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# Language Shift from English to Mother Tongue: Exploring Language Attitude and Willingness to Teach among Pre-service Teachers

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## Abstract

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Language-in-education policy becomes a recent tendentious concern in the context of the Philippines as it has recently adopted the Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). Moreover, Baker (1992) claimed that language attitude is a main and vital component of policy and planning. Therefore, this research primarily purposes to determine the language attitude of the respondents and their willingness to teach in the Mother Tongue (MT) as substitute of English as medium of instruction (MoI) in the early stages of education. The study utilized an adapted questionnaire and surveyed 120 would-be mother tongue teachers. The results show that the respondents exhibit an attitude described as “slightly positive”. Furthermore, the respondents were determined to be willing to teach in the MT. Interestingly, there is significant relationship found between the language attitude and willingness to teach in the MT among the respondents. However, contrary to existing trend relative to gender difference on language attitude, the data discounts gender as a factor influencing language attitude and willingness to teach in the MT.

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**Keywords:** Language Attitude, Mother Tongue, Medium of Instruction, Pre-service Teachers, Willingness to teach

## 1. Introduction

Language attitude research is a sociolinguistic inquiry that can provide essential information such as prediction of linguistic scenes in areas where cultural contacts and possible competition exists (Wang & Ladegaard, 2008), understanding about language and related issues such as maintenance or shift (Letsholo, 2009). Furthermore, researches focused on determining language attitudes of either the minority or the majority speech communities are necessarily important especially in determining language status and institutionalizing language policies (Callan & Gallois, 1987). The researchers further maintained that knowledge of language attitudes in context of multicultural communities proved to be central in issues relative to appropriate language policies. In addition, Jones (2012) claimed that attitudes toward languages and their use in the teaching learning process as medium of instruction have an influence in policy implementation.

The important role of language is beyond debate. It is a reasonable conclusion to say that success of any educational process relies much on the language to be used because it is instrumental in the transmission of knowledge. The language of instruction plays a crucial role in the learners’ educational development, and is essential in the realization of communication and understanding between and among teachers and students (Ejeh, 2004).

Language-in-education policy becomes a recent tendentious concern in the context of the Philippines as it has recently

adopted the Mother Tongue based Multilingual Education or the MTB-MLE. This is an educational policy that uses the first language or the mother tongue of the child in early education. Through such practice, it is expected that learners will have a sound foundation in their first language which makes learning a second or third language easy, allowing them to use the languages as resources to become lifelong learners (MacKenzie, 2009). Numerous researches report negative observations of early education in classrooms where instructions are not in the mother tongue of the learners and positive accounts of early year instructions in the first language of the learners. Jhingran (2005, cited in MacKenzie, 2009) reported that , for the case of grade 1 students taught not in their first language, they are simply doing rote learning. The students were described to find difficulty even in recognizing the letters of the alphabet. Further, in general, the children in the study were noted to struggle in framing sentences that are grammatical and have evidently limited vocabulary in L2 which eventually corroborates with the contention of Cummins (2000) arguing that proficiency in L2 is founded on the proficiency of L1. Furthermore, students taught in a language they do not understand find no interest and reason being in school (MacKenzie, 2009).

As language means culture, multicultural settings means multilingual contexts. The richness of cultural and linguistic characteristic of a multicultural societies posts challenges in the development of language in education policies (MacKenzie, 2009). The Philippines, being a multicultural society, is faced with the concern of determining what language to use in the classroom where learners come from diverse cultural orientations and backgrounds. The initial solution is the development and implementation of the Lingua Franca Model of the MTB-MLE program. In this model, the dominant lingua franca of the particular place (e.g. Zamboanga City – Chabacano) is used as medium of instruction and taught as a subject for the early years. In-service teachers and pre-service teachers then may be teaching inside classrooms where the language to be used may be both not known to learners and themselves. Shohamy (2006) claimed that stakeholders like teachers and student teachers are under considered in the implementation of the MTB-MLE policy. As student teachers soon become full-fledged teachers, they form part of the first line of implementers essential to the success of the policy. However, there is a dearth of research relative to the investigation of the language attitudes of student teachers towards the mother tongue contextualized in the Lingua Franca Model. Thus, this paper is focused on the situation of student teachers who are teaching MT in the said model. It explored their language attitude toward the mother tongue and their willingness to teach in mother tongue and willingness to teach the mother tongue as a subject after graduating from college.

