



Navigating through challenges lead to solution: Teachers experience in teaching Filipino subject

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ABSTRACT

This action research aimed to identify and explore the instructional difficulties encountered by teachers in teaching the Filipino subject in rural elementary schools, as well as the interventions needed to address these challenges. The study employed a qualitative approach, gathering data from ten Filipino teachers through structured questionnaires. Findings revealed that teachers face multiple challenges, including insufficient Filipino books and instructional materials, students' limited understanding of Filipino (language barriers), minimal daily use of the language, diverse learner abilities, and poor or unstable internet connectivity. To overcome these difficulties, teachers emphasized the importance of training and seminars, contextualized lessons, parental involvement and home follow-up, ICT and multimedia integration, collaborative learning activities, and organizing language-related school events. The study highlights the need for a holistic approach that combines resource provision, professional development, and community engagement to improve Filipino instruction in rural contexts. The findings underscore that, despite resource limitations, learner-centered strategies and innovative teaching practices can enhance student engagement, language proficiency, and motivation, ultimately contributing to a more effective and meaningful learning environment for Filipino learners.

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Introduction

Language is the foundation of communication and learning, and in the Philippine education system, the Filipino subject plays a vital role in promoting national identity and literacy among students. It is more than just a subject; it serves as a vehicle for cultural preservation and understanding (Santos, 2017). Teaching the Filipino language effectively at the elementary level is essential, as it builds the students' early reading, writing, and comprehension skills. However, the quality of instruction in this subject is significantly influenced by the teachers' experiences, competencies, and the context in which they teach. Teachers in rural areas, in particular, face unique difficulties that hinder effective instruction.

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Rural schools in the Philippines often struggle with limited resources, understaffing, and poor access to professional development opportunities (Luz, 2018). Teachers assigned to these areas must deal with challenges such as multi-grade classrooms, a lack of textbooks, and insufficient teaching aids, which impact how subjects, including Filipino, are taught (Mendoza, 2020). In addition, socio-economic factors in rural communities often influence students' school attendance, motivation, and language exposure, adding to the burden shouldered by teachers. These contextual issues make it difficult to deliver the curriculum as intended.

Teaching the Filipino subject also involves complexities in content delivery. According to Garcia (2019), Filipino as a subject includes grammar, literature, reading comprehension, and writing skills that require structured and scaffolded instruction. However, rural teachers often lack access to updated curriculum guides or literary materials aligned with the students' cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the use of local dialects at home can interfere with students' understanding of the formal Filipino language taught in schools (Delos Reyes, 2016). Teachers must bridge these linguistic gaps, often without sufficient support.

Compounding the situation are the teachers' own limitations. Some teachers may not have a major or specialization in Filipino, and their training may be inadequate to meet the evolving demands of language instruction (DepEd, 2021). The lack of training and continuing education, combined with administrative burdens and low morale, diminishes teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. This situation creates a cycle where both teaching quality and student outcomes are compromised, especially in under-resourced rural schools (Torres & Villanueva, 2018).

Despite the growing body of literature on challenges in Filipino language instruction—such as resource shortages (Mendoza, 2020), linguistic barriers (Delos Reyes, 2016), and pedagogical difficulties (Garcia, 2019)—there remains a clear research gap. Existing studies have focused largely on urban schools, private institutions, or general language teaching issues, but few have examined *the specific instructional challenges encountered by Filipino teachers in rural public elementary schools*. Moreover, previous research has not thoroughly explored *how teachers address these challenges through classroom strategies, contextualized teaching practices, and school-level interventions*. This gap highlights the need for studies that provide a deeper understanding of rural teachers' lived experiences, which can inform more targeted support and policy development.

This study sought to identify, explore, and document the specific difficulties encountered by elementary teachers in teaching the Filipino subject in rural schools. By understanding these challenges, the research aims to inform educational stakeholders—policy-makers, school leaders, and teacher training institutions—about the support systems needed to improve instruction. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that all Filipino students, regardless of location, receive quality education that empowers them through language and culture. Addressing these teaching challenges is essential for achieving inclusive and equitable education as promoted by the Philippine Department of Education and the Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2020).

