Multilingual Classrooms

A study of four Filipino teachers' experiences

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The majority of the world's population is multilingual, and there is an increase of demands on teachers worldwide to meet pupils' diverse linguistic needs and abilities. This paper on multilingualism aims to explore four Filipino teachers' experiences of working in a multilingual context. The study is based on a socio-cultural perspective on language and learning, and views the school as an institution within a larger context. Through thematic interviews, the linguistic environments in the four teachers' classrooms are described. The paper also aims to describe the status of the languages used within the context of the schools, and how the teachers express the correlations between language and identity. The results demonstrate a complex linguistic situation where the teachers have a pragmatic approach to the three languages in their everyday lives, and the use of code-switching is common. English has a high status in the society, which is also noticeable in the classroom, but the teachers work to support pupils' identity development by also allowing them to express themselves in their mother tongue.

**Key words:** multilingualism, mother tongue, status, education, the Philippines

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I Introduction

A context in which a number of languages are mixed and used in different ways to express one's opinions, intentions or values may feel foreign and intriguing to some, whereas, to others, it is everyday life. Due to globalization and as a result of historical processes and ongoing migration, it is today a fact that most areas in the world are multilingual to some extent. The possibilities for travel and technological developments have enabled communication and meetings between family, colleagues, and friends across national and linguistic borders.

In the Swedish context the monolingual norm has been predominant in a historical perspective, resulting in linguistic oppression of minorities such as the indigenous people of Sweden among others (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) also notes how monolingual Western cultures are largely ignorant of bilingual and multilingual cultures and hold negative stereotypes about such cultures. At present, administrative authorities at different levels of the Swedish society are challenging the monolingual norm by opening the society up to a diversity of languages. Such a transition poses particular challenges for teachers who, involved as they are under the influence of history, often lack the necessary perspective and adequate tools to counteract the norm. Most research in the field has been trying to ”fix the problem” with multilingual individuals in the classroom or society at large. However, to really make a difference and to facilitate a more including society, I believe this phenomenon need to be studied from different angles, and this thesis is an attempt to provide one such angle.

It was a privilege to spend a semester in the Philippines as it provided practical teacher training at different elementary schools. There are many differences between the Swedish society I grew up in and the Philippine society. Naturally, these differences are also reflected in schools and education. During my time in the Philippines, I was confounded by the way teachers handled three different languages during class. It became clear to me that even though there had been a historic time of linguistic oppression—there were still “Speak English only!” signs in most classrooms—this was a context where multilingualism was the norm. This is what stimulated my interest to research how some of these teachers viewed the concept of multilingualism, and how multilingualism is expressed by pupils and teachers in the educational context. My intention with this thesis is not to try to show or describe "best practice", but to reveal how four different teachers describe their work in multilingual classrooms.
1.1 The thesis disposition

After stating the aim and research questions of the study, the background of the thesis is divided into three sections: About the Philippines, Theoretical considerations, and Previous research. The initial overview of the Philippines is included in order to provide the reader with a grasp of the historical background and the context in which the study was conducted. Following is a section presenting the sociocultural perspective and further theoretical considerations in the thesis. In the section outlining previous research in the field, some aspects of language acquisition are briefly given account of, followed by research on language related to power and status, which is linked to the Philippine history and contemporary society. Also, recent research on the links between language and an individual’s identity is highlighted in relation to the Philippine context. As this study is primarily intended for teachers and others within the educational system, some crucial aspects of education and teaching in multilingual contexts wrap up the background chapter.

The Method chapter details the procedures before, during, and after the interviews, as well as the many ethical considerations of the study. The Result chapter describes the linguistic environments followed by a description of how the participating teachers in different ways expressed the different languages status, and how correlations between identity and the diversity of languages were expressed. The first section of the Discussion chapter discusses the method, followed by reflections on the results in relation to the theory, aim of the study, and previous research. The thesis concludes with observations that developed throughout the process and contributes suggestions for further research.
2 Purpose and statement of the questions

The study aims to explore some of the experiences and the knowledge gained by Filipino teachers teaching in a multilingual context.

The research questions guiding the study are:

• What linguistic classroom environments do the teachers describe?

• How do the teachers express the status of Filipino, English and the mother tongue?

• How do the teachers express their understanding of correlations between language and identity?
3 Background

In order to understand the complex language situation in the Philippines, the first part of this chapter (section 3.1) contains a brief presentation of the Philippines including some information on the country’s history, the school system, and the languages spoken. In section 3.2, the theoretical considerations in the thesis are elaborated, followed by an examination of previous research concerning different aspects of multilingualism (section 3.3).

3.1 About the Philippines

The Philippines is an archipelago consisting of more than 7,100 islands in a geographic area of 300,000 square kilometers (Utrikespolitiska institutet, n.d.). The country is located in Southeast Asia and has a population exceeding 92.3 million people (Philippine Statistics Authority, n.d.). The social conditions in the Philippines are complicated, as huge gaps in income lead to a gulf between social classes, as well as other issues such as extensive sex trade, corruption, and poverty that contribute to overall high crime rates (Utrikespolitiska institutet, n.d.).

3.1.1 A brief history of the Philippines

The first known inhabitants of the archipelago were the Malay people, who arrived around 1000 B.C. The Philippines was colonized by Spain in 1521. The massive gulf between social classes the Filipino people experience today is in part a result of the Spanish rule, as the plantation industry and colonial trade resulted in an increase in socio-economic division between the rich and poor. Spaniards, or people loyal to Spain, held the leading positions. Also, as the Catholic Church founded schools and universities, only those who could afford it sent their children to the capital of Manila for education (Utrikespolitiska institutet, n.d.).

The Spanish-American war in 1898 ended with Spain selling the Philippines to the USA. During the time of colonization by the USA, the Americans introduced free education and health care. The Philippines became highly Americanized due to the importation of duty-free American goods, which also resulted in little industrial development and led to an overall weakening of intrastate commerce (Utrikespolitiska institutet, n.d.). After a brief period of independence starting in 1935, the Philippines were occupied by Japan in 1941 until the Japanese surrendered in 1944, after which the Independent Republic of the Philippines was proclaimed (Utrikespolitiska institutet, n.d). The American presence in the country was significant until 1992 in terms of political influence, military bases, commerce, and institutions created based on the American model. The later history of the Philippines has been dominated by political corruption, assassinations, and demonstrations (Ibid.).

3.1.2 Languages in the Philippines

In the Philippines, multilingualism is the norm. The great diversity of languages is understandable due to the country's colonial past, as well as its geographical framing. There are at least 185 different languages and even more dialects; the number varies based on which distinction between what is a language and what is a dialect is used (Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2014).

The national languages are English and Filipino (Ibid.). The fact that English is a national language is a heritage from the colonization by the USA. Filipino is based on Tagalog, which is a
language primarily spoken in the region around the capital of Manila. President Quezon proclaimed Tagalog the national language in 1939, but it was later renamed 'Filipino' and again 'Filipino' to give it a more national label (Tupas & Lorente, 2014; Young, 2002).

### 3.1.3 Education and language of instruction in schools in the Philippines

In 2012, the Department of Education began the implementation of the K-12 program, which covers kindergarten and 12 years of basic education in Philippine schools (DepEd, n.d.). One of the main features in the new K-12 program is "Building Proficiency through Language: Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education" (Ibid.). The implementation of the program is currently ongoing; for example, in the school year 2012-2013, children who began in first grade were the first pupils to receive instruction in their mother tongue. With a focus on oral fluency, English and Filipino are taught as subjects from first grade. To begin with, twelve of the major languages in the Philippines will be used in schools, but other vernacular languages will be added in the succeeding years. English and Filipino will still be the languages of instruction in junior high school and senior high school and will be gradually introduced as the languages of instruction from fourth grade (Ibid.).

Discussions regarding the language of instruction in Philippine schools have been long (Bernardo, 2007). Though the American colonial rule introduced free education, the language of instruction was English. In postcolonial Philippines between 1947 and 1974, vernacular languages were used as the language of instruction in the first and second grades in order to improve the quality of learning (Tupas & Lorente, 2014). In 1974, the Philippines began their bilingual education program with English and Filipino as the languages of instruction, which meant a double disadvantage to children with another mother tongue (Ibid.).

Arguments in favor of using English as the language of instruction are connected to its strong international presence in the open labor market and global competitiveness in the wider society. English is also seen as the language of information and communication technology, as well as of the knowledge society in an international sense (Bernardo, 2007). Arguments in favor of using Filipino as the language of instruction emerged after the Philippines’ political independence. It was called upon to serve as a language of nationalism and a reaction against the relics of colonialism, which the English language represented. Others argue that Filipino can help preserve Filipino identity and heritage amidst the homogenizing forces of globalization, and to recuperate cultural knowledge marginalized during the colonial era (Bernardo, 2007; Tupas & Lorente, 2014).

Bernardo (2007) considers the notion of a ‘medium of instruction’ as problematic, due to the fact that the interaction between teachers and pupils in the classroom is intended to attain certain goals of learning and, hence, a complex sociocultural process. The languages used and the ways in which they are used depend on the participants and their varying degree of proficiency in those languages. In the Philippine context, Bernardo (2007) states that it is quite likely that code-switching is prevalent or even dominates in the classrooms.

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1. Vernacular language is a term used for a regional language or dialect. The vernacular language would be the mother tongue or L1 to most people living in the region.
3.2 Theoretical considerations

The study is based on sociocultural theory, which regards language as a complex phenomenon that is historically, culturally, and socially situated (Säljö, 2014). The primary function of language is seen as communicative; it is a tool of social interaction used to express our thoughts and to reach an understanding of the world around us (Vygotsky, 1934). Thus, the mediating function of language is not limited to a specific one, for example English or Swedish, or forms of modality, such as oral, written, or pictured. When conducting research from a sociocultural perspective, knowledge is viewed as constructed and negotiated through social interactions (Säljö, 2014).

Another theoretical consideration in this thesis is inspired by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development (Fig. 1), through which it becomes clear that everything exists within a context. The context holds importance also in the sociocultural theory. The model below illustrates how the settings are nested together, each inside the next, similar to a Russian doll (Ibid.). Furthermore, when conducting research from this perspective, the researcher has to look beyond a single setting to the relations between them. These interconnections are sometimes as decisive for the individual's development as events taking place within a particular setting - such as the school (Ibid.). Generally, the community which is in the largest circle in the figure below, is affected by factors such as historical, structural, and global processes, which co-exist in parallel with a society's political, social, and cultural environment. Due to the interconnections between the settings, this extends to effect the individual's development, as the individual has an effect on the different setting he or she takes part in (Ibid.).

![Figure 1. Model of the context of human development, inspired by Bronfenbrenner (1979)](image)

When relating the individual's development in the ecological model to the sociocultural theory, it becomes clear that both theories emphasize the fact that learning takes place within social contexts. An important concept in the sociocultural theory in relation to learning is the 'zone of proximal development'. This concept can, in short, be explained as the space between what an

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2 The model is only inspired by Bronfenbrenner (1979) not a copy of his model. Note the way in which the different levels correlates to Bronfenbrenner's thoughts of the individual in relation to the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystem.

3 Bisaya is here used synonymously to Cebuano. A version of Cebuano is a lingua franca in the Visayan region of the
individual can manage alone and what he or she can do with the support of someone more competent of the subject at hand, such as a teacher or peer (Säljö, 2014). The zone of proximal development can also be seen as the metaphorical space wherein identities are constantly negotiated in the learning situation (Cummins, 2000a).

3.3 Previous Research
In the following sections the previous research is accounted for. As language is central in the study, language acquisition is briefly outlined in section 3.3.1. Language is closely linked to power, and this link will be illustrated through examples from the Philippine history and society in section 3.3.2. In section 3.3.3, research concerning connections between language and identities is accounted for, and related to the Philippines.

3.3.1 Language acquisition
Languages develop in a social context as a result of humans' need to communicate. A person can learn languages as a result of personality, interests, or needs (Hernandez, 1997; Barac & Bialystok, 2011). Depending on the learning process, languages can develop either simultaneously or successively. 'Simultaneous development' occurs when a person acquires two or more languages from a young age, whereas 'successive development', on the other hand, occurs when one language is learned from birth (L1) and, later on in life, the person learns to use one or more other languages (L2) (Himmele & Himmele, 2009).

The term 'additive bilingualism' specifies the acquiring of a second language in addition to a person's first language. Conversely, 'subtractive bilingualism' refers to a situation—as the word 'subtractive' implies—when the first language is taken away or suppressed, and the new language takes over (Lessow-Hurley, 2003). Specifically, a person's first language weakens due to the lack of development through formal schooling and may be disregarded altogether. However, some degree of oral fluency in the first language is usually maintained through certain social settings (Ibid.). Subtractive bilingualism is often the result of a situation in which the language of instruction offered in school differs from the child's mother tongue (Skutnab-Kangas, 1981).

Cummins (2000b) makes another distinction between languages used in everyday communication and the language skills required to perform in academic contexts. In everyday situations involving communication, it is often possible to extract meaning through the use of clues given by the situation or context; this level of language skill is called Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS). Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALP), on the other hand, is the kind of language used in situations that do not offer as many context-related clues and reflects the fact that learning processes in formal education are often more decontextualized than real-life communication. A person proficient on a CALP level is able to gain conceptual knowledge as well as make abstractions, generalizations, and categorizations with the use of a language. Early educational methods involve hands-on interactive environments as opposed to higher educational methods, which veer toward more abstract learning processes in order to train the learner to be proficient at a CALP level. It is sometimes difficult for teachers to distinguish between skills in everyday communication and the ability to conceptualize with the use of a language (Cummins, 2000b).
Language, power and status

Language is linked to power. The examples presented in the following section show how some languages provide greater opportunities to influence society and to control one's life and future than others. From a historical perspective, this can be exemplified by how colonial powers have been able to exclude most of the indigenous inhabitants from power in colonized areas by imposing their own language as the official or national language (Smolicz & Nical, 1997). In the Philippines, the first inhabitants had their vernacular languages, which were later on suppressed by the colonial powers' languages. While the country was occupied by Spain, Spanish was the language of the elite. Later on, under American rule, English became the language exercised in all education and official institutions (Tupas & Lorente, 2014). The American influence is still strong in the Philippines, and in some classrooms there are still signs saying "Speak English only!".

Another example of how language and power is linked is the fact that minority groups often experience a complete lack of influence when state borders are drawn. Once the borders are established, the minority groups are assimilated into the dominant group and the latter's language is imposed on the minority group (Ladberg, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). When this occurs, the vernacular languages are threatened and may become extinct (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002). In the Philippines, 10 languages are becoming endangered at the time of writing and four are reported as extinct (Lewis, et al. 2014); it is likely that the number of vernacular languages that have become extinct since the colonization era began is even higher. Skutnabb-Kangas (2002) uses the term 'linguistic genocide' to describe when a dominant language outrivals vernacular languages.

As a language carries the core values of a culture, it often becomes a symbol of the identity of a group of people; the language becomes "a building block of national solidarity" (Smolicz & Nical, 1997, p. 508). The Western notion of 'one country, one language, one people' is a nationalistic model for a monolingual nation-state and is considered outdated by many researchers in light of the multilingual societies that dominate the world today (Ibid.). Even so, the introduction of Filipino as a national language in the Philippines after the country’s independence from the USA can be seen as a means to develop a national identity in parallel to the notion of 'one country, one language, one people'. After a long period of linguistic oppression and the imposition of colonial languages, the creation of a national language can be seen as a reaction to the feeling of a need for a national language in order to show national independence (Smolicz & Nical, 1997; Tupas & Lorente, 2014). The introduction of Filipino as the language of instruction in schools did not, however, change the situation of the vast population of Philippine school children, as they were still taught in a language that was not their mother tongue (Tupas & Lorente, 2014.).

