

A Narrative Literature Review of Emerging Strategies in Teaching the Filipino Language in Elementary

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100600778>

Received: 11 June 2026; Accepted: 16 June 2026; Published: 06 July 2026

ABSTRACT

Teaching the Filipino language in elementary grades presents multifaceted challenges, including English dominance, limited instructional resources, and complexities arising from the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy. Hence, this study sought to determine the emerging strategies being utilized to enhance Filipino language instruction in the elementary grades. Using a narrative literature review design drawing from peer-reviewed articles across Google Scholar, ERIC, ResearchGate, and Consensus, this study identified three principal clusters of emerging pedagogical strategies: integrative and multisensory approaches encompassing songs, movement, and storytelling; interactive and learner-centered pedagogies including task-based learning, role-playing, and gamification; and the strategic integration of technology and contextualized learning materials such as AI-assisted tools and culturally grounded digital resources. Collectively, these strategies demonstrated measurable gains in foundational literacy, oral fluency, motivation, and overall Filipino language proficiency among elementary learners. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on Filipino language education by synthesizing evidence-based instructional practices and providing a consolidated framework for enhancing Filipino language teaching and learning in elementary classrooms. Furthermore, this review serves as a reference for future research and instructional innovation by identifying pedagogical trends that may inform the development of nationally relevant and technology-enhanced Filipino language programs in the elementary grades.

Keywords: elementary education, Filipino language instruction, learner-centered pedagogy, multisensory approaches, technology integration

INTRODUCTION

Language teaching strategies are deliberate, systematic, and purposeful instructional approaches designed to facilitate effective language learning, comprehension, and application among elementary learners (Pico et al., 2021). These encompass a wide collection of instructional practices from interactive and hands-on activities to technology-enhanced and culturally responsive pedagogies, all aimed at fostering meaningful engagement with the national language. (Ahmad, 2024; Daar et al., 2025; Samar et al., 2025).

Despite its significance, Filipino language instruction continues to face challenges related to limited instructional resources, diverse learner needs, and multilingual classroom environments. The implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) has further emphasized the need for effective instructional approaches that support learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds while facilitating their development in Filipino language proficiency (Igarashi et al., 2024; Parba, 2018). Consequently, educators have explored various strategies, including multisensory learning, learner-centered pedagogies, technology integration, and contextualized learning materials, to enhance language learning and learner engagement (Kasulotan, 2024; Magno et al., 2024).

However, most studies on Filipino language instruction in the elementary grades reveal that teachers remain heavily dependent on textbooks and prescribed content, which restricts creativity and leads to monotonous

lessons (Baculayan, 2025). In rural contexts, the scarcity of contextualized and multimedia resources further exacerbates this reliance, producing repetitive lessons that students perceive as dull and uninspiring (Garcia, 2025). Research also indicates that systemic barriers in instructional delivery perpetuate traditional content-focused teaching, leaving immersive and multisensory approaches underutilized in Filipino classrooms (Manera et al., 2025; Tubao et al., 2023). Thus, a clear gap exists in the literature regarding the over-reliance on textbooks and limited instructional materials in Filipino language teaching, highlighting the need for targeted research into multisensory, learner-centered, and technology-enhanced strategies to sustain engagement and motivation (Baculayan, 2025; Garcia, 2025; Kasulotan, 2024; Manera et al., 2025; Tubao et al., 2023).

This study contributes by presenting innovative strategies for teaching Filipino at the elementary level that move beyond textbook dependence. It introduces multisensory and learner-centered approaches such as role-playing, gamification, storytelling, and contextualized activities that aim to enhance engagement and comprehension. It also explores the integration of technology-enhanced materials to address the scarcity of resources and provide more interactive learning experiences. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of systemic support through teacher training and resource development to ensure sustainable implementation. Hence, this research fills the identified gap by offering evidence-based insights into how diverse instructional strategies can revitalize Filipino language teaching and learning experiences in elementary classrooms.