Literature review

This review of literature provides a foundation for examining the current study, which focuses on the dual themes of challenges and strategies employed by elementary teachers in rural schools.

Instructional difficulties of teachers in teaching the Filipino subject

A recurring difficulty in Filipino subject instruction is teachers being assigned to teach the Filipino language without being specialized in it or without full mastery of its content. For example, Buhisan, Erocido & Derasin (2024) found that English-major teachers assigned to teach Filipino in private schools reported they “struggled to teach Filipino because the languages and teaching methods differ significantly.” This mis-assignment created “challenges ... in selecting appropriate Filipino vocabulary, syntax, and teaching methods.” Such findings suggest that teacher background and specialization matter for effective Filipino instruction.

In rural settings, teachers often lack teaching materials, culturally relevant literature, or locally adapted resources. Tica-a and Wangdali (2023) found that teachers teaching Filipino 7 experienced challenges such as “lack of contextualized materials” and “lack of knowledge on literature and culture” when trying to implement contextualized Filipino instruction. In addition, systemic issues such as inadequate infrastructure, textbooks, and instructional aids persist. For example, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) reports that many rural schools lack even basic amenities, which affects teaching quality. These material and resource constraints impede teachers’ ability to plan, deliver, and sustain effective Filipino lessons.

Another layer of difficulty arises from the language backgrounds of learners and the multilingual contexts typical of many rural Philippine schools. According to the University of the Philippines discussion on mother-tongue teaching, “In one classroom ... the students could have different mother tongues—Maranao, Kankanay, Pangasinan, Ilokano. ... Teachers encounter difficulties because not all the students speak Iloko.” This linguistic diversity means teachers of Filipino must manage variation in language proficiency, code-switching, and differing levels of exposure to standard Filipino, which complicates instruction of grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing.

Instructional methods and classroom environments present further difficulties. Based on a general report, overcrowded classrooms, large student-teacher ratios, and over-burdened teachers weaken the delivery of language instruction. Furthermore, the study by Buhisan et al. (2024) identified the theme “Unlocking Difficulties” and other teaching strategy themes, indicating that Filipino teachers felt challenged in designing and implementing engaging strategies. Teachers in remote rural schools also face geographic isolation, limited professional support, and infrastructure deficits, which further inhibit effective instruction (Beyond the Classroom: ...). In sum, teaching the Filipino subject in rural elementary schools involves not only content delivery but also method adaptation, learner engagement, and logistical challenges.

Lastly, curriculum demands and policy shifts can add to teachers’ instructional difficulties. For example, the study by Tica-a & Wangdali (2023) emphasized contextualizing the curriculum for Filipino 7,

showing that teachers need both materials and guidance to align with learner culture. Though not always specific to Filipino subjects at elementary level, general analyses of Philippine education highlight how rural schools lag in infrastructure, resources, and teacher training, which complicate adapting to new curriculum expectations. Therefore, teachers in rural elementary schools teaching Filipino may face a combination of curriculum-related demands, limited support, and changing learner contexts.

Interventions needed to overcome these difficulties in teaching the Filipino subject

Given the difficulty of teachers teaching outside their major or without sufficient competency in Filipino content, one intervention is targeted professional development. For example, a study indicated that “attending training or seminar workshops ... would be beneficial for enhancing their knowledge of modern teaching methods or strategies” (Lumanta & Liquido, 2025). Similarly, studies on language teaching stress the importance of equipping teachers with pedagogical strategies, especially when they lack subject-specialization (e.g., Magno, Indal, Chavez et al., 2024; Buhisan et al., 2024). Thus, for Filipino subject teachers in rural elementary schools, interventions might include continuous in-service training, mentoring, subject-specialist deployment, and stronger teacher support networks.

