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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Translanguaging in the MTB-MLE Classroom: A Case of an Island School With Multilingual Learners

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Abstract: Several studies on the development of translanguaging as a linguistic resource in a multilingual classroom have been done. The findings of the research imply that using translanguaging in English language teaching and learning is a useful method, especially in a classroom where English is taught as a second or foreign language. The primary goal of this research, on the other hand, is to look into the languages presented in an MTB-MLE as a subject and investigate the linguistic hybridity of the mother tongue used in the classroom as a language exercise, and find out the teacher's perspectives on teaching a mother tongue (MT) subject to multilingual learners. As a result, this paper presents a case of a mother tongue-based-multilingual education (MTB-MLE) class and how the MT subject is taught in a single classroom with five different local languages represented as MTs. The corpus of the study draws from a Grade 1 MT classroom in an island municipality in the Philippines. The researcher was able to examine the linguistic hybridity of the MT as a language practiced by the children in the school using a translanguaging framework. Furthermore, through immersion, observation, and informal interviews, it was found that translanguaging is already an intrinsic component of the "actual" language that surrounds the children, both outside and inside the MT classroom. More importantly, the study revealed that in a translingual classroom, both the teacher and the learners have linguistic potential and language competency.

Keywords: translanguaging, mother tongue education, MTB-MLE, multilingualism, bilingual education

The role of language in the learning process has been the subject of much debate in the education system of this country and beyond. Even the introduction of mother tongue-based multilingual education [MTB-MLE] in the Philippines during the academic year 2012–2013 (Department of Education [DepEd], 2012) did not put an end to such debates but rather opened the

door to a new set of issues to debate (Joting-Quiman et al., 2016). The shift from bilingual to multilingual in the language policy is a notable one in the history of the Philippines. It brought a remarkable impact on the Philippine education system as it faced different attitudes and challenges towards language shift in the teaching and learning process.

It is believed that the new language policy sought to promote literacy and learning through the utilization of the learner's native tongue during his or her formative years (Bernardo, 2007; Tupas, 2004). Because the role of language is vital in the early cognitive development of the child, the role of the language teacher is therefore crucial in achieving this goal. According to Lucas et al. (2011), linguistically responsive teachers understand the connection between language, culture, and identity, and they develop an awareness of the sociopolitical dimensions of language use and language education.

In writing this paper, I wanted to show how MTB-MLE can be implemented in classrooms where five local languages are represented as mother tongues. This paper may scratch the surface of potential areas to emphasize in the in-service training (INSET) for teachers, particularly those teaching mother tongue as a subject. This paper will supplement the existing literature on MTB-MLE and multilingual education, in addition to much larger existing studies on bilingualism and bilingual education. Furthermore, it is deemed beneficial to language education policymakers that they may consider some of the insights and issues presented to enhance language in education policy planning.

MTB-MLE in the Philippines

The positive outcomes of Walter and Dekker's (2008) mother tongue education (MTE) pilot project in Lubuagan, Philippines led the DepEd to issue Department Order (DO) No. 74 in 2009, commonly known as *Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education* (MLE). The department described this program as "the effective use of more than two languages for literacy and instruction" (p. 1). To officially carry out the program, the MTB-MLE in the Philippines was formally implemented during the academic year 2012–2013 through the Order No. 31 (DepEd, 2012). This new language in education policy was institutionalized as a fundamental educational policy and program under the supervision of DepEd in its entire jurisdiction, that is, at the basic education level, including pre-school, and in the Alternative Learning System (ALS). The program requires the teachers to use the learner's L1 as the medium of instruction for all the subjects except for Filipino and English, starting from pre-kindergarten up to Grade 3.

When the MTBMLE in the K-12 curriculum was introduced in the academic year 2012–2013, there were only 12 major languages used as mediums of instruction (MOI). These languages were Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Ilokano, Bikolano, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausug, Maguindanaoan, Maranao, and Chabacano.

After identifying 12 major languages, it took a year for the department to issue another order recognizing additional local languages to be used in teaching young learners in public schools under the K–12 reform program. Through DO 28, s. 2013, known as the *Additional Guidelines to DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2012 (Guidelines on the Implementation of the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE))*, seven new languages were added as mother tongue subjects, and these were Ybanag, Ivatan, Sambal, Aklanon, Kinaray-a, Yakan, and Surigaonon.

