

Assessing the Relationship of Multilingual Competence and Peer Collaboration Dynamics in Reading and Writing Literacy Classroom Settings Among Liberal Arts and Sciences Students at Universidad de Zamboanga: Basis for Curriculum Development Plan

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multilingual competence, peer collaboration dynamics, collaborative development, reading and writing, literacy development

Abstract. As higher education institutions continue to serve increasingly multilingual student populations, understanding how linguistic diversity contributes to academic literacy and collaborative learning has become a critical concern. This study investigated the relationship between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics in reading and writing literacy settings among students of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Universidad de Zamboanga. Grounded in Sociocultural Theory and Social Interdependence Theory, the study examined the levels of multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics, determined whether significant differences existed across selected demographic variables, and assessed the relationship between the two constructs. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving 100 undergraduate students selected from various academic programs. Data were gathered through a validated researcher-developed questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean, independent samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated high levels of multilingual competence ($M = 4.40$) and peer collaboration dynamics ($M = 4.41$), indicating that multilingual language practices and collaborative learning behaviors were widely manifested in literacy-related activities. No statistically significant differences were found when respondents were grouped according to sex, age, ethnicity, and academic program. Moreover, a strong positive and statistically significant relationship was identified between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics ($r = .768, p < .05$), suggesting that students who effectively utilized their multilingual resources were more likely to engage in meaningful collaborative literacy practices. The findings underscore the complementary roles of multilingual competence and peer collaboration in supporting literacy development. The study advocates for the integration of translanguaging strategies and collaborative learning approaches into higher education literacy instruction and proposes a curriculum intervention framework that promotes inclusive, responsive, and academically enriching multilingual learning environments.

Introduction

The increasing linguistic diversity of contemporary classrooms has transformed how scholars understand literacy development in higher education. Rather than viewing multilingualism as a challenge to academic learning, current educational research increasingly recognizes linguistic diversity as a cognitive, social, and pedagogical resource that can support deeper engagement with reading and writing tasks. Universities across multilingual societies are confronted with the challenge of designing instructional environments that acknowledge students' linguistic repertoires while simultaneously promoting advanced literacy skills. International organizations such as UNESCO (2023) and the OECD (2023) have emphasized that educational systems capable of leveraging students' linguistic resources are more likely to foster inclusive learning environments and improve academic participation. Consequently, multilingual competence has emerged as a critical construct in understanding how students navigate complex literacy demands in contemporary higher education.

The shift toward asset-based perspectives on multilingualism is strongly reflected in translanguaging scholarship. García and Wei (2014) argue that multilingual learners do not compartmentalize languages into separate cognitive systems; instead, they draw from an integrated linguistic repertoire to construct meaning and accomplish communicative goals. Similarly, Canagarajah (2013) contends that multilingual language practices represent sophisticated communicative strategies rather than deviations from academic norms. From this perspective, multilingual competence extends beyond mere proficiency in multiple languages and encompasses the ability to strategically mobilize linguistic resources across contexts. Cenoz and Gorter (2019) further maintain that multilingual competence enables learners to negotiate meaning, bridge linguistic gaps, and engage more effectively with academic discourse, particularly in educational settings characterized by linguistic diversity.

The relationship between multilingual competence and literacy development has been extensively documented in educational research. Cummins (2000) proposed that literacy-related knowledge acquired in one language can transfer to another, thereby strengthening academic performance across linguistic contexts. This interdependence hypothesis has continued to influence contemporary scholarship, with Cummins (2021) emphasizing that multilingual learners often employ cross-linguistic strategies that facilitate comprehension, interpretation, and written expression. Gibbons (2015) similarly argues that students who are allowed to utilize their full linguistic repertoire demonstrate stronger engagement with academic texts and more sophisticated written production. These findings suggest that multilingual competence may function as an important mechanism through which students access, process, and communicate disciplinary knowledge in literacy-intensive environments.

