

Filipino Language Teaching Implementation and Learner Communicative Engagement in Public Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the implementation of Filipino language teaching and its association with learner communicative engagement in public secondary schools in the City of Ilagan, Isabela. A classroom-linked multilevel explanatory correlational design was employed to account for learners nested within Filipino classes and schools. Filipino teachers and junior high school learners were selected through a multistage probability sampling procedure. Data were gathered using validated instruments that measured curriculum alignment, contextualized language instruction, communicative learning facilitation, integration of language skills, assessment-based instructional adjustment, and six dimensions of communicative engagement. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis,

variance partitioning, and three-level hierarchical linear modeling were applied. Findings showed that Filipino language teaching was highly implemented, with curriculum alignment receiving the highest rating and assessment-based instructional adjustment obtaining the lowest. Learners were generally highly engaged, particularly in cognitive investment and sustained attention, while confidence in expressing ideas and willingness to communicate in Filipino were only moderate. The multilevel analysis revealed that learner engagement varied significantly across learners, classes, and schools. Filipino language teaching implementation significantly predicted communicative engagement, with communicative learning facilitation emerging as the strongest instructional predictor. Contextualized instruction, integrated language activities, and assessment-informed adjustment also contributed significantly. The findings indicated that curriculum compliance alone was insufficient to promote meaningful communication. Filipino teachers should strengthen authentic discussion, collaborative interpretation, formative feedback, and supportive speaking opportunities to improve learners' confidence and willingness to communicate.

Keywords: *communicative engagement, Filipino language teaching, learner participation, multilevel analysis, public secondary schools, teaching implementation*

INTRODUCTION

Language education carries a responsibility that extends beyond teaching vocabulary, grammar, and literary forms. It enables learners to explain ideas, interpret experiences, participate in discussion, and respond appropriately to people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In Philippine basic education, Filipino serves both as a learning area and as a means through which learners encounter the nation's history, literature, values, and social realities. Its classroom teaching is expected to develop communicative competence, reflective and critical thinking, literary appreciation, cultural literacy, and continuing learning. These goals place communication at the heart of Filipino instruction because learners are not expected merely to recognize correct language forms. They are also expected to use Filipino to express thoughts and emotions, examine social concerns,

interpret texts, and interact respectfully with others. The quality of Filipino language teaching therefore depends on how effectively curriculum intentions are translated into actual classroom experiences that give learners meaningful reasons to listen, speak, read, write, and respond (Department of Education, 2016).

The implementation of Filipino language teaching involves the decisions teachers make before, during, and after instruction. It may be seen in the selection of texts, formulation of questions, organization of classroom interaction, use of learning materials, integration of language skills, and assessment of learner performance. A curriculum may contain clear standards, yet these standards acquire educational value only when teachers interpret them carefully and apply them according to learner needs. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers places this responsibility within several areas of professional practice, including content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, learner diversity, curriculum planning, assessment, and professional development. These standards suggest that effective implementation cannot be judged solely by the completion of prescribed lessons. It must also consider whether instruction is accurate, inclusive, responsive, and capable of supporting learner participation. Filipino teachers must therefore balance curriculum coverage with opportunities for learners to use the language in thoughtful and socially meaningful ways (Department of Education, 2017).

Learner communicative engagement refers to more than visible participation or the frequency with which a learner answers a teacher's question. A learner may speak several times during a lesson without carefully considering the ideas being discussed, while another may participate less frequently but listen closely, connect ideas, and offer a meaningful response. Engagement in a language classroom includes behavioral involvement, cognitive effort, emotional investment, and social interaction. It can be observed when learners sustain attention, ask relevant questions, contribute ideas, negotiate meaning, cooperate with classmates, and persist when communication becomes difficult. These dimensions matter because language develops through use rather than through passive exposure alone. Classroom activities that require explanation, interpretation, comparison, argumentation, storytelling, and collaborative problem solving allow learners to treat Filipino as a living means of communication. Such activities also help teachers distinguish genuine involvement from simple compliance with classroom routines (Philp & Duchesne, 2016).

Engagement also concerns how learners relate to the language itself. Learners become engaged with language when they notice how words, expressions, grammatical patterns, and forms of discourse create meaning. This may occur when they examine why a character speaks in a particular manner, compare formal and informal expressions, revise a written argument, or reflect on how language changes according to audience and purpose. This kind of attention encourages learners to approach Filipino as a system that can be examined, questioned, and used creatively. It moves instruction away from the memorization of isolated rules and toward informed language choices. Teachers contribute to this process by presenting language features through texts and situations that learners can recognize, discuss, and connect with their experiences. When classroom instruction invites curiosity and purposeful analysis, learners gain greater control over their language use and become more capable of communicating with clarity, sensitivity, and confidence (Svalberg, 2018).

A learner's willingness to communicate is shaped not only by knowledge of the language but also by the relationships and conditions found in the classroom. Learners may hesitate to speak when they fear ridicule, correction delivered without sensitivity, or judgment from classmates. Others may remain quiet when questions allow only one expected answer or when classroom talk is dominated by the teacher. By contrast, learners are more likely to share ideas when they believe that their experiences are respected and that mistakes are treated as part of learning. Communication must therefore be understood as participation in meaning making with others rather than as the mechanical production of correct sentences. Filipino language lessons can provide this form of participation through dialogue, group interpretation, oral presentation, debate, role playing, creative performance, and discussion of issues that affect learners' families and communities. These opportunities can strengthen both language ability and the learner's sense of belonging in classroom discourse (Kubanyiova & Yue, 2019).

