THE EXTENSIVE USE OF TRANSLATION IN THE SLIPPING LEVEL
OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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In language teaching, there are various approaches to consider so that learners may be fluent in the target language. Teachers are selecting the right method depending on the needs, capabilities, and interests of the learners specifically nowadays that K-12 curriculum is focusing in the child-centered approach. Yet, the most commonly used method in teaching the second language is the grammar translation approach where the teacher is letting the students to use their native language during the instruction. They are translating the target language to their mother tongue, so that learners may grasp it easily. This approach is also called as the traditional way of teaching since it focuses on the memorization of the vocabulary and grammar rules. Yet, it has a little emphasis on pronunciation. Through this, some language teachers are employing this approach so that learners may understand the language well.

Yet, aside from the language teachers, most of the subject area teachers who should use English language as a medium of instruction like Mathematics, Science and Business teachers are finding translation very helpful in delivering the lesson. They are certain that the students may learn the lesson well if they are able to interpret it using the first language. They are basically focusing on the skill and not on the language itself. According to the article published by GMA News in 2018, there’s a decline in terms of English proficiency in the Philippines’ college graduates nowadays. Based on the result of the study conducted by the Hopkin International Partners, the level of Filipinos’ English proficiency is lower than the competency requirements for taxi drivers in Dubai and proficiency target for high school graduates in Thailand. On the interview of the said article, Ms. Celeste Monge, a public school teacher for 12 years, shared that the decline of
English proficiency among the Filipino students is evident. Some teachers in Sciences and Mathematics are just translating the language, for the capability of the students to comprehend in English is decreasing. Teachers are instructing using the native language and allowing the students to speak in Filipino just to comprehend the lesson they are delivering.

The splitting level of English language proficiency among the Filipino students is alarming for the language teachers. They are somehow blamed, for they are the ones who should enhance the abilities of the learners in terms of the language. According to King (2009), one of the factors of the depletion in English language proficiency is the quality of the teachers and their understanding using the English language. Yet, subject area teachers are partly blamed as well. All of the references and textbooks offered in the schools were written in English, except for the Filipino and Araling Panlipunan subjects. Thus, language teachers are not the only ones to blame since every teacher should be proficient in the language. In the K-12 curriculum, mother tongue is added as a subject from Kinder and Grades one to three to establish the first language among the students, and the establishment of the second language should be catered in the fourth grade onwards. Nevertheless, most teachers instructing in the higher grades are using Filipino in instruction, and letting the students to express and explain their answers using their first language as well.

Pamintuan (2007) shared that the English proficiency of the Filipinos before was better than the English proficiency of the students nowadays. The writer said that the contribution of the native English speakers back then was the reason why the quality of education in terms of English language proficiency was better. The instruction before was purely in English and the teachers were competent in the language, thus they produced students who were competent in the language as well. Unlike today, not all teachers are competent in the language, so the competency of the students is also depleting. He added that the teachers nowadays are incorporating bilingualism and translation inside the
classroom where it should be purely in English. In addition, Jimenez (2018) agreed that poorly trained teachers in English language are partly blamed for the worsening level of the language proficiency.

In 1974, the Bilingual Policy of the Department of Education was introduced to develop a country which is competent in both Filipino and English. This policy mandated the use of English and Filipino as subjects in all levels from elementary to college where it also required the teachers to use their mother tongue in the instruction of other subject-areas such as Social Studies, Values Education, Physical Education, Science and Technology, Industrial Arts and Home Economics to achieve the goals of bilingual competence. However, the learning of English language was suffered as the result of this policy, for it may yield a language interference among the students. Therefore, the former President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, passed the Executive Order No. 210, s. 2003 that became a DepEd Order on August 22, 2006 as DO 36, s. 2006 which aims to strengthen the use of English as a medium of instruction in the educational system of the country. This Act amended the use of English language as the primary medium of instruction in all public and private institutions of secondary levels. It also emphasized that English should be the medium of instruction for Academic subjects such as Sciences, Mathematics and English starting from Grade three. Thus, all teachers should be strict to follow the policy in using English as the primary medium of instruction.
References:


