

The Use of Taglish as a Language Strategy in Teaching Filipino in the Elementary Grades: A Narrative Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

As a cornerstone of education, language significantly shapes how learners access, process, and understand academic content, making it a crucial element in effective teaching and learning. In multilingual classrooms, language use becomes particularly important in facilitating learners' comprehension and participation. Despite the growing body of literature supporting the effectiveness of pedagogical code-switching in multilingual settings, limited studies have specifically examined its role in supporting elementary learners who demonstrate greater proficiency in English and experience difficulty understanding Filipino as a medium of instruction. This literature review aimed to explore the effect of the pedagogical use of Taglish in classroom instruction at the elementary level. A narrative literature review was employed to synthesize and analyze relevant studies on code-switching and language practices in multilingual educational contexts. Findings revealed that Taglish serves as an instructional bridge, enhancing learners' comprehension by clarifying complex concepts, reducing language barriers, and facilitating understanding of academic content. It also promotes learner participation, confidence, and engagement in classroom interaction. However, excessive reliance on Taglish may raise concerns about learners' formal proficiency in both Filipino and English, underscoring the need for intentional, balanced language use. The review suggests that strategic code-switching may serve as an effective pedagogical scaffold in multilingual classrooms, supporting meaningful learning while gradually strengthening learners' language competence.

Keywords: Code-Switching, Elementary, Filipino, Taglish

INTRODUCTION

Language of instruction plays a central role in the teaching and learning process, serving as the primary medium through which knowledge, concepts, and experiences are communicated and understood. In contemporary education, selecting an appropriate medium of instruction has become increasingly significant because it directly influences learners' comprehension, participation, and academic performance (Lavadia et al., 2025). Effective learning occurs when communication between teachers and learners is clear, meaningful, and accessible. Consequently, theories, concepts, and academic content may not be fully understood when the instructional language fails to convey clarity and meaning to learners (Tippe et al., 2025).

In the Philippine educational system, bilingual education promotes the separate use of Filipino and English as media of instruction across designated subject areas (Villanueva & Gamiao, 2022). Filipino is commonly used in subjects such as Filipino and Araling Panlipunan, while English is predominantly utilized in Science, Mathematics, and English. Despite these language policies, classroom instruction often reflects a more flexible, dynamic use of both Filipino and English, with teachers and learners naturally integrating the two in their communication. Commonly referred to as *Taglish*, this linguistic practice represents a form of pedagogical code-switching widely observed in multilingual contexts such as the Philippines. As a communicative strategy, Taglish has been associated with improved lesson comprehension, clearer instructional delivery, and increased learner participation, particularly when teachers explain difficult concepts or unfamiliar terminology (Ral et al., 2026).

Through code-switching, teachers can make lessons more understandable and accessible while sustaining learner engagement and minimizing confusion during classroom instruction.

At the elementary level, linguistic diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for Filipino language instruction. While some learners are more proficient in Filipino or local languages, others demonstrate greater fluency in English due to early exposure at home and in their social environments. This variation in language proficiency may affect learners' ability to understand Filipino lessons, particularly when formal Filipino vocabulary and literary concepts are introduced. Research suggests that native language use and language flexibility in multilingual classrooms may support literacy development, cognitive growth, and comprehension (Delos Reyes et al., 2023). However, English-dominant learners may still encounter difficulties in pronunciation, grammar, oral communication, and vocabulary acquisition in Filipino, posing instructional challenges for teachers who must adapt their teaching approaches to diverse linguistic needs.

Although existing studies have examined code-switching and Taglish in educational settings, the literature remains fragmented regarding their effectiveness as language strategies, particularly in teaching Filipino in the elementary grades (Kasulotan, 2024). Much of the existing research focuses broadly on bilingual instruction, language attitudes, or general classroom communication, while limited attention has been given to synthesizing evidence on how Taglish influences learners' comprehension, instructional clarity, classroom engagement, and language proficiency within Filipino subject instruction (Cahyani et al, 2018; Laut & Estremera, 2025). Furthermore, inconsistencies persist regarding whether Taglish primarily serves as an effective pedagogical scaffold or poses long-term concerns for formal language development. These gaps underscore the need for a focused review that critically examines the role of Taglish in elementary Filipino instruction.

Thus, this literature review seeks to synthesize and critically examine existing studies on the use of Taglish as a language strategy in teaching Filipino in the elementary grades. Specifically, it explores how Taglish influences instructional comprehension, classroom engagement, and pedagogical effectiveness while also considering concerns regarding language proficiency. By consolidating fragmented findings, this review aims to provide a clearer understanding of the instructional value and limitations of Taglish and contribute insights that may inform more responsive and effective language practices in multilingual Filipino classrooms.

To establish conceptual clarity, this review distinguishes among the related concepts of *Taglish*, *code-switching*, *pedagogical code-switching*, and *translanguaging*. *Code-switching* refers to the alternation between languages in communication, while *pedagogical code-switching* pertains to the intentional use of multiple languages to support instruction. In this review, *Taglish* is treated as a localized form of pedagogical code-switching involving Filipino and English in classroom discourse, whereas *translanguaging* refers to learners' flexible use of their full linguistic repertoire to construct meaning. For consistency, this study primarily uses the term *Taglish* in discussing Filipino instruction in elementary classrooms.

Research Question

Based on the existing literature, what are the effects of the use of Taglish as a medium of instruction in teaching the Filipino subject at the elementary level?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored in Lev Vygotsky's theory, particularly the concept of scaffolding within the sociocultural theory of learning, which emphasizes that learners develop understanding through guided interaction and language-mediated support. In the context of teaching Filipino in the elementary grades, the use of Taglish may serve as a scaffold that bridges pupils' existing linguistic knowledge in English and Filipino, enabling them to better comprehend lessons, express ideas, and actively participate in classroom discussions. By strategically integrating Taglish, teachers may gradually support learners in understanding complex Filipino concepts while fostering confidence and engagement, eventually guiding them toward greater proficiency in the target language. Thus, Vygotsky's scaffolding theory provides a theoretical basis for examining Taglish as an effective language strategy that supports learning and language acquisition among elementary pupils.

METHODS

This study employed a narrative literature review to provide a comprehensive synthesis and critical examination of existing literature on the use of Taglish as a language strategy in teaching Filipino in the elementary grades. A narrative literature review is appropriate for studies that aim to explore broad concepts, identify emerging patterns, and develop a contextual understanding of a phenomenon by integrating findings from diverse scholarly sources (Sukhera, 2022). Unlike systematic reviews, which follow highly standardized, restrictive procedures, narrative literature reviews allow for interpretive, thematic, and critical analysis. This approach is particularly suitable for examining conceptual relationships, identifying inconsistencies in findings, and uncovering research gaps that may guide future scholarly inquiry (Greenhalgh et al., 2018; Sukhera, 2022).

The review process began with the formulation of a clear and focused research question to establish the scope and direction of the inquiry (Sukhera, 2022). Guided by the objectives of the study, a comprehensive search of relevant literature was conducted using Harzing's *Publish or Perish* through Google Scholar. Sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, theses, and other research-based publications relevant to the topic. To retrieve literature aligned with the study variables and central concepts, keyword combinations such as *Taglish*, *teaching Filipino*, *elementary education*, *code-switching*, and *Filipino language instruction* were utilized.

Following the literature search, studies were screened and selected using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance, rigor, and scholarly credibility (Ahmad, 2025; Sukhera, 2022). The criteria used for study selection are presented in Table 1, which outlines the inclusion and exclusion criteria based on topical relevance, educational context, subject area, publication type, and accessibility. From the maximum 100 search results generated through Harzing's *Publish or Perish* via Google Scholar, 15 studies met the inclusion criteria and were retained for analysis, while 85 studies were excluded for failing to align with the scope and objectives of the review. Studies were included based on their alignment with the research objectives, topical relevance, and contribution to understanding the phenomenon under investigation. The selected literature was then systematically organized into thematic categories to establish a coherent analytical structure and facilitate meaningful comparison across studies.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Literature Selection

CRITERIA	INCLUSION CRITERIA	EXCLUSION CRITERIA
Topic Relevance	Studies focusing on Taglish, code-switching, translanguaging, or language strategies in teaching Filipino.	Studies unrelated to Taglish, language strategies, or Filipino instruction.
Subject Area	Studies specifically related to Filipino language instruction.	Studies focused on subjects not relevant to Filipino teaching.
Research Focus	Studies discussing instructional effectiveness, comprehension, engagement, language proficiency, or pedagogical implications of Taglish.	Studies that only mention Taglish incidentally without discussing educational implications.

