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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Learning Styles and Instructional Engagement in Filipino Language Education Among Junior High School Learners in the Cagayan National High School Context

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Abstract

Learning styles and instructional engagement significantly influence learners' participation, comprehension, communication competence, and classroom interaction in Filipino language education. This study explored the learning styles and instructional engagement among Junior High School learners in Filipino language education at Cagayan National High School. Anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory and Multiple Intelligences Theory, the study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to examine learners' classroom experiences, instructional participation, learning preferences, and engagement in Filipino language instruction. Participants included selected Junior High School learners and Filipino teachers. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach was utilized in analyzing the gathered data. Findings revealed that interactive and differentiated instructional approaches significantly contribute to learner engagement and participation in Filipino language education. Learners demonstrated greater interest and confidence when instructional activities aligned with their preferred learning styles, including visual, auditory, collaborative, and experiential learning experiences. The findings further revealed that contextualized discussions, collaborative activities, storytelling, multimedia integration, and learner-centered classroom practices strengthen learners' engagement and communication competence in Filipino instruction. However, challenges such as limited confidence in oral participation, varying learning preferences, classroom anxiety, and insufficient instructional resources affected instructional engagement and classroom participation. The study concludes that differentiated and learner-centered instructional practices significantly contribute to meaningful engagement and language learning experiences among Junior High School learners. Strengthening contextualized instruction, collaborative learning activities, and differentiated teaching approaches is recommended to improve instructional engagement in Filipino language education.

Keywords: learning styles, instructional engagement, Filipino language education, learner participation, qualitative research, secondary education, language learning

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INTRODUCTION

Language education plays an important role in developing learners' communication skills, cultural understanding, critical thinking, and academic participation. Filipino language education, in particular, contributes significantly to learners' linguistic competence, cultural identity, social interaction, and appreciation of Philippine literature and communication practices. Through Filipino instruction, learners develop the ability to express ideas effectively, interpret literary texts, participate in discussions, and engage meaningfully in social and academic communication.

In Junior High School education, learners demonstrate diverse learning preferences and engagement patterns that influence classroom participation and instructional interaction. Learning styles refer to learners' preferred ways of processing, understanding, and responding to instructional experiences. Some learners become more engaged through visual presentations and multimedia materials, while others learn more effectively through oral discussions, collaborative activities, experiential learning, and interactive participation.

Instructional engagement refers to learners' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation in classroom learning activities. Behavioral engagement involves active participation in discussions, classroom tasks, and instructional activities. Emotional engagement refers to learners' confidence, motivation, enjoyment, and emotional responses toward classroom learning experiences. Cognitive engagement involves learners' mental effort, comprehension, reflection, and deeper understanding during instructional activities.

Within the Philippine educational context, the Department of Education emphasizes learner-centered, contextualized, and differentiated instruction under the K–12 curriculum to strengthen meaningful learning experiences and active classroom participation. Filipino language teachers are encouraged to implement instructional approaches that recognize learners' diversity, cultural backgrounds, communication styles, and learning preferences.

At Cagayan National High School, Filipino teachers continuously implement learner-centered and differentiated instructional practices to improve learner participation and engagement in language education. Teachers integrate storytelling, collaborative discussions, multimedia resources, contextualized activities, literary analysis, and experiential learning experiences to strengthen learners' communication competence and appreciation of Filipino language and culture.

However, despite these instructional efforts, learners continue to encounter challenges related to oral participation, classroom confidence, varying learning preferences, communication anxiety, and limited instructional resources. These challenges may affect learners' engagement and participation in Filipino language education.

Several studies emphasized that differentiated and learner-centered instructional approaches positively influence learner engagement and academic participation. Tomlinson (2019) explained that differentiated instruction strengthens learner participation and understanding by addressing learners' varying abilities and learning preferences. Similarly, Gardner (2020) argued that learners become more engaged when instructional activities align with their preferred intelligences and learning experiences.

