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Problems Encountered In Mother-Tongue Based Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This study tried to find out the difficulties of the teachers in teaching mother tongue as a subject and as a medium of instruction as part of the K-12 curriculum. It is essential to find out the challenges on the part of the teachers in mother-tongue based teaching in the early years of the implementation of the said curriculum. And through learning these concepts, there will be given a better coping mechanism on the side of the teachers to teach such subject. The framework for this study is premised on Multilingualism, Sociolinguistics Theory and Communication Accommodation Theory. The results of the study showed that: the teachers and pupils code-switch; the teachers have their ways to cope against the challenges faced in a pluralistic classroom; and the existence of different languages in a classroom play a role in the learning process of the pupils. Moreover, the mother-tongue based education has to go more assessments and evaluation for its effective implementation. All stakeholders – teachers, pupils, parent, administrators and policy-makers should actively address the problems in the learning process of learners.

Introduction

Language is one of the most essential components in education. It plays a very important role in communication as language carries ideas, emotions, and instruction. It is through language that a teacher engages in communication with his students. Language teaching is one of the noticeable subjects most especially in the demanding change in the educational system. Language itself, moreover, possesses its own dynamics and is constantly undergoing processes of both continuity and change, impacting upon the communication modes of different societies as it evolves (UNESCO).

The management of an effective communication is one of the central tasks of teacher inside the classroom. Effective student learning depends primarily on the strong and positive management of the classroom communication in all its forms and situations. It cannot also be denied that every teacher has his own ways and strategies of teaching and making his students understand a specific lesson.

Recognizing and responding to diversity is a key principle for quality education (UNESCO, 2007). In the new educational system of the Philippines which is the K to 12, Mother Tongue Based – Multilingual Education has always been emphasized in discussing its curriculum. It is stated in the K to 12 Toolkit (2012) that the mother tongue or the child's first language will be used as the primary medium of instruction from preschool until Grade III. Mother Tongue will also be an additional learning area from preschool to Grade III. However, there are still debates regarding the teaching of mother-tongue in a classroom when in fact the Philippines has already established the environment of Bilingual Education.

As cited by Malone (2007), the choice of the language is a recurrent challenge in the development of quality education. Speakers of mother tongues, which are not the same as the

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national language, are often at a considerable disadvantage in the educational system (UNESCO, 2003). There is a seemingly infinite number of variables like the affective domain which could be at stake in language learning (Brown and Heredia, 2000).

In the pursuit of the government to give quality education, considering that K to 12 is a learner-focused curriculum, it is most important to assess the teachers and educators in their process of teaching the learners -- that is giving attention to their difficulties especially in a multi-cultural classroom.

The researcher sought permission from the respondents through a letter indicating her request to conduct an interview and to distribute questionnaires. Aside from the letter, the researcher explained to the respondents about the nature of the study. The researcher checked on the most convenient time of the respondents to have the questionnaire conducted. After the distribution of the survey questionnaires, the researcher was asked to come back in the afternoon and collect the questionnaires from every Chairperson of every grade levels. The interviews were recorded using a voice-recorder. After the interview, transcription was done.

This research studied the problems and difficulties of the teachers in teaching Mother-Tongue as a subject and as a medium of instruction. This study tried to find out the current issues in the Mother Tongue based Teaching, grounding on the experience of the teachers. Hopefully, this research will help the policy makers in terms of educational system implementation in addressing the context issues present in a locality and as a reference for future studies.

Moreover, the researcher conducted this study because it is most important to consider and to find out the difficulties of the teachers in teaching mother tongue as a subject and as a medium of instruction as part of the k to 12 curriculum. It is essential to find out the challenges on the part of the teachers in mother-tongue based teaching in the early years of the implementation of the said curriculum. And through learning these concepts, there will be given a better coping mechanism on the side of the teachers to teach such subject.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study is premised on **Multilingualism, Sociolinguistic Theory and Communication Accommodation Theory**. Sociolinguistic Theory involves the study of the outcome of any features of society such as background on the way language is used. This theory is used in explaining the phenomenon of interest in the study.