The selected literature was subsequently analyzed and synthesized to identify recurring themes, patterns, similarities, and discrepancies in findings. Through thematic integration, evidence from multiple sources was woven into a coherent narrative that addressed the research question and strengthened the study's conceptual foundation. Furthermore, a critical evaluation of the literature was undertaken to examine methodological strengths, limitations, and gaps in existing research, thereby generating insights that informed the rationale, direction, and significance of the present study (Ahmad, 2025; Pautasso, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Instructional Bridge to Comprehension

This theme positions Taglish as a linguistic scaffold that facilitates learners' comprehension in multilingual

classrooms by bridging familiar and unfamiliar language structures. Studies utilizing discourse analysis, phenomenological, and quasi-experimental approaches consistently indicate that learners demonstrate improved understanding when Filipino and English are strategically integrated during instruction (Asuncion & Dagdag, 2025; Bacutan & Costales, 2023; Villanueva & Bert, 2023). Code-switching has been found to reduce language barriers, enhance semantic understanding, and lessen the cognitive demands of processing academic content, particularly in Filipino subjects, where learners encounter formal vocabulary, literary texts, and complex linguistic structures (Villanueva & Gamiao, 2022). These findings align with the view that Taglish enables learners to maximize their existing linguistic resources in constructing meaning and interpreting instructional content (Gatil, 2021).

Empirical evidence further supports Taglish's effectiveness in facilitating comprehension. For instance, Villanueva and Gamiao (2023) reported that code-switching contributes to the elimination of communication barriers and promotes semantic clarity, while the quasi-experimental findings of Asuncion and Dagdag (2025) revealed statistically significant improvements in learner achievement under Taglish-mediated instruction. Despite these advantages, some scholars caution that although Taglish enhances immediate accessibility and lesson comprehension, it may not necessarily strengthen learners' Filipino speaking proficiency. Consequently, Taglish appears to function more effectively as an instructional scaffold that supports understanding rather than as a substitute for formal Filipino language development (Bathan et al., 2025).

Instructional Clarity and Classroom Engagement

This theme highlights the contribution of Taglish to instructional clarity and learner engagement within the classroom. Existing studies suggest that code-switching enables teachers to explain concepts more effectively, clarify instructions, and sustain smoother classroom interaction, thereby making lessons more accessible to learners (Bathan et al., 2025; Kasulotan, 2024; Oliver et al., 2025; Ral et al., 2025). Beyond facilitating comprehension, Taglish has also been associated with affective benefits, including reduced language anxiety, increased confidence, and greater willingness among learners to participate in classroom discussions.

Supporting this claim, Ral et al. (2025) found that code-switching had the greatest impact on teaching effectiveness, particularly in concept clarification and classroom management, yielding a mean score of 4.61 out of 5.00. Similarly, Medico et al. (2025) reported that learners perceived code-switching as beneficial in promoting comprehension and enhancing classroom interaction. Collectively, these findings suggest that Taglish positively influences both the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning by fostering a more supportive and inclusive classroom environment. Nevertheless, some scholars argue that contextual factors, including institutional language policies and the perceived prestige associated with English, shape the extent to which Taglish is strategically employed in instruction (Medico et al., 2025). Moreover, although code-switching appears to promote participation and engagement, evidence regarding its direct influence on academic achievement remains inconclusive.

Pedagogical Utility and Proficiency Concerns of Taglish

This theme presents contrasting perspectives regarding the pedagogical value and long-term implications of Taglish on language proficiency. On one hand, scholars argue that Taglish functions as a practical and natural communicative strategy in bilingual settings, enabling more efficient classroom interaction and facilitating learners' understanding of instructional content (Bautista, 2004). In Filipino language instruction, Taglish may serve as a pedagogical tool that helps teachers simplify complex concepts, support English-dominant learners, and enhance lesson accessibility (Lamorinas, 2025).

