RESEARCH ARTICLE

Fostering Critical Thinking in Filipino through Media and Information Literacy

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Abstract: Media and Information Literacy (MIL) plays an indispensable role in the modern world, where the abundance of information and the rapid dissemination of media messages can both inform and mislead. This study aims to integrate MIL into Filipino language teaching through the use of lesson exemplars. Understanding and incorporating MIL competencies into subject areas is essential to nurturing students' skills and knowledge about their environment. Through the application of both quantitative and qualitative methods, the findings reveal that MIL empowers individuals to navigate the complex media landscape with confidence and discernment. It fosters informed citizenship, promotes critical thinking, protects against misinformation and manipulation, and cultivates digital citizenship. As society continues to evolve, investing in MIL education becomes paramount in equipping individuals with the skills necessary to be active, engaged, and responsible participants in the digital age.

Keywords: digital society, lesson exemplars, media and information literacy (MIL), Filipino language teaching

1   Introduction

Education has played a pivotal role in transforming societies. As societal needs evolve, the curriculum must also adapt accordingly (Leake, 2012; Sinaga & Artati, 2017). In contemporary education, there is a strong emphasis on media literacy, skills development, experiential learning, and their integration with language education (Frolich & Magolis, 2020; Tutgun-Ünal, 2020; Garman, 2015; Peterlin & Peters, 2020; Jenkins & Clarke, 2017; Leckie & Wall, 2017; Rodriguez & Hine, 2011). Consequently, mentors, administrators, and education experts have established a 21st-century skills framework that delineates the competencies and support systems necessary for students to thrive in today's world (Karakose et al., 2022). This framework identifies essential skills connected to mass communications, such as information and media literacy, and information and communication technology literacy. It also highlights life and career skills, including adaptability, self-direction, and social and cross-cultural competencies, which are particularly relevant for media students (Frolich & Magolis, 2020; Peterlin & Peters, 2020; Sinaga & Artati, 2017).

In this context, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been at the forefront of monitoring advancements in Media and Information Literacy (MIL). UNESCO defines MIL as a set of competencies that enables individuals to access, retrieve, comprehend, evaluate, and use, produce, and share information and media content effectively and ethically, regardless of format (UNESCO, 2013, p. 29). The organization has been exploring the impact of the evolving information, communication, media, and education ecosystems, advocating for the role of technology and independent media as tools for empowering individuals to be free and self-reliant (UNESCO, 2013). The collaborative and cross-disciplinary nature of media literacy is particularly noteworthy, as it entails knowing, inquiring, assessing, and confirming information (Rabe, 2014). The role of technology in this evolution presents exciting new possibilities for enhancing education and media literacy (Lavidas et al., 2024).

To further advance media literacy education, the National Association for Media Literacy Education has identified six essential elements: (a) critical thinking and inquiry about media; (b) the ability to comprehend media; (c) the strengthening of lifelong skills; (d) the enhancement of civic engagement; (e) recognition of media as a socialization agent; and (f) the capacity to create meaning from media messages (Bergsma et al., 2007). These essentials provide a framework

for fostering a comprehensive understanding of media literacy, reinforcing its vital importance in contemporary education.

1.1   Media and Information Literacy in Society

In today's world, we constantly encounter various media, forms of information, and communication technologies that significantly impact our political, economic, and personal lives. Therefore, learning new competencies—such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes—is essential for individuals who want to participate in and succeed within society's information landscape (Lavidas et al., 2022).

The term "literacy" is frequently used in research literature and is often associated with descriptors like "digital," "computer," "visual," "technology," "communication," "media," and "information." This highlights the growing public interest in literacy studies, which is evident in the rapid changes occurring in contemporary societies. Importantly, literacy now encompasses more than just traditional reading and writing skills. However, we must not underestimate the value of numeracy and fundamental skills, as these are also vital in our society. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) strengthens these skills by ensuring that young people understand the functions of media and information providers, such as libraries, where books serve as an important media source.

Young people should be capable of seeking, evaluating, using, and creating information to meet their personal, social, vocational, and educational goals (Tülübaş et al., 2022). Research in information literacy has shown that students often struggle to assess the reliability of data, even in educational environments. Although modern youth are often perceived to possess superior technological and MIL skills compared to older generations, they still require further training to develop the competencies needed in today's society. Enhancing media and information literacy skills presents opportunities for both teachers and students to enrich the educational environment and promote a more dynamic teaching and learning process.

In line with this idea, UNESCO proposed MIL as a multifaceted concept in 2007. In our increasingly connected and media-saturated world, being media literate is crucial for individuals to navigate the complex landscape of information and make informed decisions. Hobbs (2010) emphasized the importance of developing critical thinking skills, digital citizenship, and the ability to engage with media messages meaningfully. This involves understanding how media are constructed, how they convey meaning, and how they can influence opinions and behaviors. The framework also highlights the significance of media production and encourages individuals to create their own media content. Hobbs's MIL is taught in educational settings, from primary schools to higher education institutions, empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to become informed and engaged citizens in the digital age. The framework fosters active participation, critical inquiry, and responsible media consumption.In today's world, we constantly encounter various media, forms of information, and communication technologies that significantly impact our political, economic, and personal lives. Therefore, learning new competencies—such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes—is essential for individuals who want to participate in and succeed within society's information landscape.

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Media and Information Literacy (MIL) encompasses a range of skills, including digital and technology literacy, that empower individuals to interact effectively with both online and offline information sources. It consists of knowledge, attitudes, and competencies that facilitate access, analysis, evaluation, and creation of media and information in a legal and ethical manner.

Several transversal competencies fall under MIL, including media literacy, social media literacy, privacy literacy, critical literacy, and digital literacy, among others. These competencies enhance understanding in various contexts, such as navigating social media, engaging critically with content, and understanding personal data privacy.

