

Lived Experiences of Filipino English Language Teachers Implementing Differentiated Instruction in Multilingual Classrooms in Timor-Leste

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ABSTRACT: This study explored the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste. Grounded in descriptive phenomenology, the study examined how teachers navigated linguistic diversity, adapted instructional practices, and constructed meaning from their experiences in multilingual educational settings. The study employed Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method to analyze participants' narratives and uncover the essence of their lived experiences. Purposive sampling was utilized to select nine Filipino English language teachers who had at least one year of teaching experience in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews, reflective responses, and follow-up clarifications. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed through phenomenological reduction, formulation of meanings, clustering of themes, and synthesis of the essence of the phenomenon. Findings revealed that teachers experienced persistent linguistic barriers, instructional adjustments, cultural negotiation, and professional adaptation while implementing differentiated instruction. Emergent themes included adaptive instructional flexibility, multilingual responsiveness, collaborative support systems, and reflective teacher agency. The essence of the phenomenon revealed that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms is a continuous process of negotiation, adaptation, and culturally responsive engagement shaped by linguistic diversity and professional commitment. Based on the findings, the Adaptive Multilingual Differentiated Instruction (AMDII) Framework was developed to support English language teaching in multilingual contexts. The study contributes to multilingual education, differentiated instruction, and cross-cultural teacher development.

KEYWORDS: Differentiated instruction, Filipino English teachers, Multilingual classrooms, Phenomenology, Teacher experiences, Timor-Leste

I. INTRODUCTION

The linguistic landscape of Timor-Leste was characterized by remarkable diversity and complexity, with Portuguese and Tetum serving as official languages, alongside more than a dozen recognized national languages used across its regions. English, while not an official language, emerged as a significant language of wider communication, particularly in education, diplomacy, and employment. In multilingual classrooms, learners brought with them varied linguistic repertoires, cultural backgrounds, and levels of readiness in English, creating both opportunities and challenges for language teachers. Within this context, the demand for pedagogical practices that responded to learner diversity became central to ensuring meaningful access to language learning.

Differentiated instruction was recognized as an essential pedagogical approach in addressing heterogeneity within classrooms. By adapting content, process, product, and learning environment to suit the readiness, interests, and learning profiles of students, differentiated instruction enabled learners to engage meaningfully regardless of their linguistic or academic starting points (Santos, 2023). In multilingual settings such as those in Timor-Leste, differentiation became even more critical, as teachers navigated differences in learners' proficiency across multiple languages, as well as cultural perspectives that shaped their engagement with English. For Filipino teachers, who were often tasked with teaching English in such environments, differentiation offered a viable framework for managing linguistic diversity while ensuring inclusivity and equity in learning.

In this light, the study was situated at the intersection of global issues in multilingual education, the local realities of Timor-Leste, and the professional contributions of Filipino teachers. Through phenomenological inquiry, it documented and analyzed the lived experiences of these teachers as they navigated the complexities of differentiated instruction, thereby addressing an existing

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gap in the literature and offering meaningful contributions to the fields of language education, teacher identity, and cross-cultural pedagogy.

Research Question

This study explored and interpreted the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers in Timor-Leste as they implemented differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms, with emphasis on how they constructed meaning from these experiences within linguistically and culturally diverse settings. It sought to understand how these teachers perceived, adapted, and made meaning of their teaching practices within linguistically and culturally diverse educational environments:

Central Question:

1. What is the essence of the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers in Timor-Leste as they implement differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms?

Sub-questions:

1. How do Filipino English language teachers describe their most significant experiences in implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms?

2. What meanings are formulated from their significant experiences of implementing differentiated instruction?

3. What themes emerge from the meanings derived from their experiences?

4. How do Filipino English language teachers make sense of their lived experiences in implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms?

5. Based on the results of the study, what framework or implications can be proposed to enhance English language teaching practices in multilingual contexts?

II. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was confined to the exploration of the lived experiences of nine Filipino English language teachers assigned in Timor-Leste during the Academic Year 2025–2026. It focused specifically on their implementation of differentiated instruction within multilingual classrooms where learners possessed varied linguistic repertoires, proficiency levels, and cultural backgrounds. The investigation centered on the strategies these teachers employed, the challenges they encountered, and the ways in which their experiences influenced their teaching practices and professional identity. The study likewise sought to derive insights that contributed to the improvement of English language instruction in multilingual contexts. More specifically, the inquiry emphasized the participants' lived experiences, reflections, and meaning-making processes regarding differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms, with the goal of capturing the essence of these experiences within linguistically and culturally diverse educational settings.

The scope of the inquiry was deliberately limited to Filipino teachers to foreground their unique perspectives as cross-cultural educators who brought with them a distinct pedagogical orientation shaped by their professional training and experiences in the Philippines. Their narratives were considered valuable in understanding how teachers from one multilingual society adapted and responded to another, particularly within the educational landscape of Timor-Leste. By restricting the participants to this group, the study ensured a focused analysis of their lived experiences while acknowledging that the findings might not be generalized to teachers of other nationalities. The study did not include students, parents, or school administrators since the inquiry centered exclusively on the firsthand experiences and perspectives of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms.

The study further delimited itself to differentiated instruction as the central pedagogical framework. It did not attempt to examine all possible teaching approaches in multilingual education but instead emphasized how differentiation was interpreted and practiced by Filipino teachers in addressing learner diversity. Moreover, the research did not include a quantitative measurement of student outcomes or achievement gains resulting from differentiated instruction. The concern of the study lay in the teachers' subjective accounts, reflections, interpretations, and professional insights rather than in the statistical evaluation of instructional effectiveness.

In addition, the study did not extend to policy analysis at the national or institutional level, although participants' narratives naturally referred to policies and school conditions that affected their practices. These delimitations ensured that the inquiry remained focused on exploring the lived experiences and meaning-making processes of Filipino English language teachers, thereby achieving a concentrated and authentic descriptive phenomenological understanding of differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms.

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FRAMEWORK

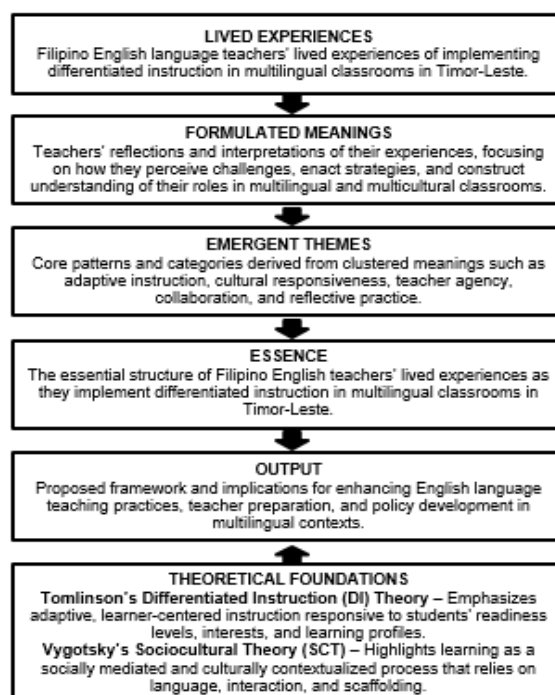


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

This conceptual framework illustrates the logical flow of the study, following the phenomenological process and grounded in Tomlinson's Differentiated Instruction (DI) Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT). It visually represents how the study progresses from the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers to the formulation of meanings, identification of themes, distillation of the essence, and the derivation of an output that contributes to pedagogical theory and practice in multilingual education.

The framework begins with Box 1: Lived Experiences, which constitute the central phenomenon explored in this study—the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste. These experiences encompass teachers' instructional realities, classroom strategies, challenges, and adaptive responses to linguistic and cultural diversity.

From these narratives arise Box 2: Formulated Meanings, representing how teachers reflect on and interpret their experiences. This stage captures their process of meaning-making as they make sense of the challenges they encounter, the strategies they employ, and the roles they assume as educators in multilingual and multicultural environments.

The next level, Box 3: Emergent Themes, presents the core patterns and categories derived from clustered meanings. These include recurring ideas such as adaptive instruction, cultural responsiveness, teacher agency, collaboration, and reflective practice. These themes serve as the analytical structure through which the complexity of differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms is understood.

Following the thematic analysis is Box 4: Essence, which encapsulates the essential structure of the teachers' lived experiences. This essence integrates cognitive, cultural, and professional dimensions of teaching, illustrating how Filipino English teachers make sense of, and grow from, their engagement with differentiated instruction in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms.

The culmination of the phenomenological process is Box 5: Output, which represents the proposed framework and implications drawn from the study. This output offers recommendations for enhancing English language teaching practices, teacher preparation, and policy development in multilingual contexts. It bridges phenomenological insights with theoretical and practical applications, contributing to the improvement of instructional practices and educational quality in Timor-Leste and similar environments.

Finally, underpinning the entire process is Box 6: Theoretical Foundations, which integrates Tomlinson's Differentiated Instruction Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. Tomlinson's theory emphasizes adaptive, learner-centered instruction responsive to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Vygotsky's theory highlights learning as a socially mediated, culturally contextualized process that relies on interaction, language, and scaffolding. Together, these theories explain how

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teachers interpret, adapt, and mediate instruction in multilingual and multicultural classroom settings, providing the philosophical and conceptual foundation for the study.

The framework demonstrates a coherent progression—from teachers' lived experiences to formulated meanings, emergent themes, and distilled essence—culminating in practical and theoretical contributions that advance understanding of differentiated instruction within multilingual education.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste. Descriptive phenomenology focuses on understanding and describing how individuals experience a particular phenomenon and the meanings they attach to those experiences. The approach was appropriate for the study because it enabled the researcher to examine participants' firsthand accounts, reflections, and perceptions regarding their instructional practices, challenges, adaptive strategies, and professional experiences within multilingual classroom settings.

The study was guided by Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological method, which emphasizes the systematic analysis of participants' narratives through the extraction of significant statements, formulation of meanings, clustering of themes, and synthesis of the essence of the phenomenon. This method allowed the researcher to remain grounded in the participants' descriptions while uncovering the shared structure of their lived experiences. Through this approach, the study captured how Filipino English language teachers navigated linguistic diversity, implemented differentiated instruction, and constructed meaning from their experiences in multilingual educational contexts.

Descriptive phenomenology was particularly appropriate because the study sought to describe the essence of the participants' experiences rather than develop theory or interpret experiences from a deeply hermeneutic perspective. The design enabled the researcher to foreground the voices of the participants and provide rich, detailed descriptions of their instructional realities within the multilingual context of Timor-Leste.

In line with Colaizzi's (1978) method of phenomenological analysis, the study systematically analyzed the participants' narratives to identify significant statements, formulate meanings, and generate emergent themes that expressed the essence of their lived experiences. This ensured methodological rigor and coherence between the research questions, the data collection process, and the analysis procedure.

By centering the voices of Filipino English language teachers, the phenomenological design aligned with the study's objective of generating insights that could inform teacher training, policy recommendations, and instructional practices tailored to multilingual and multicultural classroom environments. The design ultimately provided a framework for capturing the essence of teaching as both a professional and deeply human experience shaped by context, culture, and reflection.

Data Generation

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of nine licensed Filipino English teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste during the Academic Year 2025–2026. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their experience teaching English in multilingual settings and using differentiated instructional strategies. Data saturation was achieved after the ninth participant.

Data were primarily collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, supported by optional classroom observations and reflective journals for triangulation. The interview guide, which focused on participants' teaching experiences, challenges, strategies, and professional insights, was validated by experts and pilot-tested before the main data collection. Interviews lasted approximately 45–60 minutes, were conducted face-to-face or online, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim.

The data generation process followed three phases: preparation (permissions and informed consent), data collection (conducting interviews while maintaining researcher neutrality), and validation (member checking and transcript verification). To ensure rigor, the researcher practiced bracketing (*epoché*) through reflexive journaling and analyzed the data using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method, identifying significant statements, formulated meanings, and emergent themes.

