

Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education Challenges: A Case Study

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1. Introduction

Considering its implementation, the linguistic and cultural diversity of Mindanao, however, brings much complexity to the issue of language policy in education. With Mindanao's more than 26 provinces and over 25 million population (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2005), the government offers a challenging environment for implementing a language policy that is suppose to serve all Mindanao regions and the rest of the country.

This language policy is part of a rising trend around the world to support mother tongue instruction in the early years of a child's education. In Southeast Asia, this is apparent in a growing number of educational programs that use the mother tongue approach. Good examples can be found in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Timor L'Este and Vietnam (UNESCO, 2007). With all this, the program is now on its third year as it was implemented in 2011. Looking at this, the shift towards mother tongue-based multilingual education is not a walk in a highway. Numerous challenges need to be addressed like the production of materials, training of teachers, management of resources, and perhaps, the socio-cultural support to enhance this project. Concentrating on the MTB-MLE program challenges, this study is hoping to underwrite something of relevant contribution to the success of the MTB-MLE in Iligan City.

1.1. Objective of the Study

This study envisioned to examine the challenges affecting the implementation of the MTB-MLE. Views coming from the teachers, parents and students from two school will be thoroughly examined. To come up with a very distinctive output, two elementary schools were chosen as respondents: The Queen of Angels School of Iligan (QASI) in Acmac, Iligan City and the Northeast-IA elementary school in Sta. Filomina, Iligan City. The author believed that the two schools can provide relative results on the challenges affecting the MTB-MLE in the current setting. Hence, the following queries are hoped to be addressed accordingly:

1. What is the general assessment of the teachers, parents and students about the MTB-MLE?
2. What is the attitude of the teachers, parents, and students towards the MTB-MLE? Do they support the program?
3. What trials or challenges arise relative to the implementation of MTBMLE?

1.2. Significance of the Study

This research addressed the current and controversial topic in the Philippines which is very relevant in a multilingual communities like Iligan City which is struggling to define its educational language policy. Much of the current research on MTB-MLE is situated in other contexts in which community members have been involved in the initiative throughout planning and implementation stages. This study only focuses on the challenges in which way will try to examine the policy and how it is understood and supported by the stakeholders. It will contribute to the literature by furthering the construction of local conceptualizations of language policy outcomes within a larger national policy mandate.

Further, the current study addressed some theories by directing the focus of the analysis to the different policy perspectives among the teachers, parents and students amidst the current policy affecting the implementation of the MTB-MLE program. Language policy theory suggests that language management occurs when external forces make decisions for those at the ground level [1] but there is a need to understand how language management might occur from the grassroots. While a growing number of scholars have recognized the importance of involving local stakeholders in the language policy process [2] relatively few studies have examined language policy from the perspective of those in the community. Analyses of explicit policy statements do not yield accurate representations on how policy is being carried out from the local community stakeholders.

A number of previous studies have included only teachers' assessment towards language or particular language policies [3]. These are important in understanding local stakeholders' perspective of any reform and can help guide policy and other development leading towards the success of the program. Even more significant is the growing number of studies that have focused on teachers' involvement in language policy implementation [4]. This moves beyond the mentality of policy as something that is done to people but points to the power of those at the ground level to make change and become more appealing to all concerned. Ironically, many of these studies have focused on teachers' resistance to language policies that prohibit using local languages in the classroom in favor of national if not English language. The current study, however, will differ because it will consider the ways in which teachers, parents and students acted in the midst of a policy that supported the

use of the mother tongue. In addition, it will also examine the respondents' active roles in the MTB-MLE program, which is something currently missing in most of the literature and studies [5].

Further, in terms of practical significance, this research will address current and controversial topic for a multilingual and multicultural community like Iligan which is struggling to define its educational language policy. Since our country is the only place in Southeast Asia to require mother tongue instruction in elementary school, little is known about the implications of this national decision on a community level. While hundreds of pilot programs for mother tongue education have been implemented throughout the region, it is uncertain how they usher effectively the program's policy to the local environment. Greater understanding on the perspectives and actions of community members amidst this reform can provide guidance for the next steps in upholding the program. In particular, since this study will be conducted while the MTB-MLE program is on its full swing, there is plenty of opportunity to learn from the stakeholders' views and experiences to shade light for future decision making regarding the MTB-MLE program in Mindanao especially in Iligan.

1.3. Glossary of Terms used

Bilingual-(Individual or societal) ability to speak two (or more) languages, or a model of schooling that uses two (or more) languages.

Biliterate-Ability to speak, read and write two (or more) languages.

Empowerment-Specific efforts to give learners the knowledge, strategies and self-confidence to act to improve their own situations and those of others.

L1-First language or often interchangeable referred to as mother tongue.

L2-Non-native language, second language, foreign language; may specifically refer to contexts where the language is widely spoken outside the home, but often used to refer "official" contexts.

Lingua franca-Widely spoken language used for communication between linguistic groups

Maintenance-Continued development of a language through schooling.

Medium of instruction-The language used in teaching and learning curricular content.

Mother tongue-First language (L1), native language.

Multilingual-(Individual or societal) ability to speak more than two languages.

Transfer-Cummins' concept that what is learned in the L1 contributes to one's competence in other languages Transition Shift in the medium of instruction from L1 to L2.

Transitional-Schooling that shifts sooner or later from the L1 to the L2.

2. Theoretical Framework

The present study is anchored on UNESCO's (2007) factors in the success of mother tongue-based multilingual education program implementation, Benson's [6]; Danbolt's [7] and Malone's [8] inventory of challenges in mother tongue-based multilingual education.

UNESCO (2007) emphasized that the effectiveness of mother tongue-based multilingual education necessitates thorough planning and commitment. The planners need to take into consideration measures to ensure that the program is effective. These factors are language model, teacher recruitment and preparation, materials development and production, parental support, and education sector alignment.

