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Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages: The Case of the Philippines

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Abstract

In the Philippines, English is an official language. It is used as a medium of instruction. Yet, most Filipinos learn English as an additional language because they have various mother tongues. The diverse linguistic backgrounds of Filipinos create a challenge for both English teachers and learners of English as an additional language. As all linguists continue to think of innovative ways to teach English to speakers of Filipino languages, the Philippine context presents some particular factors that must be taken into consideration today. This study explored the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to the teaching of English as an additional language in the Philippines. Results show that English teaching and learning in the Philippines has been successful in general but has areas for improvement. Results are based on data collected from eight individual written interviews conducted with English educators, linguistic leaders and experts of Teaching English to speakers of Other Languages in the Philippines. The study also presents some practical recommendations for English language education policies in the multi-lingual societies of the Philippines.

Keywords: TESOL, Philippines, Strengths, Challenges, Threats, Mother-Tongue-Based Education, English

Introduction

The Philippines is a nation that is leading English proficiency in Asia in general. Several English survey reports from both the academe (Tupas, 2000) and the business world (GlobalEnglish Corporation, 2012), and other aspects of life (Kirkpatrick, 2010) are pointing more and more to the importance that the English language and English proficiency are playing in the educational success and economic boom of the Philippines as well as other surrounding nations. Despite the great linguistic diversity of the country, English continues to receive high functional popularity in the different areas of daily life in the nation.

The instruction and improvement in proficiency of English in the Philippines, however, have met quite some challenges in recent years. Among many others, there are new laws emphasizing more mother-based instruction, the limited number of higher education institutions that offer specific academic preparation for the teaching of English to learners whose mother tongue is other than English, technological advance, and limited instructional resources for some educators and learners.

In the Philippines, only two higher educational institutions currently offer some academic degrees in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) as of 2013. More than 180 local Philippine languages are spoken in this country. The new law that promotes mother-tongue-based education in K-12 has just been passed a couple of years ago. The goal of internationalization of education in the Philippines continues to make waves in the academic arena. A strong connection is developing among the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), using English as a lingua franca. Filipinos (the people of the Philippines) are traveling all over the world to provide work labor in different fields. Most of them have to use English to travel and work abroad. More and more countries, including Asian, African and Latin American countries, are sending their students to the Philippines because of English as a medium of instruction in the country. Looking at the historical background of the Philippines, English ties the past to the future of this nation.

The Philippines is in a state of rethinking and re-conceptualizing how and why English must be taught and learned in the Philippines. The situation is so complex that no one seems to know exactly what to do. This study aimed at contributing to the discussion by synthesizing the input of some experts, policymakers, and practitioners of English teaching in the Philippines.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on different second language acquisition (SLA) models and theories. The multiplicity of SLA theories considered in this study reflects the complexity of this topic. The study relied especially on five major theories: Kachru's Model of English Circles, academic successful learning in mother tongue, globalization calling for English, Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Critical Hypothesis theories.

Kachru's English Circles

The spread of English around the world has created different opportunities to explore it from different perspectives. Kachru wanted to classify the different types of English based on its function, learning, and teaching around the world. This classification of world Englishes led to the classification of all the nations of the world in three different circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1985, 1990; Kachru et al., 2009).

According to Kachru, the Inner Circle is comprised of countries where English is the native language of most of the speakers. The United States of America, England, and Australia are all in this first circle. As a group, these are known as the true native speakers of English.

The Outer Circle is made of countries where English is used as a lingua franca, medium of instruction, for professional and academic purposes. This is usually in context where most nationals use different mother tongues. They use English because they inherited it from the colonizer and because it is one of the best ways to linguistically unify people of the same nation. This is where the Philippines, Nigeria, India, South Africa, and Singapore are found. In these contexts, English covertly plays a political role of creating equality among speakers of different mother tongues.

In this context, there seems to be a continuous struggle for the balance between English and the local languages, English and whatever is chosen as the national language. It becomes even more complex in a country like the Philippines, with so many local languages.

The last circle, the Expanding Circle, is made of countries that are introducing English in their systems. In this context, English is spoken as a foreign language. It is hard to hear

people speak English on the streets of these countries. It is the case of countries like Myanmar, Indonesia, Peru, and Ivory Coast.

