

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' TEACHING STRATEGIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BAHASA SUG CURRICULUM AMONG INDIGENOUS LEARNERS

Nurhuda S. Puno*

Ministry of Education, Tawi-Tawi, BARMM

Maria Socorro Yvonne H. Ramos

Cheryl P. Barredo

Sitti Aisha G. Toto

Western Mindanao State University

Cherry B. Alih

Mindanao State University – Tawi-Tawi, College of Technology and Oceanography

ABSTRACT

Teaching strategies are like blueprint of a house where it needs to carefully planned in order to come up with a good outcome. It must be appropriate to all kinds of learners even to the pupils who belonged to the indigenous group. This study primarily aims to determine the early childhood educators' teaching strategies in the implementation of the bahasa sug curriculum among indigenous learners. This employed a qualitative-exploratory approach. Where the data were gathered among the 23 early childhood teachers and their administrators in one of the districts in the Tawi-Tawi Division which is part of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao that implements Mother Tongue Bahasa Sug curriculum to the Sama learners. After analyzing the informants' responses through thematic analysis, there are 7 themes that came up which were clustered based on similarity of the given ideas. The teachers shared seven strategies which includes 1) translation of lessons/ideas from Bahasa Sug to Sinama, 2) using different visual aids such as pictures, flashcards and graphs, 3) reading strategies like marungko approach, phonetic approaches, vocabulary and storytelling, 4) differentiated activities/strategies like lecture and discussion, 5) using additional textbooks in Bahasa Sug, Filipino and English, 6) Using Teacher-made Instructional Materials and 7) peer coaching. Clearly, the study concluded that early childhood educators have utilized varied teaching strategies where the cultural background were also considered.

Keywords: *early childhood education, teaching strategies, Bahasa sug, Indigenous learners*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching strategies are methods and techniques used by teachers in order to support the learning process undertaken by their students. In choosing the teaching strategies, teachers consider most suitable to the topic being studied, the level of expertise of the learner, and the stage in their learning journey. In one lesson a teacher may use many different teaching strategies with different end goals. Teaching strategies must therefore suit to the level and culture of the students.

Aligning the teaching strategies of teachers with the cultural background of the students is an important point to note. To make learning efficient, the educational experiences offered them must be focused to meet the set learning objectives. However, teachers must see to it the uniqueness of every learner with varying educational needs and do away with grouping students according to their cultural identity. Teachers should also show high expectations to the students and high regard even to the students who belong to the cultural minorities as well as using specific strategies that may be effective in teaching indigenous students.

In the Philippines, the Mother Tongue – Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) is being implemented. MTB-MLE refers to the use of students' mother tongue and two or more additional languages as the media of instruction. According to the official language policy of the 1987 Educational Act (revised in 2004), as cited in the study of Lartec (2014), children in Grades 1 – 3 are to be instructed in their first language or their mother tongue, which is known as the Mother Tongue curriculum.

Also, the Philippine government, through the Department of Education (DepEd), has enacted a number of policies in recent years which are pertinent to MTB MLE; most notably DepEd Order No. 74, Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (2009). This policy is the first of its kind in South-East Asia, requiring that the mother tongue be utilized for the early years of schooling, with gradual oral introduction of the national language (Filipino) and English. National implementation of the policy into public schools began in the school year 2012-2013, after an initial bridging period of three years while materials were developed and teachers were trained.

One of the languages that is being implemented and used in the Philippines is the Bahasa Sug. Bahasa Sug is the mother tongue of Tausug people who are found at the Southern part of the Philippines particularly in Mindanao such as Zamboanga City, Basilan province, Tawi-Tawi and majority in the province of Sulu. Instructional materials for this language were already developed and had been implemented in schools to include the province of Tawi-Tawi. In this district, 98% of the learners belong to the Sama Banguingui ethnicity who speaks Sinama language. However, the Mother Tongue Bahasa Sug curriculum is implemented in this Sama areas. The Sama teachers are also using Bahasa Sug instructional materials in teaching the Sama learners. It is in this context that the researcher would like to embark in this study to find out the challenges and prospects experienced and presently are experiencing by the teachers and administrators in this kind of policy implementation.

In relation to this current situation, the researcher was motivated to examine the teaching strategies employed by the teachers in the implementation of the Bahasa Sug curriculum to the Sama learners.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the strategies employed by the early childhood educators in the implementation of Bahasa Sug curriculum among the Sama learners?

RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Rationale for MT-Based MLE: The current situation

“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 national...language, are often at a considerable disadvantage in the educational system...” (UNESCO, 2003).

When the school-life of a child begins, their ability to communicate meaningfully in their mother tongue has also gained confidence. Their learning has started through observation and interaction with peers and adults in their community. The language, knowledge and experience that children bring to school form an important foundation for their learning in the classroom (Malone, 2007).

