

Relationship Between Preferred Language As Medium Of Instruction And Students' Motivation And Anxiety To Learn

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Abstract

The English language was introduced in the formal education when the Philippines was colonized by the United States in the early 20th century. For more than a century now, the use of the English language has been criticized and even condemned, revised and debated yet it is sustained up until today. This study aimed to determine the language preferably used as the medium of instruction for technical-vocational courses and its relationship to students' motivation and anxiety to learn. The descriptive-correlational method was applied utilizing both self-report and modified questionnaires adapted from Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich, et. al, 1990) and Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, E. K., et. al, 1986). The respondents were 40 shop instructors and 174 college freshmen in various shop classes. The data were treated utilizing weighted mean, percentage, Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient and t-test for the correlation coefficient. Results revealed an insignificant relationship between shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' observation on shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction. However, there were significant relationships between shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' motivation to learn and shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' anxiety in learning. The study concludes that the preferred medium of instruction is mixed English-Cebuano since it fosters better comprehension during lecture and hands-on. Furthermore, the medium of instruction influenced students' motivation and anxiety; enthusiasm and discomfort during shop classes were related to the language used by instructors. An English-

Cebuano Instructional Enrichment Module for Technical-Vocational Courses is proposed to be implemented.

Keywords: Education, medium of instruction, students' motivation to learn, anxiety to learn, descriptive-correlational research, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions in the Philippines have answered the need of a stronger workforce as an answer to globalization by offering technical-vocational courses for both diploma and baccalaureate programs. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) offer hands-on courses such as Automotive Technology, Cosmetology Technology, and Food Technology, among many others, that seem to draw a larger number of students nowadays. However, the language problems in our educational system have emerged from the efforts of educating the students to be globally competitive. Even though HEIs are encouraged to use English as the primary medium of instruction, questions as to what language students have to be proficient in and what language should be applied in the teaching-learning process for them to be able to acquire the needed competencies to be globally competitive still exist.

In the Philippines, there seems to be an internal educational debate as to what language is best used in the teaching and learning process. It is said that for the early formative years, the use of the Mother Tongue (native language) is both necessary and effective. For the secondary level, the English language is incorporated along with the Filipino language in teaching various subjects. In the tertiary level, English is used as the primary medium of instruction, yet higher education institutions have the academic freedom to let instructors impart lessons the best way they know how. This situation leaves technical-vocational shop instructors to fend both for themselves and for their students' sake – either they adapt the use of the second language which is English, or probably deviate from such instruction from time to time for the sake of comprehension.

According to Stephen Krashen in his affective-filter hypothesis of second language acquisition, a number of emotional variables including motivation, self-confidence and anxiety may affect the learning of and in a new language. On the onset of instances wherein

the variables are negated, an affective filter is raised as a mental block that prevents comprehension in that language. As affirmed by McGrath ("Curious Case," 2011), everyone has an affective-filter and this could either make or break language learning. When the said filter is heightened, such as in the event of getting laughed at in class, a person tends to be anxious and stressed and therefore, less successful in communication. On the other hand, when the filter is dropped, a person can communicate at and with ease.

To be able to learn something requires motivation, that inner drive to do and go on with work. A student who is highly motivated to learn would persevere despite circumstances that may somehow temporarily hinder his or her learning. One may attribute successes or failures to several factors. Weiner, as mentioned in Corpus and Lucas (2007) and in the Web Space website ("Attribution Theory," n.d.), came up with three dimensions of achievement attribution: Locus of Causality, Stability, and Controllability. Of the three, the third dimension affects one's persistence to a given task. Poor academic performance may either be the consequences of poor study habits (controllable) or due to teachers' ineffective teaching system (uncontrollable). An instructors' preferred medium of instruction is an example of such uncontrollable contributing factor that could influence a student's motivation to learn.

Staats and Eifert, as documented by Strongman (1995), came up with the two premises for their updated multi-level [learning and] behavioral theory of anxiety. They said that the basis for anxiety is an emotional response and that this feeling could be acquired "through aversive conditioning, symbolically through language." What they mean by this is that it is not necessary for someone to have a traumatic experience to be able to feel fear. Such feelings of anxiety may be elicited through words associated with negative thoughts and emotions. In a class setting, the words an instructor uses during discussion may somehow either make or break the students. In a sense, subject terms, both simple and complex, could either reinforce learning or weaken their enthusiasm for learning. An instructor's preferred language for instruction is influential.

