

Filipino teacher's linguistic barrier in English communication

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the Filipino teachers' competence in using English for teaching-learning in the Identified US States in terms of managing the classroom, engaging students interactively, and using instructional strategies as basis to plan Filipino Teacher's English Linguistic Enhancement Program during school year 2023-2024. Qualitative-descriptive study was used to present the findings of the study on the competence of Filipino teachers in the areas of managing the classroom, engagement of the learners and instructional tactics. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significance between teacher's competence and students' performance in the areas of syntax, semantics and communication skills. Thus, the application of pedagogical skills among the teachers is made evident, since most of them are highly competent. Hence, Teaching Learning Material is proposed to be used in this study to enhance the Filipino teachers' skills in the teaching learning in the identified US States.

Keywords: English teaching, Filipino teacher, quasi-descriptive, teaching-learning, identified US States, managing the classroom, engaging the students interactively, using instructional tactics

Date Submitted: November 14, 2025

Date Accepted: November 27, 2025

Date Published: December 23, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Linguistic barriers are typical in a country where people are accumulating with different languages. Inevitably, language and communication can break down because they are unable to understand each other. However, in the teaching-learning process, the scope of linguistic barriers extends beyond that. For Foreign teachers, there is a need to go beyond what is in professionally growing and personally developing strategies and methods to successfully deliver what is expected for the curriculum totality (de Guzman, 2020).

There has been an increase in the number of foreign teachers instructing k-12 students in American Education (de Guzman, 2018). The international teachers face additional difficulties since they must use English to the English-speaking students like Americans to explain and help

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS0404664>

Recommended citation:

Abucay, A. M. (2025). Filipino teacher's linguistic barrier in English communication. Pantao (The International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences) 4 (4), 7273-7282. <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS0404664>

them understand, which requires speaking clearly, fluently, and accurately. For instance, the English proficiency of foreign teachers varies, and poor language proficiency may be a barrier to successful instruction (Salas, 2020). As opposed to American teachers, students also said they learned less from foreign instructors. With this in mind, the possibility for unfavorable interactions, misunderstandings, and reduced teaching efficacy can result from different communication styles and behaviors (Liu, 2021).

Accordingly, lack of understanding and experience with western interactive learning approaches, communication ideals, and student behaviors presents another source of difficulties for international teachers (Montana, 2020). Undergraduate students and faculty members with unfavorable impressions of international teachers may also come across them. Jenkins (2019) discovered through interviewing academic staff that they were dissatisfied with the low levels of English competence and acculturation of their International Teachers.

Apparently, only prior studies concentrated on the linguistic barriers faced by international teachers as well as how faculty and undergraduate students viewed them. However, very few study has taken a direct sample of international teachers specifically, Filipino teachers, and looked at their actual teaching experiences in the United States. Now, in order to better understand the particular requirements of Filipino teachers as supervising professors, advisers, counselors, and educators abroad, it will be helpful for individuals to collect information about their own viewpoints and attitudes, such as their level of teaching self-efficacy as a setback from their language communication barrier. Through researching this essential viewpoint for Filipino teachers teaching foreign students, one can help uplift the quality of teaching foreign students while eradicating the belief that Filipino teachers are mediocre due to linguistic barrier (de Guzman, 2019).

Consequently, such linguistic barrier is linked to human communication. Human communication is a social interaction process. It is an essential part of our daily life. It is a process of creating, exchanging, sharing ideas, information, opinions, facts, feelings, and experiences between a sender and a receiver. Needless to say, communication is fundamental to the existence and survival of individuals, groups, societies, and nations. Language is the most common tool of communication. It plays a vital role in helping people build a bridge of relationships. At the same time, language acts as a destroyer of bridges of human relations because it separates people from each other. Language continues to remain a barrier to convey our messages to people in the globalization and communication era (Sanlad, 2020).

Furthermore, language barriers are also a common challenge not just in education but also in international business, aviation and social settings. They affect our daily life. Since language affects almost all aspects of everyday life, there needs to be more of a focus on communication barriers by researchers and practitioners engaged in international business and management (Henderson, 2018). The issue of language barriers is particularly critical during intercultural service encounters. Intercultural service encounters, where the customer and the service provider are from different cultures, is very common in the service sector, especially in the U.S. (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2019). Such intercultural service encounters may be influenced not only by cultural differences but also by language barriers. The fact that most service providers in the U.S. only speak English may greatly affect international customers. Customers may find it difficult to communicate or even get necessary information regarding products or services.