Trustworthiness was established through member checking, reflexive journaling, audit trails, and triangulation, ensuring credibility, dependability, confirmability, and contextual understanding. Ethical standards were strictly observed by protecting participants' confidentiality, securing research data, obtaining informed consent, and complying with the university's research ethics guidelines.

Selection of Co-Participants

The study employed purposive sampling to select nine Filipino English language teachers teaching in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste during the Academic Year 2025–2026. Co-participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) they were currently teaching English in multilingual classroom settings, (2) they possessed at least one year of teaching experience

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in Timor-Leste, and (3) they had direct experience in implementing differentiated instructional strategies to address learner diversity. These criteria ensured that the co-participants possessed rich and relevant lived experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation.

The selection process aimed to capture varied perspectives across different educational levels, classroom compositions, and institutional contexts to enrich the phenomenological descriptions and thematic analysis of the study. The co-participants represented diverse teaching experiences and multilingual instructional environments, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of how differentiated instruction was implemented and experienced within the educational context of Timor-Leste.

Purposive sampling was considered appropriate for descriptive phenomenological inquiry because it enabled the intentional selection of information-rich co-participants capable of providing detailed, reflective, and meaningful accounts of their lived experiences. By focusing exclusively on Filipino English language teachers, the study foregrounded their unique perspectives as cross-cultural educators whose pedagogical practices and professional identities were shaped by multilingual and multicultural teaching realities.

Data saturation was reached after the ninth co-participant when no new meanings, themes, or significant experiential insights emerged from the interview narratives. This indicated that sufficient depth and variation of lived experiences had been achieved to support phenomenological analysis and thematic synthesis.

Ethical transparency was maintained throughout the selection process. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to the conduct of interviews. Co-participants were informed about the objectives of the study, their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence, and the confidentiality measures observed throughout the research process.

The deliberate selection of co-participants ensured that the study captured rich, reflective, and experience-based narratives necessary for developing a meaningful phenomenological understanding of differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms.

Thematic Reflection

Data analysis in this study followed Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological method to explore the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste. Colaizzi's method was employed to systematically analyze the participants' narratives and uncover the meanings, themes, and essence of their lived experiences. The process was structured to ensure systematic engagement with the data while preserving fidelity to the participants' actual descriptions and reflective accounts.

Step 1: Familiarization with the Data. All interview recordings were listened to carefully, and the verbatim transcripts were read and re-read to achieve a deep and comprehensive understanding of the co-participants' lived experiences. This immersion enabled the researcher to internalize the participants' instructional practices, challenges, adaptive strategies, and the meanings they attached to their professional experiences in multilingual classrooms. Through reflective reading, the researcher became sensitive to the emotional nuances and contextual realities embedded in the narratives.

Step 2: Extraction of Significant Statements. Significant statements, phrases, and expressions directly related to the phenomenon under investigation were identified and extracted from each transcript. These statements captured essential descriptions of how Filipino English language teachers experienced differentiated instruction within multilingual classroom settings in Timor-Leste.

Step 3: Formulation of Meanings. Each extracted significant statement was interpreted to formulate meanings that reflected the underlying essence of the participants' experiences. The researcher continuously referred back to the original transcripts to preserve the authenticity and integrity of the participants' voices while identifying the meanings embedded in their narratives, reflections, and experiences.

Step 4: Clustering of Themes. The formulated meanings were organized into thematic clusters based on recurring patterns, similarities, and shared experiences. Through repeated transcript reading and manual coding, broader emergent themes were developed to represent the common dimensions of the participants' lived experiences, including instructional adaptation, multilingual responsiveness, teacher agency, cultural negotiation, and reflective practice.

Step 5: Development of Exhaustive Description. The emergent themes were synthesized into a rich and comprehensive description of the phenomenon. This exhaustive description integrated the participants' experiences, adaptive instructional practices, challenges, and professional reflections regarding differentiated instruction in multilingual educational settings.

Step 6: Formulation of the Fundamental Structure of the Phenomenon. From the exhaustive description, the researcher formulated the fundamental structure or essence of the phenomenon. This essence represented the shared experiential reality of Filipino English language teachers as they navigated linguistic diversity, differentiated instruction, and professional adaptation in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste.

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Step 7: Validation through Member Checking. To ensure credibility and descriptive validity, selected co-participants reviewed portions of the interpreted meanings, themes, and descriptions through member checking. Their feedback confirmed that the findings accurately reflected their lived experiences and perspectives.

The coding process was conducted manually through repeated reading, highlighting, categorization, and thematic clustering of significant statements and formulated meanings. Throughout the analysis, the researcher practiced bracketing (epoché) and maintained a reflexive journal to minimize personal bias, document methodological decisions, and preserve phenomenological openness during interpretation.

Trustworthiness of the Study. The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through multiple strategies designed to enhance credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established through member checking and triangulation using interview narratives, reflective journals, and optional classroom observations. Transferability was achieved through thick descriptions of the participants' multilingual teaching contexts, instructional practices, and classroom realities, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings. Dependability was strengthened through the maintenance of a detailed audit trail documenting all stages of data generation, coding, and thematic development. Confirmability was enhanced through reflexive journaling and bracketing, which minimized researcher bias and ensured that the findings remained grounded in the participants' actual narratives and experiences.

By systematically applying Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method and adhering to established qualitative standards, the study generated trustworthy, meaningful, and richly contextualized insights into the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms.

III. RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers in implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste. Guided by the phenomenological approaches of Colaizzi (1978) and Moustakas (1994), the data gathered from in-depth interviews were systematically analyzed to capture the essence of the participants' experiences. The analysis followed a structured process, beginning with the extraction of significant statements, followed by the formulation of meanings, clustering of themes, and culminating in the synthesis of the essence of the phenomenon.

Participants' Profile

Table 1 presents the demographic and professional profile of the participants involved in this study. A total of nine Filipino English language teachers currently teaching in Timor-Leste participated, with ages ranging from 27 to 49 years old. In terms of teaching experience in Timor-Leste, the participants have between 1 to 17 years of service, indicating a combination of novice and experienced teachers. Their total teaching experience, both locally and internationally, further reflects a diverse range of professional backgrounds, contributing to a rich and varied set of lived experiences.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Participant Code	Age	Years of Teaching Experience in Timor-Leste	Total Teaching Experience	Grade Level Handled	Subjects Taught
T1	43	17 years	17+ years	Preschool, Year 1, Grade 7, Senior High	English, Reading, Math, Science, Literature, Media & Information Literacy
T2	49	10 years	10+ years	Grades 4–7	English, Science, Math
T3	27	1 year	3 years	Junior & Senior High School	English, Research, Science, Oral Communication
T4	37	10 years	12+ years	Grades 4–8	English, Values, Filipino, Civics
T5	34	3 years	3+ years	Preschool	English, Math, Science
T6	28	2 years	8 years	Year 1, High School (Philippines)	English, Math, Science
T7	33	3 years	7+ years	Year 1	English, Major Subjects
T8	34	10 years	10+ years	Secondary Level	English and related subjects
T9	32	5 years	5+ years	Grades 7, 8, 10	English, Math, Science, Values, MAPEH

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The participants are handling different grade levels, from preschool to senior high school, and are teaching a wide range of subjects including English, Science, Mathematics, Values Education, and other related disciplines. This diversity in teaching assignments suggests that the participants are exposed to learners with varying developmental stages, cognitive abilities, and linguistic competencies. Such variation provides a comprehensive perspective on how differentiated instruction is implemented across different educational levels.

Moreover, the range of teaching experience highlights differences in adaptability and instructional approaches. Teachers with longer experience in Timor-Leste appear to have developed greater familiarity with the local linguistic context, including the use of Tetun and Bahasa Indonesia, while those with fewer years of experience are still in the process of adjusting to the multilingual environment. This variation is significant as it influences how teachers perceive and implement differentiated instruction in their classrooms.

The participants' profiles indicate that they are situated in highly diverse and complex teaching contexts, where linguistic, cultural, and educational differences intersect. These characteristics provide a meaningful foundation for understanding their lived experiences, particularly in navigating multilingual challenges and applying differentiated instruction to meet the needs of their learners.

Variations in teaching experience, grade levels handled, and multilingual classroom exposure influenced the participants' adaptive instructional strategies, perceptions of differentiated instruction, and responses to linguistic diversity. Teachers with longer teaching experience in Timor-Leste demonstrated greater familiarity with multilingual classroom dynamics and classroom adaptation strategies, while those with fewer years of experience described stronger adjustment challenges and heightened language-related difficulties. Similarly, differences in educational levels handled shaped the ways participants implemented differentiated instruction, particularly in relation to learner readiness, classroom interaction, and communication strategies. These variations enriched the phenomenological descriptions and contributed to a deeper understanding of how Filipino English language teachers navigated differentiated instruction across diverse multilingual teaching contexts.

RQ1. Lived Experiences of Filipino English Language Teachers in Implementing Differentiated Instruction in Multilingual Classrooms

This section presents the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers as they implement differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms, beginning with Participant 1. Using a phenomenological approach, the discussion highlights how individual participants describe their experiences, grounded in their own words and supported by thematic interpretation. These accounts reflect how teachers navigate linguistic diversity, adapt instructional practices, and construct meaning from their classroom realities (Vagle, 2023; Pacheco & Fossa, 2023).

The following sections present the individual narratives of the co-participants prior to the cross-case synthesis of meanings and themes. Each narrative highlights the participants' firsthand experiences, reflections, and instructional realities as they implemented differentiated instruction within multilingual classroom settings in Timor-Leste. The presentation of individual accounts allows the uniqueness and depth of each lived experience to emerge before the identification of shared meanings and thematic patterns across participants.

Significant Experiences of Participant 1

This section presents the lived experiences of Participant 1 in implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom. The account focuses on how the participant encountered and responded to linguistic diversity, particularly in situations where communication, comprehension, and instructional delivery were affected by the presence of multiple languages. The discussion draws from the participant's significant statements and corresponding textural descriptions to surface the essence of these experiences within the teaching context.

Table 2a. Significant Experiences of Participant 1

Significant Statements	Textural Description
<i>"I have to adjust... learn what language they are using."</i>	Adjusting teaching by learning students' language
<i>"I don't understand what the students are saying."</i>	Experiencing communication barriers
<i>"I differentiate some of my activities... I guide them."</i>	Applying differentiated instruction through scaffolding
<i>"I ask parents to help translate."</i>	Extending learning through external support
<i>"Multilingualism has a huge impact."</i>	Recognizing the influence of linguistic diversity
<i>"I was forced to learn Tetun or Bahasa."</i>	Developing adaptive multilingual competence

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The data relevant to Participant 1 are summarized in Table 2a. This table contains selected significant statements alongside their textural descriptions, which serve as the basis for understanding how the participant experienced differentiated instruction in a multilingual setting. The presentation of these statements allows for a closer examination of the participant's firsthand accounts prior to their interpretation. Participant 1's account reveals that teaching in a multilingual classroom is marked by constant adjustment and negotiation of meaning. The participant shared, "I have to adjust... learn what language they are using," pointing to the necessity of first understanding the linguistic background of learners before meaningful instruction can take place. This suggests that teaching does not begin with content delivery alone but with identifying the language through which learning becomes accessible.

Difficulties in communication were explicitly expressed in the statement, "I don't understand what the students are saying." This reflects a situation where both teacher and learners experience a disconnect, making classroom interaction more complex. Such experiences indicate that comprehension is not always immediate and often requires additional effort and alternative strategies.

Despite these challenges, the participant described efforts to address learners' needs through differentiated practices. As stated, "I differentiate some of my activities... I guide them," the participant provides support by modifying tasks and offering guidance. This demonstrates that differentiation is enacted through direct assistance and adjustment of learning activities.

The participant also extended instructional support beyond the classroom by noting, "I ask parents to help translate." This indicates the inclusion of external support systems in facilitating understanding, particularly when in-class communication becomes insufficient. In addition, the participant acknowledged the broader condition shaping instruction, stating, "Multilingualism has a huge impact," which underscores the extent to which language diversity influences teaching.

A notable experience is the participant's effort to learn additional languages, expressed in the statement, "I was forced to learn Tetun or Bahasa." This reflects an adaptive response where the teacher assumes the role of a learner to better engage with students. Taken together, these accounts portray teaching as a process that involves continuous adjustment, reliance on support systems, and personal effort to bridge linguistic gaps.

