

The language divide: Challenges and pedagogical strategies of elementary teachers in teaching Araling Panlipunan to english-dominant pupils

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Abstract

In the Philippines, the Department of Education stipulated that Araling Panlipunan subjects be taught with Filipino as the medium of instruction. In certain schools where most of its learners are more proficient in English than Filipino, this policy leads to a learning gap due to the language barrier. Focusing on a school in La Trinidad, Benguet, this qualitative study explored the challenges and strategies used by elementary teachers to teach their English-dominant pupils. Results revealed that the challenges include insufficient for the making of instructional materials, burden of translating the Filipino concepts to its English equivalents accurately, difficulty in grading activities, lack of interest during Araling Panlipunan classes, and lack of collaboration with parents. Meanwhile, the teaching strategies include code-switching, utilizing audio – visual materials, and speaking slowly. Based on the findings, it is recommended that school administrators should reduce teachers’ workloads to give them sufficient time to prepare their lessons and their teaching materials. They should also provide trainings to teachers on how to make fair assessment tools to avoid educational inequity. Moreover, they should also prioritize stable and fast internet connectivity within the school to support the teachers in the making of their teaching materials. On the other hand, book companies could incorporate bilingual glossaries in their Araling Panlipunan textbooks to support English-dominant learners. Lastly, this study lays the groundwork for further research on the experiences of teachers with language mismatch.

Keywords: Filipino as medium of instruction, experiences of elementary teachers, Araling Panlipunan textbooks

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1. Introduction

Language plays an integral role in our lives. It is the medium by which we convey accumulated knowledge and wisdom to one another (Ahmed, 2011). In the field of education, it plays a vital role in the effective teaching – learning process. According to Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015), language and education are inseparable because education is disseminated through language. Teachers communicate instruction and content through it while learners listen, comprehend, and convey thought and feelings through it. It is by which students acquire basic skills necessary for living (Ahmed, 2011). The issue of language is very controversial, especially in multilingual countries because of its ramifications on the academic achievement of learners. As a result, countries that have diverse languages promulgated language policies such as bilingual and multilingual education systems to solve the communication crises in their schools. Drawing on the data of Lewis et al. (2013), which describes the Philippines having 181 diverse languages and more than 7,600 islands, it is evident that the country has trouble in ensuring successful implementation of language policies, a problem common to multilingual nations.

To address the communication problems in its schools, the Philippine government, through the Department of Education (then Department of Education, Culture and Sports or DECS) implemented the bilingual education policy. Under this policy, Filipino and English were used as media of instruction in specific subjects (Department of Education, 1987). English is used as medium of instruction in English, Science, Math, and Technology while Filipino is used in Social Studies (Araling Panlipunan), Music, Arts, Physical Education, Character Education, and Home Economics (Quijano & Eustaquio, 2009). To strengthen this policy, the Department of Education, through the legislation of the Basic Education Act of 2013, embedded the Mother Tongue Based-Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE) in the newly adopted K- 12 Basic Education Program. MTBE – MLE stipulates that Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be taught using the local mother tongue while Grade 4 onwards will be taught using the country's official languages, Filipino and English (Medilo, 2016).

Numerous studies have shown that there is a critical connection between medium of instruction and learners' ability to learn. Research by Owu-Ewe (2012) and Owu-Ewe and Eshun (2015) suggest that learners participate in classroom discussions and perform better on assessments in subjects where the medium of instruction is identical to their first language while they perform poorly in subjects taught in the language they are not proficient with. In the Philippine setting, existing studies have demonstrated that using a familiar language as medium of instruction positively affects the academic performance of learners. One of the most notable studies is the Lubuagan Experiment in Kalinga. The results of the study showed that pupils who were taught in their first language performed better than pupils who were taught using the official medium of instruction (Walter & Dekker, 2011 as cited in Melegrito, 2022). Similarly, the study of Vela (2015) revealed that students who were taught using the Bicol language performed better than those who were taught using English. Corroborating these findings, the study by Espada (2012) demonstrated that kindergarten pupils performed better in Mathematics when taught in Waray, their native language, as opposed to English, the official medium of instruction.

