

Learner's perception on the use of 'Minasbate' in learning English

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Abstract — As both language teachers and learners have not been certain about the role of bilingualism on language learning and teaching process, most language educators are completely against the use of native language in language classrooms. However, the other teachers and mostly students hold a different opinion on this issue. This study attempted to determine the perceptions of Grade 10 learners of Osmeña Colleges in using 'Minasbate' or their first language in learning English. A total of 214 learners were made subjects of this study. The main instruments used in gathering the data needed for the study consisted of a questionnaire and a rating scale. Part one was a questionnaire on the reasons and attitudes of Grade 10 students in using their first language in learning English, where the students need to indicate the extent of their reasons and attitudes on the given situation. Part two was a rating scale to determine the degree of agreement and frequency of using Minasbate in English classroom. The statistical tools that were used include weighted mean and Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation, hence purposive sampling was used. The result adhered that participants use Minasbate to make a bridge between their first language linguistic backgrounds and the linguistic culture of the Target language. Hence, Grade 10 learners preferred teachers who could communicate in Minabate. While participants attitude on the monolingual approach, which focuses on an "English-only" policy is remain to be neutral among English learners.

Keywords — *First Language, Minasbate, Reasons, Perceptions*

I. Introduction

English language plays an important role in almost every aspect of modern life, therefore, the interest of learning English as a foreign language has grown for the last few decades. At present, bilingual education in the Philippines is provided using either English or Filipino as the language of instruction and a regional language as the auxiliary language of instruction depending on the subject. However, the scholastic achievement rates for the subjects of mathematics, science, and English taught in English are low, and the cause of this has been indicated as being a problem with the language of instruction.

As globalization and population movements are increasing, different cultures come into greater contact with each other, resulting in the need for communication between societies (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Thus, being bilingual has become a vital aspect for becoming a successful professional, making bilingualism the main component in education. In fact, a bilingual

person has more opportunities to obtain a better job and to have more achievements than a monolingual person. Therefore, elementary schools, high schools, and universities have to face the need for bilingualism by educating students who are able to work in these multicultural societies. (Madrinan 2014)

Baker (2011) defines bilingualism as the ability to speak one language fluently while speaking another language less fluently. He also defines it as the knowledge of more than one language. The beginning of bilingualism started with the development of the civil rights and people's call for equality in opportunities in education. Bilingualism refers to the using of two languages in some proportion in order to facilitate learning by students who have a proficiency in their mother tongue and are acquiring proficiency in the other. The Philippines is a bilingual country. More so, it is a multilingual nation. Gorgonio (2012). Language of instruction has been the topic of greatest controversy in the education of English Language learners, and by far the most volatile issue has been the use of English learner's primary language for instruction: Should English learners be taught skills in English which is just their second language (ESL) from the onset of their schooling, or should they be taught academic skills in their home language or their mother tongue? (Martin, 2010)

History points out that English have been used as the medium of instruction since the American regime. In the 1935 constitution, Tagalog was launched as the national language. This constitutional mandate was followed by the Bilingual Policy by virtue of Department of Education and Culture which specified the use of the national language, Filipino, as the medium of instruction in such domains as Work Education, Health Education, Physical Education, and Social Studies.(Martin 1999) The idea was also to provide access to civilization through the English language. As to the pedagogy, English was taught as the primary language (Sibayan, 1967). In 1974 the Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) was established. The Soriano Committee recommended the use of both English and Filipino as media of instruction in both elementary and high school, depending on the domain (or subjects). "English domain" refers to teaching in English for English Communication Arts, Mathematics, and Science. "Pilipino domain" refers to teaching in Pilipino for Pilipino communication Arts, Social Studies and History (Department of Education, 1974). Soon, this was superseded by Department Order No. 52, series of 1987 which ordered the use of Filipino and English in order to meet the needs of the country in the community of nations.