According to Edwards (2005), understanding the dynamics of multilingualism means coming to grips with many complicated linkages between languages and virtually all other areas of social life. While it is no doubt true that every language – contact situation is unique, that uniqueness arises because of the differential weightings and combinations of elements that are, themselves, recurrent across settings – and not because of the presence of elements or factors found nowhere else. This suggests the possibility of frameworks within which many settings might be assessed and compared.

Such a framework cannot capture all the important nuances, of course, some of which are not immediately apparent. As an example, consider the immigrant – indigenous dimension. Some have argued that only Amerindian languages – which, themselves, arrived via ‘ Beringia ’ some 12,000 years ago – are indigenous to Canada. French and English, however, have 400 - year claims. While less indigenous than the ‘ first nations ’ might they be considered as more indigenous than later arrivals? How long, in other words, does it take to become indigenous? This is not an idle matter, since scholarly pleas have been made for the differential treatment of indigenous and immigrant groups. There are also problems with the cohesiveness dimension: if a language is spoken sparsely over a wide area, but also possesses

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a concentrated center, then it could perhaps be described as cohesive or non - cohesive. Yet another difficulty arises when considering a language that is found in adjoining states; while each group can be classified as cohesive or non - cohesive, the degree of cohesion of its neighbor may also be important. Issues also arise concerning the adjoining/non - adjoining dichotomy itself.

Labov pioneered **Sociolinguistics** in the 1960s. Sociolinguistics refers to the study of the effect of any aspects of society on the way language is used. As the usage of a language varies from place to place, language usage varies among social classes (Chambers, et al., 2002). The term 'language and society' offers the broadest meaning, to include all the research areas, though it is frequently used interchangeably with sociolinguistics.

Sociolinguistic Theory explains the reasons of the respondents' in facing their challenges inside the classroom. This theory will be the ground to explain the affecting factors why these difficulties are faced by the respondents. As emphasized in this theory, there are variations in the use of the language depending on the place, social classes and other factors in the society.

This study is also anchored on the **Communication Accommodation Theory** of Giles (1973). This theory intends to analyze the discursive variations; these are the results of speech adjustments or accommodations done by the speakers according to their personal characteristics, speech style and language usage. The adjustment done in the speech aims to promote communicative efficiency between interlocutors, and to maintain positive social identity (Giles, 1973).

According to Giles, Communication Accommodation Theory explores the different ways in which people can accommodate communication, motivation for doing so, and the consequences the first component to the theory is the socio-historical context of an interaction (Gallois et al., 2005).

Before an interaction occurs between two parties, there are pre-established relations between the individuals and the groups to which they belong (Gudykunst et al., 2005). Specifically, Communicators' social belonging is made up of societal and cultural norms and values (Gallois et al., 2005).

The socio-historical context effects communicators' placement to the upcoming interface, as the larger social groups to which they are members influence how they will approach the interaction. Communication Accommodation Theory explains how the respondents accommodate and cope to their difficulties in teaching through their language use. Through this theory, this study finds out how the respondents do their adjustments in order to be effective in their field.

The study attempted to find out the teachers' difficulties in teaching Mother Tongue as a subject from Grades One to Three of Mindanao State University-Integrated Laboratory School, Marawi City, in the second semester of academic year 2014-2015.

More specifically, this research sought to answer the following questions: (1.) What are the problems/difficulties faced by the teachers in teaching Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction and as subject?; and, (2.) What are the mechanism of the teachers to cope with these difficulties? This study is a qualitative-quantitative research which investigated the teachers' difficulties in teaching mother tongue. Quantitative research for it involves collection of numerical data in order to present data. It is also qualitative because it basically collected narration from the interview to gain insights from the respondents to understand and further investigate.