Underpinning Theory

This study is anchored in Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning, which emphasizes the role of social interaction, cultural mediation, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in language development (Margolis, 2020). The theory provides a relevant framework for understanding Filipino language instruction, as language learning occurs through meaningful interaction and participation in socially and culturally situated contexts. The three themes identified in this review are integrative and multisensory approaches, interactive and learner-centered pedagogies, and the integration of technology and contextualized learning materials that reflect the core principles of Sociocultural Theory by promoting active engagement, collaboration, and contextualized learning. These instructional approaches support Filipino language development by providing learners with meaningful opportunities to engage in socially mediated and culturally relevant learning experiences. Taken together, the findings demonstrate that Sociocultural Theory provides a coherent foundation for understanding the emerging instructional strategies identified in this review and their contribution to effective Filipino language instruction in the elementary grades.

Research Question/s

What emerging strategies are being utilized to enhance Filipino language instruction in the elementary grades?

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a narrative literature review design to synthesize and analyze emerging strategies in Filipino language instruction in elementary education. A narrative review was selected because it enables the integration of findings from empirical studies, theoretical discussions, and review articles, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of current instructional practices and trends in Filipino language teaching.

Data Sources and Searches

Relevant literature was systematically gathered from established academic databases and search platforms, including Google Scholar, ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), ResearchGate, and Consensus. These sources were selected because they provide access to peer-reviewed journals, educational research articles, and scholarly publications relevant to language instruction and pedagogy. The search process utilized combinations of keywords such as "Filipino language instruction," "teaching strategies in Filipino," "elementary Filipino education," "multisensory learning," "learner-centered pedagogy," "gamification, and technology integration." To ensure the currency and relevance of the review, studies published between 2018 and 2025 were



prioritized, although earlier foundational works were also included when they provided significant theoretical or empirical contributions to the topic.

Selection Criterion of the Study and Data Extraction

The researchers conducted an initial screening of titles and abstracts retrieved from Google Scholar, ERIC, ResearchGate, and Consensus. The selection process involved three stages: identification, screening, and eligibility assessment. Studies were first identified through database searches using predetermined keywords related to Filipino language instruction and teaching strategies. Retrieved records were then screened based on their titles and abstracts to determine their relevance to the research topic, while articles that met the preliminary criteria were subsequently subjected to a full-text review.

Studies were included in the review if they: (i) focused on Filipino language instruction or language teaching strategies applicable to elementary education; (ii) involved elementary learners, teachers, or instructional practices relevant to the Philippine educational context, or provided findings applicable to elementary language learning; and (iii) reported empirical findings, theoretical discussions, or review-based evidence concerning instructional strategies, pedagogical approaches, learner outcomes, or language acquisition. Studies were excluded if they focused on subjects unrelated to language instruction, lacked sufficient methodological information, were duplicate publications, or did not provide information relevant to the teaching of Filipino in elementary grades. When uncertainty arose regarding the eligibility of a study, the researchers reexamined the full text and resolved discrepancies through discussion to ensure consistency in the selection process.

Following the application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 26 studies were retained for the final review and synthesis. Relevant information was then extracted from each study, including the author(s), year of publication, research design, participants, educational setting, instructional strategies employed, and key findings related to Filipino language teaching and learning.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic synthesis of the 26 selected studies, which involved identifying recurring concepts, categorizing emerging instructional strategies, and examining patterns across the literature. The researchers first conducted repeated readings of the included studies to familiarize themselves with the findings and identify common instructional approaches and reported learning outcomes. Relevant data were then coded and grouped according to similarities in instructional practices, learner outcomes, and pedagogical approaches. The findings were systematically reviewed and organized into major thematic categories through an iterative process of comparison and refinement. This analysis resulted in three main themes: Integrative and Multisensory Approaches, Interactive and Learner-Centered Pedagogies, and Technology Integration and Contextualized Learning Materials. These themes were derived from recurring patterns and shared findings reported across multiple studies and were used to synthesize current evidence on effective Filipino language teaching strategies in elementary education. The thematic framework also facilitated the identification of existing gaps in the literature and informed recommendations for future research and instructional practice, thereby contributing to the continuous improvement of Filipino language instruction in elementary schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Integrative and Multisensory Approaches in Filipino Language Instruction