The experiences of Participant 1 point to the centrality of language in shaping instructional practice in multilingual classrooms. The need to "adjust" and learn students' languages suggests that teaching is mediated by the ability to respond to linguistic diversity. This supports the view that multilingual education requires flexible and context-responsive approaches rather than fixed instructional methods (Taylor-Leech, 2023; Shukla et al., 2025).

The participant's use of guided instruction and differentiated activities reflects core principles of differentiated instruction, particularly the need to align teaching with learners' varying levels of readiness and understanding (Tomlinson, 2023; Ouyang & Ye, 2023). These practices demonstrate that differentiation becomes necessary when learners do not share a common level of language proficiency.

The involvement of parents as translators highlights the social dimension of learning. Drawing from sociocultural perspectives, learning is facilitated through interaction and support from others within the learner's environment (Rosborough & Wimmer, 2023). In this case, parents function as mediators who help bridge communication gaps between teacher and students.

Moreover, the participant's effort to learn Tetun or Bahasa reflects the exercise of teacher agency in response to contextual demands. Rather than remaining constrained by language barriers, the teacher adapts by acquiring new linguistic skills. This aligns with the notion that teachers develop professionally through engagement with challenging teaching situations (Chen, 2024).

The recognition that multilingualism has a significant impact on instruction also resonates with translanguaging perspectives, where multiple languages are seen as resources for learning rather than obstacles (García & Li, 2023). By adjusting to students' linguistic realities, the teacher creates opportunities for more inclusive participation and understanding.

The experience of Participant 1 suggests that implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom involves ongoing adjustment, use of available support systems, and the development of linguistic and pedagogical flexibility. These elements work together to address the complexities of teaching in linguistically diverse settings.

Significant Experiences of Participant 2

This section presents the lived experiences of Participant 2 in implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom. The account focuses on how the participant responds to instructional challenges brought about by language diversity, particularly in terms of managing learner differences, sustaining engagement, and maintaining effective teaching practices. The discussion is grounded in the participant's significant statements and textural descriptions, which provide insight into the nature of these experiences.

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TABLE 2b. Significant Experiences of Participant 2

Significant Statements	Textural Description
"It requires flexibility and patience."	Teaching requires adaptability and emotional resilience
"I group students based on their level."	Implementing differentiated grouping
"Students improved even with difficulty."	Observing student progress
"Some students cannot understand."	Facing persistent comprehension challenges
"I have to be resourceful."	Developing creative teaching strategies
"Language barrier is always there."	Experiencing recurring linguistic challenges

Significant Experiences of Mica

The data for Participant 2 are presented in Table 2b. The table contains selected significant statements alongside their corresponding textural descriptions. These statements serve as the basis for understanding how the participant experiences differentiated instruction within a multilingual context.

Participant 2 described teaching in a multilingual classroom as requiring both personal and instructional adjustments. The participant stated, "It requires flexibility and patience," indicating that teaching extends beyond the application of strategies and involves the development of appropriate dispositions. This reflects an awareness that working with linguistically diverse learners demands sustained effort and emotional control.

In terms of instructional practice, the participant shared, "I group students based on their level," suggesting the use of differentiated grouping to address varied learner abilities. This indicates that the participant organizes instruction in a way that aligns with students' levels of understanding, allowing for more targeted support.

Despite these efforts, the participant acknowledged persistent challenges, noting that "Some students cannot understand," and that the "Language barrier is always there." These statements point to the continuing presence of comprehension difficulties even when strategies are in place. The experience suggests that language barriers are not easily resolved and remain a constant feature of classroom interaction.

At the same time, the participant observed signs of learner development, stating, "Students improved even with difficulty." This indicates that although progress may be slow, learners are still able to develop when supported appropriately. The participant also emphasized the need for adaptability by stating, "I have to be resourceful," reflecting the use of varied and creative strategies to address instructional challenges.

Taken together, these accounts show that Participant 2 experiences teaching as a balance between addressing ongoing difficulties and recognizing gradual learner progress, while continuously adjusting instructional approaches.

Participant 2's experiences highlight the importance of teacher adaptability and differentiated practices in multilingual classrooms. The emphasis on flexibility and patience suggests that effective teaching in such contexts requires not only pedagogical skills but also appropriate professional dispositions. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing the role of teacher adaptability in managing diverse learning environments (Shukla et al., 2025).

The use of grouping based on learners' levels reflects a key principle of differentiated instruction, where instruction is tailored according to students' readiness and ability (Tomlinson, 2023). Grouping allows the teacher to provide more focused support, thereby addressing individual learning needs within a heterogeneous classroom (Ouyang & Ye, 2023).

However, the participant's acknowledgment that some students still cannot understand and that language barriers persist indicates that differentiation does not completely eliminate learning gaps. This aligns with research suggesting that while differentiated instruction supports learning, it does not fully resolve challenges associated with low language proficiency (Yuen et al., 2023).

The need to be resourceful further reflects the dynamic nature of teaching in multilingual contexts. Teachers are required to employ a range of strategies to respond to varying learner needs, which supports the view that teaching in such environments involves continuous decision-making and adaptation (Chen, 2024).

Moreover, the observation that students improve despite difficulties highlights the developmental nature of language learning. Progress occurs gradually and is influenced by the level of support provided. This aligns with sociocultural perspectives, which emphasize that learning is facilitated through guided interaction and support (Rosborough & Wimmer, 2023).

Participant 2's experiences suggest that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms involves sustained flexibility, strategic grouping, and ongoing adaptation. While challenges related to language barriers remain, these are addressed through resourcefulness and a commitment to supporting gradual learner progress.

Significant Experiences of Participant 3

Max's account suggests that her significant experiences in This section presents the lived experiences of Participant 3 in implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom. The discussion centers on how the participant responds to

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learners with low English proficiency, manages instructional challenges, and applies various strategies to support understanding and participation. The account is drawn from the participant's significant statements and their corresponding textural descriptions.

The data for Participant 3 are shown in Table 2c. The table presents selected significant statements alongside their textural descriptions, which form the basis for describing and interpreting the participant's experiences in the multilingual classroom.

Table 2c. *Significant Experiences of Participant 3*

Significant Statements	Textural Description
"Very challenging... students barely understand English."	Teaching learners with low English proficiency
"I give intervention classes."	Providing additional instructional support
"Students hesitate to work with others."	Observing social and linguistic barriers
"I use diagrams and translation tools."	Applying multimodal strategies
"Different tests for special students."	Modifying assessments
"Students improved confidence."	Observing growth in participation

Participant 3 described the teaching experience as highly demanding due to learners' limited English proficiency. The participant stated, "Very challenging... students barely understand English," indicating that comprehension is a primary concern in the classroom. This suggests that instruction is often constrained by students' inability to grasp the language of instruction.

To address this, the participant implemented additional forms of support, as reflected in the statement, "I give intervention classes." This indicates that regular classroom instruction is supplemented with targeted sessions aimed at helping learners catch up or better understand the lessons.

The participant also noted social and linguistic barriers among students, stating, "Students hesitate to work with others." This reflects not only language-related challenges but also the impact of these challenges on classroom interaction and collaboration.

In response, the participant utilized various instructional strategies, including "diagrams and translation tools," suggesting the use of multimodal approaches to make lessons more accessible. Additionally, the participant modified assessment practices, as expressed in the statement, "Different tests for special students," indicating an effort to align evaluation methods with learners' abilities.

Despite the challenges, the participant observed positive outcomes, particularly in terms of learner confidence. The statement, "Students improved confidence," highlights that students become more willing to participate when appropriate support is provided. The participant's experience reflects a combination of instructional difficulty, strategic adaptation, and gradual learner development.

Participant 3's experiences underscore the significant impact of low language proficiency on both instruction and learner participation. The difficulty expressed in teaching students who "barely understand English" reflects a common challenge in multilingual classrooms, where language becomes a barrier to content learning (Shukla et al., 2025).

The use of intervention classes and modified assessments aligns with the principles of differentiated instruction, particularly in addressing learners who require additional support (Tomlinson, 2023). Providing alternative tasks and assessments demonstrates responsiveness to learners' needs and ensures that instruction remains accessible (Ouyang & Ye, 2023).

The participant's use of diagrams and translation tools highlights the role of multimodal instruction in facilitating understanding. These strategies support the idea that learning can be enhanced when information is presented through multiple forms, especially in contexts where linguistic comprehension is limited. This is consistent with translanguaging practices, where different linguistic and semiotic resources are used to construct meaning (García & Li, 2023; Barroga & Tampus, 2023).

The hesitation of students to work with others suggests that language barriers also affect social interaction and collaboration. From a sociocultural perspective, interaction is essential for learning, and limited communication can hinder participation (Rosborough & Wimmer, 2023). However, the observed increase in students' confidence indicates that appropriate support can gradually overcome these barriers.

Furthermore, the participant's experiences reflect the need for adaptive teaching practices in response to classroom realities. The combination of intervention, modification, and multimodal strategies demonstrates how teachers adjust their approaches to meet diverse learner needs. This supports the view that teaching in multilingual contexts involves ongoing decision-making and flexibility (Chen, 2024).

Participant 3's experience highlight that differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms requires targeted support, varied instructional approaches, and continuous adaptation. While challenges related to comprehension and interaction persist, these can be addressed through strategic interventions that promote both understanding and learner confidence.

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Significant Experiences of Participant 4

This section presents the lived experiences of Participant 4 in implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom. The discussion focuses on how the participant manages instructional complexity, responds to learners' varying needs, and facilitates classroom interaction despite language-related challenges. The account is based on the participant's significant statements and their corresponding textural descriptions.

The data for Participant 4 are presented in Table 2d. The table contains selected significant statements alongside their textural descriptions, which serve as the basis for describing and interpreting the participant's experiences in the multilingual teaching context.

Participant 4 described teaching in a multilingual classroom as complex and demanding. This is reflected in the statement, "Every day is like a puzzle," suggesting that instruction requires constant problem-solving and adjustment. The participant experiences teaching as a process of determining appropriate strategies based on learners' needs at any given time.

Table 2d. *Significant Experiences of Participant 4*

Significant Statements	Textural Description
"Every day is like a puzzle."	Experiencing teaching as complex
"Who needs visual aids or translation?"	Differentiating instruction based on needs
"Students collaborate."	Observing peer-assisted learning
"Language barrier feels like climbing a mountain."	Experiencing difficulty in instruction
"Hands-on activities improve engagement."	Using active learning strategies
"Students help each other."	Promoting collaborative learning

The participant further emphasized the need to decide on suitable instructional approaches, stating, "Who needs visual aids or translation?" This indicates that differentiation involves identifying which learners require specific types of support, such as visual materials or language assistance.

Language barriers were also described as a major challenge. The participant expressed this through the statement, "Language barrier feels like climbing a mountain," highlighting the level of difficulty encountered in facilitating understanding. This metaphor suggests that overcoming communication barriers requires sustained effort and persistence.

Despite these challenges, the participant observed positive classroom dynamics, particularly in terms of collaboration. The statements, "Students collaborate" and "Students help each other," indicate that learners engage in peer-assisted learning. This suggests that students play an active role in supporting one another's understanding.

In addition, the participant noted the effectiveness of active learning strategies, stating, "Hands-on activities improve engagement." This reflects the use of experiential approaches to make lessons more accessible and engaging for learners. The participant's experience highlights a balance between instructional difficulty and the use of collaborative and interactive strategies to support learning.

Participant 4's experiences point to the complex and dynamic nature of teaching in multilingual classrooms. The description of teaching as "like a puzzle" suggests that instruction involves continuous decision-making and adjustment. This aligns with the view that multilingual teaching contexts require flexible and responsive pedagogical approaches (Shukla et al., 2025; Taylor-Leech, 2023).

The need to determine which students require visual aids or translation reflects the application of differentiated instruction, where teaching strategies are adapted based on learners' needs and levels of understanding (Tomlinson, 2023). This process involves ongoing assessment and adjustment to ensure that instruction remains accessible (Ouyang & Ye, 2023).

