
Kindergarten Teachers' Competence in Promoting Children's Language Development: Inputs for a Proposed Training Plan

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Abstract — This research sought to assess the kindergarten teachers' competence in promoting children's language development in West Sector of the Division of Pampanga during the School Year 2024-2025. The study used mixed method, which is a combination of both quantitative data gathering and interpretation as well as qualitative data collection and analysis. Specifically, sequential-explanatory design was used. There were 94 respondents on the quantitative part and 10 participants on qualitative part. Questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used to gather data. Weighted mean and thematic analysis were utilized for interpretation. Results show that kindergarten teachers are very competent in promoting children's language development in terms of linguistic responsiveness ($M=3.56$), organizing language development activities ($M=3.42$), cultivating a linguistic environment in the classroom ($M=3.52$) and collaboration with parent, personal development, and community engagement ($M=3.53$). Integrating Play-Based Lessons and Anchoring Teaching to Learners' Experiences were the best practices in teaching of the kindergarten teachers in teaching language development. Capacitating Teachers on Understanding Language Development and Strengthening Teachers' Knowledge of the Language of Children were the support needed by the participants to further improve their competence in promoting children's language development. A sustainability plan is proposed based on the findings of the study.

I. INTRODUCTION

Acquiring linguistic skills has always been an integral aspect of the development of a child. Language learning is an essential component of a person's life and should not be overlooked. Getting familiar with one's mother tongue or first language is the initial step in this process. However, it is impossible to deny the fact that a child can acquire a language more quickly if there is a competent somebody who will lead them through the process. In the home, this is done by parents and other family members, while in the classroom, it is done by instructors.

The capacity to learn language is something that is intrinsically present in each and every human kid, and they all have the aptitude to acquire it. For children who are developing normally, the construction of the grammar of their native language occurs independently, without the assistance of other people. This is the case in children who are developing in a healthy manner. However, in order for the infant to be able to perform, there are two conditions that must be met: "(1) he must recognize the physical and social events that are encoded in language, and (2) he must be able to process, organize, and store linguistic information" (Slobin, 2004). In order for the newborn to be able to perform, it is vital for them to have both of these features. Additionally, in order for the child to be able to comprehend the syllables on an internal level, it is essential for the infant to be able to know both the meaning of the syllables as well as the shape of the syllables. Therefore, this is due to the fact that syllables are the fundamental components of the language.

Specifically, Target 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals includes a call for a worldwide call for access to quality early childhood development and readiness for primary school (Global Campaign for school, n.d.). This call is intended to ensure that all children have the opportunity to achieve these goals. The Sustainable Development Goals feature this appeal as one of its initiatives. The name of this target was chosen due to the fact that it was derived from the Sustainable Development Goals. It is for this reason that it is strongly recommended that all children have access to early life experiences that are of a high quality. There is a substantial proportion of Filipino kids who are not demonstrating literacy abilities that are adequate for their level, according to the findings of research that was conducted in the country as well as foreign evaluation studies (Diaz et al., 2022). According to the findings of a study that examined the existing literature on developing countries and confirmed international patterns (Nag et al., 2019),

children who attend preschool with a smaller vocabulary may face additional difficulties if they are not given the opportunity to get tailored support. It was discovered that this was the case.

There have been a variety of various ways in which the idea of "language" has been construed over the course of the last few decades. These interpretations span from a conceptualization that is concentrated on grammar to a perspective that is more functional and dynamic. Likewise, there is a distinction between the two. Within the framework of the social constructionist tradition, the idea of language was conceived of as "language-in-use" (Lacombe, 2014), as indicated by the findings of the investigation that is now being conducted. Wegerif, Boero, Andriessen, and Forman (2009) state that this concept was developed on the basis of a number of fundamental contributions to the field of socially situated interactions. These contributions were mentioned in the previous sentence.

For the purpose of acquiring the conventions of a language, it is essential to have conversations with people who have been using that language for a considerable amount of time. Adults that are indigenous to that culture are one term that is commonly used to refer to these persons. Language exchanges, on the other hand, have the potential to be misleading in other ways if they are not supported by earlier semantic knowledge. This is because language exchanges have the capacity to be deceptive or misleading in other ways. According to Hockett (1966), "Linguistic messages may refer to things that are remote in time and space, or both, from the site of the communication." This statement is stated in the context of linguistic messages. Through the process of language acquisition, members of the human species are able to develop the capacity to perceive and comprehend linguistic language. Another advantage of this is that it enables them to duplicate this knowledge while they are having interactions with other people. This is yet another advantage of this technology. There is no restriction whatsoever placed on the total amount of words that individuals are able to articulate. Particularly in the realms of science and technology, new words and phrases are being created and incorporated into the language on a consistent basis. In particular, this is the case in the fields of science and technology. To this day, researchers have not been able to accurately identify the specific mechanism that is responsible for the teaching of first and second languages. Regarding this matter, there is still a need for more investigation.

Beginning with Vygotski, who was noted in Naibaho (2017), the term "language" was initially referred to as the "functional dynamics of dialogue." This shift in terminology occurred for the first time. This occurrence took place in the beginning of the process. An strategy that takes into account sociocultural factors was applied in order to arrive at this position. It was decided to use the term "speech" rather than "language" beginning in 1979 in order to underline the importance that was placed on the "dynamic process of communication." The concept of "language" was first presented to the public five years prior to the implementation of this alteration. In this particular context, Mercer (2008) gave an argument in support of the employment of "talk," which included a review of sociocultural research on "classroom talk, interaction, dialogue, and discourse." Mercer's argument was presented in the context of discussion. This line of argument was offered by Mercer (2008) in a more recent instance. "Talk" was changed to "dialogic" by Wegerif (2009) in order to emphasize the effectiveness of "dialogic classroom talk" in contrast to the monological approaches that appeared to be prevalent in many classrooms (Swart, de Graaff, Onstenk, & Knezic, 2017). This was done in order to emphasize the effectiveness of "dialogic classroom talk." Specifically, this was done in order to emphasize the efficacy of "dialogic classroom talk." Rather than the sharing of information through two-way communication, which is expressly meant within socially situated interactions, this was done because "talk" was also related with unilateral means to convey information. This was done because "talk" was also associated with the communication of information. This was the reason that took place in the first place. The upshot of this was the development of a growing body of study on dialogical education and interaction in the classroom. Additionally, as a result of this, there was a shift in perspective regarding the connection between language and knowledge (Wells, 2006), which was a consequence of this.

