The study aligns most directly with SDG 4 – Quality Education and SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities by promoting inclusive communicative learning opportunities for quiet and introverted learners. Its sustainability impact lies in strengthening educational and institutional practices that support learner diversity, equitable classroom participation, and evidence-based language teaching.

Keywords: Classroom Participation, Communicative Competence, Communicative Language Teaching, Discourse Competence, Introverted Learners, Oral Communication Skills, Quiet-Learner CLT Program, Senior High School Students, Strategic Competence, Willingness to Communicate

1. Introduction

English continues to function as an important language in education, business, technology, health, and other professional fields, making oral communicative competence essential for academic and career success. In CLT-based instruction, competence is not limited to grammar; it also involves appropriateness, coherence, and strategic resourcefulness in communication (Gao et al., 2024). Recent research shows that students' willingness to communicate is shaped by affective, social, and demographic factors (Yang et al., 2024). Classroom activities such as debates and pair work may increase willingness to communicate and speaking confidence, while actual oral task performance is influenced by WTC, self-confidence, and perceived communicative competence (Gao et al., 2024; Leeming et al., 2024). Despite these benefits, participation in CLT activities remains uneven. Learners may avoid speaking opportunities because of anxiety, low perceived competence, lack of confidence, teacher behavior, task design, personality differences, and socio-economic background (Gao et al., 2024; Hu & Wang, 2023; Leeming et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024). Introverted learners are

especially relevant because they may participate less in highly interactive tasks despite having sufficient language competence (Peng, 2025; Zhang & Aubrey, 2024). Their preference for inward processing, reflective response, and low-stimulus environments may make spontaneous, assertive classroom communication difficult. Thus, CLT activities must be designed to support both outgoing and quiet learners rather than rewarding only assertive participation.

The related literature identifies four major components of oral communication skills: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. These components form the foundation of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980) and are best developed through meaningful interaction and authentic language use (Ellis et al., 2020; Sato, 2021). Grammatical competence involves the learner's control of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, pronunciation, and sentence construction. It supports spoken fluency and accuracy, although scholars continue to debate the balance between fluency-focused communication and form-focused instruction (Suzuki, S. & Kormos, 2023; Spada & Lightbown, 2020). Task repetition and distributed practice also support fluency development, but task sequencing must be carefully planned to sustain long-term learning (Suzuki, 2021; Kakitani & Kormos, 2024; Suzuki & Hanzawa, 2022). Affective factors also matter because anxiety can weaken grammatical accuracy and oral performance, while low-anxiety CLT tasks may improve output and willingness to communicate (Dewaele & Li, 2020; Ngoc, 2023; Teimouri et al., 2019). Sociolinguistic competence involves appropriate language use according to social and cultural contexts, including pragmatic norms, politeness, and culturally appropriate responses (Kanwit & Geeslin, 2020). Studies show that explicit pragmatic instruction and socio-cultural exposure improve learners' sensitivity to sociolinguistic norms (Huang, 2022; Wang & Ren, 2022). Learners with stronger pragmatic awareness also tend to show greater confidence and engagement in oral communication (Lv et al., 2021). Because communicative confidence and perceived competence influence participation, sociolinguistic competence is closely related to willingness to communicate (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017). However, there remains limited research on how introverted learners develop sociolinguistic competence in classroom-based CLT environments.

Discourse competence refers to the ability to organize ideas logically and produce coherent, cohesive, and comprehensible spoken language (Wang & Xie, 2022). Coherence affects listener judgment, while common fluency measures may fail to capture deeper discourse-level skills (Handley & Wang, 2024; Tsunemoto & Trofimovich, 2024). Recent studies also emphasize that comprehensibility depends not only on accuracy but also on linguistic, affective, and behavioral factors (Bean et al., 2025; Tavakoli & Cooke, 2024). Since introverted students may prefer shorter or less visible participation, CLT activities requiring extended discourse may need additional scaffolding. Strategic competence refers to the use of communication strategies such as paraphrasing, self-repair, clarification requests, gestures, and compensatory techniques to sustain interaction when language resources are limited (Zhang et al., 2021). Learners use these strategies to manage communication breakdowns, maintain fluency, and support confidence (Yang, H. et al. (2022); Beshir & Yigzaw (2022)). The opportunity to practice strategic behaviors can increase willingness to communicate, making CLT a useful framework for strategy development. However, introverted learners may hesitate to use repair strategies because of self-consciousness or fear of judgment.

The literature on CLT activities also identifies role-playing, debates, group work, pair work, and oral presentations as key practices for oral communication development. Role-playing supports fluency, creativity, situational appropriateness, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence (Aji & Irawan, 2023; C. Li, 2025; Nggawu & Thao, 2023). It also promotes meaningful language use and negotiation of meaning (Ellis et al., 2020), although introverted learners may require peer feedback, smaller group assignments, or structured support (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017; Bhuriveth et al., 2025). Debates develop analytical thinking, argumentative competence, turn-taking, and confidence (Jimenez et al., 2024; Ina Timbu et al. (2023)), but they may heighten anxiety because of spontaneous response demands and public performance pressure (Quvanch et al. (2024); Sulis & Philp, 2021; Dewaele & Li, 2020). Group work increases language output, engagement, and collaborative learning (H. Li, 2025; Alzubi et al., 2024), but participation may become uneven when dominant learners take more speaking turns and quieter learners assume peripheral roles (Bhuriveth et al., 2025). Pair work provides a lower-pressure setting and increases speaking opportunities, negotiation of meaning, and collaborative dialogue (Kos, 2024; Saeid, 2024; N. Li & Liu, 2022; Chen & Ye, 2022), although introverted students may still need prompts and peer support (Almusharraf & Almusharraf, 2021; Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017). Oral presentations foster discourse competence, fluency, and confidence (Chang & Windeatt, 2024), but they are also anxiety-inducing because of visibility and fear of negative evaluation (Asio et al., 2024; Sari, 2023; Quvanch et al., 2024; Dewaele & Li, 2020). When scaffolded through peer support, gradual exposure, and feedback, presentations can still become effective tools for language growth (Preciado Sanchez, 2021).

