



REVISITING STAKEHOLDERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS MTB-MLE AND ELT

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ABSTRACT

A number of studies on the Filipinos' attitude towards the Philippine official languages and on code-switching have been done; nonetheless, very few studies on attitude towards the Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) language program after its implementation in 2013 have been conducted. This paper presents selected stakeholder participants' attitude towards the language program in relation to English language teaching (ELT) and learning after about seven years of its implementation, and now that it may be suspended through House Bill No. 6125 or the Act Suspending the Implementation of the Use of Mother Tongue as the Medium of Instruction for Kindergarten to Grade 3 as suggested by a prestigious national linguistic organization[13]. The writer's self-designed attitude questions which were patterned after the language attitude questions [21] were used to gather data through interview. Analysis revealed that four out of six participants had a positive attitude towards MTB-MLE; two were undecided about their perception and attitude; however, three among the six did not fully understand the program. The participants supported ELT and acknowledged the role of English as the global language; nonetheless, they were uncertain as to whether or not MTB-MLE would have a positive impact on ELT and on global competitiveness.

KEYWORDS: *Attitude, Bilingualism, English proficiency, English Language Teaching (ELT), Language of Instruction (LOI), Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education MTB-MLE), Multilingualism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, the vast world has turned into a small global village where everybody becomes a member of what Maher (2005) named Empire of the Cool where English has become the lingua franca associated with knowledge and success. However, in the Philippines, specifically in the suburban areas, it is observed that even university students would not speak straight correct register of English. Research shows the ESL learners' poor English language performance in either of the four macro-skills due to factors related to textbooks quality, teacher training, educational facilities, of curricular program itself. Indeed, Filipino students ranked last among the 79 countries in a global survey of reading comprehension, Program for International Student Assessment (PISA in Ropero, 2019). The failure may be traced back to the students' poor reading skills in

English; hence, ESL teachers are challenged to improve the learning situation.

Relatively, Valderama (2019) is convinced that the Philippines' fall from 14th place in 2018 to 20th in the 2019 English Proficiency Index (EPI) should be a cause for worry that the country's education sector should immediately address. She explains that EPI measures the average level of English language skills based on the results of an online Standard English Test (SET) administered by English Proficiency Education First, a Swiss-based global company. Further, she posits that the result affects the chances of Filipinos getting jobs and worries that it would have negative consequences for the competitiveness of Filipinos in the global arena.

Therefore, she recommends that the Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) should exert efforts to improve the teaching



and learning of English. She relates her friends' observation which can actually be observed in some areas, i.e., college graduates have difficulty expressing themselves clearly and logically in English. Valderama (2019) also claims that some observers put the blame on the Mother Tongue-Based Multi-lingual Education (MTB-MLE) teaching component embedded in the K to 12 Curriculum.

Inevitably and unconsciously, it may be opinionated that Filipino ESL learners who are poor in English despite the English language of instruction in particular content areas, will all the more be English semilinguals within the current MTB-MLE language policy. Phillipson's (1992) maximum exposure fallacy suggests that when students' learning is divided over two or more languages, it will result in an impairment of language learning. Hakuta (1986) implies the same possibility of the decline of one or more languages when more than one language is used in essential domains like formal instruction.

Nonetheless, despite empirical data manifesting the deteriorating English language skills of Filipino ESL bilingual learners and professionals, the language maintains its role and prestige as the language of power and success. Durano (2009) investigated the attitude of 284 seniors, 140 from two public high schools, and 140 from three private high schools. The respondents were made to answer close-ended and open-ended questions regarding their general attitudes towards English and Filipino. Quantitative results showed that 99% of the participants had a positive attitude towards English. Likewise, the qualitative data revealed that all the 280 participants had positive attitude towards English, which they said are connected to professional and social mobility.

As regards the Philippine official languages, the language provision in the 1987 Philippine constitution reflects that Filipino and English should be used as media of instruction, the use allocated to specific subjects as indicated in the Department Order no. 25, S.1974, and that these two languages should be taught as language subjects in all levels to achieve the goals of bilingual competence. In 2004, former President Gloria Arroyo designated English as the primary medium of instruction. Nevertheless, studies show that content area teachers and students code-switch English and Filipino for different reasons (e.g., Metilla, 2009).

