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## STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES IN TEACHING MANDARIN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE PHILIPPINES: BASIS FOR A TRAINING PLAN

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the level of utilization of teaching strategies and the level of implementation of classroom practices in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language as perceived by Mandarin teachers and students. It also identified the challenges encountered in Mandarin learning, explored the relationship between teacher profile variables and instructional practices, and determined differences in perceptions between teachers and students. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were collected from Mandarin teachers and students using a structured questionnaire and were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, correlation, and multivariate statistical tests. The results showed that teaching strategies were used a lot, and classroom practices were mostly or completely followed. Students consistently rated both strategy utilization and classroom practice implementation higher than teachers. Significant differences were found in selected domains, particularly in pedagogical content knowledge and teacher training support. Challenges related to tone production, character writing, limited practice time, and insufficient exposure to native speakers moderately affected Mandarin learning. Teacher profile variables showed limited overall influence on instructional effectiveness, although language proficiency and access to resources were associated with specific practices. Based on the findings, a structured and needs-based training program was proposed to enhance instructional quality and strengthen professional development support for Mandarin teachers.*

**Keywords:** *Mandarin as a foreign language, teaching strategies, classroom practices*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mandarin Chinese, also known as *Putonghua* (普通话), is the most widely spoken language in the world, with more than one billion speakers. As China continues to grow in economic, political, and cultural influence, Mandarin is increasingly taking on the role of a global language—used in diplomacy, international business, education, and global relations (Wang, 2021). Attracted by the career opportunities and cultural engagement, Confucius Institutes and language programs worldwide report millions of foreigners studying Mandarin. In response to this trend, many countries have added Mandarin to their foreign language curriculum, recognizing its relevance in today's interconnected world. The Philippines, with its growing economic ties to China, is no exception.

For example, the first Confucius Institute in the Philippines is the Confucius Institute at Ateneo de Manila University, which was established in 2006 through a partnership with Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou. Its primary mission is to promote Chinese language and culture as well as contemporary knowledge of China within Philippine society by offering year-round language and culture courses, teacher training seminars, and standardized proficiency tests such as

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the HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi), HSKK (Hanyu Shuiping Kouyu Kaoshi), and YCT (Youth Chinese Test). In addition, it houses a reading room in its Makati campus with over 8,000 resources on Chinese language, literature, history, and society, further supporting its role as a hub for cultural exchange and learning (Palanca, Ellen H., n.d.).

Furthermore, in 2013, the Department of Education designated the Confucius Institute at Angeles University Foundation (CI-AUF) as the Training Center for the Local Mandarin Teachers in the Philippines. Since then, CI-AUF has led the localization of Chinese language education by training 360 Filipino teachers, deploying more than 500 Chinese teachers, and developing localized instructional materials. To further support the sustainability of DepEd's Special Program in Foreign Language-Chinese Mandarin, CI-AUF, together with the Confucius Institute Headquarters, established the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Chinese Language Teaching and English in 2014 and the Master of Arts in Education major in Chinese Language Teaching in 2019 (Confucius Institute at Angeles University Foundation, n.d.).

However, learning and teaching Mandarin as a Foreign Language (MFL) in the Philippines still poses significant challenges. Linguistically, Mandarin is quite different from the alphabet-based, non-tonal languages spoken in the Philippines, such as Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, and English. Its tonal pronunciation and character-based writing system can be difficult for Filipino learners to master. Many students struggle with tone accuracy, pronunciation, and memorizing Chinese characters. In addition, cultural differences and limited exposure to and immersion in real-life Mandarin-speaking environments can make it harder for practical application to retain what they've learned (Cheng, 2021), leading to challenges in effectively communicating and using the language in everyday situations.

The author's dual experiences as a learner and an educator contribute to further understanding of this study. The author's personal, in-depth, and immersive Mandarin study in China opened his eyes to the difficulties and opportunities faced by international students. Although extensive exposure was very beneficial for learning, it also highlighted instructional strategies and practices that might not be directly applicable in the Philippine setting, such as the need for culturally relevant teaching methods and resources that address the specific challenges faced by Filipino learners of Mandarin. In addition, the author's firsthand experience of teaching Mandarin at Asian Christian University for over ten years, as well as teaching engagements in the AB English Language (ABEL) program at Pangasinan State University's three campuses for four consecutive years, revealed persistent challenges in the local classroom. Despite student interest, consistent difficulties with pronunciation and tonal accuracy, character retention, and achieving basic communicative fluency were observed. While resources and excitement are available, the observations demand that instructional approaches undergo considerable modification and innovation to be genuinely effective for Filipino students.

Educators face similar challenges. Teaching Mandarin as a foreign language requires specialized training, familiarity with effective pedagogy, and access to appropriate teaching resources. Yet in the Philippines, there's a noticeable shortage of well-trained Mandarin teachers, leading to inconsistencies in instructional quality and effectiveness among various institutions

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(Santos, 2022). These challenges emphasize the need to identify which teaching methods work best in the local context.

Even though the difficulties and significance of teaching Mandarin in the Philippines are widely recognized, there remains a significant lack of empirical, locally focused research. Specifically, there is a lack of thorough research on the actual teaching strategies and practices employed in various Philippine institutions, their perceived and quantifiable efficacy in the particular learning environment of the Filipino students, and the particular challenges teachers encounter on a daily basis. Existing international studies on MFL pedagogy may not fully account for the linguistic backgrounds of Filipino learners, which are based on English and Philippine languages, the unique cultural setting, and the resource realities of Philippine classrooms.

Therefore, this study aimed to address the current strategies used to teach Mandarin in the Philippines. It will pinpoint the most common problems in the classroom, evaluate how well the methods work, and suggest useful ways to help Filipino students learn. Through this research, the goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Mandarin is taught as a foreign language and offer practical recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of teaching strategies and practices.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to investigate the pedagogical strategies and classroom practices utilized in the instruction of Mandarin as a foreign language in higher education institutions (HEIs) across Region I, Philippines.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of utilization of the strategies in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language as perceived by the teachers and students, in terms of:
  - a. Discussion and Lecture;
  - b. Game-Based Learning;
  - c. Question and Answer;
  - d. Project Method; and
  - e. Use of Technology and Digital Resources?
2. What is the level of implementation of the practices employed by teachers in handling Mandarin as a foreign language, as perceived by teachers and students in terms of:
  - a. Pedagogical Content Knowledge;
  - b. Teaching Methods and Techniques;
  - c. Curriculum and Resources;
  - d. Assessment Practices; and
  - e. Teacher Training and Support?
3. What are the challenges encountered in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of utilization of the strategies in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language as perceived by the teachers and students?
5. Is there a significant difference in the level of implementation of the practices employed by teachers in handling Mandarin as a foreign language as perceived by both teachers and students?

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6. What training plan may be proposed to enhance the strategies and practices of teachers handling Mandarin as a foreign language?

### **Scope and Delimitations**

This study concentrated on examining the strategies and methodologies employed in the instruction of Mandarin as a foreign language at selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Region I, Philippines. It specifically covered both public and private colleges and universities located in the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan that offer formal Mandarin language courses during the Academic Year 2024–2025. The primary participants in this research were Mandarin language instructors currently teaching in these HEIs. Supplementary data were also collected from students and academic personnel, such as program heads or curriculum coordinators, to provide a broader perspective on institutional support and classroom implementation.