These factors guided the researcher in framing the instrument for the study. They were considered and were modified by the researcher to fit the present study. The researcher came up with teacher's MTB-MLE knowledge/assessment, instructional materials, and attitude towards the program as the three main aspects to be considered in investigating the challenges that stakeholders faced in the implementation of the mother tongue-based multilingual education in Iligan City.

Some authorities outlined challenges in the implementation of the mother tongue-based multilingual education. This list of challenges was also taken into account by the researcher.

Benson [6] mentions that one challenge that may be faced in mothertongue based schooling is human resource development. This means that human resource development is on the teachers' training. These trainings should not be carried out without appropriate in-service and pre-service training. Along with this challenge is the difficulty to find teachers who are competent in the L2. In consequence, unqualified teachers with less training are hired especially when nationwide implementation is done.

Another challenge according to Benson is on linguistic and materials development. She says that special attention should be given to time and resources in the implementation of mother tongue- education. Educators and people in the community should have time to work together with linguists to be able to produce materials in the L1. Benson stressed that there are problems in the implementation sometimes because people who are involved in the implementation fail to reach a consensus on the allocation of resources.

Moreover, Danbolt [7] cited another challenge and that is on the attitude towards the language which is very important in learning to use one or two languages. Learning a language goes with attitudes of its users and of persons who do not know the language. When one has a positive consideration towards the language being used, a feeling of belongingness and identity exists. Skutnabb-Kangas and McCarty [9] supports this idea by saying that positive attitude towards language is in relation to the feeling of being at home with the language. Benson [6] posed that the use of the mother tongue in the classroom makes students feel good about school and their teacher. This happens because they are becoming knowledgeable in a language familiar to them. This makes them be encouraged to demonstrate what they know and participate in their own learning and eventually express themselves.

Malone [8] as cited by Kadel [10] mentioned seven challenges in planning, implementing and sustaining an excellent mother tongue-based education. These are multiple languages with multiple dialects, absence of concrete orthographies, shortage of mother tongue speakers with teaching materials, scarcity of written literature, various mother tongues, large class sizes, and deficiency of curriculum and instructional materials. Kadel also pointed out that challenges may also be faced on poor coordination among government agencies, misconception and differences in the knowledge about mother tongue-based multilingual education, confusion of parents about the notion of mother tongue-based multilingual education, qualms among teachers in the government schools due to the apprehension of losing their jobs, eagerness of parents to send their children to go to schools with English as medium of instruction, making MTB-MLE inclusive for all since it aims for the utilization of non-dominant languages speaking children only, and the unfair allocation of financial resources from the agencies.

3. Review of Related Literature and Studies

This part of the paper will present the related literature and studies emphasizing the theoretical bases of the present investigation. It incorporates theories relevant to the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education and its challenges.

First, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. The United Nation's Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) affirmed the right to education without discrimination. Article 2 of this document significantly addressed discrimination on the grounds of language. Five years later, a well-cited UNESCO (1953) report expanded upon this by suggesting that education in the mother tongue serves multiple purposes:

"It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium". (UNESCO, 1953).

In the 1999 UNICEF statement similarly acknowledged the value of mother tongue instruction: "There are ample researches showing that students are quicker to learn to read and acquire other academic skills when first taught in their mother tongue. They also learn a second language more quickly than those initially taught to read in an unfamiliar language" (UNICEF, 1999).

Ten years later UNESCO (2003) reiterated these points and stated that essentially all researches since 1953 have confirmed the value of education in the mother tongue.

Other evidences from research studies in the Philippines and elsewhere played a role in convincing policy makers of the potential benefits of mother tongue instruction for language minority students. Cited in the study conducted by Burton [11] the benefits highlighted from these studies include improved academic skills; stronger classroom participation [6]; increased access to education; and development of critical thinking skills. Research has also noted the effect of multilingual education on cultural pride increased parent participation [12]; and increased achievement of girls (Benson, 2004). Another major benefit of mother tongue instruction is the foundation it builds for gaining literacy in additional languages [12]. Two hypotheses relate to this desired outcome: the "threshold level hypothesis" and the "interdependence hypothesis". Skutnabb-Kangas [9] proposed the threshold level hypothesis which suggests that only when children have attained a threshold of competence in their first language can they successfully gain competence in a second language. This hypothesis was formed as a result of research with Finnish children who had migrated to Sweden. It was found that children who migrated before they had gained literacy in their first language did not develop second language literacy as successfully as those who migrated after they developed first language literacy.

Based on these, Cummins [12] consequently devised the widely cited interdependency hypothesis which asserts that the level of second language (L2) proficiency acquired by a child is a function of the child's level of proficiency in the first language (L1) at the point when intensive second language (L2) instruction begins. He distinguished between two kinds of literacy: interpersonal communication and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Interpersonal communication refers to oral communication skills use in conversational settings, while CALP signifies the point at which the speaker can use language in decontextualized ways, such as through writing where language is a cognitive tool. Cummins concluded that L1 competency would be more easily transferred to L2 competency when CALP is fully learnt.

The relationship between the L1 and L2 or L3 is particularly relevant in the Philippines because of the economic opportunities associated with English proficiency. As generally perceived, English would facilitate faster mobility—a kind of idea that Hall [13] positively posters. In 2009, over 11% of the population worked overseas to provide 13.5% of the national GDP in foreign remittances (Bangko Sentral Pilipinas, 2010) and domestically-based call centers for foreign companies supplied about 4.5% of the national GDP in 2009 (USED, 2010). As a result of the strong national and individual economic benefits of English proficiency, there is a strong desire in the country to improve the English literacy skills.