In relation to mobile learning, MIL plays a crucial role as mobile devices are increasingly used for education and information dissemination. Mobile learning can leverage MIL competencies by enabling learners to access and evaluate diverse information sources on the go, fostering critical engagement and a deeper understanding of digital content. Thus, combining MIL with mobile learning enhances the educational experience and equips individuals with essential 21st-century skills necessary for navigating a complex information landscape.

The competencies outlined above align with the multiliteracy concept of the Department of Education (DepEd) in relation to language learning. According to the DepEd's curriculum framework, students are required to develop both communicative competence and multiliteracies, enabling them to derive meaning through language. Language acquisition involves a range of skills including watching, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is essential to incorporate various strategies and activities in language education to help students focus on both meaning and accuracy. Linguistic learning involves recognizing, embracing, and enhancing students' existing linguistic capabilities while also necessitating functional and critical literacy skills. This learning process equips students to navigate and understand the conventions of the target language valued by society, while also encouraging them to reflect on and critically evaluate their own language use and that of others.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) initiated the implementation of an expanded primary education curriculum known as the K-12 Program in 2016. This new curriculum introduced Media and Information Literacy (MIL) as a stand-alone subject in the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum, aiming to educate students on effectively using various technological and communication channels as part of the contemporary educational agenda (Santos, 2020).

Despite these educational reforms, challenges remain regarding the media literacy skills of the broader population in the Philippines. To address the underlying issues contributing to the proliferation of information disorder in the country, Tutgun-Ünal (2020) suggested that societal norms and values must evolve in tandem with technology. This includes focusing on five key aspects of media literacy: maintaining social etiquette in interactions, upholding moral responsibility to avoid abusing anonymity, fostering critical thinking, strengthening the frameworks for constructive debate, and respecting the plurality of ideas. Consequently, the importance of incorporating these competencies into education is a must, especially as a key for students to survive in the changing needs of society. This is also a reflection of AmBisyon Natin 2040, a 25-year long-term vision of the Philippine government by virtue of Executive Order No. 5 series of 2016, which symbolizes the collective vision and ambitions of the Filipino people for themselves and their nation during the next quarter-century (Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, 2016). All groups in society, whether public or private, should work to create possibilities for Filipinos to experience a happy, healthy, and prosperous life. Government must utilize its fiscal, monetary, and regulatory policies to influence the course of growth so that Filipinos can achieve their ambisyon or aspirations. This applies to all aspects of development, including economic, human, physical, institutional, social, and cultural capital. This could be achieved through education and re-tooling services. Well-educated and innovative Filipinos would consistently enhance the quality of living in the Philippines. If education

enables the acquisition of information, skills, values, beliefs, and habits, then formal education is the systematic way of assisting the acquisition of a particular set of such knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. The government must consequently be proactive in establishing the educational agenda. Ultimately, it is about shaping Filipinos and developing the future Filipino society which encompasses empowerment of Filipinos through MIL, among others.

In addition to ensuring that Filipino students obtain the fundamental literacies (reading, numeracy, scientific literacy, ICT literacy, economic and financial literacy, and cultural and civic literacy), the formal education system must also ensure that students acquire competencies (critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, communication, collaboration) and develop character qualities (curiosity, initiative, persistence and grit, adaptability, leadership, social and cultural literacy).

Media education is widely used in language and communication disciplines, but it is mainly taught using English as its medium of instruction (Buckingham, 2003; Cuillier, 2008). Since there is an urgent need for MIL to be integrated in subjects, particularly in language programs such as the Filipino, enriching the curriculum is the first step in introducing a relevant MIL program in academic institutions (Ahmad, 2013). This has been observed to be implemented only in K-12 education (Koltay, 2011) among Grades 11 and 12.

With this, the study aimed to empower students with MIL competencies through lesson exemplars in the Filipino subject. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:
(1) How is MIL integrated in the Grade 7 Filipino lesson exemplar?
(2) What is the evaluation of experts in the lesson exemplar?
(3) What is the evaluation of the principal or experts in the teacher observation?
(4) What are the experiences of the following users of the exemplars: teachers and students.

The data generated from this study would serve as bases for program review specifically in Filipino Language Teaching. It would also promote the need to enhance MIL competencies to meet the skill needed in the 21st-century workplace and address UNESCO's call for the advancement of media literacy to develop citizens that are news literate. This research would enrich additional research when it comes to integration of MIL in Filipino Language Teaching in the Philippines.

2   Methods

2.1   Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach to thoroughly understand the research phenomenon. It aims to investigate the experiences of those closest to the issue (Davison, 2013). The qualitative part seeks answers to research questions descriptively through interviews or observations of key informants, such as teachers and students. Their contributions, comments, and shared experiences will be gathered for further analysis. Creswell (2007) noted that a qualitative study describes the meanings for several individuals regarding their shared experiences of a concept or phenomenon (Petousi & Sifaki, 2020). The focus is on illuminating details and seemingly trivial aspects within the experience that may be taken for granted, creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991).

2.2   Population and Locale of the Study

This research study highlights the critical involvement of 30 Grade 7 journalism students, chosen for their developmental stage, which enhances their language learning and media and information literacy (MIL) engagement. At this age, students develop strong critical thinking and analytical skills, making them ideal for evaluating the lesson exemplar crafted for Filipino Language Education.

For the expert reviewers, specific criteria ensured that evaluators had relevant credentials and experience. Selected experts included educators with a substantial background in Filipino language teaching, instructional material development, and media literacy. The review selection process was thorough, targeting professionals from local universities and experienced educators in the Department of Education (DepEd) known for their curriculum development skills. These experts were invited to assess the lesson exemplar using a provided evaluation tool, ensuring they contributed both theoretical knowledge and practical insights.