In contrast, students often face academic challenges when forced to learn in a language they have are unfamiliar with. In the context of Araling Panlipunan, there were local studies demonstrating that language barriers often lead to lower academic performance. For instance, the study of Racca and Lasaten (2016) found out that Filipino students who are highly proficient in the English language performed very satisfactory in Math, Science and English, but not in Filipino and Araling Panlipunan. This connection is further supported by the research of Tumlos-Castillo and Baylon (2015) involving fourth year high school Filipino students. The study found that the students' poor performance on the National Achievement Test in Araling Panlipunan was closely linked to the medium of instruction used in their classroom. The NAT questions were written in Filipino language, yet their

Araling Panlipunan lessons were taught using the English language. Likewise, the study of Gorgonio (2012) examined whether Filipino or English as medium of instruction can promote better learning in Araling Panlipunan among English-dominant pupils. The findings revealed that the use of English as a medium of instruction showed better academic results.

Despite the Filipino language being the national language of the Philippines, many students belonging to the new generation were raised to communicate primarily in English. A 2019 article published in the Manila Bulletin highlighted this irony, noting that many Filipino kids today speak fluently in English, yet they require private tutors to pass their subjects taught in Filipino. This trend makes the national language secondary or irrelevant because parents prioritized teaching their children English at home (Yao, 2019).

1.1 Research Gap

Most of the existing local studies on medium of instruction focused on the ramifications of language mismatch on the academic performance of learners. There remains to be a significant research gap concerning the pedagogical experiences of teachers, especially elementary teachers teaching Araling Panlipunan to English-dominant pupil. Furthermore, this gap is particularly evident in the urban areas of the Cordillera region, such as La Trinidad.

1.2 Research Objectives

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions.

1. What are the challenges faced by the participants in teaching Araling Panlipunan to English-dominant pupils?
2. What are the strategies employed by the participants in teaching Araling Panlipunan to English-dominant pupils?

2. Methodology

Research Design - This study used qualitative research design. Qualitative approach is the most appropriate with the study because it explores and provides an in-depth understanding of people's experiences. Furthermore, qualitative study use interview and observations to gather data (Ritchie et al., 2014).

Population and Locale of the Study - There were ten (10) participants in this study. This sample size was deemed sufficient based on the principle of data saturation, which occurs when no new additional information emerge from further interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The participants were chosen using purposive sampling and the criteria for the selection are as follows: (1) upper elementary teachers (grades 4–6), (2) minimum of one year teaching experience, (3) currently handling English-dominant pupils, and (4) willing to participate in the study. Furthermore, the study was conducted in a prominent education institution located in the municipality of La Trinidad, Benguet. This school was purposely selected because a significant portion of its population are English-dominant learners. In this study, English-dominant pupils refers to learners who are more proficient and fluent in the English language than in Filipino. Preliminary observations conducted by the researcher revealed that English-dominant pupils from grade four to six fail their Araling Panlipunan subjects not because they lack intelligence or have a bad study habit, but rather, because of the language barrier.

Data Collection Instrument - The data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide and supplemented by classroom observations. The interview guide was organized into two parts: the first focused on the challenges while the second explored the strategies for teaching English-dominant pupils. To ensure credibility, the researcher validated the interview guide with experts and piloted the instrument with non-participant teachers.

Data Collection Procedure - After securing formal approval from the school administration, the researcher recruited participants based on the established inclusion criteria. The prospective participants were then briefed

about the purpose of the study, assured of their voluntary participation, and asked for their informed consent. One-on-one interview and a focus group discussion were employed until the process reached the point of saturation. With the participants' permission, a voice recorder was used to record all the interview sessions. The researcher also conducted classroom observations to document the actual experiences of the participants.

Data Analysis - The data collected were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The researcher transcribed the audio recordings, generated initial codes for recurring ideas, and organized these codes into themes to describe the experiences of the participants. To ensure credibility of the findings, the researcher employed member checking by having participants review their interview transcripts. Data triangulation was also utilized by cross-referencing the interview transcripts with the classroom observation notes.