Research Question 1. What are the difficulties faced by the teachers in teaching Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction?

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To get the answers of this problem, the researcher strategizes a pattern for the questionnaire, wherein four domains are considered: the pupils, the teacher, the administration and policy, and the materials and facilities. These domains are believed to be the sources of problems that would affect the learning-teaching mechanism of the mother-tongue based education.

The difficulties faced by the teachers in using mother-tongue as a medium of instruction are:

Some pupils do not speak the mother-tongue of the locality. Based from the survey questionnaire, the teachers perceive that some pupils do not speak the mother-tongue of the locality. This is a challenge faced by the teachers since the mother-tongue language of the pupil are not the same. The learning of every pupil should be put into consideration. The teachers are challenged to speak more than one language in order to cater the needs of the pupils inside the classroom. The input of language in the first five years of the basic education of a child is very crucial and important in the development of the child.

It is stated in the K to 12 program that there should not be one child left. The new program also promotes a student-centered learning. However, if a particular pupil cannot speak and write using his mother-tongue language, it suggests that the pupil will be learning the mother-tongue language as a new language. Instead of enhancing the mother-tongue, the pupil is actually learning a new language. In this sense, it might affect the learning of the pupil and create confusion.

Majority of the respondents (65.21%) agree to the statement that the language of the locality is not necessarily the mother-tongue of all pupils, causing some pupils to be left behind. 17.39% strongly agree; 13.04% disagree; and 4.35% strongly disagree to the statement. Because of this, teachers have to translate and give more and exhaustive illustrations to make their pupils understand the lesson. This supports the study of Diron (2011) with the findings that teacher code switch in order to communicate and explain the lesson further to the students and that their general reason for code-switching is for the benefit of the students.

In addition, this problem is also shown from the result of statement seven in Table 2.1 which says 'The pupils sometimes need English or Filipino translations in order to understand the lesson/s or instructions/s given in mother-tongue language.' Majority of the respondents (52.17%) strongly agreed to the statement. This is an evidence that the teachers use other languages in order for them to communicate the lessons or instructions effectively to the pupils. Another evidence, is that there are 56.52% of the teachers who agreed that the pupils do not readily understand mother-tongue language's content and structure because they use other language/s at home and at school.

While learning more than one language can produce enhanced cognitive flexibility and metalinguistic awareness once children are fully bilingual (Bialystok, 2001). There can indeed be real risks to children's academic achievement if they are struggling to learn more than one language over an inadequate time period with inadequate resources and instruction.

Moreover, it can be seen here that the Bilingual Policy is taking its place in the classroom. In the Bilingual Policy, the language of instruction is in the language of the majority. In the case of these teachers, they go back to using the National language or Filipino and English.

Some pupils are not ready to learn mother-tongue language. The readiness or preparedness of the pupils to use and learn is very important since attitude towards language is essential in learning. This should be considered among pupil inside the classroom. Understanding how human beings feel, respond and believe and value is an exceedingly important aspect of a theory of second language acquisition (Brown, 1994). The attitude of the pupils in language learning is a very important factor that should be considered in a

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classroom. In this sense, the teachers perceive that more than half of the pupils accept that their mother tongue is a language that is important for them to learn. But there are some who are not convinced that it is not important. The results of statements three and four show in Table 2.1, there is a problem in the acceptance of the pupil of their mother-tongue based teaching. While it is very important to see if the pupils know their mother-tongue, it is also important if the pupils understand the essence of the subject or language being taught. The attitude of the pupils toward the use of mother-tongue language is essential and should be considered in the learning process inside the classroom.