## 1.2. Review of Related Literature

### 1.2.1. MTB-MLE models in the Philippines

The use of the child's first language in school has been encouraged by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization since the year 1953 (UNESCO, 1953); however, the norm that favors monolingualism in education remained for the Philippines until in 2013 when the Enhance Basic Education Act was signed into a law by the then President Benigno Aquino III. The law is more commonly known as the K-12 program.

Initially, 12 local major languages were used in MTBMLE, and these are Bikol, Cebuano, Chabacano, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Kapampangan, Maguindanao, Marananao, Pangasinense, Waray, Tagalog and Tausug. However, in 2013, 7 new languages were added and these are the Ybanag, Ivatan, Sambal, Aklanon, Kinaray-a, Yakan and Surigaonon (DepEd, 2013). In total, there are 20 languages used in the two models of the MTB-MLE – as a learning area or subject and as a medium of instruction (MoI).

From grades 1 to 3, learners are to take mother tongue as a subject in which the emphasis is on reading and speaking. The mother tongue as medium of instruction shall be used in all learning areas with exceptions of the Filipino and English subjects which are introduced in the third grade (DepEd, 2013).

Multilingualism is seen as source of problems, but per se is not because it has always been advantageous for a person to speak and/or write in more than one language (Ngunga, 2011). However, inside the classrooms , the question “What language should be used as a medium of instruction?” remains as a legitimate concern. The choice of a language to become the medium for the teaching and learning process is not a simple concern to address. The diverse linguistic characteristics of the Philippines makes the implementation of the mother tongue based education in the country to

be described as far from smooth and easy. The obvious difficulty is the selection in terms of which language should be used and taught in the classroom where the learners are coming from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The Department of Education (DepEd) then provided two models of the MTB-MLE (Metila, Pradilla, & Williams, 2016). The models are the Multiple Monolingual Model and the Lingua Franca Model. In the former, students then are clustered according to their spoken mother tongue. In this model, the mother tongue as a subject and the mother tongue used as medium of instruction is the L1 or first language of the learners; however, in the second model which is the Lingua Franca Model, the learners are taught in a nominated language based on a wide use which means of having learners, in the early years, learn and speak a language which is not their own (Metila et. al., 2016).

There are then instances when a teacher or a pre-service teacher will use a medium of instruction that which the child will yet to learn in the Lingua Franca model. In addition, MT as a subject will be an L2 and not L1 to some who do not speak the nominated dominant local language. Therefore, the perceived benefits of teaching students in their first language like the fostering of understanding about the topics presented and the discussions taking place inside the classroom (Ejeh, 2004), development of proficiency in the L2 which is in most cases the English language (MacKenzie, 2009; Cummins, 2000), non-discriminating environment (Mohanty, 2006), and acknowledgement of the learner's linguistic right (Kosonen, 2005) are not expected to be present in the model in question. Therefore, it would seem that the only difference that has taken place in the account of this model, for those whose L1 is not the nominated MT, is that English is simply replaced with another language not familiar to the child in the early years – this time a local language.

### *1.2.2. On Language Attitude*

Through the different literature, it can be inferred that the construct of language attitude has become the central topic in many investigations and discussions. The topic is old but remains current because of the changing time and environment which makes language attitude as a fluid topic (Lai, 2005). González-Riaño, Hevia-Artime, and Fernández-Costales (2013) maintained that language attitude as a subject is seen to have not lose topicality. This is even believed to be reinforced in the case of the Philippines which ,as a country , has recently shifted to the use of mother tongue in early education. Moreover, Ingram (1989, in Jones, 2012) maintained that language attitude is part and parcel of the language-in-education planning. Thus, Baker (1992) claimed that language attitude is a main and vital component of policy and planning.