The valuation of different languages is based on the power relationship between the groups speaking the languages. One effect of this is that languages vary in status within a social context as the surrounding society plays a role in the attitudes that develop toward languages (Ladberg, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). The term 'diglossia' is described by Riley (2007) as a form of standardized societal bilingualism in which speakers use both a high-status and a low-status language in different domains of society. The high-status language often dominates the written language (as in academic and scientific literature), is often seen as more prestigious, and is taught in schools. The low-status language is acquired from birth, and is used for everyday conversation and to express social solidarity. 'Polyglossia' is a further differentiation of diglossia and refers to
situations in which speech communities practice more than two languages in clearly stratified ways (Riley, 2007).

People in the Philippines use a variety of languages depending on the context or domain. The vernacular language is mainly for speaking in the household and in informal contexts, such as in the marketplace, whereas English and, to some degree, Filipino is used for reading and writing in the academic and work domains. All higher education is conducted in English (Smolicz & Nical, 1997; Young, 2002). The fact that the mother tongue is acquired from birth and used in the informal domain indicates that it should be a low-status language according to Riley's (2007) reasoning of high- and low-status languages. Furthermore, as English and Filipino are the languages used in school, at work, and in literature, Riley's reasoning would indicate that these languages have a high status in the Philippine society. Moreover, as most literature is in English and all higher education is conducted in English, it could be considered to have a higher status than Filipino.

Language and power is also linked through literacy, as literacy is privileged over speech (Heath, 1983; Janks, 2010). Literacy could in the wide sense be described by the use of printed texts, to read and/or write, and all activities in which texts are used (Liberg & Säljö, 2014; Wedin, 2004). All children develop language as a resource for making meaning (Janks, 2010). Heath (1983) showed how the language, and by extension the literacy, of the middle class was privileged in the school system, compared to the language of the working class. Those with access to the preferred literacy also have more power to influence the society and form a better future.

3.3.3 Language and identity

Languages are closely tied to an individual's concept of 'identity' (Bernardo, 2007; Riley, 2007). Within the sociocultural perspective, identities may be seen as constructed through social interaction and dynamic over time and place (Cumming-Potvin, Renshaw, & van Kraayenoord, 2003; Riley, 2007). That is, identity is not seen as constructed solely by individuals themselves, but as something simultaneously constructed with others around them in their own image and likeness (Riley, 2007). Riley (2007) argues that the sources of individual identity are language, interaction, and the entire structure of society. There are many parameters to our social identities: gender, age, religion, occupation, and language, among others. Language is, as was mentioned above, a mediating tool between humans. It is also the mediating tool of our thoughts, without which humans would not be able to express their knowledge (Ibid.). When communication occurs, it is not only a message that is communicated, but also identity (Ibid.).

The examples included in this chapter in order to illustrate how languages are linked to status and power also serve to shed some light on the links between language and identity. When authorities impose a language on a group of people, there is a risk that the younger generation will incorporate the new language more rapidly than the older. The outcome is that the younger generation experience subtractive bilingualism due to the difference in status between the dominant language and the minority language, which may make the younger generation more reluctant to use the lower-status minority language to any greater extent. Research has revealed the existence of a form of intergenerational isolation, which may appear when the younger members of a family do not know how to communicate in the language of the older members (Cumming-Potvin, et al.
2003). As an individual's immediate surroundings play a major role in supporting his or her identity-building process in relation to multiple languages (György-Ullholm, 2010), this situation affects the identities of both individuals and groups.

Individuals with more than one language in his or her linguistic repertoire often make use of what is known as 'code-switching', which is when a bilingual or multilingual speaker changes between one language and another, either within an utterance, between sentences, or in different situations. Code-switching allows the speaker to make use of as many of the communicative resources at his or her disposal as possible and to do so in a highly systematic manner (Bailey, 2000; Riley, 2007). Within the social context, a multilingual child learns to connect different values and behavioral standards to different languages, why the child's immediate surroundings may be a great support in the identity-building process in relation to multiple languages (György-Ullholm, 2010). Through the use of code-switching, the speaker is able to show different aspects of his or her identity depending on the situation. The choice of language allows the individual to show affiliation with a group and to use the language as a social boundary marker (György-Ullholm, 2010). This could also create a 'we/they' dichotomy, as the language is used to mark who belongs in the group and who doesn't (Bailey, 2000; Riley, 2007). In an environment where two languages are socially available, both languages can be used as a communicative advantage to articulate and express intimacy and friendship (Lessow-Hurley, 2003). Norton (1997), in her studies of children from bilingual families, found that children mediate their identity through languages as they speak, understand, and write.

3.3.4 Education, multilingualism and academic success for pupils

Research has shown that the single most important factor for pupils' academic success is instruction in the mother tongue (Lessow-Hurley 2003; Ramirez, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002; UNESCO 1953, 2007). In fact, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that education shall be directed to:

The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own. (1989, Article 29c)

Article 30 (UN, 1989) further emphasizes the child's right to use his or her own language. With this background, in addition to the Philippines own history of declining academic achievement since the country abandoned education in vernacular languages (Tupas & Lorente, 2014), the change in policy regarding the language of instruction was to be expected.

Studies of pupils with English as a second language in schools where English is the medium of instruction indicate that instruction in the pupils' L1 helps pupils learn both the English language as well as the content matter; for example, an understanding of how the L1 works in form and function can transfer to a better understanding and acquisition of English or other languages (Cummins, 1981; Lessow-Hurley, 2003). Teaching content matter in the pupils' L1 makes it easier for pupils to grasp new concepts and skills, which are then transferred to other languages. The interrelationship that exists between languages contributes to better metalinguistic awareness, i.e.
the ability to think about and understand language (Cummins, 1981; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002).

A key to academic success, intimately connected to power, is the development of literacy skills. (Liberg & Säljö, 2014; UNESCO, 2006; Wedin, 2004). Pupils become literate more quickly and easily in their mother tongues. These skills can then transfer and facilitate learning English or other languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002). Furthermore, to support the pupils' academic achievement, teachers should have high expectations on their pupils, engage them actively in the subject matter, make use of all their languages, and value and incorporate aspects of their culture in the schoolwork. Teachers who acknowledge and value their pupils' mother tongue build pupils' self-esteem, which is a powerful foundation for learning (Lessow-Hurley, 2003).
4 Method

The aim of the study presented in this thesis is to explore some of the experiences and knowledge gained by Filipino teachers teaching in a multilingual context. In light of this, the method of choice was thematically structured qualitative interviews as, "in the qualitative case, the aim is rather to discover phenomena, to interpret and understand the meaning of life-world, to describe the beliefs or culture" (Patel & Davidson, 2003, p. 102, my translation). This method allows the researcher to thematically develop a theme or phenomenon together with the respondent; during the conversation, the researchers is able to form an understanding around how the respondent relates himself or herself to the phenomenon and see different connections between concepts and practices (Aspers, 2011). The planning stage, which included studies of previous research in the field and the surroundings, is described in section 4.1. The interview process and the transcription method are elaborated in sections 4.2 and 4.3, respectively. The analysis method is described in section 4.4 and the chapter concludes by addressing the many ethical concerns faced by qualitative research in section 4.5.

4.1 Preparing the interviews

The preparations began with thematizing the interview project, which conforms to Brinkmann and Kvale’s (2015) practical steps of interviewing. In this phase, a literature study of previous research regarding multilingualism with a preliminary focus on the Philippines and school environments was conducted. Furthermore, research concerning multilingualism in the Swedish context was studied in an attempt to raise awareness of prior background knowledge and possible biases. The intention was not to become "neutral" by eliminating possible biases, but rather to raise my self-awareness about the topic. To eliminate bias is not reasonable, since a researcher will always affect the conversation and situation (Aspers, 2011).