The pupils employ speaking and writing skills in their day-to-day language needed to interact with other people especially in the classroom. As shown from the result, there is a percentage from the respondents that there are student who cannot speak and write using their mother-tongue language. It is stated in the K to 12 program that there should not be one child left. The new program also promotes a student-centered learning. However, if a particular pupil cannot speak and write using his mother-tongue language, it suggests that the pupil will be learning the mother-tongue language as a new language. Instead of enhancing the mother-tongue, the pupil is actually learning a new language. In this sense, it might affect the learning of the pupil and create confusion. Diangka (2008) stated in her studies that students who are linguistically deficient or disadvantage because they have different first language are particularly at risk. The second language students' self-esteem are in jeopardy if the teacher and peers fail to show respect for the first language and the culture of which it is part.

In statement two of Table 2.1, 17.40% of the respondents strongly agreed that the pupils can read and listen with comprehension the mother-tongue language; 56.52% of the respondents agreed with statement two while 26.08% disagreed that the pupils can read and listen with comprehension in the mother-tongue language. No one disagreed with the statement. The pupils who can read and listen with comprehension in mother-tongue language are in advantage when mother-tongue language is taught as a subject and used as a medium of instruction. In Cummin's (1984) definition of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, pupils engage these BIC skills when they are in social interaction, when they are on the playground, and talking to their classmates. The pupils' ability to read and listen using the mother-tongue language is evident in classroom when they interact with their classmate and teacher.

However, those pupils who cannot read and listen with comprehension using their mother-tongue language are in disadvantage because they need reinforcement to better understand the register of the mother-tongue language used in the classroom.

The results of the first two statements in the questionnaire show that there is a problem in the readiness or preparedness of the pupils in the use of the mother-tongue language as a medium of instruction. Language should be used as a way to strengthen the communication of the pupils and teachers for learning to take place effectively. If the language used will create instead, a gap in the classroom between the teacher and the pupils then the learning might be at risk. Such cases should not be ignored by the teacher and the implementers of the mother-tongue based teaching. The acceptance and readiness give implication on the attitude of the learner. The attitude of the learner towards a language is very important. Brown (2000) put an emphasis that attitude form one part in the largely conducted framework of broader research. Attitude plays an important role as it develops as a result from experience. Emphasis should be given on how pupils are able to understand the cognitive effects of using mother-tongue language in their learning process.

Some teachers are not ready to learn and teach mother-tongue language. Some teachers are not ready to learn and teach mother-tongue language. This is perceived a problem because teachers are the prime implementers of the mother-tongue based teaching

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and one should be knowledgeable or has the acceptance and readiness to teach particular subject.

There are 39.14% of the respondents who agreed that they can speak and write as well as read and listen with comprehension in their mother – tongue language; another 39.14% strongly agreed with the statement. While 17.40% disagreed with the statement, 4.32% strongly disagreed to it. However, in the interview, some teachers have pointed out that they do not perceive their knowledge in their mother-tongue language enough to teach it as a subject when they are asked if there are situation when they have to code-switch. One of the respondents has pointed out that her knowledge might not be enough to teach the pupils mother-tongue language as stated:

“even me, I can speak only few Meranaw words. I do not think knowledge in my mother tongue is enough... I always speak in Filipino.. and I am comfortable with that...”

The attitude of the teachers towards a language plays an important role in the teaching and learning process inside the classroom. Some of the teachers lack the confidence to teach in the mother-tongue language because they do not feel that their knowledge is not enough. As teachers and facilitator of learning, this kind of situation triggers anxiety in their teaching strategies. Research on communication apprehension in the native language has shown its potentiality detrimental effects on the frequency and quality of communication (Bealty, 1988; Mcroskey, 1977, 1984).

Some teachers need more training in the mother-tongue based education.

Teachers must be equipped and trained in order for them to teach effectively. Trainings are needed for them to realize their strategies and style which is appropriate inside the classroom.

This is a problem perceived by the teachers since, as shown in their profile, most of them are on their first ten years of teaching in MSU-ILS. Most of the teachers are on their twenties and this explains why they need more training because they want to learn more about the new program.