In the field of education, language is one of the important factors that should be given attention because it is the excellent key to learning and achievement of students in various academic subject areas.(Gorgonio 2012) Throughout history, many English language-teaching methods have developed. Some were in favor of using first languages and some were not. (Sharaeai & Ahmed, 2012). One of the first English language teaching methods that highly encouraged and depended heavily on the use of first language was The Grammar Translation Method. (Freeman, 1986) went into a detailed description of this method and other teaching methods in her book *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. She pointed out how the teacher in her class

depended heavily on translations from English to Spanish. All the vocabulary and texts that were taught during class were instantly translated into the first language.

Al-Hadrhami (as cited in Borg, 2008) conducted a study on the use of Arabic in English classes and how it affected the learning process. He held interviews with EFL teachers and observing their classes. The study demonstrated that teachers utilized the L1 in translating new ideas, concepts, and vocabulary terms as well as for classroom management and instructional purposes. Similarly, Al-Buraiki (2008) conducted a study on teachers' perceptions of their L1 use in English classes. The results were similar to those of previous studies, as giving instructions and explaining new concepts and vocabularies were the main reasons behind L1 use. Most participants (teachers) believed that L1 use can aid students in acquiring fluency and it can facilitate English language acquisition. They also thought that L1 use is a time-saving technique, as it takes a longer time to clarify concepts in the TL.

Lin (2005) elaborated the issue of how learners' attitudes are affected by the teachers' use of learners' native language. He determined that an "English-only" policy is more important in classes with students majoring in English than one in classes with non-major students. Almost all the teachers agreed to use the L1 with non-major students. This study demonstrated that the teachers used their L1 in different ways (as single words and complete sentences). The study also indicated that the amount of teachers' L1 use depended on students' levels. They used students' L1 more frequently with elementary students than with relatively more advanced students such as university students.

However, Alcoberes (2006) stressed on the need to preserve the national language, which represents a unified culture, without disregarding the language dominantly used in the controlling domains. In fact, the necessity to preserve the national language has been one of the major problems in the field of language planning in our country for several decades now. The state of education, however, as observed in 1914, showed a low level of English language proficiency. It was recommended that 3 major regional languages be used together with English. The gains in English proficiency were not palpable as the 1925 Monroe Survey Commission show. The commission, however, reaffirmed the English-only policy and recommended ways to overcome the "foreign language handicap" (Monroe, 1925).

Apparently, there is an alarming rate of students who get low grades in the content areas, particularly in the subjects of Sciences and Mathematics even English. Many studies have been conducted to know the different factors affecting their level of achievements. One of these is the Language factor (Lopez, et al. 1995) Language ability of both the teacher and learner has been acknowledged to pass potential and actual barriers to learning in all content areas (Moralida, 1991).

According to Dahlia Romero Domingo (2015) in her study on the content area effectiveness: english vs filipino medium of instruction, to understand the relationship between language and the subject, one needs to know the main components of the language as it is used in

the classroom. In teaching any subject in the content area, a certain mastery of the English language has to precede the understanding of the subject. It is of great importance for teachers to evaluate the methods and techniques used in the process of teaching his subject. In evaluating this method, the first question in hand is: “Does the ability of speaking and understanding English affect the achievement of my students?” Exact scenario in schools most often shows that students perform poorly in the content areas because of language barriers. The students tend to shy from reciting and asking questions because of their limited vocabulary skills.

The locale of the study was Osmeña Colleges located in the City of Masbate. Being one of the premier institutions- Osmeña Colleges is the biggest private high school and one of the most competitive schools in Masbate in both public and private that offers quality education from pre-school to senior high school even college. Historically, Osmeña Colleges opened in June, 1948 holding classes in a rented building on the corner of Danao and Mabini streets in the capital. The school transferred to its present location in 1949. With the opening of more courses and the increases in enrolment through the years, more buildings and classrooms had to be constructed. The original course offering was on teacher education. At present aside from Elementary and High School, it offers courses in Business Administration, Criminal Justice Education, Computer Education and Hotel and Restaurant Management in addition to the masteral and doctorate programs.