Language attitude studies were explored with different respondents .In the study of González-Riaño et. al. (2013), 217 students aged 11-12 were taken as respondents of the study. The study aimed to provide insight about the language attitude and sociolinguistic awareness of the respondents noted to be graduating from their primary education. Lai (2005) studied the secondary school students who are considered to be the first post-colonial generation as informants of her investigation. Wang and Ladegaard (2008) conducted a language attitude investigation among 174 secondary school students aged 13-16. The investigation was concerned with the reported perception of the respondents and their reported use of the two varieties: The Putonghua and the Cantonese.

Researches on language attitudes have been focused on learners and only a few were directed towards teachers and student teachers (Gürsoy, 2013). In Shafer and Shafer (1975), a total of 64 teachers , representing a cross-section of the geographic areas ,were interviewed to identify their language attitude towards their learners' language. Through qualitative approach, they reported that a large majority of the teachers have a negative perception towards the language of children from the working class. Khejeri (2014) investigated teachers' attitude towards the use of MT as LoI in Hamis District of Kenya. The findings show that the mother tongue was less valued as compared to English. The lukewarm reception of teachers found in the study towards the MT became the basis for the promotion of the mother tongue through publication of instructional materials to endorse the mother tongue both as a medium of instruction and as a subject. The teachers , however , in the study of Jones (2012) were not merely implementer of the MT as a language policy (e.g. Khejeri, 2014; Shafer & Shafer, 1975) but were involved in a variety of language planning activities. She reported that these teachers exhibit a positive attitude towards the policy.

In the study of Ejieh (2004) which investigated the language attitudes of student teachers with the use of a survey questionnaire, the findings reveal that the respondents are exhibiting negative attitude towards teaching in mother tongue. Such attitude towards the use of indigenous languages in primary education in Nigeria, the context of the study, is primarily linked, as reported, to misconceptions, some of which are: mother tongue use in education adversely affect learning English; mother tongue in primary years of schooling lays a weak educational foundation; and, mother tongue use poses problem in the translation of some concepts.

It is widely accepted that a positive language attitude is a very essential component determining success in language learning (Berowa, Devanadera, & David, 2018).. However, attitude also can serve either as an enabling or disabling factor not only in leaning a language but also in teaching as in the case of language educators. Therefore, student teachers' language attitudes, as they would eventually become classroom teachers, should become a research interest since teachers' language attitude toward indigenous and dominant language shape that of their students as well (Gürsoy, 2013).

### *1.2.3 On Language Attitude and Gender*

Bilaniuk (2003) discussed, in context of the study conducted in Ukraine, that gender as a construct is very important and influential in affecting language ideology. She further claimed that gender goes beyond from being simple and clear, and that it intertwines with other facets of identities such as ethnicity, profession and class.

Researchers have reported gender difference in language interest (Head, 1999 in Van De Gaer, Pustjens, Van Damme & De Munter, 2007) and attitude towards languages (Lamb, 1997 cited in Van De Gaer, et. al., 2007). Therefore, gender is an important issue in discussing and investigating language attitudes either in bilingual or multilingual contexts (Zhang, 2011).

Zhang (2011) points a main difference between men and women in terms of language attitudes. He reported preference of women towards so-called "high" languages over men. This means that women are inclined to like languages with prestige. In Gal (1978), one of the findings of the study is that women are distancing themselves from Hungarian and are moving towards German which is deemed as the high language. Thus, it can be inferred that women, in the issue of language-in-education, are most likely to exhibit negative attitude towards local languages with little or no economic importance as compared to language with great economic value such as English. This claim is supported by Milroy and Milroy (1998) when they reported that while men are giving preferentiality to the vernacular forms, women on the other hand prefer the prestige form. A similar conclusion was provided by Bilaniuk (2003) when women were reported to be more positive towards English as compared to men.

Moreover, Wang and Ladegaard (2008) reported the inclination of women towards the Putonghua which is the prestige standard variety. In Gürsoy (2013), male and female teacher trainees were found to vary significantly in their language attitudes. Females were found to be more positive towards English as compared to their male counterpart which further corroborate with other studies that supports the trend on gender and language attitudes.

Accounting the trends established by the enumerated researches, gender is an essential construct to factor in the study of language attitude. This is especially important for this study as a shift from a perceived prestigious language (English) to a indigenous one serves as backdrop of this investigation.