Learning in the Mother Tongue

Based on research that has shown that people learn better in their mother tongue, the Philippines recently passed a law that requires early grades to use one of the 12 national languages as the medium of instruction. This number started at 8, then moved to 12, and in just 2 years after the application of the law, some are calling for 14 languages. It is true that research has proven a direct link between academic success and studying in the mother tongue (L1). It is, however, unknown how this works when a country has multiple first languages (multiple local languages).

Indeed, it has been shown that students who study in their mother tongue are fast in recognizing words and learning vocabulary in their own mother tongue (Abadzi & Prouty, 2012). Additionally, comprehension is at best in most of the subjects that students take, and cognitive development is effective when studying in the mother tongue (Alfari, 2009; Changizi & Shimojo, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Last, applying these theories of learning through L1, the study by Ledesma and Morris (2005) yielded positive results of Filipino students who studied in Tagalog as their mother tongue.

It is true that the link has been established for effective learning in mother tongues. It is probably one of the reasons why important quality is seen in education of South Korea, Japan, China, and the United States (Pinar et al., 2006), where students study primarily in their mother tongue. One factor between all these nations, however, is that nationals of the same country share primarily only one language, unlike the Philippines that has a plethora of local languages. Additionally, these countries are already fairly economically stable that they do not have an urgent need to integrate English or other Western languages in their systems for economic survival.

Globalization's Call for English

Anyone embracing globalization today is de facto expected to integrate English in the national system. Looking at the ASEAN countries (in the Southeast region of Asia), the increase in the integration of English instruction is unprecedented (Kirkpatrick, 2010). English is the rope that will tie these nations together due to the great linguistic diversity observed there.

Today, economics, travel, tourism, and written texts heavily rely on English. To compete on the global market, the nation must have a strong command of English. In fact, the survey on the Business English Index revealed that the high index of business English in the Philippines correlated with its strong economic growth in 2012 (GlobalEnglish Corporation, 2012).

As for travel and tourism, the primary medium of communication found in hotels, restaurants, banks, recreation areas, flights, airports, among many others, is English. With the rapid spread of information technology, English is overused today through social networks, books, journals, signs, television, radio, etc. English's imperialism (Finegan, 2011), a concept that seemed illusionary a few decades ago, is real today. The Philippines cannot be free from the integration and promotion of English if the nation plans to continue thriving in the global political and economic competitiveness.

Input Hypothesis and Critical Period Hypothesis

In the early 1980s, Steven Krashen, one of the great theorists of language learning, developed a number of theories. For the purposes of this study, two have been taken into consideration: The Input Hypothesis and the Critical Period Hypothesis. These two are especially important for the topic under consideration because of their relevance.

According to Krashen (Krashen, 1981, 1985), for people to learn a language, they must receive input (through reading). To be able to produce a language correctly, one must have had access to comprehensible input. Put into the context of this study, for Filipinos to learn English well, they must receive considerable amount of English at school. It is true that they receive English input through other channels, such as television, radio, websites, and social networks. They still need, however, academic input in an academic setting. Krashen recommends flooded input for learning to occur.

According to the Critical Period Hypothesis (Birdsong, 1999; Nunan, 2009), there is a certain age beyond which human beings are not able to reach the full potential of learning an additional language. Although the specific age is debated, most linguists agree that beyond a certain age (varying between puberty and end of adolescence), people face quite some challenges in fully learning an additional language. Proponents of critical period believe that the earlier the introduction of a new language, the better in second language learners. Based on this hypothesis, it would be necessary for countries in the Outer Circle to introduce and emphasize both the mother tongue and English early in the life of the students. Such an approach would most likely help develop simultaneous bilinguals (Foote, 2010), an approach preferred over sequential bilingualism when considered from the Critical Period Hypothesis.

