

## **Mother Tongue Hegemony in the State College of Zamboanga Del Sur, Philippines**

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**Abstract:** Linguistic hegemony is one of the contentious issues particularly to all levels of Philippine education system. This is quite occurring because diversity of language is evident which influences development of lessons in a learnable approach. This paper investigated the extent of mother tongue usage of randomly selected 30 teachers and 305 students in the state college of Zamboanga del Sur. Data were retrieved from validated questionnaire checklist answerable for teachers and students. Statistical tools used in treating data were weighted mean and p-value. Findings showed that teachers often prioritized and modeled the use of English language in classroom undertakings than mother tongue, but they often spoke community language to assure sequencing of ideas when doing community services. Students found contrary on the teachers' language practice. They more often valued mother tongue in their academic studies. It aided their comprehension, active participation, effective expression of ideas, belongingness, reflection, queries, fluency, and choice of words to fully accomplish scholarly and other relevant activities. These were more often observed during classroom discussion, giving instruction, communicating classmates and schoolmates, having evaluation or assessment, engaging challenging activities with peers, and discussing subjects such as Filipino, Social Science, and Literature. The interplay of language found essential in fostering positive expectations to increment academic and social proficiency. Language assessments could be observed between teachers and students so that efficiency of foreign language use as they exercised their own leads to effective counterpart of learning.

**Keywords:** Linguistic hegemony, mother tongue usage, students, teachers

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### **I. Introduction**

The use of appropriate language to assure learning has been a lingering academic issue nowadays <sup>[1,2]</sup> since the language use depends highly to personal, economic mobility, employability, and other substantial purposes. Language, as the very influential element on the entire education process, provides advantageous impact to individual holistic development. Various studies on language, particular on mother tongue use, revealed to be fostering cognitive development and progress. In fact, appropriate language-in-education (LiE) policies that enable teachers to instruct in the language the learners speak most at home and understand well to learn academic content through their mother tongue as they learn a different language, improve pupils' critical engagement with content, foster an environment of mutual learning, and improve inclusion <sup>[3]</sup>. Yet, many Asian countries have used their own tongue to education which geared them towards socio-economic prosperity and other improvements.

In the Philippines, teachers have different language orientations in classroom instruction. It is observed that 180 languages currently recorded in the different areas in the country where some use English during classes while others use mother tongue or mixed languages. Before the country's K to 12 implementation, education curricula were overridden with English while local languages were not observed as media of instruction. Teachers were trained to teach in English and there was a dearth of materials in the local language, thus English language is preferred over local languages in the country <sup>[4]</sup> and this makes learners couldn't totally comprehend the text which prevent them from learning <sup>[5]</sup>. While English has dominated in pedagogical context in the recent years, no doubt learning still exists. However, people use the language they are exposed with neglecting other suggested languages for they believe this can develop their potentials to the fullest.

Mother tongue education policy on primary education has been implemented in the Philippines since 2010. Although the use of mother tongue is infinite on the grade level the education sector has suggested, it also influences the tertiary education. Since educational development involves the use of language, this study seeks to determine the extents of mother tongue usage of teachers and students as well as their corresponding language reasons and situations in the three campuses of state college of Zamboanga del Sur.

## II. Materials and Methods

This study employed the descriptive research design and made use simple random sampling procedure upon the selection of campuses and respondents in J. H. Cerilles State College namely Dumingag, MS Canuto-Lakewood, and the Main. Thirty (30) teachers and 305 education students in the 1<sup>st</sup> Semester SY 2015-2016 were chosen as research participants to answer the prepared questionnaire checklist. The validated research instrument for teachers (0.73) and students (0.868), consisting language reasons and situations upon integrating mother tongue in their daily teaching and learning, was pilot tested and screened through reliability analysis. Statistical tools such as weighted mean and p-value were employed for analysis and interpretation using statistical software.



Fig. 1. Map of the study areas [6].

## III. Results And Discussion

Language hegemony has been a lingering issue especially to educators. It may be that teachers and students have dominated the use of local foreign language or the interaction of them on scholarly activities to foster teaching and learning, thus enabling education to be highly possible.

Teachers' reasons of speaking mother tongue are presented in Table 1. The need to express ideas continuously is the prime consideration of teachers in speaking local dialect where not more than half (38.15%) of them observed the use of mother language. This means teachers minimally used local language during classroom sessions but most of the time implemented and highlighted English as medium of instruction in educational context, thus proved for their competitiveness in the said language. Since these teachers have been teaching in tertiary schools, their expertise on English was significantly optimized and put less attention on mother tongue. This signifies that teachers devalued mother tongue but highly considered English language in instrumental and integrative purposes [4, 7, 8].

Table 1. Teachers' reasons of speaking mother tongue.