### *1.3. Research Questions*

This current study aimed to determine the language attitude of the student teachers situated in a multicultural society where the lingua franca model of the MTB-MLE is implemented. Further, the willingness to teach the nominated mother tongue as a subject, and the willingness to use the nominated mother tongue as medium of instruction (MoI) are also explored in relation with the student teachers' language attitude. Finally, the influence of gender is investigated with regards to the language attitude towards the mother tongue, willingness to teach in mother tongue and willingness to teach the mother tongue as a subject. Hence, This investigation is led by the following questions:

1. What is the language attitude of the respondents towards the mother tongue?



2. Are the respondents willing to teach in the mother tongue and the mother tongue as a subject?
3. Is there a significant difference in the language attitude of the respondents towards the mother tongue when data are grouped according to gender?
4. Is there a significant difference in the willingness to teach in the mother tongue of the respondents and willingness to teach the mother tongue as a subject when data are grouped according to gender?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the language attitude and the willingness to teach in mother tongue, and willingness to teach the mother tongue of the respondents?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.2. Research Design

The current study used the descriptive-quantitative-correlational design employing the use of a survey questionnaire. The use of survey questionnaire is anchored on the claim of Dillman, Smith, and Christian (2009) discussing that an efficient way of data collection is through the use of survey questionnaires, especially if the study includes gathering of data from a large sample size. The design fits with the intention of the study of quantifying data and generalizing results which is the main reason for choice of the quantitative design.

### 2.3 The Participants and setting of the study

As the study is directed towards a determined population, a purposive sampling technique was used in identifying individuals to take part of the study based on the given parameters: (1) must be a student teacher by the time the study was conducted, (2) must have at least two (2) months of classroom experience teaching in mother tongue, and (3) must have at least two (2) months of classroom experience of teaching the mother tongue as a subject. A total of 120 respondents form part of the sample of this study. There are equal numbers of males (60) and females (60) taken as respondents of the study. The respondents' ages range from 19 – 39, while their mean age is 20.07 (SD = 2.495).

### 2.4 The research instrument

Callan and Gallois (1987) discussed that language attitude can be measured through two means. One is through the use of indirect methods, such as the matched guise, which accounts language attitude by eliciting evaluative measures. Another is through the so called direct method, examples of which include use of survey and interview. As for this study, the language attitudes of the respondents were measured using the direct method through the use of survey questionnaire.

The research instrument is in part influenced by Ejie (2004) and Sicam and Lucas (2016). Fourteen (14) questions were taken from the instrument used by Ejie (2004) in the investigation exploring the language attitudes of students teachers towards mother tongue. However, the original questionnaire was answerable by yes and no only. In this study, a scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree) was used. Five (5) items of the research tool were inspired by the instrument used by Sicam and Lucas (2016). It consists of two parts. The first part solicits demographic information limited to gender and ethnicity while the second part contains, in all, twenty-two items.

Items 1 -20 sought opinions of the respondents on the issues relating to use of mother tongue as MOI and the teaching of it as a subject. The first twenty items were rated on a four-point scale using the responses with given abbreviations: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Item 21 sought the respondents' willingness to teach the mother tongue as a subject, and item 22 sought the respondents willingness to teach the mother tongue as MOI. The two items are answerable with yes or no.

Since modifications were made in the scale and items of the principal questionnaire of Ejie (2004), the questionnaire used in the study was subjected to reliability testing. It was pilot tested to 50 students teachers who do not form part of the sampling frame. The cronbach's alpha reliability test yields a result of 0.81 reliability which is considered high. Thus, all items were included in the final administration of the instrument.

### 2.5 Procedure

Correspondence was sent to seek permission for the administration of the instrument to the identified respondents. Upon approval of request, a meeting was set with the student teaching supervisor for the discussion of details of the study and the administration of the research tool. The identified student teachers were first gathered in a convening hall. The participants were then informed that the nature of participation is voluntary and that non participation will in no way affect their ratings, and that they must sign a consent letter before answering the test.