How all these theories come together in the discussion of the TESOL challenges and opportunities in the Philippines was the basis of the current study. These theories are intriguing in the context of the Philippines. Yet, limited research has been done on them. Due to heavy emphasis on English literature and English education, English teachers and policy makers treat English as if it was Filipino students' native language. Although it might be the mother tongue of some, from the functional perspective, English in the Outer Circle is not considered their mother tongue as a whole. This study tried to shed some light on this complexity of the issue of TESOL in the Philippines. This fundamental understanding could help meet better the needs of English teaching and learning in the Philippines.

Research Questions

As of 2013, the Philippines had only two universities that were offering a certain degree in TESOL. All other institutions that trained teachers in teaching English focused primarily on English literature and English education, two fields that are not usually suitable in preparing teachers of English to speakers of different native languages. Additionally, a new study revealed that the young generation of Filipinos are struggling with both English and their mother tongue (Chureson, 2013). They are proficient in neither language. To make the issue even more complex, the Philippines recently passed a law of using native languages as medium of instruction in early years of K-12 education. With all these complexities, the current study aimed to address the following research questions.

1. What is contributing to the teaching and learning success of English in the Philippines?
2. What challenges do people face in teaching and learning English in the Philippines?
3. What should be the steps forward in the teaching and learning of English in the Philippines?

Research Design

Due to the complexity and the goal of the topic selected for this study, several factors were taken into consideration as described in this section. The interpretive approach of research fit well with the study because of its multiple ramifications. The views and opinions of the research participants were synthesized to address the different components of the study, using a thematic approach.

Research Design

This study is based on the case study design because it sought to explain the “how” and “why” of the present circumstance (Yin, 2014) of TESOL in the Philippines. For the direction of this case study, the SWOT matrix was utilized to be able to clearly explore and synthesize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It proved to be the best approach for this specific study because it provided a very specific direction of the study that would probably have not been achieved otherwise. Although originally from the field of business during the economic collapse (Fine, 2010), SWOT analysis is a powerful tool to look at large systems and organizations.

Population and Sample

The population in this study included English practitioners (English teachers, educators, and instructors), English policymakers, leaders and administrators of English language institutes, English departments, and English schools. These were considered to be at the forefront of global and local decisions that affect English teaching and learning in the Philippines.

Sampling was purposive. As recommended for purposive sampling in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Lichtman, 2012), participants were selected if they were found to be able to provide the best information available on the teaching and learning of English in the Philippines. Although it can be prone to bias, purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research. It gives the researcher an opportunity to choose the most effective informant available for the study.

The sample of this study included eight participants. While representativeness is not a recommended characteristic of qualitative research, diversity of English language teaching experts was considered in the selection of the research participants. This was purposefully done to base the findings of this study on the overlap between people from different positions.

The participants included the president of the TESOL Philippines professional organization, one Regional English Language Officer Assistant (at the United States Embassy in Manila, Philippines), two chairpersons of English departments offering graduate subjects in TESOL, two university English professors, one English language institute director, and one English teacher. This diversity helped collect data that might be relevant to the different groups of experts involved in the design and delivery of English instruction in the Philippines.

Data Collection

This study is based on an interview guide that was validated through its review by one professor of English and three TESOL experts (see Appendix A). The people presented in the sample voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. They were contacted either by email or by phone. They were given a choice of receiving a phone interview or answering the interview questions by writing. They all chose to address the questions by writing, except one. They

believed that by writing their answers, they could think more about the questions before they could return their answers. They were each given two weeks to develop and submit their answers to me by email.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was based on content analysis that used the emerging themes. Any concept or category that was mentioned at least three times in the data was considered in the results. Additionally, the SWOT matrix was considered to make sure all the components of the matrix were included. This was also based on the research questions and the main goal of the study.

Results

For simpler organization of the findings, the SWOT matrix was used. The findings were later used to address the three research questions that guided this study. Findings in this study, however, need to be taken with caution due to the nature of qualitative research. This study was conducted as a baseline study to generate different variables that can now be investigated in depth in subsequent research studies.

Excluded Data

As indicated above, themes were included in this study if reported by at least three participants. There were some that met this criterion but were excluded because they were not unique to TESOL; they related to other fields too. When some participants addressed some weaknesses and threats related to the English teaching and learning in the Philippines, they also discussed general issues such as infrastructure, class size, lighting and ventilation, poverty and hunger, and technological advancement. Although these are all important factors, they were not considered in the analysis of this study because they relate to other fields of learning.