Research on language learning has shown that engagement is a complex construct whose meaning and measurement vary across studies. A systematic review of language engagement research found that scholars have used different definitions, theoretical frameworks, and methods to examine how learners participate in language

learning. This variation suggests that engagement should not be reduced to a single behavior, such as attendance, task completion, or recitation. It must be examined through connected indicators that represent attention, effort, interaction, emotional response, and investment in communication. For classroom research, this means considering whether learners listen actively, communicate ideas, respond to peers, complete language tasks with purpose, and remain involved when activities require sustained thinking. It also means examining the teaching practices that may invite or restrict such behaviors. A clearer account of Filipino language teaching implementation can therefore help explain why communicative engagement differs among learners and across classrooms (Hiver et al., 2024).

The implementation of Filipino instruction may also be affected by the preparation of teachers, the availability of appropriate materials, and the linguistic experiences of learners. A Philippine study on the teaching of Filipino identified concerns related to out-of-field teaching, pedagogical adjustment, and rapid language transition. These concerns show that assigning a teacher to the subject does not automatically ensure strong implementation. Teachers need sufficient command of Filipino, familiarity with its literature and cultural foundations, and the ability to design instruction suited to learners with different home languages and levels of proficiency. Public secondary school classrooms may include learners who speak regional languages at home, use Filipino mainly through media and peer interaction, or communicate more comfortably in English in academic situations. Such diversity requires careful instructional choices. Teachers must create bridges among the languages learners already use while maintaining clear expectations for appropriate, accurate, and meaningful communication in Filipino (Seballos et al., 2024).

Broader evidence on the literacy performance of Filipino adolescents adds urgency to the improvement of language instruction. In the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment, only 24 percent of participating students from the Philippines reached at least Level 2 in reading. At this level, students are expected to identify a main idea, locate information using stated criteria, and reflect on the purpose and form of a text when directed to do so. Although this assessment does not measure Filipino subject performance alone, the findings reveal difficulties in reading comprehension and interpretation that affect learning across languages and subjects. Filipino classes can contribute to addressing these difficulties by engaging learners in close reading, oral explanation, text analysis, evidence-based discussion, and purposeful writing. Stronger communicative engagement may give learners more frequent opportunities to clarify understanding, examine different interpretations, and organize their thoughts before expressing them in spoken or written form (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023).

These concerns point to the need to examine Filipino language teaching not only through curriculum documents or teacher reports but also through its connection with learner participation. A teacher may demonstrate strong content knowledge yet provide limited room for learner talk. Another may use interactive activities without ensuring that communication develops accuracy, depth, or cultural understanding. Determining the extent to which Filipino language teaching is implemented and the level at which learners communicate, respond, collaborate, and invest effort can provide a more grounded picture of classroom practice. It can also identify aspects of instruction that support active language use and those that require improvement. Thus, the present study examines these two areas and determines how the implementation of Filipino language teaching relates to the communicative engagement of learners. Its findings may guide instructional planning, teacher development, classroom support, and school-based initiatives intended to make Filipino lessons more participatory, meaningful, and responsive to learners.

Literature Review

Filipino Language Teaching as Curriculum Enactment

Filipino language teaching implementation should be understood as the actual enactment of curricular expectations rather than the simple delivery of prescribed content. Teachers interpret competencies, select texts, organize learning activities, adjust explanations, and determine how learners will demonstrate understanding. These decisions shape whether the curriculum becomes a meaningful classroom experience or remains a list of

standards to be covered. Datnow (2020) explained that teachers occupy a central position in educational reform because their beliefs, professional knowledge, collaboration, and capacity to exercise judgment influence how policies are carried into practice. This view is especially relevant to Filipino instruction, where teachers must connect formal language competencies with the varied linguistic backgrounds, interests, and experiences of secondary school learners. Implementation therefore includes the teacher's ability to contextualize lessons, use appropriate instructional materials, manage classroom discourse, and respond to differences in learner readiness. A systematic review by Cong-Lem (2021) further showed that professional agency is shaped jointly by teacher capacity, implementation strategies, and workplace conditions. Filipino language teaching may consequently vary across schools even when teachers follow the same curriculum guide. Examining implementation requires attention to what teachers actually do, how consistently they apply communicative and learner-responsive practices, and how school conditions support or limit their instructional decisions.

Meaning-Focused and Communicative Language Instruction

Communicative language instruction places purposeful language use at the center of learning. Rather than treating grammar, vocabulary, reading, speaking, and writing as separate areas, it brings these skills together through activities that require learners to understand messages, express ideas, and respond to others. Ellis (2017) argued that task-based language teaching can create meaningful opportunities for communication while still allowing teachers to address language form, explicit instruction, and differences in task complexity. This balance is important in Filipino classes because communication should not sacrifice accuracy, organization, or appropriate language use. Learners need opportunities to discuss literary selections, explain cultural practices, defend interpretations, present viewpoints, and produce spoken or written texts for identifiable audiences. Sato (2017) also found that learners' beliefs about interaction influenced their classroom behavior and language development. Learners who viewed peer interaction as valuable were more likely to participate productively, provide assistance, seek clarification, and work through communication difficulties. These findings indicate that communicative teaching depends on both the design of the activity and the quality of interaction encouraged by the teacher. Filipino instruction becomes more communicative when tasks require genuine exchange, allow several possible responses, and give learners enough support to communicate with confidence and substance.

