

After A Decade: Exploring Elementary Teachers' Attitude and Challenges in Handling Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education

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Abstract. This study explored teachers' experiences implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), which plays a vital role in education by embracing and honoring students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments. This study delves into elementary school teachers' attitudes and challenges while implementing MTB-MLE. Utilizing qualitative methods, the research explores teachers' experiences, shedding light on their perceptions, attitudes, and the obstacles encountered in the classroom. The study involves ten elementary school teachers in Banay-banay, Davao Oriental. Findings highlight various challenges, including the scarcity of learning resources and teacher training, unfamiliar terminologies, code-switching, and improved student proficiency. Despite generally positive attitudes among teachers, concerns such as poor implementation, lack of support, and unaddressed gaps persist. Insights drawn from teachers' experiences underscore the importance of proper implementation, remediation of gaps, and teacher consultation and dialogue. Addressing these challenges and fostering a supportive environment can optimize program implementation, benefiting students through enhanced language development and cultural preservation. Implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education requires ongoing support, professional development opportunities, and access to appropriate instructional materials for teachers and students. When these were met, it could lead to enhanced language development and proficiency among students. By effectively utilizing students' mother tongues as the medium of instruction.

KEY WORDS

1. mother tongue-based multilingual education 2. challenges 3. attitudes

Date Received: May 25, 2024 — Date Reviewed: June 01, 2024 — Date Published: July 1, 2024

1. Introduction

There are over one hundred and twenty languages spoken around the Philippines, with Filipino and English as its official language. Rural areas around the islands of the country have their different language spoken such as Kapampangan, Cebuano, Chavacano, Hiligaynon, and many more. A decade ago, Republic Act no. 10533, otherwise known as the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013” was signed into law by the late President Benigno Aquino. One of the salient features of this law is the use of the mother tongue as the medium or language of instruction and as one of the subjects taught in the classroom. In the implementation of Mother

Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, learners begin their education in the language they understand best- that is their mother tongue. Before adding additional languages such as a second and third language, learners need to develop a strong foundation first in their mother tongue. The goal of developing a solid foundation in the mother tongue was to develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language that would also develop their competencies in the different learning areas making Filipino children become lifelong learners. According to UNESCO (2007), the mother tongue is a language that a person has learned first, recognizes best, and practices most. Starting from kindergarten up to grade three, the mother tongue is used as the primary language of learning. In grades one to three, the mother tongue is taught as a subject. After reaching grade three, the country's official languages, such as Filipino and English, will be used as the language of instruction. This change in the language policy is part of the increasing movement around the globe to support mother tongue instruction in the early years of the child's education. Language policies such as the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, where the mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction, are not new. In some countries in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, different language policies are implemented. In Malaysia, the MBMMBI policy was implemented by the Malaysian Ministry of Education to uphold the Malay Language and strengthen the English language policy. Dominant mother tongues such as Malay are used as the medium of instruction in national schools at the primary level while other non-dominant mother tongues are taught as subjects in some areas of the country (Nagarathinam, 2008). Meanwhile, in Singapore, the Bilingual Policy requires all students in public schools to study both English and their mother tongue from the early years of primary education through the secondary level. The Na-

tional Language Policy of Thailand was implemented by the government to promote bilingual or multilingual education for the youth of ethnic groups whose mother tongue is different from the national language (Djite, 2011). In the Philippines, most programs in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education are designed to function in rural areas of the country where there exist countless different languages. One of its goals is to build a strong foundation in the learner's mother tongue to have an effective springboard for learning a second language and there are countless studies to prove that (Leighton, 2021). However, despite the pieces of evidence showing that the use of the mother tongue is an excellent approach to communicating lessons with the learners and promoting literacy in the second language, individuals outside the academic spheres concerned with the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education program do not understand this concept well (Cansino, 2023). Several issues concerning the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education program arose during the past ten years. A study has found that less than only 10% of the filing of House Bill 6125 aiming to suspend the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education as a subject from kindergarten to grade 3 started the controversy. The House bill was filed after Rep. Mark Go cited that compared to other countries, the Philippines has scored significantly low in the result of the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (Department of Education, 2019). Another House Bills 2188, filed by Rep. Roman Romulo, and 3925, filed by Rep. Mark Go in the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, sought to suspend the implementation of the provisions on the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the Republic Act No. 10533, particularly on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction for learners in kindergarten to grade 3. The suspension stems from the current inability of the

Department of Education to effectively implement the use of mother tongue in all regions as provided by RA 10533, which ranges from producing complete books and other instructional and learning materials to having trained teachers to properly teach the mother tongue. Based on the DepEd's assessment, only 72,872 out of 305,099 educators underwent training including supervisors, school heads, and teachers from kindergarten to grade 3. According to Gatchalian, chairman of the Senate Committee on Basic Education, most of the schools and teachers in the Philippines are not ready because based on DepEd's information, only 23Another issue concerning the implementation of the use of the mother tongue is the wide variety of prevailing languages used by people within an area. In the study conducted by Cabansag (2016), Tagalog was used as the medium of instruction and communication because the class is composed of learners who have different mother tongues. The same issue was observed in the study of Cansino, Maulad, Magbata, Alvarez, Excija,

and Kuwih (2022) in southern Palawan where Tagalog was used as the medium of instruction. This is common in cities or urban setups where there is a brimming diversity of culture. With these problems arising in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education after a decade, the elementary school teachers in the district of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental are facing the same issues. It has been observed that they are facing challenges in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. It is in this context that this study was conceptualized. The aim of this study is to unravel the attitudes and challenges experienced by elementary school teachers of Banaybanay Central Elementary School in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. Educational management insights will be drawn from the results of the study, and this will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in relation to the experiences of teachers in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—This study sought to explore the challenges experienced by elementary school teachers as well as their attitudes toward the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Banaybanay Central Elementary School. Their roles as the classroom implementers of the use of mother tongue play a big part in the success of this program. With the prevailing issues regarding the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education and the possibility that it might be suspended, the teachers who are the primary movers of the curriculum are the ones who will either benefit or be harmed by its suspension. Data was gathered through the challenges experienced by elementary school teachers in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the classroom. The data gathered helped the researcher formulate significant insights to add to the existing body of knowledge. In particular, this study helped teachers to have a deeper and wider understanding of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education program and its implementation.

1.2. Research Questions—This study sought to determine the attitudes and challenges experienced by elementary school teachers in handling Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. This study will be conducted, and the researcher seeks to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of teachers in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education after a decade?
- (2) What are the attitudes of teachers in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education?

(3) What educational management insights are drawn from the findings of the study?

1.3. *Definition of Terms*—

1.4. *Significant of the Study*—The purpose of conducting this research study on the experiences, particularly the challenges encountered by elementary school teachers in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education is to gain a deep understanding of their lived experiences, individual perspectives, and attitudes toward the implementation of the program. Four themes emerged from the experiences of the elementary school teachers and three themes emerged from their attitudes towards the implementation as well as the meaningful insights gained from the program.

1.5. *Theoretical Lens*—This study was anchored on the Socio-educational Model by Robert Gardner (1985). The model postulates that attitudes deemed to be educationally and socially relevant can influence motivation. Gardner (1985) posited in viewing motivation, a complex perspective must be used and that certain characteristics of learners must be present to facilitate language learning, including the learners' desire to learn, the effort they exert to learn, and a display of positive attitude towards learning. According to Tonio and Ella (2019), the teachers' willingness, interest, and openness towards learning and teaching Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education policy in the community for socialization and cultural learning are reflected in the attitudinal construct of integration. This gives clear emphasis on the teachers' ability to understand the language as well as the culture of a community. Motivation and attitude and their interdependent relationship were also stipulated in the model. These two variables go hand in hand and have a direct or indirect influence on successful language learning. In the context of the study, this theory was utilized as a basis for scrutinizing the teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. Chomsky's theory of language acquisition argues that human brain structures naturally allow for the capacity to learn and use languages. Chomsky believed that rules for language acquisition are innate (inborn) and strengthen naturally as humans grow and develop. Chomsky concluded that children must have an inborn faculty for language acquisition. According to this theory, the process is biologically determined - the human species has evolved a brain whose neural circuits contain linguistic information at birth. Chomsky's theory of language acquisition views language acquisition as a biologically determined process that uses neural circuits in the brain that have evolved to contain linguistic signals. Chomsky concluded that language acquisition requires an inborn faculty in children, a concept known as the language acquisition device. In other words, humans are born with an innate language "device" that enables them to learn any human language. Prior to Chomsky, it was widely agreed that language was acquired through experiential learning, but his theory argues that human brain structures naturally allow for the capacity to learn and use languages. Ricento and Hornberger's language policy and planning model (LPP) (1996) further reinforced the study. The model considers the actors within each of the national, institutional, and interpersonal levels. In this study, the national level refers to the language policy statements, the institutional level refers to the school,