In the creation of each and every sentence, the syntactical units, which are the units that are accountable for the generation of sentences, were the ones who were responsible for the construction. A certain chronological sequence has been created for the placement of these syntactical components within the phrase. This order has been established. Chomsky, on the other hand, put out the idea that native speakers are born with a cognitive understanding of the language that they speak. A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that individuals are born with the innate capacity to improve their linguistic abilities at an early age. It is through Chomsky's theory

that one can gain an understanding of the process by which native speakers acquire linguistic skill. As Radford (2004) correctly points out, "in a sense that is fairly obvious, it is possible to say that any native speaker of a language is fully conversant in the grammar of his or her native language."

Children are able to effortlessly learn to speak their native language without the need for official training if they are exposed to and experience their native language on a daily basis as a speech motor exercise. This is because the majority of children are able to learn to speak their original language without any formal training. This is due to the fact that the vast majority of youngsters are capable of learning their native language without ever having to undergo any kind of official instruction. According to Munson et al. (2012), the continual fine-tuning of children's abilities in phonological awareness occurs concurrently with the constant rise of children's expressive repertoire across the course of their development. It would appear from this that children's expressive repertoire is continually expanding throughout time.

The idea that children acquire the ability to speak and understand language as a result of the input that they receive from their surroundings is one that people who subscribe to the behaviorist school of thought believe. Behaviourists are of the opinion that this is due to the environment and its effects. As a result of the fact that they are passive recipients of the effects that are brought about by their environment, children do not take part in the process of verbal behavior development. The result is that they are unable to take part in the process in any meaningful way. This is due to the fact that children are the ones who are able to reap the benefits of the consequences. Not only does the behaviorist fail to acknowledge the child's active engagement in the process of language acquisition, but they also fail to acknowledge the child's degree of maturity before making their evaluation. This is a problematic situation for the behaviorist.. However, this is a sword with two edges. It has been said by Indrayani (2016) that the length of time that a person is exposed to the environment on a daily basis is the most important factor that determines the process of language development. In point of fact, the capacity to communicate is achieved through the utilization of the connection principle known as S-R (Stimulus - Response) in conjunction with the activity of imitation. These are both essential elements that must be present.

According to Bajrarmi (2015), when it comes to the process of autonomous learning, the role that the teacher plays is one that is impossible to overestimate in terms of its relevance. It is because of the fact that the role of the instructor is particularly important in regard to the processes that are involved that this is the case. On the other hand, if the instructor does not provide guidance and monitoring, the entire process will result in low efficiency or even enter a state of disorder. This is because the instructor will not be able to provide direction. The student is the one who is responsible for making decisions and establishing the path that their own educational experiences will take, and it is essential to keep this fact in mind.

Over the course of the past several years, language-oriented pedagogies have gained a tremendous amount of popularity in higher education for a variety of different reasons. They have gained more and more popularity. The criteria that have been socially proposed, which state that teachers should be able to deal with the growing cultural and linguistic diversity that exists inside the classroom, are the most essential of these reasons (Den Brok, van Eerde, & Hajer, 2010). It is for this reason that it is generally agreed that this is the most significant. According to the findings of another study, ambiguities regarding language policy and related pedagogies led not only to an increase in language difficulties but also to problems with teaching and student learning itself, and consequently, problems with students' academic achievement (Herelixka & Verhulst, 2014). This was the conclusion reached by the researchers. Researchers came to this realization as a result of their investigation. In a single study, it was found that the presence of these ambiguities was associated with an increase in the number of linguistic difficulties.

It is essential for educators to grow their language skills and have a deeper comprehension of language, as stated by Dalton-Puffer and Smit (2013). This is due to the fact that these advancements have made it essential for educators to develop their language skills throughout their careers. In light of the fact that their content-based classroom interaction encompassed a number of conceptual and technical hurdles, it was absolutely necessary for them to satisfy this criterion. Therefore, it was of the utmost importance that they do so. A greater degree of focus was placed on the ongoing development of language, which encompassed a range of forms of dependent and communicative education. This was in addition to the behavioral aspects of classroom interaction that had been present in their previous iterations. Due to the fact that this was the situation, there was a consequence that occurred. In order to provide an example, Ruiz-Primo and Furtak (2006)

carried out research on a model of classroom interaction and teachers' self-assessment. The approach involves an investigation into a number of different tactics that are utilized by educators, such as diagnostic and linguistic contingencies. It is said by Broza and Kolikant (2015) that these strategies are a reference to the manner in which a teacher gives pupils with regulated support through a variety of different modes of engagement.

Student responses, on the other hand, were not only more contextual in nature but also characterized by the deployment of more complex linguistic formulations (Walsh & Knight, 2016). This was the case because student responses were more contextual in nature. It has been seen that this is the case in the actions of the students. This was the case under circumstances in which teachers encouraged students to engage in critical thinking and reflection while interacting with one another. Additionally, language-oriented strategies and adjustments were implemented in order to fulfill the criteria that students had in terms of their educational requirements.

Saylag (2014) found that teachers who were able to distinguish these kinds of formulations were more motivated to assist students in attaining larger levels of language comprehension in technical terminology and concepts connected to the subject matter. Teachers who were able to distinguish these kinds of formulations were the ones who experienced this consequence. As a consequence of their investigation, the researchers arrived to this conclusion by themselves. In order to make this point more clear, the instructor's response (for the third turn) was contingent on the student's response (for the second turn). This was because the instructor wanted to make this point more obvious. Specifically, this is due to the fact that the teacher's response demonstrated a significant and language-oriented comprehension of the student's first request (Lee, 2007). This is the reason why this is the case.