Parallel to the growing recognition of multilingualism, educational scholars have increasingly highlighted the role of peer collaboration in literacy learning. Drawing on sociocultural theory, Vygotsky (1978) posited that learning is fundamentally mediated through social interaction, with knowledge developing through collaborative engagement within the zone of proximal development. Building upon this foundation, Johnson and Johnson (2017) demonstrated that cooperative learning structures promote higher achievement, stronger interpersonal relationships, and deeper cognitive processing. In literacy classrooms, collaborative activities such as peer review, group discussions, and joint writing tasks provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, refine ideas, and co-construct knowledge. Meletiadou (2021) further observed that collaborative learning environments strengthen student accountability and engagement, ultimately contributing to improved reading comprehension and writing performance.

Recent studies suggest that multilingual competence and peer collaboration may be mutually reinforcing constructs. Swain's (2006) output hypothesis emphasizes that language development is stimulated when learners engage in meaningful interaction that requires them to articulate, revise, and negotiate ideas. Such processes frequently occur during collaborative literacy tasks where students collectively interpret texts, evaluate arguments, and construct written outputs. Zheng and Yu (2022) found that collaborative academic activities encourage learners to maximize their linguistic resources, resulting in greater communicative flexibility and language awareness. Likewise, Kibler (2017) reported that students participating in multilingual collaborative environments exhibited stronger engagement in literacy tasks and demonstrated greater confidence in expressing complex academic ideas. These findings indicate that multilingual competence may not only support collaboration but may also be strengthened through collaborative learning experiences.

Despite increasing scholarly attention to both constructs, significant debates remain regarding the educational implications of multilingual language use. Traditional language policies often privilege monolingual academic norms and restrict the use of local languages in formal learning environments. Advocates of monolingual instruction argue that exclusive use of the target language promotes linguistic accuracy and academic rigor. In contrast, translanguaging scholars contend that restrictive language policies may limit participation, reduce comprehension, and constrain opportunities for meaning-making among multilingual learners (García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2018). This tension reflects a broader debate concerning whether multilingual practices should be viewed as transitional supports or as legitimate pedagogical resources within

higher education. Although growing evidence favors the latter perspective, empirical investigations examining the relationship between multilingual competence and collaborative literacy practices remain comparatively limited.

The Philippine educational context provides a particularly relevant setting for examining these issues. As a multilingual nation characterized by extensive linguistic diversity, Philippine classrooms routinely involve interactions among speakers of multiple local and national languages. Recent reports from EDCOM II (2023) have raised concerns regarding literacy performance and language-related barriers to learning, emphasizing the need for instructional approaches that respond to learners' actual linguistic realities. Within higher education institutions, students frequently engage in translanguaging practices when interpreting readings, discussing academic concepts, and producing written outputs. However, institutional policies and classroom practices often continue to reflect assumptions rooted in monolingual models of instruction. Consequently, understanding how multilingual competence interacts with collaborative literacy processes has become increasingly important for curriculum development and language policy reform.

Although previous studies have independently established the educational value of multilingualism and peer collaboration, limited research has examined the direct relationship between these constructs within reading and writing literacy settings among university students. Furthermore, empirical evidence remains scarce in multilingual higher education contexts in Western Mindanao, where students routinely draw upon diverse linguistic resources during academic interactions. The extent to which multilingual competence influences collaborative literacy practices among university learners therefore remains insufficiently understood. This study investigated the relationship between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics among students of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Universidad de Zamboanga. Specifically, it examined the levels of multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics, determined whether significant differences existed when respondents were grouped according to selected demographic variables, and assessed the relationship between the two constructs. The findings provide empirical evidence that may inform language policy development, literacy instruction, and curriculum enhancement initiatives in multilingual higher education environments.