The participant's characterization of language barriers as "climbing a mountain" underscores the significant challenge posed by linguistic diversity. This finding supports existing literature that identifies language as a major factor influencing comprehension and instructional effectiveness in multilingual settings (UNESCO, 2025).

At the same time, the observed collaboration among students highlights the importance of peer interaction in learning. From a sociocultural perspective, learning is facilitated through social engagement, where learners support one another in constructing understanding (Rosborough & Wimmer, 2023). Peer-assisted learning thus becomes a valuable strategy in overcoming language-related challenges.

The use of hands-on activities further demonstrates the role of active and multimodal learning approaches in enhancing engagement. Such strategies allow learners to participate meaningfully even when linguistic comprehension is limited. This is consistent with research emphasizing the importance of varied instructional methods in multilingual classrooms (Barroga & Tampus, 2023).

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Participant 4's experiences indicate that implementing differentiated instruction involves managing instructional complexity, addressing language barriers, and fostering collaborative learning. Through continuous adjustment and the use of interactive strategies, the teacher is able to support learner engagement and understanding in a linguistically diverse classroom.

Significant Experiences of Participant 5

This section presents the lived experiences of Participant 5 in implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom. The discussion highlights how the participant navigates the challenges of teaching learners with very limited English proficiency, while employing strategies that support understanding and gradual language development. The account is based on the participant's significant statements and their corresponding textural descriptions.

The data for Participant 5 are presented in Table 2e. The table shows selected significant statements alongside their textural descriptions, which serve as the basis for describing and interpreting the participant's experiences in the multilingual teaching context.

Table 2e. Significant Experiences of Participant 5

Significant Statements	Textural Description
<i>"Challenging yet fulfilling."</i>	Experiencing dual nature of teaching
<i>"I use pictures and gestures."</i>	Using visual and non-verbal strategies
<i>"Student could only say 'yes' or 'I don't know'."</i>	Encountering minimal language proficiency
<i>"Student eventually learned English."</i>	Observing learner progress
<i>"I used translation and assistant support."</i>	Utilizing collaborative teaching support

Participant 5 described teaching in a multilingual classroom as both demanding and rewarding. This is reflected in the statement, "Challenging yet fulfilling," indicating that the experience involves difficulties but also a sense of accomplishment. The participant's account suggests that while teaching requires effort, it also provides meaningful outcomes.

A key challenge identified by the participant is the very limited language proficiency of learners. This is evident in the statement, "Student could only say 'yes' or 'I don't know'," which shows that students initially have minimal ability to express themselves in English. This condition makes communication and instruction particularly difficult.

To address these challenges, the participant employed non-verbal and visual strategies, as indicated in the statement, "I use pictures and gestures." These approaches allow the teacher to convey meaning even when verbal communication is limited. In addition, the participant utilized translation and assistance, stating, "I used translation and assistant support," which reflects the use of collaborative teaching practices to support learner understanding.

Despite the initial difficulties, the participant observed positive learner outcomes. The statement, "Student eventually learned English," indicates that progress occurs over time when appropriate support is provided. This suggests that learning, although slow, is possible within a supportive instructional environment.

Participant 5's experience reflects a process that begins with significant communication limitations but gradually leads to learner development through the use of supportive and adaptive strategies.

Participant 5's experiences highlight the impact of very low language proficiency on teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms. The limited ability of students to communicate, as reflected in their responses of "yes" or "I don't know," underscores the need for instructional approaches that go beyond verbal explanation (Shukla et al., 2025).

The use of pictures and gestures demonstrates the application of multimodal instructional strategies, which are essential in facilitating understanding when linguistic resources are limited. These strategies align with translanguaging perspectives, where meaning is constructed through multiple modes and not solely through a single language (García & Li, 2023; Barroga & Tampus, 2023).

The participant's use of translation and assistant support further emphasizes the importance of collaborative teaching practices. Such support systems enable more effective communication and help bridge gaps between teacher and learners. This reflects sociocultural principles, where learning is mediated through interaction with others (Rosborough & Wimmer, 2023).

The observation that students eventually learn English highlights the developmental nature of language acquisition. Learning occurs gradually and requires consistent support, patience, and appropriate instructional strategies. This finding supports the view that differentiated instruction can facilitate progress even among learners with very limited initial proficiency (Tomlinson, 2023; Ouyang & Ye, 2023).

Moreover, the participant's description of teaching as both challenging and fulfilling points to the emotional dimension of teaching in multilingual contexts. Teachers experience both difficulty and satisfaction, suggesting that professional practice involves not only technical skills but also emotional engagement and commitment (Chen, 2024).

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Participant 5's experiences indicate that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms requires the use of multimodal strategies, collaborative support, and sustained effort. Despite initial communication barriers, these approaches contribute to gradual learner development and meaningful teaching experiences.

Significant Experiences of Participant 6

This section presents the lived experiences of Participant 6 in implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom. The discussion focuses on how the participant addresses instructional challenges through collaboration, language use, and adaptive strategies to support learner engagement and development. The account is based on the participant's significant statements and their corresponding textural descriptions.

The data for Participant 6 are presented in Table 2f. The table includes selected significant statements alongside their textural descriptions, which provide the basis for describing and interpreting the participant's experiences in the multilingual teaching context.

Participant 6 described teaching in a multilingual classroom as demanding, as reflected in the statement, "It's very challenging." This indicates that the participant encounters consistent difficulty in delivering instruction due to the linguistic diversity of learners.

Table 2f. Significant Experiences of Participant 6

Significant Statements	Textural Description
"It's very challenging."	Experiencing difficulty in multilingual teaching
"I divide the class with assistant teacher."	Implementing co-teaching strategies
"Students became more active with Tetun."	Using local language to enhance engagement
"Without assistant, students lose interest."	Recognizing need for instructional support
"From zero to broken English."	Observing gradual language development
"Students help each other."	Encouraging peer learning

To manage these challenges, the participant adopted a collaborative teaching approach, stating, "I divide the class with assistant teacher." This suggests that instruction is shared in order to provide more focused support to learners. The presence of an assistant teacher allows for more manageable grouping and closer attention to students' needs.

The participant also emphasized the role of the local language in facilitating engagement. The statement, "Students became more active with Tetun," indicates that learners participate more when instruction incorporates a familiar language. This suggests that the use of the first language supports comprehension and involvement in classroom activities.

At the same time, the participant recognized the importance of instructional support, noting that "Without assistant, students lose interest." This highlights the reliance on collaborative teaching structures to sustain learner engagement and attention.

In terms of learner development, the participant observed gradual progress, as expressed in the statement, "From zero to broken English." This indicates that students move from having no knowledge of English to developing basic communicative ability over time. Additionally, the participant noted that "Students help each other," pointing to the presence of peer support within the classroom. Participant 6's experience reflects a combination of instructional difficulty, collaborative support, and gradual learner improvement, facilitated by both teacher and peer interaction.

Participant 6's experiences highlight the importance of collaborative and language-inclusive approaches in multilingual classrooms. The use of an assistant teacher reflects a form of co-teaching that allows for more individualized attention and support. This aligns with the principles of differentiated instruction, where teaching is adjusted to accommodate diverse learner needs (Tomlinson, 2023; Ouyang & Ye, 2023).

The participant's observation that students become more active when Tetun is used underscores the role of first language support in learning. This finding is consistent with translanguaging theory, which emphasizes the use of learners' full linguistic repertoire to facilitate understanding and participation (García & Li, 2023;

Barroga & Tampus, 2023). Allowing the use of the local language helps reduce barriers to engagement and makes learning more accessible.

The reliance on an assistant teacher also reflects the social dimension of learning, where instruction is supported through interaction and shared responsibility. From a sociocultural perspective, learning occurs through mediated interaction, and the presence of additional support enhances this process (Rosborough & Wimmer, 2023).

The gradual progression from "zero to broken English" highlights the developmental nature of language acquisition, where learning occurs incrementally over time. This supports the view that differentiated instruction can facilitate progress by providing appropriate levels of support at different stages of learning (Yuen et al., 2023).

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Furthermore, the presence of peer support indicates that students contribute to each other's learning. Peer interaction serves as an additional resource in the classroom, reinforcing understanding and promoting engagement.

Participant 6's experiences suggest that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms is strengthened through collaboration, the strategic use of learners' first language, and the presence of support systems. These elements contribute to increased engagement and gradual language development despite the challenges of linguistic diversity.

Significant Experiences of Participant 7

This section presents the lived experiences of Participant 7 in implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom. The discussion focuses on how the participant manages instructional difficulties, adjusts pacing, and applies varied strategies to support learners with diverse linguistic needs. The account is based on the participant's significant statements and their corresponding textural descriptions. The data for Participant 7 are presented in Table 2g. The table includes selected significant statements alongside their textural descriptions, which serve as the basis for describing and interpreting the participant's experiences in the multilingual teaching context.

Table 2g. Significant Experiences of Participant 7

Significant Statements	Textural Description
"Super hard... I need many strategies."	Experiencing difficulty in teaching
"Lessons take longer."	Adjusting pacing due to language barriers
"I use pictures and storytelling."	Applying creative instructional strategies
"Students improve gradually."	Observing incremental progress
"I scaffold each learner."	Providing individualized support
"I sometimes cry."	Experiencing emotional challenges

Participant 7 described teaching in a multilingual classroom as highly demanding, as reflected in the statement, "Super hard... I need many strategies." This indicates that the participant experiences significant difficulty in addressing the diverse linguistic needs of learners and recognizes the need for multiple approaches 71 to facilitate understanding.

The participant also noted that instructional pacing is affected, stating, "Lessons take longer." This suggests that additional time is required to ensure that learners comprehend the material, particularly when language barriers are present. To address these challenges, the participant employed a range of instructional strategies, including "pictures and storytelling." These approaches indicate the use of creative and multimodal methods to make lessons more accessible and engaging. Additionally, the participant emphasized individualized support, stating, "I scaffold each learner," which reflects an effort to provide guidance tailored to individual student needs.

Despite the difficulties, the participant observed gradual learner progress, as expressed in the statement, "Students improve gradually." This indicates that learning occurs over time when appropriate support is consistently provided.

The participant also shared an emotional dimension of the experience, stating, "I sometimes cry." This reflects the level of stress and emotional strain associated with teaching in a multilingual classroom. At the same time, it suggests a deep level of involvement and concern for learners' progress.

Participant 7's experience highlights the demanding nature of teaching, the need for varied and individualized strategies, and the presence of both emotional challenges and gradual learner development. Participant 7' experiences underscore the intensive demands of 72

differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms. The need for "many strategies" reflects the complexity of addressing diverse learner needs, which requires flexibility and a broad repertoire of instructional approaches (Shukla et al., 2025).

The observation that lessons take longer highlights the impact of language barriers on instructional pacing. This finding aligns with research indicating that multilingual contexts often require extended time for explanation, clarification, and practice to ensure comprehension (Yuen et al., 2023).

The use of pictures and storytelling demonstrates the role of creative and multimodal strategies in supporting understanding. These approaches enable learners to access content through multiple modes, which is particularly important when linguistic comprehension is limited. This is consistent with translanguaging perspectives that emphasize the use of diverse semiotic resources in learning (García & Li, 2023).

The participant's emphasis on scaffolding each learner reflects key principles of differentiated instruction, particularly the need to provide individualized support based on learners' readiness and abilities (Tomlinson, 2023; Ouyang & Ye, 2023). This approach aligns with sociocultural theory, where learning is supported through guided interaction within the learner's zone of proximal development (Rosborough & Wimmer, 2023).

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The emotional aspect of the participant's experience, as expressed in 73 moments of distress, highlights the role of emotional resilience in teaching. Teaching in multilingual contexts involves not only instructional challenges but also emotional demands, which contribute to the development of professional resilience and commitment (Chen, 2024).

Finally, the gradual improvement of students reflects the developmental nature of learning, where progress occurs incrementally over time. This reinforces the importance of sustained support and adaptive teaching practices in facilitating learner growth.

Participant 7's experiences indicate that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms requires multiple strategies, extended instructional time, individualized support, and emotional resilience. These elements collectively support learner development despite the challenges of linguistic diversity.