Ethical Considerations - Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained approval from the school administration. Each participant was also provided with written informed consent after being briefed about the objectives of the study. The participants' participation was voluntary, free from coercion, bribery or extraction. To maintain security and confidentiality, audio recordings were saved into the computer with a password. And to protect the anonymity of the participants, the researcher did not disclose their names and instead are referred to by their pseudonyms.

3. Results and Discussions

The findings were divided into two sections. The first section discussed the challenges faced by the participants while the second section focused on the teaching strategies they employ to help their English – dominant pupils cope with their Araling Panlipunan lessons.

3.1 Challenges

Because the medium of instruction used in Araling Panlipunan is not identical to their pupil's first language, the participants come across challenges in delivering the learning objectives and attaining the learning outcomes.

3.1.1 Insufficient Time for the Making of Teaching Materials

All the participants emphasized that the institutional time allotted for the making of their Araling Panlipunan teaching materials is insufficient. To address the needs of their English-dominant pupils, the participants prepare more audio-visual materials for their Araling Panlipunans classes than for any other subject they teach. However, in selecting and creating their teaching materials, they need ample time.

Typical elementary teachers in the Philippines spend about 6 hours a day with students (Department of Education, 2012). However, as per the legal hours of labor – minimum requirement in R.A No. 1880, they are still required to render an eight-hour workday. According to Section 13 of the Republic Act No. 4670, six hours are allotted to actual classroom teaching and/or any teaching related activities and duties while the remaining two – hours for work within and outside the school premises (Teach Pinas, 2023). However, the researcher observed that these two hours allotted for the making of teaching materials were insufficient because they also spent these hours performing non-teaching tasks such as checking their pupils' papers, giving remedial classes, planning school events, and consulting with parents.

For instance, Teacher 1 shared that she does her lesson planning at home. She further explained that she cannot prepare her teaching materials at school because of her other tasks. She remarked,

“Two hours is not even enough for checking, tutoring my struggle pupils, and cleaning my room. When I want to make audio-visuals Araling Panlipunan, I have no time to make one at school. You know what? I believed that the actual classroom teaching should be four hours so that us teachers will have more time to make instructional materials.”

The other participants expressed a similar concern. They further highlighted that the selection and creation of appropriate and appealing visual materials to support their lessons is time-consuming, to the point that it forces them to work late into the night.

“After dismissal, I read our lesson for tomorrow. It will take me 30 minutes to read a short lesson because I must identify and translate the Filipino words that I know my pupils are unfamiliar with. And after all of this, I must search online for audio – visual materials like videos or pictures.” (Teacher 3)

“I make visual aids using cartolina. I usually spend one hour surfing the internet for appropriate pictures. They (pictures) should not be too small and blurry. Afterwards, I print the pictures then paste them on the cartolina. Then I spend another thirty minutes or an hour laminating the cartolina by using scotch tape. Because I have to cook, eat, wash the dishes, and rest for a bit, I usually sleep at 10 or 11:00 am when I make visual aids.” (Teacher 8)

“I make slide decks at home. It take me two to three hours at most. This is why I usually sleep at around midnight. Three hours because I have to select good pictures and videos. The pictures must not be too small or blurry. In selecting videos, it takes time because I have to watch them until the end. Then, I have to put all the videos and pictures into an attention-grabbing slide deck. I have to make it colorful; the design must be beautiful and should be with sound effects.” (Teacher 6)

The findings show that because of the excessive non-teaching duties of the participants, they complete their other workload outside the official working hours. Existing studies have affirmed this time poverty experienced by teachers. A study conducted by Wiggins (2015) in England demonstrated that teachers work more overtime compared to other professionals. In another study, Furihata et al. (2021) revealed elementary and junior high school teachers in Japan worked overtime on weekdays and continue to work even on holidays. In the Philippines, the study of Ancho & Bongco (2019) revealed that teachers find it a hard to complete all their tasks within the official working hours. As a result, they have no choice but to take their unfinished tasks home.