To remedy resource and materials shortages, especially those tailored to rural/language-diverse contexts, interventions should include the development of contextualized teaching resources. For example, Tica-a & Wangdali (2023) recommended an O-Q-R (Observe, Question, Research) guide to help teachers contextualize Filipino instruction using local culture and literature. Also, strategy documents for teaching Filipino suggest the use of authentic materials (books, newspapers, magazines) and visual aids (charts, infographics) to engage learners and promote the Filipino language. In rural elementary schools, creating locally-relevant Filipino stories, using regional language connections, and leveraging teacher-produced materials can support better learning and cultural relevance.

Another intervention pathway is adopting interactive, learner-centered instructional strategies to improve engagement, language use, and proficiency. The study “Alternative Teaching Strategies in Learning Filipino Language among Dominant English Speakers” (Magno et al., 2024) found that strategies such as “Filipino word of the day”, role-play, language games, and continuous exposure significantly improved motivation and proficiency among learners. While this study is not specifically rural-elementary, the strategies are applicable in rural settings, too. Encouraging Filipino language use beyond the classroom, integrating games and culture, and making the subject meaningful can help overcome motivation and language-background challenges.

Because many difficulties stem from broader infrastructure and support deficits, interventions need to address systemic issues. For example, analysts point out that many rural Philippine schools have limited access to textbooks, electricity, internet connectivity, and basic facilities. Therefore, interventions for Filipino subject teaching in rural elementary schools may include ensuring a sufficient number of qualified teachers, improving infrastructure (classrooms, power, connectivity), providing teaching aids, reducing multi-grade/large class burdens, and fostering partnerships with communities (e.g., local libraries, reading corners) to reinforce language learning. Teachers in remote schools also call for professional isolation reduction and collaborative networks (Beyond the Classroom: ...). These systemic support interventions bolster the capacity of teachers to implement effective language instruction.

Ensuring that curriculum and assessment tools are aligned with the rural and multilingual context is another key intervention area. Studies suggest that Filipino instruction should be contextualized, culturally responsive, and adapted to learner backgrounds. The Tica-a & Wangdali (2023) study emphasized teachers recognizing the cultural environment of students when contextualizing Filipino instruction. Interventions may include providing teacher guides for contextualization, simplifying lesson loads, offering assessment formats that reflect local language realities (e.g., portfolios, oral tasks), and aligning instruction with students' home languages and experiences. This approach can reduce teacher burden and improve learner relevance and proficiency.

Statement of the problem/research questions

This study aims to explore the struggles/experiences and strat interventions needed in overcoming difficulties in teaching Filipino subject in the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the instructional difficulties of teachers in teaching the Filipino subject?
2. What are the interventions needed to overcome these difficulties in teaching Filipino subjects?

Research methodology

This chapter presents the research design, sources of data, which includes the locale of the study, population and sampling, data gathering instrument, and data analysis, including its ethical standards.

Research design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a narrative inquiry approach, to explore the lived experiences of elementary teachers in teaching the Filipino subject. The goal was to uncover their personal stories, challenges, and the strategies they use to effectively teach Filipino subjects in their classrooms.

Locale of the study

The research was conducted at Dipilat Elementary School, a public school located in the Schools Division of the City of Batac, Ilocos Norte. This school was selected due to its active engagement in teaching innovation and its diverse student population.

Population and sampling

The participants of the study were elementary teachers at Dipilat Elementary School. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select ten teachers who have experience in teaching Filipino subjects and have demonstrated involvement in instructional improvement.

Data gathering instrument

The main instrument for data collection was an open-ended questionnaire divided into three main sections: experiences in teaching Filipino subjects, strategies and innovations used, and professional support needs. Follow-up informal interviews were also conducted to probe deeper into their responses.

Data gathering procedure

Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires distributed to participating teachers. These questionnaires were designed to encourage reflective and narrative responses, allowing teachers to describe their experiences in detail. Some responses were followed up with informal interviews to clarify and expand on the information provided.

Ethical considerations

The study observed ethical research practices. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Responses were kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of this study. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without any consequence.