### **Review of Related Literatures**

#### ***Global Importance of Mandarin Language Education***

Over the past two decades, Mandarin Chinese has emerged as one of the most strategically important foreign languages in the world. The rise of China as a major economic and geopolitical power has significantly influenced global language education policies and practices. As China's power grows in business, politics, technology, and culture, Mandarin has become more and more important as a language for international communication, diplomacy, and trade (Lin, 2024). Universities, governments, and international institutions worldwide have therefore intensified efforts to promote Mandarin language education.

The teaching of Mandarin as a foreign language (MFL), commonly referred to as Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) or Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL), has experienced rapid growth in higher education institutions worldwide. One of the major factors of the global spread of Mandarin education is China's strategic language promotion initiatives. Government-supported programs such as scholarships, international partnerships, and language promotion organizations have played an important role in expanding Mandarin instruction globally. Among the most visible initiatives are Confucius Institutes, which function as international centers for Chinese language and cultural education. These institutions operate in collaboration with universities and educational organizations worldwide and serve as platforms for cultural exchange, language training, and academic cooperation. Through these programs, Mandarin is increasingly positioned not only as a language of communication but also as a tool for intercultural engagement and diplomacy (Gong et al., 2020; Ma, 2022).

Another factor contributing to the global growth of Mandarin education is the increasing number of international students and cross-border academic collaborations. Educational exchange programs and partnerships between Chinese universities and schools around the world have made it easier for people to learn new languages and share their cultures. These kinds of partnerships help people learn new languages and make international academic cooperation stronger.

This trend reflects a recognition of the strategic importance of Mandarin proficiency in today's interconnected world. The literature suggests that when a language is promoted via state-

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level economic and educational policy, uptake in universities and vocational programs often follows, mediated by local institutional capacity and funding. (Godwin-Jones, 2023; Maksimova, 2022).

### ***Mandarin Language Education in the Philippine Context***

Mandarin language education in the Philippines has evolved through a complex combination of historical, sociopolitical, and cultural influences. During the American colonial period, Chinese communities have long been present in Philippine society, and Chinese schools historically served as institutions for preserving the Chinese language and culture among Chinese-Filipino communities.

However, these institutions faced pressure to integrate into the Philippine national education system, particularly through policies promoting English-language instruction and national curricular standards. Consequently, Chinese schools gradually adopted bilingual or dual curricula that combined instruction in Chinese with English and Philippine subjects. Educational reforms and Filipinization policies further required these schools to align with national regulations, leading to the incorporation of Philippine history, civics, and culture alongside traditional Chinese instruction.

Recent reports, institutional press releases, and regional memoranda show concrete efforts by Region I HEIs to establish Mandarin programs and local language resources (examples include Mariano Marcos State University's Chinese Learning Center and "Chinese Corner" and Pangasinan State University curricular offerings), often supported through donations, consular cooperation, or institutional partnerships (MMSU news; PSU campus sites). These local initiatives demonstrate demand and institutional responsiveness, but also highlight uneven capacity in staffing, materials, and the continuity of programming—conditions that require targeted training and institutional support to sustain and scale Mandarin courses in the region. (Mariano Marcos State University news; Pangasinan State University information) ([mmsu.edu.ph](http://mmsu.edu.ph), [main.psu.edu.ph](http://main.psu.edu.ph)).

Despite these formal supports, studies examining Chinese language education in the Philippines identify several challenges affecting the implementation of Mandarin programs. These include shortages of qualified teachers, limited localized teaching materials, and disparities in educational resources across regions (Lin, 2024; Wikipedia, 2024).

Language policy research also shows how Mandarin's role in the Philippine education system is changing. Policy developments indicate increasing recognition of Mandarin as a strategic foreign language for economic and diplomatic engagement. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends on teacher training, institutional support, and curriculum development (Xu & Jiang, 2024).

Although regional trainings and DepEd's SPFL learning modules show a national commitment, they haven't closed long-standing deficiencies (e.g., disparities in teacher upskilling, digital readiness, and local resource allocation). These disparities are acutely felt in underserved regions such as Region I (Ilocos), where challenges like underfunding and inadequate teacher training—with 70% of surveyed educators reporting insufficient preparedness (Santos, 2022)—limited localized materials, and infrastructural gaps hinder effective delivery, compounded by the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) 2023 finding that only 15% of HEIs meet established instructor qualification benchmarks (HSK Level 5 or equivalent + pedagogical training).

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Additionally, DepEd's K–12 implementation, which is meant to serve as a feeder for HEIs, is still uneven; according to a DepEd Region I survey (2023), only 30% of Division Offices reported having teachers specifically trained for the Mandarin curriculum, and in 65% of sampled schools, actual classroom hours delivered fell short of the 120-hour target, primarily because of a shortage of qualified teachers and materials. These gaps underscore the need to scrutinize the implementation of Mandarin instruction at the tertiary level, particularly in underserved regions like Region I.

### ***Teaching Strategies in Mandarin Instruction***

These methods align well with the limited timeframe of one or two semesters by focusing on practical, high-frequency language use. These methods have shown promise in enhancing learner engagement, confidence, and overall proficiency. These approaches encourage learners to engage in meaningful communication activities that simulate authentic language use. Recent research also highlights the effectiveness of blended learning and flipped classroom models in Mandarin instruction. These approaches combine traditional classroom instruction with online learning activities, enabling students to engage with learning materials before class and apply their knowledge during interactive classroom activities (Kong, 2024).

### ***Technology in Mandarin Language Teaching***

Educational technology has significantly transformed language learning environments by providing learners with new opportunities for interactive and personalized learning experiences. Digital tools such as mobile applications, online learning platforms, and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have increasingly been integrated into Mandarin language education to support flexible and learner-centered instruction. These technologies enable students to access multimedia resources, interactive exercises, and adaptive learning systems that facilitate more effective language acquisition. Studies in computer-assisted language learning (CALL) demonstrate that digital technologies can improve language acquisition by promoting learner autonomy, augmenting exposure to target language input, and enabling multimodal learning experiences (Godwin-Jones, 2023).

### ***Challenges in Learning Mandarin***

The inherent difficulty of Mandarin presents significant challenges within the limited timeframe of one or two semesters. Compared with many commonly taught foreign languages, Mandarin requires learners to acquire unfamiliar phonological patterns, a calligraphic writing system, and cultural knowledge that are often absent in learners' prior linguistic experiences. Linguistically, Mandarin presents unique difficulties for Filipino students, given its tonal nature and character-based writing system. Filipino learners, whose native languages are typically phonetic and non-tonal (e.g., Tagalog, Ilocano, and Pangasinan), often struggle with pronunciation, tone recognition (featuring four distinct tones plus a neutral tone), and character memorization (Liu & Thompson, 2020; Han & Zhao, 2022). One of the most significant linguistic challenges involves Mandarin's tonal phonology. Mandarin

### ***Teacher Professional Development and Training***

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Another critical issue is the shortage of locally qualified Mandarin instructors within the Philippine system. Teacher competence is a crucial factor in the effectiveness of foreign language education programs. Effective Mandarin instruction requires both linguistic proficiency and specialized pedagogical knowledge. In many HEIs, Mandarin is taught by teachers who may lack native-level proficiency or formal pedagogical training.