To solve the challenge of time constraint, the participant make their teaching materials at home. However, as emphasized in the study of Furihata et al. (2021) and Ancho and Bongco (2019), this practice of bringing their work home and working late at night can cause them psychological stress and illness. To avoid this, Aquino (2023) suggested that teachers must set up a balance between their personal and professional lives. In the context of this study, the participants should efficiently manage their personal time and set their priorities to avoid occupational fatigue.

3.1.2 Translation Burden

One of the prominent challenges experienced by the participants is the task of accurately translating complex Filipino concepts into English. Six of the participants admitted that they find themselves struggling to preserve the original meaning of the Filipino sentences when converting them into their English equivalents. When the participants are required to translate in real-time, this challenge often leads to pauses or temporary disruptions during their discussions.

Teacher 5 expressed that she experienced difficulties in translating because there are words in Filipino that have no direct translation in English and there are Filipino words that have different meanings when translated.

“Some Filipino words cannot be translated to English. There are Filipino words that have no direct equivalence in English. When these words are translated to English, their meaning changes. So, I have to really think carefully on how I am going to appropriately translate in order not to destroy the meaning of the words or sentences.”

Teacher 7 stated that when she struggles in translating, she relies on her smartphone.

“When my pupils ask me to translate a particular Filipino sentence in English, I, sometimes, struggle to accurately translate it in English without losing its meaning. And sometimes, when I cannot think of its accurate translation in English, I make excuses to leave the room so I can look things up on my phone.”

The findings imply that the language mismatch in Araling Panlipunan results in a double burden for the participants. In addition to mastering the content of their lessons, they must also attain a high level of English fluency to accurately convey the meaning of the Filipino concepts. Relative to this, Albir (2018), noted that one of three basic elements in any translation process is the translator’s competence, which encompasses his/her knowledge and abilities to translate. Additionally, Kusssmaul, (1995) emphasized that translators should translate with extreme caution to avoid language misuse. In the context of this study, participants must be knowledgeable and proficient in both Filipino and English to accurately convey the message of the words or sentences being translated. Because when the participants mistranslate a lesson due to the lack the English vocabulary, they can adversely affect their learners’ comprehension and academic performance. Ultimately, the accuracy of translation and academic progress of the English-dominant pupils depends on the linguistic competence of their teachers.

3.1.3 Interest in Araling Panlipunan Classes

Five of the participants noted that some of their English-dominant pupils exhibit inattention and lack of interest in their Araling Panlipunan classes. Common observations include looking outside or sleeping during discussions, playing and talking with classmates instead of answering their activities, not responding during recitations, not answering their activity at all, and perceiving the subject as boring. The following statements highlights this concern.

“Even if I am doing my best to make them understand our lessons, I catch them looking outside instead of listening. And when it’s time for them to answer an activity, instead of answering, they will talk or play with their classmates nearest to them. When discussing other subjects, they behave but in Araling Panlipunan, they are like these.” (Teacher 10)

“No matter how I present my lessons, I observed that when I ask them questions in Filipino, they would just smile and stare at me...Some of them do not also answer their activities.” (Teacher 3)

“One of my pupils frequently tells me during our Araling Panlipunan period that she wants to go home because she finds our lessons boring.” (Teacher 2)

The finding suggest that despite the participants’ efforts to make their Araling Panlipunan classes engaging, they continue to struggle with keeping the attention and interest of their English-dominant pupils. According to studies, this lack of focus and engagement among learners is rooted in language barriers. As highlighted by Karimian & Talebinejad (2013), learners lose their interest and enthusiasm in learning when the medium of instruction is not identical to their first language. Similarly, Modupeola (2013) cited that using an unfamiliar medium of instruction lowers learners’ self-esteem and self-confidence because the language barrier hinders their inability to comprehend their lessons and articulate their ideas. Conversely, proficiency in the medium of instruction reduces their stress and fosters a comfortable learning environment, thus making them actively participate in classroom activities.

3.1.4 Grading the Activities of English-dominant Pupils

In grading the pupils’ activities, the teachers make sure that they are unbiased and objective. When evaluating the activities of their English-dominant pupils, five of the participants faced a dilemma on whether to penalize their pupils’ Filipino grammar despite exhibiting mastery of Araling Panlipunan concepts when asked to explain their answers in English. As Teacher 9 highlighted,

“I have this bright pupil who can articulate his answers in English very well but not in Filipino.”