Since its launch during the academic year 2012–2013, the program has faced a lot of issues and concerns even up to now. These problems become a challenge to the DepEd personnel, as well as to the stakeholders. In fact, stakeholders had different perspectives on the program's implementation and the program itself (Ponce & Lucas, 2011). One of the major issues that teachers face is a lack of work texts or teaching materials for mother tongue subjects. This is because many non-Tagalog languages were not taught in school for a number of years (Oyzon & Fullmer, 2014), which is why there are virtually no instructional materials, grammar materials, or vocabulary lists for Grades 1-3 teachers and students. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests that even the teachers themselves are not confident in terms of vocabulary competence in their own L1. Teachers teaching the subjects are then compelled to solve the problem by making their own teaching materials. Unfortunately, most of them do not have enough background in the L1, including Kinaray-a, as the medium of instruction in teaching MT. Moreover, they only have limited resources to utilize, resulting in inconsistent and problematic teaching materials.

Despite the many challenges that language policymakers, educators, and administrators are facing regarding language and education policies in the Philippines, Gallego and Zubiri (2011) saw the importance of MTB-MLE implementation. They believed that MTBMLE provides a sustainable future for Filipinos because it will not only improve the

quality of education in the Philippines but will also secure the long-term school success of the students and boost the health of the local languages as well.

Philippines as a Multilingual Community

The Philippine linguistic landscape is noted for its heterogeneity. In fact, the 24th edition of Ethnologue, released in 2021, reported that there are 186 distinct languages in the country (Ethnologue, 2022). Antique, as one of the provinces of the Philippines, is a multicultural community. Thus, Antiqueos are multilingual. Aside from Kinaray-a, they can also speak Hiligaynon, Tagalog (Filipino), and English. This is also true of the Caluyahnon, the inhabitants of Caluya, Antique. Caluya is the only island municipality among the 18 towns of Antique Province. It is home to the country's largest coal mining industry, which means it is teeming with multilingual and multicultural residents, both locals and migrant workers. Consequently, the contemporary *Caluyanon* community does not speak monolingual *Caluyanon*, but a lot of code-switching happens.

The tendency to code-switch from one language to another is not a language deficiency but rather a distinct feature of being a bilingual or multilingual speaker (Grosjean, 2013). Code-switching is, therefore, a linguistic resource that enables one to attain effective communication. In language teaching, using, expecting, and requiring a single contact language as the norm is a monolingual fallacy, which is a fundamental distrust of bilingualism (Phillipson, 1992 in Bernardo, 2007) and a failure to consider the students' intense linguistic experiences in other languages. Students are therefore taught, specifically in the MTB-MLE class, in a way that the medium of instruction is something to consider fundamental to crafting pedagogical devices to achieve communicative goals. Knowing all those principles and concepts gives the teachers perspective that in the teaching and learning process, there is a need to know the learners' language backgrounds so that one can provide appropriate interventions and devices to further optimize learning, especially for the Filipino learners who are mostly multilingual.

Teaching MTB-MLE as a subject in the classroom using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction from a monolingual perspective will create problems for the learners because the language used might not be the same as the naturally occurring language practiced outside the school, particularly in a community where

learners are multilingual or multicultural. In the study by Wang (2005), both teachers and students agreed that using the mother tongue in the classroom, especially for pedagogical purposes, helped students learn more. Literature also informs that appropriately using learner's L1 could help them build on their existing knowledge and experience (Liu & Fang, 2020), increase students participation (Daniel et al., 2019), and develop rapport among learners (Wang, 2019a). Furthermore, bilinguals switch languages during production if the desired statement is more accessible or better stated in the other language (Phillips & Pylkkänen, 2021).

Having said that, the present study opines that MTB-MLE as a subject lesson with multilingual learners demonstrates translanguaging. The myth of the pure language, which is taught in mother tongue schools according to the majority of mother tongue teachers, is refuted. This is the principle that I hope to establish in this investigation. According to Cook (2011), the L1 construct is already an abstraction. In fact, the mother tongue of learners may be considered abstract (Canagaraja, 2013) and not an extant reality, as the language that the learners are using is already fluid, or they are exposed to not only one but many. This concept supports the reality of language learning in multilingual and multicultural contexts, especially in the Philippines.

Codeswitching vis-a-vis Translanguaging

Interestingly, the expression of code-switching in a multilingual classroom was mentioned previously in the earlier part of this research project. Several studies on code-switching have also been noted to support that code-switching is practiced in the classroom, and there were several challenging research findings on code-switching in the classroom. For example, Bernardo (2000) investigated the effect of using the Filipino students' first or second language on their mathematical problem-solving ability. He concluded that there is no single effect of language on mathematical ability. Instead, the language effects are "multifarious and specific to the different components of mathematical problem solving" (p. 303). Martin's (2006) study on code-switching, which analyzed two cases of college science students, found that the practice does not support the goals of delivering content knowledge. According to her, code-switching was used by science teachers as a pedagogical tool for motivating

student response and action, ensuring rapport and solidarity, promoting shared meaning, checking student understanding, and maintaining the teaching narrative.