The language that is considered to be the child's mother tongue is the language in which the child receives their initial training. This is done within the framework of the National Kindergarten Curriculum (NKCF), which places an emphasis on the value of multilingual education that is based on the instruction of the mother tongue. As stated by Education Development Center Inc. (2018), it is hoped that young children will cultivate favorable attitudes about reading and writing throughout the course of their first year of schooling. This is something that students ought to make it a priority to accomplish. Additionally, it is hoped that students will

begin to become proficient users of language in addition to becoming learners of language within the course of this program. Within the Language, Literacy, and Communication area of the curriculum, the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (KCG), which was published by the Department of Education in 2016, focuses a significant amount of emphasis on spoken language. This is because spoken language is considered to be an essential component of the curriculum. The Oral Language subdomain encompasses a total of twelve competencies, and there are twelve of those competencies listed here. It is expected that students will demonstrate their ability to demonstrate expressive language skills by the time the school year comes to a close. These competencies place an emphasis on expressive language assignments. Bernardo (2007) warns educators that they must continue to be cautious in order to guarantee that language development curricula are not simply a technique of standardizing the "linguistic behavior of pupils" through the use of prescriptive education. This is despite the fact that this is the case. It is of the utmost importance that the process of language development be acknowledged as a multifaceted sociocultural interaction that takes place within a specific setting. To add insult to injury, it must be beyond the comprehension of a coding system that has been preset. An additional obstacle that needs to be conquered is the process of developing and delivering lessons that combine and address the competences that have been defined (Moneva, 2016). This is a problem that must be solved.

In the study conducted by Ramirez, Ferron and Lopez (2019), they examined the teacher characteristics that play a significant role in the development of young children's bilingual abilities with regard to language, literacy and math. We examined the school readiness skills of 217 Latino DLLs attending Head Start taking into account specific teacher characteristics that may impact the development of readiness skills. Different teacher characteristics have different effects on the developmental outcomes. Amount of training had a positive significant effect on several children's outcomes in English and in Spanish. The years of experience a teacher had working in classrooms with DLLs had a positive effect on children's English spelling skills. Teachers' cultural competency rating had a positive effect on receptive language and literacy in Spanish

The presented literature and studies put premium on the importance of language development of children at an early stage. When they are able to learn language well, they will be able to converse well with their peers that may add guidance as they progress to learn more in schools. In addition, the role of the teachers in the learning of children is highlighted. Indeed,

competence of teachers in teaching cannot be discounted. The same analysis even showed that most of the studies conducted are on generic term of teachers' competence and language development. There is a missing link to assess the kindergarten teachers' competence in promoting children's language development. This opened the path for the researcher to conceptualize a study that assessed the kindergarten teachers' competence in promoting children's language development in West Sector of the Division of Pampanga during the School Year 2024-2025.

Conceptual Framework

The study was anchored on behaviorism theory. Behaviourists found children born without bringing any ability. It is therefore necessary for the infant to acquire knowledge through the process of imitation, the conditioning of the environment, and the provision of reinforcement. According to the findings of a knowledgeable individual who examined the evolution of language from the perspective of stimulus-response, thinking as an internal process of language began to accumulate as a result of interactions with the surrounding environment. In the other one, the development of language was examined from the perspective of the social learning theory. Some people believed that children learn through imitation, imitation of others, or by simulating a model, which meant that they did not receive any reinforcement from other people (Costly & Nelson, 2013). With this, the study adopted an IPO model.

The input had the data on kindergarten teachers' competence in promoting children's language development. In addition, the best practices of the kindergarten teachers in teaching language development and the support they need to further improve their competence in promoting children's language development were surfaced.

The process had both quantitative and qualitative phase. Quantitative had securing permit, distribution of questionnaire, retrieval of questionnaire, applying statistical treatment and interpretation. The qualitative part included development of interview guide, validation of interview guide, interview proper and thematic analysis.

The output is the proposed training plan.