By involving both Grade 7 journalism students and expert reviewers, the study fosters collab-

oration and aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the integrated MIL approach's effectiveness in Filipino Language Education. This approach ensures the findings reflect a well-rounded perspective from experienced voices in the field.

2.3   Instrument

For the qualitative phase of the study, an interview guide was developed based on a priori codes. The questions focused on the experiences of both teachers and students in relation to the lesson exemplars. Additional questions were asked to explore the teacher's perspectives on factors influencing student performance in the program. Open-ended questions were used to encourage in-depth and authentic responses, while follow-up questions ensured data saturation. All interviews were audio recorded to preserve accuracy and ensure the integrity of the responses. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, with participants and the institution assured that all collected data would be treated with confidentiality and used solely for research purposes.Furthermore, the researcher used the PIME Model of UNESCO, which stands for Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the lesson exemplars:

For the Planning phase, the researcher prepared three lesson exemplars that integrated MIL competencies. The lesson exemplars were based on the MELCS set by the Department of Education. The lessons including the competencies for the objectives were based on the MELCS. Activities that promote MIL in Filipino language teaching were carefully planned and analyzed. These were then evaluated by three master teachers who were also evaluators in the field of journalism and Filipino language teaching. They used the DepEd's evaluation tool set under the LRMDS.

Implementation and Monitoring: After the evaluation of the lesson exemplars, the teacher executed these lessons in the Grade 7 journalism class. The three master teachers observed the teacher's execution of the lessons. They used the DepEd classroom observation evaluation tool. This is a critical component of the research since this observation was part of the monitoring of progress and attainment of goals of the teaching and learning process (UNESCO's guide in monitoring and evaluation, page 6).

Evaluation: Afterwards, the participants were interviewed. The researcher set an interview which was more structured than the informal conversational interview, although it was still flexible in its composition. The manner by which the questions were phrased depended upon the researcher. The participants may not consistently answer the same question(s) based on how they were posed by the interviewer (McNamara, 2009). The point of a qualitative interview is to let the respondents tell their own story on their own terms. This is the critical part that determines whether the lesson exemplar, in which MIL was integrated, was compelling to the students and the teachers.

2.4   Treatment of Data

To address the first research question on integrating Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in the Filipino lesson exemplar, the DepEd lesson plan format was merged with the Hobbs Framework. For the second research question, three master teachers evaluated the lesson exemplars using LRMDS forms from DepEd, providing feedback that informed discussions and improvements, thereby ensuring reliability and validity through expert insights. The third question involved classroom observations by the same master teachers, utilizing evaluation tools to assess student participation and overall lesson effectiveness.

For the fourth research question, interviews with teachers and students about their experiences with the lesson exemplar were transcribed and translated. The researcher conducted a cool analysis to extract significant insights, followed by a warm analysis to identify common themes. Thematic analysis, as defined by Boyatzis (1998), was employed to code qualitative data and reveal patterns.

To enhance trustworthiness, an audit trail was maintained, coupled with member-checking for accuracy of the gathered data. Methodological triangulation further added reliability by incorporating diverse perspectives from both teachers and students regarding MIL integration. This comprehensive approach reinforced the themes and discussions derived from expert evaluations, ensuring a robust analysis of the findings.

2.5   Ethical Considerations

The minors' rights and wellbeing were given special attention in the conduct of this research. Thus, a consent form was signed by the authorities and the participants of the school prior to

the actual conduct of the research. Because children cannot legally offer informed consent for research participation, parental or guardian authorization was sought. The researcher has explained to the parents and the students the research method and why they need to participate. After the explanation, some parents raised questions which were then answered by the researcher. Eventually, the parents signed the consent for their children to participate in the research.

3   Results and Discussion

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is a crucial component of education in the twenty-first century, especially for high school students navigating a plethora of media and a rapidly changing digital landscape. According to UNESCO (2013), MIL encompasses the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and generate various forms of media and information. As mobile learning becomes increasingly prevalent, it complements MIL by offering students flexible access to learning resources and opportunities to develop these essential skills on-the-go.

In this study, the educational activities were specifically designed to be based on mobile learning. This approach allows students to engage with content in diverse formats, utilize various mobile applications for research and communication, and gain critical skills to discern credible information. By integrating MIL with mobile learning, teachers can create a dynamic educational environment that enhances collaboration and interaction. Ultimately, this synergy not only enriches the teaching-learning process but also prepares students to be informed, responsible participants in a digital society. The following discussion aims to answer the first research question on how MIL was integrated into Grade 7 Filipino Lesson Exemplar.

3.1   Integrating MIL in Grade 7 Lesson Exemplar

Including MIL in courses increases many capacities, meaning that young people should understand the operations of media and other information providers (for example, libraries, where books serve as the media). This was reiterated by Hobbs (2010) in her book Plan of Action, which states that there must be an integration of digital and media literacy as critical elements for education at all levels through collaboration among federal, state, and local education officials, particularly in the school setting, the classroom. With this, students must be able to locate, evaluate, utilize, and create information to achieve their personal, social, occupational, and educational goals. Furthermore, information literacy studies have indicated that students, particularly in educational contexts, need help judging data reliability.

