COPING MECHANISMS OF TEACHERS TEACHING IN SCHOOLS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE (IP) LEARNERS: LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

Many students struggle with language use, especially in English. This topic can be found not only in primary and secondary schools but also in higher education. In light of this, the researchers examined whether Indigenous students are aware of this. The bulk of these Indigenous students live in the mountains of one of the provinces in region three, which is one of the province's most impoverished regions. However, Indigenous Peoples' struggle does not preclude them from battling poverty and injustice through education. They are also a part of inclusive education, which means they receive the same guidance, therapies, and treatment as all students. The main purpose of this study is to discover the coping mechanisms of teachers in selected private schools in Davao City with Indigenous People (IP) learners who experience language differences inside the classroom. The Elementary teachers teaching in grades 3 to 6 would somehow reveal their experiences on how they handle situations in order to help learners with language difficulty or language differences. The objectives were to identify indicators of poor vocabulary, processing and expressing of information. The result is a school education for Indigenous children that can be regarded as 'additive' as opposed to the many 'subtractive' English only models of education. Such English only models of education, which allow for at most, just a token use of the children's mother tongue, are destined to continue their pattern of failure.

KEYWORDS: *Coping, mechanisms, teachers, teaching, indigenous, learners, language, differences, focus*

INTRODUCTION

In advancing quality education (Ball, 2011), it has always been a challenge of any country's educational policy to decide on and recommend the right language/s that must be used in instruction. Language of instruction, whether inside or outside the classrooms denotes the language used for teaching the basic curriculum of the educational system. Some countries decide to use one language causing learners who are mother tongue speakers at a remarkable disadvantage in the educational system as in they are receiving instruction in a foreign official language. Nevertheless, other nations opted to use educational strategies that regard national or indigenous languages to be put in place in instruction (UNESCO Mother Tongue Based Bilingual Multi-Lingual Education, 2016). In the advent of global political transformation and evolutions, language as a primary right was expressed among the Indigenous Peoples claims.

As education curriculum changed in the Philippines, teaching approaches needed to be transformed. Every Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum strand requires learners, indigenous or non-indigenous, to acquire mastery of lessons as they go through different educational levels (Department of Education, 2016). Teachers of mainstream classrooms in the Philippines need to give attention on the aspects of quality language teaching and consider customized educational programs such as intervention to become a part of their pedagogical practices. To make learning possible, teaching approaches and learning activities need to consider components among the three facets: academic excellence, quality learning environment, and impacts (Hanlen, 2010).

For pupils from kindergarten to Grade 3, teachers may shift to the learner's mother tongue from English or Filipino languages as medium of instruction. This is to guarantee that quality education in the early years may be achieved. This is stipulated in Philippine Department of Education Order No. 74, series of 2009 or the Institutionalization of MTBMLE in the Early Childhood Education in the Philippines (Department of Education, 2009). As such policies in language of instruction are carried out, teachers need to support enrichment of curriculum and assessment strategies that decrease inequalities in language learner's achievements. Furthermore, school and home must provide opportunities that enable disadvantage English language learners to catch up and obtain crucial learning skills and meet the demands of language and communication such as skills in speaking. Hence, for IP learners, schools are compelled to teach the national curriculum in a language they can easily understand (Ball, 2011).

Speaking is crucial in the total language development of IP learners. It is simultaneously performed while learner listens (Academia, 2016). To achieve learning, indigenous or non-indigenous learners, are expected to acquire English vocabulary building skills to maximize their learning capabilities through speaking. Their speaking vocabularies in English facilitates sharing of thoughts verbally and help them maintain good academic performance. However, most IP learners and their families may have limited awareness and inadequate competence as an effect of the past failure of the educational system that could have addressed social, linguistic/verbal, cultural needs in teaching and learning. Research uncovered that while reforms are taking course in Philippine education, teachers, parents and learners are challenged regarding languages of instruction. Filipino indigenous learners continuously experience difficulty while English is being utilized as language medium. It is a problem when the indigenous learner is hard up recalling, articulating and interpreting English words. Hence, s/he struggles during classroom interactions.

An issue in the mainstream classes in the Philippines is teachers' preparation. A reason that teachers failed in the past is because they were not prepared in handling indigenous learners with learning problems particularly difficulty in speaking English. They feel that the classroom challenge is very extensive and how or where to start is unclear. These issues were discussed in the Thematic Paper towards the preparation of the 2014 World. Conference on Indigenous Peoples "Education and Indigenous Peoples: Priorities for Inclusive Education" of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues (2014). Much effort has been taken along these issues, by developing specially tailored pedagogical approaches, culturally and linguistically customized learning programs in English for indigenous learners.