Further, she added that, the educational problem faced by many children from ethno linguistic communities is two- fold. In the first place, some have no access to education at all. Those who do have access to school but do not speak the official language when they enter the education system find disadvantages on their knowledge, experience and language. It seems that their language was not helpful because they felt that it has no place in the classroom. Even the language of their textbooks are in a language they neither speak nor understand. Their knowledge and their problem solving skill in their own culture and social setting had not been useful to them because the culture of the classroom, the teachers, and the textbooks is that of the dominant society. Thus, this leads to consequences for many students which have been noted in many studies.

One of those is the loss of confidence in themselves as learners. When students' language, culture and experiences are not given attention in classroom interactions, it becomes disadvantage to students. The things that they have learned from the beginning until this moment, will become meaningless to school learning. Second, is the inability to learn the official school language well. As elaborated by one of the respondents in the study of Jinghran (2005), “My children are very good at copying from the blackboard. By the time they reach Grade 5, they can copy all the answers and memorize them. But only two of the Grade 5 students can actually speak Hindi. Third, is the high repetition and drop-out rates. Fifty percent of the world's out-of-school children live in communities where the language of schooling is not their language at home. This situation serves as hindrance in achieving Education for All (World Bank, 2005). In the study of Saavedra (2020), teachers reiterated that local government should implement policies that will be beneficial to all group in a certain place and not only to the majority.

Fourth, includes the alienation from heritage language and culture, from parents and community. Children who started with their early education are often teased by other students for using their language at home when they talk with their classmates. So their teachers instead asked them to use their L2 or the language understood by many. Parents are asked not to use MT at home in order to make the children fluent in the L2. This scenario created a negative impact towards their language in the minds of the parents and children. Aside from these so-called damages to students who do not speak the dominant language when they begin school, dominant language-only education policies and programs have negative consequences for the language communities, for nations, and indeed, for the world in general.

Fifth, is the further disempowerment of girls. Gender considerations cross cut situations of educational risk, for girls and women may be in a particularly disadvantaged position. In many places, it is the girls and women who tend to be monolingual, being less exposed either through schooling, salaried labour, or migration to the national language, than their sons, brothers or husbands (UNESCO, 2003). However, there are several studies have shown equal footing of both gender in their performance on the different skills. Alejandro et. al (2022) stressed in their study that boys and girls manifested the same research skills which is very satisfactory. They attributed such level of skill to the teaching strategies employed by their research teachers.

Malone (2007) also noted that another is the lack of access to social, political, economic and physical development processes. Policies and programs which had been implemented have failed to reduce discrimination towards indigenous communities in vital areas related to employment, religion, language, ownership, possession or use of lands and natural resources and access to education, health services and different institutions (Research and Development Collective, 2003, Page 17, in Paulson, 2004). For many ethnolinguistic minority group promises of economic and social mobility are poor compensation for cultural subordination and language shift. Linguistic minority groups are driven to further poverty—cultural and economical because their languages, as a resource for educational achievement and for equal access to economic and other benefits in a competitive society, are rendered powerless (Mohanty, 1990).

The underutilization of human resources is another consequences that had been noted. Children whose first language is not used at school, experience lower levels of learning and are much less likely to be able to contribute to a country's economic and intellectual development (World Bank, 2006). Also, loss of languages, cultures and of knowledge systems was listed. More broadly, the loss of language is part of the loss of whole cultures and knowledge systems, including philosophical systems, oral literary and music traditions, environmental knowledge systems, medical knowledge, and important cultural practices and artistic skills. The world stands to lose an important part of the sum of human knowledge whenever a language stops being used. Just as the human species is putting itself in danger through the destruction of species diversity, so might we be in danger from the destruction of the diversity of knowledge systems (Hinton, 2001). We have a few hundred years of evidence that submersion in the L2 is "highly inefficient," if not downright wasteful and discriminatory, since such school systems are characterized by low intake, high repetition and dropout, and low completion rates... The overall costs to the society... are clearly astronomical, and must be seen as at least partially to blame for the lack of inclusive, participatory governing in post-colonial countries (Benson, 2001).

Learning Materials for MTB-MLE

According to Kincheloe et al. (2008) through the learners' experiences and lexicon that they are already familiar with, it would just be easier now for the learners to make connections of the new ideas and skills that are taught to them. And, compared to the traditional education system, it utilizes localized and culturally meaningful learning materials. MTB MLE curriculum is based on the learner's previous experiences, incorporating traditional milieu into the classrooms. As Dekker and Young (2005) describe, "the most important consideration in the design (of MTB MLE curriculum) is that a child's cognitive and affective development is closely related to the intimate relationship between the learner, his first language and his culture milieu".

