Part of the changes brought by the K-12 program is the inclusion of Mother Tongue - Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in Basic Education Curriculum for Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2 and 3. The MTB-MLE policy has two modules: one as a subject area and one as a medium of instruction. In the present, there are 19 dialects in MTB-MLE used by DepEd such as Tagalog, Capampangan, Sambal, Chavacano, Waray, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Bikol, Maranao, Ybanag, etc.

According to Ashley Manabat (2016), "the purpose of a multilingual education program is to develop appropriate cognitive and reasoning skills enabling children to operate equally in different languages—starting in the mother tongue, which is the first language of the child." She also added an excerpt from a research that it was proven that the child's first language really facilitates learning even during the education with the Thomasites.

Indeed, using mother tongue as a medium of instruction is very effective to enhance the cognitive learning of the children in acquiring knowledge from the different subject areas that the teacher teaches. It is more efficient to use their mother tongue because it would not be hard for them to grasp information. Also, it enables the students to express themselves easily and confidently. This instruction also encourages the students to have an active participation during discussion.

MTB-MLE best works as a medium of instruction but using this policy as a subject area is another matter to deal with. In fact, one of the articles by Laura Garbes (2012) published in the website Cultural Survival includes an interview from one of the chambers of commerce in Pampanga saying that there were no available modules or books to support their mother tongue curriculum. This is the reality because most of the textbooks and modules that are being circulated in the Philippine classrooms are
mostly written in Tagalog or in English.

Another dilemma is that there are a lot of teachers all over the country that are not well-trained in teaching mother tongue as a subject. Also, aside from lacking of textbooks and modules that are written in a particular mother tongue, there were only very few published literatures that are written in other dialects in the Philippines. Thus, it gives many teachers a very few access or maybe no access at all of the institutions written in their mother tongues.

Due to these pitfalls of implementing MTB-MLE policy as a subject, it is now time for the Department of Education to create solutions to these existing problems. One solution is to produce books and modules written in particular mother tongues. Another solution is to provide trainings and workshops for teachers of mother tongue subjects in able for them to be competent in teaching that subject. It was just the beginning, and these problems will be truly effective if the implementors of MTB-MLE will take an immediate action to address the dilemmas.

References: