PHILIPPINE LANGUAGES: THE REALM OF LINGUISTIC EDUCATION IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Local and world educators have developed various interventions in the field of education particularly in strengthening the literacy of the young minds to prepare them for a higher degree of classroom tasks. Literacy, as has been denoted for decades, is the capability of an individual to learn, understand, and apply basic knowledge in terms of reading, writing, and arithmetic. In all facets of educational process, literacy is seen as the seed of the prosperous learning and honing the other life skills the students must possess.

When talking about literacy, there is the significance of language in information absorption as we have known to be a receptive diagnosis. We can observe if a child starts to learn to speak because the child’s repertoire is supported by the skill of listening. We can identify if a child starts to learn to write because there is a continuous input that is given to him or her. These outputs or productive manifestations, on the other hand, grow from time to time, enabling a learner to utilize language in different functions, situations, and contexts associated with distinctive strategies. When a learner uses language to communicate, it is also the beginning of intelligibility emergence.

In the Philippines, we generally use Filipino and English as the media of instructions in the teaching and learning process. Ever since the implementation of the Republic Act 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 signed by the former president Noynoy Aquino), curriculum planners have advocated the teaching of mother tongue as an intervention not only to preserve our diverse languages and ethnicities, but also to establish a foundation of the first language that will aid the learning of the second language. This is a paradigm shift. They believe that what is lacking in our linguistic
movement is the initiative to intellectualize our local languages. However, there are corners and edges in the first years of implementation. Some issues and challenges encountered are:

- There is an insufficiency of instructional materials where both students and teachers can utilize for enrichment activities;
- Teachers need more training;
- Our society is known to have evolving vernaculars and colloquial terms, thus linguistic learning in the Philippines is flexible and inventive;
- Philippine English is not yet totally acknowledged by many Filipinos thinking that it is a sort of bastardized language;
- There is a fossilized misconception in the terms, “language” and “dialect” and so, there is a need to address the problem;
- Filipino subjects in Senior High School are too much focused in research writing that they have forgotten the practical implications of Filipino discourse; and
- Foreign music, drama, films, and literature are overpowering our Philippine languages.

By looking into the notional change in our curricular landscape, is it enough to only teach Filipino subjects? Where are we in the realm of linguistic education in our country? How are we beating the predicaments that are existing in the lines?

I, for instance, is a secondary teacher specializing in Filipino subject. For years of studying the nature of my field, I know that I still have a lot to learn – from the rudiments of language structure to the pragmatic senses, like how we treat sciences and mathematics essential to our daily lives.
We are coursing to many paths while riding our boats. We are braving the waves of the sea. This is similar to how we venture the opportunities and platforms that connect us, as teachers, with our learners, making understanding the most important product of language and communication. To be honest, we are exercising more the activities that are relevant to foreign language that we tend to forget the pluralities of our own. In a sense, what we must do is to aspire equal importance among diverse languages to avoid bias.

How can we possibly do this? Senior High School offers the subjects:

- Komunikasyon at Pananaliksik sa Wika at Kulturang Pilipino;
- Pagbasa at Pagsusuri ng Iba’t Ibang Teksto;
- Filipino sa Piling Larang;
- 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World;
- and Malikhaing Pagsulat/ Creative Writing.

Notice that these subjects are avenues for the SHS students to not just learn and discuss about Philippine Languages, but also to be familiar with all the varieties and to empower themselves to be the gardeners of such languages. There are the possibilities of continuous language attrition, but there are more chances of linguistic rehabilitation through trainings, symposia, team-buildings, community education, and action researches.

Senior High School is a transition to tertiary education that is why a crucial emphasis is needed in educating them about the identities of our tongues, constituting to being Makabansa as a core value.

Let us be able to realize that language teachers are not only the professionals to instill the importance of our languages among the youth, everyone must participate. If
we are still standing on the ground of unmoving benches of linguistic education, then we are not doing our job. We must associate ourselves with all the philosophies and ideologies of language preservation, promotion, and application.

In the end, we are Filipinos, not intruders.

Reference:

R.A. 10533 – Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013