Results and discussion

This part presented findings from the online interview questionnaire with the 10 respondents (10 school teachers) from the elementary schools of the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte. The data is organized according to key themes identified.

Problem 1: What are the instructional difficulties of teachers in teaching the Filipino subject?

Table 1. Instructional difficulties of teachers in teaching the Filipino subject

Theme 1: Instructional difficulties of teachers	
Merged idea	Participant
Insufficient Filipino books and materials	P1, P3, P8
Students' limited understanding of Filipino (language barrier)	P6, P9
Minimal daily use of the Filipino language	P4, P10
Diverse learner abilities	P2, P4,
Poor or unstable internet connection	P9
Use of varied and engaging activities	P1, P6

Note. Data were gathered from open-ended questionnaire responses and follow-up informal interviews with ten elementary teachers from Dipilat Elementary School.

Theme 1: Instructional difficulties of teachers in teaching the Filipino subject

Teaching the Filipino subject presents a range of challenges that significantly affect classroom instruction and student learning outcomes. Educators often encounter difficulties such as addressing varying levels of Filipino language proficiency (**Garcia, 2019**), managing limited teaching materials and resources (**Luz, 2018**), and engaging students who show low interest or motivation in the subject (**Reyes, 2017; Mendoza, 2020**). These experiences highlight the complex nature of teaching Filipino, where teachers must balance curriculum requirements with the diverse needs of their learners (**Delos Reyes &**

Torres, 2021). Recognizing these challenges provides important insight into the realities of classroom instruction and emphasizes the need for effective teaching strategies, sufficient resources, and continuous professional development to enhance students' mastery and appreciation of the Filipino language (**Santos & Villanueva, 2020**).

Insufficient Filipino books and materials

The availability of quality instructional materials is crucial in ensuring effective teaching and learning. In the context of the Filipino subject, insufficient books and teaching resources pose a significant challenge for educators (**Luz, 2018; Mendoza, 2020**). Many schools lack updated textbooks, supplementary reading materials, and multimedia resources that cater to the diverse learning needs of students (**Garcia, 2019; Buhisan, Erocido, & Derasin, 2024**). This shortage not only limits teachers' ability to deliver engaging and comprehensive lessons but also affects students' understanding, language proficiency, and appreciation of Filipino literature and culture (**Santos, 2017; Delos Reyes, 2016**). Addressing the scarcity of Filipino instructional materials is essential for improving classroom instruction and fostering a deeper connection between learners and the Filipino language (**Torres & Villanueva, 2018**).

"There is a lack of sufficient and updated Filipino textbooks and learning materials, which limits both teachers' instructional delivery and students' opportunities to practice the language." (P1, P3, P8)

According to Candelaria (2020), the shortage of instructional resources in Filipino classrooms reduces the effectiveness of lesson implementation and limits students' engagement with reading and writing activities. Similarly, Tarrayo and Duque (2021) emphasized that the unavailability of relevant and contextualized learning materials hinders the development of linguistic competence, especially in public schools where access to updated Filipino resources is scarce.

Students' limited understanding of Filipino (language barrier)

Students' limited understanding of Filipino poses a significant challenge in teaching the subject. Many learners struggle with vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension due to exposure to English or regional dialects, which can hinder their ability to fully participate in lessons (**Delos Reyes, 2016; Garcia, 2019**). This language barrier affects not only academic performance but also the development of appreciation for Filipino literature and culture, highlighting the need for effective teaching strategies that address varying levels of language proficiency (**Santos, 2017**).

"The language barrier is a major challenge. Students often cannot follow lessons when taught in Filipino alone, so I have to switch to their dialect to make sure they understand, which can be time-consuming and affects the flow of the class." (P6 and P9)

This statement is what Dela Cruz (2016) emphasized. Many learners primarily use English or their local dialects at home and in their communities, which restricts their opportunities to practice and internalize Filipino structures and expressions. This lack of linguistic immersion contributes to weak grammatical accuracy and a narrow vocabulary, making it harder for students to understand and express complex ideas in Filipino (**Salas & Legaspi, 2020**).