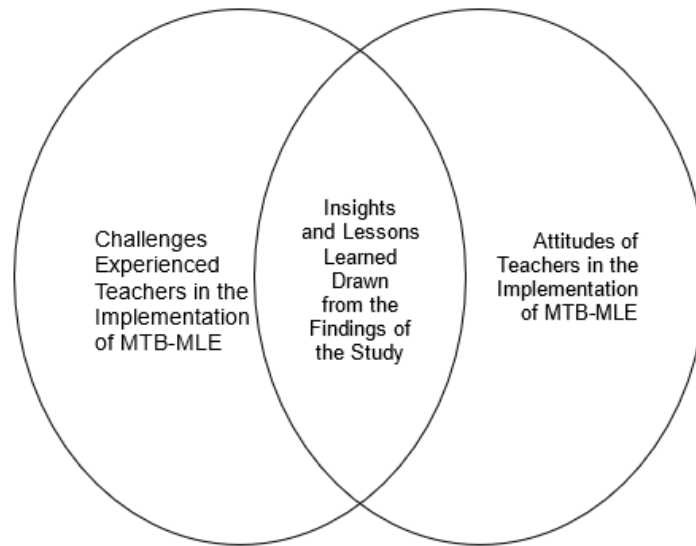


Fig. 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

and the interpersonal level refers to teachers as actors in the classroom. The model also highlights how reform implementation approaches from the national or community level interact to influence implementation at the classroom level. Agents from all three levels (national, institutional, interpersonal) interpret the language policy goals and objectives, and then negotiate between and within levels about the policy implementation process. The LPP model considers language planning and policy implementation as a multidirectional process that considers both top-down and bottom-up priorities. In the context of this study, the LPP was utilized in exploring how Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education is employed specifically at the interpersonal level which encompasses the teachers in the classroom. Mother Tongue Based-Multi Lingual Education (MTB-MLE) has its learning theories that help learners understand their own personal learning history and assist teachers in developing appropriate community-based learning activities. Cabansag (2016) found that challenges with MTB-MLE implementation in

the Philippines can be grouped into four: multilingual environment, difficulty in translation, mandatory compliance with the Department of Education order, and inadequacy of instructional materials. Figure 1 was the conceptual framework of the study. As seen in the figure, there are two interconnected circles of experiences. The experiences of challenges experienced by teachers in the implementation of MTB-MLE, a qualitative inquiry that allows researchers and teachers as well as learners to provide the necessary skills, knowledge, and focus on engaging in meaningful inquiry about their attitudes toward teachers in the Implementation of MTB-MLE, would enhance this practice and affect positive changes concerning the educative goals of the learning community. There was a real concern, as could be viewed with the first circle, which interlinks to the second circle; however, the center of the two circles determines that there is a way of exploring teachers' experiences in implementing MTB-MLE in trying times, a way of teaching and learning development that was critical to school success.

2. Methodology

This chapter effectively addressed the specific objectives of the study by outlining the systematic procedures and methodologies used in phenomenological research. It also explained the selected research design and the roles I played as the researcher throughout the study's implementation. Moreover, it offered thorough insights into the research subjects, clarifying their procedures and selection standards. The chapter concluded by exploring the techniques used for data collection, analysis, and strategies used to uphold ethical standards during the research.

2.1. Philosophical Assumptions—A study's philosophical and qualitative presumptions are vital in steering the investigation. Four fundamental assumptions—ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological—form the bedrock for comprehending qualitative research. These assumptions establish the groundwork for the research design and inform the researcher's approach to the study. A paradigm was a broad framework or perspective that guides and shapes how researchers approach their studies, formulate research questions, gather data, analyze findings, and interpret results. It encompasses a set of beliefs, assumptions, methodologies, and theoretical foundations that influence how researchers conceptualize and conduct their research (Zukauskas et al., 2018). In this research, the paradigm guided the choice of methodology, methods, and techniques, shaping the overall research process and ensuring coherence in the study.

Ontology. This section of the study focuses on the relationship between the problem and reality. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), ontology can be defined as the study of the nature of reality. The authors also assert that the research participants' perceptions of reality were varied and subjective. This study recognized the complexity and diversity of the realities faced by elementary school teachers regarding the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. Every participant's story added to a diverse yet collective understanding of their experiences. It was my sole responsibility to use theme analysis to capture these various realities and provide a thorough picture of the challenges faced by elementary school teachers and their attitudes toward the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education.

Epistemology. Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the known. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the researcher made an effort to reduce the gap between them and the participants based on the epistemological premise. By engaging directly with the participants, I became an "insider," facilitating a more authentic and nuanced collection of data. This approach supported the gathering of firsthand challenges, attitudes, and insights, which are critical in exploring the subjective realities of the participants.

Axiology. It concerns the influence and importance of my values as a researcher in this study. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), acknowledging and openly discussing the researcher's values that shape the study is crucial. The values which influence how data are interpreted and presented are explicitly acknowledged in the research process. As a researcher, I handled each participant's narrative with care and integrity, and I always had the utmost respect for the information they provided. This commitment guaranteed that the challenges experienced by the participants and their attitudes towards the program were communicated truthfully, mirroring both their individual and research values.

Methodology. According to Crotty (2020), this is "the strategy, plan of action, process, or design lying

behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of the methods to the desired outcomes.” Its objectives are to explain, assess, and defend procedures. This study explored elementary school teachers’ lived challenges and attitudes regarding Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education using a qualitative methodology. In order to support the ontological and epistemological tenets, certain techniques like focus groups and interviews are employed, enabling a thorough and sympathetic examination of participants’ stories. These techniques were chosen because they can successfully convey the complexity and depth

2.2. *Qualitative Assumptions*—Using a phenomenological research methodology, I explore the challenges and attitudes of elementary school teachers regarding the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. My objective was to gather information about their struggles and how they feel concerning the phenomenon I am studying. Utilizing phenomenology as my guiding qualitative framework, I uncovered the essence and significance of the roles played by these individuals, emphasizing their unique viewpoints and the intricate details of their experiences. As the study’s qualitative researcher, I supported a level of investigation that goes beyond cursory observations. My research investigated the difficulties faced by elementary school teach-

2.3. *Design and Procedure*—Determining the precise approach used in a study is crucial in order to customize the best research design, data collection strategy, and data analysis approach to the study’s objectives. I used a qualitative research design in this investigation. Hammersley (2013, cited in Aspers and Corte, 2019) states that studies characterized by verbal rather than statistical analysis are appropriate for qualitative

of the participants’ experiences. Rhetoric. In research, rhetoric is the skillful and convincing use of language, communication strategies, and presentation tactics to effectively communicate concepts, claims, and conclusions in order to sway the audience’s opinion and comprehension of the study (Beqiri, 2018). I utilized an engaging and respectful narrative style that honors the voices of the participants while effectively communicating the significance of the findings. This method not only made the research easier to read but also guaranteed that the interpretations were strong and based on the experiences of the participants.

ers together with their attitudes towards the implementation of the program in relation to the phenomenon. I emphasized the significance of understanding the complexities of the human experience in light of the various perspectives that are shaped by unique contexts, backgrounds, and personal histories (Neubauer et al., 2019). To capture the profound and complex nature of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, my study placed a strong emphasis on in-depth interviews, reflective dialogues, and the analysis of participants’ narratives. I hope to contribute a thorough and contextually rich understanding of the challenges, attitudes, and educational management insights related to Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, all while upholding phenomenological principles.

research. Since I studied the lived experiences, such as the challenges they faced, their attitudes towards the program, and the insights drawn from the study, the qualitative design is the most appropriate. This means that rather than establishing or refuting theories, I describe and elaborate on this phenomenon. There are, however, specialized methods used in qualitative research, including grounded theory, narrative,

case studies, phenomenology, and ethnography. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, I explored the lived experiences of the participants in this particular setting. I selected this approach because, according to Asper's (2009, cited in Aspers and Corte, 2019) work, the scientific side of phenomenological research focuses on communicating the viewpoints of the subjects and the importance of their experiences, then applying scientific concepts to analyze these perspectives. Furthermore, according to Creswell (2018), a phenomenological study is a method of inquiry that describes the complex

2.4. Research Participants—Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size than quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions. Obtaining most or all the perceptions leads to the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (2017) as cited in Hennink and Kaiser (2022) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommends 5 to twenty-five. According to Subedi (2021), larger samples in qualitative studies hinder an in-depth exploration of the study phenomenon. There are no specific rules when determining the appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and

2.5. Ethical Considerations—Ethical considerations are crucial because they relate to the moral principles and guidelines that govern my conduct as a researcher. These principles ensure that I carry out my investigations responsibly, treating participants with respect and striving to

and collective experiences of the participants with respect to a particular phenomenon. A key idea in phenomenology is to reduce one's interpretations of a particular phenomenon to a description that can be applied to all situations. Therefore, I identified a phenomenon that revolves around the participants' challenges in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. I then collected information from people who have direct experience with this phenomenon in order to create detailed and accurate descriptions.

study objectives (Patton, 2002 as cited in Mullet, 2018). The participants in this study consisted of 10 elementary school teachers from an elementary school in the district of Banaybanay, province of Davao Oriental. 5 participants were for the In-Depth Interview, and another 5 participants were for the Focus Group Discussion. These participants were selected based on specific criteria: elementary school teachers handling kindergarten to grade three classes, currently teaching in Banaybanay Central Elementary School, and implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. I utilized the purposive sampling design so that the participants were chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2018). It is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996 as cited in Vasileiou et al., 2018).

generate reliable and precise information. To protect participants, maintain scientific integrity, and foster trust within the research community, I adhered to established ethical standards in my research practices (Resnik, 2020). Social value. This concerns the potential benefits and favor-

able outcomes that research can bring to society, like addressing problems or improving people's quality of life. I evaluated the societal value of my study by acknowledging its potential impact and importance for the larger community. This ensured that resources are directed toward research that has the potential to create significant advantages for society. Informed Consent. This involves obtaining a participant's voluntary agreement to participate in a research study after they have been provided with sufficient information about the study's purpose, methods, potential drawbacks, and benefits. In this research, it was my responsibility to ensure that the participants fully understood the study and their rights. This explanation allowed them to make an informed decision about participation, thereby preserving their autonomy and dignity and ensuring consent. Vulnerability. The vulnerability of research participants pertains to their increased risk of experiencing harm, exploitation, or coercion due to factors such as age, cognitive ability, or socioeconomic status. As a researcher, it is crucial for me to acknowledge and consider the potential vulnerability of these participants and take appropriate measures to protect them. This involved providing additional safeguards and support, such as obtaining informed consent from the participants, ensuring confidentiality, and carefully explaining their rights and the study's procedures in a way they can understand. Additionally, I modified research methods to minimize potential adverse effects, ensuring that the well-being of the participants was prioritized throughout the study. Risks, benefits, and safety. In research, it is essential to carefully evaluate the potential risks and benefits associated with participation in a study, as well as to implement measures that safeguard the well-being of participants. These elements involve assessing the potential disadvantages and advantages of participating in a study, along with establishing strategies to ensure the welfare of participants.

