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TEACHING STRATEGIES AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN TEACHING INDIGENOUS LEARNERS: BASIS FOR MODULE DEVELOPMENT

Edlyn C. Esperanza

President Ramon Magsaysay State University

ABSTRACT: This study explored the teaching strategies, instructional materials, challenges, and recommendations for improving English instruction for Indigenous learners in Senior High School. Based from the findings, language teachers primarily used visual aids, direct instruction, questioning techniques and culturally relevant materials to ensure structure, clarity, and student engagement. Technology-based strategies like online app or resources, interactive activities and digital storytelling were less utilized due to limited access to infrastructure and digital tools. Instructional materials such as worksheets or handouts, culturally relevant texts, and audio/visual resources were most commonly utilized, while interactive whiteboards or smartboards, language learning software, and bilingual dictionaries were rarely used due to resource scarcities.

Language teachers most commonly integrated Indigenous culture, values, and storytelling into lessons to foster students' identity and belonging, and used local languages alongside English to improve comprehension. They created contextualized, interactive, and visually supported materials, and relied on community involvement from parents and elders. Instruction was adapted through flexible, learner-centered approaches and simplified, low-tech materials. However, limited access to print and digital resources led teachers to depend more on printed materials, oral storytelling, and community-based methods. Despite the efforts, language teachers faced challenges, including language barriers, low student confidence, curriculum mismatches, limited resources, lack of insufficient trainings and emotional burnout. Socio-economic factors further hinder attendance and performance of the indigenous learners.

To address these issues, teachers recommended integrating Indigenous knowledge into lessons, using contextualized materials, and employing interactive strategies. Early language support at the elementary level and professional development in culturally responsive teaching were also suggested. Language teachers advocated for increased community involvement and the strategic use of technology connected to the realities of Indigenous communities. These measures aimed to enhance English instruction while preserving cultural relevance. Following a thorough evaluation, the proposed module development could be implemented for future reference.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is acknowledged as a basic human right and a powerful tool for societal transformation, particularly in achieving the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. This is especially vital for Indigenous Peoples (IP), who continue to face marginalization, poverty, and limited access to quality education (United Nations, 2015). In response, the Philippines established the National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework, recognizing the need for equitable educational opportunities and the preservation of cultural diversity.

Despite these policy efforts, indigenous learners-such as the Ayta community in Zambales-continue to face significant challenges in English language acquisition. These include limited vocabulary, low confidence, and expressive language difficulties, which are compounded by a lack of culturally relevant and contextualized instructional materials. Teachers often struggle to contextualize lessons and develop learners' reading, writing, and digital literacy skills, as well as to effectively integrate indigenous knowledge and practices into the classroom. Furthermore, the scarcity of written resources in indigenous languages and superficial understanding of cultural practices among teachers hinder meaningful learning experiences.

Effective teaching strategies and instructional materials are essential for all basic education teachers; while understanding and educational results can be challenging for students, including those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The Department of Education in the Philippines will be at the forefront of management and leadership initiatives to enhance the ability of the management system internally and decreasing the department's exposure to risks through the implementation of new strategies and continuous assessment of their Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) (Ulmel, et al., 2020).

In accordance with RA 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act 2013), incorporation of context in instructional material is important. It is considered essential in the K to 12 curricula. It is evident that the curriculum must have enough flexibility to accommodate. Enable schools to adapt, make indigenous, and improve their educational materials social environments. RA 10533 specifically emphasizes that Filipino education is focused on the learner, as the Department of Education views the local context through this lens. Past initiatives to tackle diversity are now viewed through the lens of inclusion, which is also evident in acknowledging the various cultures present in the nation (DepEd Order, 2015).

Getting good at English of the indigenous learners has its own set of challenges due to their different languages, cultures, and histories because the Philippines is home to numerous indigenous communities with unique languages, traditions, and worldviews (Justo, 2023). Integrating these knowledge and perspectives into the formal education system is crucial for preserving cultural heritage and promoting social inclusion. Moreover, indigenous learners in the Philippines often face unique challenges in mastering the English language due to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Addressing these challenges requires the development of effective teaching strategies that cater to the specific needs of this student population (Li, 2022).

