

The Teaching of Mother-Tongue Based Multi-lingual Education of Pre-Service Teachers: Basis for a Training Program

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Abstract— *One of the changes in Basic Education Curriculum brought about by the K-12 program is the introduction of Mother Tongue- Based Multilingual Education. With the implementation of the MTB-MLE a lot of changes were made and every educator has to face a lot of challenges. It is with this context that the researchers became interested to conduct a study pertaining to the status of teaching of mother-tongue based multi-lingual education of Pre-Service Teachers. The study is intended to assess the program. The researcher also believed that the result of the study will be the basis of the school administrators and teachers in evaluating and fortifying the MTB-MLE program and be able to formulate strategies and activities for the improvement of the program and the result of the study will also help the researchers understand better the nature and essence of their chosen profession and as future implementer or teacher of MTB-MLE.*

Keywords— *Pre-Service Teachers, Mother-Tongue Based Multi-lingual Education.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important variable affecting education. The use of mother tongue enables the young learners to immediately construct and explain without fear of making mistakes. Mother Tongue- Based Multilingual Education is referred to “first-language-first” education that is, schooling which begins in the mother tongue and transitions to additional languages particularly Filipino and English. It is meant to address the high functional illiteracy of Filipinos where language plays a significant factor. In this study, it refers to the language used by the teachers in teaching subjects such as Mother Tongue, Araling Panlipunan, MAPEH, Mathematics, Science, and Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP).

DepEd Order No.16, S. 2012 had formulated the guidelines on the nationwide implementation of MTB-MLE. It was implemented in all public schools, specifically in Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, and 3 and in two (2) modes: as a learning/subject area and as medium of instruction. The Mother Tongue (MT) as a subject will focus on the development of beginning reading, and fluency from grades 1 to 3. The learners’ Mother Tongue (L1) had been used as the medium of instruction (MOI) in all domains/learning areas from Kindergarten through Grade 3 except Filipino (L2) and English (L3)

It was supported by Section 9 of the Senate Bill No. 3286 which states that mother tongue of the learner also known as the first language (FL), home language, native language or

vernacular shall be the primary medium of instruction for teaching and learning from the Kindergarten level to grade 3 of the elementary education. The DepEd in coordination with the commission on Filipino language and in close coordination with academic and research institutions concerned with education had formulated a mother tongue based multilingual framework for teaching and learning in the kindergarten and elementary education.

Moreover, Malone (2011), states that success of MTB-MLE programs depend in large part on the teachers in the classroom. Teacher education institutions in many countries, often operating in difficult circumstances, do an admirable job of training pre-service teachers to provide instruction for learners in the formal education system using the official school language. Teachers learn how to present curriculum materials in a way that allows children who understand and speak the school language to gain the prescribed standards for their grade level.

Karan and Morren (2013), also stated that teachers need to know how to use L1 as a bridge to subject matter content in second language (L2). They need to understand the importance of keeping language learning and concept learning separate in early primary grades. They need to be able to plan lessons and provide lesson material in a comprehensible way at the level of language that pupils can cope with, providing adequate and appropriate scaffolding.

In order for teachers in MTB-MLE classrooms to help their learners achieve a successful education, the teachers must understand and follow two specific pedagogical approaches. First, they must begin with what the students already know about their own language and the knowledge and skills they have acquired through living in their own community and use that as the foundation for teaching new content and concepts. Second, teachers must help their students to develop oral, written, and higher level thinking skills in the language they know best and, at the same time, support the students as they gradually learn the official school language.

The context for pedagogical use of the mother tongue (L1) has been established worldwide, that in contrast to a second or foreign language that L1 is the most efficient language for beginning literacy and content area instruction (Cummins, 1999 & Dutcher, 1995). When the instruction is in the L1, teachers and students can interact more naturally and negotiate

meanings together, and teachers can get a much better idea of what their students have learned.

With this implementation, teacher training institutions carry a big responsibility on how to deal with this shift in the curriculum. Thus, their instructions and offerings in the curriculum are at stake whether they could address the emergent need of the new system in education.