Significant Experiences of Participant 8

This section presents the lived experiences of Participant 8 in implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom. The discussion highlights how the participant manages comprehension difficulties, adjusts instructional delivery, and develops adaptive teaching practices in response to learners' diverse linguistic needs. The account is drawn from the participant's significant statements and their corresponding textural descriptions.

The data for Participant 8 are presented in Table 2h. The table contains selected significant statements alongside their textural descriptions, which serve as the basis for describing and interpreting the participant's experiences in the multilingual teaching context.

Table 2h. Significant Experiences of Participant 8

Significant Statements	Textural Description
"Challenging and meaningful."	Experiencing both difficulty and fulfillment
"I simplify explanations."	Adjusting instruction for comprehension
"I use examples, visuals, and translation."	Applying multimodal strategies
"Students struggle to understand English."	Encountering comprehension challenges
"Students engage when lessons match their level."	Observing importance of differentiation
"Teaching requires patience and flexibility."	Developing adaptive teaching qualities

Participant 8 described teaching in a multilingual classroom as both demanding and meaningful, as reflected in the statement, "Challenging and meaningful." This suggests that while the participant encounters difficulties, the experience is also perceived as purposeful and worthwhile.

A primary concern identified by the participant is learners' difficulty in understanding English. This is evident in the statement, "Students struggle to understand English," indicating that comprehension remains a persistent challenge in the classroom.

In response, the participant adjusts instructional delivery, stating, "I simplify 75 explanations." This reflects an effort to make lessons more accessible by modifying language and breaking down concepts. The participant further elaborated on the use of varied strategies, including "examples, visuals, and translation," which indicates the application of multimodal approaches to support understanding.

The participant also recognized the importance of aligning instruction with learners' levels, noting that "Students engage when lessons match their level." This suggests that learner participation increases when instruction is appropriately differentiated based on their abilities and readiness.

In addition, the participant emphasized the need for certain teaching dispositions, stating, "Teaching requires patience and flexibility." This reflects an awareness that effective teaching in multilingual classrooms involves not only strategies but also appropriate attitudes and responsiveness.

Participant 8's experience reflects a process of adjusting instruction, addressing comprehension challenges, and recognizing the importance of aligning teaching practices with learners' needs.

Participant 8's experiences highlight the importance of instructional adjustment and responsiveness in multilingual classrooms. The need to simplify explanations reflects the role of linguistic modification in facilitating comprehension, particularly for learners with limited proficiency (Shukla et al., 2025).

The use of examples, visuals, and translation demonstrates the application of 76 multimodal and translanguaging strategies, which support meaning-making through multiple forms of representation. These practices align with the view that language learning is enhanced when learners are allowed to draw on various linguistic and semiotic resources (García & Li, 2023; Barroga & Tampus, 2023).

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The participant's observation that students engage more when lessons match their level underscores a central principle of differentiated instruction—that learning is most effective when it is aligned with learners' readiness and abilities (Tomlinson, 2023; Ouyang & Ye, 2023). This highlights the importance of continuously assessing and adjusting instruction to meet learners' needs.

The emphasis on patience and flexibility reflects the role of teacher dispositions in managing multilingual classrooms. These qualities enable teachers to respond effectively to challenges and maintain supportive learning environments. This finding is consistent with research that identifies adaptability as a key component of effective teaching in diverse contexts (Chen, 2024).

Furthermore, the participant's characterization of teaching as both challenging and meaningful suggests a sense of professional purpose, which contributes to sustained engagement in teaching despite difficulties.

Participant 8's experiences indicate that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms involves simplifying instruction, using varied strategies, aligning teaching with learner needs, and demonstrating patience and flexibility. These elements support both learner comprehension and engagement in linguistically diverse settings.

Significant Experiences of Participant 9

This section presents the lived experiences of Participant 9 in implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom. The discussion focuses on how the participant conceptualizes teaching, utilizes language-inclusive practices, and adapts instruction to address learners' comprehension and participation. The account is based on the participant's significant statements and their corresponding textural descriptions.

The data for Participant 9 are presented in Table 2i. The table includes selected significant statements alongside their textural descriptions, which serve as the basis for describing and interpreting the participant's experiences in the multilingual teaching context.

Table 2i. Significant Experiences of Participant 9

Significant Statements	Textural Description
<i>"Empowering experience of nurturing."</i>	Viewing teaching as holistic
<i>"I use translanguaging."</i>	Applying inclusive language strategies
<i>"Students use native language first."</i>	Supporting comprehension through L1
<i>"Students look like they understand but don't."</i>	Recognizing hidden misunderstanding
<i>"I give alternative tasks."</i>	Differentiating instruction
<i>"I need to be creative."</i>	Adapting teaching approaches

Participant 9 described teaching in a multilingual classroom as a holistic and meaningful process. This is reflected in the statement, "Empowering experience of nurturing," which suggests that teaching is viewed not only as instruction but also as supporting learners' overall development.

A key practice identified by the participant is the use of learners' native language. The participant stated, "I use translanguaging," and "Students use native language first," indicating that learners are allowed to express their ideas using familiar languages before transitioning to English. This reflects an inclusive approach to language use in the classroom.

The participant also recognized challenges related to comprehension, particularly the difficulty of accurately gauging students' understanding. This is evident in the statement, "Students look like they understand but don't," suggesting that surface-level responses may not reflect actual comprehension. To address this, the participant adapts instruction by providing additional support, such as "I give alternative tasks," which indicates the use of differentiated activities to accommodate learners' needs.

The participant further emphasized the need for creativity, stating, "I need to be creative." This reflects the continuous effort required to develop effective strategies that respond to learners' diverse linguistic and cognitive levels.

Participant 9's experience highlights the importance of inclusive language practices, ongoing assessment of comprehension, and flexible instructional approaches in supporting learner engagement and understanding.

Participant 9's experiences emphasize the role of translanguaging and inclusive language practices in multilingual classrooms. Allowing students to use their native language as a starting point supports comprehension and expression, aligning with translanguaging theory, which views multiple languages as resources for learning (García & Li, 2023; Barroga & Tampus, 2023). This approach fosters a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

The participant's observation that students may appear to understand but do not fully comprehend highlights the importance of ongoing assessment and clarification. This finding suggests that teachers must continuously check for understanding and adjust instruction accordingly, which is a key aspect of effective teaching in multilingual contexts (Shukla et al., 2025).

The use of alternative tasks reflects the application of differentiated instruction, where learning activities are modified to match students' abilities and levels of understanding (Tomlinson, 2023; Ouyang & Ye, 2023). This ensures that learners are provided with appropriate opportunities to engage with the content.

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The emphasis on creativity further underscores the need for adaptive teaching practices. Teachers must develop and implement varied strategies to address the complexities of multilingual classrooms. This aligns with research highlighting the importance of teacher agency and innovation in responding to diverse educational contexts (Chen, 2024).

Additionally, the participant's view of teaching as nurturing reflects a learner-centered perspective, where the focus extends beyond content delivery to include the development of learners' confidence and participation. This perspective supports the creation of a positive and inclusive classroom environment.

Participant 9's experiences indicate that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms involves the integration of translanguaging practices, continuous assessment of understanding, flexible instructional strategies, and a learner-centered approach. These elements contribute to more meaningful and inclusive learning experiences for students.

RQ2. Formulated Meanings from the Significant Experiences of Participants

This section presents the formulated meanings derived from the significant experiences of the participants in implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms. Through phenomenological reduction, the significant statements from Participants 1 to 9 were clustered and interpreted to reveal underlying meanings that capture how teachers make sense of their experiences. These meanings reflect shared patterns across participants and provide a deeper understanding of the nature of teaching in linguistically diverse contexts.

The formulated meanings corresponding to the significant statements are presented in Tables 3a to 3e. These tables show how individual statements were transformed into concise meanings that represent the essence of the participants' experiences. The presentation of these meanings serves as the basis for further thematic analysis.

Adaptation and Instructional Responsiveness

This section presents the formulated meanings derived from the significant experiences of Participants 1 and 2 in implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms. The analysis focuses on how their experiences were interpreted to reveal underlying meanings related to language barriers, instructional strategies, and teacher dispositions. These meanings capture shared patterns in how the participants make sense of their teaching within linguistically diverse environments.

The formulated meanings were derived through repeated reading of the verbatim interview transcripts, extraction of significant statements, and careful phenomenological reflection following Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. Each significant statement was examined to identify the meanings embedded within the participants' lived experiences, reflections, and instructional realities. The process focused on preserving the authenticity of the participants' narratives while uncovering the underlying meanings associated with implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms.

The significant statements and their corresponding formulated meanings for Participants 1 and 2 are presented in Table 3a. The table illustrates how individual experiences were transformed into concise phenomenological meanings that reflected the essence of the participants' lived experiences in multilingual classroom settings.

Table 3a. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings (Participants 1–2)

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning
"I have to adjust... learn what language they are using."	Teaching requires linguistic adaptation due to communication barriers.
"I don't understand what students are saying."	
"Language barrier is always there."	
"I group students based on their level."	Differentiated instruction is implemented through scaffolding and social support.
"I guide them and differentiate activities."	
"I ask parents/peers to translate."	
"Students improve despite difficulty."	Differentiated instruction supports learning but does not eliminate all learning gaps.
"Some students still cannot understand."	
"I have to be resourceful and flexible."	Multilingual teaching develops adaptability, patience, and resourcefulness.
"Teaching requires patience."	

The formulated meanings reveal that the participants experienced differentiated instruction as a continuous process of instructional adjustment, linguistic negotiation, and adaptive teaching practice. Across the narratives, the co-participants described recurring experiences related to communication barriers, learner diversity, flexibility in instruction, and the need for culturally responsive teaching approaches. These meanings suggest that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms required pedagogical adaptability, reflective practice, and sustained responsiveness to learners' linguistic and cultural needs.

Another key meaning relates to instructional responsiveness through differentiated practices. The participants perceived grouping, scaffolding, guidance, and translation support as necessary instructional responses to learners' varying language

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proficiencies and readiness levels. The involvement of parents and peers in translation further reflects how participants experienced instructional support as extending beyond the teacher and involving collaborative assistance within the learning environment.

The formulated meanings also suggest that differentiated instruction supported learner participation and gradual improvement, although learning challenges remained present. The participants perceived multilingual instruction as a process where learner progress occurred unevenly, particularly among students with limited English proficiency. These reflections indicate that differentiated instruction facilitated engagement and comprehension but did not completely eliminate communication and learning difficulties within multilingual classroom contexts.

In addition, the participants' narratives emphasized the importance of flexibility, patience, and resourcefulness as essential dispositions in multilingual teaching. The co-participants perceived these qualities as necessary for responding to persistent instructional challenges, language barriers, and the continuously changing realities of multilingual classrooms. Their reflections demonstrate how teaching in linguistically diverse settings required continuous adaptation, professional responsiveness, and reflective decision-making.

The formulated meanings derived from the participants' narratives revealed recurring patterns of instructional adaptation, multilingual responsiveness, professional adjustment, and reflective practice. These recurring meanings served as the basis for clustering experiential patterns into broader emergent themes that collectively represented the shared lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste.

Instructional Complexity and Multimodal Support

This section presents the formulated meanings derived from the significant experiences of Participants 3 and 4 in implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms. The analysis focuses on how their experiences were interpreted to reveal meanings related to instructional challenges, the use of varied strategies, and the role of classroom interaction. These meanings reflect how teachers respond to learners with low language proficiency while managing the complexity of multilingual teaching.

The formulated meanings were derived through repeated reading of the verbatim interview transcripts, extraction of significant statements, and careful phenomenological reflection following Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. Each significant statement was examined to identify the meanings embedded within the participants' lived experiences, reflections, and instructional realities. The process focused on preserving the authenticity of the participants' narratives while uncovering the underlying meanings associated with implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms.

The significant statements and their corresponding formulated meanings for Participants 3 and 4 are presented in Table 3b. The table illustrates how individual experiences were transformed into concise phenomenological meanings that reflected the essence of the participants' lived experiences in multilingual classroom settings.

