

# Unveiling the Experiences of Elementary Teachers in Handling Linguistically Diverse Learners

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## Abstract

This study explored the experiences of elementary teachers in handling linguistically diverse learners, the contexts shaping their teaching practices, and their future visions for multilingual education. Using a transcendental phenomenological research design, the study involved seven non-Indigenous teachers from Lake Sebu Central Elementary School and Diente Integrated School. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and thematic analysis was used to uncover emerging themes.

Teachers' future visions for teaching linguistically diverse learners were reflected in three key themes: projected teacher identity, desire for professional growth, and culturally inclusive and collaborative strategies. These emphasize aspirations for continuous learning and a more culturally responsive teaching approach.

The study concludes that sustained professional development, institutional support, and culturally relevant teaching materials are essential in improving teachers' effectiveness in linguistically diverse classrooms. It recommends enhancing multilingual training programs, fostering stronger school-community collaboration, and integrating inclusive teaching policies to ensure quality education for all learners.

Keywords: Challenges of Non- Indigenous Teachers; Linguistically Diverse Learners

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## I. Introduction

In today's classrooms, cultural and linguistic diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for educators. Teachers must navigate language barriers, varying proficiency levels, and cultural differences while fostering an inclusive learning environment. The increasing diversity in

schools highlights the need for pedagogical strategies that address these complexities, ensuring equitable and meaningful learning experiences.

Globally, inclusive education has gained recognition as a means to support diverse learners. UNESCO (2022) underscores the importance of culturally responsive teaching and differentiated instruction in promoting equitable education.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has taken steps to address linguistic diversity through the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy. Research by Lopez and Castillo (2023) and Buenavista and Miranda (2023) highlights the benefits of contextualized teaching strategies in improving student engagement and learning outcomes.

At the local level, educators in South Cotabato, including Koronadal City and indigenous communities, face significant hurdles in addressing the needs of linguistically diverse learners. Studies by Arciosa (2024) and Tubog (2024) reveal that while there is recognition of the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, the absence of standardized materials and comprehensive teacher training limits its full implementation. Maintaining linguistic authenticity while ensuring curriculum alignment continues to be a major challenge.

Despite the growing body of research on inclusive education, there remains a gap in literature exploring the specific strategies and challenges faced by teachers in diverse, multilingual, and indigenous classrooms in the Philippines. Most studies focus on broad multicultural education, with limited emphasis on culture-based instructional materials tailored for indigenous learners. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the pedagogical strategies used by teachers, the challenges they encounter, and the need for culturally responsive instructional materials. The findings will serve as the basis for developing criteria and guidelines for Tboli culture-based learning materials that promote inclusive education.

## Theoretical Framework of the study

This study attached to the **Humanist Education Theory** is based on the philosophy of humanist theory of psychology including person-centered theory (Gould, 2012). This theory as well as approach in education relates to humanistic psychology, with major concepts focusing on the aspect that children are good at the core and education needs to give emphasis on rational ways to teach the whole child. If the language is not understood, a pupils will not be able to concentrate on learning. Further, if the learners unfamiliar with the language use in delivery of the lesson, normally they are not interested to listen and learned, and directly affect their academic performance.

Ormrod (1999) added that, **Social Learning Theory** is centered towards education which happens in a social context. It is believed that people learn from each other, including concepts like observation education, copying, and modeling.

Using Diverse Teaching Methods and Instructional Materials to engage pupils, educators should use multicultural literature.

In this study, the **Linguistic Learning Theory** of language development comes from the work of Noam Chomsky, an American linguist who is also regarded as the initiator of modern cognitive science. Chomsky's linguistic theory is based on the idea that people are born with an innate ability to learn a language. He argued that all human brains are pre-wired with a language acquisition device.

## II. Methodology

This study had employ qualitative research design, specifically Transcendental Phenomenology brings added dimensions to the study of human experiences through qualitative research. Grasping and using its philosophical tenets in a meaningful way can be challenging, given their abstraction and complexity (Moustakas, 1994).

This paper provided a conceptual framework for deeper understanding and, therefore, more meaningful practice using parallels that emerged from the lived experiences of teachers in linguistically diverse classroom. An additional layer of the framework provides integration with theories of decision-making and organizational outcomes.

Transcendental Phenomenology (TPh), largely developed by Husserl, is a philosophical approach to qualitative research methodology seeking to understand human experience (Moustakas, 1994). Pure TPh is grounded in the concept and conditioned upon setting aside all preconceived ideas to see phenomena through observation while administering instrument, thereby allowing the true meaning of phenomena to naturally emerge with and within their own identity (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas discusses at length Husserl's philosophical underpinnings of TPh. Though philosophically sensible, the terminology somehow lacks clarity even when defined, that which is experienced, the what of experience.

Phenomenology is a form of inquiry that seeks to understand human experience (Moustakas, 1994), to explore phenomena and how it is perceived and experienced by individuals in the phenomenological event (Lester, 1999). Moustakas (1994) posits phenomenology as an appropriate tool for exploring and describing shared experiences related to phenomena.

### Scope and Limitation of Study

The study unveiling elementary teacher's experiences linguistically diverse learners in classroom focused on the diverse language regardless of practices, culture and tradition. This is limited to the learning process in the classroom, the challenges of the Grade one (1) to three (3) Non- Indigenous People (IP) teachers, and their approach in dealing with diverse language. The impact to academic performance of the learner is not part of the study. The study conducted in school year 2024-2025, in Lake Sebu Central Elementary School and Diente Integrated School

of Cluster 1 in Lake Sebu East District 1, Division of South Cotabato. The data collection would take place over a two-three weeks period, from February 2025 to March 2025.

The scope of this study is limited to seven (7) selected Grade one (1) to three (3) Non-Indigenous People (IP) teachers, which would limit how broadly the results can be applied. The phenomenological design enables the researcher to examine each participant's views closely; however, the actual participant number is limited, which may result in a limited generalization of the findings Grade one (1) to three (3) Non-Indigenous People (IP) teachers of Cluster 1 in Lake Sebu East District 1, Division of South Cotabato. Also, this study only focuses in Lake Sebu Central Elementary School and Diente Integrated School that have a Non-IP teachers handling Grade one (1) to three (3) learners, which restrains the number of experiences that could be seen in other districts or schools with different resources or demographics. As a qualitative study, it aims to present comprehensive descriptions rather than quantitative results, and the conclusions would mainly be based on the experiences of the chosen participants within the given timeframe and school environments.

### Operation Definition of Terms

This part of the research paper would described clearly the words apply to understand the concept of the study.

**Unveiling Experiences.** This is refers to the procedure of exploring, revealing, and understanding the various aspects of teachers' professional lives, practices, and perceptions, this involves gathering data through interview using self- structured survey questionnaires.

**Linguistically Diverse.** Refers to the learner's situation in which individuals speak multiple languages or come from different linguistic backgrounds. It involves the varied language skills, dialects or accents within the population.

**Phenomenological Study.** Refers to a qualitative research approach which will be used to describe and gain an inside-out appreciation of

the experiences of teachers regarding the role of viewing in language learning.

**Teachers' Perspectives.** Refers to the insights, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences that teachers have regarding how to handling linguistically diverse learners. This involves the challenges and successes how to deal with learners speaking their first language, the strategies and approaches they employ to have effective and equitable educational practices.