This study aimed to describe the experiences of the Pre-Service Teachers (PSTs) of the College of Education of Bukidnon State University in teaching Mother Tongue as a subject and as medium of instruction. The researchers themselves did a supervisory visit to the public elementary schools where the PSTs were deployed for their off-campus teaching assignment. Based from the cooperating teachers' (CT) feedback, PSTs have difficulties in teaching Mother Tongue as a subject and as medium of instruction in the field. Accordingly, the PST's have the hard time speaking the language of the community and the language being utilized in the module. When it comes to content, they have problems in understanding the words used in the teaching guide. They further suggested that PSTs may be given more training in teaching Mother Tongue as a subject and as a medium of instruction. They commented that proficient and effective pre-service teachers can be produced when enough knowledge and trainings are given.

Furthermore, majority of the PST's claimed that they lack the training and the knowledge on the teaching of Mother Tongue as a subject and as a medium of instruction. When asked during the post-conference, they admitted that they had not gone to any training to prepare them in teaching the mother tongue as a subject and as medium of instruction. They further revealed that they faced several difficulties as they delivered their instructions for they were not prepared and knowledgeable for it.

They have difficulties in teaching since they are not exposed to the teaching of MT since the Elementary Laboratory School where they are deployed for their on-campus teaching does not implement Mother Tongue. This is due to the kind of learners in the laboratory school. Majority of the learners preferred to use and communicate using the English Language. Meaning, PSTs have no experiences in teaching MT.

The PST's are deployed in DepEd without enough theoretical and practical knowledge and skills needed to be effective in teaching Mother Tongue as a subject and as medium of instruction. They really had great problems on this aspect in their teaching.

II. FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This study is anchored on the theory of Vygotsky, the Sociolinguistic Theory which states that Historical Context Language is learned in interpersonal interactions and then used by the child in self-thought. Language is multifunctional, serving as a social interactive tool and also as an abstract representation for internal logical reasoning. Language is a force that drives cognitive development because language mediates the child's participation in intellectual and social environments. Language leads to new forms for cognitive

organization. Benson (2002) and Dutcher (2003) further identified that children's overall educational attainment can be enhanced if they are being taught in their mother tongue during their early grades.

In MTB MLE programs, the child's home language is the first language (L1) used in school. Teachers and learners communicate in the language the pupils' know best and the knowledge and experience they bring from their home and community are the foundation for learning new concepts. Teachers will then help the learners build fluency in understanding, speaking, reading and writing the L1 and then develop oral and written skills in the official language (the second school language or L2).

Dekker (2008), states that no teacher can teach effectively without appropriate materials that are based on pupil's prior knowledge, culture and values. Furthermore, Malone (2007) stated that literacy can only be maintained if there is an adequate supply of reading materials.

Teaching of mother tongue should be identified in order to decide whether there is a need for designing a training program. There is a need to determine the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills of the Pre-Service Teachers in teaching the first language in order to determine if the teacher training institution meet the demands of their stakeholders. The teaching experiences of the teacher could be the determinant factor that gives concrete evidence that the university, the teacher training institution is to conduct an intensive training program to the Pre-Service Teachers to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills in teaching MTB-MLE. Teachers need training in using first language in the classroom and that the materials have to be appropriate, available, and interesting to the pupils, as well used (Dutcher, 2004).

Beginning with the learners' first language and culture will better facilitate mastery of the curriculum content. "Nowhere is the role of prior knowledge more important than in second language educational contexts. Students who can access their prior knowledge through the language and culture most familiar to them can call on a rich array of schemata, whereas students who believe they can only use that knowledge they have explicitly learned in the second language are limited in their access. Chamot, (1998)

III. OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to describe the experiences of the Pre-Service Teachers in the teaching of Mother Tongue as a subject and as medium of instruction. This was conducted at Bukidnon State University, College of Education School. Specifically, the following objectives were set for the study:

1. What are the experiences of the Pre-Service Teachers in the teaching of Mother-Tongue as a Subject and as Medium of Instruction?
2. What problems did the Pre-Service Teachers encounter in teaching Mother-Tongue as a Subject and as Medium of Instruction?
3. What training program can be designed to address the problems encountered?