Recent studies also support the use of self-report measures in studying perceived oral communication competence and participation. Learners' perceptions of CLT practices and learning attitudes have been linked to self-reported engagement and classroom performance (Rochmawati et al., 2024). CLT-based activities have also been associated with improved perceived communicative competence, confidence, and willingness to participate (Ho (2020); Metruk (2023); Chaisiri (2023)). These findings justify the present study's use of perceived oral communication skills and perceived classroom

participation as meaningful indicators of learner engagement, especially for introverted students whose communicative ability may not always appear in observable performance.

Globally and across Asian EFL contexts, CLT is recognized as a major language teaching approach that promotes authentic communication, learner interaction, and communicative competence. However, its implementation is shaped by teacher behavior, task structure, peer dynamics, cultural expectations, curricular pressure, and learner differences (Gao et al. (2024); Hu and Wang, 2023). Recent studies show that well-structured communicative tasks can increase willingness to communicate, but participation remains affected by learner anxiety, confidence, and classroom climate (Peng, 2025; Zhang & Aubrey, 2024). In the Philippine senior high school context, oral participation is shaped by identity development, peer dynamics, public speaking anxiety, and cultural norms of respectfulness, modesty, and avoidance of public mistakes (Soliman & Gorospe, 2024; Lavadia, 2023). Local studies suggest that learner autonomy and strategy use are linked to English proficiency, yet differences between quiet and outgoing learners remain insufficiently examined (Soliman & Gorospe, 2024). Local findings also reveal gaps between grammatical knowledge and productive speaking performance, indicating that linguistic competence alone does not ensure active participation (Lavadia, 2023). Since role-plays, debates, group activities, pair work, and oral presentations are common in Philippine classrooms, there is a need to understand how introverted students experience these tasks and how teachers may adapt CLT to support equitable participation. Nationally, the study also supports the goal of developing functionally communicative graduates through learner-centered and inclusive English instruction. It responds to the need for teaching approaches that recognize diverse learner personalities and provide structured opportunities for quiet learners to participate meaningfully.

This study is anchored on Canale & Swain's (1980) Communicative Competence and the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) model (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Communicative competence explains the skills required for effective oral communication: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. WTC explains why learners may or may not use these skills in actual classroom interaction, considering factors such as personality, anxiety, self-confidence, perceived competence, task type, interlocutor, and classroom climate. The communicative competence framework supports the study's examination of oral communication skills. Grammar-related self-beliefs and speaking self-efficacy are linked to speaking outcomes (Wang & Sun (2024)), while demographic and socio-demographic factors may influence English proficiency and competence (Soliman & Gorospe, 2024; Muttaqin, 2022). Sociolinguistic competence is influenced by pragmatic instruction, socio-cultural exposure, and demographic variables (Wang et al., 2024; Zhang and Aubrey (2024); Taguchi et al. (2022)). Discourse competence is affected by learner background, coherence, exposure, and proficiency (Lavadia, 2023; Petrocelli (2025); Xiao & Chen (2023)). Strategic competence is shaped by communication strategy use, learner personality, proficiency, and socio-economic background (Khajavy, 2021; Peng, 2025; Rabab'ah, 2020; Rahman & Isroyana, 2021).

The WTC model explains participation in CLT activities. It views speaking behavior as a dynamic outcome of trait-level, affective, and situational factors. Low-stakes tasks such as pair work, group activities, and role-playing may increase WTC, while high-stakes tasks such as debates and oral presentations may reduce participation among introverted learners. Empirical findings support this view, showing that pair and group activities can raise WTC and engagement while debates and public presentations may provoke anxiety (Sarwari (2024); Han & Li (2025); Han et al. (2024)). Perceived competence, speaking self-efficacy, anxiety, and enjoyment mediate the relationship between communicative ability and actual participation (Leeming et al., 2024; Heidari (2024)). Demographic factors such as age, gender, strand, and socio-economic background may also affect WTC and participation (Barrios & Acosta-Manzano (2025); Napiórkowska & Barrios (2024)). Conceptually, the study follows an Input-Process-Output logic. The inputs are respondents' demographic profile, perceived oral communication skills, and perceived participation in CLT activities. The process involves instrument development and validation, survey administration, data gathering, and descriptive and inferential analysis. The output is the proposed Quiet-Learner CLT Program, which is intended to guide English teachers, administrators, and curriculum designers in supporting introverted learners through scaffolded speaking tasks, smaller group formats, teacher immediacy, and low-anxiety participation structures.