The Department of Education (DepED) Order 31 s. 2013 records the dramatic transition of Philippine Basic Education from Bilingual Instruction i.e., English and Filipino to MTB-MLE, and contravened the latter's provisions of RA 10533. Sec. 4 of RA 10533, otherwise known as *An Act Enhancing the Philippine Basic Education System by Strengthening its*

Curriculum and Increasing the Number of Years for Basic Education provides that:

"Basic education shall be delivered in languages understood by the learners as the language plays a strategic role in shaping the formative years of learners."

"For kindergarten and the first three years of elementary education, instruction, teaching materials, and assessment shall be in the regional or native language of the learners, among others."

According to Dekker (2010), MTB-MLE which is perceived to refer to language of instruction (LOI) is more than just using the learners' L₁ to explain lessons' content. MTB-MLE curriculum reflects the local culture and promotes cognitive development, more so higher order cognitive processes. Moreover, MTB-MLE rests on the premise that the students can transfer the skills and knowledge they gained from their intensive L₁ instruction to their L₂, provided they get sufficient training and education. Thus, active L₂ learning is ensured alongside the improved academic performance of the students (Nolasco, 2009 in Gallego and Zubiri, 2013).

Relatively, Mahboob and Cruz (2013) in Wa-Mbaleka (2014) believe that the success of MTB-MLE will highly depend on the change in attitude towards languages. Wa-Mbaleka (2014) investigated the perceptions of English teachers about MTB-MLE policy and its implementation. His analysis revealed that the teachers' perceptions on the impact of MTB-MLE on learning in general were inconclusive. He stated that they could not reveal with certainty whether or not they believe that an impact of MTBMLE exists on learning, and whether MTB-MLE will have a positive impact on ELT and on global competitiveness. Likewise, the teachers were not sure whether or not the Philippines is well prepared for the implementation of MTB-MLE. On the other hand, the study also revealed his participants' positive view that MTB-MLE will have a positive impact on the learning of mother tongues and on the enhancement of the local cultures.

Educational institutions' stakeholders in the elementary and high school levels are divided in their opinions regarding the MTB-MLE program's possible effects on English language teaching and learning. Some commend the new language program's principle of learners starting from where they are and from what they already knew proceeding from the known to the unknown. In contrast, others, especially those who see English proficiency as a competitive advantage in employment, especially across borders, may keep skeptical about it. Filipino language scholars and applied linguists, therefore, double their efforts in



finding appropriate approaches in teaching and learning English across the curriculum. Nevertheless, this implementation of MTB-MLE specifically in Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, and 3 to support the goal of *Every Child-A Reader and A Writer by Grade 1*, poses a significant challenge to ESL teachers.

The recently proposed House Bill no. 6125, "*An act suspending the implementation of the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction for kindergarten to grade 3*" seems to sadden the supporters of MTB-MLE. House Bill No. 6125 proposes the suspension of the implementation of mother tongue as a medium of instruction (MOI) from Kindergarten to Grade 3. The Linguistic Society of the Philippines (2020), a premier fifty-year-old prestigious professional organization of linguists in the country stands against the Bill and claims that the mother tongue is the most effective bridge to and foundation for the learning of other languages like English, among other arguments expressed in its February 2020 position paper. Citing a number of studies done in other countries and in the Philippines, the Organization argues that the mother tongue used as a medium of instruction particularly in the early stage of basic education, helps the learners learn best and bridge their learning of the second language and of content areas taught in that second language.

LPS recommends the Filipinos concerted effort to capacitate the concerned government sectors, particularly the Department of Education (DepEd), to work in collaboration with universities, professional organizations, book companies, and non-profit government organizations, in order to produce teaching and learning materials needed by both teachers and learners to implement the MTB program in basic education effectively. Moreover, the concerned faculty members of the Department of English at Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) as well as UP College of Education and UP Integrated School support the LSP's stand. ADMU, in its statement, asserts that the MTB-MLE needs not to be suspended but rather be maintained, valued, and strengthened.

