



LIVED-EXPERIENCES IN THE TEACHING MOTHER TONGUE IN THE PRIMARY GRADES OF TABACO CITY DIVISION

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ABSTRACT

The institutionalization of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) mandates using learners' first language as the medium of instruction from the pre-kindergarten through grade three with Filipino and English taught separately. This study determined the status of Mother Tongue Instruction along pre-instruction and post-instruction phase, analyze the lived-experiences in teaching Mother Tongue in the primary grades of Tabaco City Division, and enumerated the common practices of primary teachers in teaching Mother Tongue. Using Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Observation. Selected grade 1 to 3 teachers in Tabaco City Division were subjected for this research. The participants from the four districts were well-represented. The objective of the study was to formulate an additional guideline to enhance the teaching of Mother Tongue instruction. The self-conceived guideline aims to draw everyone's attention to the importance of fostering a culture that nurtures literacy. This guideline serves as an appeal to the school, the entire community and society at large to address the urgent need for establishing a literacy-centric culture. In such a cultural context, everyone acknowledges the significance of

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each other as an essential element that contributes to the learning acquisition, especially for children.

Keywords: *lived-experiences, mother tongue, teaching, primary grades*

INTRODUCTION

To be globally competitive, one must possess adequate knowledge and skills to be able to deal with the competitive world. The use of Mother Tongue has been shown to improve literacy rates by building on existing language skills. Bidyapati B.Ed (2021) emphasized that language is the most important element to develop a sense of belongingness and identity. People use language to make new acquaintances and friends. It is deemed that children communicate well using their first language, the same way they learn best using their Mother Tongue.

In the Philippine setting, there is a dire need to strengthen the implementation of a language policy supportive of learners' knowledge acquisition. Since different language policies in the Philippines seem to have fluctuated over the last century, as such, in order to address the issues, in 2009, the Department of Education (DepEd) took action against the bilingual education policy by mandating the implementation of Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). This directive emphasizes the utilization of learners' native languages as the primary

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medium of instruction for all subjects from pre-kindergarten through grade three, with Filipino and English taught as distinct subjects.

In January 2013, the Philippine Congress officially supported this endeavor by approving the Enhanced Basic Education Act. This legislation not only involves a shift towards a K-12 educational frameworks but also mandates that instruction, teaching materials, and assessments be provided in the regional or native language of learners from kindergarten through grade three, with a transition to another language program from grades four through six. Despite President Benigno Aquino not having signed the bill into law yet, nationwide implementation of Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) has commenced. The mass training programs began with grade one students in 2012, followed by grade two and three in 2013 and 2014, respectively.

The decision by Department of Education and Congress to embrace Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) stemmed from previous research findings highlighting the advantages of using the mother tongue as the language of instruction. Studies revealed that students who attained literacy in their first language achieved higher academic success compared to those learning in a second or third language. It was proposed that subsequent languages could be acquired more effectively if a solid foundation in the first language was established early on (Philippines Department of Education, 2009). This principle, outlined in DepEd Order No. 74, s. 2009, was formalized by R.A. 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013,

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which endorsed MTB-MLE as the medium of instruction in the primary grades in schools across the country.

Currently, DepEd employs 19 languages in MTB-MLE: Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinan, Iloko, Bikol, Ybanag, Sinugbuanong Binisaya, Hiligaynon, Waray, Bahasa Sug, Maguindanaoan, Maranao, Chavacano, Ivatan, Sambal, Aklanon, Kinaray-a, and Sinurigaanon. MTB-MLE is integrated into two modules: as a learning/subject area and as a medium of instruction. However, recently, DepEd has eliminated the Mother Tongue subject as a separate subject in Grades 1–3 of the newly introduced MATATAG K–10 Curriculum. This program aims to address fundamental education challenges, namely: MA - Make the Curriculum relevant to produce job-ready, active, and responsible citizens; TA - Take steps to accelerate the delivery of basic education facilities and services; TA - Take good care of learners by promoting learner well-being, inclusive learning, and a positive learning environment; and G - Give support to teachers to enhance teaching quality. This curriculum innovation has started to take effect in the later phase of the SY 2023-2024