### **Locale of the Study**

The study was conducted in Lake Sebu Central Elementary School and Diente Integrated School located at Cluster 1 of Lake Sebu East District 1 Municipality of Lake Sebu, South Cotabato. This above mention schools are diverse learners or linguistically diverse, because this compose of Tboli, Ilonggo, and other IP language both teachers and pupils. However, some of the teachers are Ilonggo and they cannot adopt easily the first language or mother tongue of their learners. The practices, fluency of words different, terms and level of understanding.

The map of Lake Sebu Municipality in figure 1 show the specific location of the schools involved in the study which are Lake Sebu Central Elementary School and Diente Integrated School.

### **Participants of the Study**

This study would selected participants using purposive sampling that have set inclusion criteria. The participants will be seven (7) selected grade one (1) to three (3) non-IP teachers teaching in diverse learners. The study's participants are regular non-IP teachers handling grade I to III pupils with three (3) and above years in services, and willing to undergo interview in gathering data to share reflective insights regarding their teaching practices. Consequently, participants will be coded to safeguard their confidentiality.

The selection of these participants is based on purposive sampling, aiming to capture a range of perspectives from different schools in Custer 1 of Lake Sebu East District 1, Division of South Cotabato. This approach allows for a rich, multi-

dimensional exploration on how to handle linguistically diverse learners, taking into account variations in resources, community engagement, and demographics across the district's educational landscape.

### **Sampling Technique**

This study would use purposive sampling technique in selection of the teacher's participants. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher intentionally selects participants or cases that meet specific criteria relevant to the research study. The aim is to focus on individuals or groups that are particularly knowledgeable about or have experienced the phenomenon being studied, ensuring the sample is highly relevant to the research objectives. Nikonopoulo, K (2022).

For this study, seven (7) selected grade one (1) to three (3) non-IP teachers teaching in diverse learners will be purposefully selected from Lake Sebu Central Elementary School and Diente Integrated School, Cluster 1 of Lake Sebu East District 1 Municipality of Lake Sebu, South Cotabato.

By targeting participants who can give different practices and strategies that can help both non-IP teachers and linguistically diverse learners, this purposive sampling method ensures that the data collected will be both relevant and insightful, directly contributing to the study's goal to investigate the unveiling challenges of teachers in handling linguistically diverse learners in Lake Sebu East District 1.

### **Data Gathering Instrument**

This study would employ in-depth interviews (IDI) as the primary method for data collection.

In-depth interviewing (IDI) is a qualitative research technique in which data is collected through interviews with a small sample of participants about their experiences in handling

linguistically diverse learners. This approach is most useful when there is a need to precisely analyze their attitudes and actions or when a researcher investigates new topics. In-depth interviews can fill gaps in understanding the context within which the 'program' is operating as well as gather a larger, more detailed understanding of its scope and impacts (Boyce et al., 2018). The researcher will use self-structured survey questionnaires to gather data from the teachers, which in this study would be subjected to content validity. The questions that will be prepared will be presented in drafts to the adviser before presenting to the validators. Further, the recordings of the one-on-one interviews conducted with participants will be attained with their permission. The researcher will utilize a cellular phone as the recording device to ensure reliable information capture and to document all participant responses without bias, facilitating accurate transcription and analysis.

In addition to this, the researcher will also utilize various instruments, including a questionnaire validation tool, interview protocols, an assent and informed consent form, and a transcription guide.

#### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researcher would send a letter first to the Dean of Graduate School at Sultan Kudarat State University asking permission to conduct the study. When the Dean of the Graduate School approved the letter of request, the researcher would send a letter to the Schools Division Superintendent of South Cotabato, District Supervisor of Lake Sebu East 1, two (2) Principals in cluster 1, and to the selected non-IP teachers handling Grade 1 to 3 participants of the study.

Then, after the approval of those permission letters, the researcher would develop a self-structured instrument. This instrument was properly reviewed and evaluated, to ensure credibility and transferability, the interview guide created by the researcher will be validated by a panel of experts.

It is also imperative to conduct a trial interview which will replicate and investigate a

real-world system or process, allowing researchers to test different situations and outcomes without real-world constraints (Law & Kelton, 2000).

Therefore, after the evaluation and content analysis of survey questionnaires, the researcher will administer the instrument by means of interview and document using a cellular phone as a recorder, then orient the participants before the final interview undergo a trial and error interview before the final interview. Then, after the documented data and survey, the researcher transcribes and transcribes the participants' answers with signature for cross-validation of the teacher participants and their school head about their answer.

Moreover, the researcher will employ member checking after the interview session (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The next step, the researcher will tabulate and narrate to describe and explain the gathered data from the 7 participants of this study, and that will be supported by the related study. Below is the research paradigm.

#### **Data Analysis**

This study will use thematic analysis and coding. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (theme) within a dataset, such as interview transcripts, survey responses, or observational notes. The researcher will use the following steps:

**Familiarizing with the data.** In this step the researcher will read and re-read the data to become deeply familiar with it. The researcher must complete data collection.

**Generating Initial Codes.** The researcher will generate or label important features of the data that are relevant to the research question by documenting where and how patterns occur. It happens through data reduction, where the researcher collapses data into labels to create categories for more efficient analysis. Data compilation is also completed here. It involves the researcher making inferences about what the codes mean.

**Searching for Themes.** By grouping the codes into potential themes, based on patterns in the data. It was important to develop themes that described exactly what the theme meant, even if it did not fit. The researcher also will clarify what is missing from the analysis.

**Reviewing Themes.** By refining themes to ensure they accurately represent the data. If the analysis seems incomplete, the researcher must go back and find what needs to be added.

**Naming Themes and Writing the Report.** By presenting the findings, including examples of the data that illustrate each theme. This analysis will be guided by (Moustakas, 1994), the phenomenology study. Additionally, this grounded on phenomenology approach will analyses through qualitative methods. Phenomenology is a qualitative approach that examines the lived experiences for individuals concerning a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The phenomenology design is suitable for this study to gather information about challenges face at the diverse learners.

**Ethical Consideration**

The crucial importance of ethical issues inside the focused study on Unveiling the Experiences of Teachers in Handling Linguistically Diverse Learners in Cluster 1 of Lake Sebu East District 1, Division of South Cotabato: A Phenomenology Study must be

emphasized in the administration of this investigation.

