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Research Article

Killing Multilingualism in the Philippines

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At the heart of this article are the questions: Is multilingualism being "killed" in the Philippines — and if so, why? Who is doing the "killing," and through what means is it happening? I navigate these questions in relation to Republic Act 12027, a contentious government policy that discontinues the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Philippine schools. Drawing on an analysis of public reactions to a Facebook post by a major newspaper announcing the law's passage, I identified three key patterns: (1) mother tongues as a source of confusion in learning, (2) mother tongues as languages strictly for the home, and (3) mother tongues as impediments to global competitiveness. These patterns are shaped by deeply rooted ideologies of monolingualism, standard language, and neoliberalism. Complementing this analysis, interviews with selected online users reveal how these ideologies are internalized through early childhood socialization and reinforced by media representations. Together, these findings point to two processes — systematic and diffused systemic — through which inclusive multilingualism is being "killed." In both instances, there is a pervasive assumption that multilingualism constitutes a problem that must be managed or solved. Against this backdrop, I contend that the Philippines is not becoming inclusively multilingual but is instead evolving into an increasingly hierarchical multilingual society.

Keywords: hierarchical multilingualism; inclusive multilingualism; mother tongue; MTB-MLE; language policy

1. INTRODUCTION

At the heart of this article are the questions: Is multilingualism "killed" in the Philippines — and if so, why? Who is doing the "killing," and through what means is it happening? I acknowledge that these questions may be unsettling to those who passionately celebrate multilingualism, as they challenge the romanticized view of the Philippines as "a paradise of languages" (Remoto, 2016). They are also provocative questions to pose because they imply that multilingualism is being actively and intentionally diminished, which might seem initially accusatory, suggesting that someone or something is responsible for the erosion of multilingualism. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of these questions is that they force us to apprehend what constitutes the "killing" of multilingualism.

Throughout history, multilingualism has had the potential to gradually decline or even vanish within any given society. Pavlenko's (2023) *Multilingualism and History* compellingly illustrates this phenomenon, challenging the widespread notion that the world is becoming increasingly multilingual and instead asserting the opposite. Three

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historical examples vividly demonstrate the decline of multilingualism. One is the transformation of the linguistically diverse Ottoman Empire into the predominantly monolingual nation-state of Turkey (Fortna, 2023). Another example is Japan, which was once home to numerous regional languages, such as Ainu and Okinawan, but has since shifted toward a single, standardized Japanese language as a result of modernization efforts in the late 19th century (Heinrich, 2012).

In my earlier work (Martinez, 2023), I illustrated how multilingualism was a fundamental feature of precolonial communities in the Philippines until it was systematically devalued by the Spanish colonizers from 1565 to 1898 through translation practices that both reflected and perpetuated linguistic hierarchization. Drawing from these historical instances, my use of the metaphor of "killing" in this paper is well justified, as it underscores that "killing" multilingualism is neither an overstatement nor a failure of imagination. Rather, the metaphor aptly captures the gradual processes through which multilingualism is suppressed, weakened or diminished.

I investigate the "killing" of multilingualism at a specific historical juncture, namely, present-day Philippine multilingualism, where the promotion of linguistic diversity coexists with the durability of English monolingualism. Across the span of Philippine history, numerous events have marked the weakening of multilingualism. To cite two examples: Rafael's (2011) *Contracting Colonialism* offers an account of how multilingualism in the Philippines was systematically undermined during the early Spanish colonial period. Although Rafael does not explicitly use the term "multilingualism," his book reveals how language was weaponized as a tool of colonial governance. Spanish and Latin were elevated and institutionalized, while local languages were suppressed within narrow ideological and religious frameworks. Extending this trajectory to more contemporary times, Doplon's (2018) study of language-in-education policies during the administration of former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo illustrates how multilingualism continues to erode in the postcolonial era. Through an analysis of 13 policy mandates issued by the Department of Education and the Office of the President from 2001 to 2009, she demonstrates a consistent privileging of English to the detriment of other Philippine languages.

The works of Rafael (2011) and Doplon (2018), each focusing on multilingualism in different periods of time, reveal that multilingualism in the Philippines has not only been historically suppressed but has also steadily declined. Both works align with my paper in demonstrating how multilingualism in the Philippines is weakening, mainly due to state policies and dominant language ideologies. However, my paper goes further by unpacking the specific domains through which these ideologies are shaped and internalized.