Although learner engagement and instructional practices have been widely discussed in educational research, there remains limited qualitative research exploring learning styles and instructional engagement in Filipino language education within Philippine secondary school contexts. Thus, this study aimed to explore learning styles and instructional engagement among Junior High School learners in Filipino language education at Cagayan National High School.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory by Vygotsky (1978) and Multiple Intelligences Theory by Gardner (2020).

Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners actively construct understanding through interaction, collaboration, reflection, and meaningful learning experiences. Language learning becomes more effective when instructional activities are participatory, learner-centered, and socially meaningful.

Multiple Intelligences Theory explains that learners possess diverse intelligences and learning preferences that influence classroom participation and learning experiences. Learners become more engaged when instructional approaches accommodate different learning styles and modes of participation.

These theories provided the framework for understanding how learning styles influence instructional engagement and participation in Filipino language education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to explore learning styles and instructional engagement among Junior High School learners in Filipino language education at Cagayan National High School. Specifically, it sought to examine learners' classroom experiences and participation in Filipino language instruction and identify learning styles and instructional practices that contribute to learner engagement. The study further aimed to explore how learners demonstrate behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during Filipino instruction. Additionally, it intended to identify the challenges encountered by learners and teachers in instructional engagement and classroom participation. Finally, the study aimed to derive insights from the participants' experiences that may serve as basis for strengthening instructional engagement in Filipino language education.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore learning styles and instructional engagement among Junior High School learners in Filipino language education at Cagayan National High School. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gather rich and contextualized descriptions regarding learners' classroom experiences, participation, instructional interactions, and learning preferences within Filipino language instruction. Through qualitative inquiry, the study captured the lived experiences of learners and teachers and examined how learning styles influence instructional engagement and classroom participation. The study was conducted at Cagayan National High School, a public secondary school operating under the supervision of the Department of Education. The school serves learners from diverse socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds.

The participants of the study included selected Junior High School learners and Filipino teachers. Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants who possessed direct experiences and active involvement in Filipino language instruction and classroom learning activities. The selected learners represented varying participation levels, learning preferences, and engagement experiences.

The study utilized semi-structured interview guides, focus group discussion guides, classroom observation notes, and document analysis checklists as qualitative research instruments. Interview questions focused on classroom participation, learning experiences, instructional practices, communication activities, learner engagement, and challenges encountered during Filipino language instruction.

Prior to data gathering, permission was secured from school administrators and ethical considerations including

informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study. Data were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. All interviews and discussions were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The gathered data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. Significant statements and recurring patterns were identified, coded, categorized, and organized into themes representing learning styles and instructional engagement experiences in Filipino language education. Trustworthiness was established through triangulation, member checking, audit trails, and thick description to ensure credibility and dependability of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Differentiated and Interactive Instructional Practices Enhance Learner Engagement

The findings revealed that differentiated and interactive instructional practices significantly contribute to learner engagement and participation in Filipino language education among Junior High School learners at Cagayan National High School. Participants emphasized that learners become more engaged when instructional activities are varied, collaborative, creative, and aligned with their preferred learning styles.

One learner participant stated:

"Mas gusto ko ang Filipino kapag may group activities at role-playing kasi mas nakakatuwa at naiintindihan ko ang lesson."

Another learner shared:

"Kapag interactive ang discussion, mas active kaming sumasali sa klase."

Similarly, another participant explained:

"Mas natututo ako kapag may visual presentations at storytelling activities."

These responses indicate that differentiated and learner-centered instructional approaches positively influence learners' behavioral and emotional engagement during Filipino instruction. Learners become more participative and interested when classroom activities accommodate different learning preferences and modes of participation.

Teachers also emphasized that interactive instructional strategies improve classroom participation and communication skills.

One teacher participant stated:

"Mas nagiging active ang learners kapag varied at creative ang activities."

