

EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN HANDLING MTB-MLE INSTRUCTION IN MIDSAYAP NORTH COTABATO

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Abstract: The study is a qualitative research which is focused on the experiences of teachers in handling Mother Tongue Based-Multi-Lingual Education in Midsayap, North Cotabato. This research explored on the teachers' experiences in handling MTB-MLE in terms of subject area as a medium; teaching- learning process; Teachers training and development; and preparation of Learning resources. It also described the teachers aspirations in the implementation of MTB-MLE in the basic education.

Findings revealed that all teachers encountered difficulties on the language used as medium of instruction. Teachers who are non- Ilonggo experience difficulty using the dialect or language as medium of instruction. Also, there are terminologies used in learning resources which are not common or unfamiliar. Though teachers described these experiences in terms of learning subject/area as medium of instruction a very challenging, one needs to learn or familiarize the first language or mother tongue of their learners in order to communicate with them. Teachers need to translate terminologies for the learners to understand the lesson. The teachers device mechanisms or used strategies in the conduct of the lesson. The common strategy used to address the problem is the use of translation method or code-switching. Code-switching means shifting from Ilonggo language (Hiligaynon) to Filipino language which is understood by all learners to be used in classroom especially for classes which are multi-lingual. Though teachers have been teaching in Midsayap for several years, it is not an assurance that participants are considered proficient and competent in Hiligaynon language. The teacher continuously conducted the lessons using variety of language where students can learn. As experienced, most of them have to do adopt new teaching strategy to facilitate learning.

The result implies that there is better communication process between the teachers and the learners. The used of mother tongue can be a contributory factor in learning but this can be realized only if the learners are mono-lingual.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the latest developments in the Philippine educational system is the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). This refers to the use of students' mother tongue and two or more additional languages of instructions in school (Lartec, et al.). It mandates the use of language that the students are familiar with or their first languages to be able to help them in grasping basic concepts more easily. In 2009, the Department of Education (DepEd) challenged the Bilingual Education Policy by issuing an order that is called for institutionalization of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). This order requires the use of the learners' first language as the medium of instruction in all subject areas in pre-kindergarten through grade three, and Filipino and English being taught as separate subjects beginning from grade four to ten (Philippines Department of Education, 2009).

According to Llaneta (2018) the Department of Education (DepEd) recognized the benefits of teaching children using their mother tongue or first language. Local and international research has found that children learn to speak, read, and write more quickly in their first language, and can pick up a second and third language quickly if taught in their first Language. Swedish Education Act states that all students with a legal guardian who speaks a mother tongue other than Swedish are entitled to instruction in this language, if they have basic knowledge and if language is used daily at home

(Ganuza&Hedman, 2017). Moreover, the child's local language or mother tongue is used as the foundation language of education and children will learn language in Filipino and in English while they learn literacy in their dominant language (Ocampo, 2017).

Department of Education Order 16, S. 2012 dated February 2012 issued the Guidelines on the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) starting School Year (SY) 2012-2013. The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) shall be implemented in all Public Schools, specifically kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, and 3 as part of the K to 12 Basic Education Program. The MTB-MLE shall support the goal on every child, a reader and a writer by Grade 1.

The municipality of Midsayap is considered to be a home of many immigrants from other parts of the country. The languages that are commonly spoken are Cebuano, Ilocano, Ilonggo/ Hiligaynon, Manobo, Maguindanaon, and Tagalog. With these various dialects, the researcher wants to find out the experiences that the teachers are experiencing in teaching MTB-MLE in Midsayap North Cotabato as well as the problems encountered and the strategies to overcome them.

The main objective and intention of this study was to describe the experiences and aspirations of teachers in handling MTB-MLE.

Theoretical Framework

The Theory on Multilingual Education was anchored on the DepEd order 74, series 2009, Institutionalizing Mother Tongue –Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), is the effective use of more than two languages for literacy and instruction. In the DepEd order 16, series 2012, Guidelines on the implementation of the Mother Tongue –Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), shall be implemented in two modes; (1.) as learning/subject area (2) as a medium of instruction. This is in response to the government's effort to provide quality and improve the education of school-aged learners in the country to access basic education.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to know the experiences of teacher in teaching MTB-MLE instructions in Midsayap, North Cotabato. Specifically the study sought to answer the following questions;

1. What are the experiences of teachers in handling MTB-MLE in terms of learning subject/area as medium of instruction; teaching learning process; teachers training and development; and preparation of learning areas?
2. What are the aspirations of teachers handling MTB-MLE in Midsayap North Cotabato?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed pure qualitative research design which utilized data gathering through interviews. Qualitative approach was employed to gain insights, explore the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the social or cultural phenomenon. It will create understanding from data as the analysis proceeds.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were the Kindergarten to grades three teachers handling Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education programs their school curriculum. The participants were selected teachers from Midsayap North Cotabato.