Variable	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	P-value
I can phonate the language sounds easily.	3.80	3.14	3.50	0.06
I can find the appropriate vocabulary words to substitute English words.	3.50	2.93	3.75	0.07
I can simplify broad concepts I have in mind.	3.60	3.36	3.50	0.07
I can sequence words in expressing ideas.	4.00	3.14	4.00	0.05
I can identify myself with the students.	3.40	3.21	3.25	0.08
I can verbally express ideas taken from varied texts for students' understanding.	3.60	3.29	3.25	0.06
I can motivate students to listen attentively.	3.50	2.93	3.25	0.07
I can generate discussion comfortably.	3.40	3.00	3.00	0.08
I am emphatic and precise in discussing lessons.	3.40	2.71	3.00	0.08
I can easily relate and express ideas to real world situations.	3.70	2.93	3.75	0.06
I experience belongingness whenever I conform to the regional inflections or utterances of my first language.	3.50	3.29	3.50	0.07
I am fluent in using the mother tongue in classroom deliberations.	3.20	2.71	3.00	0.09
I can automatically substitute English vocabulary words in simplifying concepts.	3.00	3.14	2.75	0.10
Aggregated mean	<b>3.51</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>3.35</b>	
Standard deviation	<b>0.25</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.36</b>	

**Legend:**

Numerical Rating	Adjectival Description
5 – (4.21-5.00)	5 – Frequent (F)
4 – (3.41-4.20)	4 – More Often (MO)
3 – (2.61-3.40)	3 – Often (O)
2 – (1.81-2.60)	2 – Seldom (S)
1 – (1.00-1.80)	1 – Never (N)

This study revealed that teachers used mother tongue only when sequencing words to express ideas. This occurred in order to deliberate emphasis and actual meaning of their insights. Moreover, they found it effective on arousing students' participation on discussions and as a tool for learning<sup>[9]</sup> when ideas were delivered and explained using local dialect. It is no doubt, therefore, that teachers still spoke using mother tongue in class hours to soundly bridge prior and current knowledge in a most appropriate and communicable way, allowing learners' cognitive benefits<sup>[10]</sup>. This signifies that teachers could not resist the assimilation of native language because they can deliver ideas in the most convenient and comprehensible way. Students interacted on lecture when broad concepts explained orally in their own language<sup>[11]</sup>. This could not deny, therefore, that mother tongue becomes supplemental on the development of lesson and comprehension to enhance understanding and learning<sup>[12]</sup>. It is then claimed a prime criterion that, aside from supporting methods and strategies, teachers should possess the linguistic mastery of local and international languages to serve as role models. The same point was stressed that teachers in higher levels should have a good command of the language of instruction, vernacular or international, plus adequate knowledge and complementary strategies<sup>[13]</sup>. Since this study observed only one significant consideration, further researches could be conducted to determine other important language circumstances for the identification of teachers' reasons upon preferred use of English language in class.

Language situations of teachers in using mother tongue were discussed in Table 2. Doing extension services is found the principal situation considered by teachers when discoursing with the use of mother language. This is a good manifestation of teachers as proficient in English language during class hours. They used vernacular in finite situation and this is when they were outside school premises where the particular language is used more correspondingly. This happened because the clients were using locality's usual language and that teachers need to adapt the language culture to conversely understand each other for the promotion of good benefits to all stakeholders. It played supportive and facilitating role in the community<sup>[9]</sup> which is very effective in the right situations at the right time<sup>[14]</sup>.

Table 2. Teachers' situations to use mother tongue.

Variable	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	P-value
During lecture-discussion	2.60	2.21	2.25	0.12
Giving instruction	2.80	2.29	2.50	0.11
Communicating with student or co-students	3.20	2.50	2.75	0.09
Communicating colleagues	3.40	3.93	2.75	0.08
Having evaluation or assessment	3.60	2.21	2.75	0.08
Conducting challenging activities to students	2.60	2.50	3.25	0.12
Discussing subjects (Filipino, Social Science, Literature)				
	2.60	2.50	2.75	0.12
Meeting with faculty or students	2.40	3.00	3.25	0.14
Doing extension services	3.80	3.43	4.00	0.05
Attending seminars or workshops	2.70	2.71	2.50	0.11
Aggregated mean	<b>2.97</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>2.88</b>	
Standard deviation	<b>0.48</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.50</b>	

**Legend:**

Numerical Rating	Adjectival Description
5 – (4.21-5.00)	5 – Frequent (F)
4 – (3.41-4.20)	4 – More Often (MO)
3 – (2.61-3.40)	3 – Often (O)
2 – (1.81-2.60)	2 – Seldom (S)
1 – (1.00-1.80)	1 – Never (N)

Teachers possessed the needed language skills necessary for the young individuals to learn and imitate. They did not force their audience to understand written text in English which would deprive interaction and understanding<sup>[5]</sup>. Indeed, they were versatile in certain occasions most especially when language is the major way on communication. Amenability of known language takes into account when speaking in the people within the locality. That's why they translated foreign texts into vernacular in order to align with the language of the

community to allow acceptable participation and development. This states that the positive impact of common language usage to its constituents and to the country as a whole<sup>[15]</sup>, therefore teachers are practically pliable to their audience and societal needs in order to cope the demand of times.

