

# Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Teaching Mother Tongue Based- Multilingual Education at Fort Del Pilar Elementary School

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**Abstract:** The implementation of Language Policy is part of the sector of education around the world to support the mother tongue instruction in the early stage of a child's education. With the adaptation of mother tongue based-education in the Philippines comes the challenges that will measure the program's failure or success.

The Mother Tongue Based- Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) is still a crux not only among the education sectors but also to the community. This particular research discussed the challenges encountered by the teachers in teaching mother tongue and its effect to the learning capabilities of students. This also served as an eye-opener and a platform for the program implementer. A relevant study that addressed the current struggles on the problems encountered in the implementation of MTB-MLE and a reference to gather insights for future study. This study particularly expected to present the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching mother tongue based-multilingual education, to determine which among the challenges encountered by Teachers has the greatest impact on the learning capabilities of the students, and present suitable and effective recommendations in addressing the challenges encountered by the teachers and learners.

This research intended the used of interviews and surveys as methods of collecting inputs from the respondents to verify which among the challenges has the greatest effect to students learning. Descriptive Analysis was used to analyse the data.

The findings of this research showed that Mother Tongue books and instructional materials have the highest points in terms of Mother Tongue Based- Multilingual Education challenges. Due to the rush implementation of the program, risk can result to failure. One of the identified risks is the lack of mother tongue teaching materials.

The researchers recommended that the Department of Education officials, school administrators and other implementing bodies must provide the schools with necessary learning materials and provide relevant trainings for teachers to address the needs of teachers in gaining knowledge and the mastery of teaching the subject mother tongue.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Mother Tongue Based, Multilingual Education, Fort Del Pilar, Challenges in MTB-MLE.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Mother tongue is indeed the mother of all languages. The implementation of Language Policy is part of the sector of education around the world to support the mother tongue instruction in the early stage of a child's education.

This study was conducted to present the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), the knowledge and attitudes of teachers towards the program and the recommended solutions to address the current challenges encountered that affects the students learning capabilities.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The educational system of the Philippines has a long and complicated history. Probably the first comprehensive research conducted dealing with the supposed medium language of teaching was accomplished by [1] Gonzalez, A (1992, 1998), who also discussed the educational system of the Philippines and its historical aspects, together with the interlocking conflicts and resulting problems of higher education in the Philippines. [2] Young, C (2002) discussed the Filipino language as the medium of instruction in the country's educational system, as well as proposed an alternative, ideological model of literacy which develops the critical thinking skills of Filipino students, builds cognitive and affective domains, and values their local language experience and culture. To date the Philippines has embraced the K12 program in the year 2012. One of the changes in Basic Education Curriculum brought about by the new K-12 program is the introduction of Mother Tongue- Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) specifically in Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2 and 3 to support the goal of "Every Child- A- Reader and A –Writer" by Grade 1 which therefore either become a boon or a ban to our learning setting.

To consider, the Philippines consists of about 7,641 islands that are broadly categorized under three main geographical divisions from north to south: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Stop to think just how many languages are spoken in Philippines—more than 170. In total, there are around 120 to 175 languages in the Philippines, depending on how they are classified. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the lingua franca was Spanish due to colonial influence of Spain to the Philippines.

Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education is the government's banner program for education as a salient part of the implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Program. Researches have been done and made by various researchers but to its definitiveness is yet to be followed up for its premature stage. The government has just adapted the act in just past few years. And its significance is underscored by the passing of [3] Republic Act 10523, otherwise known as the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013." It is education, formal, informal and used outside the four walled room in which learner's native language and other various languages are utilized. Studies done by various institutions in the Philippines in Mother Tongue – Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) show that being competent in the student's lingua franca makes it more effective for them in learning additional languages; in fact, lets them more than prepared. Thus, he better understands concepts if taught in their dialect or lingua franca. The Philippine educational system has found it effective to adapt the mother tongue instruction as springboard in teaching and this is true and applicable to rural settings since the learners and teachers have common languages. Considering the Philippines, it has more than one native language across its archipelago, this could be difficult, a crux and a debate among linguist enthusiasts and teachers specifically, since there are no established theories regarding the mother-tongue as a subject to suffice or support claims. Some challenges are the fact that teachers themselves and learners are non-speakers of the said language and pedagogical knowledge are not properly learned and applied. And the Philippines is not a full blast in this regard though records show actions and resolutions as well as seminars about teaching the mother tongue.