III. Results and Discussions

**Table 1.** Lived Experiences of the Elementary Teachers in Handling Linguistically Diverse Learners

			<p>also incredible trying my best to explain it in their mother tongue, but in the end, they just smiled because of the wrong instructions."</p> <p>- Participant2: "I fear a mix of emotions..."</p> <p>- Participant6: "It's essential to love the workload you have..."</p>
	3.3 Embracing a mix of emotions	<p>mix of emotions, rewarding, non-IP teacher, delivering lesson</p>	
4. Creative Adaptation and Resourcefulness in Teaching	4.1 implementing multimodal strategies	<p>multimodal, visual materials, differentiated, creativity, patience, flexibility, multilingual teaching, visuals, gestures, simple language</p>	<p>- Participant1: "Use of multimodal instructions, visual materials (organized), and differentiated activities must be done"</p> <p>- Participant3: "... as a teacher with diverse learners needs creativity, patience, and flexibility..."</p> <p>- Participant5: "... requires strategy called multilingual teaching like using visuals, gestures, simple language when needed to facilitate understanding."</p>
	4.2 Resolving adaptive teaching moments	<p>pictures, hand gestures, explaining, Tbol, hand-on, puppet, instructions, peer help, translation challenge, deep Tbol words, word meaning, patience, empathy, creativity,</p>	<p>- Participant1: "... used pictures and hand gestures and asked pupils to explain Tbol to their classmates..."</p> <p>- Participant3: "A pupil really got it after working with peers or doing hands-on activities."</p> <p>- Participant4: "... One of my pupils did not do his pupil because he didn't understand my instructions. So, I told one of my pupils to help his classmates."</p>
		<p>valued, respected</p>	<p>- Participant5: "At one point, I was not able to translate deep Tbol words because there was no actual translation of some Tbol words, but everything was handled well."</p> <p>- Participant7: "... the joy of seeing learners grow and overcome language barriers makes it the most satisfying for a non-IP teacher. I make sure all of them in my class feel valued and respected."</p>
		<p>hard, researching language skills, non-IP teacher, incredible</p>	<p>creative ways to help them understand..."</p> <p>- Participant2: "The presentation of lessons may not be easy..."</p> <p>- Participant3: "Frustrating but pushes me to find new ways to connect to them..."</p> <p>- Participant6: "Sometimes it is hard..."</p> <p>- Participant7: "...It is frustrating at times, but it is</p>

Emerging Themes	Clustered Themes	Codes	Significant Statements
1. Creating Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environments	1.1 creation of inclusive environments	<p>involves, bridging language gaps, cultural openness, supportive, valued, differentiated activities</p>	<p>- Participant1: "... creating an inclusive environment that respects cultural identities while bridging language gaps to foster meaningful learning"</p> <p>- Participant2: "... involves creating inclusive and supportive learning environments where pupils feel valued and are able to succeed academically..."</p>
	1.2 fostering cultural respect	<p>approach, culture, respectful</p>	<p>- Participant5: "As a teacher handling linguistically diverse learners... Always recognize them as your pupils and appreciate their culture, as they respect you as their teacher."</p> <p>- Participant6: "I try to explain concepts using simpler words, gestures, and visual aids..."</p> <p>- Participant2: "Explained in their own native tongue and translated in other languages..."</p>
2. Overcoming Language Barriers through Adaptive Strategies	2.1 explaining using simple language	<p>simpler words, gestures, visual aids, native tongue, translated, pictures, hand</p>	
	2.2 using Code-switching	<p>switch code, code-switching, mother</p>	<p>- Participant2: "Use simpler words, pictures, and hand gestures or ask classmates to help translate..."</p> <p>- Participant6: "... I use simpler words that they can easily understand..."</p> <p>- Participant6: "The teacher needs to communicate with each learner by using the identified mother tongue of a child"</p> <p>- Participant5: "switch code Code-switching is an ability a teacher teaching linguistically diverse learners must</p>

### **Emerging Theme 1: Creating Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environments**

This emerging theme highlights the teachers' commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive classroom environment for linguistically diverse learners. Teachers emphasize the importance of **bridging language gaps while respecting cultural identities**, ensuring that students feel valued and included in the learning process. They achieve this by **differentiating activities, acknowledging students' backgrounds, and cultivating a sense of belonging in the classroom**. The creation of an inclusive environment helps learners succeed academically despite linguistic challenges.

### **Emerging Theme 2: Overcoming Language Barriers through Adaptive Strategies**

This theme highlights the teachers' proactive efforts to address communication challenges in a linguistically diverse classroom. Teachers employ **various adaptive strategies such as simplifying language, using visual aids, code-switching, and multimodal instruction** to ensure that students grasp lesson concepts effectively. These strategies allow them to bridge linguistic gaps and enhance student understanding, fostering a more inclusive and engaging learning environment.

The findings indicate that **teachers recognize the necessity of modifying their**

**teaching methods to accommodate students with different linguistic backgrounds**. By utilizing a combination of language simplification, translation, and non-verbal communication, they create a learning environment where all students, regardless of their language proficiency, can actively participate and comprehend lesson content.

### **Emerging Theme 3: Emotional Journey and Teacher Resilience**

This theme captures the emotional highs and lows that teachers experience while handling linguistically diverse learners. Teachers describe feelings of **frustration, determination, and fulfillment** as they navigate language barriers and strive to connect with their students. While the challenges of teaching in a multilingual classroom can be overwhelming, teachers also express a deep sense of **commitment and resilience**, pushing themselves to find innovative ways to ensure effective learning.

The findings emphasize that **teaching linguistically diverse learners requires not only pedagogical strategies but also emotional resilience**. Teachers encounter struggles in delivering lessons effectively, yet their passion and commitment drive them to continually adapt and refine their approaches. Despite the difficulties, they find joy and fulfillment in seeing their students overcome language challenges, reinforcing their dedication to the teaching profession.

### **Emerging Theme 4: Creative Adaptation and Resourcefulness in Teaching**

This theme underscores teachers' ability to **innovate and maximize available resources** to effectively engage linguistically diverse learners. Faced with language barriers, teachers integrate **varied instructional strategies, culturally responsive materials, and interactive techniques** to ensure that students grasp lesson concepts. They emphasize the importance of **adaptability, ingenuity, and persistence** in designing meaningful and accessible learning experiences.

The findings highlight that **teachers employ dynamic and resourceful teaching methods** to bridge linguistic gaps and enhance student engagement. By incorporating **visual aids, peer-assisted learning, and contextualized instruction**, they create a more **inclusive, responsive, and interactive** learning environment that supports all students regardless of their linguistic backgrounds.

**Table 2. Contexts Shaping the Experiences of Elementary Teachers in Addressing the Needs of Linguistically Diverse Learners**

Emerging Themes	Clustered Themes	Codes	Significant Statements
1. Institutional & Professional Development	1.a Professional Development & Policies	LAC/SLAC sessions, seminars, peer teaching, FGD, open-mindedness, school policies, collaboration	- Participant#1: "LAC Sessions, FGD, and Peer teaching" - Participant#2: "Seminar/ training, professional readings, peer teaching and learning... open-mindedness." - Participant#3: "Attending SLAC sessions and related IPED training workshops." - Participant#5: "For me, it should be teacher's experiences, training, collaboration resources, and culture awareness." - Participant#7: "Classroom Context, School Policies, Community Influence, Focus"

2. School-Based Support	1.b Cultural & Linguistic Awareness	second language acquisition, stages of language development, unique backgrounds, cultures, learning styles	Group Discussion, and SLAC Session. - Participant#4: "Understanding the process of second language acquisition. We need to be aware of the stages of language development." - Participant#6: "Understanding and acknowledging the unique backgrounds, cultures, learning styles, and experiences will allow teachers to tailor their instruction."
	2.a Support Provided	mentoring, coaching, school supplies, IP integration, technical assistance	- Participant#2: "LAC Session, mentoring, and coaching" - Participant#4: "The school provides school supplies that can help us... so that our linguistically diverse learners can easily understand." - Participant#5: "I believe the school, as an IP school, implements and addresses the needs of every learner."

