



Indigenous Peoples Validation of Self-Identity in Language Teaching: Into the Lens of the Obo-Manobo Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the integration of oral traditions and Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) in language teaching among Obo-Manobo educators. Using a qualitative approach, the findings revealed that teachers actively embed cultural narratives such as folktales, epic stories, chants, and songs to strengthen language skills and preserve cultural identity. Storytelling and traditional songs serve as vital tools for reinforcing linguistic competence and cultural pride. Moreover, Indigenous knowledge such as rituals, farming, healing practices, and craftsmanship are incorporated into classroom instruction, making lessons more meaningful and connected to real-world Indigenous experiences. The study also highlighted the crucial role of native language use in promoting self-identity and cultural pride among students. Daily use of the Obo-Manobo language fosters a stronger sense of belonging, resilience, and connection to ancestral heritage. However, educators face challenges such as modernization, loss of traditional practices, and limited resources. To address these, they adopt strategies like community collaboration, engagement with elders, and integration of rituals and storytelling into lessons. Findings emphasize that sustaining Indigenous language and practices through education promotes both academic success and cultural preservation. Teachers emerge as key figures in bridging education and cultural continuity. The study underscores the importance of culturally responsive teaching practices to safeguard Indigenous heritage in a modernizing society. It calls for continued efforts in curriculum development, teacher training, and community involvement to ensure that Indigenous traditions remain vibrant and relevant for future generations.

INTRODUCTION

The preservation of culture lies into the hands of those who see the worth of their forefathers fight for self-identity. One of the ethnolinguistic groups in the Province of Cotabato is the Obo-Manobo. They are situated in Kidapawan City, Magpet, Makilala, and President Roxas. With cross-marriages and advent of modern technologies, these identities among the tribe have waned. For personal reason, some opted not to identify themselves as part of the tribe because of discrimination (Simbulan, 2020).

Language teaching has been incorporated in the Philippine curriculum (Barrot, 2022; Policarpio, 2021). The Basic Education has strengthened its efforts to enhance the educational system by the honing learners to have the necessary language skills as mentioned by Symaco and Bustos (2022) and Meneses et al. (2023). However, it was observed that local languages would soon vanish because of the lack of support from the government (Hernandez, 2022; Ponce & Lucas, 2021). Indeed, language enthusiasts fought for the incorporation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education from Kindergarten until Grade 3 (Adriano et al., 2021; Monje et al., 2021).

This aims to provide the learners their appreciation of their own identity (Atong & Ventura-Escote, 2023). The use of their own language in teaching strengthens the programs efforts to decolonize language teaching in the Philippines (Tupas, 2023) and to apply the integral findings of research which stated the importance of multilingualism (Lising, 2022) in enhancing the critical thinking of the learners (Evangelista et al., 2023). Learners appreciated the contexts of the lessons taught in their own language.

At one hand, research studies on self-identity among the Indigenous People have not been validated in the Philippines. Previous studies focused among the English major students in Philippine universities (Fontanilla, 2016), Filipino teachers in Japan (Kobayashi, 2020), and of the native and non-native language teachers in Thailand (Phaetong et al., 2024). On the other hand, self-identity among Obo-Manobo teachers in the Province of Cotabato in Southern Philippine is not yet explored.

Expanding the knowledge on self-identity of the Obo-Manobo language teachers in the elementary level understands their fight for inclusivity. As they nurture the children of their own communities, they see the importance of their approaches that lead to cultural empowerment. These children as well may see the relevance of their culture in language preservation.

Research Questions

This qualitative study employing phenomenology aims validate self-identity among the Obo-Manobo language teachers. Specifically, it answers the following sub-problems:

Phase 1 On Pedagogy and Cultural Integration: Validating Self-Identity in Language Teaching among the Obo-Manobo Teachers

1. How do Obo-Manobo teachers incorporate Indigenous cultural elements into their language teaching practices to validate their self-identity?
2. What specific pedagogical approaches do Obo-Manobo teachers use to affirm their cultural identity in language teaching?

Phase 2 The Role of Self-Identity in Language Teaching: From the Perspectives of Obo-Manobo Teachers

1. How do Obo-Manobo teachers perceive their self-identity as language educators?
2. How does this influence their capability towards language teaching?
3. How does self-identity of Obo-Manobo teachers affect the language learning experiences and cultural awareness of their students?
4. What professional development can be suggested based on the findings of the study?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research design, the locale, the participants, the data analysis, and the ethical considerations.

Research Design

This study employed qualitative-phenomenology. Qualitative research is a type of research that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems (Kopec, 2023). Instead of collecting numerical data points or intervening or introducing treatments just like in quantitative research, qualitative research helps generate hypothesis to further investigate and understand quantitative data (Chali et al., 2022).

At its core, Rogo (2024) stated that phenomenology looks to investigate experiences from the individual's perspective. Phenomenology is essentially looking into the "lived experiences" of the participants and aims to examine how and why participants behaved a certain way from their perspective. It focuses on describing and explaining an event or phenomenon from the perspective of those who have experienced it (Ellis & Hart, 2023).

In this manner, the researcher applied qualitative since there is no statistics needed and phenomenology to interpret the experiences of the Obo-Manobo teachers' application of self-identity in language teaching. Thematic analysis will be applied to put meaning into these experiences.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were the IP teachers of the IP identified schools in the 2nd Congressional District of Cotabato. They were chosen using the purposive sampling with specific criteria (Zarghani et al., 2024). They were took part as Key Informants and participants for the Focus Group Discussion. The purpose of the latter was to confirm or to negate the responses of the former.