However, one of the critical challenges of teaching and learning media literacy at the classroom level is the thorny question of effectively consolidating the school and out-of-the-school media literacy practices essential to cross the institutionally constructed divides. Thus, to instill MIL in the lesson, the researcher's lesson exemplars is based on DEPED's lesson plan and based on the Hobbs (2010) Framework of Five Essential Competencies for MIL, which covers (a) Access, or the capacity to find and obtain information from various sources, such as conventional media, digital platforms, and databases. It entails learning how to utilize search engines efficiently, assessing the dependability of sources, and navigating through various media types; (b) Analyze, or the ability to examine and assess media messages and information critically. Understanding the intent, perspective, and potential biases encoded in media information is the emphasis of this competence. Students learn to analyze media texts, recognize propaganda methods, and identify persuasive strategies media providers use; (c) Assess, or the checking of media and information sources in terms of trustworthiness, veracity, and relevance. Students learn to use fact-checking techniques, and assess the dependability of sources using indications such as knowledge, authority, and reputation; (d) Create, or the capacity to generate media material efficiently and ethically. This skill highlights the significance of students being active media makers, knowing the techniques and conventions of many media types, and generating well-crafted, engaging, and responsible material; and (e) Act, or the willingness to engage in responsible and ethical media and information consumption and creation. This skill encourages students to actively participate in society by fostering civic engagement, knowing their rights and duties as media consumers, and advocating for media variety and freedom of speech. In today's digital age, kids who acquire these qualities become critical thinkers, responsible consumers, and empowered media makers. These competencies provide a holistic strategy for strengthening students' critical thinking and media literacy abilities. In addition, integrating MIL activities into lesson exemplars allows students to analyze, evaluate, and interpret media messages and information critically. It helps them develop the skills to navigate the vast information available and make informed decisions (Tibaldo, 2021; Santos, 2020). By engaging in media analysis, fact-checking, and evaluating sources, students learn to think critically and become discerning

media consumers.

The researcher made three lesson exemplars following the DepEd lesson plan format but integrating Hobbs' Framework of Essential Competencies.

The first lesson was on writing sports news. For the level of Access, students were given pictures to analyze and they were tasked to write sports headlines out of such. Further examples from various sources were given. The analysis of conventional media was done by the students. One of the pictures analyzed was a lion. Students have given characteristics of the lion which they may use in creating a headline. Students have given strong, king, and big as descriptions for the lion. Then, the teacher presented another picture of dust. Students have given small, dirty, accumulated outside descriptions of it. Then the teacher explained that those characteristics were useful in creating headlines. She then presented a website and a video on how to do it. From all of these, students have navigated from traditional or conventional media into a more complex one which is gathering information from the website.

The second part of the framework focused on the Analyze part. Students must examine the media critically. In the lesson exemplar, students were given examples of the website needed for the information gathering for the sports news. In the discussion, potential biases of different websites were discussed. The activity would eventually teach students to understand the intent and perspective encoded in media information which is the emphasis of the second competency of Hobbs that is also reflected in the MIL framework. The activity-based integration of MIL in lesson exemplars is essential in today's digital age (Santos, 2020; Villela, 2014). Developing critical thinking skills is one of the results of the lesson exemplar (Simon & Sapp, 2006). For the third activity which reflects the third competency which is the assessing, students were given different websites which had sports news on it. During the analysis, students can verify the information and facts written on the website. With this activity, students learn to assess the trustworthiness of information, use fact-checking techniques, and assess the reliability of sources using indications such as knowledge, authority, and status. Furthermore, it empowers students as critical media consumers. The MIL integration empowers students to become active participants in media creation and consumption. Students learn to question information sources, distinguish between reliable and unreliable content, and form well-grounded opinions by engaging in media analysis, fact-checking, and critical evaluation activities. This empowers them to navigate complex media landscapes, challenge misinformation, and make informed choices as media consumers (Bor, 2014).

The next activity based on the Hobbs framework was on Create. This was reflected in the DepEd exemplar which was the last activity on evaluation. Students created sports news through the information sheets given by the teacher and additional information were obtained on the internet with credible contents. Afterwards, the students reflected on the significance of their roles as active media makers: knowing the techniques and conventions of many media types, and generating well-crafted, engaging, and responsible material. From this reflection, students can act and to engage in responsible and ethical media and information consumption and creation which is embedded in the lesson.

The first lesson was on identifying legitimate websites. In this lesson, students can learn about the analysis of online contents. This is very essential today where vast information is seen on the internet and students tend to believe information from different websites without analyzing. Furthermore, content analysis of websites was emphasized in every activity. The MIL activities promote responsible and ethical use of media and technology. Students learn about online privacy, cyberbullying, digital footprints, and copyright, enabling them to become responsible digital citizens (Tandoc et al., 2019). Moreover, it enhances media literacy skills. In a media-saturated world, students need to develop media literacy skills. By incorporating media-related activities into lesson exemplars, students can analyze various forms of media, such as advertisements, news articles, videos, and social media posts (Roberts, 2015). They learn to recognize bias, identify persuasive techniques, and understand media production processes. Media literacy skills empower students to critically engage with media, challenge misinformation, and become active participants in the digital landscape (Tibaldo, 2021; Ryhan, 2014; UNESCO, 2013). Through the lesson exemplar, students were able to promote creativity and expression. Integrating MIL activities encourage students to be creative and expressive. Students can develop their digital media production skills by incorporating multimedia elements into their assignments, such as creating videos, podcasts, presentations, or digital stories. This allows them to express their ideas and knowledge innovatively and engagingly, leveraging the power of media tools and technology.

The second lesson was all about the analysis of theater play. In this lesson, students were

given different scenes of different dramas in the Philippines. Students were asked to give the title of the drama and eventually answer the questions which pertains to the theme of the drama and explain why it was so special in the hearts of the Filipinos. From the answers of the students, they would be able to answer the next question which was reading researches about the history of theater in the Philippines. Students needed to reflect and search for additional information regarding the topic. The succeeding activity was the analysis of a short movie. Movies are powerful media that can shape opinions, influence societal norms, and perpetuate certain biases. Through movie analysis, individuals can identify and evaluate the presence of biases, stereotypes, and ideological perspectives embedded within films. This understanding enables them to recognize media manipulation and consider alternative viewpoints, fostering a more informed and media-savvy approach to consuming movies and other media forms. The analysis of a movie is an integral part of MIL for several reasons. The MIL aims to develop critical thinking skills and promote a deeper understanding of media content and its impact on individuals and society (Roberts, 2015). It cultivates a broader understanding of media as a powerful tool that shapes culture, values, and narratives, thereby enabling individuals to become active and discerning participants in the media landscape (Tutgun-Ünal, 2020).