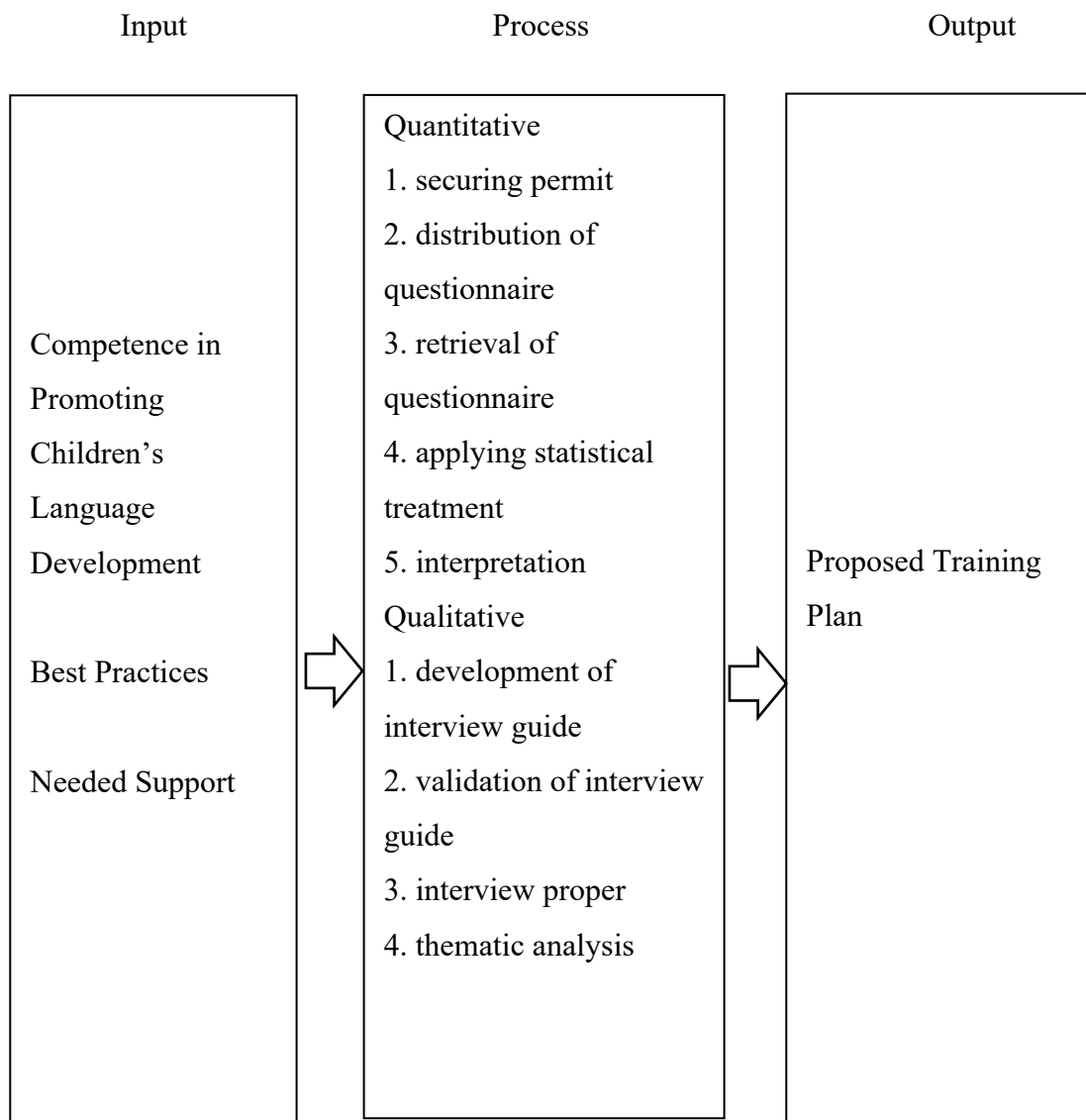


FIGURE 1
PARADIGM OF THE STUDY

Statement of the Problem

This research sought to assess the kindergarten teachers' competence in promoting children's language development in West Sector of the Division of Pampanga during the School Year 2024-2025.

Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

1. How may the competence in promoting children's language development of the kindergarten teachers be assessed based on:

1.1 linguistic responsiveness,

1.2 organizing language development activities,

1.3 cultivating a linguistic environment in the classroom, and

1.4 collaboration with parent, personal development, and community engagement?

2. What are the best practices of the kindergarten teachers in teaching language development?

3. What support do the kindergarten teachers need to further improve their competence in promoting children's language development?

4. Based on the findings, what sustainability plan may be proposed?

Significance of the Study

The outcome of this research undertaking is expected to benefit the following:

School Administrators. They will be able to acquire knowledge about their teachers' competence on promoting children's language development. In this case, they will be

able to come up with plans and strategies on how they can provide better technical assistance to their teachers as part of their work in instructional supervision.

Kindergarten Teachers. Through this study, their knowledge about promoting children's language development will be widened. They may also learn from the best strategies of the other teachers which will be beneficial in their teaching.

Pupils. The improvement of the teaching of their teachers will definitely have a huge positive impact on their learnings. When teachers are well supported, they can provide better learning experiences to their pupils.

Future Researchers. The final output of the study will be added on the existing body of knowledge about promoting children's language development which may serve as reference in the future. In addition, the recommendation section of the study may open a path for future research direction.

Scope and Delimitation

The study was conducted in West Sector of the Division of Pampanga during the School Year 2024-2025. It is one of the city divisions in Region III, which is under the leadership and management of a schools division superintendent.

The study sought to assess the kindergarten teachers' competence in promoting children's language development.

To attain the goal, the researcher collected data on kindergarten teachers' competence in promoting children's language development based on linguistic responsiveness, organizing language development activities, cultivating a linguistic environment in the classroom, and collaboration with parent, personal development, and community engagement. This will be part of the quantitative phase.

In addition, the best practices of the kindergarten teachers in teaching language development and the support they need to further improve their competence in promoting children's language development were tackled. These two were part of the qualitative phase.

Based on the findings, a training plan was proposed.

Definition of Terms

To have a richer understanding, the following terms are defined:

Competence. This refers to the skills and knowledge that a person uses to execute a given task. Hager and Gonczi (2009) stated that competence is a measurement of actual execution of tasks.

Language Development. It is the process by which children come to understand and communicate language during early childhood (Indrayani, 2016). This deals with the process wherein a child learns a language as he/she grows.

II. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents and discusses the research design, participants and sampling, the sources of data, instrumentation, data collecting procedure and data analysis, which are used in the conduct of this research.

Research Design

The study used mixed method, which is a combination of both quantitative data gathering and interpretation as well as qualitative data collection and analysis. Considering the stance of Creswell (2013), a mixed method approach is a combination of both the quantitative and qualitative research and data in one research study. The use of the two methods in a single research

is not only confined with combining the beauty of the two but by the purpose of strengthening the weakness of the other. Even Almaki (2016) noted the same concept that mixed method is a powerful design that involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon.

A mixed method approach using sequential explanatory approach was utilized in this study. This approach is focused on the collection, analysis and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. This study is a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to provide better understanding of the nature of the problem.

Considering the traits of sequential explanatory, it tailored fit the purpose of the study which was to assess the kindergarten teachers' competence in promoting children's language development in West Sector of the Division of Pampanga during the School Year 2024-2025.

Respondents/Participants

The respondents of the study were the kindergarten teachers who were currently assigned at West Sector of the Division of Pampanga. They were chosen because they are the center of the investigation. This will be done during School Year 2024-2025.

From the sector, the researcher requested the total population of the kindergarten teachers. This allowed everyone to be represented in the actual data gathering. This gave the researcher a more substantial data to be interpreted.

