

Teaching strategies in mother-based multi-lingual education context: Inputs to the development of contextualized model

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Abstract

Since the implementation of Mother Tongue Based- Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), the interests of researchers and scholars have been evident as supported by the numerous studies about it. This depicts the rich research areas that need exploration or investigation. In such context, this study was conducted to bridge the research gaps by focusing on the experiences of teachers in MTB-MLE. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts revealed the teaching strategies of teachers which are tagged as TRIP, an acronym for Translating, Remediating Instruction, Indigenizing Instructional Materials, and Peer Learning. These identified strategies surfaced from the rich sharing of the participants as they experience MTB-MLE. In the light of these findings, MTB-MLE remains an important factor in the success of the teaching and learning process; teachers remain adaptive amidst educational reforms and trends.

Keywords: indigenization, peer teaching, remediation, teaching strategies, translation

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1. Introduction

Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) has carved its niche as a practical and effective approach in the educational landscape. It offers a plausible framework for preparing coming generations to become better adaptive and even rich contributors in the globalized and intercultural world. The gate to the new millennium has brought great zeal in and at the same time contestations around this educational alternative. The inclusion of MTB-MLE in the K to 12 curriculum is mandated by Republic Act 10533. Republic Act 10533 explicitly states that “the curriculum shall adhere to the principles and framework of MTB-MLE, which starts from where the learners are and from what they already knew proceeding from the known to the unknown; instructional materials and capable teachers to implement the MTB-MLE curriculum shall be available” (R.A. 10533, 2013).

Interestingly, a local study revealed that in implementing the MTB-MLE, strategies employed by the teachers were improvising instructional materials written in mother tongue, remediating instruction, and utilizing literary piece written in mother tongue. It also revealed the problems that teachers encountered like absence of books written in the mother tongue, lack of vocabulary, and lack of teacher training. Through these strategies employed by the teachers, they can effectively implement the use of MTB-MLE in helping their pupils acquire the necessary information and learning in the classroom. These innovative strategies help the students attain the maximum learning and helps build firm foundations, valuing and developing the oral and written skills that young children bring to school without rushing literacy. The problems indicated the major attention and effort necessary to be considered so that it will not hinder the meaningful learning and will not affect the way the teachers deliver their lessons (Lartec *et al.*, 2014).

Notably, future studies should look into the techniques and mechanics of teachers in teaching, using the MTB-MLE (Bercebio *et al.*, 2016; Walter & Dekker, 2011) leading to the formulation of a framework or model that shall help to improve its implementation (Hunuhunan, 2019; Sumalinog, 2018; Cabansag, 2016; Cajis, 2012). As such, this study was designed to describe the teaching strategies of teachers under the MTB-MLE as basis in developing a contextualized framework.

2. Methods

Research Design - This study employed basic descriptive qualitative design. Lambert and Lambert (2012) underscored that the goal of qualitative descriptive studies is a comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals, qualitative descriptive studies tend to draw from naturalistic inquiry, which purports a commitment to studying something in its natural state to the extent that is possible within the context of the research arena. With these ideas in mind, the researcher found the design suitable since study described experiences of teachers especially their teaching strategies in the context of MTB-MLE.

Selection and Study Site - The research was implemented in the elementary schools in the municipality of Sigay, Ilocos Sur which focused on how the teachers of primary grades teach under the MTB-MLE. The researchers choose the elementary school of Sigay because they fit the time frame and resources needed by the researcher. The participants of the study were selected through purposive sampling. With this sampling technique, two criteria were set. First, they have been teaching under the context of MTB-MLE for the past three years. Second, they are willing to participate. With these criteria, 10 teachers were considered; however, only seven teachers were interviewed upon reaching data saturation. Notably, saturation of data was reached when patterns from interviews were established, and no additional data was gathered.

Research Instrument - The researcher used an interview protocol as the prime data gathering instrument. It was based on an interview guide. This interview guide included *a priori* codes that served as the foundation for creating the interview questions. The developed questions focused primarily on surfacing the teaching strategies of teachers under the lens of MTB-MLE.