The present study is anchored on Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) and the Social Interdependence Theory of Johnson and Johnson (2017). Sociocultural Theory posits that learning is fundamentally a social process mediated through interaction, language, and participation in meaningful cultural activities. Central to the theory is the notion that cognitive development occurs through collaborative engagement, where learners construct understanding by interacting with more knowledgeable peers and negotiating meaning within their social environment. In multilingual classroom contexts, language serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a cognitive tool that facilitates comprehension, reasoning, and literacy development. Complementing this perspective, Social Interdependence Theory explains how positive interdependence among group members promotes cooperation, shared responsibility, and collective achievement. The theory suggests that learners are more likely to attain desired outcomes when they perceive their success as linked to the success of others. Together, these frameworks provide a strong theoretical foundation for examining the relationship between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics. Sociocultural Theory explains how students utilize their linguistic repertoires to construct meaning and engage in literacy practices, while Social Interdependence Theory elucidates how collaborative interactions foster mutual support, accountability, and academic engagement. The integration of these theories supports the proposition that multilingual competence and peer collaboration are interconnected processes that collectively contribute to effective reading and writing literacy development in higher education settings.

Research Questions:

The study sought to examine the relationship between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics in reading and writing literacy settings among students of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Universidad de Zamboanga. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of multilingual competence among the respondents in terms of:
 - a. Strategic Language Mixing;
 - b. Vocabulary Resourcefulness;
 - c. Writing Style Adaptability;
 - d. Language Awareness; and
 - e. Communicative Resilience?
2. What is the level of peer collaboration dynamics among the respondents in terms of:
 - a. Group Reading Comprehension;
 - b. Joint Essay Writing;
 - c. Meaning Negotiation;
 - d. Team Interdependence; and
 - e. Shared Academic Accountability?

3. Are there significant differences in multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics when respondents are grouped according to their demographic profile?
4. Is there a significant relationship between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics in reading and writing literacy settings?
5. What curriculum development plan may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual paradigm of the study. The framework posits that students' multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics function as key educational processes that collectively influence reading and writing literacy development. Multilingual competence is represented through five dimensions, namely strategic language mixing, vocabulary resourcefulness, writing style adaptability, language awareness, and communicative resilience, which reflect learners' capacity to effectively utilize multiple linguistic resources in academic contexts. Peer collaboration dynamics are likewise operationalized through group reading comprehension, joint essay writing, meaning negotiation, team interdependence, and shared academic accountability, highlighting the social and interactive nature of literacy learning. Anchored on Sociocultural Theory and Social Interdependence Theory, the framework assumes that students who effectively mobilize their linguistic repertoires while engaging in meaningful collaborative interactions are more likely to demonstrate stronger literacy outcomes. The findings derived from the relationship between these constructs serve as the basis for the proposed Curriculum Development Plan, which aims to strengthen literacy instruction through the integration of multilingual and collaborative learning approaches within the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