Behavioral, Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Engagement

Learner communicative engagement involves several connected forms of participation. Behavioral engagement is shown through attention, task involvement, and willingness to contribute. Cognitive engagement appears when learners interpret ideas, examine language choices, relate new information to prior knowledge, and improve their responses. Emotional engagement concerns interest, enjoyment, confidence, and the feelings learners associate with classroom communication. Social engagement is evident when learners listen to others, extend a classmate's idea, ask for clarification, provide feedback, and participate responsibly in group communication. Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) maintained that engagement extends beyond motivation because a learner may value language learning but still remain passive during classroom tasks. Teachers must therefore create conditions that initiate participation and sustain it throughout the lesson. Dao (2020) demonstrated that direct instruction in interaction strategies improved learners' cognitive, social, and emotional involvement during peer activities. Learners produced more ideas, encouraged partners to speak, reflected on one another's contributions, and displayed more positive responses after receiving structured guidance. For Filipino classes, these dimensions suggest that communicative engagement should not be measured only through recitation frequency. It should also reflect the depth of learner responses, persistence in completing language tasks, responsiveness to classmates, and willingness to use Filipino for sustained and purposeful communication.

Teaching Practices and Learner Communicative Engagement

The connection between teaching implementation and communicative engagement rests on the kinds of opportunities teachers provide and the value learners attach to those opportunities. A language activity is more likely to invite participation when its purpose is clear, its content is relevant, and its level of difficulty allows

learners to contribute without removing the need for effort. Vo (2023) found that perceived task relevance was a stronger predictor of language learner engagement than simply offering choices. This finding suggests that learners participate more meaningfully when they recognize how an activity relates to their goals, experiences, or actual communication needs. Filipino teachers may foster this relevance by using local narratives, community concerns, social issues, media texts, and situations that learners can discuss from informed personal positions. Rahimi and Ong (2023) likewise found that expert language teachers combined strong instructional knowledge with caring relationships, meaning-focused activities, and opportunities for learners to exercise agency. Their practices supported behavioral, cognitive, emotional, social, and agentic engagement. These findings provide a basis for expecting an association between Filipino language teaching implementation and learner communicative engagement. When instruction offers clear guidance, meaningful content, supportive interaction, and space for learner expression, students are more likely to listen actively, exchange ideas, ask questions, elaborate responses, and communicate with greater confidence.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a classroom-linked multilevel explanatory correlational design. This design was selected because learner communicative engagement occurred within Filipino classes, while teaching implementation was shaped by teachers and the schools in which they worked. The approach allowed the study to examine the association between Filipino language teaching implementation and learner communicative engagement while accounting for the shared experiences of learners who belonged to the same class and school. Rather than treating every learner response as completely independent, the design recognized the hierarchical organization of educational data, with learners clustered within Filipino classes and classes situated within public secondary schools. No instructional condition was manipulated, and the variables were examined as they naturally occurred during the conduct of Filipino language lessons. The design also supported the estimation of classroom-level and school-level differences in communicative engagement and the extent to which these differences were associated with teaching implementation.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected public secondary schools under the Schools Division of the City of Ilagan, Isabela. The locale included schools that implemented the prescribed Filipino curriculum at the junior high school level and served learners from varied linguistic, social, and community backgrounds. Filipino classes in these schools provided an appropriate setting for examining how curriculum expectations were translated into classroom practices and how learners participated in language-related activities. The participating schools differed in enrollment size, accessibility, and community characteristics, which allowed the study to capture teaching and engagement conditions across different public secondary school environments. Rang-ayan National High School formed part of the broader educational setting from which the research problem was developed, but the investigation covered selected schools to provide a wider representation of Filipino language teaching practices within the division.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants consisted of Filipino language teachers and junior high school learners enrolled in the classes handled by the participating teachers. Teachers were included when they were officially assigned to teach Filipino during the data-gathering period and had taught the selected class for a sufficient period to establish regular instructional routines. Learners were included when they were officially enrolled in the selected Filipino classes and had attended enough lessons to provide an informed assessment of their classroom experiences. A multistage probability sampling procedure was applied. Public secondary schools were first grouped according to relevant school characteristics, after which participating schools were selected through proportionate random

sampling. Filipino classes were then randomly identified within each participating school. All eligible learners in the selected classes were invited to participate, while the corresponding Filipino teachers completed the teaching implementation instrument. This procedure preserved the connection between teacher-level practices and learner-level engagement without relying on convenience selection.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered through two linked survey instruments. The Filipino Language Teaching Implementation Scale was administered to teachers and measured curriculum alignment, contextualized language instruction, communicative learning facilitation, integration of language skills, and assessment-based instructional adjustment. The Learner Communicative Engagement Scale was administered to junior high school learners and assessed active participation, cognitive investment, interaction with classmates, confidence in expressing ideas, sustained attention, and willingness to communicate in Filipino. All statements were written in clear and age-appropriate language and were answered using a five-point response scale. A non-identifying coding system linked each learner questionnaire to the corresponding Filipino class without revealing the name of either the teacher or the learner.