Table 3 shows that student respondents (46.17%) found integrating mother tongue any time during their scholarly engagements to expedite learning. This says that the teachers of different schools permitted students to use mother tongue during classroom undertaking. This is a good manifestation that teachers encouraged and opened to the different methods and strategies of students to learn. As such, they allowed their students to attract learning through the use of language they know best. This stresses permission of teachers to allow students speak using mother tongue<sup>[9]</sup>. Thus, mother tongue is perceived as a helpful tool upon doing activities in class<sup>[12]</sup>.

Students considered more often the use of vernacular because they could understand concepts better, listen attentively in class discussions, and express ideas fluently whenever their teacher encourages the said language. It was also imbibed on the related circumstances because they could experience belongingness, share emphatic ideas, participate comfortably on discussions, relate to real world situations, substitute vernacular when fell short of English terms, express ideas spontaneously, and generate class discussion with peers. These reasons were observed because they found them effective in displaying their competency and excelling their academics. Similar investigations were contingent to this study. A study recently stated 73% of the students preferred native language to understand, listen, and freely express and share their ideas to certain lessons and current situations<sup>[9]</sup>, thus using vernacular for communicative purposes and easier means<sup>[16]</sup>. Students find speaking in their own language a lot easier than struggling with English to communicate something important whenever they are quite incapable of expressing what they mean<sup>[17]</sup>, therefore using own language in the best way they know through translating easily the difficult context into comprehensible ones which becomes an emergency measure when running out of English terminologies<sup>[14]</sup> and encourages them to enhance participation through talking with their teacher and classmates or peers about new and related thoughts<sup>[18]</sup>. As such, the same with teachers, students need to have the flexibility to decide which were easily to use for important learning purposes<sup>[12]</sup>.

Table 3. Students' reasons of speaking mother tongue.

Item	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	P-Value
<b>I Can Understand Concepts Whenever My Teacher Explains Lessons In Vernacular.</b>	4.70	3.08	4.60	0.04
<b>I Experience Belongingness Whenever My Teacher Uses Vernacular.</b>	4.38	3.80	4.03	0.05
<b>I Can Share My Ideas Emphatically In Vernacular To My Classmates.</b>	4.40	3.90	4.35	0.05
<b>I Listen Attentively In Class Discussions.</b>	4.58	3.83	4.08	0.04
<b>I Can Participate Comfortably In The Discussions.</b>	4.30	3.86	4.08	0.05
<b>I Can Relate To Real World Situations Whenever My Teacher Uses Vernacular.</b>	4.48	3.73	4.73	0.05
<b>I Can Express Ideas Fluently Whenever The Teacher Encourages The Use Of Vernacular.</b>	4.52	3.63	4.73	0.04
<b>I Can Substitute English Words To Vernacular Whenever I Fall Short Of English Terms.</b>	4.26	3.95	4.40	0.05
<b>I Can Express Ideas Spontaneously In The Class.</b>	4.36	3.66	3.98	0.05
<b>I Can Generate Class Discussion With My Peers Whenever My Teacher Initiates Vernacular.</b>	4.38	3.86	4.10	0.05
Aggregated Mean	<b>4.44</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>4.26</b>	
Standard Deviation	<b>0.13</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>0.28</b>	

**Legend:**

**Numerical Rating**

- 5 – (4.21-5.00)
- 4 – (3.41-4.20)
- 3 – (2.61-3.40)
- 2 – (1.81-2.60)
- 1 – (1.00-1.80)

**Significant (P < 0.05)**

**Adjectival Description**

- 5 – Frequent (F)
- 4 – More Often (MO)
- 3 – Often (O)
- 2 – Seldom (S)
- 1 – Never (N)

This study supports the notion that there is important reason to conduct assessments in mother tongue in tertiary level<sup>[11]</sup> but this research only limits to the determination of time extents of reasons and situations of mother tongue usage of teachers and students and does not include correlation to academic performance. However, to promote innovative approaches to solving the problems of low academic achievement through particular language choices<sup>[19]</sup>, this study may also become one of the barometers to invites similar and related studies.

Table 4. Students' situations to use mother tongue.