On an average, the respondents answered the tool in 10 minutes. Participants submitted the questionnaire after answering the same. They hand over the questionnaire to the researcher. The researcher on the other hand immediately checked for any missed numbers, double entry and others that may disqualify their response in the inclusion for analysis. The tabulation and collection of data was first done by the researcher using Microsoft Excel as per advised by the statistician, and the transferred to SPSS for the analysis.

### 2.6 Method of Analysis

Analyses of data were done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). However, the data were first encoded in an electronic spreadsheet for ease of task. The code for gender is as follows: 1 for male and 2 for female; for the ethnicity, the coding is as follows: 1- *Bisaya*, 2- *Chavacano*, 3- *Ilonggo*, and 4- *Tausug*.

For the language attitudes, there are 16 positive statements (1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,14,16,18,and 20) and four (4) negative statements (13, 15, 17 and 19). Responses on positive statements are coded as 1 for SD, 2 for D, 3 for A and 4 for SA; while a reverse coding was used for negative statements. In determining the language attitudes of the respondents, mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) will be used with the following scale:

Table 1.0  
Language Attitude Scale

Scale	Description
3.25 – 4.0	Positive Language Attitude
2.50 – 3.24	Slightly Positive Language Attitude
1.75 – 2.49	Slightly Negative Language Attitude
1.0 – 1.74	Negative Language Attitude

For the willingness to teach in mother tongue and to teach the mother tongue as a subject, responses for items 21 and 22 will be coded as follows: 1 for yes and 2 for no. In determining the willingness of the respondents to teach in the mother tongue and to teach the mother tongue as a subject, mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) will be used, and the data will be given interpretation through the use of the following scale: 1.0 to 1.49 – Willing and 1.50 to 2.0 Not Willing.

To determine the significant difference in the language attitude of the respondents across gender and ethnicity, and the significant difference in the willingness to teach in the mother tongue and willingness to teach the mother tongue as a subject across gender the data was treated with the statistical tool called one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Finally, to determine the significant relationship between the language attitude of the respondents and their willingness to teach in mother tongue and willingness to teach the mother tongue as subject, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient was used.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Language Attitudes towards mother tongue

Table 2 presents the language attitudes of the respondents towards mother tongue. The likert scale weighted mean score was computed. On the average, the respondents show slightly positive attitude towards the mother tongue.

Table 2.

Language Attitudes toward mother tongue

Variable	Mean	SD	Descriptor
Language Attitudes	2.50	3.66	Somehow Positive

Note: Scale: 1.0-1.74 = negative attitude; 1.75-2.49 = slightly negative attitude; 2.50-3.24 slightly positive attitude; 3.25 – 4.0 = positive attitude.

Table 3.

Statements rated high by the respondents

Number	Statement	Mean	SD
4	Teaching in mother tongue will enable teachers to express themselves clearly in class.	2.90	.803
1	A policy on the use of only mother tongue in Philippine primary schools is good in principle	2.82	.622
5	Teaching in mother tongue enables pupils to understand easily.	2.79	.709
18	The teaching of the mother tongue will help the pupils get around and converse with classmates	2.79	.716
16	The use of mother tongue in class discussion makes students participate actively	2.76	.594

The data (Mean [M] = 2.50, Standard Deviation [SD] = 3.66) is interpreted as slightly positive. This means that the respondents of this study are showing a little positivity towards the mother tongue. The result counters the findings of Ejieh (2004) which reported a negative attitude of students teachers toward the mother tongue. For the said study, two main reasons were accounted for the findings. One is the expectation of parents that their children learn English because it gives better chances for employment which pressures the respondents, and the sets of training given to the student teachers which was in English. Similar attitude was reported in the study of Khejeri (2014) which involved teachers. Greater importance was accorded to English over the mother tongue. Moreover, the reception towards the mother tongue was described to be lukewarm. However, the result of this current study suggests that the respondents are finding some positive points and reasons in the implementation of the mother tongue. One of which is the perceived better communication teachers can do when using the mother tongue as maintained by Ejieh (2004) who claimed that the use of mother tongue by the teachers and students lead to better communication and understanding. Corroborating to this is item 4 “*Teaching in mother tongue will enable teachers to express themselves clearly in class.*” having rated as the highest. Conversely, it must be noted that the attitude of the respondents, although not negative, is only somehow positive suggesting that they are yet to be completely convinced of the benefits and need of the first language policy. This perhaps also means that there remain certain apprehensions towards the teaching of and use of mother tongue in education.