The initial versions of the instruments underwent content and response-process validation. A panel composed of specialists in Filipino language education, curriculum and instruction, educational measurement, and secondary education evaluated the items according to relevance, clarity, construct alignment, cultural appropriateness, and representativeness. The item-level content validity index ranged from .83 to 1.00 for both instruments. The scale-level content validity index based on the average method was .96 for the Filipino Language Teaching Implementation Scale and .97 for the Learner Communicative Engagement Scale. These values indicated excellent content validity. Items that received lower ratings were revised to improve wording, remove possible ambiguity, and strengthen alignment with the intended dimensions. Cognitive interviews further showed that the directions, response categories, and item statements were understood as intended. Minor changes were made to several expressions that learners considered too formal or difficult.

The revised instruments were pilot-tested among Filipino teachers and junior high school learners from public secondary schools that were not included in the main investigation. The pilot responses showed adequate item variability, with corrected item-total correlations ranging from .42 to .76 for the teaching implementation scale and from .40 to .79 for the communicative engagement scale. The Filipino Language Teaching Implementation Scale obtained an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .92, while the coefficients for its dimensions ranged from .81 to .88. The Learner Communicative Engagement Scale produced an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .94, with dimensional coefficients ranging from .80 to .89. McDonald's omega coefficients were .93 for the teaching implementation scale and .94 for the communicative engagement scale. These results demonstrated good to excellent internal consistency and supported the use of both instruments in the full data collection.

Data Gathering

Approval to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate research ethics body, the Schools Division Office, and the heads of the participating public secondary schools. The researcher coordinated with designated school personnel and Filipino department coordinators to identify eligible classes and arrange data collection without interrupting examinations, major school activities, or required instructional periods. Teachers received an information sheet and consent form that explained the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the expected completion time, and the voluntary nature of participation. For learners who were minors, parental or guardian consent and learner assent were obtained before questionnaire administration.

The teacher and learner instruments were administered separately to reduce pressure, response influence, and the possibility that teachers could identify individual learner answers. Trained research assistants explained the instructions using a standardized administration guide and avoided interpreting items in ways that could lead participants toward particular responses. Completed questionnaires were checked only for unanswered items and not for the nature of the responses. Each questionnaire was assigned a non-identifying code that represented the

school and class grouping. Responses were encoded in a password-protected dataset, verified through double-entry checking, and examined against the original instruments to resolve encoding inconsistencies. The finalized dataset retained the hierarchical structure required for the multilevel analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were initially screened for duplicate entries, out-of-range values, missing responses, response uniformity, and unusually short completion patterns. Item distributions and composite scores were examined through descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, median, interquartile range, and 95 percent confidence interval. Missing values were evaluated according to their extent and pattern. When the proportion of missing data remained limited and was considered plausibly missing at random, multiple imputation was applied before inferential analysis. Reliability was reassessed using Cronbach's alpha, McDonald's omega, and corrected item-total correlations.

A three-level hierarchical linear model was used as the principal statistical treatment. This method was selected because learners were nested within Filipino classes, while Filipino classes were nested within public secondary schools. The unconditional model was first estimated to determine how much variation in learner communicative engagement occurred at the learner, classroom, and school levels. Variance partition coefficients and intraclass correlation coefficients were calculated to justify the multilevel structure. Learner-level control variables relevant to classroom participation were entered at Level 1 only when they were theoretically defensible and available from the approved instrument. Filipino language teaching implementation was entered at the classroom level, while school-level characteristics were included only when sufficient variation and representation were present.

The fixed effects of teaching implementation on learner communicative engagement were estimated using restricted maximum likelihood with cluster-robust standard errors. Continuous classroom predictors were grand-mean centered to make the model intercepts and coefficients more interpretable. Random intercepts were retained for classes and schools, while random slopes were tested when the data supported variation in the implementation-engagement relationship across schools. Model comparison relied on the Akaike information criterion, Bayesian information criterion, likelihood-ratio tests, and changes in proportional reduction of variance. The strength of the association was reported through unstandardized coefficients, standardized estimates, 95 percent confidence intervals, and multilevel pseudo- R^2 values. Statistical significance was evaluated at the .05 level, but interpretation also considered effect magnitude, interval precision, and practical instructional meaning rather than relying on the probability value alone.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed the principles of informed participation, voluntary involvement, privacy, confidentiality, fairness, and protection from harm. Participants were informed that participation was not connected to grades, teaching performance ratings, promotion, employment status, or access to school services. Teachers and learners were permitted to decline participation or discontinue answering without penalty. Learners were not asked to evaluate a teacher by name, and teachers were not given access to individual learner responses. The class-linking codes were used only for statistical analysis and were stored separately from consent records.

Only information necessary to answer the research questions was collected. Electronic records were kept in encrypted and password-protected storage, while printed documents were placed in a secured filing area accessible only to the researcher and authorized research personnel. Findings were reported in combined form so that no participant, class, teacher, or school could be identified from the published results. Data were retained only for the period approved by the ethics body and were securely destroyed after the retention period. Any classroom concern disclosed during administration that suggested a risk to learner welfare was handled according to established school safeguarding procedures without incorporating identifying information into the research dataset.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Internal Consistency of the Filipino Language Teaching Implementation and Learner Communicative Engagement Scales

Scale and dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	McDonald's Omega	Interpretation
Filipino Language Teaching Implementation Scale	30	.92	.93	Excellent
Curriculum Alignment	6	.84	.85	Good
Contextualized Language Instruction	6	.86	.87	Good
Communicative Learning Facilitation	6	.88	.89	Good
Integration of Language Skills	6	.83	.84	Good
Assessment-Based Instructional Adjustment	6	.81	.82	Good
Learner Communicative Engagement Scale	36	.94	.94	Excellent
Active Participation	6	.85	.86	Good
Cognitive Investment	6	.84	.85	Good
Interaction with Classmates	6	.87	.88	Good
Confidence in Expressing Ideas	6	.89	.89	Good
Sustained Attention	6	.80	.81	Good
Willingness to Communicate in Filipino	6	.88	.89	Good

Table 1 shows that the instruments produced satisfactory internal consistency coefficients. The Filipino Language Teaching Implementation Scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .92 and a McDonald's omega of .93. The coefficients for its five dimensions ranged from .81 to .88 for alpha and from .82 to .89 for omega. These values indicated that the items within each dimension measured related aspects of Filipino language teaching implementation without showing excessive similarity.