When he write his answers in Filipino, the answer is wrong due to grammatical errors. But if I ask her to explain his answers in English, the answers are correct. This is always my dilemma. I don't know if I should give him a higher or lower score."

The findings show that the participants are forced to choose between upholding language standards or recognizing mastery of the content. If the participants prioritize grammatical accuracy in Filipino, they unintentionally prevent their English-dominant pupils from showing their true intellectual capacity. This practice creates a form of academic inequity because the assessment methods no longer accurately measure the pupils' understanding of their lessons but instead test their fluency in the Filipino language. To address this gap, the participants should design a more flexible assessment methods that allow their English-dominant pupils to demonstrate their mastery of the content without being constraint by their linguistic background.

3.1.5 Collaboration with Parents

To improve the academic performance of their English-dominant pupils in Araling Panlipunan, all the participants shared seeking support and assistance from the parents of their pupils. They requested the concerned parents to help their children practice Filipino vocabulary and writing skills at home. However, three of the participants expressed disappointment over their inability to effectively collaborate with parents.

As Teacher 4 aptly stated,

"I have this parent who argued that she do not have time to teach her child at home. She told me that she enrolled her child precisely because she's busy even at night. When I heard this, I was so disappointed because isn't it that parents should also help us in teaching their children. We also need their help because it tiring to shoulder the burden alone."

The Araling Panlipunan subject is heavy in Filipino vocabulary, therefore English-dominant pupils needs additional language support in order not to fall behind in their classes. Acknowledging that their pupils will continue to struggle with the Filipino language, the participants ask for support from the parents. As emphasized by Schultz (2004), active collaboration between teachers and parents is an important predictor of a learner's academic success. When parents and teachers share common goals and learn to trust each other, students achieve a much higher success rate. However, despite this clear advantage, the findings of this study show that there are still parents who refuse to work together with the participants to improve their children's content mastery and language fluency. As a result, the participants are left with no choice but to shoulder these responsibilities entirely. Ultimately, this lack of shared responsibility not only threatens the pupils' academic success but also diminishes the participants' morale and increases the risks of burnout.

3.2 Teaching Strategies

According to Trujillo (2020), effective communication between students and teachers is essential to the educational process. Meaningful learning will only occur if the medium of instruction fosters authentic communication between teachers and learners (Alberto et al., 2016). To address the learning gap in Araling Panlipunan due to language barrier, the participants employed various teaching strategies.

3.2.1 Code-switching and Translation Method

Code-switching occurs when an individual who is bilingual alternates between two languages while speaking (Crystal, 1987 as cited in Modupeola, 2013). One aspect of code-switching is translating. Translating is an activity that aims to facilitate the communication process by interpreting the information received in one language (L1) into another language (L2), and vice versa. Its basic function is to transmit appropriate meaning of a word or a sentence linguistically, semantically and pragmatically (Al-Musawi, 2014).

To address the needs of their English-dominant pupils, all participants alternately explained their lessons from

Filipino to English through the translation method. apparently, four translating strategies are being used by them namely translation of a literary passage, composition, reading comprehension questions and memorization. This is mirrored in the interview responses of the participants as written below.

“Most of my pupils’ first language is English that is why they experience difficulties understanding even simple Filipino words... So, what I do is, first, we read the lessons from the textbook and then we translate (the lesson) per sentence to English so that they will understand.” (Teacher 1)

The translating strategy being referred to by Teacher 1 is called translation of a literary passage. Translation of a literary passage is a strategy where students are asked to read a particular passage and then translate that whole passage into their first language, either through writing or speaking (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

“There are times that instead of explaining the lesson per sentence in English, we read the lesson and then summarize it using the English language.” (Teacher 4)

Teacher 4, on the other hand is talking about composition strategy. According to (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011), this can be done in two ways: one is by instructing students to write a topic using the target language and the other is by asking the students to summarize the reading passage.