The reviewed literature confirms the value of CLT in developing oral communication skills and classroom participation, yet several gaps remain. First, most studies focus on general L2, EFL, university, or adult learners rather than introverted senior high school students. Second, research on oral communication competence often examines grammar, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence separately, with limited attention to how these dimensions interact with introversion. Third, although CLT activities such as role-playing, debates, group work, pair work, and oral presentations are widely studied, few studies investigate how these activities should be adapted for learners who are quiet, anxious, reflective, or less inclined to spontaneous interaction. Fourth, existing studies rarely contextualize the issue within the Philippine senior high school setting, where cultural norms, language learning traditions, peer dynamics, and curricular expectations may influence oral participation. The present study addresses these gaps by focusing specifically on introverted senior high school students in a private school in Valenzuela City, Philippines. It investigates their perceived oral communication skills in terms of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence; their perceived

extent of participation in role-playing, debates, group activities, pair work, and oral presentations; significant differences based on demographic profile; and the relationship between perceived oral communication skills and perceived classroom participation. The rationale is to generate evidence for a proposed Quiet-Learner CLT Program that adapts CLT principles to the needs of introverted learners and promotes inclusive participation in English classes.

This study is most directly aligned with SDG 4 – Quality Education because it promotes inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for senior high school students with diverse communication styles. By focusing on introverted learners, the study supports a classroom environment where students are not excluded from oral communication development because of personality, anxiety, or discomfort with high-interaction tasks. The proposed Quiet-Learner CLT Program contributes to inclusive quality education by offering scaffolded and learner-sensitive strategies that can help quiet students participate in communicative English activities. The study also supports SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities in an educational sense because it recognizes that classroom participation may be uneven when communicative activities privilege assertive or extroverted learners. By proposing ways to adapt CLT tasks for introverted students, the research aims to reduce participation gaps and promote fairer access to speaking opportunities.

The study contributes primarily to educational sustainability by helping English teachers design CLT activities that remain effective, inclusive, and responsive to learner diversity. Sustainable language education requires instructional practices that do not benefit only highly verbal learners but also support students who need preparation time, smaller interaction spaces, or lower-anxiety speaking opportunities. The Quiet-Learner CLT Program may strengthen classroom inclusivity by making role-plays, debates, group work, pair work, and oral presentations more accessible to introverted learners. The study also contributes to institutional sustainability because its findings may guide teachers, school administrators, curriculum designers, and policy makers in improving English instruction and professional development. By identifying the relationship between perceived oral communication skills and participation, the research can support evidence-based decisions for classroom strategies, teacher training, and learner-centered policy. It also contributes to socio-cultural sustainability by recognizing that communication behavior is influenced by culture, personality, confidence, and classroom expectations. In this sense, the study promotes a more humane and inclusive model of communicative language teaching, where quiet learners are supported rather than overlooked.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative method and employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component was used to measure and describe the demographic profile of introverted senior high school students, their perceived oral communication skills, and their perceived extent of participation in selected CLT activities. The correlational component was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between perceived oral communication skills and classroom participation without manipulating any variables. A recent study by Aparece, Arcipe, & Ayog (2024) used a descriptive-correlational design to examine relationships between students' English Language difficulties and their strategy use. The descriptive-correlational design was considered appropriate because the study aimed both to describe naturally occurring educational variables and to test relationships among them. This design allowed the researcher to generate a clear picture of students' communicative competence while identifying possible associations between oral communication skills and classroom participation as perceived by the respondents. This methodological approach is widely adopted in language education studies because it allows for statistical testing of theoretical assumptions while maintaining ecological validity (Aparece et al., 2024). Its use was also supported by Buscabus and San Jose (2025), whose work demonstrated the effectiveness of this design in identifying significant linkages among language-related variables in senior high school contexts.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in a private university in Valenzuela City, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. The research locale had 750 senior high school students and offered multiple academic strands, including STEM, ABM, and HUMSS. This setting provided a suitable student population with varied academic orientations relevant to the investigation of perceived oral communication skills and participation in CLT activities.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were 126 senior high school students enrolled in the selected private university in Valenzuela City during School Year 2025–2026. They were students who voluntarily identified themselves as introverted or quiet learners in classroom speaking situations. The inclusion criteria required respondents to be officially enrolled Grade 11 or Grade 12 students, to identify themselves as introverted or quiet learners based on the screening tool, and to provide voluntary informed consent together with guardian consent. Students who identified themselves as ambiverts or extroverts based on the screening tool and those who declined participation were excluded from the study. The respondents were considered appropriate because the study specifically focused on the oral communication skills and classroom participation patterns

of introverted students in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities. Their participation allowed the study to generate insights into how quieter learners experience communicative classroom tasks and how instructional strategies may be designed to support their participation and communicative competence.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Convenience-purposive sampling was used to select participants who met the specific criterion of voluntarily identifying or describing themselves as introverts in classroom speaking situations. This sampling technique was appropriate because the study focused on a specific learner group rather than the entire senior high school population. The targeted approach ensured that the respondents possessed the trait of interest and that the data gathered would be relevant to the development of a Quiet-Learner CLT Program (Palinkas et al., 2015). During recruitment, the researcher coordinated with class advisers and explained the purpose of the study to the classes. Students who identified themselves as introverts were given a screening tool containing a simple personality test question to further determine whether they were introverted, extroverted, or ambiverted. Only students who clearly selected the statement describing themselves as introverts proceeded to answer the finalized and validated research instrument.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire designed to gather quantitative data on the respondents' demographic profile, perceived oral communication skills, and perceived extent of classroom participation. The questionnaire consisted of three major parts. The first part gathered demographic information, including age, gender, academic strand, and socio-economic background. These indicators were used to answer the first research question and to group respondents for the analysis of differences. The second part measured perceived oral communication skills based on Canale and Swain's four dimensions of communicative competence: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Items in this section were presented as self-assessment statements using a four-point Likert scale, with 4 indicating Excellent, 3 indicating Good, 2 indicating Fair, and 1 indicating Poor. The third part measured perceived classroom participation in CLT activities, specifically role-playing, debates, group activities, pair work, and oral presentations. This section also used a four-point Likert scale, with 4 indicating Always, 3 indicating Sometimes, 2 indicating Rarely, and 1 indicating Never.