Research Instrument

The main instrument in qualitative research was the researcher. She is responsible for the gathering of the data through in-depth interview. Using the interview guide questions, the researcher was able to understand the importance of self-identity as an Obo-Manobo teacher in language teaching.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using the thematic analysis. It includes the familiarization with the data. Initial codes will be generated to provide an overview (Naeem et al., 2023; Saunders et al., 2023). Themes were searched out specially these have the same meanings. Reviewing of themes followed and the writing up of the discussions (Yanto, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the thematic analysis. Each theme is discussed and provided with in-depth implications.

Themes on the incorporation of the Obo-Manobo Indigenous cultural elements into their language teaching practices to validate their self-identity

Incorporation of Oral Traditions and Storytelling. Integrating Obo-Manobo oral traditions and storytelling into language teaching enhances students' cultural pride and supports intergenerational knowledge transfer. It validates their linguistic heritage and encourages a deeper emotional connection to learning. Storytelling also promotes critical thinking and contextualized language use by rooting lessons in lived experiences. This approach safeguards endangered narratives while making education more relatable and engaging.

Including traditional stories and cultural practices fosters a strong connection between students and their heritage, promoting pride and cultural continuity.

I include traditional stories and cultural practices. (IDI 1 Q 1.1)

Using storytelling methods, traditional games, and songs enriches language instruction and ensures that Indigenous knowledge remains vibrant and engaging

I include storytelling methods or the big books and traditional games and traditional songs. (IDI2 Q 1.1)

In the same manner, integrating cultural elements such as oral traditions, community involvement, and daily activities strengthens students' understanding of the relationship between language, identity, and history.

As an IP teacher, I integrate various cultural elements into language lessons to ensure students not only learn language but also understand its deep connection to identify history and traditions. Some elements are oral traditions and storytelling, community involvement and daily activities. (IDI 5 Q 1.1)

Teaching through oral traditions and folk stories deepens students' cultural awareness and preserves essential Indigenous knowledge across generations.

The Indigenous cultural elements I include in my language lessons are oral traditions and folk stories. (IDI 9 Q 1.1)

Oral storytelling, as a pedagogical method, has proven crucial in preserving Indigenous knowledge and fostering language acquisition among Indigenous learners (De Vera, 2021). Embedding storytelling practices in classrooms strengthens cultural identity and ensures that ancestral wisdom remains alive within younger generations (Tupas & Macasil, 2022). This practice nurtures not only language proficiency but also emotional resilience through shared cultural values (Andam, 2025).

Integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Daily. Embedding Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into daily teaching practices ensures that students see their everyday realities reflected in academic contexts. It promotes experiential learning, connects traditional wisdom with modern knowledge, and bridges the gap between home culture and school. Students develop critical pride in Indigenous practices, recognizing them as valuable sources of learning and innovation.

Including traditional stories and cultural practices in language lessons strengthens students' cultural identity and keeps Indigenous heritage alive through education.

By integrating indigenous knowledge and practices. Lessons include traditional, agricultural practice, herbal medicine and wearing techniques. We teachers integrate the Obo-Manobo language, especially in the early years to ensure comprehension and cultural connection. (IDI 4 Q 1.1)

Using storytelling methods, traditional games, and songs fosters language acquisition while embedding cultural pride and community values in students.

Obo-Manobo traditional practice their connection to nature and practice traditional ritual, their ways of living and product as source of living. (IDI 7 Q 1.1)

Integrating oral traditions, storytelling, and community practices into lessons promotes a holistic understanding of language as deeply tied to Indigenous identity and history.

Indigenous knowledge and practices incorporate traditional knowledge and environment, farming, hunting and gathering practices. (IDI 8 Q 1.1)

Teaching oral traditions and folk stories not only enhances language skills but also preserves the collective memory and ancestral wisdom of Indigenous communities.

As a kindergarten teacher I integrate IKSP or the Indigenous Knowledge System and practices in my lessons. I introduce Obo-Manobo songs, stories and poems in teaching language. (IDI 12 Q 1.1)

Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into curricula reinforces cultural continuity and contextualizes education to Indigenous learners' lived experiences (Maslang & Santiago, 2022). Daily classroom practices that incorporate local traditions and ecological knowledge promote respect for Indigenous epistemologies (Caballero et al., 2023). It also enables Indigenous students to assert their cultural agency within formal education systems (Ladot & Punzalan, 2024).

Promotion of Cultural Identity and Pride. Promoting cultural pride through language teaching cultivates positive self-concept among Obo-Manobo students. Recognizing and celebrating Indigenous identity reduces internalized oppression and promotes psychological well-being. Students who are proud of their cultural roots tend to engage more actively and perform better academically.

Incorporating oral traditions, community involvement, and daily cultural practices into language lessons helps students connect language learning with their Indigenous identity and lived experiences.

As an IP teacher, I integrate various cultural elements into language lessons to ensure students not only learn language but also understand its deep connection to identify history and traditions. Some elements are oral traditions and storytelling, community involvement and daily activities. (IDI 5 Q 1.1)

Using traditional stories, local proverbs, and native expressions enhances cultural relevance in lessons, fostering student engagement and cultural pride.

Include Indigenous cultural elements such as traditional stories, local proverbs, songs and Obo-Manobo expressions. These helps preserve cultural identity and make lessons more meaningful and relatable for students. (IDI 6 Q 1.1)

Integrating Indigenous practices like elder respect, language exchange, and cultural norms creates a culturally responsive classroom that affirms students' self-identity and promotes cultural preservation.