Given the growing awareness of the importance of culturally relevant and inclusive education for Indigenous students, this research is well-timed (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Conventional teaching approaches frequently do not fully meet the specific requirements and learning preferences of Indigenous students (Nelson et al., 2018), however, being aware of successful tactics can greatly enhance their academic success and establish a fairer learning atmosphere.

Educating Indigenous learners in senior high school offers distinct challenges and potential advantages. Although there is a growing awareness of the significance of culturally responsive teaching, the particular teaching strategies and instructional materials used by English teachers to successfully involve Indigenous learners are not well-investigated (Leano, Rabi, & Piragasam, 2019). It is essential to create teaching strategies and instructional materials specifically for Ayta learners in an IP Community to improve their English language skills while also respecting their cultural identity, thus enhancing their educational experience.

In Zambales, specifically in the Eastern schools of Botolan, Zambales, there is a noticeable challenge with English proficiency skills among Indigenous learners. A lot of these students encountered major difficulties when it comes to improving their English skills because of a lack of vocabulary and struggles with understanding and communicating information. Studies show that Ayta learners frequently have difficulty expressing their ideas coherently in English, resulting in confusion and miscommunication in the classroom. The Bilingual Policy in the Philippines requires teaching in both Filipino and English, making it difficult for Indigenous learners who are mainly fluent in their native dialects. This language barrier not just impairs their understanding of lessons but also impacts their confidence and involvement in classroom conversations. As noted in different research studies, like those investigating speech challenges in Indigenous students, the problem is further worsened by inadequate teaching strategies and instructional materials. As a result, it is essential to discuss these challenges in order to enhance the academic achievements and improved educational journey of Indigenous learners in Zambales.

There is a pressing need to develop teaching strategies and instructional materials that are not only culturally responsive but also aligned to the unique linguistic and cultural backgrounds of indigenous learners. Research shows that conventional approaches often fail to address these learners' needs, leading to disengagement and poor academic outcomes. By investigating and documenting effective practices, this study aims to bridge the gap between current teaching methods and the actual needs of indigenous students, thereby supporting both language development and cultural preservation.

This study aimed to investigate the teaching strategies and instructional materials used by the English teachers in teaching English subject to Indigenous (Ayta Learners) in Senior High School in the Division of Zambales. The study investigated current teaching strategies and instructional materials they used, and the challenges in their education due to cultural and language differences. This study aimed to discover effective strategies and instructional resources by examining how English teachers interact with Ayta students, in order to develop modules tailored to meet their specific needs. This module development aimed to effectively involve Ayta students in learning English in the IP Community of Zambales. Suggestions involve integrating this module into educational settings to improve better the teaching strategies and promote a welcoming learning atmosphere. Educational institutions see advantages such as increased student participation and continued enrollment, along with enhanced academic results for Ayta learners, which helps create a fair educational environment catering to the varying needs of all learners.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-explanatory research design in both the quantitative and qualitative phases.

Descriptive-explanatory research design was a hybrid approach that combined both descriptive and explanatory research methodologies. The main purpose of descriptive research was to provide a detailed account of a phenomenon, focusing on what was happening without emphasizing the underlying reasons or causes. It sought to define characteristics, patterns, or trends within a specific population or context. It involved collecting data on the types of teaching strategies and instructional materials used by the English teachers available to Indigenous learners.

Combining descriptive and explanatory approaches helped the researchers describe the current situation and understand the factors causing a given phenomenon. In this study, the research started by outlining the different teaching aids employed (descriptive) and then explored the considerations of English teachers in creating their teaching strategies and instructional materials as well as the challenges they encountered in implementing them (explanatory).

Data Collection

Before conducting the study, the researcher secured all necessary permits and approvals from university and school officials, and obtained consent from participating school principals. The study used a mixed-methods approach: a validated survey questionnaire gathered quantitative data on teaching strategies and materials used by senior high school teachers for Indigenous students, while semi-structured interviews provided qualitative insights into teachers' lesson design considerations and challenges. Both the survey and interview tools were reviewed by experts for validity. Data from these methods were analyzed and used to develop a module tailored to the needs of English teachers working with Indigenous learners.

