International Journal of Philosophy, Linguistics, and Humanities

Journal Homepage: https://ijmshe.com/index.php/ijplh



Research Article

A Convergent Mixed-Methods Study On Assessing Master Teachers' Language Practices Across Instructional And Professional Contexts: Basis For An Enhancement Program

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https://doi.org/10.70847/744164

Article history:

Received: 9 October 2026
Revised: 15 October 2026
Accepted: 15 Nerovemb 2026

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Abstract

Master teachers in the Philippines perform dual roles as classroom teachers and instructional leaders, using language to facilitate learning, mentoring, coaching, and professional collaboration. This study assessed master teachers' language practices in instructional and professional contexts across five Schools Divisions in Region X (Northern Mindanao), Philippines, and examined differences in their reported practices according to age, sex, and years of experience. Employing a convergent mixed-methods design, the quantitative strand surveyed 224 master teachers selected through proportionate stratified random sampling using a 28-item instrument aligned with the seven domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (α = .946). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and one-way analysis of variance. The qualitative strand involved 19 participants in in-depth interviews (n = 10) and focus group discussions (n = 9), analyzed using seven a priori themes. Language practices were rated very high overall (M = 4.54, SD = 0.36), with learning environment rated highest and diversity of learners and curriculum and planning lowest. Age differences were significant, F(2, 221) = 4.47, p = .012, with those aged 30–40 reporting higher practices than older colleagues; differences by sex and experience were nonsignificant. Qualitative findings highlighted clear instructions, purposeful code-switching, localized examples, respectful correction, strengths-first feedback, and two-way family communication. Integration showed confirmation for overall practices and sex, partial discordance for age, and expansion for experience. Findings highlight highly rated multilingual language practices and age-related differences. They informed CLEAR, a proposed eight-week enhancement program requiring pilot evaluation.

International Journal of Philosophy, Linguistics, and Humanities
E-ISSN: 3082-415X

Keywords: code-switching, convergent mixed methods, master teachers, multilingual classrooms, Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, teacher mentoring

1. Introduction

Language practices are the habitual choices speakers make among the languages and forms available to them in a particular setting (Spolsky, 2004). For master teachers, who teach while also leading colleagues, these choices occur in two contexts. Instructional language practices include switching languages to explain lessons and manage the class (Ferguson, 2003) and translanguaging, which draws on learners' full linguistic repertoires (García & Wei, 2014). Professional language practices involve the language used with colleagues in mentoring dialogues, which range from directive to non-directive (Hennissen et al., 2008). In the Philippines, Dingal (2023) reported an association between master teachers' mentoring skills and colleagues' instructional practices.

International research has documented variation in these practices. In the Czech Republic, Svojanovský (2026) found that mentors often initiated topics and used directive techniques, while more dialogic exchanges supported preservice teachers' reflection. In Indonesia, Laksono et al. (2025) found that teachers struggled to balance English with learners' everyday languages, partly because institutional policies on translanguaging were unclear.

The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) expect master teachers to model effective practice and assist colleagues (Department of Education [DepEd], 2017). Evidence on this role remains mixed. Bush et al. (2016) found limited evidence that master teachers in Malaysia and the Philippines influenced colleagues beyond their own classrooms, and Ag-A (2026) reported that master teachers in Sagada, Mountain Province, faced resistance from fellow teachers. In Bukidnon, Alo (2026) found that master teachers' mentoring practices were rated very high. [Authors: state in one sentence what Alo (2026) found about the link between mentoring and teacher performance, and why the finding leaves a gap.] Language policy has also shifted. Republic Act No. 12027 (2024) discontinued the mother tongue as the medium of instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 3, with regional languages retained as auxiliary media.

Master teachers in Region X work in schools where Cebuano, Filipino, English, and Indigenous languages coexist, so their language choices carry practical weight for learners and colleagues alike.

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E-ISSN: 3082-415X

The study responds to United Nations (n.d.) Sustainable Development Goal 4. Target 4.c calls for more qualified teachers through teacher training, and master teachers extend such training to colleagues. Target 4.5 seeks equal access to education for vulnerable groups, including Indigenous peoples, and purposeful use of learners' languages makes lessons more accessible in multilingual classrooms.

Studies have rarely examined teacher language in both the classroom and mentoring at once. [Authors: support the gap with a brief review of Philippine studies on master teachers and state which dimension each omits. The phrase "to the researcher's knowledge" in the dissertation is not sufficient for journal review.] The present study addressed this gap through a convergent mixed-methods design in five Schools Divisions of Region X: Cagayan de Oro City, Tangub City, Malaybalay City, Camiguin, and El Salvador City. The purpose was to assess the level of master teachers' language practices across instructional and professional contexts, test differences by age, sex, and years of teaching experience, describe the practices through participants' accounts, integrate both strands, and propose an enhancement program.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted pragmatism, which emphasizes practical problem-solving and the choice of methods that best answer the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Two theories guided interpretation. Sociocultural Theory views language as a social and cultural tool that mediates learning and knowledge construction (Vygotsky, 1978). Master teachers use language to scaffold learners' understanding and to support colleagues' development through mentoring and LAC sessions. Metacognitive Theory explains how individuals monitor and regulate their own cognition (Flavell, 1979). Metacognitive knowledge refers to awareness of suitable language choices for different audiences and purposes, while metacognitive skills involve monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting these choices (Schraw, 1998; Wenden, 1998). Together, the two theories account for the social functions of master teachers' language and the reasoning behind their language decisions.

