

Bridging Literacy Gaps in Multilingual Classrooms: The Role of Culturally Responsive English Language Pedagogy

Nazeera S. Salapuddin^{1*}, Nelson U. Julhamid¹

¹ *School of Graduate Studies, Sulu State University, Jolo, Sulu, Philippines*

Corresponding email: sscgspub@sulustatecollege.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Multilingual classrooms present persistent literacy challenges that require instructional approaches responsive to learners' linguistic and cultural diversity. This study investigated the role of culturally responsive English language pedagogy in bridging literacy gaps in multilingual classrooms among teachers in public higher education institutions in Sulu. Specifically, the study examined teachers' teaching strategies, perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism, and the significant differences and relationships among the identified variables. Employing a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, data were gathered from 200 teachers using a structured survey questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, t-test, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation were utilized in analyzing the data. Findings revealed that teachers generally demonstrated high levels of culturally responsive teaching practices and positive perceptions toward multilingualism. Significant differences emerged in selected variables when grouped according to civil status, length of service, and educational attainment. Moreover, a significant high positive relationship was found between teaching strategies and perceptions toward multilingualism. The study concludes that teachers' multilingual orientations substantially influence their pedagogical responsiveness and capacity to support literacy development in multilingual classrooms. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening culturally responsive pedagogical training and institutional support systems in higher education settings.

Keywords: culturally responsive pedagogy, multilingual classrooms, English language pedagogy, literacy gaps, multilingualism, teaching strategies, language proficiency

INTRODUCTION

Multilingual classrooms have become increasingly prominent in contemporary education as globalization, migration, and cultural diversity continue to reshape learning environments across the world (García & Wei, 2014; Cummins, 2000). In higher education institutions, linguistic diversity presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly in English language instruction where students possess varying levels of language proficiency and cultural backgrounds. English remains a dominant medium of instruction in many academic institutions, yet learners in multilingual contexts often encounter difficulties in comprehension, classroom participation, academic writing, and literacy development (García, 2009). These disparities contribute to persistent literacy gaps that may hinder academic success and equitable access to educational opportunities.

The increasing linguistic complexity of classrooms has intensified the demand for instructional approaches that recognize and respond to learners' diverse cultural and linguistic experiences. Culturally responsive pedagogy emerged as a significant educational framework that emphasizes the integration of students' cultural identities, prior experiences, and linguistic backgrounds into classroom instruction (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994). This pedagogical orientation promotes inclusive learning environments where diversity is viewed as an educational asset rather than a deficit. In English language teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy encourages the use of instructional practices that foster meaningful engagement, contextualized learning, collaborative interaction, and respect for multilingual identities.

This study was anchored on Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), and the Ecological Model of Language Context, which collectively explain how language learning is shaped by meaningful interaction, cultural experiences, attitudes, and social environments. These theoretical perspectives substantiate the importance of culturally responsive English language pedagogy in multilingual classrooms, as they emphasize that learners acquire language more effectively when instruction is comprehensible, socially interactive, culturally relevant, and responsive to their linguistic realities. The theories also highlight the critical role of teachers' perceptions and instructional practices in fostering inclusive learning environments that support literacy development among multilingual learners.

Several studies have underscored the relevance of culturally responsive English language pedagogy in multilingual educational settings. Matiso (2024) emphasized that culturally responsive instructional strategies, including peer collaboration, differentiated instruction, and technology-assisted learning, strengthen learner engagement and inclusivity in multicultural English classrooms. Similarly, Haniko et al. (2024) highlighted that culturally responsive teaching strategies enhance classroom inclusivity through the recognition and valuing of students' cultural diversity. Translanguaging practices and multilingual pedagogies have also been identified as effective approaches that allow learners to utilize their full linguistic repertoires in constructing meaning and improving language learning outcomes (Bisai & Singh, 2019; Donley, 2022). These pedagogical practices contribute to stronger learner participation, improved motivation, and more meaningful literacy development in multilingual contexts.

Within the Philippine educational landscape, multilingualism remains a defining feature of classroom interaction. The implementation of multilingual education policies and the coexistence of local languages, Filipino, and English continue to shape language learning experiences across regions. In the province of Sulu, the educational setting reflects a highly diverse linguistic environment where Tausug, Filipino, English, and other dialects coexist in both academic and social communication. Although English functions as the medium of instruction in higher education institutions, many students enter tertiary education with differing levels of English language proficiency and distinct cultural experiences. These realities create instructional challenges for educators who must address literacy gaps while simultaneously maintaining inclusive and effective learning environments.