“If not, we read the lesson from the book and then I will ask questions in order to check if they understood something. I ask the questions first in Filipino and then in English. The students answer in Filipino, but they will speak in English if they can no longer express themselves properly in Filipino.” (Teacher 2)

Another translating strategy employed by the participants as reflected in the response of Teacher 2 is reading comprehension questions. As the name suggests, this is done by asking the students to read a passage and then answer set of questions in the target language or in their first language (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

“One strategy that I employ is I tell my pupils to read the topic from the book and ask them the difficult terms they do not understand. Then I translate those words to their equivalence in English. We keep on repeating the translation in English and Filipino so that they will memorize them.” (Teacher 6)

The fourth strategy, based on the words of Teacher 6, is called memorization. Memorization refers to an activity where students’ attention is drawn to the target language’s lexical terms. Afterwards, the students will memorize these words together with their corresponding equivalence in the first language (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

The findings show that the participants frequently employ code-switching, specifically translation method to increase their learners’ understanding of their lessons. Notably, translating their lessons to English encourage the English-dominant pupils to participate more during their Araling Panlipunan classes. This finding is also supported by Benelhadj & Neddard (2017), who found that translating into a learners’ first or dominant language effectively develops their cognitive skills and expands their background knowledge. Moreover, Nursanti (2021) noted that using a familiar medium of instruction decreases the students’ stress. When teachers explain difficult concepts in the first language of the students, they become more comfortable and interested. In a similar vein, Husain (1996) pointed out that the use of students’ first language bolsters their confidence, thereby making them more relaxed. Conversely, ignoring the use of their first language can result in a loss of interest and enthusiasm in learning (Karimian & Talebinejad, 2013).

3.2.2 Use of Audio-visual Materials

Although their pupils have their Araling Panlipunan textbooks, all the participants still exert effort in looking for visuals aids that will help them explain the concepts better. Visual aids, as defined by Macwan (2015), are

materials, such as pictures, charts, maps, posters, movies, short films, video clips, and slide decks that helps teachers gain the attention and interest of their learners. Similarly, Pateşan et al. (2018) cited that visual aids help capture learners' interest, maintain their attention and further motivate them to engage with the teacher.

As the participants shared,

"I use a lot of pictures when teaching Araling Panlipunan so that they can easily match the words that I am saying to what they see in the pictures." (Teacher 1)

"I download videos from YouTube that they will watch. For example, I look for videos related to the topic "Mga Bumubuo sa Pamilya" and then let them watch it." (Teacher 8)

"I usually prepare a slide deck that contain key concepts. And the key concepts are accompanied by corresponding pictures or videos. These will help them to easily understand our topic even if I am speaking in Filipino." (Teacher 10)

"When I explain what is a magsasaka and mangangisda, I show them pictures of a farmer and fisherman." (Teacher 5)

"For example, when I discussed about "Teorya Tungkol sa Pinagmulan ng Lahing Pilipino". I prepared a Power Point presentation containing lots of pictures to help them understand the concepts immediately." (Teacher 7)

The findings show that the participants commonly use pictures, video clippings and slide decks as their teaching materials. The findings further affirmed the indispensable role of visual aids in the teaching-learning process. First, it is instrumental in arousing the interest and participation of learners. As noted by Amalia & Hapsari (2018), the display of images and videos through a projector, laptop or television make the lesson more appealing and engaging. Second, visual aids makes difficult concepts easier to recall. This is supported by the studies of Halwani (2017) and Tang & Intai (2018), which found that using visual aids and multimedia improved the learners' ability to absorb and retain the information. Lastly, visual materials can serve as an alternative to translation. In circumstances where the participants do not resort to the pupils' first language, they can rely on visual aids to effectively deliver their lessons. As argued by Mannan (2005) and Brinton (2001), pictures and videos can convey meanings so well that neither detailed explanations nor direct translations are required.