On the other hand, several studies caution against excessive reliance on Taglish, suggesting that persistent code-switching may weaken learners' proficiency in both Filipino and English by limiting opportunities for sustained exposure to formal language use (Chureson, 2013; Estremera, 2021). This concern is particularly relevant in Filipino subject instruction, where teachers are expected not only to facilitate comprehension but also to strengthen learners' command of Filipino. Despite these concerns, evidence indicates that the potential disadvantages of Taglish may be mitigated when code-switching is implemented intentionally and strategically rather than excessively (Medico et al., 2025). Purposeful translanguaging practices, coupled with differentiated

and culturally responsive instruction, may allow teachers to maximize the pedagogical benefits of Taglish for lesson delivery and concept clarification while still fostering learners' formal language development (Bravo-Sotelo, 2020; Manera et al., 2025). Thus, while Taglish may improve comprehension and classroom participation, its excessive use in academic settings may hinder formal language proficiency, reduce precision in academic discourse, and pose challenges to maintaining standardized communication.

Taglish Instruction Framework based on the Study's Findings

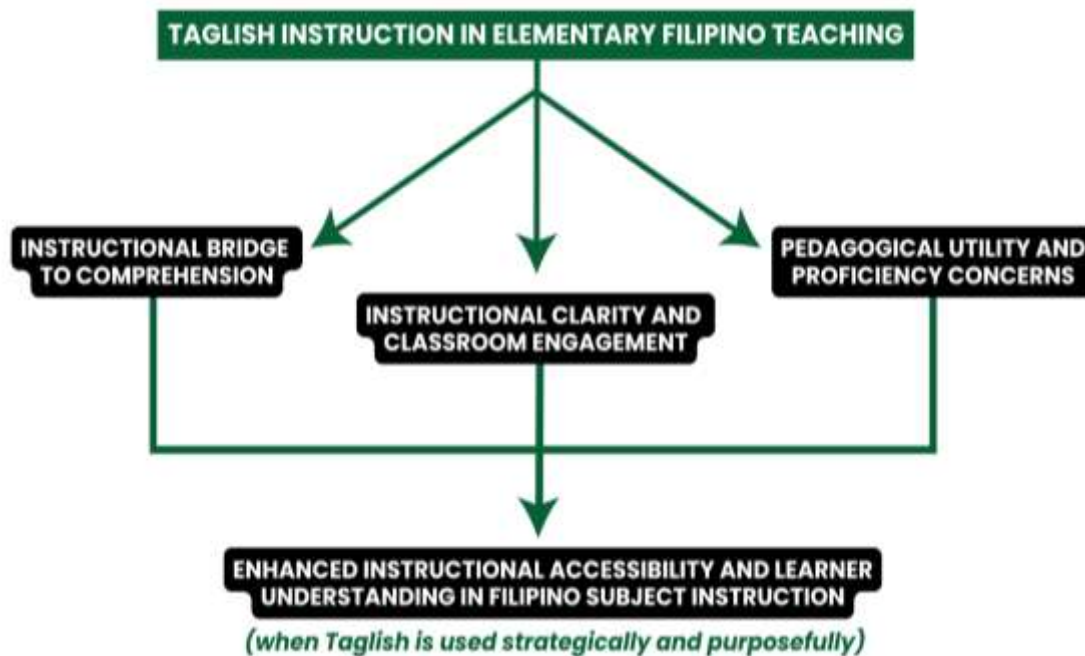


Figure 1. Taglish Instruction Framework

The Taglish Instruction Framework illustrates how Taglish instruction in elementary Filipino teaching functions as a strategic pedagogical tool that promotes enhanced instructional accessibility and learner understanding. Grounded in the study's findings, Taglish serves three interconnected roles: first, as an instructional bridge to comprehension, helping learners overcome language barriers and understand difficult Filipino concepts by connecting familiar English terms with Filipino lessons; second, as a means of instructional clarity and classroom engagement, enabling teachers to explain ideas more effectively, reduce learner anxiety, and encourage active participation; and third, as a consideration of pedagogical utility and proficiency concerns, recognizing that while Taglish is useful for facilitating learning, excessive dependence on it may hinder the development of formal Filipino and English language proficiency. The framework suggests that when Taglish is used strategically, purposefully, and in moderation, it supports learners' comprehension and engagement with instruction while still allowing for the gradual development of formal language competence. This aligns with the concept of scaffolding, where Taglish acts as a temporary support that helps learners progress toward greater mastery of Filipino.

