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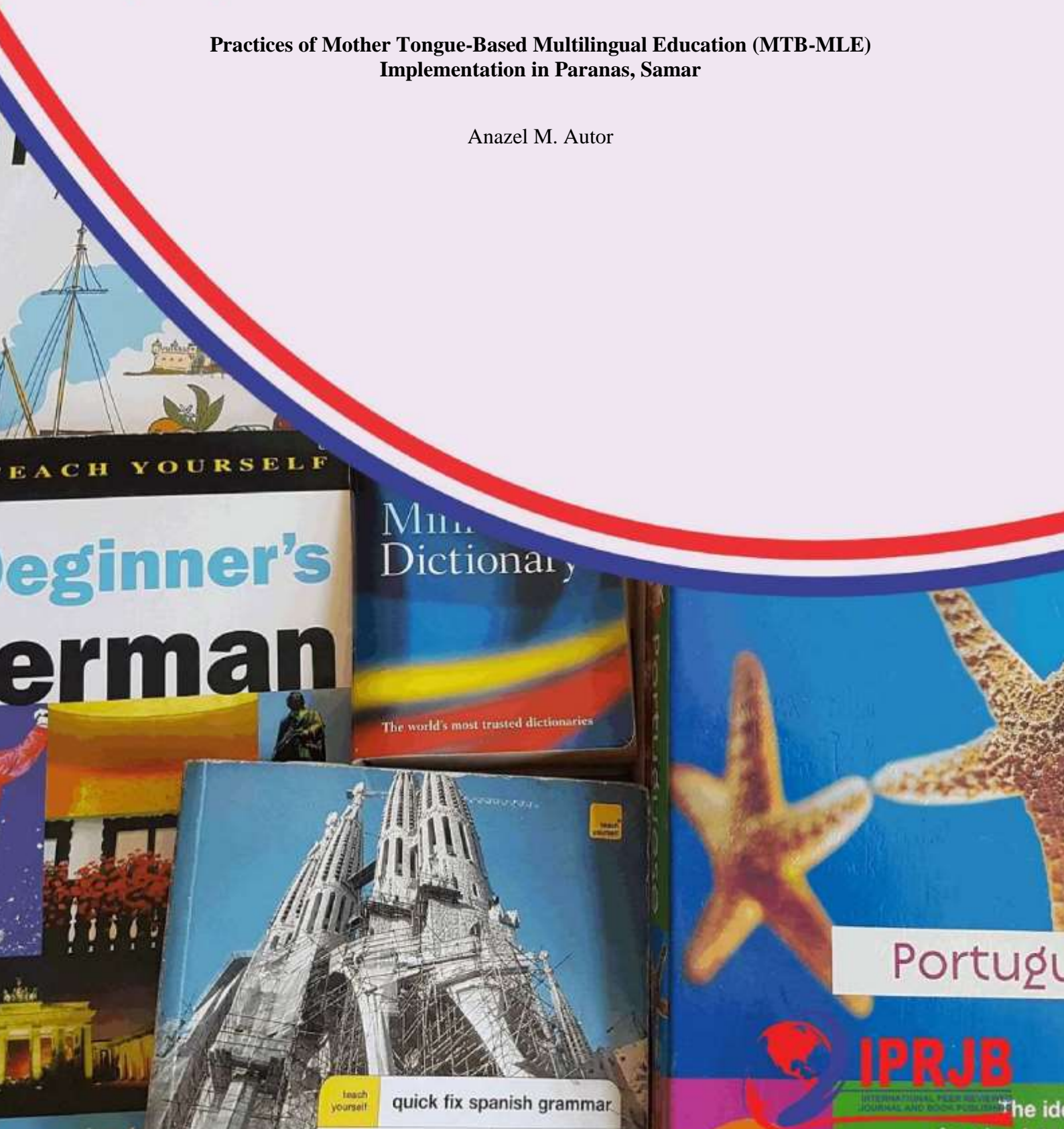
Practices of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) Implementation in Paranas, Samar

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explored the practices of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) implementation in Paranas, Samar.

Methodology: Using an exploratory qualitative research design, data were gathered from key informant interviews with teachers who are implementing MTB-MLE.