The government has done efforts to improve the education system of the Philippines. In 2010, Department of Education (DepEd) started the conceptualization of K-12 curriculum, an adaptation of the 12-year curriculum of partnering countries.

Many of these reforms were adopted against a backdrop of declining educational standards in the Philippine education system during the first decade of the 21st century. A UNESCO mid-decade assessment report of Southeast Asian education systems, published in 2008, for example, found that participation and achievement rates in basic education in the Philippines had fallen dramatically, owed to chronic underfunding. After rising strongly from 85.1 percent in 1991 to 96.8 percent in 2000, net enrolment rates at the elementary level, for instance, had dropped back down to 84.4 percent by 2005. Also by mid-decade, elementary school dropout rates had regressed back to levels last seen in the late 1990s. The completion rate in elementary school was estimated to be below 70 percent in 2005.

In the survey done recently, the Philippines is the lowest when it comes to reading comprehension, this raised a red flag in our education system. As mentioned earlier, the Philippines has more than a hundred spoken languages even if it follows the Regionalization wherein the teacher should teach where he or she came from, it is not a guarantee that products will be 100, (5) excellent since every region is a mixed culture, a melting pot. Baguio itself is a melting pot of culture. More than anything, the top challenge for a teacher, is the teaching and learning materials.

[4] Nolasco (2008) showed that Multi-lingual education is an innovative approach to learning but cautioned that such approach would not work if implementers and educators will only change the language by translating existing materials into the local languages. He further supplemented that, “there must be a development of good curricula, a pool of trained teachers in the required languages, content and methodology, production of sufficient and suitable teaching materials, and the empowerment of the community.”

Other concern in the implementation of MTB-MLE in the Philippines is the attitude of the people towards the program. [5] Mahboob & Cruz (2013) presented in their study that Filipinos regard English as the premium language and other local languages were reduce in importance. They also found out that more than half of their respondents considered themselves to be highly proficient in English. Further more than 90% in the university level favoured English as the medium of instruction above any other language. [6] Burton (2013) and [7] Wa-Mbaleka (2014) found in their study that although teachers were contented with the increase in student’s understanding, teachers together with the parents uttered apprehensions about the future implications for learning in native dialect rather than in English language.

Other concerns presented in the use of MTB-MLE like planning and preparations. [8] Fullan (2003) stated that, “One of the basic reasons why planning fails is that planners or decision makers of change are unaware of the situations faced by potential implementers. They introduces changes without providing a means to identify and confront the situational constraints and without attempting to understand the values, ideas, and experiences of those who are essential for implementing any changes.” [9] Benson (2004) found that, another challenge encountered is on linguistic and materials development. Benson mentioned that, special attention should be given to time and resources in the implementation of mother tongue- education.

On the other hand, according to [10] Rosekrans, Sherris, and Chatry-Komerek (2012), the problems encountered in the implementation of MTB-MLE can be overcome by “progressive power of change”. The development of standards of learning and materials, as well as innovative aspects of constructivist teacher education approach (Rosekrans, 2012) and adding a bigger resource allocation, political will and clearer policy objectives [11] (Gacheche, 2010 and Nolasco 2008).

## 1.2 Theoretical Framework

The present study is anchored on UNESCOs (2007) factors in the success of MTB-MLE program implementation, Bensons (2004), [12] Danbolts (2011) and [13] Malones (2012) inventory of challenges in MTB-MLE. UNESCO (2007) emphasized that effectiveness of MTB-MLE is based on the thorough planning and commitment. The planners to take measures into considerations to make the program implementation effective.