The third lesson was about epics. For the presentation of the lesson, students were given information like statistical analysis of the history of the place with references. Exploring the history of a place as part of MIL enriches individuals' understanding of media content by providing historical context, enabling critical analysis of media representations, and fostering a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between media and history. It equips individuals with the tools to navigate media landscapes and engage with media content in a more informed and critical manner. After discussing the history, the students were asked to analyze pictures. The analysis of pictures is a crucial component of MIL as it enables individuals to critically engage with visual media, decode messages, and understand their impact. Analyzing images in media material encourages individuals to think critically, challenge assumptions, and comprehend visual representations. It analyses an image's composition, framing, color choices, graphics, and visual features to determine the intended message or subtext. This approach fosters critical thinking abilities and enables people to question prejudices, uncover manipulation, and evaluate alternate views in visual media.

From the lesson exemplar, the activities reflected the teaching and learning practices at the primary and secondary levels that can support students' media literacy, facilitate their critical engagement with media and support their active citizenship in the public sphere (European Union, 2018). In addition, MIL integration prepares students for the digital future. In today's information-driven society, digital literacy skills are essential for future success (Ahmad, 2013). By integrating MIL into lesson exemplars, educators equip students with the necessary skills to navigate and thrive in the digital world. These skills include information retrieval, evaluation, organization, and communication using digital tools and platforms. Students develop the competencies needed to adapt to evolving technologies and effectively participate in the digital economy by engaging in MIL activities.

Teaching and learning practices for media literacy education can involve various classroom-based methods such as active inquiry, discussion-based learning, collaborative learning and educational leadership, and game-based learning. Most of these are based on active learning (Hobbs, 2010). Almost all of the activities in the lesson exemplar focus on the need to capacitate students' skills in discerning media information and how to use it in their daily lives.

Thus, successful implementation of media-based literacy education at the school level is facilitated by approaches to pedagogy that combine and or cross boundaries between spaces and roles – the classroom and the extended third space; teachers and students working in partnership to co-create learning and professional development in hybrid combinations of physical and virtual networks.

3.2   Evaluation of Experts in the Lesson Exemplar

The following is the discussion for the second research question which is the evaluation of the experts to the lesson exemplar. Evaluation is essential to inform and improve instructional designs continually. Evaluation ensures that the instruction is designed to meet the identified need for instruction and effectively achieve the intended learning outcomes of the lesson (Gyori & Charles, 2017). In addition, evaluation is critical in developing and improving instructional models. It assists educators in evaluating the success of their educational materials and practices, identifying development areas, and making sound decisions regarding future instruction (Ryhan, 2014; Leggette et al., 2019).

Experts for the assessment were chosen based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. All three evaluators were master teachers and they were also evaluators in the division and regional level of the Cordillera Administrative Region. Experts play a vital role in evaluating lessons because of their specialized knowledge and experience in education.

The lesson exemplars made by the researcher passed the quality assurance, which means that those lesson plans can be administered in the class.

The evaluation tools of DepEd (CO Form 7.2 and Form 7.6) were used to evaluate the lesson exemplar. These forms are based on the suggested evaluation forms of the Learning Resource Management and Development System (LRMDS). Form 7.2 is the evaluation educational soundness evaluation checklist. Meanwhile, Form 7.6 is the evaluation of new print resources. Under this form is the evaluation of the content, format, presentation, organization, accuracy, and to-datedness of learning material.

The following is the summary of the content of Form 7.2. (a) Alignment with Curriculum: The learning resource should align with the curriculum objectives and standards, ensuring that it supports the intended learning outcomes; (b) Content Accuracy and Relevance: The resource should provide accurate and up-to-date information that is relevant to the subject or topic being taught; (c) Clear Learning Objectives: The resource should clearly state the learning objectives or goals it aims to achieve, helping learners understand what they would gain from using the resource; (d) Engagement and Interactivity: The resource should be engaging and interactive, fostering active participation and encouraging learners to explore and apply their knowledge; (e) Differentiation and Adaptability: The resource should offer flexibility and options for differentiation, catering to diverse learner needs and allowing for personalized learning experiences; (f) Variety of Media and Formats: A good learning resource incorporates a variety of media, such as text, images, videos, and interactive elements, to cater to different learning styles and preferences; and (g) Assessment and Feedback: The resource should provide opportunities for assessment and feedback, allowing learners to gauge their progress and receive constructive guidance on their performance. From all these factors in the evaluation, the lesson exemplar passed the criteria. The lesson exemplar clearly articulates the learning objectives, outlining what students were expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. This clarity helps teachers focus on specific learning outcomes and ensures students understand the purpose and expectations of the lesson.

Having a good lesson exemplar can significantly impact teaching and learning outcomes. It provides a well-structured framework that guides teachers in designing effective lessons and helps students achieve desired learning objectives. A good lesson exemplar offers clear learning objectives that set the direction for instruction. According to Marzano and Kendall (2006), setting clear learning goals is essential for effective teaching. When teachers have a well-defined understanding of the intended outcomes, they can plan instructional activities and assessments that align with those objectives; thus, enhancing student understanding and engagement. Additionally, a good lesson exemplar incorporates research-based instructional strategies. Lawson (2021) emphasizes the importance of utilizing evidence-based practices that have a high impact on student learning. These strategies can include techniques such as cooperative learning, formative assessment, and explicit instruction. When teachers implement proven strategies within a lesson exemplar, they provide students with the opportunity to engage in effective learning experiences.