Myers-Scotton (1993) defined code-switching as the use of two language varieties in the same conversation. This idea is supported by Creese and Blackledge (2010), who said that switching from one language to another in a conversation may be considered code-switching. This study, however, goes beyond code-switching, which basically considers language as a code and shifts from one language code to another, as the present study postulates language as a translanguaging practice. Thus, this paper follows García's (2009) translanguaging view. This bilingual education scholar theorized that "translanguaging is a sociocognitive theory that counters traditional 'monoglossic' understandings of bilingualism" (Hamman-Ortiz, 2020, p. 64). The translanguaging framework contends that the bilingual brain is not made up of two independent language systems, but rather of a holistic repertoire comprising a variety of communicative tools that can be used as needed for various audiences and contexts (Otheguy et al., 2015). In addition, Garcia (2009, as cited in De Los Reyes, 2019) backed up the claim that translanguaging is not codeswitching by refuting the latter's premise that "bilinguals' two languages are two different monolingual codes that might be utilized without reference to each other" (p. 307).

Studies on translanguaging in the classroom suggest that language practice benefits both teachers and students in terms of learning. When Torpsten (2018) studied translanguaging in a multilingual Swedish classroom, she discovered that it led to a larger and deeper understanding of language and subjects. De Los Reyes (2018) found a good outcome when he researched translanguaging in multilingual classes. He noted that teachers were able to present their lessons more effectively and efficiently and that students were able to contribute meaningfully to classroom discussions.

The above discussion is a ramification that, to accomplish meaningful learning, educators should consider a translanguaging classroom as a safe and comfortable language learning environment. As described in this study, a translanguaging classroom is a learning environment in which many languages are used and shared in conversation to establish a

common understanding among multilingual learners. Translanguaging pedagogy, according to David et al. (2019), is a natural hybrid practice. As a result, the students' use of their linguistic repertoire to communicate in class and highlight numerous languages in a favorable light is important. Recontextualizing the students' translanguaging experiences in the classroom, regardless of their native language, supports the students' socio-emotional growth and cultural identities by achieving bilingualism or multilingual ways of knowing.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to look into the languages utilized in an MTB-MLE as a subject for Grade 1 pupils. The said class used Caluyanon language as MOI. I am interested in the linguistic hybridity of the language and would want to investigate how Caluyanon is used in the classroom as a language exercise to carry out the teacher's perspectives to multilingual learners by answering the following questions:

1. What languages are represented in the MTB-MLE as a subject class interaction?
2. Do the multilingual teacher and the learners use translanguaging in MTB-MLE classroom?
3. Does translanguaging facilitate learners' communicative skills in learning MTB-MLE?

Theoretical Framework

This paper's theoretical foundation is based on contact linguistics multilingualism frameworks. The paper's overall framework, however, is translanguaging, which attempts to investigate the idea that a learner's "mother tongue" may be fluid (Canagaraja, 2013) because the language they use and are exposed to is not one, but many. This work is also based on Krashen's (1982) affective filter theory, which aims to apply the theory to language education by showing how learners can make the most of their learning experiences when their affective (or emotional) variables such as when learners are more motivated, more self-confident, and less anxious.

Methodology

Research Locale

The study was conducted in an elementary school in Caluya, Antique (the Philippines). As mentioned in the previous section, Caluya is an island municipality. However, it is made up of three major islands and four islets. The town proper, which is home to the Municipal Hall and most government offices, is composed of eight barangays. Other islands, such as Semirara, Sibay, and Sibato, which are bigger than the island of the town proper, are composed of several barangays too.

Caluya is in the northernmost part of Antique Province, the Philippines. Being an island municipality, it is not a part of mainland Antique. The primary language spoken in the island municipality is Caluyanon (which *Caluyanhons* call *Binisaya*). The language on mainland Antique (on the island of Panay, which the provinces of Aklan, Iloilo, and Capiz also share) is known as Kinaray-a, the same language spoken by some towns in the provinces of Aklan, Capiz, and Iloilo.

Due to its geographical location, however, the Caluyanon language carries an apparent variation from those varieties in the mainland municipalities. Because of this, the Caluyanon is often unintelligible to most people on mainland Antique. This variety may be attributed to influences coming from nearby islands like Panay, Mindoro, Romblon, and Palawan. Caluyanon has, in its lexicon, Tagalog, Aklanon, Hiligaynon, Cebuano, Cuyonon, and Kinaray-a terms, among others.