There are 8 (eight) guiding principles of teaching and learning MTBME. Among the eight (8) guiding principle two of which is related to this study. The first which is known to the unknown patterned in Ausubel’s Meaningful Learning theory reiterates the importance of what one already knows (i.e. his native language) as one single factor in influencing learning. And one must ascertain this and teach him accordingly. [14] Ausubel, D.P. (1968). The second revolves on positive impact on a well-developed skill in the first language thus better acquisition to other languages. All the principles boil down on the positive effect of using and learning the mother-tongue; it will help develop and value the culture and the home language, promotes active learning, enhances academic results, cohere on contextual meanings and accuracy of concepts, and students discover things themselves. In support to this claim, Schema theory suggests that cognitive knowledge is organized into interrelated patterns which are based in the individual’s previous knowledge and experiences and allow them to hypothesize about future experiences. [15] (Nunan, 1999: 133). Andersen’s Nativist Model also claims that humans relate new events or new experiences or items to their existing cognitive concept or schema. With all the theories mentioned above it’s a conclusion that if the teacher has enough, exemplary and wide vocabulary on the native language the better she teaches efficiently and effectively, same is true to the students. The more they are familiar in the language the better they grasp the topic.

According to Maslow’s theory, if the individual has satisfied the primary needs, more likely that he will maximize and optimize all potentials he has. In this regard, if the teacher has enough materials, the teacher can maximize his/ her potentials as a facilitator of knowledge; the more that the teacher projects better results. If the teacher himself is not equipped with the right knowledge and his environment is not conducive enough to better his skills; then more likely that there will be inadequacy in the transfer of knowledge.

The researchers were guided by factors in framing the instruments like, language model, teacher's preparation, material development and production, and educational sector support. With these, instruments were considered and were modified to fit in the study. The three main aspects to be considered in examining the challenges encountered by the teachers in teaching MTB-MLE, the researchers came up with the teacher knowledge and understanding of MTB-MLE, instructional materials provided and their attitudes towards the implementation of MTB-MLE.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

This research intended to study the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching MTB-MLE. Observations and opinions coming from the teachers and school coordinators was thoroughly examined. The authors believed that FDPES can provide relative results on the challenges encountered in teaching MTB-MLE in the current setting. The following questions are expected to be addressed accordingly:

1. What are the challenges encountered by school teachers in teaching mother tongue based-multilingual education;
2. Which among the challenges encountered by Teachers has the greatest impact on the learning capabilities of the students; and,
3. What are the solutions presented by the DepEd, School and Other implementing bodies with the challenges encountered by the schools teachers in teaching mother tongue based- multilingual education?

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

This research addressed the current trend in the Philippines which is very important in the multilingual community like Baguio City which is hostile to identify its educational language policy. This can also provide insights and better view of what can be done in terms of policy amendments and additions with the implementation of MTB-MLE. According to [16] Spolsky, (2011) Language policy theory suggests that language management occurs when external forces makes decisions for those at the ground level but there must be a need to understand how language management might occur from the grassroots.

This research can also be a reference for other researchers regarding Language policy and implementation.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discussed the progression of how this research was done. The following operations were seen and discussed in this chapter, such as Research Design, Population and Locale of the Study, Data Gathering Tool, Data Gathering Procedure, and Treatment of Data

### 2.1 Research Design

Qualitative Participatory Method by [17] Davies and Dart (2005) was adopted by the researchers to conduct this research. This method was directed using questionnaires, and the teachers were given open ended questions to answer. Distribution of questionnaires is important in the conduct of this research to help as a guide for the interview with the participants. Random interviews was conducted with the teachers in kindergarten and grade 1 to 3 level. The interview questions focused on the challenges being encountered by the teachers in teaching MTB-MLE, their knowledge about the subject and their attitudes towards the program.

### 2.2 Population & Locale of the Study

This research was conducted at Fort Del Pilar Elementary School (FDPES), Fort Del Pilar, Baguio City. The researchers selected the participants using purposive sampling specifically maximal variation sampling which aims to integrate only few cases who are different as possible, to disclose the range of variation and differentiation, if there are any [18] (Patton, 2002). The twenty (20) participants in this study were assumed to have direct involvement in the execution of MTB-MLE, wherein the participants were composed of the Grade Level Coordinators, and kindergarten to grade three level school teachers. The participants were aged from 27 to 55 years old with 0 to 8 years' experience in teaching MTB-MLE.