Data Analysis

In the quantitative phase, a Likert scale, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics were used to analyze the level of usage of teaching strategies and instructional materials. In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis was used to assess the responses of participants in the interviews. Below were the tools used:

A **Likert scale** was used as a rating tool that allowed participants to indicate how frequently they used different teaching strategies and instructional materials in the classroom, giving a clearer understanding of usage patterns.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the Likert scale responses, helping to identify how often teachers used different strategies and materials. The mean was calculated to determine the average frequency and effectiveness of each teaching strategy and instructional material.

Thematic analysis was used to interpret interview data by identifying and organizing key themes from participants' responses. This method ensured teachers' unique perspectives and challenges were accurately captured, helping to develop culturally appropriate teaching strategies for Indigenous students.

III. ANALYSIS

This analysis utilized a descriptive-explanatory research design in both the quantitative and qualitative phases. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes to identify the consideration in designing the teaching strategies and instructional materials as well as the challenges they encountered in teaching indigenous learners. Additionally, the analysis explored the recommendations of language teachers in lesson designing. Finally, all the data gathered from the most used teaching strategies and instructional materials were used as the basis in crafting module as well as the considerations and recommendations of language teachers in creating a culturally relevant lesson design.

Table 1
Teaching Strategies Used

Teaching Strategies Used	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Rating	Rank
1. Direct Instruction	4.48	Very Often Used	2
2. Collaborative Learning	4.16	Often Used	5
3. Project-Based Learning	3.88	Often Used	8
4. Questioning Strategies	4.48	Very Often Used	2
5. Use of Visual Aids	4.52	Very Often Used	1
6. Scaffolding Techniques	4.08	Often Used	6
7. Differentiated Instruction	4.24	Very Often Used	4
8. Experiential Learning	3.88	Often Used	7
9. Digital Storytelling	3.32	Sometimes Used	12
10. Use of Culturally Relevant Materials	4.40	Very Often Used	3

11. Peer Teaching	3.68	Often Used	9
12. Interactive Activities	3.52	Often Used	11
13. Use of Technology (Online apps or resources)	3.48	Often Used	10
14. Role-Playing	3.72	Often Used	8
15. Use of Local Contextual Example	4.16	Often Used	5

Teaching strategies used in Indigenous education showed a strong preference for structured, teacher-led approaches. The most frequently used strategies were the Use of Visual Aids (4.52, Rank 1), Direct Instruction (4.48, Rank 2), Questioning Strategies (4.48, Rank 2), and use of culturally relevant materials (4.40, Rank 3). Visual aids were especially important for bridging language gaps, while direct instruction provided clarity and structure. Questioning strategies encouraged participation and critical thinking, and culturally relevant materials helped connect lessons to Indigenous students' identities and experiences.

Table 2
Instructional Materials Used

Instructional Materials Used	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Rating	Rank
1. Digital Resources (Apps or Websites)	3.24	Sometimes Used	5
2. Audio/Visual Materials (e.g., videos, podcasts)	3.80	Often Used	3
3. Handouts and Worksheets	4.56	Very Often Used	1
4. Culturally Relevant Texts	4.28	Very Often Used	2
5. Manipulatives or Real Objects	3.4	Sometimes Used	5
6. Interactive Whiteboards or Smartboards	2.76	Sometimes Used	8
7. Graphic Organizers	3.44	Often Used	4
8. Games and Simulations	3.44	Often Used	4
9. Flashcards	2.92	Sometimes Used	7
10. Language Learning Software	2.44	Rarely Used	9
11. Posters and Charts	3.16	Sometimes Used	6
12. Bilingual Dictionaries or Glossaries	2.68	Sometimes Used	8

The most frequently used instructional materials were Handouts and Worksheets (4.56, Rank 1), Culturally Relevant Texts (4.28, Rank 2), and Audio/Visual Materials (3.80, Rank 3). Teachers relied on printed materials for structure and clarity, especially where digital access was limited. Culturally relevant texts were often used to connect lessons to Indigenous culture, while audio/visual materials helped engage students with limited reading proficiency. Interactive and technology-based resources, such as games, graphic organizers, and manipulatives, were used less often, and digital tools like language software and bilingual dictionaries were rarely used due to infrastructure challenges. Overall, teachers favored traditional, tangible materials, with limited integration of digital and interactive resources.