Teachers play a critical role in responding to these challenges through the adoption of pedagogical strategies that accommodate multilingual learners. Effective English language pedagogy in multilingual classrooms requires not only content knowledge and instructional competence but also positive perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism and cultural diversity. Teachers' beliefs, teaching strategies, and responsiveness to students' linguistic realities significantly influence classroom engagement, literacy development, and students' overall learning experiences. Nevertheless, localized investigations examining culturally responsive English language pedagogy in higher education institutions within geographically and culturally diverse contexts such as Sulu remain limited.

Most existing studies on culturally responsive pedagogy and multilingual education have concentrated on basic education settings or broader multicultural contexts, leaving insufficient empirical attention to higher education classrooms in marginalized and multilingual regions. Furthermore, limited research has examined the relationship between teachers' instructional strategies and their perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism within English language pedagogy. This gap underscores the need for context-specific investigations that explore how educators navigate multilingual realities in tertiary education.

The present study investigated the role of culturally responsive English language pedagogy in bridging literacy gaps in multilingual classrooms among teachers in public higher education institutions in Sulu. Specifically, it examined teachers' teaching strategies, perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism, and the challenges and support associated with English language instruction in multilingual settings. The findings of the study may contribute to the development of more inclusive and

culturally responsive instructional practices that strengthen literacy development, promote educational equity, and enhance multilingual learners' academic experiences in higher education institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching Strategies in Multilingual Classrooms

The growing linguistic diversity in educational institutions has increased the need for teaching strategies that effectively address the learning needs of multilingual students. In English language classrooms, teachers are expected to implement instructional approaches that promote participation, comprehension, and literacy development despite differences in learners' language proficiency and cultural backgrounds. Research emphasizes that learner-centered and culturally responsive teaching practices create more inclusive and supportive learning environments for multilingual learners (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994). These approaches recognize students' linguistic repertoires as valuable educational resources rather than barriers to learning.

Several studies have identified collaborative learning, differentiated instruction, translanguaging, and technology-assisted teaching as effective strategies in multilingual classrooms. Bisai and Singh (2019) noted that collaborative learning and translanguaging practices enhance learner interaction and comprehension by allowing students to maximize their linguistic resources during classroom activities. Similarly, Matiso (2024) found that differentiated instruction, peer collaboration, and technology-assisted learning strengthen learner engagement and inclusivity in multicultural English classrooms. Donley (2022) further explained that translanguaging pedagogy supports multilingual learners' participation and confidence by enabling flexible movement across languages during learning processes. These findings suggest that adaptive and culturally responsive instructional practices are essential in addressing literacy gaps and improving English language learning outcomes among multilingual students.

Perceptions and Attitudes toward Multilingualism

Teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism significantly influence the effectiveness of English language instruction in linguistically diverse classrooms. Positive attitudes toward multilingualism encourage teachers to adopt inclusive pedagogical practices that recognize students' linguistic and cultural identities, while negative perceptions may contribute to restrictive and monolingual-oriented instruction. Research suggests that teachers who value linguistic diversity are more likely to create supportive learning environments that enhance learner participation, motivation, and literacy development. In multilingual educational settings, attitudes toward language diversity also shape how teachers respond to students' communication practices, language preferences, and varying levels of English proficiency.

Existing literature highlights that multilingualism is increasingly recognized as an educational and sociocultural asset rather than a barrier to learning. Krulatz et al. (2023) emphasized that multilingual classrooms require teachers to engage learners' entire linguistic repertoires and promote additive multilingualism to support meaningful language learning experiences. French (2020) similarly argued that multilingual pedagogies become more effective when teachers affirm students' home languages and challenge monolingual mindsets within educational systems. In the Philippine context, Mendoza (2024) noted that learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds influence language comprehension and literacy outcomes, emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive instructional practices. Salgado et al. (2024) further found that culturally responsive pedagogy fosters inclusive education by aligning instruction with students' cultural experiences and linguistic realities, resulting in improved written communication competencies and stronger learner engagement.

The role of teachers' beliefs and attitudes also extends to their willingness to implement culturally responsive and multilingual teaching practices. Hornay et al. (2024) observed that while teachers and learners may differ in their instructional preferences, both groups recognize the value of diverse teaching strategies and autonomous learning in multilingual environments. Dela Cruz et al. (2025) likewise

emphasized that faculty members in Philippine higher education institutions view intercultural competence and multilingual inclusivity as essential components of effective classroom instruction. Their findings revealed that teachers who embrace multilingual practices and culturally contextualized instruction are better able to foster inclusive dialogue, cultural awareness, and student empowerment. These studies collectively suggest that positive perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism are critical in strengthening culturally responsive English language pedagogy and bridging literacy gaps in multilingual classrooms.