1.2. Master Teachers' Language Practices

Master teachers' language practices refer to the deliberate ways highly experienced educators use their communicative repertoires to support learning and to fulfill leadership roles (DepEd, 2017; Walsh, 2011). In classrooms, teacher talk mediates content through explanation, questioning, scaffolding, interaction management, and feedback (Walsh, 2011). Mercer (2010) showed that exploratory talk supports deeper reasoning than disputational or cumulative talk, and Alexander (2018) and Boyd and Markarian (2011) described how dialogic talk moves, such as extended questioning and revoicing, connect curriculum

content with learners' prior knowledge. Andrews (2007) defined teacher language awareness as explicit knowledge of linguistic systems that enables adaptive discourse choices.

Beyond the classroom, master teachers mentor colleagues, lead LAC sessions, and conduct post-observation conferences. Freeman (2016) argued that such professional talk turns tacit pedagogical knowledge into explicit, shareable expertise, and Johnson (2009) described how verbalizing pedagogical decisions during co-planning makes them visible to novice teachers. Walsh (2013) proposed structured analysis of recorded lessons to build teachers' interactional awareness. In the Philippine context, Reyes and Oropa (2025) emphasized the instructional supervision role of master teachers in advancing teacher and learner outcomes.

1.3. Language Practices in Instructional Contexts

The study organized instructional language practices under four PPST domains. *Content knowledge and pedagogy* concerns how teachers make subject matter accessible through clear explanations, visuals, and academic vocabulary (Echevarría et al., 2017; García & Wei, 2014) and how they model disciplinary ways of speaking and writing (Gibbons, 2015; Schleppegrell, 2004). *Learning environment* concerns affirming, accessible language and the negotiation of classroom norms (García & Wei, 2014; Walsh, 2011), and teacher–student relationships are linked with engagement, belonging, and learning (Emslander et al., 2025). *Diversity of learners* concerns the treatment of home languages as resources rather than obstacles (Busse et al., 2020) and linguistically responsive instruction through vocabulary support, sentence frames, and adjusted speech (Echevarría et al., 2017; Lucas et al., 2008). *Curriculum and planning* concerns how teachers translate curriculum documents into language-supportive lessons (DepEd, 2017), now under the revised medium-of-instruction policy of Republic Act No. 12027 (2024).

1.4. Language Practices in Professional Contexts

Professional language practices were organized under three PPST domains. *Assessment and reporting* concerns how master teachers explain assessment purposes, model the interpretation of results, and help colleagues report progress to learners and parents in learner-centered terms (DepEd, 2017). Feedback effects depend on the information feedback provides (Wisniewski et al., 2020). *Community linkages and professional engagement* concerns partnerships with parents and communities. Family–school engagement interventions have small positive effects on parent–teacher relationships and communication (Smith et al., 2022), parental involvement takes different forms at home, at school, and in discussions of learning goals (Yang et al., 2023), and community elders' knowledge strengthens teachers' cultural capability in

Indigenous settings (Bobongie-Harris & Youse, 2023). *Personal growth and professional development* concerns reflective, growth-oriented mentoring talk. Mentoring dialogues shift between directive and non-directive roles (Hennissen et al., 2008), and professional learning that combines training, coaching, and collaboration shows promise for teacher and learner outcomes (Ventista & Brown, 2023).

1.5. Grouping Variables

Age, sex, and years of teaching experience served as grouping variables. Research on related teacher competencies reports mixed patterns. A review of 44 studies identified experience, attitudes, and teaching conditions as influences on teachers' digital competence (Claro et al., 2024). Zhang (2023) found that gender and experience did not explain differences in digital literacy among teachers of English as a foreign language, while Moreira-Choez et al. (2024) reported gender differences among university teachers in Ecuador. These contrasts suggest that demographic differences depend on setting and measure.

This study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1. What is the level of master teachers' language practices across instructional and professional contexts?
RQ2. Is there a significant difference in master teachers' language practices when grouped by age, sex, and years of teaching experience?
RQ3. How do master teachers describe their language practices across instructional and professional contexts?
RQ4. How do master teachers' descriptions of their language practices compare when grouped by age, sex, and years of experience?
RQ5. What results emerge from integrating the quantitative and qualitative data?
RQ6. What enhancement program is supported by the results of the study?

The null hypothesis, tested at the .05 level of significance, states that there is no significant difference in master teachers' language practices when grouped by age, sex, and years of teaching experience.

1.5. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework, adapted from the mixed-methods visual models of Gempes and Obenza (2025). The quantitative strand measured language practices in the instructional context (LPIC: content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, and curriculum and planning) and the professional context (LPPC: assessment and reporting, community linkages and professional engagement, and personal

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E-ISSN: 3082-415X

growth and professional development), based on the seven PPST domains (DepEd, 2017). The qualitative strand gathered accounts through in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) and organized them under the same seven domains. The double-headed arrow indicates concurrent collection from different participants and separate analysis. The rounded box shows the results of both strands, which were merged in a joint display and classified as confirmation, expansion, or discordance (Fetters et al., 2013).

