**The Challenge of Implementing Mother Tongue Education
in Linguistically Diverse Contexts: The Case of the Philippines**

Abstract

This study reports on the implementation of mother tongue education in linguistically diverse contexts (LDC), or locations where a number of mother tongues (MT) are spoken. In 2012 the Government of the Philippines implemented a Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education program for the first four years of schooling (K-3). The Philippine Department of Education proposed two program models to assist schools to cater for linguistic diversity: a ‘multiple monolingual’ model, which groups students with the same MT in separate monolingual classes, and a ‘lingua franca’ model, which adopts a widely-used language as medium of instruction in all classes. Three years into the program, a nationwide survey including 50 schools in LDC was conducted to identify challenges that teachers faced and strategies in program implementation. Responses to the survey described modifications of the Department-proposed models, illustrating how educators embraced the multi-layered character of linguistic diversity through context-driven program strategies. Results also identified program areas for which schools need additional support, such as the organization and teaching of classes in which a range of MTs is spoken. The adopted strategies demonstrate a localized realization of a national policy and provide policy-makers and implementers with a range of classroom realities and possible options for improving educational outcomes for students in complex and dynamic multilingual settings.

Keywords: mother tongue education; linguistic diversity; Philippine mother tongue education; challenges in mother tongue education; strategies in mother tongue education; language-in-education policy implementation

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Introduction

Research on mother tongue education (MTE) has shifted from demonstrating the effectiveness of MTE in improving children's educational achievement to investigating how MTE programs can be implemented successfully in different contexts (Cummins, 2013). MTE implementation worldwide has been found to face a roughly uniform set of challenges (Ball, 2011) but implementers in multilingual contexts face the additional impact of linguistic diversity, which makes program implementation more difficult. Despite this challenge, multilingual nations endeavor to craft MTE policies that address linguistic diversity. MTE studies in linguistically diverse contexts (LDC) have been conducted in Botswana, where the national language was used for what was intended to be an MTE program (Mokibelo, 2014), in India, where reading acquisition in multilingual settings was investigated (Nakamura, 2014), and in Papua New Guinea (PNG), where the MTE program implementation as a whole was studied. However, the main focus of these studies was not about the challenges of linguistic diversity. The present study aims to fill this gap by directly addressing this, exploring MTE implementation specifically in LDCs, an inquiry that has become more timely since PNG, the world's most linguistically diverse country, reversed its policy in 2013, returning to English-medium education after following an MTE program for 18 years. This inquiry will offer insights into MTE implementation into linguistically heterogeneous nations, some of which also face literacy challenges and limited resources (Smits, Huisman, & Kruijff, 2008). It offers empirical data about challenges faced and strategies used by schools implementing MTE in LDC.

The experience of the Philippines illuminates MTE implementation in LDC due to two main factors. Firstly, with 187 languages, the Philippines is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in Southeast Asia. Filipino and English are official languages, with Filipino designated as the national language and functioning as the lingua franca (LF), and English serving as the national working language. Around eight languages are regional LFs. Linguistic diversity, however, has been identified as an inhibitor of MTE success in the country (Young, 2011). Secondly, the number of official MTs for the program and participating schools makes Philippine MTE the most ambitious in Asia. Since 2012, 46,000 schools chose media of instruction (MOI) from 19 official MTs. Currently, at least 25 indigenous languages are also used for the program, and the Philippines Department of Education (DepEd) is anticipating the expansion of the list of official MTs. The case of the Philippines provides complex realities of localized MTE in LDC schools. This study accounts for this unique context and provides insights into language policy-making, program design and MTE implementation in developing, linguistically diverse countries. This paper reports on one part of a multiphase study designed to identify best practices in MTE implementation in the Philippines.

Education Programs for Linguistically Diverse Contexts

It has been noted that linguistic diversity tends to result in additional challenges to MTE implementation (Ball, 2011). The multiplicity of languages in a community poses the challenge of choosing an MT MOI from among many alternatives, which can result in mismatch between the MOI and students' home languages (Trudell, 2016). In cases where only one language can be chosen, an LF usually prevails, but this choice can undermine linguistic diversity and exclude minority languages. Where multiple languages are used, with some being local languages (LL), problems of discrimination and inadequate academic register often arise.

