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Article Info

Received: 2-2-2026

Accepted: 4-9-2026

Published: 6-1 -2026

# Studies in Technology and Education

Volume 5, Issue 3, 2026 | <https://www.azalpub.com/index.php/ste>

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### CONTEXTUALIZED LITERACY PEDAGOGIES AND LEARNER ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION: EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

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#### Abstract

Contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner engagement are essential components of meaningful English language education, particularly in rural secondary school contexts where learners encounter diverse linguistic and educational challenges. This study explored contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner engagement in English language education among learners at Maconacon National High School, Fely, Maconacon, Isabela. Anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, the study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to examine learners' classroom experiences, literacy engagement, instructional participation, and language learning experiences. Participants included selected Junior High School learners and English teachers. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach was utilized in analyzing the gathered data. Findings revealed that contextualized literacy pedagogies, collaborative learning activities, interactive communication tasks, and localized instructional materials significantly contribute to learners' literacy engagement and English language learning experiences. Learners demonstrated greater participation and comprehension when English instruction was connected to local experiences, community realities, and familiar communication contexts. The findings further revealed that learner-centered instructional approaches and supportive classroom environments strengthen learners' communication confidence, reading comprehension, and classroom participation. However, challenges such as limited vocabulary proficiency, low confidence in oral communication, insufficient instructional resources, and language anxiety negatively affected literacy engagement and participation. The study concludes that contextualized and learner-centered literacy pedagogies significantly contribute to meaningful English language learning experiences and learner engagement in rural secondary school settings. Strengthening contextualized literacy instruction, collaborative learning environments, and communication-centered pedagogical practices is recommended to improve learner engagement in English language education.

**Keywords:** contextualized literacy pedagogy, learner engagement, English language education, literacy learning, qualitative research, rural education, secondary education

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## INTRODUCTION

English language education plays a vital role in developing learners' communication competence, literacy skills, critical thinking abilities, and academic participation. Through English instruction, learners develop reading comprehension, oral communication, writing proficiency, vocabulary development, and interpretive skills necessary for academic success and global communication. English language education also contributes significantly to learners' confidence, social interaction, and access to wider educational and professional opportunities.

In secondary education, literacy pedagogies and instructional engagement significantly influence learners' participation, language comprehension, communication confidence, and literacy development. Effective English language instruction requires learner-centered and contextualized pedagogical approaches that encourage meaningful communication, collaborative learning, reflective participation, and active engagement in literacy activities.

Learner engagement refers to learners' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation in instructional activities and language learning experiences. Behavioral engagement involves active participation in classroom discussions, reading tasks, writing activities, and collaborative learning experiences. Emotional engagement refers to learners' confidence, motivation, enjoyment, and emotional responses toward English language learning. Cognitive engagement involves learners' mental effort, comprehension, interpretation, and reflective understanding during literacy instruction.

Within the Philippine educational context, the Department of Education emphasizes contextualized and learner-centered instruction under the K-12 curriculum to strengthen meaningful learning experiences and literacy development. English teachers are encouraged to integrate localized instructional materials, collaborative learning activities, communication-centered tasks, and culturally responsive pedagogical approaches to improve learner engagement and literacy competence.

At Maconacon National High School, English teachers continuously implement contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner-centered instructional practices to improve learners' literacy engagement and communication competence. Teachers integrate storytelling, collaborative discussions, reading activities, contextualized writing tasks, and multimedia-assisted instruction to strengthen learners' comprehension and participation in English language learning.

However, despite these instructional efforts, learners continue to encounter challenges related to limited vocabulary proficiency, language anxiety, low confidence in oral communication, insufficient instructional resources, and varying literacy abilities. These challenges may affect learners' engagement and participation in English language education.

Several studies emphasized that contextualized and learner-centered literacy pedagogies positively influence learner engagement and literacy development. Gay (2018) explained that culturally responsive and contextualized instruction strengthens learner participation and meaningful learning experiences by connecting lessons to learners' lived realities. Similarly, Krashen (2019) argued that meaningful and low-anxiety language learning environments strengthen literacy acquisition and communication competence among learners.