Moreover, a good lesson exemplar promotes differentiation and inclusion which is evident in all three evaluated lesson exemplars. Zimmerman (2000) highlights the significance of providing instruction that meets the diverse needs of students. By including differentiation strategies within a lesson exemplar, teachers can accommodate various learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds. This ensures that all students have access to meaningful learning experiences and can make progress towards their individual goals.

Furthermore, for the evaluation and application part of the lesson plan, it is evident that it involves feedback through rubrics. A well-designed lesson exemplar includes opportunities for teachers to formatively assess student understanding and provide timely feedback. This helps students track their progress, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments to their learning strategies.

Overall, the evaluation allows educators to measure how much students have achieved the desired learning outcomes. It helps determine whether the lesson exemplar effectively facilitates student understanding, engagement, and mastery of the subject matter. The experts also provided valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson exemplar. By

analyzing assessment results and student feedback, educators can identify areas where the exemplar excels and areas that need improvement (Fleischmann & Hutchison, 2012). This information allows the researcher to refine and enhance the teaching materials and instructional strategies.

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed policy or plan, including its design, implementation, and results. Thus, evaluation allows educational institutions and stakeholders to monitor and assess the effectiveness of lesson exemplars, ensuring that they align with curriculum standards and support student learning objectives (Fulay et al., 2019). Evaluation outcomes provide evidence of the quality and impact of instructional materials, helping to maintain high standards in education.

In summary, evaluation is essential in lesson exemplars. It helps assess student learning, identify strengths and weaknesses, inform instructional decisions, improve future lessons, promote professional growth, and ensure accountability and quality assurance (Fulay et al., 2019). Educators can create compelling, impactful, learner-centered lesson exemplars that optimize student learning outcomes by rigorously evaluating students.

3.3   Observations in the Classroom

The following is the discussion for the third research question, which is the observation of the experts in the classroom. The expert's observation of the teacher in the classroom provides an opportunity to offer feedback, guidance, and support for enhancing instructional practices, classroom management, differentiation, assessment, student engagement, content knowledge, and professional development. The observations aim to support the teacher in their ongoing growth and improvement as an educator.

Classroom observation holds significant importance in the field of education for several reasons. First, it provides teachers with valuable feedback on their instructional practices, classroom management, and overall effectiveness as educators (Ryhan, 2014). Observers, whether they are administrators, mentors, or colleagues, can offer constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement. This feedback helps teachers reflect on their teaching strategies, adjust, and enhance their professional skills. Second, classroom observations serve as a means of quality assurance in education. They ensure that teachers are adhering to established standards and guidelines, implementing curriculum effectively, and meeting the needs of their students. Observations can identify areas of strength and areas that require improvement, allowing for targeted support and professional development (Rodriguez et al., 2011). Third, observations help assess the level of student engagement and the effectiveness of instructional practices in promoting student learning. Observers can gauge student participation, collaboration, and critical thinking during lessons. They can also provide insight into how well teachers differentiate instruction to meet diverse student needs, ensuring all learners can succeed. Lastly, observations can be used as a platform for mentoring and collaboration among educators. Experienced teachers can observe and guide novice or less experienced teachers, offering support and sharing effective instructional strategies (Villela, 2014). In other words, collaborative observations allow for exchanging ideas and practices, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth. Feedback from the observer has a great help in improving the strategy of the teacher when she would teach the lesson again in the future. Classroom observations contribute to teacher accountability and evaluation processes. They provide evidence-based information on teacher performance and effectiveness, helping inform professional development, recognition, and advancement decisions. Thus, observations can be part of a comprehensive evaluation system considering the multiple factors in assessing teacher competence.

3.4   Experiences of the Teacher and Students in the use of the Lesson Exemplar

Teachers have an essential role in ensuring that students leave the school with the skills necessary to be critical media consumers and deliberate and educated creators of mediated messages (Levitskaya, 2015). The success of the teaching and learning process depends on the teacher's knowledge of the subject matter. The knowledge of teachers in the subject matters they teach is crucial for establishing credibility, planning effective instruction, adapting to student needs, fostering higher-order thinking, inspiring students, addressing inquiries and challenges, and promoting their professional growth (Gyori & Charles, 2017; Fulay & Labo, 2019; Alagaran, 2015). A deep understanding of the subject enhances teachers' ability to facilitate meaningful learning experiences and support student achievement in the classroom.

Hence, to answer the fourth research question on the experiences of the teacher and the students in the use of the lesson exemplar, the following themes were generated from the interviews conducted.

3.4.1   Misconception Regarding MIL

During the interview, the teacher mentioned that the common misconception about MIL is that it is merely technology-based. However, she stressed that it should be seen as an umbrella concept of a more holistic approach to learn language. She mentioned:

> "Ang alam ko kasi sa MIL pang educational technology lang kaya noong sinabi mo na magtuturo ako tapos Filipino na nakaintegrate ang MIL medyo nacurious ako. Inaral ko pa talaga ano ba ang MIL. Napagtanto ko na hindi pala about technology pero beyond pa pala kapag naintegrate ang MIL sa klase."