It is, therefore, more interesting to find now if the program is still gaining support from its immediate stakeholders, especially from English language teachers who observe that ESL learners' English language proficiency deteriorates all the more due to MTB-MLE program. The present paper tries to describe the attitude and perception of six stakeholders: two secondary school heads, two secondary high school ESL teachers, and two parents of MTB-MLE students from a performing state university in Region-4, Philippines towards the seven-year-old MTB-MLE program in relation to English language teaching and learning.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants

This study involved six immediate stakeholders of a performing university in Region 4 of the Philippines; the choice of this state university is justified by the fact that it succeeds in offering Education courses and producing successful teachers and supervisors for specific content areas, among others. Besides the bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degree programs, it has also been offering Basic Education. The writer was convinced that the participants should not necessarily be MTB-MLE teachers but mere educators and teachers because language issues should be every teacher's concern. Every teacher is aware of what is happening within the educational system, and each has a unique attitude towards it.

Two Basic Education principals/coordinators, two senior high school ESL teachers, and two parents were purposively selected to shed light on the problem raised in section 1. The coordinators, who are called principals in the Department of Education (DepEd) schools, were the overall heads who would manage, look after, and supervise classes the senior high school. The choice of the two ESL teachers was also planned; the writer believes that language teachers are supposed to be aware of national language policies, issues, and concerns to become more effective and productive teachers. To ensure substantial and insightful answers to the interview questions from the parents and use of only one set of questions in Filipino, two professional mothers of MTB-MLE students were considered for the interview. They are college instructors for mathematics and Science.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Only one qualitative research tool, the writer's self-designed interview instrument, was used to gather data that would determine the participants' attitudes towards MTB-MLE in connection with English language teaching and learning. The interview questions were written and identified when the review of the literature had been done. The attitude questions were constructed and patterned to Romaine's (1995) language attitude questions, which she used in her study of Panjabi/English bilinguals' attitude towards code-switching (p. 298). On the other hand, the question contents on attitude towards ELT were anchored on Albarracin et al. (2005) model of attitude concept.

Romaine (1995) argues that attitude is a general concept that can be accurately determined from the answer to a specific question or responses given by an informant in a carefully controlled experimental



situation. In short, the questions were formulated in a way that they would draw the participant's authentic attitude towards the issue at hand. Romaine (1995) suggests that there can be discrepancies between what people say and what they do, and part of such discrepancies has to do with how questions are phrased. For instance, in this study, the *yes* answer to the question, "*Do you think Mother Tongue as medium of instruction will threaten the prestige of English, or Do you think it will limit the domains of English?*" was not taken to imply a positive attitude at once. The participants' attitude was determined through their justifications of their *yes* response.

To validate the attitude questions, the researcher had it field tested in her Bachelor of Education-English (BSEd) second year class. She interviewed six members of the class; however, the interview did not progress because the answer to the initial questions, "*What do you know about MTB-MLE Language program? Do you welcome the transition from Bilingual instruction (English & Filipino only) to MTB-MLE?*" were not given good answers. The students naively admitted that they do not know MTB-MLE. The researcher then asked the first year BSEd-English class to write at least a paragraph about the language program, and to her surprise, the students could not do as directed due to their unfamiliarity with it.

Interviews were then conducted. To ensure full cooperation and further explications of the participants' answers to the interview questions, they were interviewed informally with the researcher initiating the code-switching. The researcher did not provide them any information on the English proficiency of Filipino learners as well as MTB-MLE though four of them tried to ask. This was done to ensure authentic responses to the interview questions. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed during Christmas

vacation. After the transcription, the key responses were arranged, summarized in Tables 1 and 2, and then interpreted. The basic answers were lined up side by side the questions asked, and marked for easy reference. Responses that implied positive attitude were marked with (*I*); those that reflected negative attitude were marked (*x*), and those that suggested the interviewees' uncertainty or neutrality were marked with (?). Inasmuch as this is a qualitative exploration, no complex statistical treatment was utilized, but simple counting only to determine the overall impression regarding the stakeholders' attitudes towards the language program.