Although learner engagement and literacy pedagogies have been widely discussed in educational research, there remains limited qualitative research exploring contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner engagement in rural Philippine secondary school settings. Thus, this study aimed to explore contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner engagement in English language education among learners at Maconacon National High School.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

**This study was anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory by Vygotsky (1978) and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy by Gay (2018).**

Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners actively construct understanding through interaction, collaboration, reflection, and meaningful learning experiences. Language learning becomes more effective when instructional activities are participatory, socially meaningful, and learner-centered.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy explains that instruction becomes more meaningful and engaging when lessons are connected to learners' cultural backgrounds, community experiences, and social realities. Learners become more engaged when instructional practices acknowledge and integrate their lived experiences and linguistic contexts.

These theories provided the framework for understanding how contextualized literacy pedagogies influence learner engagement and participation in English language education.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to explore contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner engagement in English language education among learners at Maconacon National High School. Specifically, it sought to examine learners' classroom experiences and participation in English language instruction and identify contextualized literacy pedagogies that contribute to learner engagement. The study further aimed to explore how learners demonstrate behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during literacy learning activities. Additionally, it intended to identify the challenges encountered by learners and teachers in literacy instruction and classroom engagement. Finally, the study aimed to derive insights from the participants' experiences that may serve as basis for strengthening contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner engagement in English language education.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner engagement in English language education among learners at Maconacon National High School. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gather rich and contextualized descriptions regarding learners' classroom experiences, literacy engagement, instructional participation, and language learning experiences. Through qualitative inquiry, the study captured the lived experiences of learners and teachers and examined how contextualized literacy pedagogies influence learner engagement in English language education.

The study was conducted at Maconacon National High School, a public secondary school operating under the supervision of the Department of Education. The school serves learners from geographically isolated and rural communities in Isabela.

The participants of the study included selected Junior High School learners and English teachers. Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants who possessed direct experiences and active involvement in English language instruction and literacy learning activities. The selected learners represented varying literacy abilities, participation levels, and classroom engagement experiences.

The study utilized semi-structured interview guides, focus group discussion guides, classroom observation notes, and document analysis checklists as qualitative research instruments. Interview questions focused on literacy learning experiences, classroom participation, instructional practices, communication activities, reading comprehension, writing experiences, and challenges encountered during English language instruction.

Prior to data gathering, permission was secured from school administrators and ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study. Data were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. All interviews and discussions were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The gathered data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. Significant statements and recurring patterns were identified, coded, categorized, and organized into themes representing contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner engagement experiences in English language education. Trustworthiness was established through triangulation, member checking, audit trails, and thick description to ensure credibility and dependability of the findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Theme 1: Contextualized Literacy Pedagogies Strengthen Learner Comprehension and Participation**

The findings revealed that contextualized literacy pedagogies significantly contribute to learners' comprehension, participation, and engagement in English language education among learners at Maconacon National High School. Participants consistently emphasized that English lessons become more understandable and meaningful when instructional discussions, reading materials, and literacy activities are connected to learners' local experiences, community realities, and familiar social contexts.

One learner participant stated:

"Mas naiintindihan ko ang English kapag may examples na related sa buhay namin."

Another learner shared:

"Kapag local at relatable ang stories, mas interesado akong magbasa at sumali sa discussion."

Similarly, another participant explained:

"Mas madaling maintindihan ang lesson kapag ginagamit ang experiences namin sa examples."

These responses indicate that contextualized literacy pedagogies positively influence learners' cognitive and emotional engagement during English language instruction. Learners become more participative and reflective when literacy activities are meaningful and socially relevant to their daily experiences.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of contextualization in improving comprehension and literacy participation among learners.