Interestingly, among the five statements rated high by the respondents of the study, four (4) of which relate to classroom communication (see table 4). Statements 4 “*Teaching in mother tongue will enable teachers to express themselves clearly in class.*” (M=2.9, SD=.83), 5 “*Teaching in mother tongue enables pupils to understand easily.*” (M=2.79, SD=.709), 18 “*The teaching of the mother tongue will help the pupils get around and converse with classmates.*” (M=2.79, SD=.716), and 16 “*The use of mother tongue in class discussion makes students participate actively.*” (M=2.76, SD=.594) are all noticeably relating to communication between students and teachers and among students themselves. This probably means that for the respondents of the study the non-use of the mother tongue limits

the teachers and students in communicating their ideas. The language which is perceived to have not been fully mastered like English as example may serve as barrier in the total understanding between students and teachers. Further, since the student teachers may have accounted their own capability and reflected their own proficiency in the use of English in answering the questionnaire, they have favoured the teaching in the mother tongue as plausible coping option.

Additionally, the second highest rated item is number 1 “A policy on the use of only mother tongue in Philippine primary schools is good in principle” (M=2.82, SD=.622). This means that in general the respondents perceived the mother tongue use in education as a policy to be realized. The possible reason to this is that the use of mother tongue will usher the understanding in so far as the discussion of the class is concerned and that students would not parrot without understanding words, phrases, or sentences which is very much evident in primary education that do not use the mother tongue (Jhingran, 2005).

### 3.2. Willingness of the respondents to teach in the MT and to teach MT as a subject

Table 4 presents the willingness of the respondents to teach the mother tongue as MOI and as a subject. The ratings of the two variables were averaged and the standard deviation was also noted. It was revealed that the respondents are willing to teach in the mother tongue and to teach the mother tongue as a subject.

Table 4.

Willingness of the respondents to teach the mother as MOI and as a Subject

Variables	Mean	SD	Descriptor
Teach in mother tongue (MOI)	1.40	.416	Willing
Teach the mother tongue (as Subject)	1.19	.509	Willing

Note: 1.0-1.49 = Willing; 1.50 – 2.0 = Not Willing

The data shows that the respondents are both willing to teach in mother tongue (M=1.40, SD=.416) and the mother tongue as subject (M=1.19, SD=.509). This result is contrary to the result of the study of Ejie (2004) which reported that 84.21% or 80 out of the 95 student-teacher respondents reported to be not willing to teach in mother tongue. The unwillingness is a manifestation of a negative attitude towards the mother tongue. The student teachers in the mentioned study have their attitude towards mother tongue influenced by their perceived value of the indigenous language compared to that of English which is associated with economic gains. It is not only the student teachers who are found to be hesitant in teaching in the mother tongue and teaching the mother tongue as a subject. Khejeri (2014) found out that the teacher respondents of conducted investigation are reluctant in the implementation of the mother tongue policy, and there is consistency with reason for the exhibited attitude towards the mother tongue – the perceived lesser value it has in comparison to English.

On the other hand, the respondents of the current study are willing to both use the mother tongue as medium of instruction and to teach the mother tongue as a subject. The respondents may have given greater consideration to the benefits of using the mother and teaching the mother tongue in the class such as the protection of linguistic right (Kosonen, 2005), and better communication and understanding inside the classroom (Ejeh, 2004). A more plausible reason is that the respondents view the teaching in mother tongue and of the mother tongue as subject in primary years not as a move away from the development of proficiency in English, but a way towards attaining it (Cummins, 2000).

### 3.3 Significant difference the language attitudes of the respondents across the variables gender

Table 5 presents the significant difference matrix of the respondents' language attitudes when data are grouped according to gender and ethnicity. One-way ANOVA was used to determine the significant difference in the language attitudes of the respondents with respect to their gender.

Table 5.