Data Gathering Procedure - In implementing the study, the researcher secured permission to conduct the study from concerned Department of Education officials in the district. With the sought permission, the researcher identified and approached the participants. Their consent was sought before their participation in the study. Then, the interview protocol was constructed. Afterwards, the researcher conducted the interview based on the convenience of the participants. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Notably, some of the participants opted to write their answers to the interview questions because of their busy schedules; however, follow interviews were conducted to supplement the gathered data. Likewise, member checking procedures which included letting the participants check the interview transcripts and informing them of the result of the study were implemented for accuracy and truthfulness of data. Finally, the data was analyzed using thematic analysis before developing the output of the study.

Mode of Analysis - Thematic analysis was employed in analysis of data. Through this, the answers of the participants were grouped and categorized according to commonalities in their properties. The features of the common responses were then identified, and finally the themes were formulated.

Ethical Consideration - The researcher made a written consent to the participants asking full participation in the research. The consent indicated that all the information that the participants provided are to be used solely in the research to provide security, privacy, and dignity to the research participants. The participants were assured that they can withdraw their participation in the study any time they want. Finally, they were assured that the results of the study and the interview transcript shall be shown and communicated to them.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Teaching Strategies of Teachers in MTB-MLE

Since the implementation MTB-MLE, the interests of researchers and scholars have been evident as supported by the numerous studies about it. This depicts the rich research areas that need exploration or investigation. With these, this study was conducted to bridge research gaps by focusing on the experiences of teachers in MTB-MLE. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts revealed the teaching strategies of teachers which are dubbed as TRIP, an acronym for Translating, Remediating Instruction, Indigenizing Instructional Materials, and Peer Learning. These identified strategies surfaced from the rich sharing of the participants they experience MTB-MLE. Hence, the discussions below explain these findings.

Translating. During the interviews, the sharing of the participants reveals that they perform translation in their classes. The theme means using Ilokano, Filipino, and English sparingly in the lesson. The participants shared that Ilokano words are translated to English or Filipino. Similarly, English words are translated to Filipino or Ilokano. As verbalized:

“I use it a medium of instruction because sometimes there are Ilokano terms that the learners can’t understand so I will use the Filipino to English called translation of language or other called bridging.” (T1)

“Other learners did not understand Ilokano terms because they are English speaking at home, so I translate it in English and Filipino for them to understand the words.” (T2)

“My methods of teaching using MTB-MLE are translation of language, materials written in English to Filipino to Ilokano.” (T2)

“In using MTB-MLE, I let my learners express their views and opinions using their mother tongue languages, this could be an ((remove an)) oral or written activities like in English I let them Translate the language to Ilokano or Filipino just to express themselves.” (T3)

“Allow my learners to express her/his thoughts and views through their mother tongue, I let my learners translate their answer from English to Filipino and Ilokano just to give them the courage to recite.” (T4)

“The methods of teaching using MTB-MLE is [are] what we called the translation of language or bridging. It is very necessary for us to help my learners to understand the lesson very well.” (T7)

The finding indicates that translation is paramount in making learners understand the lessons. Notably, translation is included into language learning activities alongside commonly used ones, (e.g., Reading, listening, writing, and vocabulary development) could be classified as a "pedagogical tool" because their objective is to teach a language (Dagilienè, 2012). In the process, Ilokano and Filipino serve as auxiliary languages which aid the learners in grasping the lesson. Similarly, Azarias (2022a) and Azarias (2022b) revealed that Ilokano and Filipino are auxiliary languages that help teachers in explaining their lessons.

Clearly, translation is extremely important in MTB-MLE. Learners must be able to speak in the language they are studying to comprehend the concepts being taught. The verbalizations do not only highlight that translation assist students grasp the topic they are studying but also serving as an assessment tool. When used effectively, translation can be a beneficial resource in the teaching-learning process. In fact, translation strategies improve learner autonomy by using genuine materials and emphasizing learner-centered practices (Dagilienè, 2012). Finally, Gardner (2022) echoed that translating or converting one language to another provides learners with a new perspective on their native language. They will get significant insight into the various ways in which languages differ from one another. Thus, translation is also one way of preserving the identity of the learners while learning a language.

Remediating Instruction. In the interviews, the remediating instruction is done to help learners who have difficulty in coping with their lessons. Teachers perform remedial teaching every Friday to help their learners read, understand words, and comprehend reading texts. The statements below support the claim.