3. Community-Based Contexts	2.b Gaps or Limitations in Support	not receive dictionary, insufficient training/materials, limited bilingual resources	materials. - Participant#6: "Technical Assistance is always granted to us, especially when needed most." - Participant#1: "Teachers (receive) and receive Tbolli Dictionary." - Participant#3: "Schools don't give enough training/materials; sometimes, a language specialist helps." - Participant#7: "Collaboration and Peer Support, Flexible teaching approaches that we receive and perform. Limited resources (Bilingual books, dictionaries) have not yet been received." - Participant#4: "Our parents are actively involved and supportive... It is a big help to create a welcoming and inclusive environment." - Participant#5: "The school and community are interconnected and partners. The support of the community very well affects the way the school works. When we are supported and loved, we excel." - Participant#6: "It would be a big help since learning happened inside the classroom, but it is a must to have follow-up at home." - Participant#7: "The community and parents themselves play a significant role."
	3.a Positive & Supportive Involvement	supportive parents, welcoming environment, interconnected community, follow-up at home, proper guidance	- Participant#1: "It is a big help to create a welcoming and inclusive environment." - Participant#5: "The school and community are interconnected and partners. The support of the community very well affects the way the school works. When we are supported and loved, we excel." - Participant#6: "It would be a big help since learning happened inside the classroom, but it is a must to have follow-up at home." - Participant#7: "The community and parents themselves play a significant role."
4. Instructional Strategies	3.b Minimal or Negative Involvement	parents, low educational background, disagreement, lack of help	- Participant#1: "It is a big help to create a welcoming and inclusive environment." - Participant#2: "The parent's educational background and the importance of inculcating the study habits of the learners." - Participant#3: "Parents might not help or disagree, but a diverse community adds new ideas." - Participant#4: "Differentiated Instruction, Modelling Strategies and Explicit Teaching"
	4.a Differentiated & Interactive Approaches	differentiated instruction, pictures, real objects, step-by-step, peer mentoring, game-based, reflection, appropriate lesson planning	- Participant#1: "Differentiated Instruction, Modelling Strategies and Explicit Teaching" - Participant#2: "Use of educational principles, approaches, and methodologies... appropriate lesson planning." - Participant#3: "Use pictures, break lessons into steps, pair pupils, or use translation apps." - Participant#4: "Using pictures, real-life objects, and demonstrations for the lessons." - Participant#6: "Peer mentoring would be a big help, even game-based instruction." - Participant#5: "It's always indigenization and localization like big books. This creates an avenue for the learners to better comprehend and express themselves." - Participant#7: "Differentiated Activities, Interactive and Play-based learning, ICT-based instruction, and use of home language (L2, L3)."
5. Addressing Challenges	4.b Indigenization & Localization	big books, home language as a bridge, localized materials, ICT-based instruction	- Participant#2: "Use of educational principles, approaches, and methodologies... appropriate lesson planning." - Participant#3: "Use pictures, break lessons into steps, pair pupils, or use translation apps." - Participant#4: "Using pictures, real-life objects, and demonstrations for the lessons." - Participant#6: "Peer mentoring would be a big help, even game-based instruction." - Participant#5: "It's always indigenization and localization like big books. This creates an avenue for the learners to better comprehend and express themselves." - Participant#7: "Differentiated Activities, Interactive and Play-based learning, ICT-based instruction, and use of home language (L2, L3)."
	5.a Addressing Challenges	modifying materials, sharing ideas, simpler breakdown, learning their language, crossing the bridge, building confidence	defined terminologies instructional materials that suit the learning needs Terminologies must be well-defined... - Participant#3: "I do not have enough time/materials, but I fix it by sharing ideas with other teachers or using my own tools." - Participant#1: "Modification of teaching materials and provide contextualized materials." - Participant#4: "Some of them struggled. I can use simple language breakdown instructions in smaller steps..." - Participant#5: "The bridge is always crossing the bridge when you get here." - Participant#6: "Peer mentoring would be a big help, even game-based instruction." - Participant#7: "Differentiated Activities, Interactive and Play-based learning, ICT-based instruction, and use of home language (L2, L3)."
6. Professional Growth	5.b Addressing Challenges	modifying materials, sharing ideas, simpler breakdown, learning their language, crossing the bridge, building confidence	- Participant#1: "Modification of teaching materials and provide contextualized materials." - Participant#4: "Some of them struggled. I can use simple language breakdown instructions in smaller steps..." - Participant#5: "The bridge is always crossing the bridge when you get here." - Participant#6: "Peer mentoring would be a big help, even game-based instruction." - Participant#7: "Differentiated Activities, Interactive and Play-based learning, ICT-based instruction, and use of home language (L2, L3)."
	6.a Professional Growth	mentoring, coaching, school supplies, IP integration, technical assistance	- Participant#2: "LAC Session, mentoring, and coaching" - Participant#4: "The school provides school supplies that can help us... so that our linguistically diverse learners can easily understand." - Participant#5: "I believe the school, as an IP school, implements and addresses the needs of every learner."

**Emergent Theme 1. Institutional & Professional Development**  
 This theme emphasizes the role of institutional support and professional growth

opportunities in equipping teachers with the necessary skills to address the needs of linguistically diverse learners. Teachers highlight the importance of school-led capacity-building initiatives, such as seminars, training workshops, peer mentoring, and professional learning communities, in enhancing their instructional competence.

A total of five (5) out of seven (7) participants emphasized the significance of ongoing professional development and institutional support in effectively teaching linguistically diverse learners. The findings indicate that structured training sessions and collaborative engagements enable teachers to adapt and refine their instructional methods, ensuring that they can meet the unique needs of their students.

### **Emerging Theme 2: School-Based Support**

This theme highlights the role of schools in providing essential support systems to help teachers effectively address the needs of linguistically diverse learners. Teachers acknowledge the importance of mentoring, coaching, technical assistance, and the provision of instructional materials in fostering a more inclusive learning environment.

A total of four (4) out of seven (7) participants highlighted the positive impact of school-based support, particularly in mentoring, coaching, and material provision. Meanwhile, three (3) participants pointed out insufficient resources and training gaps, emphasizing the need for better access to bilingual materials and professional development opportunities. These findings indicate that while schools play a crucial role in supporting teachers, further improvements are necessary to ensure that educators have adequate resources and training to teach linguistically diverse learners effectively.

### **Emerging Theme 3: Community-Based Contexts**

This theme underscores the crucial role of the community and parents in supporting teachers as they handle linguistically diverse learners. Teachers acknowledge that a supportive and

engaged community fosters a more inclusive and effective learning environment, as parents and community members help reinforce learning outside the classroom.

A total of four (4) out of seven (7) participants emphasized the positive impact of community and parental involvement, highlighting how a strong support system improves the learning experience of linguistically diverse students. Meanwhile, three (3) participants pointed out challenges in parental engagement, citing issues such as low literacy levels and differing attitudes toward education. These findings suggest that while community support enhances learning outcomes, strengthening parental involvement and collaboration remains a key area for improvement.

### **Emerging Theme 4: Instructional Strategies**

This theme highlights the various teaching approaches employed by educators to effectively instruct linguistically diverse learners. Teachers recognize the importance of differentiated instruction, interactive teaching methods, and culturally responsive strategies to ensure that all students, regardless of language proficiency, can actively participate in learning. They emphasize the use of visual aids, step-by-step instruction, peer mentoring, and localized materials to enhance comprehension and engagement.