Strengths

The data presented several strengths worthy of consideration in this study. It was evident that research participants were optimistic about the quality of English teaching and learning in the Philippines. They based their opinions on the fact that English is used as both an official language and a medium of instruction, two functions that require a high level of command of the language.

They indicated more evidence with the recent study that showed the Philippines as the best in Business English in the world (GlobalEnglish Corporation, 2012), apart from native-speaking English nations. Additionally, they indicated that more than 90% of people in the Philippines now speak English; a considerable percentage of English speakers compared to other surrounding nations. Based on the same organization, the Philippines is considered the third country with the largest number of English speakers in the world, just after the United States of America and India. Considering the percentage of English speakers in each of the 10 top nations with the largest number of English speakers, the Philippines comes again at the third place right after the United States and the United Kingdom, while India falls at the end of the list.

The additional evidence that they provided was in relation to the high graduation rate of English majors and the fact that an increasing number of people are coming to the Philippines to learn English. As long as English departments in higher education institutions

continue to produce English majors, it is evident that English will continue to be taught at school. That is somehow an important sign of sustainability of English instruction in the Philippines.

As for foreigners who are currently traveling to the Philippines for English, it is evidence that the world is considering the Philippines as a good place to learn English. English language institutes are mushrooming in the Philippines. They are drawing students from different continents. English learning tourism is also growing. People are entering the Philippines just to enjoy tourism while learning and practicing English. The Philippines is also training English teachers for the neighboring countries, in addition to sending Filipino teachers to teach English in those same countries and beyond.

Another strength was that the country provides access to large amount of English print materials, television and radio programs, and considerable amount of Internet access in English. According to them, English is perceived and portrayed positively through the media. The Filipino people have a positive attitude towards the United States, the country that passed English on to them. This positive attitude is in line with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (Nunan, 2009) and even some pragmatics literature that shows that such an attitude is conducive to effective learning of a second language.

This positive attitude was evident in other themes that emerged. For instance, someone who speaks English well in the Philippines is considered highly educated. Additionally, English speaking is encouraged at home.

Weaknesses

The data demonstrated three major sets of weaknesses that have negative ramifications on English language teaching and learning. These include limited English of Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) materials and curriculum for solid foundation of K-12 education, interference of many linguistic backgrounds, and limited number of TESOL experts. These weaknesses have negatively affected the teaching and learning of English in the Philippines.

ESOL materials and curriculum. ESOL materials and curriculum are missing in the teaching and learning of English in the Philippines. Instructional materials used in K-12 do not take into account that Filipinos, as members of the Outer Circle, are not native speakers of English. They go to school with their own linguistic backgrounds. They go there to learn English. Therefore, from SLA theories and models, some accommodations are expected to meet the English language needs of these students. Lack of ESOL materials and curriculum is due to the high cost that is attached to them and the limited number of trained TESOL experts.

The lack of ESOL accommodations in the instructional materials has led to some negative impact. English language learning is weak at the foundational level (K-12). This weak foundation has a negative impact on higher education. Tertiary education is expected to rely heavily on English as a medium of instruction in the Philippines. Without solid foundation of English in K-12, students may be expected to meet some challenges in their learning process.

Due to lack of adequate ESOL materials, K-12 may develop English linguistic errors that go on unnoticed or uncorrected. Without effective intervention in early years of English language learning, students internalize some errors that go on unnoticed for a long time. These errors become quite difficult to correct because students reach what has been known in SLA as plateau or fossilization (Nunan, 2009). One of the reasons why college professors cannot help their students improve their English is that students' errors are internalized in K-12. Unlearning something is usually harder than learning something new.

Limited trained TESOL experts. This weakness has also some devastating consequences on the English teaching and learning in the Philippines. Because of the weak foundation of English in K-12 and extremely limited number of colleges and universities offering TESOL academic degrees, some English teachers are not well prepared for their work and others have their own fossilized English errors. They can easily transfer these to their students, thus perpetrating the errors over several students and over the years. Some of these errors are also internalized through daily communication. As errors are used frequently in daily communication, people begin to use them as the normal linguistic rules. At a certain point, people are no longer aware of the errors because they have become fossilized.