This problem shows that majority of the teachers (30.43%) agreed that they are trained and equipped to teach in mother-tongue; 17.40% strongly agreed; 26.08% disagreed and another 26.08% strongly disagreed. This result is evident that despite those who agree that they are trained and equipped to teach in mother-tongue, the distribution of the result shows that trainings are still needed for the teachers in mother-tongue based education. The shortage of suitably trained teachers is one of the listed practical problems in using mother-tongue in school by the UNESCO Experts (Pascasio, 1977).

Teachers should be given trainings for them to have a better to have a better hold of their role inside the classroom. It is very important to learn about the teachers' role. The most common role of the teachers inside the classroom are giving instructions, facilitating, setting up activities, correcting, eliciting and explaining language (Polland, 2008). From this, it can be seen how teachers should be given priority in their trainings to continually develop different strategies in teaching.

The need of the teacher for training is also implied as the lack of close supervision between the school administration and teacher also should be addressed. Most teachers (43.48%) disagreed that there is a close coordination between the school administration and the teachers in the preparation for the new program; 13.04% strongly agreed; 34.78% agreed; and 8.70% strongly disagreed. Despite the availability of the policies of implementation, there is no close coordination between the school administration and the teachers in the preparation for the new program. This is evident that the teachers need to seek their own efforts to embrace the implementation of the new program. Accordingly, these teachers want

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more trainings and seminars for the mother-tongue based teaching. As listed by the UNESCO experts in 1968, the shortage of the suitably trained teachers is one of the problem and limitation in using mother-tongue in school (Pascasio, 1977).

Wa-Mbaleka (2014) also enumerated two challenges in his study in regards to teachers' training. The following are (1) teachers are not trained in the local languages used for instructions where they teach, (2) primary school teacher may not have solid training on L1 or L2 learning research and theories.

In the project of UNESCO conducted in Bataan, one of the problems encountered by the implementers was the low level of commitment and lack of skills in managing teaching and learning activities.

There is a lack of vocabulary. The lack of vocabulary is a perceived problem. These challenges the teacher to think about their diction used inside the classroom. This also challenges the teacher to come up with mechanism or ways that will fill in the gap between teachers and pupils caused by the inefficiency to speak in mother-tongue language. This is evident in table 2.1. Most of the respondents (56.52%) agreed that the pupils do not readily understand mother-tongue language's content and structure because they use other language/s at home and at school while only 4.35% of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement. There are 30.43% disagreed to the statement while 8.7% strongly disagreed. Other factor such as intelligence, emotional quotient, preparedness could be the cause that pupils do not understand, other than because of the lesson I delivered in the mother-tongue language.

In sociolinguistics, according to Hornberger (2002), teachers should bear in mind the pupils based on what they already know. In other words, if pupil do not often use the mother-tongue language in their daily conversations but the second or other languages, it is bet to strengthen their learning with what is comfortable and usual for them.

Furthermore, this study shows that 52.17% of respondents strongly agreed that the pupils sometimes need English or Filipino translations in order to understand the lesson/s or interaction/s given in mother-tongue language. This means that most of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement seven and thus, they perceived it is as true with certainty. There are 30.43% of the teachers who agreed that the pupils need English or Filipino translations in order to understand the lesson/s or instruction/s given in mother-tongue language, while 17.40% disagreed. On the other hand, no one strongly disagreed to statement seven.

This shows that as a medium of instruction, mother-tongue language has a problem. It is evident in Interview 1 when Respondent 1 was asked about her challenges encountered inside the classroom

“...it is very funny because some Meranaw pupils would understand the words in English rather than in Meranaw.”

As stated in the study of Lartec, et.al. (2014), lack of vocabulary is considered to be the dearth of words to use when delivering a message or information and there is no wide range of the words or phrases used in discussing the lesson using mother tongue; therefore, it is considered as one of the problems being encountered by the teachers. Furthermore, inadequacy of the vocabulary is one of the practical limitations in the use of the mother-tongue in school listed during the meeting of the UNESCO expert in 1968 (Pascasio, 1977). This means that the language may not yet have a vocabulary enough and necessary for the essentials of the curriculum. It should also be noted that there is no exact translation from first language to second language or any other language.