In this investigation, as the researcher, I meticulously assessed and balanced these factors, ensuring that the potential benefits outweigh the risks. I put adequate precautions in place to minimize harm while optimizing the safety of participants, particularly considering the vulnerabilities of student participants. This comprehensive approach was crucial to maintaining ethical standards and protecting the participants throughout the research process. Privacy and confidentiality. Privacy and confidentiality in research are about safeguarding participants' personal information and ensuring their identity remains confidential unless they explicitly consent to disclosure. In the context of this study, I am responsible for implementing appropriate protocols to secure participants' data and maintain confidentiality. This included anonymizing data, securely storing information, and limiting access to authorized personnel only. These measures are crucial to protect the privacy of the participants and uphold the integrity of the research process. Justice. This concept relates to the equitable allocation of both the advantages and disadvantages resulting from research across various segments of society. In this study, I ensured that my research was inclusive, avoiding the exploitation or exclusion of vulnerable groups. Additionally, I strived to make the benefits of the research accessible to all who could benefit from it. This approach promoted fairness and equity throughout the research process, ensuring that no group bears an undue burden or is left out of the potential gains from the findings. Transparency. Transparency in research encompasses maintaining integrity at every phase of the study, from its conception and execution to the reporting of results. In this study, I offered clear and truthful information regarding my research methodologies and outcomes. Furthermore, I was receptive to examination and feedback. Transparency acts as a catalyst for trust, credibility, and accountability, not only within the research community but also

among the general public. This commitment to openness ensured that the process and results of my research were accessible and understandable to all stakeholders involved. The qualification of a researcher. The qualification of a researcher relates to one's academic background, professional experience, and proficiency in a particular area of study, ensuring that one possesses the requisite abilities and knowledge to conduct the research competently. In this investigation, I held suitable qualifications that showcase my capability to conduct research, analyze data, and interpret the results. My expertise and training provided the foundation necessary to approach this study with a rigorous scientific method and critical analytical skills, ensuring the integrity and validity of the findings. The adequacy of facilities. This addresses the presence and suitability of the essential resources, tools, and infrastructure required to execute a study efficiently and securely. In this research, I guaranteed access to appropriate facilities for conducting the investigation. This access facilitated the creation of credible and consistent findings and mitigated potential risks to study participants. Having the right facilities ensured that the data collection and analysis processes were conducted under conditions that uphold

the highest standards of research integrity and safety. Community involvement. This encompasses the dynamic involvement and active engagement of community members, stakeholders, or the intended study population throughout the research journey, from initial planning to sharing research outcomes. In this study, I engaged the community to guarantee the study's relevance, acceptability, and potential impact. Additionally, this involvement fostered trust and cooperation between me and the community. Engaging with the community not only helped to tailor the research to be more effective and meaningful but also enhanced the overall quality and applicability of the results. Plagiarism and fabrication. Researchers should strictly follow principles of academic honesty and integrity. This entails giving proper credit to the work of others, presenting original contributions, and verifying the accuracy and authenticity of data. In this study, I employed tools like plagiarism detectors and maintained thorough documentation of my research procedures to ensure that my work is devoid of plagiarism and that all data and discoveries are authentic and reliable. By upholding these principles, I enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the research community.

2.6. Role of the Researcher—As an unbiased research facilitator and promoter, I was responsible for ensuring that the research process was conducted fairly, objectively, and without personal bias, prejudice, or influence from outside sources. I created an environment that encouraged the open and honest exploration of ideas and promoted fairness in data collection and analysis. This commitment to impartiality helped to uphold the integrity of the research process and ensured that the findings were reliable, and representative of the true phenomena being studied. As an expert in qualitative methods, I am familiar with various qualitative

research techniques, such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. I possess the skills and knowledge necessary to design, conduct, and analyze qualitative studies, ensuring that the research question is satisfactorily addressed and that the results are legitimate and dependable. My expertise in these methods allowed me to deeply explore complex social phenomena and capture the nuanced experiences of participants, contributing to the validity and reliability of the research findings. As a data collector and keeper, I gathered information from various sources such as interviews or observations, and I ensured accurate and secure storage

of this information. I followed ethical guidelines, safeguarded participants' privacy, and ensured that data was structured and available for later examination and understanding. This careful management of data helped maintain the integrity of the research process and supported the production of credible, reliable findings that can be reviewed and utilized by others in the academic community. As a data analyst, I analyzed the gathered data to discover trends, patterns, and valuable perspectives in accordance with the research query. I utilized meticulous qualitative data analysis methods like coding and thematic analysis to extract significant findings and enrich the knowledge base within my discipline. This approach allowed me to deeply understand the data, providing insights that are not

only relevant but also contribute significantly to the field, enhancing scholarly discussions and practical applications related to the study topic. Finally, as an organizer and presenter of data, I was tasked with synthesizing and communicating the research findings concisely and coherently. This entailed skillfully conveying the study's objectives, approaches, outcomes, and ramifications through written documents, presentations, or alternative means of transmitting information. I ensured that the research results were easily accessible and comprehensible to the designated audience. This approach helped to maximize the impact of the findings, ensuring they were not only shared but also understood and utilized by others in ways that could further knowledge and influence practice in the field.

2.7. Data Collection—This study employed a systematic data collection procedure. Several steps were taken to adhere to the proper data collection procedure, which ensured the accuracy and objectivity of the data collection. The following was the step-by-step process of gathering the data needed. Securing endorsement from the Dean of Graduate School, the Schools Division Superintendent, and the School Principal. To initiate the data collection process, I secured endorsements from key stakeholders including the Dean of the Graduate School at Rizal Memorial Colleges, the Schools Division Superintendent, the School Principal, and the participants. This process involved submitting formal letters outlining the research objectives and methodology, accompanied by any supporting documents. This crucial step took place within the last two weeks of May 2023, ensuring that all necessary permissions were in place before proceeding with the collection of data. This proactive approach not only facilitated compliance with ethical standards but also fostered a cooperative environment among all parties involved. Asking permission from

the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon receiving the endorsement, I requested permission from the school's division superintendent. This required submitting a formal letter detailing the research proposal and its significance to the educational community. Along with the letter, I attached Chapters 1 and 2 of my dissertation and the research instrument, clearly explaining the study's objectives and the process of participant identification. Moreover, I waited for the response from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) before proceeding with the data collection. This step happened during the first week of June 2023, ensuring that all necessary approvals were in place to conduct the research ethically and effectively. Asking for permission from the school heads. Once permission was granted, I sought approval from the school heads of the selected institutions. This step involved submitting formal request letters to each school head, outlining the research's purpose and the expected data collection timeframe. I asked for permission to conduct the study from the third week of June 2023 to the last week of the same month. Obtaining consent

from the participants. With the school heads' approval, I asked for consent from the research participants through informed consent forms that were provided to them. These forms clearly explained the research purpose, participant rights, and confidentiality measures. This consent process ensured that the participants were fully informed and agreed to participate. Asking for consent from the participants was done in the last week of June 2023. Conducting the interview. Upon securing consent from all participants, I scheduled and conducted the interviews using a structured or semi-structured interview

2.8. Data Analysis—After collecting the data, I embarked on data coding and thematic content analysis. This involved methodically structuring the transcribed data into categories, subcategories, and themes from the interview dialogues. By discerning patterns and connections within the data, I formulated conclusions and gleaned insights directly related to the research objectives. This process allowed me to interpret the data effectively, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the experiences and perspectives of the participants. In this study, I employed Creswell's Thematic Analysis approach, which is particularly suited for encompassing a range of perspectives and portrayals in participants' feedback. Adopting thematic analysis authenticates the portrayal of individual components and facilitates the categorization of identified patterns within the provided responses. Thematic analysis was a qualitative research technique used to recognize, scrutinize, and interpret patterns or themes present within qualitative data in textual, visual, or other formats. As a qualitative research approach, the-

2.9. Framework of Analysis—The analytical framework in phenomenological research is a methodical and structured approach to data

guide to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection. The interviews took place in the first two weeks of July 2023. Transcribing the interviewees' responses. Following the interview sessions, I meticulously transcribed the interviewees' remarks, diligently taking account of non-verbal cues and contextually relevant details. This procedure used audio recordings and field notes to comprehensively capture the breadth of participants' reactions. The transcription of interviewee responses happened in the third week of July 2023.

matic analysis allows researchers to systematically arrange and dissect complex data sets. It involves searching for overarching themes that encapsulate the narratives embedded within the data. This process necessitated the identification of themes through meticulous examination and repeated review of transcribed data (Dawadi, 2020). This methodical approach helped ensure that the analysis was both comprehensive and reflective of the data collected, providing deep insights into the study's objectives. Therefore, I used Creswell's Thematic Analysis in my research, which necessitated extensive theming and transcript interpretation. According to Caulfield (2020), there are multiple essential phases in Creswell's Thematic Analysis, including familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and labeling themes, and writing up. As I became acquainted with the data to begin this process, I became fully immersed in the intricacies and subtleties of the content. After that, I started categorizing the data using semantic richness to group different informational components.

analysis, interpretation, and presentation. In this research study, I made use of Colaizzi's method to analyze data from the interviews

and discussions with the participants regarding their struggles in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. According to Morrow et al. (2021), Colaizzi's (1978) method features a distinctive seven-step process that offers a rigorous analysis, closely adhering to the data at each stage. This method culminates in a concise yet comprehensive description of the phenomenon under study, which is validated by the participants who experienced it. The effectiveness of this approach relies on rich first-person accounts of experiences, which can be collected through various means. Although face-to-face interviews are common, data can also be gathered from written narratives, blogs, research diaries, online interviews, and other forms. This method enables researchers to uncover emergent themes and explore the intricate relationships between them (Wirihana et al., 2018).