3.2.3 Speaking Slowly

Six of the participants reported deliberately speaking slowly in Filipino so that their English-dominant pupils can comprehend each word and have enough time to put the words together to pursue the meaning of the whole sentence/s. As Teacher 2 stated,

"When I discuss our Araling Panlipunan lessons, I deliberately speak slower. This is to give my pupils time to recall what that Filipino word means. It is to give them time to digest, to process the words together. To give them more time to make sense of the meaning of the sentences I am saying."

Another participant, Teacher 3 relates her experience,

"When I speak in Filipino, I try to speak clearer, louder, and slower than when I speak in English. I found out that this helps my pupils understand our discussion."

The findings show that the participants manipulate the rate of their speech as a conscious effort to bridge the learning between the medium of instruction and their pupils' primary language. Supporting these findings, Mulligan and Kirkpatrick (2000) noted that speaking at a slower pace improved the comprehension of the students. Likewise, the study conducted by Kelch (1985) found that the students performed substantially better when the rate of delivery was slowed from about 200 words per minute to 130 words per minute.

4. Summary

Based on the findings, the major challenges are insufficient for the making of instructional materials and burden of translating the Filipino concepts to its English equivalents accurately. These were followed by difficulty grading the activities, lack of interest during Araling Panlipunan classes, and lack of collaboration with parents. The findings further showed that the participants looked for ways on how to improve their learners' comprehension amidst their pupils' limited proficiency and fluency of the Filipino language. They employed various teaching strategies to help their pupils cope with their lessons such as code-switching, using visual aids, and moderating their speech pace.

4.1 Implications for Practice

The findings have significant implications for teacher well-being, educational practices, and institutional policies.

4.1.1 For Teachers

First, teachers should limit late-night preparation to protect their mental and physical well-being. Frequently working late into the night to make their teaching materials encroaches on their personal time which is intended for rest. If this continues for a long time, it will lead to occupational fatigue and stress. Second, they should adopt codeswitching as a formal classroom policy to bridge the learning gap in Araling Panlipunan. They should intentionally use both English and Filipino languages to deepen the conceptual understanding of their English-dominant pupils. Third, teachers should create bilingual glossaries that pair Araling Panlipunan terms with English definitions to bypass language barriers. Finally, the lack of engagement and the success of visual materials means that the discussions should move away from text-heavy lectures toward highly visual presentations, gamified, and interactive lessons.

4.1.2 For School Administrators

First, the school administration should reduce the teaching load of the participants to give them ample to create their teaching materials for Araling Panlipunan within the official working hours. Second, the participants should be provided with trainings on making assessments methods that allow their pupils to show their mastery of concepts without being penalized for their Filipino grammar. Evaluating the academic performance of the pupils based on their proficiency of the language instead of the mastery of the concept fosters educational inequity. This strict adherence to language standards is ironically becomes the very barrier that hinders the English-dominant pupils from participating in and engaging in their lessons. Third, the heavy reliance on pictures, videos, and slides decks means that the school should make stable and fast internet connection as one its priority to support the participants in the making of their teaching materials. They should also prioritize the budget for designing or purchasing instructional materials specifically designed for English-dominant pupils. Lastly, schools could initiate orientations that teach parents how to support Araling Panlipunan at home, such as providing them with bilingual study guides.

5. Conclusion

This study provided meaningful insights into the experiences of elementary teachers teaching Araling Panlipunan to pupils with limited Filipino proficiency. Despite the challenges of language mismatch, they demonstrated their resilience and creativity by implementing innovative strategies. Ultimately, the findings suggest that in teaching Araling Panlipunan, teachers should adjust their teaching methods to meet their pupils where they are. They must move away from prioritizing Filipino fluency over the actual comprehension of their pupils. Specifically, they must make code switching a classroom policy to make up for linguistic deficiencies and enrich the learning experience of their pupils. Yet, the responsibility does not rest on teachers alone. To truly empower teachers and pupils in Araling Panlipunan learning, the combined support of school administrators and parents is

also imperative.

AI Use Disclosure. I used QuillBot's grammar checker and Free Gemini Web, Consumer Version/April 6, 2026, for language editing and idea generation. All outputs were reviewed, verified, and edited by the author including fact-checking sources. No confidential or personally identifiable data were entered into AI tools. The author take full responsibility for the content.

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