Variable	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	P-value
<b>During lecture-discussion</b>	4.25	3.63	3.72	0.05
<b>Giving instruction</b>	4.16	3.70	3.85	0.05
<b>Communicating with student or co-students</b>	4.34	3.94	4.05	0.04
<b>Communicating colleagues</b>	4.30	3.78	3.85	0.05
<b>Having evaluation or assessment</b>	4.19	3.53	3.48	0.05
<b>Conducting challenging activities to students</b>	4.26	3.66	3.85	0.05
<b>Discussing subjects (Filipino, Social Science, Literature)</b>	4.06	3.51	3.50	0.05
<b>Meeting with professors or instructors</b>	4.00	3.51	3.50	0.06
<b>Doing extension services</b>	3.97	3.54	3.35	0.06
<b>Attending seminars or workshops</b>	3.89	3.79	3.20	0.06
Aggregated mean	<b>4.14</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>3.64</b>	
Standard deviation	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.26</b>	

Legend:

Significant (P < 0.05)

**Numerical Rating**

**Adjectival Description**

5 – (4.21-5.00)

5 – Frequent (F)

4 – (3.41-4.20)

4 – More Often (MO)

3 – (2.61-3.40)

3 – Often (O)

2 – (1.81-2.60)

2 – Seldom (S)

1 – (1.00-1.80)

1 – Never (N)

Students' situation upon using mother tongue is revealed in Table 4. Students (39.68%) stressed the use of mother tongue in academic and social circumstances where all subject schools allowed the use of native language. Significant situations upon deliberation using the local language were during discussion, giving instruction, communicating classmates, having evaluation or assessment, conducting challenging activities with peers, and discussing subjects such as Filipino, Social Science, and Literature. This shows that students did not resist the use of mother tongue inside their school and that posit that their potential for language variation upon classroom undertaking. They used the familiar language to better discuss grammar, historical, and social ideas, to instruct clearly, to communicate with ease and confidence, to evaluate and assess their own or classmates, and to conduct activities with their classmates in class. This would mean mother tongue to construct solutions and evaluation of various academic tasks necessary for substantial metacognitive and cooperative learning, thus claiming it as a supportive and facilitating role in the classroom<sup>[19]</sup>. During lecture, giving directions and activities, discourses, and evaluation, the immediate translation of English texts to mother tongue has helped students in creating a more relaxing environment, bringing cultural background knowledge, giving instructions clearly, checking understanding of concepts<sup>[20]</sup>, developing sense of security<sup>[21]</sup> and confidence upon learning<sup>[19]</sup> in order to express more effectively their ideas understandable for own selves and to their audience, therefore allowing increase mastery of concepts and vocabulary retention. Since there are notions that mother tongue works well, the study would adhere that prohibition of language shifting practice may hamper the entire education process and that code-switching does not deny academic proficiency at all. This stands the claim that students acquire mastery on competencies using first language and may foster with additional known languages<sup>[22]</sup>.

However, despite advantageous impact on learning and teachers and majority of students' positive perception on the use of first language in the teaching and learning process<sup>[23]</sup>, students may practically discourse native tongue and disregard or fail to learn the target language which can be alarming for future benefits. Consistent use of mother tongue is professionally inappropriate<sup>[24]</sup> and its overuse may impede students from foreign language use<sup>[25]</sup>. Thus, a balanced approach is needed to see a role for the mother tongue and recognize the importance of maximizing the international language use in the classroom. Though many studies proved advantages of using mother tongue in tertiary schools<sup>[13]</sup>, teachers should not allow students to use mother tongue always particularly on school premises for social and employment purposes. The use of vernacular language as a medium of instruction over an international language such as English could inadvertently be disadvantage of the people who were meant to benefit from such a policy. In fact, anecdotal evidence shows that graduates from countries that use of vernacular language as the medium of instruction until tertiary levels eventually face challenges adapting to real-life environments in which English is the official language of communication<sup>[13]</sup>. Therefore, a necessary language intervention and considerable measures should be implemented to attain equitable language approach on all tracks of learning which might result to hone students' competitiveness and appreciation on local and global languages.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Teachers devalued mother tongue in school engagements. Mastery on sequential expression of words was the peak reason of teachers in speaking own dialect when doing community services. However, student respondents found inverted inclination on mother tongue usage. They often used this familiar language to expedite knowledge on academics and societal awareness. Surprised observations of this study were that teachers spoke local dialect when engaged in community services and permitted students to speak own dialect freely to aid learning. In general, this study revealed the interplay of mother tongue and English language to construct solutions and evaluation of various academic and community related tasks necessary for effective achievement and implementation. While this practice was determined to contribute good impacts, this study did not provide the solution to language teaching. Intervention measures on the frequent use of mother tongue to improve academic benefits could be done whenever necessary. Educators should not adhere students to use mother tongue always in the classroom so that they would achieve confidence and mastery to assure all areas of development despite any occurring language from teachers, peers, books, and other related instructional materials, thus certain assessments could be implemented to ensure learning and language consistency through a balanced approach of first and second language.

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