Challenges and Support in Multilingual English Language Instruction

Despite the recognized benefits of culturally responsive and multilingual pedagogies, English language teachers continue to encounter various challenges in multilingual classrooms. Differences in language proficiency, limited instructional resources, cultural diversity, and mixed-ability classrooms often complicate the teaching and learning process. These challenges may affect classroom interaction, learner participation, and literacy development, particularly when instructional practices fail to address students' linguistic realities. In multilingual educational contexts, teachers are therefore required to continuously adapt their pedagogical approaches to ensure inclusive and effective language instruction.

Several studies identified instructional and institutional barriers that hinder the effective implementation of multilingual English language pedagogy. Safeer et al. (2024) emphasized that language proficiency disparities, cultural differences, and diverse learning styles remain major obstacles in multilingual classrooms, often affecting student engagement and academic performance. Similarly, Koonj et al. (2020) noted that English language teachers experience difficulties in managing linguistically diverse learners due to differences in comprehension, communication, and classroom participation. Their findings revealed that multilingual classrooms produce both positive and negative effects on learning outcomes depending on the strategies employed by teachers. William et al. (2025) also highlighted persistent issues in multilingual education, including inadequate instructional materials, limited teacher preparedness, and sociocultural biases favoring English over local languages. These constraints influence the effectiveness of literacy instruction and the implementation of inclusive language education practices.

Support systems and professional development opportunities play a crucial role in helping teachers navigate these challenges. Caingcoy (2023) stressed the importance of institutional support, continuous professional development, and culturally responsive training programs in strengthening inclusive educational practices. Likewise, Sandiarsa and Firman (2024) argued that teacher collaboration, research engagement, and access to technological resources enhance educators' capacity to address the complexities of multilingual instruction. Existing literature further suggests that supportive educational policies, localized instructional materials, and culturally responsive learning environments contribute to stronger learner engagement and more equitable literacy outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of providing adequate pedagogical and institutional support to teachers in order to strengthen culturally responsive English language pedagogy in multilingual classrooms.

Language Proficiency and Literacy Development in Multilingual Classrooms

Language proficiency remains a central factor influencing literacy development and academic participation in multilingual classrooms. In English language instruction, learners' abilities in speaking, listening, reading, and writing affect their comprehension, communication skills, and overall academic performance. Multilingual learners often navigate between their native languages and English within educational settings, creating both opportunities for cognitive development and challenges in literacy acquisition. Variations in English language proficiency may therefore contribute to disparities in classroom engagement and learning outcomes, particularly when instructional approaches are not responsive to learners' linguistic needs.

Existing studies emphasize that multilingual and culturally responsive instructional practices can strengthen language proficiency and literacy development among learners. Cummins (2000) argued that students' first languages serve as important cognitive and linguistic resources that support second

language acquisition and literacy growth. García and Wei (2014) similarly explained that multilingual learners develop deeper understanding when they are allowed to utilize their full linguistic repertoires during learning processes. In multilingual English classrooms, culturally contextualized instruction, collaborative learning, and interactive communication practices contribute to improved comprehension and language use. Research conducted by Srichaiwong (2025) further revealed that culturally responsive teaching significantly improved learners' communication skills, confidence, and motivation, particularly in speaking and writing competencies. These findings demonstrate that culturally grounded instructional approaches positively influence language proficiency and literacy development.

The relationship between language proficiency and culturally responsive pedagogy is also evident in higher education settings where students encounter academically demanding English language tasks. Effective English language pedagogy requires teachers to recognize learners' varying proficiency levels and provide instructional support that accommodates linguistic diversity. Studies indicate that multilingual learners become more engaged and academically confident when classroom instruction validates their cultural and linguistic identities. Such findings reinforce the importance of culturally responsive English language pedagogy in addressing literacy gaps and supporting equitable language learning experiences in multilingual classrooms.

Culturally Responsive English Language Pedagogy and Literacy Gaps in Multilingual Classrooms

Culturally responsive English language pedagogy has emerged as an important instructional approach in addressing literacy gaps among multilingual learners. Literacy disparities in multilingual classrooms often stem from differences in language proficiency, limited exposure to English, culturally disconnected instruction, and the dominance of monolingual teaching practices. These gaps affect learners' comprehension, classroom participation, academic writing, and overall educational achievement. In linguistically diverse educational settings, culturally responsive pedagogy provides opportunities for teachers to connect instruction with students' cultural experiences and linguistic realities, thereby creating more inclusive and meaningful learning environments.

