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# PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN TEACHING FILIPINO AND LEARNERS' LANGUAGE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: A QUALITATIVE SUBJECT-BASED STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

*The development of learners' language skills remains a central concern in mother-tongue and national language instruction, particularly in multilingual educational contexts. This qualitative subject-based study examines pedagogical practices employed in the teaching of Filipino and how these practices influence learners' language skills development. Using classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, the study explores instructional strategies, teacher beliefs, and classroom interactions that shape learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing competencies. Findings reveal that culturally responsive pedagogy, contextualized language activities, translanguaging practices, and interactive learning tasks significantly enhance learners' communicative competence and engagement. The study contributes to language education scholarship by providing empirical insights into effective Filipino language pedagogy and offers implications for curriculum development, teacher education, and language policy in multilingual settings.*

**Keywords:** *Filipino language education, pedagogical practices, language skills development, qualitative study, mother-tongue-based instruction*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Language instruction plays a crucial role in learners' cognitive, academic, and socio-cultural development. In the Philippine educational context, Filipino serves not only as a national language but also as a medium for cultivating cultural identity, critical thinking, and communicative competence. Despite curriculum reforms emphasizing learner-centered and communicative language teaching, challenges persist in translating policy intentions into effective classroom practices.

Previous research has highlighted persistent gaps in learners' language proficiency, particularly in reading comprehension, expressive writing, and oral communication. These challenges are often attributed to teacher-centered instruction, limited contextualization, and insufficient integration of learners' linguistic and cultural resources. As such, examining pedagogical practices in actual classroom settings becomes essential to understanding how Filipino language instruction supports or constrains language skills development.

This study responds to this need by investigating pedagogical practices in teaching Filipino through a qualitative subject-based approach. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What pedagogical practices do Filipino teachers employ in teaching language skills?
2. How do these practices influence learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing development?
3. What contextual and pedagogical factors shape teachers' instructional decisions?

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### 2.1 Pedagogical Practices in Language Education

Effective language pedagogy is consistently framed in the literature as instruction that prioritizes meaningful interaction, authentic language use, and active learner engagement, rather than repetitive drills detached from communicative goals. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), for instance, positions communication as both the means and end of instruction by emphasizing task-based exchanges, negotiation of meaning, and opportunities to use language for real purposes (Richards, 2006). In classroom research, interaction is not simply a teaching "technique" but a central condition for language development because it creates moments where learners notice gaps in understanding, attempt reformulations, and receive feedback that refines form-meaning connections. This interactional view is also reflected in work on classroom interactional competence, which argues that the quality of teacher talk, turn-taking, questioning patterns, and learner response space directly shapes participation and language learning opportunities (Walsh, 2014).

Complementing CLT, sociocultural perspectives underscore that language learning is mediated through social activity, where learners develop competence through dialogue, collaboration, and scaffolded support within interaction (Lantolf, 2006). In practical terms, scaffolding appears when teachers model language, structure tasks, provide guided prompts, and gradually release responsibility as learners gain control over communicative and academic language demands. Recent empirical work on teacher scaffolding further shows that strategically designed interaction and support moves can expand learners' participation and language output, especially for students developing proficiency in a second or additional language (Koyuncu et al., 2024). Taken together, these traditions



converge on a key principle: language development is strongest when learners construct meaning actively in socially organized, purposeful tasks, supported by teacher mediation and peer collaboration (Richards, 2006; Walsh, 2014).

## 2.2 Teaching Filipino in Multilingual Contexts

Teaching Filipino occurs within a **linguistically diverse** Philippine environment where many learners navigate home languages, Filipino, and English across academic and social domains. This multilingual reality shapes how learners access meaning and participate in classroom discourse. Language-in-education policy and classroom practice in the Philippines have been strongly influenced by the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy framework, which emphasized early literacy and learning through the learner's first language before transitioning to Filipino and English. DepEd's curriculum guides formalized this multilingual orientation and positioned local languages as central resources for foundational learning (Department of Education, 2016). More recent scholarship, however, shows that implementation has been complex affected by teacher preparedness, materials availability, language attitudes, and local linguistic ecologies and has undergone policy shifts in recent years (Bustos-Orosa, 2025). Empirical evidence likewise suggests that multilingual policies and practices produce mixed outcomes depending on alignment among assessment language, instructional language, and classroom realities (Igarashi et al., 2024). Within these conditions, studies increasingly argue that rigid monolingual approaches ("Filipino-only" or strict separation of languages) can reduce comprehension and limit participation, especially when learners are still building academic Filipino. In contrast, translanguaging the strategic use of learners' full linguistic repertoires to