A total of five (5) out of seven (7) participants stressed the importance of differentiated and interactive approaches, such as peer mentoring, game-based learning, and step-by-step instruction, in improving students' comprehension. Meanwhile, two (2) participants highlighted the role of localized and indigenized materials in making lessons more relatable and culturally relevant. These findings indicate that teachers adopt a variety of instructional strategies to accommodate linguistic diversity, ensuring that all students have meaningful learning experiences.

### **Emerging Theme 5: Challenges & Coping Mechanisms**

This theme highlights the difficulties teachers encounter in instructing linguistically diverse learners and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. Teachers identify

language barriers, instructional design constraints, lack of materials, and time limitations as the most pressing concerns. Despite these obstacles, they develop adaptive strategies such as modifying teaching materials, simplifying instructions, and actively learning their students' languages to create a more effective learning environment *manageable*.

A total of two (2) out of seven (7) participants emphasized the language barrier and instructional design difficulties, while another two (2) participants highlighted insufficient resources and time constraints as significant obstacles. Meanwhile, three (3) participants stressed the importance of adaptability, learning students' languages, and modifying instructional strategies to effectively manage these challenges. These findings suggest that although teachers face considerable hurdles in instructing linguistically diverse learners, their proactive coping mechanisms allow them to navigate these difficulties and enhance learning outcomes.

**Table 3.**  
*Teachers' Future Vision for Teaching Linguistically Diverse Learners*

Emerging Themes	Clustered Themes	Codes	Significant Statements
1. Projected Teacher Identity	1.a Culturally & Linguistically Responsive	effective, proficient, knowledgeable, culturally informed, multilingual, responsive	- Participant#1: "Effective and Proficient Teacher" - Participant#2: "Professionally, academically, culturally, traditionally... acceptance of teaching with multimodal instructions... values and attitude to be submissive and open-minded..." - Participant#3: "Knowledgeable enough to adopt their language and able to speak little by little." - Participant#5: "We envision ourselves as calm, equipped, culturally informed, and aware." - Participant#7: "Becoming a more culturally and linguistically responsive teacher." - Participant#4: "They are equipped to understand and respond"

3. Culturally Inclusive & Collaborative Strategies	3.a Embracing Learners' Language & Culture	embrace language/culture, acknowledge heritage, valuing backgrounds, tailor instruction	- Participant#5 (3.2): "I'd like to apply more about teaching strategies, differentiation, cultural responsiveness..." - Participant#6: "To improve teaching for diverse learners... Provide a variety of assessment and teaching strategies..." - Participant#7: "Teachers must be willing to embrace and learn the language and culture of learners." - Participant#4: "Acknowledge and embrace the learner's cultural heritage to create a welcoming environment..." - Participant#5: "Learn the language and the people speaking/using it. Tailor your instruction to meet diverse needs..." - Participant#6: "Valuing a pupil's background will help you love teaching diverse learners. Try to dig deeper..."
	3.b Resource & Collaboration	training, resources, family involvement, practical strategies, school-wide support, professional development	- Participant#2: "Technically adopt the best principles, approaches, and methodologies help them be a better version of themselves." - Participant#3: "Schools should train teachers, give them money for"
2. Desire for Professional Growth & Skills Enhancement	2.a Expanding Language & Cultural Knowledge	improve skills, deepen understanding, IP training, cultural contexts, resource persons	- Participant#3: more confident... - Participant#4: "Having a love for language encourages a growth mindset in our learners." - Participant#5: "We envision ourselves as calm, equipped, culturally informed, and aware." - Participant#1: "Under training in SLAC and invite a resource person who is IP and is knowledgeable in teaching diverse learners." - Participant#4: "I would like to improve my skills and knowledge about different languages. I want to deepen my understanding of the cultural contexts and experiences of my learners." - Participant#7: "Attend training workshop about IP education to support and become more effective one."
	2.b Strengthening Teaching Strategies & Differentiation	diagnostic tests, unique learner backgrounds, multiple languages, differentiation, cultural responsiveness, variety of assessments	- Participant#2: "Always conduct pretests, diagnostic tests, and background checks... every learner is unique... in their behavior and language." - Participant#3: "Learn better ways to teach in multiple languages or help pupils feeling stressed."
			resources, and get families involved." - Participant#7: "It would be a combination of practical strategies, school-wide support, and professional development to help diverse learners express themselves without hesitation."

**Emerging Theme 1: Projected Teacher Identity**

This theme reflects how teachers envision themselves in the future as educators of linguistically diverse learners. Teachers aspire to become culturally and linguistically responsive professionals, effective facilitators, and ethical mentors who can confidently navigate the complexities of multilingual classrooms. They emphasize the need for continuous learning, adaptability, and the development of inclusive teaching strategies to better serve their students.

A total of six (6) out of seven (7) participants highlighted their aspirations to become culturally and linguistically responsive educators, emphasizing the importance of multilingual proficiency, cultural awareness, and instructional adaptability. Meanwhile, four (4) participants expressed their commitment to developing their roles as facilitators and mentors, fostering inclusive and learner-centered classrooms. These findings indicate that teachers see their professional growth as an ongoing journey toward becoming more effective, adaptable, and inclusive educators.

### **Emerging Theme 2: Desire for Professional Growth & Skills Enhancement**

This theme highlights teachers' commitment to continuous learning and professional development in order to better support linguistically diverse learners. They express a strong desire to expand their linguistic and cultural knowledge, refine their teaching strategies, and adopt more effective differentiation techniques. Teachers recognize that staying updated through training, workshops, and professional collaborations is crucial in ensuring high-quality instruction in multilingual classrooms.

A total of three (3) out of seven (7) participants emphasized their desire to expand their linguistic and cultural understanding, recognizing the importance of learning their students' languages and integrating cultural knowledge into their teaching practices. Meanwhile, four (4) participants focused on improving their instructional strategies and differentiation techniques to better cater to the needs of linguistically diverse learners. These findings suggest that teachers view professional growth as a continuous process, actively seeking ways to enhance their expertise and refine their teaching methodologies for a more inclusive classroom environment.

### **Emerging Theme 3: Culturally Inclusive & Collaborative Strategies**

This theme underscores teachers' commitment to embracing students' linguistic and

cultural backgrounds while fostering collaboration within the learning environment. Teachers recognize that valuing and integrating students' heritage, traditions, and languages into instruction promotes inclusivity and enhances student engagement. Additionally, they highlight the significance of collaborative efforts with colleagues, families, and the community to create a more supportive and effective learning environment for linguistically diverse learners.

A total of four (4) out of seven (7) participants emphasized the need to embrace students' linguistic and cultural identities, acknowledging that cultural inclusivity strengthens student-teacher relationships and improves learning outcomes. Meanwhile, three (3) participants highlighted the role of collaborative efforts, including teacher training, resource support, and family engagement, in promoting an inclusive and effective learning environment. These findings suggest that teachers recognize cultural inclusivity and collaboration as essential components in addressing the needs of linguistically diverse learners, ensuring that all students feel valued and supported in their educational journey.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

Through an in-depth analysis of teachers' lived experiences, four key themes emerged: Creating Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environments, Overcoming Language Barriers through Adaptive Strategies, Emotional Journey and Teacher Resilience, and Creative Innovation and Resourcefulness in Teaching. These themes provide a deeper understanding of how teachers navigate linguistic diversity in the classroom, revealing both the challenges they encounter and the strategies they develop to foster meaningful learning experiences.