In localizing the learning materials it requires a transformation of the curriculum to successfully include the culturally relevant learning and reading materials. Even in developing their reading readiness, the L1 of a child also serves as a factor to be considered. Mastery of the L1 facilitates the learning of L2 (Martinez, 2022). Pupils' perception of having a low level in English reading was due to the medium of instruction used when they were in the

primary grades. Although, it is the lingua franca of the City, but they claimed that not all of them speak and understand the language (Saavedra, 2020).

According to Sibayan (1985) such reading and instructional materials for ethno linguistic minorities in the Philippines, both are not readily available. These learning materials should be created preferably by those members of the community who know the language and the culture by heart: including the elders and traditional leaders, also teachers, and those community members who have had further education. After the materials are developed, these should be edited by multiple language speakers, then field tested by a wider audience of community members (Casquite, 2010).

One of the studies that explored on the learning materials and resources is the study of Jaani (2022). It was emphasized that teachers' teaching strategies, methods and resources should have high attitude toward teaching. Generally, the faculty members used varied teaching approaches and teaching methods. Methods and resources but reporting technique emerged to be common among the faculty members. The best strategy, methods and resources to promote social studies interest is to build positive self-concept to raise levels of achievement among diverse learners in multicultural context including teacher related limitations.

METHODOLOGY

To meet the objective, this study employed a qualitative-exploratory approach. This was conducted to early childhood teachers and their administrators in one of the districts in the Tawi-Tawi Division which is part of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao that implement Mother Tongue Bahasa Sug curriculum to the Sama learners. This district comprises of five schools which are located in the islands. 23 respondents or informants voluntarily participated of which 19 were primary teachers and 4 administrators in five schools of Tawi-Tawi. These informants are Sama with the mother tongue or lingua franca of Sinama. The teachers and their administrators were selected purposively. This is because only those teachers who are handling Grades 1 to III and implement the MTB-MLE in Bahasa Sug to their Sama learners were chosen to participate in this study. They should be presently teaching in the five schools under the District. Likewise, the administrators must be the current heads of the five schools where these teachers teach. The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher with the help of the research adviser which was also validated by three experts of research and curriculum implementation. The interview questionnaire is composed of 10 questions which elicit information to answer the research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the Strategies Employed by the Early Childhood Educators in the Implementation of Bahasa Sug Curriculum Among the Sama Learners

After analyzing the informants' responses through thematic analysis, there are 6 themes that came up which were clustered based on the similarity of the given responses. The flow of presentation is based on the number of informants with the same responses or thoughts. Below are the themes based on the responses of the informants on the strategies they used in teaching Sama elementary learners.

Teaching Strategies used by Teachers in teaching Bahasa Sug to the Sama elementary learners
Themes:
1. Translation of lessons/ideas from Bahasa Sug to Sinama.
2. Using Different visual aids such as pictures, flashcards and graphs.
3. Reading strategies like marungko approach, phonetic approaches, vocabulary and storytelling
4. Differentiated activities/strategies like lecture and discussion
5. Using Teacher-made Instructional Materials

Theme 1: Translation of lessons/ideas from Bahasa Sug to Sinama.

When asked the question "*What are the strategies you use in teaching the elementary Sama learners?*", translating of lessons/ideas from Bahasa Sug to Sinama, was all their common answer which is the first theme that emerged. Translation also came out earlier when they were asked how they implemented the Mother Tongue

curriculum in Bahasa Sug. This theme was codified from the responses of all informants. Moreover, this theme was identified to be used by Grades I to 3 teachers.

Below are some of their responses:

Informant 1: *"I use my own strategies such as showing pictures, flashcards and translating so the learners can understand"*.

Informant 2: *"subay kami magtranslate Tausug dahu ni Sinama boh tahati... kahunitan du"*(We need to translate it from Tausug to Sinama so pupils can understand, but sometimes we also do not know the translation, ahunit (difficult).)

Informant 3: *"Had su sab"* (from time to time or in passing; because we need to translate Tausug to Sinama (L1) of the learners)"

Informant 4: *"saga books ma Tausug, kahekaan kabtangan mbal du sab tahati kami"* (In the textbook it is written in Tausug, there are some words I cannot understand, so I try to explain it further to my learners using the Sinama).

Informant 5 disclosed that she also translated the lessons from Bahasa Sug to Sinama because her pupils are all Sama and cannot understand the language used in the materials.

Informants 6, 7, 8 and 9 who are all Grade 3 teachers of LCTES verbalized that they too translate the lessons from Bahasa Sug to Sinama language. As explained by Informant 9 *"I need to translate so my pupils who are Sinama speakers can understand"*.