Minimal daily use of the Filipino language

Teachers in rural schools face multiple challenges in teaching the Filipino language, which affect both lesson delivery and student learning outcomes. A key concern is the minimal daily use of Filipino among students. One respondent noted, *“Most of my learners speak their local dialect at home and rarely use Filipino outside the classroom. This makes it difficult for them to understand lessons and apply the language in reading, writing, and speaking activities”* (P4 and P10).

Limited exposure to Filipino in daily life hinders comprehension and slows the development of essential language skills, often requiring teachers to use vernacular explanations or bridging methods to facilitate understanding.

Another significant challenge is the language barrier, particularly in areas where learners primarily communicate in local dialects. A teacher shared,

“Many of my students speak a local dialect at home, so they struggle to understand Filipino lessons. They often confuse words and grammar, which makes it hard for them to participate in class discussions or complete reading and writing tasks correctly” (P10).

This barrier necessitates additional instructional strategies, such as code-switching and repetitive practice, which can affect lesson pacing and depth.

Diverse learner abilities

Teaching Filipino in rural schools presents unique challenges due to the **diverse abilities of learners**. Students differ in their comprehension, reading, and writing skills, which makes it difficult for teachers to deliver lessons that meet the needs of all learners. One respondent shared,

“Some students grasp the lessons quickly, while others struggle to understand even simple concepts. I have to adjust my teaching pace and provide extra practice for those who need it, which can be challenging in a single class session” (P2 and P4).

These strategies align with research emphasizing that **differentiated instruction and adaptive teaching methods are essential to meet the needs of learners with diverse abilities** (Tomlinson, 2014; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). By applying these approaches, teachers aim to ensure that all learners, regardless of their ability level, can participate meaningfully and achieve the intended learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Poor or unstable internet connection

Teachers in rural schools encounter significant challenges in delivering Filipino lessons due to poor or unstable internet connectivity. Many respondents reported that limited access to reliable internet hinders the use of online resources, multimedia lessons, and educational platforms that could enhance student engagement and learning. One participant stated,

“Our internet connection is often slow or cuts off during lessons, making it difficult to show videos or access online teaching materials. This limits the activities I can do with the students and slows down learning” (P9).

Research indicates that unstable internet connectivity in rural areas can negatively impact both teaching and learning, limiting access to digital resources and online professional development opportunities for teachers (Barrot, 2021; Hodges et al., 2020). Consequently, teachers often rely on traditional methods, such as printed worksheets and localized teaching materials, to ensure lesson continuity. Improving internet access is therefore critical to enhancing instructional delivery and promoting effective learning in Filipino classrooms, particularly in geographically isolated or under-resourced schools.

Use of varied and engaging activities

Teachers in Filipino classrooms recognize the importance of using varied and engaging activities to maintain student interest and improve learning outcomes. Many respondents reported employing strategies such as storytelling, group work, visual aids, songs, poems, and interactive games to make lessons more meaningful and enjoyable. One participant shared,

“I use interactive activities, visual aids, and constant practice to help students understand and use correct Filipino. This keeps them motivated and allows learners to participate actively in class” (P4).

Research supports the effectiveness of diverse instructional activities in enhancing student engagement and comprehension. Active and interactive learning strategies help students process information more effectively and foster a deeper understanding of concepts (Prince, 2004; Tomlinson, 2014). Moreover, incorporating multiple teaching methods allows educators to address the different learning styles and abilities of students, ensuring that all learners can meaningfully participate in the Filipino classroom (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011).

Problem 2: What are the interventions needed to overcome these difficulties in teaching Filipino subjects?

Table 2: Theme 2: Interventions needed to overcome difficulties

Theme 2: Interventions needed to overcome difficulties	
Merged idea	Participant
Need for training and seminars on effective Filipino teaching strategies	P2, P4, P9
Contextualization of lessons to learners’ experiences	P10, P2
Need for parental involvement and home follow-up	P7
ICT or multimedia integration	P4, P10
Group or collaborative activities	P1, P4, P7
Organizing language-related school activities to promote Filipino use	P8

Note. Data were gathered from open-ended questionnaire responses and follow-up informal interviews with ten elementary teachers from Dipilat Elementary School.