2. HIERARCHICAL AND INCLUSIVE MULTILINGUALISMS

Multilingualism is often defined as the presence of multiple languages. However, this oversimplified definition fails to account for the nuanced nature of multilingualism in the Philippines. What exists is not multilingualism but rather *multilingualisms,* manifested in varied and layered forms: *individual* (a person using two or more languages), *societal* (a community using multiple languages across domains), *additive* (languages are learned without losing the first language/s), *subtractive* (learning another language causes a person to lose or weaken their first language/s), *hierarchical* (languages coexist but accorded unequal status), and many more. These forms cannot be flattened into a uniform condition. Therefore, a view of multilingualism as the coexistence of different languages is narrow and inadequate.

My study is particularly concerned with what Mohanty (2010) terms *hierarchical multilingualism* — a situation where some languages, often English and a national language, are privileged, while others are marginalized and disadvantaged. There is a wide gap between the statuses of language, and such a gap is not without its cost. It leads to "marginalization, domain shrinkage, identity crisis, deprivation of freedom and capability, educational failure (due to inadequate home language development and forced submersion in majority language schools), and poverty" (Mohanty, 2010, p. 138). In this regard, multilingualism does not always imply equity. Languages are ordered and policed, with a few dominating the spheres of education, governance, and economic mobility, while others are relegated to the periphery or private life. Ideologies related to prestige, power, globalization, and identity govern how languages are ranked hierarchically.

The notion of hierarchical multilingualism mirrors what Tupas (2015) refers to as the *inequalities of multilingualism*, where language becomes a site of exclusion, stratification, and limited access to resources and opportunities. These inequalities are not accidental. Ideological and structural forces shape them. In the Philippines, linguistic hierarchies and inequalities are shaped by both structural and ideological factors — ideological because they are governed by the ideas, beliefs, and attitudes among people, and structural because such ideas, beliefs, and attitudes are embedded in how institutions operate (Tupas, 2015). The unequal valuation of languages in the Philippines is well-documented across various domains. In the field of education (e.g., Tupas, 2018; Tupas & Metila, 2023), within family language practices (e.g., Alvarez-Tosalem et al., 2025), and in professional and workplace settings (e.g., Martinez, 2024), research consistently reveals how English is positioned as the dominant and more desirable language, often at the expense of regional, Indigenous, and non-standard languages. These studies expose the enduring hierarchies of multilingualism that shape everyday life.

The opposite of hierarchical multilingualism is what I call *inclusive multilingualism* — an orientation that affirms the equal value of all languages, regardless of their institutional status or number of speakers. This term resists the politics of linguistic

hierarchization. It insists that every language needs to be recognized, maintained, and used as a means of identity, participation, and empowerment. My motivation for introducing this term is not to advance a theory of multilingualism (though that may be explored in future work), but to articulate my position that while multilingualism is present in the Philippines, what is actually being "killed" is its inclusive, equitable form. This stance is conceptually sound, drawing attention to a critical contradiction that multilingualism may exist in practice, but not in principle.

Both hierarchical and inclusive multilingualism can be understood as outcomes of *language managemen*t. In Spolsky's (2009) theorization of language management, he outlines several key assumptions, two of which I will mention here. First, language management is shaped by the beliefs and practices of members within specific domains (e.g., home, school, church, and workplace). They serve as sites and conduits for the transmission of linguistic beliefs and practices. Second, language management assumes the presence of a "manager" — whether an individual or a group — who actively attempts to alter the beliefs and practices within those domains. These two assumptions remind us that hierarchical and inclusive multilingualism do not occur naturally but are ideologically constructed and maintained through social and institutional practices.

Building on the concepts of *hierarchical multilingualism* (Mohanty, 2010), *inequalities of multilingualism* (Tupas, 2015), and *language management* (Spolsky, 2009), this article argues that, in the Philippine context, what is being undermined or "killed" is not multilingualism in a general sense, but rather inclusive multilingualism. The erosion of inclusive multilingualism is driven by dominant language ideologies that are shaped and circulated within specific social domains.

To navigate this phenomenon, the present study pursues two objectives: (1) to identify and examine the ideologies that contribute to the weakening of inclusive multilingualism in the Philippines, and (2) to analyze the domains through which these ideologies emerge and are propagated. The first objective draws on textual data, specifically comments from a Facebook thread discussing a state policy that discontinued the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction (MOI) in Philippine schools. The second objective utilizes interview data, obtained through conversations with a sample of online users who contributed to that discussion. The methodological procedures underlying both sets of data are described in Section 5. Given the centrality of the mother tongue in this study, I first provide an operational definition of the term as it is situated within the Philippine context.