The instrument underwent expert validation to ensure the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of the questionnaire items. It was reviewed by three experts with backgrounds in language education, research methodology, student development, and educational psychology. The validators evaluated the instrument in terms of content relevance, clarity of instructions, appropriateness of items, and alignment with the study variables. Their recommendations were incorporated before pilot testing and actual data collection. To establish reliability, a pilot test was conducted with 20 senior high school students from another private secondary school in Valenzuela City who shared similar characteristics with the intended respondents but were not part of the final sample. The responses were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis using statistical software. The computed Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.91, indicating good internal reliability because values above 0.70 are generally considered acceptable in social science research. Based on the pilot test, minor revisions were made to clarify some questionnaire items, particularly by changing behavioral statements to communicative competence statements and rewording several items for better respondent understanding.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection followed a systematic process to ensure ethical compliance, accuracy, and reliability. Before gathering data, the researcher requested formal permission from the school administration of the selected private institution in Valenzuela City. A written request was submitted to the principal, academic coordinator, and senior high school department head, stating the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the study. After approval was granted, informed consent was obtained from the students and their parents or legal guardians. Since some respondents were minors, dual consent was observed. Parents or guardians received a consent form explaining the study objectives, procedures, confidentiality measures, and voluntary nature of participation. Students were also given an age-appropriate assent form to confirm their willingness to participate. Only students who submitted both parental consent and personal assent were included. Before the main data collection, the researcher conducted a pilot test with students who had similar characteristics to the target respondents but were not included in the final sample. The pilot test was used to check the clarity, reliability, and appropriateness of the instrument. After revisions, the finalized instrument was prepared using Google Forms for convenience, accessibility, and accurate recording of responses. The Google Form was distributed during the respondents' vacant periods in coordination with class advisers to avoid disruption of regular classes. Instructions were clearly provided at the beginning of the form, and the researcher remained available for clarification while maintaining neutrality. A built-in consent and assent confirmation section was also included at the start of the form to reinforce ethical compliance. After the allotted response period, the researcher downloaded the completed forms and transferred the responses to a secure spreadsheet. The submissions were checked for completeness and accuracy before data cleaning and preparation for statistical analysis. Identifying information was excluded from the final dataset to maintain confidentiality. The study

complied with the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173, 2012), which mandates responsible collection, processing, and storage of personal information. Since data were collected through Google Forms, the study also observed the provisions of the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10175, 2012), which safeguards against unauthorized access, data interference, and other online risks during electronic data collection and storage.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed according to the research questions of the study. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, academic strand, and socio-economic background. Mean, weighted mean, and standard deviation were used to determine the perceived level of oral communication skills across grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence, as well as the perceived extent of classroom participation in role-playing, debates, group work, pair work, and oral presentations. Independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to determine whether significant differences existed in perceived oral communication skills and perceived participation in CLT activities when respondents were grouped according to demographic profile. The t-test was used for variables with two categories, such as gender and age group, while one-way ANOVA was used for variables with more than two groups, such as academic strand and socio-economic background. Such group comparison approaches are used in recent educational research to detect whether variable means differ across categorical demographic strata (Bhuriveth et al., 2025). When ANOVA results yielded a significant p-value ($p < .05$), Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post hoc test was used to identify the specific groups with significant differences. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between perceived oral communication skills and perceived extent of participation in CLT activities. Effect sizes were reported with p-values to indicate both statistical and practical significance. Correlational analysis of this nature is evidenced in recent studies on personality types like introversion or extroversion and performance or participation in language tasks (Febrianti et al., 2025). All inferential tests were conducted at the 0.05 alpha level, and data analyses were performed using SPSS version 23.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical and professional standards to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of the participants. Before data collection, formal approval was sought from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee of the participating university. The study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, participants' right to withdraw at any stage, and respect for their autonomy throughout the research process. The study also complied with the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173 (2012)), ensuring that all personal and identifiable information was handled with confidentiality. It further adhered to the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10175 (2012)), ensuring that electronic data collection through Google Forms was protected against unauthorized access, data breaches, and other cyber-related threats. Respondents' data were anonymized and stored in password-protected digital files accessible only to the researcher. The study upheld transparency, integrity, and accountability throughout its implementation and ensured that all procedures conformed to institutional and national ethical research standards.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile and Main Descriptive Findings