Using a thematic analysis, the following themes and subthemes were developed to address the considerations of language teachers in designing teaching strategies and instructional materials in preparing their lessons to indigenous learners in senior high school. Additionally, it also analyzes challenges of the teachers in teaching indigenous learners and their recommendation towards lesson designing.

Table 3 Considerations in Designing Teaching Strategies and Instructional Materials

Code	Subtheme	Theme	Supporting Quotes
CH-1, CH-5	Integration of Indigenous Culture; Traditional Knowledge and Indigenous Storytelling	Cultural Sensitivity and Integration	Informant 1 (CH-1): "I incorporate cultural values and traditions in my lessons." Informant 4 (CH-5): "I integrate

			Indigenous stories and history to make lessons more relatable.”
CH-2, CH-10	Use of Local Language in Instruction; Addressing Limited Access to Technology	Language and Communication	Informant 2 (CH-2): “Using their native language alongside English helps improve comprehension.” Informant 2 (CH-10): “Since they have limited access to technology, I use printed materials and hands-on activities.”
CH-3, CH-7	Contextualized Learning Materials; Visual and Interactive Resources	Resource Utilization and Engagement	Informant 6 (CH-3): “I design materials based on their environment and daily experiences.” Informant 7 (CH-7): “I use images, videos, and interactive tools to make lessons more engaging.”
CH-4, CH-5	Community Involvement in Learning; Traditional Knowledge and Indigenous Storytelling	Community Involvement	Informant 2 (CH-4): “I engage parents and elders to reinforce learning beyond the classroom.” Informant 4 (CH-5): “I integrate Indigenous stories and history to make lessons more relatable.”
CH-6, CH-11	Flexible and Adaptive Teaching Strategies; Differentiated Instruction Based on Student Needs	Adaptability and Flexibility	Informant 3 (CH-6): “My teaching strategies change based on the students' learning pace and style.” Informant 5 (CH-11): “Not all students have the same English proficiency level, so I adjust my teaching based on their needs.”
CH-8, CH-12	Encouraging Student Participation; Learner-Centered Approach	Learner-Centered Approach	Informant 9 (CH-8): “Encouraging students to actively participate helps them gain confidence.” Informant 10 (CH-12): “Understanding their background allows me to tailor my teaching approach.”

Language teachers teaching strategies and instructional materials for Indigenous learners focused on cultural sensitivity, integrating Indigenous culture, values, and storytelling to foster identity and belonging. They used local languages alongside English to support comprehension and relied on contextualized, interactive, and visually supported materials. Community involvement, adaptability to students’ needs, and learner-centered approaches were also key considerations. Accessibility challenges, such as limited technology and resources, led teachers to simplify lessons and use practical, low-tech materials. Overall, teachers emphasized the need for culturally relevant, flexible, and accessible instruction that connects with students’ backgrounds and involves the broader community.

Table 5
Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Implementing Strategies and Instructional Materials

Code	Subtheme	Theme	Supporting Quotes
CH-1, CH-3	Language Barriers and Limited English Exposure; Comprehension Difficulties in Reading and Listening	Language Barriers and Comprehension Difficulties	Informant 1: “Students struggle because they have limited exposure to English outside the classroom.” Informant 3: “Some learners cannot fully understand instructions in English, making it hard to follow lessons.”
CH-2, CH-11	Fundamental English Proficiency Issues (Grammar, Writing, Vocabulary);	Academic Challenges in English and	Informant 6: “Many students struggle with sentence construction and grammar, making it hard to express their ideas clearly.”