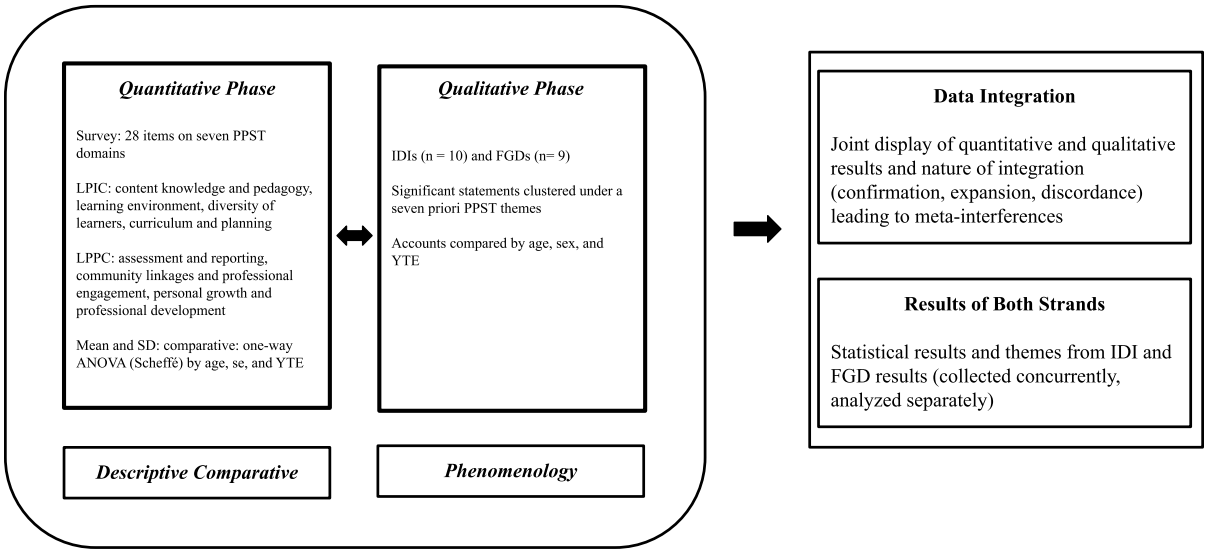


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Convergent Mixed-Methods Study on Master Teachers' Language Practices

Note. LPIC = language practices in the instructional context; LPPC = language practices in the professional context; YTE = years of teaching experience; IDI = in-depth interview; FGD = focus group discussion; PPST = Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers. Adapted from the mixed-methods visual models of Gempes and Obenza (2025).

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

The study used a convergent mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently, analyzed separately, and merged for interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Fetters et al., 2013). Both strands carried equal weight in answering the research questions. The quantitative strand followed a descriptive-comparative approach to determine levels of practice and group differences. The qualitative strand followed a

phenomenological approach to describe master teachers' experiences of language use (Creswell, 2013), with data organized under a priori themes derived from the PPST domains

2.2. Research Participants and Data Collection

The study was conducted in five Schools Divisions of Region X, Northern Mindanao, Philippines: Cagayan de Oro City, Tangub City, Malaybalay City, Camiguin, and El Salvador City. These divisions were chosen because they employed master teachers who met the inclusion criteria and were accessible for face-to-face data collection within the approved timeline. Separate participants were recruited for each strand to keep the strands independent.

2.2.2. Quantitative Strand

The target population consisted of 537 master teachers in the five divisions. A sample of 224 was determined for a finite population at a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and a 50% response distribution. Proportionate stratified random sampling allocated respondents by division: Cagayan de Oro City (101), Tangub City (19), Malaybalay City (51), Camiguin (34), and El Salvador City (19). Official rosters from the Schools Division Offices served as the sampling frame. Eligible respondents held the position of Master Teacher I, II, III, or IV in public elementary or secondary schools, had served in the position for at least one school year, were actively performing instructional and professional duties, and gave written informed consent. Master teachers on extended leave, study leave, secondment, or retirement were excluded. [Authors: report the response rate, any replacements, and the profile of the 224 respondents by age, sex, and years of experience (n and percentage per group).]

2.2.2. Qualitative Strand

Nineteen master teachers who did not take part in the survey were selected through purposive sampling. Ten joined IDIs, and nine joined two FGDs (Batch 1, n = 5; Batch 2, n = 4). Eligible participants held the Master Teacher I to IV position, had served as master teachers for at least three years, and had substantial experience in mentoring, instructional supervision, LAC facilitation, or professional development. School heads helped identify eligible master teachers but did not take part in recruitment decisions. Participants were 30 to 40 years old (n = 2), 41 to 50 years old (n = 15), and 51 years old and above (n = 2). Eleven were female and eight were male. Seven had 1 to 7 years of experience, nine had 8 to 14 years, and three had 15 years or more (Table 4).

2.3. Research Instruments

The survey questionnaire was adapted from the PPST (DepEd, 2017). Part I gathered age, sex, and years of experience. Part II contained 13 items on the

instructional context: content knowledge and pedagogy (four items), learning environment (two items), diversity of learners (four items), and curriculum and planning (three items). Part III contained 15 items on the professional context: assessment and reporting (two items), community linkages and professional engagement (nine items), and personal growth and professional development (four items). A sample item reads, "I display high-level communicative proficiency and strategic code-switching in the Mother Tongue, Filipino, and English to facilitate the teaching and learning process." Items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always). Mean scores were interpreted as very high (4.20–5.00), high (3.40–4.19), moderate (2.60–3.39), low (1.80–2.59), and very low (1.00–1.79). Four experts in applied linguistics rated the questionnaire for relevance, clarity, and accuracy. A pilot test with 31 master teachers yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .946 for the 28 items.

The qualitative strand used a semi-structured interview guide with one main question and three probing questions for each PPST domain. A sample main question reads, "How do you use communication and classroom interactions to create a positive, respectful, and supportive learning environment?" The same four experts reviewed the guide for relevance, clarity, coherence, and alignment with the research objectives, and their comments were incorporated before data collection.

2.4. Data Collection

The University of the Immaculate Conception Research Ethics Committee granted ethical clearance (protocol GS-FR-06-26-0337) on July 29, 2026. Permission was then obtained from the five Schools Division Superintendents and the participating school heads. Respondents received a participant information sheet and an informed consent form before taking part. The survey was administered face-to-face and took approximately 20 to 30 minutes. The IDIs were conducted face-to-face from August 25 to September 18, 2026, and lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The FGDs were conducted through video conferencing on September 21 and 26, 2026, and lasted approximately 70 to 90 minutes. Participants used English, Filipino, or Cebuano, as they preferred. Separate written consent was obtained for audio recording. The first author conducted, transcribed, and translated all interviews.