### 2.3 Data Gathering Tools

The researchers used informal interviews and adopted the Qualitative Participatory Method by Davies and Dart (2005) to conduct the study were in the participants were required to answer the survey with yes or no.

## SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

MTB-MLE KNOWLEDGE	YES	NO
I understand the benefits of MTB-MLE.		
I am oriented about the MTB-MLE.		
I have enough information about the MTB-MLE.		
I am adequately equipped with knowledge about how to carry out the MTB-MLE.		
I am fluent in the language used in MTB-MLE.		
My first language is "Ilokano"		

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS	YES	NO
Manuals for Mother- Tongue are provided.		
The lesson in the manuals are easy to follow.		
There are enough materials other than teachers' manuals to aid the pupils in learning the mother-tongue.		
Various teaching strategies are specified in the manuals.		
There are enough manuals provided to use for Mother-Tongue.		
Time specified in the manuals is enough to carry out the content.		

ATTITUDES TOWARDS MTB-MLE	YES	NO
I am positively supporting the MTB-MLE program.		
I support mother-tongue teaching.		
I positively like the lessons in mother-tongue.		
I am happy for the MTB-MLE program.		
I know that MTB-MLE positively affects attendance.		

## 2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers asked approval of the title and statement of the problem of the research to the class adviser of the course. After attaining the approval, the researchers visited the school for initial collaboration with the school coordinator. The researchers were directed to write a letter as formal communication addressed to the principal of Fort Del Pilar Elementary School. After drafting the letter it was shown and presented to the Dean of College of Teacher Education for approval and signature on the communication letter and the questionnaires. The letter was forwarded to the target school for the approval of the principal to conduct a research and asked for the cooperation of the school teachers. When the letter was approved, the researchers floated questionnaires and gathered the data for analysis.

## 2.5 Treatment of Data

The data on the challenges encountered by the respondents of Fort Del Pilar Elementary School were analysed and presented based on Benson (2004) and Danbolt (2011) challenges of MTB-MLE. After gathering the data, the researchers used frequency and percentage to come up with the outcomes.

## III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This chapter intends to show the result and findings of the researchers on the study. This chapter also provides interpretations on the gathered data.

**Table I: Knowledge of Participants regarding Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education.**

No	MTB-MLE KNOWLEDGE	YES	%	NO	%
1	I understand the benefits of MTB-MLE.	19	95	1	5
2	I am oriented about the MTB-MLE.	17	85	3	15
3	I have enough information about the MTB-MLE.	14	70	6	30
4	I am adequately equipped with knowledge about how to carry out the MTB-MLE.	11	55	9	45
5	I am fluent in the language used in MTB-MLE.	10	50	10	50
6	My first language is "Ilokano"	12	60	8	40

Table 1 shows that, most of the teachers understand the benefits of MTB-MLE, with nineteen (19) out of twenty (20) participants answered affirmatively. According to Maslow's theory, if the individual has satisfied the primary needs, more likely that he will maximize and optimize all potentials he has. In this regard, if the teacher has enough materials, the teacher can maximize his/ her potentials as a facilitator of knowledge; the more that the teacher projects better results. If the teacher himself is not equipped with the right knowledge and his environment is not conducive enough to better his skills; then more likely that there will be inadequacy in the transfer of knowledge.