It is with the aforementioned current educational situation reflected and observed in the researchers' workplace that triggered the researcher to conduct the study to determine if there is a significant relationship between the preferred medium of instruction

in technical-vocational courses to college students' motivation and anxiety in learning and how this could be addressed accordingly.

This study was founded on theoretical work on communication accommodation as propounded by Howard Giles. Furthermore, four positions of relationship between language and the acquisition and performance of technical knowledge and skills by Allan Bernardo also gave foundation to the study.

According to the Communication Studies website ("Communication Accommodation Theory," n.d.) Giles affirmed that communication accommodation happens when individuals change their communication styles to accommodate others. During interaction, a person would unconsciously change the way s/he talks to be able to match the listener's level of understanding. However, there are also instances where one would rather put up a wall of difference to better accentuate his/her level from the audience while trying to make them understand a point. Either way, both cases give emphasis on communication as a tool in the teaching-learning process and are actually present in the current Philippine educational system for tertiary education.

The Communication Accommodation Theory has two distinct types: convergence and divergence. The former basically means changing one's language style to become similar to the audience. In a sense, this kind of accommodation lends a feeling of belongingness for both the speaker and the listener. In a classroom situation, instructors are often found to impart and review lessons using more than one known language to better cater the needs of the students. The latter, on the other hand, is defined as changing one's language style to be different with no intention of accommodating the audience.

This accommodation sets the speaker apart and maintains distance from the listener. In tertiary education, students are, more often than not, expected to have prior knowledge regarding the lessons. Hence, instructors tend to give lectures that would eventually seem too much for the students and could lead to shallow understanding.

In terms of language use, both instructors and students share a common ground: to use a language one is most comfortable with.

This is evident in current classroom scenarios wherein discussions are not limited to only one language. However, students are viewed to receive a bigger impact since they are the recipients of information from the instructors' teaching.

According to Bernardo as recognized by Bautista and Bolton (2009), there are at least four possible positions regarding the relationship between language and the acquisition and performance of technical knowledge and skills: null hypothesis, language proficiency effect, language-of-learning effect, and structural-fit effect. The first position suggests that technical knowledge is unaffected by language. The second position proposes that technical knowledge and skills are best acquired using the language that the students are proficient in. Hence, comfort with using the language is a factor in understanding a topic. The third position implies that technical knowledge and skills are best performed using the language it is taught and learned in. Moreover, regular use of the language promotes better performance in the subject area. The last position entails that certain languages are appropriate for specific technical fields, such as English for teaching math and science.

Language provisions found in Article XIV Sections 6 and 7 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution serve as legal bases for the different language policies in the country. Section 6 affirms that the national language is Filipino and would later on evolve and thus, should be enriched based on the existing Philippine and other languages, while Section 7 acknowledges that the official languages both for instruction and communication would be Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law, English.

The Executive Order 210, established to strengthen the use of the English language as a medium of instruction in the educational system supports Article 7 of the 1987 Constitution. Section 2 – Institutions of Higher Education states that:

Institutions of higher education, including State Colleges and Universities [SUCs], are hereby encouraged to adopt the use of the English language as the primary medium of instruction in the tertiary level. The CHED shall adopt measures to promote and encourage the use of the English language as the primary medium of instruction in the tertiary or higher education level.

Furthermore, Section 3 of the same order underscores the proficiency of teachers and the need to evaluate their communicative skill in the use of the English language through nationwide training programs. Given that English is used as the primary medium of instruction in tertiary level, it is but imperative for educators to be well-versed in the said language and are expected to deliver lessons in English.

However, Section 9 of Executive Order 210 assures HEIs that they do have academic freedom. Therefore, it is up to the institution and to the teachers to freely choose what they are going to teach and how they shall teach them as they determine their medium of instruction.

For the past years, the EO 210 has received a lot of criticisms, among which is of the challenge raised by Patricia B. Licuanan, president of Miriam College. According to her, "When English is used, students do not learn well, and at times do not learn at all." (Llanto, 2008). For this reason, instructors would rather use Filipino or their own vernacular during classroom discussions and activities to enable students to understand their lessons.