Most researches on literacy outcomes related to mother tongue instruction were done in North America and Europe. In spite of this Western focus on language learning studies, it has served for much of the rationale in propagating usage of the mother tongue in education throughout the rest of the world. Researchers like Ramirez, et al [14] and Thomas and Collier's [15] major longitudinal studies in the United States found that language minority children who were educated in their home language for a majority of their elementary school years demonstrated stronger gains in English proficiency than other language minority children who were educated only in English or for just a short time in their first language. The finding is being reinforced by other research that has suggested strong first language abilities will advance cognitive development in children and allows them to easily negotiate in other subject matter [16]. Other studies also indicated that English (or other second language for this matter) literacy skills develop more easily and efficiently when they are based in a child's understanding of their first language [12].

Other researches outside of the Western context have produced similar outcomes. One of the most well-known MTB-MLE initiatives took place between 1970 to 1978 in Nigeria. The result showed that students who learned in their first language for six years demonstrated higher overall academic achievement than students who only learned in their first language for three years. The first group showed no difference in English proficiency from the second group despite having had fewer years with English as the medium of instruction [17].

In our country, the Philippines, a longitudinal study was conducted with the grade one to three students in Lubuagan, a rural community in the Cordillera Mountains. The mother tongue pilot project began in one school in 1999, and the study was formally launched in 2005 with three schools in the experimental group and three in the control group. After three years of the study, consistent advantages were noted for the children in the mother tongue schools. They scored significantly higher than students in the control schools in math, reading, Filipino, and English [18].

Field researcher, Akinnaso in 1993 reviewed literature on mother tongue based programs in developing countries and claimed that most projects yield positive correlations between the development of literacy in the mother tongue and development of literacy in the second language. However, the use of the mother tongue alone does not guarantee an overall positive result. Consideration must be given to the ways in which the policy is implemented, both from a national and local standpoint.

Scholars from anthropological traditions have argued that top-down language policy issues give more weight to expert knowledge than local knowledge [19]. While the quantitative evidence found in the aforementioned studies validates the use of MTB-MLE, it does not account for local understandings of language learning. Context shapes the way in which policy can be implemented, and those at the ground level create their own knowledge about effective and ineffective strategies even if they are not recognized in scholarly literature [20]. While local knowledge should be considered, Canagarajah [20] warns about the possible consequences of regarding it exclusively. He pointed out that “celebrating local knowledge should not lead to ghettoizing minority communities, or forcing them into an ostrich-like intellectual existence”. The bridge between these two types of knowledge must be created for a good understanding to transpire.

The success of multilingual language policies at national and local levels is dependent upon the presence of ideological and implementational spaces. Hornberger [21] introduced these terms in her seminal work on the continua of biliteracy to explain how local stakeholders could take advantage of openings in language policy to promote multilingual education. She suggested that ideological spaces are opened up when societal and policy discourses begin to accept and value non-dominant languages for education. In our country, the policy has created an opening for this ideology, but it is unclear if the societal discourse will follow. On the other hand, implementational spaces are created when content and media for instruction utilize local, contextualized viewpoints rather than the majority, decontextualized perspectives traditionally observed in educational systems.

As observed, while the concepts can be described separately, they are interrelated in practice. As Hornberger [21] stated, “it would appear that the implementational space for popular participation is of little avail in advancing a multilingual language policy if it is not accompanied by popular participation in the ideological space as well”. Apparently, it appears to influence the other in a way that each is a necessary component of multilingual education initiatives. Ideological and implementational domains of language reform deserve attention when studying the way in which a national policy is understood and enacted at the local level.

Second, Spolsky’s language policy. Spolsky [1] proposed a theory of language policy. He argued that “the goal of a theory of language policy is to account for the choices made by individual speakers on the basis of rule-governed patterns recognized by the speech community (or communities) of which they are members”. His theory is encompassed by three assumptions which must be tested and adapted. The first assumption is that language policy is a social phenomenon constructed in a variety of domains, including homes and schools. A second assumption, as presented in his book *Language Policy* (2004), assumes the presence of three separate but interrelated components: beliefs, practices, and management (see Figure 1.) The third assumption focuses on the influence of internal and external forces on language choice. Spolsky [1] suggested that these may come from within or outside of the domain and may be language-related or not.

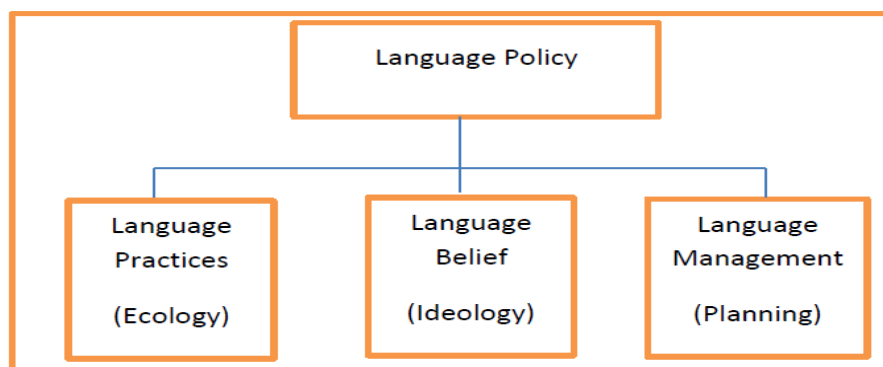


Figure 1.
Language policy.

The three components of language policy deserve closer attention. Language Practices, refer to the language selections that people actually make. This is often described in terms of the sound, word, and grammatical choices made within a community including the societal rules about when and where different varieties of language should be used. These practices are shaped by the complex ecology of language or the interactions between language and the social environment [22]. They may include decisions made by individuals to use a particular language in one setting but not another.