In this light, the aim of this study is to identify students perceptions on the use of ‘Minasbate’ in an English classrooms, that tend to support the use of the students’ native language or vernacular language to reinforce concepts and skills and discuss difficulties as well as exploring the new information being given under each new lesson. This study attempted to identify students perceptions on the use of minasbate language in learning English specifically Grade 10 learner’s of Osmeña Colleges.

Specifically, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What reasons do Grade 10 English learners of Osmeña Colleges have for using ‘Minasbate’ in the English classroom?
2. What are the students’ attitudes on the use of ‘Minasbate’ in the English classroom?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the reasons and attitudes of Grade 10 learner’s on the use of ‘Minasbate’ in English Classroom?
4. What are suggested measures to improve the use of English in English classrooms?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated at the beginning of the study:

HO : There is no significant relationship between the reasons and attitudes of Grade 10 learner's on the use of 'Minasbate' in English Classroom

HA : There is a significant relationship between the reasons and attitudes of Grade 10 student's on the use of 'Minasbate' in English Classroom

II. Methodology

Research Design

This study made use of the descriptive survey method of research. The study was primarily descriptive as it made use of a set of gathered data or information analyzed, summarized and interpreted along certainties of thought or purposes of specific study (Good and Scates, 1973). It made use of the questionnaire and rating scale as the main instruments in gathering the data. This allowed a thorough analysis of the problems under study.

The dependent variables were the Grade 10 learners' perceptions on the use of 'Minasbate' in learning English and the independent variables were the implications to English instruction.

Respondents and Sampling

A total of 214 Grade 10 learners of English were included in this study. Hence, purposive sampling was used.

Instruments Used

The main instruments used in gathering the data needed for the study consisted of a questionnaire and a rating scale.

Part one was a questionnaire on the reasons and attitudes of Grade 10 learners in using first language which is 'Minasbate' in learning English, where the learners need to indicate the extent of their reasons and attitudes on the given situation.

Part two was a rating scale to determine the degree of agreement and frequency of using 'Minasbate' in English classroom. This rating scale was used to quantify the seriousness and oftenest of using second language in learning English.

| Weight | Descriptive Rating | Range |
|--------|--------------------|-----------|
| 5 | Strongly Agree | 4.51-5.50 |
| 4 | Agree | 3.51-4.50 |
| 3 | Neutral | 2.51-3.50 |
| 2 | Disagree | 1.51-2.50 |
| 1 | Strongly Disagree | 0.50-1.50 |

| Weight | Descriptive Rating | Range |
|--------|--------------------|-----------|
| 5 | Always | 4.51-5.50 |
| 4 | Often | 3.51-4.50 |
| 3 | Occasionally | 2.51-3.50 |
| 2 | Seldom | 1.51-2.50 |
| 1 | Never | 0.50-1.50 |

Research Procedure

The study was started with the review of related literature which served as the basis for formulating the research problem, the specific questions and the hypotheses as soon as these were finalized the manuscript was prepared for the title proposal. The questionnaire was then prepared so that permission to distribute them could be obtained from the K to 12 Headmaster. The items included in the rating scale were validated by three sets of jurors and then finalized. The questionnaire and the rating scale were then distributed to Grade 10 learners under English subject in Osmeña Colleges, after which they were retrieved. The data gathered were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using statistical measures chosen, conclusions and recommendations were made. The manuscript was then prepared for the pre-oral defense. Suggestions given by the panel were incorporated in the final manuscript which was presented for the oral examination.