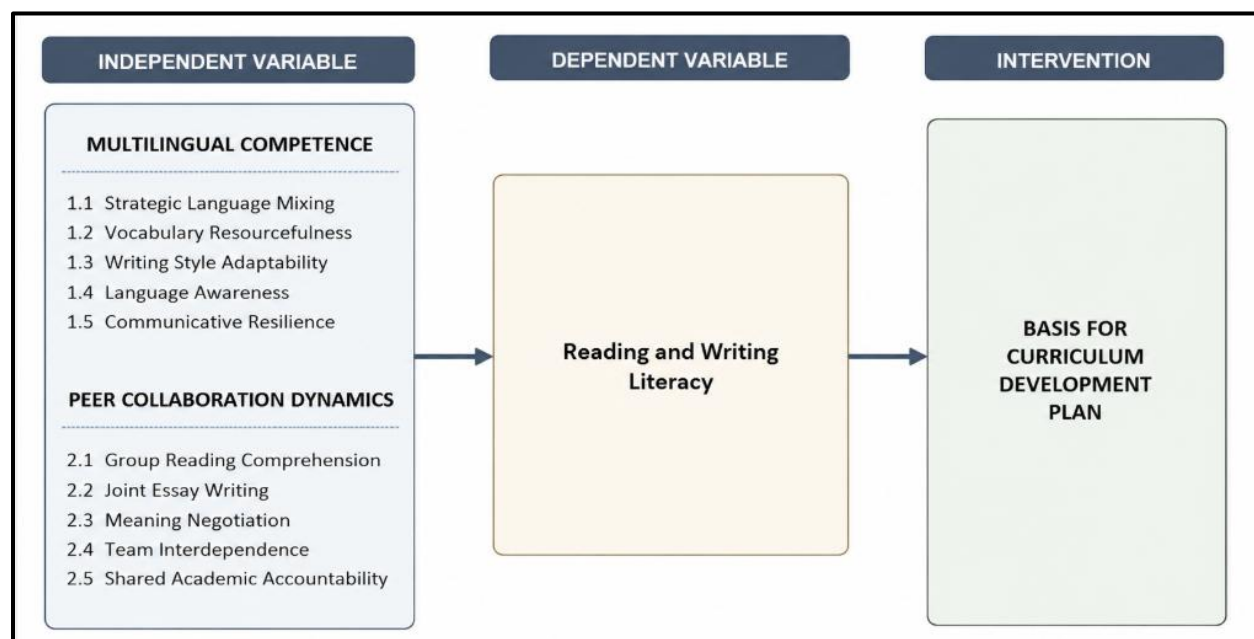


Figure 1: Conceptual Paradigm

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics in reading and writing literacy settings. The descriptive component was utilized to determine the respondents' levels of multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics, while the correlational component assessed the degree of association between the two variables. This design was deemed appropriate because it allowed the researcher to investigate naturally occurring relationships among variables without manipulating the study environment or participants' behaviors.

Locale

The study was conducted at Universidad de Zamboanga, a private higher education institution located in Zamboanga City, Philippines. Specifically, the respondents were drawn from the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences (SLAS), which serves students from diverse linguistic, cultural, and academic backgrounds. The institution provides an appropriate setting for investigating multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics because students regularly engage in multilingual communication practices within academic reading and writing contexts.

Research Instrumentation

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire consisting of two major sections. The first section measured multilingual competence across five dimensions: strategic language mixing, vocabulary resourcefulness, writing style adaptability, language awareness, and communicative resilience. The second section assessed peer collaboration dynamics in terms of group reading comprehension, joint essay writing, meaning negotiation, team interdependence, and shared academic accountability. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating stronger agreement and higher levels of the measured constructs.

The questionnaire underwent content validation by three experts in language education and educational research to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Revisions were incorporated based on the recommendations of the validators. A pilot test was subsequently conducted among students who were not included in the actual sample. Reliability analysis yielded acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients, indicating satisfactory internal consistency of the instrument.

Research Population and Sampling

The study involved 100 undergraduate students officially enrolled in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Universidad de Zamboanga during the academic year covered by the investigation. Respondents were selected through proportionate stratified sampling to ensure adequate representation across academic programs, sex, and ethnicity. The sample was considered sufficient to provide reliable quantitative data regarding multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics among Liberal Arts and Sciences students. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents.

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	62	62.0
	Male	38	38.0
Ethnicity	Tausug	48	48.0
	Chavacano	28	28.0
	Bisaya	18	18.0
	Yakan	6	6.0
Academic Program	AB Political Science	39	39.0
	BS Social Work	38	38.0
	BA English Language Studies	17	17.0
	AB Broadcasting	4	4.0
	BS Mathematics	2	2.0

Table 1: Demographic Profile (N=100)

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Weighted mean was employed to determine the levels of multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics. Independent samples t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were utilized to examine significant differences in the variables when respondents were grouped according to demographic characteristics. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was applied to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics. All statistical tests were evaluated using a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured the necessary approvals from the concerned university authorities. Upon approval, the researcher personally administered the survey questionnaires to the selected respondents and provided clear instructions regarding the purpose and completion of the instrument. Participants were given sufficient time to answer the

questionnaire, after which all completed forms were retrieved, checked for completeness, and organized for statistical analysis. The collected responses were encoded and prepared for data processing using appropriate statistical procedures.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards in educational research. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose, procedures, and significance of the study prior to their involvement. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for academic and research purposes. Anonymity was maintained throughout the data collection and reporting processes, and respondents were given the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the level of multilingual competence of the respondents during reading and writing tasks in terms of Strategic Language Mixing, Vocabulary Resourcefulness, Writing Style Adaptability, Language Awareness, Communicative Resilience.

