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**ENHANCING DIGITAL SKILLS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS  
IN TEACHING LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDE  
AND KNOWLEDGE USE OF ICT**

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**\*Abegail S. Nazara**

Philippines.

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\*Corresponding Author: Abegail S. Nazara

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Philippines.

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the digital literacy of early childhood teachers, focusing on their attitudes, knowledge, and skills in using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for language teaching. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, the research explored teachers' lived experiences in integrating ICT in early childhood education within the 2nd Congressional District of the Province of Cotabato. Findings revealed that teachers generally have positive attitudes toward ICT, recognizing its ability to enhance creativity, engagement, and language development. However, their willingness to integrate ICT is influenced by factors such as access to technology, level of training, and personal confidence. While ICT improves teaching effectiveness and learner engagement, challenges such as limited resources, inadequate training, and concerns about screen time hinder its full utilization. Teachers respond by adapting their practices, engaging in professional development, and collaborating with peers. The study concludes that strengthening digital competence through continuous training, adequate resources, and institutional support is essential for effective ICT integration in early childhood language education.

**INTRODUCTION**

Early childhood education serves as the foundation for lifelong learning, making it essential for teachers to possess the necessary skills to support learners' development. In the modern educational landscape, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a critical role in transforming teaching practices and enhancing learning experiences. Despite the rapid advancement of technology, many teachers still rely on traditional methods and show

hesitation in integrating ICT into their classrooms. This gap highlights the need to examine teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and digital skills in language teaching.

ICT has been recognized as a tool that can foster creativity, improve communication, and provide diverse learning opportunities. However, its effectiveness depends largely on teachers' ability and willingness to use it appropriately. In early childhood education, ICT is often used for recreational purposes rather than being fully integrated into instructional practices. Additionally, limited research exists on ICT integration among early childhood teachers in the Philippines. This study addresses this gap by exploring teachers' digital literacy and their experiences in using ICT in language instruction.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to examine the lived experiences of early childhood teachers regarding ICT integration in language teaching. The research was conducted in the 2nd Congressional District of the Province of Cotabato, including the municipalities of Antipas, Arakan, Magpet, Makilala, and President Roxas. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on criteria such as being early childhood teachers, having at least three years of teaching experience, and specializing in language instruction.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions using open-ended questions, audio recordings, and validated interview guides. The data gathering process involved securing permissions, obtaining informed consent, conducting interviews at convenient times, and transcribing responses. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes from the data. Ethical considerations—including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data privacy—were strictly observed throughout the study.

## **RESULTS**

The findings revealed several key themes regarding early childhood teachers' digital literacy and ICT integration. Teachers generally demonstrated positive attitudes toward ICT, recognizing its ability to enhance creativity, engagement, and language learning. They reported that ICT tools such as videos, games, and digital storytelling improve vocabulary, listening, speaking, and communication skills. ICT also promotes student motivation, active participation, and interactive learning experiences.

However, teachers' attitudes were found to be conditional, depending on factors such as access to technology, availability of training, and institutional support. Teachers in well-resourced environments showed higher confidence and willingness to integrate ICT, while those in under-resourced settings expressed hesitation and limited use.

The study also identified several challenges in ICT integration, including limited digital skills, lack of training, poor internet connectivity, insufficient devices, and concerns about screen time and developmental appropriateness. These barriers often lead teachers to rely on traditional teaching methods.

To address these challenges, teachers emphasized the need for professional development, particularly hands-on training, workshops, and continuous learning opportunities. They also highlighted the importance of peer collaboration, reflective practices, and contextualized training that aligns with classroom realities. Additionally, teachers assess their ICT use through self-reflection, student feedback, and peer evaluation to improve their teaching strategies.

In lesson planning, teachers integrate ICT purposefully by selecting age-appropriate tools such as digital storybooks, educational apps, games, and multimedia resources. These strategies enhance engagement and support language development when aligned with learning objectives.