Statistical Measures

To determine the extent of frequency and degree of agreement of Grade 10 learners in using ‘Minasbate’ in learning English the weighted mean was computed using the following formula:

$$Mn = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f} = \frac{f_1x_1 + f_2x_2 + f_3x_3 \dots + f_nx_n}{f_1 + f_2 + f_3 \dots + f_n}$$

Where:

- Mn** = the weighted mean
- $\sum fx$ = summation of the product
- $\sum f$ = total number of frequencies

Pearson Product Movement Coefficient of Correlation r formula was used to identify the correlation of Reasons and Attitudes of Grade 10 learners in using ‘Minasbate’ in learning English, the formula used was:

$$r = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where:

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| r | = | Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of correlation |
| n | = | sample size |
| $\sum xy$ | = | the sum of the product of x and y |
| $\sum x \sum y$ | = | the product of the sum of $\sum x$ and the sum of $\sum y$ |
| $\sum x^2$ | = | sum of squares of x |
| $\sum y^2$ | = | sum of squares of y |

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1
Reasons for using ‘Minasbate’ in English Classrooms

| Indicators | Mn | Adjectival Description | Rank |
|---|-------------|------------------------|------|
| I speak ‘Minasbate’ in English class because I am explaining a new point in the lesson to a classmate | 3.75 | Often | 9 |
| I speak ‘Minasbate’ in English class because I want to chat with my classmates about topics that may not be connected to class. | 3.74 | Often | 10 |
| I speak ‘Minasbate’ in English class because I need to ask a classmate to explain a point in the lesson for me. | 3.81 | Often | 8 |
| I speak ‘Minasbate’ in English class because I need to check the meaning of a new word or concept during the lesson. | 3.87 | Often | 5.5 |
| I speak ‘Minasbate’ in English class because I cannot think of the correct word in English when talking to my classmates | 3.87 | Often | 5.5 |
| I speak ‘Minasbate’ in English class because my classmates start talking to me in minasbate language while we are working on a task | 4.04 | Often | 3 |
| I speak ‘Minasbate’ during English class when I talk about personal things with my classmates. | 3.89 | Often | 4 |
| In English class, I speak ‘Minasbate’ with other members of my group who speak ‘Minasbate’ because we want to finish class activities faster. | 4.22 | Often | 2 |
| I speak ‘Minasbate’ with my classmates during English class because it makes me feel more connected to my culture | 4.29 | Often | 1 |
| Because I can’t think of the words in English, I speak in ‘Minasbate’ even when others may not understand me. | 3.86 | Often | 7 |
| Overall | 3.93 | Often | |

The reasons of Grade 10 learners in using ‘Minasbate’ in learning English are shown in Table 1. The table also shows the weighted mean, the adjectival description and rank of each reason.

As seen in the Table 1 above, among the reasons of Grade 10 learners in using ‘Minasbate’ language in learning English, indicator making feel more connected to culture with the weighted mean of 4.29 and adjectival description “often” ranked 1; speaking ‘Minasbate’ to finish class activities faster with weighted mean 4.22 and adjectival description “Often” ranked 2; classmates start talking to me in ‘Minasbate’ while we are working on a task with weighted mean of 4.04 and

adjectival description “Often” ranked 3; talking about personal things with my classmates with weighted mean 3.89 and adjectival description “Often” ranked 4; need to check the meaning of a new word or concept during the lesson and I speak ‘Minasbate’ in English class because I cannot think of the correct word in English when talking to my classmates with weighted mean 3.87 and adjectival description “Often” ranked 5.5; can’t think of the words in English , I speak in ‘Minasbate’ language, even when others may not understand me with a weighted mean of 3.86 and adjectival description “Often” ranked 7; need to ask a classmate to explain a point in the lesson for me with a weighted mean of 3.81 and adjectival description “Often” ranked 8; explaining a new point in the lesson to a classmate with a weighted mean of 3.75 and adjectival description “Often” ranked 9 and chatting with classmates about topics not connected to class with a weighted mean of 3.74 and adjectival description “Often” ranked 10.

The table may adhere that participants use Minasbate to make a bridge between their first language linguistic backgrounds and the linguistic culture of the Target language which is English.