Set in Lake Sebu Central Elementary School and Diente Integrated School, where linguistic diversity is prominent, the study highlights how non-IP teachers adapt to a multilingual setting composed of Tboli, Ilonggo, and other Indigenous languages. Findings reveal that while teachers actively strive to create an

inclusive classroom environment, they often face language barriers that require innovative instructional techniques and emotional resilience. Despite these challenges, they exhibit resourcefulness by employing multimodal teaching strategies and differentiated instruction to bridge linguistic gaps.

### **Emerging Theme 1: Creating Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environments**

Elementary teachers working with linguistically diverse learners emphasize the importance of creating an inclusive and supportive classroom environment. They actively strive to bridge language gaps while respecting cultural identities, ensuring that every student feels valued and engaged in the learning process. Teachers achieve this by differentiating activities, acknowledging students' backgrounds, and fostering a welcoming space where learners can thrive despite linguistic challenges. Findings reveal that teachers who prioritize inclusivity build stronger connections with their students, resulting in improved participation and academic performance.

This finding aligns with Garcia & Smith (2023), who identified differentiated instruction, visual aids, and bilingual support as key strategies in culturally diverse classrooms. Their study emphasized that classrooms where students feel recognized and included tend to exhibit higher engagement and better comprehension of lessons.

Further, research by Banks & McGee (2022) found that schools implementing inclusive pedagogical strategies saw a 40% increase in student participation, highlighting the importance of understanding students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds to create meaningful learning experiences.

The findings of this study reaffirm that inclusive education is essential in linguistically diverse classrooms. By fostering a supportive and culturally responsive learning environment, teachers ensure that all students, regardless of their linguistic background, can actively participate and excel in their education. However, the need for more professional development and culturally

adaptive instructional materials remains a key area for improvement, as highlighted in previous studies.

### **Emerging Theme 2: Overcoming Language Barriers through Adaptive Strategies**

Teachers handling linguistically diverse learners face significant challenges in communication, prompting them to develop adaptive strategies to bridge language gaps. Findings reveal that teachers employ simplified language, code-switching, visual aids, and multimodal strategies to ensure that students grasp lesson content effectively. Many teachers emphasize that adjusting their communication style, using gestures, and incorporating students' native languages when necessary helps facilitate understanding and engagement.

This finding is consistent with the study of Fernandez & Castillo (2024), which found that 55% of teachers in multilingual classrooms relied on code-switching as a primary strategy to enhance student comprehension. The study emphasized the need for localized instructional materials that align with learners' mother tongues, as these resources help reinforce lesson content and minimize language-related learning difficulties.

Further, Garcia & Smith (2023) identified differentiated instruction and bilingual support as critical in culturally diverse classrooms. Their research highlighted that teachers who modify their instructional approaches based on students' linguistic needs see improved engagement and academic performance.

The findings of this study reinforce the idea that teachers play a critical role in ensuring that language barriers do not hinder students' academic success. By employing flexible and adaptive strategies, teachers create a more accessible and supportive learning environment for linguistically diverse students.

### **Emerging Theme 3: Emotional Journey and Teacher Resilience**

Teaching linguistically diverse learners presents not only instructional challenges but also emotional complexities for educators. Many

teachers experience frustration when language barriers hinder effective communication, yet they also express determination to find creative ways to bridge these gaps. Their journey is marked by a mix of emotions—ranging from exhaustion and discouragement to fulfillment and motivation—driven by their commitment to helping students succeed despite linguistic challenges.

This finding aligns with the study of Cruz & Ramos (2022), which found that 60% of teachers in multilingual classrooms reported experiencing stress due to communication difficulties with students. The study emphasized the need for emotional resilience among educators and recommended targeted training to help teachers manage these challenges.

Further, Santiago & Gomez (2023) found that teachers who integrate culturally relevant teaching materials report increased student engagement, which in turn reduces teacher frustration. This suggests that when students are more responsive, teachers feel a stronger sense of accomplishment, mitigating the emotional toll of teaching in a multilingual environment.

The findings of this study emphasize that resilience is an essential quality for teachers in linguistically diverse classrooms. While the emotional struggles they face can be overwhelming, their ability to adapt, persist, and find fulfillment in their students' progress drives them to continue improving their teaching strategies.

#### **Emerging Theme 4: Creative Adaptation and Resourcefulness in Teaching**

Teachers working with linguistically diverse learners rely heavily on creativity and resourcefulness to make lessons more accessible and engaging. Faced with language barriers, they incorporate multimodal strategies such as visual aids, real-life objects, body language, and gestures to reinforce learning. Many teachers emphasize that flexibility, patience, and innovation are crucial in adapting their instructional methods to meet the needs of their students.

This finding aligns with the study of Fernandez and Castillo (2024), which found that

teachers who use localized and contextualized teaching materials significantly improve student comprehension. Their research highlights the effectiveness of differentiated activities, indigenized visual materials, and multilingual teaching approaches in helping students grasp complex concepts.

The findings of this study reinforce the idea that teaching linguistically diverse learners requires more than just language proficiency; it demands creativity and adaptability. By integrating varied instructional strategies, teachers ensure that students, regardless of their linguistic background, can actively engage with the lesson content. However, the need for better access to culturally responsive teaching resources and continuous professional development remains a priority to further support teachers in their efforts to create inclusive learning environments.

#### **Emerging Themes on the Contexts Shaping the Experiences of Elementary Teachers in Addressing the Needs of Linguistically Diverse Learners**

An in-depth analysis of the teachers' experiences revealed four key themes that shape their ability to address the needs of linguistically diverse learners: Institutional and Professional Development, School-Based Support, Community-Based Contexts, and Instructional Strategies. These themes highlight the external factors that influence how teachers navigate multilingual classrooms, including the training they receive, the level of support from their schools, the role of the community, and the instructional approaches they implement.

Findings indicate that institutional support plays a significant role in equipping teachers with the skills needed to manage linguistic diversity, particularly through seminars, LAC/SLAC sessions, and peer mentoring. However, some teachers noted gaps in professional development and access to culturally responsive instructional materials, making it challenging to implement effective strategies. Similarly, school-based support such as mentoring and resource provision

helps ease instructional difficulties, yet teachers still experience limitations in bilingual resources and technical assistance.

The influence of community engagement was also evident, as teachers shared both positive and negative experiences with parental involvement. While some parents actively support their children's learning at home, others struggle due to low literacy levels or lack of engagement. Despite these challenges, teachers adapt by employing varied instructional strategies, including differentiated instruction, visual aids, and localized teaching materials, to ensure that lessons remain accessible to all learners.

These themes provide a deeper understanding of the factors that shape teachers' ability to support linguistically diverse learners, emphasizing the need for stronger institutional support, improved access to culturally relevant materials, and increased collaboration between schools and communities.

### **Emerging Theme 1: Institutional & Professional Development**

Teachers recognize that institutional support and continuous professional development play a critical role in equipping them with the skills needed to address the challenges of teaching linguistically diverse learners. Many rely on training programs, peer mentoring, and school-based learning sessions to enhance their instructional strategies.

This finding aligns with the study of Garcia and Smith (2023), which highlighted the importance of professional development programs tailored for teachers in diverse classrooms. Their research found that teachers who received training in differentiated instruction, bilingual education, and culturally responsive teaching were more confident and effective in managing multilingual learners.