In preparation for the interviews, I spent four months in the Philippines mainly observing lessons and practice teaching at both private and public schools. This facilitated a better understanding of the teachers' reality and their working environment. During this time, it was essential to learn as much of the local language as possible in order to gain a deeper comprehension of the social environment. This approach is supported by, among others, Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), who argue that, by staying for a prolonged period of time in the environment where the interviews are to be conducted, the researcher may have opportunities to become introduced to the daily routines and power structures, which may allow a better anticipation of what the respondents will talk about. While staying in the Philippines, a better understanding of and sensitivity to local language policy issues was achieved, which according to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p. 135) are also relevant to consider during interviews and in reporting. This is also the reason why the thesis lingers on the history of the Philippines and the linguistic situation - simply to give the reader a better understanding of the complex everyday situation of the interviewed teachers.

Through studies of international research on multilingualism and comparison between research conducted in Sweden and in the Philippines, it was possible to formulate relevant questions to the respondents. Based on the study of research in the field of multilingualism and education, a mind map (Fig. 2, p. 14) was constructed. The themes in the mind map were viewed as crucial in order to build an understanding of the phenomenon of multilingualism.
As audio recordings were deemed sufficient, the choice of recording device fell on a mobile phone. The decision to use audio recordings was motivated by Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) arguments to facilitate an easier transcribing process and higher quality since it would increase the possibility to quote the respondents correctly.

Before the interviews, a personal visit and presentation to all of the respondents was conducted. This opened an opportunity to prepare them for the interview and to answer possible concerns. The teachers who had agreed to participate in the study received information that the study was on multilingualism and that the primary interest would be in their classroom experiences as teachers and their thoughts about multilingualism. During this initial contact, the respondents were informed that the interview would be recorded, and that no preparations would be required on their part. This is an approach recommended by Aspers (2011) among others, to make the respondents feel at ease with the situation.

### 4.1.1 Finding respondents and the delimitation of the study

The study was conducted in an area where most of the residents have Cebuano as their mother tongue. Four respondents were considered sufficient to fulfill the aim of the study with regard to the restricted time limit. To find respondents, contacts and principles at one private and one public school were asked to recommend teachers for participation, as it was found preferable to include teachers from both private and public schools. In order to enable comparison, two teachers from each school form were chosen. The criterion the respondents had to meet was that they were currently teaching pupils between the ages of six and eleven years old. The chosen teachers had a range of expertise and years of working life experience to create diversity and depth to the interviews. The four interviewed teachers are presented further in Chapter 5.
4.1.2 Pilot interview

A pilot interview was conducted in order to ensure that the mind map developed for the interviews (Fig. 2, p. 14) would provide sufficient support during the interviews and to test the recording device. As it turned out, the results of this interview were more than satisfactory, and the decision was made to also include the pilot interview in the material, which consists of a total of four interviews.

4.2 Conducting the interviews

The interviews were thematically structured and open. As argued by Aspers (2011, p. 144), the intention behind this kind of interview is for the interviewer to use everyday conversation as a base for the interview. By using a conversational approach, the interviewer is able to make use of his or her personal knowledge of the subject, in this case multilingualism in the Philippines. The primary role of the interviewer during the interviews was to be interested, curious, attentive, and relaxed.

The interviews began with a few minutes of informal conversation and eating of some snacks I brought, during which time the respondent was presented with a consent form and any questions the teacher had for me were answered. This is an approach described in Aspers (2011) and is intended to make the respondent feel at ease and secure with the situation.

The interviews were conducted using a mind map (Fig. 2, p. 14) in a similar manner to that used by Schmidt (2013, p. 96), and inspired by Aspers’ interview strategy (2011, p. 151). This kind of structure gives the interviewer control over the process, while at the same time allowing the flexibility to go deeper into some part of the mind map or open up for an entirely new theme (Aspers, 2011). The mind map made it possible to focus on the respondent rather than on an interview guide with questions. As the interviews were conducted in English—the second language of both the respondents and the interviewer—both the main questions and the most likely follow-up questions to go with the mind map were prepared beforehand. This was an attempt to avoid leading questions and misunderstandings due to language difficulties. The questions were exclusively for myself as interviewer and were not shown to the respondents, nor were they used during all interviews.

Following Aspers’ (2011, p. 148) recommendation, it was considered important to relate the interview questions to the teachers’ daily practice to as great an extent as possible and to ask them to give examples of situations they had encountered in their practice. Follow-up questions were used to facilitate understanding of the teachers’ statements. I also restated what the interviewed teacher had said in my own words, to reassure their statements were understood the intended way. In other cases the respondent was given the opportunity to clarify. The mind map was placed on the table so as to be visible to both the respondent and myself. During the interview notes were taken directly on the mind map without interrupting the conversation. When opportunity rose the notes were used to encourage the teacher to explain a specific topic or statement in greater detail, and during the summary conducted at the end of the interview in order to ensure that all the important parts of the conversation had been noted.
Each interview yielded roughly 25-35 minutes of recorded material, but the time spent with the respondent was naturally longer with the small talk before and after the recording device was turned on. At the end of the interview, after the recording device was turned off, the respondents were asked again if they had any concerns or questions regarding the interview and also to provide contact information in case any clarifying information was required. Also, the respondents who wanted to receive a copy of the final paper were asked to provide an email address.

### 4.3 Transcription of the interviews

As recommended in Aspers (2011. p. 155), thoughts and impressions from the conversations were written down immediately after each interview.

All four interviews where transcribed verbatim, resulting in roughly 25 pages of transcripts. Though Aspers (2011) argue that it is ideal to transcribe the material as soon as possible after the interview concludes, personal circumstances made this impossible in this case, and the interviews were instead transcribed over a period of six months after the interviews were conducted. All the interviews were transcribed by me, which has the advantage that it allows the beginning of a dialogue between the theory and the material—a first step in the analysis. During the transcription process there is also the possibility that useful ideas may arise (Aspers, 2011), which was another reason to do the transcribing myself.

As noted by Aspers (2011), most literature on the subject of interviewing recommends that loud or noisy surroundings should be avoided in order to improve the quality of the recorded sound and to facilitate the transcription process. However, the practical circumstances during the four interviews conducted did not allow for this recommendation to be followed due to the city sounds and ventilations systems in the buildings.

Moreover, transcription is an interpretative process, as it is a form of translation from spoken to written language (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). In order to strengthen the credibility of the transcribed interviews, a third party who was not engaged in the study in any other way, was asked to compare parts of the recorded material with the transcripts.

**Transcription guide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>...</th>
<th>Pause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(inaudible)</td>
<td>Indiscernible, audible actions deriving from the speaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[laughing]</td>
<td>Comment on audible actions observed by the speaker, e.g. laughing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERRUPTION</td>
<td>The interview was interrupted by exterior circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Italics</em></td>
<td>The speaker put strong emphasis on a certain word.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Analysis

The analysis of the gathered material began at the scene of the interview and in the thoughts and impressions written down immediately after the interview had concluded. During the transcription process, the dialogue between the theory and the material began. When the interviews had been transcribed, the material was printed out and coded as described below. The first step was to mark everything according to which research question it was interpreted as corresponding to (below). Fluorescent pens in different colors were used in order to provide an overview and facilitate a visual survey of the codes (Aspers, 2011; Trost, 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Question 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language of instruction: YELLOW</td>
<td>Mother tongue: PINK</td>
<td>Correlations: BROWN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils' language: GRAY</td>
<td>Filipino: BLUE</td>
<td>Support: GREEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code-switching: PURPLE</td>
<td>English: RED</td>
<td>Personal identity: ORANGE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the coding process, I attempted to maintain openness toward the material. The material was divided into the three categories above before the next step began. In the second step, the material was analyzed in relation to the theory and previous research; this resulted in three sets of subcodes, one for each code in the first step, each comprising three subcodes. The material was then color-marked according to the subcodes, as represented below.