As Manobo teachers, incorporate Indigenous cultural elements into language teaching practices is crucial to validate the student's self-identity and promote cultural preservation. Teaching students about the importance of respecting elders, traditions and cultural practices in Obo-Manobo society and the language exchange as a teaching practice, pair students with fluent Obo-Manobo speakers. By incorporating these Indigenous cultural elements and teaching practices. Teachers can create a culturally responsive and inclusive language learning environment. (IDI 11 Q 1.1)

Embedding cultural identity themes in education strengthens resilience and academic achievement among Indigenous students (Caballero et al., 2023). Programs that foster cultural pride are linked to higher motivation and stronger learning outcomes (Delos Santos & Florentino, 2022). Recognition of cultural identity within schools counters assimilation pressures and validates Indigenous ways of being (Andam, 2025).

Creation of Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Learning Environments. Building culturally responsive classrooms ensures that the language of instruction, classroom norms, and teaching strategies are inclusive of Obo-Manobo experiences. It leads to higher student engagement, reduces cultural marginalization, and builds a respectful environment that values diversity. Culturally inclusive practices encourage critical thinking about different worldviews and histories.

Utilizing varied teaching strategies rooted in Indigenous language enhances learner comprehension and honors culturally grounded instruction.

As an IP teacher I include my language lessons into different teaching strategies for them to understand what my teaching lessons. (IDI 10 Q 1.1)

Embedding the richness of Indigenous worldviews and histories in language lessons promotes deeper cultural understanding and appreciation among learners.

Incorporating Indigenous cultural elements into language lessons, it's important to include aspects that reflect the richness and diversity of Indigenous traditions, worldviews, and histories. (IDI 17 Q 1.1)

Fostering a culturally responsive classroom through Indigenous content strengthens inclusivity and supports the validation of students' cultural identities.

Teachers can create a culturally responsive and inclusive language learning environment. (IDI 19 Q 1.1)

Culturally responsive pedagogy fosters equity and belonging in diverse classrooms, particularly among Indigenous learners (Ladot & Punzalan, 2024). Inclusive educational environments validate students' lived realities and promote active participation (Tupas & Macasil, 2022). A culturally responsive approach enhances both academic outcomes and emotional well-being (De Vera, 2021).

Holistic Understanding of Indigenous Culture. Promoting a holistic understanding of Obo-Manobo culture allows students to appreciate the interconnectedness of language, spirituality, land, and community. It deepens respect for Indigenous worldviews and fosters a more profound appreciation of the self and the environment. This integrated approach builds balanced, socially responsible individuals grounded in cultural integrity.

Recognizing the holistic nature of Indigenous culture—including both physical and spiritual elements—allows language instruction to honor and reflect the full identity of Obo-Manobo learners.

Indigenous cultural is holistic and it includes physical and spiritual components. (IDI 23 Q 1.1)

Holistic Indigenous education emphasizes interconnectedness and balances intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical growth (Andam, 2025). Teaching that acknowledges the wholeness of Indigenous culture cultivates deeper empathy, sustainability values, and critical consciousness (Caballero et al., 2023). Such models challenge Western compartmentalized education and affirm Indigenous epistemologies as legitimate (Maslang & Santiago, 2022).

Themes on the incorporation of the Obo-Manobo Indigenous cultural elements into their language teaching practices to validate their self-identity

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic Theme
Integrating Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Identity into Language Education for Cultural Preservation and Inclusivity	Incorporation of Oral Traditions and Storytelling	Includes folktales, myths, legends, traditional songs, poems, storytelling, and oral traditions as mediums to teach language while preserving cultural heritage.
	Integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Daily	Incorporates IKSP (Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices) such as traditional farming, hunting, herbal medicine, rituals,

		dances, and daily activities reflecting Obo-Manobo life.
	Promotion of Cultural Identity and Pride	Emphasizes building students' cultural pride, validating their self-identity, and helping them appreciate their heritage as more than just a communication tool.
	Creation of Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Learning Environments	Focuses on creating an inclusive, culturally responsive language classroom where Indigenous students feel valued and supported through appropriate cultural elements and practices.
	Holistic Understanding of Indigenous Culture	

Themes on the pedagogical approaches use by the Obo-Manobo teachers to affirm their cultural identity in language teaching

Community Engagement and Collaboration. Obo-Manobo language educators perceive themselves as integral members of their communities, actively engaging in collaborative efforts to preserve and promote their linguistic and cultural heritage. By involving community elders, parents, and local leaders in the educational process, they ensure that language instruction is deeply rooted in communal values and practices. This collaborative approach not only enriches the learning experience but also reinforces the educators' roles as cultural custodians and community advocates.

Developing a community-based curriculum ensures that Obo-Manobo cultural knowledge is authentically embedded into formal education, strengthening cultural relevance and student identity.

It must be community-based curriculum development, collaborate with Obo-Manobo elders, parents, and cultural leaders, masters to integrate indigenous knowledge into lesson plans. (IDI 1 Q 2.1)

Using experiential learning through cultural immersion activities deepens students' understanding and appreciation of their heritage, making lessons more meaningful and connected to real-life experiences.

I use experiential learning-taking students to cultural sites, festivals, or immersion activities or benchmarking with elders. (IDI 2 Q 2.1)

Employing community-based approaches and Indigenous language instruction enhances cultural validation in the classroom and fosters stronger linguistic and cultural retention among learners.