Informant 10 (Multigrade primary teacher of Likud ES) expressed the same ideas when she said *"yun lang nalalaman ko, yun lang tinuturo ko sa mga bata. Itranslate ko from Filipino-English to Sinama"*. (I only teach those that I know and do translation from Filipino-English to Sinama).

Informants 11, 12 and 13 who came from the same school (Putad ES) and are all Grade 3 teachers agreed with others because they too translated their lessons from Bahasa Sug to Sinama Language.

Informant 11 stated that *" minsan du mag Tausug saga materials kami, hal sadja guide koh eh"* (Sometimes even our materials are in Bahasa Sug, we use Sinama in teaching MTB in our school, but we use the Tausug Materials as our basis and guide).

Informant 12 on the same manner raise similar thought when she enunciated that *"I implement it using Sama Dialect and I try my best to translate from Tausug for my pupils"* while Informant 13 also uttered *" mbal aku makasayu Tausug, atoggol aku angahati saga materials itu boh tapamanduh ni anak anak"* (I am not fluent in Tausug, it takes time for me to learn the materials so I need to translate it for my learners).

Informants 14 and 15 who are both teaching Grade I classes at West disclosed that they too used translation as a strategy in their teaching.

Informant 14 said that *"Medyo nahihirapan kami (in a way, we find it difficult) that's why we do research of its equivalent in Sinama words, we translate"*. Same ideas were raise by Informant 15 when she revealed *"Reading from the flashcards which is in English then translate to Sinama"*.

Informants 16, 17 and 18 who are all Grade 2 teachers of West also used translation as one of their teaching strategies.

Informant 16 verbalized that she still needs to translate from Bahasa Sug to tagalog then to Sinama language. She added *"Ginagamit ko po yung vocabulary then I also use translate. Similarly, Informant 17 articulated "I used the English- Tagalog Book as my references, then translate to Sinama"*.

The first theme that emerged is the most common since all the informants responded the same thought on translating their lessons from Bahasa Sug to Sinama language or from other language to Sinama. It is already expected to be given by all informants because they have already implied it earlier in their way of implementing the Mother Tongue Bahasa Sug curriculum. Possibly, they found this strategy to be most effective among the other strategies they are using. This strategy also is the best for the Sama elementary learners wherein most of them if not all cannot comprehend Bahasa Sug language. Because of the language mismatch between the materials, teachers and the learners, the researcher also assumes that this strategy fits the need of the Sama learners.

According to the guidelines for the MTB-MLE policy implementation, the teacher should consistently use the MT as the medium of instruction; translation is not advisable unless this forms part of the learning objectives and is used as a teaching strategy in bridging. The learners may use their MT in expressing their answers if they find it difficult to use the target language (e.g., in Filipino or English subjects). The teacher can then subtly translate the learners' answer to the target language.

In the study of Usaid when teachers were asked to list what they do when a student does not understand something in the language that they are using for instruction, 50 percent mentioned "translate it into a language that the student understands better." In addition, 89 percent indicated that they believed that "it is sometimes appropriate for teachers to use more than just the official language of instruction in class."

Theme 2: Using Different visual aids such as pictures, flashcards and graphs.

After a thorough thematic analysis on the responses of the informants, the second strategy that most of the informants revealed is using different visual aids such as pictures, flashcards and graphs. Among the 19 teacher-informants, there are 11 who inferred similar responses which turned to belong in the same theme.

The second theme was analyzed using the following responses:

Informant 1: *"I use my own strategies such as showing pictures, flashcards, so the learners can understand"*.

Informant 2: *"I use pictograph, marungko approach, more on sounds"*.

Informant 3: *"I use pictures so they can understand"*.

Informants 14, 15 and 18 are the other 3 primary grade teachers from West who also articulated that they too are using different visual aids as their strategy in teaching Bahasa Sug to their Sama learners.

Informants 14 and 15 use flashcards with letters and pictures and so with Informant 8. Similarly, this strategy was also employed by Informants 5, 7, 8 and 17. Moreover, as analysed further, it was known that all the informants who stated the same thoughts on this question are teaching for Grade 1 to 3 which means that this strategy is also used in the primary grades. (I-III).

Like translation, using of different visual aids such as pictures, graphs and flashcards is the second theme that appeared on the thematic analysis. The researcher would like to believe that teachers also used this teaching strategy to facilitate the understanding of the Sama learners who cannot understand Bahasa Sug language. Through the visual images that the learners see, it helps them understand the lesson even if they don't understand so much the language.