“I used remediation to my learners especially those consider as slow learner in reading comprehension.” (T1)

“I used remedial teaching every Friday to help my pupils to understand more difficult words through individual reading on my table.” (T2)

“My techniques when using MTB-MLE is through remedial teaching wherein I let my slow learners to answer question or problems in math or other subjects where I assist the by giving assistance using the MTB-MLE approach.” (T3)

“During Friday afternoon I use this for remedial teaching, for me to help my learners to read, comprehend and develop their capacity to understand some difficult words using MTB-MLE approach wherein, If the learners 'didn't understand the word I translate to other language.” (T4)

The finding support Soriano (2017) who revealed that one of the strategies of teacher in teaching MTB is through the conduct of remedial teaching. Notably, the abovementioned statements emphasize that remedial teaching is crucial because they help learners succeed academically. Learners who are struggling with a specific subject or ability may become discouraged and overwhelmed, resulting in a lack of enthusiasm and lower performance. Remedial sessions give these learners the tools they need to overcome their hurdles and achieve academic achievement.

Clearly, the verbalizations underscore that a remedial class is always an impressive way to solve the problem on why learners fall behind their lessons or classes (Asio & Jimenez, 2020). It helps to bridge the achievement gap between kids from various socioeconomic backgrounds. Students from low-income households and underserved neighborhoods frequently lack access to the same educational resources as their wealthier peers. Remedial programs improve student management and offer students with the additional support they require to thrive academically, regardless of socio-economic status.

Indigenizing Instructional Materials. Under the context of MTB-MLE, indigenizing instructional materials emerged as one of the strategies. The participants shared that it is characterized by the used of instructional materials that are contextualized in the location of the schools. These include the use stories in the community that are written by the teachers or local authors. This indigenization is evident in the verbalizations below.

“Indigenization of instructional of materials [like using materials] written in Ilokano like the local stories in the community. This is for them to relate to the lesson.” (T1)

“I used to read stories made by teachers and some local writers to preserve the local stories that is [are] called indigenization. Through this, they will be able to understand the lesson because they are familiar with the material.” (T2)

“My methods in teaching using MTB-MLE is by using indigenize materials or using materials found in the community like reading materials needed to improve the reading comprehension skills of every learners. Doing this is making them relate to the topic. They can share a lot.” (T3)

“I use indigenization of materials where I prefer to use the local stories as my materials in reading stories, comprehension and developing vocabularies to my pupils. Using materials that are familiar to them is helping them understand the lesson.” (T4)

“Indigenization of Instructional materials [is what I used] meaning from English [I] write it in Filipino and Ilokano so that they can relate.” (T6)

Lucidly, the sharing of the participants manifests that indigenizing instructional materials makes the learners relate to the lesson. Through this, they will be able to understand the lesson. In fact, indigenized materials arouse learners’ interests, improve their understanding of lesson, and engage them in class discussion (Muhammad *et al.*, 2019).

Notably, the findings amplify the need to use instructional materials that contextualized or that learners can relate to. In fact, Eniayewu (2005) articulated that is critical to use instructional resources that allow learners to connect and link to their own identity and culture during teaching and learning to encourage participation and improve academic standards. After all, using a resource that is common to the learners' culture directs their attention to what else to study, allowing them to focus more freely on the abilities (Parallag, 2022).

Peer Learning. Results of the interview surface that peer learning is being implemented in MTB-MLE classrooms. In doing it, teachers let performing learners to teach their classmates who have difficulties in understanding the class’ lessons. This is also characterized by the one learner helping another group of learners understand reading texts or to answer comprehension questions. Likewise, one learner is tasked to help his/her classmates learn how to read. As stated:

“I use peer learning wherein the brighter learners help their classmates to read and understand what they are reading using short stories.” (T1)

“I ask question using Ilokano and they answer it in Ilokano. Another is the group or peer learning wherein I let my learners teach their teammates/classmates to read stories an Ilocano, English or Filipino.” (T2)

“I let my learners participate through helping each other in answering question taken from the story that they had read. It is very effective because it can develop their potentials to help each other.” (T3)

“To make my learners participate in my class is to call them one by one and sometimes peer teaching so that to make sure that they can have their output after the activity.” (T6)

Undoubtedly, the statements of the participants reverberate that learning does not solely happen with teacher being the giver of information or being the teacher. The finding shows that learning can be a shared activity among learners. Clearly, peer learning is a learning strategy that encourages collaboration and teamwork to gain knowledge. Indeed, it is the learners who, using a concept and various information, must solve a problem without the assistance of a teacher. Each learner is both a receiver and a giver of knowledge. All learners collaborate to solve a particular challenge. Individual abilities learned before or during teamwork are then shared with all teammates.