The choice and number of languages for MTE are partly determined by the language environment. Some multilingual countries like Belgium and Switzerland (Grin, Hexel, & Schwob, 2003) have 'multiple monolingually-oriented' schools (Busch, 2011) where using one language – the children's MT – is advisable and easily implemented. In contrast, more linguistically diverse countries like PNG (852 languages) and South Africa (34 languages) accommodate diversity by using LFs as MOI – defended as a practical choice, especially if there is one predominant LF in the area. Under MTE in PNG, a regional language spoken by a majority of students was selected as MOI (Klaus, 2003), while South Africa selects English LF as MOI for the majority of students who are not Afrikaans speakers (Heugh, 2009). For Philippine Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), the use of an LF is also recommended for LDC schools, and there are currently eight in the list of Department-nominated MTs. In a study of 21 multilingual African countries, 90% were found to have

language-in-education policies supportive of LLs, yet MOI choice was generally English or an LF whenever policy allows it (Trudell, 2016).

These situations offer a glimpse into the complex world of MTE in LDC, where programs established to teach children in the MT often fall back on LF use due to implementation challenges. This choice is supported by arguments that LF use is a feasible short-term choice for MTE in LDC as “evidence overwhelmingly points to the effectiveness of using an L1 (or, if necessary in a multilingual area, another language in which children are proficient) as the LOI throughout primary school (at least)” (RTI International, 2015, p. 21). Resorting to an LF is reported to be an experience- and evidence-based solution in linguistically diverse MTE programs that serves the majority of students (RTI International, 2015). However, as MTE is usually based on a rationale of using the child’s strongest language, and raising the status of LLs, the use of LF has to be balanced with teachers’ affirmation of children’s use of other languages. LF use is presented as a short-term design until LLs have working orthographies, resources are produced, and teachers are trained to teach in the LLs. However, the choice of LF undermines linguistic diversity and excludes the minority (Mokibelo, 2014). Scholars argue for LL use in MTE because LLs have to be protected and multilingualism preserved (Lo Bianco, 2016), and explain that governments should strive to implement MTE using LLs to ensure equity in education, particularly for children who are not LF-proficient (Trudell, 2016). On the other hand, some research reveals that using local MTs presents challenges including inadequate academic vocabulary (Klaus, 2003), low pedagogical suitability (Trudell, 2016), weak community support, and preference for dominant languages (Young, 2011). Despite these difficulties, scholars (Lewis & Lockheed, 2006) maintain that no correlation exists among developing countries’ linguistic diversity and learning achievement, and that linguistic diversity does not necessarily lead to failure in education.

For highly diverse settings, creative solutions are suggested, like using multiple MTs such as the case of Ethiopia’s use of 22 MOI (Heugh, 2011). Unconventional solutions include grouping students by shared MTs, with each group managed as a multi-grade class (RTI International, 2015). However, this may not be a solution for all contexts. Teachers in Botswana observed that forming separate classes for students speaking different languages required more time and human resources (Mokibelo, 2014). In Zamboanga City in Mindanao, multiple monolingual classes were viewed by the Mayor as “tribal segregation” arguing that it encouraged disunity and did not align with the city’s goal of cultural assimilation of migrants (Rimando, 2013). The result was that Chavacano, a local LF, was the language nominated for MTE in the city rather than other LL MTs. This situation shows that responding to linguistic diversity is not only about pupils’ languages but also about local imperatives and sociopolitical acceptance, which can have consequences for MTE program goals.

In highly LDC, it is also possible for students and teachers to share languages and code-switch. In instruction, this has been viewed as beneficial when it serves a deliberate instructional purpose, what is called pedagogical code-switching (Probyn, 2015). For instance, code-switching was encouraged in mathematics and science subjects in a trilingual Chinese middle school in Brunei because code-switching was lesson-directed, and facilitated rather than hindered learning (Ho, 2009).