The reviewed studies consistently support the effectiveness of integrative and multisensory approaches in language learning, although they report different areas of improvement. Bhandari (2025) found significant gains in phonics awareness, letter identification, and writing skills among young learners, whereas Magno et al. (2024) reported that multisensory approaches support vocabulary development. In contrast, Zhan et al. (2025) documented improvements across listening, speaking, reading, and writing, suggesting that multisensory instruction can influence both foundational literacy skills and broader language competencies. These differences indicate that the impact of multisensory approaches varies according to instructional objectives and learner needs, but the overall evidence suggests that engaging multiple sensory modalities can enhance language



learning more effectively than traditional single-modality instruction. Another study also differs in its explanation of why multisensory approaches are effective. Specifically, Tarjadinata (2025) emphasized culturally inclusive storytelling, arguing that language learning becomes more meaningful when learners connect instructional content to their cultural experiences.

As a result, the direct applicability of these findings to Filipino language instruction should be interpreted with caution, considering the linguistic diversity of Philippine classrooms and the unique sociocultural role of Filipino as a national language. Despite this limitation, the consistent positive outcomes reported across studies indicate that integrative and multisensory approaches hold considerable potential for enhancing language learning. In the context of Filipino language instruction, these approaches are particularly relevant because they support literacy development while providing culturally meaningful learning experiences that contribute to both language proficiency and cultural identity formation.

Use of Interactive and Learner-Centered Pedagogies

The interactive and learner-centered pedagogies reviewed in the literature are consistently identified as effective approaches to Filipino language instruction, although the nature of their reported outcomes varies across studies. While Kasulotan (2024) emphasized the role of interactive and hands-on activities in promoting learner participation and self-expression, Hortizuela et al. (2025) demonstrated that Task-Based Learning significantly improved Filipino language performance among Grade 2 learners. Similarly, Cerna et al. (2025) found that cooperative storytelling and role-playing enhanced learners' oral fluency. Although these studies examined different instructional strategies, they collectively suggest that active engagement in meaningful language tasks supports both language development and communicative competence. This convergence of findings highlights the value of learner-centered approaches in creating opportunities for learners to actively construct and apply language knowledge rather than passively receive information.

However, the literature also reveals differences in how the effectiveness of learner-centered pedagogies is conceptualized and evaluated. Hortizuela et al. (2025) primarily measured effectiveness through improvements in language performance, whereas Magno et al. (2024) emphasized gains in learner motivation and communication skills resulting from language games and role-play activities. Likewise, Mangulian (2025) reported positive effects of gamification on learner engagement and achievement but focused largely on short-term outcomes and learner perceptions. These differences suggest that although learner-centered approaches consistently promote participation and interaction, evidence regarding their long-term impact on language proficiency remains limited. Consequently, the effectiveness of these pedagogies may depend not only on the instructional strategy employed but also on how it is aligned with specific language-learning objectives and assessment outcomes.

These findings are particularly relevant to Filipino language instruction because they address the limitations of traditional teacher-centered and textbook-dependent practices frequently reported in the literature. Interactive pedagogies provide learners with meaningful opportunities to use Filipino in authentic communicative contexts, thereby supporting the development of oral language skills, self-expression, and functional language use. Furthermore, these approaches reflect the sociocultural nature of language learning by fostering collaboration, dialogue, and shared meaning-making among learners. Collectively, the literature suggests that learner-centered pedagogies are most effective when intentionally designed to develop specific Filipino language competencies while encouraging active participation in meaningful language experiences.

Integration of Technology and Contextualized Learning Materials

The reviewed literature suggests that the integration of technology and contextualized learning materials can enhance Filipino language instruction, although the reported benefits vary across studies. Lucaberte et al. (2024) demonstrated that learners exposed to educational technology achieved significantly higher performance scores than those who received conventional instruction, highlighting the effectiveness of digital tools in improving academic achievement. Similarly, Almacen and Labitad (2024) reported that students taught with multimedia tools scored significantly higher on posttests than a control group taught traditionally, despite similar pretest baselines.