Studies have shown that culturally responsive instructional practices contribute positively to learners' literacy development and academic engagement. Gay (2010) emphasized that culturally responsive teaching strengthens academic success by integrating learners' cultural knowledge, experiences, and communication styles into instruction. Ladson-Billings (1994) likewise argued that culturally relevant pedagogy promotes both academic achievement and cultural competence among diverse learners. In multilingual contexts, García (2009) explained that recognizing students' linguistic resources in classroom instruction enhances comprehension and supports literacy acquisition. Research conducted by Salgado et al. (2024) further revealed that culturally responsive pedagogy improves written communication competencies and fosters inclusive learning experiences among multilingual learners. Similarly, William et al. (2025) found that multilingual instructional approaches strengthen foundational literacy skills and comprehension when learners' first languages and cultural backgrounds are acknowledged within the educational process.

The effectiveness of culturally responsive English language pedagogy also depends on teachers' ability to create supportive, inclusive, and context-sensitive instructional environments. Educational practices that encourage interaction, contextualized learning, translanguaging, and culturally relevant materials enable multilingual learners to participate more actively in literacy-related tasks. Existing literature consistently suggests that culturally responsive pedagogy not only improves language learning outcomes but also reduces educational inequities experienced by multilingual students. These findings reinforce the importance of adopting culturally responsive English language teaching practices in bridging literacy gaps and promoting equitable learning opportunities in multilingual higher education classrooms.

Synthesis of the Literature

The reviewed literature highlights the growing importance of culturally responsive English language pedagogy in multilingual educational settings. Existing studies consistently emphasize that

effective teaching strategies, positive perceptions toward multilingualism, and inclusive instructional practices contribute significantly to learner engagement, language proficiency, and literacy development. Collaborative learning, differentiated instruction, translanguaging, and technology-assisted pedagogies were identified as effective approaches in supporting multilingual learners and creating more participatory classroom environments. The literature further reveals that teachers' attitudes toward multilingualism influence their instructional decisions and willingness to implement culturally responsive practices that recognize students' linguistic and cultural identities.

The reviewed studies also established that multilingual classrooms present various instructional challenges, including language proficiency disparities, limited instructional resources, mixed-ability learners, and insufficient institutional support. Despite these challenges, culturally responsive pedagogical approaches were found to strengthen learner motivation, communication skills, and academic participation when properly implemented. Moreover, the literature underscores that literacy gaps in multilingual classrooms may be addressed through instructional practices that value learners' linguistic repertoires and cultural experiences as educational assets.

Although numerous international and local studies have explored multilingual education and culturally responsive pedagogy, limited research has specifically examined the relationship between teaching strategies and perceptions toward multilingualism among teachers in public higher education institutions in Sulu. Existing studies have largely focused on basic education or broader multicultural settings, leaving insufficient empirical evidence within multilingual tertiary education contexts in geographically and culturally diverse regions. Hence, the present study was conducted to address this gap by investigating the role of culturally responsive English language pedagogy in bridging literacy gaps in multilingual classrooms among teachers in public higher education institutions in Sulu.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design utilizing a descriptive-correlational approach to examine the role of culturally responsive English language pedagogy in bridging literacy gaps in multilingual classrooms. The descriptive component was used to determine teachers' teaching strategies, perceptions, and attitudes toward multilingualism, while the correlational aspect examined the relationship between teaching strategies and perceptions toward multilingualism. The quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it allowed the systematic collection and statistical analysis of numerical data, providing objective and measurable insights into the variables investigated in the study.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected public higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Province of Sulu during the Academic Year 2025–2026. Sulu represents a linguistically and culturally diverse educational setting where Tausug, Filipino, English, and other local dialects are commonly used in academic and social interactions. English serves as the primary medium of instruction in higher education institutions within the province, making multilingualism a significant feature of classroom instruction. This locale was considered appropriate for the study because it provides a relevant context for examining culturally responsive English language pedagogy and literacy-related challenges in multilingual classrooms.

Population and Sampling

The respondents of the study consisted of 200 English language teachers from selected public higher education institutions in Sulu, including Mindanao State University-Sulu, Sulu State College, Hadji Butu School of Arts and Trades, and Lapak Agricultural College. The study employed purposive sampling to ensure that participants possessed relevant teaching experiences and direct engagement in multilingual classroom instruction. Teachers were selected regardless of academic rank, provided that they were actively teaching during the conduct of the study. The use of purposive sampling enabled the researcher to obtain

participants who could provide relevant and context-specific data regarding culturally responsive English language pedagogy in multilingual higher education settings.