**Table II: Instructional Materials being use in Teaching Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education.**

No	INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS	YES	%	NO	%
1	Manuals for Mother- Tongue are provided.	5	25	15	75
2	The lesson in the manuals are easy to follow.	4	20	16	80
3	There are enough materials other than teachers' manuals to aid the pupils in learning the mother-tongue.	2	10	18	90
4	Various teaching strategies are specified in the manuals.	4	20	16	80
5	There are enough manuals provided to use for Mother-Tongue.	1	5	19	95
6	Time specified in the manuals is enough to carry out the content.	5	5	15	75

Table II shows that, most of the participants have negative feedback on the instructional materials provided by the Department of Education. According to Maslow's theory, if the individual has satisfied the primary needs, more likely that he will maximize and optimize all potentials he has. In this regard, if the teacher has enough materials, the teacher can maximize his/ her potentials as a facilitator of knowledge; the more that the teacher projects better results. If the teacher himself is not equipped with the right knowledge and his environment is not conducive enough to better his skills; then more likely that there will be inadequacy in the transfer of knowledge. Fullan (2003) stated that, "One of the basic reasons why planning fails is that planners or decision makers of change are unaware of the situations faced by potential implementers. They introduces changes without providing a means to identify and confront the situational constraints and without attempting to understand the values, ideas, and experiences of those who are essential for implementing any changes." Benson (2004), stated that, another challenge encountered is on linguistic and materials development. Benson mentioned that, special attention should be given to time and resources in the implementation of mother tongue-education.

**Table III: Attitudes of Participants towards Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education.**

No	ATTITUDES TOWARDS MTB-MLE	YES	%	NO	%
1	I am positively supporting the MTB-MLE program.	8	40	12	60
2	I support mother-tongue teaching.	11	55	9	45
3	I positively like the lessons in mother-tongue.	8	40	12	60
4	I am happy for the MTB-MLE program.	5	25	15	75
5	I know than MTB-MLE positively affects attendance.	7	35	13	65

Table III intends to show the attitudes of teachers towards mother tongue based- multilingual education. The researchers found out that most teachers have uncertain feelings towards MTB-MLE. This findings agreed with the findings of Burton (2013). In the study of Mahboob and Cruz (2013) showed that in the Philippines, English is regarded as the premium language. In their findings, 90% of their respondents preferred English as medium of instruction above any other language. Furthermore, Burton (2013) discovered that teacher have uncertain feelings towards the implementation of MTB-MLE.

Other challenges encountered by the teachers in teaching mother tongue based- multilingual education are (1) Learners have different mother tongue and with different places of origin and (2) Lack or limited teaching and learning materials. Iloko used in the Teaching Materials and Learning Materials are different from the Ilokano language in Baguio City.

Solutions provided by the School, Dep-Ed and other implementing bodies in addressing the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching MTB-MLE is bridging the lessons into three languages, wherein teachers will teach the words, phrases and sentences to learners from Ilokano to Tagalog and then in English and vice versa.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the implementation of MTB-MLE in the Philippines, language should unite each people, each region, each municipality and each cities not to divide them by region through their mother tongue. Since Philippines considered Filipino as its national language, why not teach each every Filipinos the Filipino language. Philippines is a one nation but not in their language since each region have their own vernacular dialect and considered it as their mother tongue.

Fullan (2003), stated that, “One of the basic reasons why planning fails is that planners or decision makers of change are unaware of the situations faced by potential implementers. They introduces changes without providing a means to identify and confront the situational constraints and without attempting to understand the values, ideas, and experiences of those who are essential for implementing any changes.” This study agreed with the findings of Fullan (2003) and Benson (2004) in terms of the challenges encountered in the implementation of MTB-MLE. The teachers of Fort Del Pilar Elementary School are supportive on the implementation of MTB-MLE but dubious.

The recommendations of the teachers and the researchers to the Dep-Ed to make the program more effective and operational are: (1) MTB-MLE should be taught in Filipino/Tagalog; (2) Make research on what mother tongue being used in Baguio City before implementing the program; and, (3) Try producing localized instructional books to fit the mother tongue of learners in Baguio City.

According to Rosekrans, Sherris, and Chatry-Komerek (2012), the problems encountered in the implementation of MTB-MLE can be overcome by “progressive power of change”. The development of standards of learning and materials, as well as innovative aspects of constructivist teacher education approach (Rosekrans, 2012) and adding a bigger resource allocation, political will and clearer policy objectives (Gacheche, 2010 and Nolasco 2008). Further, future researchers engaging other variables are encouraged.

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