The language belief, on the other hand, sometimes referred to as ideology, explain the values held by members of a speech community toward language and language use. Spolsky [22] described it as “what people think should be done”. While many beliefs may be present within a community, there is commonly one dominant ideology that favors a particular language approach.

The Language Management is defined as any efforts made to influence language practices. Sometimes referred to as language planning, this component emphasizes the direct intervention aimed at shaping the way in which a policy is enacted. While Spolsky [22] pointed out that language managers can include any person or entity that attempts to affect the language choices of other people, management is most commonly associated with individuals or documents possessing legal authority. An example could include written legislation in support of a particular language policy. Indeed, so political in nature. And Third, Ricento and Hornberger’s language policy and planning model. Ricento and Hornberger’s [2] language planning and policy (LPP) model complements and enhances Spolsky’s theory by considering actors within each of the national, institutional, and interpersonal levels. In this ground, the national level refers to the language policy statements; the institutional level refers to parents as actors in the community; and the interpersonal level refers to teachers as players inside the classroom. An examination of each level of Ricento and Hornberger’s [2] model highlights how reform implementation approaches from the national or community level interact to influence implementation at the classroom level.

Ricento and Hornberger’s [2] model is depicted as the layers of an onion “that together make up the Language Policy (LP) whole and that affect and interact with each other to varying degrees. Each layer infuses and is infused by the others”. The figure below, figure 2, illustrates this model by depicting the agents, levels, and processes involved in language planning and policy. Agents from all three levels (national, institutional, interpersonal) interpret the language policy goals and objectives, and then negotiate between and within levels about the policy implementation process. The LP model considers language planning and policy implementation as a multidirectional process that considers downward and upward priorities. This is depicted by dotted lines and concentric circles, which demonstrate movement and interactions between the national, institutional, and interpersonal levels of the model in language policy interpretation. This process can create conflict and ambiguity in policy goals and objectives, resulting in misalignment between layers [2].

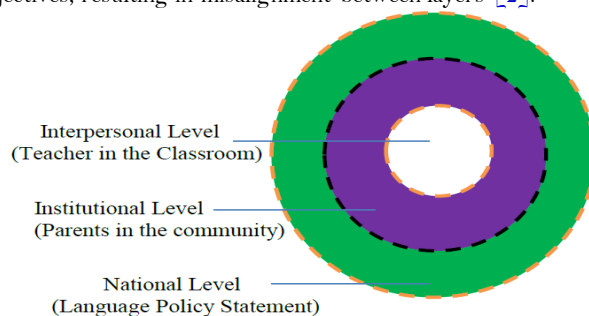


Figure 2.
Ricento and Hornberger’s [2] model.

The multidirectional nature of language interpretation and implementation is a necessary, but conflict-laden process. It suggests that language policy is not simply defined by national level implementers. Rather, the onion model depicts the complexity at play in shaping decisions made at a local level. Teachers are specifically noted for their role in reform implementation. In the study of Garcia and Menken [23] they pointed out:

“It is the educators who cook and stir. The ingredients might be given at times, and even a recipe might be provided, but all good cooks know, it is the educators themselves who make policies—each distinct and according to the conditions in which they are cooked, and thus always evolving in the process”.

While the role of educators in the interpersonal level of this model is given much attention in theory and practice, less attention has been given to the alignment and interactions between teachers and parents within the same community. Thus, this study will utilize the classroom, community, and national policy levels in Ricento and Hornberger’s [2] LPP model as a lens from which to view Spolsky’s [22] and Spolsky’s [1] three components of beliefs, practices, and management.

4. Research Methodology and Design

The researcher adopted the Qualitative Participatory Method by Davies and Dart [25]. Such approach is deemed appropriate for the current study. The method was administered by making use of a direct classroom observation, questionnaire, and interview. The questionnaire is necessary for it serves as springboard in the latter interview with the

respondents. Data were collected in July, August and September 2014 in two schools in Iligan City (QASI and Northeast 1A). The qualitative component consists of random interviews with the grades 1 to 3 teachers, parents, and students. The researcher randomly selected 10 teachers, 10 parents, and 10 students per school; with the total of sixty (60) respondents all in all. The interview questions focused on the knowledge/assessment, attitude, challenges and other concerns that they have encountered which may affect the MTB-MLE implementation. The quantitative component includes a questionnaire in which the grades 1 to 3 respondents responded to items related to their knowledge, instructional materials, attitude, and challenges about MTB-MLE in general. In addition, classroom observations were also conducted. Observations included the classroom environment as well as teaching practices and student responses.

4.1. Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in two elementary schools, the Queen of Angels School of Iligan (QASI) in Acamac, Iligan City and the Northeast 1A Central Elementary School in Sta. Filomena, Iligan City. The respondents speak “Binisaya” and a handful few can speak Maranao and Tagalog. These two schools are offering complete elementary education and in these schools the grades 1 to 3 students with their parents and teachers were used as respondents of the study.

Table 1.

The students’ first languages in the three grade levels.

School	Pupils’ First Language		
	Grade Level		
	G1	G2	G3
QASI	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”
Northeast 1A	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”

Table 2 reveals the number of grade 1, 2, and 3 classes in the two schools. The QASI has 1 section per grade level for grades 1, 2, and 3. On the other hand, there are a total of five grade 1 classes, five grade 2 classes and six grade 3 classes in Northeast 1A with a total of sixteen sections all in all. Obviously, it can be seen in the table that Northeast 1A has a bigger population compared to QASI. For equal treatment of respondents, however, the researcher decided to use only ten (10) per group of respondent – that is 10 parents, 10 teachers, and 10 students per school with the total of sixty (60) respondents all in all.

Table 2.

Number of grades 1, 2 and 3 classes in the two schools.