Research Instrumentation

The primary instrument used in the study was a structured survey questionnaire adapted from standardized instruments used in previous related studies on multilingual education and culturally responsive pedagogy. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: the first part gathered the demographic profile of the respondents; the second part measured the extent of English language pedagogy in terms of teaching strategies, effectiveness of strategies, and challenges and support; while the third part assessed teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism, specifically language proficiency, personal attitudes, societal attitudes, and challenges. To ensure contextual relevance and clarity, the instrument was subjected to expert validation by faculty members from the Graduate Studies department prior to administration.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured formal permission from the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and the administrators of the selected public higher education institutions in Sulu. Upon approval, the researcher personally administered and retrieved the survey questionnaires to ensure proper distribution and immediate clarification of respondents' concerns when necessary. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were given adequate time to complete the instrument. The collected data were organized, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis following the retrieval of all accomplished questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in the study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Frequency counts and percentages were utilized to describe the demographic profile of the respondents, while weighted mean and standard deviation were employed to determine the extent of English language pedagogy and perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism. To examine significant differences in the variables when grouped according to demographic profile, t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used. Furthermore, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was applied to determine the significant relationship between teaching strategies in multilingual classrooms and perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism. These statistical tools enabled the study to generate objective and systematic interpretations of the data.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly observed ethical standards throughout the research process to ensure the protection and welfare of the participants. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were adequately informed regarding the purpose and nature of the research before the administration of the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by ensuring that personal information and responses were used solely for academic purposes. The researcher also ensured that no form of coercion, harm, or undue pressure was imposed on the participants during data collection. Additionally, proper acknowledgment of all sources and adherence to institutional research ethics guidelines were consistently observed throughout the conduct of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of gender, age, civil status, length of service, and educational attainment?

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Teacher-Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	47	23.5
	Female	153	76.5
Age	≤25 years	14	7.0
	26–35 years	64	32.0
	36–40 years	42	21.0
	≥41 years	80	40.0
Civil Status	Single	69	34.5
	Married	121	60.5
	Widowed	3	1.5
	Separated	7	3.5
Length of Service	≤5 years	64	32.0
	6–15 years	83	41.5
	16–20 years	38	19.0
	21–30 years	11	5.5
	≥31 years	4	2.0
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's	25	12.5
	Master's	117	58.5
	Master's w/ Doctoral Units	38	19.0
	Doctorate	20	10.0

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profile of the teacher-respondents from selected public higher education institutions in Sulu. The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents were female (76.5%), suggesting that women continue to dominate the teaching profession, particularly in language-related disciplines. In terms of age, most respondents were 41 years old and above (40.0%), followed by those aged 26–35 years old (32.0%), indicating a teaching workforce characterized by considerable professional experience and instructional maturity.

Regarding civil status, most respondents were married (60.5%), implying that many faculty members balance academic responsibilities alongside personal and family obligations. In terms of length of service, the largest proportion had been teaching for 6–15 years (41.5%), reflecting moderate to extensive professional exposure in higher education instruction. Meanwhile, more than half of the respondents possessed a master's degree (58.5%), while others had doctoral units or completed doctorate degrees. This finding suggests that the faculty members generally possess advanced academic qualifications that may strengthen their pedagogical competence and responsiveness to multilingual classroom demands.

Research Question 2. What is the extent of English Language Pedagogy of teachers in public Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Sulu in terms of teaching strategies in multilingual classrooms, effectiveness of strategies, and challenges and support?

Table 2: Extent of English Language Pedagogy of Teachers in Public HEIs in Sulu

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Teaching Strategies	4.3640	0.63523	Agree
Effectiveness of Strategies	4.2770	0.65423	Agree
Challenges and Support	4.2330	0.54534	Agree
Overall Mean	4.2913	0.61160	Agree

Legend: (5) 4.50–5.00=Strongly Agree (SA); (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Agree (A); (3) 2.50 –3.49=Undecided (U); (2) 1.50 – 2.49=Disagree (D); (1) 1.00 – 1.49=Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2 presents the extent of English language pedagogy among teachers in public higher education institutions in Sulu. The findings reveal that all indicators obtained an interpretation of “Agree,” indicating that teachers generally demonstrate a high extent of culturally responsive and adaptive pedagogical practices in multilingual classrooms. Among the indicators, teaching strategies obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.3640$), suggesting that teachers frequently employ instructional approaches such as collaborative activities, differentiated instruction, technology integration, and code-switching to facilitate learning among multilingual students.