Materials

The study involved a 55-year-old female teacher (who has been teaching MTB-MLE in Grade 1 for four years, but she has been in the teaching profession for 27 years in the said school) and her 16 male and 17 female Grade 1 pupils as informants. It should be noted that the teacher's first language (L1) is Kinaray-a. Most of the pupils were in their childhood (5–6 years old) phase. Twenty-six pupils were reported to have Caluyanon as their L1, whereas four from Occidental Mindoro have Tagalog as their L1, two Kinaray-a speakers from mainland Antique, and a Masbateño speaker from Masbate.

Grade 1 MTB-MLE as a subject lesson was recorded and transcribed as the corpus of the study. The lesson guide used for that session was also assessed

for reference. The class meets daily for 50 minutes for language literacy activities using the mother tongue Caluyanon as the medium of instruction. The material in this study was gathered during the Academic Year 2018–2019.

Research Ethics Procedure

I requested permission to record the MTB-MLE as a topic lesson of Grade 1 class through an official letter to the school's principal, following the study ethics protocol for human subjects. Following his agreement, an informed consent form was obtained on behalf of the students for the class adviser to affirm her participation prior to the recording.

During the first day of recordings, I and my former colleague, who teaches in the island municipality where the study locale is located, visited the target informants in their classroom and informed them of the following: the purpose of the activity, their role as informants, and the recording schedule. Following that, the MTB-MLE class was taped.

Data Analysis

The full recording process took a week to complete. Five sessions of Grade 1 MTB-MLE as a subject were recorded in succession. The final session was transcribed in the hopes that the children would not be mindful that they were being recorded and that the last one would be the most naturally occurring discourse among the sessions.

The paper employs a qualitative-descriptive design, characterized by an inductive process of generating themes and patterns and organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information (Creswell, 2007). To attain the objectives of the present study, I utilized Grade 1 MTB-MLE subject lesson as the research corpus. The data analysis procedure for this study was as follows. First, the lesson was recorded. Second, it was transcribed. It should be noted here that there were no transcription notations used during the transcription. Third, I submitted the transcribed data to the teacher informant and to the colleague who was present during the class observation to ensure that the transcribed data was accurate. After transcription, content analysis was performed on the teacher's answers in the semi-structured interview. The themes and patterns that emerged from the transcriptions and the interview were noted and analyzed.

Results and Discussion

1. What Languages are Represented in the MTB-MLE as a Subject Class Interaction?

Based on the transcribed spoken data, it was found that there was an interplay of five languages in the MTB-MLE as a subject in Grade 1 class. Table 1 presents the different languages present in the entire lesson and the percentages of the lexicons used.

Caluyanon dominated the languages used in the classroom discussion of the MTB-MLE class, comprising a total of 90.47% compared to the other languages used. Among the embedded languages, English (4.26%) is the most used language, followed by Tagalog (2.46%), Hiligaynon (1.40%), and Kinaray-a (1.40%). These results could be attributed to the fact that the pupils are multilingual and can speak three or more languages. The different mother tongues that these children possess made them observe translanguaging in a mother tongue lesson.

Another contributing factor to why a lot of translation is happening in the class discussion is that the teacher facilitating the lesson is not a native Caluyanon speaker. Apparently, translanguaging happens in an MTB-MLE as a subject if learners have diverse L1s. This is the reality in some MTB-MLE classes across the country. When delivering directions, asking questions, and expressing their opinions in class, both the teacher and the Grade 1 students employed a variety of languages.

2. Do the Multilingual Teacher and the Learners Use Translanguaging in MTB-MLE Classroom?

The MTB-MLE class's fifth meeting of the week, which was recorded and transcribed for the purpose of this study, focused on the learners' phonological

awareness. The learners were taught to write a specific letter from the alphabet, produce its sound, and then build many syllables and words that began with that sound. This observation was also in line with the lesson guide the teacher provided to me after he evaluated the material.

According to the subject teacher during the interview, the language used as the medium of instruction (MOI) in the MTB-MLE subject is Caluyanon, which is the dominant language of Caluya Island in Antique Province. There are 2,276 words in the transcript: 2,059 for Caluyanon morphemes, 97 for English, 56 for Tagalog, 32 for Hiligaynon, and 32 for Kinaray-a, respectively. There are pure complete Caluyanon sentences in the transcript. "Pure complete," according to Myers-Scotton (1993), means a sentence without any insertion of either content or system morphemes from English or another language. She referred to it as matrix language (ML) islands. Unfortunately, there are no pure and complete morphemes from other languages found in the transcript that could be identified as the embedded language (EL) island.