According to the guidelines for policy implementation, once the MTB-MLE curriculum has been contextualized according to the local language system, [Regional Offices] and Division Offices should ensure that appropriate materials are available at the school level in order to ensure quality implementation of the program. The existence, availability, and use of TLM in the designated medium of instruction for a subject can greatly influence both the teacher's and students' usage of the medium of teaching learning (MoTL) in the class as they interact with the materials in that language. As noted earlier, previous studies have found that MTB-MLE implementation has been hindered in multiple contexts by inadequate materials in the designated MT.

In addition to explaining the meaning of new words, teachers may also use non-linguistic means of supporting comprehension of unfamiliar language, such as pictures, drawings, gestures, miming, demonstrations,

etc. In G1–G3, teachers provided non-linguistic comprehension support in just fewer than 60 percent of the lesson periods observed, with no substantial differences by grade or subject; in KG, they provided it more frequently, in 76 percent of the lessons, perhaps to help the new students acclimate to the school environment. The practice varied slightly by MT group and was more frequent in Chavacano and Magindanawn MT schools (observed in 76 percent and 68 percent of lessons, 45 Republic of the Philippines Department of Education, 2019, p. 127 2019 Language Usage Study 29 respectively), and the lowest in Mëranaw MT schools (53 percent). Note that of the four MT groups, Chavacano and Magindanawn MT schools have the highest percentage of students who do not speak the MT at home, and Mëranaw the lowest (Usaid, 2020).

Theme 3: Reading strategies like marungko approach, phonetic approaches, vocabulary and storytelling

8 out of 19 teacher-informants enunciated that they used reading strategies like Marungko approach, phonetic approaches, vocabulary and storytelling as another strategy in teaching their Sama learners. This strategy is not anymore surprising due to the fact that they are all primary grade teachers who are all teaching reading. However, only the following informants explicitly raise the same theme:

Informants 2 and 7 who are both primary grade teachers of LCTES were the first two to convey that they used reading approaches in teaching their Sama learners. Informant 2 used marungko approach which she describes as having a phonological foundation while Informant 7 on the other hand used story telling when she is teaching reading.

Informant 10 who is a multigrade teacher also mentioned “*Reading vocabulary, yun lang nalalaman ko, yun lang tinuturo ko sa mga bata* (Reading Vocabulary, that’s all I know, that’s all I’m teaching to my pupils)”.

Moreover, informants 16 and 17 who are both teaching Grade 2 classes articulated that they are using reading strategies. Informant 16 used vocabulary strategy while Informant 17 also used storytelling to her Sama learners.

Informants 3, 8 and 12 also stated that this strategy, referring to story telling, was used in their teaching. The 8 participants coming from different schools in East South Ubian District of Tawi-tawi Division also used different reading strategies to their Sama learners. Even so, coupled with this strategy, they first need to translate the stories into Sinama language to be understood by their learners. They also used reading strategies using sounds or phonetics as foundation. It is safe to say that these strategies were used by the teachers because they found them suitable to the needs of their primary grade learners.

Although, there are only 8 among the 19 informants who shared this theme, but it is considered as majority for teachers teaching Grades I and II with a total of 15 teachers.

The researcher believes that reading strategies were also employed by the informants due to the fact that they are handling primary grades which are the foundation of teaching reading. Unfortunately though, the learners learn to read in a different language not their own mother tongue.

The study of Niri (2013) gave a similar scenario. Her findings lent support to already familiar question of reading problem versus language problem first raised by Alderson (1984) and followed by Carrell (1991). Both elements of language and reading are significant factors but the difference is that for lower level of language competence it is a matter of language problem. Conversely, at high levels of language competence it is a reading problem. The results will help the teachers to remove their students’ language and reading problems. If the good readers are taught reading strategies, they will be efficient and better readers. But according to Clarke’s short-circuit hypothesis (1980) the poor readers should pass a certain threshold level if they want to make use of readings strategies. Thus poor readers should be helped both with their L2, by increasing their language competence in L2, and then by teaching the reading skills. Therefore according to the expected results the following points will be taken into account. 1. Poor readers should be helped with their L2 i.e. language competence, and then reading strategies.

The study of Usaid, 2020 bears similar findings on the present study. Teachers appeared to be applying the strategy of explicit vocabulary instruction at generally high rates. Teachers provided explicit vocabulary instruction at least once in 76 percent of the 3,047 lesson periods observed. The overall frequency did not vary substantially from one MT group, grade, or subject to another. On the whole, teachers tended to use the MT for vocabulary

instruction (observed at least once in 60 percent of the lessons) slightly more often than Filipino (49 percent) or English (31 percent), except for Magindanaw MT school teachers, who favored Filipino slightly over the MT (64 percent to 51 percent).

Theme 4: Using Differentiated activities/strategies like lecture and discussion

Through the narratives of these primary teachers, it was clear that the fourth theme is using Differentiated activities/strategies like lecture and discussion. This theme emerged after coding the transcripts of the five informants from different school of East South Ubian District, Tawi-Tawi.