School	Number of Classes			Total
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	
1. QASI	1	1	1	3
2. Northeast 1A	5	5	6	16
Total				19

4.2. Research Participants

The participants of the study were the grades 1, 2, and 3 students, teachers and parents from two elementary schools (Private and Public) in Acamac and Sta. Filomena, Iligan City. Table 2 shows the distribution of grades 1, 2, and 3 classes in the two schools. Of the nineteen classrooms, only 10 parents, 10 teachers, and 10 students per school were being randomly selected as respondents. Hence, it will give the total of 60 respondents from both schools.

Table 3.

The distribution of teacher-Participants in the two schools.

School	Number of Teacher-Participants			Language	Total
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3		
QASI	3	3	4	“Binisaya”	10
Northeast 1A	3	3	4	“Binisaya”	10
Total					20

The twenty teachers in both schools used “Binisaya” as their first language. Table 3 also reflects the number of respondents per year level and the teacherparticipants’ first language. Three (3) teachers are from grade 1, three (3) from grade 2, and another four (4) from grade 3. Each school has equal respondents per year level with the total of twenty (20) teacher-participants all in all.

Table 4.
The distribution of parent-Participants in the two schools.

School	Number of Parent-Participants			Language	Total
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3		
QASI	3	3	4	“Binisaya”	10
Northeast 1A	3	3	4	“Binisaya”	10
Total					20

The twenty parents in both schools used “Binisaya” as their first language. Table 4 reflects the number of parent-participants and their first language.

Table 5.
The Distribution of Students-Participants in the two Schools.

School	Teacher, Parent, Students First Language		
	Grade Level		
	G1	G2	G3
QASI	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”
Northeast 1A	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”

The twenty students in both schools used “Binisaya” as their first language. Table 5 reflects the number of student-participants and their first language. It can be gleaned from the set of tables above that both schools are equally represented starting from the teachers up to the parents and pupils.

Table 6.
Teachers, Parents, and Students First Languages in Grades 1, 2 and 3.

School	Teacher, Parent, Students First Language		
	Grade Level		
	G1	G2	G3
QASI	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”
Northeast 1A	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”	“Binisaya”

The table reflects that the 60 respondents have “Binisaya” as their first language.

4.3. Sampling Procedure Used

A random sampling was used in the study. The researcher had chosen only two elementary schools because of the following pragmatic reasons: a) accessibility; b) financial consideration; and c) time affecting the data gathering.

4.4. Instrument Used

The researcher adopted and modified Amor Clarido’s [26] questionnaire which was constructed based on UNESCO’s (2007) factors in successful implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education and on the challenges outlined by Malone [8]. The questionnaire was validated by an expert. Revisions were done to adopt the expert’s suggestions and the final questionnaire was produced.

The questionnaire has three parts. The first part is on the profile of the participants (see appendix A). The second part is a checklist with items related to the MTB-MLE information and the third is on the challenges. The last part allowed the respondents to rank the other challenges that they might have encountered in regards to the MTB-MLE implementation.

4.5. Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher followed the resourceful steps in gathering the data for the study. This made the whole conduct of the research tedious and exhausting.

A letter asking permission was sent to the school principals in the two chosen schools (see appendix C). The researcher scheduled a five-day visit per school. He first visited the QASI then the North East 1A there after. The scheduling was based on the availability of the respondents per school. The signed and duly approved letter of permission was handed to the teachers per year level as well as the parents. The questionnaires were then administered and were retrieved immediately after the respondents answered them.

The Interviews were conducted after the observation and retrieval of the questionnaires. The researcher looked into the reading materials used by the grades 1, 2, and 3 teachers in both schools. Since almost the same materials were available in the two schools, the researcher considered the materials in the second school. He also tried to look into the different materials used by teachers in the both schools and tried to document the observations. Looking into the materials, some probing questions were thrown by the researcher to gather information that may help the researcher in understanding the challenges the teachers may have faced. The classroom observations were done to gather data on how children responded to mother tongue teaching and how teachers delivered their lessons in the mother tongue. The data gathered from the questionnaire helped the researcher

understand peculiarities in the classroom. Finally, probing questions with the respondents were also conducted to clarify some responses in the checklist, to verify their comments reflected in the last part of the questionnaire, to ask about some clarifications on the materials used, and to elaborate some events that had happened during the classroom observations.

4.6. Data Analysis

The data on the challenges met by the respondents in two schools were analyzed based on Beson's [6] and Danbolt's [7] challenges in MTB MLE.

4.7. Statistical Treatment

After the data were gathered the researcher used frequency and percentage to come up with the results.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 7 and 8 present the challenges faced by the respondents in regards to the implementation of the mother tongue-based multilingual education. The table reveals the respondents' knowledge/assessment in MTB-MLE. From the private school, it can be seen that items 1 to 7 which talk about their MTB-MLE knowledge, of the 30 respondent, they indicated that they are knowledgeable about the program. A negligible percentage covering items 3 and 4 (on MTB information and knowledge on how to carry out the MTB-MLE) that would count to 7% and 10% only. This indicates, though so little, that the parent-participants considered these two items as challenges in teaching the MT "Binisaya" to their children. Two parents do not have enough information and that they are not adequately equipped with knowledge about the MTB-MLE. As for the public school, parents are very skeptical in regards to their responses. As reflected in the table, though majority of them know about the MTBMLE program, but a handful few claimed that they are not totally knowledgeable about it. This does not, however, affect the whole sentiment of the 30 respondents especially the teachers and pupils coming from the public school.