The categorized languages that were used as embedded languages, as well as the various words mentioned under each language, are shown in Table 2.

Table 1 shows that the words with a high number of occurrences in the transcript are terms in Caluyanon that do not have an absolute English translation. If there is one, it is either rarely used or completely unfamiliar to the language speakers. Consider the following snippet 1 from the transcript. Take note that the underlined terms are non-Caluyanon lexicons:

Table 1

The Languages Used and Their Percentage

Caluyanon	English	Tagalog	Hiligaynon	Kinaray-a	Total
2,059 words (90.47%)	97 words (4.26 %)	56 words (2.46 %)	32 words (1.40 %)	32 words (1.40 %)	2,276 words (100.00%)

Table 2*List of Embedded Lexicons and Their Frequencies*

English	<i>f</i>	Tagalog	<i>f</i>	Hiligaynon	<i>f</i>	Kinaray-a	<i>f</i>
Group 1	11	laso	14	kunla	11	liso	12
Group 2	7	opo	12	isa	7	ninyo	6
so	7	tunog	6	tan-aw	4	inyong	5
keyword	6	pansit	3	magtan-aw	3	ipakita	2
Group 3	5	tama	3	huo	1	lima	2
blue	5	aso	2	nan	1	inyo	1
Grade	4	usok	2	nan tan-aw	1	kaninyo	1
chart	4	ama	2	nagatan-aw	1	mapalantu-lantu	1
hello	4	lason	2	husto	1	nakun	1
syllable	3	madali	2	isa-isa	1	no	1
classmate/s	3	mga salita	1	tan-awa	1		
finish	3	panuto	1				
letter	3	sino	1				
yes	2	pisara	1				
blackboard	2	suso	1				
two	2	ligo	1				
wow	2	sa'yo na	1				
class	2	nanalo kami	1				
Group 4	2						
correct	2						
plus	2						
okay	1						
pancit canton	1						
Yeheey	1						
Group leader	1						
instruction	1						
leader	1						
phrase	1						
drawing	1						
bag	1						
key object	1						
picture	1						
one	1						
blend	1						
key symbol	1						
answer	1						
words	1						

Extract 1*(Free Translation)*

T: O, dadi tanan. Group 1, Group 2, Group 3 kag Group 4.
Durungan.

Ps: /lo/, /ka/, /la/, /pis/, /so/, /ma/, /li/, /am/,
/la/, /lo/, /la/, /lu/, lolo, lola, lapis, bata.

T: Dadi mga bata, sin-o ang makatudo dige sa chart kung
ano ang tinaga nga keyword naton dadi nga adlaw?

*Sin-o dige ang makatudo kang darwa ka kunla ukon
darwa ka syllable kon dapunon sanda darwa kag
mahimo atun keyword dadi nga adlaw.*

P: Keyword?

T: Ano gani aton keyword kaina, dadi?

P: Duto /b/, bola /b/

T: May bola? Bola?

P: /la/, lapis.

T: Dige sa may chart nga dya. Usuyon dige ang darwa ka
kunla.

P: Ma'am, Ma'am!

T: Nga kun dapunon sanda nga darwa mahimo nga
keyword nga lapis.

P: Ma'am, Ma'am!

T: O sige bi sin-o ang makatudo!

P: Ma'am, ako, Ma'am

T: Diin?

Tama mga bata?

Basahon natun ang gin...

P: Opo, lapis.

T: So, dadi ang inyong himuon. Maghimo pagid kita kang
mga tinaga nga dige natun ginbuol sa mga kunla nga
dige sa chart. Sino pa ang may nakita dige nga tinaga?

P: Uy, dato... lola, lola.

Ako, Ma'am!

T: Ikaw ano imo? Hambala anay.

P: Lola.

T: Ha?

Tuduhi asta mabatian kang classmates.

P: Lola.

T: Nabatian ninyo, Grade 1?

Ps: Opo

T: Diin naton dato ginbuol?

P: Ma'am dato, Ma'am (Pointing on board).

T: Bi itudo gani. Diin halin?

P: (Pointing) "lo", "la"

Okay, everybody. Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, and
Group 4. All together.

/lo/, /ka/, /la/, /pis/, /so/, /ma/, /li/, /am/, /la/, /lo/, /
la/, /lu/, lolo, lola, lapis, bata.

Okay, children, who can point out our keyword for
today in the chart?

Who can point out the two *kunla* or the two
syllables that if combined will form as our
keyword for today?