Table 2
Attitudes on the Use of Second Language in English Classrooms

| Indicators | Mn | Adjectival Description | Rank |
|---|-------------|------------------------|------|
| In English class, it is best to have a teacher who can understand ‘minasbate’ language. | 4.25 | Agree | 1 |
| I would prefer to sit next to a classmate who speaks ‘minasbate’ in English class. | 3.64 | Agree | 7 |
| I think my English class should have an “English Only Policy.” (This means only English is allowed in the English classroom.) | 3.10 | Neutral | 10 |
| As my English improves, I am becoming more comfortable speaking only English in English class | 3.62 | Agree | 8 |
| I want to be able to speak ‘minasbate’ in English class when I feel I need to | 4.01 | Agree | 2 |
| It’s not important to speak only English in class as long as I am completing the course tasks. | 3.46 | Neutral | 9 |
| Using dictionaries and resources in the ‘minasbate’ should be allowed in English class | 3.93 | Agree | 3.5 |
| Speaking ‘minasbate’ with my classmates between and during class activities should be okay as long as the course is not a speaking class. | 3.76 | Agree | 5 |
| I think I speak in ‘minasbate’ more often than I speak English in English class. | 3.93 | Agree | 3.5 |
| Having to speak English only in class makes me feel nervous. | 3.65 | Agree | 6 |
| Overall | 3.74 | Agree | |

On the second research question regarded the attitudes concerning learners' use of their first language which is 'Minasbate' in learning English at Osmeña Colleges High School Department. The attitude of Grade 10 learners in using 'Minasbate' in learning English shown in Table 2. The table also shows the weighted mean, the adjectival description and rank of each attitude.

As seen in the Table 2 above, among the attitudes, statement, In English class, it is best to have a teacher who can understand 'Minasbate' language with a weighted mean 4.25 and adjectival description "Agree" ranked 1; I want to be able to speak 'Minasbate' in English class when I feel I need to with a weighted mean of 4.01 and adjectival description "Agree" ranked 2; Using dictionaries and resources in 'Minasbate' should be allowed in English class; and I think I speak 'Minasbate' more often than I speak English in English class with a weighted mean of 3.93 and adjectival description "Agree" ranked 3.5; Speaking in 'Minasbate' with my classmates between and during class activities should be okay as long as the course is not a speaking class with a weighted mean of 3.76 and adjectival description "Agree" ranked 5; Having to speak English only in class makes me feel nervous with a weighted mean 3.65 and adjectival description "Agree" ranked 6; I would prefer to sit next to a classmate who speaks 'Minasbate' in English class with a weighted mean 3.64 and adjectival description "Agree" ranked 7; As my English improves, I am becoming more comfortable speaking only English in English class with a weighted mean of 3.62 and adjectival description "Agree" ranked 8; It's not important to speak only English in class as long as I am completing the course tasks with a weighted mean 3.46 and adjectival description "Neutral" ranked 9; I think my English class should have an "English Only Policy." (This means only English is allowed in the English classroom.) with a weighted mean of 3.10 and adjectival description "Neutral" ranked 10.

Grade 10 English learners preferred teachers who could communicate in 'Minabate or first language. While participants attitude on the monolingual approach, which focuses on an "English-only" policy, is remain to be neutral among English learners.

Table 3
Significant Relationship on the Students' Perceptions between Reasons and Attitudes on the use of 'Minasbate' in Learning English

| Variable | Data |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Σx | 39.34 |
| x | 3.93 |
| Σy | 37.35 |
| y | 3.74 |
| Σx^2 | 155.09 |
| Σy^2 | 140.42 |
| Σxy | 146.98 |
| df | 8 |
| Level of significance (α) | 0.5 |
| r computed | 0.083 |
| r critical | 0.632 |
| Decision | H_0 is accepted |
| Interpretation | Not Significant |

Decision Rule : $r_{\text{computed}} > r_{\text{critical}}$, reject H_0 ;
 $r_{\text{computed}} < r_{\text{critical}}$, accept H_0

On The Significant Relationship on the Students' Perception between Reasons and Attitudes of Grade 10 Learners on the Use of 'Minasbate' in English Classroom

In this study there were variable considered which are the reasons and attitudes of Grade 10 learners in using 'Minasbate' in learning English with ten indicators each. In order to analyse the significant relationship between the two, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation r formula was used.