The findings imply that teachers recognize the importance of instructional flexibility in addressing linguistic diversity and literacy-related challenges in multilingual classrooms. This supports the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy proposed by Gay (2010), which emphasize the need for instructional practices that acknowledge learners’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The strong rating for effectiveness of strategies ($M = 4.2770$) further indicates that teachers perceive these pedagogical approaches as beneficial in promoting learner engagement, participation, and language development. This aligns with Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, which posits that meaningful and comprehensible instruction strengthens language acquisition and literacy development among second language learners.

Meanwhile, challenges and support obtained the lowest mean among the indicators ($M = 4.2330$), although still interpreted as “Agree.” This suggests that while teachers generally feel capable of implementing multilingual instructional practices, they continue to encounter barriers related to instructional resources, training, and classroom demands. The finding highlights the continuing need for institutional support, professional development, and access to culturally responsive teaching resources. The results collectively suggest that English language teachers in public HEIs in Sulu demonstrate strong pedagogical responsiveness to multilingual classroom contexts, although sustained support systems remain necessary to strengthen inclusive and literacy-oriented instruction.

Research Question 3. What is the extent of Culturally Responsive English Language Pedagogy of teachers in public Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Sulu in terms of perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism?

Table 3: Extent of Perceptions and Attitudes toward Multilingualism among Teachers in Public HEIs in Sulu

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Language Proficiency	4.1790	0.57639	Agree
Personal Attitudes	4.4170	0.57021	Agree
Societal Attitudes	4.3120	0.63835	Agree
Challenges	4.0950	0.84828	Agree
Overall Mean	4.2508	0.65881	Agree

Legend: (5) 4.50-5.00=Strongly Agree (SA); (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Agree (A); (3) 2.50 –3.49=Undecided (U); (2) 1.50 – 2.49=Disagree (D); (1) 1.00 – 1.49=Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 3 presents the extent of teachers’ perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism in public higher education institutions in Sulu. The findings indicate that all indicators were interpreted as “Agree,” suggesting that teachers generally demonstrate favorable perceptions toward multilingualism and culturally responsive English language pedagogy. Among the indicators, personal attitudes obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.4170$), indicating that teachers strongly recognize the personal, academic, and professional value of multilingualism. This suggests that faculty members view multilingual competence as beneficial not only for communication but also for professional growth and learner engagement in multilingual classrooms.

Societal attitudes also obtained a relatively high mean ($M = 4.3120$), reflecting teachers’ recognition of multilingualism as an important factor in promoting inclusivity, intercultural understanding, and social

participation in an increasingly globalized environment. This supports García and Wei's (2014) perspective that multilingualism should be viewed as an educational and social resource rather than a limitation. Meanwhile, language proficiency obtained a mean of 4.1790, implying that teachers generally perceive themselves as linguistically capable of navigating multilingual instructional contexts. Such confidence may contribute to more effective classroom interaction and literacy-oriented instruction.

On the other hand, challenges obtained the lowest mean ($M = 4.0950$), although still interpreted as "Agree." This indicates that teachers continue to experience barriers related to time management, access to resources, communication, and institutional support within multilingual teaching environments. The finding highlights that despite positive attitudes toward multilingualism; practical and structural constraints remain evident in the implementation of culturally responsive English language pedagogy. Overall, the results suggest that teachers in public HEIs in Sulu possess favorable multilingual orientations that may support inclusive and literacy-responsive instructional practices.

Research Question 4. Is there a significant difference in the extent of Teaching Strategies in Multilingual Classrooms of teachers in public Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Sulu when grouped according to their socio-demographic profile?

Table 4: Differences in the Extent of Teaching Strategies in Multilingual Classrooms when Grouped According to Socio-Demographic Profile

Variables	Demographics	Statistical Value	p-value	Interpretation
Teaching Strategies	Gender	$t = -0.290$	.772	Not Significant
	Age	$F = 1.705$	.167	Not Significant
	Civil Status	$F = 2.163$	.094	Not Significant
	Length of Service	$F = 0.756$	.555	Not Significant
	Educational Attainment	$F = 1.243$	.295	Not Significant
Effectiveness of Strategies	Gender	$t = -0.005$	.996	Not Significant
	Age	$F = 1.855$	.139	Not Significant
	Civil Status	$F = 2.222$	.087	Not Significant
	Length of Service	$F = 2.459$	.047	Significant
	Educational Attainment	$F = 1.621$	.186	Not Significant
Challenges and Support	Gender	$t = -1.025$	.307	Not Significant
	Age	$F = 2.450$	.065	Not Significant
	Civil Status	$F = 4.212$	.006	Significant
	Length of Service	$F = 4.029$	.004	Significant
	Educational Attainment	$F = 0.711$	.546	Not Significant