2.5. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed through means and standard deviations. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tested differences by age, sex, and years of experience at the .05 level, followed by the Scheffé post hoc test for significant results. Analyses were performed in SPSS [version].

[Authors: report tests of normality and homogeneity of variance, the number of respondents in each group, and confirm the effect sizes in Tables 2 and 3 against the SPSS output. Consider an adjustment for the 24 tests performed.]

Qualitative data were transcribed verbatim, anonymized with codes, and analyzed following Creswell's (2013) procedures: organizing the data, coding significant statements, clustering them under the seven a priori themes, developing descriptions, interrelating themes, and interpreting meanings. Core ideas were generated from statements shared across participants within each theme. [Authors: describe the codebook, whether a second coder took part, how statements outside the seven domains were handled, and how translations were checked.]

For integration, the quantitative and qualitative results were placed side by side in a joint display. Each pair of results was classified as confirmation (the two strands support each other), expansion (one strand adds detail to the other), or discordance (the strands disagree), following Fetters et al. (2013).

2.6. Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Trustworthiness followed Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was supported through methodological triangulation, data-source triangulation across IDIs and FGDs, iterative questioning, and member checking, with five participants signing verification certificates. Dependability was supported through an audit trail of procedures and decisions. Confirmability was supported through reflexivity and peer debriefing by a faculty member in applied linguistics, along with review by the adviser and a data analyst. Transferability was supported through descriptions of the context, participants, and procedures.

Participation was voluntary, and participants could decline any question or withdraw at any time without consequence for employment, evaluation, or promotion. The first author is a master teacher in the Department of Education but holds no supervisory or evaluative authority over the participants. Codes replaced personal identifiers. Records were stored in password-protected files and locked storage accessible only to the researcher and adviser, in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173, 2012), and will be destroyed three years after study completion.

3. Results

3.1. Level of Language Practices

Table 1 presents the level of master teachers' language practices. The overall mean was 4.54 (SD = 0.36), described as very high.

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The instructional context obtained a mean of 4.55, and the professional context obtained 4.53. Learning environment obtained the highest mean (M = 4.65, SD = 0.42), followed by content knowledge and pedagogy (M = 4.62, SD = 0.38). Diversity of learners (M = 4.47, SD = 0.46) and curriculum and planning (M = 4.47, SD = 0.51) shared the lowest mean. In the professional context, assessment and reporting obtained the highest mean (M = 4.57, SD = 0.46), while community linkages and professional engagement obtained the lowest (M = 4.48, SD = 0.43). At the item level, the lowest means concerned leading colleagues in strategies for learners with disabilities or giftedness (M = 4.32), reviewing student performance data for remedial programs (M = 4.35), and using technical assessment language with colleagues (M = 4.36). All seven domains were rated very high.

Table 1. *Level of Master Teachers' Language Practices by Context and Domain*

Context and domain	*M*	*SD*	Level
Instructional context			
Content knowledge and pedagogy	4.62	0.38	Very high
Learning environment	4.65	0.42	Very high
Diversity of learners	4.47	0.46	Very high
Curriculum and planning	4.47	0.51	Very high
Instructional context overall	4.55		Very high
Professional context			
Assessment and reporting	4.57	0.46	Very high
Community linkages and professional engagement	4.48	0.43	Very high
Personal growth and professional development	4.54	0.48	Very high
Professional context overall	4.53		Very high
Overall	**4.54**	**0.36**	**Very high**

Note. N = 224. Ratings used a 5-point scale (1 = never, 5 = always). Very high = 4.20–5.00.

Master teachers reported very high language practices in both contexts. The qualitative accounts gave this rating concrete form through clear directions, purposeful code-switching, local examples, fair participation, and calm correction. These practices align with the sociocultural view of language as a mediating tool for learning (Vygotsky, 1978). The participants' description of

English, Filipino, and the mother tongue as serving distinct functions echoes research on purposeful, limited use of familiar languages in teaching (Prilutskaya, 2021). Evidence on learning benefits remains mixed.

Huang and Chalmers (2023) identified design weaknesses in translanguaging research, and Qureshi and Al-Surmi (2025) found a small positive effect on second-language reading alongside mixed results. The present study measured reported practices, not effects on achievement.

Learning environment was the highest-rated domain. Participants emphasized dignity-preserving correction and shared turn-taking, consistent with evidence linking teacher–student relationships to engagement and belonging (Emslander et al., 2025) and with findings that teacher talk inviting and building on learners' ideas relates positively to achievement, while one-way explanation shows no significant association (Tao & Chen, 2024). Spoken reasoning routines described under content knowledge and pedagogy also connect with Metacognitive Theory, since explaining how to approach a problem makes a thinking strategy visible to learners (Flavell, 1979).

Diversity of learners and curriculum and planning were the lowest-rated domains, though still very high. The three lowest items concerned leading colleagues in strategies for learners with disabilities or giftedness, data-driven remedial planning, and technical assessment language. All three items concern leading colleagues rather than teaching learners, which points to specialized professional discourse as a focus for support. [Authors: this item-level reading was added during condensation. Confirm that it reflects your interpretation.] Participants' tiered tasks and community consultation reflect differentiated and culturally responsive practice, which relates to learners' well-being and inclusion (Pozas et al., 2021). Knowing an approach does not ensure its consistent use (Kong et al., 2022), and assessments of culturally responsive practice rely heavily on self-report (Franco et al., 2024). Classroom observation would strengthen future claims. Collaborative lesson preparation shows promise for teacher knowledge and practice (Benedict et al., 2023), although gains in student learning are less consistent (Kahmann et al., 2022). In the professional context, participants described error analysis, quick checks, reteaching, and strengths-first parent conferences. Formative assessment produces modest positive effects on reading (Xuan et al., 2022), and feedback effects depend on the information provided (Wisniewski et al., 2020). A strengths-first format alone does not guarantee that learners or parents understand the concern. Communication with families through two-way dialogue and barangay coordination aligns with evidence that family–school engagement improves parent–teacher communication (Smith et al., 2022) and that partnerships depend on how families and schools understand their relationship (Pennington et al., 2024).