According to CHED (2023) data, only 35% of MFL teachers in higher education institutions have HSK Level 5 proficiency, which is usually the minimum for teaching basic courses. Level 6 (advanced) holders are not common outside of large private and elite universities. The issue is particularly worse in Region I, as universities primarily use non-native Filipino teachers, many of whom are heritage speakers or language enthusiasts without formal pedagogical training or certified advanced proficiency (Santos, 2022; Pascual, 2024).

According to Pamintuan (2024), these teachers may be proficient in explaining grammar and history, but they frequently have a difficult time modeling accurate and standard pronunciations, effectively addressing tone errors, guiding the correct stroke orders in writing Chinese characters, and providing authentic spoken Chinese. Such challenges can lead to students getting errors from the very beginning.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Teaching Mandarin as a Foreign Language (MFL) in the Philippines integrates multiple conceptual domains to address the unique linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic factors affecting effective language acquisition. Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), Postmethod Pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 1994), and Language Policy and Planning (LPP) Theory (Spolsky, 2004) are the three interrelated theoretical lenses to be used in this work to analyze these dynamics. Collectively, these frameworks demonstrate how educators bridge policy gaps in resource-constrained settings, promote learning through culturally rooted interactions, and innovate beyond prescribed methods.

### ***Sociocultural Theory***

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is an important part of understanding how people learn languages through social interaction and cultural mediation. In the multilingual context of the Philippines, particularly in Region I, learners bring diverse linguistic skills (Ilocano, Pangasinan, Tagalog, and English) that significantly shape Mandarin acquisition processes. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and social mediation provide the ideal framework for understanding the learning process in Mandarin as a Foreign Language (MFL) and how teachers can provide appropriate scaffolding to support Mandarin learning (Olobia, 2025). Ilocano and Pangasinan first-language speakers perceive Mandarin's tonal system as difficult to understand, especially its rising and falling intonations. Teachers employ culturally based scaffolding that connects new sounds to well-known events to close this phonological gap.

### ***Postmethod Pedagogy***

According to Kumaravadivelu (1994), postmethod pedagogy advocates flexible, context-sensitive training based on local educational circumstances rather than standardized instructional frameworks. This perspective is especially valuable in the Philippine setting, where educators must

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adapt international language teaching approaches to fit local resources, cultural norms, and student requirements (Matolo et al., 2023).

### ***Language Policy and Planning (LPP) Framework***

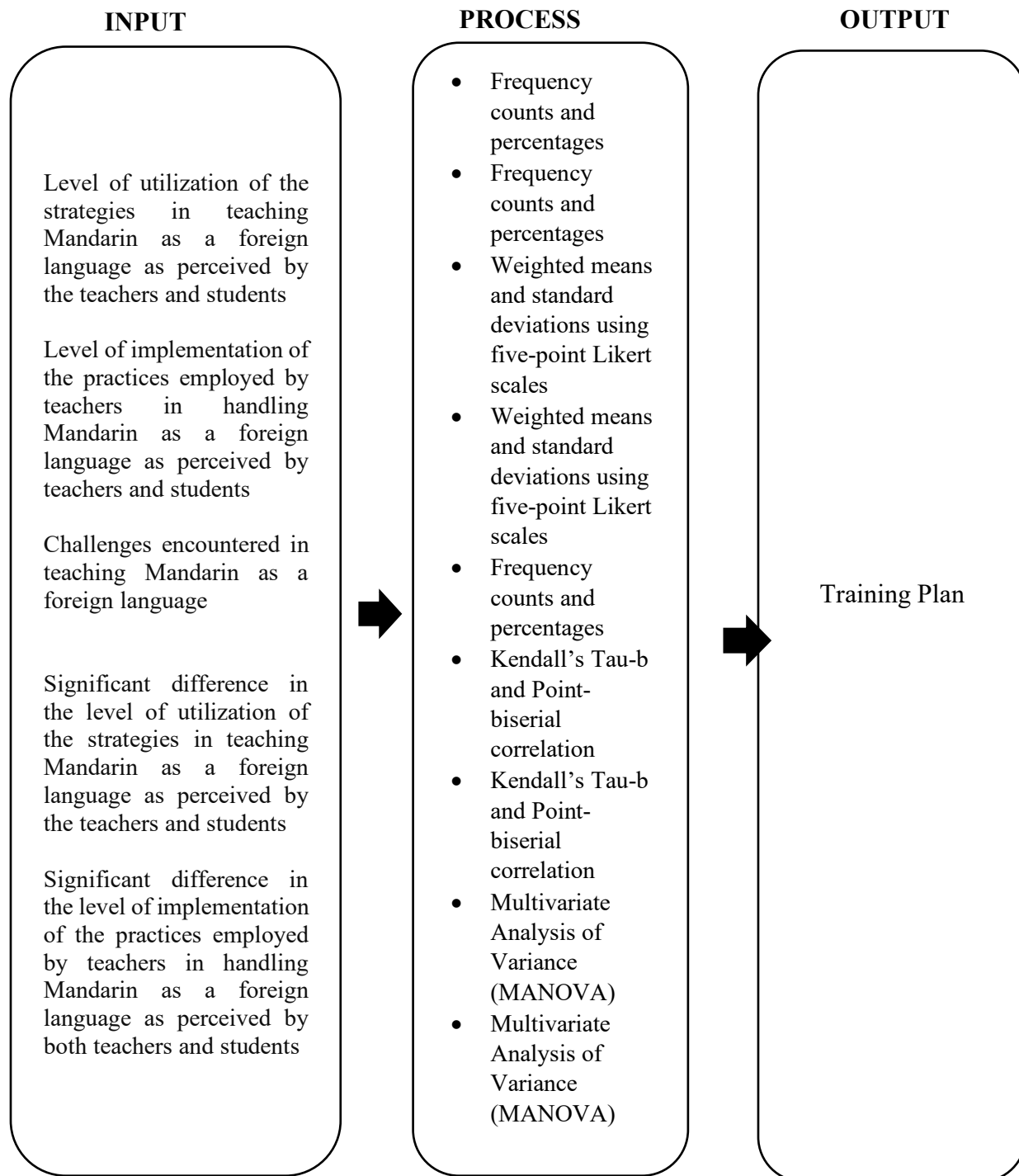
Spolsky's (2004) Language Policy and Planning (LPP) theory posits that language education is influenced by a multifaceted interplay of policies, practices, and ideologies, rather than solely by the curriculum. Mandarin education in the Philippines reflects a conflict between the economic value of Chinese in trade and diplomacy and the country's language priorities, which are Filipino and English.

According to comparative studies, the Philippines' fragmented approach to Mandarin instruction stands in significant contrast to the coordinated national policies of Thailand and Vietnam, two neighboring Southeast Asian nations that have established systematic teacher training programs and standardized curricula (Rey S. Villaverde, 2016). A notable resource allocation discrepancy between the center and the periphery characterizes the Philippine context. Metro Manila benefits from numerous Confucius Institutes that offer university dual-degree programs, while regional centers frequently prioritize cultural events over teacher development. This policy fragmentation results in variable educational quality across the region and makes it difficult to construct sustainable programs (Villaverde, 2016).

### ***Integrative Theoretical Model***

The integrative theoretical model combines Sociocultural Theory, Postmethod Pedagogy and Language Policy into a coherent framework that addresses the specific challenges and opportunities of teaching Mandarin in the Philippine context. Each theory offers a distinct area of emphasis: LPP theory places these initiatives within larger power structures and policy landscapes; postmethod pedagogy emphasizes the significance of teacher agency and local adaptation; and sociocultural theory captures the immediate classroom dynamics of socially mediated learning. In the integrative model, it recognizes that effective Mandarin instruction requires simultaneous consideration and attention to cultural, technological, professional, and policy dimensions instead of separately addressing each aspect.