Keyword?

What was our keyword here, again?

That one, /b/, ball, /b/

Is there a ball? Ball?

/la/, lapis (pencil)

Find the two syllables here in this chart.

Ma'am, Ma'am! (Pupils raising their hands)

If you combine them, it will form the keyword
lapis (pencil)

Ma'am, Ma'am! (Pupils raising their hands)

Okay, let's see if who can do it!

Ma'am, me, Ma'am (pointing the two syllables)

Where

Is that right, children?

Let's read the...

Yes, pencil.

So, this is what you're going to do. We're going
to form new words from the given syllables in the
chart. Who else found a word here?

Oh, that one... *lola, lola*.

Me, Ma'am!

What's your answer? Say it first.

Lola (grandmother)

What?

Say it louder so that your classmates can hear it.

Lola (grandmother).

Did you hear it, Grade 1?

Yes.

Where did we get it?

There, Ma'am (Pointing on board).

Please point it out.

(Pointing) "lo", "la".

T: “lo” kag “la.”

Isulat nakun, [lola]

Sin-o pa. Sin-o ang makaagto sa pisara?

P: *Ako, Ma’am.*

T: *Okay, si Jinjon kuno.*

Ano Gha nga tinaga ang imo naulaman halin dyan sa may chart?

“lo” and “la”.

I’m going to write it, [lola] (grandmother)

Who else? Who wants to go to the chalkboard?

Me, Ma’am.

Okay, Jinjon wants to do it.

What word did you find in the chart?

The teacher used the words “syllable” and *kunla* throughout the dialogue. *Kunla*, which means syllable in English, is a strange term to her, according to the teacher. Because she could not think of an accurate translation in Caluyanon, she just followed the phrases in the teacher’s guide, which is written in Hiligaynon. Other worth noting terms are “keyword” and “chart,” which appear multiple times. When interviewed, the teacher stated that she is comfortable using the English term because the learners would quickly grasp and understand if English counterpart terms are used and that they would feel less anxious in class.

Although Caluyanon lacks a distinct politeness marker, such as *opo* in Tagalog, pupils use it when answering the teacher. Perhaps it is because they are taught to use *po* and *opo* to address teachers and others older than them in school, and it gradually becomes part of their linguistic repertoire. The teacher uses English phrases such as grade, chart, classmates, and Grades 1, 2, and so on because these English terms do not have direct translations in Caluyanon. On the other hand, in one of the lines in the transcript, the teacher used *pisara* instead of chalkboard because pupils are familiar with the term *pisara*, and it has been used frequently by the teacher in the Filipino subject. During the transition stage, the teacher also used the discourse particle “so.” This expression, along with “yeah” and “wow,” are English loan words (also known as borrowed words) that are considered part of the Caluyanon language.

The situation above exemplifies how a bilingual (and also multilingual) person’s mental trajectory works. According to Grosjean (2013), bilingual minds have executive control, which allows them to comprehend methods for improved comprehension and communication. The bilingual teacher and pupils in that Grade 1 class use code-switching to communicate. This language practice is a natural linguistic trait used by multilingual communicators in the communication

process. This phenomenon appears to occur among bilinguals because social factors such as “movement of people, education, and culture that affect language configuration” (Grosjean, 2013, p. 23) affect language configuration among these bilinguals/multilinguals.

Another thing in the transcript that I find interesting is the discussion of the word *liso*. *Liso* in Kinaray-a means “seed,” whereas, in Caluyanon, *liso* means “to move sideward.” In Caluyanon, a seed is called *busol*. An interesting discussion about the word seed, which means *liso* in Kinaray-a and *busol* in Caluyanon, is presented in extract 2.

In the situation above, a pupil in the class said *liso*, and no one seemed to mind until someone else said it again, and then the teacher emphasized and dwelt on the phrase. In English, the *liso* that a pupil is saying means seed. However, because most of the pupils in the class are native Caluyanon speakers, seed means *busol* to them and not *liso*. To acknowledge that *liso* also means seed, the teacher apparently repeated the term and used comprehension questions to elicit responses from individuals who were familiar with the term.