One teacher participant stated:

"Kapag contextualized ang materials, mas mabilis maintindihan ng learners ang lesson."

Another participant explained:

"Mas nagiging active ang learners kapag nakakarelata sila sa topic."

The findings suggest that contextualized instructional practices strengthen literacy engagement and meaningful learning experiences among secondary school learners. Learners become more motivated to read, write, and participate in discussions when literacy activities reflect their realities and communication experiences.

The findings support Gay (2018), who emphasized that culturally responsive and contextualized instruction strengthens learner engagement and meaningful participation by connecting lessons to learners' lived experiences and cultural realities. Similarly, Krashen (2019) argued that

meaningful and comprehensible instructional input improves language acquisition and literacy development among learners.

The findings further align with Vygotsky's (1978) Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that learners construct understanding through meaningful interaction and socially contextualized learning experiences.

Classroom observations further revealed that learners demonstrated greater attentiveness and participation during reading activities and discussions involving local stories, community issues, and contextualized literacy materials.

One learner participant shared:

"Mas enjoyable ang English kapag relatable ang readings at activities."

This finding highlights the importance of contextualized literacy pedagogies in strengthening learner engagement and comprehension in English language education.

## **Theme 2: Collaborative Literacy Activities and Interactive Communication Tasks Promote Engagement**

The study further revealed that collaborative literacy activities and interactive communication tasks significantly contribute to learners' engagement and confidence in English language learning. Participants emphasized that group discussions, oral presentations, peer reading, collaborative writing, storytelling, and role-playing activities help learners improve communication competence and classroom participation.

One learner participant stated:

"Mas natututo ako kapag may group discussions at sharing of ideas."

Another learner shared:

"Kapag may oral presentations at role-playing, mas nagiging confident kami."

Similarly, another participant explained:

"Mas enjoyable ang English kapag interactive ang activities."

These responses indicate that collaborative and communication-centered instructional activities positively influence learners' behavioral and emotional engagement during literacy instruction. Learners become more expressive and participative when classroom environments encourage communication, interaction, and collaborative learning.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of interactive communication tasks in strengthening learners' literacy competence and classroom confidence.

One teacher participant stated:

"Mas nagiging expressive at participative ang learners kapag collaborative ang activities."

Another participant explained:

"Kapag interactive ang instruction, mas maraming learners ang gustong makilahok."

The findings suggest that collaborative literacy pedagogies strengthen learners' communication confidence, oral participation, and literacy engagement in English language education.

The findings support Fredricks et al. (2019), who argued that behavioral and emotional engagement increase when learners actively participate in collaborative and interactive classroom activities. Similarly, Pianta et al. (2021) emphasized that supportive and participatory classroom environments strengthen learners' confidence and communication competence.

The findings further revealed that collaborative learning environments reduce learners' fear and hesitation during oral communication activities.

One learner participant shared:

"Mas comfortable akong magsalita kapag supportive ang classmates at teacher."

This finding highlights the importance of collaborative literacy activities and communication-centered instruction in promoting learner engagement and participation in English language education.

### **Theme 3: Learner-Centered and Supportive Classroom Environments Improve Literacy Confidence**

The findings revealed that learner-centered and supportive classroom environments significantly contribute to learners' confidence, motivation, and literacy engagement in English language education. Participants consistently described effective English instruction as encouraging, participatory, flexible, and emotionally supportive.

One learner participant stated:

"Mas ginaganahan akong sumali kapag supportive si teacher."

Another learner explained:

"Kapag hindi ko maintindihan ang lesson, tinutulungan kami ni teacher hanggang matuto kami."

Similarly, another participant shared:

"Hindi ako natatakot magkamali kapag understanding ang teacher."

These responses indicate that positive teacher-learner relationships positively influence learners' emotional engagement and communication confidence during literacy instruction. Learners become more willing to participate in reading, writing, and oral communication activities when classroom environments are supportive and emotionally safe.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of encouragement and patience in facilitating literacy learning among learners with varying language abilities.