The Mother Tongue subject has been replaced with a generic "Language" subject that is only for Grade 1. The curriculum is being pilot tested this year and will be implemented in phases starting in SY 2024–2025. DepEd clarified that the Mother Tongue will remain a medium of teaching and learning in schools. The decision to remove the Mother Tongue was reached after months of consultation with various sectors and stakeholders in revising the curriculum for Kinder

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to Grade 10, which has been subjected to a review. The removal of the Mother Tongue subject has been met with criticism from some groups who believe that it is important to teach the Mother Tongue as a separate subject to develop literacy skills, and enhance the awareness and appreciation of learners of their cultural identity positive attitude towards their socialization. So, children must maintain their first language when they begin schooling because, at the time when children develop their Mother Tongue, simultaneous development of a host of other essential skills, such as critical thinking and literacy skills, takes place in them. Bidyapati, B.Ed. (2023): In other words, the Mother Tongue helps greatly in learning acquisition among the primary pupils.

Many voices are to be heard and those voices are from the primary grade teachers who were dedicated and exerted all their efforts in crafting materials and resources in teaching Mother Tongue. It may lose motivation and inspiration that could affect their ability to continue developing educational materials in local languages that could be of help in preserving cultural heritage. Primary grade teachers are calling the attention of the government to support the MATATAG curriculum by producing more textbooks, activity sheets, and instructional materials for those are the main problems of the teachers teaching Mother Tongue.

This situation drove the present researcher to look into the lived- experiences of teachers in teaching primary grades using the Mother Tongue as a Subject since they have reached first-hand experience of the challenges. This also gathered best practices on the valiant efforts the

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teachers have made in using the first language of the pupils, specifically in the given subjects in the primary grades.

Hence, the researcher believes that the current study is timely and relevant; As a result, the data gathered in this study has made a noteworthy impact in the realm of education and on the lives of primary school pupils, not only within Tabaco City Division but also across other districts in the region. These are some of the key findings illuminated by this research.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the lived-experiences in teaching Mother Tongue in the primary grades of Tabaco City Division. Specifically, this study aimed to:

1. Determine the status of Mother Tongue instruction along:
 - a. Pre-instruction phase
 1. Lesson Planning
 2. Preparation of Instructional Material
 - b. Post-instruction phase.
 1. Assessment
2. Analyze the lived-experiences in teaching Mother Tongue in the primary grades of Tabaco City Division;
3. Enumerate the common practices of primary grade teachers in teaching Mother Tongue.

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4. Formulate additional guidelines to use the Mother Tongue by contextualizing them.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the theories of Carl Rogers, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, and Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky. Also shown in the theoretical paradigm are the researcher's view and theory on the study at hand.

Self - Actualization Theory of Carl Roger He emphasizes that a teacher as a facilitator of knowledge, he shall create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. As a facilitator of learning, he will act upon the principles of learning and thereby treats pupils as a unique person with feelings of his own rather than as an object to be taught something. In the context of mother tongue instruction, this suggests that creating a learning environment where students feel accepted, valued, and supported by their teachers can foster their ability to self-actualize and reach their full potential in their native language. Providing unconditional positive regard and helping students develop a positive self-concept around their mother tongue abilities is an important factor in effective mother tongue education. He emphasized on the role of the "experiential field" and how it changes with age. This implies that mother tongue instruction should be tailored to the developmental stage and lived experiences of the students, allowing them to integrate their native language learning with their evolving self-concept.

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Carl Rogers' theory of self-actualization highlights the importance of a nurturing, accepting environment and positive self-regard in enabling individuals to fully realize their potential, which can be applied to the context of mother tongue instruction.

Another theory that is supportive to Carl Rogers' Theory is Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi of Zurich, Switzerland. Pestalozzi has a great contribution to the educational system in Europe. He believes that instructions should proceed from the familiar language to the new one. He further said that learning can easily be achieved if the language whom the teachers are using is a familiar one. That is the main idea of the adaption in the Philippines of MTB-MLE which is the mother tongue. He believed that children learn best when starting with concrete experiences and sense impressions, then gradually moving to more abstract concepts. In language learning.

His theory is related to this study that suggests the use of the child's native language and lived experiences, which are most familiar and concrete. Parents, especially mothers, play a key role in a child's early education, including language development in the mother tongue. This early grounding in the native language provides a foundation for later learning.