This Taglish Instruction Framework is grounded in Vygotsky's scaffolding theory, which posits that temporary instructional support within a learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) enables progression toward independent competence (Panhwar et al., 2025; Shabani et al., 2010). Anisah (2025) affirmed that scaffolding significantly supports language development by breaking complex tasks into manageable steps and providing real-time feedback, with approximately 85% of analyzed studies reporting improved language abilities through this technique. In this light, Taglish serves as a linguistic scaffold, using familiar English terms to make Filipino instruction more accessible, while remaining a temporary support rather than a permanent mode of instruction. Bardinas et al. (2025) and Fauzan et al. (2026) similarly found that strategic code-switching enhances comprehension and engagement but must be purposefully balanced to avoid fostering dependency on the first language. Together, these studies support the view that Taglish, when used moderately and intentionally, functions as an effective scaffold that bridges learners toward greater mastery and formal proficiency in Filipino.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the reviewed literature establishes Taglish as a meaningful and contextually relevant pedagogical strategy in multilingual Filipino classrooms, particularly in the elementary grades. The findings consistently indicate that Taglish functions as an instructional bridge that facilitates learners' comprehension by reducing language barriers, enhancing semantic understanding, and enabling students to draw upon familiar linguistic resources in processing academic content. By integrating Filipino and English during instruction, teachers can make lessons more accessible, especially in contexts where learners have varying levels of language proficiency. This reinforces the view that Taglish serves as a scaffold that supports learners in constructing meaning as they gradually develop their understanding of formal Filipino concepts.

The literature likewise highlights the role of Taglish in improving instructional clarity and fostering classroom engagement. Through code-switching, teachers are better able to explain concepts, clarify instructions, and create a more inclusive learning environment that encourages learner participation, confidence, and interaction. Such findings suggest that Taglish contributes not only to the cognitive dimension of learning through enhanced understanding but also to the affective dimension by reducing language anxiety and promoting active classroom involvement. In the context of elementary education, where learners are still developing foundational language competencies, the strategic use of Taglish may therefore provide meaningful support for effective instruction and learner participation.

Despite these instructional advantages, the reviewed literature also raises concerns regarding the long-term implications of excessive reliance on Taglish, particularly its potential influence on learners' formal proficiency in both Filipino and English. While Taglish may effectively facilitate comprehension and accessibility, evidence suggests that its overuse may limit opportunities for sustained exposure to formal language structures and standardized communication. Consequently, the literature emphasizes that Taglish should not replace formal Filipino instruction but instead be used as a deliberate and balanced pedagogical scaffold. When implemented purposefully and strategically, Taglish may enhance teaching effectiveness and meaningful learning while simultaneously supporting the gradual development of learners' formal language competence in multilingual classroom settings.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the reviewed literature, Taglish may be strategically used in elementary Filipino instruction to clarify difficult concepts, explain unfamiliar vocabulary, and support learners with varying language proficiency levels. However, its use should remain purposeful and balanced, functioning as an instructional scaffold rather than a replacement for formal Filipino instruction. Teachers are encouraged to gradually increase learners' exposure to Filipino to strengthen language proficiency while maintaining comprehension and classroom engagement.

THEORETICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Future studies may further investigate the long-term effects of Taglish on Filipino language proficiency and compare its effectiveness across different grade levels. Additionally, experimental and mixed-methods research designs are recommended to provide stronger evidence regarding the instructional effectiveness of Taglish in elementary Filipino classrooms.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical standards in conducting academic research. As a narrative literature review, no direct involvement of human participants, interventions, or collection of personal data was undertaken; therefore, formal ethics approval was not required. The researchers ensured academic integrity by critically reviewing, synthesizing, and accurately representing the relevant scholarly literature on pedagogical code-switching and language strategies in multilingual classrooms. Proper citations and acknowledgments of all sources were observed to avoid plagiarism and maintain the study's credibility, transparency, and trustworthiness.

Conflict Of Interest

The researchers declare that there are no conflicts of interest, whether financial, personal, academic, or professional, that could have influenced the conduct, interpretation, or reporting of this study. The review was conducted objectively and independently to ensure the integrity and credibility of the findings.

Data Availability

No primary data were generated or analyzed in this study. The review relied exclusively on published scholarly literature and secondary sources publicly accessible through academic databases, journals, and other credible sources.

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