Cangarajah (2013) proposed the term “translingual practice” to describe the negotiating pattern in linguistic communication. In the fifth chapter of his book *Translingual Practice: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations*, he emphasized that translanguaging occurs during a conversation, especially when people who speak different languages use a familiar language as a lingua franca for mutual understanding. By forming a negotiation process to achieve shared understanding, this notion assists the teacher in achieving her goal of allowing the kids to learn that seed is *liso* in mainland Antique and *busol* in Caluya island. It is also worth noting that because the teacher’s first language is Kinaray, she highlights how the word is used in both languages, which would not be possible if the teacher’s L1 is Caluyanon. The scenario above illustrates how, in a multilingual classroom, the

Extract 2

<p>T: “ma” kag “li” kundi mahimo nga mali. <i>Ano pagid? Duro dan.</i></p> <p>P: Mali, liso.</p> <p>T: Oh ano pagid? Duro dan.</p> <p>P: Ma’am, liso. <i>Ma’am, Ma’am, Ma’am ako.</i></p> <p>T: Diin pagid? Oh ikaw, Edric.</p> <p>P: Liso.</p> <p>T: Liso! Kilala nyo ang liso?</p> <p>Ps: Opo!</p> <p>T: [Ano] ang liso nga ra hay?</p> <p>P: Liso, maliko, maliso.</p> <p>T: Ha? Barko?</p> <p>P: Maliko, maliko.</p> <p>T: Ah, maliko gali.</p> <p>P: Opo.</p> <p>T: Ah! Maliko? Maliso. <i>Ano pagid? Ano pagid ang ginatawag nga liso?</i></p> <p>P: Ma’am, ako, pa Ma’am! <i>Mapabinit.</i></p> <p>T: May pamangkot ako anay. Ano ang ginatawag nga liso?</p> <p>P: Binit. Mapabinit.</p> <p>T: Iba pa gid? <i>Ang mga prutas bala halimabawa magkaun kita kang manga, may ano duto sa sulod?</i></p> <p>P: May ulod! Ulod.</p> <p>T: May ulod?</p> <p>P: May busol. May busol.</p> <p>T: May busol. Tama! <i>Ang busol nga ra amo ran ang liso.</i></p> <p>P: Wow!</p> <p>T: Liso kung sa nayon, busol kung dige sa Caluya. <i>Ang liso nga dya busol kang prutas.</i></p> <p>P: Huod, liso, busol.</p>	<p>(Free Translation)</p> <p>“ma” and “li” will become <i>mali</i> (wrong). What else? There are many. <i>Mali</i> (wrong), <i>liso</i> (turn sideward). What else? Some more? Ma’am, <i>liso</i>. Ma’am, me, please. What else? Oh you, Edric. <i>Liso</i> (turn sideward). <i>Liso!</i> (referring to a ‘seed’ in Kinaray-a) Do you know what is <i>liso</i>? Yes! By the way, what is <i>liso</i>? <i>liso, maliko, maliso</i> (all mean ‘to turn sideward’ in Caluyanon) What? A boat? Maliko, maliko. Ah, you mean ‘to turn sideward’. Yes. Ah! <i>Maliko? Maliso</i>. What else? What does the word <i>liso</i> mean? Ma’am, me too, Ma’am! To go to the side (of the road) I have something to ask first. What is this thing called <i>liso</i>? To go to the side of the road. What else? For example in fruits. Like when we eat a mango, there’s something inside it, right? There’s worm! Worm. A worm? There’s <i>busol</i>. <i>May busol</i> (a seed). Right, there’s a seed. That <i>busol</i> is what we call <i>liso</i>. Wow! <i>Liso</i> in mainland Antique, <i>busol</i> here in Caluya. This <i>liso</i> is the <i>busol</i> (seed) of the fruit. Yes, <i>liso</i> is <i>busol</i>.</p>
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various languages present—in this case, the various mother tongues of the children—are shared and absorbed by all and become the contact language in the teaching and learning process.

1. Does Translanguaging Facilitate Learners' Communicative Skills in Learning MTB-MLE?

I interviewed the Grade 1 teacher who teaches MTB-MLE as a subject to better understand translanguaging in the classroom. In her interview, the Grade 1 mother tongue teacher stressed that “It is hard to use a pure Caluyannon particularly [if] the lessons in teaching numbers and shapes. There are shapes that do not have exact translation in vernacular that is why I always codeswitch.” She also claimed that pupils are more familiar with English concepts than with those in their mother tongue, which throws difficulty on the learners, and this places a burden on the part of the pupils because they are used to counting (perhaps being taught at home or with their peers) numbers in English, but in MTB-MLE, they are using their mother tongue.

In her interview, the teacher expressed a positive attitude toward the use of translanguaging, noting that using mixed languages in MT class assists learners in grasping the lesson easily and makes them participate in the discussion actively. According to her, using codeswitching in the MTB-MLE class effectively bridges processes, explains to students, and introduces concepts. The teacher also claims that “Pupils actively participate in the discussions because they can say their answers in whatever language they want to use and they comprehend the lesson well.”