4.5 Ethical considerations

In interview studies, there are many ethical issues to consider. Thus, Brinkmann and Kvale’s (2015) ethical guidelines were applied to this study from an early stage and, following their recommendations ethical considerations were addressed throughout the whole research process. However, the ethical concerns involved in an interview study are not limited to the matters covered by these guidelines, but are linked to the ethical capabilities of the researcher, which include the ability to stay open to the conflicts or dilemmas that may arise during the research process (Ibid.).

Obtaining informed consent from the respondents is one ethical issue mentioned by Brinkmann & Kvale (2015, p. 93); in this study, it was obtained in written form from the teachers interviewed and the principals at the teachers’ schools. The written consent form that the teachers signed stated that they participated voluntarily, were informed of the fact that they could discontinue their participation at any time, and accepted that the interviews were recorded. The consent form also included a confidentiality paragraph, in which it was stated that participants in the study would not be identified by name in any reports. In order to maintain confidentiality, the respondents are referred to as Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, and Teacher D in this thesis. All re-
search material, including recordings and transcripts, were deleted once the paper was published. The consent forms signed by the principals were less extensive and of a more formal matter; in it, the principals confirmed that they had been informed about purpose of the study and that they accepted that some of the teachers working at their school participated. In connection to signing the consent forms, both the teachers and the principals received information regarding the aim of the study, as this was considered not to affect the outcome in any way.

Due to its high complexity, it is difficult to predict the consequences of qualitative research. However, the possible consequences of this study were considered both with regard to the possible harm it may cause the participants and how they may benefit from their participation; it was taken into consideration that this did not only concern the respondents, but also the larger group of Filipino teachers, whom they represent (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 95). The assessment was that the thesis would not result in any far-reaching consequences for the persons interviewed. Possible consequences included that the respondents, during the interviews, increased their reflective approach to their role as teachers and the languages they use in everyday life. Likewise, it is not considered likely that publishing this thesis will result in any far-reaching consequences for the participants or the group they represent due to the fact that it involves research on the lowest possible level and therefore will not have any major impact.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) also highlight that the role of the researcher and the researcher’s integrity, knowledge, experience, and honesty are the decisive factors that determine the quality of the study in terms of weighing ethical concerns against scientific ones. As the interviews took place across cultural boundaries, it was probably beneficial to the study that I had the opportunity to spend some time in the respondents’ environment prior to conducting the interviews. This allowed me to adapt to the language used but also to establish trust among the respondents. In general, fair-skinned people and foreigners are quite uncommon in the Philippine school context, especially in public schools. My long-term presence proved to be beneficial to the study as the respondents did not feel threatened, but rather regarded me as an interested teacher-student/researcher who was curious to learn about their professional experiences and knowledge.

In the writing of the Results and Discussion chapters, an effort was made to relate to the material in such a way that the investigation stayed ‘loyal’ to the respondents’ statements (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). To facilitate this, the complete transcripts were archived and I returned to the text in its entirety when needed. In doing so, an attempt was made to ensure that the extracts where not taken out of their context in such a way as to cause them to be misinterpreted or to lose their meaning (Bryman, 2011).
5 Results

The chapter begins with a presentation of the setting in which the study was conducted and of the respondents in the study (section 5.1). Afterwards, the findings of the study are presented, starting with the linguistic environment the teachers described (section 5.2), followed by the status of the languages (section 5.3), and lastly, the correlations between language and identity expressed in the interviews (section 5.4).

5.1 Presentation of the setting and the respondents

The interviews were conducted at two schools in Cebu City. The vernacular language in the area is Cebuano. However, in the same way as in the rest of the Philippines, both English and Filipino are taught and used as the language of instruction in particular subjects in schools.

5.1.1 The Private School

The Private School is an elementary school managed by the Catholic Church. Most pupils attending this school come from families considered to be in the high socio-economic level. Some of the pupils attending the Private School have English as their L1, as their parents speak English with them at home, while others have Cebuano as L1. Many of the pupils are bilingual from birth, as they have grown up with English and Cebuano used simultaneously or within different domains of society. The Private School has been given exemption from the mother tongue-based prerequisite of the K to 12 Program. As a result, English is the language of instruction in most subjects and Cebuano is instead taught as a separate subject. Among the respondents, Teachers A and C are working at the Private School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher A</th>
<th>Teacher C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Grade 1</td>
<td>• Grade 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching experience: more than 20 years</td>
<td>• Teaching experience: less than 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Subjects: Science and to some extent Civics</td>
<td>• Subject: Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.2 The Public School

The Public School is an elementary school managed by the Philippine government. Though the Public School is free in terms of attendance and tuition, the pupils’ families are required to pay for school uniforms and materials. This is often challenging, since most of the pupils attending this school are from families considered of a low socio-economic level and often live in squatter settlement households. With few exceptions, the pupils attending this school have Cebuano as their L1. Among the respondents, Teachers B and D are working at the Public School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher B</th>
<th>Teacher D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Grade 3</td>
<td>• Grade 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching experience: more than 20 years</td>
<td>• Teaching experience: more than 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Subjects: English, Math and Filipino</td>
<td>• Subjects: all subjects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Linguistic environments

The linguistic environments of the classrooms are described in the following sections: Language of instruction, Code-switching, Written texts, and Pupils' language. The linguistic environments described by the teachers are rather complex, but in general it could be said that orally, all three languages (Cebuano, Filipino, and English) are regularly available to the pupils. However, in the Philippines, the language of instruction usually varies between different subjects, which is the reason this presentation will linger on the language of instruction (section 5.2.1). Code-switching has a prominent position in the teachers’ descriptions of the linguistic environments of their classrooms (section 5.2.2). The teachers describe a classroom environment that could be considered multilingual in terms of verbal communication, whereas regarding the written material, the findings suggest a rather bilingual setting with English and Filipino, or a monolingual one with exclusively English in certain subjects (section 5.2.3). The interviewed teachers’ views on pupils’ language use in the classroom is presented in the final section of this chapter (section 5.2.4).

5.2.1 Language of instruction

In the Private School, where Teachers A and C work, the language of instruction is English, with the exception of Filipino and Civics which is taught in Filipino and the Mother Tongue subject where the language of instruction is Cebuano. However, the interviews revealed that the teachers translate most of the instructions, both oral and written, from English to Cebuano during class. During lessons taught in Filipino the teachers described how they translate the Filipino language both to English and to Cebuano, to ensure all the pupils' are able to understand. The pupils’ understanding of the concepts and content appears to be the teachers’ primary focus. From a sociocultural perspective, it is possible to argue that Teacher A, in the extract below, shows an awareness of the pupils’ zone of proximal development, as she explains that in her understanding, the teachers will translate for the pupils only as long as they need it in order to grasp the content and, once they do so without assistance, the teachers considered it unnecessary to continue translating for them.

"We speak in English, but we have also to translate it into Bisayan, we have to see to it all, we have also children who are really not good at English. If I can see that they are able to grasp what is it all about, then I don't have to translate any more."

(Teacher A)

It is also possible to argue from the extract above, that the teacher is expressing that English is the target language and the pupils’ mother tongue is seen as a support language. Once the pupils' are able to grasp the content in the English language, the mother tongue is no longer considered needed and therefore the teacher will stop using it. All four teachers participating in the study were describing similar ways of using the pupils' mother tongue.

In the Public School, where Teachers B and D work, there is a clear difference between which languages are used depending on what grade the pupils are in. In grade one, the language of instruction is Cebuano, the pupils’ mother tongue. Only in the subjects concerning the two national...
languages are English and Filipino respectively used. In the Public School, the majority of the pupils have Cebuano as their L1, which may be the reason Teacher D, who is teaching grade 1, attests to using the pupils’ mother tongue as the primary language of instruction.

Only English and Filipino [subjects] has different language [than mother tongue]. It's English for English and Filipino for Filipino. The rest is mother tongue.  