Findings: The findings revealed that using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction significantly improves comprehension and engagement among learners. Other best practices include contextualization, bridging of languages, reflecting cultural relevance, and promoting the expression of ideas. However, teachers encountered multiple challenges such as difficulties in translating technical terms, dialectal variation, limited learning materials, late distribution of resources, language confusion, insufficient teacher training, and inappropriate graphics in instructional tools.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study concludes that while MTB-MLE has transformative potential, it requires systemic support through localized resources, sustained training, and collaborative planning. A model of MTB-MLE implementation was proposed to institutionalize these best practices and overcome implementation barriers.

Keywords: *Inclusivity, Contextualization, Cultural Identity, Multilingualism, Pedagogy*

JEL Codes: *I21, I28, Z13, O15*

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a critical role in the learning process, shaping not only comprehension but also how students connect with instructional content. In multilingual countries like the Philippines, this role becomes more complex, especially when students speak a home language that differs from the language used in school. This linguistic mismatch has long contributed to learning disparities, especially in marginalized and rural communities. While Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) was introduced nationally to address these gaps, how the policy unfolds in under-resourced areas remains underexplored.

Although the Department of Education has formally adopted MTB-MLE through Republic Act No. 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, research has shown that full implementation remains elusive, particularly in rural districts where dialectical variations, inadequate resources, and professional capacity gaps persist. Most studies on MTB-MLE in the Philippines have focused on policy-level analyses or regional assessments, often overlooking the nuanced, school-level experiences of teachers who implement the program in linguistically diverse classrooms. This creates a significant research gap in understanding how MTB-MLE plays out in real-world teaching environments, particularly in rural communities such as Paranas, Samar.

Paranas is part of the District of Wright II in the Schools Division of Samar and presents a challenging linguistic terrain where multiple dialects co-exist. Teachers in this locality often confront the difficulty of instructing students whose spoken language may not align with available instructional materials. Despite the presence of a formal MTB-MLE framework, the day-to-day realities in Paranas reveal a different story—one of adaptation, improvisation, and localized decision-making. Understanding how educators in such contexts navigate these complexities is crucial to improving the policy's impact and equity.

In addition, limited professional development opportunities tailored to MTB-MLE constrain teachers' ability to maximize the benefits of mother tongue instruction. Many report minimal training in language-bridging strategies, translation techniques, or culturally responsive pedagogy. These capacity gaps are further intensified by insufficient and non-localized instructional materials, delayed textbook distribution, and a lack of classroom resources that reflect the students' cultural backgrounds.

Despite these challenges, some educators in Paranas have developed innovative and effective teaching strategies, drawing from their cultural knowledge and community partnerships. However, these promising practices often remain undocumented and underutilized in broader program development. This situation calls for a research approach that not only highlights the problems but also actively seeks out the strengths and successes within existing systems.

To this end, the present study is guided by Appreciative Inquiry (AI)—a strengths-based framework that shifts focus from diagnosing problems to identifying what works well and how such successes can be amplified. Rather than beginning with deficits, AI asks questions such as: What gives life to this system when it is at its best? What do teachers value about their experience implementing MTB-MLE? What successful strategies have they developed? These questions allow the study to uncover sustainable, community-rooted solutions that can inform future educational reforms.

By using Appreciative Inquiry as a conceptual lens, this study investigates the best practices already in use and explores how teachers respond to common challenges. AI's 5D model—Definition, Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny—frames the inquiry process to highlight

positive experiences, encourage aspirational thinking, and co-construct recommendations grounded in actual classroom practice. This approach not only provides a counterbalance to problem-focused research but also empowers educators by recognizing their agency in driving educational change.

Furthermore, this study aligns with the Philippine government's thrust toward inclusive education and supports Sustainable Development Goal 4: ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education. Through its localized focus, it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on MTB-MLE implementation and provides insights that can bridge the gap between national policy and school-level realities.

Problem Statement

Therefore, this study aims to assess the implementation of MTB-MLE in the District of Wright II, with particular focus on the schools in Paranas, Samar. It seeks to (1) identify the best practices developed by teachers in delivering instruction using the mother tongue, and (2) examine the challenges they encounter in the process. Ultimately, the findings are expected to inform context-sensitive and sustainable strategies that can support more effective MTB-MLE delivery in rural and multilingual settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) has gained international recognition as a pedagogical approach that enhances learners' comprehension, academic performance, and cognitive development, particularly in early education. Globally, several landmark studies have highlighted the benefits of using learners' first language in instruction, yet their applicability to local, resource-constrained contexts—such as rural areas in the Philippines—requires critical examination.

