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## **Pedagogical implications on perceived issues and challenges in teaching MTB-MLE teachers in Surigao Del Norte, Philippines**

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### **Abstract**

The study aimed to determine the new pedagogical implications on issues and challenges encountered by the MTB-MLE teachers. The study used a qualitative approach and utilized the lived experiences of the MTB-MLE teachers to identify the pedagogical implications. There are three main themes developed in this study, with excerpts quoted from the interview to highlight the perception of the teachers as posted in the research questions. These three main themes included Students and Teachers' Issues and Challenges in Teaching MTB-MLE, Best Practices Implemented to meet the Challenges, and Pedagogical Implications. Sub-themes were also formed based on the data gathered from the interview. These sub-themes include Limited Reading Materials and References, Language Conflict, and Lack of Training for Teachers, which fell under Students and Teachers' Issues and Challenges in Teaching MTB-MLE; Improvisation of Instructional Materials, Remedial Instruction, Attendance to Trainings, Self-motivation to Learn and Teach the Lesson, and Collect inputs and insights from the seasoned teachers, which fell under Best Practices Implemented to meet the Challenges; and On the Quality Education, On Students' Literacy, On Effective Implementation, which fell under the C. Pedagogical Implications. It is concluded that MTB-MLE teachers have to undergo intensive training to meet the requirements of the competencies of the subject. It is recommended that a curriculum review will be conducted to elementary schools.

**Keywords:** Mother-tongue, department of education, k-12 curriculum, MTB-MLE

### **Introduction**

Several pedagogical approaches have been integrated into the mother tongue-based multilingual education classes in the Philippines since its implementation through RA 10533, known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. The Philippines' Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) strategy implements local mother tongues as the language of instruction in K-3, with Filipino and English introduced after grade 3. In the past, teachers and students used local languages to supplement Filipino and English in the classroom. From 2012-2013, MTB-MLE is adopted nationwide. Few schools previously employed MTB-MLE, but more schools and teachers are now learning to use a local mother tongue as the language of instruction. The challenges of teaching MTB-MLE have been added in the advent of the Covid-19 Pandemic. This study attempts to discover new pedagogical implications for the teachers' teaching experiences in teaching MTB-MLE.

Other issues and challenges in teaching MTB-MLE are currently published in various research journals. In their study, Alberto, Gabinete, and Raola (2016) <sup>[2]</sup> assert that learners could share their thoughts and ideas, which led to high participation in class discussions. Also, learners become more independent in how they choose to express themselves; using the mother tongue makes it easier to explain what some English words mean. However, the problems encountered are all caused by the lack of teaching materials, which makes it hard for learners to improve their reading, to listen, speaking, and writing skills. On top of that, teachers-to-be don't get enough training to teach in their mother tongue.

Moreover, the challenges which hinder the implementation of MTB-MLE are grouped into four essential topics as introduced by Cabansag (2016) <sup>[4]</sup>. It includes a multilingual environment, difficulty in translation, inadequacy of instructional materials, and mandatory

compliance with the Department of Education (DepEd) order. In a study by Taguinod & Corpuz, 2019<sup>[10]</sup>, the parents' and teachers' opinions show that they have a favorable view of the program and agree that it will help. On the other hand, some parents are still worried about the policy, and teachers have also found some problems, especially with Ilokano's spelling, grammar, and terminology in the different learning areas taught in the MTB-MLE.

It is evident from the cited studies that several issues and challenges that various people in the field perceive are generally affected in the implementation the MTB-MLE in the country. In particular, the challenges call for multiple presentations of pedagogical implications that may guide other educators to be more open to new policies that may strengthen the implementation of the MTB-MLE in the country. This is the primary focus of the present study.

Determining the pedagogical implications of issues and challenges encountered by the MTB-MLE teachers is aimed to be presented in this study. It is very significant to K-12 educators to devise a specific plan to develop more productive teaching and learning experiences in every MTB-MLE classroom. Specifically, it aimed to discuss the issues and challenges of MTB-MLE teachers in Surigao de Norte, Philippines; identify their best practices conducted and employed to each challenge identified, and propose pedagogical implications.

### Methodology

**Research Design:** The study used a qualitative approach and is phenomenological in nature. It utilized the lived experiences of the MTB-MLE teachers to identify the pedagogical implications.