Table 3b. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings (Participants 3–4)	
Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning
"Students barely understand English."	Learners with low proficiency require additional and differentiated support.
"I give intervention classes."	
"I modify assessments."	
"I use diagrams and translation tools."	Instruction must be multimodal to support comprehension.
"Multimodal strategies help understanding."	
"Teaching feels like a puzzle."	Teaching is dynamic and cognitively complex.
"You need to address different needs every day."	
"Students collaborate and help each other."	Peer collaboration enhances learning.
"They improve through group work."	
"Students gain confidence."	Differentiated instruction promotes engagement and confidence.

The formulated meanings reveal that the participants experienced differentiated instruction as a dynamic and responsive process that required continuous instructional adjustment to address learners' varying language proficiencies and educational needs. Across the narratives, the co-participants described recurring experiences related to low English proficiency, instructional modification, multimodal support, and classroom collaboration. These meanings suggest that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms required sustained adaptability, creativity, and instructional responsiveness.

Another key meaning emerging from the participants' experiences is the importance of multimodal instructional practices in supporting learner comprehension. The co-participants perceived the use of diagrams, translation tools, intervention classes, and modified assessments as necessary strategies for facilitating understanding among learners with limited English proficiency. Their reflections indicate that differentiated instruction extended beyond verbal explanation and involved the integration of varied instructional resources and representations to make learning more accessible and meaningful.

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The meanings also reflect the cognitively complex nature of multilingual teaching. The participants described teaching as “like a puzzle,” emphasizing the continuous need to assess learners’ needs, modify instructional approaches, and make immediate pedagogical decisions within multilingual classroom contexts.

These experiences suggest that differentiated instruction required ongoing problem- 87 solving, flexibility, and reflective instructional practice.

In addition, the participants’ narratives highlighted the role of peer collaboration and classroom interaction in supporting multilingual learning. The co-participants perceived collaborative activities and peer assistance as important forms of instructional support that enhanced learner participation, comprehension, and engagement. Their reflections indicate that social interaction functioned as a meaningful resource in helping learners navigate language difficulties and participate more actively in classroom activities.

Finally, the formulated meanings reveal that differentiated instruction contributed not only to cognitive support but also to the development of learner confidence and classroom participation. The participants observed that learners became more willing to engage in classroom interaction when provided with appropriate instructional support and adaptive learning opportunities. These reflections suggest that differentiated instruction fostered a more inclusive and supportive multilingual learning environment.

The formulated meanings derived from the participants’ narratives revealed recurring patterns of instructional adaptation, multimodal responsiveness, collaborative engagement, and reflective teaching practice. These recurring meanings served as the basis for clustering experiential patterns into broader emergent themes that collectively represented the shared lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste. Gradual Language Development and Collaborative Support

This section presents the formulated meanings derived from the significant experiences of Participants 5 and 6 in implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms. The analysis focuses on how their experiences were interpreted to reveal meanings related to learners’ limited language proficiency, the use of supportive and collaborative strategies, and the gradual nature of language development. These meanings reflect how teachers respond to learners who begin with minimal English knowledge and require sustained instructional support.

The formulated meanings were derived through repeated reading of the verbatim interview transcripts, extraction of significant statements, and careful phenomenological reflection following Colaizzi’s descriptive phenomenological method. Each significant statement was examined to identify the meanings embedded within the participants’ lived experiences, reflections, and instructional realities. The process focused on preserving the authenticity of the participants’ narratives while uncovering the underlying meanings associated with implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms.

The significant statements and their corresponding formulated meanings for Participants 5 and 6 are presented in Table 3c. The table illustrates how individual experiences were transformed into concise phenomenological meanings that reflected the essence of the participants’ lived experiences in multilingual classroom settings

TABLE 3c. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings (Participants 5–6)

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning
“Teaching is challenging yet fulfilling.”	Teaching involves addressing low proficiency while maintaining motivation.
“Students start with very little English.”	
“I use gestures, pictures, translation.”	Multimodal and collaborative strategies support learning.
“Assistant teacher helps in instruction.”	
“Students improve gradually.”	Language acquisition is gradual and developmental.
“From zero English to broken English.”	
“Students help each other.”	Peer interaction supports language learning.
“Peer teaching strategy works.”	
“Students respond when local language is used.”	Use of familiar language enhances engagement.

The formulated meanings reveal that the participants experienced differentiated instruction as a sustained and supportive process aimed at addressing learners’ limited English proficiency within multilingual classroom contexts. Across the narratives, the co-participants described recurring experiences related to foundational language support, instructional adaptation, peer collaboration, and gradual learner progress. These meanings suggest that implementing differentiated instruction required patience, instructional responsiveness, and continuous support for learners with minimal English proficiency.

Another key meaning emerging from the participants’ experiences is the importance of multimodal and collaborative instructional strategies in facilitating learner understanding. The co-participants perceived gestures, pictures, translation, and assistance from co-teachers as necessary instructional supports that enabled learners to access classroom content despite language limitations. Their reflections indicate that differentiated instruction involved the integration of varied communication methods and collaborative teaching practices to make instruction more accessible and meaningful within multilingual settings.

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The meanings also emphasize the gradual and developmental nature of language acquisition. The participants described learner progress as a step-by-step process in which students moved from having little or no English proficiency toward developing basic communicative abilities over time. These reflections suggest that multilingual learning required sustained reinforcement, adaptive support, and consistent instructional guidance rather than immediate mastery of language skills.

In addition, the participants' experiences highlighted the role of peer interaction and collaborative learning in supporting language development. The co-participants perceived peer teaching and classroom collaboration as meaningful strategies that enhanced learner participation, comprehension, and confidence. Their reflections demonstrate that social interaction functioned as an important source of support within multilingual classrooms.

Another important meaning reflected in the narratives is the strategic use of learners' familiar language to enhance classroom engagement and participation. The participants observed that students responded more actively and confidently when local languages were incorporated during instruction. These experiences suggest that the use of familiar linguistic resources supported comprehension, reduced communication barriers, and fostered a more inclusive learning environment.

The formulated meanings derived from the participants' narratives revealed recurring patterns of instructional adaptation, multimodal responsiveness, collaborative engagement, gradual language development, and reflective teaching practice. These recurring meanings served as the basis for clustering experiential patterns into broader emergent themes that collectively represented the shared lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste.

Instructional Demands, Emotional Resilience, and Adaptive Practices

This section presents the formulated meanings derived from the significant experiences of Participants 7 and 8 in implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms. The analysis focuses on how their experiences were interpreted to reveal meanings related to instructional demands, the need for adaptive strategies, and the emotional dimensions of teaching. These meanings reflect how teachers manage the complexity of multilingual instruction while sustaining learner engagement.

The formulated meanings were derived through repeated reading of the verbatim interview transcripts, extraction of significant statements, and careful phenomenological reflection following Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. Each significant statement was examined to identify the meanings embedded within the participants' lived experiences, reflections, and instructional realities. The process focused on preserving the authenticity of the participants' narratives while uncovering the underlying meanings associated with implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms.

The significant statements and their corresponding formulated meanings for Participants 7 and 8 are presented in Table 3d. The table illustrates how individual experiences were transformed into concise phenomenological meanings that reflected the essence of the participants' lived experiences in multilingual classroom settings.

Table 3d. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings (Participants 7–8)

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning
"Teaching is very hard."	Multilingual contexts affect instructional pacing and complexity.
"Lessons take longer due to language barriers."	
"I use pictures and storytelling."	Creative and adaptive strategies are necessary for comprehension.
"I scaffold each learner."	
"I feel stressed... I sometimes cry."	Teaching involves emotional challenges and resilience.
"Students engage when lessons match their level."	Instruction must align with learner readiness and clarity.
"I simplify explanations and repeat ideas."	
"Teaching requires patience, flexibility, creativity."	Effective teaching requires adaptive dispositions.

The formulated meanings reveal that the participants experienced differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms as a demanding and continuously adaptive instructional process. Across the narratives, the co-participants described recurring experiences related to language barriers, extended instructional pacing, learner diversity, emotional strain, and the need for flexible teaching approaches. These meanings suggest that implementing differentiated instruction required sustained instructional responsiveness, emotional resilience, and reflective teaching practice.

Another key meaning emerging from the participants' experiences is the necessity of adaptive and creative instructional strategies to support learner comprehension. The co-participants perceived the use of pictures, storytelling, scaffolding, simplified explanations, and repetition as important instructional responses to learners' varying language proficiencies and comprehension levels. Their reflections indicate that differentiated instruction involved modifying communication and learning activities to make classroom instruction more accessible and understandable within multilingual settings.

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The meanings also highlight the emotional dimensions of multilingual teaching. The participants described feelings of stress, exhaustion, and emotional difficulty while managing the instructional demands of linguistically diverse classrooms. These reflections suggest that teaching in multilingual contexts required not only pedagogical competence but also emotional resilience and perseverance in responding to ongoing classroom challenges.

In addition, the participants emphasized the importance of aligning instruction with learners' readiness levels to sustain engagement and participation. The co-participants perceived learner-centered adjustment, simplification of explanations, and repeated reinforcement as necessary instructional practices for supporting understanding and classroom interaction. Their reflections indicate that effective differentiated instruction depended on continuous assessment and responsiveness to learners' varying needs and abilities.

The participants' narratives further emphasized the importance of patience, flexibility, and creativity as essential teaching dispositions within multilingual classrooms. The co-participants perceived these qualities as necessary in navigating instructional complexity, responding to communication barriers, and maintaining meaningful learning experiences for students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The formulated meanings derived from the participants' narratives revealed recurring patterns of instructional adaptation, emotional resilience, learner-centered responsiveness, and reflective teaching practice. These recurring meanings served as the basis for clustering experiential patterns into broader emergent themes that collectively represented the shared lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste.

Translanguaging, Learner-Centeredness, and Instructional Flexibility

This section presents the formulated meanings derived from the significant experiences of Participant 9 in implementing differentiated instruction in a multilingual classroom. The analysis focuses on how the participant's experiences were interpreted to reveal meanings related to translanguaging practices, learner-centered teaching, and the need for continuous instructional adjustment. These meanings reflect how teaching is shaped by linguistic inclusivity, responsiveness to learners' understanding, and adaptive instructional practice.

The formulated meanings were derived through repeated reading of the verbatim interview transcripts, extraction of significant statements, and careful phenomenological reflection following Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. Each significant statement was examined to identify the meanings embedded within the participant's lived experiences, reflections, and instructional realities. The process focused on preserving the authenticity of the participant's narrative while uncovering the underlying meanings associated with implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms.

The significant statements and their corresponding formulated meanings for Participant 9 are presented in Table 3e. The table illustrates how the participant's experiences were transformed into concise phenomenological meanings that reflected the essence of the lived experience in a multilingual classroom setting.

Table 3e. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings (Participant 9)

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning
"Teaching is nurturing, not just instructing."	Teaching is holistic and learner-centered.
"I allow students to use their native language."	
"I use translanguaging."	Native language serves as a bridge to understanding.
"Students express ideas in their own language."	
"Classroom becomes safe when language is allowed."	Inclusive language practices enhance participation.
"Students appear to understand but do not."	Comprehension requires continuous clarification and adaptation.
"I simplify and rephrase questions."	
"I give alternative tasks."	Differentiation involves flexible strategies and recognizes transitional language development.
"Students mix languages when learning."	

The formulated meanings reveal that the participant experienced differentiated instruction as a learner-centered and inclusive teaching process grounded in flexibility, responsiveness, and continuous instructional adaptation. Across the narrative, the participant described recurring experiences related to Translanguaging, classroom inclusivity, comprehension monitoring, and adaptive teaching strategies. These meanings suggest that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms required sustained attentiveness to learners' linguistic realities, understanding, and participation.

A central meaning emerging from the participant's experiences is the use of Translanguaging as an instructional strategy that supported learner comprehension and expression. The participant perceived the use of native language and mixed language communication as important resources that enabled students to articulate 97 ideas, participate more actively, and access classroom content more effectively. These reflections indicate that differentiated instruction involved recognizing learners' linguistic backgrounds as meaningful supports for understanding and engagement.