Similarly, language is the key to a person's self-identity. It enables the person to express emotions, share feelings, tell stories, and convey complex messages and knowledge.

Accordingly, it is essential to better understand how language barriers affect ESL customers' service experience. Increased globalization is forcing a growing number of business managers and employees to interact across linguistic boundaries (Lauring, 2018). Since language affects almost all aspects of everyday life, there needs more of a focus on communication barriers by researchers and practitioners engaged in international business and management (Henderson, 2005). The issue of language barriers is particularly critical during intercultural service encounters. Intercultural service encounters, where the customer and the service provider are from different cultures, is very common in the service sector, especially in the U.S. (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2021). Such intercultural service encounters may be influenced not only by cultural differences but also by language barriers. The fact that most service providers in the U.S. only speak English may greatly affect international customers. Customers may find it difficult to communicate or even get necessary information regarding products or services

Henceforth, this present study assesses the international teachers in the US who faced additional difficulties in teaching since they must use English to the English-speaking students like Americans.

In the modern study of child language acquisition, there are three basic theories about how young children learn new words. Perhaps surprisingly, two of them have nothing to do with pragmatics or communication. The basic process is that children 'map' a novel word onto their perceptual world - with the person speaking this novel word, and her reasons for speaking it, considered irrelevant. If we look at children's earliest comprehension and production of real-live linguistic utterances. However, we see that there is something very special going on and it is not the deployment of special 'word learning constraints'(Graham, S., & Macaro, E. (2008).

The situation is this. The child encounters an adult making funny noises at her. What is she to make of this odd behavior? If she understands the other person as an intentional being, she will attempt to determine the purpose for which that person is making these funny noises. Given that the child has previous experience in interpreting the adult's nonlinguistically expressed communicative intentions, as the adult points to things for her, shows her things, etc., one possibility is for the child to now make a novel word her own - by learning not just to comprehend it but to produce it as well, she must engage in a somewhat unique form of social (cultural) learning.

To imitatively learn a novel intentional behavior in general, the child must identify with the demonstrator - put herself in the demonstrator's cognitive shoes - and then behave as he does toward some outside entity; for example, an adult kicks a ball and the child follows suit. The adult's intention is not toward an outside entity directly, but rather it is toward the child's attentional state toward an outside entity. When the child now wants to imitatively learn this new communicative behavior, she must reverse roles with the adult. She must direct a communicative behavior (e.g., linguistic symbol) to the adult in the same way the adult has previously directed the 'same' communicative behavior to her. In other places, I have called this 'role reversal imitation' and it is a unique feature of the acquisition of cultural behaviors that are primarily communicative in function (Tomasello 2019). This is what a linguistic symbol is. It is a noise (or other behavior) that two or more individuals use with one another to direct one another's attention and thereby to share attention - and they both know this is what they are doing. If you do not have this, then you may have something like a dog knowing that the sound " dinner " means that food is coming, but you do not have an intersubjectively understood linguistic symbol used to follow into, direct, and share attention with other persons. Until theorists of word learning understand this, their theories will be hopeless in the most fundamental way.

Corollary, through this research, the Department of Education will be able to advise Filipino teachers to develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the notion of globalization and teaching exchange program so as to be adept in the teaching-learning process and eventually focus on promoting life skills pedagogies while teaching the subject. In the same way, this study assessed at the Filipino teachers' competence of their own ability to manage the classroom, engage students interactively, and use instructional tactics notwithstanding their linguistic barrier as basis to propose Filipino Teacher's English Linguistic Enhancement Program during school year 2023-2024.

Statement of the problem

This research determined the competence of Filipino teachers in using the English language for teaching and learning among students in selected institutions in the United States for the school year 2023 2024, as a basis for crafting a Filipino English Linguistic Enhancement Program. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of competence of Filipino teachers in using the English language in terms of classroom management, interactive student engagement, and the use of instructional tactics?
2. What is the level of students' academic performance during the first quarter of the academic year?
3. Is there a significant difference between the teachers' competence in using the English language and the students' academic performance?
4. What are the experiences of teachers in using the English language during class engagement?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what Filipino English Linguistic Enhancement Program can be proposed?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine Filipino teachers' competence in using the English language for teaching and learning in selected schools in the United States. The design was deemed appropriate as the inquiry focused on capturing teachers' perceptions, reflections, and experiences related to the teaching learning process, particularly in managing classrooms, engaging students interactively, and applying instructional strategies. The approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of teachers' insights and professional judgments, contributing to a clearer understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement when teaching foreign students. Through this design, the study was able to generate both descriptive and interpretive accounts of instructional practices and linguistic challenges encountered by Filipino teachers working in an international context.