The Learner Communicative Engagement Scale yielded an overall Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega of .94. Its dimensional coefficients ranged from .80 to .89. The strongest internal consistency was observed for confidence in expressing ideas, while sustained attention obtained the lowest coefficient. The latter coefficient remained within the acceptable range and supported the inclusion of the dimension in the succeeding analyses.

The close agreement between Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega strengthened the reliability evidence because the results did not depend solely on the assumption that all items contributed equally to their respective constructs. The obtained values also showed that the scales were sufficiently stable for classroom-level and multilevel statistical analysis. None of the dimensions required removal based on internal consistency.

The reliability results supported the treatment of Filipino language teaching implementation and learner communicative engagement as multidimensional constructs. This was consistent with Mercer and Dörnyei's (2020) view that classroom engagement should not be represented by a single indicator because learner participation involves behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and social processes. The use of dimension-specific scores allowed the study to identify areas that appeared strong and those that needed instructional attention.

Table 2. Level of Filipino Language Teaching Implementation

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	95% Confidence Interval	Interpretation	Rank
Curriculum Alignment	4.18	0.46	4.11 to 4.25	Highly Implemented	1
Integration of Language Skills	3.87	0.54	3.78 to 3.96	Highly Implemented	2
Contextualized Language Instruction	3.74	0.58	3.65 to 3.83	Highly Implemented	3

Communicative Learning Facilitation	3.62	0.61	3.52 to 3.72	Highly Implemented	4
Assessment-Based Instructional Adjustment	3.55	0.63	3.45 to 3.65	Highly Implemented	5
Overall Filipino Language Teaching Implementation	3.79	0.49	3.71 to 3.87	Highly Implemented	

Scale: 4.21 to 5.00 = Very Highly Implemented; 3.41 to 4.20 = Highly Implemented; 2.61 to 3.40 = Moderately Implemented; 1.81 to 2.60 = Slightly Implemented; 1.00 to 1.80 = Not Implemented.

Table 2 indicates that Filipino language teaching was highly implemented, with an overall mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 0.49. The relatively narrow confidence interval showed that the overall estimate was reasonably precise. Teachers generally reported that they followed curriculum expectations, connected language skills across lessons, used suitable classroom materials, encouraged communication, and modified instruction based on assessment information.

Curriculum alignment obtained the highest mean of 4.18. This result showed that teachers were consistent in identifying required learning competencies, preparing lessons that corresponded with curriculum standards, and directing classroom activities toward expected Filipino learning outcomes. The strong score may be associated with the visibility of curriculum guides, lesson planning requirements, classroom observations, and school monitoring procedures. Curriculum alignment was therefore the most firmly established part of instructional implementation.

The integration of language skills ranked second, with a mean of 3.87. Filipino teachers frequently connected listening, speaking, reading, viewing, and writing within the same lesson or sequence of lessons. This practice was valuable because communicative ability does not develop through isolated language exercises alone. Learners need to read or listen to a text, interpret its meaning, discuss their understanding, and produce an oral or written response. Ellis (2017) explained that meaningful language activities become stronger when language form and communicative purpose are brought together instead of being taught as unrelated classroom components.

Contextualized language instruction obtained a mean of 3.74. Teachers generally connected lessons with learners' experiences, community concerns, Filipino culture, and familiar communication situations. Nevertheless, the result was lower than curriculum alignment, indicating that contextualization was not applied with the same consistency across classes. Some lessons may have remained closely dependent on textbooks, prepared modules, and uniform examples that did not always reflect the linguistic and cultural experiences of learners.

Communicative learning facilitation registered a mean of 3.62. Although it was interpreted as highly implemented, the result showed room for improvement. Teachers appeared to provide opportunities for discussion, oral presentation, collaborative work, interpretation, and exchange of viewpoints, but these practices may not have occurred in every lesson. Classroom communication may still have been guided mainly by teacher questions that required brief or predetermined answers. Such routines allow participation but may not consistently encourage learners to elaborate, negotiate meaning, challenge an interpretation, or sustain a discussion.

Assessment-based instructional adjustment received the lowest mean of 3.55. The result suggested that teachers used assessment information, but adjustments based on learner performance were less consistent than curriculum planning and content delivery. Teachers may have administered quizzes, written exercises, and oral recitations without always using the results to reorganize groups, revise explanations, provide targeted language support, or design follow-up communication tasks. The score revealed an implementation concern because assessment becomes instructionally useful only when it informs the next teaching decision.

The gap between curriculum alignment and assessment-based adjustment reflected a difference between complying with prescribed expectations and responding to actual classroom evidence. Datnow (2020) maintained that teachers play an interpretive role in curriculum reform because policy does not automatically determine classroom practice. Strong implementation requires professional judgment, especially when learners differ in linguistic background, confidence, comprehension, and readiness to communicate.

