

**Enhancing the pedagogical practices of elementary English teachers  
in public schools of Ilagan City North District**

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**ABSTRACT**

Persistent gaps in English proficiency and reading comprehension among Filipino learners highlight concerns about the effectiveness of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in public elementary schools. However, limited localized evidence exists on how teacher characteristics, instructional resources, and contextual challenges influence EMI implementation in Ilagan City North District. This study examined the pedagogical practices of elementary English teachers and the factors affecting instructional effectiveness. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 19 purposively selected public elementary English teachers through a validated researcher-made questionnaire. Findings revealed a relatively young and high-performing teaching workforce, with 89.47% receiving “Outstanding” ratings. Teachers strongly supported EMI (overall means above 4.50) and rated ICT and audiovisual resources as very effective. However, student-related challenges, particularly lack of interest and limited English exposure outside school, were perceived as more serious than teacher-related concerns. The study concludes that strengthening professional development, technology integration, and community-based language support is essential to enhance EMI effectiveness and learner outcomes.

**Keywords:** English as a medium of instruction, teacher pedagogy, instructional resources, student-related challenges, professional development

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**INTRODUCTION**

English continues to function as a global lingua franca in commerce, science, technology, and international communication. According to Ethnologue, English is the most widely learned second language worldwide, with more than one billion users across first- and second-language contexts (Eberhard, Simons, & Fenning, 2023). In educational systems where English is taught as a second language (ESL), its mastery is closely associated with academic achievement, employability, and social mobility.

In the Philippines, English occupies a distinctive position as both a core learning area and a medium of instruction. The Department of Education institutionalizes English instruction

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under the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum and through policy frameworks aligned with the Republic Act No. 10533. While mother tongue-based multilingual education is implemented in the early grades, English gradually assumes a broader instructional role in upper elementary levels. Consequently, the quality of English pedagogy in elementary classrooms significantly influences learners' literacy development and overall academic performance.

However, national and international assessment results reveal persistent challenges in reading comprehension and language proficiency among Filipino learners. Data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development through the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicate that Filipino students perform below the OECD average in reading literacy. Although PISA assesses 15-year-old learners, the results highlight systemic issues that are often rooted in foundational literacy instruction during the elementary years.

Scholarly literature consistently identifies teacher quality as the most influential school-based factor affecting student achievement. Hattie (2009) emphasized that effective instructional practices—such as clear learning intentions, formative feedback, and structured teaching—yield significant gains in student learning. Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2000) underscored the importance of teacher preparation, ongoing professional development, and pedagogical competence in improving student outcomes. In the domain of English language teaching, Richards and Rodgers (2014) highlighted the effectiveness of communicative language teaching approaches, while Nation (2013) emphasized explicit vocabulary instruction and meaningful language exposure as essential components of ESL pedagogy.

Local research further affirms that instructional quality, teacher preparedness, and administrative support significantly influence English proficiency outcomes in Philippine public schools. Bernardo (2004) noted that teacher beliefs and instructional practices shape learner engagement and performance. Tupas and Lorente (2014) discussed the complexities of English use in multilingual Philippine classrooms, emphasizing the need for context-sensitive pedagogical approaches. Martin (2013) further explained that teachers must be equipped to navigate bilingual or multilingual realities to ensure effective language instruction.

Within the public elementary schools of Ilagan City North District, classroom observations and assessment results indicate that many learners continue to struggle with reading comprehension, vocabulary development, grammar usage, and oral communication. These concerns suggest the need for a systematic examination of teaching pedagogies, instructional resources, and contextual challenges affecting English instruction.

As a teacher-researcher situated within this district, the present study seeks to generate empirical evidence on the pedagogical practices of elementary English teachers and the factors influencing instructional effectiveness. By grounding the investigation in established educational theories and both local and foreign literature, this research aims to propose evidence-based strategies that can enhance classroom instruction and ultimately improve learner outcomes in English.

### Conceptual framework of the study

This study is anchored on three interrelated theoretical foundations: Teacher Effectiveness Theory, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), and Guskey's Model of Teacher Change.

First, teacher effectiveness research asserts that teachers are the most significant in-school determinant of student achievement (Hattie, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Effective teachers demonstrate instructional clarity, strategic questioning, formative assessment practices, and responsive classroom management. In English language teaching, these

competencies translate into the ability to scaffold reading comprehension, facilitate meaningful language interaction, and provide corrective feedback that supports linguistic accuracy and fluency.

Second, Lee Shulman introduced the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (1986, 1987), which emphasizes that effective teaching requires not only mastery of subject matter but also knowledge of how to teach that content in ways learners can understand. For elementary English teachers, this includes understanding literacy development, grammar instruction strategies, vocabulary acquisition processes, and differentiated instruction for diverse learners. The integration of content knowledge and pedagogy is critical in multilingual classrooms such as those in Ilagan City North District.

Third, Thomas Guskey (2002) proposed that sustainable teacher change occurs when professional development leads to improved classroom practices, which then result in enhanced student learning outcomes. Positive evidence of student progress reinforces teacher commitment to instructional innovation. This model underscores the importance of continuous monitoring, evaluation, and reflective practice in strengthening teaching pedagogies.

Guided by these theoretical perspectives, the study examines how teacher-related variables (such as educational attainment, teaching experience, and professional development), instructional resources, and encountered challenges relate to the enhancement of English teaching pedagogies. The framework assumes that strengthening teachers' pedagogical competence, supported by adequate instructional materials and institutional support, leads to improved classroom instruction and higher levels of learner comprehension and communicative competence.

The conceptualization of this study recognizes that pedagogical improvement is not a linear process but a dynamic interaction among teacher characteristics, instructional practices, contextual challenges, and professional growth opportunities. Through systematic evaluation and evidence-based intervention, the study seeks to contribute to the continuous enhancement of English instruction in the public elementary schools of Ilagan City North District.

#### Statement of the problem

This study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of English as a Medium of Instruction. Specifically, it aimed to address the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teacher respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, latest performance rating, job title, number of years teaching English in the public school, and in service trainings attended in English instruction?
2. How do the respondents view the importance of English as a Medium of Instruction?
3. To what extent do instructional resources affect the use of English as a Medium of Instruction?
4. What is the degree of problems encountered in using English as a Medium of Instruction?
5. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' perceptions of the importance of English as a Medium of Instruction, the effectiveness of instructional resources, and the problems encountered when grouped according to sex?

#### METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive survey method to gather data regarding the use of English as a medium of instruction in public elementary schools. The descriptive design was

considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to systematically describe the perceptions of teachers, the instructional resources utilized, and the problems encountered in implementing English as a medium of instruction. The investigation was conducted in Ilagan City, North District, Isabela, which comprises several public elementary schools under the supervision of the Schools District Supervisor.

The respondents of the study were public elementary English teachers in Ilagan City, North District. They were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in teaching English and in using English as a medium of instruction in their respective schools. Their selection ensured that the data collected were derived from individuals with relevant experience and direct engagement in the instructional practices under investigation.

A researcher made questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed to obtain information on the respondents' profile, their perceptions of the importance of English as a medium of instruction, the effectiveness of instructional resources, and the problems encountered in its implementation. To ensure clarity and validity, a test run of the instrument was conducted among a small group of English teachers who were not included as actual respondents in the study. In addition, the researcher sought feedback from the Dean of the Graduate School and her research adviser. Their comments and suggestions were carefully reviewed and incorporated to refine and improve the final version of the questionnaire, thereby strengthening its content validity and overall reliability.

The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert type scale to measure the respondents' perceptions. Separate sets of items were developed to assess the perceived importance of English as a medium of instruction, the effectiveness of instructional resources used in English instruction, and the degree of seriousness of problems encountered in using English as a medium of instruction. Higher mean scores indicated stronger agreement, greater perceived effectiveness, or more serious problems, depending on the specific section of the instrument. This scaling procedure allowed for systematic quantification and comparison of responses across the identified domains.

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured permission from the Office of the Schools District Supervisor. Approval was likewise obtained from the school heads of the identified public elementary schools. After obtaining the necessary permissions, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the target respondents and retrieved them upon completion to ensure a high response rate and to maintain the integrity of the data collection process. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the conduct of the study, including adherence to institutional protocols and respect for the professional roles of the participating teachers.

The data gathered were tallied, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, latest performance rating, present position, length of teaching experience, and in service trainings attended in English instruction. The weighted mean was computed to determine the average responses of the teachers regarding the importance of English as a medium of instruction, the effectiveness of instructional resources, and the degree of problems encountered. Ranking was employed to establish the relative standing of items within each category based on their computed mean scores. To determine whether there was a significant difference in the respondents' perceptions when grouped according to sex, an appropriate statistical test was applied. Through these procedures, the study ensured systematic data analysis that aligned with its descriptive and comparative objectives while maintaining methodological rigor and coherence.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Respondents' profile

The largest proportion of respondents (42.11%) were between 31–39 years old, followed by 31.57% aged 41–49 and 26.32% aged 25–30. This indicates that most English teachers in Ilagan City North District were in their early to mid-career stage, suggesting a workforce that combines relative youth with professional experience.

The majority of respondents were male (89.47%), while females comprised 15.79%. This reflects male dominance among English teachers in the district.

Most respondents (78.95%) were married, while 21.50% were single. The predominance of married teachers suggests a mature and potentially stable teaching workforce.

Nearly half (47.37%) had 6–10 years of experience teaching English. Teachers with 1–5 years of experience accounted for 26.36%, while 15.79% had 11–15 years, and 10.57% had 16–20 years of experience. No respondent had more than 20 years of experience. This suggests that the majority of teachers possessed moderate professional experience, which aligns with research emphasizing that teacher experience contributes positively to instructional effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hattie, 2009).

All respondents attended school-based and district-level trainings, while fewer participated in division (9), regional (8), and national (2) trainings. This pattern indicates active participation in local professional development but limited exposure to higher-level seminars. Guskey (2002) emphasized that sustained professional development is critical to improving classroom practice, suggesting that broader training opportunities may further enhance instructional quality.

More than half (57.89%) were bachelor's degree holders, 36.84% had completed a master's degree, and 5.26% had earned a doctoral degree. This demonstrates a strong commitment to continuing professional development. Shulman (1986, 1987) highlighted that deep subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are essential to effective teaching, and higher educational attainment may strengthen these competencies.

Most respondents (73.68%) were Teacher III, while 21.05% were Teacher I and 5.26% were Master Teacher II. This suggests that the majority had progressed beyond entry-level positions, indicating professional growth and accumulated teaching competence.

An overwhelming majority (89.47%) received an "Outstanding" performance rating, while 10.53% obtained "Very Satisfactory." None received a "Satisfactory" rating. This reflects high professional standards and adherence to competency expectations, consistent with teacher effectiveness frameworks (Hattie, 2009).

### Importance of English as a medium of instruction as perceived by the respondents

Both male and female respondents strongly agreed on the importance of English as a medium of instruction, with overall mean ratings of 4.59 and 4.58, respectively. The highest-rated indicators included better job opportunities, positive influence on the wider community, and wider communication opportunities, with some items receiving perfect ratings (5.00) from male respondents.

These findings affirm that teachers view English not only as a subject but as a tool for social mobility and professional advancement. This supports Garcia and Tupas (2020), who observed that English proficiency in the Philippines is closely associated with employability

and socioeconomic mobility. Similarly, Martin and Dela Cruz (2021) found that teachers perceive English as essential in preparing learners for global and digital participation.

However, slightly lower ratings were given to multilingualism and dual language education, suggesting that while English is valued, its integration within multilingual frameworks may require further strengthening. Bernardo (2020) noted that although educators value English, challenges remain in aligning English instruction with culturally responsive and multilingual teaching practices.

#### Effectiveness of instructional resources

Instructional resources used in English instruction were rated very effective overall, with mean scores of 4.70 (male) and 4.55 (female). ICT tools and audiovisual materials received the highest ratings, including perfect scores (5.00) from male respondents. Non-electronic materials received comparatively lower, though still positive, ratings (4.21 among females).

The findings demonstrate a strong preference for technology-enhanced and multimedia-based instruction. This supports Lansangan and Mendoza (2020), who found that ICT-based materials significantly enhance language retention and proficiency in English-medium instruction. Alcantara and Yu (2021) further emphasized that multimedia and audiovisual resources create multimodal learning environments beneficial to second-language learners. Conversely, Francisco (2019) argued that exclusive reliance on traditional materials may limit authentic language exposure, reinforcing the trend observed in this study.

#### Student-related problems

Student-related challenges were rated as moderately serious overall (4.20 for females; 3.94 for males). The most significant problems were a lack of interest and limited opportunities to practice English outside school, which received the highest ratings (4.53 among females; 4.50 among males). Lack of parental support and financial constraints were also notable concerns.

These findings suggest that motivational and environmental factors posed greater barriers than material or technological issues. Santos and Malabanan (2021) similarly found that student disinterest and limited home exposure to English negatively affect language acquisition. Reyes and Briones (2020) emphasized that parental involvement and real-world language application significantly influence comprehension outcomes. Padilla (2019) also identified vocabulary limitations and language barriers as foundational challenges, especially in non-English-speaking regions.

#### Teacher-related problems

Teacher-related challenges were likewise rated moderately serious (4.02 for females; 3.72 for males). The most prominent concerns included cultural attitudes, diverse learning levels, and large class sizes. Limited specialized training was also identified as a concern, while lack of teaching confidence received comparatively lower ratings.

These results indicate that contextual and systemic factors were perceived as greater obstacles than personal teaching competence. Carreon and Tolentino (2020) identified cultural resistance and linguistic diversity as key impediments in English-based instruction in Philippine public schools. Navarro and Manlapig (2021) highlighted the need for differentiated instruction in heterogeneous classrooms. Punzalan (2019) further noted that training gaps and large class sizes often outweigh issues of teacher confidence.

### Overall problems encountered

When comparing student-related and teacher-related challenges, student-related problems received higher ratings (4.20 and 3.94) than teacher-related concerns (4.02 and 3.72). This indicates that learners' motivation, exposure, and external support systems were perceived as the more significant barriers to effective instruction in English.

These findings are consistent with Reyes and Sumilang (2020), who argued that student-related factors often outweigh teacher-related concerns in second-language contexts. Domingo and Enriquez (2021) similarly found that even well-prepared teachers struggle to improve outcomes when students lack motivation and exposure. Lopez and Sarmiento (2019) emphasized that strengthening student-centered language programs significantly improves the effectiveness of English instruction.

### CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that the respondents strongly supported English as a medium of instruction (EMI), and available instructional resources were generally perceived as effective. The teaching workforce in Ilagan City North District was relatively young, professionally stable, and high-performing, as reflected in their years of experience, academic qualifications, and predominantly "Outstanding" performance ratings. These indicators suggest that the district possesses a capable and committed group of English teachers who are open to instructional innovation.

Despite these strengths, gender-based differences were observed in the perception of instructional challenges. Female teachers tended to rate both student-related and teacher-related problems as more serious than male teachers, indicating possible differences in classroom experiences and sensitivity to contextual issues. Overall, student-related challenges—particularly lack of interest, limited opportunities to practice English outside school, and insufficient parental support—were perceived as more pressing than teacher-related concerns. While issues such as diverse learning levels, large class sizes, and limited specialized training were identified, they were rated as moderately serious.

These findings imply that improving EMI in the district requires not only sustaining teacher competence and resource effectiveness but also strengthening systemic and environmental support for learners. In response, professional development programs should be expanded beyond school- and district-level trainings to include broader exposure to advanced instructional strategies, differentiated teaching, and ICT integration. Mentoring systems utilizing senior teachers may further enhance instructional quality.

Schools should continue strengthening access to technology-based and multimedia resources while ensuring equitable distribution and technical support. Given that student-centered issues were more significant, initiatives that promote English use beyond the classroom—such as reading programs, language clubs, and speaking activities—should be prioritized. Parent orientation sessions and community-based language programs may also help reinforce language learning at home.

Finally, school leaders should explore flexible instructional approaches to address diverse learning levels and large class sizes and institutionalize monitoring systems to guide continuous improvement. Through coordinated efforts at the teacher, school, and community

levels, English medium instruction in the district can be further strengthened to achieve more inclusive and effective language education.

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