Cummins' (2000) Interdependence Hypothesis asserts that the development of literacy skills in the first language facilitates the acquisition of a second language. His research, primarily based in Western, bilingual urban settings, suggests that a strong foundation in the mother tongue leads to better academic performance in subsequent languages. While this theory provides a valuable conceptual foundation, its practical relevance in Paranas, Samar—where classrooms may contain a mix of dialects, inadequate resources, and under-trained teachers—needs adaptation. For instance, the assumption of well-developed L1 instructional materials and well-prepared teachers is not always met in rural Philippine schools, where mother tongue resources are scarce and teachers may struggle with linguistic diversity.

Similarly, Benson (2016) emphasized that instruction in a familiar language increases learner participation, boosts confidence, and reduces dropout rates. Her work in sub-Saharan Africa resonates with some conditions in the Philippines, particularly in underdeveloped rural schools. However, in Paranas, while student engagement is observed to improve with mother tongue instruction, the absence of standard orthographies for certain dialects and inconsistent classroom language use complicate implementation. The lack of written materials in local languages diminishes the potential benefits described in Benson's study, signaling a need for context-responsive adaptation of global insights.

In the Southeast Asian context, Malone and Paraide (2011) documented effective community involvement in mother tongue education in Papua New Guinea, highlighting how participatory approaches lead to stronger program ownership and success. Their model advocates community-generated materials and local teacher training. This model aligns well with the

realities in Paranas, where teachers often rely on community elders and local narratives to supplement instruction due to the scarcity of printed resources. However, community participation in Samar remains inconsistent, and efforts to institutionalize such collaboration are minimal.

Monje et al. (2019) conducted a mixed-methods process evaluation of MTB-MLE implementation in the Philippines, revealing that fewer than 10% of schools had fulfilled the program's core requirements. Barriers such as procurement delays, inadequate teacher preparation, and limited understanding of the policy at the grassroots level were common. These findings strongly mirror the challenges observed in Paranas, where teachers navigate delayed material distribution, diverse dialects, and insufficient training. Monje's study provides empirical support for the challenges faced in the current study site and underscores the theory-practice gap in MTB-MLE execution.

Gempeso and Mendez (2021) further identified a significant correlation between teacher training and the effectiveness of MTB-MLE delivery. While their quantitative study provides actionable insights, teachers in Paranas report limited access to updated professional development opportunities, especially those that are tailored to their specific linguistic environment. Hence, while the study confirms the importance of teacher competence, the structural support to achieve this is lacking locally.

From a policy standpoint, Pascua and Petilla (2020) pointed out the disconnect between DepEd's centralized textbook production and the regional language needs of Eastern Visayas. Many schools receive materials late or not at all resulting in the use of outdated or inappropriate resources. This observation is particularly applicable in Paranas, where teachers report supplementing instruction with self-made or improvised teaching aids that may not always follow curriculum standards.

Taken together, these global and national studies contribute valuable insights, yet their direct application to the local context in Paranas requires critical adaptation. The unique combination of linguistic heterogeneity, resource scarcity, and inconsistent institutional support in Paranas demands localized strategies that go beyond what existing literature prescribes.

Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural Theory of Learning

This study is grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which posits that learning is inherently social and deeply influenced by cultural and linguistic contexts. According to Vygotsky (1978), language is not just a medium of communication but a primary tool for thinking and learning. In multilingual rural classrooms such as those in Paranas, this theory reinforces the idea that instruction in the learner's first language allows for more meaningful interaction, better scaffolding, and deeper cognitive engagement.

The theory's emphasis on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is also applicable: when teachers use the mother tongue, they operate closer to the learner's ZPD, allowing for guided participation in new learning tasks. This aligns with how Paranas teachers bridge languages, scaffold new concepts, and contextualize content to match students' cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's framework supports the collaborative learning environment fostered through community involvement—a practice already observed in some Paranas schools. Teachers' reliance on local culture and peer-based learning mechanisms resonates with the sociocultural emphasis on learning as a culturally embedded process.

