Filipino Teachers: Key to nurturing learning through MTB MLE

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Based on my study: Filipino Teachers’ Negotiate Their Identities within a Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education Landscape
The number of individual languages listed for the Philippines is **185**

181 are living
4 are extinct

**LIVING LANGUAGES**
43 are institutional
70 are developing
45 are vigorous
13 are in trouble
10 are dying

www.ethnologue.com/country/PH/languages
Why this study?

- Need to explore and legitimize teacher voices within this policy change from submersion BE (Filipino and English) to MTB-MLE.
- Need to understand patterns of investment in the policy.
- Need to influence pre-service teacher training, teacher in-service training, teacher professional development.
- Need to contribute to a more holistic view of L1
- Need to contribute to building capital in the local languages.
My position in the study

• Outsider with experience in the Philippines.
• Invested in locally developed and contextualized multilingual education in the Philippines.
• Biases in favor of MTB-MLE for social justice education focusing on marginalized groups.
• Gave no explicit statement of personal policy position to the study participants.
Conceptual framework

Societal Power Relations

Filipino Identity

Investment

Decolonizing Education

Sociocultural Theory
IDENTITY

IDEOLOGY

INVESTMENT

CAPITAL

Affordances / perceived benefits

Systemic patterns of control

Positioning

Darvin & Norton. 2015
Overarching Research Question

How are teachers' personal and professional identities affected by the language policy shift that for the first time acknowledges the value of languages which have historically been marginalized?
Subquestions

1. How are teachers empowered or disempowered by the impetus of teaching through their own previously marginalized languages?

2. How do teachers’ multiple identities affect their learning / willingness to learn to teach in their own first language?

3. How do teachers adjust their underlying knowledge, beliefs and understanding of language teaching and linguistic hierarchies within this major language policy shift?
Multiple Site Case Study

- Six schools
- Six teachers at each school
- Principals
- Parents
- Teacher educators
### Major Findings

**Resistance to MT use**

1. (Mis)understanding of rationale of policy
   - Fear loss of global opportunities
   - Fear loss of English proficiency
   - MT proficiency unhelpful for academic study or accessing job market
   - Influence of power holders

**“Support” of MT use**

- Intuitive or learned understanding of policy
  - Academe (university level & basic education level)
  - Outlier teachers and education leaders
  - Outlier politician(s)
- Culture of respect
Both compliance & resistance relate to:

Commonly discussed issues

- Available materials
- Necessary training
- Needed support
- Teacher status
- English dominance

Less commonly discussed issues

- Societal Ideologies
- Societal power relations
- Teachers’ personal histories
- Teachers’ perceptions of MTB-MLE
Ideologies

- English necessary for global participation
- Contradictory ideologies:
  - anticolonial discourses
  - English dominance
- Neocolonialism / decolonizing education
  - Philippine English
  - national language - Filipino
- Historical devaluation of L1 for education
- Culture of obeisance - critical reflection
Teachers are products of English based education:

- Identities tied to English proficiency
  - Sign of intelligence
  - Sign of sophistication / modernization
  - Access to power

- Capital in English not L1
  - Upward mobility through English only
    - Local jobs
    - Work abroad
    - Conversing with foreigners
Teachers Identities (positioning)

- Teachers career choice
  - Prescribed identities for position & power
  - Negotiated identities for position & power

- Teacher status
  - View among academe/elite vs parents
  - Assertion of agency as proficient English speakers and as expert English teachers

- Teacher as knower vs teacher as learner
  - Academic language vs social language
  - Knowledge of L1 orthography, grammar, CALP
  - Transmission vs Transformative teaching
Teachers’ personal histories

- Ethnicity - dominant language, non-dominant language or minority language group
  - Experiences of discrimination: “learners are positioned in multiple ways before they even speak” (Darvin & Norton, p. 7)
- Socioeconomic status
- Resistance to national language vested in English, MT
- Outlier teachers - encouraging practices/ideologies
Cultural barriers

- Hierarchical nature of DepEd - from imposing BE to imposing MTB MLE
  - Culture of compliance
  - Resistance to perpetual change
  - Response to MTB MLE
  - Investment (in MT or English)
Cultural barriers

- Leadership response matters!
  - Principal
    - Trained for supporting MLE
    - or untrained
  - Division Leaders
  - Regional Leaders
Teachers’ enact their identities

- Agency - level of commitment to MTB-MLE
- Teacher as knower vs teacher as learner
- Teacher obtaining power and position
- Teacher sharing power with students
Every teacher acknowledges that
   Students learn more in MT classes
   Students are more participative in MT classes
   MT classes are more enjoyable

Most teachers unaware of the vast literature on the value of the L1 in learning, though some intuitively appreciate it.

Teachers may do nothing without the policy, but
Teachers will do less without engagement on the policy.
Top down dictates may not be effective without engaging with teachers’ beliefs and identities as a correlating bottom up approach.

Discourses around MTB-MLE should be framed as a step forward in decolonizing education and nourishing the learning spirit (Battiste, 2013).
Why should you care?

- Socially just education calls for equitable quality and access to education in the learners’ mother tongue and other languages.
- Local identity vested in local languages develops confidence, creativity, competence and global participation.
- MTB-MLE contributes to creating social and economic capital in non-dominant languages for social justice education.
Resources


Istaychiyoy!
Maraming salamat po!
Thank you!