Strategies are community-based learning approached and use of Indigenous language in giving instruction. (IDI 5 Q 2.1)

The study by Añolga (2023) highlights the significance of community participation in the educational endeavors of the Ilianen Manobo, a subgroup closely related to the Obo-Manobo. It emphasizes that active involvement in community planning and cultural activities fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among educators and learners alike. Such engagement is crucial in maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of indigenous education programs

Contextualization and Integration of Indigenous Knowledge. Obo-Manobo educators integrate indigenous knowledge systems into their teaching practices, contextualizing lessons to reflect local traditions, languages, and worldviews. This approach not only enhances the relevance of the curriculum but also empowers students by validating their cultural identities within the educational framework. Educators see themselves as bridges between traditional knowledge and formal education, facilitating a learning environment where indigenous wisdom is recognized and valued.

Contextualizing language lessons around familiar aspects of Obo-Manobo life such as farming and spirituality strengthens students' cultural connection and deepens their engagement with learning.

Contextualization- I contextualized the language or the lessons familiar to Obo-Manobo life such as farming, spiritual practices and activities. (IDI 3 Q 2.1)

Integrating local language, traditions, and real-life examples in lessons bridges academic learning with lived Indigenous experiences, making education more relatable and meaningful.

Through integrating local language, traditions and real-life cultural examples in lessons. (IDI 4 Q 2.1)

Embedding the Obo-Manobo community's traditions, values, and worldview into language teaching ensures cultural authenticity and affirms the students' identity within the curriculum.

I use strategies like incorporating Obo-Manobo language teaching means integrating the community's traditions, values and worldview into lessons. This ensures teaching is culturally relevant and respectful of their way in life. (IDI 6 Q 2.1)

Almeda (2023) discusses the importance of contextualizing indigenous knowledge in elementary education, noting that such integration supports meaningful learning experiences and fosters cultural appreciation among students. The study underscores the role of educators in adapting teaching methods to incorporate local cultural elements, thereby enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies. Obo-Manobo language educators adopt culturally responsive teaching strategies that acknowledge and respect the cultural backgrounds of their students. By incorporating culturally relevant materials and pedagogical approaches, they create inclusive classrooms that affirm students' identities and experiences. This responsiveness enhances student engagement, promotes equity, and supports the academic success of indigenous learners.

Using differentiated, role-play, child-centered, and culturally appropriate activities fosters engagement and ensures that learning is accessible and respectful of the Obo-Manobo cultural context.

I use differential learning activities, role-paly method, child-centered, culturally appropriate activities. (IDI 11 Q 2.1)

Collaborating with the community and embedding traditional stories, practices, and values into instruction promotes language learning while strengthening cultural pride and heritage preservation.

To ensure alignment with the community's cultural values, teachers collaborate with the community members. Use culturally relevant materials, respect cultural protocols, foster a positive learning environment and continuously reflect and adopt teaching practices. Also, by incorporating traditional stories, cultural practices and community environment that promotes Obo-Manobo cultural pride and identity. By these, teachers not only teach language but also preserve and promote the rich cultural heritage. (IDI 12 Q 2.1)

Utilizing culturally relevant materials, respecting cultural norms, and fostering a positive environment ensures that teaching practices affirm Indigenous identity and create inclusive learning spaces.

Use culturally relevant materials, respect cultural protocols, foster a positive learning environment and continuously reflect and adopt teaching practices. (IDI 13 Q 2.1)

Burnham (2024) underscores that culturally responsive pedagogy enhances equity and student engagement, particularly for indigenous and marginalized learners. Teachers who adapt their instruction to reflect students' cultural contexts develop stronger trust, classroom cohesion, and learner performance. These educators are viewed not just as instructors, but as cultural advocates and bridge-builders.

Promotion of Cultural Identity, Heritage, and Pride. Obo-Manobo educators play a pivotal role in promoting cultural identity and pride among their students. Through language instruction that incorporates traditional stories, rituals, and values, they instill a sense of belonging and self-worth in learners. This emphasis on cultural heritage not only preserves indigenous traditions but also empowers students to navigate the broader society with confidence and resilience.

Aligning teaching with Obo-Manobo cultural values strengthens students' heritage connection, fosters pride, and ensures the preservation of language and traditions.

Teachers can ensure that their teaching not only aligns with the Obo-Manobo community's cultural values but also strengthens students' connection to their heritage, promotes cultural pride, and helps sustain the language and traditions for future generations. (IDI 16 Q 2.1)

Promoting cultural pride and sustaining traditions through culturally aligned teaching builds a deeper sense of belonging and identity among Obo-Manobo learners.

Teachers can ensure that their teaching not only aligns with the Obo-Manobo community's cultural values but also strengthens students' connection to their heritage, promotes cultural pride, and helps sustain the language and traditions for future generations. (IDI 18 Q 2.1)

Emphasizing community ties, environmental respect, and oral traditions in teaching reinforces core Indigenous values and nurtures cultural continuity.

Emphasizes the importance of community, respect for the environment, oral traditions (IDI 20 Q 2.1)

Burgos et al. (2025) explore the relationship between cultural identity and language learning among Filipino students, highlighting how a strong cultural foundation enhances language acquisition and personal development. The study suggests that affirming students' cultural backgrounds in educational settings leads to improved academic performance and self-esteem.

Themes on the pedagogical approaches use by the Obo-Manobo teachers to affirm their cultural identity in language teaching

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic Theme
Culturally Anchored Teaching Practices through Community Engagement, Contextualization, and	Community Engagement and Collaboration	Strategies emphasize working closely with Obo-Manobo elders, parents, and cultural leaders. Teachers build strong relationships with the community to design culturally grounded curricula and activities.