Informants 11, 12 and 13 who are all primary grade teachers of Putad ES are also employing different teaching strategies. Informant 11 preferred to apply sinama group strategies coupled with explanation. Informant 12 also chose to use lecture method in delivering her lessons while Informant 13 is used to the discussion method.

Informants 17 and 18, both from West and are also primary teachers are inclined to using different group strategies in delivering their lessons to their Sama learners. Informant 17 is employing lecture, discussion and boardwork while Informant 18 articulated “I use explicit teaching and differentiated approach”.

This strategy was also employed by 5 informants teaching Grade III. It may also be considered as theme representing the majority of the Grade III teachers with a total of 7. It seems that the five teachers are using different group strategies. After translating the lessons, the teachers are still applying other strategies in teaching. Perhaps, the teachers have proven the effectiveness of these that’s why along with translation; they still employ other teaching strategies that they believe appropriate to the level of the Sama learners.

It is known that different group work can be an effective method to motivate students, encourage active learning, and develop key critical-thinking, communication, and decision-making skills. But without careful planning and facilitation, group work can frustrate students and instructors and feel like a waste of time.

David Johnson, Roger Johnson, and Karl Smith performed a meta-analysis of 168 studies comparing cooperative learning to competitive learning and individualistic learning in college students (Johnson et al., 2006). They found that cooperative learning produced greater academic achievement than both competitive learning and individualistic learning across the studies, exhibiting a mean weighted effect size of 0.54 when comparing cooperation and competition and 0.51 when comparing cooperation and individualistic learning. In essence, these results indicate that cooperative learning increases student academic performance by approximately one-half of a standard deviation when compared to non-cooperative learning models, an effect that is considered moderate. Importantly, the academic achievement measures were defined in each study, and ranged from lower-level cognitive tasks (e.g., knowledge acquisition and retention) to higher level cognitive activity (e.g., creative problem solving), and from verbal tasks to mathematical tasks to procedural tasks. The meta-analysis also showed substantial effects on other metrics, including self-esteem and positive attitudes about learning. George Kuh and colleagues also conclude that cooperative group learning promotes student engagement and academic performance (Kuh et al., 2007).

Theme 5: Using Teacher-made Instructional Materials

Thematic analysis also highlighted another theme based on the informants’ responses. There are 8 teachers articulated similar ideas that have come up with the sixth theme which states that teachers also used teacher-made instructional materials. This was also supported by the 4 school heads during the individual interview conducted.

Informant 16, a Grade 2 teacher, uttered that “*We don’t use the Tausug materials, but we devise our own IMs using the CG of the MT as basis*”. The same thought was conveyed by informant 18, a Grade 3 teacher, when she also articulated that “*We are confused because we don’t have TGs. We need to make our own guide for topics to teach within the week*”.

Informant 3, 5, and 9 similarly said in the interview that they need to device their own instructional materials due to the scarcity and limited number of IMs given to them.

The same thing happened to informants 12 and 14 when they uttered that “ *kalagihan kami kakatas katasan panambal pagpanduh* ” (We really prepare IMs to supplement during our teaching)”.

Based on further analysis, the 8 informants employed this strategy due to the fact that they have received limited IMs while some of them did not yet receive the teaching and learning materials from the Division, that is why, they temporarily resorted to the production of their own IM’s but they emphasized that these materials are still based on the Bahasa Sug curriculum guide.

To supplement to this claim, the school heads’ reports also authenticate the claims of the teachers. All the school heads agreed that instructional materials issued to their schools are limited only and they are still waiting for the rest which they said to be coming from the Division office and central office of the DepEd. Relative to this, they always emphasized to their teachers to be innovative to address this concern.

Devising teacher’s own instructional materials is a characteristic that teachers should possess for being called a 21st century teacher. This characteristic will help the teachers in contextualizing their materials to the needs of their learners especially it is true that every learner has different learning needs and learning preference.

Generally, teachers tend to use all guidance provided by a textbook. However, it is a fact that a textbook does not always meet the variety of conditions in a language class (Ur,1996; Richards, 2003). This is specially in the context of this current study where the materials were written in the language other than their mother tongue.

Sometimes, teachers need to explore teaching materials outside textbooks and modify them in order to be relevant to the need and demands of particular group of students. Teachers’ experiences and understanding of their students is very important in materials development, so that the students are motivated in learning the target language. According to Tomlinson (1998) materials development refers to anything which is done by writers, teachers or learners to provide sources of language input in ways which maximize the likelihood of intake.