(Teacher D)

Teacher B concurred with Teacher D regarding the subjects English and Filipino, but stated that she uses English as the language of instruction also in Math since she is a teacher in grade 3. However, both teachers working at the Public School described that they translate instructions to the mother tongue when English or Filipino are the language of instruction, in order to ensure the pupils’ understanding.

5.2.2 Code-switching

When it comes to code-switching, the teachers’ general interpretation of the term could be described as the act of translating between two languages, i.e. repeating what they have already said in another language. It seems as though the interviewed teachers switch between languages to explain the content matter in different ways, until they are certain the pupils have understood. All four teachers described how they use translation as a tool to ensure the pupils’ understanding of the instruction or the content matter.

Well, I use the translation; I translate between English and Bisaya, like that, both ways, both ways. Then I ask the children Do you understand? English, and then...the Cebuano. In Cívica, that's in Filipino, so there will be three now, L1, L2 and L3. Language one the Cebuano, and then L2 the Filipino and L3 the English or English is their L2 and the L3 will be the Filipino. So, that's why I'm having difficulties in Cívica. Because there'll be three languages that I’m going to switch in between [laughing].

(Teacher A)

The extract above shows that the teacher is most concerned with the pupils' comprehension and checks to see if they follow. It also becomes apparent that despite the fact that most of the participants in the classroom may be considered to be a Cebuano, English, and Filipino speaker, the language groups are heterogeneous; the main difference between them being the pupils' levels of proficiency in each of the three languages. The extract above also sheds light on the complexity of the multilingual situation, and the difficulties in determining which language should be considered the individual pupil’s L1, L2 or L3, or whether or not such a distinction is at all necessary.

So, switching of languages is... I think that is happening every time I'm teaching... because, like what I said a while ago, not all of the children are familiar with these words. It is important that you have to translate it, translate every word. Like in science, I teach difficult words, that not all words in science can be translated to Cebuano. So, when that word cannot be translated, then it will be that word, so no translation of difficult words.

(Teacher C)

Above, Teacher C describes the difficulties associated with the lack of suitable translations from scientific English words to the mother tongue; consequently the English word is used even when speaking Cebuano or Filipino. Likewise, Teacher B referred to some words as "deep" during the
interview, which may be interpreted as an attempt at describing a phenomenon similar to the one described by Teacher C above.

**5.2.3 Written language**

What can be interpreted from the interviews is that the vast majority of the literature used in the classrooms is in English. All four teachers described how they orally translate the textbooks from English to Cebuano. In specific subjects, such as Civics and Filipino, the literature used is in Filipino. In the extract below, the lack of literature in the vernacular language becomes evident. As teachers in the Private School are expected to use Cebuano in the Mother Tongue subject, Teacher A describes how Mother Tongue teachers struggle with producing material to make up for the lack of appropriate literature, textbooks and other written materials available.

> Oh, it’s [the written materials] in English. Textbooks in Science, textbooks in Math, other subjects like PE is also in English, only Cívica and Filipino is in Filipino. And in the MTB, which is supposed to be in Cebuano, no textbook yet, no materials yet. They are just using photocopies, research research about this... *(Teacher A)*

Due to a lack of resources, teachers in the Public School produce most of the written literature themselves. This enables them to adapt the language to the subject they are teaching. Hence, Teacher D stated that, apart from the subjects Filipino and English, she uses Cebuano for the written material in most subjects. Moreover, the Public School’s lack of economic resources has resulted in a shortage of textbooks, and the pupils mostly copy down what the teacher writes on the blackboard. The books available in the small school libraries, and most of the literature available in the classrooms, are generally written in English or, in exceptional cases, Filipino.

**5.2.4 Pupils language**

When it comes to the pupils’ language in school, all the teachers stated that the pupils converse among themselves mainly in Cebuano. The teachers at the Private School also added that those pupils who have English as their L1 quickly pick up Cebuano from their peers. When speaking with the teachers, the pupils at the Private School switch between Cebuano and English, whereas at the Public School, pupils use only Cebuano also with teachers. All of the respondents stated that, during class, they encourage their pupils to use English or Filipino in the subjects where those languages are the medium of instruction. However, the teachers also expressed awareness of that the language may be a hindrance to the pupils' ability to express their understanding and thoughts. Thence the teachers emphasized the importance of facilitating comprehension and the ability to follow the instruction given by the teacher over that of regulating which language the pupils use to communicate.

> I usually allow them to answer [in any language], as long as they can express their own ideas. Because if you try to monopolize, try to impose a language, like for example you want English to be used, the children will not be able to express their own point of view. They will not answer any more." (...) " Which is why you need to, you need to use... simpler terms for them to understand and encourage them to use the language without fear. *(Teacher B)*
All the interviewed teachers answered that they allow the pupils to answer in the language of the pupils' own choice. In the statement above, it also becomes clear that Teacher B wants to encourage her pupils to use English, but without exerting too much pressure on them. This can be seen in the light of the history of the Philippines, where languages has been imposed on the people in school and by other administrative authorities.
### 5.3 Status of the mother tongue, Filipino and English

It appears that the respondents interpret and express the concept of status of a language in different ways. One way the teachers expressed status is pragmatic and based on the fact that different languages are used in different domains of society; thus, some languages are considered to be more useful in certain circumstances than others. In other words, the language that is considered most useful in a particular context has the highest status by this way of looking at it.

I don’t think so if there is like higher status. Because it differs like to whom you are talking to. If you are talking to Filipino people we will be using Filipino. If we are going to talk with those people in our community we will be using the mother tongue. If we would be talking to foreign people we would be using English. So it’s like... We use it for communication.

*(Teacher D)*

The attitudes expressed by the teachers are also connected to the language they, or their pupils, are most comfortable with. This was the reason behind that three of the teachers answered that they considered the mother tongue to have the highest status of the languages in the classroom, as it is spoken and understood by all pupils.

Regards to status [in the classroom] of course the higher the Visayan, because they are more exposed with the mother tongue (...) Because they all of them understood mother tongue. Some could understand English but not all. But with the mother tongue all of them could understand

*(Teacher D)*

In addition to the pragmatic aspect, i.e. the choice of language according to context, the teachers also express a different view on the relative status of the three languages. One such is connected to which language is considered to be the target language in the classroom context; it is clear from the interviews that as the target language in most areas is English, it is considered to have higher status than the mother tongue in the school context. This view is illustrated by the extract below, in which Teacher D states that the use of the mother tongue is a necessity brought about by the fact that the pupils are not yet sufficiently proficient in English or Filipino, as they are often in the process of learning these languages. The other respondents expressed the same attitude, often in relation to which language they want the pupils to use; though they attest to allowing the pupils to answer in whichever language they choose, they prefer the pupils to use English if they are able to. The extract below also visualizes how TV, music, and computer games facilitate language acquisition in the surrounding community and society.

We find it [all languages] necessary, first mother tongue, for the beginners... They need to be taught, or they need to use mother tongue because some pupils don’t know how to speak on English or Filipino yet. (...) Then in Filipino, we also use Filipino, to strengthen the national language. But we find it quite easy to teach Filipino to kids, because they are exposed to movies. We have movies for children, and they are speaking Filipino. And for English, there is only one subject. The kids don’t find it hard because they are exposed to computer nowadays and the computers are more on communication. The games are in English, they are listening to foreign singers like the one they love from Frozen “Let it go” it’s more on English, so it’s not really hard.

*(Teacher D)*
As Teacher D expresses in the extract above, all the teachers confirm that they use Filipino in order to strengthen its position as a national language, which is in line with the directives issued by the Philippine Department of Education. In this view, the Filipino language can be considered to have lower status than mother tongue and English, due to the pupils’ and teachers’ lack of emotional connection to this language; though the teachers consider Filipino to be a language all citizens are required to learn how to speak, they do not think it necessary to use in everyday situations. All but one of the teachers admitted to being reluctant to use Filipino, due to their experienced low proficiency.