Research Instrument

The researcher used a key informant interview guide for the conduct of interviews with the participants. The researcher recorded and took down notes all the interviewees' answers. The researcher used recording device, paper, and pencil necessary for the conduct of this study.

Data Gathering Procedure

After obtaining approval from the school's administrators and principal of the Agriculture schools, letters of invitation were given personally. Teachers who express interest and willingness were scheduled for an interview based on their

availability just after their summer reading. The letters of consent were given to the participants on the conduct of the interview after carefully explaining the purpose of the interview and importance of their participation.

Data Processing and Analysis

The researcher for a more accurate transcription read and reread to ease the understanding of the transcribed interview recordings. The transcribed data were translated from vernacular to English and were analyzed, organized, and encoded by the researcher.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the Experiences of Teachers Handling MTB-MLE

Based on the conducted interview, the participants expressed different experiences in handling MTB-MLE. This research explored on the teachers' experiences in handling MTB-MLE in terms of Subject Area as a Medium; Teaching Learning Process; Teacher's Training and Development; and Preparation of Learning Resources.

Theme 1- Difficulty in the Learning /subject area as Medium of Instruction

The data revealed that ten out of eleven teacher-participants had experienced difficulty in terms of the subject area as medium of instruction. The problem occurred because Midsayap is a municipality where different tribes reside and the majority were Ilonggos. The participants' responses were presented in the following discussions. Based on their narratives, their experiences are quite the same or similar in terms of the first language used by the teachers. Most of the participants said that it's difficult and challenging because the learners are coming from the different tribes. Learners spoke in different languages.

According to participant 1 of Midsayap Southwest District an Ilocano, her experience in Agriculture Central Elementary School, most of the pupils spoke Hiligaynon language along with the four (4) dialects spoken by other pupils. She said that it is hard for the teacher to use a common dialect especially if it is not his/her spoken dialect. Teaching the subject area using Hiligaynon, a dialect of the Ilonggos was considered difficult because her language is different aside from no enough source as to Teachers Guide's and Learner's Manuals.

As cited there is 5 existing dialects in ACES, Hiligaynon, Maguindanaon, Ilocano, Bisaya or Cebuano, and Tagalog thus teaching learning process is difficult for teacher and pupils. A participant shared *"So what we are using is second language or L2 and the use of Filipino as medium of instruction. Kasi ito naman yong naiintindihan ng karamihansamgabata."*

Participant 4 shared *"I cope with those situations through learning the other dialects, kelangan kong matuto nang kanilang dialect so I research in the internet and attended seminars and trainings aligned with MTB-MLE curriculum."*

Participant 6 also said *"Yes, I had encountered difficulties in handling MTB-MLE because of varied dialect of learners. In terms of culture and ethnicity I have to translate the words into their own language for them to understand"*. She is also trying her best to translate the words and try them to understand what the words mean.

The participant confirmed and shared her experiences and struggles on the medium of instruction, where the learners had a difficulty on understanding the medium. The teacher trained the pupils using step by step process in learning a language. She has to do translation from the native language to English and Filipino.

In terms of learning subject area as a medium, the problem was on the language to be used as a medium. Teachers found it so difficult because the medium used is not their native language or mother tongue. The teachers assigned in the basic education are non-Hiligaynon speakers except participants 7 who is an Ilonggo. For her, Hiligaynon as the language used in the basic education is not a problem. This is so because it is her first language. She remarked *"Walang problema dahil naiintindihan ko at ng mga bata."* (There is no problem because I am knowledgeable of the language and learners or pupils were able to understand the words used.

Participant 10, who is teaching in a private school don't find the language to be used as hard since she used English and Filipino as a medium. While participant 11 also confirmed that he used Filipino language instead of the mother tongue.