In doing so, materials developers, including teachers, may bring pictures or advertisements in the classroom, compose a textbook, design a student worksheet, read a poem or an article aloud. Table 2.0 shows the summary of the strategies employed by the teachers according to the Grade level.

Table 2.0

Grade Level	Strategies Employed by the Teacher-Informants
Grade I	Translation of lessons/ideas from Bahasa Sug to Sinama. Using Different visual aids such as pictures, flashcards and graphs. Reading strategies like marungko approach, phonetic approaches, vocabulary and storytelling Using Teacher-made Instructional Materials
Grade II	Translation of lessons/ideas from Bahasa Sug to Sinama. Using Different visual aids such as pictures, flashcards and graphs. Reading strategies like marungko approach, phonetic approaches, vocabulary and storytelling Using Teacher-made Instructional Materials
Grade III	Translation of lessons/ideas from Bahasa Sug to Sinama. Using Different visual aids such as pictures, flashcards and graphs. Reading strategies like marungko approach, phonetic approaches, vocabulary and storytelling Using Differentiated activities/strategies like lecture and discussion Using Teacher-made Instructional Materials

Summary of the Strategies Employed by the Teachers According to the Grade Level

Edge (1993) also stated that materials exist in order to support learning/teaching, so they should be designed to suit the people & the processes involved. Most teachers are not creators of teaching materials but providers of good materials. For that purpose, teachers may conduct materials adaptation in order that they can provide good materials for their students. Materials adaptation involves changing existing materials so that they become more suitable for specific learners, teachers or situations just in the case of the Sama learners.

One interesting finding from this study was the claim of the other 2 informants that emerged from their statement. Although this may not be considered a theme due to the less number of informants who expressed this thought, the researcher included this for another thought to ponder especially for the future researchers.

Despite the confession of the teachers that most of them cannot understand Bahasa Sug language, Informant 13 reveals that “I have to ask others who know Sug”. This statement implies that peer coaching is also one of the strategies that some teachers applied in order to deliver the lesson well.

Informant 18 also disposed that “*__atilaw gih aku ni kasehean ku bang huruf atau Bahasa alalom na*”(I have to ask my peers because I am not familiar with the other terms.

However, further analysis supports her statement since there are also teachers in their schools, though they are not fluent in the language, but they speak a little bahasa Sug and understand the language too. Nonetheless, even if only one informant disclosed this theme, the researcher believed on its importance to be considered by other teachers who have similar teaching experiences with the informants.

According to Joyce and Showers (2002), peer coaching is a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace. Although peer coaching seems to be the most prominent label for this type of activity, a variety of other names are used in schools: peer support, consulting colleagues, peer sharing, and caring like in the case some informants in this study. These other names seem to have evolved, in some cases, out of teacher discomfort with the term *coaching*. In the study of Saavedra (2016), this is one of the varied strategies which they utilized to improve their linguistic competence which may also be applicable to the students.

In their work, Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (2002) focused on identifying what components a professional development (PD) program must have for it to impact student achievement. Looking at three potential outcomes of PD—knowledge, skill, and transfer—they concluded that transfer is required for the PD to truly impact student learning. In their efforts to determine what components of PD were essential to achieve this transfer of learning to the classroom, Joyce and Showers found that PD must include four components— study of theory, demonstration, practice, and peer coaching—for teachers to actually impact student achievement by implementing what they have learned in the classroom.

Peer coaching can also be helpful to reduce isolation among teachers and to build collaborative norms to enable teachers to support each other. Hence, peer coaching helps to develop a better understanding of best practices and better-articulated curriculum. According to Becker (n.d.), peer coaching has contributed to an overall improvement in teaching and learning in the US schools.

Yee (2016) also reported in her study that peer coaching has improved the working habits in our department. The discussion for pre- and post-observation, the lesson plan, the feedbacks and comments for improvement had enhanced better communication and commitment in the team. It could not be denied that for effective peer coaching, team members must be dedicated to working in a trusting relationship and to be open-minded with sharing classroom experiences. Peer coaching not only helped us to grow professionally but also to build trust.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

After analyzing the informants' responses through thematic analysis, there are 7 themes that came up which were clustered based on similarity of the given ideas. The teachers shared seven strategies which includes 1) translation of lessons/ideas from Bahasa Sug to Sinama, 2) using different visual aids such as pictures, flashcards and graphs, 3) reading strategies like marungko approach, phonetic approaches, vocabulary and storytelling, 4) differentiated activities/strategies like lecture and discussion, 5) using additional textbooks in Bahasa Sug, Filipino and English, 6) Using Teacher-made Instructional Materials and 7) peer coaching. Clearly, the study concluded that early childhood educators have utilized varied teaching strategies where the cultural background where also considered.