The research was conducted in selected schools located in Northern Arizona and Central Nevada in the United States. Northern Arizona served as a major research locale due to its role as a regional center within Coconino County, while Central Nevada provided a complementary setting representing a different geographical and educational context. These locations were chosen to capture variations in teaching environments where Filipino teachers are employed and use English as the primary medium of instruction. The respondents of the study consisted of twenty Filipino teachers from Northern Arizona and five Filipino teachers from Central Nevada, yielding

a total of twenty-five participants. These teachers were handling various subject areas and were selected to provide diverse perspectives on English language use in classroom instruction. Their participation was based on their direct involvement in teaching foreign students and their experience using English to facilitate learning.

Data were gathered using a researcher administered questionnaire adapted from established instruments developed by Hernandez and Kalin. The instrument was structured to capture both background information and teachers' perceptions of their instructional competence. The first part of the questionnaire focused on profiling the respondents, while the second part examined their perceived competence in classroom management, interactive student engagement, and the use of instructional strategies. The questionnaire was designed with closed ended items to allow responses to be quantified and described statistically, while also supporting qualitative interpretation of teachers' experiences related to linguistic barriers and classroom practices. In addition to the survey responses, qualitative insights drawn from interview based or report type responses were integrated into the analysis to enrich the interpretation of findings.

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured formal permission from school heads to conduct the study within the participating institutions. Once approval was granted, the purpose and scope of the study were clearly explained to the participating teachers to ensure transparency and understanding. The questionnaires were then distributed to the respondents through the coordination of school administrators, with careful consideration of the teachers' consent to participate. Adequate time was provided for the completion of the instruments, after which the questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, and prepared for analysis. Throughout the data gathering process, ethical considerations were observed by ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and the confidentiality of respondents' identities and responses.

The collected data were organized and subjected to appropriate statistical and qualitative treatments to address the objectives of the study. Descriptive statistical techniques were used to summarize and interpret the quantitative data derived from the questionnaires. Simple percentage computations were employed to describe the distribution of responses, while the weighted mean was utilized to determine the extent of teachers' competence in the identified domains and to examine its relationship with students' academic performance. The results were analyzed, compared, and interpreted to generate meaningful descriptions that informed the formulation of findings and recommendations. Qualitative data were analyzed through a thematic process in which responses were examined, clustered, and interpreted to identify recurring patterns and significant themes related to teachers' experiences and challenges. These themes were refined to ensure internal coherence and distinctiveness, and the resulting interpretations were subjected to validation through expert review and member checking. This process ensured that the findings accurately reflected the lived experiences and perspectives of the participating teachers and provided a credible basis for the development of the proposed Filipino English Linguistic Enhancement Program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the findings of the study based on data gathered from twenty-five Filipino teachers teaching in selected schools in Northern Arizona and Central Nevada during the academic year 2023-2024. Anchored on a qualitative descriptive research design, the study employed a structured questionnaire adapted from established instruments to capture

teachers' perceptions of their competence in using English for teaching and learning, alongside indicators of students' academic performance during the first quarter. The respondents were selected purposively based on their active engagement in teaching foreign learners, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentage, weighted mean, and inferential analysis through a t test, complemented by thematic analysis of qualitative responses. The discussion that follows is grounded strictly on the collected data and interprets the results in direct relation to the objectives of the study.

The contextual profile of the participants provides an important backdrop for understanding the results. Of the twenty-five respondents, twenty were teaching in Northern Arizona, representing eighty percent of the sample, while five were from Central Nevada, accounting for twenty percent. All respondents were Filipino teachers handling various subject areas and using English as the primary medium of instruction. This distribution highlights that the findings largely reflect experiences within Northern Arizona, while still incorporating perspectives from a different regional context. The professional background of Filipino teachers, shaped by their training and teaching experiences in the Philippines where English is widely used as a second language, provides a critical lens for interpreting their competence in an international teaching environment. Their exposure to English mediated instruction prior to working abroad likely influenced their pedagogical confidence and adaptability, as suggested in earlier studies emphasizing Filipino teachers' strong orientation toward English based teaching practices.