Interference of different linguistic backgrounds. The Philippines currently has more than 180 languages. Thus, groups of teachers and students of English come from various linguistic backgrounds. They each come with some potential of their own linguistic interference. Some teachers are reported to be mixing their mother tongue with English while teaching. In fact, there are some college instructors that cannot teach without using code-switching. In many cases, this is because code-switching has been fossilized in their English. This code-switching is transferred to the students and the vicious circle goes on.

Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) law. The Philippines passed the MTB-MLE law recently, which requires earlier grades to be taught in students' mother tongues. While learning in the mother tongue is supported by research, it has become a new weakness for English teaching and learning. Under the MTB-MLE law, the number of English instruction periods is highly limited. From the Input Hypothesis perspective, it can be expected that the English learning process will be slower as a result of MTB-MLE. This law is good for learning in general. Its application, however, is causing some challenges because it is still new and it looks like limited training has been provided to teachers, in this Outer Circle country.

Opportunities

MTB-MLE. The Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education law, seen for some as a weakness for the teaching and learning of English in the Philippines, was viewed as an opportunity by others. According to those who believe in its positive aspect, MTB-MLE will help students learn better all other subjects in K-12. Additionally, and maybe even more importantly for TESOL, English will for the first time be in the hands of TESOL experts.

In the previous curriculum, all teachers (even those who could be struggling with English) were expected to teach all the subjects, including English. With MTB-MLE, only trained English teachers will teach English. Even if MTB-MLE provides limited time for English in earlier grades, this law is expected to yield better results for English language teaching and learning because English will be taught by experts. It is understood that it is better to have fewer hours of English teaching well done than more hours of English affected with erroneous teaching of English by non-English expert teachers.

English imperialism. The concept of English imperialism has been around for a number of decades in most language teaching and linguistic fields. One participant stated, "English is the king of other languages in the Philippines". Here, English is an official language—a common characteristic of the Outer Circle countries. It is a lingua franca used to unite the people around the country. English imperialism crosses the borders. Just looking at the ASEAN block, English is used as the common language. Beyond the ASEAN block, English is still dominant. The Philippines has embraced, not rejected, the supremacy of the English

language. These attitude and practice have provided the Philippines an opportunity to take the leadership of English use in the ASEAN region.

Philippines' influence through English. The Philippines is having more and more influence on surrounding nations through English. More and more people are coming to the Philippines to study, tourism, or for business due to the convenience that English offers here. Additionally, more and more surrounding countries are recruiting English teachers from the Philippines, next to recruitment done in the US and the UK.

Some participants believe that Filipinos have an advantage of learning and mastering English over the surrounding nations for two main reasons. According to them, Filipinos have a natural linguistic ability that allows them to learn languages faster than other people. Some believe that it is because of their skill of imitation. Second, unlike many other languages in surrounding Asian countries, Filipino languages have similar sounds and linguistic features with English. For them, this is why Filipino speakers can more easily learn English than their Chinese, Korean, Thai, Myanmar, or Thai counterparts because of the similarities between English and Filipino languages.

Threats

Data revealed three major threats of TESOL in the Philippines. First, the ineffective implementation of MTB-MLE. The second major threat is that the new structure of the K-12 program offers limited time to English teaching and learning. The last one is the limited TESOL training and ESOL materials.

Ineffective implementation of MTB-MLE. Participants believed that a catastrophic impact on English is awaiting the Philippines if people continue to fail to implement the MTB-MLE law properly. This ineffectiveness is due to lack of proper training and planning. Training affects planning and planning affects teaching and learning. Anything that goes wrong in training and planning will most likely negatively influence the teaching and learning transaction.

A number of characteristics of the ineffective implementation of MTB-MLE were evident in the interviews. From the interviews, participants mentioned limited knowledge on the implementation of the new law. The law was implemented before much of the training could take place. Additionally, due to the plethora of languages in the Philippines, only few languages have materials in the native languages. Teachers are not trained in teaching in their mother tongue, except those whose native language is Tagalog (a variety of Filipino, the national language).