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The meanings also highlight the importance of creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive multilingual learning environment. The participant observed that learners became more comfortable and willing to participate when their native language was acknowledged and allowed within classroom interaction. These experiences suggest that inclusive language practices contributed to learner confidence, engagement, and meaningful classroom participation.

Another significant meaning reflected in the participant's narrative is the recognition that apparent learner responses did not always indicate genuine understanding. The participant perceived continuous clarification, simplification, and rephrasing of questions as necessary instructional practices to ensure comprehension. These reflections demonstrate that differentiated instruction required ongoing monitoring of learners' understanding and continuous instructional responsiveness within multilingual classroom contexts.

The participant's experiences further emphasize the importance of flexible and adaptive instructional strategies, such as providing alternative tasks and modifying classroom activities according to learners' readiness and comprehension levels. The participant perceived these strategies as necessary in addressing transitional language development and supporting learners with varying communication abilities. The formulated meanings derived from the participant's narrative revealed recurring patterns of translanguaging, learner-centered responsiveness, inclusive instructional practice, and continuous adaptation. These recurring meanings served as the basis for clustering experiential patterns into broader emergent themes that collectively represented the shared lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste.

RQ3. Emergent Themes from the Formulated Meanings

This section presents the emergent themes derived from the clustering of formulated meanings following Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. Through repeated analysis of the participants' narratives, recurring experiential patterns and shared meanings were identified and synthesized into broader thematic categories. These themes collectively represent the lived realities, adaptive practices, instructional responses, and professional reflections of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste.

Table 4. Theme Clusters and Emergent Themes from the Formulated Meanings

Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme
Teaching requires linguistic adaptation due to communication barriers	Language Barriers in Communication	Navigating Language Barriers in Instruction
Language barriers hinder understanding		
Surface understanding differs from actual comprehension	Instructional Complexity in Multilingual Contexts	
Multilingual contexts affect instructional pacing and complexity		
Lessons take longer due to comprehension difficulty	Learner Comprehension Challenges	
Learners require repetition and simplification		
Students have low English proficiency	Instructional Adaptability	Pedagogical Flexibility in Diverse Classrooms
Instruction must be flexible and responsive		
Teaching requires adjustment of strategies	Differentiated Teaching Practices	
Differentiation through grouping and scaffolding		
Use of varied instructional strategies	Multimodal Instructional Approaches	
Multimodal strategies enhance learning		
Use of visuals, translation, and repetition	Collaborative Learning Practices	Building Inclusive Multilingual Learning Environments
Peer collaboration supports learning		
Students help each other understand lessons	Language Inclusivity	
Native language supports comprehension		
Translanguaging enhances understanding	Learner Engagement and Participation	
Classroom becomes safe and supportive		
Students gain confidence through support	Development of Teaching Competence	Teacher Transformation and Professional Growth
Teaching develops adaptability and resourcefulness		
Teachers become more flexible and creative	Emotional Resilience in Teaching	
Teaching involves emotional challenges		
Teachers demonstrate resilience	Professional Identity Transformation	
Teaching is both challenging and fulfilling		
Teaching becomes holistic and learner-centered		

The emergent themes, together with their corresponding theme clusters and formulated meanings, are presented in Table 4. The unified thematic table illustrates how recurring meanings from the participants' lived experiences were organized into broader phenomenological themes representing the shared realities of multilingual teaching.

The emergent themes collectively reveal that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms is characterized by continuous instructional adaptation, multilingual responsiveness, cultural inclusivity, collaborative engagement, and reflective teaching practice. The participants' experiences demonstrate that differentiated instruction extends beyond

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modifying classroom activities and involves navigating communication barriers, learner diversity, instructional complexity, and evolving learner needs. Across the narratives, the co-participants described flexibility, scaffolding, translanguaging, collaboration, and learner-centered responsiveness as essential in sustaining meaningful and inclusive multilingual learning experiences.

Navigating Language Barriers in Instruction

The findings reveal that language barriers significantly shaped instructional delivery and classroom interaction in multilingual settings. The participants consistently experienced communication difficulties caused by learners' low English proficiency, resulting in misunderstanding of instructions, incomplete comprehension, and extended instructional pacing. These experiences required teachers to simplify explanations, repeat instructions, modify communication strategies, and provide continuous clarification to support learner understanding.

The emergent theme highlights that language barriers are a fundamental condition shaping instruction in multilingual classrooms. These barriers affect communication, comprehension, and pacing, making teaching more complex and demanding. This finding supports existing literature identifying language diversity as a central challenge in multilingual education (UNESCO, 2025; Taylor-Leech, 2023). The participants' need to simplify language and repeat instructions reflects the importance of linguistic scaffolding, which aligns with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizing guided support in facilitating learning (Rosborough & Wimmer, 2023). The variation in learner comprehension further underscores the relevance of differentiated instruction, where teachers continuously adjust instruction according to learners' readiness levels and language proficiency (Tomlinson, 2023; Ouyang & Ye, 2023).

Pedagogical Flexibility in Diverse Classrooms

The participants' narratives demonstrate that pedagogical flexibility was essential in addressing learner diversity within multilingual classrooms. Teachers continuously modified instructional strategies, grouped learners according to readiness levels, scaffolded instruction, and utilized multimodal approaches such as visuals, translation, repetition, and alternative explanations to support comprehension.

The emergent theme suggests that multilingual teaching required continuous instructional adjustment responsive to learners' varying needs and classroom realities. These findings align with Tomlinson's Differentiated Instruction Theory, which emphasizes adapting instructional content, processes, and activities according to learner readiness and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2023; Ouyang & Ye, 2023). The use of multimodal strategies and translanguaging practices also reflects the importance of diverse representational resources in multilingual learning environments (García & Li, 2023; Barroga & Tampus, 2023). Furthermore, the participants' experiences indicate that teaching in multilingual contexts is dynamic, context-sensitive, and dependent on ongoing pedagogical decision-making (Chen, 2024).

Building Inclusive Multilingual Learning Environments

The participants' experiences reveal that inclusive multilingual learning environments were fostered through collaboration, language inclusivity, and supportive classroom interaction. Teachers encouraged peer collaboration, accepted learners' native language use, and promoted translanguaging practices that enhanced participation, confidence, and comprehension among learners.

The emergent theme underscores the importance of inclusive classroom practices in multilingual education. Collaborative learning practices align with sociocultural perspectives emphasizing learning through interaction and shared experiences (Rosborough & Wimmer, 2023). Similarly, the use of learners' native language reflects translanguaging approaches where linguistic diversity functions as a resource for meaning-making and participation (García & Li, 2023; Barroga & Tampus, 2023). The participants' efforts to create safe and supportive classroom environments further reflect learner-centered approaches prioritizing students' identities, experiences, and emotional comfort in the learning process (Ojha et al., 2024). These findings suggest that inclusive multilingual classrooms are built through responsiveness to learners' linguistic realities and collaborative engagement.

Teacher Transformation and Professional Growth

The findings indicate that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms contributed to significant personal and professional transformation among the participants. The teachers described becoming more flexible, creative, resourceful, and learner-centered as they navigated instructional complexity, emotional demands, and multilingual classroom realities. Despite experiences of stress, pressure, and emotional strain, the participants demonstrated resilience and sustained commitment to supporting learners.

The emergent theme highlights that multilingual teaching contributes to teacher transformation and professional growth. The development of adaptability and creativity reflects the need for flexible teaching practices in linguistically diverse educational environments (Shukla et al., 2025). The emotional challenges experienced by participants demonstrate that multilingual teaching involves both cognitive and affective dimensions requiring resilience and professional perseverance (Chen, 2024). Moreover, the

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participants' shift toward learner-centered and holistic teaching reflects the principles of differentiated instruction, where teaching is guided by learners' needs, experiences, and developmental realities (Tomlinson, 2023). The sense of fulfillment described by participants further suggests that engagement with multilingual classrooms contributed to stronger professional identity and reflective teaching practice (Mohammad Nezhad & Stolz, 2024).

The emergent themes reveal interconnected dimensions of the participants' lived experiences, reflecting how Filipino English language teachers navigated differentiated instruction within linguistically and culturally diverse educational settings. These thematic patterns served as the foundation for formulating the essence of the phenomenon, which synthesizes the shared meaning underlying the participants' experiences in multilingual classrooms.

RQ4. Essence of the Lived Experiences of Filipino English Language Teachers

This section presents the essence of the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste. The discussion synthesizes the emergent themes and integrates the shared meanings underlying the participants' experiences. Through this phenomenological synthesis, the fundamental nature of teaching in multilingual contexts is articulated as a dynamic, adaptive, and learner-centered process shaped by linguistic diversity, instructional responsiveness, and professional commitment.

The essence of the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms reveals a continuous process of instructional adaptation, linguistic negotiation, and learner-centered responsiveness shaped by linguistic diversity, cultural inclusivity, and professional commitment. Teaching in multilingual classrooms emerged as a dynamic and reflective practice in which educators constantly adjusted their communication strategies, instructional approaches, and classroom interactions to address learners' varied language proficiencies, comprehension levels, and educational needs.

The participants' lived experiences demonstrate that differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms extends beyond the modification of learning activities and involves the continuous negotiation of meaning, participation, and understanding within linguistically diverse educational environments. Communication barriers, varying learner readiness, and multicultural classroom realities required teachers to employ multimodal instructional strategies, scaffolding, translanguaging practices, collaborative learning approaches, repetition, simplification, and adaptive instructional techniques to sustain learner engagement and comprehension. These experiences positioned differentiated instruction as a responsive, inclusive, and context-sensitive pedagogical process grounded in flexibility, creativity, and instructional responsiveness.

The participants' experiences further reveal that multilingual teaching involved significant emotional, cognitive, and professional demands that shaped their development as reflective and adaptive educators. The challenges associated with language barriers, instructional complexity, learner diversity, and continuous classroom adjustment cultivated patience, resilience, resourcefulness, and professional responsiveness among the teachers. Through these experiences, the participants developed deeper awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy, learner-centered instruction, and the importance of sustained flexibility in supporting multilingual learners within diverse classroom settings.

Another essential dimension of the phenomenon is the recognition of language as both a challenge and a resource in the learning process. The participants perceived translanguaging, native language use, and collaborative interaction as meaningful strategies that facilitated learner participation, comprehension, and confidence. Their experiences suggest that multilingual classrooms become more inclusive and supportive when learners are allowed to utilize familiar linguistic resources while gradually developing English language proficiency. This reflects a teaching environment where inclusivity, empathy, and linguistic responsiveness contribute to meaningful learning experiences.

The lived experiences of the participants also indicate that differentiated instruction required continuous reflection, situational responsiveness, and ongoing instructional negotiation. Teachers consistently evaluated learners' understanding, adjusted instructional pacing, simplified explanations, and modified classroom activities according to learners' evolving readiness levels and communication needs. These experiences demonstrate that teaching in multilingual classrooms is not a fixed or routine process but a continuously evolving pedagogical practice shaped by classroom realities and learner diversity.

The essence of the phenomenon further highlights that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms contributed to teacher transformation and professional growth. The participants described teaching as both challenging and fulfilling, emphasizing how multilingual classroom experiences strengthened their adaptability, creativity, emotional resilience, and commitment to inclusive education. Their reflections suggest that sustained engagement with linguistically diverse learners fostered deeper professional awareness and a stronger learner-centered orientation in teaching practice.

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The essence of implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms lies in the teachers' continuous effort to create inclusive, meaningful, and accessible learning experiences despite linguistic and cultural complexities. The phenomenon reflects a teaching practice rooted in responsiveness, empathy, adaptability, collaboration, and reflective engagement, where instruction is constantly reshaped according to learners' evolving needs and classroom realities. These lived experiences underscore the importance of contextualized instructional support systems and informed the development of the Adaptive Multilingual Differentiated Instruction (AMDl) Framework to support English language teaching in multilingual educational contexts.