> *(What I know only in MIL is about its educational technology application. I got curious when you asked me to teach Filipino with the integration of MIL. I realized that MIL is not only about technology but it is beyond what technology is.)*

The notion that MIL is solely focused on technology is a common misconception. While technology plays a significant role in the modern media landscape, MIL encompass a broader set of skills and competencies. Media literacy as a multidimensional concept: Media literacy involves more than just technological proficiency. It encompasses the ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and create media content. Madison (2019) further explained that media literacy involves "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages," emphasizing the importance of critical thinking skills in navigating and understanding media. Moreover, according to Buckingham (2003), media literacy emphasizes the development of critical thinking abilities to question, analyze, and challenge media representations, promoting active engagement with media texts. Simply put, MIL is more than just a technology. It is information literacy beyond technology. Information literacy goes beyond the use of technology tools. It encompasses the ability to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information from various sources. Malila (2019) supported this by stating that information literacy involves "recognizing when information is needed and having the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information," emphasizing the broader scope of information literacy beyond technology.

The knowledge of teachers in MIL is vital for guiding students in critically evaluating media, nurturing responsible digital citizenship, promoting MIL skills, empowering students as active participants, addressing misinformation, and integrating MIL across subjects (Tibaldo, 2021; Anderson, 2014; Ahmad, 2013; Breit, 2018).

3.4.2   Benefits of Integrating MIL in the Filipino Lesson Exemplar

When it comes to the experience and observation of the teacher, she has mentioned about the benefits of integrating MIL in the lesson exemplar in Filipino.

> "Okay naman yung pag-integrate nung MIL sa lesson. Mas naging malawak yung pang-unawa ng mga bata sa lessons nila. Nagkaroon din ng active participation ang klase lalo na at may reflection part kung anong nabago o anong bago sa kanilang pinag-aralan. Natuto sila lalo na hasain ang kanilang critical thinking. Tapos may realization din students na hindi lamang pang journalism ang MIL or pang Filipino pero kailangan nila talaga lalo sa society."

> *(The integration of the MIL in the lesson is okay. Students have deepened their understanding in the lesson. Active participation is indeed seen especially in the reflection part of the lesson where students need to share what they have learned in the lesson. They have developed critical thinking and they have this realization that MIL is not only about journalism or about the subject Filipino but they need it in the society.)*

The above statement shows that the integration of MIL was successful. By imparting MIL knowledge, teachers equip students with the necessary skills to navigate the complex media landscape, make informed decisions, and become engaged and responsible citizens in the digital age. Integrating MIL in Filipino lesson exemplars can have a significant impact on teaching and learning outcomes. By incorporating MIL principles and skills into Filipino lessons, students develop critical thinking, communication, and information evaluation abilities that are essential in today's media-rich world.

Integrating MIL in Filipino lesson exemplars allows students to critically analyze and evaluate

Filipino media texts. It enables them to examine media representations, identify biases, and understand how language and cultural elements are conveyed through different media platforms. According to Santos (2018), integrating MIL in language teaching enhances students' critical literacy skills, enabling them to interpret media messages in Filipino more effectively.

Furthermore, incorporating MIL in Filipino lessons promotes digital and media literacy. Students learn to navigate digital resources, verify information credibility, and use technology responsibly. This empowers them to become informed digital citizens who can engage with Filipino media content thoughtfully and ethically. As noted by Ong (2021), integrating MIL in language lessons equips students with the skills necessary to navigate the digital landscape and engage critically with Filipino media texts.

Moreover, integrating MIL in Filipino lesson exemplars encourages students to become active producers of media content. They learn to create their own media texts in Filipino, such as digital stories, videos, or presentations. This process enhances their creativity, critical thinking, and digital skills, empowering them to express themselves in new and engaging ways. As discussed by Aquino (2017), integrating MIL in language education encourages students to become active media creators and cultivates their digital storytelling abilities in the Filipino language.

For the students, a focused group discussion was conducted. The interview questions revolved around the experiences and reflections of students and the teacher after encountering lessons in Filipino with the integration of MIL.

The following were the questions in the interview for the students:
(1) How does MIL contribute to the development of critical thinking for students as well as the use of digital tools in learning Filipino?
(2) How will you describe your experiences in the class using MIL?
(3) What are the skills (digital and other literacies) you have developed because of the lesson?

Based on the interviews and the cool and warm analysis, themes were created.

3.4.3   Student Experiences

The students' experiences in MIL was significant for several reasons. First, they have reflected on the importance of navigating and crossing the digital landscape. In today's digital age, students are constantly exposed to vast information from various media sources (Gyori & Charles, 2017; Guess & Lyons, 2020). Through MIL, students were equipped with the skills to navigate this landscape effectively (Aitamurto & Varma, 2017; Peterlin & Peters, 2020; Garman, 2015; Frolich & Magolis, 2020). This was evident in the students' answers on the lessons they have learned. One student mentioned:

> "Nagcocontribute po yung ano [sic] sa development po ng critical thinking of students by knowing the reliable sources and information and the use of digital tools in learning Filipino, yun po, to find or information na isusulat sa balita."
>
> *(The lesson contributes to the development of critical thinking of students by knowing the reliable sources and information and the use of digital tools in learning Filipino, to find the information that will be written in the news.)*

Another student explained:

> "Ma'am, yung mga dapat lang po nilang malaman na information ang kailangang banggitin at hindi po dapat sosobrahan. Kung magnavigate man sa internet dapat reliable pa rin ung sources."
>
> *(Ma'am, the information needed to be known should only be written and not exceeded. If one navigates the internet, he or she should ensure that the source is reliable.)*
>
> Thus, by critically evaluating and analyzing media content, students can discern reliable sources, identify misinformation or bias, and make informed decisions about the information they consume (Courtney, 2017; Han & Newell, 2014; Hermida, 2018).

