Society and language are bound together. Language provides identity for a certain society’s culture; society cannot coexist and interact unless such language—verbal or written—exists. Communication brings forth understanding, that of which is highly needed for a community to prosper. This same concept goes within the four walls of our classrooms: the languages in which teachers teach must be appropriate, relatable, and understandable to the students.

On the other hand, these past few months, there was an issue pertaining to what languages we should really include or apply to the Philippine education environment—especially in the aspect of teaching. But are such extra languages necessary to be taught in the Philippines?

According to the study of Ducher and Tucker (1977), the first language in a specific area of dialect, more known as Mother Tongue, gives a more effective avenue for the students for the initial learning to read and to write, developing good comprehension and exercising reasoning among learners. This is the principle applied to Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education or MTB-MLE. This speaks of “first-language-first,” where schooling begins in mother tongue and transitions to additional languages, specifically Filipino and English.

Since language plays a significant factor to a child’s learning, this comfort zone of where the child was first exposed to the surroundings provides more chances for him or for her to grasp a specific topic being taught. The child’s own language enables him or her to express self easily and conveniently. The implication would lessen the fear and
hesitancy of making mistakes. It rather encourages active participation, because they can immediately use their mother tongue to analyze and explain better than that of when the language is unfamiliar to them. This therefore allows free flow of learning for the student.

   Nationalism. As mentioned, the language that has been dominantly exposed to us Filipinos is Tagalog. Learning this primarily gives us more keys to better learning and comprehension and emboldens us to raise our “makabayan spirit”. As students go forward education, they start to step on a bigger, wider area. Eventually, the country will no longer be their playfield—they will face the whole globe.

   On the other hand, although both are the Philippines’ official languages, using whether Tagalog or English becomes a debate for many.

   English is said to be the universal language of our world, only unless if there exist other colonies outside the Earth and English is not their language. This is the same world our learners must and will eventually step on. Given this concept, effectively grasping the said language pushes our students to be competitive worldwide by being able to go with the flow of the commerce, the international market, and global growth. Not only do they understand what native English people say, but also convey what they themselves as individuals want to convey.

   Once they graduate, students may desire to pursue their careers in Japan, so learning Nihongo is a skill he or she must acquire to cope up with the Japanese atmosphere. However, as possible as many students may want to work abroad United States when they graduate, Nihongo would not likely work well there, just as the Korean and Spanish. Therefore, other languages such as Korean, Nihongo, Spanish, and more, regardless of how interesting the language may be, can only be taught as an elective subject and are not a necessity.

   Society and language are bound together. If language gives identity to our culture and nationality, the Philippine classrooms must be open for brand new sparks of
opportunity. But even when it is our principle to raise globally competitive students, this
does not mean we should adjust to whatever becomes mainstream to the world. In the
constant search for improvement, we must still bear the pride and faith as Filipinos.

References:

Burton, L. A. (2013). Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the Philippines:
Studying Top-Down Policy Implementation from the Bottom Up. University of
Minnesota
Burton, L. A. (2013). Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the Philippines:
Studying Top-Down Policy Implementation from the Bottom Up. University of
Minnesota
Burton, L. A. (2013). Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the Philippines:
Studying Top-Down Policy Implementation from the Bottom Up. University of
Minnesota