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Reflective post-observation conversations reflect professional learning grounded in actual work (Ventista & Brown, 2023), and feedback is more useful when teachers receive help in interpreting it (Röhl et al., 2025).

3.2. Differences by Age, Sex, and Years of Experience

Table 2 presents the comparison by age. The overall difference was significant, $F(2, 221) = 4.47$, $p = .012$, $\eta^2 = .04$, so the null hypothesis was rejected for age. Master teachers aged 30 to 40 obtained the highest overall mean ($M = 4.77$), while the two older groups both obtained 4.52. Scheffé comparisons showed that the youngest group differed from both older groups, while the two older groups did not differ. Five domains showed significant differences: learning environment, diversity of learners, assessment and reporting, community linkages and professional engagement, and personal growth and professional development. Content knowledge and pedagogy ($p = .169$) and curriculum and planning ($p = .218$) showed no significant differences. In every significant pair, the youngest group obtained the higher mean.

Table 2. Differences in Language Practices by Age

Domain	30–40 (A)	41–50 (B)	51+ (C)	*F*	*p*	Post hoc
Content knowledge and pedagogy	4.76	4.59	4.62	1.79	.169	—
Learning environment	4.90	4.62	4.62	4.40	.013*	A > B, A > C
Diversity of learners	4.71	4.44	4.45	3.42	.034*	A > C
Curriculum and planning	4.65	4.44	4.46	1.54	.218	—
Assessment and reporting	4.81	4.54	4.55	3.07	.048*	A > B
Community linkages and professional engagement	4.74	4.50	4.46	4.20	.016*	A > B, A > C
Personal growth and professional development	4.79	4.56	4.48	3.70	.026*	A > C
Overall	**4.77**	**4.52**	**4.52**	**4.47**	**.012***	**A > B, A > C**

Note. Values are means. *df* = 2, 221. Post hoc comparisons used the Scheffé test. For the overall score, $\eta^2 = .04$, computed from *F* and *df*. Asterisks mark $p < .05$.

Table 3 presents the comparisons by sex and years of experience. Female ($M = 4.55$) and male ($M = 4.54$) master teachers did not differ, $F(1, 222) = 0.01$, $p = .940$, and no domain showed a significant difference.

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Years of experience produced no significant overall difference, F(2, 221) = 0.89, p = .413, η² = .008. Master teachers with 8 to 14 years obtained the highest mean (M = 4.62), followed by those with 1 to 7 years (M = 4.58) and 15 years or more (M = 4.53). The null hypothesis was not rejected for sex or years of experience.

Table 3. Differences in Language Practices by Sex and Years of Experience

Domain	Sex				Years of experience				
	Female	Male	*F*	*p*	1–7	8–14	15+	*F*	*p*
Content knowledge and pedagogy	4.54	4.64	2.29	.132	4.72	4.71	4.61	1.27	.284
Learning environment	4.61	4.65	0.25	.617	4.63	4.68	4.64	0.09	.911
Diversity of learners	4.51	4.46	0.41	.522	4.53	4.55	4.45	0.66	.517
Curriculum and planning	4.50	4.46	0.12	.725	4.54	4.55	4.45	0.52	.597
Assessment and reporting	4.64	4.56	0.92	.338	4.56	4.64	4.56	0.35	.703
Community linkages and professional engagement	4.46	4.49	0.11	.739	4.56	4.55	4.47	0.52	.598
Personal growth and professional development	4.56	4.53	0.12	.727	4.50	4.70	4.52	1.73	.180
Overall	**4.55**	**4.54**	**0.01**	**.940**	**4.58**	**4.62**	**4.53**	**0.89**	**.413**

Note. Values are means. *df* = 1, 222 for sex and 2, 221 for years of experience. No difference was significant at $p < .05$. For the overall scores, $\eta^2 < .001$ (sex) and $\eta^2 = .008$ (experience), computed from *F* and *df*. The youngest master teachers rated their practices higher than older colleagues in five of seven domains. The effect was small ($\eta^2 = .04$), and the difference concerns reported, not observed, practice. Several explanations are possible and were not tested: more recent training, greater comfort with digital tools, recency of promotion, or differences in how groups rate themselves. Claro et al. (2024) linked teachers' digital competence with experience, attitudes, and teaching conditions, and Althubyani (2024) found favorable views of technology alongside medium measured competence. UNESCO (2023) stresses that access, preparation, and governance shape the educational use of technology. The age finding therefore

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E-ISSN: 3082-415X

supports a skills-based needs assessment, not an assumption that older master teachers require digital remediation.

The absence of a sex difference is consistent with Zhang (2023), who found that gender did not explain digital-literacy differences among teachers, and contrasts with Moreira-Choez et al. (2024), who reported gender differences among university teachers. These contrasts point to the role of setting and measure. In this sample, shared DepEd standards and responsibilities offer a plausible explanation for similar ratings. The absence of an experience difference suggests that once teachers reach master teacher status, reported practices are broadly similar, while the qualitative accounts show different priorities across career stages. Professional learning should therefore respond to demonstrated needs rather than to demographic categories.

3.2. Master Teachers' Descriptions of Their Language Practices

Table 4 presents the qualitative participants, and Table 5 summarizes the seven a priori themes and their core ideas. Excerpts originally in Cebuano or Filipino are presented in English translation, with the original given for selected code-switched statements.

Table 4. Profile of Qualitative Participants

Code	Age (years)	Sex	Experience (years)	Group
IDI_01	30–40	Male	1–7	IDI
IDI_02	41–50	Female	1–7	IDI
IDI_03	41–50	Female	1–7	IDI
IDI_04	41–50	Female	8–14	IDI
IDI_05	41–50	Female	8–14	IDI
IDI_06	41–50	Male	1–7	IDI
IDI_07	41–50	Male	8–14	IDI
IDI_08	41–50	Female	15+	IDI
IDI_09	41–50	Female	1–7	IDI
IDI_10	41–50	Male	8–14	IDI
FGD Batch 1_001	41–50	Female	8–14	FGD 1
FGD Batch 1_002	30–40	Male	1–7	FGD 1
FGD Batch 1_003	41–50	Male	8–14	FGD 1
FGD Batch 1_004	41–50	Female	8–14	FGD 1
FGD Batch 1_005	51+	Female	15+	FGD 1
FGD Batch 2_001	51+	Male	8–14	FGD 2

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Code	Age (years)	Sex	Experience (years)	Group
FGD Batch 2_002	41–50	Female	8–14	FGD 2
FGD Batch 2_003	41–50	Male	1–7	FGD 2
FGD Batch 2_004	41–50	Female	15+	FGD 2

Note. $N = 19$. IDI = in-depth interview; FGD = focus group discussion.

Table 5. A Priori Themes and Core Ideas on Master Teachers' Language Practices

Theme	Core ideas
Instructional context	
Content knowledge and pedagogy	Delivers simple, unambiguous instructions to preempt misconceptions. Code-switches strategically among English, Filipino, and the local vernacular. Grounds abstract terms in familiar local livelihood scenarios. Articulates reasoning routines aloud as an instructional anchor.
Learning environment	Sets a welcoming tone through real-world themes. Uses random calling to remove partiality. Implements collaborative routines and co-created conduct rules. Avoids abrasive comments to preserve learners' dignity.
Diversity of learners	Uses tiered, profile-specific activity sheets. Consults Indigenous community members to localize materials. Pairs peers in mixed-language groups. Adjusts complexity through one-on-one interventions.
Curriculum and planning	Schedules co-curricular language activities after class. Focuses on hands-on events such as science exhibitions. Unpacks competencies collaboratively within subject teams. Uses AI-assisted slide creation alongside storytelling.
Professional context	
Assessment and reporting	Analyzes error patterns against explicit criteria rather than raw marks. Uses quick diagnostics such as entry and exit checks to adjust lessons. Uses parent–teacher commitments to address absences. Frames feedback with strengths first.
Community linkages and professional engagement	Establishes two-way dialogue with external partners. Partners with barangay leaders to locate absent pupils. Holds community forums on home connectivity issues. Invites stakeholders to view resource gaps directly.
Personal growth and professional development	Leads by example through completion of graduate degrees. Shares diagnostic tables and benchmark tools within school networks. Conducts collaborative checking of test papers and results. Uses post-observation talks to guide peers toward targets.

Note. Themes follow the seven domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (Department of Education [DepEd], 2017).

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3.3. Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Participants described clear instructions, purposeful movement across languages, local examples, and spoken explanations of their reasoning. IDI_06 assigned a function to each language: "I use the three languages on purpose, not randomly. The Mother Tongue gives learners access to the idea, Filipino serves as a bridge, and English gives them the academic vocabulary they will need for assessments and later schooling." FGD Batch 1_002 described returning learners to the language of the lesson after clarifying in Cebuano:

> For language, I use English or Filipino depending on the subject, pero if makita nako nga lisod para sa learners, I use Cebuano to clarify the idea. Then, gradually, I bring them back to the language expected in the lesson. For me, ang importante gyud is understanding first. [For language, I use English or Filipino depending on the subject, but if I see that it is difficult for the learners, I use Cebuano to clarify the idea. Then, gradually, I bring them back to the language expected in the lesson. For me, what really matters is understanding first.] (FGD Batch 1_002)

3.4. Learning Environment

Participants described welcoming language, shared participation, co-created rules, and respectful correction. IDI_06 explained, "I apply the same standards to everyone and make sure participation is shared, using random calling, group roles, and turn-taking routines so the same few learners do not dominate." FGD Batch 1_002 added, "Even when correcting behavior, I avoid embarrassing the learner in front of the class. I want them to feel safe and comfortable in the classroom."

3.5. Diversity of Learners

Participants described tiered tasks, consultation with Indigenous community members, peer support, and one-on-one assistance. IDI_09 described tiered activities: "For struggling learners, we provide simplified, scaffolded tasks and additional support." A participant teaching Higaonon learners described working with the community:

> I have this experience in the hinterland where we teach IPEd learners, and it's very challenging because we don't know their language, which is Higaonon. So, what we did was an innovation. Gabuhat mi og instructional materials, and we consulted mga Lumad to address their cultural backgrounds and their needs in the classroom para ma-include namo sila, instead nga ma-exclude. [We made instructional materials, and we consulted Indigenous community members to address their cultural backgrounds and their needs in the classroom so we could include them instead of excluding them.] (IDI_1)

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3.6. Assessment and Reporting

Participants described using assessment evidence to guide instruction and communicating with parents constructively. IDI_06 stated, "I conduct item analysis and look for patterns in errors rather than only totals. If many learners miss the same item, I reteach it differently." IDI_09 described parent conferences: "I use the 'Sandwich Method' during Parent-Teacher Conferences. . . . First, I begin with a genuine strength or positive observation about the learner."