However, switching involving the MT may be a concern in MTE programs that are anchored in MT immersion because it reduces MT exposure. Since code-switching may be inevitable in a multilingual classroom, the important issues are the extent of code-switching and the question of whether it is indiscriminate or judicious (Metila, 2007). Indiscriminate code-switching may be a way of masking unmastered language forms ('safe-talk') (Chick, 1996).

For LDC, the challenge for policy-makers and school-level implementers is to choose a program design or create tailor-made solutions that best meet the needs of their context (Ball, 2011; Weber & Horner, 2012). The case of the school head in Africa who transformed the curriculum as a way of contesting monolingual practices in a multilingual school is reported to exemplify the use of a bold approach that may be useful in some settings (Heugh, 2009). Policy flexibility is reported as essential to allow the program to adapt to complex realities in the field (RTI International, 2015). Mokibelo (2014) reports that the rigid imposition in Botswana of the use of a national language in MTE was designed to address various class realities - a complex situation for which there was no one solution.

Philippine Language-in-Education History

The vernaculars have always played a role in language-in-education policy and research in the Philippines. Vernaculars were employed as MOI in education during the Spanish period (1521-1898) but were replaced by English during the American occupation (1899-1946). From the 1940s to the 1960s, studies on the effectiveness of vernaculars as MOI were conducted (Iloilo Experiment and Rizal Experiment) (Gonzalez, 1998). Results were essentially supportive of Thomas and Collier's (1997) data showing that students who learned in their MT performed much better than counterparts who were instructed in English. These results lend support to UNESCO's 1953 statement declaring the child's MT as the best MOI for early education. Support for MT use in education has been consistently expressed by the United Nations (UN) through the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the 1960 UN Convention, and the 1999 UNICEF statement among others.

In the Philippines, the Vernacular Education Policy (1957-1974) employed bilingual (LF-English) education with a range of LFs, but ended due to training and funding problems and was replaced by the

Bilingual (Filipino-English) Education Policy (BEP) in 1970. From the 1970s to 2012, the Philippines implemented the BEP, but further MTE studies were conducted (Regional Lingua Franca Project and First Language Component) and provided empirical evidence supporting vernacular use in education. Despite these studies, government support for MTE waxed and waned. While these studies provided empirical support and contributed to local MTE literature, it should be highlighted that these studies were conducted in linguistically homogeneous environments, and therefore fall short in informing how MTE can be implemented successfully in more linguistically heterogeneous parts of the country.

Addressing Linguistic Diversity in Philippine MTE

In 2009, following a complex history in language-in-education policy, DepEd established MTB-MLE (DepEd, 2009) with the objective of having children commence formal schooling in the language they know best. The program has four goals: improving pupils' cultural development, language development, cognitive development, and academic development (DepEd, 2012). The program's rationale is drawn from findings that children's MT provides the best foundation for learning successive languages and academic content (World Bank, 2005; Barron, 2012), which is achieved through MT immersion in the early years (Ball, 2011).

Philippine MTE operates through two program 'modes': MT as a language subject and MT as MOI from Kindergarten to Grade 3 (K-3). Implementation of these modes begins with the choice by the school of an MT MOI, which can be an LF or an LL. In some areas, an LL may be a local LF – that is, an LL that also functions as an LF in the community.

As a response to linguistic diversity, DepEd allows schools to select MOIs based on local circumstances. DepEd's 19 official MTs (eight LFs and 11 LLs) shown in Table 1 allow the program to reach almost all students in the country, leaving only a small percentage who cannot be educated in their MT. Among the LFs is Tagalog, the linguistic base of Filipino. The difference between the two is that Filipino receives lexical contributions from other Philippine languages. An explanation for the selection of official MTs is not provided by DepEd, but it can be inferred that including LFs is motivated by a desire to ensure greater coverage for the program, while including more LLs reflects DepEd's commitment to reaching minority groups. Schools are encouraged to use languages outside the official list and engage in local materials production funded by DepEd. Hence, the policy can be understood as the use of an LF MT only when it is not possible to use an LL MT.