3.1.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The respondents consisted of 126 introverted senior high school students. In terms of age, 66 respondents, or 52.4%, were aged 18–20, while 60 respondents, or 47.6%, were aged 15–17, showing a relatively balanced age distribution with a slightly higher proportion of older students. In terms of gender, female students constituted the majority with 94 respondents, or 74.6%, while male students accounted for 32 respondents, or 25.4%. In terms of academic strand, ABM students formed the largest group with 49 respondents, or 38.9%, followed by STEM students with 43 respondents, or 34.1%, and HUMSS students with 34 respondents, or 27.0%. In terms of socio-economic background, nearly half of the respondents, or 47.6%, reported a monthly family income below Php 20,000, followed by 35.7% within the Php 20,001–Php 40,000 bracket, while only smaller proportions came from higher income brackets. The slight predominance of students aged 18–20 suggests that many respondents were in the later stage of adolescence, a period associated with stronger self-regulation, openness, and social relationship development according to Laurence Steinberg (2020). The higher number of female respondents is reflected in their active involvement in language-related subjects and classroom communication activities, while Kim and Canagarajah (2021) found that female students are generally more willing to participate in interactive tasks. The strand distribution also suggests that academic orientation may shape communication behavior, as disciplinary culture influences students' communicative practices, with STEM often emphasizing analytical and technical communication and ABM and HUMSS emphasizing discourse, argumentation, and critical communication (Hyland, 2004). Socio-economic background is also relevant because students from lower socio-economic groups may have fewer opportunities for enriched language interaction and classroom discourse participation (UNESCO, 2021; Reardon, 2018).

3.2 Perceived Oral Communication Skills

3.2.1 Grammatical Competence

The respondents perceived their grammatical competence as good, with an overall weighted mean of 2.70. All indicators were within the good range. The highest-rated indicator was the application of grammatical rules in everyday conversations, while the lowest-rated indicator was the use of correct verb tenses in expressing thoughts. This indicates that the respondents generally perceived themselves as capable of using grammar in spoken English, although some difficulty remained in consistent tense use and structural accuracy. This finding suggests that the respondents had functional grammatical knowledge and moderate confidence in applying grammar during oral communication. Grammatical competence remains a core component of communicative competence and influences perceived speaking proficiency (Porcellato, 2020). However, spontaneous speaking requires real-time language processing, which may explain why grammatical accuracy in oral production develops more slowly than receptive knowledge (DeKeyser and Suzuki, 2025). Thus, the good but not excellent rating suggests that students can apply grammar in familiar speaking contexts but may still need support in improving accuracy during real-time communication.

3.2.2 Sociolinguistic Competence

The respondents perceived their sociolinguistic competence as good, with an overall weighted mean of 2.93. Most indicators were rated good, while the use of a respectful and polite tone when speaking with others was rated excellent. This shows that students generally perceived themselves as capable of adjusting language according to social situations, using appropriate expressions, understanding social cues, and communicating politely. The high rating in politeness and appropriateness suggests strong awareness of social norms in communication. Sociolinguistic competence is essential in CLT because learners must adjust language according to listener, context, and communicative purpose (Burhanuddin, 2023). Recent studies also show that learners with higher sociolinguistic awareness tend to demonstrate stronger communicative confidence and classroom participation (Pratiwi & Hasib, 2024). The findings therefore suggest that students were socially aware in communication, although they may still need improvement in interpreting implied meanings and adapting expressions across different interactional contexts.

3.2.3 Discourse Competence

The respondents perceived their discourse competence as fair, with an overall weighted mean of 2.49. They rated consistency of message and connecting ideas as good, but maintaining a conversation without losing focus and presenting clear and logical explanations were rated fair. This indicates that students could organize and connect ideas to some extent but experienced difficulty sustaining coherent and extended spoken communication. This result indicates that discourse competence was one of the weaker areas of the respondents' oral communication skills. Discourse competence requires the ability to organize ideas logically, maintain cohesion, and sustain meaning during communication (Housen & Kuiken, 2009). Learners may still struggle with discourse-level organization even when they possess adequate grammatical knowledge because extended speaking requires fluency, idea development, and structure (Hiver et al., 2024). The fair rating suggests the need for structured speaking tasks, guided presentations, storytelling, and discourse-organizing activities to improve coherence and conversational maintenance.

3.2.4 Strategic Competence

The respondents perceived their strategic competence as fair, with an overall weighted mean of 2.49. They rated the use of gestures and rephrasing thoughts as good, but asking for clarification and managing communication breakdowns were rated fair. This shows that while students could use some nonverbal and compensatory strategies, they were less confident in actively repairing communication problems during interaction. Strategic competence is important because it helps learners manage communication gaps and sustain interaction. Strategies such as clarification requests, circumlocution, and paraphrasing support oral fluency and interactional success (Dao, 2020). However, learners with limited strategy use may avoid participation because of fear of making errors (Zarrinabadi et al., 2021). The findings suggest that the respondents may sometimes compensate for vocabulary or expression gaps but may lack confidence in asking for clarification or repairing communication breakdowns, which can affect participation in CLT activities.

3.3 Perceived Participation in CLT Activities

3.3.1 Participation in Role-Playing

The respondents rarely participated actively in role-playing activities, with an overall weighted mean of 2.12. All indicators were interpreted as rarely. The lowest-rated indicator was volunteering to participate in role-playing activities, while the highest-rated indicator was collaborating with classmates in preparing for role-plays. This indicates that students were more willing to help in preparation than to perform actively or volunteer in front of others. The low participation in role-playing suggests possible speaking anxiety or lack of confidence in spontaneous performance tasks. Role-playing requires real-time language production, public performance, and social interaction, which may increase speaking anxiety among EFL learners (Botes et al., 2021). Students with communication apprehension are also less likely to volunteer in dramatized or simulated speaking tasks (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2021). Thus, although role-playing is a useful CLT activity, its effectiveness may be limited when introverted learners feel psychologically unprepared or fear negative evaluation.