make meaning has gained substantial support as a pedagogical and equity-oriented approach. Translanguaging research conceptualizes multilingual learners' languages not as separate containers but as interrelated resources that can be mobilized for comprehension, expression, and learning (Vogel & García, 2018). Empirical work in Philippine classrooms demonstrates that teachers and learners naturally shift across languages to clarify meaning, sustain engagement, and accomplish academic tasks suggesting that translanguaging is not simply "mixing" but a purposeful meaning-making practice in multilingual learning environments (De Los Reyes, 2019). Research syntheses and critical reviews also emphasize that pedagogical translanguaging can reduce language anxiety, widen participation, and strengthen classroom interaction when used deliberately and ethically (Fuster, 2024).

For Filipino instruction specifically, contextualized pedagogy becomes especially important: integrating local culture, community narratives, and lived experiences can strengthen comprehension, relevance, and identity-affirming learning. Such contextualization aligns well with multilingual pedagogies because it allows learners to connect Filipino texts and tasks to familiar knowledge, thereby increasing motivation and supporting sustained use of Filipino for authentic communication (Department of Education, 2016; Bustos-Orosa, 2025).

## 2.3 Language Skills Development

Language skills development is multidimensional and involves the interrelated growth of listening, speaking, reading, and writing across social and academic contexts. Contemporary language education research emphasizes that these skills develop most effectively when taught in an integrated manner, reflecting how



language is used in real life (e.g., reading a text, discussing its meaning, and producing a written or oral response). Evidence from research on reading–writing relationships shows that literacy development is strengthened when instruction explicitly connects receptive skills (reading/listening) with productive skills (writing/speaking), enabling learners to transfer vocabulary, discourse structures, and rhetorical patterns across modalities (Grabe & Zhang, 2016). Rather than treating skills as isolated competencies, integrated instruction supports deeper comprehension, richer language production, and improved coherence in learner output because learners repeatedly encounter and reuse language forms in meaningful contexts (Grabe & Zhang, 2016).

In addition, teacher feedback and modeling are consistently identified as high-impact mechanisms in skills development. Feedback provides learners with information about the quality of their performance and guides them toward improved strategies, accuracy, and clarity. A major synthesis in educational research highlights feedback as among the most powerful influences on learning, but also stresses that its effectiveness depends on specificity, timing, and alignment with learning goals (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Later meta-analytic evidence reinforces that feedback effects vary widely and are strongest when feedback helps learners understand *what to improve and how to improve it*, rather than merely evaluating correctness (Wisniewski et al., 2020). In Filipino language instruction, this supports pedagogies that include modeling of effective oral and written discourse, guided practice, iterative revision, and performance tasks that require authentic language use. When learners are given structured opportunities to listen, speak, read, and write in connected sequences supported by feedback and scaffolded interaction language learning becomes both more measurable in outputs and more

meaningful as communication (Grabe & Zhang, 2016; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

### 3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative subject-based research design focusing on the teaching of Filipino as an academic subject. The design enabled an in-depth examination of pedagogical practices as they naturally occurred within classroom settings, allowing the researcher to capture the complexity of teaching–learning interactions, instructional decision-making, and language use in authentic contexts. The qualitative approach was particularly appropriate for exploring teachers’ pedagogical practices and their influence on learners’ language skills development, as it emphasized meaning, process, and context rather than quantification.