Table 3. *Level of Learner Communicative Engagement in Filipino Classes*

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	95% Confidence Interval	Interpretation	Rank
Cognitive Investment	3.76	0.58	3.71 to 3.81	Highly Engaged	1
Sustained Attention	3.72	0.57	3.67 to 3.77	Highly Engaged	2
Interaction with Classmates	3.67	0.62	3.62 to 3.72	Highly Engaged	3
Active Participation	3.48	0.66	3.42 to 3.54	Highly Engaged	4
Confidence in Expressing Ideas	3.31	0.71	3.25 to 3.37	Moderately Engaged	5
Willingness to Communicate in Filipino	3.28	0.73	3.22 to 3.34	Moderately Engaged	6
Overall, Learner Communicative Engagement	3.54	0.55	3.49 to 3.59	Highly Engaged	

Scale: 4.21 to 5.00 = Very Highly Engaged; 3.41 to 4.20 = Highly Engaged; 2.61 to 3.40 = Moderately Engaged; 1.81 to 2.60 = Slightly Engaged; 1.00 to 1.80 = Not Engaged.

Table 3 shows that learners were highly engaged in Filipino classes, with an overall mean of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 0.55. The overall rating indicated positive participation, but the score was located near the lower boundary of the highly engaged category. The dimensional results also revealed a clear difference between learners' mental involvement and their readiness to express ideas publicly.

Cognitive investment received the highest mean of 3.76. Learners generally tried to understand Filipino texts, connect lesson content with prior knowledge, examine the meanings of words and expressions, and think about the questions presented during lessons. This showed that many learners were mentally involved even when they did not always speak. Filipino classes appeared capable of stimulating interpretation, analysis, and reflection.

Sustained attention ranked second, with a mean of 3.72. Learners generally listened to discussions, followed task instructions, and remained focused during Filipino learning activities. However, attention should not be interpreted as equivalent to communicative participation. A learner may listen carefully and complete assigned work while remaining hesitant to initiate a question, challenge an idea, or speak before the class.

Interaction with classmates obtained a mean of 3.67. Learners were generally comfortable communicating with peers, especially during group activities and collaborative tasks. Peer interaction may have reduced the pressure associated with speaking before the entire class. It also provided learners with a space to test ideas, ask for clarification, and prepare responses before public presentation. Dao (2020) found that structured interaction strategies can improve learners' cognitive, social, and emotional participation by helping them extend ideas and support the contributions of group members.

Active participation received a mean of 3.48. Although the result remained within the highly engaged category, it was lower than cognitive investment, attention, and peer interaction. This indicated that participation was present but uneven. Some learners may have responded regularly, while others participated mainly when called by the teacher or when tasks were completed in small groups.

Confidence in expressing ideas obtained a mean of 3.31, while willingness to communicate in Filipino received the lowest mean of 3.28. Both dimensions were interpreted as moderate. These results identified the central concern of the study. Learners were attentive and mentally involved, yet a considerable portion remained cautious about expressing ideas in Filipino. They may have worried about incorrect grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary limitations, negative reactions from classmates, or the possibility of giving an unacceptable answer.

The larger standard deviations for confidence and willingness also showed that learners' experiences varied more widely in these areas. Some learners communicated comfortably, while others avoided speaking unless required. This variation may have been influenced by differences in home language, exposure to Filipino, classroom climate, topic familiarity, and prior experiences of correction. Sato (2017) emphasized that learners'

beliefs about classroom interaction influence whether they participate, seek clarification, and persist when communication becomes difficult.

The findings showed that communicative engagement should not be inferred from attention or task completion alone. The stronger scores for cognitive investment and sustained attention did not automatically produce equally strong willingness to communicate. Teachers therefore needed to create conditions in which learners could express incomplete ideas, make language errors without embarrassment, and receive constructive support from teachers and classmates.

Table 4. *Unconditional Three-Level Model for Learner Communicative Engagement*

Source of Variation	Variance Estimate	Standard Error	Variance Partition Coefficient	Interpretation
Learner Level	0.210	0.014	75.54%	Differences among learners
Filipino Class Level	0.051	0.012	18.35%	Differences among classes
School Level	0.017	0.007	6.12%	Differences among schools
Total Variance	0.278		100.00%	

Combined class and school intraclass correlation coefficient = .245

Model intercept = 3.54, SE = 0.05, 95% CI [3.44, 3.64], $p < .001$

The unconditional model in Table 4 separated the variation in learner communicative engagement into learner, class, and school components. The largest proportion of variation occurred at the learner level, accounting for 75.54 percent of the total variance. This indicated that learners within the same Filipino class still differed considerably in attention, confidence, participation, peer interaction, and willingness to communicate.

Differences among Filipino classes accounted for 18.35 percent of the variance. This was an important result because learners assigned to the same class shared a teacher, instructional routines, communication norms, learning materials, and opportunities to participate. The proportion showed that classroom conditions were associated with meaningful differences in engagement. Treating every learner response as fully independent would have ignored this shared classroom influence and could have produced underestimated standard errors.

School-level differences accounted for 6.12 percent of the total variation. Although smaller than the learner-level and class-level components, the school variance remained meaningful. Schools may differ in instructional supervision, availability of Filipino learning materials, class organization, professional collaboration, and support for language-related activities. These features may shape the conditions under which teachers implement the curriculum and learners communicate.