The result implies that teachers who are non- Ilonggo found the learning/subject area as medium of instruction difficult and challenging especially when the learners were coming from the different tribes. As teachers, their experience in terms

of learning subject/area as medium of instruction is very challenging, one needs to learn or familiarize the mother tongue of their learners in order to communicate with them. Teachers need to translate terminologies for the learners to understand the lesson. The teachers' device mechanisms or used strategies in the conduct of the lesson. The common strategy used to address the problem is the use of translation method or shifting to a common language which is Filipino language to be used in classroom especially for classes which are multi-lingual. Though teachers have been teaching in Midsayap for several years, it is not an assurance that participants are considered proficient and competent in Hiligaynon language. The teacher continuously conducted the lessons using variety of language where students can learn. As experienced, most of them have to adopt new teaching strategies to facilitate learning.

Teacher quality is linked to pupil outcomes and it is often suggested that teacher education contributes to the development of teacher quality. However, teaching quality is difficult to define and the concept of pupils' outcome related to teacher quality contested. These and other factors create considerable methodological challenges for researching these matters. Although there is a little hard evidence to demonstrate the connection between teaching quality, teacher education and pupil outcomes, there is widespread professional agreement that they are positively related (Scottish 2010).

Theme 2- Teaching and learning Process.

In terms of teaching and learning process, some participants found it easy. The learners can easily understand the discussion because translation was used where the meaning of words in their own dialects were provided by the teachers.

Participant 1 verbalized "*So what we are using is L2- the Filipino as medium of instruction, kasi ito naman yong naiintindihan ng karamihan sa mga bata.*" (I used the L2 so it will be understood by all. Also I am not an expert of Hiligaynon dialect so I used Filipino to play safe.

Participant 2 verbalized, "the teaching learning process is also hard if the teacher is not used to deliver the lesson using MTB-MLE for deeper understanding. There is a need for a teacher to understand the first language of the learner since in the public school, there is diversity of learners, so it is not easy on the part of the teacher to impart learning immediately. Sometimes learning process seem hampered.

Participants 4 revealed her experiences saying "*In teaching and learning ay mas madaling maintindihan ng mga bata ang mga paksa/ topic na dinidiscuss ng guro at madali rin nilang masagutan ang ipinapagawa ng guro sa kanila.* (The learners can easily understand the topics and easily answer the activities given by the teacher).

Another Participant shared "In teaching learning process there is an interaction between the learners and the teacher because of the first language used." This was confirmed by Participant 5, "In teaching –learning process there is an interaction between teacher and pupils and the communication is quiet easy." While participant 10 shared " My experience in teaching as a kindergarten teacher in private school, I don't use MTB-MLE as a medium of instruction in my teaching and learning process instead I used English or Filipino." She affirmed this situation since she is assigned in private school and most of their pupils speak English and Tagalog. Furthermore, their lesson inputs particularly in preparatory class usually used viewing, playing

Theme 3- Necessity for Teacher's Training and Development

The data revealed the need for more trainings of teachers for MTB-MLE. The information were presented in the succeeding discussions.

One participant shared she was privilege to be one at the participant on region I training on MTB-MLE ELL *kaya mas naiintidihan ko na if 5 dialects are existing in one classroom you may use the L2 as medium of instruction. But only one training is not enough until now. There are still a lot of questions that I want to clarify regarding the use of MTB in teaching.* (She was privilege to be one of the participant on Region I training on MTB-MLE ELL more understanding of her that if 5 dialects are existing in one classroom you may use the L2 as medium of instruction, but only one training is not enough until now).

Teachers particularly KD-III undergo series of training in MTB-MLE those trainings are not enough in terms of number of days and usually the focus of those trainings are just theories, and the implementation were based on teachers perspectives.

This implies that there is only a limited chances for teachers to attend trainings and seminars related to MTB-MLE. For a curriculum to be implemented successfully, massive training of the implementers must be considered. The Department of Education must also consider the provisions of trainings that would enhance the language proficiencies and competencies for especially for teachers assigned in multi-lingual communities.

On Training and Development

It was supported by the theory of Wiseman, 2012 stated that teacher education operates within a larger educational ecology of significant resource and achievement gaps among diverse Pre K-12 students groups.

Teachers training are sets of standards for the setting the qualification and competencies. Within the MTB-MLE curriculum standards should reflect the fact that teachers are prepared to successfully educate the learners. This requires. The teachers understand and can implement strategies for the using of the Mother Tongue as the primary road of the learners to build their initial literacy skills as well as using it to bridge to oral and written literacy in the targeted second (L2) language. The effective teachers in MTB-MLE program is an important factor in the success of curriculum.