When the summarized responses were being explained, the complete responses were revisited repeatedly. Extracts from the full interview texts are presented to justify the claims made. These replies and excerpts were encoded as uttered; no revisions or corrections were made in any level of language study (e.g., choice of words, grammar, etc.) except for the deletion, suppletion, and alteration of the sentence theme or complementizer for a clearer presentation of answers to questions (e.g., *I think, it will not threaten the prestige of English because the majority will still be using the English language* is edited into *MT* or *the use of MT* (when the participant really meant that) *will not threaten the prestige of English language*.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Stakeholders' attitude towards MTB-MLE

Table 1 presents the key questions asked to the participants, which were followed by questions that sprung out of the participants' answers during the actual interviews. With these key questions are key responses from the participants.



Table 1
Stakeholders' Attitude towards MTB-MLE

Attitude Questions	Responses					
	SHS Coordinators		ESL Teachers		Parents	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
1. Do you welcome the transition from Bilingual instruction to MTB-MLE? What do you know about MTB-MLE?	? Yes	✓ Yes	✗ I hardly understand the government for implementing it.	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
2. Do you think it will help our students improve their academic performance?	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✗ No	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
3. Which do you think between MTB-MLE and English is the foundation of lifelong learning?	✓ MT in a way	✓ MT	✓ MT	✓ MT	✓ MT	? I'm not sure
4. Do you see MTB-MLE as a tool for socio economic advancement?	? It depends upon the implementation	Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
5. Do you think it can produce global learners with 21 st century skills?	? Not at all	✓ Yes	? Slightly	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✗ No
6. Do you think pupils lose confidence when their Mother tongue is not used in classroom interaction? Why?	It depends upon ? teacher's approach.	✗ No	✗ No	No	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
7. Do you think MTB-MLE will threaten the prestige of English? How?	✓ No	✓ No	✓ No	✓ Not at all	✓ No	✓ No
8. Do you think it will limit the domains of English? Explain.	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ No	✓ Not at all	✓ No	✓ No
9. Do you agree that MT is a good bridge to learning oral and written English language skills? How?	? It depends upon the implementation.	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
10. Do you think the MTB-MLE program is succeeding? Why?			? I hope so.	✓ Yes	✓ I think so.	No

Legend: ✓ Positive Attitude
✗ Negative Attitude
? Neutral

A quick look or closer scrutiny of the summarized answers of the six participants show their positive attitude towards the program in relation to English language education, as advanced by the 45

checkmarks presenting positive attitude against seven x marks indicating negative attitude and seven question marks implying neutrality of attitude i.e., positive



attitude; however, there may be hesitations doubts and conditions given.

As has earlier been stated, the 45 checkmarks recorded the participants' positive attitude towards the newly implemented MTB-MLE along with the broader K-12 Basic Education. It is important to mention, however, that the ESL teachers and the parents of MTB-MLE pupils who are also college instructors of courses taught in English are not wholly familiar with the language of education policy. Two of them boldly admitted it, while the other two participants' answers suggested the same fact. Likewise, the high school heads showed inconsistent familiarity to the program through their not very sufficient answers to the question, *I hope you don't mind. What's your understanding of the MTB-MLE program?*

Coordinator A: *There is a need to be an efficient L₁ user; therefore, MTB can help pupils to express themselves*

wholly and fluently.

Coordinator B: *There are subjects in which the students should use MTB. The transition from the Bilingual*

Education (English and Filipino) to MTB-MLE is a good idea so that the students will fully understand

the subject matter.

The other four participants' replies to the same query are as follows:

ESL Teacher A: *It is about using L₁ instead of English for the subjects that need to be explained in English.*

ESL Teacher B: *It is a strategy/method ... using the native tongue as the medium of instruction in teaching*

Math, Science, and other subjects

Parent A: *I have to study MTB-MLE first.*

Parent B: *I am not familiar with MTB-MLE; what is that?*

It is interesting to know that although the participants do not have a complete understanding of the seven-year-old language education overhaul, the majority, i.e., four among the six stakeholders are convinced that the MTB-MLE program can help improve Filipino learners' academic and cognitive performance. They also believe that it can be a foundation of lifelong learning and can be a tool for socio-economic advancement; hence they appreciate the implementation of the said language of the education. This finding jibes with Wa-Mbaleka's (2014) observation that the Philippines, especially in

public schools, has been successful in having everyone adopt the policy. The participants gave the following reasons for openly considering the MTB-MLE program, though admitted that it was difficult at the outset of the implementation.