3. MOTHER TONGUE AND FIRST LANGUAGE

The distinction between *mother tongue* and *first language* varies across contexts. For some, the terms overlap, while for others, they are distinguished based on factors such as acquisition, emotional attachment, and identity. A mother tongue refers to the

language a person acquires from primary caregivers, such as a mother, within the home environment (Kieu, 2023). Abad (2007) contends that mother tongues are intricately connected to emotional bonds, sensory experiences, sensibilities, and identities. These deep-seated connections render the mother tongue the most effective medium for facilitating learning.

> Ang pagkatuto ay mabilis at epektibo kung direktang gumigising ito sa maraming pandama at sensibilidad ng mga mag-aaral at wala ng ibang wikang kakatawan dito kundi ang wika niya sa araw-araw at wikang magbibigay sa kanya ng higit na tiwala at pagkakakilanlan (Abad, 2007, p. 222).
>
> (Learning is quick and effective when it directly awakens multiple senses and sensitivities of students, and no other language can do this except their everyday language — the language that nurtures their confidence and sense of identity.)

On the other hand, first language (L1) typically refers to the language one has learnt first, identifies with, knows best, and uses the most (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Thus, by comparison, L1 concerns the process of language acquisition, whereas the mother tongue signifies sociocultural affiliation and heritage.

These distinctions reflect individual linguistic experiences: a language may serve as both a mother tongue and an L1, while in other cases, a language may function as an L1 without being the mother tongue. Depending on the caregiving environment, a child may be exposed to multiple languages as L1s, even if these are not the mother's language in the strictest sense (Kieu, 2023). Consider a hypothetical case: Maria, a 25-year-old from Davao in southern Philippines, was raised speaking Cebuano at home. As a language connected to her family and ethnolinguistic identity, Cebuano is her mother tongue. However, she acquired both Cebuano and Filipino, the national language, early in life through exposure at home, in school, and on the broader community, making both languages her L1s.

In principle, at least, the terms differ, but in the Philippines, they tend to overlap. In fact, certain official documents from the Philippines' Department of Education concerning multilingual education use mother tongue and L1 interchangeably, as shown below:

> The lessons and findings of various local initiatives and international studies in basic education have validated the superiority of the use of the learner's mother tongue or first language in improving learning outcomes and promoting Education for All (EFA). (Department of Education, 2009, p. 1, italics mine)
>
> During the first key stage, the first language (L1) or mother tongue remains to be used as the primary medium of teaching and learning. (Department of Education, 2023, p. 15, italics mine)

The alternate use of the two terms in policy discourses in the Philippines reflects not only practical and administrative considerations but also pedagogical and ideological concerns. To align with current usage in the Philippines, I also use these terms

interchangeably in this article. It should be noted, however, that the overlap of the terms is not unique to the Philippines. For instance, a 2003 position paper by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on multilingual education also uses mother tongue to refer to L1 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003).

4. A CONTENTIOUS LAW

On October 10, 2024, the bill that discontinues the use of mother tongues as the MOI lapsed into law without the signature of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., the son of a former dictator who assumed office in 2022. While Marcos's involvement in the legislative process remains undeniably significant, his decision not to sign or veto the bill reflects a perceived indifference or lack of competence in addressing quality education. Notably, the rule of law permits Marcos to abstain from signing a bill. Under the Philippine Constitution, a Senate bill may automatically become law if it remains unsigned by the president for 30 days after receipt.

The bill that lapsed into law is known as Republic Act No. 12027 (RA 12027), entitled "An Act Discontinuing the Use of the Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 3, Providing for Its Optional Implementation in Monolingual Classes, and Amending for the Purpose Sections 4 and 5 of Republic Act No. 10533, Otherwise Known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013." As indicated by its long title, RA 12027 amends the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, which institutionalizes the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program (Republic Act No. 12027, 2024).

Under the MTB-MLE program, formally introduced in 2009, the mother tongue functions both as a subject and as the MOI from Kindergarten to Grade 3, before transitioning to English and Filipino beginning in Grade 4. The discontinuation of the mother tongue as MOI entails a reversion to Filipino and English as the primary languages of instruction, with regional languages assuming an auxiliary role. Notably, prior to the enactment of RA 12027, the mother tongue had already been removed as a separate subject under the MATATAG Curriculum, a recalibration of the K-12 Curriculum implemented on August 10, 2023.

RA 12027 does not entirely remove the mother tongue as MOI. Instead, it allows its use only in cases where the class is monolingual; that is, composed of students of the same grade who speak the same L1. According to the implementing rules and regulations outlined by the Department of Education and the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), the mother tongue may be used as the MOI in monolingual classes only if the following are available: an official orthography developed and published by the KWF; officially documented vocabulary resources such as a dictionary or encyclopedia; a grammar

book; literature written in big books and picture books; and qualified teachers who both speak the language and are trained to teach in it (Department of Education, 2025).

Social media was flooded with polarizing reactions when RA 12027 was announced in the news. There was considerable opposition to the law, but there were also those who were in favor of it. What I find instructive here is that the supporters of RA 12027 outnumber its detractors, suggesting a surge of public sentiment that deserves scholarly attention. It is this public sentiment that I examine in this paper, focusing specifically on the online reactions of the general public whom Benson and Kosonen (2021) refer to as "actors from below." Unlike government institutions and international organizations (*actors from above*) or academics and members of civil society organizations (*actors from the side*), these individuals operate outside formal institutional spaces.

As grassroots actors, their social media posts have the potential to shape public opinion and even influence policy direction. By analyzing public discourses surrounding RA 12027, I aim to contribute to broader conversations on multilingualism and highlight the vital role the general public plays, not as passive recipients of language policy, but as active participants who accept, challenge, and negotiate the policies that affect their everyday lives.

5. EXPLORING THE DATA

INQUIRER.net is the official digital platform of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, a well-established English-language daily newspaper. It offers online access to news, articles, and content that were originally featured in the print version of the publication. INQUIRER.net maintains various online platforms, such as Facebook, X, Instagram, and YouTube. The data for this study consists of comments on RA 12027 posted on INQUIRER.net's Facebook page on October 12, 2024 (INQUIRER.net, 2024). The post briefly reported the circumstances surrounding the enactment of RA 12027 and included screenshots of the official policy document.

The post received a total of 524 comments and was shared more than 4,000 times. I manually copied and pasted these comments into a text document, along with additional metadata such as the user's name (presented as pseudonyms in this paper) and the date of the comment. For comments written in languages other than Tagalog, Ilocano, and English (three languages with which I am familiar), I requested translation assistance from colleagues. I then filtered the data based on a specific set of criteria.

The inclusion criteria were:

- Comments that directly discuss or respond to the news about RA 12027;
- Comments that express a clear opinion or stance regarding RA 12027; and
- Comments with high engagement or visibility (e.g., those with many replies).

The exclusion criteria were:

- Comments that are off-topic, irrelevant, or unrelated to the news;
- Comments with non-substantive content, such as spam, or irrelevant emojis; and
- Comments that are too brief or vague (e.g., simply “I agree” or “I disagree”).

Of the 524 comments, 357 were excluded from the dataset. The remaining 167 were examined through Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992). The coding process involved identifying three main codes: (1) support for RA 12027, (2) opposition to RA 12027, and (3) neutral comments (those that reflect mixed views or acknowledge both positive and negative aspects of the law). Of the total, 96 comments were categorized under the first code, 54 under the second, and 17 under the third. The comments in the first code were further classified into subcategories reflecting broader language ideologies.

To enhance the reliability of the coding process, I invited a colleague to code the same dataset independently. We then compared our coding outcomes and, in cases of disagreement, jointly reviewed the data, refined our coding scheme, and reached consensus to ensure accurate classification.

As one of the aims of this study is to explore the language ideologies contributing to the weakening of multilingualism, the analysis focuses mainly on comments that support RA 12027 (code 1). A brief analysis of opposing comments (code 2) will follow as a secondary layer of interpretation. While Code 3 comments were important in capturing ambivalence, they are excluded from the main analysis in this paper, as they do not strongly reflect a clear ideological position.

To analyze the domains through which these ideologies emerge and are propagated, I employed non-probability purposive sampling by privately messaging nine of the most active users on the Facebook post who supported RA 12027. Of these nine, only five agreed to participate in an interview. The demographic information about the interview participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Interview Participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Gender	Occupation	Place of Residence
Niko	27	Cisgender male	Professional gamer	Metro Manila
Jennylyn	43	Cisgender female	Homemaker	Laguna

Cristina	40	Cisgender female	Online seller	Davao del Norte
Alona	50	Cisgender female	Accountant	Perth, Australia
Marco	35	Cisgender male	Salesperson	Metro Manila

The interview focused on the main question: *Can you share an experience from the past that made you think using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction is not a good idea?* The recorded interviews, conducted in Tagalog and English — languages familiar to all five participants — lasted an average of twenty minutes. My research assistant manually transcribed the interviews.