Teachers' competence in using English for teaching and learning was examined across three major domains: managing the classroom, engaging students interactively, and using instructional strategies. In terms of classroom management, the data revealed consistently high levels of competence among the respondents. Seventeen teachers, or sixty eight percent, reported that they highly applied practices that allow learners to concentrate and pay attention at all times, while seven teachers, or twenty eight percent, indicated that they applied these practices, and only one teacher, or four percent, reported a lower level of application. Clear rule setting emerged as a particularly strong area, with nineteen teachers, or seventy six percent, indicating high application and the remaining six teachers, or twenty four percent, indicating application, with no respondent reporting low application. Similar patterns were observed in creating a relaxing classroom atmosphere, encouraging learners to learn from their mistakes, and allowing students to share their opinions, all of which registered zero responses under the less competent category. Notably, twenty teachers, or eighty percent, strongly applied the practice of providing feedback by telling learners what they did right and what they did not, underscoring feedback as a central classroom management strategy. These results suggest that Filipino teachers demonstrate strong classroom management skills when teaching foreign learners, aligning with Syamsinar's assertion that effective English teaching is closely linked to deliberate pedagogical effort and classroom climate. The findings further imply that teachers' prior experiences in managing diverse classrooms in the Philippines may have contributed to their high level of competence abroad.

With regard to engaging students interactively, the results indicate a generally high but more varied level of competence compared with classroom management. Eighteen teachers, or seventy two percent, strongly applied real life experiences to involve learners despite linguistic barriers, while six teachers, or twenty four percent, applied this strategy and only one teacher, or four percent, reported low application. Simulation based activities showed a more balanced distribution, with eleven teachers, or forty four percent, strongly applying them, twelve teachers, or forty eight percent, applying them, and two teachers, or eight percent, reporting low application. Role play and situational activities followed a similar pattern, with forty eight percent reporting

high application, forty four percent reporting application, and eight percent reporting low application. Hands on workshops were strongly applied by fourteen teachers, or fifty six percent, while ten teachers, or forty percent, applied them and only one teacher, or four percent, reported low application. Visual based strategies such as viewing exhibits, moving pictures, and still pictures showed relatively higher proportions under the applied category, with up to fifty two percent indicating application and a small but notable percentage, reaching twelve percent in some indicators, indicating low application. Listening to lectures and reading texts also showed moderate variation, with up to sixteen percent reporting low application for lecture-based activities. Overall, these findings suggest that Filipino teachers favor experiential and participatory strategies over purely receptive methods, which supports Krashen's affective filter hypothesis that reduced anxiety and increased engagement facilitate language learning. The small proportion of low application responses indicates that while engagement strategies are widely used, certain methods may be constrained by contextual factors such as curriculum demands or learner preferences.

The use of instructional strategies revealed the strongest overall competence among the three domains. Most indicators recorded no responses under the less competent category, particularly in presenting minimum content tailored to students' knowledge, maintaining accessibility through tutorials and electronic communication, presenting content within a clear and logical framework, and promoting both individual work and teamwork. Allowing and encouraging student participation emerged as the most strongly applied strategy, with twenty-two teachers, or eighty eight percent, indicating high application. Promoting teamwork followed closely, with twenty teachers, or eighty percent, reporting high application. Presenting content in a clear and logical framework was strongly applied by nineteen teachers, or seventy six percent. Slight variations appeared in areas such as allowing students to organize assignments and providing detailed information about objectives and assessment methods, where up to twelve percent of respondents reported low application. Nevertheless, the overall pattern demonstrates that Filipino teachers employ a wide range of instructional strategies effectively when teaching foreign learners. This finding corroborates Sanlad's view that dynamic instructional strategies are essential for addressing learner diversity and sustaining engagement, particularly in multicultural classroom settings.

Student performance during the first quarter of the academic year further contextualizes the impact of teachers' competence. The data indicate that students' performance in English language use ranged from very good to excellent across all measured domains. In syntax, fifteen students, or sixty percent, demonstrated excellent performance, while ten students, or forty percent, demonstrated very good performance. In semantics, seventeen students, or sixty eight percent, achieved excellent performance, and eight students, or thirty two percent, achieved very good performance. Pragmatics showed the strongest outcome, with eighteen students, or ninety percent, demonstrating excellent performance and only two students, or ten percent, demonstrating very good performance. Communication skills reflected the highest level of achievement, with all respondents, or one hundred percent, demonstrating excellent performance. These results suggest that students were able to use English effectively in structure, meaning, contextual application, and overall communication. When interpreted alongside linguistic theories on syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, the findings imply that students benefited from consistent exposure to communicative and contextually rich instruction. The uniformly high performance in communication aligns with de Guzman's assertion that willingness to use language and apply foundational skills plays a crucial role in effective communication.