	Student Low Confidence in Expressing Themselves in English	Confidence Issue	Informant 5: “Students are afraid to speak in class because they lack confidence in using English.”
CH-4, CH-11	Classroom Management and Student Engagement Issues; Student Low Confidence in Expressing Themselves in English	Classroom Engagement and Management	Informant 6: “Some students become disengaged when they struggle to understand English, making it hard to keep them focused.” Informant 5: “Students are afraid to speak in class because they lack confidence in using English.”
CH-5, CH-10	Mismatch Between Curriculum and Indigenous Culture; Limited Parental Support in Learning Process	Cultural Sensitivity and Community Involvement	Informant 7: “Some topics in the curriculum do not reflect Indigenous traditions, making it harder for students to relate.” Informant 2: “Many parents are unable to assist their children with English assignments due to their own language limitations.”
CH-6, CH-10	Socio-Economic Challenges Affecting Attendance; Limited Parental Support in Learning Process	External Socio-Economic and Community Factors	Informant 4: “Financial issues force some students to miss school, which affects their learning progress.” Informant 2: “Many parents are unable to assist their children with English assignments due to their own language limitations.”
CH-7, CH-8	Limited Teaching Resources and Learning Materials; Lack of Professional Training for Indigenous Education	Resource Constraints and Professional Development Needs	Informant 8: “There are not enough books, learning modules, or visual aids designed for Indigenous learners.” Informant 9: “We need more training on how to effectively teach English to Indigenous learners.”
CH-9, CH-12	Teacher Emotional Struggles and Burnout; Difficulty in Adapting to Differentiated Instruction	Teacher Well-Being and Adaptability Challenges	Informant 10: “Teaching Indigenous learners is fulfilling but also emotionally challenging when I see them struggle with the material.” Informant 3: “Not all students have the same level of English proficiency, so I have to adjust my teaching strategies accordingly.”

Teachers reported that Indigenous learners face major challenges such as language barriers, limited English exposure, and comprehension difficulties, making it hard for students to follow lessons and participate confidently. Academic struggles with grammar, writing, and vocabulary, as well as low student confidence, further hinder engagement. Classroom management is affected when students become disengaged due to these language issues. Other challenges include a mismatch between the curriculum and Indigenous culture, limited parental support, socio-economic difficulties affecting attendance, lack of teaching resources, insufficient professional training, and teacher burnout. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive teacher training, culturally relevant materials, curriculum adaptation, and stronger school-community partnerships.

Table 1
Recommendations and Insights Toward Enhancement of Teaching Strategies and Instructional Materials

Code	Subtheme	Theme	Supporting Quotes
RI-1, RI-3	Enhancing Oral Communication; Strengthening English Foundations at Early Levels	Language Development	RI-1: Informant 1: “Strengthen oral communication skills and increase opportunities for students to speak and listen in English. Role-playing, interactive group discussions, and real-life scenarios should be integrated into lessons.” RI-3: Informant 3: “Strengthen the foundation of learners in English at the elementary level by implementing phonics-based instruction and early language immersion strategies.”
RI-2, RI-4	Integration of Local Stories, Traditions, and	Cultural Sensitivity and Integration	Informant 2: ‘Incorporate local stories, traditional and cultural practices into English lessons.

	Indigenous Knowledge; Culturally Responsive Teaching		Combining native language and English helps support comprehension.'
RI-6, RI-7	Adaptability and Flexibility	Considering Students' Language Proficiency; Innovative Teaching Methods	RI-6: Informant 6: "Always consider their level of understanding by tailoring lessons based on their English proficiency and using scaffolding techniques when introducing complex concepts."
RI-9, RI-8	Technology-Enhanced Learning	Incorporating Digital and Technology-Based Resources; Simplified and Easily Accessible Learning Materials	RI-9: Informant 9: "Integrate technology-based resources such as educational videos, digital storytelling, and interactive learning apps that align with Indigenous culture." RI-8: Informant 8: "Create simplified instructional materials with clear, concise language and visual supports to help students grasp concepts more easily."
RI-10, RI-11	Community and Parental Involvement	Community Collaboration; Encouraging Parental Involvement and Support	RI-10: Informant 10: "Develop more culturally relevant and contextualized learning materials by working with local elders and community members to incorporate their stories and traditions into the curriculum." RI-11: Informant 11: "Encourage parental involvement in learning by providing family-based literacy programs and engaging parents in storytelling or home-based language activities."