In relation to the mismatch of the teachers' language and materials of the curriculum, this study also recommends that Sinama orthography should be developed and finalized because this will be the foundation and basis of the writers in preparing the Sinama instructional materials. Having a unified orthography especially Sinama language has also dialects or variants, this will result to commonality wherein confusion on some vocabularies may be avoided on Sinama vocabulary.

REFERENCES

- Alderson, C., & Urquhart, A. H. (1984). Introduction: what is reading? In C. Alderson, & A. H. Urquhart (Eds.), *Reading in a foreign language* (pp. 16-28). London & New York: Longman.
- Alejandro, W. D. C., Saavedra, A. D., & Espinosa, R. C. (2022). Self-perceived research competence among social sciences students: An investigative survey during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Health Sciences, Special Issue III*, 4211-4221.
- Benson, Carol. 2001. *Real and potential benefits of bilingual programs in developing countries*. Paper presented at the Third Annual Symposium on Bilingual Education, Bristol England, 20 April, 2001.
- Carrell, P. (1991). Second Language Reading: Reading Ability or Language Proficiency? . *Applied Linguistics*, Volume 12, Issue 2, June 1991, Pages 159-179
- Casquite, M. S. (2010). *Insider and outsider roles and other essential elements in developing quality and culturally sensitive mle materials*. Paper presented at the 1st Philippine Conference on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education.
- Dekker and Young (2005) Dekker, D., & Young, C. (2005). *bridging the gap: the development of appropriate educational strategies for minority language communities in the Philippines*. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 6(2), 182-199.
- DepEd (2009). *Deped order 74 institutionalizing mother tongue-based multilingual education*. Pasig City
- Hinton, L. (2001). Language Revitalization: An Overview", pp. 3-18, in Hinton, L. & Hale, Ken (Eds.). *The green book of language revitalization in practice*. San Diego: Academic Press Human Development Network
- Jaani, A.-N. A. (2022). Tertiary teachers' instructional methods, strategies and resources used. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S1), 14161-14174.
- Jinghran, D. 2005. *Language disadvantage. the learning challenge in primary education*. New Delhi: A. P. H. Publishing.
- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R., & Smith, K. (2006). *Active learning: Cooperation in the university classroom* (3rd ed.). Edina, MN: Interaction.
- Kuh, G. D. et al. (Eds.) (2007). *Piecing together the student success puzzle: research, propositions, and recommendations*. ASHE Higher Education Report, 32, 1-182.
- Lartec, et.al., (2014). *Strategies and problems encountered by teachers in implementing mother tongue – based instruction in multilingual Classroom*, Baguio City, Philippines.
- loe, J. L. (2008). *Knowledge and critical pedagogy: an introduction dordrecht: springer*.
- Malone, S. (2007). *Mother tongue-based multilingual education: implications for education policy*. Presented at the Seminar on Education Policy and the Right to Education: Towards More Equitable Outcomes for South Asia's Children Kathmandu, 17-20 September 2007
- Martinez, J.S. (2022). Reading strategies: its implication to the reading level among early grade learners. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (INT-JECS) ISSN: 1308-5581 Vol 14, Issue 04 2022* .
- Mohanty, A. K. (1990). *Psychological consequences of mother tongue maintenance and multilingualism in India*. In D. P. Pattanayak (Ed.), *Multilingualism in India* (pp. 54-66). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

- Paulson, R. (2004). *A professional development program for the mother tongue-based teacher: assessing teacher knowledge and attitudes about mtbml*. University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- Richards, K. (2003) *Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Saavedra, A. (2016). Varied strategies in improving the linguistic competence of selected elementary teachers: an action research. *Elementary Education Online 15 (Issue 2)*, pp. 723-727
- Saavedra, A. (2020). Teachers' Preference on the Local Policy Implementation of the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education: An Assessment. *Asian EFL 27 (2.2)*, 217-238
- Saavedra (2020). Chavacano as a medium of instruction: its implications for the reading levels of english in elementary school pupils. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change 10 (10)*
- Sibayan, B. P. (1985). *The filipino people and english*. in k. r. janowsky (ed.), *scientific and humanistic dimensions of language (pp. 581-593)*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Tomlinson, B. (ed.) (1998a). *Materials development in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- UNESCO. 2003. *Education in a Multilingual World*. Paris, UNESCO.
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001297/129728e.pdf>
- Ur, P. (1996) *A course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- World Bank. 2005. *In their Own Language: Education for All*. New York: World Bank
- World Bank, (2006). *Language of learning, language of instruction. Implications for achieving Education for All*. New York: The World Bank
- Yee A. (2016). The Unwritten Rules Of Engagement: Social Class Differences in Undergraduates' Academic Strategies. *The Journal of Higher Education 87(6)*: 831-858.