Table 1

Localizing a National Policy

DepEd has provided implementing guidelines that set national expectations while allowing schools the freedom to localize. MTE guidelines (DepEd, 2012) present two models for program implementation. ‘Model 1’ states that ‘ideally,’ the children’s MT should be used for Kindergarten to Grade 1 (K-1) classes. There is no explanation for recommending Model 1 for K-1, but it can be inferred that it represents the provision of the deepest MT immersion required by bridging¹. However, Model 1 does not advise whether one language or several should be used, yet this is a matter that is relevant to LDC schools. Model 2 is the use of an LF for LDC schools, with provisions for MT oral fluency classes for children whose MT is not the chosen LF, subject to teacher availability. The Model, however, does not provide other alternatives for children not speaking the school’s declared MT if a teacher is unavailable, a circumstance with a higher likelihood in LDCs. Clearly, there are some concerns relevant to MTE in LDC that are not covered by the provided models. Given this gap, part of the aim of this study is to know whether schools were challenged by this and what strategies were used, if any, to resolve matters where guidelines were silent.

Method

To date, no other study has investigated how schools in LDC respond to their unique linguistic situation. This study aims to address this gap and contribute to the investigation of how MTE is implemented in LDCs by answering two questions: (1) What are the challenges faced by LDC schools in implementing MTE? (2) What strategies are being adopted by LDC schools in response to these challenges?

Sample

DepEd coordinators were asked to nominate 50 LDC schools nationwide that had faced challenges and developed a range of strategies in response to them. The nominated schools were often those where national trainers taught or those with strong stakeholder support. The schools represented the three main island groups (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao) and were predominantly small and rural, but 17 (34%) were large and city-based.

Table 2 shows that the schools implemented eight LLs and four LFs. Ten were in the DepEd list, while two were LLs not included in the list.

Table 2

¹ The gradual introduction and use of languages in a program.

Each school's administrator was included as part of the sample, and half of the total number of K-3 MT teachers in each school were alternately chosen from the school roster. The inclusion of fifty percent of K-3 faculty ensured that the sample would provide a representative account of MTE implementation. Fifty school administrators and 349 teachers provided responses to the surveys.

Instrument

Two survey instruments – one for school administrators and one for teachers – were six pages long and elicited information about the school and its MTE program. The findings from the scoping phase of the project informed the design of these instruments. The instruments included 19 Likert-style items on appropriateness of the MT, pupil attitude and competencies, parent and community involvement, teacher attitude towards the program and classroom practices. Each statement is a five-point Likert item that can be rated from strongly disagree (-2) to strongly agree (+2). Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the 19 Likert-style items was .944, indicating high reliability. Six open-ended questions on implementation challenges and strategies employed, school accomplishments related to MTE, and innovative MT teaching practices were also included in the instruments. The instruments were piloted prior to use.

Data Collection

A verification visit was made to all 50 schools to confirm linguistic diversity among students and the community. This was done through conversations with teachers and informal observations of language use in classrooms and the community. Data collection ran for a month, with a typical fieldwork day accommodating a visit to one to three schools, depending on school locations.

The visit to each school included survey administration, which contributed to the 100% response rate for the 50 schools. Participants were gathered in one room and were seated with ample space between them. Survey forms were answered within 30-45 minutes. No major questions were raised about the items. The K-3 teachers who were not surveyed were present during the visit and conversed with the researchers. Details of these conversations were noted and found to corroborate the data from survey participants.

Data Analysis

Data from the Likert-style items were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to identify significant differences between sets of data, while NVivo 10 was used to organize data from the open-

ended questions into themes (nodes). The aim was to identify unique challenges and strategies, so data were filtered to eliminate multiple reports of the same challenges or strategies by different schools. Related challenges and strategies were grouped into categories. Explanations of challenges and strategies were drawn from responses to open-ended items.