Thus, Sociocultural Theory provides a robust foundation for interpreting how MTB-MLE functions within the specific socio-linguistic environment of Paranas, Samar, and how best practices can be enhanced through community-sensitive, culturally grounded pedagogy.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher utilized the exploratory qualitative research method to systematically and critically review the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in the different public schools in the Schools Division of Samar for the School Year 2024-2025. This approach focused on identification of best practices and challenges of teachers teaching MTB-MLE through in-depth qualitative research method.

The study explored the best practices in teaching MTB-MLE from Kindergarten to Grade 3, as well as the challenges encountered in its delivery in terms of language, instruction, materials, and program implementation. The study employed thematic analysis to achieve the study's objectives, thematic analysis were employed, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. This method involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes within the data. The themes provided a comprehensive understanding of the practices and challenges associated with MTB-MLE implementation.

This exploratory qualitative approach allows the researcher to gain an in depth understanding of the intricacies of MTB-MLE implementation while highlighting the unique perspectives and experiences of the key informants. The findings would inform recommendations for improving the implementation of MTBMLE in the Schools Division of Samar.

To enrich the exploratory qualitative approach, this study employed the five phases of the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) model, ensuring a balanced perspective that focuses on strengths, challenges, and actionable strategies for improving MTB-MLE implementation. By integrating Appreciative Inquiry, the study goes beyond traditional problem-based analysis and promotes a forward thinking, solution-oriented approach to MTB-MLE implementation. It ensures that the research does not merely document gaps and limitations but also highlights successes that can be replicated or adapted in other contexts.

This exploratory qualitative approach, guided by thematic analysis and Appreciative Inquiry, allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the intricacies of MTB-MLE implementation, while highlighting the unique perspectives and experiences of key informants. The findings informed recommendations for improving the implementation of MTB-MLE in the Schools Division of Samar, ensuring a balanced, research-based approach to multilingual education.

Research Instrumentation

The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide as the primary data gathering instrument for this study. The interview guide is structured to elicit detailed and meaningful responses from the participants of the study. It includes questions that focus on the best practices and challenges in teaching MTB-MLE. This iterative process ensures that the interview guide is both comprehensive and aligned with the study's objectives, enabling the researcher to gather rich, nuanced data to address the research questions effectively.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher identified and select five participants to be interviewed for the qualitative component of the study. Prior to the conduct of the interviews, written consent was obtained from the participants, ensuring that they fully understand the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. The researcher scheduled the interviews at a time and place convenient for the participants to encourage open and honest responses.

During the interviews, the researcher used the validated semi-structured interview guide to facilitate meaningful discussions while allowing participants the flexibility to elaborate on their experiences. Each interview was audio-recorded, with the consent of the participants, to ensure accurate data capture.

After the interviews, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings verbatim. The transcriptions were then reviewed and verified for accuracy. The qualitative data underwent manual coding using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, to identify key themes and patterns related to the objectives of the study. Once all data have been collected, the researcher proceeded with data organization, analysis, and interpretation. Manual coding and thematic analysis were used to extract insights and address the research questions.

The study has been conducted during the School Year 2024-2025, ensuring alignment with the study's scope and objectives.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns which were considered and observed in this current research focused on the teacher-respondents' privacy, confidentiality of information, and legitimacy of the conduct of the study. For the legitimacy of the conduct of the study, the researcher secured the approval of concerned DepEd officials such as the Schools Division Superintendent, and School Principal or Head Teacher or Teacher-in-Charge of the schools in the Schools Division of Samar. The approval of these DepEd officials is important because they are the starting point before this current research was conducted.

When the approval is given, the researcher proceeded with securing the consent of the teacher-respondents to ensure that they voluntarily participate in answering the questionnaires. Part of this is respecting their privacy and thus, no personal information shall be divulged and all the answers of the teacher respondents during the study was considered privileged communication between the researcher, the teacher-respondents, the research adviser, and the statistical expert. Finally, a copy of the manuscript was submitted to the Ethics Review Committee (ERC) to further ensure the observance of ethical considerations of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Best Practices in MTB-MLE Implementation

Best Practices	Rank
The use of first language as medium of instruction	1
Translating the language	2
Bridging of languages	4.5
Reflective of the culture	4.5
Contextualization	4.5
Encouraging the expression of Ideas	4.5

Table 1 presents the best practices in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), ranking them according to their frequency of occurrence. These practices reflect the strategies employed by educators to enhance student learning, promote cultural inclusivity, and facilitate multilingual proficiency. The findings align with UNESCO's theory of multilingual education, which emphasizes the importance of using the first language as the primary medium of instruction to strengthen cognitive development and support a smooth transition to additional languages.