The responses in tables 7 and 8 vary when it comes to MTB-MLE Knowledge. The parents in particular were not all knowledgeable about the program. Items 3 and 4 give 7% to 10% variance compared to the parents in private school. This result implies that not all parents are updated about the program. Teachers and students, on the other hand, are saying that they are knowledgeable. This finding agrees with UNESCO's (2007) as cited in the study of Ball [27]. With mother tongue used in the classroom, UNESCO (2007) pointed out that the use of the MT in the classroom would make the pupils express what they want to convey. This happens because pupils are able to understand what is discussed in the class and they are able to speak because they use their own language. This case is true in the present study. Further, the same finding is revealed in the study of Chihana and Banda [28].

Table 7.
Participants' Responses for the MTB-MLE Knowledge (Private).

A. MTB-MLE Knowledge	YES			%	NO			%
	P	T	S		P	T	S	
1. I understand the benefits of the MTB-MLE.	10	10	10	100%	0	0	0	0
2. I am oriented about the MTB-MLE.	10	10	10	100%	0	0	0	0
3. I have enough information about the MTB-MLE.	8	10	10	93%	2	0	0	7%
4. I am adequately equipped with knowledge about how to carry out the MTB-MLE.	7	10	10	90%	3	0	0	10%
5. I am fluent in the language used in MTB-MLE.	10	10	10	100%	0	0	0	%
6. My first language is "Binisaya".	10	10	10	100%	0	0	0	%
7. My first language is the same language used in the class.	10	10	10	100%	0	0	0	%

Table 8.
Participants' responses for the MTB-MLE knowledge (Public).

A. MTB-MLE Knowledge	YES			%	NO			%
	P	T	S		P	T	S	
1. I understand the benefits of the MTB-MLE.	9	10	10	97%	1	0	0	3%
2. I am oriented about the MTB-MLE.	9	10	10	97%	1	0	0	3%
3. I have enough information about the MTB-MLE.	8	10	10	93%	2	0	0	7%
4. I am adequately equipped with knowledge about how to carry out the MTB-MLE.	7	10	10	90%	3	0	0	10%
5. I am fluent in the language used in MTB-MLE.	9	10	10	97%	1	0	0	3%
6. My first language is "Binisaya".	10	10	10	100%	0	0	0	%

The most obvious implication here is the displacement of English and Filipino as media of instruction. This is one reason why DepEd Order No. 74 is believed to have both supplanted the official bilingual education policy of the country which has been in place for almost three decades now, and ushered in the possibility of a multilingual education in the Philippines. Whether MTB-MLE succeeds in the end still remains to be seen because of the many challenges it must hurdle (Nolasco), education in the Philippines. Whether MTB-MLE succeeds in the end still remains to be seen because of the many challenges it must hurdle (Nolasco), but one factor that needs to be recognized is that MTB-MLE claims to be additive (as opposed to subtractive) in its approach to multilingual education.

While teachers and parents differed in their knowledge of the MTB-MLE policy, their awareness of the guidelines similarly came from the national level. Those from QASI, considering their frequent visit in the school, it can be deduced that their queries about the MTB-MLE would somehow addressed by the teachers or even the principal they see every now and then. Parents from Northeast 1A, however, received even less information about the program as it was relayed to them only through their brief meetings with teachers. In some cases, they had not completely understood it all. This demonstrated a weakened diffusion of knowledge [29] in which information filtered down through a series of different sources of information. While teachers and parents in this study were aware of the logistical aspects of the policy related to their specific roles, they had less understanding about the more nuanced aspects of the policy, including the rationale for the MT implementation.

Tables 9A and 9B present the challenges the participants faced in the implementation of mother tongue-based teaching in terms of instructional materials.

Table 9A shows that the item “The lessons in the manuals item “There are enough materials other than the teachers’ manuals to aid the pupils in learning the mother tongue” 8 of the parents answered “no”, 5 from the teachers, and 4 from the students. For item “the lessons in the manuals are easy to follow”, 3 of the parents answered “no”, 2 from the teachers and 2 from the students also answered “no”. For the item “Time specified in the manual is enough to carry out the content”, 5 parents, 3 teachers and 4 students answered “no”. These notable responses would manifest that MT instructional materials remain inadequate in their school thereby affecting academic instruction and pupil’s academic performance. It further implies that teachers might resort to hunting for Mother Tongue (MT) references even though they are not sure of the material suitability or effectiveness when used in the class.

Table 9A.
Participants’ response on the instructional materials (Private).

Instructional Materials	Yes			%	No			%
	P	T	S		P	T	S	
1. Manuals for other-tongue are provided.	10	10	10	30 or 100%	0	0	0	%
2. The lessons in the manuals are easy to follow.	10	7	10	27 or 90%	0	3	0	3 or 10%
3. There are enough materials other than the teachers’ manuals to aid the pupils in learning the mother tongue.	2	5	6	13 or 43%	8	5	4	17 or 57%
4. Various teaching strategies are specified in the manuals.	10	10	10	100%	0	0	0	%
5. The lessons in the manuals are easy to follow.	7	8	8	23 or 77%	3	2	2	7 Or 23%
6. Time specified in the manual is enough to carry out the content.	5	7	6	18 or 60%	5	3	4	12 Or 40%

In the interview, it was mentioned by Teacher Jenilyn that they learned that they would be implementing the MT only one week prior to the start of the school year. They did not receive MT materials right away; rather during the second week of school they were provided with curriculum guides that listed core competencies. Later, school heads provided them with teacher’s guide that included some lessons and student worksheets, but these materials had to be reproduced at the cost of the teachers. Teachers claimed that their teaching had suffered because of the limited materials.

According to her:

“To impart the lessons to the pupils, in my opinion, is easy. It’s easy for them to understand because they can comprehend easily. We could use them if they are ready, we can execute the lesson clearly to the pupils. What is important are the materials for us to execute the lessons properly”.