IV. METHODOLOGY

Generally, the study made use of a qualitative research design. Data were gathered through Interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and Actual Observation. Narrative analysis was then employed after the data were gathered.

The researcher will follow the protocol in gathering the data. An inform consent will be sent to the participants prior to the conduct of observation, interview and focus group discussion

Based on the result of the data gathered, it was made as the basis in proposing a training program for the Pre-Service Teachers in teaching MTB-MLE.

The study was conducted at the College of Education of Bukidnon State University. The participants were the Pre-Service Teachers assigned in primary grades such as Kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3 teachers during their practice teaching. They were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Their identity were not be revealed in any part of the paper.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the gathering of the data, the presentation of results was organized based on the order of the specific problems.

The pre-service teachers were interviewed individually and were gathered once for the focus group discussion. Given the guide and the motive questions, they were able to express and share their experiences along with the problems they had encountered in the teaching of Mother Tongue as a subject and as medium of instruction.

Experiences of the Pre-Service Teachers in the Teaching of Mother-Tongue as a Subject and as Medium of Instruction

The participants had shared common experiences with regards to the teaching of Mother Tongue as a subject and as medium of instruction. When it comes to the teaching of the Mother Tongue as a subject, their cooperating teacher provided them with the Teaching Guide and the Learner's Materials.

As for the teaching of Mother Tongue as medium of instruction, they were instructed by their cooperating teachers to utilize the teaching guide of the respective subjects and the learners' materials and to utilize the vernacular language in teaching the lessons in mother tongue, MAPEH, Edukasyon SA Pagpapakatao (ESP), Science, Mathematics, and Araling Panlipunan.

- *Most of the terms used in the learners' materials (the bisaya translation of some English concepts) are difficult to remember and my pupils find it hard to understand. I have to use the original English term when teaching them. Instead of using the mother tongue term, I only used the original English term, like "verb-punglihok" because I am comfortable with the English term than the visayan term.*
- *I had to make my own activities because I feel that the Teaching Guide and the Learners' materials are mismatched. Some English instructions and procedures*

stated in the Teaching Guide are different from the activities in the learners' materials.

- *I had a hard time speaking in deep bisaya and binukid. I did self-study about their language to adjust and cope with them.*
- *In my case I used Sinugbuanong-Binisaya which this language is totally different to the native language found here in Bukidnon. Because of this, words are translated differently. So, I have to be keen in choosing examples that are localized and suit to the letters diversity.*
- *Teaching Mother Tongue was not easy for me. It is crucial especially in bridging from L1 to L2 to L3*
- *I tried to learn the language of my learners. If I could not understand and I needed to integrate it to real experiences, I tried to find means by looking for a resource person in the community to seek help.*

Based on the responses of the participants, they had experienced translating the terms in the learners' materials into English term. They resorted to this action since the children had difficulties in understanding the term and led them to confusions. To make learning comprehensible to the learners, sometimes they would make their own activities that would suit to the lesson and objectives found in the Teaching guide.

At times, pre-service teachers upon using sinugbuanong-binisaya found it totally different from the language of the community. The learners could not comprehend right away the content since the language in the learners' materials is not familiar to them. The teachers explored for some techniques in citing for some examples that are contextualized.

With the different experiences expressed by the pre-service, it shows that their teaching of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education was very challenging. However, it shows that they had their own initiative in coping with those challenges. One teacher even took effort to consult a resource person in the community to help him in contextualizing the lesson.

This implies that the pre-service teachers' knowledge and background in the teaching MTB-MLE is not enough for them to perform effectively in teaching their learners. This further implies that they are not yet fully prepared to teach the subject and to use the language.

This supports to Karan and Morren (2013) who stated that teachers need to know how to use the first language. They need to be able to plan lessons and provide lesson materials in a comprehensible way at the level of language that learners can cope with, providing adequate and appropriate scaffolding.

Moreover, it supports to Cummins (1999) & Dutcher (1995) who stated that when the instruction is in first language, teachers and learners can interact more naturally and negotiate meanings together, and teachers can get a much better idea of what their learners have learned.