The interview data underwent a coding process as well. Initially, I identified recurring codes related to both *human* (e.g., mother and sister) and *non-human* sources (e.g., newspaper and TV) of their belief systems. I then organized these codes into two categories: (1) *socialization from childhood*, and (2) *media representations*. I asked the same colleague to code the data, compared our coding decisions, refined the codes and categories, and reached a consensus.

It should be noted that excluding online users who do not support the law from interviews reflects a methodological decision intended to maintain the study's focus and depth. Interviewing non-supporters of RA 12027 could introduce viewpoints that, although valuable in a broader discourse, may fall outside the specific scope and objectives of this study. Nonetheless, future research may incorporate interview data from non-supporters to explore counter-narratives surrounding RA 12027.

Before moving further, I would like to add a statement about the measures I took to safeguard research ethics. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, this study involves a systematic analysis of publicly available online comments posted on the Facebook page of the Philippine Daily Inquirer. All data analyzed were retrieved from publicly accessible posts that did not require login credentials or membership. Identifiable personal information, such as usernames or profile details, was neither collected nor reported in this article. All quotations have been anonymized.

In addition to analyzing public comments, a subset of users who had posted comments was invited to participate in interviews. I contacted them through direct messaging and provided an information sheet outlining the study's objectives, their rights as participants, and how their data would be handled. Informed consent was obtained before each interview. All identifying information has been removed or anonymized to ensure participant confidentiality.

6. MONOLINGUAL, STANDARD LANGUAGE, AND NEOLIBERAL IDEOLOGIES

Three key patterns surfaced in the analysis of online comments: (1) *mother tongues as a source of confusion in learning*, (2) *mother tongues as languages strictly for the home*, and (3) *mother tongues as impediments to global competitiveness*. These patterns are indicative of damaging ideological frameworks that promote monolingualism, standard language, and neoliberalism, which influence how languages are perceived and used in educational contexts in the Philippines. I analyze each pattern using exemplar comments, unedited and accompanied by English translations in parentheses, from online users.

6.1 Mother Tongues as a Source of Confusion in Learning

The findings point to a prevailing belief that the use of L1s as MOI is a source of confusion among students. This belief stems from concerns that incorporating L1 in the classroom might hinder students' ability to understand the lesson's contents fully.

> Katrina: Mabuti naman po at natugonan ninyo. Ung mga naunang nag isip neto jusko apaka t.... pinaglaruan lng ang kinabukasan ng mga bata. Walang kwentang subject ngdudulot lng ng kalitohan sa mga bata. Salamat po.
>
> (It's good that this has been addressed. My goodness, those who initially thought of this were [expletive deleted], they just played with the future of the children. It's a useless subject that only causes confusion among the kids. Thank you.)

Katrina expresses strong opposition to the use of mother tongues in classroom instruction. Her comment reflects a strong sense of frustration and disapproval, as evidenced by the use of a Tagalog expletive (deleted from the above quotation). She critiques those who advocated for the use of L1, characterizing their actions as irresponsible and suggesting that such decisions were reckless and harmful to the well-being of the children.

However, Katrina is mistaken in thinking that RA 12027 addresses the status of mother tongue as a subject. As previously mentioned, the law concerns specifically the discontinuation of the mother tongue as MOI. Mother tongue as a subject was removed from the K-12 curriculum before the passage of RA 12027. Similarly, the comments on the post reflect a recurring misunderstanding of the law, with some online users conflating the use of the mother tongue as a subject with its use as MOI.

The data also show that the confusion caused by the use of L1s in school is not limited to children or students alone, but also extends to their legal guardians, such as parents, aunts, or uncles. This implies that utilizing L1s in educational contexts reaches beyond the students, affecting the comprehension and participation of family members who may find it challenging to assist in their children's education.

> Janice: Yung mga bata ngayon delayed na comprehension dahil sa mother tongue struggle at stress talaga sa mga anak at magulang.
>
> (Children nowadays have delayed comprehension because of the mother tongue. It's really stressful for both the kids and the parents.)

According to her Facebook profile, Janice identifies as a mother, and she attributes children's delayed comprehension to the use of L1s from a maternal perspective. She suggests that the use of mother tongues in the school is causing stress not only for the children, who are struggling with understanding, but also for parents like her, who find it challenging to support their children's learning. The tone reflects frustration, as Janice seems to view the mother tongue as an obstacle to effective learning, implying that it complicates the educational process. A similar sentiment is shared by Pedro.