One school was designated as the venue of the research using the embedded single-case design. An embedded case design comprises of analyzing subunits incorporated in the whole of the primary target of research (Yin, 2012)<sup>[12]</sup>. The various perceptions of the teachers served as the subunits of the study.

### Research Locale and Research Subject

Researchers selected five elementary schools MTB-MLE teachers at the Department of Education, Surigao del Norte Division, Philippines. These teachers were chosen as they have taught MTB-MLE subjects for not less than 5 years.

### Research Instrument

The researcher made use of semi-structured, open-ended questions stipulated in an interview questionnaire to conduct a more open and comprehensive interview process. The questions were ordered in a logical sequence, from general questions to more specific or focused questions.

### Data Gathering Procedure

The focus group method was used because it presents a life-like environment in which the respondents were allowed to have group discussions about their experiences in handling the MTB-MLE subject in their respective schools. Discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed for coding purposes.

### Data Analysis

The analysis commenced during the data collection phase. In order to retain thorough and detailed notes, the recorded

material was evaluated, synthesized, and documented. The themes that emerged from focus group conversations were documented and thoroughly examined.

### Results and Discussion

There are three main themes developed in this study, with excerpts quoted from the interview to highlight the perception of the teachers as posted in the research questions. These three main themes included Students and Teachers' Issues and Challenges in Teaching MTB-MLE, Best Practices Implemented to meet the Challenges, and Pedagogical Implications.

Sub-themes were also formed based on the data gathered from the interview. These sub-themes include Limited Reading Materials and References, Language Conflict, and Lack of Training for Teachers, which fell under Students and Teachers' Issues and Challenges in Teaching MTB-MLE; Improvisation of Instructional Materials, Remedial Instruction, Attendance to Trainings, Self-motivation to Learn and Teach the Lesson, and Collect inputs and insights from the seasoned teachers, which fell under Best Practices Implemented to meet the Challenges; and On the Quality Education, On Students' Literacy, On Effective Implementation, which fell under the C. Pedagogical Implications. For data presentation, only the initials of their last names, ages, and the grade level of mother tongue lessons they are teaching were included in the quotations below.

#### Students and Teachers' Issues and Challenges in Teaching MTB-MLE

Participants in the interview shared several issues and challenges they encountered commonly in their years of teaching the MTB-MLE. Out of those which are mentioned, the researcher grouped these challenges and derived the following sub-themes:

#### Limited Reading Materials and References

The lack of reading materials that are intended for the learners to train them to use the language more appropriately is a great challenge that learners and teachers are facing in teaching MTB-MLE. This is the state of not having enough references in the mother tongue, such as textbooks, books, dictionaries, and the like, to meet the demands of learners with varied mother tongues.

**Teacher A:** "Very limited reading resources in Surigaonon language. This challenges us very much. As much as we can, we have to learn to the language so we can teach the kids."

**Teacher B:** "Pupils find it hard to read Surigaonon language texts. Much more than we have fewer materials for them to read."

**Teacher C:** "The insufficient supplies of teaching materials like textbooks and teacher's manual made me find a hard time expressing the content in our own language."

On references, teachers need more available references to establish a consistent idea of the language he is teaching. A shortage of materials that affirm and build on students' knowledge and experience to assist them in learning new concepts and abilities is one of the issues that MTB MLE

faces in places where the minority language is not the majority language. Materials designed for "mainstream" students who are proficient in the official school language are typically inappropriate for young students who do not speak the dominant language or understand the dominant culture. This is because mainstream students are expected to be fluent in the official school language. Children who participate in MTB-MLE programs require tales about individuals they know engaging in activities that are of interest to them. They require educational resources that make use of what they currently know in order to challenge them to learn new information (sil.org, 2022) <sup>[9]</sup>.

No teacher can teach effectively without suitable references based on two components: stated government curriculum goals and pupils' prior knowledge, culture, and value systems.

Materials development looks to be a challenging endeavor in light of the fact that few books are accessible for the majority of the 170 languages spoken in the Philippines. Students' education wouldn't be complete without the use of books. The proper and relevant use of instructional materials is essential for effective teaching and learning.

### Teacher's Language Problem

Not all MTB-MLE teachers are native to the language they are teaching. In the case of Surigao del Norte in the Philippines, there are teachers who were raised in the neighboring provinces of Surigao. This has made them hard to teach the Surigaonon language to the learners.

**Teacher C:** "Although I am from the neighboring province of Surigao, I am familiar with the Surigaonon language, but I can't speak fluently using the language."