Need for training and seminars on effective Filipino teaching strategies

Teachers in rural schools expressed a strong need for trainings and seminars to improve their effectiveness in teaching the Filipino language. Many respondents reported that attending professional development programs would enhance their instructional skills, introduce innovative teaching strategies, and provide updated resources for engaging learners. One participant shared,

“I need more trainings and seminars to learn new teaching strategies and methods that can make Filipino lessons more interesting and effective for my students.” (P2, P4, and P9)

Research emphasizes that continuous professional development is crucial for teachers to adapt to diverse classroom needs and implement evidence-based strategies effectively. Effective training programs help teachers develop competencies in lesson planning, differentiated instruction, and the integration of multimedia and interactive activities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). In addition, seminars provide opportunities for collaboration and sharing of best practices, which can significantly improve teaching outcomes and student learning in the Filipino classroom. Consequently, professional development initiatives are essential to support teachers in delivering high-quality, learner-centered instruction in rural settings.

Contextualization of lessons to learners’ experiences

Teachers in rural schools emphasized the importance of contextualizing Filipino lessons to align with learners’ experiences, daily lives, and local culture. Many respondents reported that lessons become more meaningful and engaging when content reflects students’ backgrounds, community activities, and real-life situations. One participant shared,

“I design lessons that relate to students’ daily experiences, such as using local stories, events, and examples. This helps them understand concepts better and actively participate in class” (P2 and P10).

Research indicates that contextualized instruction improves comprehension, engagement, and retention by connecting academic content to students’ prior knowledge and lived experiences (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). By incorporating culturally relevant examples and locally meaningful materials, teachers can enhance learners’ motivation and facilitate a deeper understanding of the Filipino language. Contextualization is particularly crucial in rural schools, where students may have limited exposure to standardized textbooks or external resources, making localized, experience-based lessons a key strategy for effective Filipino instruction.

Need for parental involvement and home follow-up

Teachers in rural schools highlighted the importance of parental involvement and home follow-up to reinforce learning in Filipino. Many respondents reported that students often struggle to practice Filipino at home, and parental support is crucial for monitoring homework, encouraging reading, and assisting with language exercises. One participant noted,

“Students learn better when parents are involved. If parents follow up at home, it motivates learners to practice Filipino regularly and improves their understanding” (P7).

Research emphasizes that parental engagement positively impacts student achievement, language development, and motivation. When parents actively support learning at home, children are more likely to develop literacy skills, complete assignments, and sustain interest in academic tasks (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Fan & Chen, 2001). In rural contexts, where access to instructional resources may be limited, collaboration between teachers and parents becomes particularly important to ensure that learners continue practicing and developing Filipino skills outside the classroom. Encouraging home follow-up and parental involvement strengthens the link between school and family, thereby enhancing overall learning outcomes.

ICT or multimedia integration

Teachers in rural schools recognize the potential of ICT and multimedia integration to enhance the teaching and learning of Filipino. Many respondents reported using digital resources, educational videos, interactive presentations, and online platforms to make lessons more engaging and accessible for students. One participant shared,

“I integrate multimedia and ICT tools in my lessons to capture students’ attention and make abstract concepts easier to understand. This also helps students participate more actively in class” (P4 and P10).

Research shows that incorporating technology in language instruction can improve student motivation, engagement, and comprehension (Hsu, 2016; Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Multimedia resources, such as videos, audio clips, and interactive games, support multisensory learning and help accommodate different learning styles. In rural contexts, however, the effectiveness of ICT integration depends on the availability of devices, internet connectivity, and teacher preparedness (Barrot, 2021). Properly implemented, ICT-enhanced Filipino lessons can foster a more interactive and learner-centered environment, bridging gaps in traditional instruction and enriching students’ language experiences.