Data Familiarization. By reading and rereading the transcripts several times, I fully understood the meanings conveyed by the participants and gained a global sense of the phenomenon being studied. This thorough review process was crucial for fully grasping the nuances of participants' statements, enabling a deeper analysis of their experiences.

Identifying Significant Statements. I carefully identified every statement in the narratives that was directly related to the phenomenon I was studying. To identify and highlight phrases and descriptions that shed light on the particular experiences under study, a thorough examination of the gathered data—such as written narratives or transcripts of interviews—must be conducted. This step was essential to ensuring that my analysis stayed on topic and provided a strong basis for future thematic development.

Formulating Meanings. After carefully examining the important statements, I determined meanings that are pertinent to the phenomenon. Although Colaizzi admits that complete bracketing is never truly possible, I have to reflexively "bracket" my own presuppositions to stick closely to the

phenomenon as experienced. To guarantee that the analysis stays rooted in the participants' real experiences, this process entailed putting aside my own interpretations as much as is practical.

Clustering Themes. I ensured a rigorous analysis that remained true to the participants' experiences by grouping the identified meanings into themes that are shared by all accounts. Throughout this process, presuppositions must be bracketed, especially to avoid any possible influence from existing theories. By letting the themes naturally arise from the data rather than being influenced by outside forces, this preserves the integrity of the analysis. Developing an exhaustive description. I incorporated every theme generated in the previous step into a comprehensive and all-encompassing description of the phenomenon that I wrote. By identifying common themes from the participant accounts, this thorough description conveyed the essence and complexity of the phenomenon. By taking this step, it was ensured that the final representation presents a comprehensive perspective of the experiences that each participant has had.

Producing the fundamental structure. I broke down the lengthy explanation into a succinct, concise statement that highlights the key elements that I believed are crucial to understanding the phenomenon's structure. The essence of the participants' experiences is effectively and concisely communicated through this succinct synthesis, which concentrates on the essential components that are necessary for comprehending the phenomenon. Seeking verification of the fundamental structure, I asked participants if the fundamental structure statement accurately reflects their experience by returning it to all participants. I then went back and changed the earlier stages of the analysis in light of their comments. Through this iterative process, the validity and credibility of the findings increased, and the analysis remained firmly based on the participants' perspectives. The following figure illustrates this rigorous process, highlight-

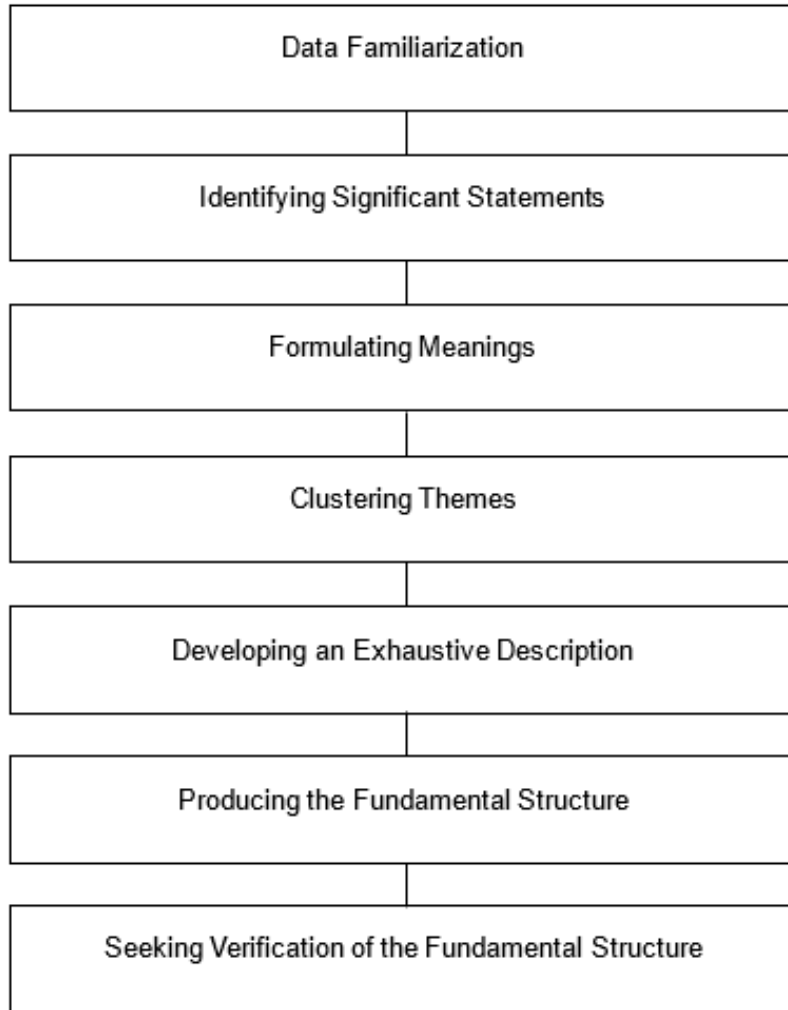


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

ing each step to comprehensively explain the data.
 actions taken to comprehensively analyze the

2.10. *Trustworthiness of the Study*—The trustworthiness of a study is about how reliable, sensible, and authentic the research results are, ensuring that the conclusions are trustworthy and accurate. In qualitative research, factors like credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability are often used to evaluate how reliable the study is. These considerations are further described below, according to Guba (1981). Credibility. Building credibility entails proving that the results are accurate.

Credibility is important for this study because it evaluates if the results accurately represent the realities and challenges faced by elementary school teachers regarding the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. I conversed with the participants for a long time in order to gain a thorough understanding of their experiences and to increase my credibility. I also used triangulation, gathering information from a variety of sources, including observations, interviews, and maybe question-

naires. In order to confirm the interpretations, I gave the participants a preliminary version of the findings as part of member checking. Transferability. The degree to which the results of this study can be used in different situations or with different populations is referred to as transferability. While the particular insights are closely linked to elementary teachers' experiences in a specific educational environment, I gave thorough explanations of the research context and methodology. The study's transferability was increased because this thorough, rich narrative enables others, including educators, school administrators, and researchers, to assess how well the results apply to comparable contexts or populations. Confirmability. Confirmability deals with the study's objectivity by making sure that the respondents, not my personal prejudices or biases, shaped the findings. I kept a thorough audit trail that details every step of the research process, from data collection to data analysis decisions, in order to ensure confirmability. This methodological transparency made it possible for other researchers to evaluate the research's

objectivity by following the study's development and going over the choices made. Dependability. Dependability is proving that the study results are reliable and repeatable in similar situations. Dependability in this study was attained through meticulous documentation of the entire research procedure, including the methods used for data collection and analysis. By ensuring that other researchers can duplicate the study and possibly produce consistent results, such documentation validated the dependability of the research. By following these standards, the research not only offered valid and trustworthy conclusions regarding the challenges encountered by elementary teachers in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education but it also offered a framework that researchers and other educators can use to compare similar learning environments. This methodology enhanced the study's standing in the academic community and provided insightful information for upcoming studies and instructional design.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results generated from the analysis of the gathered data from the interview, including the themes and a comprehensive discussion that answers the objectives of the study. The themes that emerged from the gathered data were discussed in this chapter. The result presents the description and background of the participants along with their assigned pseudonyms to hide their identities.

3.1. Experiences of Elementary School Teachers in the Implementation of Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education After a Decade—The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education Policy in 2012 is the government's banner program for education as a salient part of the K to 12 Basic Education Program. This policy brought forth changes in the Philippine education realm specifically in all public schools. Basically, the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education policy pertains to the

use of the mother tongue or first language in the early education of children (Alieto, 2018). The Department of Education (2012) agreed and added that education in the Philippines underwent quite a number of changes over time. It is considered one of the most monumental and radical changes in the country's system of education. The implementation of the mother tongue-based multilingual education policy includes K-12 programs as mandated by Republic Act 10533. The implementation of this pro-

gram is to address the pressing and concerning issue regarding the high functional illiteracy rate among Filipinos. However, like all the policy that was implemented, challenges will arise along the way. Since teachers will be the ones to

implement the use of the mother tongue inside the classroom, problems facing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education will be passed down to them. The themes discussed below are the experiences of the participants of this study.