It implies that children should learn their mother tongue through immersion, interaction, and hands-on experiences, not just rote memorization. Pestalozzi's belief that education should proceed from the familiar to the new, and that learning should be grounded in concrete experience, supports the importance of beginning literacy instruction in a child's mother tongue before transitioning to additional languages. This provides a strong foundation for later learning.

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Furthermore, another theory that relates to this study is the theory of of Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky is very helpful to the present study, that the community has a fundamental role of language in cognitive development. So, based from such theory, children or pupil(s) can easily understand word(s) that are commonly used in the community. Therefore, it is but proper to adopt a language in educational process which is commonly used in the community for social interaction. That language or medium of instruction in the academe is now known as the mother tongue or the first language which the child acquired from birth.

Self- actualization theory, concrete to abstract theory and sociocultural theory support the researcher theory of self -determination theory wherein, in order to truly learn, a child must be fully engaged in the process, which starts with the use of a language known to the learner. In that way, there is an assurance of comprehension. Empowering individuals, fostering academic achievement, and promoting parental involvement in education. By recognizing the significance of mother tongue instruction and involving parents in the learning process, individuals can assert their rights and actively engage in their educational journey.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To process the study, the researcher employed a grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss research design, which is a qualitative method of research developed through inductive reasoning

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from a dataset collected by a participant observer. Grounded theory is characterized by its structured yet flexible approach, making it suitable for situations where limited information exists about a phenomenon. The primary objective is to generate or construct an explanatory theory that elucidates a process inherent to the substantive area of inquiry.

Research Instrument

The instruments considered in this study were the interview guide and the observation tool. This was used in the conduct of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and Observation on the actual teaching of the respondents. All the questions in the guide and in the tool were based on the objectives of this research. It helped a great deal in soliciting information and insights on the study at hand.

Participants of the Study

Basically, the participants and subject of this research are the primary school teachers in the Tabaco City Division Handling Grades 1 to 3. A sample of five (5) teachers from every grade level served as participants and subjects of the current research. The participants came from the four (4) districts in Tabaco City Division.

This study has a total of fifteen (15) participants to be taken from the population of the teachers from Grades 1 to 3 as suggested by the dissertation committee members. There were

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one hundred two (102) teachers in Grade 1, one hundred seven (107) in Grade 2, and one hundred five (105) in Grade 3 with a total of three hundred fourteen (314). Comprising both teachers with and without training experience in using Mother Tongue Instruction across various subjects such as Mathematics, Araling Panlipunan, Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao, Mother Tongue, and Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH). The total number of participants which is fifteen (15) is only 4.78 percent of the total population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teaching is an interactive process characterized by its unique function of imparting knowledge, fostering understanding, and cultivating skills. It is undeniably a multifaceted endeavor. To effectively execute this task, systematic planning is imperative. This planning involves various steps, collectively referred to as the phases of teaching. To gain a comprehensive understanding of a teacher's instructional activities, one must consider not only what occurs during regular classroom teaching but also the preparations and follow-up actions undertaken to maximize the effectiveness of teaching.

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CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, this study has come up with the following conclusions:

1. Mother Tongue Instruction (MOI) in teaching can indeed have a profound impact on language learning and understanding. It enables students to connect with their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of identity and belonging. Moreover, Mother Togue Instruction (MOI) facilitates the enhancement of overall language skills, as students engage with familiar linguistic contexts that promote deeper comprehension and communication.
2. Teachers lived-experiences revealed that they faced various struggles and challenges when teaching mother tongue-based instruction in Tabaco City Division, such as highly tasking instructional responsibilities, challenging use of native dialects, difficulty with unfamiliar terminologies, negative effects on English proficiency, and the aim for positive learning outcomes,
3. Teachers in Tabaco City Division employ coping strategies to overcome the challenges they face, including self-retooling activities, diversified teaching methods, contextualized instructional delivery, individualized instructions, and acquaintance with the community
4. Additional guidelines has made in order to address the challenges encountered by the primary teachers.

In essence, the study underscores the significance of valuing and preserving one's Mother Tongue in education as it not only aids in language acquisition but also plays a crucial role in cultural identity and personal development.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions of the study, here are six recommendations to enhance the implementation and effectiveness of Mother Tongue Instruction (MOI) in education:

1. Professional Development for Teachers. Provide comprehensive training programs for teachers to equip them with effective strategies and methodologies for teaching in the Mother Tongue. This training should include language development techniques, classroom management skills, and methods for integrating cultural heritage into the curriculum.