The combined intraclass correlation coefficient was .245. This meant that approximately 24.5 percent of the variation in learner communicative engagement was connected with class and school membership. The value justified the use of a three-level hierarchical linear model rather than ordinary correlation or single-level regression. A conventional analysis would have treated clustered learners as unrelated observations and overlooked the influence of shared instructional environments.

The result also supported the view that learner engagement was not simply a personal trait. While individual confidence and language ability mattered, a substantial part of engagement was associated with where and with whom learners studied Filipino. Rahimi and Ong (2023) reported that instructional knowledge, supportive relationships, meaningful learning activities, and learner agency worked together in shaping language engagement. The variance structure obtained in the present analysis reflected that combination of individual and environmental influences.

Table 5. *Three-Level Hierarchical Linear Models Predicting Overall Learner Communicative Engagement*

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	p-value
Model 1: Overall Implementation Score					
Intercept	3.54	0.04		3.46 to 3.62	< .001
Filipino Language Teaching Implementation	0.42	0.07	.38	0.28 to 0.56	< .001
Model 2: Implementation Dimensions					
Intercept	3.54	0.04		3.46 to 3.62	< .001
Curriculum Alignment	0.08	0.05	.07	-0.02 to 0.18	.113
Contextualized Language Instruction	0.13	0.05	.13	0.03 to 0.23	.011
Communicative Learning Facilitation	0.22	0.06	.23	0.10 to 0.34	< .001
Integration of Language Skills	0.12	0.05	.12	0.02 to 0.22	.018
Assessment-Based Instructional Adjustment	0.10	0.04	.10	0.02 to 0.18	.014
Model Fit and Explained Variance					
Model	AIC	BIC	Learner-Level Variance Reduction	Class-Level Variance Reduction	School-Level Variance Reduction
Unconditional Model	1978.40	2001.90			
Model 1: Overall Implementation	1926.10	1955.50	1.90%	37.25%	23.53%
Model 2: Implementation Dimensions	1904.80	1952.70	3.33%	49.02%	35.29%

Table 5 presents the principal result of the study. Overall Filipino language teaching implementation had a positive and statistically significant association with learner communicative engagement, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.42, a standardized estimate of .38, and a probability value below .001. The 95 percent confidence interval ranged from 0.28 to 0.56 and did not include zero.

The coefficient indicated that a one-unit increase in Filipino language teaching implementation was associated with an estimated 0.42-unit increase in learner communicative engagement, after accounting for the clustering of learners within classes and schools. The standardized estimate represented a moderate relationship. Better implementation was associated with stronger participation, interaction, attention, cognitive effort, confidence, and willingness to communicate.

Model 1 reduced class-level variance by 37.25 percent and school-level variance by 23.53 percent. This showed that differences in implementation explained a meaningful portion of the engagement differences observed among Filipino classes and schools. The reduction at the learner level was smaller because the principal predictor was measured at the classroom level. Learner-specific influences, including language proficiency, previous learning experiences, and personal confidence, continued to account for most individual variation.

The model fit improved after Filipino language teaching implementation was entered. The Akaike information criterion declined from 1978.40 to 1926.10, while the Bayesian information criterion declined from 2001.90 to 1955.50. Lower values indicated that the implementation model represented the observed pattern more adequately than the model containing only random class and school differences.

Model 2 examined the five dimensions simultaneously. Communicative learning facilitation emerged as the strongest predictor, with a coefficient of 0.22 and a standardized estimate of .23. Filipino classes that provided discussion, collaborative interpretation, oral explanation, meaningful questioning, and opportunities to exchange viewpoints tended to have more communicatively engaged learners.

The result emphasized that classroom communication needed to involve more than asking learners to recite prepared information. Engagement was stronger when learners had a meaningful reason to speak, enough time to prepare a response, and opportunities to respond to classmates. Vo (2023) found that the relevance of language tasks was more influential than simply giving learners choices. An activity may offer several options, but participation remains limited when learners cannot see its connection with their experiences or communication needs.

Contextualized language instruction was also significantly related to engagement, with a coefficient of 0.13 and a probability value of .011. Learners became more involved when Filipino lessons included recognizable situations, local experiences, social concerns, cultural texts, and issues that allowed them to draw from personal knowledge. Contextualization provided content that learners could discuss rather than requiring them to communicate about unfamiliar or distant situations.

Integration of language skills produced a significant coefficient of 0.12. Lessons that combined reading, viewing, listening, speaking, and writing were associated with stronger communicative engagement. Integrated activities gave learners several entry points into the lesson. A learner who was initially reluctant to speak could first read a text, write a short response, discuss it with a partner, and later share an idea with the class.

Assessment-based instructional adjustment had a smaller but significant coefficient of 0.10. Learners were more engaged when teachers used assessment results to adjust explanations, provide language support, vary task difficulty, and organize follow-up activities. The result reinforced the need to move beyond recording scores. Assessment information needed to influence what teachers taught next and how learners were supported.

Curriculum alignment did not reach statistical significance after the other implementation dimensions were considered, with a coefficient of 0.08 and a probability value of .113. This did not mean that curriculum alignment lacked importance. Its high descriptive mean showed that it was already consistently practiced and therefore had limited variation across classes. It may also have influenced engagement indirectly through contextualized instruction, integrated activities, and communicative facilitation.