Table 2 presents the level of multilingual competence among the respondents during reading and writing tasks. The findings revealed an overall mean of 4.40, indicating a high level of multilingual competence. Among the dimensions, Language Awareness obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.44$), followed by Writing Style Adaptability ($M = 4.42$) and Communicative Resilience ($M = 4.41$), while Vocabulary Resourcefulness recorded the lowest mean ($M = 4.36$). Nevertheless, all dimensions were interpreted as high, suggesting that the respondents consistently employed multilingual resources to support comprehension, communication, and academic participation in literacy-related activities. The relatively higher ratings in language awareness and writing adaptability indicate that students possess the capacity to recognize linguistic variations and adjust their language use according to academic contexts and communicative demands.

Dimension	Mean	Interpretation
Strategic Language Mixing	4.39	High
Vocabulary Resourcefulness	4.36	High
Writing Style Adaptability	4.42	High
Language Awareness	4.44	High
Communicative Resilience	4.41	High
Overall Mean	4.40	High

Table 2: Level of Multilingual Competence

The finding supports contemporary multilingual education research that views linguistic diversity as an academic resource rather than a barrier to learning. García and Wei (2014) argued that multilingual learners strategically draw upon their entire linguistic repertoire to facilitate meaning-making and knowledge construction across learning contexts. Similarly, Cenoz and Gorter (2019) emphasized that multilingual competence enables learners to navigate complex communicative situations by integrating linguistic knowledge from multiple languages. The high levels of language awareness and writing adaptability observed in the present study further align with Cummins' (2021) assertion that multilingual learners often engage in cross-linguistic transfer processes that strengthen literacy performance and academic communication. These findings suggest that multilingual competence extends beyond language proficiency and encompasses strategic, cognitive, and communicative abilities that support literacy development.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings support Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which posits that language functions as a primary mediational tool in the construction of knowledge and understanding. The consistently high ratings across all dimensions suggest that students actively utilize their linguistic resources to negotiate meaning, process information, and engage in literacy practices within socially situated learning environments. Practically, the findings imply that higher education institutions should recognize multilingual competence as an instructional asset and develop learning environments that encourage strategic language use. Literacy programs that acknowledge students' multilingual repertoires may provide greater opportunities for participation, engagement, and academic success in reading and writing classrooms.

Research Question 2: What is the level of peer collaboration dynamics among the respondents during literacy tasks in terms of, Group Reading Comprehension, Joint Essay Writing, Meaning Negotiation, Team Interdependence, Shared Academic Accountability.

Table 3 presents the level of peer collaboration dynamics among the respondents during reading and writing tasks. The findings revealed an overall mean of 4.41, interpreted as high, indicating that the respondents frequently engaged in collaborative learning practices while performing literacy-related activities. Among the dimensions, Team Interdependence obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.45$), followed by Joint Essay Writing ($M = 4.43$), Shared Academic Accountability ($M = 4.41$), Meaning Negotiation ($M = 4.39$), and Group Reading Comprehension ($M = 4.38$). Although Group Reading Comprehension registered the lowest mean among the indicators, it remained within the high category, suggesting that collaborative reading activities were still commonly practiced among the respondents. The consistently high ratings across all dimensions indicate that students actively participate in collaborative literacy environments characterized by shared responsibility, coordinated effort, constructive interaction, and collective engagement in academic tasks.

The prominence of Team Interdependence suggests that students recognize the importance of mutual support and cooperation in accomplishing reading and writing activities. Likewise, the high rating for Joint Essay Writing indicates that learners are comfortable co-constructing written outputs, exchanging ideas, and contributing to shared academic tasks. The relatively strong ratings for Meaning Negotiation and Shared Academic Accountability further imply that students frequently engage in discussions, clarification of ideas, and collective monitoring of group performance. These findings collectively suggest that collaboration is not limited to task completion but extends to deeper cognitive and communicative processes that support literacy development.

