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CONTEXTUALIZED FILIPINO LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AND LEARNER ENGAGEMENT IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM TEACHERS IN A RURAL PHILIPPINE SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored contextualized Filipino language instruction and learner engagement in elementary education from the perspectives of teachers at Masipi Elementary School, Masipi East, Cabagan, Isabela. The study aimed to examine how teachers implement contextualized instructional practices in Filipino language education, how learners demonstrate engagement during classroom instruction, and what challenges teachers encounter in delivering meaningful Filipino language learning experiences within a rural Philippine school context. Using a descriptive qualitative research design, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving elementary teachers and selected learners. Thematic analysis revealed four major themes: (1) localized and culturally responsive Filipino instruction, (2) collaborative and interactive learner engagement, (3) learner-centered and contextualized literacy practices, and (4) instructional and classroom challenges in rural Filipino language education. Findings showed that teachers utilized localized examples, storytelling, community experiences, group activities, and culturally familiar instructional materials to strengthen learners' participation and comprehension in Filipino language learning. Learners became more engaged when lessons reflected their lived experiences, local culture, and familiar community situations. However, inadequate instructional resources, reading difficulties, learner diversity, and classroom limitations affected instructional implementation. The study concludes that contextualized and culturally responsive Filipino language instruction significantly enhances learner engagement and meaningful learning experiences in elementary education. Strengthening teacher support, instructional materials, and contextualized literacy programs is recommended to improve Filipino language education in rural schools.

Keywords: contextualized instruction, Filipino language education, learner engagement, elementary education, rural education, culturally responsive teaching, qualitative study

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I. INTRODUCTION

Filipino language education plays a vital role in developing learners' communication skills, cultural identity, literacy competence, and appreciation of national heritage. In elementary education, Filipino language instruction provides learners with opportunities to develop reading comprehension, oral communication, writing abilities, and critical thinking skills necessary for meaningful participation in academic and social contexts. Effective Filipino instruction also strengthens learners' appreciation of culture, identity, and community experiences.

Learner engagement is an important factor influencing language learning and literacy development. Engaged learners actively participate in classroom discussions, collaborative activities, reading tasks, and language exercises. Behavioral engagement is reflected through participation and classroom interaction, emotional engagement through enjoyment and confidence, and cognitive engagement through comprehension and meaningful application of language concepts.

Contextualized instruction has become an essential pedagogical approach in Filipino language education because it connects lessons to learners' lived experiences, socio-cultural backgrounds, and community realities. Through contextualized teaching, learners are able to relate classroom instruction to familiar experiences and cultural situations, thereby improving comprehension, participation, and language learning outcomes.

In rural Philippine schools, teachers frequently implement localized and culturally responsive instructional practices to make Filipino lessons meaningful and accessible to learners. Teachers utilize community stories, local experiences, indigenous examples, and contextualized learning materials to strengthen classroom interaction and learner participation. Such practices align with culturally

responsive pedagogy and learner-centered educational approaches that recognize learners' backgrounds and realities as important components of meaningful instruction.

Despite these instructional innovations, teachers in rural schools continue to encounter challenges related to limited instructional materials, reading difficulties, learner diversity, and insufficient literacy resources. These educational realities affect classroom instruction and learner participation in Filipino language education.

Previous studies emphasized that contextualized instruction and culturally responsive teaching positively influence learner engagement and literacy development. However, limited qualitative studies have explored how teachers in rural Philippine schools experience contextualized Filipino language instruction and how such practices influence learner engagement in elementary education.

Objectives of the Study

This study therefore aimed to explore contextualized Filipino language instruction and learner engagement from the perspectives of teachers at Masipi Elementary School, Masipi East, Cabagan, Isabela.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What contextualized instructional practices are utilized in Filipino language education?
2. How do learners demonstrate engagement during contextualized Filipino instruction?
3. What challenges do teachers encounter in delivering contextualized Filipino language education?
4. What implications may be derived for improving Filipino language instruction and learner engagement in rural schools?



Review of Related Literature

Contextualized Instruction in Filipino Language Education

Contextualized instruction refers to teaching approaches that connect lessons to learners' experiences, culture, and community realities. According to Lev Vygotsky, learning becomes meaningful when instruction is connected to learners' social and cultural experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Contextualized teaching enables learners to relate classroom concepts to real-life situations, thereby improving comprehension and participation.

Studies revealed that contextualized Filipino language instruction strengthens learners' reading comprehension, communication skills, and classroom participation (Orale & Antonio, 2022). Teachers who integrate local stories, community experiences, and culturally familiar examples create more meaningful and engaging learning environments for elementary learners.