It's very difficult for us to use the Filipino language; we are more comfortable with English

(Teacher B)

All four teachers are expressing that they are aware that Filipino should be used between Filipinos with different vernacular languages, but three of them are also expressing how they are more comfortable with English. When they go travelling, they choose to use the English language when speaking to their countrymen instead of Filipino.

Another view on the status of the English language—which was mentioned by all teachers on more than one occasion during the interviews—highlights the privilege held by those who use it in their community. The poor, especially those without education, do not have access to English and, thus, only use Cebuano.

Because they are a little bit... what do you call it... more financially OK, and then, the parents are speaking in English, although, those who are also rich can speak in Bisaya or Cebuano, but usually it's those in the lower level who speak always in Bisaya.

(Teacher A)
5.4 Correlations between language and identity

With regard to identity, all of the teachers expressed that they consider the ability to use different languages to be an important social marker and strongly connected to a person’s origins. Hence, languages are considered an integral part of a collectivist society because of its role as a social glue that strengthens connections within the local communities.

Dependent on the places we live, they usually use the language that is spoken by most of the people most of the time. The language that they usually use every day, that is to identify them, to show the identity, as a group of people living in the same community.

(Teacher B)

In addition to replies to direct questions, the teachers indicated the connection between language and identity in two ways: the first of which was that they stated that they supported the pupils in their construction of multilingual identities (section 5.4.1), and the second the fact that their own identities in relation to the languages revealed more than the teachers led on during the interviews (section 5.4.2).

5.4.1 Supporting the pupils’ construction of identities

The teachers awareness of the pupils’ needs to express themselves in the language of the pupil’s own choice, and their openness to allowing this to happen, are a part of supporting their pupils in their identity-building process. All the teachers stated that they encourage their pupils to use their mother tongue orally to express his or her thoughts if unable to do so in English or Filipino. Furthermore, two of the teachers stated that they encourage the pupils to use their mother tongue when writing.

I as a teacher encourage them to, just write it in Cebuano, so that you can express, so... Because children are expressive but there are hinders between English, when they use English they cannot express what they want to say! So I encourage them to write it in Cebuano.

(Teacher C)

Moreover, Teacher A stated that teachers in the Mother Tongue subject at the Private School often base their teachings on local legends in order to make pupils more aware of their culture; through these, the pupils are able to gain a deeper connection to their community and the area in which they live.

All of the teachers emphasized the importance of the pupils' self-esteem with regard to speaking English. They avoid pushing their pupils toward the English language too much, since it might give the pupils a negative attitude toward using the English language, and make them uncomfortable using it.

That is why, so when the child already has the confidence in participating, studying and going to school. Evidently, when he is interested, he will be able to go to the higher level, and be able to learn the English language or whatever language they will learn there. So when he's already a professional, he is ready.

(Teacher A)
5.4.2 The teachers' identities in relation to the languages

It became clear during the interviews that the connections between identity and language described by the teachers were not limited to the processes they had observed in their pupils, but extended to their own experiences. The extract below may be considered to indicate some degree of subtractive bilingualism or multilingualism, as both Spanish and English can be seen to have suppressed Teacher A’s L1 Cebuano, while she was growing up; her mother tongue was regarded with negative scrutiny and she was encouraged to develop her English instead. The fact that no formal schooling in the L1 was made available to her when she was growing up may be one of the reasons she presently wants to develop her Cebuano further.

I like to learn the Cebuano words, because I myself don't know some, because we were influenced by the Spanish. And then we were influenced by the America that is why we are having English as our medium of instruction! We are Filipinos, we are supposed to speak Filipino and use our language in our classes but we are using English because of the Americans and the Spanish before. So, that's why we know how to speak in English, maybe because of the influence of the Americans before...

(Teacher A)

Though Teacher C described a similar situation to that of Teacher A, a follow-up question revealed quite a different reason for developing her proficiency in the mother tongue. In the extract below, it is clear that Teacher C feels that she needs to develop her vocabulary in the mother tongue in order to be able to communicate with the older generation.

Interviewer: You said that you, when speaking with the MTB teachers, you are also asking about Cebuano and the native Cebuano words.
Teacher C: Yes.
Interviewer: Do you feel like that is important to you as a Cebuana, for your identity?
Teacher C: I think, uhm, it is necessary but not important. So that you can relate to others like the old ones.
Interviewer: Ah, so the relationship to you grandparents?
Teacher C: Yes, and the other old.

It is also possible to interpret the extract above as an indication of how languages are used in different domains of society, as Teacher C’s desire to expand her competence in the mother tongue in order to speak with the older generation is most likely connected to the language used in the home domain.
6 Discussion

In this chapter, the method and results will be discussed. Beginning with methodological considerations (section 6.1), the strengths, weaknesses and credibility of the study are clarified. The results will be discussed in relation to the study’s aim, research questions, theoretical considerations and previous research (section 6.2).

6.1 Methodological considerations

The aim of the study is to explore some of the experience and the knowledge gained by Filipino teachers while teaching in a multilingual context. I think that the thematically structured interviews were a good choice of method to achieve this and respond to the research questions.

In accordance with Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) recommendations, the credibility checks of the study have been considered throughout the whole research project. During each step of the study, it has been evaluated whether or not the study investigates what it purports to and, as a result of these evaluations, adjustments have been made whenever the need arose.

As described by Damber (2010), one weakness in the chosen method may be related to the contrasting differences between what teachers communicate as opposed to the reality they actually produce. In the terms used by Lauvås and Handal (2001), it is common that the way in which a teacher formulates ideal goals for classroom praxis, called 'formulated praxis theory', only partly coincides with the praxis visible in the classroom, called 'applied praxis theory'. In order to obtain a more representative picture of the actual linguistic environments and, perhaps, gain an accurate portrayal of languages in terms of status, as well as of how identities are created in the classrooms, the study should be expanded to include classroom observations; these should preferably be conducted by a researcher with proficiency in all relevant languages, as to facilitate a deeper interpretation of the occurring events and the results.

Aspers (2011, p. 148) state that the researcher should avoid theoretical concepts within the questions, but instead try to use the concepts from the respondents’ worlds. Though this advice was heeded during the planning of the interviews, it was discovered during the analysis of the interviews that the theoretical concept of 'code-switching' was used both on the mind map and in the questions posed by the interviewer to the respondents. This being a theoretical concept might have been the reason I didn't feel entirely certain the interviewed teachers understood it the same way I did. The reason this was not discovered during the planning phase was likely due to the fact that, as it was evident to me that the teachers used code-switching frequently, I assumed that they would already be familiar with the concept. This misconception may have arisen due to the fact that I could only understand one of the languages the teachers were switching in between. Furthermore, the fact that I come from a context with a predominantly monolingual norm might also add to the misconception. Since multilingualism is the norm in the Philippines, it may be that code-switching is not a matter being discussed, since it is more of a natural state of being and communicating.

In order to strengthen the credibility of the transcripts of the interviews, parts of the recorded material were compared to the transcripts by a third party. Aspers (2011) proposes that the re-
spondents could be asked to control the transcripts of the interviews themselves, but this method was decided against for two reasons: Firstly, there was a risk that the respondents would be overly concerned with the difference between spoken and written language; the transcripts may have been viewed by the respondents as making their utterances appear scattered, and thus less professional. This may have resulted in a displacement of focus of the respondents away from the aspects of the texts which are of interest to this study. Secondly, the time-lapse caused by the delay in the transcription process would have made it difficult for the respondents' to validate the transcripts as their memories of the interviews would have faded.

Another consideration deriving from the sociocultural perspective employed in this thesis relates to the communication of knowledge, which is central to the study as it is at the core of any interview situation. Considering the history of the Philippines as an American colony and the subsequent linguistic oppression by the English language, as well as other parts of the theoretical considerations presented in this thesis, the question is whether the respondents' answers would have been different if the interviews had been conducted in Cebuano or Filipino rather than in English. Also, the fact that English is the second language of both the researcher and the respondents likely affected the study's results, especially concerning the level of precision with which the respondents were able to express their points of view.