TABLE 1
RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

Districts	Frequency	Percentage
District A	11	11.70
District B	15	15.96
District C	13	13.83
District D	9	9.57
District E	12	12.77
District F	11	11.70
District G	12	12.77
District H	11	11.70
Total	94	100.00

Table 1 reflects that there were 94 respondents on the quantitative part.

On the other hand, another set of source of information was considered for qualitative part. The researcher selected 10 participants in qualitative data gathering. For this part, the researcher applied purposive sampling technique. It is a selection technique that limits the choices of the researcher. With this, the researcher needed to set criteria for selection to have a more substantial data for interpretation. The goal was to get quality data rather than focusing on quantity.

For kindergarten teachers to be included in the qualitative part, they must meet the following criteria: (1) has been teaching in kindergarten for at least five years, (2) has innovation or program or project related to language development, and (3) has outstanding rating for the last three years.

Research Instruments

Another consideration of the study is on the kinds of instrument that was used. In a research, it is needed to ensure that the avenue to be used for data collection is carefully selected and chosen after consideration on the main goal of the study. From the view of Eng (2013), a research instrument serves as the tool to solicit the pertinent information from the different sources that answered the given questions of the study.

For quantitative part, the researcher used the tool of Vu and Dinh (2022) on assessment of teachers' competence in promoting children's language development. It is a tool that is based on linguistic responsiveness, organizing language development activities, cultivating a linguistic environment in the classroom, and collaboration with parent, personal development, and community engagement. The instrument was still subjected to content validation.

The qualitative part had semi-structured interview. The data solicited were not quantified by numbers in a qualitative research thus the researcher of this study relied on semi-structured interview. It is a type of interview wherein predetermined questions are given to the participants prior to the conduct of the actual interview. There is also a huge probability that not all of the questions are asked during the data collection because it depends on how the participants respond to each question. Furthermore, additional questions may be asked to solicit more substantial data from the target participants.

In this phase, the questions asked were open-ended to give way for the kindergarten teachers to fully express themselves including their thoughts, ideas, and experiences about the phenomenon under investigation. The purpose of giving these questions to the participants is to primarily collect qualitative information for key point identification, coding, and grouping of codes until themes were yielded from the analysis.

The researcher personally crafted the questions. As soon as the initial draft has been crafted, it was provided to the research adviser for the purpose of receiving ideas to enhance the instrument. Following the completion of the first draft's editing, it was introduced to the group of qualitative specialists for the purpose of content validation. To have a unity in validation, each question was analyzed and scrutinized considering the following parameter: (a) relevance to the research

questions, (b) clarity of the questions and (c) appropriateness of the words. Before crafting the final draft, the comments and suggestion of the validators were discussed with the adviser to incorporate the suggestions for the betterment of the questions asked, which was used during the interview.

Data Collection

Protocols in securing the necessary permits and approval were done initially prior to the commencement of the research. The researcher personally wrote a letter of request signed by the adviser and the dean of the graduate school to be sent to the Schools Division Superintendent. It had the information of the researcher and the purpose of the study. With this, the higher authorities may contact the researcher whenever there are questions or clarification.

After getting all the approvals, the researcher proceeded on data collection through online platform.

In terms of qualitative data gathering, the interviews was done online. The researcher needed to record the conduct of the interview for accurate transcription of the data. However, the researcher got the permission of the teacher-participant first.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher discussed to the respondents the purpose of the study. Each respondent had the liberty to ask question when they found it necessary. Another consideration was to ensure that the participation is on voluntary basis. To do this, there was a letter of consent that was signed by the respondents to show their approval. Furthermore, the researcher protected their identity by giving them the chance to write their names optionally.

In addition, there were no information in the entire manuscript that would pinpoint the identity of the teachers. All of the data were coded and no answer was singled out in the entire manuscript.

Statistical Treatment/Data Analysis

The researcher applied both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data. For the quantitative part, the researcher used the following:

1. Weighted mean, to measure the competence in promoting children's language development

Scale Value	Descriptive Rating
4	Very Competent
3	Competent
2	Somewhat Competent
1	Not Competent

The uniqueness of qualitative phase lies more on its data analysis. Words, phrases, sentences, and observations are the pieces of information that are tough to analyze or interpret because the researcher is the one who extracted the meaning from the given data.

Figure 2 guided the researcher in processing the qualitative data analysis. The data were the ones taken from the semi-structured interview.

Data analysis commenced after each interview is recorded. The researcher purposively listened to the recordings and write the audio information until they were converted to printed texts or transcripts. Verification of the accurateness of the transcripts was done by the researcher and the adviser by reading the printed texts while listening on the audio for comparison.

In an interview, not all the words from the participants' answers were given meaning. Only the important parts that answered the listed/provided questions were the ones that were focused. This is the process of key point identification wherein only the salient quotations were highlighted.

After getting all the key points from every participant, they were given codes that represented the entire statement of the participants. Each code was analyzed to reveal the similar concepts until they are grouped through their affinity before the assignment of the themes.