The most frequently cited best practice is the use of the first language as the medium of instruction (1st). This practice highlights the essential role of mother tongue instruction in enhancing comprehension and academic performance. UNESCO (2003) asserts that when students learn in their first language, they develop stronger literacy and cognitive skills, which serve as a foundation for acquiring second and third languages. Cummins' (2017) interdependence hypothesis further supports this, stating that proficiency in the first language positively influences learning in additional languages. By using the mother tongue as the primary language of instruction, students are better able to grasp fundamental concepts, participate actively in discussions, and develop critical thinking skills.

Following this, translating the language (2nd) is another widely recognized best practice. Teachers frequently translate instructional content from the first language to other languages to bridge comprehension gaps, particularly in technical subjects like mathematics and science. Benson (2016) highlights that translating content into the students' mother tongue reduces cognitive overload and enhances retention, particularly for young learners. This approach ensures that students build a strong knowledge base before transitioning to second-language instruction, aligning with UNESCO's (2017) assertion that multilingual education should be structured to accommodate students' linguistic abilities while gradually introducing additional languages.

The remaining best practices—bridging languages, reflecting culture, contextualization, and encouraging the expression of ideas (tied at 4.5)—are equally significant despite their lower frequency. Bridging languages involves gradually transitioning students from their mother tongue to second and third languages, reinforcing their multilingual proficiency. UNESCO's principle of additive multilingualism supports this approach, emphasizing that students should first develop strong literacy skills in their mother tongue before acquiring new languages. This structured approach to language learning ensures that students maintain their linguistic roots while expanding their linguistic competencies.

The inclusion of reflecting culture as a best practice underscores the importance of integrating students' cultural backgrounds into instruction. This aligns with UNESCO's emphasis on culturally relevant pedagogy, which fosters students' sense of identity, self-worth, and belonging. According to Ball (2017), incorporating local traditions, values, and stories into the curriculum strengthens engagement and motivation, ensuring that students relate personally to the learning process.

Similarly, contextualization plays a crucial role in MTB-MLE by making learning more relevant to students' daily lives. This practice tailors instruction to students' real-world experiences, ensuring that abstract concepts become more tangible and applicable. Ball (2017) and Trudell (2016) emphasize that contextualized instruction enhances problem-solving skills and student engagement, particularly in linguistically diverse classrooms. By aligning lessons

with students' lived experiences, teachers create meaningful learning opportunities that promote deeper understanding and retention.

Lastly, encouraging the expression of ideas is an essential practice that fosters an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Allowing students to express their thoughts in their mother tongue enhances classroom participation, boosts confidence, and ensures that teachers accurately assess students' comprehension. UNESCO (2017) advocates for the promotion of self-expression in the first language, particularly in early education, as it serves as the foundation for developing communication and analytical skills. When students feel comfortable expressing themselves, they are more likely to engage actively in discussions, contributing to their overall academic and social development.

The variation in frequency among these practices suggests that the use of the first language as the medium of instruction and translating the language are prioritized due to their direct impact on comprehension and knowledge retention. However, the other practices remain essential in ensuring a well-rounded and culturally responsive educational experience. These findings align with UNESCO's holistic approach to multilingual education, which stresses the interconnection between linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors in achieving equitable learning outcomes.

The findings of this study underscore the multifaceted nature of MTB-MLE implementation, where the use of the first language as the primary medium of instruction serves as the cornerstone practice, supported by language translation, bridging strategies, cultural integration, contextualization, and self-expression. These best practices collectively reflect the principles of multilingual education by addressing linguistic diversity, promoting cultural relevance, and fostering an inclusive learning environment. By institutionalizing these strategies, MTB-MLE can optimize its impact on student learning, engagement, and multilingual proficiency, ultimately fostering a stronger foundation for lifelong learning and educational equity.

Empowering Learning through Mother Tongue-Based Instruction

One of the most prominent findings of this study is the profound impact of using the learners' first language as the primary medium of instruction. Teachers consistently observed that students were significantly more engaged and responsive when lessons were delivered in a language familiar to them. The sense of familiarity allowed learners to grasp abstract concepts more readily and express their thoughts with clarity and confidence.