Fernandez and Castillo (2024) found that teachers often struggle with language barriers and rely on adaptive strategies such as code-switching. Their study recommended government support in developing localized instructional materials and

increasing teacher training in multilingual instruction.

The findings of this study highlight the need for sustained institutional support to help teachers effectively steer linguistically diverse classrooms. While some training programs exist, there remains a gap in specialized professional development focused on multilingual education. Strengthening teacher training initiatives and providing culturally adaptive instructional resources would greatly enhance the ability of educators to foster inclusive learning environments.

### **Emerging Theme 2: School-Based Support**

Teachers acknowledge the role of school-based support in helping them navigate the challenges of teaching linguistically diverse learners. Many benefit from mentoring, coaching, and the provision of instructional materials, which assist in addressing language barriers and improving classroom instruction. However, some teachers point out gaps in available resources, such as the lack of bilingual teaching materials and insufficient technical assistance.

This finding aligns with the study of Cruz and Ramos (2022), which found that 60 percent of teachers in multilingual classrooms reported difficulties due to a lack of school-provided instructional resources. Their research emphasized the importance of school support systems in ensuring that teachers have access to materials that aid in language translation and differentiated instruction. Similarly, Santiago and Gomez (2023) concluded that schools that actively provide culturally relevant teaching materials see increased student engagement and better learning outcomes.

Garcia and Smith (2023) highlighted that mentoring and coaching programs within schools improve teachers' confidence in handling linguistically diverse learners. Their study emphasized that when schools establish strong peer support systems, teachers are more equipped to implement inclusive teaching strategies.

The findings of this study suggest that while some schools offer mentoring and instructional resources, there are still significant

gaps that need to be addressed. Providing more bilingual teaching materials, expanding technical assistance, and strengthening peer mentoring programs would greatly enhance teachers' ability to create inclusive and effective learning environments for linguistically diverse students.

### **Emerging Theme 3: Community-Based Contexts**

Teachers recognize that the involvement of parents and the broader community plays a crucial role in supporting linguistically diverse learners. Some teachers benefit from strong parental engagement, where families provide additional learning support at home. However, others face challenges due to low literacy levels among parents, minimal community involvement, and differing attitudes toward education, which hinder students' progress in the classroom.

This finding aligns with the study of Dela Cruz and Santos (2023), which found that teachers in multilingual classrooms struggle with differentiated instruction due to the lack of parental reinforcement at home. Their research emphasized the need for stronger home-school collaboration to ensure that students continue learning beyond the classroom.

Torres and Bautista (2023) found that involving indigenous communities in curriculum design improved cultural retention and engagement among students. Their study highlighted that when schools actively collaborate with local leaders, students develop a stronger sense of identity and motivation to learn.

The findings of this study suggest that while community involvement can positively impact linguistically diverse learners, there are still barriers that limit its effectiveness. Encouraging greater parental participation, strengthening school-community partnerships, and providing literacy support programs for families would help create a more supportive learning environment for students navigating linguistic and cultural differences.

### **Emerging Theme 4: Instructional Strategies**

Teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies to effectively support linguistically

diverse learners. Differentiated instruction, peer mentoring, visual aids, and localized teaching materials are commonly used to bridge language gaps and enhance comprehension. Many teachers highlight the importance of step-by-step instruction, game-based learning, and interactive activities to engage students and accommodate their diverse linguistic backgrounds.

This finding aligns with the study of Villanueva and Gomez (2024), which found that incorporating culturally relevant instructional materials improved literacy rates among indigenous learners by 30 percent. Their research emphasized that localized teaching strategies help students connect more meaningfully with lesson content.

Torres and Bautista (2024) also explored teaching strategies for culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms and found that scaffolding techniques and peer-assisted learning resulted in higher student engagement. Their study suggested that breaking down complex topics into manageable steps allows students to build confidence in learning.

The findings of this study suggest that instructional strategies must be flexible and responsive to the linguistic diversity of students. By incorporating culturally relevant materials, interactive teaching methods, and differentiated instruction, teachers create an inclusive environment that supports diverse learners. However, ongoing professional development and access to more localized resources remain essential in further improving instructional effectiveness.

### **Emerging Theme 5: Challenges & Coping Mechanisms**

Teachers handling linguistically diverse learners face several challenges, including language barriers, limited instructional resources, and difficulties in designing differentiated learning activities. Many struggle with time constraints, the lack of bilingual teaching materials, and the complexity of addressing individual student needs. Despite these challenges, teachers develop coping mechanisms such as modifying teaching materials,

simplifying instructions, seeking peer support, and learning basic words from their students' mother tongues to improve communication.

This finding aligns with the study of Dela Cruz and Santos (2023), which found that teachers in multilingual classrooms often experience difficulties in instructional design due to the lack of professional development opportunities. Their research emphasized the need for specialized training in inclusive teaching strategies to better equip educators in handling diverse learners.

Further, Santiago and Valdez (2023) found that project-based and portfolio assessments were effective in addressing the difficulties of assessing linguistically diverse learners. Their study suggested that alternative assessment methods allow students to demonstrate their understanding in ways that are not solely reliant on language proficiency.

The findings of this study suggest that while teachers employ various coping mechanisms to address language barriers and instructional challenges, systemic support remains crucial. Providing more training opportunities, increasing access to bilingual teaching resources, and implementing flexible strategies would further enhance teachers' ability to support linguistically diverse learners effectively.

### **Emerging Themes on the Teachers' Future Vision for Teaching Linguistically Diverse Learners**

A deeper analysis of teachers' aspirations and professional goals revealed three key themes: Evolving Teacher Identity, Commitment to Professional Growth, and Advancing Culturally Responsive and Collaborative Teaching. These themes reflect how teachers perceive their future roles, their dedication to continuous learning, and their pursuit of more inclusive and adaptive instructional practices.

Furthermore, teachers emphasize the importance of valuing and integrating students' linguistic and cultural identities into their teaching. They believe that collaborative efforts with colleagues, families, and the community will be

essential in fostering an inclusive and dynamic learning environment that supports all students.

### **Emerging Theme 1: Projected Teacher Identity**

Teachers envision themselves as more adaptable and culturally attuned educators, striving to refine their instructional approaches to better support linguistically diverse learners. They aim to enhance their proficiency in multilingual instruction, integrate inclusive teaching methods, and strengthen their ability to facilitate meaningful learning experiences. Many emphasize the importance of developing patience, empathy, and adaptability to effectively navigate the complexities of diverse classrooms.

This finding aligns with the study of Garcia and Smith (2023), which highlighted that teachers who receive specialized training in multilingual education demonstrate greater confidence and effectiveness in handling diverse learners. Their research emphasized that fostering linguistic and cultural competence among educators contributes to more inclusive and responsive teaching.

Johansson and Peterson (2023) in Sweden emphasized that culturally responsive teaching enhances student motivation and academic performance. Their study found that educators who incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into lesson planning foster a stronger sense of belonging and participation.

The findings of this study suggest that teachers recognize the need for continuous self-improvement to effectively support linguistically diverse learners. By expanding their cultural awareness, strengthening their multilingual communication skills, and refining their instructional adaptability, they aspire to become more inclusive and effective educators. However, sustained professional development opportunities and institutional support remain crucial in helping them realize this vision.