Results

In keeping with the focus of this paper on implementation, the results reported here concentrate on survey items about program implementation and classroom communication. Overall, schools reported the highest number of challenges and strategies in the design category, which includes the choice of MT MOI and sectioning of students. More than half of the schools used at least one LF as MOI and the remaining schools used at least one LL as MOI. Results indicate that LDC teachers used the MT during instruction but found the MTs to be limited in academic registers and academic formality. LDC teachers also employed communication strategies such as code-switching, translation and bridging to accommodate learners whose MTs were different from the MT MOI.

Challenges and Strategies

As shown in Figure 1, the 50 LDC schools reported 17 unique program challenges that fell into four categories: design, connection with local community and culture, staff training, and staff selection. Figure 2 shows that schools reported 18 implementation strategies that fell into five categories: design, connection with local community and culture, staff training, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation. (For the full list of challenges and strategies, see Understanding Best Practices in MTB-MLE in the Philippines Phase 2 Report (forthcoming)).

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Figure 3 presents data from Likert-style items about teachers' classroom practices and perceived MT skills. Note that higher means are indicative of stronger agreement with the statements. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the seven items is .898, indicating high reliability.

Fig. 3

Results indicate that the teachers have a working knowledge of the MTs and are proficient enough to use them frequently during instruction. This indicates that the program is implementable even when not all teachers are native speakers (NS) of the school's declared MT. More surprising, given these results, is their relatively lower mean rating for confidence in MT teaching, which appears inconsistent with the higher results on teachers' assessment of their MT proficiency and use of strategies acquired in training. It is possible that teachers draw their confidence from program implementation experience and that it may increase as the program matures. Their pre-service training focused on the use of English and Filipino as MOI and their professional development in MTE comes only from DepEd's in-service mass training, which ran for a few days.

Although teachers used the MT to a large extent, they also code-switched. This was one of the most reported strategies for addressing challenges in classroom communication, along with translation and bridging. Multilingual teachers reported explaining lessons in all the pupils' languages, although this was exhausting and time consuming. Teachers also reported switching languages to explain content that students had difficulty understanding in the MOI, indicating that code-switching occurred during formal parts of the lesson, but it is likely to have occurred also during informal parts of the lesson, since it is a common practice in the country. Switching was done often from the MT to an LF and sometimes to English. Teachers reported that they code-switched to improve pupils' comprehension, and by this account, the code-switching occurring qualified as pedagogical code-switching (Probyn, 2015). Whether code-switching was judiciously used cannot be determined, because we did not have the opportunity to observe classes. However, based on the principle that MT immersion is central to MTE programs (Ball, 2011), the rating given to code-switching, which indicates reduced time for MT exposure, is quite high, and therefore invites some reflection on whether it may jeopardize the building of a strong MT foundation.

Figure 4 indicates that the teachers have found the MTs to be limited in mathematics and science lexicon, and academic formality which are also some of the common challenges identified in MTE in LDC (Trudell, 2016), indicating the prevalence of this set of challenges among LLs in LDCs. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (.870) for the three items shows high reliability.

Fig. 4

The negative rating for the usefulness of the MT academic lexicon is possibly indicative of the actual state of intellectualization of MTs — both LLs and LFs. Some MTs, particularly those that are also LFs, have been intellectualized to some extent, but because MTs have only been recently used as MOI, some academic

terms for these languages have not been developed yet or those existing are unfamiliar to both students and teachers. No clear strategy for this was provided by the schools, but the continuous and frequent use of the MT in classes may help to develop the academic register of LLs over time.

Program Design

The design category, which concerns the choice of MT and implementation model, yielded the largest number of challenges and strategies. Table 3 shows that, despite linguistic diversity, a majority of LDC schools (65%) implemented a single language program. Three quarters used at least one LL MT, but less than half (44%) used only LL. In other words, more than half of the schools (56%) used at least one LF. These results are rather favorable with regard LL use, as compared to the reported LF choice of 90% of surveyed African MTE-implementing countries (Trudell, 2016). Considering that the MTE policies of the Philippines and the surveyed countries are supportive of LL use, these results invite a deeper comparison and contrast of MTE policies, program guidelines, and context dynamics.