In July of 2014, an article which concerns imposing medium of instruction in HEIs was published in the periodical, *The Freeman*. A public consultation was done by CHED together with 170 academic stakeholders from the Visayas region. This was with regards to the CHED Memorandum Order 20 Series of 2013, entitled as "General Education Curriculum: Holistic Understanding, Intellectual and Civic Competencies" which states that General Education courses may be taught in either English or Filipino. According to Vincent Isles, a lawyer, "it is not within the power of CHED to mandate a medium of instruction to be used in colleges and universities." Doing so would only violate Article XIV, Section 5 of the 1987 Constitution which states that "Academic freedom shall be enjoyed in all institutions of higher learning."

However, the focus of the said article was not on technical-vocational education but for general education. Therefore, there is still that blank space as to what medium of instruction is appropriate for tech-voc subjects in tertiary education regardless of with or without involving academic freedom. This leaves both shop instructors and students with a problem as to how they are to meet

at a common point – in this case, the language to be used - for the sake of learning.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) came up with six internationally agreed Education for All (EFA) movement goals in pursuit of giving quality education addressed to meet learning needs of children, the youth, and adults.

Stipulated in the UNESCO website (“Education for All,” n.d.), Goals 3 and 6 of EFA are provisions for:

- a. ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes; and
- b. improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

As a UNESCO member since November 21, 1946, it is but only proper that the Philippines uphold such goals in its educational system. Higher education institutions are trying their best to offer quality education to its clientele. In its country profiling, the Philippines got its highest gross enrollment rate for tertiary education last 2013 with 33.8 percent (“Philippines,” n.d.). However, technical-vocational courses were not clearly specified in the statistics.

The above-mentioned current educational situation is actually evident in the researcher’s workplace. Personal observations ranging from students either doing well in their shop classes or failing to catch up with the latest lesson to instructors complaining about passive learners to working personnel commending on-the-job trainees’ performance but criticizing their communication comprehension prompted the researcher to pursue this study. From a language instructor’s viewpoint, these observations could be influenced by the medium used in instruction. Given the extremes in the observations – from positive to negative – such influence may either make or break even a college student.

Through Howard Giles’ theory on Communication Accommodation, as well as with Allan Bernardo’s four positions on the relationship between language and the acquisition and

performance of technical knowledge and skills, and legal bases gleaned from the 1987 Philippine Constitution and UNESCO's Education for All movement goals, the researcher was motivated to come up with this study in the hope that it would shed some light on what language would best serve the clientele in the first year college level in terms of technical-vocational education in order to increase motivation and lessen anxiety in the learning process.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The primary purpose of the study was to determine the language preferably used as medium of instruction for technical-vocational courses and its relationship to students' motivation and anxiety to learn.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the medium of instruction preferred by shop instructors themselves and as observed by the students during shop classes?
2. What are the levels of motivation and anxiety of the students as influenced by the medium of instruction?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the following:
 - a. shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' observation on shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction;
 - b. shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' motivation for learning; and
 - c. shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' anxiety in learning?
4. What appropriate action plan may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

This study hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between:

- a. shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' observation on shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction;
- b. shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' motivation for learning; and
- c. shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' anxiety in learning.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive-correlational method was used in the study. Such method was deemed appropriate because there was no manipulation of variables or controls. The main tools in data gathering were self-report questionnaires and modified questionnaires adapted from standardized questionnaires by Pintrich, R. R., & DeGroot, E. V. (1990) and Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986).

The study was conducted at Bohol Island State University (BISU) Main Campus. BISU envisions to be a premier Science and Technology University for the formation of a world class and virtuous human resource for sustainable development in Bohol and the country. Specifically, the study was conducted in the College of Technology and Allied Sciences (CTAS) of BISU MC Bingag Extension at Brgy. Bingag, Dauis, Bohol. It offers the following courses: Bachelor in Hotel and Restaurant Service Technology (BHRST); Bachelor in Industrial Technology (BSIT) and Diploma in Industrial Technology (DIT) major in Automotive Technology, Civil Technology, Cosmetology Technology, Drafting Technology, Food Technology, Garments Technology, Hotel and Restaurant Technology, Mechanical Technology, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technology, Welding and Fabrication Technology, and Wood Technology; Bachelor in Electrical Technology (BS Elec) and in Electronics Technology (BS Elex); Diploma in Electrical Technology (DECT) and in Electronics Technology (DEXT).