One teacher participant stated:

"Kailangan talaga ng encouragement at patience sa pagtuturo ng English."

Another participant explained:

"Kapag supportive ang classroom environment, mas nagiging confident ang learners."

The findings suggest that learner-centered and emotionally supportive classroom environments significantly contribute to learners' literacy confidence, communication competence, and classroom participation.

The findings align with Krashen's (2019) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which explains that learners acquire language more effectively when anxiety is reduced and classroom environments are emotionally supportive. Similarly, Fredricks et al. (2019) emphasized that emotional engagement increases when learners feel respected, encouraged, and supported within classroom settings.

The findings further revealed that supportive instructional practices help learners become more confident in using English during communication activities.

One learner participant shared:

"Mas confident akong magsalita kapag hindi ako pinapahiya kapag nagkakamali."

This finding highlights the importance of supportive classroom environments in strengthening learners' confidence and literacy engagement in English language education.

### **Theme 4: Language Anxiety, Limited Vocabulary Proficiency, and Resource Constraints Affect Literacy Engagement**

Despite positive literacy experiences, the findings revealed that learners and teachers encounter several challenges affecting literacy engagement in English language education. Participants identified language anxiety, limited vocabulary proficiency, low confidence in oral communication, insufficient instructional resources, and varying literacy abilities as major barriers to meaningful participation and engagement.

One learner participant stated:

"Nahihiya akong magsalita ng English kasi baka mali ang grammar o pronunciation ko."

Another learner explained:

"Minsan nahihirapan akong intindihin ang mga unfamiliar na words."

Similarly, another participant shared:

"May pagkakataon na kinakabahan akong sumagot sa English."

These responses indicate that emotional and linguistic barriers negatively influence learners' participation and engagement during literacy instruction. Learners who experience anxiety, vocabulary difficulties, and low communication confidence become less willing to participate in oral communication and literacy activities.

Teachers also emphasized that insufficient instructional resources and literacy materials affect literacy instruction and learner participation.

One teacher participant stated:

"Challenge minsan ang kakulangan sa reading materials at multimedia resources."

Another participant explained:

"Iba-iba ang literacy abilities kaya mahirap minsan i-adjust ang instruction."

The findings suggest that literacy engagement is influenced not only by instructional practices but also by emotional experiences, language competence, and institutional support systems.

The findings support OECD (2019), which highlighted that language anxiety and low academic confidence significantly affect learner participation and literacy engagement. Similarly, Krashen (2019) emphasized that anxiety and fear negatively influence language acquisition and communication competence among learners.

Participants further revealed that some learners become hesitant to participate because of fear of criticism and embarrassment during oral communication activities.

One learner participant stated:

"Nahihiya akong magsalita kapag baka pagtawanan ang pronunciation ko."

This finding implies the importance of creating emotionally supportive and inclusive classroom environments that encourage communication, self-expression, and confidence-building among learners.

Despite these challenges, participants emphasized that supportive teachers and collaborative literacy activities help improve confidence and participation in English language learning.

One learner participant shared:

"Mas confident akong sumali kapag supportive ang teacher at classmates."

This finding highlights the resilience of learners and the importance of supportive literacy pedagogies in sustaining meaningful engagement in English language education.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed that contextualized, collaborative, and learner-centered literacy pedagogies significantly contribute to meaningful English language learning experiences and learner engagement among learners at Maconacon National High School. Contextualized instructional approaches help learners connect literacy activities to their real-life experiences, community realities, and communication contexts, thereby strengthening comprehension and classroom participation.

The findings further revealed that collaborative literacy activities and interactive communication tasks promote communication competence, literacy confidence, and active participation among learners. Learners become more expressive and motivated when classroom environments encourage interaction, collaboration, and meaningful communication.

The study also found that learner-centered and supportive classroom environments significantly influence learners' emotional engagement, confidence, and willingness to participate in literacy learning activities. Positive teacher-learner relationships reduce language anxiety and encourage

learners to express ideas and participate actively in communication activities.