Noted and emphasized is a need to craft instructional programs such as intervention which are suited to those indigenous learners with learning problems. Furthermore, it was also suggested that to make the said program effective, it must be localized. It must be done in a bottom-up manner to guarantee that infrastructure, materials and instructions, cater the context and unique needs of indigenous learners. However, most of the current instructional programs, materials and assessment processes in the Philippines are more focused on the reading, writing and listening areas not on speaking. In the evaluation of language skills, activities in the speaking domain are generally limited. These are generally carried out through written forms of assessments.

Research evidences impels a gargantuan amount of benevolence among Filipino teachers who are handling indigenous learners with speaking difficulties in English. These learners' inadequacies may generate troubles with understanding, acquiring vocabulary and interactions using English language. The challenge is how to help them attain their potentials in academics. The Understood Team (2016) mentioned that some children can have more than one among these obstacles, which are: 1) expressive language difficulties, 2) mixed receptive-expressive language difficulties, and 3) social communication difficulties. During teaching and learning processes, verbal language difficulty in English makes it hard for the child to put his or her ideas even feelings into words.

Their vocabulary in English is very limited that they may leave out key words in their sentences and may say sentences with confusing ideas. Some indigenous learners may also manifest difficulty in English when they find it so hard to understand what the teacher is saying and are troubled processing information and expressing thoughts into spoken words. Indigenous learners are much more confronted with orally presented stories that have longer sentences because of poor vocabulary in English.

Another challenge is the Bilingual Policy in the Philippines using both Filipino and/or English as the languages of instruction (Department of Education, 2020). This may academically confront an indigenous learner with problems in speaking because his or her dialect at home is Tagalog. Aside from personal issues in speaking the English language, an indigenous learner faces hardships in grasping lessons and expressing himself or herself in the classroom.

Moreover, indigenous learners who are confronted with language complication in English may have problem in processing information, difficulty in sustaining one's span of attention and struggles in focusing during instructions. Vocabularies among Filipino learners. Semantics refers to the study of meanings of words or phrases based on a specific context. Skills in Semantics language describe the ability to perceive and state labels; and the competence to recognize and name exact brands or categories. It means one's capacity to decipher and tell words and their functions. Moreover, it is the individual's capability to understand and use descriptive expressions including parts of a whole (Children's Speech and Language Services, 2020).

This study therefore, aimed to identify speaking difficulties of indigenous learners in English semantics. Specifically, it was intended to determine specific indicators of poor English vocabulary development, and poor information processing and expressing using verbal language.

Trained teachers are expected to apply sound effective coping mechanisms in teaching IP learners who experience language differences inside the classroom. However, many teachers working in some public schools appear to be applying ineffective coping strategies that are reportedly already hurting the learning processes of many students.

Therefore, the researcher felt that there is a need to investigate how public-school teachers used their coping mechanisms in teaching language to IP learners is affecting the coping mechanisms used by the teachers working in selected public schools since the Government is making a lot of investments in the sector. Profoundly, this study examined these issues through the lens of the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of learning gap between indigenous and non-indigenous learners across the learning distribution? Does the learning gap hold when accounting from differences on the array of characteristics between these two groups of learners?
2. Do previous coping mechanisms of home language exposure of Indigenous students at primary level reduce the learning gap with respect to non-indigenous students?
3. What educational impact of additional support school policies on the prevalence of repetition for Indigenous learners?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design
This section will: (a) discuss the interview approach; (b) explain the role of the researcher; and lastly, (c) describe the sampling method and ethical considerations. This study used qualitative phenomenological since this dealt more on the experiences of the teachers in teaching language to Indigenous People students.

Since qualitative research studies subjects in their natural setting, all interviews must be done through virtual interviews using google meet at a time convenient for the participants. All interview sessions were tape-recorded for purposes of transcription. When needed, the researcher used follow-up interviews after transcription to clarify meaning or explore areas in more depth.

In order to find out about topics they are unable to directly observe, Patton (2005) suggests that researchers interview subjects. The goal of qualitative interviewing is to comprehend participants' experiences and the meanings they attach to them, rather than to find answers to questions (Seidman, 2016). Semi-structured interviews are frequently used when a researcher wants to gather more focused and specific information, but unstructured, open-ended interviews are typically used in qualitative studies because they allow for the greatest flexibility and responsiveness to emerging issues for both the interviewer and the participants (Schwandt, 2001).

Participants and Sampling
Participants of this study are all public-school teachers who are teaching during the pandemic with more than ten (10) years of teaching experience in order to share their experiences in-depth. There are only seven (7) of them to be considered since there is still limiting travel from one place to another in the region. I only maximize teachers working nearby my workplace to observe the protocols set by the government. These participants are working in public schools and are using different instructional supervision and pedagogical practices as public-school teachers who are teaching secondary students as educational opportunities to consider. I choose seven participants in order to have more focus

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in the conduct of data gathering. It is also my pleasure having this numbers as Mertens (2019) mentioned that fewer number of participants will give clarity on the results.