Legend: (5) 4.50-5.00=Strongly Agree (SA); (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Agree (A); (3) 2.50 –3.49=Undecided (U); (2) 1.50 – 2.49=Disagree (D); (1) 1.00 – 1.49=Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 4 presents the differences in the extent of teaching strategies in multilingual classrooms when respondents were grouped according to their socio-demographic profile. The findings revealed no significant differences in teaching strategies and effectiveness of strategies when grouped according to gender, age, civil status, and educational attainment, as all obtained p-values greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This suggests that teachers generally demonstrate comparable instructional practices and perceptions regarding multilingual pedagogy regardless of their demographic background. The result implies that culturally responsive teaching practices may already be embedded within the institutional and professional culture of public HEIs in Sulu, resulting in relatively consistent pedagogical approaches across teacher groups.

The absence of significant differences further indicates that multilingual classroom instruction is less influenced by personal demographic characteristics and more shaped by shared instructional demands, professional preparation, and institutional expectations. This finding supports the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy proposed by Gay (2010), which emphasize that inclusive and adaptive instructional practices should transcend individual differences among educators in order to effectively address learners' diverse linguistic needs. The consistency in teaching strategies may also reflect teachers' collective awareness of the importance of promoting equitable literacy support within multilingual learning environments.

However, significant differences emerged in certain dimensions. Length of service showed significant differences in effectiveness of strategies ($p = .047$) and challenges and support ($p = .004$), while civil status significantly influenced challenges and support ($p = .006$). These findings suggest that professional experience and personal responsibilities may affect how teachers perceive the effectiveness of their instructional approaches and the challenges they encounter in multilingual classrooms. Teachers with longer teaching experience may possess greater instructional adaptability and familiarity with multilingual classroom realities, enabling them to navigate challenges more effectively. Meanwhile, differences associated with civil status may reflect variations in workload management, professional engagement, and access to support systems. Overall, the findings suggest that while teaching strategies in multilingual classrooms remain generally consistent across demographic groups, certain personal and professional factors influence teachers' experiences related to instructional effectiveness and classroom challenges. The results underscore the importance of continuous professional development and institutional support mechanisms that address the evolving demands of culturally responsive English language pedagogy in multilingual higher education contexts.

Research Question 5. Is there a significant difference in the extent of Perceptions and Attitudes toward Multilingualism of teachers in public Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Sulu when grouped according to their socio-demographic profile?

Table 5: Differences in Perceptions and Attitudes toward Multilingualism when Grouped According to Socio-Demographic Profile

Variables	Demographics	Statistical Value	p-value	Interpretation
Language Proficiency	Gender	$t = -0.466$	.642	Not Significant
	Age	$F = 0.248$	.862	Not Significant
	Civil Status	$F = 0.890$	.448	Not Significant
	Length of Service	$F = 3.053$	.018	Significant
	Educational Attainment	$F = 1.202$	.310	Not Significant
Personal Attitude	Gender	$t = -1.171$	.243	Not Significant
	Age	$F = 1.794$	.150	Not Significant
	Civil Status	$F = 3.346$	.020	Significant
	Length of Service	$F = 2.381$	.053	Not Significant
	Educational Attainment	$F = 1.350$	.259	Not Significant
Societal Attitude	Gender	$t = 0.035$	.972	Not Significant
	Age	$F = 0.887$	.449	Not Significant
	Civil Status	$F = 1.804$	.148	Not Significant
	Length of Service	$F = 2.545$	.041	Significant
	Educational Attainment	$F = 1.632$	.183	Not Significant
Challenges	Gender	$t = 1.021$	.308	Not Significant
	Age	$F = 1.745$	.159	Not Significant
	Civil Status	$F = 1.495$	.217	Not Significant

Length of Service	F = 0.285	.887	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	F = 4.515	.004	Significant

Legend: (5) 4.50-5.00=Strongly Agree (SA); (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Agree (A); (3) 2.50 –3.49=Undecided (U); (2) 1.50 – 2.49=Disagree (D); (1) 1.00 – 1.49=Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 5 presents the differences in perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism when respondents were grouped according to socio-demographic profile. The findings revealed that most variables obtained no significant differences, indicating that teachers generally share similar perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism regardless of gender, age, and educational attainment. This suggests that multilingual awareness and culturally responsive orientations are widely manifested among teachers in public HEIs in Sulu, reflecting a common understanding of the value of linguistic diversity in multilingual educational settings.

The absence of significant differences in most categories implies that perceptions toward multilingualism are not heavily influenced by demographic characteristics but may instead be shaped by shared professional experiences and institutional exposure to multilingual classroom realities. This finding aligns with Social Constructivist perspectives, which emphasize that attitudes and understandings are developed through social interaction and shared educational environments. The consistency in teachers' perceptions further suggests that multilingualism has become an accepted and normalized component of instruction within the higher education context in Sulu.