The participants of the study included Filipino language teachers and selected learners from public secondary schools situated in linguistically diverse settings. Teachers were purposively selected based on their teaching experience, professional engagement in Filipino instruction, and willingness to participate in the study. Learners participated as classroom members during observations and as informants during interviews, providing insights into their learning experiences and language use. The research was conducted in schools that reflected multilingual classroom environments, allowing for a nuanced understanding of Filipino language pedagogy in diverse linguistic contexts.

Data were collected using multiple qualitative methods to ensure depth and triangulation. Classroom observations were conducted across several teaching sessions to document instructional strategies, teacher–learner interactions, and patterns of language use during Filipino lessons. In-depth, semi-structured interviews with teachers were undertaken to elicit their pedagogical



beliefs, instructional rationales, and reflections on teaching Filipino. In addition, document analysis was carried out on lesson plans, instructional materials, and selected student outputs to corroborate observed practices and interview data.

Data analysis followed a thematic approach using a systematic coding process. Initial codes were generated from recurring patterns identified across observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents. These codes were subsequently organized into broader themes that represented key pedagogical practices and instructional meanings. The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through methodological triangulation, member checking with participants, and prolonged engagement in the research setting, enhancing the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the study.

#### 4. Results and Findings

The qualitative analysis of classroom observations, teacher interviews, and instructional documents yielded four major themes that illuminate how pedagogical practices in teaching Filipino contribute to learners' language skills development. These themes reflect recurring patterns across participants and contexts and demonstrate the interplay between pedagogy, language use, and learner engagement.

##### Theme 1: Contextualized and Culturally Responsive Filipino Instruction

Teachers consistently emphasized the use of local contexts, cultural narratives, and familiar experiences in teaching Filipino. Lessons were anchored in learners' everyday realities community events, local stories, family experiences, and culturally familiar situations rather than decontextualized texts.

##### Participant Responses

One teacher explained:

“Mas naiintindihan ng mga bata ang aralin kapag may kaugnayan sa buhay nila. Kapag ang teksto ay tungkol sa sariling komunidad, mas nagiging aktibo sila sa pakikinig at pagbasa.”

Another participant shared:

“Hindi na sila natatakot magbasa o magsalita kasi parang kuwento lang ng sarili nilang karanasan ang pinag-uusapan.”

##### Interpretation

Contextualized instruction enhanced **listening and reading comprehension**, as learners were able to activate prior knowledge and connect new language input to familiar schemas. This practice also increased learner motivation and participation, supporting the idea that language learning is socially and culturally situated.

##### Related

##### Studies

These findings align with research demonstrating that culturally responsive pedagogy strengthens comprehension and engagement in language classrooms. Studies by Gay (2018) and Ladson-Billings (2021) emphasize that culturally grounded instruction enables learners to process language meaningfully. In the Philippine context, localized language teaching has been shown to improve reading fluency and interpretive skills, particularly in mother-tongue and Filipino instruction (Dumanig & David, 2019).

##### Theme 2: Interactive and Dialogic Pedagogical Practices

Teachers employed dialogic teaching strategies, including open-ended questioning, peer discussions, role-playing, group reporting, and oral storytelling. Classroom interactions were characterized by



continuous exchanges between teachers and learners, rather than one-way transmission of knowledge.

### Participant Responses

A teacher noted:

“Mas mahalaga sa akin na marinig ang boses ng mga bata kaysa matapos agad ang lesson. Kapag nakakapagsalita sila, mas natututo sila ng Filipino.”

A learner expressed:

“Mas gusto ko ang klase kapag may talakayan kasi natututo akong magsalita nang mas maayos at mas confident.”

Dialogic practices significantly contributed to the development of speaking and listening skills, particularly fluency, pronunciation, and confidence in oral expression. Interaction created opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning, receive immediate feedback, and refine language use in authentic contexts. These results support sociocultural theories of language learning, particularly Vygotsky’s concept of learning through social interaction. Empirical studies confirm that dialogic classrooms foster oral language development and higher-order thinking (Alexander, 2020). In Filipino language education, interactive strategies have been found to enhance learners’ communicative competence and classroom participation (Borlongan, 2021).