> Pedro: Mas mabuti kasi diko na maintindihan ibang salita sa libro ng mga pamangkin ko, ang lalalim bes.
>
> (It's better because I can no longer understand some of the words in my nieces' and nephews' books. They're too complex, *bes*.)

Pedro conveys a sense of relief, albeit with underlying frustration. He suggests that the implementation of RA 12027 has improved the situation, as he no longer has to struggle with understanding certain words in the books of his sibling's children. The source of his stress stems from what he perceives as the complex vocabulary or language used in these books. This could indicate a mismatch between the language level of the books and Pedro's own language proficiency or understanding.

The view that mother tongues are a source of learning confusion is also experienced by the teachers themselves. For some of the internet users, the shift to L1 in teaching presents challenges in terms of curriculum implementation, lesson delivery, and assessing students' understanding. Teachers, especially those who are more accustomed to using English or Filipino as the primary MOI, struggle to adapt to the nuances and complexities of teaching in L1s.

> Rosanna: Mabuti naman, nahihirapan din ako magturo ng mother tongue kasi ang lalim ng Maguindanaon words na ginagamit.
>
> (It's good, though I also find it difficult to teach the mother tongue because the Maguindanaon words used are too deep.)

Motivated by frustration, Rosanna acknowledges that RA 12027 is a good idea because it addresses the difficulty that she faces due to the nuances of Maguindanaoan, a language spoken by the Maguindanao people, primarily in the provinces of Maguindanao del Norte and Maguindanao del Sur in the Philippines. She highlights that certain Maguindanaon words or expressions are particularly difficult to comprehend or explain, which impedes her ability to teach smoothly.

The comments of Katrina, Janice, Pedro, Rosanna, and many others clearly express frustration, confusion, and even relief, particularly in response to the passing of RA

12027. We must remember, however, that emotions are not neutral (Ahmed, 2024). People's emotions about language reflect deeper beliefs about its role in educational contexts. Affective responses to language use, whether frustration, confusion, or relief, stem from broader ideological perspectives about what teachers and students consider "valuable" or "effective" in education.

The comments above embody a monolingual ideology, asserting that the use of multiple languages, particularly mother tongues, creates confusion and hinders learning. Explicitly, they advocate for education to be conducted in a single language, rooted in the belief that mixing languages disrupts comprehension of the target content. By framing the use of mother tongues as inherently problematic and confusing, these comments align with a deficit perspective that views multilingual practices as inferior to monolingual norms. Furthermore, the assertion that the mother tongue is a "useless" subject disregards substantial research demonstrating that the MTB-MLE program improves learning outcomes, cognitive development, and cultural identities (e.g., Arzadon, 2024; Metila et al., 2017; Nolasco, 2008; Walter & Dekker, 2011). However, it is crucial to understand that views in favor of the law may not result from an intentional disregard of academic research, but rather from a lack of awareness or limited access to relevant studies.

6.2 Mother Tongues as Languages Strictly for the Home

The findings also underscore the restriction of mother tongues to the home environment, a practice often justified as a means of prioritizing official or dominant languages within educational contexts. This belief is grounded in the assumption that the introduction of multiple languages to students may hinder their learning process, leading to the compartmentalization of languages, where mother tongues are confined to the home and standard languages are reserved for the school environment. Such a problematic separation is viewed as a strategy to prevent confusion and facilitate more effective learning.

> Dominic: Sa totoo lang simula ng ipatupad yan na mother tongue karamihan ng kabataan na tumuntong ng Grade One ay nahirapan umintende ng leksyon, kasi iba iba ang lengguwahe ng bawat lugar, ang mas tama na ituro ay ang tagalog/ pilipino dahil yan ang ating pambansang wika. Karamihan din ngayon ng mga bata English speaking, pero pag pinasulat mo kahit yong simple word lang hindi marunong, magaling lang magsalita kasi sa mga naririnig nya pero hindi alam kong ano ang spelling. Ang bata automatic yan natututo ng mother tongue don sa lugar kong saan sya nakatira.
>
> (To be honest, ever since the implementation of the mother tongue policy, most children who reach Grade One struggle to understand the lessons because each place has a different language. It would be more appropriate to teach Tagalog/Filipino since it is our national language. Nowadays, many children are English-speaking, but when you ask them to write even simple words, they do not know how. They are good at speaking because of what they hear, but they do not know how to spell the words. Children automatically learn the mother tongue in the place where they live.)