Promotion of Indigenous Identity	Contextualization and Integration of Indigenous Knowledge	Focus on incorporating real-life cultural examples, traditions, farming, environment, language, oral traditions, and spirituality into lessons to ensure that learning is relevant and meaningful.
	Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies	Includes child-centered, culturally appropriate activities, differential learning, respect for cultural protocols, and recognition of communal values like love, humility, and cooperation.
	Promotion of Cultural Identity, Heritage, and Pride	Teaching is aimed not only at academic learning but also at promoting cultural pride, sustaining the Obo-Manobo language and traditions, and strengthening students' connection to their heritage.

Themes on the Perceived Self-Identity as Language educators among the Obo-Manobo

Language as a Core of Personal and Professional Identity. For Obo-Manobo educators, language is not merely a communication tool but a fundamental component of their personal and professional identity. Teaching their native language allows them to embody and transmit their cultural values, reinforcing their role as custodians of their heritage. This dual identity enhances their commitment to preserving linguistic traditions and fosters a sense of purpose in their educational practices.

Recognizing the Obo-Manobo language as central to both personal and professional identity strengthens the role of educators in cultural preservation and enhances culturally respectful teaching practices.

The Obo-Manobo language is central to both my personal and professional identity. Personally, it connects me to my heritage and gives me a deep sense of pride, while professionally it serves as a vital tool in preserving cultural traditions and engaging students in meaningful, culturally respectful learning. (IDI 1 Q 3.1)

In the same vein, viewing language as a guiding force in shaping values and perspectives reinforces the teacher's role as a cultural custodian and community leader.

It holds profound significance in both personal and professional identity, serving as more than just a means of communication. It is a guiding force that shapes values, perspectives and my role in the community. (IDI 2 Q 3.1)

As such, acknowledging the language as a source of belonging deepens community connections and fosters mutual respect, which are essential for effective Indigenous education.

As a member of Obo-Manobo, I would see my language as deeply significant in both my personal and professional identity because I have a sense of belonging. Speaking and understanding the language fosters a Deep connection with the community, reinforcing cultural identity and mutual respect. (IDI 6 Q 3.1)

Language is central to Indigenous educators' self-concept, functioning not only as a means of communication but as a foundation for professional and cultural legitimacy. Research highlights that Indigenous teachers perceive their language as an extension of their personal identity, influencing their teaching philosophy and pedagogical goals. Through teaching their native language, they reclaim their voice and assert their professional identity in systems that often marginalize Indigenous epistemologies (Bala & Zajda, 2021; Montañó & Martínez, 2022). This dynamic creates a powerful synergy between personal belief systems and professional practices, fostering a culturally grounded and purposeful form of teaching.

Preservation of Culture and Strengthening of Cultural Identity. Obo-Manobo language educators play a pivotal role in preserving their culture and reinforcing cultural identity among students. By integrating traditional narratives, customs, and values into their teaching, they ensure that learners develop a profound connection to their heritage. This approach not only enriches the educational experience but also instills pride and continuity within the community.

Valuing the Obo-Manobo language as essential for preserving traditions strengthens the cultural foundation and identity of both the educator and the community.

The Obo-Manobo language is important in keeping traditions alive and strengthening cultural identity. (IDI 3 Q 3.1)

Recognizing the language as a symbol of ancestral connection and spiritual heritage affirms the educator's responsibility as a bridge between generations.

It represents ancestral connection and spiritual heritage as well as reinforce their role as cultural keepers and educators. (IDI 4 Q 3.1)

Emphasizing their role as cultural keepers and educators highlights the importance of language in sustaining and promoting Indigenous identity.

It reinforces their role as cultural keepers and educators. (IDI 5 Q 3.1)

Educators who teach Indigenous languages see themselves as cultural preservers, working to strengthen collective identity in communities where languages and traditions face the threat of erosion. Culturally responsive instruction that integrates rituals, narratives, and oral traditions sustains intergenerational knowledge and reinforces a sense of belonging among learners (Bustamante et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2020). This process of cultural reinforcement empowers Indigenous youth to embrace their heritage and contributes to broader efforts in cultural revitalization and decolonization within education (Mahabir & Wilson, 2023).

Language as a Tool for Community Engagement and Education. Language educators among the Obo-Manobo utilize their teaching as a means to engage with the community and promote educational development. By involving elders, parents, and local leaders in the educational process, they create a collaborative environment that values communal knowledge and participation. This inclusive approach enhances the relevance of education and strengthens communal bonds.

Thus, contextualizing lessons with relatable examples and multilingual approaches ensures that all Obo-Manobo students feel recognized and engaged in their learning.

I, myself is part of the tribe the Obo-Manobo, it is a given responsibility for us to be significant to what we are teaching. Use or contextualize the topic that is relatable to the Obo-Manobo students, use example during discussions that students relate, translate from one to another language to catch all the students' needs and attention. (IDI 7 Q 3.1)

Moreover, viewing oneself as a guardian of the Obo-Manobo language and culture reinforces the teacher's vital role in preserving cultural identity and fostering a sense of belonging.

As a teacher, I always see myself as a guardian of the language and culture and attach great significance to the Obo-Manobo language as a symbol of cultural identity, heritage and community environment. (IDI 8 Q 3.1)

Similarly, consistently emphasizing the importance of the Obo-Manobo language highlights the teacher's commitment to sustaining cultural heritage across generations.