This supports the study of Scottish 2010 which stated that it is widely agreed that teaching quality is linked to pupil outcomes and it is often suggested that teacher's education contributes to the development of teacher quality. However, teaching quality is difficult to define and the concept of pupils' outcome related teacher quality is contested. These and other factors create considerable methodological challenges for researching these matters. There is very little published work on "wider" pupil outcomes. There is conflicting evidence (mainly from the USA) about the impact of higher level teaching qualifications on pupil attainment. Although there is a little hard evidence to demonstrate the connections between teaching quality, teachers' education and pupil outcomes, there is widespread professional agreement that they are positively related.

Theme 4 - Limited or Insufficiency of Learning Resources

In terms of Teachers Preparation of Learning Resources, the narratives of participants revealed that there is a limited learning resources in handling MTB-MLE classes. One of the participants said "I received for example in *Math subject may dumatingna 8 books in Tagalog, 20 books in Maguindanaon, 20 books in Hiligaynon, 15 books in Bisaya o Cebuano kaya anghirapituroangisang subject area naibaibaanggamitna dialect especially on the part of the teacher learning process.* (They received books for example in Math subject if there are books came like 8 books in Tagalog, 20 books in Maguindanaon, 20 books in Hiligaynon, and 15 books in Bisaya it's so hard to teach one subject area if there are different used dialect especially on the part of the teacher learning process.)

"We don't have enough resources such as any textbook issued by the government ay hindilahatiisang dialect lang." (Because it is the only dialect that can be understood by the learners). "Mas mahirapang preparation of learning resources kasi the resources is limited at hindi pa expert ang teacher." (I experience very hard in the preparation of learning resources because the resources is limited and not that expert as a teacher). Results imply, though there were supplies given to their respective schools, books were not enough

As a teacher, in using MTB-MLE in the preparation of learning resources is not easy it needs resourcefulness and creativeness. It is a need to conduct research on the different dialects used in the community especially in making hard translations.

Participant 3 revealed "As a neophyte in handling MTB-MLE during the preparation of learning resources, at first I find it difficult because of inadequate learning material. The teacher spent their own money to download files from the internet.

Participant 4 cited "In preparing the instructional materials ay kailangang MTB din angagamitin at I translate lang din sa Tagalog in order for them to easily understand especially using pictures, objects and real objects. (In preparing the instructional materials it needs MTB that will be used and to be translated in Tagalog in order for them to easily understand especially using picture, objects, and real objects).

Another participant mentioned "In terms of preparation of learning resources it is hard for me because there are unfamiliar words that are hard to understand. I have to ask somebody who understand the Mother Tongue and translate the unfamiliar words."

The participants 6 from Midsayap Southwest District said that *Nakakalito ang mga termino ng gagamitin it is because of the different dialects of every learners and pupils. May mga batang magtatanong kungano yong nabanggit mong salita dahil bago lang sa kanilang pandinig.* (The terminologies used was confusing it is because of the different dialects of every pupils. Some of the children will ask about the unfamiliar words that you said which is new to their hearing).

On Aspirations of Teacher

The transcriptions from the participants revealed their aspirations as teachers handling MTB-MLE. The data suggest that participants aspired and recommended to have more training in terms of MTB-MLE implementation; provision of learning materials to be used by teachers and pupils; and Filipino must be used for MTB-MLE.

Participant 1 dreamed that all teachers who are handling kindergarten to grades 3 are well trained in the conduct of MTB-MLE and availability of adequate learning materials to use. She even suggested that when a pupil is enrolled in elementary, Filipino will be used as the medium of instruction because the pupils have already mastered their native language at home. She aspired that MTB-MLE will be applied to those mono-lingual communities but for those multi-lingual communities with diversity of dialects, L1 is not applicable. It is better to use Filipino language as a medium.

Participant 2 verbalized her aspirations as a teacher in handling MTB-MLE in Midsayap are; The Department of Education must provide thorough trainings for us teachers as well as to provide us with sufficient materials to use in delivering our daily lessons to ensure accurate and quality learning for our learners. While participant 3 mentioned her aspiration as MTB-MLE teacher in Midsayap Southwest district is to abolish the MTB-MLE and focus to English as a medium in order to work competitively and globally. The aspiration of teachers in handling MTB-MLE in Midsayap Southwest district are the following: The Department of education should apply the MTB-MLE where all the people used one dialect only; The teacher to be assigned in handling MTB-MLE should be expert in the dialect of the said locality; Before the implementation of MTB-MLE curriculum, the Department of Education should provide teachers guide and learners material that suits the need of the learners.

Participant 4 aspiration is addressed to the Department of education should provide enough instructional learning materials such as textbooks for the teachers and the learners. Conduct trainings for the teachers in order to gain knowledge on how to cope with this situation. Her aspiration is to help and enhance the knowledge and ability of the learners and develop professionalism and competent teachers.