However, significant differences emerged in selected dimensions. Length of service significantly influenced language proficiency ($p = .018$) and societal attitudes ($p = .041$), suggesting that professional experience may shape teachers' confidence in multilingual communication and their broader views regarding the societal value of multilingualism. Teachers with longer experience may have greater exposure to diverse linguistic contexts, allowing them to develop stronger language competencies and more nuanced perspectives on multilingual education. Civil status also showed a significant difference in personal attitudes ($p = .020$), indicating that personal and social responsibilities may influence teachers' perceptions toward multilingualism and professional engagement. Moreover, educational attainment significantly influenced challenges ($p = .004$), implying that teachers with varying academic qualifications experience multilingual instructional challenges differently, particularly in relation to access to resources, professional preparation, and instructional demands.

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers generally demonstrate favorable and consistent perceptions toward multilingualism, although certain socio-demographic factors influence specific dimensions of these attitudes. The results underscore the importance of sustained professional development and institutional support to further strengthen culturally responsive English language pedagogy and teachers' capacity to navigate multilingual educational environments effectively.

Research Question 6. Is there a significant relationship between Teaching Strategies in Multilingual Classrooms and Perceptions and Attitudes toward Multilingualism of teachers in public Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Sulu?

Table 6: Correlation between Teaching Strategies in Multilingual Classrooms and Perceptions and Attitudes toward Multilingualism

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Teaching Strategies in Multilingual Classrooms and Perceptions and Attitudes toward Multilingualism	0.543	.000	Significant High Positive Correlation

Table 6 presents the relationship between teaching strategies in multilingual classrooms and teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism. The findings revealed a statistically significant

high positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .543$, $p = .000$), indicating that teachers with more positive perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism also tend to demonstrate stronger and more responsive teaching strategies in multilingual classroom settings.

The result suggests that teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions regarding linguistic diversity substantially influence their instructional practices and pedagogical responsiveness. Educators who value multilingualism are more likely to employ inclusive teaching strategies, culturally responsive approaches, and adaptive instructional methods that support learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This finding supports the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that individual attitudes and beliefs significantly shape behavioral intentions and professional practices. In the context of multilingual education, positive multilingual orientations may encourage teachers to create more supportive and equitable literacy learning environments.

The significant relationship also reinforces the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, which emphasize the importance of recognizing learners' cultural and linguistic identities within classroom instruction (Gay, 2010). Teachers who possess favorable multilingual attitudes may be more open to implementing strategies such as differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, translanguaging, and contextualized teaching practices that enhance learner participation and literacy development. The findings further imply that strengthening teachers' multilingual awareness and culturally responsive perspectives may contribute to more effective English language pedagogy in multilingual classrooms.

Overall, the results demonstrate that perceptions and attitudes toward multilingualism are closely associated with the quality and responsiveness of teaching strategies employed in multilingual educational settings. This highlights the importance of professional development initiatives that cultivate positive multilingual orientations among educators to further strengthen inclusive and literacy-supportive classroom practices in higher education institutions.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that culturally responsive English language pedagogy extends beyond the use of instructional techniques and functions as a critical orientation toward inclusivity, linguistic diversity, and equitable literacy development in multilingual classrooms. The findings suggest that effective multilingual instruction is not solely determined by teachers' demographic characteristics or academic qualifications, but more importantly by their perceptions, attitudes, and responsiveness toward multilingualism as an educational resource. Teachers who possess positive multilingual orientations are more likely to implement adaptive and learner-centered strategies that foster meaningful classroom engagement and support literacy development among diverse learners.

The significant relationship between teaching strategies and perceptions toward multilingualism further indicates that instructional responsiveness in multilingual classrooms is deeply connected to how educators understand and value linguistic diversity. This highlights that culturally responsive pedagogy is not merely methodological in nature, but also reflective of teachers' professional beliefs and educational dispositions. In multilingual higher education contexts such as Sulu, literacy gaps may therefore be addressed more effectively when instructional practices move beyond monolingual norms and intentionally integrate learners' linguistic and cultural realities into the teaching and learning process.

Moreover, the study underscores the importance of sustaining institutional environments that promote professional growth, culturally responsive training, and inclusive pedagogical support systems. As multilingualism continues to shape educational landscapes, higher education institutions must recognize that bridging literacy gaps requires not only academic competence but also culturally grounded and socially responsive teaching practices that empower learners within linguistically diverse classrooms.

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