## Conceptual Framework



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This study was conducted using Ralph Tyler's Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model to systematically examine how Mandarin Chinese is taught as a foreign language in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Region I, Philippines.

The *Input* phase involved gathering data on the teaching and learning environment, including instructional strategies, classroom practices, and institutional support mechanisms.

The *Process* phase employed a quantitative approach using a structured survey questionnaire as the sole data collection instrument. The collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics to present a full picture of the identified variables. The analysis was interpreted in light of relevant theoretical frameworks, including Sociocultural Theory, Postmethod Pedagogy, and Language Policy and Planning.

The *Output* phase presented the findings by identifying effective teaching practices, instructional challenges, and existing support systems. These findings informed the development of a context-responsive improvement plan for Mandarin language education. A feedback loop from the Output phase to the Input phase ensured that the results contributed to the continuous enhancement of instructional practices, teacher professional development, and institutional policies, thereby affirming the IPO model as a systematic framework for evaluation and ongoing improvement.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design, supported by both quantitative and qualitative approaches. It aimed to describe and understand the current strategies, practices, and challenges faced by Mandarin language teachers in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Region I, Philippines. The descriptive design allowed the researcher to gather factual and insightful data that reflect the actual conditions in the classroom and institutional settings. The quantitative component focused on collecting measurable data through survey questionnaires, while the qualitative part gathered more profound insights through open-ended questions. This combination provided a well-rounded perspective on how Mandarin is taught as a foreign language in both public and private colleges and universities.

### Respondents of the study

The respondents of this study are Mandarin language teachers currently teaching in selected public and private HEIs in Region I that offer Mandarin courses. A total of 15 Mandarin teachers from different universities within the region were selected using purposive sampling. These teachers met specific inclusion criteria: they must have at least one year of experience teaching Mandarin and must be actively handling classes at the time of the study. Both full-time and part-time instructors are included to represent a wide range of perspectives. By focusing on teachers with direct classroom experience, the study ensures that the data collected are credible and grounded in actual teaching practices.

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In addition to the teachers, the study also included 600 students currently enrolled in Mandarin courses under the selected instructors. This student body further validated the teaching difficulties and instructional efficacy that the teachers had described. The study ensured that the data collected were reliable and firmly based in actual teaching and learning contexts by focusing on teachers who have direct classroom engagement and their individual students.

### **Data-Gathering Instrument**

The primary instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed questionnaire based on relevant literature and subjected to rigorous validation.

Experts in language education and research looked over the questionnaire to confirm that it was valid and reliable. It consisted of several sections: the first gathered the respondents' demographic profile, including age, gender, educational attainment, years of experience in teaching Mandarin, and participation in related training or seminars; the second focused on the teaching strategies commonly employed; the third examined classroom practices such as content delivery methods, use of instructional materials, and assessment tools; the fourth identified the challenges encountered in teaching Mandarin to Filipino learners, including pedagogical, cultural, and institutional barriers; and the fifth explored institutional support mechanisms and interventions, such as administrative assistance, availability of teaching materials, and professional development opportunities. The final section included open-ended questions that allowed respondents to share suggestions and unique experiences that may contribute to the development of the proposed enhancement plan.

To ensure the instrument's quality, the questionnaire underwent multi-stage validation, beginning with a review by the research adviser for alignment with the study objectives, followed by evaluation by a panel of experts in educational research, professional development, and language instruction, who assessed its content accuracy, clarity, relevance, and overall appropriateness for data collection.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

After the research instrument was validated, the final questionnaire was given to a group of Mandarin language teachers from both public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) in Region I. This was done through a mix of online and offline methods, depending on what was easiest for the respondents and what they preferred. Google Forms links were utilized to distribute the questionnaire to teachers with reliable internet access, while printed copies were distributed to and retrieved from respondents with limited connectivity or technological constraints.

Prior to participation, all respondents were provided with a clear explanation of the study's purpose, ethical considerations, and procedures, and informed consent was obtained to ensure voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and the respondents' right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Before data collection commenced, the researcher secured formal approval from the administrations of the participating HEIs by presenting the study objectives, methodology, and ethical safeguards, and coordination with authorized institutional representatives facilitated the proper distribution of the questionnaires.

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Standardized instructions were provided to ensure consistency in responses, and open communication channels were maintained throughout the administration period to address inquiries and provide assistance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented through tables and figures to facilitate clear and accurate interpretation. Each table or figure is introduced with a brief description of its focus, followed by a detailed discussion of what the data reveal. The analysis highlights notable patterns, similarities, and differences in perceptions, while the interpretation explains the implications of these results for Mandarin language instruction. Emphasis is placed on how the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of effective teaching strategies and classroom practices in a foreign language context. Below is the summary of level of implementation of classroom practices:

**Table 1 Summary of Level of Implementation of Classroom Practices**

Level of Implementation of Classroom Practices	Mandarin Teachers		Students	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
Pedagogical Content Knowledge	4.32	Well Implemented	4.64	Fully Implemented
Teaching Methods and Techniques	4.49	Well Implemented	4.57	Fully Implemented
Curriculum and Resources	4.46	Well Implemented	4.53	Fully Implemented
Assessment Practices	4.54	Fully Implemented	4.53	Fully Implemented
Teacher Training Support	3.78	Well Implemented	4.49	Well Implemented
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>Well Implemented</b>	<b>4.55</b>	<b>Fully Implemented</b>
1.00-1.50 Not Implemented (NI)		1.51-2.50 Slightly Implemented (SI)		
2.51-3.50 Moderately Implemented (MI)		3.51-4.50 Well Implemented (WI)		
4.51-5.00 Fully Implemented (FI)				

The results showing that teachers rated overall classroom practices as Well Implemented ( $M = 4.32$ ) while students rated them as Fully Implemented ( $M = 4.55$ ) indicate that Mandarin instruction is systematically and consistently applied across key pedagogical domains and perceived positively by both teachers and learners. The higher student ratings across all domains suggest that learners experience instructional practices as especially effective, coherent, and supportive of their language development—perhaps even more strongly than teachers' own evaluations.

One key implication of this pattern is that students may be more sensitive to the cumulative and holistic effects of instructional practices than individual teachers, who may critically evaluate their performance against professional standards. Research demonstrates a strong link between student perceptions of instructional quality, particularly in language classrooms, and engagement,

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motivation, and the perceived relevance of teaching behaviors (Wu & Wang, 2025). Students' positive perceptions of teacher talk, interaction, and assessment practices can contribute to deeper cognitive engagement and affective investment in learning, resulting in better outcomes.

Another implication is that teachers' self-critical evaluations may reflect awareness of areas needing further development, such as training support or differentiated practice, whereas students primarily perceive the outcomes of effective classroom activities. Studies in educational research suggest that a perception gap between teachers and students often occurs because teachers attend more closely to pedagogical limitations and contextual constraints, while students emphasize instructional impact on their learning experience (Tang, 2025). This gap does not necessarily denote ineffective teaching but highlights different interpretive frameworks: teachers focus on process fidelity and pedagogical rigor, while students focus on learning experience and instructional clarity.