Difference matrix of the language attitudes of the respondents according to gender

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	<i>p</i> -value	Interpretation
Language Attitudes	Gender	0.258	Not Significant

Note: \*significant at  $\alpha=0.05$

The data ( $p$ -value = 0.258) is not significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This means that the variable gender is not a factor influencing the language attitudes of the respondents in this study. This finding contradicts with the results of the studies reporting gender difference in the language attitudes (e.g. Gal, 1978; Head, 1999; Lamb, 1997; Zhang, 2011). The given researches established the trend that women are more inclined to favor the “high” or more prestigious languages over the local languages while the opposite is true for the males. This finding is related to the results in table 4 which explains the positivity of both sexes towards the mother tongue because the respondents find the use of mother tongue a means realizing better expression of ideas of the students and themselves, as teachers, inside the class. Furthermore, the respondents in the study are positive toward the mother tongue. However, although there was no significant difference found, the males ( $M=2.54$ ) are found to be more positive towards the mother tongue over the females ( $M=2.46$ ). This in a way confirms the findings of Milroy and Milroy (1998) that men gives preferentiality towards lingua franca more than women.

### 3.4 Significant differenc in the willingness to teach in the mother tongue and to teach the mother tongue as a subject when data are grouped according to gender

Table 6 provides the difference in the willingness to teach in the mother and the willingness to teach the mother tongue as subject across the variable gender. One-way ANOVA was the statistical treatment used to determine the difference.

Table 6.

Difference: Willingness to teach in the MT and willingness to teach the MT as subject across gender

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	<i>p</i> -value	Interpretation
Willingness to teach in the MT	Gender	0.827	Not Significant
Willingness to teach the MT as subject		0.475	

Note: Significance set at  $\alpha = 0.05$

The data show that the variable gender does not significantly influence the respondents’ willingness to teach in the MT (0.827) and their willingness to teach the MT as subject (0.475). It implies that both the male and female respondents of the study would want to use the MT as medium of instruction (MoI) and teach the MT as a subject. This finding contradicts the findings of Gürsoy (2013) which reported gender difference in teaching of language. It was reported that female prefer to teach English which is a prestigious language in comparison to their males counter parts.

The reason seen is that training the student teachers had have influenced them enough to become willing in to teach in the mother mother tongue and to teach the mother tongue as a subject. Since the policy is the latest development and most relevant topic to be discussed in teacher education programs, the respondents may have been exposed to discussions relative to the importance and rationale of teaching in MT and teaching the MT as subject. The discussion of the latest policy geared towards its benefits and relevance may have rendered them to become willing. The discussions about the mother tongue-based education may have conditioned the respondents about the job that they will be taking on after graduation. They may have perceived that to teach the mother tongue and to teach in mother tongue forms part of their being an elementary school teacher, and that such should be performed by them. It could be further inferred that the respondents have postitiitvely accepted their roles as users and teachers of MT.

### 3.5 Significant relationship between the respondents' language attitudes and willingness to teach in the mother tongue and to teach the mother tongue as a subject.

Tables 7 gives the correlation matrix between the language attitudes towards the mother tongue and the willingness to teach in the mother tongue and to teach the mother tongue as a subject. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient was used as statistical treatment.

Table 7.

Correlation: Language Attitudes and Willingness to teach in the mother tongue (MoI) and to teach the mother tongue (as Subject)

Variables		r	p-value	Interpretation
Language Attitudes	Willingness to teach in the mother tongue	-.353	.000	Significant
	Willingness to teach the mother tongue as subject	-.365	.000	Significant

Note: \*Significant at alpha = 0.001

As shown in table 9, the data shows that the variables willingness to teach in the mother tongue ( $p$ -value = 0.000) and willingness to teach the mother tongue as subject ( $p$ -value = 0.000) are both significant at alpha = 0.05. This means that there is a significant correlation between the language attitude and the willingness to teach in the mother tongue and willingness to teach the mother tongue as subject.