Participants emphasized that the use of the mother tongue encouraged spontaneous participation among pupils. Unlike when English or Filipino was used exclusively, learners felt more secure in expressing their ideas without the fear of mispronunciation or misunderstanding. This confidence translated into more active classroom interactions, reinforcing students' sense of agency in their own learning process.

Teachers noted improvements in early literacy, particularly in reading comprehension and vocabulary development. Since the instructional language mirrored the learners' home language, decoding and meaning-making became more intuitive. This aligns with Cummins' (2000) Interdependence Hypothesis, which suggests that literacy skills acquired in one language transfer positively to additional languages.

Additionally, numeracy development appeared to be positively influenced by the use of the mother tongue. Mathematical concepts, often perceived as abstract and difficult, were more

accessible when explained in a familiar linguistic framework. Teachers shared instances where learners solved problems more efficiently after instructions were translated into the local dialect.

Another positive outcome observed was the improved classroom discipline and learner focus. Teachers attributed this to reduced cognitive overload. When students are not preoccupied with deciphering an unfamiliar language, they can allocate more attention to content understanding. This allowed for smoother classroom management and a more focused instructional environment.

Teachers also reported that learner retention of lessons improved when instruction was given in the mother tongue. Lessons taught in the learners' language were remembered longer and more clearly. This suggests a deeper level of cognitive processing and internalization of information.

Parent-teacher feedback sessions further validated these observations. Parents shared that children often discussed classroom learnings at home using the mother tongue, reflecting both comprehension and a strong school-home connection. This suggests that MTB-MLE fosters continuity between the learning environments of home and school.

Translating and Bridging Languages for Clarity

Translation emerged as a core strategy in the MTB-MLE implementation. Teachers often began lessons in the mother tongue and gradually transitioned into Filipino or English, particularly for subjects with technical content such as science and mathematics. This translanguaging approach facilitated comprehension while slowly building multilingual competencies.

The act of translating also served as an instructional scaffold. Teachers would often simplify terms, provide analogies, and relate abstract ideas to local experiences before presenting the formal terminology in the second or third language. This method allowed learners to develop foundational knowledge before encountering more complex vocabulary.

Several teachers emphasized the importance of consistency in translation. Without standardized glossaries, teachers relied on their judgment and classroom experience to translate terms, which sometimes led to inconsistencies. Despite this, the overall practice of translation remained an effective tool for ensuring content accessibility.

The bridging of languages was also supported through visual aids and code-switching techniques. Teachers used bilingual posters, flip charts, and flashcards to reinforce vocabulary acquisition. Learners were gradually exposed to target languages in context, making the transition feel less abrupt and more organic.

Teachers noted that this multilingual approach cultivated metalinguistic awareness among students. Learners began to identify patterns between languages, understand the structure of different linguistic systems, and recognize language as a tool rather than a barrier.

Cultural Integration and Contextualization

Cultural relevance played a significant role in the effectiveness of MTB-MLE implementation. Teachers observed that integrating local stories, folklore, and real-life scenarios into lessons increased learner engagement and fostered a stronger connection between students and the content.

Teachers shared specific examples, such as using community practices like farming or fishing to explain scientific concepts. These locally grounded analogies enabled students to visualize and relate to the lesson, thereby improving comprehension.

Contextualization also included adapting reading materials to reflect local customs, values, and celebrations. Instead of generic texts, teachers created or modified stories to include names, settings, and problems familiar to the learners. This personalization made the learning experience more meaningful and less intimidating.

Teachers noted that this approach helped preserve indigenous knowledge and linguistic heritage. Students not only learned academic content but also developed a deeper appreciation for their own culture and identity. This aligns with UNESCO's (2017) advocacy for culturally relevant pedagogy as a foundation for sustainable learning.

Moreover, this culturally responsive practice enhanced parent involvement. Parents were more willing to support their children's education when they saw familiar elements in the curriculum. Community members also became more engaged, sometimes volunteering to share local stories or practices during class sessions.

Addressing Implementation Challenges

Despite the successes, teachers encountered several challenges that hindered the full realization of MTB-MLE goals. A primary concern was the difficulty of translating technical terms, particularly in mathematics and science. Participants cited the absence of equivalent terms in the local dialect as a major obstacle.