Notably, Williamson and Paulsen - Becejac (2018) underscored that peer learning benefits students in their pursuit of shared knowledge, ideas, and experiences in the classroom. It has been demonstrated to be cost-effective in catering to students while maintaining the standards and quality of learning experiences provided by educational institutions (Keenan, 2014). Students benefit from learning from one another in terms of improving coaching, team leadership and management skills, as well as reflective and self-directed learning skills (Stone et al., 2013; Boud & Lee 2005).

3.2 Contextualized Model in Implementing MTB-MLE

In this study, the rich sharing of the participants led to the development of contextualized model in the context of seven primary and elementary schools of Sigay, Ilocos Sur in the district of Galimuyod-Sigay-Gregorio del Pilar. Notably, four strategies of teaching under MTB-MLE have been identified: translating, remediating instruction, indigenizing instructional materials, and peer learning (Figure 1). Translating is characterized using Ilokano and Filipino languages in explaining lessons in English. These two languages serve as auxiliary languages in MTB-MLE. The use of these two languages helps facilitate the understanding of learners especially on words that they have difficulty comprehending.

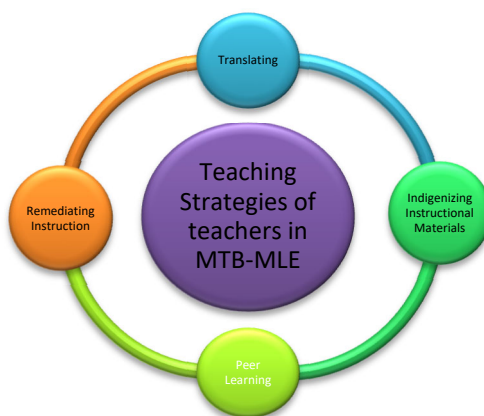


Figure 1. Contextualized Model in Implementing MTB-MLE

In remediating instruction, teachers provide extra teaching hours to learners who have difficulties in their English lessons. The teacher asked the permission of the school head and also with the permission of their parents allowing him to conduct the remediation. This is usually done after classes or break time. Here, remedial activities and intervention activities are provided to learners. In addition, indigenizing instructional materials is done through using local materials like stories in designing lessons. Here, the culture of learners is integrated. Doing this is one

way for the learners to relate to the lesson. As a result, better and easier understanding of the lesson is facilitated and directed.

Finally, peer learning is mainly described by allowing learners to teach their classmates who are having difficulties in coping with the lessons. This could be done through pair or group in which a performing learner teaches his or her classmates. This is done mainly to help also learners feel comfortable in learning with their friends or classmates acting as their mentor. Hence, establishing a community of learning where they feel safe and productive.

4. Conclusion

The four identified teaching strategies (translating, remediating instruction, indigenizing instructional materials and peer learning) under MTB-MLE context indicate that teachers remain steadfast and adaptive amidst educational reforms and challenges. In so doing, the learners are assured that the quality and excellence of education and training that they deserve are being delivered through the responsive teaching strategies of teachers. Notably, the findings accentuate the need for teachers to be exposed to rigorous trainings and other professional development activities that equip them with pertinent skills and knowledge to address the demands of the changing educational landscape. Such activities for teachers should be based on their needs. Nonetheless, the findings of the study call for the Department of Education to provide necessary materials and resources needed by the teachers in molding the mind of the learners.

4.1 Recommendation

In the light of the findings and conclusion of the study, teachers are encouraged to maximize the potential translating, remediating instruction, indigenizing instructional materials and peer learning as teaching strategies under MTB-MLE. Future trainings for teachers may explore the provision of intensive training on personalized teaching strategies for teachers. Meanwhile, this study has limitations despite its rigor and depth. First, the study identified only the teaching strategies, and did not test their effectiveness through quasi-experimental study. Its effectiveness is based mainly on the observations and practice of the participants. Second, it only focused in one municipality which is just one of the two municipalities comprising the district where the study was conducted. With these limitations, an action research testing the effectiveness of the strategies in Science, Math, and English may be conducted. Last, similar study may be conducted in the other locale within the district to get a more eidetic picture of MTB-MLE.

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