Participant 5 said that her aspiration as a teacher in handling MTB-MLE is to have trainings for the teachers for them to master it and deliver it well. Her aspiration in teaching MTB-MLE is to stop teaching MTB-MLE and use the national language Filipino. The participant added that she had encountered difficulties especially in remote places dealing with indigenous people. In terms communication, the language is considered a barrier.

Similar situation was also experienced by another participant because of the different dialects used by the learners. In managing her time in dealing with different dialects would affect her class activities. This implies that teachers have to make use of a common language that can be understood by all learners. In this situation the participant teachers has to shift to Filipino as medium for communication.

One participant even proposed to stop using native language and use Filipino and English inside the classroom to improve and to prepare the learners for global competencies.

Participant 10 shared and said that her aspiration was addressed to the Department of Education to abolish MTB-MLE especially in urban areas where pupils were exposed to technologies with advance leaning. She suggested to use English and Tagalog or Filipino for the learners to communicate globally and not to degrade their capability and capacities in improving skills in communication.

Moreover, she did not experience difficulties in teaching MTB-MLE because she doesn't use it during her teaching. She used English and Filipino as her medium of instruction.

According to Participants 11 her experience as a teacher contributed to her aspirations in handling MTB-MLE as a teacher in Midsayap North Cotabato are the following: to help and enhance the ability of the learners; to make each one of them a better version of themselves; and to guide them for a better future.

She said yes, she encountered difficulties and adjustments in handling MTB-MLE concerning these four areas because not all learners are ready to face the challenges in this subject. Not all learners understand Ilocano, Cebuano, etc. Some learners do not cooperate to speak and use the language during class discussion because of shyness. She can cope with these situations by giving them varied activities. Also, she can share her aspiration as MTB-MLE teacher by sharing her knowledge and experiences, telling those scenarios she accomplished which had made a big difference in dealing with others. Inspiring them to seize their dreams and goals for them to achieve the life they wanted.

According to Llaneta (2018) local and international research has found that children learn to speak, read, and write more quickly in their first language, and can pick up a second and third language quickly if taught in their first language. Swedish Education Act states that all students with a legal guardian who speaks a mother tongue other than Swedish are entitled to instruction in this language, if they have basic knowledge and if language is used daily at home (Ganuza&Hedman, 2017). Moreover, the child's local language or mother tongue is used as the foundation language of education and children will learn language in Filipino and in English while they learn literacy in their dominant language (Ocampo, 2017).

Based on the result of the interview their experiences are almost the same although there are different dialects used by the teachers as they continue their adjustment and learn the dialects of the pupils in the communities where they are teaching.

Considering all of their experiences as teachers in teaching MTB-MLE most of the teachers experience difficulty in teaching especially in dealing with the multi-lingual used by the learners. Teacher in public school does not use First language (L1) but they use the Second language(L2). Most teachers in the public school use L2 not L1 because of the diversity of learners in terms of dialects and culture. L2 which is Filipino is being integrated in Midsayap Southwest particularly in Agriculture Central Elementary School. For the teachers, this is the only language that everybody could understand.

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes the steadfast implementation of MTB-MLE curriculum in Public and Private Elementary Schools in Midsayap North Cotabato particularly in Midsayap Southwest District, had caused problems to teacher-implementers in terms of the language use as a medium and availability of learning materials. There is a need to conduct trainings and seminars regarding MTB-MLE to develop competency and expertise among teachers. The Department of Education may provide enough learning resources for the teachers and the learners.

Among the eleven (11) participants most of the teachers had experienced difficulties in teaching because of the multi languages spoken by the learners and limited instructional materials. The

Department of Education will conduct seminars to upgrade the proficiency of teachers in handling MTB-MLE instruction. In teaching MTB-MLE it affects the different dialects used in their community because most of them came from different tribes and culture. Furthermore, MTB-MLE curriculum design for the improving learning output, teachers' will engage trainings to enhance mastery of teaching and learning process. And provide adequate learning and teaching materials.

5. RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDY

In relation of the findings and correlation of the study, the following are strongly recommended:

1. Provision from the Department of Education to provide trainings and seminars and;
2. Administrators may check assignment for teachers aligned with the language of expertise.
3. To have more training in terms of enhancement of MTB-MLE implementation; provision of learning materials to be used by teachers and pupils; Filipino must be used for MTB-MLE.

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