Dominic articulates a perspective that confines the role of the mother tongue to the home environment while advocating for the use of Tagalog-based Filipino as the primary MOI. He expresses concern that incorporating mother tongues in education may engender confusion among children due to the linguistic diversity across regions. He also perceives a disjunction between oral proficiency in English and written literacy, suggesting that children acquire spoken English through exposure but encounter difficulties with spelling. Implicitly, his comment reinforces the notion that the mother tongue is more effectively acquired naturally within the home environment than through formal education. Joan expresses a similar sentiment.

> Joan: Very Very Very Good! Ang "mother tongue" ay sa mga tahanan na lamang. Dapat ensayuhin ng mabuti ang mga mag-aaral sa ENGLISH speaking at writing.
>
> (The "mother tongue" should be confined to the home. Students should be thoroughly trained in English speaking and writing.)

Joan devalues the role of the mother tongue in formal education, suggesting also that it should be restricted to the home. Her brief comment implies that the mother tongue has limited utility or relevance within academic settings. Through advocating for the confinement of the mother tongue to the private sphere of the home, she implicitly suggests that L1s lack the prestige and practicality necessary for formal education.

However, while both Dominic and Joan agree on restricting the mother tongue to domestic settings, the question becomes: Which language should take its place in formal education? This is where their views diverge, reflecting deeper ideological differences. For Dominic, it is Standard Filipino, while for Joan, it is Standard English. The disagreement between Dominic and Joan over which language should replace the mother tongue in formal education reflects a key issue in standard language ideology — the belief in the superiority and legitimacy of a "standard" version of a language, often in contrast to Indigenous and other non-standard languages. This ideology is pervasive in educational contexts, where standard languages are often seen as more prestigious, authoritative, and suitable.

For Dominic, supporting Standard Filipino as the language of education aligns with a *national standard language ideology* that upholds Filipino as the national language of the Philippines. In this framework, Standard Filipino is regarded as a cohesive, formally "correct" version of the language, appropriate for official use, including education. On the other hand, Joan's support for Standard English as *the* language in education reflects the strong influence of *global standard language ideology*, which positions English as the dominant language in international communication. English, as a standardized language, has become linked with prestige, economic success, and access to global opportunities. Joan's preference for Standard English reflects the belief that English is not just a tool for communication but an essential skill for succeeding in a globalized world. These contrasting ideologies illustrate the broader conflict between *localism* (Dominic's promotion of Filipino) and *globalism* (Joan's promotion of English) in language policies and education.

The comments of Dominic and Joan reveal an underlying belief that only the dominant or official language (e.g., Standard Filipino or English) should be used in educational spheres. Their remarks are grounded in the idea that multilingualism could hinder academic and professional success. In this sense, restricting the mother tongue to the home implies a preference for monolingualism in formal contexts, reinforcing the notion that non-standard languages should remain private or informal, confined to the home or community, while the standard, official language(s) dominate public life. This approach marginalizes the mother tongues and diminishes the perceived value of linguistic diversity in formal education.

6.3 Mother Tongues as Impediments to Global Competitiveness

The findings also reveal how the mother tongues are often perceived as an obstacle to the global competitiveness of Filipinos, particularly in the context of education policies aimed at aligning the country with global standards. This perception is grounded in the widespread notion that proficiency in English is crucial for accessing global opportunities, whether in higher education, the workforce, or international trade. From this viewpoint, mother tongues are seen not as valuable resources, but rather as barriers that limit students' ability to compete on a global scale.

Vivian's comment reflects this belief, emphasizing that the Philippines' only real advantage over other Southeast Asian countries is its proficiency in English. She further suggests that Filipinos should excel in English due to its importance in industries such as call centers and tourism. She also highlights English as a linguistic asset in securing work overseas.

> Vivian: Dapat lang naman, iyan na nga lang advantage natin sa ibang ASEAN countries eh. Dapat nga kapag Filipino class lang nagsasalita ng Filipino eh parang sa Ateneo at La Salle. Nabubuhay tao sa call center, OFW at turismo kaya dapat magaling tayo English kahit ano pa work mo.
>
> (It's only right, that's our only advantage over other ASEAN countries. In fact, when it's a Filipino class, we should speak Filipino just like in Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University. People survive through call centers, being OFWs, and tourism, so we should be good at English, no matter what job you have.)