The technical-vocational shop instructors and first year Diploma in Industrial Technology students from the College of Technology and Allied Sciences of BISU Main Campus Bingag Extension were the chosen respondents of the study. No systematic sampling technique was used to determine the shop instructors given that there were only 40 of them – 23 were males and 17 were females. On the other hand, purposive sampling was done to determine the student participants. From the 364 currently enrolled in the college's three-year diploma courses, 174 were chosen as the respondents with 121 male students and 53 female students from the 13 trade subjects.

To get the preferred medium of instruction of shop instructors during lecture and hands-on for their shop classes, the weighted mean was utilized. In order to determine how many of the

respondents used each of the six mediums according to the 4-point scale, percentage computation was employed.

Both the weighted mean and percentage were also used to get the students' observation on their shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction.

To determine the levels of motivation and anxiety of the students during their shop classes as influenced by their shop instructors' medium of instruction, the weighted mean was also utilized. To test the null hypotheses in terms of correlation between the variables, the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used. To prove if there were significant relationships for the three hypotheses, t-test was applied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 3 Summary of Shop Instructors' Preferred Medium of Instruction during Lecture and Hands-on
N=40**

Media of Instruction		WM	Description	Rank
Lecture	English	3.09	Often	2 nd
	Mix English & Cebuano	3.59	Always	1st
	Cebuano	2.44	Sometimes	3 rd
	Mix Cebuano & Filipino	1.74	Never	5 th
	Filipino	1.59	Never	6 th
	Mix Filipino & English	1.88	Sometimes	4 th
Hands-on	English	2.91	Often	2 nd
	Mix English & Cebuano	3.47	Always	1st
	Cebuano	2.68	Often	3 rd
	Mix Cebuano & Filipino	1.74	Never	5 th
	Filipino	1.53	Never	6 th
	Mix Filipino & English	1.91	Sometimes	4 th

From Table 3, it could be inferred that the mixture of English and Cebuano turned out to be the preferred medium of instruction for shop instructors both in lecture and hands-on setting. They found this medium easy to use especially since the latter is our mother tongue while the former is our second language and both would foster better

comprehension in terms of explaining and letting the students understand a shop lesson.

Understandably, technical-vocational courses have jargons in English which do not have equivalent terms in Cebuano. Besides, manuals of gadgets are phrased in English. This condition explains why the use of English and Cebuano as alternative languages is always used. Whenever use of Cebuano is possible, the instructors used it alternately with English especially in lectures.

Table 5 Summary of Students' Observation on Shop Instructors' Preferred Medium of Instruction during Lecture and Hands-on N=174

Medium of Instruction		WM	Description	Rank
Lecture	English	2.64	Often	3rd
	Mix English & Cebuano	3.16	Often	1st
	Cebuano	2.71	Often	2nd
	Mix Cebuano & Filipino	2.04	Sometimes	5th
	Filipino	1.79	Sometimes	6th
	Mix Filipino & Cebuano	2.16	Sometimes	4th
Hands-on	English	2.47	Sometimes	3rd
	Mix English & Cebuano	2.83	Often	2nd
	Cebuano	2.90	Often	1st
	Mix Cebuano & Filipino	1.99	Sometimes	5th
	Filipino	1.77	Sometimes	6th
	Mix Filipino & Cebuano	2.00	Sometimes	4th

Compared to the results shown in Table 3 where the preferred medium of instruction of the shop instructors was a mixture of English and Cebuano for both lecture and hands-on, the results reflected in this table revealed that the students had a different observation during hands-on activities. Instead of a mixture of English and Cebuano as most preferred by the shop instructors, the students observed that Cebuano was more often used.

Table 5 also implies that while the shop instructors maintained that a mixture of English and Cebuano is the medium they always use for both lecture and hands-on or practicum, the students observed that this is only often used by their shop instructors.

The students' level of motivation for their shop classes was measured by the 12-item modified version adapted from the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire by Pintrich, R. R., & DeGroot, E. V. (1990). Generally, the students' level of motivation had an overall mean response of 3.10 reflecting High Motivation that suggests they have high interest and enthusiasm for their shop classes as influenced by their shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction.