3.1.1. Scarcity of Learning Resources and Teacher Training—Based on the narratives of the participants in this study, most of them expressed that they are having problems when it comes to teaching and learning resources. Some of the teachers also said that there are not enough training programs offered to improve the skills of the teachers to effectively handle a classroom implementing a Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education program. Cabansag (2016) identified the unavailability or inadequacy of textbooks and learning materials as one of the challenges that teachers experience in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. The scarcity of materials affected their delivery of instruction and some teachers even revealed that they had to reproduce the learning packages that were given to them at their own expense. The same challenge was found in the study conducted by Berowa and Agbayani (2010). According to them, the absence of books and dictionaries written in the mother tongue has become a common problem among teachers. In another study, modules and instructional guides were prepared by the Department of Education to be given to some regions of the country. However, these resources were not given on time, and some schools only received the soft copy of the instructional materials stored on CDs (Bloch

et al., 2010). It was stressed by Hall (2010) that without the relevant and accurate use of learning materials, teaching will never be effective. This is because the teachers will be forced to use materials that are written in other languages, and this will create problems and confusion since the medium of instruction is different from the learning resources. Dutcher (2003) posited that essentially the program is fruitless when there is a scarcity of teaching materials, inferior teacher training, and deficient language development. Bajas, Flores, and Manito (2017) also identified the lack of teacher training as one of the challenges experienced by teachers in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. According to them, in a multilingual classroom where students have different mother tongues, training, and seminars are important so that teachers' knowledge will be enriched, and they will also be guided on how to handle learners who speak different languages. Seminars and trainings will also serve as an opportunity for teachers to learn and interact with other teachers. Most teachers need training in methodology so that they can exploit the advantages of teaching in a language that children can understand. This means less emphasis on rote learning, repetition, and copying, and more on peer-to-peer interaction and on encouraging students to think for themselves, read, and come to their own conclusions.

3.1.2. Unfamiliar Terminologies—Another challenge that the participants experienced is the use of unfamiliar terminologies written in the mother tongue. Some teaching and learning materials use uncommon words

that the teachers cannot even understand, and this causes more confusion and complications not just for the teachers but for the students as well. Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education promotes the use of the mother tongue

as a subject and as a medium of instruction. According to Dequiña Olivia (2022), this can lead to confusion and difficulties in terms of language use and complicated terminologies. As a result, this can hinder the teaching and learning process because the students will have trouble comprehending the unfamiliar words and the instruction time will be spent on translating these words. The same challenge was identified by Gaylo (2020), according to him, complicated terminologies present the most challenging issue for students and teachers, as it is not their native language. It was verified that the limited vocabulary makes the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education goals difficult. Some of the students may have limited comprehension of the mother tongue being used. If both teachers and students cannot understand the terminologies being used in certain subjects, the responsibility of translating these words will depend on the teachers. If there are no dictionaries available, they will have to look it up on the internet. They must do this outside the instructional time to not disrupt the lesson. However, teachers also have other tasks to accomplish aside from teaching.

3.1.3. Code Switching—The Philippines is composed of many languages making it a multilingual country. Before the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, Filipino and English were the medium of instruction in all grade levels, and the mother tongue served as a language that helped students understand the lessons better. According to the responses of the participants, there are many unfamiliar terminologies in the mother tongue that are difficult for students to comprehend, which is why they usually translate those words into simplified terms, and most of the time, they resort to code-switching for better understanding. To deliver the lessons properly, the teachers need to take the student's level of proficiency into consideration. There are many

Some of the participants revealed that most of their time is spent on translating and explaining these uncommon words and they also shared that even the parents are complaining about this issue. In the study conducted by Adriano, Franco, and Estrella (2021), several difficulties were identified in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. One of which is the lack of books and dictionaries to aid the teachers in translating the unfamiliar terminologies used. This problem made it particularly difficult to teach and hinders the immediate success of the implementation of the use of the mother tongue. Another study conducted by Kolman (2019) discovered that teachers teaching Mathematics subjects find the textbook's content challenging to teach due to its use of complex terminologies. The participants stated that they must translate the elaborate terms used to aid students in comprehending the lessons. It was also found in the study that the students prefer the English terminologies in teaching mathematics subjects because they are more familiar with it compared to the terminologies, they use in their mother tongue.

words in their mother tongue that are incomprehensible for their level which is why teachers need to find a strategy to address this challenge. Code-switching by translating words from their mother tongue to either Filipino or English is one of the techniques that the teachers utilized to help them deliver the lessons properly. However, this technique was criticized by Mondez (2013), as well as the inconsistency of the policy. According to him, code-switching, as part of the communicative efforts of the teachers to translate words so that students can understand better, leads the students to develop the habit of code-switching to two languages rather than fluency in one language. To support this technique, many studies argued that code-switching not only helps teachers but also aids students

in enhancing their cultural and language heritage by not stopping or hampering the students from changing to any language they want in conversation with their fellow students or teachers (Algarin-Ruiz, 2014). Switching from one language to another and using either Filipino or English to help explain some difficult concepts has become a huge factor in the delivery of instruction. According to the participants, sometimes, the use of the mother tongue causes more confusion than clarity, and to help them communicate better with the students, they resort to switching languages for better understanding. The use of different languages to aid the use of the mother

tongue in the delivery of instruction revealed that students participated more in the discussion because they can easily comprehend the familiar words and thus, they can understand the lessons better. In the study conducted by Gempeso and Mendez (2021), it was revealed that the habit of code-switching was observable in using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Fortunately, this technique yielded positive results in the teaching and learning process and allowed the student's comprehension of the lessons and active participation in the class.

3.1.4. Improved Student Proficiency—One of the reasons why Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education was implemented is to improve the proficiency of the students and develop their higher-order thinking skills. Based on the narratives of the participants, after a decade since its implementation, the academic proficiency of the students has improved. When asked about their experiences, participants shared their struggles and challenges in implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. However, despite their challenges, it cannot be denied that it helped improve the student's understanding and ability to read and write. In a study conducted by Walter and Dekker (2011) both in the United States and in the Philippines, results showed that students learn better and experience higher academic achievement when their mother tongue is used in school as compared to learners who learn using their second or third language. The findings of this study support the idea that strong first language skills help children's cognitive development and make it easier for them to navigate the subject matter. Another study conducted by Burton (2013) revealed that students who learned using their mother tongue as the language of instruction for six years outperformed students

who only learned in their mother tongue for three years in terms of overall academic achievement gains. The use of the mother tongue as a language of instruction helps students understand the lessons better since they will be able to comprehend the words used. Participants also shared that aside from students understanding the lessons better with their mother tongue as the medium of instruction, the students were also able to read and write more easily. To learn additional languages such as Filipino and English effectively, learners need to begin their education in the language that they understand best, which is their mother tongue, and develop a strong foundation in their mother language. Implementing the use of the mother tongue allows the learners to grasp the concepts easily and comprehensively. Based on a study conducted by Walter (2011), he argued that using the mother tongue in education is of great importance because of its capability of producing proficient readers in 2-3 years as well as its benefits to learners with average ability and potential. The use of the mother tongue as a subject focus on the development of speaking, reading, and writing from Grades 1 to 3 in the mother tongue. Mother tongue used as a medium of instruction will start from kinder to Grade 3 in

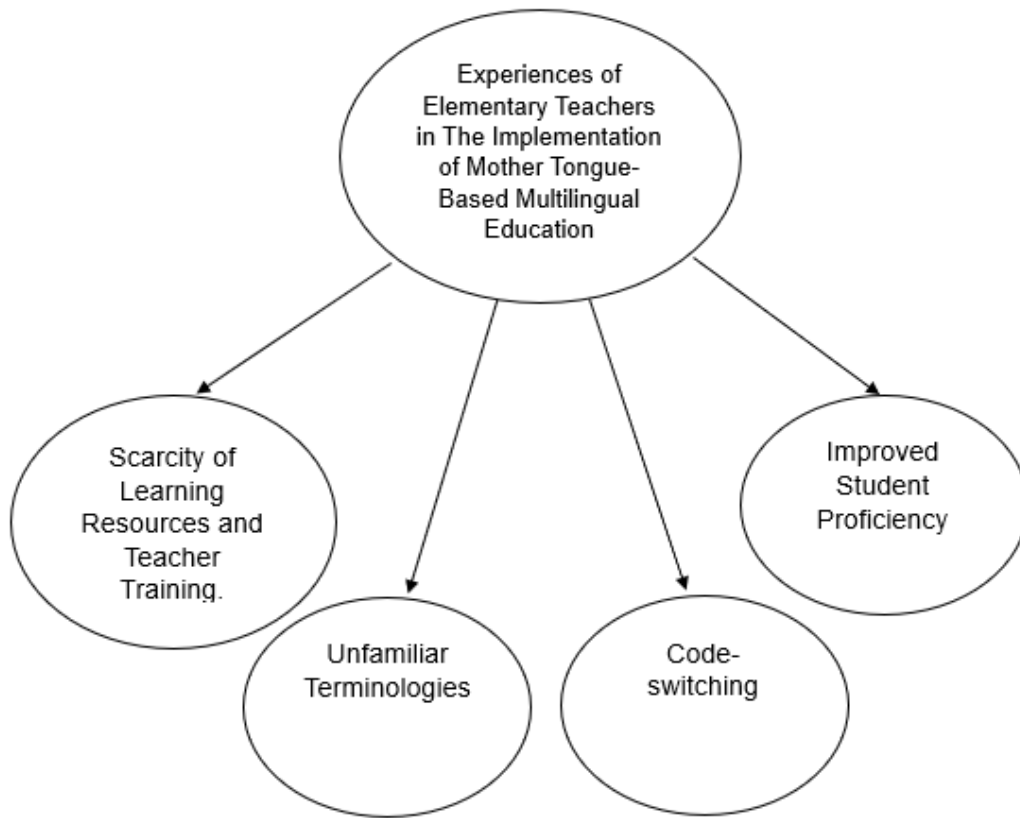


Fig. 3. Experiences Of Elementary Teachers in The Implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education

all learning areas except in teaching English and Filipino subjects. This strengthens the development of the appropriate cognitive and reasoning skills allowing students to operate equally in other languages. If the students have fully grasped the concepts that they need to learn in their mother tongue, a strong foundation is built, and it will be easier for them to learn another language. The use of the mother tongue inside the classroom promotes interaction be-

tween and among teachers and students. As they expand their ideas and articulate their thoughts, their critical thinking skills and language are strengthened. Figure 3 shows the experiences of elementary teachers in implementing mother-tongue-based multilingual education—the emergence of the four themes, scarcity of learning resources, teacher training, unfamiliar terminologies, code-switching, and improved student proficiency.

3.2. *Attitudes of Elementary Teachers in The Implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education*—The trust measures the success of any education policy and support the teachers give to the idea of the system and the system itself for them to change classroom prac-

tices. Stone (2012) asserts that the education system cannot run without teachers, and a policy cannot succeed if the teachers do not believe in and support it. In the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, the function of the teachers in the Department

of Education is to implement the program inside the classrooms directly. This idea is similar to Sutton and Levinson's (2012) statement where they said that teachers' attitudes toward Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education should be given attention since they shape and directly impact their students inside the classroom; in essence, their actions can be constituted as the policy in itself. They adhere to the previous author, who emphasized the im-

portance of teachers in the implementation of an educational policy. Most of the participants in this study do not have negative attitudes toward Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. In fact, they show their full support for its implementation and show a positive attitude. However, they have their own sentiments regarding this policy. Although they do not harbor any negative attitude towards it, they allow themselves to express their struggles.

3.2.1. Poor Implementation—It is evident in the participants' experiences that they faced several challenges since this policy was implemented. Their experiences only strengthened the fact that Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education was poorly implemented. If a policy is poorly implemented, no matter how big the potential it possesses, it will still not be successful. Although it has been a decade since this policy was implemented, there has not been much improvement, according to many teachers. Its poor implementation has caused a clamor between and among teachers and parents. Instead of helping the students develop their language and cognitive skills, it has caused more confusion than clarity. Nolasco (2008) claimed that in the Philippine context, the change in LOI alone will not be enough for the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education policy to work and yield favorable results. The way in which policies are implemented should be taken into consideration from a local and national standpoint as scholars from anthropological traditions argue that in retrospect, top-down language policies give heavy footing and lean towards expert knowledge compared to local knowledge. Another issue with the poor implementation of this policy is the inconsistencies between policymakers and the Department of Education. According to the participants, the changes and any amendments proposed and done by the higher-ups only add up to the bur-

dens of the teachers leaving them no place to stand. Those who have the power to make and amend the laws and policies usually focus on what is usually seen on the surface. They do not consider the struggles of the teachers who are directly involved in the implementation. Burton (2013) pointed out in his study that the choice that policymakers have, whether they would release top-down directives that oftentimes do not consider local contexts where teachers, parents, and other key stakeholders play critical roles, and where policy implementation takes place, or they can be involved in making decisions regarding which policy will be implemented and vetoed. Moreover, Fullan (2003) stated that one of the basic reasons why planning fails is that planners or decision-makers of change are unaware of the situations faced by potential implementers. They introduce changes without providing a means to identify and confront the situational constraints and without attempting to understand the values, ideas, and experiences of those who are essential for implementing any changes. The success of this policy indeed relies on the teachers since they are the ones who are directly involved in the process. However, the higher officials of the Department of Education provide information such as guidelines, reports, memorandums, orders, and instructional materials that the teachers need. If these are not met and stated clearly to the teachers, problems may arise that will lead to poor implementation.

3.2.2. *Unaddressed Gaps*—If the policy is poorly implemented, gaps remain unaddressed. The most common challenges mentioned by the teachers are the lack of materials and teacher training. According to the participants' narratives, many issues in the program have yet to be solved, and other issues and problems are piling up. As a result, the teachers are the ones struggling. Naom and Sarah (2014) argue that the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education policy implementation is faced with major drawbacks. These include but are not limited to teacher preparedness, resources, and attitudes along with the challenges of having a multilingual classroom. These challenges hamper the proper implementation of the policy if they

remain unaddressed. According to the participants, because of the negligence of the higher authorities in addressing these gaps, the struggles are passed onto them, leaving them no choice but to create solutions of their own. Nolasco (2008) also argued that less attention has been given to the grassroots level where the implementation of the program will actually occur. Problems inside the classroom remained unaddressed because the higher authorities are more focused on other things such as amending the policy. The participants complained that they are so slow in addressing the gaps and in the end, they have to do it on their own. Nolasco (2008) also cited community support and empowerment as the crucial conditions that need to be met to ensure the success of the program.

3.2.3. *Lack of Support*—The lack of support when it comes to teaching and learning resources and teacher training has also impacted the attitudes of the teachers in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. Although they said that they harbor no negative attitude against its implementation, the lack of support hinders their effectiveness in teaching. The roles of teachers do not end at teaching; they are also implementors. All the legislation and policy guidelines will not be put into action without them. Teachers are responsible for developing the Mother Tongue curriculum and instructional materials. But delivering learning to the learners such as Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education is not an easy task. Teachers since then until now are subjected to problems. According to Tupas (2020), the primary difficulty faced by teachers when teaching Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education is a dearth of instructional materials such as textbooks, dictionaries, and references. The lack of support given by the government to address these difficulties faced by teachers adds up to the reasons why the program is still far from successful. The

participants also mentioned that the government should make extra efforts to address the lack of support regarding the scarcity of learning materials and teacher training. According to Berowa and Agbayani (2019), the teachers of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education serve an enormously vital role in the implementation of the policy as well as its success. They stand as front-liners and implementers of the policy and without them, any institution, system of education, legislation in education, and policies cannot be successfully operated without the presence and competence of teachers (Stone, 2012). Without their participation, any policy will have a big chance to be rendered as a failure. If they are given little to no support, it will have a huge negative impact on the teaching and learning process. One of the key revelations in Valerio's study (2015) is the respondents' lack of confidence in the instructional materials they presently have and use, whether it can ascertain their appreciation of the policy since localized translations are mostly unavailable. They are unsure if the use of the mother tongue in instruction can improve and elevate academic perfor-

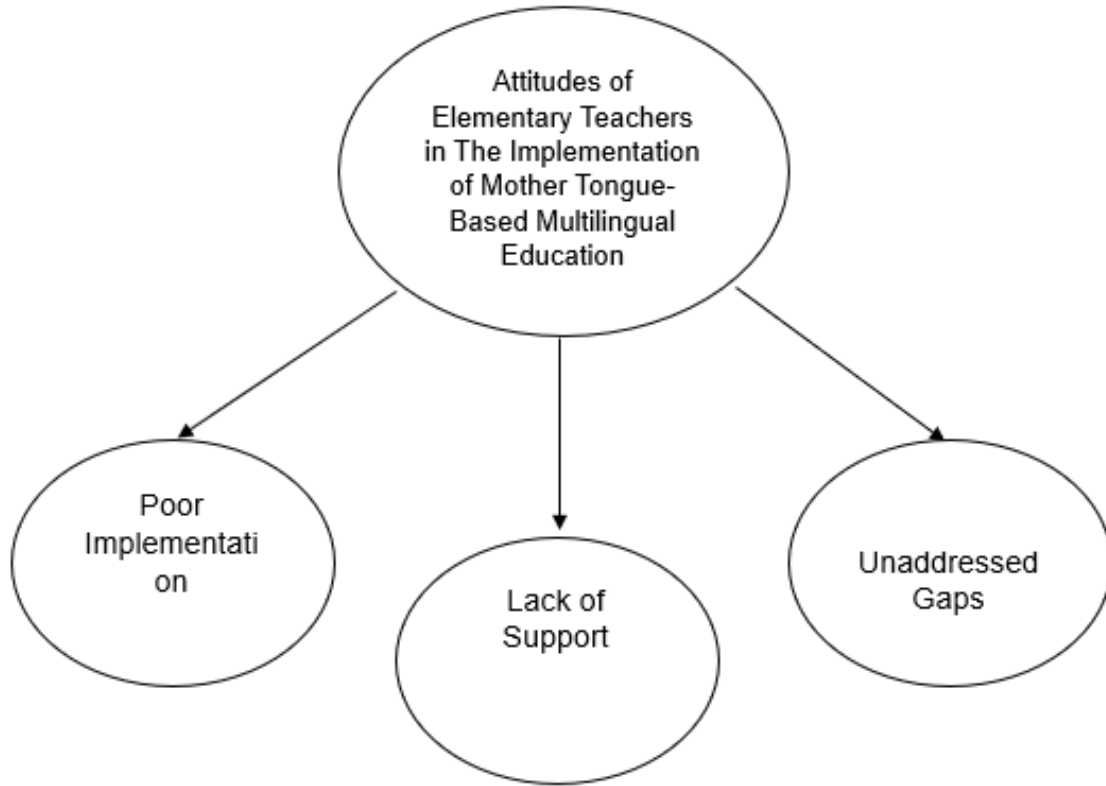


Fig. 4. Attitudes of Elementary Teachers in The Implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education

mance. The goal of teachers and other educators is to provide students with the knowledge and experiences they need to be able to keep up with the changing world. Educational policies are made in order to address problems that occur in the field of education and one of its aims is to improve the teaching and learning process. The role of the teachers in implementing these policies is crucial to its success since they are the ones directly involved in the process. Their attitudes towards the implementation of Mother

Tongue-Based Multilingual Education are essential because it will be one of the bases if this policy will be a success or not. Since they are the implementers at the grassroots level, what they think and feel about this policy should be given more emphasis and importance. Figure 4 shows elementary teachers' attitudes toward implementing mother-tongue-based multilingual education. Three themes emerge: poor implementation, lack of support, and unaddressed gaps.

3.3. *Educational Insights Drawn from the Experiences of Teachers in the Implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education*—From the perspectives of the teachers, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education is an excellent way to improve the literacy of the students because they are more adept at the mother tongue when used as a medium of in-

struction. However, based on the responses of the participants, the policy was poorly implemented because of the lack of support, and the gaps remained unaddressed, affecting their attitudes towards it. In a study conducted by Dagalea, Peralta, and Abocejo, (2022), it was concluded that there is an apparent need to redirect the strategies and goals of Mother Tongue-

Based Multilingual Education in addressing the linguistic, economic, and cultural condition of the community. Based on the participants' narratives, the Department of Education still needs to address many things to make Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education successful. Al-

3.3.1. Proper Implementation—Proper implementation of the said policy is probably the priority of all policymakers, the Department of Education, and all teachers. Almost all the participants complained that Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education is poorly implemented and there are so many problems that the teachers need to solve on their own to still be able to deliver a meaningful lesson. What the participants are trying to say to higher authorities is to properly implement the policy to reach its full potential. The reason why a policy cannot yield favorable results is because of the complexities of the implementation that lie in different aspects like the scarcity of resources and professional teacher development (Galdo Serdan, 2019). Unfortunately, when this policy was implemented, the public schools in the Philippines are not yet primed and equipped for the integration of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education system (Monje et al.,

3.3.2. Remediation of Gaps—Another sentiment voiced by the participants is for the policymakers and the Department of Education to address the gaps that have reoccurred in the last ten years since the policy was implemented. The teachers are the implementors of the said policy inside the classroom, whatever problem may arise, they have to solve it in their own way professionally and quickly. Although they might have a lot of strategies stored to make the teaching process meaningful and still relevant, the higher authorities owe it to them to address the problems right away. Based on

though it was implemented a decade ago, the issues remained the same throughout the years. Participants gained insightful lessons from their experiences, and all they want is for this policy to be implemented properly.

(2021). Additionally, it is imperative to understand that context plays an important role in shaping the policies to be implemented, and those who work on the grassroots level have their own knowledge, based on hands-on and context-specific experience about the strategies, may it be effective or not, even though they are mostly unrecognized in the scholarly literature (Burton, 2013). According to Jorolan-Quintero (2018), the Philippines, with 183 living languages, is known to be a linguistically diverse country in the world. This fact presents the issue that curriculum developers are confronted with in producing high-quality, locally relevant resources. Because of this, the policy requires greater financial support from the government (Lone Efstratopoulou, 2022). However, the government only offered minimal support for the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in view of fund supervision (Lee, Hamid, Hardy, 2021).

the responses of the participants of this study, the teaching and learning resources, as well as the teacher training, are two of the most frequently mentioned issues in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. It has been pointed out repeatedly in this study that there is a problem when it comes to the availability of teaching and learning resources to teach the local languages. The lack of materials may somehow result in limited knowledge and strategies of teachers in teaching the mother tongue as a subject and using it as a language of instruction (Facullo et al., 2022).

Therefore, since the program requires inherent provisions like financial and other support for teacher training, local book acquisitions, and instructional materials that both teachers and students need, there has to be a budget allocation that needs to be considered by the higher authorities (Perez, 2019). To effectively deliver their lessons in a manner that is aligned with the policy, the teachers must be well-equipped with knowledge and skills and the students must be provided with enough learning materials. Another suggestion by the participants is to invest in the skills of the teachers. After a decade, only a handful of teachers underwent training and the rest still lack the competency to handle Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the classroom. It was mentioned earlier that the Philippines is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world. According to Anudin (2018), teachers' diverse linguistic backgrounds have become a challenge because they lack the necessary skills to speak the mother tongue used by students in a partic-

3.3.3. Teacher Consultation and Dialogue—After the interview with the participants, the one thing they only hope is for the higher authorities to listen to them and their concerns. Since they work at the grassroots level, they know what works and what does not. They also know the problems ranging from solvable to alarming ones. If the policymakers and the Department of Education will only listen to them and take action based on their concerns, the implementation might be more effective. Noam and Sarah (2014) propositioned that the goals of a program will only be realized when the attitudes of the teachers are put to the core of the policy and not just the program implementation. Since the teachers are the ones tasked to deliver a certain policy, it is imperative that they also have a take on it. Their role is crucial to the success of the policy; therefore, they must be

ular area. The same issue was also expressed by the participants of Cansino's (2022) study where they shared that the differences in mother tongue among the students and teachers served as a challenge. Malone and Malone (2011) stressed the importance of language competency and proficiency for teachers handling the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education program. They believe that improving the competence of teachers needs to be the priority. Wambaleka (2014) suggested that the government must provide a sufficient budget to address the challenges of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. Considering that the policy has met challenges in the actual implementation in terms of the development of instructional materials, language instruction, and teacher training. Teachers cannot carry the burdens of this policy alone; there must be someone to ease their problems by addressing the long-overdue problems that the people on the ground level have been complaining about.

given a voice and they should also be listened to. Just like what Arsenal and Andrino (2022) said, for a policy to succeed, policymakers should listen to those who are working at the grassroots level because they have firsthand experiences of what the real situation is. The participants also encourage the higher authorities to make amendments based on the concerns of the people at the ground level. However, to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation, this policy only follows a top-down approach instead of an interaction between the top and bottom (Burton, 2013). Ensuring the positive attitudes of the key implementers, such as the teachers, was stressed by Alieto (2018) as a necessity to yield success in implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. Nolasco (2008) also added that the attitude of teachers, may it be positive or negative, toward the use of their mother

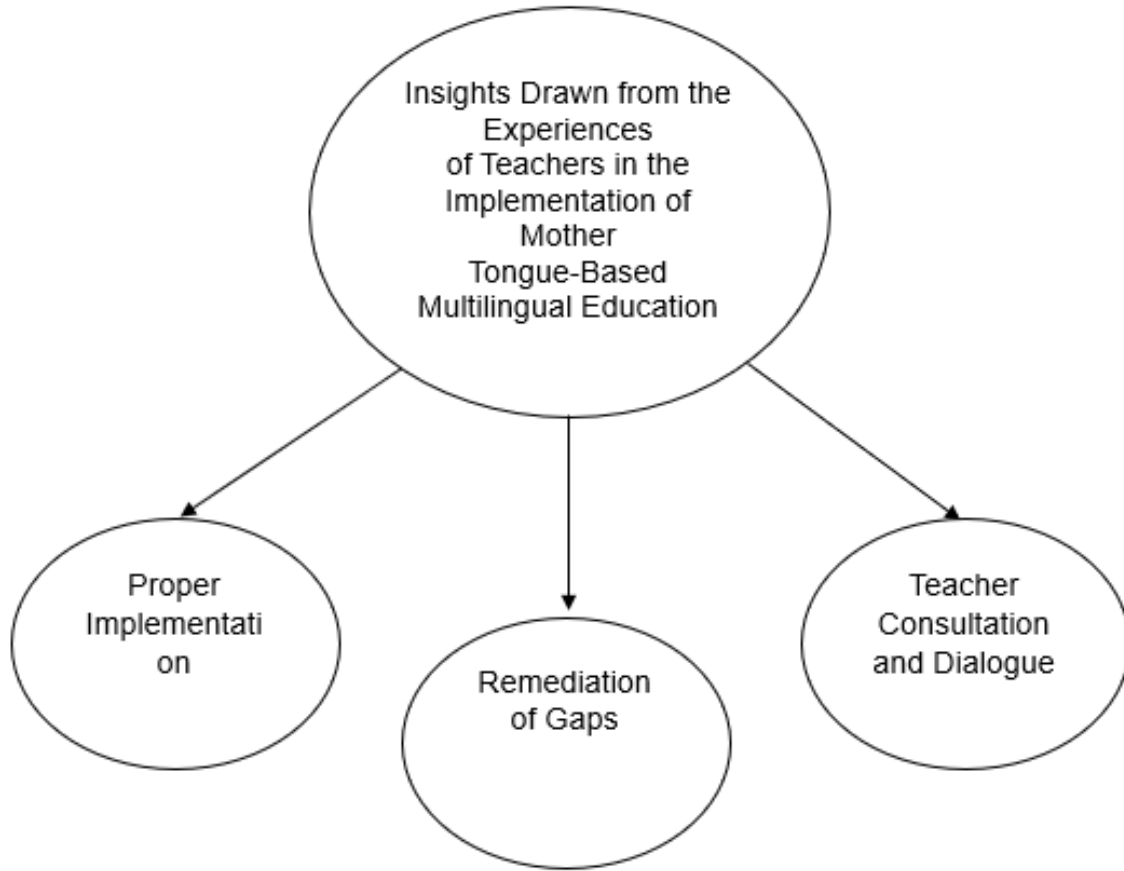


Fig. 5. Insights Drawn from the Experiences of Teachers in the Implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education

tongue as the language of instruction is one of the most recurring issues in the implementation process, taking into consideration that teachers and parents are one of the key stakeholder groups playing integral roles for carrying out and enacting the educational policy are often forgotten in the process. A lot has been said about Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education and most of them are complaints about the issues and challenges that the teachers and students encountered since the day it was implemented. Although the program yields positive results, drawbacks were also present. Because

of that, many lawmakers wanted to suspend it. However, instead of suspending this program that has been around for a decade, it is ideal to give support and allot a budget for research, instruction, and resources which are the main concerns of the teachers. Figure 5 shows the insights drawn from the experiences of teachers in the implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education. The emergence of three themes namely: proper implementation, remediation of gaps, and teacher consultation and dialogue.

4. Implications and Future Directions

This chapter provides a brief overview of the research conducted, followed by an examination of the implications derived from the obtained findings. Moreover, the study discussed the prospective

avenues for further exploration of its long-term impact on language proficiency and academic outcomes.

4.1. Findings—The purpose of conducting this research study on the experiences, particularly the challenges encountered by elementary school teachers in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education is to gain a deep understanding of their lived experiences, individual perspectives, and attitudes toward the implementation of the program. Four themes emerged from the experiences of the elementary school teachers and three themes emerged from their attitudes towards the implementation as well as the meaningful insights gained from the program. The four themes that emerged from their experiences include scarcity of learning resources and teacher training, unfamiliar terminologies, code-switching, and improved student proficiency. The themes drawn out from the participants' responses infer that a decade after its implementation, the teachers faced several challenges. However, despite these challenges, most students have achieved one of the program's goals, which is to improve literacy. Due to the scarcity of resources for teaching and learning as well as teacher training programs, it was determined from the study's findings that elementary school teachers faced numerous challenges. This suggests a far more serious issue because it could prevent the program from being implemented effectively. The lack of adequate teaching and learning materials may restrict the available resources compatible with students' mother tongues, potentially preventing the development of their language skills and overall academic achievement. Additionally, a teacher's capacity to effectively deliver instruction in different languages and modify their teaching methods to suit the various requirements of their pupils may be hampered by the absence of comprehensive teacher training programs. Inadequate training may make it difficult to foster a welcoming and encouraging learning environment and may make it challenging to navigate the linguistic and cultural nuances necessary in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education courses. The use of unfamiliar terminologies in the context of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education can yield several implications. Primarily, the inclusion of these unfamiliar terms can impede students' comprehension, as they may encounter difficulties in understanding and assimilating the meanings of these new terms. Consequently, this impediment can hamper their language development, as unfamiliar terminologies hinder their ability to express themselves accurately and confidently within the educational setting. Moreover, the introduction of unfamiliar terms necessitates an additional cognitive load on students, as they are compelled to invest extra effort in deciphering and comprehending the meanings of these newly presented words. Lastly, the usage of unfamiliar terminologies can disrupt effective communication between teachers and students, leading to potential miscommunication and misunderstanding, thereby diminishing the overall effectiveness of instruction within the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education framework. The excessive use of Code-switching in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education may lead to reduced language mastery in either language being used. It can also create challenges for teachers in planning and the delivery of instruction. That was why teachers need to strike a balance between facilitating comprehension and providing exposure to the target language which is the mother tongue. Additionally, code-switching can also impact language standardization. In contexts with multiple dialects or variations of a language, code-switching can blur the boundaries between different language varieties and hinder efforts to establish a standardized form of the language. Mother Tongue-

Based Multilingual Education has been proven to improve the literacy of students based on several studies conducted. This study yields the same results based on the responses of the participants who said that the students can now read and write easily. The improvement of students' proficiency implies enhanced learning outcomes as students can comprehend and engage with the curriculum, leading to improved academic achievement and cognitive development. It also enables effective communication, facilitating meaningful interactions between and among students. Additionally, it eases academic transitions, boosts confidence, and opens doors to higher education and career prospects. By providing comprehensive language instruction and support, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education contributes to students' holistic growth, cultural preservation, and future success. The attitudes of the elementary school teachers show favorable results, and they express their support towards the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. However, they want the program to be properly implemented so they can effectively deliver the instruction. Three themes were drawn out from the responses of the participants when asked about their attitudes in the implementation of the program which are poor implementation, lack of support, and unaddressed gaps. When mother tongue-based multilingual education is not implemented properly, students may struggle to develop strong literacy skills and proficiency in both their mother tongue and the target language. This can happen if the mother

tongue is not effectively used as a medium of instruction. Reduced academic attainment can result from this since insufficient resources and support make it difficult for teachers to deliver effective instruction and for students to comprehend and interact with the material. Additionally, improper implementation prevents children from developing multilingual competency since it limits their capacity to become proficient in the target language and fully integrate into a multilingual society. The lack of support for implementing mother tongue-based multilingual education has significant implications. Inadequate resource allocation hampers program development and delivery, lowering education standards. The absence of clear policies and guidelines causes disagreements among educators and schools, hindering consistent language instruction. Moreover, the lack of government support undermines the potential benefits of this approach, including enhanced language development and cultural preservation. Without strong government backing, the positive impact of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education on students and communities remains limited. The unaddressed gaps in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education can result in lower language proficiency among students. Without enough assistance and resources, students may find it difficult to acquire strong literacy skills in both their mother tongue and the target language, which can negatively affect the quality of education, their overall language proficiency, and their ability to advance academically.

4.2. *Implications*—The results of my analysis revealed the following significant findings. The four themes that emerged from their experiences include scarcity of learning resources and teacher training, unfamiliar terminologies, code-switching, and improved student proficiency. The themes drawn out from the par-

ticipants' responses infer that a decade after its implementation, the teachers faced several challenges. However, despite these challenges, most students have achieved one of the program's goals, which is to improve literacy. The elementary teachers' attitudes toward implementing mother-tongue-based multilingual educa-

tion. Three themes emerge: poor implementation, lack of support, and unaddressed gaps. Through their experiences, insights were drawn, and three themes emerged from the participants' responses. These themes include proper implementation, remediation of gaps, and teacher consultation and dialogue. The proper implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education requires ongoing support, professional development opportunities, and access to appropriate instructional materials for teachers and students. When these were met, it could lead to enhanced language development and proficiency among students. By effectively utilizing students' mother tongues as the medium of instruction, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education strengthens their language skills, resulting in improved overall language competence. Additionally, it supports better academic outcomes as students can comprehend and engage with the curriculum more effectively when taught in a language they understand well. This leads to improved learning outcomes, higher academic achievement, and increased student

4.3. Future Directions—This study offers an in-depth exploration of the experiences, attitudes, and insights of elementary school teachers involved in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. By capturing the lived experiences of these teachers, valuable data was collected to inform recommendations, suggestions, and future directions for key stakeholders in education, such as policymakers, administrators, teachers, and future researchers. The findings of this study serve as a foundation for evidence-based decision-making and provide practical guidance for improving the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education programs at both the policy and classroom levels. For Policy Makers. To enhance the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the

motivation. If the gaps in the program were remediated, the language proficiency of the students was enhanced by addressing deficiencies in instructional materials, teacher training, and language support. Students' linguistic skills in both their mother tongue and the target language are enhanced as a result, leading to an improvement in their overall language proficiency. Also, recognizing and including students' mother tongues in the curriculum encourages cultural pride, identity, and connection among students while also promoting the preservation of cultural heritage. Additionally, it enhances academic performance through focused interventions including better teaching techniques, modernized resources, and specialized support, resulting in higher educational outcomes. Moreover, it also improves communication and collaboration between educators, students, and stakeholders by addressing gaps in training, providing opportunities for professional growth, and creating a supportive environment.

Philippines, policymakers and the government should allocate sufficient financial resources for instructional materials and teacher training. They may develop comprehensive policies and guidelines, prioritize ongoing professional development for teachers, engage stakeholders, and support research and evaluation studies. These actions would ensure equitable access to quality education, enhance teachers' competencies, and promote evidence-based decision-making for effective Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education implementation. When the government actively engages in teacher consultation and dialogue, it facilitates a valuable exchange of insights into the challenges and issues faced by teachers in the field. This interaction empowers the government to make informed decisions and develop policies that ef-

fectively address the specific needs and requirements of teachers, resulting in more targeted and impactful support. Moreover, such engagement enhances teacher morale and motivation, as teachers feel valued and respected, fostering a positive professional environment. By identifying areas for improvement through teacher consultation, the government can allocate resources and implement measures to enhance the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education programs. Furthermore, this collaborative approach promotes a culture of trust and transparency, establishing a strong foundation for effective partnerships between the government and teachers. Ultimately, the active engagement of the government in teacher consultation leads to the more effective implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education programs and contributes to improved educational outcomes for students.

For School Administrators. School administrators play a crucial role in improving the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in their schools. They may provide strong leadership, create a supportive environment, and ensure teachers receive adequate support and resources. Administrators should engage with parents, guardians, and the community to raise awareness and understanding of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to identify areas for improvement. Additionally, administrators may participate in networks and collaborations with other schools and institutions to share experiences and col-

lectively enhance Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education implementation. Their commitment and active involvement are vital for creating a conducive environment for the successful implementation of the program.

For Teachers. Teachers play a critical role in improving the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in schools. They could contribute to its success by deepening their understanding through professional development, collaborating with colleagues to share best practices, fostering positive relationships with students and families, monitoring student progress, and engaging in professional dialogue with administrators and policymakers. By enhancing their knowledge, utilizing effective instructional strategies, and actively participating in the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education process, teachers can support the successful implementation of the program and create a conducive learning environment for students.

For Researchers. Future research in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education may focus on longitudinal studies to examine its long-term impact on language proficiency and academic outcomes. Investigations into effective instructional strategies, parental and community involvement, teacher training, cultural preservation, and comparative studies between different regions can enhance our understanding and inform improvements in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education implementation. Such research is essential for promoting inclusive and high-quality education.

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