Some participants believed that MTB-MLE will actually end up isolating individual linguistic groups in the Philippines. People will be so much involved in their own mother tongue that they will no longer mind connecting with other groups through the use of English. Additionally, teachers who do not teach English may become less and less interested in learning and improving their English.

Limited time. The second threat that came out of the data was the limited time allocated to English in the new K-12 program. Until a couple of years ago, the Philippines had 6 years of primary education and 4 years for high school. Now, the country is transitioning to a 12-years long program. This new program, in accordance with MTB-MLE, offers limited number of English classes. This means, students in K-12 programs will spend much less time with English than they used to. This limited time is seen as a threat to effective English teaching and learning. Given that English is not the majority's mother tongue in the

Philippines, allocating more time would be expected if high quality of English instruction is to be achieved.

Limited TESOL training and ESOL materials. As indicated earlier, only two higher education institutions were offering some kind of degree in the field of TESOL in the Philippines in 2013. This is not enough for the tremendous need for TESOL experts in any Outer Circle country. This might be one of the reasons why ESOL materials are limited. English is presented in textbooks as if it was for native speakers of English. This can create some challenges for non-native speakers who are trying to learn their subjects in English.

Discussion

Coming back to the main goal of this study, three questions led the exploration. The study aimed at discovering elements that contribute to the success of teaching and learning English in the Philippines. Second, it explored the challenges that students and teachers face in the teaching and learning of English in the Philippines. Last, it was the intent of this study to try to develop some strategies needed to move forward in the teaching and learning of English in the Philippines.

Success of English Teaching and Learning in the Philippines

This study has revealed that in general, the Philippines is successful in the teaching and learning of English. The evidence of this success is seen through the promotion of English through the media, home, school, tourism, business, and even the sending of English teachers abroad. Some surveys even proved that the Philippines was the best non-native English speaking country in business English. A significantly high percentage of people here speak English as compared to the neighboring countries.

Opportunities were seen in that the Philippines is basically “teaching” English to the other surrounding nations and beyond. English is accepted as part of the Philippines’ past and destiny. As one participant stated it, “English is the history and destiny of the Philippines”. Before English can be considered the lingua franca of the world, it is already the lingua franca of the Philippines due to the great linguistic diversity of the Philippines.

Challenges in English Teaching and Learning in the Philippines

Despite the great success found in the teaching and learning of English in the Philippines, there were some weakness and three threats. Weaknesses included teachers with limited English language proficiency and use of other languages in instruction when English is supposed to be used. Additionally, the plurality of Philippine languages was seen as a challenge in the learning of English due to their interference with the learning of a new language, English.

Three major threats came out of the data. Although MTB-MLE is a law that is based on sound linguistic theory of learning, implementing it ineffectively can lead to catastrophic results in the teaching and learning of English. Second, time allocated to the teaching and learning of English in the new K-12 program is not enough for effective learning of a new language. Last, lack of ESOL materials and TESOL experts was seen as a threat to the sustainability of English language teaching and learning in the Philippines.

Steps Forward

Two approaches seem to be the best as the Philippines moves forward in the teaching and learning of English. One approach will be the one embedded in the MTB-MLE law together

with the new K-12 program. The second would be an optional one for those independent schools that can continue with English as the medium of instruction. Below are two models suggested to further the discussion of TESOL in the Philippines. They were both developed based on the findings of this study. One of them should be adopted based on the philosophy of the school leaders.