Furthermore, the particularly strong ratings for assessment practices and instructional delivery imply that Mandarin instructional practices effectively balance formative assessment, feedback, and communicative pedagogy. Recent systematic reviews on student perceptions of teaching behaviors underscore that when students perceive teacher practices as clear, engaging, and supportive—especially in feedback and interaction—they report higher satisfaction and improved learning engagement (Brandmo & Gamlem, 2025).

Finally, the comparatively lower teacher rating for teacher training support suggests that teachers perceive gaps in sustained professional development and institutional support, which may temper their confidence in implementing best practices at the highest level. This perception aligns with literature indicating that ongoing, context-specific professional learning opportunities significantly influence teachers' instructional confidence and adaptability (Amemasor et al., 2025). Overall, the findings imply that while both teachers and students see classroom practice implementation positively, students' more favorable perceptions likely reflect the visible instructional coherence and learning support experienced in the classroom, whereas teachers' more measured evaluation highlights areas—such as professional support—where further institutional strengthening may enhance instructional excellence.

### Challenges Encountered by Students in Learning Mandarin

The table below displays the challenges students face when learning Mandarin as a foreign language, as reported by the student respondents (n = 165). The table identifies a range of linguistic, instructional, and contextual challenges that may affect students' Mandarin learning experience. Responses were measured using a five-point scale ranging from Does Not Affect to Strongly Affects, allowing the study to determine the extent to which each challenge influences students' learning.

The challenges include access to learning materials, motivation, time constraints, difficulty with Chinese characters and tones, availability of facilities, institutional support, teacher-related communication issues, learner differences, technological concerns, cultural understanding, interaction with native speakers, and enrichment opportunities.

**Table 13 Challenges Encountered by Students in Learning Mandarin n=165**

How much do the following challenges affect your Mandarin learning experience?	SA	A	N	SLA	DNA
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1. Limited access to quality Mandarin learning materials and resources.	F	48	<b>55</b>	42	13	7
	%	29.1	<b>33.3</b>	25.5	7.9	4.2
2. Lack of motivation or interest in learning Mandarin.	F	<b>53</b>	45	31	19	17
	%	<b>32.1</b>	27.3	18.8	11.5	10.3
3. Not enough time to fully understand lessons or finish activities.	F	<b>56</b>	47	33	16	13
	%	<b>33.9</b>	28.5	20.0	9.7	7.9
4. Difficulty in recognizing or writing Chinese characters and pronouncing tones.	F	51	<b>54</b>	32	22	6
	%	30.9	<b>32.7</b>	19.4	13.3	3.6
5. Language/speech laboratories or similar facilities are available for Mandarin learning.	F	43	<b>60</b>	37	13	12
	%	26.1	<b>36.4</b>	22.4	7.9	7.3
6. Lack of encouragement or support from the school.	F	37	<b>51</b>	44	17	16
	%	22.4	<b>30.9</b>	26.7	10.3	9.7
7. Difficulty understanding the teacher due to language barriers.	F	35	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	18	26
	%	21.2	<b>26.1</b>	<b>26.1</b>	10.9	15.8
8. Some classmates are more advanced or behind in Mandarin skills.	F	31	<b>53</b>	32	25	24
	%	18.8	<b>32.1</b>	19.4	15.2	14.5
9. Poor internet or tech issues during online Mandarin classes.	F	42	<b>48</b>	30	26	19
	%	25.5	<b>29.1</b>	18.2	15.8	11.5
10. Confusion due to cultural differences in the lessons.	F	38	<b>54</b>	34	26	13
	%	23.0	<b>32.7</b>	20.6	15.8	7.9
11. Absence of activities that let us interact with Mandarin native speakers.	F	42	<b>52</b>	35	19	17
	%	25.5	<b>31.5</b>	21.2	11.5	10.3
12. Lack of opportunities to enrich our Mandarin curriculum (e.g., contests, cultural events).	F	50	<b>54</b>	36	14	11
	%	30.3	<b>32.7</b>	21.8	8.5	6.7
<b>Mean</b>			<b>3.54 - Affects</b>			

Note: Highest frequencies are in bold face

1.00-1.50 Does Not Affect (DNA)

1.51-2.50 Slightly Affects (SLA)

2.51-3.50 Neutral (N)

3.51-4.50 Affects (A)

4.51-5.00 Strongly Affects (SA)

The overall mean for the challenges encountered by students is 3.54, described as Affects, indicating that the identified challenges moderately affect Mandarin learning. This findings that students report moderate but meaningful challenges in learning Mandarin—with particular concern for limited time for practice, difficulty with Chinese characters and tones, lack of interaction with native speakers, and limited enrichment opportunities—have several important pedagogical implications.

First, the prominence of time constraints suggests that the pace and structure of Mandarin instruction may not fully accommodate the depth of practice required for mastering complex linguistic features. Second, the high ratings for difficulties with characters and tones align with well-documented characteristics of Mandarin as a second language; these features require extensive input, repeated practice, and targeted pedagogical support. Third, the reported lack of

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meaningful interaction with native speakers and authentic language use points to gaps in exposure and communicative opportunities, which are essential for developing fluency and confidence. Recent research supports these implications. Studies on Mandarin as a foreign language emphasize that tonal perception and production remain challenging for non-native learners, confirming that Mandarin's tonal phonology requires sustained practice and focused training (Zhou & Goh, 2025). The difficulty with tones and characters observed in this study thus reflects inherent linguistic complexity that deserves sustained instructional attention.

Moreover, research on second language learning highlights that limited exposure to authentic input and interaction with native speakers can significantly hinder communicative competence and confidence. Interaction provides learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning, receive feedback, and develop sociocultural understanding—conditions that are often lacking when classroom interaction is isolated from authentic communication contexts (Zhou & Goh, 2025).

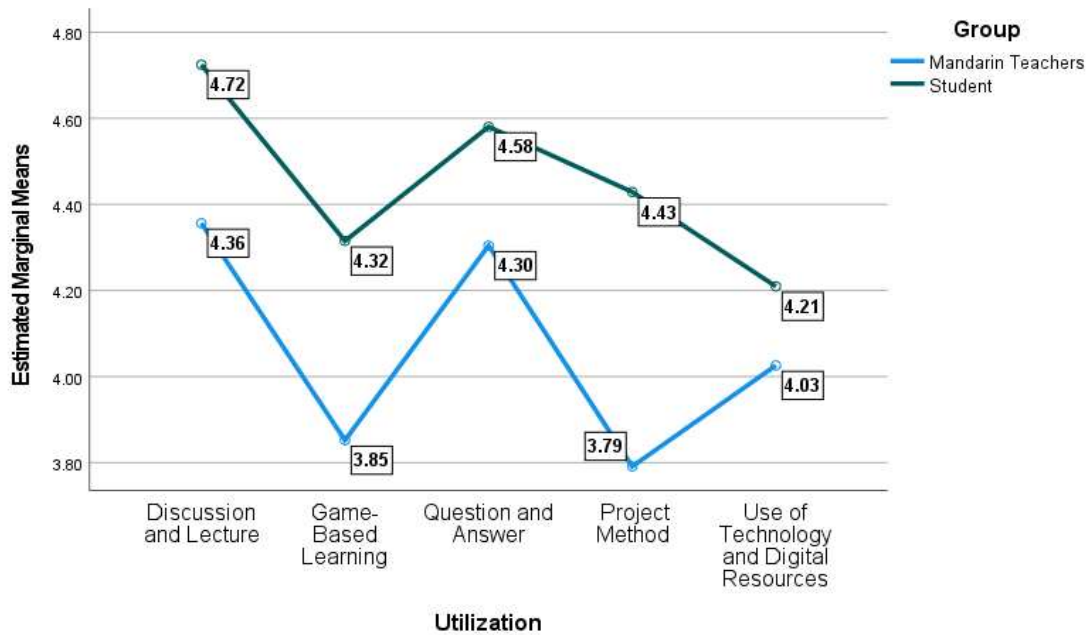
Challenges related to time constraints and opportunity for practice are also consistent with broader foreign language research showing that intensifying exposure and structured practice opportunities correlates with improved proficiency outcomes. For example, instructional interventions that increase language contact time and provide additional practice contexts—such as blended learning or technology-mediated environments—have been shown to mitigate learning difficulties and enhance retention.