Research Instruments
Semi-structured interviews made by the researcher was used to combine the flexibility of unstructured, open-ended interviews with directionality and an agenda to produce focused, qualitative, textual data (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 2019). This study collected data using semi-structured interviews to explore how the Filipino teachers in the United Arab Emirates improve the quality of teaching using multiple pedagogical practices and instructional supervision and to describe their experiences, strategies, and outcomes when attending classes in promoting the best instructional supervision and pedagogical practices in the country where they are currently teaching.

To ensure that the same information was collected from all the participants, an interview guide was used. The interview guide included open-ended questions and topics to help structure the interview, but when needed, the interviewer also explored, probed, and asked additional questions to clarify and expand on a particular topic. The interview guide helped make interviewing several different participants more systematic and comprehensive by defining in advance the issues to be explored (Patton, 2005). The open-ended questions were framed in a way, so the participants could represent their views and perspectives in their own words and terms, in addition to taking the questions in any direction that they chose.

Data Analysis
In fields where little study has been done, as in the case of the recreational camping experience we have discussed, descriptive phenomenology is particularly useful. Psychologists may find Colaizzi's method more familiar and approachable due to its thematic structure than Giorgi's "distilling" style (2016)

After that, the researcher read through the interviews in great detail to become familiar with the material and comprehend its substance. At least three readings of the interviews were required for this. As per Hatch's (2002) suggestions, the researcher made a note sheet specifically for every participant in the qualitative analysis. As the data analysis progressed, the summary sheets provided a convenient means of quickly consulting the source data.

Hatch (2002) advises researchers to study the data through in its entirety with a single typology in mind following the initial readings. Typologies are classification schemes composed of categories that separate different facets of reality. Research objectives, common sense, or theory are the sources of typologies. The investigator employed the typologies or themes identified in the literature review as the conceptual frameworks to analyze the data in this investigation.

The researcher categorized the data into five categories from the literature by extracting text samples from the data and classifying them under a specific category after going through the data with each construct or typology in mind. Following the coding procedure, the researcher went over the information once again and started to provide interpretations while also penning analytical notes outlining her ideas and discoveries. In order to give the teachers' educational experiences context and relevance, the researcher started to analyze the data at this point by highlighting key themes, recurring concepts, and belief patterns that appeared frequently throughout the interviews.

As themes emerged in the data, interpretations started to be offered. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), this aspect of the data analysis enables the researcher to create connections between the interviews and gives the themes and categories context. In order to provide the teachers' teaching experiences context and relevance, the researcher started interpreting the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The purpose of this study was to discover the coping mechanisms of teachers in schools with indigenous people (IP) learners. In this manner, their language differences is the utmost concern in this study. Moreover, analysis of the data revealed three main themes; namely, *asses the students with learning gaps, lack of respect and resources causes critical education gap and language policy and practice.*

The data from the interviews were analyzed using a process of thematic analysis facilitated by initial coding of the interview transcripts, identifying preliminary categories, second round coding, refining categories, and recognizing

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emerging themes. Main themes were identified through the iterative process of coding and categorizing, resulting in the most salient topics in participants' responses to the interview questions. These themes were discovered inductively in a bottom-up manner as emerging from transcript data when analyzed about the research questions. This resulted in the final distribution of themes deemed as most accurately reflecting the reported experiences of the research participants.

As a result of the analysis, the main themes *asses the students with learning gaps, lack of respect and resources causes' critical education gap and language policy and practice* aligned with the original research questions. Additionally, the data found to answer the questions regarding challenges and benefits emerged primarily within the context of the other themes, thus these are not addressed separately, but are included within the three main themes as identified in this section. Sub-themes are being identified in the course of analysis which is presented below.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Teachers must engage their students at a physical, emotional/mental, intellectual and spiritual level by using a variety of teaching methods. Using different techniques and methods in teaching the indigenous learners would give them an opportunity to widen their horizons and perspectives in learning the language used as a medium of communication inside the classroom.

Further, this study recommends that a similar study be conducted to collect sufficient data on class interactions through utilizing intensive classroom observations to deepen the investigation on the language practices of the Indigenous teachers during the classroom discourses. Moreover, it also recommends that other methods like surveys and interviews with the teachers can also be undertaken to gather their viewpoints about when and why they use appropriate language during instruction as well as their attitudes toward their use.

Lastly, concerning research design, conducting a case study is another way in which to focus more on the totality of the Indigenous learner's passion for education and how they preserve their culture in their studies. Doing so could involve other stakeholders such as the principal, students and parents. Data collection sources are journals, interviews, and focus groups. A mixed methods approach is also appropriate as an assessment to focus on Indigenous students' satisfaction and burnout.

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