There are not enough mother-tongue based teaching guidelines and references provided for the teachers. The shortage and lack of materials is one of the most obvious challenges faced by the teachers in MSU-ILS. There are not enough mother-tongue based teaching guidelines and references provided for the teachers. This is a problem with the policy and its implementation. It should have given notice that guideline and references are

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very important to guide and direct the teachers to help their teaching efficient and effective. Teaching guidelines are very important since these are the materials needed by the teachers for the objectives of the k to 12 curriculum.

In Table 2.3, most of the teachers (65.215%) disagreed that there are enough mother-tongue based teaching guidelines and references provided for the teachers; 8.7% agreed; 26.08% strongly disagreed; no one strongly agreed. There are not enough mother-tongue based teaching guidelines and references, by which it should be understood that these guidelines and references are important to lead the teacher to the objectives of the mother-tongue based teaching. Shortage of educational materials and need for the reading materials are of the listed practical problems in using mother-tongue in school by the UNESCO Experts (Pascasio, 1977). As long as there is a lack of political will to create and implement a policy allowing these programs, the human resource capacity, curriculum and learning resources, and popular demand for these programs will be lacking (Ball, 2010).

Furthermore, Garbes (2012) pointed out in her article published in Cultural Survival about the continuous debate in the definition of “mother-tongue”. Accordingly, mother-tongue is interpreted by some as the cultural heritage, but others as the language taught from birth, regardless of whether it is part of traditional heritage. Without a clear agreement, resistance to the new program and confusion within communities will remain (Garbes, 2012).

Research Question 2. What are the mechanisms of the teachers to cope with these difficulties?

The accounts taken from the interview of six respondents have led to the interpretation and implication of the strategies and coping mechanism of the teachers in mother-tongue based teaching. The following are:

Application of Different languages (Mother-tongue, National, and International languages). The respondents have admitted that when teaching, they tend to use more than two languages. They tend to use *Meranaw, Filipino and English*. This is to remedy the gap between those who speak the language of the locality and those who do not. Clearly, multilingualism exists inside the classroom, from teaching to the learning process that take place. This also supports the study of Lartec, et.al.(2014) that multilingual teaching helps the teacher in Baguio City. The ability of the teachers to use more than two languages is clear in the result shown in table 1.6. Majority of the teachers are able to speak more than two languages. These are the mother tongue, a regional or national language and an international language in education (Education in a Multilingual World, 2003).

Multilingualism is defined to be the act of using two or more - multiple languages, either by individual or a number of speakers in a community (Komorowska, 2011). At the individual level, bilingualism and multilingualism refer to the speaker’s competence to use two or more languages. Broader definitions of bilingualism have an advantage in that they incorporate the developmental processes of second language acquisition into the scope of studies of bilingualism (Hakuta, 1986). In the case of the teachers, they use these languages to communicate their lessons to the pupils. They make use of the language that is most comfortable for them and useful to deliver the lessons in the classroom.

Use of translation and code-switch. Translation is mostly utilized by the teacher in MSU-ILS. It is being used to cater those who have not enough vocabulary in *Meranaw*, who speak mostly in English or Filipino at home, and those who do not speak *Meranaw* at all. In the study of Lartec et.al., (2014), it was found out that mostly the teachers of pilot schools also translate English to Ilokano and vice versa, or even translate Ilocano words to *Kankanaey* in Baguio City.

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In the case of the teachers in MSU-ILS, they are able to code-switch in times when they do not know the equivalent word to Meranaw language. This supports the study of Diron (2011). Diron concluded that teacher code switch in order to communicate and explain the lesson further to the students and that their general reason for code-switching is for the benefit of the students.