This kind of statement was commonly heard among her fellow teachers. Another teacher explained that they are grappling in the dark to navigate their way through this shift without resources. Materials provide guidance for teachers, and they all expressed this during their meetings. She said, “DepEd says grade one teachers are the champion of change, but how can we be the champions of change if we don’t have enough materials?” Teachers confined their lament to the classroom and other school contexts. Teachers compensate the challenges based on their own knowledge, beliefs, and practices, but the national level did little to address them. Fullan [30] suggested: “One of the basic reasons why planning fails is that planners or decision makers of change are unaware of the situations faced by potential implementers. They introduce changes without providing a means to identify and confront the situational constraints and without attempting to understand the values, ideas, and experiences of those who are essential for implementing any changes”.

Table 9B shows that item “Manuals for other-tongue are provided” was lightly marked by 3 parents with “no” answers. The remaining items were marked heavily with 100% “no” answers by all respondents from Northeast 1A. They stood incongruent to what has been expected by the researcher. This would imply that the school lacks or had limited MT materials to carryout the teaching in the classroom. The researcher’s visit to the classrooms made this challenge clearer. It was revealed that aside from one copy of the teacher’s manual provided to each grade one and two teachers, only one copy of the learner’s material was provided to each of them. This one copy of the learner’s material is not enough for more than forty pupils in one class. This gave the teachers problem since they had to draw on the board (if not on the chart) the figures found in each page of the learner’s material to be able to deliver it to the pupils. Teachers Joycelyn Alisbo and Rosanna Langilao cited that their time spent on drawing the figure almost consumed the whole period every time they conduct their classes. They had to do it anyway since they lack resources in producing the materials. On the other hand, parents described the lack of resources in a slightly different way. They hinted other means of acquiring.

Table 9B.
Participants’ Response on the Category Instructional Materials (Public).

Instructional Materials	Yes			%	No			%
	P	T	S		P	T	S	
1. Manuals for other-tongue are provided.	7	10	10	27 or 90%	3	0	0	10%
2. The lessons in the manuals are easy to follow.	5	0	0	5 or 17%	5	10	10	25 or 83%
3. There are enough materials other than the teachers’ manuals to aid the pupils in learning the mother tongue.	6	0	0	6 or 20%	4	10	10	24 or 80%
4. Various teaching strategies are specified in the manuals.	7	0	0	7 or 23%	3	10	10	23 or 77%
5. The lessons in the manuals are easy to follow.	3	0	0	3 or 10%	7	10	10	27 or 90%
6. Time specified in the manual is enough to carry out the content.	6	0	0	6 or 20%	4	10	10	24 or 80%

“Binisaya” books and resources available to them for use at home and described the challenge of working with their children without those resources as (lisod kaayo) very difficult. These materials have not been adequately produced by the government, much less for commercial purposes. This case is also true in the study of Clarido [26] in Bukidnon. The same case in Kenya in the study of Clayton [31] and in Nigeria in the study of Iyamu [32]. In Kenya and Nigeria, the lack of instructional materials in teaching the mother tongue hindered the teaching of the content to the local languages. UNESCO (2004; 2007) stressed that materials should be available for the delivery of the languages.

Teachers in the study described their coping mechanism as the development of collaborative relationships. Despite the complex environment for addressing the challenge, the level of hope remained high for both teachers and parents. Despite the complex environment for addressing this challenge, the level of hope remained high for the teachers and parents.

Table 10 (A and B) present the challenges faced by the teacherparticipants in terms of attitude towards language.

Table 10A.
Participants’ response on the attitude towards language (Private).

Attitude towards MTB-MLE	Yes			%	NO			%
	P	T	S		P	T	S	
1. I am positively supporting the MTB-MLE program.	10	10	10	30 or 100%	0	0	0	%
2. I support mother-tongue teaching.	10	10	10	30 or 100%	0	0	0	%
3. I positively like the lessons in mother-tongue.	10	10	10	30 or 100%	0	0	0	%
4. I am happy for the MTB-MLE program.	8	10	10	28 or 93%	2	0	0	2 or 7%
5. I know that MTB-MLE positively affect attendance.	10	10	10	30 or 100%	0	0	0	%

Table 10B.
Participants' Responses on the Category Attitude towards Language (Public).

Attitude towards MTB-MLE	Yes			%	NO			%
	P	T	S		P	T	S	
1. I am positively supporting the MTB-MLE program.	7	10	10	27 or 90%	3	0	0	3 or 10%
2. I support mother-tongue teaching.	9	10	10	29 or 97%	1	0	0	1 or 3%
3. I positively like the lessons in mother-tongue.	7	0	0	7 or 23%	3	10	10	23 or 77%
4. I am happy for the MTB-MLE program.	7	0	7	14 or 47%	3	10	3	16 or 53%
5. I know that MTB-MLE positively affect attendance.	9	10	10	29 or 97%	1	0	0	1 or 3%

Table 10A presents a positive response of the respondents from the private school. Only a 2 parents answered “no” for the item I am happy for the MTB-MLE program. It is a negligible percentage which would otherwise speak that majority of the respondents from QASI is happy about the

MTB-MLE program. While they could see that MT increased understanding in the first years of education, this benefit might not appear to extend to higher grades.

This may be the difference between what teachers and parents have observed and what they have not yet observed [Guskey \[33\]](#). The MT immediate benefits were apparent, but it was more difficult for them to foresee how this advantage could extend in the future grades of their children. However, they expressed optimism during the interview. Mrs. Saldaga confidently expressed it by saying (dali ra man; problema, wa lay libro) it is easy but the problem is they have no books.