Language teachers emphasized the importance of language development by strengthening oral communication and foundational English skills, especially through role-playing, group discussions, and early language immersion. They recommended integrating local stories and Indigenous knowledge for cultural relevance, adapting lessons to students' proficiency levels, and using simplified, contextualized materials. Technology-based resources and visual supports were encouraged to enhance engagement, while community and parental involvement were seen as vital for reinforcing learning and cultural continuity. Overall, teachers advocated for student-centered, culturally responsive, and flexible strategies to support Indigenous learners in English instruction.

IV. DISCUSSION

1 Teaching Strategies Employed and Instructional Materials Used

The study revealed that teachers most often used visual aids, direct instruction, questioning techniques, and culturally relevant materials because these approaches provided structured learning and actively engaged students, especially through guided discussions. In contrast, strategies involving technology, interactive activities, and digital storytelling were used less frequently, mainly due to limited access to digital tools and insufficient teacher training in technology integration.

For instructional materials, teachers favored handouts, worksheets, culturally relevant texts, and audio/visual resources, as these supported structured learning and helped contextualize lessons with Indigenous narratives. However, materials like interactive whiteboards, bilingual dictionaries, and language learning software were rarely used, reflecting ongoing resource constraints, lack of training, and inadequate technological infrastructure in Indigenous communities.

2 Considerations of English Teachers in Designing Teaching Strategies and Instructional Materials

Language teachers prioritized culturally sensitive strategies by integrating Indigenous culture, values, and storytelling into lessons to foster students' identity and belonging. They used local languages alongside English to improve comprehension and bridge linguistic gaps. Teachers also focused on creating contextualized, interactive, and visually supported materials relevant to students' daily lives. Community involvement, including participation from parents and elders, was seen as essential for reinforcing learning beyond the classroom. Adaptability was addressed through flexible, differentiated instruction tailored to diverse learning needs, and teachers promoted learner-centered approaches that encouraged active participation. Due to limited access to print and digital resources, teachers relied more on printed materials, oral storytelling, and community-based teaching methods.

3 Challenges Encountered by English Teachers in Implementing the Strategies and Instructional Materials

Language teachers addressed challenges in Indigenous education by using bilingual support and clear, direct instructions to scaffold language development and improve comprehension. They fostered student confidence and participation through supportive, differentiated instruction and made lessons engaging by integrating Indigenous culture and stories. Teachers preferred accessible, hands-on, and printed materials, promoted community involvement, and recognized the need for more culturally appropriate resources and professional training to better meet Indigenous learners' needs.

4 Recommendations and Insights Toward Enhancement of Teaching Strategies and Instructional Materials Used

Language teachers most often recommended strengthening oral communication and foundational English skills through interactive activities, while integrating Indigenous culture and local languages to make lessons relatable. They tailored instruction to different proficiency levels, used simplified and contextualized materials, incorporated technology where possible, and encouraged community and parental involvement—all aiming to create an engaging and inclusive environment for Indigenous learners.

5 Developed Module in teaching English to indigenous learners in Senior High School

A teaching module was developed based on study findings, featuring direct instruction with clear, step-by-step modeling, guided and independent practice, and systematic skill introduction to support students with lower English proficiency. It used questioning strategies to promote understanding and active participation, integrated culturally relevant materials such as Indigenous stories and traditions, and included handouts, worksheets, and audio/visual resources for accessibility. The module emphasized cultural sensitivity, language development, resource engagement, community involvement, adaptability, and learner-centered approaches to create an inclusive, responsive learning environment for Indigenous learners.

V. CONCLUSION

English teachers of Indigenous senior high students primarily use visual aids, direct instruction, and culturally relevant materials due to their structure and clarity. These teachers prioritize cultural sensitivity, language proficiency, and available resources when designing lessons, adapting content to reflect Indigenous traditions and using simplified language. However, they face challenges like language barriers, low student confidence, curriculum mismatches, and limited resources. To cope, teachers use localized materials, flexible strategies, and community involvement. Recommendations include integrating Indigenous knowledge, providing early language support, offering professional development, and engaging parents and elders. The proposed module was crafted using the most frequently used teaching strategies and instructional materials aligned with the considerations and recommendations of language teachers in crafting culturally relevant materials tailored with the educational needs of the indigenous learners.

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