The relationship between teachers' competence and students' performance was examined through a t test analysis conducted at a significance level of 0.05. The mean score for teachers' competence was 2.32, which falls under the descriptive interpretation of competent, while the mean score for students' performance was 4.2, indicating a very high level of performance. The computed t test value was 7.749, which exceeded the critical value of 2.052, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This result indicates a significant difference between teachers' competence and students' performance during the first quarter of the academic year. While students demonstrated higher performance levels, the findings do not diminish the role of teachers' competence; rather, they suggest that students' strong language background as native users of English, combined with effective pedagogical support from Filipino teachers, contributed to the observed outcomes. The significant difference highlights the complementary rather than competing roles of teacher competence and learner characteristics in shaping academic performance.

The qualitative findings further enrich the interpretation of the results by illuminating teachers' lived experiences during class engagement. Teachers consistently emphasized the importance of integrating learners' real-life experiences, simulations, and role play activities to enhance involvement and meaning making. Their narratives underscored the belief that linguistic barriers are secondary when learners are actively engaged and when instruction is anchored in students' experiences. Teachers also reflected on the need to design lessons with ample materials, to avoid assumptions about students' cultural and historical background, and to explicitly check for comprehension through questioning and formative assessment techniques. These insights reveal a reflective and adaptive teaching stance, where Filipino teachers consciously adjust their strategies to address diversity, inclusivity, and contextual understanding. The qualitative themes align with the quantitative findings by demonstrating how high levels of instructional competence are enacted in practice through deliberate engagement strategies.

In synthesis, the results of the study demonstrate that Filipino teachers teaching in selected United States contexts exhibit high levels of competence in managing classrooms, engaging students, and using instructional strategies in English mediated instruction. Students' performance during the first quarter ranged from very good to excellent, particularly in communication, pragmatics, semantics, and syntax, suggesting that the instructional environment supported effective language use. The significant difference between teachers' competence and students' performance underscores the complex interaction between pedagogical skill and learner characteristics, while the qualitative findings highlight teachers' adaptability and reflective practice. Collectively, these findings address the study's objectives by providing empirical and interpretive evidence that supports the development of a Filipino English Linguistic Enhancement Program and offers meaningful implications for instructional practice, teacher training, and future research in international education contexts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the competence of Filipino teachers in using English for teaching and learning in selected schools in the United States is generally high and is manifested through effective classroom management, meaningful student engagement, and the strategic use of instructional approaches. The results demonstrate that teachers consistently foster learning environments that encourage attention, participation, and positive interaction, while employing experiential and communicative strategies that support

learners' linguistic development. These practices are reflected in the strong academic performance of students during the first quarter, particularly in syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and overall communication, where outcomes ranged from very good to excellent. The significant difference observed between teachers' competence and students' performance further indicates that while students possess strong linguistic foundations, the instructional competence of Filipino teachers plays a crucial role in facilitating comprehension, confidence, and contextual language use. Qualitative findings reinforce these results by showing that teachers intentionally draw from learners' experiences, simulations, and role play activities to reduce anxiety, promote participation, and enhance meaning making in the classroom.

The conclusions of the study are theoretically grounded in the Social Pragmatic Theory advanced by Akhtar and Tomasello, which emphasizes the role of intention reading, joint attention, and meaningful interaction in language learning, as supported by earlier work cited by de Guzman and Baldwin. The findings affirm that language learning is strengthened when teachers and learners engage in shared attention and purposeful communication, thereby enabling learners to construct meaning more effectively. In view of these conclusions, the study underscores the importance of sustaining and enhancing interactive instructional practices through structured simulations, classroom-based symposiums, and experiential learning activities that further develop speaking and communicative skills. It also highlights the need for continuous professional development through seminars and training programs conducted during academic breaks or at the end of each semester to support teachers in refining instructional strategies suited to contemporary and multicultural learning contexts. Finally, the Filipino Teacher's English Linguistic Enhancement Program developed as an output of this study emerges as a viable and relevant intervention that may be adopted, implemented, and further enhanced to strengthen teaching competence and support the professional growth of Filipino teachers working in international settings. Collectively, these conclusions and integrated recommendations emphasize the value of reflective practice, theory informed instruction, and sustained institutional support in advancing effective English language teaching and learning.

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