After the lessons, critical thinking was one of the skills that were developed by the students through the integration of MIL. They learn to question, analyze, and evaluate media messages and information sources. These were evident in the lesson exemplar used by the teacher. Students reasoned out and discussed the different concepts found in the internet related to their topic. One student shared:

"Ma'am, yung sa ginagawa naming na basta na lang kumukuha sa kung ano-anong website, natutuhan po namin na titignan po munang mabuti yung vinivisit na sites para malaman po kung reliable talaga ung information na kukunin."

(Ma'am, the way that we lift information from the website, now we realized and learned that we need to analyze carefully the sites that we visit in order for us to know if the information in the sites is reliable.)

The student's answer above shows the realization of being critical of having reliable sources. Thus, in the different activities, students develop the ability to think critically about the credibility, accuracy, and relevance of the content they encounter (Guess & Lyons, 2020). This skill is crucial for students to become active, engaged, and discerning participants in society (Hare, 2019). Critical thinking is of paramount importance to students because it equips them with valuable skills beyond memorizing facts and information, enabling them to analyze, evaluate, and solve complex problems.

3.4.4   Implication of the study

Integrating MIL into Filipino language classroom instruction has several benefits that can improve the students' overall language competency, critical thinking abilities, and capacity to explore and analyze media and information. By giving opportunities for students to examine and critically engage with various types of media, such as news articles, videos, ads, and social media postings, incorporating MIL into Filipino instruction helps improve students' overall language ability. Students can enhance their reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing abilities in the Filipino language. The MIL also encourages critical thinking skills, allowing students to examine, evaluate, and interpret media messages in the context of the Filipino language and culture. Students learn to discern biases, detect disinformation, and challenge the legitimacy and trustworthiness of sources through investigating media material. This improves their capacity to think critically and make sound decisions. Furthermore, including MIL in Filipino instruction fosters media literacy abilities relevant to the Filipino context. The MIL integration helps students develop digital citizenship skills and promotes responsible media use. Students learn about copyright laws, online safety, digital etiquette, and media ethics. They become more responsible consumers and producers of media content in Filipino, gaining an understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the digital world. They can also examine how Filipinos are portrayed in the media, investigate problems of media ownership and control, and become active and discriminating media consumers. In sum, students can learn how the media shapes and reflects Filipino culture, values, and identity. The MIL in Filipino instruction prepares students to be responsible digital citizens in the Philippines.

In Filipino, they learn about internet safety, ethical behavior, and responsible use of social media sites. In Filipino digital culture, students understand the importance of respecting privacy, avoiding cyberbullying, and participating in constructive online discussions. The MIL integration in Filipino teaching allows students to engage with various media forms that showcase the diversity of Filipino culture, traditions, and perspectives. Students learn to appreciate various cultural expressions, question prejudices, and empathize with various groups in Filipino society. The MIL encourages students to take an active role in public life. Students can get a better grasp of democracy, human rights, and social justice by critically assessing media messages on social and political issues in the Philippines. They may participate in debates, share their thoughts, and become knowledgeable champions for good change in their communities. Incorporating MIL into Filipino instruction provides students with digital research skills that are relevant to their language study. They learn efficient search tactics, how to assess the trustworthiness and dependability of internet sources, and how to correctly cite and reference information sources in the Filipino language.

By integrating MIL in the teaching of Filipino, educators can foster a more engaging, critical, and culturally responsive learning environment that equips students with essential skills for the digital age. These activities would truly help teachers to teach Filipino in a more interactive way rather than the traditional manner. As mentioned in the curriculum guide, Filipino must be taught hand-in-hand with media literacy.

4   Conclusion

The findings on integrating Media and Information Literacy (MIL) with mobile learning affirm and expand existing research in notable ways. They support UNESCO's definition of MIL as a multifaceted skill set encompassing the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and

create media. The focus on mobile learning highlights the modern shift toward more accessible learning environments and aligns with literature promoting digital tools in education.

Furthermore, these findings illustrate mobile learning's effectiveness in developing critical skills among students, particularly in distinguishing credible information in a vast media landscape. This suggests that digital literacy is closely linked with critical thinking and evaluative abilities. However, there is also a challenge: technological advancements are outpacing traditional educational methods, indicating a need for ongoing research to adapt MIL to ever-evolving digital contexts.

As for practical implications, educator preparation programs must adapt to include thorough training on MIL and mobile learning, enabling teachers to use mobile tools effectively. Educational curricula should incorporate MIL competencies through project-based learning that employs mobile applications, helping students engage in authentic research and communication experiences. Policymakers need to recognize the significance of MIL in today's digital era and advocate for resources to support its integration in schools, ensuring equitable access to technology for all students while establishing clear MIL competency standards across educational levels.

Overall, these findings highlight the pressing need for comprehensive strategies in teacher training, curriculum development, and policy to equip students to become informed and responsible digital citizens in an increasingly complex media environment.Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is a crucial component of education in the twenty-first century, especially for high school students navigating a plethora of media and a rapidly changing digital landscape. According to UNESCO (2013), MIL encompasses the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and generate various forms of media and information. As mobile learning becomes increasingly prevalent, it complements MIL by offering students flexible access to learning resources and opportunities to develop these essential skills on-the-go.

5   Limitations and Recommendations

While the findings of this study draw attention to issues in the language teaching, it also has limitations worth addressing in future investigations, such as the limited period for the lesson exemplar. A more extended period for the execution of such exemplars would provide a clearer picture of the essence of integrating MIL into Filipino language teaching.

Another possible line of inquiry would be the factors affecting the effectiveness of the lesson exemplars in Filipino language teaching and learning. This would provide answers and suggestions for further training of participants regarding MIL.

Lastly, it would also be valuable to examine the attitudes and beliefs of teachers regarding the integration of MIL in their lessons, which is somewhat new, especially in Filipino subjects. Identifying appropriate interventions, curriculum contents, and pedagogical approaches would be key outputs of such studies.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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