The students' level of anxiety for their shop classes was measured, specifically in terms of attendance (Item 1), comprehension (Items 2-6), recitation (Items 7-14), and emotion (items 15-24) through a 24-item modified version adapted from the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale by Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). The students' level of anxiety had an overall mean response of 2.50 reflecting High Anxiety which suggests that students feel discomfort learning in shop classes as influenced by shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction.

Table 8 Relationship between Shop Instructors' Medium of Instruction and Students' Motivation and Anxiety N=174

Variables	Pearson r	Description	Computed t @ df=173	Critical Value of t	Decision @ 0.05
Shop Instructors' Preferred Medium of Instruction & Students' Observation on Shop Instructors' Preferred Medium of Instruction	0.07	very low correlation, almost negligible relationship	-0.90	1.97	Insignificant relationship, Accept Ho
Shop Instructors' Preferred Medium of Instruction & Students' Motivation for Learning	-0.10	very low correlation, almost negligible relationship	-20.58	1.97	Significant relationship, Reject Ho
Shop Instructors' Preferred Medium of Instruction & Students' Anxiety in Learning	0.09	very low correlation, almost negligible relationship	-5.24	1.97	Significant relationship, Reject Ho

Table 8 presents the relationship between (a) shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' observation on shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction, (b) shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' motivation for learning, and (c) shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' anxiety in learning. The computed Pearson r for the three pairs of variables shows very low correlation and almost negligible relationship. Testing the given value for significance in the relationships through a t-test revealed that the computed t-value for the first relationship was less than the critical/tabular value. However, the computed t-values for the shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' motivation for learning and the shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' anxiety in learning were higher than the critical t-value (despite being negative, they are to be interpreted as absolute values).

The findings imply that there is no relationship between the shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and the students' observation of shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction, but the medium of instruction influences their enthusiasm and unease during their shop classes. A certain medium might either inspire them or intimidate them from learning what they need to learn in their chosen field of trade.

FINDINGS

1. The preferred medium of instruction was a mixture of English and Cebuano. However, there is a difference between the instructors' choice and the students' observation.
 - a. The preferred medium of instruction of the shop instructors for both lecture and hands-on was a mixture of English and Cebuano. This was supported by the high percentage of shop instructors who always used this medium for instruction during their shop classes.
 - b. The students observed that the medium of preference of their shop instructors were a mixture of English and Cebuano for lecture and Cebuano for hands-on or practicum. These were supported by the high percentage of shop instructors who often used these mediums for instruction during their shop classes as observed by the students.

2. The students' level of motivation as influenced by their shop instructors' medium of instruction was relatively high. The students were motivated to attend their shop classes and majority believed that understanding their major subject is important.
3. The students' level of anxiety as influenced by their shop instructors' medium of instruction is high. The students experienced anxiety in their shop classes and majority worried about the consequences of failing their shop classes.
4. There are very low correlations, almost negligible relationships for each of the three pairs of variables – shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' observation on shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction, shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' motivation for learning, and shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' anxiety in learning.
5. There is no significant relationship between shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' observation on shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction. This means that the language used during shop class depends on the preference of the shop instructor.
6. There is a significant relationship between shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' motivation for learning, and shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction and students' anxiety in learning. This means that the medium of instruction influences the enthusiasm and unease a student experiences during a shop class. A certain medium used by the instructor could either inspire or intimidate a student to learn essential information from his/her chosen field of trade.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing findings, the study concludes that the preferred medium of instruction for technical-vocational classes is a mixture of English and Cebuano because it fosters better comprehension during lecture and hands-on.

Furthermore, the students' motivation and anxiety are influenced by their shop instructors' preferred medium of instruction,

which means that their enthusiasm and discomfort during shop classes were related to the language used by their shop instructors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Delivery of lessons and hands-on instructions for tech-voc courses in a mixture of English and Cebuano to foster better comprehension without sacrificing quality education. Hands-on activities may be addressed in English, given that instructions are reiterated clearly in Cebuano as well.
2. Inclusion of seminars and trainings as part of the administration's strategic planning on the enhancement of communication skills.
3. A similar study may be conducted with another set of student respondents from the other departments of the college.
4. A follow-up study is strongly encouraged to determine the effects of a mixture of English and Cebuano as medium of instruction on students' motivation and anxiety.

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