Variables	Mean	Interpretation
Group Reading Comprehension	4.38	High
Joint Essay Writing	4.43	High
Meaning Negotiation	4.39	High
Team Interdependence	4.45	High
Shared Academic Accountability	4.41	High
Overall Mean	4.41	High

Table 3: Level of Peer Collaboration Dynamics

The findings are consistent with the work of Johnson and Johnson (2017), who emphasized that positive interdependence among learners promotes cooperation, accountability, and higher academic achievement. Similarly, Meletiadiou (2021) found that collaborative learning environments encourage active participation and improve students' engagement in academic tasks. The high ratings for Joint Essay Writing and Meaning Negotiation also support Swain's (2006) proposition that interaction facilitates learning by requiring individuals to articulate, refine, and negotiate ideas with others. Through collaborative exchanges, learners are provided with opportunities to co-construct knowledge and develop a deeper understanding of academic content.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings support both Sociocultural Theory and Social Interdependence Theory. Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning is mediated through social interaction, where individuals develop understanding through dialogue and collaborative engagement with others. Likewise, Social Interdependence Theory posits that learners achieve better outcomes when they perceive their success as interconnected with that of their peers. The consistently high ratings across all dimensions suggest that collaborative literacy practices create opportunities for shared meaning-making, mutual support, and active participation in reading and writing activities. These findings imply that literacy instruction may be strengthened through the integration of structured collaborative learning experiences that promote teamwork, peer feedback, collective accountability, and meaningful academic interaction.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in the multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics of the respondents during reading and writing tasks when they are grouped according to their demographic profile

Table 4 presents the results of the analyses examining differences in multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics when respondents were grouped according to sex, age, ethnicity, and academic program. The findings revealed that all computed p-values exceeded the .05 level of significance, indicating no statistically significant differences across any of the demographic variables examined. Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted, suggesting that respondents demonstrated comparable levels of multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics regardless of their demographic characteristics. These results indicate that the observed multilingual and collaborative literacy practices were consistently manifested across the different respondent groups.

Variable	Grouping Variable	Test Statistic	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Multilingual Competence	Sex	t = 0.874	.384	Accept H ₀	Not Significant
Peer Collaboration Dynamics		t = 0.652	.516	Accept H ₀	Not Significant
Multilingual Competence	Age	t = 1.156	.250	Accept H ₀	Not Significant
Peer Collaboration Dynamics		t = 1.089	.278	Accept H ₀	Not Significant
Multilingual Competence	Ethnicity	F = 1.152	.315	Accept H ₀	Not Significant
Peer Collaboration Dynamics		F = 1.088	.342	Accept H ₀	Not Significant
Multilingual Competence	Academic Program	F = 1.245	.294	Accept H ₀	Not Significant
Peer Collaboration Dynamics		F = 0.985	.418	Accept H ₀	Not Significant

Table 4: Differences in Multilingual Competence and Peer Collaboration Dynamics According to Demographic Profile

The findings suggest that multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics may function as broadly shared academic experiences rather than characteristics associated with specific demographic categories. Regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, or academic program, respondents reported similarly high levels of multilingual language use and collaborative engagement in reading and writing tasks. This pattern may reflect the shared academic environment of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, where students are exposed to similar instructional practices, literacy demands, and opportunities for peer interaction. The absence of significant differences further implies that multilingual literacy practices and collaborative learning behaviors are widely distributed across the student population rather than concentrated within particular groups.