Finally, while these challenges do not negate the effectiveness of current teaching practices, they point to the need for systematic enhancements in exposure, practice time, and authentic interaction. This suggests that curriculum designers and teachers should consider extended practice opportunities, intercultural exchanges, and technology-mediated authentic input to address these barriers and support learners' deeper linguistic development.

### **Difference in the Level of Utilization of the Strategies in Teaching Mandarin as a Foreign Language as Perceived by the Teachers and Students**

The table below presents the differences in perceived utilization of teaching strategies in Mandarin instruction between teachers and students. Mean ratings are compared across five strategies: discussion and lecture, game-based learning, question and answer, project method, and use of technology and digital resources. To determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the perceptions of teachers and students, both multivariate and univariate analyses were conducted.

The multivariate test using Pillai's Trace revealed a significant overall difference between teachers and students in their perceptions of strategy utilization (Pillai's Trace = 0.130,  $F_c = 5.43$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Univariate analyses showed significant differences in discussion and lecture ( $F_c = 14.08$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), game-based learning ( $F_c = 7.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), question-and-answer ( $F_c = 4.52$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and project method ( $F_c = 17.52$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), with students consistently reporting higher mean ratings than teachers. However, no significant difference was found in the use of technology and digital resources ( $F_c = 0.91$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), indicating similar perceptions between the two groups in this domain.



**Figure 2**  
**Profile Plot Describing the Difference in the Level of Utilization of the Strategies in Teaching Mandarin as a Foreign Language as Perceived by the Teachers and Students**

Figure 2 shows that students always rated the use of Mandarin teaching strategies higher than teachers did in all areas. The most noticeable differences are in discussion and lecture, game-based learning, and the project method. Both groups, on the other hand, had similar views on the use of technology and digital resources.

The observed pattern—where students consistently rate the utilization of Mandarin teaching strategies higher than teachers—suggests two complementary implications for teaching and learning quality. First, students may judge strategy utilization primarily on its perceived effects on their engagement, comprehension, and enjoyment, while teachers evaluate based on professional standards, curricular alignment, and pedagogical theory. Second, discrepancies between student and teacher perceptions highlight the value of triangulating multiple viewpoints in instructional evaluation to gain a fuller picture of classroom practice.

Empirical research indicates that students and teachers frequently have divergent perceptions of instructional quality. Studies on teacher-student perception alignment indicate that students can provide positive and meaningful feedback, especially when teaching practices are visible, engaging, and student-centered (Melaku et al., 2025). This observation supports the tendency in the present findings for students to report higher utilization of interactive strategies such as discussion, games, and projects, reflecting their lived classroom experience.

Moreover, studies comparing teacher self-assessment and student evaluations suggest that these two perspectives do not always align because they are shaped by different frames of reference. Teachers may apply critical professional standards to judge the adequacy and theoretical grounding of their practices, whereas students may base their evaluations on how clearly and

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supportively strategies are presented (Brandmo & Gamlem, 2025). Including both viewpoints in evaluation contributes to a more nuanced comprehension of instructional quality and can inform both formative professional development and responsive curriculum design.

Finally, research on student perception underscores its importance as a valid indicator of instructional effectiveness in its own right, particularly when students are engaged in learning and can reflect on how strategies affect their comprehension and motivation (Dinamling & Depaynos, 2025). When student ratings are systematically higher, it may indicate that learners feel supported, engaged, and confident in the instructional environment—even if teachers self-critique their implementation.

Taken together, these studies suggest that discrepancies in perception should be interpreted not as deficits but as complementary insights into teaching strategy utilization that can guide reflective practice, professional learning, and instructional improvement.

### **Difference in the Level of Implementation of the Practices Employed by Teachers in Handling Mandarin as a Foreign Language as Perceived by Teachers and Students**

The following table presents the difference in the level of implementation of classroom practices for teaching Mandarin as a foreign language, as perceived by Mandarin teachers and students. The table compares the mean ratings of the two groups across five classroom practice domains: pedagogical content knowledge, teaching methods and techniques, curriculum and resources, assessment practices, and teacher training support. Both multivariate and univariate statistical tests were conducted to determine whether significant differences exist between teacher and student perceptions. The multivariate test used Pillai's Trace to examine the overall difference across all classroom practices, while the univariate tests identified differences for each specific domain.

**Table 14 Difference in the Level of Implementation of the Practices Employed by Teachers in Handling Mandarin as a Foreign Language as Perceived by Teachers and Students**

Classroom Practices	Mandarin Teachers	Students	Multivariate Test			Univariate Test	
	Mean	Mean	Pillai's Trace	Fc	Sig.	Fc	Sig.
Pedagogical Content Knowledge	4.32	4.64				<b>8.44*</b>	<b>0.004</b>
Teaching Methods and Techniques	4.49	4.57				0.44	0.506
Curriculum and Resources	4.46	4.53	<b>0.401</b>	<b>24.39*</b>	<b>0.000</b>	0.28	0.594
Assessment Practices	4.54	4.53				0.01	0.928
Teacher Training Support	3.78	4.49				<b>30.78*</b>	<b>0.000</b>