Table 3

These results show that schools adopted some form of the proposed models for LDCs, 35% of which involved a form of modification (Modified Model 1 or Combined Model), demonstrating the flexibility of the policy, a desired feature of an MTE policy (RTI International, 2015), of which the schools took advantage. This resulted in four modifications: the use of a single LL instead of the recommended LFs, the combining of models, the use of multiple languages, and the formation of in-class groups of students who speak the same language. Notably, however, 40% of schools implemented Model 1, adopting a single LL – an option not recommended by DepEd for LDCs. Some implementers explained the choice of a single LL as a way of preserving the language and culture of the area, which, as Teacher 17 said, ‘should be protected from MTs which are historically associated with other areas.’ Other schools, such as a school in Cotabato, Mindanao, where the declared MT is Sinugbuanong Binisaya, chose an LF not historically used in that location but well known to the students after coming into use following internal migration into the area. Similarly, the choice of Tagalog LF as MOI was explained by School Head 03: ‘It was the actual dominant language in the community, the only language that all pupils will understand.’

As we have noted, implementers created linguistically heterogeneous classes using an LF as MOI on the grounds that those students not taught in their MT were often LF-proficient. This arrangement was reported

as less demanding of resources and necessary when there was no supply of teachers competent in the LL MT, the same rationale for an LF choice in the literature (RTI International, 2015). It was also seen as a way of minimizing classroom communication problems caused by the use of too many languages, some of which may have been unfamiliar to teachers and some pupils.

Multiple language programs were usually implemented when, for each language, there was a sufficient number of NS pupils – at least 15 – to form separate classes using one MT. In these cases, following Modified Model 1 (use of multiple LLs as MTs), pupils with the same MTs formed one class and were matched with an MT-speaking teacher. Some implementers of multiple language programs discovered different approaches from a process of trial and error. One school *‘tried grouping the Iloko pupils in one class and Tagalog pupils in another and found it effective’* (Teacher 17). In some cases, teachers handling mixed language classes formed in-class groups of pupils with the same MTs, retaining a form of Modified Model 1 within the class, which is similar to the unconventional same-language multi-grade design recommended in the literature (RTI International, 2015).

Modified Model 1 offers LDCs the greatest potential for MT immersion. However, despite language diversity, very few schools adopted this model. More than half of the surveyed schools implemented Model 2, an LF model, rather than adopting one of the recommended multiple monolingual models. This may be because the multiple monolingual model presents logistical challenges, such as finding teachers whose language repertoires mirror pupils’ languages. To maximize use of human resources, some school heads reported that they assigned teachers to a new grade level to match pupils’ MT. This made their program more efficient but may pose challenges for teachers, who may find themselves assigned to a new grade level every year.

Discussion

While this study confirms challenges concerning MTE in LDC found in other contexts (Ball, 2011), it also reveals the significance of program design as a crucial issue in the implementation of MTE in LDCs. Two decisions about MOI are crucial – *how many languages* and *which language/s* should be used for MTE. This is also true for other countries, some of which, like Botswana and Uganda, have used only one language, while some, like South Africa and Ethiopia, have used several LFs (Heugh, 2011). The case of the Philippines has shown that the choice partly depends on what policy allows – and in matters where policy guidelines are silent - implementers’ perspective and decision-making. This study suggests that policy flexibility provides potential for schools to make decisions that meet local circumstances but allows pragmatic decisions with potential to undermine policy goals.

In the Philippines, policy guidelines and sociopolitical dynamics determined how the national policy was implemented locally. Gaps in the guidelines triggered the innovativeness of school heads and teachers, who viewed them not as inadequacies but as opportunities for program localization. This resonates with what has been reported from other contexts, such as the agency exhibited by the school head in South Africa who modified the school's curriculum to respond to the linguistically diverse population it serves (Heugh, 2009). These cases demonstrate that program implementation is achievable through the use of LLs (Lo Bianco, 2016). Reported challenges for LL use are also the same as those experienced by implementers in other LDCs, implying that, for those who desire to conduct MTE through LLs, these challenges can be the focus of efforts to make LLs an attractive MOI for MTE programs.