To address this, teachers often improvised or created context-specific definitions. However, this improvisation sometimes led to confusion and inconsistencies, especially when students transferred to different schools where other terms were used.

Another pressing issue was the presence of multiple dialects within a single classroom. Teachers reported that even within a single barangay, linguistic variations existed that complicated lesson delivery. This linguistic diversity made it difficult to choose a single instructional language that would be equally accessible to all students.

Resource limitations were also frequently mentioned. Teachers noted a shortage of instructional materials in the mother tongue. Textbooks, visual aids, and activity sheets were either unavailable or poorly translated. Some resources lacked cultural relevance or were printed with low-quality graphics that hindered learning.

Additionally, the delayed arrival of materials disrupted instructional planning. Teachers often had to design their own teaching materials, which consumed time and sometimes lacked the quality of standardized resources. This placed an extra burden on educators, especially those already juggling multiple grade levels.

Insufficient teacher training further compounded the issue. Many participants stated that while they received orientation on MTB-MLE, it lacked depth and ongoing support. Teachers called for more sustained and localized professional development programs focused on translation, contextualization, and multilingual teaching strategies.

Language confusion during classroom interaction was another reported problem. Teachers observed that students sometimes responded in a different language than the one used for instruction. This inconsistent language use reflected students' varied linguistic exposure at home and in the community, underscoring the need for clear language use guidelines.

Finally, there was concern about societal attitudes toward the mother tongue. Some parents still preferred instruction in English or Filipino, believing it offered better future opportunities. This preference occasionally led to resistance or misunderstanding about the goals of MTB-MLE, creating additional challenges for school implementation.

The findings of this study affirm that the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), when carried out with cultural and linguistic relevance, significantly enhances learner engagement, comprehension, and academic performance. Teachers reported that the use of the first language not only facilitated the delivery of complex concepts but also empowered students to participate more actively in classroom discourse. These results align with global research that underscores the value of mother tongue instruction as a foundation for effective early education. However, these positive outcomes are only fully realized when supported by appropriate resources, clear implementation frameworks, and strong community backing.

Despite the evident benefits, the study also revealed that the implementation of MTB-MLE faces substantial challenges. Among the most pressing are the difficulties in translating technical terms into local dialects, the presence of multiple dialects within single classrooms, and the lack of standardized instructional materials. These linguistic and logistical obstacles often disrupt instructional consistency and compromise learning outcomes. Moreover, the limited availability of culturally contextualized teaching resources and the delayed distribution of materials further hamper the potential of MTB-MLE, especially in rural and resource-constrained areas like Paranas, Samar.

Another critical barrier identified is the insufficiency of professional development opportunities for teachers. While many educators are committed to implementing MTB-MLE, they often do so with minimal training and without the support structures needed to navigate the complexities of multilingual instruction. Inconsistent teacher preparation not only affects the quality of instruction but also contributes to the inconsistencies in the application of MTB-MLE across schools and districts. This finding underscores the need for sustained and context-specific teacher capacity-building initiatives.

In response to these findings, the study offers several key recommendations. First, the Department of Education should prioritize the development of region-specific instructional materials and glossaries. This would address the challenges related to dialectal variations and improve the accuracy and relevance of translated content. Second, there must be continuous professional development and peer mentorship programs to support teachers in applying effective multilingual pedagogies. Third, structured language-bridging programs should be introduced to guide students' transition from mother tongue instruction to Filipino and English. These programs will ensure that students are linguistically prepared for higher grade levels without compromising their foundational learning.

Finally, sustaining the benefits of MTB-MLE requires a whole-of-community approach. Strengthening community engagement—including parental involvement, local government support, and partnerships with civil society—can reinforce the value of mother tongue education and enhance resource mobilization. Institutional support must also be reinforced through clear policies and stable funding mechanisms. By embedding MTB-MLE into the broader educational governance system, the Department of Education can ensure that the program is not only maintained but also evolves to meet the diverse linguistic needs of learners

across the country. Together, these strategies will contribute to a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive education system.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that translating lessons into the learners' mother tongue is the most impactful practice, as it simplifies complex academic content and fosters deeper comprehension, especially in technical subjects. Additional strategies, such as bridging languages, embedding cultural relevance, contextualizing content, and encouraging self-expression, further support inclusive and learner-centered instruction. These practices align with UNESCO's framework for multilingual education, promoting linguistic equity and cultural pride.

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