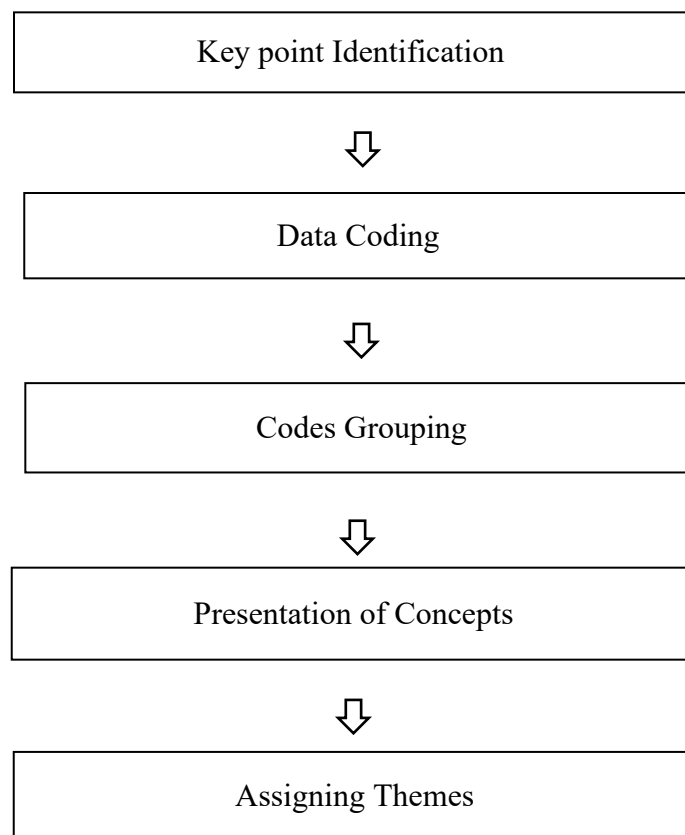


FIGURE 2
DIAGRAM OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis using tables and themes. Arrangement is based on the statement of the problem.

1. Kindergarten Teachers' Competence in Promoting Children's Language Development

The competence in promoting children's language development of the kindergarten teachers was assessed based on linguistic responsiveness, organizing language development activities, cultivating a linguistic environment in the classroom, and collaboration with parent, personal development, and community engagement.

Kindergarten teachers assess their linguistic responsiveness with a mean of 3.56 (SD=0.48) or very competent. In addition, third indicator "Use precise, unequivocal language" listed a mean of 3.66 (SD=0.50) or very competent. On the other hand, fifth indicator "Use a moderate speech rate in a manner that is sufficient for the children to listen, understand and participate in the conversation" has a mean of 3.48 (SD=0.48) or very competent.

According to data, kindergarten teachers are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to respond appropriately to their students during communication. Linguistically responsive educational methods are teaching strategies that promote the learning, development, and engagement of children from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

To understand each student's unique requirements, educational paths, and schooling histories, teachers must listen to and get to know their pupils. Several studies have also revealed that teachers find it difficult to teach students from different linguistic backgrounds (Petkou et al., 2025). Furthermore, teachers believe that language proficiency and academic success are the responsibility of language specialist teachers rather than regular teachers. Given these views, it would seem that they do not believe that teaching language to immigrant students is their duty.

TABLE 2
ASSESSMENT OF LINGUISTIC RESPONSIVENESS

Linguistic Responsiveness	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Standard pronunciation, no lisp	3.62	0.45	Very Competent
2. Warm, tender, and friendly tone of voice	3.49	0.53	Very Competent
3. Use precise, unequivocal language	3.66	0.50	Very Competent
4. Use plentiful verbal and nonverbal language when interacting with infants	3.51	0.48	Very Competent
5. Use a moderate speech rate in a manner that is sufficient for the children to listen, understand and participate in the conversation	3.48	0.48	Very Competent
6 Model turn-taking manner	3.51	0.43	Very Competent
7. Emphasize the crucial keywords, explain the concepts, expression used in the conversation	3.54	0.52	Very Competent
General Weighted Mean	3.56	0.48	Very Competent

Organizing language development activities is another aspect of competence in fostering children's language development that is assessed as extremely competent, with a mean of 3.42 and

a standard deviation of 0.54. The same illustration highlights that the highest mean of 3.48 (SD=0.52) or very competent is found on “Master teaching methods about age-appropriate language development”. The lowest mean of 3.40 (SD=0.58) is given to second indicator “Select age-appropriate linguistic activities”.

The results tell that kindergarten teachers know how to encourage their students to actively participate in language development and have conversations. Due to their underdeveloped minds, teaching language development to children is difficult. When given the opportunity to learn in a classroom, learning one's mother tongue or first language is considered normal in the Philippines. As part of the curriculum, they are being taught in their mother tongue. People who live in the province of Pampanga are supposed to speak Kapampangan as their first language. Successful second language acquisition requires a solid foundation in one's mother tongue. The majority of what youngsters learn in their early years comes from deciphering other languages.

Blair et al. (2023) asserts that teachers must assist students in developing their language skills since doing so will encourage them to interact and socialize with people in their immediate environment. The majority of oral language norms are taught to kids in primary school. Nevertheless, throughout this developmental stage, phonological, semantic, and syntactic deficiencies still need to be identified and corrected. When young children can ponder and discuss sounds, word meanings, and sentence structure, they are better prepared to comprehend difficult language standards. During their primary school years, children acquire certain reading and writing skills. A child's cultural background and the number of languages they speak can have an impact on their literacy development. When learning to read, write, and talk, children with special needs require additional assistance.

TABLE 3
ASSESSMENT OF ORGANIZING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Organizing Language Development Activities	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Master mother tongue language's knowledge	3.46	0.51	Very Competent
2. Master teaching methods about age-appropriate language development	3.48	0.52	Very Competent
3. Select age-appropriate linguistic activities	3.40	0.58	Very Competent
4. Showcase that they make an effort to observe and understand the child to create suitable language development goals	3.47	0.57	Very Competent
5. Use appropriate, effective visual aids	3.39	0.59	Very Competent
General Weighted Mean	3.42	0.54	Very Competent

Table 4 presents that kindergarten teachers' competence in promoting children's language development in cultivating a linguistic environment in the classroom has a grand mean of 3.52 (SD=0.56) or very competent. The same table tells that fifth indicator "Encourage the children to interact with children of the same age and different ages" has a mean of 3.65 (SD=0.53), which is considered the highest. On the other hand, fourth indicator "Provide symbols, images, and guiding words to help the child recognize conventions (e.g., glue the letter A to their individual cup)" got the lowest mean of 3.48 (SD=0.59) or very competent.

The finding indicates that kindergarten teachers search for methods to establish a stimulating learning environment in their classrooms that will encourage language development. Pupils continue to attend class without understanding that teachers are providing them with opportunities to play and develop their language abilities (Ye, 2019).