6.2 Reflections of the findings

When looking at the results through the theoretical glasses, it becomes evident that schools are institutions that operate within a larger context. History is always present in the interviewed teachers' statements. Also politics are present in the statements, as schools are effected by local, national, and international politics to varying degrees; the most obvious of which are the national policies regarding teaching content and language of instruction. One can see how the national policies of strengthening Filipino as the national language, and to strengthen the vernacular languages through mother tongue instruction in the lower grades, influences the teachers' answers. Taken together, the picture that emerges from the interview material is that of a complex reality that both teachers and pupils face, in which they are forced to relate to the different languages within their repertoire in different ways.

The teachers' statements during the interviews reveal that the three languages are linked in a complex way. Three of the teachers are of the opinion that the status relationship between the languages in the teachers' classrooms is different from what it is at the national level; when asked about the Philippines as a whole, the teachers agree on the view that the function of a language is that of a means of communication, and that which language is used depends on the conversation partner's linguistic repertoire and the context. In one way or another, however, all teachers mention that English is the language used by those of a high socio-economic level; whereas Cebuano is used by most people in the region, it is to great extent a language spoken by people who are considered underprivileged. According to Riley's (2007) definition of high- and low-status languages, English could be said to be the high-status language in this context, based on the fact that English is mainly accessible to those individuals who are in a privileged position and have access to education.
The findings of this study support Bernardo's (2007) statement that, in the Philippine context, code-switching is prevalent in the classrooms. The approach to language and language use of the teachers participating in this study appears to be very pragmatic, but even so, their attitude toward the languages in the classroom could be interpreted as hierarchically ordered: Mother Tongue—English—Filipino. Less than two decades ago, Smolicz and Nical (1997) presented research in which pupils expressed the opinion that the use of the mother tongue by pupils in the classroom could be interpreted as lack of respect for the teacher. This situation appears to have changed since then, if one takes the results presented in this thesis into account, in which teachers state that they encourage the pupils to express themselves also in their first language. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that the teachers favor English over Filipino in classroom situations, which correlates with the findings of Smolicz and Nical (1997). The reason that the attitudes toward these two languages appear not to have changed over the last two decades may be due to the historical fact that by the time Tagalog was elevated to the position of national language, there were as many Cebuano speakers as there were Tagalog speakers.

Even though the teachers’ answers indicate that the Cebuano language has high status in the classroom, a further analysis indicates that English is the language with higher status also in the classroom. This due to the fact that most of the written materials are in English (Riley, 2007), and the fact that Cebuano is used primarily as a "backup-language" for situations in which the pupils' proficiency in English or Filipino is insufficient. The fact that the teachers state that some words do not exist in their mother tongue indicate that, as Cebuano is not used in scientific contexts, there has been no need to come up with a proper translation. This may further consolidate the position of English as a high-status language, and serve to preserve the current power relationship between the languages, as Cebuano will appear to be of little use in some contexts or domains in society.

The pupils primarily develop literacy in English. Though it is a quite common occurrence in postcolonial states for the population to become literate primarily in the language with the highest status (Janks, 2010) and, in this light, the situation described by the teachers is understandable as English is the key to higher education and employment in the Philippines, the question remains: what consequences does this situation bring about for those involved? As research shows that children become literate faster in their mother tongue (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002), it may be argued that the domination of English in terms of literacy should prove to be a disadvantage to the whole education and learning potential of the Filipino pupils. It is also clear from the interview material that the teachers experience a lack of available literature in the mother tongue, and the question is how this affects the pupils’ identity development and the general efforts put into raising the status of the vernacular languages? As some of the teachers state that they encourage their pupils to write in Cebuano, a potential for change may already be present. If the teachers were to make use of the pupils’ own texts in order to meet the need of written materials in the mother tongue, this may assist in the reading and writing of authentic texts in the mother tongue (Cummins, 2000a).

By extension, relations of power can serve to enable or constrain the range of identities that pupils can negotiate in their classrooms and communities (Cummins, 2000a; Norton, 1997). The fact that Teacher C stated that she experienced a need to develop her vocabulary in her mother
tongue in order to be able to communicate with the older generation, correlates to research into
the form of intergenerational isolation that arise when the younger generation of a family is un-
able to communicate with the older members of the family due to the former’s low proficiency in
the mother tongue; this isolation has proven to have strong emotional implications and affect the
individuals’ self-image in relation to the languages in question (Cumming-Potvin et. al, 2003). It is
possible to interpret the teachers’ statements as evidence of the role of English as a 'killer lan-
guage' in the Philippines (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002); even though the Cebuano language is not in
danger of becoming extinct, the extensive use of other languages appears to interfere with the
communication across generations.

The teachers working at the Private School describe that some of the pupils who have English as
their L1 rapidly pick up Cebuano through interaction with their peers, which can be seen as a part
of the pupils' identity-building process and serve as a tool to connect to wider social spheres. By
developing their L2, the pupils are included in the larger group of Cebuano speakers in addition
to the English-speaking academic community. It is reasonable to think that the pupils’ rapid lan-
guage development is motivated by a feeling of exclusion during code-switching, as this activity
has been proven to serve as a base for the creation of a 'we/they' dichotomy (Riley, 2007, p. 29).

The fact that the teachers' state that they make efforts to improve the pupils' self-esteem in rela-
tion to their school work and language use are in line with research that reveals the importance
for teachers to acknowledge and value their pupils' languages in order to build up their self-
esteem, which is a powerful foundation for learning (Lessow-Hurley, 2003).

6.3 Implications for practice in the Swedish context
By drawing on all of the pupils' languages, the Philippine teachers are scaffolding both the con-
ceptual development and the linguistic development of their pupils. However, in a Swedish con-
text, it is not realistic to expect the teachers to learn all their pupils’ languages, as this would likely
involve five or more different languages for any given group of pupils. However, the opportunity
to use the pupils' languages to support their learning process should not be declared lost so easily;
teachers in Sweden have to find other ways to draw on their pupils' linguistic repertoires. Fur-
thermore, teachers in Sweden need an intercultural competence, which include an awareness of
the pupils' different languages, as their pupils' are likely from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Drawing on inspiration from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, it may be argued that
what is relevant in one context may be irrelevant in the other, and so the teachers in both con-
texts have to take local conditions and the individual pupils of the groups into consideration
when planning their lessons.

6.4 Ideas for further research
As the Filipino pupils become older, the language of instruction will be English in most subjects,
which may prove to be problematic to those who have not yet developed their proficiency in
English at a CALP level (Cummins, 2000b). As early educational methods involve hands-on in-
teractive environments as opposed to higher educational methods, which veer toward more ab-
straction, it would be interesting to study the methods used by teachers at the higher levels of the
educational system in support of their pupils' language development. Additionally, as the mother
tongue based education is focusing only on the lower grades, it would be interesting to research what linguistic effects it has on high school and the higher education in the future. It would also be interesting to see if the Filipino students gain greater academic success when the medium of instruction is changed to the mother tongue, as was the case in Papua New Guinea (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002).

Furthermore, during the interviews, some of the teachers voiced concerns connected to the change of the language of instruction regarding, for example, the fact that as tests are given in English, children in public schools, who study English only as a subject, are put at a double disadvantage. These concerns should be taken seriously, and perhaps could a ethnographic study discover and analyze the result of official decisions.

7 Concluding words

The teachers interviewed in this study recognize the respective benefits of each of the languages in their community, and in this context, it is only natural for them to foster their pupils’ multilingual competence. In the ever-changing and globalized world of today, all languages should be seen as a possibility. This study may provide an insight into the Philippines, a country struggling to restore the respect for the vernacular languages while at the same time struggling with a situation in which proficiency in English is seen as a necessity for academic and professional success and the government uses the Filipino language as a means to unite the nation. To enable the pupils' academic success, the multilingualism in the classrooms in which the interviewed teachers are practicing their occupation, can and should be seen as a foundation and resource for teaching and learning.
References


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