3.3.2 Participation in Debates

The respondents rarely participated actively in debates, with an overall weighted mean of 2.05. Most indicators were rated rarely, including taking part in debates, sharing arguments confidently, preparing points or counterarguments, and collaborating with classmates. The only indicator that reached the sometimes level was helping the group organize ideas for debates. This suggests that the respondents were more comfortable supporting idea organization than publicly defending arguments. Debates require higher-order thinking, spontaneous argument construction, and public defense of ideas, which may explain the respondents' low engagement. Although debates can develop critical thinking and communicative competence, many learners hesitate to participate because of fear of making linguistic errors in front of peers (Ghalib & Almuslimi, 2023). Willingness to communicate research also shows that argumentative speaking tasks tend to produce lower participation among learners with moderate speaking confidence. The findings suggest that debate activities may require greater scaffolding, preparation time, and low-pressure formats for introverted learners.

3.3.3 Participation in Group Activities

The respondents sometimes participated in group activities, with an overall weighted mean of 2.76. Most indicators were rated sometimes, including active participation, contributing ideas, collaborating with classmates, and taking initiative in problem-solving. However, volunteering for assigned group tasks was rated rarely. This indicates that students were generally willing to participate in group contexts, especially when responsibility was shared, but they remained less inclined to volunteer individually. Compared with role-playing and debates, group activities appeared to provide a more supportive interactional environment. Cooperative learning research suggests that small-group contexts reduce performance pressure and increase peer-supported communication (Gillies, 2016). Collaborative tasks also provide more speaking opportunities and reduce anxiety because responsibility is shared among group members (Adickalam & Md Yunus, 2022). This may explain why respondents participated more in group activities than in high-pressure individual or argumentative speaking tasks.

3.3.4 Participation in Pair Work

The respondents showed the highest level of participation in pair work, with an overall weighted mean of 3.43, interpreted as always. Most indicators were rated always, including engaging with a partner, exchanging ideas or feedback, assisting a partner, and completing pair work with mutual effort. Communicating in English throughout pair tasks was rated sometimes. This shows that students were most comfortable and consistent in dyadic interaction. The strong participation in pair work supports the view that dyadic interaction lowers speaking anxiety and increases communicative output. Pair work provides a safer space for negotiation of meaning and language experimentation (C. Li, 2025). Recent studies also show that learners demonstrate greater willingness to communicate in pair settings compared with whole-class tasks (Mundelsee & Jurkowski, 2021). The findings imply that pair-based CLT activities may be especially effective for increasing oral engagement among introverted senior high school learners.

3.3.5 Participation in Oral Presentations

The respondents sometimes participated in oral presentation activities, with an overall weighted mean of 2.73. They always prepared a speech or script before presenting and sometimes expressed ideas clearly and used visual aids or gestures. However, they rarely responded to audience questions after presenting. This suggests that students were willing to prepare but found live interaction and spontaneous response more difficult. The findings indicate that preparation does not always translate into confident live performance. Presentation anxiety can affect spontaneous responses even when learners have prepared adequately (Tsang, 2025). Responding to audience questions also requires communicative confidence and discourse management skills (Linao et al., 2025). This pattern suggests that structured rehearsal, peer feedback, and gradual exposure may help students become more confident and active in oral presentations.

3.4 Differences in Perceived Oral Communication Skills According to Demographic Profile

3.4.1 Differences According to Age

The findings showed no significant difference in grammatical competence between students aged 15–17 and those aged 18–20. However, significant differences were found in sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence, with students aged 18–20 obtaining higher mean scores. This indicates that age did not significantly affect grammatical competence but significantly influenced the more interactional and communicative dimensions of oral communication skills. Recent studies support age-related differences in oral communicative competence. Dey et al. (2024) found that older adolescent learners often show stronger sociolinguistic and strategic skills because of greater exposure and practice, while younger learners may perform better in implicit language acquisition such as pronunciation. This supports the present findings, where older respondents perceived themselves as stronger in sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. The results suggest that communicative maturity and accumulated classroom experience may help older students manage interaction more effectively.

3.4.2 Differences According to Gender

The findings showed no significant gender differences in grammatical competence and discourse competence. However, significant differences were observed in sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence, with female students obtaining higher mean scores than male students. This indicates that gender was not a significant factor in grammatical and discourse competence but was significant in the socially adaptive and strategy-based dimensions of oral communication. These findings suggest that female students perceived themselves as having stronger sociolinguistic and strategic skills. Alamri and Qasem (2024) reported that female learners had higher foreign language speaking confidence and lower speaking anxiety compared with male learners, which supported more effective communicative engagement. This pattern is consistent with evidence that females often participate more actively in pragmatic and interactive classroom tasks. The results imply that gender-related differences in confidence and interactional behavior may influence perceived oral communication competence.

3.4.3 Differences According to Academic Strand

The findings showed no significant differences in grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence across ABM, HUMSS, and STEM students. However, a significant difference was found in strategic competence. Post hoc analysis showed that HUMSS students scored significantly higher in strategic competence than ABM and STEM students. This indicates that academic strand did not strongly influence most oral communication skill areas but had a significant effect on strategic competence. These results suggest that strand-specific learning experiences may influence students' communication strategies. HUMSS students' higher strategic competence may reflect greater exposure to reflective, discussion-based, and collaborative learning activities. Bacatan et al. (2023) found that students in strands or programs emphasizing collaborative and discourse-intensive activities demonstrated stronger strategic and sociolinguistic communication skills than students in more STEM-oriented tracks. Therefore, strategic competence may develop more strongly in academic contexts that require frequent discussion, reflection, and interactive communication.