Around age two is when a child's speech begins to reach its most noticeable developmental stage. At this age, children start communicating using words and short word clusters called telegraph language. Children's language development varies, just like other parts of development. Individual differences and adult attitudes are a major factor in this, to a certain extent. Consequently, children who receive regular feedback and reinforcement from adults develop their language skills much faster.

TABLE 4
ASSESSMENT OF CULTIVATING A LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Cultivating a Linguistic Environment in the Classroom	Mean	Std. Dev	Verbal Description
1. Encourage the children to interact with children of the same age and different ages	3.65	0.53	Very Competent
2. Encourage every student to talk in the class	3.54	0.54	Very Competent
3. Combine words with non-verbal language to help the child understand adults' demands easier (e.g., say "yummy yummy" and pretend eating something)	3.55	0.52	Very Competent
4. Provide symbols, images, and guiding words to help the child recognize conventions (e.g., glue the letter A to their individual cup)	3.48	0.59	Very Competent
5. Teach the students about communication rules and how these rules vary in different contexts	3.60	0.52	Very Competent
General Weighted Mean	3.52	0.56	Very Competent

Table 5 shows that collaboration with parent, personal development, and community engagement is rated with a mean of 3.53 (SD=0.42) or very competent. Fourth indicator “Give instructions to the students’ families to help the children practice at home”, got the highest mean of 3.65 (SD=0.42), while the third indicator “Be diligent, responsible, always finish the works on schedule” has the lowest mean of 3.42 (SD=0.40) or very competent. The results magnified that kindergarten teachers work with parents and the community to ensure that pupils will be motivated to develop their skills on communication.

Learners in school benefit from a stronger comprehension of their first language since it promotes cognitive growth. They are beginning to learn more quickly or effortlessly, especially when concepts are translated, even when certain subjects are taught in a second or third language.

According to Lei and Vibulphol (2024), one of the curriculum's goals should be the improvement of students' cognitive abilities Students' personal development is aided by the lessons they are given, particularly in the area of cognition. They get training and direction that enables them to gain the skills and information required to advance in the school where they are enrolled.

TABLE 5
ASSESSMENT OF COLLABORATION WITH PARENT, PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Collaboration with Parent, Personal Development, and Community Engagement	Mean	Std. Dev	Verbal Description
1. Actively participate in professional development training	3.50	0.43	Very Competent
2. Commit to working towards equality and creating opportunities for language development for all children	3.55	0.44	Very Competent
3. Be diligent, responsible, always finish the works on schedule	3.42	0.40	Very Competent
4. Give instructions to the students’ families to help the children practice at home	3.65	0.42	Very Competent
5. Support parents who have difficulties in communicating with the child	3.63	0.43	Very Competent
General Weighted Mean	3.53	0.42	Very Competent

2. Best Practices of Kindergarten Teachers in Teaching Language Development

The researcher also looked into the best practices of the kindergarten teachers in teaching language development.

Theme 1: Integrating Play-Based Lessons

As children play, they gain knowledge about the world around them and about themselves. They also acquire abilities that they will need to succeed in their studies, careers, and relationships, such as confidence, self-esteem. It will be easier for students to develop other competencies if they are able to improve through play. The phrase "learning through play" is used in the fields of psychology and education to refer to the process by which a kid might learn to understand the world around them by playing games. Children are able to acquire social and cognitive abilities, evolve emotionally, and obtain the self-confidence necessary to participate in new activities and surroundings through play.

This theme is crafted based on the following ideas of the participants:

We play then we talk (P1)

Include play in communicating with them so they will be engaged (P3)

Talking while playing (P7)

There are things that I need to incorporate like playing while we speak so they will be encouraged to talk (P8)

I play and talk (P9)

It is difficult to provide a straightforward description of play because it is a multifaceted, complicated, and dynamic activity. It is generally considered to be a universal pastime, and children are frequently depicted as having an innate desire and ability to play.

Play is a multifaceted activity that can be expressed in a variety of ways, with some of the most popular categories being able to and actually overlapping within a single episode of play. These include exploratory play with objects, physical play, pretend, fantasy or dramatic play, games and puzzles, and other forms of play that involve explicit rules, constructive play (which includes artistic and musical play), play with language (which involves playing with words and other features of language such as rhyme), and outdoor play (Ndlovu et al., 2023).

Theme 2: Anchoring Teaching to Learners' Experiences

The teachers have the authority to decide how the lesson will be presented. It is a component of the lesson plan that they use at any time that they are presenting their themes or lessons to their students. The success of the implementation of the curriculum is heavily dependent on the methods used by teachers to deliver lessons, which cannot be overlooked.

Establishing a connection between the lessons and the real-world experiences of the students is one of the most effective teaching methods. In order to utilise this as a jumping-off point for learning, teachers enquire about the activities of their students in their homes or in their communities.

This theme is conceptualized based on the following responses:

I ensure that I know what they like and what they do
(P2)

*I consider what they see in their house and places
where they go (P4)*

*It is more on starting to know what they know and
use it as spring board (P5)*

Ask them what they do and see in house (P6)

I use their experience and interest (P10)

As stipulated by Origenes et al. (2024), it is salient to use learners' experiences in providing instructions to them. When students are asked about their experiences, they can share and communicate their thoughts easily which makes them more confident to learn and participate.

3. Support Needed to Further Improve Their Competence in Promoting Language Development

Even the support needed by the teachers to improve their competence in promoting children's language development was also tackled. The analysis of data was able to form the following themes:

Theme 1: Capacitating Teachers on Understanding Language Development

Training is essential because it provides an opportunity to both expand the knowledge base of your personnel and enhance their present skills. As a result, both individual and organizational performance will be optimized. Within the context of this study, the goal is to assist kindergarten teachers in developing a better understanding of their students and to encourage language development among learners.