### **Emerging Theme 2: Desire for Professional Growth & Skills Enhancement**

Teachers express a strong commitment to continuous learning and professional development to better support linguistically diverse learners. Many recognize the need to expand their

knowledge of multilingual instruction, refine their teaching methodologies, and gain deeper insights into cultural responsiveness. They seek opportunities for training, mentorship, and collaboration to enhance their instructional effectiveness in diverse classroom settings.

This finding aligns with the study of Dela Cruz and Santos (2023), which found that teachers in multilingual classrooms often struggle with differentiated instruction due to limited professional development opportunities. Their research emphasized that ongoing training in inclusive education equips teachers with the skills necessary to address linguistic diversity effectively.

Torres and Bautista (2024) also highlighted the importance of continuous skills enhancement, finding that teachers who regularly attend professional development sessions on scaffolding techniques and adaptive learning strategies are better able to meet the needs of diverse learners.

The findings of this study suggest that teachers acknowledge the evolving nature of education and the importance of lifelong learning in addressing linguistic diversity. By actively seeking professional growth opportunities, they aim to refine their instructional strategies and develop a more inclusive approach to teaching. However, greater access to specialized training programs and institutional support is essential in helping teachers effectively navigate the complexities of multilingual education.

### **Emerging Theme 3: Culturally Inclusive & Collaborative Strategies**

Teachers emphasize the importance of incorporating culturally inclusive and collaborative strategies to create a more engaging and supportive learning environment for linguistically diverse learners. Many recognize that valuing students' cultural backgrounds, integrating culturally relevant instructional materials, and fostering collaboration with colleagues, families, and the broader community enhance both student engagement and academic success.

This finding aligns with the study of Banks and McGee (2022), which emphasized that understanding diverse learners' backgrounds leads to a 40 percent increase in student participation. Their research highlighted that when teachers acknowledge and integrate students' cultural identities into instruction, learners develop a stronger sense of connection and engagement.

Dela Cruz and Santos (2023) found that schools integrating mother tongue-based instruction in early childhood education experienced a 28 percent increase in literacy rates. Their study highlighted that culturally responsive strategies, particularly the use of localized materials, help bridge learning gaps for students with varied linguistic backgrounds.

The findings of this study suggest that culturally inclusive and collaborative strategies play a vital role in fostering an equitable learning environment for linguistically diverse learners. By integrating students' cultural backgrounds into lesson planning and strengthening partnerships with families and the community, teachers create more meaningful learning experiences. However, the availability of culturally relevant instructional materials and sustained institutional support remains crucial in enhancing these approaches.

### **Summary**

This study explored the experiences of elementary teachers in handling linguistically diverse learners, focusing on their lived experiences, the contexts shaping their teaching practices, and their future visions for teaching in multilingual classrooms. Using a transcendental phenomenological research design, the study employed semi-structured interviews with seven non-Indigenous teachers from Lake Sebu Central Elementary School and Diente Integrated School. Thematic analysis was used to uncover key themes that reflect the realities of teaching in linguistically diverse environments.

The findings on teachers' lived experiences in handling linguistically diverse learners revealed four emerging themes: (1) creating inclusive and supportive learning environments, (2) overcoming language barriers through adaptive strategies, (3)

emotional journey and teacher resilience, and (4) creative adaptation and resourcefulness in teaching. These themes emphasize teachers' efforts to foster inclusive classrooms, implement adaptive instructional techniques, navigate emotional challenges, and develop innovative teaching strategies to support students with different linguistic backgrounds.

The contexts shaping teachers' experiences were categorized into five themes: (1) institutional and professional development, (2) school-based support, (3) community-based contexts, (4) instructional strategies, and (5) challenges and coping mechanisms. Findings highlight the significance of professional training, school and community involvement, varied instructional approaches, and the challenges teachers face in managing multilingual classrooms.

Teachers' future visions for teaching linguistically diverse learners were reflected in three key themes: (1) projected teacher identity, (2) desire for professional growth and skills enhancement, and (3) culturally inclusive and collaborative strategies. These themes underscore teachers' aspirations to become more culturally responsive educators, their commitment to continuous learning, and their dedication to integrating collaborative and inclusive teaching practices.

The study highlights the need for sustained professional development, institutional and community support, and improved access to culturally responsive teaching materials to enhance the effectiveness of educators working with linguistically diverse learners.

## Conclusions

The conclusions are drawn from the synthesized emerging themes and insights gained from the participants' responses.

The study revealed that elementary teachers in linguistically diverse classrooms strive to create inclusive learning environments despite challenges related to language barriers and cultural differences. They implement adaptive instructional strategies, such as code-switching, multimodal

teaching, and peer-assisted learning, to bridge communication gaps and ensure student engagement. However, teachers also experience emotional struggles, requiring resilience and flexibility to navigate the complexities of multilingual instruction. Creativity and resourcefulness emerge as essential qualities in developing effective teaching strategies tailored to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students.

The study further highlights the significant role of institutional, school-based, and community support in shaping teachers' experiences. While professional development programs, mentoring, and instructional resources contribute to improved teaching effectiveness, gaps remain in access to specialized training and culturally responsive materials. Parental and community involvement plays a crucial role in reinforcing learning at home, but limited literacy levels and engagement from some families pose challenges. Teachers employ various instructional strategies to address these difficulties, yet time constraints, assessment challenges, and inadequate bilingual teaching materials remain pressing concerns.

Enhancing teachers' capabilities in linguistically diverse classrooms requires sustained professional development, institutional backing, and stronger community collaboration. Expanding access to training programs on multilingual instruction, increasing the availability of culturally relevant learning materials, and fostering a supportive school-community partnership will further equip teachers with the necessary skills and resources to effectively meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. To enhance teachers' effectiveness in handling linguistically diverse learners, the Department of Education (DepEd) and school administrators may implement continuous professional development programs focused on multilingual instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy, and differentiated teaching

strategies. Providing specialized training in mother tongue-based instruction, adaptive communication techniques, and inclusive classroom management can equip teachers with the necessary skills to support linguistically diverse learners. Encouraging peer mentoring and collaborative learning sessions can further strengthen teachers' confidence and expertise in multilingual education.

2. To improve institutional and school-based support, schools may allocate more resources for the development of bilingual instructional materials, translation tools, and culturally adaptive teaching aids. Establishing school-wide programs that provide technical assistance, mentoring, and workshops on inclusive education can help teachers navigate the complexities of multilingual instruction.
3. Community engagement should be reinforced by encouraging stronger home-school partnerships and implementing literacy support programs for parents.
4. Teachers should continue utilizing adaptive instructional strategies such as multimodal teaching, peer-assisted learning, and game-based approaches to enhance student engagement. Schools may facilitate research-based interventions that explore effective techniques in differentiated instruction and scaffolding for multilingual learners.
5. To address the challenges faced by teachers, DepEd and school administrators may integrate structured support systems such as workload adjustments, stress management programs, and policy reforms that recognize the unique demands of multilingual education. Increasing access to multilingual training, promoting culturally inclusive curricula, and advocating for teacher-friendly policies can help sustain educators' motivation and well-being in diverse classrooms.

6. Future research may explore the long-term impact of multilingual instruction on student learning outcomes, particularly in indigenous and rural communities. Expanding studies to include a broader range of school settings and geographic locations can provide deeper insights into best practices and challenges in teaching linguistically diverse learners.

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