Coordinator B: *MTB-MLE helps the students a lot because they will easily understand the lessons. MT can be a foundation for lifelong learning. In a way, it will help, but the students will not be totally competitive because English is the universal language.*

ESL Teacher A: *Of course, MT is the foundation of lifelong learning. But though it may help, still our goal is to be more competitive in this era. It will be more in hand if we Filipinos also adapt to the use of the universal language.*

ESL Teacher B: *It will help improve their cognitive performance since the problem is limited vocabulary.*

Difficulty in expressing themselves will not be a hindrance. MT is the medium of one's thought.

Parent A: *Yes, because the understanding of the lessons will be achieved. Korea, Japan, China use MT in teaching,*

and yet they are very progressive... they produce learners that are globally competitive.

It can be observed that although Coordinator B and ESL Teacher A support the MTB-MLE program, they also support ELT and acknowledged the function and role of English as Lingua Franca of the world and as a passport to global competitiveness. Parent B did not elaborate, inasmuch as she admitted that she does not know the MTB-MLE program.

ESL Teacher A seemed not to completely have a 100% positive attitude towards the program in relation to ELT teaching, as shown by her replies to ten attitude questions, Table 2. Her replies can be grouped into three a) five checkmarks (✓) that reflect her positive attitude, b) three X's that mirror her negative attitude, and two question marks (?) that show her doubt and uncertainty of the success of MTB-MLE, hence hers can be *yes or no* answers. She displayed inconsistency in her stand and attitude towards the language policy. Again, this finding appears to correspond with Wa-Mabaleka's (2014) teacher participants' attitude towards the same language program. He suggested that her participants were uncertain as to whether or not they would believe on MTB-MLE's impacts on learning, and whether it would have a positive impact on ELT and on global competitiveness. Likewise, they were not sure whether or not the Philippines is well prepared for the implementation of MTB-MLE. ESL



Teacher A did not welcome the transition from Bilingual education to MTB-MLE because she was convinced that it would not help students improve academic performance and doubted if it could produce global graduates with skills on par with skills of graduates from any university, primarily in the ASEAN region.

The senior high school Coordinator A, on the other hand, is happy about the MTB-MLE program; however, she expressed a negative attitude towards the implementation. She stated:

Both MT and English can be the foundation of lifelong learning. Actually, there are students who cannot express themselves, even in MT. They have limited vocabulary even in MT and use ano, bale, kuwan (Tagalog discourse particles tantamount to uhm, ah which are used as fillers.)

The problem is the implementation. There must be long span preparation before implementation.

Her thoughts embody those of other scholars and teachers which are expressed when they are having informal and friendly academic discussions and during seminars as observed and noted by this researcher. It can be remembered that Wa-Mbaleka (2014) suggested that more preparation and training should have been done before the implementation of this policy. Consequently, in the course of preparation, Nolasco's (2008) propositions should necessarily be considered. He suggests four conditions that must be met for MTB-MLE to succeed: cognitively demanding curriculum, competent teachers in the required language; suitable teaching materials; and community support and empowerment.

The same trend of attitude and perception is manifested by the stakeholders' responses to questions 6-10 in T₁. All of them were positive that MT is a bridge to the learning of spoken and written English, that the MTB-MLE program will not cause the natural death of the English language or even make it diglossic. Along with their positive attitude towards the program reflects their confidence that English will continue to perform its roles as MT does its function. This is confirmed by the following extracts from their propositions:

Coordinator B: *MTB-MLE will not threaten the prestige of English because the majority will still be using*

the English language. It is a good bridge to L₂ learning because many students can comprehend the lessons.