From the Interview 2, the respondent has admitted that she often *code-switch*. She has reiterated that *translation* is really needed to fill in the gap between the teacher and the pupils. Though translation is not reliable, it is also their way to teach lessons, and concept about mother-tongue language. The respondent has elaborated that this is because some pupils do not speak the mother-tongue of the majority of the class. They often code switch. Gumperz (1982) defined Code-switching occurs when speakers use forms from one language in an utterance that is primarily composed of another language within the switching occurs between thoughts. The teachers have to code-switch when they want to express certain parts of lessons in another language for example from Meranaw to Filipino. There are also times when the teachers code-switch because they do not know the exact translation of some words. This corroborates the study of Diron (2011) with the findings that teacher code switch in order to communicate and explain the lesson further to the students and that their general reason for code-switching is for the benefit of the students. The respondents have also expounded that they do not necessarily encourage the pupils to code switch however, code-switching cannot be neglected because it is the only way for both teachers and pupils express some parts of the lessons.

In the research of Lartec, et al., (2014) in Baguio City, it was found out that translation can be applied in every aspect of learning. Through translation, it helped the students understand more the materials that they are using. Furthermore, alphabets should be based on the pupils' mother tongue. This means that translation plays a vital role in teaching and in learning. The result of statement seven in Table 2.1 is evident other role of translation as in the study of Lartec, et.al.(2014). The teachers of MSU-ILS use mother-tongue language when they are confident to use it and have to translate words from mother-tongue to English or Filipino because some pupil better understand it that way. One of the reasons why some teachers need to translate is because some pupils do not speak the mother-tongue language of the locality at home. Some pupils are using Filipino as their language at home.

Creation of lesson plans which cater the need of the classroom and use of local materials such as Meranaw stories and songs. In the shortage of reading materials and books translated in Meranaw language. The teachers create lessons and materials from what is available in the locality like the *Meranaw stories and songs*. It was also mentioned that the teachers give assignment to the pupils. The teachers teach the Islamic values and ask the pupils to translate it at home. This corroborates the study of Lartec, et.al., (2014) that improvisation of instructional materials written in mother tongue and remediation of instructions are two of the strategies of the teachers in Baguio City since Baguio City has also cases of pluralistic classrooms.

The teachers create lesson plans which will cater the need of the classroom such as being it as a pluralistic. They integrate local stories and songs. For those who teach mother-tongue as a subject, they integrate Islamic values

"...I ask the kids to translate Arabic lessons to Meranaw like Islamic values, pillars of Islam."

Furthermore, Yusoph (2011) recommended the administration in her study, to send teachers to seminar and symposium so that new techniques and strategies be acquired and the applied to the students.

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Improvisation of instructional materials and activity materials. Materials for reading and instructions are essential in the learning of the pupils. These help to boost the effective teaching and learning process inside the classroom. As cited by Lartec et al., (2014), these instructional materials are entertaining at the same time educational and can cater to the different senses; this is one way of motivating the class to participate during the discussion. Instructional materials are vital to teaching-learning process (Sunday & Joshua, 2010). The teachers in MSU-ILS create visual aids, illustrations and activities which are attractive to the pupils.

Closer supervision especially to the Non-speaker of the language of the majority. During lectures, the teachers would go near to the pupil who finds the mother-tongue challenging and help them to understand the lessons using translations or illustrations.

From the Interview 1, the respondent pointed out that they *go to the pupils who need close supervision, make her voice louder in a class of more than twenty, code-switch and translate*. These are her ways to cope with the challenge inside the classroom. In the challenge of the lack of materials, the respondent has stated that *she provides what she can and make lessons out of the stories from the locality*.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions are drawn: the teachers and pupils code-switch; the teachers have their ways to cope against the challenges faced in a pluralistic classroom; and the existence of different languages in a classroom play a role in the learning process of the pupils. Moreover, the mother-tongue based education has to go more assessments and evaluation for its effective implementation. All stakeholders – teachers, pupils, parent, administrators and policy-makers should actively address the problems in the learning process of learners.

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