3.7. Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

Participants described two-way communication, barangay assistance, and invitations for stakeholders to see school needs. IDI_06 shifted into Cebuano to stress shared responsibility: "With parents and community partners, I keep communication two-way, so they are not only informed but also invited to contribute. Mas maayo gyud kung magtinabangay ta [It really is better when we help one another]." IDI_03 described a commitment form with the community: "Whenever a child does not attend school and continues to be absent, we already have a partnership with the barangay to locate the child and encourage them to return to school."

3.8. Personal Growth and Professional Development

Participants described further study, sharing assessment tools, joint review of results, and reflective post-observation conversations. IDI_04 explained, "I also encourage my colleagues to do the same by creating opportunities for reflection during LAC sessions, mentoring, and post-observation conversations. I tell them that reflection is not about finding fault with ourselves

3.9. Descriptions by Age, Sex, and Years of Experience

The accounts were also compared across demographic groups. For sex, the theme Homogeneous Professional Standard described shared practices among female and male participants, including clear explanations, code-switching, respectful correction, error analysis, and peer coaching.

For age, the theme Two-Tier Generational Differentiation described technology-supported classroom and assessment talk among participants aged 30 to 40 and analogies, community experience, face-to-face mentoring, and policy-guided dialogue among those aged 41 and above.

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The approaches overlapped, since IDI_03, aged 41 to 50, also described using Canva AI. For experience, the theme Stable Competency Level described shared practices with different priorities, including assessment tools, culturally appropriate tasks, action research, and cross-school mentoring.

Because only two participants were aged 30 to 40 and two were 51 or older, these groupings describe tendencies in the available accounts rather than group characteristics.

3.10. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Table 6 presents the joint display. The very high ratings were consistent with accounts of clear directions, purposeful code-switching, shared rules, parent communication, and reflection, so the level of practices was classified as confirmation. The absence of a sex difference matched accounts of shared practices, also classified as confirmation. For age, both strands separated the youngest group from older master teachers, yet older participants described structured mentoring while the youngest group rated the related professional domains higher. This pairing was classified as confirmation with partial discordance. For experience, the qualitative accounts added detail about differing professional priorities behind similar ratings, classified as expansion.

Table 6. Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Research questions	Quantitative result	Qualitative result	Integration
RQ1 and RQ3: Level and description	Instructional $M = 4.55$, professional $M = 4.53$, overall $M = 4.54$ (very high)	Clear instructions, strategic code-switching, co-created rules, strengths-first feedback, continued study, and reflection	Confirmation: described practices are consistent with the very high ratings
RQ2 and RQ4: Sex	No difference, $F(1, 222) = 0.01$, $p = .940$ (female 4.55, male 4.54)	Female and male participants described the same professional communication standards	Confirmation: both strands show similar reported practices

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Research questions	Quantitative result	Qualitative result	Integration
RQ2 and RQ4: Age	Difference, $F(2, 221) = 4.47$, $p = .012$; 30–40 (4.77) > 41–50 and 51+ (4.52); significant in five domains	Ages 30–40: technology-supported talk; 41 and above: analogies, community experience, face-to-face mentoring, policy registers	Confirmation with partial discordance: older participants described structured mentoring, yet the youngest group rated the related professional domains higher
RQ2 and RQ4: Experience	No difference, $F(2, 221) = 0.89$, $p = .413$ (1–7: 4.58, 8–14: 4.62, 15+: 4.53)	Shared practices with different priorities across career stages	Expansion: accounts add detail on differing priorities behind similar ratings

Note. Integration types follow Fetters et al. (2013).

3.11. Proposed Enhancement Program

Table 7 summarizes the four modules. The program runs for eight weeks with 26 guided hours: two hours for orientation and a baseline skills check, 16 hours for the modules, six hours for applying outputs in school, and two hours for review. Outputs are scored with a six-criterion guide (clear language, language suited to the audience, inclusive and respectful communication, link to the lesson or work goal, use of evidence or examples, and realistic next steps), each scored from 0 to 3. The proposed completion standard is 14 of 18 points, with at least 2 points for clarity and inclusive communication, and at least 90% of participants are expected to meet the standard after revision. The program has not yet been implemented or tested.

Table 7. Modules of the Proposed CLEAR Enhancement Program

Module (component)	Finding addressed	Key content and activity	Output
1. Clear Communication with Digital Tools (Communicating Lessons)	Age difference ($p = .012$); accounts of digital and familiar approaches	Clear instructions in digital activities, AI-assisted slides checked for accuracy, offline alternatives; skills-based peer pairs; 4-hour workshop (Week 2)	One interactive lesson with clear instructions, reasoning questions, and an offline alternative

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Module (component)	Finding addressed	Key content and activity	Output
2. Inclusive Language and Local Learning Tasks (Communicating Lessons)	Diversity of learners and curriculum and planning (M = 4.47); accounts of familiar languages and local examples	Suitable use of English, Filipino, and local language; tasks at three levels; community advice on cultural content; 4-hour workshop (Week 3)	One lesson plan with three task levels, a local example, and a participation routine
3. Clear Communication with Families and Community Partners (Engaging Partners)	Community linkages (M = 4.48); accounts of parent conversations and barangay partnerships	Explaining progress simply, strengths-first feedback, attendance agreements; case-based role-play; 4-hour workshop (Week 4)	A family and community communication guide with a progress report, sample conversation, and action agreement
4. Supportive Mentoring and Professional Goals (Advancing Reflection)	Personal growth (M = 4.54); no sex or experience differences; accounts of reflection and joint review	Post-observation discussion, specific feedback, review of common test errors, PPST-linked goals; peer-coaching practice; 4-hour workshop (Week 5)	One coaching record, one improvement plan, and one shared teaching or assessment tool

Note. CLEAR = Communicating Lessons, Engaging Partners, and Advancing Reflection. Persons involved include school heads, Learning Action Cell coordinators, master teachers, peer coaches, and, for Module 3, parents and learning partners.

