

English Language as a Medium of Instruction: Its Posted Challenges and Enhancement Program

¹Shulamith Galan Candolita & ²Rebecca T. Barrios

Abstract

This study explored the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in four secondary schools in the District of Pandan. Descriptive qualitative design was used and data from the interview were collected from 18 public secondary school teachers of Grade 7 in English, Mathematics, and Science during the school year 2022 – 2023 and their challenges in using English as medium of instruction were analyzed. The findings revealed that teachers could hardly facilitate learning using the language because learners could not comprehend English language. Since learners were not native speakers of English, teachers used code-switching or integrate Filipino or local language in instructions. One of the causes for such a practice is attributed to the fact that learners do not use and practice the language due to the delay in the face to face modality of instruction caused by the pandemic. Thus, learners were not exposed to the language. However, all schools were very supportive to bridge the gap in reading and comprehension problems of the learners. Exposing learners to English reading materials and practicing them to read every day was a big factor to enhance reading and comprehension skills.

Keywords: *Challenges. Difficulties. Coping Mechanisms. Instructional Support. Medium of Instruction.*

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About the authors:

¹Corresponding Author. Master of Arts in Education major in English, Teacher I, Sta. Ana National High School, galanshulamith@gmail.com.

²Doctor of Education, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Northwestern Visayan Colleges, becky_tandug@yahoo.com.ph

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Introduction

The purpose of this study critically examined the challenges in the use of English language as a medium of instruction in English language classrooms of the basic education classes in the District of Pandan, Division of Antique. The challenges and difficulties encountered in the use of English language as a medium of instruction, the instructional supports given by the school to the teachers, and the coping mechanism of the English teachers in meeting difficulties examined as to make the teaching of English responsive and productive to the participants.

Methodology

This study made use of the descriptive qualitative approach to research. According to Kumar, 2011, it was a design in which the main focus was on description, rather than examining relationships or associations, was classified as a descriptive study. The researcher asked the respondents about their knowledge relevant to a particular phenomenon. This design was appropriate to use in this study because the researcher wanted to explore the challenges of the teachers in using English as the medium of instruction.

Pseudonyms of the participants were used to protect their identity. The participants of this study were the six (6) English, six (6) Mathematics, and six (6) Science teachers in four (4) Public Secondary Schools in Grade 7 classes in the District of Pandan, DepEd Division of Antique for school year 2022-2023. The length of service in teaching of the participants were also present in the table.

This study made use of instruments to gather the necessary information. An interview guide was formulated and validated to obtain data on the challenges, instructional supports, and coping mechanisms in the use of English languages as a medium of instruction based on the statement of the problem. The interview guide was divided into three parts.

Part I surveyed on the challenges and difficulties in the use of English language as a medium of instruction

Part II gathered answer on the instructional support the school provides

Part III generated answers on the coping mechanisms of teachers

Ethical Consideration

In the conduct of this study, letters of consent were properly sent to the people who were involved in the study. Moreover, letter of informed consent was given to the participants to orient them on the purpose of the study and for them to know their extent of participation in the study being undertaken. The researcher ensured the anonymity of the participants by using pseudonyms to conceal their real identity. All the information disclosed by the participants were treated with utmost confidentiality by strictly adhering to the provisions of Republic Act 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Findings

Classroom Observation

During the conduct of the classroom observation, the researcher observed that the majority of the teachers translated English language as their instruction into Filipino or Mother Tongue because the learners could not understand the instruction. This was further affirmed through my observation where for the time the research was being conducted; all learners were using local language in their communication. The same applied to the teachers themselves. They all used local language in staff meetings and when communicating outside the classroom.

Challenges and difficulties in Using English Language as the Medium of Instruction

Out of the responses, majority of the participants agreed based on their experiences that the challenges and difficulties of the teachers using English language as a medium of instruction was the reading and comprehension of the learners. Classes happened daily and the occurrence of the phenomenon was also present day by day. Learners hardly comprehend even simple words in English and it will result to low performance. Participants had to integrate Mother Tongue in order to be understood. Some learners could not recognize letters and sounds and could only write their names that may result to have a difficulty in expressing their ideas and opinions in English. Others preferred not to answer questions and hesitant to speak for it may result to wrong answer. Furthermore, learners devote more their time on social media that may hinder their chance and loses interest in reading.

Instructional Support

Participants were grateful for not having a shortage of instructional materials because the school were very supportive in giving instructional support. Majority of the participants shared the

same answer that various reading materials were given and used to the remedial reading sessions. ICT resources such as televisions in every classroom, projectors, and printers were provided. Schools even have internet connections to aid instructions and give meaningful lessons. Online learning portals were also provided. However, there were participants who did not use those ICT resources because it was time consuming. Reading programs were very effective in enhancing learner's skill through remedial reading classes.

Coping Mechanism in Meeting Difficulties in the Use of English Language

Most participants had the same aid in dealing with the challenges and difficulties in using English as a medium of instruction which is the integration of the local language. Participants translated English to Filipino or Mother Tongue in order to be understood by the learners. Learners hardly comprehend even simple English words and use this strategy to avoid communication problems and breakdowns when they asked and answered questions. Code switching can facilitate communication and interaction among students and their teachers, and it can also help students to express their ideas. Participants used code switching to compensate for themselves or to enhance their students' understanding.

Conclusion

Participants encountered challenges and difficulties in the use of English language day by day in their respective classes. Majority of them were challenged with the reading and comprehension in English of the learners that will result to poor academic performance. Learners could hardly understand even simple English words that's why teachers had to integrate English into Filipino or Mother tongue for them to understand the instruction. Moreover, some teachers as well were not fluent using the English language which result to learners having difficulties in using and understanding the language.

Public Secondary Schools were very cautious in doing their responsibility that as much as possible they could provide and support the needs of the teachers and the learners as well by giving instructional materials for the teaching and learning process.

In spite of the challenges and difficulties faced by the participants in using English language as a medium of instruction, they were assertive to the answers on how to cope up with it. Participants have a positive outlook that giving interventions and remediation will solve the phenomenon. They admitted that dealing with reading and comprehension problem was not easy especially that the main cause of it was the pandemic. But in due time, through remedial reading programs, they will achieve the goal of the Department of Education, "Bawat Bata Bumabasa.

Based from the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were drawn:

Teachers should know the level of the learners especially in reading and comprehension skills.

Teachers should give different learning activities to the low performing learners that cater their needs.

Teachers should use best coping strategies that will impart learning. The researcher recommend to use code switching if the instructions were not implied and understood. The use of code switching in content classes is not always problematic; it could be used to help students understand the content of the lesson which they could not fully understand in English.

Schools should continue provide instructional materials that will help lift the teaching and learning process.

Schools should support the remedial reading programs.

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