Learner Engagement in Language Education

Learner engagement refers to learners' active participation, emotional involvement, and cognitive investment in classroom learning activities (Fredricks et al., 2004). In language education, engagement becomes evident through classroom participation, storytelling, reading interaction, collaborative discussions, and language use during classroom activities.

Research suggests that learners become more engaged when instructional activities are interactive, collaborative, and connected to their lived experiences (Christenson et al., 2012). Contextualized literacy instruction contributes positively to learners' confidence, participation, and language development.

Culturally Responsive and Learner-Centered Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy emphasizes the integration of learners' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities into classroom instruction. Geneva Gay emphasized that culturally responsive teaching improves learner participation, motivation, and academic achievement by making learning meaningful and culturally relevant (Gay, 2018).

Learner-centered instruction likewise emphasizes

flexibility, participation, collaboration, and responsiveness to learners' developmental needs. Teachers frequently utilize storytelling, cooperative learning, contextualized reading materials, and experiential activities to strengthen learner engagement and literacy development.

Challenges in Rural Language Education

Rural schools frequently encounter challenges related to limited reading materials, inadequate literacy resources, learner diversity, and insufficient instructional support (OECD, 2019). Teachers often improvise instructional materials and contextualize lessons according to available community resources and learners' literacy levels.

Despite these limitations, rural teachers demonstrate adaptability and commitment in sustaining meaningful literacy instruction. However, strengthened institutional support and literacy programs remain necessary to improve Filipino language education in rural schools.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design to explore contextualized Filipino language instruction and learner engagement experiences in elementary education within a rural Philippine school context. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to examine participants' lived experiences, instructional practices, and classroom realities within natural educational settings.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Masipi Elementary School located in Masipi East, Cabagan, Isabela, Philippines. The school serves learners from rural farming communities and reflects the realities of language and literacy instruction in geographically challenged and resource-limited educational settings.

Participants of the Study

The participants included six elementary teachers handling Filipino subjects and ten selected elementary learners. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement and experiences in Filipino language instruction and classroom learning activities.



Data Gathering Procedures

Interviews explored teachers' instructional practices, learner engagement experiences, classroom interaction, and challenges encountered in Filipino language instruction. Classroom observations focused on teacher-learner interaction, collaborative activities, literacy engagement, and contextualized instructional practices.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006). Coding, categorization, and theme generation were conducted systematically to identify meaningful patterns and interpretations from the collected qualitative data.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Credibility was established through triangulation and member checking. Dependability was ensured through audit trails and organized documentation of research procedures. Confirmability and transferability were strengthened through detailed descriptions of the research process, context, and findings.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and respect for participants were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Permission from school authorities and parental consent for learner participants were secured prior to data gathering activities.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Localized and Culturally Responsive Filipino Instruction

The findings revealed that teachers at Masipi Elementary School frequently implemented localized and culturally responsive instructional practices to make Filipino language lessons more meaningful, understandable, and engaging for elementary learners. Teachers emphasized the importance of connecting lessons to learners' daily

experiences, local culture, and community realities.

One participant shared:

“Mas naiintindihan ng mga bata kapag ang examples ay galing mismo sa buhay nila sa komunidad.”

Another teacher explained:

“Kapag local stories at familiar situations ang ginagamit namin, mas interesado silang makinig at sumali.”

Teachers integrated local stories, community experiences, farming activities, indigenous expressions, and culturally familiar examples into classroom discussions and literacy activities. Participants explained that contextualized instruction helped learners relate Filipino language concepts to their actual experiences, thereby improving comprehension and classroom participation.

Classroom observations showed that learners became more attentive and participative when lessons reflected familiar situations and local experiences. Learners actively participated during storytelling sessions, community-based examples, and contextualized reading activities.

One learner shared:

“Mas gusto ko po kapag kuwento tungkol sa lugar namin ang binabasa.”

Another learner stated:

“Mas naiintindihan ko po ang lesson kapag tungkol sa totooong buhay.”

Teachers also utilized local language expressions and contextualized examples to clarify difficult Filipino vocabulary and concepts. Participants emphasized that contextualized instruction reduced learners' hesitation in participating during classroom interaction.

One participant stated:

“Mas nagiging confident sila kapag relatable ang lesson at hindi sila nahihirapang umintindi.”

The findings suggest that localized and culturally responsive instruction significantly strengthens learner engagement and comprehension in Filipino language education. Contextualized teaching practices created meaningful and inclusive classroom experiences that encouraged participation and active interaction among learners.