The table 10B shows that only teachers and students favored items 1, 2, and 5 which obtained 100% “yes” responses. The rest of the items are directing to “no” answers. The items depict a negative attitude among the parents, teachers, and students. Items 3 and 4 even indicate that the teaching of the mother tongue did not influence the liking of MT lessons and they are not happy with the program. One parent answered that it does not help improve pupil's attendance. The majority, however, think otherwise. The interviews with the teachers revealed that the problem on poor attendance has long been experienced in the schools due to some factors other than the MTB. This finding agree to what Benson (2009) cited. Benson said that the use of the mother tongue makes pupils feel good about school. This implies that when students have a positive feeling towards school, it would mean that they would also have a positive feeling toward the teacher and they would eventually come to school. In the case of the pupils, they may have had a positive feeling toward their teachers but the language used in the classroom might have not made them feel at home since it was not the language that they understood better. English was still prevalent. Looking back in items 3 and 4, the teachers and students don't like the lessons in their books and they are not happy about it. In the interview, it was revealed that their book lessons were not consistent with the guide that they have in the MT teacher's manual and thereby making their class discussions more problematic. Teacher Rosanna Langilao said: “The teacher's manual does not jibe with the textbook”. Another significant point which is worth mentioning is the comment of Teacher Melba Montecino. She said: “We need to provide dictionary for MTB-MLE. Big books are needed for telling story and in Math discussion”. She even pointed out that she discusses in “Binisaya” but gave her exams in English. It's confusing. “Makalibog!” she admitted. This observation is supported by Teacher Joycelyn Alisbo: “If only we got enough MT materials and books then we can conduct our class successfully”. Such ideas are also evident in the study of Danbolt [7] and Burton [11].

Overall, the MTB-MLE appears to challenge the teachers' abilities to implement it in the classroom. Three main points were uncovered in the data affecting the attitudes of the respondents. These include the environment of the community, the difficulty in translating academic language “Binisaya” to English and vice versa, and the limited resources and materials available to teachers and parents to support the efforts of the MT endeavor for the students.

In the succeeding questions, the researcher opted to use them for the parents and teachers only. Other than its magnitude and depth, it is presumed that these questions would matter for the parents and teachers only. The teachers and parents respondents were asked to rank the other factors that may have affected the implementation of the MTB-MLE. They were asked to identify which of the five challenges is considered to be on top. Hence they were marking the choices between 1 to 5 and in which ranking 1 is considered the highest and 5 is the lowest.

5.1. D. Other Challenges/Factors Affecting the Implementation of the MTB-MLE (Teachers/Parents Only)

5.1.1. Significant Insights

The interviews, questionnaires, and observations yield consistent result. MT books and materials garnered the highest position in terms of MTB-MLE challenges. Looking at it, although the new MTB-MLE policy and its provisions are good as what advocates have been fighting for, the rush in implementing the program seems risky and may result into failure.

If the program has to survive, the researcher strongly suggests that the following challenges need to be addressed accordingly:

Materials development: Materials development would include, among others, books for both teachers and students must be available in the “Binisaya” language being ranked as first in factors/challenges that affect the implementation of the MTB-MLE by the two schools.

1. QASI

Other factors/challenges that affect the implementation of the MTB- MLE	Private	
	Rate	Rank
Insufficient Learning Materials and Books	30	1st
Parental support	17	4th
Education sector alignment	25	2nd
Language distribution	10	5th
Teacher recruitment and preparation	22	3rd

2. NorthEast 1A

Other factors/challenges that affect the implementation of the MTB- MLE	Public	
	Rate	Rank
Insufficient Learning Materials and Books	27	1st
Parental support	10	3rd
Education sector alignment	15	2nd
Language distribution	5	4th
Teacher recruitment and preparation	2	5th

Teacher recruitment and preparation: Availability of teachers who are speakers of the target languages is also a key consideration for program development.

Language distribution: Key questions regarding the distribution of languages spoken in a community need to be answered in order to design an effective program.

Education sector alignment: To ensure the success of MTB education programs, governments must structure all aspects of the education system to be aligned in support of the chosen model.

Parental support: Parents’ support is essential to the success of a mother tongue education program. Therefore, parents need to be well informed about the benefits of MTB instruction and reassured that learning in the mother tongue will not hinder their children’s opportunity to learn a foreign or national language, often a key goal of sending their children to school. Finally, while Republic Act (RA) 10533 is in place, MTB-MLE challenges are growing. But such challenges must not stop the MT’s noble intention. Its birthing stage must not be allowed to die, but must be cherished, nurtured, encouraged until it will be perfected or so in its practical sense. Elucidating the concurrent challenges is part in giving a solution. Hence, the researcher put forward the self-made theory called the “**Ethno-lingo propagar theory**”. It means collectively propagating a community-based learning materials and books to answer the current educational needs of the community affected by the MTB-MLE program*.

6. Conclusion

The stakeholders from the Queen of Angels School of Iligan and Northeast 1A are supportive of the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education but skeptical. They seem to believe that the MTB-MLE is merely affecting the educational change in terms of policy written in papers but not in practice. The MTB-MLE initiative is promising, but unless tangible reforms and improvements in the quality of school facilities, teachers’ trainings and learning materials, community and government support are demonstrated, MTB-MLE will remain stuck in the quagmire of lapses as they affect the program itself and the stakeholders at present. Challenges are growing. Unless we resolve them, MTB-MLE’s future remains vague.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

1. That DepEd officials, school administrators, concerned communities and NGO's must find ways to provide the schools with necessary MT learning materials, especially books, to ensure that teachers will carryout their lessons successfully.
2. That DepEd should take into consideration the in-service trainings for teachers. It must be intensified for teachers handling grades 1, 2, and 3.
3. There is a need for a thorough information dissemination and or reorientation for stakeholders especially the parents.
4. Reclaim the children's' right to learn in their own language through Ethno-lingo propagar theory.
5. Finally, a comparative and experimental study between and among the private and public learning institutions will also be conducted in order to measure the MT learning outcomes quantitatively.

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