Table 3 shows the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation r result on Grade 10 students' perceptions. The computed value of r which is 0.083 is lesser than the critical value of 0.632 at .05 level of significance with 8 degrees of freedom; the decision is to accept the null hypothesis. This means that there is no significant relationship between reasons and attitudes of students' perceptions on the use of 'Minasbate'.

This also indicates that the attitudes do not depend on the reasons for using 'Minasbate'. Thus, students' perceptions on attitudes are not influenced by their perceptions on the reasons on the use of 'Minasbate' in the English classrooms.

IV. Conclusion

The current research investigated the Grade 10 learners' perception on the use of first language or 'Minasbate' in learning English at Osmeña Colleges High School Department. It also attempted to determine any statistically significant differences between the reasons and attitudes of learners in using Minasbate in English classrooms. Furthermore, the study determined the most common reasons and attitude among participants, focusing as well on learners' opinions towards the use of first language or 'Minasbate' in their English classes. The following are the conclusions made by the researcher:

1. On the reasons of Grade 10 learners of Osmeña Colleges for using 'Minasbate' in learning English, the overall mean is 3.93 with the adjectival Description "Often", where indicator making feel more connected to culture constituted the most common reason behind learners' use of 'Minasbate' compared with the other reasons. On the other hand chatting with classmates about topics not connected to class was the least common reasons behind Grade 10 English learners at Osmeña Colleges. Therefore, participants use 'Minasbate' to make a bridge between their first language linguistic backgrounds and the linguistic culture of the Target language which is English.
2. On the attitude of Grade 10 learners of Osmeña Colleges for using 'Minasbate' in learning English the overall mean is 3.74 with the adjectival Description Agree, where indicator, In English class, it is best to have a teacher who can understand 'Minasbate' constituted the favoured opinion behind learners' use of 'Minasbate' compared with the other opinion. On the other hand, indicator I think my English class should have an "English Only Policy." (This means only English is allowed in the English classroom.) was the least favoured attitude behind Grade 10 English students' use of 'Minasbate' at Osmeña Colleges. In this light learner preferred teachers who could communicate in 'Minasbate' in English classroom and participant's attitude on monolingual approach, which focuses on an "English-only" policy, remain neutral among Grade 10 English learners at Osmeña Colleges.
3. There is no significant relationship between the reasons and attitudes of Grade 10 learners on the use of 'Minasbate' in English Classroom. This indicates that the attitudes do not depend on the reasons for using the first language/ Minasbate. Thus, attitudes are not influenced by the reasons for using 'Minasbate' in the English classrooms.

V. Recommendations

The following were the recommendations given:

1. Teachers must support the limited use of ‘Minasbate’ to maximize learners’ exposure to the Target Language. Learners can use ‘Minasbate’ to understand grammatical points and to overcome the shortcomings while communicating in the Target Language which is viewed as a compensation strategy.
2. Learners can use their first language/ ‘Minasbate’ to check the meaning of a new word or concept during an English lesson in order to learn faster and easier. Further, learners should expose themselves to the Target Language as much as possible in order to cope with learning the Target Language.
3. Classrooms that offer using ‘Minasbate’ are probably a better environment for learning the Target Language, therefore, the distance between teachers and learners is reduced. However, utilizing ‘Minasbate’ does not mean translating all classroom activities into learners’ first language. Rather, it should be viewed as a tool to be employed on an as-needed basis.
4. Monolingual and bilingual approaches do not seem sufficient; instead, a more balanced approach towards second language is needed which maximizes and recognizes the first language as a beneficial classroom tool. Especially among low-level learners who lack Target Language proficiency. However, this use may be limited as learners gradually become more confident in using the Target Language.

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