ESL Teacher B: *MT is a good bridge to L₂ learning. Most of us believe that mastery of the universal language*

is the key to competing globally; we

should also realize that mastery of the MT prior to the English language can establish a stronger foundation. MT cannot limit or dictate when or where English should be used. Understanding the system/rules of their MT can be used to scaffold oral and written English language skills.

The above extracts reflected the participants' agreement with Cummins' (1984, 1999) interdependency model, i.e., the level of second language proficiency acquired by learners is a function of the level of proficiency in their first language at the point when intensive second language instruction begins. His well-acknowledged model of two types of literacy: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) which refers to conversational communication skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) which refers to language skills used as a cognitive tool for academic purposes proposes that competency in the first language is transferred to second language competency when CALP has been developed.

While the six participants were unanimous in their answers to questions 7, 8, and 9 in Table 1, the parent participants, however, were very concise with their answers and hardly elaborated their yes or no answers as they jokingly reminded the interviewer that they are not language teachers. Nonetheless, they said:

Parent A: *Mother Tongue will not threaten English, because as far as I know, English will still be taught when the pupils reach grade 3.*

Parent B: *Mother Tongue is a good bridge to English learning because students can learn thru translation.*

The two, Coordinator A and ESL Teacher A, were still read to have a small degree of negative attitude or perception regarding the implementation of the new language program. The former insisted that the success of the program depends on the implementation, along with the provision of other requirements like instructional materials and well-trained teachers. She confirmed her agreement with the MTB-MLE authors that great users of English are also great users of MT. The latter, ESL Teacher A stood firm in her notion that learners do not lose confidence when their language and culture are excluded in the classroom saying that:

ESL Teacher A: *It is not only thru language; there are other factors that build their confidence.*

English should be taught at an early age.



<p>9. Will you still encourage/motivate your children and students to speak/learn English? 10. Do you think English will remain the language of globalization?</p>					
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As suggested by the data in Table 2, the participants' have positive attitude towards English language instruction and the language itself, although one of them, ESL Teacher B, admitted frustration in teaching English.

Teacher B: *Teaching fourth-year students English frustrates me. Based on my formal reading inventory, they have*

poor comprehension. I allow myself to code-switch as much as I allow them to. If I won't, our discussion will just be pointless efforts. Their vocabulary is very limited; therefore, using their L1 allows them to express themselves thoroughly.

This attitude is totally different from ESL Teacher 1, who finds ELT as fulfilling and challenging. The MTB-MLE parents who are mathematics and physics teachers describe their teaching using English as MOI as just fine sent across by the phrase *okay lang*. The brief reply to "How's your teaching of Physics/Math using English as MOI?" is understandable since they are not language teachers.

It can be noted that their replies to question number 2, *What do you think of your students' English proficiency?* are very much related and seem to have arrived at the same point-i.e., their ESL learners would not perform well in English class. Their descriptions of their learners' English language skills match with the observations and findings of the scholars (e.g., Macasinag 2011) about the poor English proficiency of Filipino learners in general.

They were divided in the opinion that students lose confidence when they cannot talk in English; however, they were in agreement that these Filipino learners can maintain identity and culture while learning and patronizing the English language. Five participants were unanimous in their beliefs that English should be taught as early as Kindergarten 1, and that the two essential subjects elementary Science and Mathematics should be taught in English. All of them perceived English as the language of globalization; thus, they will continue motivating their

children and students to learn English despite the implementation of MTB-MLE.

This positive attitude of the stakeholders on English and English language instruction has been confirmed by early studies, e.g., Aglaura and Aliponga (1998) and Durano (1994). Likewise, Dumanig et al., (2010) study revealed the preference of teachers and parents in using the English language over the vernacular in classroom teaching and the home environment. The Filipinos have been looking up at English as a prestigious language, the language of global mobility and success. The participants' understudy did not manifest emotional and nationalistic resistance to favor English instruction but equal acceptance of both Philippine Languages and English Language as the media of learning.