Kindergarten teachers see that they need support on understanding language development of children. This is revealed on the following key points of the participants:

I hope they can help us have better understanding of language development of children (P1)

I am looking forward on giving us the capacity building to learn more on language development (P3)

Mentoring from language experts (P9)

In every educational institution, the presence of a competent and high-performing teacher is considered to be one of the most valuable assets. When it comes to learning, the teacher is seen as the professional agent and bears the most direct responsibility for the process. He is the individual who is responsible for ensuring that pupils learn and benefit from the instruction they get, and he is held accountable for the quality of his teaching. As a result of this, the teacher and the quality of his instruction are always being discussed and are considered to be of utmost importance in education. The Algerian educational institutions, much like any other educational institutions across the globe, are in danger of experiencing a circumstance in which our educational systems are not able to provide instruction and shape exceptional students in the modern day.

The performance of teachers in the classroom is influenced by a number of factors, including their teaching experience. In addition to this, as Ahmed et al. (2021) point out, teachers' performance is also impacted by the training that they have received. Teachers who have demonstrated strong and professional performance in curriculum implementation are responsible for establishing learning programs, implementing learning, and assessing the learning outcomes achieved by pupils.

Theme 2: Strengthening Teachers' Knowledge of the Language of Children

Teachers are responsible for putting the curriculum into practice and for providing instruction to their individual classes. Beginning with this point, it is essential that these teachers possess a thorough command of the language that they are instructing their students in.

The Kapampangan language is a language that is characterized by its diversity. Depending on the location, there may be variations in its usage and vocabulary. As a result of this, instructors' knowledge of knowledge needs to be increased. This can be done in various ways as shown in the following statements:

Knowledge about language of children (P2)

I want to know how they start talking theoretically (P7)

Strong foundation on language development is what I need (P8)

Teachers who instruct students in classrooms are required to have both knowledge of and the ability to learn the language. Nonetheless, the first thing that is to be done is to encourage these students to engage and converse with their classmates and peers in order to practice speaking. Teachers are required to possess a thorough understanding of the way that language develops. Wang and Yan (2024) claims that even when someone is surrounded by the language, there is a greater likelihood that they will be able to learn it more quickly and comprehend it more thoroughly.

4. Proposed Sustainability Plan

After careful analysis of data and getting results from the quantitative part and qualitative part, the researcher proposed this sustainability plan.

Objective	Strategies/Activities	Persons Involved	Time Frame	Resources Needed	Success Indicators
1. Enhance teachers' knowledge of language development theories and approaches	- Conduct seminar-workshops on language acquisition, phonological awareness, vocabulary building, and comprehension strategies	School Head, District Supervisor, Resource Speakers, Teachers	1st Quarter	Training modules, handouts, projector, venue	Teachers demonstrate increased mastery of concepts in post-training evaluation
2. Improve teachers' pedagogical skills in teaching language (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	- Demonstration teaching - Peer coaching and mentoring - Use of varied instructional strategies (storytelling, shared reading, language games)	Master Teachers, Teacher-Mentees, School Head	Quarterly	Sample lesson plans, children's books, teaching aids	Teachers integrate diverse strategies in lesson plans and class observations

Objective	Strategies/Activities	Persons Involved	Time Frame	Resources Needed	Success Indicators
3. Strengthen use of learning materials for language development	- Develop localized and contextualized teaching aids - Integrate ICT-based tools (audio books, digital flashcards)	Teachers, ICT Coordinator	Ongoing	Realia, art supplies, tablets/computers	Pupils engage actively in language activities using developed materials
4. Foster collaborative professional learning	- Organize Professional Learning Communities (PLC) focused on language instruction - Conduct regular Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions	School Head, Teachers	Monthly	LAC session guides, research articles	Teachers share best practices and adapt new strategies
5. Monitor and evaluate teaching competence and pupil progress	- Conduct classroom observations - Use formative assessment tools for pupils - Reflective journals for teachers	School Head, Teachers	Continuous	Observation tools, rubrics, assessment forms	Improvement in teachers' ratings and pupils' language performance
6. Provide continuous professional growth opportunities	- Encourage participation in webinars, DepEd trainings, and external language development courses - Recognition of best practices	Teachers, Division/Regional Trainers	Annual	Internet access, registration fees	Teachers receive certificates, awards, and improved competence rat

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with presentation of summary of findings, conclusions drawn and recommendations offered.

Summary of Findings

The following were the summary of findings:

1. Kindergarten teachers are very competent in promoting children's language development in terms of linguistic responsiveness ($M=3.56$), organizing language development activities ($M=3.42$), cultivating a linguistic environment in the classroom ($M=3.52$) and collaboration with parent, personal development, and community engagement ($M=3.53$).
2. Integrating Play-Based Lessons and Anchoring Teaching to Learners' Experiences were the best practices in teaching of the kindergarten teachers in teaching language development.
3. Capacitating Teachers on Understanding Language Development and Strengthening Teachers' Knowledge of the Language of Children were the support needed by the participants to further improve their competence in promoting children's language development.
4. A sustainability plan is proposed based on the findings of the study that is created as the contribution of the study.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were formed considering the findings of the study:

1. Kindergarten teachers create activities, exercises, and lessons that are appropriate for promoting speech and communication in order to help students acquire their first language.

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- .2. Kindergarten teachers emphasized the necessity of incorporating play and understanding to enhance the language development process. They believe that this is the best way to support language development, which is complemented by making the teachings relevant to the students' own experiences.
 3. Kindergarten teachers will find it much easier to promote language development if they have a better understanding of children's language development and receive training on it.
 4. The proposed sustainability plan aims to be of great help to schools to provide better learning opportunities to kindergarten pupils on their language development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are derived from the conclusions:

1. School heads may continue their religious supervision of classes on language development of children so they can provide the most needed better assistance.
2. Best practices on teaching strategies and interventions on promoting language development of pupils may be shared with one another through convention or forum or even learning action cell.
3. Kindergarten teachers may receive a school learning action cell or instruction from language development specialists that focusses on comprehending language development.
4. The proposed sustainability plan may be adopted in a district so they can test its effectiveness and may be subjected for further improvement.
5. Future researchers may dwell on how school heads provide assistance to their kindergarten teachers in teaching language development to enrich the findings of the study.

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