Another participant explained:

"Kapag collaborative ang instruction, mas maraming learners ang gustong makilahok."

The findings suggest that differentiated and interactive instructional practices strengthen learners' classroom participation and engagement in Filipino language learning. Learners become more motivated and expressive when instructional environments are participatory, enjoyable, and learner-centered.

The findings support Tomlinson (2019), who emphasized that differentiated instruction strengthens learner participation and comprehension by addressing learners' varying learning preferences and abilities. Similarly, Gardner (2020) argued that learners become more engaged when instructional activities align with their preferred intelligences and learning experiences.

The findings further align with Vygotsky's (1978) Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that meaningful learning develops through interaction, collaboration, and socially meaningful experiences.

Classroom observations further revealed that learners demonstrated higher levels of attentiveness and participation during storytelling, group discussions, collaborative literary analysis, and role-playing activities.

One learner participant shared:

"Mas enjoyable ang Filipino kapag interactive at collaborative ang activities."

This finding highlights the importance of differentiated and interactive instructional practices in strengthening learner engagement in Filipino language education.

Theme 2: Contextualized and Culturally Relevant Instruction Promotes Meaningful Language Learning

The study further revealed that contextualized and culturally relevant instructional practices significantly strengthen learners' understanding and appreciation of Filipino language and literature. Participants emphasized that learners become more interested and engaged when lessons are connected to real-life experiences, local culture, social issues, and familiar community contexts.

One learner participant stated:

"Mas naiintindihan ko ang lesson kapag related sa totoong buhay at experiences namin."

Another learner shared:

"Kapag may examples na tungkol sa kultura at araw-araw na buhay, mas meaningful ang lesson."

Similarly, another participant explained:

"Mas na-appreciate ko ang Filipino kapag relatable ang discussions."

These responses indicate that contextualized instruction positively influences learners' cognitive engagement and conceptual understanding during Filipino language instruction. Learners become more capable of interpreting literary texts, expressing ideas, and participating in discussions when instructional content is meaningful and connected to familiar experiences.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of contextualized and culturally responsive teaching in Filipino language education.

One teacher participant stated:

"Mas nagiging meaningful ang Filipino kapag kinokonekta sa kultura at experiences ng learners."

Another participant explained:

"Kapag relatable ang lesson, mas interesado at participative ang learners."

The findings suggest that contextualized instruction strengthens learners' appreciation of Filipino language, literature, and communication practices. Learners become more reflective and engaged when instructional discussions address real-life situations and social realities.

The findings support Gay (2018), who emphasized that culturally responsive and contextualized instruction strengthens learner engagement and meaningful participation by connecting lessons to learners' cultural experiences. Similarly, Freire (2020) argued that meaningful learning occurs when instruction is connected to learners' social realities and lived experiences.

The findings further align with Constructivist Learning Theory, which explains that learners develop understanding more effectively through meaningful interaction and contextualized experiences (Vygotsky, 1978).

Participants further revealed that contextualized instruction improves confidence in expressing ideas and participating in discussions.

One learner participant stated:

"Mas confident akong magsalita kapag relatable ang topic."

This finding highlights the importance of contextualized and culturally relevant instructional practices in promoting meaningful engagement in Filipino language education.

Theme 3: Collaborative Learning and Oral Communication Activities Strengthen Learner Confidence

The findings revealed that collaborative learning and oral communication activities significantly contribute to learners' confidence and instructional engagement in Filipino language education. Participants consistently emphasized that debates, oral presentations, group discussions, storytelling, and peer interaction activities help improve communication competence and classroom participation.

One learner participant stated:

"Mas nagiging confident ako kapag may reporting at oral activities."

Another learner shared:

"Nakakatulong ang group discussions para mas maipahayag namin ang ideas namin."

Similarly, another participant explained:

"Mas natututo kami kapag nakakapag-share kami ng opinions at experiences."