These findings support the sociocultural learning theory of Lev Vygotsky, which emphasizes meaningful learning through social and cultural interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). The findings likewise align with the culturally responsive teaching framework of Geneva Gay, which highlights the



importance of connecting instruction to learners' cultural identities and lived experiences (Gay, 2018).

Theme 2: Collaborative and Interactive Learner Engagement

Another major finding revealed that collaborative and interactive classroom activities significantly enhanced learner engagement during Filipino language instruction. Teachers emphasized that learners became more participative, expressive, and confident when lessons involved group interaction, storytelling, role-playing, and collaborative literacy activities.

One teacher explained:

“Kapag may group activities at storytelling, mas active ang participation nila.”

Another participant stated:

“Mas nagiging expressive sila kapag collaborative ang learning activities.”

Teachers frequently utilized group reading, peer interaction, role-playing, oral recitation, collaborative storytelling, and language games during classroom instruction. Classroom observations revealed that learners actively interacted with classmates, shared ideas, answered questions, and participated enthusiastically during collaborative literacy tasks.

Learners also expressed enjoyment regarding interactive classroom activities.

One learner shared:

“Masaya po kapag may group work at role play.”

Another learner stated:

“Nag-eejoy po kami kapag may storytelling at games.”

Behavioral engagement was observed through increased participation, attentiveness, and task completion during classroom activities. Emotional engagement emerged through learners' enjoyment, confidence, and willingness to participate during discussions and collaborative tasks. Cognitive engagement was reflected in learners' improved comprehension, vocabulary use, and communication skills during interactive classroom activities.

One participant noted:

“Kapag interactive ang activities, mas mabilis nilang natutuhan ang lesson.”

Another teacher added:

“Mas natatandaan nila ang lesson kapag sila mismo ang involved sa activities.”

The findings indicate that collaborative and interactive instructional practices significantly contribute to learner engagement and language development in Filipino education. Interactive classroom environments encouraged learners to become active participants in the teaching-learning process.

These findings support the learner engagement framework of Fredricks et al. (2004), which emphasizes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in classroom learning activities. Similarly, Christenson et al. (2012) highlighted that collaborative and participatory classroom environments positively influence learner motivation, interaction, and academic engagement.

Theme 3: Learner-Centered and Contextualized Literacy Practices

The findings further revealed that teachers implemented learner-centered and contextualized literacy practices to address learners' varying comprehension levels and literacy needs. Teachers emphasized the importance of flexibility, scaffolding, and differentiated instruction in sustaining learner participation and understanding during Filipino language instruction.

One participant shared:

“Hindi pare-pareho ang level ng mga bata kaya kailangan i-adjust ang strategies.”

Another teacher explained:

“Mas natututo sila kapag may visual aids, pictures, at actual examples.”

Teachers utilized visual aids, reading materials, pictures, contextualized stories, songs, and differentiated classroom activities to facilitate literacy learning. Participants explained that learner-centered instructional practices allowed them to address learners' reading difficulties and communication challenges more effectively.

Classroom observations revealed that learners became more engaged when teachers utilized colorful instructional materials, localized reading texts, and experiential literacy activities. Learners demonstrated stronger comprehension and participation during contextualized reading and oral communication tasks.

One learner shared:



“Mas naiintindihan po namin kapag may pictures at support as major challenges affecting Filipino language examples.” instruction. Participants explained that some learners

Another learner stated:

“Mas gusto ko po ang reading kapag tungkol sa experiences and oral communication, which affected classroom namin.” participation and literacy development.

Teachers emphasized that contextualized literacy instruction improved learners’ confidence and classroom participation, particularly among struggling readers and shy learners.

One participant stated:

“Nagiging mas confident silang magsalita kapag naiintindihan nila ang topic.”

Another teacher added:

“Mas lumalakas ang loob nilang magbasa kapag supportive ang environment.”

The findings suggest that learner-centered and contextualized literacy practices contribute positively to learner confidence, participation, and literacy development in Filipino language education. Flexible instructional approaches enabled teachers to create supportive and meaningful literacy learning experiences for elementary learners.

These findings align with learner-centered pedagogical frameworks emphasizing differentiated and responsive instruction in elementary education. The results also support contextualized literacy studies emphasizing the importance of culturally meaningful and experiential learning approaches in language development.

Theme 4: Instructional and Classroom Challenges in Rural Filipino Language Education

Despite the positive instructional practices implemented by teachers, participants encountered several classroom and instructional challenges affecting the delivery of quality Filipino language education in the rural school setting.

One participant stated:

“Mahirap minsan kasi kulang ang reading materials at resources.”