As a teacher, I always see myself as a guardian of the language and culture and attach great significance to the Obo-Manobo language. (IDI 9 Q 3.1)

Language instruction becomes a vehicle for engaging communities, fostering solidarity, and bridging generations. Indigenous educators often incorporate elders, local leaders, and traditional events into the curriculum to align learning with community values and lived experiences (Tuhwai Smith & Tuck, 2021; Garcia et al., 2023). This collaborative approach enhances students' social learning and builds reciprocal relationships between schools and communities, positioning language education as both an educational and communal act.

Language as a Symbol of Ancestral Connection and Cultural Legacy. For Obo-Manobo educators, teaching their native language is a profound act of honoring their ancestors and preserving their cultural legacy. Language instruction serves as a bridge connecting past generations with the present, ensuring that ancestral wisdom and traditions are passed down. This perspective imbues their teaching with a sense of reverence and continuity.

This foundational perspective underscores how language serves not only as a communication tool but also as a vessel of identity and responsibility.

It represents ancestral connection and spiritual heritage as well as reinforce their role as cultural keepers and educators. (IDI 4 Q 3.1)

This highlights the lived experiences that are passed down through language, shaping collective memory and belonging.

Language is a bridge to family stories, oral traditions, and community rituals. (IDI 17 Q 3.1)

Together, these insights reveal that the Obo-Manobo language is more than words—it is the heartbeat of cultural preservation and identity.

The Obo-Manobo language is a treasure, a legacy, a living connection to the past, present and future of a vibrant and deserving culture. (IDI 23 Q 3.1)

Teaching Indigenous languages is widely viewed by educators as a sacred act of honoring their ancestors and preserving a legacy of resilience. The act of speaking, writing, and teaching these languages is infused with spiritual and historical significance, representing a direct link to ancestral wisdom and Indigenous cosmologies (Wyman & McCarty, 2020; Cruz & Aquino, 2024). Through language, educators transmit the values, stories, and worldviews of their people, making the classroom a vital space for spiritual continuity and cultural empowerment.

Themes on the Perceived Self-Identity as Language educators among the Obo-Manobo

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic Theme
The Central Role of the Obo-Manobo Language in Shaping Identity, Preserving Culture, and Empowering Education	Language as a Core of Personal and Professional Identity	The Obo-Manobo language is deeply tied to both personal heritage and professional teaching identity. It provides a sense of belonging, pride, and connection with the learners.

	Preservation of Culture and Strengthening of Cultural Identity	The language is seen as essential for preserving traditions, oral histories, and cultural resilience, ensuring that cultural identity remains strong across generations.
	Language as a Tool for Community Engagement and Education	Language is used strategically in teaching practices (e.g., contextualization, translation, creation of materials) to make education more accessible and culturally responsive for Obo-Manobo students.
	Language as a Symbol of Ancestral Connection and Cultural Legacy	The language is seen as a living bridge connecting the past, present, and future generations, strengthening community ties and honoring ancestral wisdom.

Themes on effects of Self-Identity of Obo Manobo Teachers on the language learning experience and cultural awareness of their students

Creation of Inclusive and Culturally Diverse Learning Environments. Fostering an inclusive and culturally diverse learning environment allows Obo-Manobo learners to feel valued and respected within the classroom. It encourages cultural understanding among all students and promotes a sense of belonging. Teachers who recognize and integrate students' cultural backgrounds create a more equitable educational space. This approach reduces marginalization and enhances student engagement and identity development.

Creating an inclusive classroom environment through culturally integrated lessons fosters a deeper appreciation for diversity and encourages students to respect one another's backgrounds.

To promote cultural awareness among students, I create an inclusive classroom environment by integrating lessons about different cultures, traditions, and perspectives. I encourage open discussions to celebrate cultural events and use diverse teaching materials. This helps students develop respect and understanding for cultural differences. (IDI 1 Q 4.1)

Encouraging open discussions and incorporating diverse teaching materials can strengthen students' understanding of cultural celebrations and build a more respectful classroom culture.

I encourage open discussions to celebrate cultural events and use diverse teaching materials. (IDI 14 Q 4.1)

Designing lessons that reflect multiple cultural traditions and viewpoints supports inclusivity and promotes empathy among learners.

I should create an inclusive classroom environment by integrating lessons about different cultures, traditions, and perspectives. (IDI 15 Q 4.1)

Bautista and Velasco (2023) emphasized that creating culturally responsive spaces nurtures mutual respect and fosters classroom equity. According to Yazon et al. (2022), inclusive settings help reduce bias and support personalized learning for Indigenous communities. Culturally sustaining pedagogies promote both achievement and identity affirmation (Paris & Alim, 2020).

Language Empowerment through Storytelling and Native Language Use. Using storytelling and native language in instruction empowers Indigenous learners by validating their identity and cultural knowledge. It strengthens language preservation and increases students' participation by allowing them to engage with familiar linguistic and cultural symbols. Teachers using Obo-Manobo stories reinforce intergenerational wisdom and build stronger linguistic bridges between home and school. This strategy also boosts literacy skills by providing meaningful and context-rich learning experiences.

Encouraging students to use their native language in storytelling and writing enhances their linguistic confidence and strengthens cultural identity.

Encouraging students to speak and write in their native language through storytelling and creative writing. (IDI 2 Q 4.1)

Celebrating traditions and sharing cultural narratives nurture students' pride in their heritage and deepen their connection to community values.

Celebrating traditions, telling cultural stories and discussing local values help students appreciate their culture. (IDI 3 Q 2.1)

Using storytelling, dances, and songs in the classroom fosters cultural expression and makes learning more engaging and meaningful for students.