There is a negative correlation between the language attitude and willingness to teach in the mother tongue ( $r = -.353$ ) and the language attitudes and willingness to teach the mother tongue as a subject ( $r = -.365$ ) which means that the respondents of this study whose language attitude is positive are likely to be willing to teach in the mother tongue and willing to teach the mother tongue as a subject. Conversely, the respondents whose language attitude is negative are likely to be not willing to teach in the mother tongue and not willing to teach the mother tongue as subject.

This study corroborates with the findings of Khejeri (2014) who noted the negative attitude of the teachers towards the mother tongue as they perceived English to be more of value. This negativity has been translated to the implementation of the mother tongue policy in Hamis, district of Kenya. The teachers' negative language attitude attitude is considered as the reason for the lukewarm reception towards the mother tongue policy (Khejeri, 2014).

Ejeh (2004) conducted a study and yielded results further supporting this finding. Student teachers who are respondents of the study in Nigeria showed negative attitude towards mother tongue teaching in basic education. The same respondents were also reported to be mainly, 80 out of 95 students, not willing to teach in mother tongue after graduation.

The language attitudes toward the mother tongue then serve as an enabling and disabling factor in terms of the support and practice that the primary implementors, who are not only the teachers, but includes the student teachers who would sooner or later become teachers themselves, do which is very meaningful in relation to language-in-education policy (Jones, 2012) which Ingram (1989) supports by claiming that language attitude is part and parcel of language policy in education.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are made.

First, Tupas (2015) reported that there exist a prevailing preference for English over other languages in the Philippines. This is true not only to learners but also to teachers. Therefore, although the respondents did not exhibit a completely positive attitude toward the mother tongue, their reported attitude of being 'slightly positive' can be taken to mean a progress in the stance of development about attitude toward an indigenous languages.

Second, the respondents were found out to be willing to use the mother tongue as medium of instruction in primary education and to teach the mother tongue as subject. This is perhaps due to the training and discussions provided by their institution which could have conditioned and made them accept the possibility of teaching in mother tongue and teaching the mother tongue which translates to their willingness to do both.

Third, the finding of the study relative to the variable gender does not support the trend claiming gender difference on language attitude. Researchers (Head, 1999; Lamb, 1997; Zhang, 2011) have maintained that there is a difference in the language attitude between males and females. However, in the case of the respondents of this study, both males and females exhibit, on the average, 'somehow positive' attitude toward mother tongue. This could be due to the same training, discussion and lecture to which all the respondents were subjected and put through. This similarity in terms of experience is seen to have caused the weakening of influence of gender as variable. Unlike in the early studies that have pointed gender difference, males and females in those studies have varying experiences and contexts which have resulted to varying attitude toward a language or languages and its/their variations.

Finally, there is a significant relationship between attitude towards the mother tongue and the willingness of to teach in MT and willingness to teach the MT. This means that attitude is indeed an enabling and disabling factor. Therefore, for the successful implementation of the MTB-MLE in the country and elsewhere, it is necessary to ascertain positive attitude of the implementers of the language policy.

### 5. Implications of the study

The findings of the study bear implications for education, presented as follows:

One, teacher training institutions must include in the curriculum courses mainly intended to expose students intending to become elementary school teachers to the different research that report the importance and advantages of teaching young children in their mother tongue. This practice shall not only provide information about the feasibility and necessity of using MT in the years of early education, but also may cause the reshaping of their held perspectives and attitudes ill favoring MT in education.

Second, sets of training and opportunities should be afforded to teacher education students. The existing curriculum for teacher education in the country does not abound in providing chances for the use of MT in developing lesson plans and in the delivery of lessons except only when students are already on their on-the-job training or practice year. The absence or lack thereof posts challenges and difficulties to student teachers when the time comes for them to teach in MT which may result to an unfavorable teaching experience stigmatizing the teaching in MT and impacting willingness to teach in the MT of would-be teachers.

Last, because attitude is a central factor determining acceptance and practice, efforts in influencing positive ones among would-be teachers come to the fore in consideration of the successful implementation of the language policy. Therefore, logistics such as books and other instructional materials in the MT should be developed and be readily available for use. This form of support essential provides assistance to the teaching in the MT nad to the teaching of MT.

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Researchers' Note: This is an original publication which has not been published elsewhere and is not under consideration elsewhere.

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