Based on the responses of the teacher during the interview, the teacher claimed that because of code-switching in the classroom, the learners enjoy the activities, especially problem-solving. She noticed that cooperative learning is evident, and the learners are actively raising their hands to show their interest in answering the questions posed. The teacher also noticed that even slow learners learned concepts easily.

This paper posits that translanguaging is normal among multilingual learners. Translanguaging as a language practice is a result of the speakers' natural way of communicating because children are exposed to different languages that they may be considered as their own mother tongues as they also make use of

them in their daily interactions as part of their linguistic repertoire. Labeling the mother tongue as a pure monolithic language is therefore problematic because of the overlapping lexicon and syntax, especially among the Philippine languages and dialects (i.e., Caluyanon, Kinaray-a, Tagalog, and Hiligaynon) as observed in this paper.

In a multilingual classroom, where different local languages are considered mother tongues, translanguaging facilitates learning more effectively because learners access the language features of their more familiar language (e.g., English or Tagalog), even if it is not their MT, and deploy those features in the teaching and learning process. This notion is important because, according to Urbano et al. (2021), 21st-century learners are more culturally and linguistically diverse as the world constantly changes. Literacy has evolved to the point where it is now recognized as an integrated skill that contributes to global competitiveness. Moreover, the cognitive development of learners during the formative years is crucial (Casalan et al., 2021)—the reason that educators should allow linguistically diverse students to utilize the language with which they are most comfortable in the classroom.

The findings of this study corroborate with other studies from the perspective of multilingualism that through translanguaging, language users gain meaning through other modes or languages, especially from popular culture (Dovchin et al., 2015). Translanguaging is also often deployed to recognize students' first language as a linguistic resource to facilitate language learning (Liu & Fang, 2020), negotiate and resist language standardization (Parba, 2018), and recognize pupils' large linguistic potentials (Torpsten, 2018). This paper also supports De Los Reyes' (2019) notion of “familiar language,” in relation to translanguaging, as a kind of language that may not only be the L1 of the speaker but also the language they consistently use at or outside the home.

Conclusion

In general, the transcript, as reflected in the particular lesson, showed how Caluyanon and other languages are used in the classroom. There are five languages used in the MTB-MLE as a subject in Grade 1 class: Caluyanon, English, Tagalog, Hiligaynon,

and Kinaray-a. Based on the data, Caluyanon is the dominant language in a Mother tongue subject.

There are also several reasons why the teacher observed translanguaging. As discussed, there are no exact translations of some words, for example, English to Caluyanon. The teacher is less anxious about doing lessons in the classroom if she has observed translanguaging. The same observation had been made by each of her pupils in the classroom discussion. It is also favorable in the teaching-learning process to use terms familiar to the learners for immediate comprehension, and translanguaging is inevitable in a multilingual classroom.

According to the teacher, translanguaging as a linguistic resource in Grade 1 MTB-MLE class is useful in communication processes, particularly in processing a concept, because pupils are allowed to communicate with others in their native language. They actively participate in discussions and fully absorb the material. Furthermore, cooperative learning is visible, and slow learners quickly learn concepts. It could also be inferred that translanguaging and borrowing are already a part of the actual language that surrounds the children and that they are difficult to avoid even inside the classroom.

There really is a need for materials that deal with the realities of Caluyanon life, preferably in their language. There is also a need for the MT teacher who is a native speaker of the learners' language. This is the common complaint of teachers teaching MT—they are not native speakers of the language they teach. Should this be otherwise, the teacher must have the willingness and determination to learn the language of the learners by heart.

Pedagogical Implication

Although the use of the mother tongue raises expectations for the quality of language acquisition among primary students, certain realities must also be considered when implementing the MTB-MLE program. One admirable goal of using MT is to keep the language alive. However, such a goal should not obstruct the more important goal of bringing concepts closer to learners and developing higher-order thinking skills by using language they are comfortable with—that is, one they are exposed to most of the time and familiar with.

The argument for allowing translanguaging, or any other type of language blending in a classroom, is argued along this line. This may be addressed by the school and other stakeholders in their curriculum development and training, such as the In-service Teachers Training (INSET). Then there is the issue of community support for this project.

End users, particularly Grade 1 teachers, should be able to create their own materials for the subject, incorporating the culture and lifestyle of the community in which the learners live, rather than relying on ready-made materials created by education planners who have never visited their location. INSET should then be a place for these teachers to feel empowered or simply motivated. In-depth research on the implementation, effect, and advancement of MTB-MLE should also be done, including pupil and parent experiences.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

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