I used storytelling, dances and songs. (IDI 8 Q 2.1)

Storytelling and mother tongue-based approaches are effective tools for identity formation and literacy development. Esteban and Mabunga (2021) found that Indigenous language use strengthens learners' sense of self and improves comprehension. Research by Ramos and Laguador (2023) demonstrated that culturally embedded stories enhance vocabulary and oral expression among IP learners. Moreover, Mahboob and Talaat (2020) stress the critical role of local language instruction in promoting inclusion and academic equity.

Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Contextualized Materials. Integrating Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum affirms the wisdom of local communities and enriches student learning. When materials are contextualized to Obo-Manobo traditions, students can better connect mathematical, scientific, and linguistic concepts to real-life experiences. This culturally grounded pedagogy enhances critical thinking and cultural pride. Teachers act as cultural bridges, linking traditional knowledge systems with formal education.

Integrating Obo-Manobo history, geography, and social studies into language lessons deepens students' cultural understanding while strengthening their academic connections across subjects.

I use interdisciplinary approach-integrating Obo-Manobo history geography and social studies into language lessons. (IDI 4 Q 4.1)

Incorporating Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED) across disciplines supports holistic learning and affirms the cultural identity of Obo-Manobo learners.

IPED Integration- integrating Obo-Manobo into different subjects. (IDI 5 Q 4.1)

Using Indigenous materials as teaching tools fosters relevant and engaging instruction grounded in the learners' cultural environment.

Contextualized learning-use of Indigenous materials as instructional materials (IDI 10 Q 4.1)

Teaching students about their land, ecosystems, and indigenous practices builds ecological awareness and preserves traditional knowledge systems.

Teach students about their land, local ecosystems, and indigenous knowledge systems related to farming, herbal medicine, or survival. (IDI 17 Q 4.1)

Contextualized instruction aligned with Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) fosters relevant and meaningful learning. Dela Cruz and Lumibao (2022) emphasized that embedding cultural practices in curriculum boosts learners' engagement and retention. Padilla and Panganiban (2021) showed that contextual materials increase learner motivation and understanding in multicultural settings. The Department of Education's IP Education Framework (DepEd, 2020) also promotes curriculum localization to respect community values.

Community Engagement and Cultural Celebrations. Engaging with the community through cultural events strengthens school-community ties and reinforces the value of Indigenous traditions. Involving parents and elders in educational activities provides learners with role models and deepens their understanding of cultural continuity. Cultural celebrations foster collective identity and help preserve rituals, dances, and traditional knowledge. This collaboration nurtures holistic development and creates a culturally grounded support system for learners.

Engaging in IPED trainings and community activities enables teachers to effectively transfer cultural knowledge, allowing students to develop pride and awareness in their Obo-Manobo heritage.

Through community engagement, training and seminars in IPED I can be passionate about the knowledge or information I know to my students. So that they will be aware of the different practices, culture, traditions of the tribe they belong. (IDI 7 Q 4.1)

Celebrating Indigenous events and participating in local festivals strengthens the cultural identity of students and fosters deeper community-school relationships.

We celebrate IP day? Ip month and IP festival in our school to showcase the rich culture of Obo-Manobo tribe. We also join community gatherings like POKAAT KALLU Festival of the Barangay Manobo. (IDI 11 Q 4.1)

Integrating storytelling, cultural immersion, and community-based projects into lessons cultivates empathy, critical thinking, and a culturally inclusive learning environment.

I promote cultural awareness. I use specific practices such as storytelling, cultural immersion, community engagement and language and cultural instruction. I also incorporate local knowledge and perspective into lesson plans, encouraging critical thinking and empathy. My sharing anecdotes, involving students in community-based projects and teaching traditional practices. Create a rich and inclusive learning environment. (IDI 12 Q 4.1)

Community participation enhances the cultural responsiveness of education. Sarmiento and Loria (2022) found that integrating cultural celebrations improves school attendance and learner involvement. Del Rosario and Basa (2023) highlighted the role of intergenerational learning in cultural sustainability. UNESCO (2021) also emphasizes that education must actively involve Indigenous communities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.

Storytelling, Music, and Arts as Tools for Cultural Transmission. Artistic expressions such as storytelling, music, and dance are powerful mediums for transmitting values, histories, and traditions. Incorporating these in lessons enables students to internalize cultural narratives and creatively express their identity. These activities also develop cognitive, emotional, and linguistic skills in culturally relevant ways. Teachers who integrate cultural arts help ensure that ancestral knowledge continues to thrive in formal education settings.

Highlighting traditions and cultural stories fosters a sense of belonging and pride among students about their heritage.

Celebrating traditions, telling cultural stories and discussing local values help students appreciate their culture. (IDI 3 Q 4.1)

Using storytelling, dances, and songs in lessons makes learning more engaging and helps preserve cultural expressions.

I used storytelling, dances and songs. (IDI 8 Q 4.1)

Sharing stories that reflect values and history deepens students' understanding of their identity and strengthens intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Students learn moral values, cultural wisdom, and history through storytelling, which is an authentic and powerful way to pass down knowledge. (IDI 19 Q 4.1)

Arts-based education plays a vital role in preserving and revitalizing Indigenous heritage. Villegas and Tangonan (2023) found that music and storytelling enhance cultural memory among Indigenous learners. Bulaon and Cruz (2022) emphasized that visual and performing arts improve engagement and promote intergenerational learning. Likewise, UNESCO (2020) affirms that creative expressions are essential to safeguarding Indigenous knowledge and identity.

Themes on effects of Self-Identity of Obo Manobo Teachers on the language learning experience and cultural awareness of their students

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic Theme
Promoting Cultural Awareness through Inclusive Practices, Indigenous Integration, and Language Empowerment in Education	Creation of Inclusive and Culturally Diverse Learning Environments	Teachers emphasize building inclusive classrooms by integrating diverse cultures, traditions, and perspectives into lesson plans to develop cultural appreciation and mutual respect among students.
	Language Empowerment through Storytelling and Native Language Use	Promotes the use of the Obo-Manobo native language in speaking, writing, storytelling, and classroom communication to strengthen cultural pride and maintain linguistic heritage.
	Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Contextualized Materials	Teachers integrate Obo-Manobo history, geography, farming practices, herbal medicine, and survival knowledge into lessons, using indigenous materials for authentic and meaningful learning experiences.
	Community Engagement and Cultural Celebrations	Teachers engage in community-based projects, festivals, competitions, and trainings that promote awareness of the Obo-Manobo culture and strengthen the bond between schools and local communities.
	Storytelling, Music, and Arts as Tools for Cultural Transmission	Use of storytelling, dances, songs, music, and arts is emphasized as authentic, effective methods to transmit cultural wisdom, moral values, and historical traditions.

This chapter presents the implications of intercultural language teaching in pedagogical sense and in research.

Implications for Practice

Cultural awareness and sensitivity in Filipino language teaching must be a foundational element of the curriculum. Educators need to ensure that students understand and respect cultural differences within the Filipino context and beyond. Teachers should incorporate lessons that highlight various Filipino traditions, customs, and values to deepen students' understanding of their own heritage. Such practices create an inclusive and empathetic learning environment where cultural diversity is appreciated and celebrated.

Interactive and engaging learning strategies should be integrated into language teaching practices. Teachers can utilize role-playing, group activities, and real-life scenarios to allow students to express their thoughts and ideas freely. By involving students in active discussions and activities, teachers encourage critical thinking while reinforcing cultural sensitivity. These approaches also allow students to connect language with real-world experiences, improving their communication skills and cultural comprehension.

Language learning must be contextualized to ensure students understand the nuances of Filipino culture. Teachers should introduce lessons that explore idioms, expressions, and cultural references embedded in the language. Additionally, comparative analysis and reflection should be encouraged, allowing students to compare Filipino culture with other cultures they encounter. This process helps students appreciate the diverse world around them and develop their intercultural communication skills.

Implications for Future Research

This chapter presents the implications for practice, implications for future research, and concluding remarks.

Implications for Practice

The findings demonstrate that integrating oral traditions such as folktales, chants, and epic stories into classroom instruction is vital for both language development and cultural preservation. Teachers should be supported with resources and training that help them effectively use Indigenous oral narratives as powerful pedagogical tools. Incorporating storytelling and traditional songs into language lessons can improve student engagement, deepen cultural connections, and enhance retention of both linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Embedding Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) into language teaching fosters learning experiences that are authentic and culturally grounded. Educators must be encouraged to design curricula that reflect Indigenous realities, such as rituals, crafts, and farming techniques, thereby ensuring that students' education is both academically enriching and culturally meaningful. Schools and education policymakers must prioritize the inclusion of community elders and Indigenous knowledge holders in the curriculum development process to maintain authenticity and cultural accuracy.

Using the native language consistently in the classroom builds students' pride, strengthens self-identity, and promotes resilience against cultural erosion. Teachers should be empowered to deliver instruction in the mother tongue and encouraged to create a learning environment that honors and celebrates Indigenous languages. School leadership must advocate for language policies that protect and revitalize Indigenous languages to preserve cultural heritage while promoting educational equity.

Implications for Future Research

Future research should explore longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of integrating oral traditions on students' academic performance, cultural pride, and language retention. Tracking students who have experienced culturally responsive education rooted in oral traditions can reveal how these practices impact lifelong cultural engagement and academic success. Such studies would provide valuable data to further refine Indigenous-centered education frameworks.

There is a need for more participatory research involving Indigenous communities in the co-creation of teaching materials based on IKSP. Investigating how community-led curriculum development influences teaching effectiveness, student motivation, and cultural transmission would offer deeper insights into best practices. Future research could also explore variations across different Indigenous groups to understand localized educational needs and approaches.

Studies examining the challenges and opportunities for Indigenous language preservation in the digital age are critically needed. Research should investigate how technology can support the revitalization of native languages through digital storytelling, online platforms, and culturally sensitive educational apps. Future inquiries should also focus on how Indigenous youth engage with modern tools while maintaining their linguistic and cultural roots.

Concluding Remarks

This study affirms that integrating oral traditions and Indigenous knowledge systems into classroom instruction is not only a pedagogical strategy but also a powerful act of cultural preservation. Through the daily use of storytelling, rituals, traditional crafts, and mother-tongue instruction, teachers create a culturally vibrant learning environment that strengthens students' sense of identity and belonging. These practices honor the wisdom of ancestral heritage while making education deeply relevant to Indigenous realities.

The findings also highlight the resilience and adaptive strategies employed by teachers in the face of modernization and cultural erosion. Despite challenges such as diminishing traditional practices and resource limitations, educators continue to find innovative ways to embed Indigenous culture into classroom activities. Community collaboration, elder involvement, and ritual-based learning emerge as crucial methods for safeguarding cultural continuity across generations.

Ultimately, this chapter underscores the vital role of education in sustaining Indigenous heritage. Teachers are not just transmitters of knowledge but guardians of cultural legacy. By embracing culturally responsive language teaching and preserving Indigenous wisdom, schools become critical sites for nurturing pride, resilience, and a strong sense of self among Indigenous youth, ensuring that their rich cultural traditions endure in a rapidly changing world.