3.4.4 Differences According to Socio-Economic Background

The findings showed no significant differences in grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence across income groups. However, a significant difference was found in strategic competence. Post hoc analysis showed that students from households earning below Php 20,000 scored significantly lower in strategic competence than those from the Php 20,001–Php 40,000 group and above. This indicates that socio-economic background was most evident in students' perceived ability to manage communication challenges and use repair strategies. These findings suggest that socio-economic background may influence strategic oral communication skills through differences in language exposure, access to learning resources, and opportunities for practice outside school. This aligns with research showing that students from higher-income households often demonstrate stronger communication strategies and more confident oral language use because of supportive learning contexts and parental involvement (Şengönül, 2022). The findings imply that learners from lower-income backgrounds may need more explicit classroom support in communication repair, clarification, and confidence-building strategies.

3.5 Differences in Participation in CLT Activities According to Demographic Profile

3.5.1 Differences According to Age

The findings showed that students aged 18–20 reported significantly higher participation than those aged 15–17 in all CLT activities, including role-playing, debates, group activities, pair work, and oral presentations. This indicates that age significantly influenced students' perceived participation in communicative language teaching activities. Older students appeared to participate more actively and confidently in communicative classroom tasks than younger students. Age-related differences in participation are consistent with research on willingness to communicate, which connects adolescent engagement with confidence, social attitudes, and task valuation (Kirkpatrick et al., 2024). Communicative participation is also shaped by cognitive development, social roles, and self-perceptions of competence, which may increase in late adolescence (Alons et al., 2025). Tasks perceived as meaningful or socially supportive can also produce stronger participation, particularly in activities such as role plays and debates (Kirkpatrick et al., 2024). These explanations support the finding that older respondents were more engaged in CLT activities.

3.5.2 Differences According to Gender

The findings showed that female students reported significantly higher participation than male students in role-playing, group activities, pair work, and oral presentations. However, no significant gender difference was found in debates. This indicates that gender significantly influenced most forms of classroom participation, especially collaborative and interactive communicative tasks, but not argumentative debate participation. Recent research supports gender-related differences in classroom communicative participation. A study by (Armugam & Kesavan, 2025) found that female students tend to report higher willingness to communicate in second-language classrooms, especially in collaborative and interactive tasks. Lungay (2023) also reported that female learners often show higher communicative engagement and lower communication anxiety in classroom speaking contexts. These findings align with the present results, where female

students were more engaged in role-playing, group work, pair work, and oral presentations, while debate participation showed no significant gender difference.

3.5.3 Differences According to Academic Strand

The findings showed no significant differences among ABM, HUMSS, and STEM students in role-playing, debates, group activities, pair work, and oral presentations. This means that academic strand did not significantly influence students' perceived participation in CLT activities. Students across the three strands appeared to have comparable levels of engagement in communicative classroom tasks. These findings suggest that academic strand does not substantially determine participation in communicative language learning activities. Instead, communicative engagement appears to be shaped more by classroom interactional conditions than by strand classification. Research on willingness to communicate emphasizes that participation is influenced by situational and psychological factors such as classroom climate, perceived communicative competence, and interaction opportunities rather than fixed background characteristics (Allahyar et al., 2022). Contemporary motivational research also explains that communicative task engagement emerges from dynamic interactions among motivation, teacher support, and peer collaboration (Sulis & Philp, 2021).

3.5.4 Differences According to Socio-Economic Background

The findings showed significant differences across all CLT activities when respondents were grouped according to socio-economic background. Significant differences were found in role-playing, debates, group activities, pair work, and oral presentations. Students from lower-income groups tended to report lower participation, while students from higher socio-economic backgrounds reported greater engagement in communicative tasks, particularly debates and oral presentations. These findings indicate that socio-economic background plays a meaningful role in classroom participation. Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds may have greater access to resources, language-rich environments, and confidence-building experiences that support communicative engagement. This aligns with research showing that socio-economic status affects confidence, access to learning resources, and exposure to language-rich environments, which influence participation in interactive learning (Aminulloh and Pranata, 2025). The results suggest the need for inclusive participation opportunities that reduce resource-based and confidence-related gaps among learners.

3.6 Relationship Between Oral Communication Skills and Participation in CLT Activities

3.6.1 Grammatical Competence and Participation

The results showed very weak positive correlations between grammatical competence and all CLT participation variables, including role-playing, debates, group activities, pair work, and oral presentations. However, all relationships were not statistically significant. This means that grammatical competence did not have a significant relationship with students' participation in communicative classroom activities. These findings suggest that grammatical knowledge alone may not strongly influence participation in CLT tasks. Learners may know grammar but still avoid speaking if they lack confidence, interaction opportunities, or supportive classroom conditions. Recent research indicates that willingness to communicate is more strongly associated with communicative confidence, interaction opportunities, and classroom environment than linguistic knowledge alone (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021). Tawfiq (2020) also reported that engagement in communicative activities is influenced by psychological and contextual factors, not merely grammatical ability.