\*Significant

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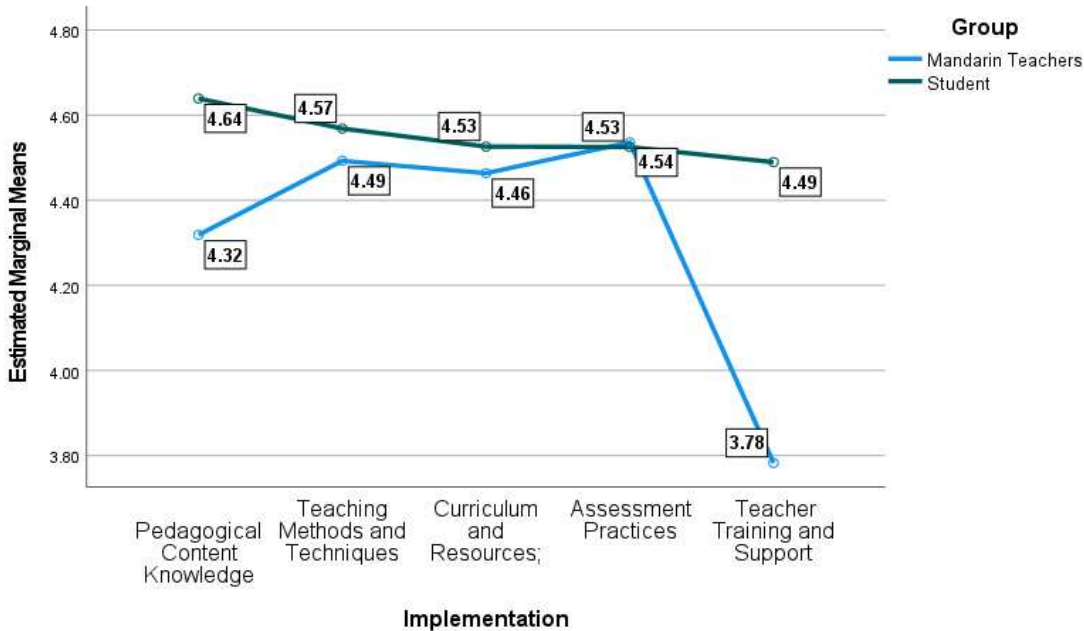
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The statistical analysis shows a significant overall difference in the level of implementation of classroom practices as perceived by Mandarin teachers and students, as indicated by the multivariate test using Pillai's Trace (Pillai's Trace = 0.401,  $F_c = 24.39$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). At the univariate level, significant differences were found in pedagogical content knowledge ( $F_c = 8.44$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and teacher training support ( $F_c = 30.78$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), with students reporting higher mean ratings than teachers in both areas. In contrast, no significant differences were observed in teaching methods and techniques, curriculum and resources, and assessment practices. These results have meaningful implications for instructional evaluation and program improvement. First, the finding that students rate these domains more favorably than teachers suggests that learners may perceive the classroom implementation of these practices more directly in terms of their engagement and learning experiences, whereas teachers may evaluate their practice against higher professional benchmarks and self-expectations. Research in education corroborates this trend: when teacher and student perceptions differ, it frequently indicates distinct evaluative frameworks—teachers utilize pedagogical standards and critical self-reflection, whereas students prioritize clarity, approachability, and experienced support (Holzer et al., 2022).

A highly significant difference was found in teacher training support, where teachers reported a mean of 3.78 (Well Implemented), while students reported a substantially higher mean of 4.49 (Well to Fully Implemented) ( $F_c = 30.78$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This further implies that teacher preparation and professional development may not fully meet teachers' own expectations and needs. This aligns with research highlighting that teacher support and professional learning environments influence student perceptions of instructional quality, but teachers themselves may perceive gaps in the relevance, continuity, or accessibility of professional development opportunities (An et al., 2022). These discrepancies indicate that institutions should not depend exclusively on student satisfaction as a measure of professional learning efficacy; they should also systematically collect teacher feedback to inform specialized training programs.

Moreover, the shared perceptions between teachers and students regarding teaching methods, curriculum and resources, and assessment practices indicate alignment in observable classroom practices. When both groups have similar views about these domains, it suggests that instructional behaviors in these areas are evident and consistently enacted, which correlates with research showing that visible classroom practices are often evaluated similarly by teachers and learners when they directly affect the learning experience (Bray et al., 2023).

Taken together, the implications of these findings are threefold: (1) perceptual differences highlight the importance of triangulating teacher self-assessment and student feedback in program evaluation; (2) significant gaps in specific domains such as training support indicate areas where teacher capacity building and institutional investment are needed; and (3) alignment in other domains reinforces confidence in the consistent implementation of core classroom practices. Recognizing and addressing these perceptual nuances can support a more holistic approach to instructional improvement and professional development in Mandarin education.



**Figure 3**  
**Profile Plot Describing the Difference in the Level of Implementation of the Practices Employed by Teachers in Handling Mandarin as a Foreign Language as Perceived by Teachers and Students**

Figure 3 demonstrates that students consistently rated the implementation of classroom practices higher than teachers across all domains, with the largest discrepancy observed in teacher training and support. Smaller perceptual gaps were found in pedagogical content knowledge, teaching methods, curriculum alignment, and assessment practices, suggesting substantial alignment in observable classroom implementation but divergence in how professional support structures are perceived.

The overall significant difference implies that students tend to evaluate classroom practices based on visible instructional effectiveness and learning experience, whereas teachers assess implementation against professional standards, institutional expectations, and reflective self-evaluation. Contemporary research supports this pattern. Research on discrepancies in perceptions between teachers and students shows that students tend to give better evaluations when classroom practices are clear, helpful, and interesting. On the other hand, teachers use more critical internal standards based on pedagogical theory and goals for professional growth.

The significant difference in pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) suggests that students clearly recognize teachers' mastery of Mandarin content and instructional clarity. Research shows that students' perceptions of teacher expertise strongly correlate with instructional clarity and structured explanation, which enhance engagement and comprehension (Wisniewski et al., 2020). Students often rate instructional competence highly when they receive systematic and well-delivered feedback and explanations, despite teachers' perception of areas requiring refinement.

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The largest perceptual gap in teacher training support has important institutional implications. Students see the results of teachers' professional competence in the classroom, but teachers say they don't think their training is adequate enough.

Overall, strong alignment in most domains indicates that Mandarin classroom practices are robust and well-implemented. However, the significant disparity in training support highlights the necessity for robust, needs-based, and equitable professional development systems. Combining data from both teacher self-assessments and student perceptions presents a more complete picture of the quality of instruction and the support systems at the school.

## **Training Plan to Enhance the Strategies and Practices of Teachers Handling Mandarin as a Foreign Language in the Philippines**

### **Introduction**

Mandarin Chinese has gained increasing relevance in the Philippine educational system due to expanding global economic relations and cultural exchanges. As institutions integrate Mandarin into their academic programs, teachers are expected to employ effective teaching strategies and classroom practices to support meaningful language acquisition. However, Mandarin instruction in the Philippine context faces several pedagogical challenges.

The findings showed that teachers consistently utilize a range of teaching strategies, yet students perceive higher levels of utilization than teachers, particularly in game-based learning, the project method, and interactive strategies (SOP 3 and SOP 8). Additionally, while classroom practices are strongly implemented, teacher training and support emerged as the weakest domain, especially from the teachers' perspective (SOP 4 and SOP 9). Significant relationships were also found between certain teacher profile variables—such as Mandarin proficiency, income level, and employment status—and the implementation of classroom practices (SOPs 6 and 7).

To address these concerns, a structured training plan is proposed to strengthen instructional competence and enhance the overall quality of Mandarin language education in higher education institutions.

### **General Objective**

The aim is to improve the instructional strategies and classroom practices of teachers who are teaching Mandarin as a foreign language in higher education institutions in the Philippines.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To improve teachers' pedagogical content knowledge in teaching Mandarin.
2. To strengthen teachers' capability to apply interactive and learner-centered teaching strategies.
3. To enhance teachers' competence in integrating digital technologies and instructional resources.
4. To develop effective and authentic assessment practices for Mandarin language learning.
5. To strengthen teacher training support and professional development opportunities.