### Theme 3: Translanguaging as a Scaffold for Language Learning

Teachers strategically allowed learners to use their **first language or regional language** alongside Filipino, especially during concept clarification, group discussions, and pre-writing activities. This flexible language use was not viewed as a weakness but as a bridge toward Filipino proficiency.

### Participant Responses

One teacher explained:

“Kapag pinapayagan ko silang gumamit ng unang wika nila, mas mabilis nilang naiintindihan ang teksto bago namin ito isalin o talakayin sa Filipino.”

A learner shared:

“Mas madali para sa akin magsulat kapag naiisip ko muna sa sarili kong wika bago ko isalin sa Filipino.”

Translanguaging functioned as an effective cognitive and linguistic scaffold, supporting comprehension, idea generation, and written expression. Rather than hindering Filipino acquisition, it facilitated deeper understanding and smoother transitions to Filipino language use.

This finding is consistent with translanguaging research, which views multilingual learners’ languages as integrated resources (García & Wei, 2014). Studies in multilingual classrooms demonstrate that translanguaging enhances reading comprehension and writing quality by reducing cognitive load (Cummins, 2017). Philippine-based studies similarly report that strategic multilingual practices support language development without undermining Filipino proficiency (Martin, 2019).

### Theme 4: Integrated Teaching of Language Skills

Teachers adopted an integrated-skills approach, where listening, speaking, reading, and writing were taught as interconnected processes. Typical lessons involved reading a text, discussing its meaning, and producing written or oral outputs based on the discussion.

### Participant Responses

A teacher stated:



“Hindi ko hinihiwalay ang pagbasa, pagsasalita, at pagsulat. Kapag sabay-sabay itong ginagawa, mas buo ang pagkatuto ng mga bata.”

Another participant added:

“Mas nagiging malinaw sa akin ang pagsulat kapag napag-usapan muna namin ang binasa.”

Integrated instruction strengthened overall language coherence, allowing learners to transfer skills across modalities. This approach promoted deeper comprehension, improved writing organization, and enhanced vocabulary use. Research in applied linguistics supports integrated language instruction as more effective than isolated skill teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Studies indicate that integrated approaches improve reading–writing connections and oral–written fluency (Grabe & Zhang, 2016). In Filipino classrooms, integrated instruction has been linked to improved narrative writing and comprehension outcomes (De Leon, 2020).

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this qualitative subject-based study highlight the critical role of pedagogical practices in shaping learners’ Filipino language skills development. Across themes, effective teaching was characterized by contextualization, interaction, linguistic flexibility, and skill integration, reinforcing contemporary theories of language learning as social, cultural and dynamic. Consistent with sociocultural theory, learning emerged through meaningful interaction and scaffolded participation. Teachers who contextualized lessons and encouraged dialogue created environments where learners felt linguistically safe and motivated to participate. This supports existing literature asserting that emotional security and relevance are foundational

to language acquisition (Krashen, 1985; Alexander, 2020).

The strategic use of translanguaging challenges traditional monolingual ideologies and aligns with global shifts toward inclusive multilingual pedagogy. Rather than impeding Filipino learning, translanguaging enhanced comprehension and expression, echoing findings from international and local studies that position multilingualism as an instructional asset.

Finally, the integrated teaching of language skills underscores the importance of holistic language pedagogy. Treating listening, speaking, reading, and writing as interconnected processes enabled learners to construct meaning more effectively and develop functional language competence.

## 6. Conclusion and Implications

This qualitative subject-based study demonstrates that effective pedagogical practices in teaching Filipino significantly contribute to learners’ language skills development. Contextualized instruction, interactive strategies, translanguaging, and integrated-skill approaches emerge as key elements of effective Filipino language pedagogy.

Implications for practice include the need for sustained professional development focusing on culturally responsive and multilingual pedagogies. Curriculum developers may consider providing greater flexibility for contextualized and integrated instruction. Future research may extend this inquiry through longitudinal qualitative studies or mixed-methods approaches to examine long-term language development outcomes.

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