3.6.2 Sociolinguistic Competence and Participation

The findings showed significant positive correlations between sociolinguistic competence and all participation variables. The strongest relationship was found with role-playing, followed by oral presentations, group activities, pair work, and debates. Since all relationships were significant, the findings indicate that students with higher sociolinguistic competence tended to participate more in CLT activities. The findings are supported by research emphasizing the importance of sociolinguistic competence in communicative interaction. Sociolinguistic competence enables learners to use language appropriately according to social context, which supports effective classroom communication. Denopol et al. (2025) found that students with higher sociolinguistic competence showed greater engagement in classroom discussions and communicative tasks. Similarly, communicative language teaching research indicates that communicative competence, including sociolinguistic knowledge, contributes significantly to active participation in collaborative and discussion-based language tasks (Qasserras, 2023).

3.6.3 Discourse Competence and Participation

The findings showed significant positive correlations between discourse competence and all participation variables, including role-playing, debates, group activities, pair work, and oral presentations. This indicates that students who perceived themselves as more capable of organizing and sustaining spoken discourse also tended to participate more actively in CLT activities. Discourse competence helps learners organize ideas logically, maintain coherence, and sustain interaction during communication tasks. Laşcu (2023) reported that learners' communicative competence, particularly the ability to organize and sustain discourse, significantly influences engagement and interaction in communicative language classrooms. Sulis and Philp (2021) also emphasized that students' engagement in communicative language learning is

associated with their ability to express ideas coherently and interact meaningfully with peers. These findings support the present results, showing that discourse competence encourages participation in CLT activities.

3.6.4 Strategic Competence and Participation

The findings showed significant positive correlations between strategic competence and all participation variables. Strong relationships were found with oral presentations and role-playing, followed by debates, group activities, and pair work. This indicates that students with higher strategic competence were more likely to participate in communicative language teaching activities. The results align with research emphasizing the importance of strategic competence in communicative language learning. Strategic competence enables learners to use clarification requests, paraphrasing, circumlocution, and other repair strategies to sustain interaction and manage communication breakdowns. Diobi & Nashruddin (2023) found that learners who effectively use communication strategies demonstrate higher engagement and participation in communicative language tasks. Zhou & Li (2025) also reported that strategic language use during interaction contributes to students' willingness to communicate and participate in classroom discussions. These findings suggest that strategic competence plays a crucial role in facilitating participation in CLT activities.

3.7 Basis for the Proposed Quiet-Learner CLT Program

The findings served as the basis for developing the proposed Quiet-Learner Communicative Language Teaching Program for senior high school students. The major instructional needs identified were the fair levels of discourse competence and strategic competence, the high participation in pair work, the lower participation in role-playing and debates, the significant positive relationships between communicative competence and participation, and the participation differences associated with socio-economic background. These results pointed to the need for structured speaking support, communication strategy training, low-pressure pair-based tasks, scaffolded role-play and debate activities, integrated communicative tasks, and inclusive classroom environments. The proposed program aims to enhance oral communication skills and classroom participation among senior high school students, particularly introverted learners, through structured, supportive, and progressively challenging communicative language activities. It focuses on improving discourse competence, developing strategic competence, increasing participation in role-playing and debates, sustaining pair and group work engagement, gradually exposing students to oral presentations, and creating a supportive classroom environment. Anchored on Communicative Language Teaching and the Willingness to Communicate model, the program emphasizes both skill development and affective support by reducing anxiety, building confidence, and encouraging gradual participation in more demanding speaking tasks.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that the respondents were mainly female senior high school students aged 18–20 from ABM, STEM, and HUMSS strands, with many coming from lower-income households. They generally demonstrated good grammatical and sociolinguistic competence but only fair discourse and strategic competence, indicating difficulty in sustaining coherent spoken interaction and managing communication breakdowns. They participated more actively in pair work and group activities than in role-playing, debates, and oral presentations, suggesting that smaller and less pressured communicative settings encourage greater participation. Age, gender, academic strand, and socio-economic background influenced selected aspects of oral communication competence, particularly sociolinguistic and strategic competence, while participation in CLT activities was influenced by age, gender, and socio-economic background but not consistently by academic strand. Higher sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence were associated with greater participation in communicative classroom activities, whereas grammatical competence alone did not significantly predict participation. Overall, the findings indicate the need for structured instructional strategies that strengthen discourse and strategic competence while providing supportive communicative environments for introverted learners.

Senior high school students, particularly introverted learners, may engage in structured communicative activities such as pair discussions, guided presentations, and collaborative speaking tasks to gradually develop discourse organization, communication strategies, confidence, and classroom participation. English teachers may integrate scaffolded CLT strategies that begin with low-pressure interaction formats such as pair work and small-group discussions before progressing to role-playing, debates, and oral presentations, while explicitly teaching communication repair strategies and discourse organization techniques. School administrators may support inclusive communicative language teaching through professional development programs, instructional resources, and collaborative platforms that help teachers implement structured speaking activities. Education policy makers may strengthen CLT initiatives by supporting instructional programs for diverse learner profiles, including introverted learners, through curriculum enrichment, teacher training, and school-based communication development initiatives aligned with national priorities for English proficiency and learner participation. The school may also implement, investigate, and evaluate the proposed Quiet-Learner CLT Program through experimental or quasi-experimental research designs while examining personality traits, communication anxiety, and other contextual factors that may influence communicative competence and classroom participation in English language classes.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This study complied with recognized ethical standards for human-participant research by ensuring voluntary participation with informed consent, the right to withdraw without penalty, and strict confidentiality through anonymous, secure, and aggregated data handling. Given the focus on psychological well-being, procedures were non-invasive, and safeguards were observed to minimize discomfort, with guidance to appropriate support services when needed, and required institutional permissions were secured for instrument use and access to academic records.

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