Moreover, other studies emphasize the role of technology in fostering learner engagement and cultural understanding. Oligario et al. (2025) found that artificial intelligence (AI) tools enhanced learner participation and supported the comprehension of culturally embedded literary texts through contextualized explanations of unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions. In contrast, Kasulotan (2024) emphasized the importance of teachers' deliberate use of digital and audiovisual resources in promoting learner engagement and self-expression. Although both studies support technology integration, they differ in their interpretation of its effectiveness. Oligario et al. (2025) highlighted the capacity of AI to facilitate personalized learning, whereas Kasulotan (2024) underscored the continuing role of teachers in creating meaningful learning experiences. This distinction reveals a key tension within the literature: while technology can enrich language learning, its effectiveness depends largely on how it is integrated into pedagogically sound and culturally responsive instruction rather than on the technology itself.

These findings are particularly relevant to Filipino language instruction, where reliance on textbooks and the limited availability of contextualized learning resources remain persistent instructional challenges. The studies reviewed suggest that technology is most effective when combined with culturally grounded materials that enable learners to connect language learning with authentic social and cultural contexts. Moreover, contextualized resources strengthen the relationship between classroom instruction and learners' lived experiences, thereby enhancing the relevance and meaningfulness of Filipino language learning. Consequently, the integration of technology and contextualized materials appears to support not only academic achievement but also learner engagement, cultural understanding, and more responsive language instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study examined emerging strategies in teaching the Filipino language in the elementary grades through a review of recent literature. The findings highlight the importance of instructional approaches that promote active learner engagement, meaningful social interaction, and culturally responsive learning experiences in supporting Filipino language development. By synthesizing current evidence, this review contributes to a deeper understanding of effective instructional practices and provides a foundation for future research and pedagogical improvement in Filipino language education. The review underscores the importance of instructional approaches that are responsive to the diverse learning contexts and linguistic realities of elementary learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations based on this study's conclusion. First, in terms of practical recommendations, Filipino language teachers are encouraged to reduce reliance on textbooks and repetitive reading by incorporating multisensory strategies such as songs, storytelling, and movement to improve pupils' engagement and retention. They may also adopt learner-centered approaches like role-playing, task-based learning, and gamification to foster active participation and oral fluency. In addition, teachers can integrate modern tools such as PowerPoint presentations, interactive multimedia, and culturally grounded digital resources to balance traditional and innovative strategies, ensuring a more engaging learning experience for pupils.

Second, for managerial recommendations, school administrators are encouraged to provide professional development programs that train teachers in multisensory, learner-centered, and technology-enhanced pedagogies. They may also allocate adequate funding for the development and utilization of innovative instructional materials and monitor their implementation to ensure effective classroom practice. Furthermore, administrators can advocate integrating culturally responsive and game-based strategies into the curriculum to support interactive and inclusive language learning.

Lastly, for theoretical recommendations, future researchers may conduct experimental and longitudinal studies to examine the effectiveness of multisensory, learner-centered, and technology-driven strategies in real classroom settings across different grade levels. They may also investigate the impact of these approaches on learners' motivation, participation, and academic performance, as well as compare their effectiveness with traditional textbook-based methods. Future studies may explore the long-term effects of innovative strategies on



learners' retention, collaboration, and cultural identity, thereby contributing to the continuous improvement of Filipino language instruction in elementary schools.

Ethical Consideration

This study adhered to ethical research standards by using only published and publicly available scholarly sources.

Proper citation and acknowledgment were given to all authors to avoid plagiarism and ensure academic integrity. The review objectively presented findings without misrepresentation, bias, or alteration of information. Since no human participants were involved, issues related to informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy were not applicable. However, the researcher ensured that all collected literature was credible, relevant, and used responsibly for educational purposes.

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