In sum, the analysis revealed that the majority, four out of the six stakeholder participants in the present study, have a positive attitude toward the MTB-MLE program. The other two, Principal A and ESL teacher A, seem to be undecided about their perception and attitude. Their responses to the interview questions suggest a balance between positive and negative attitudes towards the language program. The negative attitude was brought by their 1) doubt towards effective implementation of the program, and 2) dedication and love for teaching English as a second language. This finding suggests a similar attitude of the more significant number of stakeholders and a slightly different attitude of a small portion of the society as represented by one high school head and one ESL teacher in this study. Nevertheless, all of them shared the same perception about English and its status and prestige as shown by their answers in questions 7 and 8, despite the MTB-MLE program.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The findings imply that stakeholders, in general, positively accept the MTB-MLE program and support, though they do not fully understand it. It may be said that the government's promotion of the program was not sufficient, not only at the grassroots level but even with the Basic Education principals, language teachers,



and educated parents. The Education-English major students, for instance, do not know the MTB-MLE program. It can therefore, be concluded that even students may not be aware of the program. Henceforth, it can be recommended that more awareness-raising seminars be conducted specially to win the stakeholders' support; otherwise, MTB-MLE would be deemed futile as suggested by Gallego and Zubiri (2013).

The MTB-MLE program would be more supported by English language teachers and even by legislators if it is explicated well because the framework is clear, MT as a subject focus on the development of beginning reading and fluency from Grades 1-3. The learners' MT is used as the MOI in all content areas from Kindergarten through Grade 3 except Filipino and English, which can be L₂ and L₃ of those born outside the Tagalog region. The L₂ (Filipino) is introduced in the first semester of Grade 1 for oral fluency; whereas, reading and writing are introduced in the 2nd semester of Grade 1. What will cause ELT teachers to support the program is the provision that oral fluency in English (L₂ in Tagalog region and possibly L₃ in non-Tagalog region) is introduced in the second semester of Grade I; while, reading and writing start in the 1st semester of Grade II. However, this instructional program for monolingual students as posited by Cummins (1988) should address: cognitive skills, academic content, and critical language awareness.

Coordinator A's concern and worry about the effectiveness of the program's implementation should be taken seriously by the government. The government's claim that the implementation and related activities have been well planned does not sound completely convincing; even concerned MT teachers have not all been trained to teach Mother Tongue. In addition, casual interviews done with the non-participants of this study revealed that there are insufficient instructional materials. These may also be part of the country's legislators' observation that resulted in the proposal of House Bill No. 6125 or the Act Suspending the Implementation of the Use of Mother Tongue as the Medium of Instruction for Kindergarten to Grade 3.

It is therefore recommended that all universities offering Education courses offer the *Teaching of the Mother Tongue* because it is not as easy as it may seem. The MT teachers need to have pedagogical know-how of handling the course and the learners as well. In addition, DepEd provincial offices may seek the assistance of best language teachers in the universities within the outskirts of their provinces to help them train their Mother Tongue and English language, teachers. It is also advanced that graduate

students in Linguistics programs continue to conduct and prepare dictionaries and reference grammars of Mother Tongues in the Philippines. Likewise, the works of graduate students in these areas need to be funded for publication and utilization in corresponding areas in the country.

Despite findings and claims that Filipinos' English language proficiency is deteriorating, educational institutions' stakeholders seem to share a common perception of the importance and prestige of English. This implies that they can be motivated to learn it rigidly; it just takes ESL and content area teachers' support and collaboration to develop among students' English proficiency tailored for their future jobs while learning through the MTB-MLE education. Simultaneous with the learning of Mother Tongue and Filipino, acquisition of proper English should start from children's early years because of secondary and tertiary level teachers find it challenging to correct students' fossilized language errors. MTB-MLE teachers and ESL teachers may, by all means, assist one another in helping Filipino young learners learn their Mother Tongues and English and learn content areas through these languages. In conclusion, it may be concluded that both MTB-MLE and English language instructions within the MTB-MLE program have a bright future, only if the former will be implemented well and if the latter will be taught in the most innovative approaches. Nolasco (2008) conveys that the road to multi-literacy and multilingual education in the Philippines would be a difficult and tortuous one (p. 13); however, he suggests that once the program is understood and supported, there will be more than enough hands to build that road.

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