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**Table 2 Plan of Action**

Key Findings	Strategies / Activities	Training Objectives	Key Performance Indicators	Persons Involved	Timeframe/ Timeline	Source of Funds/ Budget	Estimated Budgetary Requirements (Per Year)
Teachers frequently use lecture and discussion strategies, but they need more interactive and communicative activities.	Conduct a workshop on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) for Mandarin instruction.	To strengthen teachers' ability to apply interactive teaching strategies.	Teachers demonstrate the use of at least two communicative activities in their lesson plans.	Mandarin Teachers, Language Trainers, Academic Coordinators	2-day workshop	Institutional Professional Development Fund	Honorarium: ₱80,000 Materials: ₱20,000 <b>Total: ₱100,000</b>
Students encounter difficulties in tone pronunciation and Mandarin phonology.	Conduct training on Mandarin phonetics and tone instruction using multimodal teaching techniques.	To improve teachers' ability to teach pronunciation and tone production effectively.	Improvement in students' pronunciation accuracy during oral assessments.	Mandarin Teachers, Native Speakers, Linguistics Experts	2-day workshop and seminar	Language Program Funds	₱40,000

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Students struggle with Chinese character writing and retention.	Organize a seminar-workshop on Chinese character teaching strategies and writing techniques.	To develop effective strategies for teaching Chinese characters and writing skills.	Students demonstrate improved accuracy in character writing exercises.	Mandarin teachers handling intermediate & advanced Mandarin Curriculum Specialists	2-day training	Institutional Academic Funds	₱35,000
Limited use of technology and digital tools in Mandarin instruction.	Conduct training on the integration of educational technology and digital language learning tools.	To enhance teachers' competence in integrating digital resources into language teaching.	Teachers incorporate digital tools such as language learning applications and multimedia resources in classroom instruction.	ICT Specialists, Mandarin Teachers	2-day training	ICT Development Fund	₱60,000
Inconsistent assessment practices in Mandarin language courses.	Conduct a workshop on authentic and performance-based assessment in language learning.	To improve assessment strategies aligned with Mandarin language proficiency standards.	Development of standardized rubrics and performance-based assessments.	Mandarin Teachers, Academic Program Heads	Ongoing	Institutional Academic Development Funds	₱30,000

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Limited professional development opportunities for Mandarin teachers.	Establish a Mandarin Teachers Professional Learning Community (PLC) and mentoring program.	To promote continuous professional development and collaborative learning among teachers.	Regular PLC meetings were conducted, and collaborative lesson planning sessions were implemented.	Mandarin Teachers, Program Heads, Academic Administrators	Quarterly	Institutional Support / External Partnerships	Annual PD: ₱120,000 Mentoring incentives : ₱50,000 <b>Total: ₱170,000</b>
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### Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the proposed training plan. This will involve systematic assessment of the implementation of training activities and their impact on teaching practices and student learning outcomes.

The evaluation process will include:

1. Pre-training and post-training evaluation of teachers' instructional competencies.
2. Classroom observations to assess the application of new teaching strategies.
3. Student feedback surveys regarding teaching effectiveness.
4. Review of lesson plans and instructional materials developed by teachers.
5. Assessment of student learning outcomes and language proficiency performance.

Findings from these evaluations will guide improvements in the training program and inform future professional development initiatives.

### Sustainability Plan

To ensure the sustainability of the proposed training program, the following strategies will be implemented:

1. Institutionalization of regular training programs for Mandarin teachers within higher education institutions.
2. Establishment of a Mandarin Teachers Professional Learning Community (PLC) for continuous collaboration and knowledge sharing.
3. Development of localized instructional materials suited to Filipino learners.
4. Strengthening partnerships with language institutions, Confucius Institutes, and international academic organizations.
5. Allocation of institutional funding for continuous professional development and instructional innovation.

Through sustained support, collaboration, and continuous training, Mandarin teachers will be better equipped to implement effective instructional strategies and improve the overall quality of Mandarin language education in the Philippines.

## SUMMARY

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered, the following findings were obtained:

1. **Level of Utilization of Teaching Strategies.** The strategies used in teaching Mandarin, particularly discussion and lecture, game-based learning, question and answer, project method, and the use of technology and digital resources, were reported as frequently utilized. Students generally rated the utilization of these strategies higher than the teachers themselves.
2. **Level of Implementation of Classroom Practices.** The implementation of classroom practices was generally rated as well implemented to fully implemented across several domains, including pedagogical content knowledge, teaching methods and techniques, curriculum and resources, assessment practices, and teacher training and support. However, teacher training and institutional support received relatively lower ratings from teachers compared to other domains.
3. **Challenges Encountered in Teaching and Learning Mandarin.** Students reported that several challenges moderately affected their learning of Mandarin. These included difficulties in tone pronunciation, memorization and writing of Chinese characters, limited opportunities for language practice, and insufficient exposure to native Mandarin speakers.
4. **Difference in the Level of Utilization of Teaching Strategies as Perceived by Teachers and Students.** There were significant differences between the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the level of utilization of teaching strategies. Students consistently rated the utilization of teaching strategies higher than the teachers.
5. **Difference in the Level of Implementation of Classroom Practices as Perceived by Teachers and Students.** Significant differences were also found between teachers and students in terms of the level of implementation of classroom practices. Students tended to evaluate classroom practices more positively than teachers.
6. **Proposed Training Plan.** Based on the findings of the study, a training plan was developed to enhance the strategies and practices of Mandarin teachers. The proposed program focuses on strengthening language proficiency, improving pedagogical skills, integrating technology in instruction, and providing continuous professional development opportunities.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

1. Mandarin teachers frequently utilize a variety of teaching strategies that promote learner engagement and participation in the classroom.
2. Teachers generally implement Mandarin classroom practices effectively, especially in areas related to pedagogy, teaching methods, curriculum use, and assessment practices.
3. Linguistic features of Mandarin, particularly tonal pronunciation and character-based writing, present considerable challenges for Filipino learners studying the language.
4. Students perceive the utilization of teaching strategies more positively than teachers, indicating differences in instructional perceptions between the two groups.
5. Students also perceive classroom practices as more effectively implemented compared to teachers, reflecting a generally positive evaluation of instructional practices from the learner perspective.

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6. To improve the strategies and practices of Mandarin teachers and deal with the teaching problems found in this study, a structured and needs-based training program is necessary..

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Higher education institutions offering Mandarin courses should provide continuous professional development opportunities for Mandarin teachers, including training workshops, language immersion programs, and seminars related to teaching Mandarin as a foreign language.
2. Teachers should adopt learner-centered and scaffolded instructional approaches that support beginner learners in developing confidence and foundational Mandarin language skills.
3. Mandarin teachers should continue utilizing interactive teaching strategies such as game-based learning, communicative activities, and project-based learning to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.
4. Educational institutions should strengthen institutional support for Mandarin instruction by providing updated teaching resources, technological tools, and structured teacher training programs.
5. Teachers should incorporate additional pronunciation drills, tone practice activities, and character writing exercises to help students overcome common learning difficulties associated with Mandarin.
6. Professional development initiatives should prioritize improving teachers' language proficiency and pedagogical skills rather than focusing solely on demographic characteristics.
7. Institutions should ensure that all students have equal access to teaching materials and technology that will help them learn better in the classroom.
8. Teachers may consider collecting regular student feedback regarding teaching strategies to better align instructional practices with learner needs and expectations.
9. Collaborative dialogue between teachers and students should be encouraged to promote reflective teaching practices and continuous improvement in classroom instruction.
10. The proposed training plan developed in this study should be implemented and evaluated by higher education institutions to enhance the strategies and practices of Mandarin teachers and to strengthen the overall quality of Mandarin education in the region.

This study enhances the comprehension of Mandarin as a foreign language by pinpointing effective instructional strategies, current challenges, and opportunities for professional development. Through the proposed training program and the recommendations presented in this chapter, the study offers practical and evidence-based directions for strengthening Mandarin instruction and supporting both teachers and learners in achieving improved educational outcomes.

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