However, the findings revealed that language anxiety, limited vocabulary proficiency, insufficient instructional resources, varying literacy abilities, and low confidence in oral communication continue to affect literacy engagement and participation among learners.

Overall, the study concludes that contextualized and learner-centered literacy pedagogies significantly contribute to meaningful English language learning experiences and learner engagement in rural secondary school settings. Strengthening contextualized instruction, collaborative literacy activities, communication-centered pedagogical approaches, and emotionally supportive classroom environments is essential in improving literacy engagement among secondary school learners.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study provide important implications for English language education, literacy instruction, learner engagement, curriculum implementation, educational leadership, and future research. The study emphasizes the importance of contextualized, collaborative, and learner-centered literacy pedagogies in strengthening literacy engagement and communication competence among learners.

### **Educational Implications**

The findings imply that English language instruction should become more contextualized, interactive, collaborative, and communication-centered to strengthen learners' literacy engagement, comprehension, and communication competence. Teachers may integrate contextualized reading materials, collaborative discussions, storytelling, role-playing, oral presentations, and experiential literacy activities to improve learner participation and literacy development.

The study further implies that English language education should focus not only on grammar and language structure but also on meaningful communication, literacy confidence, and learner expression.

Additionally, the findings suggest that emotionally supportive and inclusive classroom environments significantly contribute to learners' willingness to participate in oral communication and literacy activities.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The findings imply that teachers play a critical role in shaping learners' literacy experiences and instructional engagement in English language education. Teachers should demonstrate flexibility, encouragement, patience, and learner-centered pedagogical approaches in facilitating literacy instruction.

The study also highlights the importance of contextualized and collaborative literacy pedagogies in strengthening learners' communication competence and classroom participation. Teachers may utilize local stories, community-based examples, collaborative writing tasks, communication-centered activities, and multimedia-assisted instruction to improve literacy engagement and comprehension.

Furthermore, the findings imply that supportive instructional environments reduce language anxiety and encourage learners to participate actively in communication and literacy activities.

### **Institutional and Policy Implications**

The findings provide important implications for educational leaders and policymakers within the Department of Education regarding the strengthening of contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner support systems in English language education. Educational institutions may strengthen literacy learning by providing contextualized instructional materials, reading resources, multimedia tools, and professional development programs focusing on learner-centered and communication-based literacy instruction.

The study further implies the importance of strengthening institutional support systems that address learners' language anxiety, literacy difficulties, and communication confidence.

Moreover, the findings suggest the need for adequate literacy materials and supportive learning environments that improve literacy engagement and participation among learners in rural educational settings.

### **Social and Cultural Implications**

The findings imply that meaningful literacy learning experiences contribute significantly to learners' communication competence, critical thinking, confidence, and social interaction necessary for academic participation and lifelong learning.

The study also highlights the importance of creating inclusive and respectful classroom environments that encourage self-expression, collaborative learning, and appreciation of learners' linguistic and cultural experiences.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The findings highlight the need for future studies exploring contextualized literacy pedagogies and learner engagement across different educational contexts and learner populations. Future researchers may conduct comparative studies involving urban and rural schools to examine variations in literacy engagement, instructional practices, and language learning experiences.

Longitudinal and mixed-methods studies may also be conducted to explore the long-term influence of contextualized literacy instruction on learners' communication competence and academic achievement.

Future studies may likewise investigate the role of digital literacy instruction, multilingual education, translanguaging practices, and culturally responsive literacy pedagogies in strengthening learner engagement and literacy development.

Overall, the study emphasizes that strengthening literacy engagement requires collaborative efforts among teachers, school leaders, educational institutions, policymakers, and learners. Contextualized literacy pedagogies, collaborative learning environments, communication-centered instruction, and emotionally supportive classrooms are essential in promoting meaningful English language learning experiences among learners in rural Philippine secondary schools.

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