**Teacher A:** "I have stayed in Surigao. Still, I admit that there are words which I am not familiar with."

A teacher's language problem is a significant problem to MTB-MLE teachers when the teacher himself is not good in that particular language. The language proficiency of MTB-MLE teachers is one of the most critical aspects that contribute to the success of instruction because it helps teachers to handle the challenges that students face, makes teaching more creative, and ensures the provision of a suitable model of the target language.

Moreover, the teachers emphasized that their lack of knowledge of some terms affected their ways of teaching the mother tongue. If there are instances that the teachers encounter some difficult words in the book, they ask their co-teachers who have an idea about these terms. With that, it will be easier for the teachers to understand these terms and explain them to the class.

### Lack of Training for Teachers

With limited references and available reading materials, the teachers also suffered from having limited training in the subject area.

**Teacher A:** "We used to consider our experiences as training. We do seldom have training for the particular language."

**Teacher B:** "Although we have training on the approaches and strategies on teaching the subject, we lack training on

the use of the particular language like Surigaonon. With this, teachers have to study well the lessons before sharing them to the students."

Teachers must be trained and consistently oriented with the latest teaching pedagogies. Making target language competency one of the primary goals of in-service teacher training on MTB-MLE is likely to provide a number of advantages in light of such a daunting task. This includes better learning outcomes for students and teachers, access to higher degrees of professional development and training, better-quality abilities for organizing lessons and generating materials, as well as personal pleasure as well as more teaching techniques.

In addition, the teachers noted that their inability to explain concepts in their own tongue was hampered by their unfamiliarity with certain terminology. Teachers contact their co-teachers for help if they come across words in the text that they don't understand. Teachers will have an easier time understanding and teaching these phrases to their students as a result of this (Bajas, Flores, & Manito, 2017) <sup>[3]</sup>.

### Best Practices Implemented to Meet the Challenges

Teachers have their own way of delivering quality education despite the challenges met in teaching the MTB-MLE. Responses from the interviewed teachers showed important best practices to deliver the learning competencies despite challenges.

### Improvisation of Instructional Materials

Teachers used to improvise their materials to provide experiential learning to the students. These materials include books, other reading materials, and other multimedia components that are very important in this digital age.

Instructional materials are very important because what students hear can easily be forgotten, but what they see cannot be easily forgotten and last longer in their memory. In the contribution of Abimbola, as cited by Aina, 2013 <sup>[1]</sup> to the importance of instructional materials to the teaching and learning process, he stressed that the primary purpose of instructional materials is to make learning more effective and also facilitate it. He averred further that teachers would not be able to do much where these materials are not available; therefore, improvisation becomes necessary. Posited that instructional media or materials can be used by lecturers to overcome noise factors, such as misconception, referent confusion, and daydreaming.

**Teacher A:** "I do recording of my voice so students can hear and practice."

**Teacher C:** "Big books are still there, but in MTB-MLE context. Pictures are also important for them to have the idea of the word."

The help brought by the improvisation of materials is being studied in the academe. Vergar (2019) <sup>[11]</sup> affirms the vital role of teachers in supporting a pupil's learning relative to the implementation of the MTB-MLE through their innovative strategies and overcoming barriers.

Instructional materials help the teacher to meet individual differences of the learners in the class by using aids that appeal to different senses, according to Morohunfolá as

cited in the work of Aina (2013) <sup>[1]</sup>. Instructional materials are used to supplement verbal explanation of concepts or any description so that the lesson could be real to the students. These instructional materials are categorized into audio-visual, audio, and visual. These are materials that, when the teacher uses them, can appeal to students both sight and hearing. These can be electronically operated materials like Television, Radio, Film, and Slide motion; Computer and non-electronic ones such as Chalkboard, Charts, Burners, Models, and many more. The absence of these materials in physics teaching could make the class very uninteresting to students and discourage learning, thereby leading to low or poor achievement.

### Remedial Instruction

The meaning of "remedial" is to improve or "remedy" something. Remedial education definition is the concept of reteaching and reinforcing previously taught basic skills to improve student outcomes in current or future coursework. Some might also refer to remedial education as filling "learning gaps".

Teacher-participants in this study disclosed that they used remedial instructions to reinforce the learning of the students in learning the MTB-MLE.

**Teacher B:** "In our school, we have remedial instruction to help the students whose learning is needed to be reinforced. We have set a separate schedule for the remedial classes."