RQ5. Proposed Framework and Implications for English Language Teaching in Multilingual Contexts

This section presents the proposed framework and educational implications derived from the findings of the study. Based on the emergent themes and the essence of the participants' lived experiences, the Adaptive Multilingual Differentiated Instruction (AMDl) Framework was developed to support English language teaching in multilingual classrooms. The framework was grounded in the participants' instructional realities, adaptive practices, and professional reflections regarding differentiated instruction in linguistically and culturally diverse educational settings. It provides a contextualized guide for implementing responsive, inclusive, and flexible instructional practices in multilingual classrooms.

The proposed framework, together with its key issues, strategies, and educational implications, is presented in Table 6. The table consolidates the major findings of the study and translates them into key components that address the challenges and demands of multilingual instruction. While Table 6 presents the detailed components of the framework, a schematic representation is provided in Figure 2 to illustrate the interrelationship of its core elements and how they collectively support effective teaching in multilingual classrooms.

Table 5. Adaptive Multilingual Differentiated Instruction (AMDl) Framework for Multilingual Classrooms

Emergent Theme	Key Issues Identified	Proposed Strategies	Educational Implications
Navigating Language Barriers in Instruction	Low English proficiency; misunderstanding of instructions; slow pacing	Simplify language; repetition; visuals/gestures; strategic translation; vocabulary pre-teaching	Improves clarity and access to content; reduces misinterpretation; supports comprehension for beginning learners
Pedagogical Flexibility in Diverse Classrooms	Mixed ability levels; varied learning styles; uneven progress	Grouping (leveled/heterogeneous); scaffolding; tiered tasks; modified assessments; intervention sessions	Promotes equitable, learner-centered instruction; aligns tasks to learner readiness and instructional need
Building Inclusive Multilingual Learning Environments	Language anxiety; low participation; exclusion of first language	Translanguaging; peer support/peer tutoring; collaborative tasks; safe classroom norms	Increases participation, confidence, and engagement; validates learner identity and linguistic diversity
Teacher Transformation and Professional Growth	Need for adaptability; limited preparation for multilingual settings; emotional strain	Ongoing professional development; reflective practice; collaboration with assistants; resource development	Strengthens teacher competence, resilience, responsiveness, and reflective teaching practice in multilingual contexts

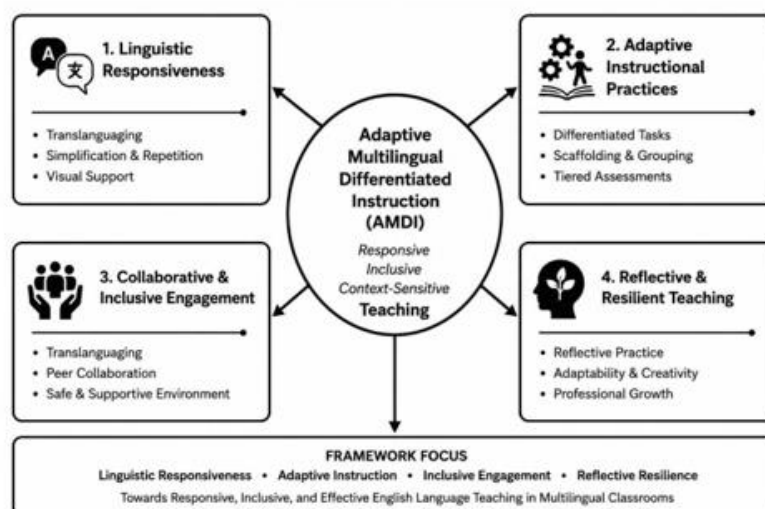


Figure 2. Adaptive Multilingual Differentiated Instruction (AMDl) Framework

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The AMDI Framework is organized around four interrelated components: Linguistic Responsiveness, Adaptive Instructional Practices, Collaborative and Inclusive Engagement, and Reflective and Resilient Teaching. These components emerged directly from the participants' lived experiences and correspond to the emergent themes identified in the study, reflecting the core dimensions of differentiated instruction within multilingual classroom settings.

The first component, Linguistic Responsiveness, emerged from the participants' experiences in addressing communication barriers and varied English proficiency levels among learners. This component emphasizes the use of translanguaging, repetition, simplification, clarification, visual support, strategic translation, and contextualized communication strategies to facilitate learner comprehension and participation in multilingual classrooms. The findings indicate that teachers continuously adjusted their language use and instructional pacing to address learners' comprehension difficulties and linguistic diversity.

The second component, Adaptive Instructional Practices, reflects the participants' continuous modification of instructional strategies, classroom activities, grouping methods, scaffolding approaches, and assessments according to learners' readiness levels, comprehension, and learning needs. This component reinforces the importance of instructional flexibility and responsiveness in implementing differentiated instruction. The participants' experiences demonstrate that multilingual teaching required constant pedagogical adjustment, multimodal support, and varied instructional approaches to sustain meaningful learning experiences.

The third component, Collaborative and Inclusive Engagement, emerged from the participants' emphasis on peer collaboration, Translanguaging practices, learner participation, and supportive classroom interaction. This component highlights the importance of collaborative learning, safe classroom environments, peer support, and the acceptance of learners' linguistic resources within multilingual instruction. The participants perceived inclusive classroom practices as essential in promoting learner confidence, engagement, comprehension, and active participation.

The fourth component, Reflective and Resilient Teaching, reflects the participants' experiences of emotional challenge, professional growth, adaptability, and learner-centered teaching. This component emphasizes continuous reflection, emotional resilience, professional responsiveness, and sustained commitment to inclusive education. The findings suggest that multilingual teaching contributed to the development of teachers' patience, creativity, flexibility, and reflective teaching practices as they navigated instructional complexity and learner diversity.

Taken together, these components illustrate that effective teaching in multilingual classrooms involves the integration of interconnected instructional, linguistic, social, and professional practices rather than isolated teaching strategies. The AMDI Framework therefore represents a holistic and context-sensitive approach to differentiated instruction grounded in the actual experiences of Filipino English language teachers in Timor-Leste.

The AMDI Framework is theoretically anchored in Tomlinson's Differentiated Instruction Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. Tomlinson's theory supports adaptive instructional planning responsive to learner diversity, readiness levels, and learning profiles, while Vygotsky's theory highlights the importance of interaction, scaffolding, collaboration, and socially mediated learning in multilingual educational contexts. Together, these theories reinforce the framework's emphasis on flexibility, inclusivity, learner-centeredness, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

The framework also reflects existing scholarship emphasizing linguistic accessibility, instructional flexibility, translanguaging, collaborative learning, and teacher resilience in multilingual education (UNESCO, 2025; Taylor-Leech, 2023; García & Li, 2023; Rosborough & Wimmer, 2023). The participants' lived experiences demonstrate that differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms requires not only adaptive pedagogy but also sustained emotional resilience, reflective practice, and contextual responsiveness.

Positioned within the findings of this phenomenological inquiry, the AMDI Framework serves as a data-driven and experience-based pedagogical model rather than a purely theoretical construct. The integration of Table 6 and Figure 2 strengthens the presentation of the framework by providing both detailed and visual representations of its interconnected components.

The framework may serve as a practical guide for English language teachers, school administrators, curriculum planners, and teacher-training institutions handling multilingual educational contexts. It supports the development of responsive instructional practices, inclusive classroom environments, and professional development initiatives aimed at strengthening differentiated instruction in multilingual settings. The AMDI Framework suggests that improving English language teaching in multilingual classrooms requires an integrated approach that addresses language barriers, adapts instructional strategies, fosters inclusive learning environments, and supports continuous teacher development.

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the phenomenological inquiry on the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms in Timor-Leste. The discussion synthesizes the significant experiences, formulated meanings, emergent themes, and

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the essence of the phenomenon, which collectively revealed how teachers navigate language barriers, adapt instructional practices, foster inclusive learning environments, and undergo professional transformation within multilingual teaching contexts. The findings likewise served as the basis for the development of the Adaptive Multilingual Differentiated Instruction (AMDl) Framework.

The following findings were derived from the thematic analysis of the participants' lived experiences and are aligned with the research questions of the study.

1. Filipino English language teachers described multilingual teaching as a continuous process of instructional adaptation shaped by communication barriers, learner diversity, and varied levels of English proficiency. The participants experienced difficulties related to misunderstanding of instructions, uneven learner comprehension, and extended instructional pacing, requiring continuous adjustment of communication and instructional strategies.
2. The formulated meanings revealed that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms involved linguistic responsiveness, instructional flexibility, reflective adaptation, and sustained support for learners' evolving needs. The participants perceived multilingual teaching as requiring scaffolding, grouping, multimodal instruction, translanguaging, repetition, simplification, and collaborative learning strategies to facilitate comprehension and participation.
3. The lived experiences of the participants revealed four emergent themes: (1) Navigating Language Barriers in Instruction, (2) Pedagogical Flexibility in Diverse Classrooms, (3) Building Inclusive Multilingual Learning Environments, and (4) Teacher Transformation and Professional Growth. These themes collectively reflected the participants' shared experiences of instructional adaptation, inclusivity, learner-centered responsiveness, and professional development within multilingual educational contexts.
4. The participants experienced multilingual teaching as both professionally meaningful and emotionally demanding. They encountered challenges related to communication difficulties, learner diversity, instructional complexity, and emotional strain while simultaneously observing gradual learner progress, increased engagement, and improved classroom participation. These experiences contributed to the development of adaptability, patience, resilience, creativity, and reflective teaching practices.
5. The essence of the participants' lived experiences revealed that implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual classrooms is a dynamic, reflective, and context-sensitive process grounded in instructional responsiveness, inclusivity, adaptability, and continuous pedagogical adjustment. Teaching in multilingual contexts required sustained efforts to create meaningful, accessible, and learner-centered educational experiences despite linguistic and cultural complexities.
6. Based on the findings and essence of the phenomenon, the Adaptive Multilingual Differentiated Instruction (AMDl) Framework was developed. The framework emphasizes Linguistic Responsiveness, Adaptive Instructional Practices, Collaborative and Inclusive Engagement, and Reflective and Resilient Teaching as interconnected dimensions supporting effective English language instruction in multilingual classrooms.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. Language barriers significantly shape the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers, influencing instructional delivery, classroom interaction, learner comprehension, and instructional pacing within multilingual classroom settings.
2. Differentiated instruction functions as a necessary and responsive pedagogical approach in multilingual classrooms, requiring continuous instructional adaptation according to learners' linguistic diversity, readiness levels, and comprehension needs.
3. Multimodal instruction, translanguaging practices, scaffolding, collaborative learning, and inclusive classroom interaction support learner participation, comprehension, confidence, and engagement in multilingual educational contexts.
4. Teaching in multilingual classrooms involves significant instructional, emotional, and professional demands that contribute to the development of teacher adaptability, reflective practice, emotional resilience, and learner-centered teaching orientation.
5. Effective English language teaching in multilingual classrooms requires an integrated pedagogical approach that combines linguistic responsiveness, adaptive instructional practices, inclusive engagement, and sustained teacher development.
6. The Adaptive Multilingual Differentiated Instruction (AMDl) Framework provides a context-responsive and data-driven pedagogical model grounded in the lived experiences of Filipino English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in multilingual environments.

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. English language teachers may strengthen differentiated instruction practices through the continued use of multimodal strategies, translanguaging practices, scaffolding, grouping techniques, and learner-centered instructional approaches responsive to multilingual classroom realities.

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2. Teachers may engage in continuous reflection, collaborative learning, and professional development initiatives to further strengthen their adaptability, instructional competence, emotional resilience, and responsiveness in multilingual educational settings.
3. School administrators may develop and implement professional development programs, mentoring initiatives, instructional support systems, and collaborative teaching structures that support teachers handling linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms.
4. Educational institutions and curriculum planners may design contextualized instructional materials, inclusive classroom policies, and teacher education programs that integrate differentiated instruction, multilingual responsiveness, and culturally inclusive pedagogical practices.
5. Educational policymakers may strengthen support mechanisms, instructional resources, and institutional frameworks promoting inclusive multilingual education and sustained teacher development in linguistically diverse contexts.
6. Future researchers may conduct further phenomenological and multilingual education studies involving different educational contexts, learner perspectives, subject areas, or instructional levels to expand understanding of differentiated instruction and further validate the AMDI Framework.

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