These responses indicate that collaborative and oral communication activities positively influence learners' behavioral and emotional engagement during Filipino instruction. Learners become more expressive and participative when classroom activities encourage communication, interaction, and collaborative learning.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of oral participation and collaborative interaction in strengthening communication competence.

One teacher participant stated:

“Importante ang oral activities para mahasa ang communication skills ng learners.”

Another participant explained:

“Kapag collaborative ang environment, mas nagiging expressive ang learners.”

The findings suggest that collaborative instructional environments strengthen learners’ communication confidence, participation, and engagement in language learning activities.

The findings align with Fredricks et al. (2019), who argued that emotional and behavioral engagement increase when learners actively participate in classroom interaction and collaborative learning activities. Similarly, Pianta et al. (2021) emphasized that supportive and participatory classroom environments strengthen learner confidence and communication competence.

The findings further revealed that collaborative learning environments reduce learners’ fear and hesitation during oral participation.

One learner participant shared:

“Mas comfortable akong magsalita kapag supportive ang classmates at teacher.”

This finding highlights the importance of collaborative learning and oral communication activities in strengthening instructional engagement in Filipino language education.

Theme 4: Classroom Anxiety, Limited Confidence, and Resource Constraints Affect Instructional Engagement

Despite positive instructional experiences, the findings revealed that learners and teachers encounter several challenges affecting instructional engagement in Filipino language education. Participants identified classroom anxiety, fear of public speaking, varying learning preferences, limited instructional resources, and low confidence in oral participation as major barriers to classroom engagement.

One learner participant stated:

“Nahihiya akong magsalita minsan kasi baka mali ang grammar o pronunciation ko.”

Another learner explained:

“May pagkakataon na kinakabahan akong sumagot sa harap ng klase.”

Similarly, another participant shared:

“Minsan hindi ako makasabay kapag mabilis ang discussion.”

These responses indicate that emotional and communication-related barriers negatively influence learners’ classroom participation and engagement during Filipino instruction. Learners who experience anxiety and low confidence become less willing to participate in oral communication and classroom discussions.

Teachers also emphasized that limited instructional resources and varying learner abilities affect instructional delivery and classroom participation.

One teacher participant stated:

“Challenge din minsan ang kakulangan sa instructional materials at multimedia resources.”

Another participant explained:

“Iba-iba rin ang confidence at participation level ng learners.”

The findings suggest that instructional engagement in Filipino language education is influenced not only by instructional practices but also by emotional experiences, communication confidence, and institutional support systems.

The findings support OECD (2019), which highlighted that classroom anxiety and low academic confidence significantly affect learner participation and engagement. Similarly, Gardner (2020) emphasized that learners’ varying intelligences and communication preferences influence classroom interaction and participation.

Participants further revealed that some learners become hesitant to express ideas because of fear of criticism from classmates.

One learner participant stated:

“Nahihiya akong mag-share kapag baka pagtawanan ang opinion ko.”

This finding implies the importance of creating emotionally safe and inclusive classroom environments that encourage communication, self-expression, and respectful interaction.

Despite these challenges, participants emphasized that supportive teachers and collaborative classroom environments help improve confidence and participation.

One learner participant shared:

“Mas nagiging confident ako kapag supportive ang teacher at classmates.”

This finding highlights the resilience of learners and the importance of supportive instructional practices in sustaining meaningful engagement in Filipino language education.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that differentiated, contextualized, and learner-centered instructional practices significantly contribute to instructional engagement and meaningful learning experiences among Junior High School learners at Cagayan National High School. Interactive instructional activities, collaborative learning experiences, and oral communication tasks strengthen learners' participation, communication competence, and confidence in Filipino language education.

The findings further revealed that contextualized and culturally relevant instructional practices promote meaningful language learning experiences by helping learners connect lessons to their real-life experiences, culture, and social realities. Learners become more engaged and reflective when instructional discussions are relatable and socially meaningful.