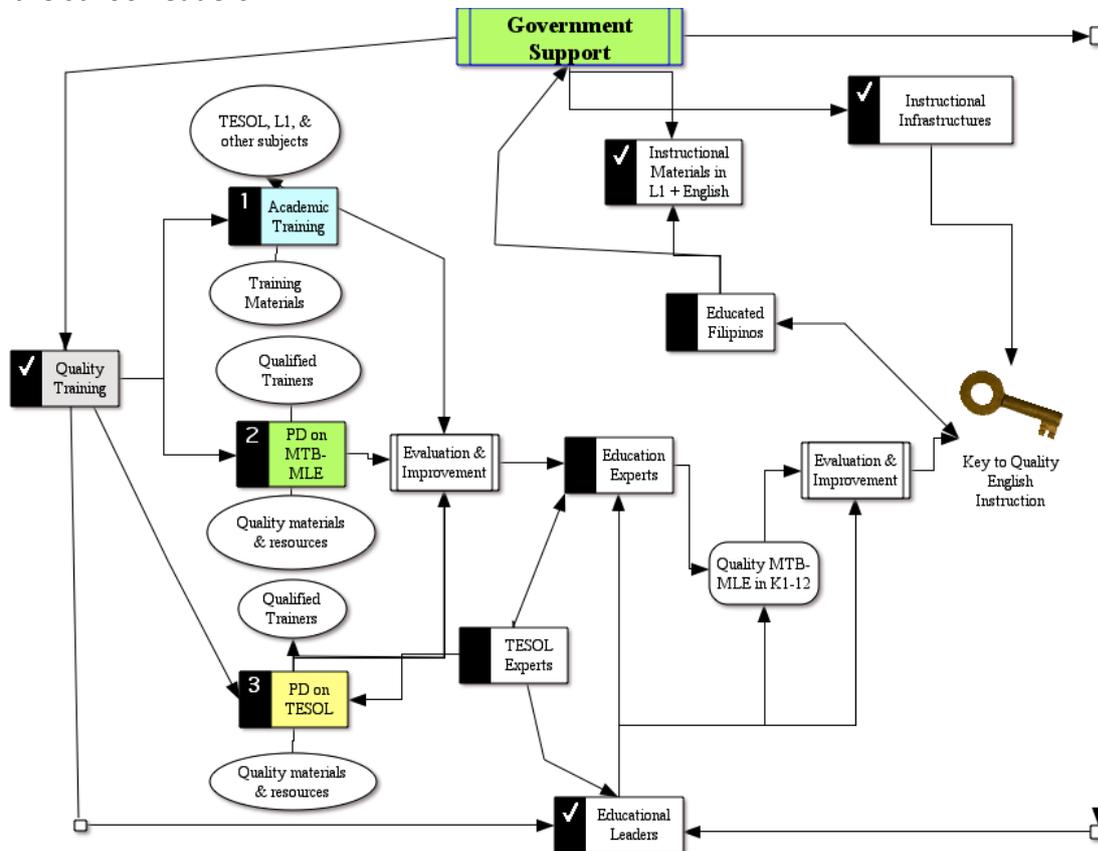


Figure 1. MTB-MLE-Integrated Model

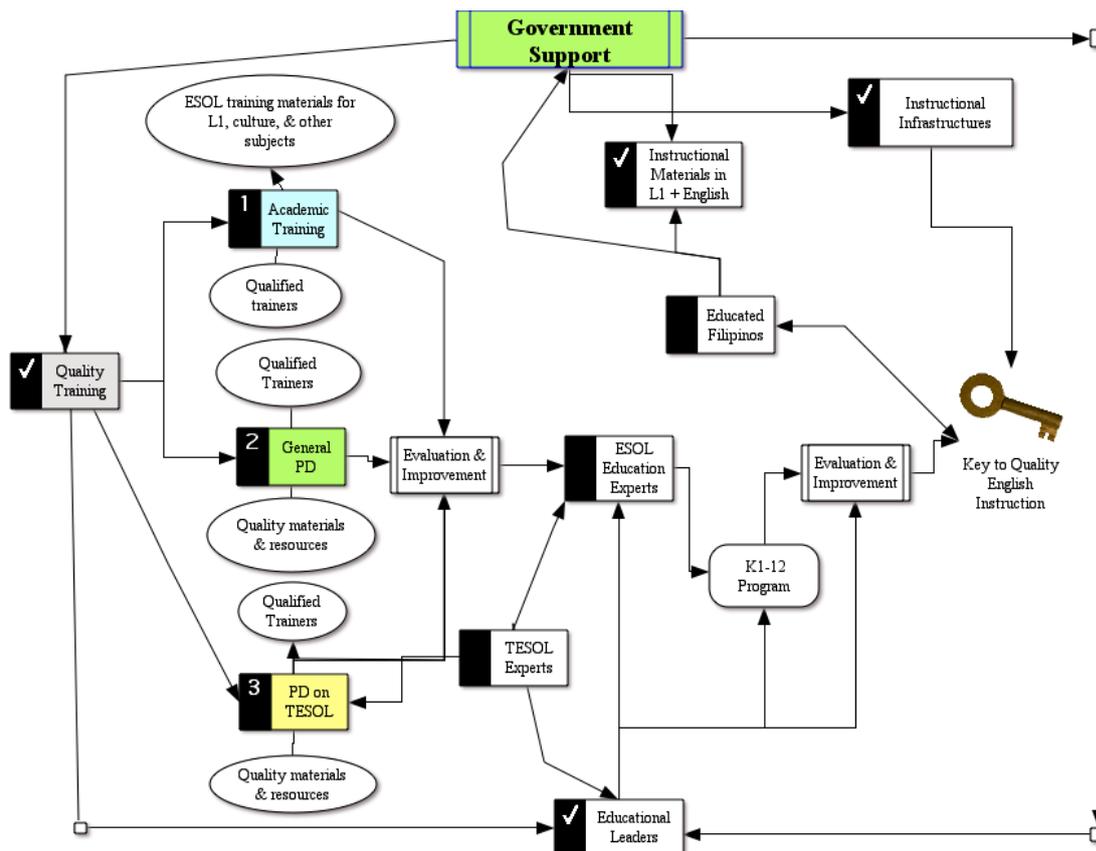


Figure 2. TESOL-Integrated Model

Both models are based on the findings of this study and therefore open to improvement. In the MTB-MLE-Integrated Model, everything is driven by MTB-MLE while English is taught as a separate subject. In this case, English is taught only by TESOL experts. Other teachers are not required to be highly proficient in English or English teaching. Non-TESOL majors do not teach English. In earlier grades, they do not teach in English either.

In the second, the TESOL Integrated Model, all teachers are trained to teach in English. All K-12 materials are in English but designed specifically for ESOL students. English is the medium of instruction. Mother tongues and the national language are taught as separate subjects. No preference is given to either one. It is the context that should dictate which model to adopt.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From this study, it is evident that English experts believe that, in general, English teaching and learning has been successful in the Philippines. It is, however, facing some new challenges that, if not handled well, may rapidly negatively affect the success that has been visible. The Philippines has a need for more intentional teaching and learning of English to remain the leader of English in the ASEAN region and to continue playing an important role around the world. The Philippines needs more TESOL experts to help with this challenge. The two models presented above (put page on which the models appear) are only some suggestions to begin the discussion for the way forward.

An effort must be made to improve the standards and expectations of the teaching and learning of English. If MTB-MLE must be implemented, it must be implemented well. For this reason, quality training is urgently needed to help in the process. Where English-only