The distinction was educationally important. Following competencies and preparing standards-based lessons provided the structure for instruction, but alignment alone did not guarantee learner communication. Engagement depended more directly on how curriculum requirements were transformed into classroom tasks, interaction, support, and feedback. Cong-Lem (2021) observed that teacher agency emerges through the interaction of professional capacity, implementation strategies, and working conditions. Teachers needed room to interpret curriculum expectations and adapt them to the actual communicative needs of learners.

Model 2 explained nearly half of the class-level variation and more than one-third of the school-level variation. Its lower Akaike information criterion showed that examining specific teaching dimensions provided a better explanation than using only an overall implementation score. The findings identified communicative facilitation as the strongest instructional area, while contextualization, skill integration, and assessment adjustment also made significant contributions.

Table 6. Separate Three-Level Models for the Dimensions of Learner Communicative Engagement

Engagement Outcome	Coefficient of Overall Teaching Implementation	Standard Error	Standardized Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	p-value
Active Participation	0.46	0.08	.35	0.30 to 0.62	< .001
Cognitive Investment	0.34	0.07	.29	0.20 to 0.48	< .001
Interaction with Classmates	0.41	0.07	.33	0.27 to 0.55	< .001

Engagement Outcome	Coefficient of Overall Teaching Implementation	Standard Error	Standardized Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	p-value
Confidence in Expressing Ideas	0.53	0.09	.41	0.35 to 0.71	< .001
Sustained Attention	0.29	0.07	.24	0.15 to 0.43	< .001
Willingness to Communicate in Filipino	0.57	0.10	.43	0.37 to 0.77	< .001

Table 6 shows that Filipino language teaching implementation was significantly associated with all six dimensions of learner communicative engagement. The coefficients were positive and their confidence intervals did not include zero. This pattern indicated that stronger implementation was associated not only with visible classroom participation but also with cognitive effort, social interaction, attention, confidence, and willingness to communicate.

The strongest effect was observed for willingness to communicate in Filipino, with a coefficient of 0.57 and a standardized estimate of .43. This result was notable because willingness to communicate received the lowest descriptive mean. The dimension represented a problem area, but it was also the aspect most responsive to variation in teaching implementation. Filipino classes characterized by meaningful tasks, supportive interaction, contextualized content, integrated language activities, and constructive feedback were more likely to encourage hesitant learners to speak.

Confidence in expressing ideas had the second strongest coefficient at 0.53. Learners appeared more confident when classroom practices gave them preparation time, language support, multiple ways to respond, and reassurance that errors could be corrected without humiliation. Confidence was therefore not treated only as a fixed learner characteristic. It was partly connected with the classroom conditions established by the teacher.

Active participation obtained a coefficient of 0.46. Improved teaching implementation was associated with more frequent contributions to discussion, completion of communicative activities, volunteering of answers, and involvement in group work. The result indicated that well-organized Filipino instruction could convert mental engagement into observable classroom action.

Interaction with classmates had a coefficient of 0.41. Teaching implementation influenced whether peer communication became a genuine exchange or merely a division of assigned work. Clearly structured collaborative tasks encouraged learners to listen, ask questions, add to a classmate's idea, and negotiate a shared response. Dao (2020) reported that learners benefited when interaction strategies were explicitly taught rather than assumed.

Cognitive investment produced a coefficient of 0.34. Learners were more likely to examine meanings, compare interpretations, and revise responses when teaching practices required thoughtful language use. The effect was moderate because cognitive effort may also depend on reading ability, topic familiarity, interest, and prior knowledge.

Sustained attention received the smallest coefficient at 0.29, although the relationship remained statistically significant. Attention was already among the higher-rated engagement dimensions, leaving less room for improvement. Learners may also remain attentive because of classroom routines or teacher monitoring even when instruction provides limited opportunities for communication.

The pattern across the six outcomes clarified the role of teaching implementation. Its strongest associations occurred in the areas where learners had shown the greatest difficulty, namely willingness and confidence. This meant that the most important instructional contribution was not merely keeping learners quiet, attentive, or compliant. It involved creating an environment in which they were prepared to take communicative risks and express ideas in Filipino.

CONCLUSION

Filipino language teaching implementation was generally strong in public secondary schools, particularly in curriculum alignment and the integration of language skills, but important gaps remained in communicative learning facilitation and assessment-based instructional adjustment. Learners showed favorable levels of cognitive engagement, sustained attention, and peer interaction, yet their confidence in expressing ideas and willingness to communicate in Filipino were comparatively weaker. The multilevel analysis further indicated that learner communicative engagement was influenced not only by individual differences but also by the shared conditions of classes and schools. Filipino language teaching implementation was significantly associated with learner communicative engagement, with communicative facilitation, contextualized instruction, integrated language activities, and assessment-informed adjustment emerging as the most influential instructional dimensions. Based on these findings, Filipino teachers should provide more sustained opportunities for discussion, oral interpretation, collaborative meaning making, debate, storytelling, and other tasks that require learners to use Filipino for authentic purposes. Schools should strengthen professional learning activities focused on communicative pedagogy, formative assessment, contextualization, and strategies for supporting hesitant speakers. Teachers should also create a respectful classroom climate where errors are treated as part of language development and where learners receive preparation time, vocabulary support, and constructive feedback before and after speaking. School administrators may use the findings to guide classroom observation, instructional coaching, resource development, and Filipino program improvement, while future researchers may examine other factors such as language background, classroom climate, teacher feedback, and learner self-efficacy to deepen understanding of communicative engagement in Filipino classrooms.

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