The study also found that collaborative learning environments and supportive teacher facilitation significantly influence learners' emotional engagement, communication confidence, and classroom participation. Positive teacher-learner and peer relationships help reduce fear, hesitation, and communication anxiety during Filipino instruction.

However, the findings revealed that classroom anxiety, low confidence in oral participation, varying learning preferences, limited instructional resources, and fear of criticism continue to affect instructional engagement among learners.

Overall, the study concludes that meaningful instructional practices and supportive classroom environments significantly contribute to learner engagement and participation in Filipino language education. Strengthening differentiated instruction, collaborative learning environments, contextualized teaching approaches, and emotionally supportive classrooms is essential in improving instructional engagement among Junior High School learners.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study provide important implications for Filipino language education, instructional practices, learner engagement, curriculum implementation, educational leadership, and future research. The study emphasizes the importance of differentiated, contextualized, and learner-centered instructional approaches in strengthening instructional engagement and communication competence among learners.

Educational Implications

The findings imply that Filipino language instruction should become more differentiated, interactive, collaborative, and contextualized to strengthen learners' participation, confidence, and communication competence. Teachers may integrate storytelling, debates, collaborative discussions, multimedia presentations, role-playing, and experiential learning activities to improve learner engagement and language learning experiences.

The study further implies that Filipino language education should focus not only on language structure and literary analysis but also on meaningful communication, cultural appreciation, and learner expression. Additionally, the findings suggest that emotionally supportive classroom environments significantly contribute

to learners' willingness to participate in oral communication and collaborative learning activities.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings imply that teachers play a critical role in shaping learners' engagement and classroom participation in Filipino language education. Teachers should demonstrate flexibility, encouragement, creativity, and learner-centered pedagogical approaches in facilitating instructional activities.

The study also highlights the importance of differentiated and culturally responsive instructional practices in strengthening learner participation and communication competence. Teachers may utilize contextualized examples, collaborative learning tasks, oral communication exercises, and multimedia-assisted instruction to improve engagement and comprehension.

Furthermore, the findings imply that supportive instructional environments reduce classroom anxiety and encourage learners to participate actively in discussions and communication activities.

Institutional and Policy Implications

The findings provide important implications for educational leaders and policymakers within the Department of Education regarding the strengthening of Filipino language instruction and learner support systems in secondary schools. Educational institutions may strengthen language education by providing contextualized instructional materials, multimedia resources, and professional development programs focusing on differentiated and learner-centered instructional approaches.

The study further implies the importance of strengthening institutional support systems that address learners' communication anxiety, participation difficulties, and varying learning preferences.

Moreover, the findings suggest the need for adequate instructional resources and supportive learning environments that improve communication competence and classroom engagement among learners.

Social and Cultural Implications

The findings imply that meaningful Filipino language learning experiences contribute significantly to learners' communication skills, cultural appreciation, confidence, and social awareness necessary for academic participation and responsible citizenship.

The study also highlights the importance of creating inclusive and respectful classroom environments that encourage self-expression, collaboration, and appreciation of Filipino culture and language.

Implications for Future Research

The findings highlight the need for future studies exploring learning styles and instructional engagement across different language learning contexts and educational settings. Future researchers may conduct comparative studies involving urban and rural schools to examine variations in instructional engagement, learning preferences, and classroom participation.

Longitudinal and mixed-methods studies may also be conducted to explore the long-term influence of differentiated and contextualized instruction on learners' communication competence and academic performance.

Future studies may likewise investigate the role of digital technology, multilingual instruction, creative pedagogy, and cultural integration in strengthening instructional engagement in Filipino language education. Overall, the study emphasizes that strengthening instructional engagement in Filipino language education requires collaborative efforts among teachers, school leaders, educational institutions, policymakers, and learners. Differentiated instruction, collaborative learning environments, contextualized teaching practices, and emotionally supportive classrooms are essential in promoting meaningful learning experiences among Junior High School learners.

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