The findings are consistent with contemporary multilingual and collaborative learning research, which suggests that opportunities for academic interaction and literacy engagement may exert a stronger influence on learning behaviors than demographic characteristics alone. From the perspective of Sociocultural Theory, learners develop knowledge through participation in shared social and educational contexts, which may contribute to similarities in literacy-related practices across diverse groups. Likewise, Social Interdependence Theory posits that collaborative outcomes are shaped by interactional structures and shared goals rather than by individual demographic attributes. The findings therefore imply that interventions aimed at strengthening multilingual competence and peer collaboration may be implemented broadly across the student population without the need for substantial differentiation based on demographic factors.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between the students' level of multilingual competence and their level of peer collaboration dynamics in reading and writing literacy

Table 4 presents the relationship between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics among the respondents. The findings revealed a statistically significant and strong positive relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.768$, $p < .05$). The result indicates that students who demonstrated higher levels of multilingual competence also tended to exhibit stronger peer collaboration dynamics during reading and writing tasks. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming the existence of a significant association between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics. The magnitude of the correlation suggests that multilingual competence is closely linked to students' ability to engage in collaborative literacy practices, including communication, meaning negotiation, shared accountability, and cooperative learning. The strong relationship observed in the study may be attributed to the role of multilingual competence in facilitating interaction and collaborative meaning-making. Students who are capable of strategically utilizing multiple linguistic resources are likely to communicate more effectively, clarify ideas more confidently, and participate more actively in collaborative academic activities. Likewise, collaborative environments provide opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning, exchange perspectives, and draw upon their diverse linguistic repertoires while engaging in reading and writing tasks. This reciprocal interaction may explain why higher levels of multilingual competence are associated with stronger collaborative behaviors among university students.

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Multilingual Competence and Peer Collaboration Dynamics	0.768	0.000	Strong Positive Correlation

Table 5: Relationship between Multilingual Competence and Peer Collaboration Dynamics

The findings support the growing body of multilingual education research emphasizing the interconnected nature of language use and social learning. García and Wei (2014) argued that multilingual learners mobilize their linguistic repertoires to construct knowledge and participate meaningfully in academic discourse. Similarly, Cenoz and Gorter (2019) noted that multilingual competence enhances learners' capacity to navigate complex communicative situations and engage in collaborative learning environments. The findings also align with Swain's (2006) proposition that interaction promotes learning through dialogue, negotiation, and the co-construction of meaning. Previous studies by Kibler and Hardigree (2021), Zheng and Yu (2022), and Meletiadou (2021) likewise reported that collaborative academic environments support

language development while simultaneously strengthening student engagement and participation. From a theoretical perspective, the findings strongly support both Sociocultural Theory and Social Interdependence Theory. Sociocultural Theory posits that learning occurs through social interaction mediated by language, making multilingual competence an important resource for knowledge construction and literacy development. Likewise, Social Interdependence Theory suggests that positive learning outcomes emerge when individuals cooperate toward shared goals and engage in mutually supportive interactions. The strong correlation identified in this study demonstrates that multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics are not independent processes but rather complementary dimensions of literacy learning. The findings therefore suggest that literacy instruction in multilingual higher education settings should integrate pedagogical practices that simultaneously promote strategic language use and collaborative engagement, thereby fostering more inclusive and effective learning environments.

Problem 5: Based on the findings of the study, what Language Policy Enhancements can be proposed for the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences to support student literacy

Figure 2 is the proposed intervention design is grounded in the study's central finding that multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics exhibit a strong and statistically significant relationship ($r = .768, p < .05$). The framework assumes that students' natural use of multiple linguistic resources and collaborative learning behaviors are valuable educational assets that should be intentionally incorporated into literacy instruction. Rather than maintaining restrictive language practices, the intervention advocates for a structured translanguaging approach that allows students to strategically utilize their linguistic repertoires during reading and writing activities. The model begins with faculty capacity building, recognizing that successful implementation depends on instructors' ability to design and facilitate multilingual and collaborative learning environments. Through professional development activities, educators are trained to integrate translanguaging strategies, collaborative literacy tasks, and shared assessment practices into their courses. These instructional innovations are then operationalized through classroom practices such as cross-cultural reading circles, joint essay drafting, peer evaluation, and meaning negotiation activities. The intervention ultimately aims to improve students' reading comprehension, academic writing performance, collaborative engagement, and overall participation in literacy learning. The resulting curriculum development plan institutionalizes these practices by establishing a standardized framework for multilingual and collaborative literacy instruction across the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, thereby ensuring consistency, inclusivity, and sustainability in literacy education.