instruction is preferred or allowed, teachers must be trained in some TESOL approaches so that they will be better equipped in teaching non-English speaking speakers in English. The second model provided above is a starting point.

Additionally, practical elements are needed to continue improving English teaching and learning in the Philippines. More TESOL experts are needed to develop ESOL materials and train better the pre-service teachers, and help in-service teachers unlearn any fossilized errors of English. Quality professional development through conferences, workshops, seminars for all teachers teaching English (or teaching in English) must be organized. Massive awareness raising about the correct use of English is needed. Effort must also be put in finding accessible and affordable means to prepare educators and train the potential TESOL trainers. For this to happen, the government and school leaders must develop a strong partnership with TESOL experts. Educational leaders must also request applicants of the teaching position that requires teaching English or teaching in English to demonstrate greater skills in English proficiency and English teaching ability. For the efficiency in delivering urgently needed professional development in TESOL, educational leaders could consider distance and mobile learning tools.

This research is considered a baseline study for TESOL research in the Philippines. It thus offers several opportunities for further research. The following suggestions are by no means exhaustive. More research is needed about the impact of the new K-12 program and MTB-MLE law on English teaching and learning in the Philippines. Research is also needed about the TESOL training and materials in the Philippines. With such a multitude of cultural backgrounds in the Philippines, more research is needed on how to adequately train teachers in sociolinguistics.

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