**Teacher D:** "I like conducting remedial classes to help my students because I feel like helping them in a way that I extended my extra time for them, teaching them to read and write."

**Teacher C:** "We usually do lecture, games, and sometimes writing activities to reinforce them."

Digital Class, an academic website, suggests that students who have fallen behind in their studies or who need short-term learning assistance have the right to receive remedial instruction. When challenges in learning or school attendance are identified in a student, the importance of remedial teaching should be realized quickly.

Mcdaniel (2018) <sup>[8]</sup> asserts that remedial activity is one meant to improve a learning skill or rectify a problem area. The purpose of remedial teaching involves individualized teaching of students who are experiencing difficulties in specific subject areas. Remedial instruction might be taught individually or in groups and targets academic weaknesses that potentially hinder learning. The benefits of remedial teaching activities can include forming the foundation for learning a subject in greater detail. These skills must be learned before students can develop a detailed understanding of the topic of study.

### Attendance to Training

The reason why continuing teacher training is so important for educational excellence is simple: teachers need to be given regular training opportunities in order to stay at the top of their game. Even the best teachers will begin to lag behind if they don't continue to strive for excellence (Communication | Blog CAE, CAE Method, E-learning, Technology, 2020) <sup>[5]</sup>.

The result of the analysis conducted by Essien, Akpan, & Obt (2016) <sup>[7]</sup> revealed that there exists a positive and small relationship between the frequency of teachers' attendance at in-service training, seminars, and workshops and students' academic performance in social studies. It was recommended that government should make it mandatory for all teachers in both primary and post-primary to undergo professional training, as is the case with other professions like law and medicine, among others.

**Teacher C:** "I really tried to attend special training for MTB-MLE to supplement what I have learned before, and, of course, for professional growth."

**Teacher A:** "Attending training and seminars enhances my ability to teach students, especially in terms of teaching the MTB-MLE."

**Teacher D:** "I attend training especially when it comes to learning our own language, Sinurigaanon, which we, teachers, have to teach for our MTB-MLE. It's all worth it, anyway."

### Pedagogical Implications

The study findings presented here are thought to be important for teachers, school leaders, teacher training institutions, teacher development specialists and policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders involved in teacher development. Guided by the findings of the study, the following pedagogical applications were drawn:

**On the Quality Education:** Aside from tracking the progress of the MTB-MLE learner, the teachers have to consider creativity in the delivery of instruction to the learners. With this, despite the lack of instructional materials, the learning process may be remediated.

The instructional materials may also be considered for review. Enough and highly scrutinized materials may lead to a successful learning experience for the learners. Teachers, on the other hand, may have a convenient teaching delivery experience.

The best practices implemented by the other schools may be benchmarked and adapted by other schools which encountered the same problems.

**On Students' Literacy:** The MTB-MLE students can develop learning within and across the grade levels of the subject being offered. More reading materials must be provided to the schools inside the country that uses the particular language or mother tongue so that the teachers would find it convenient in the teaching and learning process.

In case of a low literacy rate, schools may opt to conduct remediation or enrichment classes on a specific schedule. This will help the students with difficulties in attaining the competencies set for a particular lesson.

Moreover, home visits can also be effective. This will encourage the parents to participate in their children's learning process as they get acquainted with the updates on their children's learning progress even more.

### On Effective Implementation

With the existing challenges that the MTB-MLE teachers are facing, and as stated in the findings of this study, an

intensive curriculum review has to be conducted on various aspects of the curriculum, particularly on the pros and cons of the implementation of the subject.

Curriculum implementation should be associated with enough training intended for the teachers handling the subject, specifically on the use of the particular language taught in the subject.

Moreover, a group of experts in the curriculum implementation which will also include an expert in a particular language for MTB-MLE from the different offices in the department, has to focus on the progress of implementation projects inside the country.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Generally, the MTB-MLE teachers have identified issues and challenges in the delivery of instruction and identified best practices in the MTB-MLE curriculum implementation. The analysis and interpretation of the gathered data led to the following conclusions:

- a. The identified issues and challenges the teachers encounter in teaching MTB-MLE produce poor language instruction quality for learners.
- b. Other schools may adapt best practices that are implemented in the schools to meet the challenges in the teaching and learning process of MTB-MLE.
- c. Pedagogical implications may provide the solution to the existing challenges in teaching MTB-MLE.

It is recommended that a further review of the implementation process of the subject in the schools should be conducted.

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