3.12. Integration and Implications for the Enhancement Program

The joint display strengthened understanding of what participants reported, although both strands relied on self-report and the qualitative sample was selected for substantial experience. Agreement between strands does not establish classroom effectiveness. The partial discordance for age deserves attention, since older participants described long-practiced mentoring while the youngest group rated the related domains higher. Examining such disagreement, rather than concealing it, is central to integration (Fetters et al., 2013).

CLEAR translates these results into practice. Its sequence of preparing an output, applying it in school, receiving feedback, and revising it reflects features linked with effective professional development, including practical relevance, active learning, and school application (Donath et al., 2023; Education Endowment Foundation, 2021).

Implementation guidance distinguishes an attractive program idea from the work required to put it into practice (Education Endowment Foundation, 2024), so CLEAR should be piloted with attention to time, resources, and follow-up before wider adoption.

4. Conclusion

Master teachers in the five Schools Divisions of Region X demonstrated very high language practices across instructional and professional contexts. Learning environment emerged as the strongest domain, while diversity of learners and curriculum and planning were relative areas for development. Age showed a small but significant difference favoring younger master teachers, whereas sex and years of experience showed no significant differences. Qualitative findings highlighted language practices encompassing purposeful code-switching, respectful classroom communication, assessment feedback, family partnerships, and reflective mentoring. Mixed-methods integration confirmed the overall quantitative findings and sex comparison, partially confirmed the age comparison, and expanded the experience comparison. Sociocultural Theory and Metacognitive Theory provided interpretive lenses for understanding familiar-language use, guided interaction, spoken reasoning, and reflection, although neither theory was directly tested.

5. Recommendations

School heads and Learning Action Cell (LAC) coordinators should provide regular opportunities for shared planning, classroom application, and feedback, particularly in diversity of learners and curriculum and planning. Digital skills should be assessed before training, with teachers paired according to demonstrated competencies rather than age. Master teachers should sustain strengths-first assessment feedback that identifies evidence, explains learning needs, and establishes next steps in collaboration with families and barangay partners. Mentoring activities should incorporate reviews of assessment results and teaching decisions aligned with Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST)-linked goals. Finally, the proposed CLEAR program should undergo an eight-week pilot implementation and systematic evaluation before wider adoption.

Future studies should combine self-report with classroom observation, analysis of recorded mentoring conversations, and learner and parent feedback. Research should test explanations for the age pattern, such as digital skills, training history, and teaching assignments, and report effect sizes and confidence intervals. Pilot evaluation of CLEAR should examine how the program is implemented and whether changes in language practice are sustained.

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6. Limitations of the Study

Several limitations qualify the findings. First, the survey measured self-reported practices, and all seven domain means fell between 4.47 and 4.65, which suggests a ceiling effect and possible social desirability bias. Second, the instrument operationalized language practices through the PPST domains, so several items concern professional practice more broadly than language choice. Third, the five divisions were selected for accessibility, which limits generalization to Region X and beyond. Fourth, qualitative subgroups were uneven, with two participants each in the youngest and oldest age groups, which limits the demographic comparisons. Fifth, the cross-sectional design rules out causal claims about age. Sixth, the first author, a fellow master teacher, conducted, transcribed, and translated all interviews, and IDIs and FGDs used different modes. Finally, no classroom observation, learner data, or family feedback was collected.

Supplementary Details

Supplementary Materials & Data Availability Statement:
Supplementary materials, including the validated survey questionnaire and alternative-model specifications, are accessible upon request. The anonymized dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is not publicly archived in accordance with institutional ethical protocols, participant confidentiality agreements, and cultural data protection guidelines governing Indigenous communities. However, de-identified data supporting the findings of this study may be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable academic request and subject to appropriate ethical and institutional clearances.

Author Contributions:
This journal uses the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT).

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C : **C**onceptualization	I : **I**nvestigation	Vi : **Vi**sualization
M : **M**ethodology	R : **R**esources	Su : **Su**pervision
So : **So**ftware	D : **D**ata Curation	P : **P**roject administration
Va : **Va**lidation	O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft	Fu : **Fu**nding acquisition
Fo : **Fo**rmal analysis	E : Writing - Review & **E**diting	

Funding:
This research received no external funding

Institutional Review Board Statement:
This study was approved by the University of the Immaculate Conception Research Ethics Committee (Protocol Code GS-ER-03-26-0628, May 5, 2026) and received clearance from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

Informed Consent Statement:
All participants gave informed consent.

Acknowledgement Statement:
The author extends sincere gratitude to research adviser Dr. Teresita Q. Adriano, dissertation panel chair Dr. Gloria P. Gempes and panel members, Graduate School leadership, and the University of the Immaculate Conception Research Ethics Committee for their scholarly guidance and oversight of this study. Appreciation is also expressed to the instrument validators, peer debriefer, and participating Schools Division Offices across Region X—Cagayan de Oro City, Tangub City, Malaybalay City, Camiguin, and El Salvador City—as well as the master teacher participants, school colleagues, and family for their support throughout the completion of this research.

Conflicts of Interest:
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Disclosure Statement:
Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used to assist in improving the language, grammar, clarity, and overall readability of the manuscript. These tools were employed solely for language editing and refinement. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, interpretation, and final content of the article.

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International Journal of Philosophy, Linguistics, and Humanities
E-ISSN: 3082-415X

Cite as: Ampong, R., Adriano, T., & Gempes, G. (2026). A Convergent Mixed-Methods Study On Assessing Master Teachers' Language Practices Across Instructional And Professional Contexts: Basis For An Enhancement Program. International Journal of Philosophy, Linguistics, and Humanities, 2(2), 48-76. https://doi.org/10.70847/744164