Another teacher explained:

“May mga batang hirap pa rin sa reading at comprehension kaya kailangan ng mas tutok.”

Teachers identified limited instructional materials, insufficient reading resources, learner diversity, reading difficulties, classroom distractions, and limited parental

One participant shared:

“Kailangan minsan gumawa pa ng sariling materials para may magamit sa klase.”

Another teacher noted:

“May mga batang kulang sa support sa bahay kaya nahihirapang sumabay.”

Classroom observations showed that teachers frequently improvised instructional materials and modified lessons according to learners’ literacy levels and classroom conditions. Teachers exerted additional effort in conducting remediation activities and individualized instructional support for struggling learners.

Learners also recognized instructional limitations.

One learner shared:

“Mas gusto po namin kapag mas maraming books at stories.”

Another learner stated:

“Minsan po nahihirapan kami sa mahahabang babasahin.”

Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated resilience, creativity, and commitment in sustaining meaningful literacy instruction and learner engagement. Participants emphasized that learner improvement and participation motivated them to continue implementing contextualized instructional practices despite limited resources.

The findings indicate that while contextualized Filipino instruction strengthens learner engagement, institutional support, literacy resources, and instructional materials remain essential in improving literacy education within rural school settings.

These findings support OECD (2019), which emphasized that rural schools frequently encounter instructional and literacy resource limitations affecting educational quality and learner support. Similarly, Dela Peña (2020) highlighted that rural teachers continuously adapt instructional practices despite classroom and resource-related challenges.

Discussion

The study revealed that contextualized and culturally responsive Filipino language instruction significantly



enhances learner engagement and meaningful literacy learning experiences among elementary learners in rural Philippine school settings. Teachers at Masipi Elementary School demonstrated learner-centered and adaptive instructional practices that strengthened learners' participation, comprehension, confidence, and classroom interaction.

Localized and culturally responsive teaching practices enabled learners to connect classroom lessons to their daily experiences, community realities, and cultural backgrounds. Such instructional approaches improved learners' understanding of Filipino language concepts while creating meaningful and inclusive classroom experiences.

Collaborative and interactive literacy activities also strengthened learners' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during classroom instruction. Storytelling, group discussions, role-playing, and contextualized reading activities encouraged active learner participation, communication, and confidence in language use.

Learner-centered and contextualized literacy practices further contributed to improved learner participation and literacy development by addressing diverse learner needs and comprehension levels. Teachers' use of visual aids, differentiated instruction, and supportive classroom environments strengthened learners' confidence and willingness to participate during language activities.

However, classroom and instructional challenges related to inadequate reading materials, learner diversity, literacy difficulties, and limited parental support continue to affect instructional implementation in rural Filipino language education. Despite these limitations, teachers demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and commitment in sustaining meaningful literacy instruction.

The findings highlight the importance of strengthening contextualized literacy programs, instructional support systems, and culturally responsive teaching practices to improve learner engagement and language development in elementary education.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that contextualized Filipino language instruction significantly strengthens learner

engagement, participation, comprehension, and literacy development among elementary learners in rural Philippine school contexts. Teachers at Masipi Elementary School implemented localized, culturally responsive, and learner-centered instructional practices that promoted meaningful language learning experiences. Collaborative and interactive literacy activities enhanced learners' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement through active participation, storytelling, discussion, and contextualized classroom interaction. Learner-centered literacy practices further contributed to learners' confidence and communication skills development.

However, challenges related to inadequate instructional materials, reading difficulties, learner diversity, and limited literacy resources continue to affect the delivery of quality Filipino language instruction in rural schools. Despite these limitations, teachers demonstrated creativity, flexibility, and commitment in implementing meaningful and engaging literacy instruction.

The study emphasizes the importance of contextualized, culturally responsive, and learner-centered pedagogical approaches in improving Filipino language education and learner engagement within rural educational settings.

Implications of the Study

The findings imply that Filipino language instruction should continuously emphasize contextualized, culturally responsive, and learner-centered pedagogical approaches to strengthen literacy development and learner engagement among elementary learners.

Educational leaders and policymakers may strengthen literacy programs by providing adequate reading materials, contextualized instructional resources, and classroom support necessary for effective Filipino language education in rural schools. Schools may also encourage the development of localized reading materials and culturally meaningful literacy activities.

Professional development programs focusing on contextualized literacy instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy, learner engagement strategies, and differentiated language instruction may further enhance teachers' instructional effectiveness.

Future researchers may conduct similar qualitative or mixed-methods studies exploring literacy development, learner engagement, and contextualized instructional innovations across diverse elementary school contexts.



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