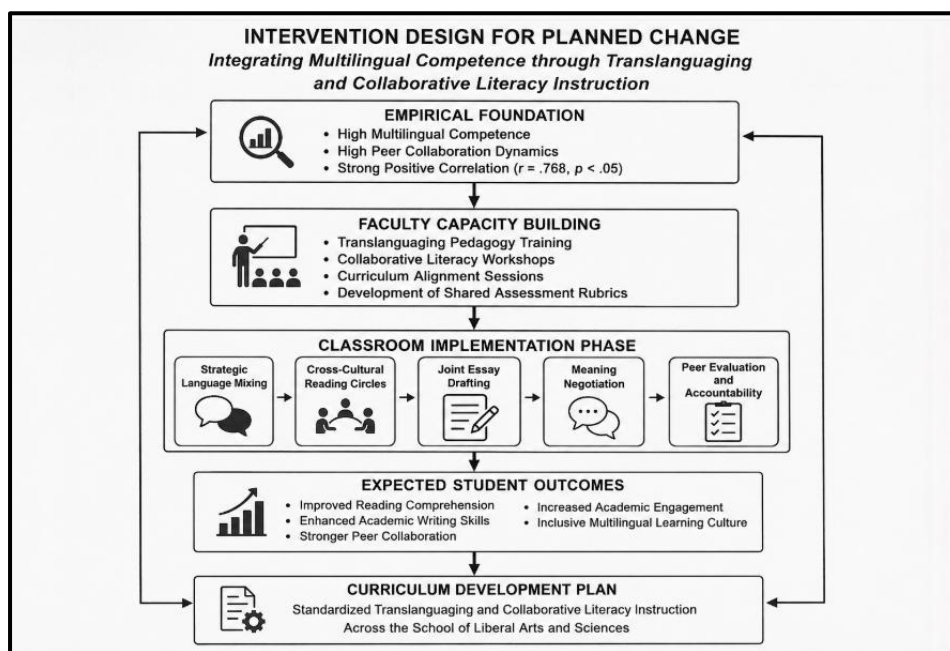


Figure 2: Integrating Multilingual Competence: An Intervention Design Focused on Standardized Translanguaging and Collaborative Literacy Instruction

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the relationship between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics among students of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Universidad de Zamboanga within reading and writing literacy settings. The

findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated high levels of multilingual competence across all measured dimensions, particularly in language awareness, writing style adaptability, and communicative resilience. Similarly, peer collaboration dynamics were found to be highly manifested, with team interdependence, joint essay writing, and shared academic accountability emerging as prominent indicators. These findings suggest that students regularly utilize their multilingual resources and actively engage in collaborative literacy practices as part of their academic experiences.

The study further established that multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics were consistently manifested across respondent groups regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, and academic program. The absence of significant differences indicates that these literacy-related behaviors are broadly shared among students within the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences. More importantly, a strong and statistically significant positive relationship was identified between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics. This finding confirms that students who exhibit greater capacity to strategically utilize multilingual resources also tend to demonstrate stronger collaborative engagement during reading and writing activities, highlighting the interconnected nature of language use and social learning in higher education contexts.

The findings carry important implications for literacy instruction, curriculum development, and language policy in multilingual educational settings. The strong association between multilingual competence and peer collaboration dynamics suggests that multilingual practices should be recognized as valuable pedagogical resources rather than constraints to academic learning. Educational institutions may benefit from adopting instructional approaches that integrate translanguaging strategies, collaborative literacy activities, and inclusive language practices to support student engagement and achievement. Furthermore, the proposed curriculum intervention underscores the need for faculty development initiatives that equip educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to foster multilingual and collaborative learning environments, thereby promoting more responsive, equitable, and effective literacy education in higher education institutions.

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that there are no known competing financial, professional, institutional, or personal interests that could have influenced the design, conduct, analysis, or reporting of this research.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Access to the data may be subject to ethical considerations and measures intended to protect participant confidentiality and privacy.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.