Code-switching was reported as a strategy that facilitated classroom communication. Deeper analysis of the use of different languages in the classroom and its impact is beyond the scope of this study, but management of different languages in MTE requires further investigation to understand how code-switching in MTE classrooms relates to policy goals.

The localization of policy guidelines spurred the modification of class models – an approach that may benefit MTE implementers in other places with language heterogeneity. The case of Philippine LDCs thus enriches a growing typology of MTE language programs or class models, which add to existing effective models of MTE implementation in multilingual areas (Lo Bianco, 2016). We consider these models as a continuum, with each model involving a mix of costs and gains. The aim of the program – MT use for all children – is likely to be realized in varying models, an affirmation that one size does not fit all in MTE implementation. The modified models of LDC schools highlight how the interplay of needs and goals influence policy implementation. While flexibility of policy is viewed positively in MTE literature, if it is to allow effective implementation, it needs to be designed in a way that guarantees and protects policy principles.

Conclusion

This study shows that linguistic diversity indeed raises challenges for MTE, making it not immediately possible to provide MTE in every child's language in complex multilingual contexts in the Philippines. In such cases, LFs were deemed by some implementers as appropriate alternatives when children's LL MT could not be used, but the decision to use them must be made with a clear understanding of the costs and benefits it brings, bearing in mind that it is, at best, a model for temporal use until resources are in place for the use of LLs.

To implement the program, schools need to understand policy goals and explore how they can best be realized, given the linguistic dynamics of their communities. In some cases, policies may not comprehensively

account for all the concerns of LDC schools, but this should be viewed by implementers as avenues for innovative localization. Program decentralization should be strongest in LDC to accommodate this localization. Given this flexibility, schools in LDC need to make informed decisions about programmatic concerns (MT choice and program design), especially because these decisions trickle down to the classroom and affect language practices. Adapting policy imperatives to local circumstances is a welcome practice, but can result in unevenness in the extent to which localization is faithful to MTE goals and principles. This requires close monitoring of and support for schools as they engage in localization.

The case of the Philippines shows that whatever the choices made, MTE in LDC raises issues regarding the accommodation of children who do not speak the implemented MT and the use of multiple languages in the classroom. These challenges emerge from the balancing act between program principles and practicalities. Flexible decision-making and program localization require support to ensure faithfulness to policy principles. This is the lesson for policy makers in the Philippines and other developing countries.

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Figure

1. Categories of program challenges with corresponding frequencies of reported challenges.

Figure 2. Categories of program strategies with corresponding frequencies of reported strategies.

Figure 3. Mean values of teachers' attitude towards classroom language practices.

Figure 4. Mean values of teachers' perception on the MT as MOI.

Table 1

The 19 Official MT MOI

Local Languages	Lingua Francas
Akeanon	Bikol
Bahasa Sug	Hiligaynon
Chavacano	Iloko
Ibanag	Kapampangan
Ivatan	Pangasinan
Kinaray-a	Sinugbuanong Binisaya
Maguindanaon	Tagalog
Meranao	Waray
Sambal	
Surigaonon	
Yakan	

Table 2

Languages Implemented as MT in the 50 Participating LDC Schools

Language	Status in Implementing School Community	Number of schools ^a
Kapampangan		4
Pangasinan		4
Akeanon		2
Sama		2
Chavacano	LL	1
Bahasa Sug		1
Maguindanaon		1
Hanunuo		1
Tagalog		3
Tagalog		8
Sinugbuanong Binisaya	LF	9
Iloko		9
Hiligaynon		6

Note. Some schools implemented more than one language as MT.

Table 3

Program Designs in LDCs

Single Language Program	Multiple Languages Program
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Model 1	Model 2	Modified	Combined
MT is a local language only	MT is a Lingua Franca in the locality	Model 1 All MTs are different local languages	Model At least 1 MT is a local language + at least 1 MT is a Lingua Franca in the locality
19 (40%)	12 (25%)	2 (4%)	15 (31%)

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