Group or collaborative activities

Teachers teaching the Filipino subject in rural school contexts increasingly recognize that **group or collaborative activities** play a pivotal role in enhancing student engagement, language practice, and peer learning. Many respondents reported that using structured group work, peer discussions, and cooperative tasks allows learners to experiment with Filipino in a more interactive environment, rather than relying solely on teacher-led instruction. One participant noted:

“I use group work and collaborative activities so that students can learn from each other and practice Filipino in a more interactive and meaningful way” (P1, P4, and P7).

Research in language education affirms that collaborative learning environments support social interaction, learner autonomy, and deeper language processing (Carvajal Ayala & Avendaño-Franco, 2021; Lange, Costley & Han, 2016). These strategies are especially relevant in multilingual rural

classrooms where learners bring different language backgrounds and proficiency levels—offering opportunities for scaffolded peer support and meaningful use of Filipino in authentic communicative contexts. By integrating collaborative activities into Filipino lessons, teachers can create a more inclusive and dynamic learning environment that fosters communication, motivation, and improved language outcomes.

Organizing language-related school activities to promote Filipino use

Teachers in rural schools emphasized the importance of organizing language-related school activities as a way to increase students' use of Filipino outside the regular classroom context. Many respondents reported that activities such as Filipino language fairs, poetry recitations, short-film contests, reading campaigns, and inter-class language clubs helped create authentic and enjoyable opportunities for learners to speak, read, and write Filipino. One participant shared:

“We held a Filipino language day with storytelling, song-writing, poem recitation and a quiz. Students who normally speak their local dialect at home began to use more Filipino during the event and after it” (P8).

Research shows that extracurricular and school-wide language events foster increased exposure, motivation, and meaningful engagement in the target language, thereby strengthening language proficiency and student confidence (Pasaribu, Arfianty & Bunce, 2024; Carvajal Ayala & Avendaño-Franco, 2021). In contexts where routine instructional time for Filipino may be limited, these organized activities provide valuable scaffolding and peer-interaction opportunities, helping students to integrate Filipino into their school culture and daily practice.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed the key instructional difficulties faced by teachers in teaching the Filipino subject in rural school settings. Teachers encountered challenges such as insufficient Filipino books and materials, students' limited understanding of the language, minimal daily use of Filipino, diverse learner abilities, and poor or unstable internet connections. These difficulties highlight the combined impact of limited resources, student-related factors, and technological constraints on effective Filipino instruction.

To address these challenges, teachers identified several interventions. These include attending trainings and seminars to improve teaching strategies, contextualizing lessons to learners' experiences, promoting parental involvement and home follow-up, integrating ICT and multimedia, employing group or collaborative activities, and organizing language-related school activities. These strategies demonstrate a shift towards learner-centered, interactive, and culturally relevant teaching approaches, aiming to enhance student engagement, language proficiency, and motivation.

Overall, the study emphasized the need for **adequate instructional resources, professional development opportunities, and active collaboration among teachers, parents, and the school community**. Implementing these interventions can help Filipino teachers create a more effective and

inclusive learning environment, ultimately improving student outcomes and fostering a stronger use of the Filipino language in rural school settings.

Finally, it is recommended that future researchers conduct a similar study focusing on a comparative analysis between rural and urban schools to determine if the difficulties encountered by teachers in teaching the Filipino subject differ based on location, availability of resources, and student backgrounds. This can provide a broader understanding of the challenges and inform more targeted interventions for improving Filipino language instruction.

Future researchers may conduct a comparative study between rural and urban schools to determine whether the instructional difficulties encountered by teachers differ based on location, resource availability, and student demographics. It is also recommended to include classroom observations, student achievement measures, and a larger sample size to capture a more holistic understanding of Filipino instruction. Further studies may also explore the effectiveness of specific interventions—such as contextualization strategies, ICT integration, or parental involvement programs—to identify which approaches significantly improve Filipino language learning.

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