Problems Encountered by the Pre-Service Teachers in the Teaching Mother-Tongue as a Subject and as Medium of Instruction

- *I have a hard time understanding the learners' materials because some items do not match with the teaching guide.*
- *It was difficult for me to teach the kids because their exposure to Mother Tongue gives them confusions in giving the correct spelling of terminologies in English.*
- *I have difficulty in translating deep bisaya words into my vocabulary for me to teach children efficiently and effectively.*
- *It was difficult for me to communicate towards the kids. I had hard time in speaking deep bisaya and binukid.*
- *Learners' materials are only limited which I think are very essential to supplement learning.*
- *It was very difficult for me to teach the MTB because I do not know how to speak and use their language. I am teaching in an IP class. I had a hard time to let them understand for I myself doesn't understand their spoken language*
- *There was no dictionary available for use. But in the book, they provide vocabulary for the day which is difficult to integrate with real situations because I need to know as a teacher the culture and the language of the learners.*

Pre-service teachers encountered problems in teaching MTB-MLE to their learners. The major problem they encountered was the mismatch of the Teaching Guide and the Learners' Materials. They had difficulty in executing the activities since the given instructions and procedures in the teaching guide do not fit with the activities in the learners' materials.

The teachers found it difficult to teach the learners in spelling the words because they are confused. They spelled the English terms in visayan. The learners' exposure to mother tongue led them to this confusion.

Another problem met by the teachers was their difficulty in using the mother tongue of the learners. The language used by the learners is not familiar to them and in result; they had a hard time communicating.

The teachers also encountered problem in the very limited learners' materials. Considering that they struggled in teaching the subject, they have also the burden in finding the appropriate materials which will make their teaching effective.

With those problems encountered by the pre-service teachers, these imply that they encountered difficulties in the teaching of MTB-MLE. They lack the knowledge and skills in delivering the lesson. This supports to the concept of Dekker (2008) which states that no teacher can teach effectively without appropriate materials that are based on pupil's prior knowledge, culture, and values

The pre-service teachers need to be given an intensive training in the teaching of MTB-MLE.

The Proposed Training Program to Address the Problems Encountered by the Pre-Service Teachers in Teaching Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)

Rationale

The pre-service teachers had encountered problems in teaching the MTB-MLE. A training program can be done to prepare them with the necessary knowledge and skills in handling learners with different languages. Dutcher (2004) stated that teachers need training in using first language in the classroom and that the materials have to be appropriate, available, and interesting to the pupils, as well used.

The activities outlined aimed to equip the incoming pre-service teachers and it is suggested that it will be incorporated in the program of the College of Education. This program can be shown in the table:

TRAINING PROGRAM FOR THE INCOMING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS in TEACHING MTB-MLE			
Problems	Objectives	Activities	Time Frame
Mismatch Teaching Guide and Learners' Materials	1. To develop pre-service teachers' initiative in making teaching materials appropriate to the lesson and its objectives	a. Lesson Planning b. Effective Teaching Strategies	1 day
Difficult Terminologies Used in the Learners' Materials	To enrich the pre-service teachers' stock of vocabulary of the community	a. Vocabulary Building b. Develop a Mini-dictionary	1 day
Lack of Knowledge in the Structure of the language of the Community	To enhance pre-service teachers' skill in using the correct structure of the language of the community	a. Intensive Training on Sentence Construction Using the Language of the Community	1 day
Unavailability of Contextualize Instructional Materials	To develop the pre-service teachers' skill in making effective contextualize instructional materials	a. Workshop in Making Contextualize Instructional Materials	1 day

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. The pre-service teachers' experience in teaching MTB-MLE was very challenging.
2. The pre-service teachers' encountered varied problems in teaching MTB-MLE such as; Mismatch of Teaching Guide and Learners' Materials, Lack of Vocabulary of the Community, Lack of Knowledge in the Structure of the

language of the Community, and Unavailability of Contextualize Instructional Materials.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Department of Education may consider conducting a revisit to the Teaching Guide distributed to the teachers.
2. A localized dictionary may be made available in the community.
3. Contextualized instructional materials may be produced for teachers' utilization.

4. A training program may be conducted to the incoming pre-service teachers to address the problems encountered in the teaching of MTB-MLE.

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