2. Curriculum Development. Develop a culturally responsive curriculum that incorporates local stories, traditions, and practices. This will help students connect their learning experiences with their cultural background, fostering a stronger sense of identity and engagement in the classroom.

3. Resource Allocation. Ensure that schools have access to adequate teaching materials and resources in the Mother Tongue. This includes textbooks, visual aids, and digital content that support the curriculum and enhance the learning experience for students.

4. Community and Parental Involvement. Encourage active involvement of parents and the local community in the educational process. Organize workshops and meetings to educate parents about the benefits of Mother Tongue Instruction and how they can support their children's learning at home

5. Support Systems for Teachers. Establish support systems for teachers, such as peer mentoring, regular feedback sessions, and professional learning communities. These support

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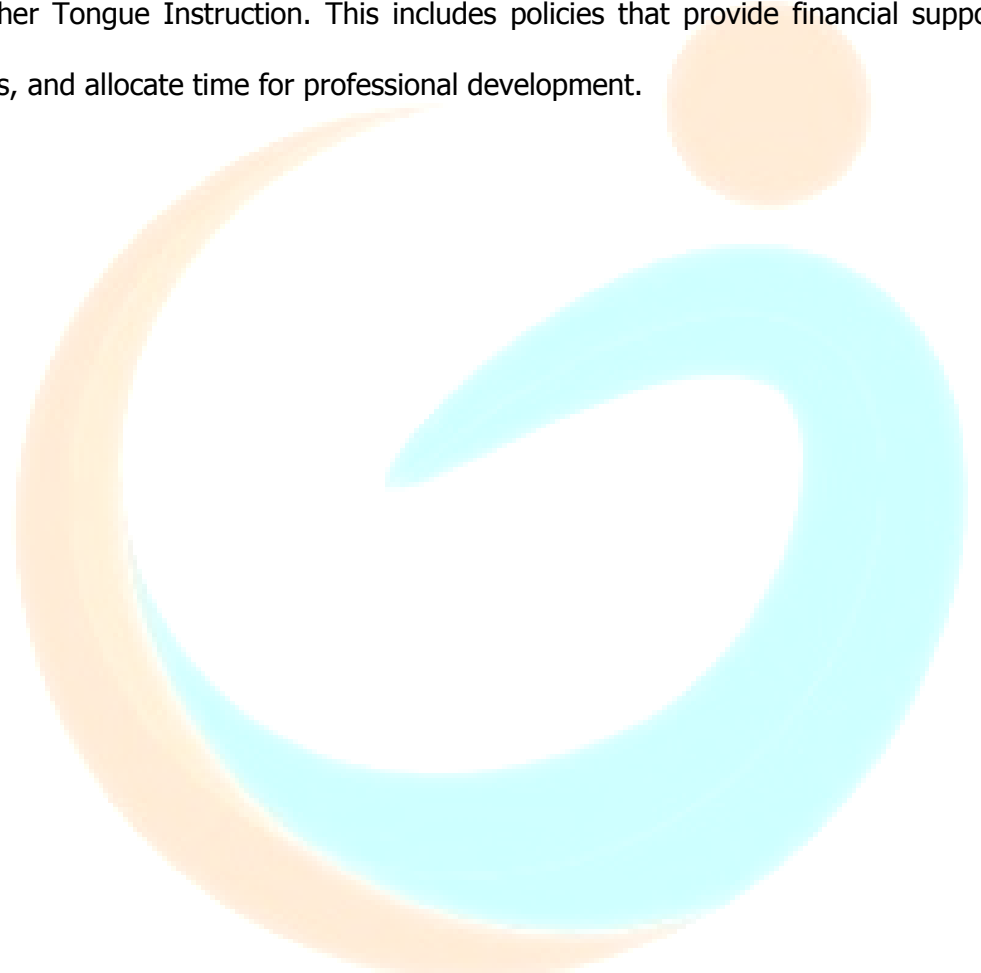
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structures can help teachers share best practices, address challenges, and continuously improve their teaching methods.

6. Policy Advocacy and Implementation. Advocate for the development and implementation of contextualized policies that address the specific challenges faced by teachers in delivering Mother Tongue Instruction. This includes policies that provide financial support, reduce class sizes, and allocate time for professional development.



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