Eric aligns with Vivian's perspective but takes a more direct and outright position against the use of mother tongues in education. He strongly advocates for prioritizing English as MOI, viewing it as essential for fostering global competitiveness among children. He views proficiency in English as crucial for accessing opportunities in the global economy, and he believes that using the L1s as MOI limits students' ability to fully engage in international markets and communication.

> Eric: This is a correct measure. There is no mother tongue but the international language making the children globally competetive in communication skills. I agree to this.

Anthony presents a strong critique of the use of mother tongues as MOI. He begins by questioning whether mother tongues have any practical benefits, implying that they do not contribute to the development of essential skills for global competitiveness.

> Anthony: Very cutesy, very demure, and very classy. Is there any benefits that the students get having taught of mother tongue? The Philippine education system is evolving backwards. As a Foreign Language Teacher in other country, I am very happy that the mother tongue is now discontinued as a medium of instruction in Kinder - Grade 3 why, because the main purpose of K-12 program curriculum in the Philippines is for the Filipino learners to be globally competitive.

Anthony further argues that the Philippine education system is regressing by maintaining the use of mother tongues in the early years of education. As a foreign language teacher abroad, he underscores the significance of the K-12 program in priming students to be globally competitive. Eric's comment echoes what San Juan (2016) refers to as the "neoliberal restructuring of education in the Philippines." San Juan contends that the transition from a ten-year (K-10) to a twelve-year (K-12) basic education cycle in 2012 is driven primarily by market-oriented imperatives rather than broader educational or social objectives. This neoliberal restructuring is evident in the K-12's emphasis on English proficiency in higher grades and the elimination of subjects that foster creativity and critical thinking, both of which are seen as mechanisms for preparing students to participate effectively in the global economy.

Vivian, Eric, Anthony, and many other internet users extol the value of English for participating in the global economy. But what kind of participation in the global economy are they talking about? In the Philippines, global competitiveness is framed through a neoliberal lens, focusing on the language skills and knowledge necessary to participate in the global economy (Martinez, 2024; San Juan, 2016). Education serves the function of preparing Filipino students for the international job market, with a focus on English fluency, technical skills, and adaptability. However, despite these efforts, Filipino participation in the global economy often takes the form of servitude (Lorente, 2017).

The country has become heavily dependent on the Global North for jobs, where corporations and governments set the terms of labor, leaving the Philippines with little bargaining power. As a result, Filipinos contribute to global production but receive only a small share of the benefits. They have limited control over their working conditions, pay, and labor rights. Many Filipinos face long hours, low wages, and poor working conditions in other countries. While their work is crucial to the global economy, they are underpaid and overworked, participating not by choice but out of necessity. This framing of participation as servitude reveals a global system where Filipinos are positioned to serve rather than drive globalization (Lorente, 2017).

7. RESISTING RESISTANCE TO THE MOTHER TONGUE

RA 12027 enjoys widespread public approval, as evident from the number of Facebook comments in favor of it. However, there is also a considerable number of online reactions demonstrating opposition to the law. They highlight concerns about the law's potential negative impacts on linguistic diversity, cultural identity, and the educational development of children. Due to space constraints, a detailed analysis of the online comments is not feasible; instead, I offer a holistic reading of their broad implications for multilingualism.

> Bianca: to everyone who's cheering about the implementation of this policy: you should not. It's been proven time and time that stopping our children from using their mother tongue in the early years of language education is detrimental to their learning. besides, it's NOT even true na (that) learning our mother tongue will negatively impact our global competitiveness. this is so disappointing.
>
> Lina: People celebrating this don't really know the importance of our mother tongues in our identity. This is sad and very disappointing.
>
> Jeremy: The lawmakers are NOT academicians and researchers nor linguist who have best knowledge on the significance of Mother Tongue in learning acquisition. Their stand is political based on baseless clamour from stakeholders and group who wants to make a new BRAND. Generally, the Mother Tongue is NOT a problem in classroom instruction but rather addresses communication gap between teachers and learners and more importantly strengthen understanding and critical thinking on CONCEPT development in all topics.
>
> Johnny: Bayang paurong talaga tayo. Imbes na gamitin ang wika kung saan matututo ang bata ay pinagpipilitan sa wikang Ingles.
>
> (We really are a regressing nation. Instead of using the language through which children can learn better, English is still being forced upon them.)
>
> Antonio: Nakakalungkot lang na karamihan sa comment section ay sang-ayon sa batas na 'to. Sinasabi na kesyo hindi naman kailangan ang mother tongue at sinasabi pang dialect lang ang mga ito. Mas nakakalungkot lang kasi karamihan din tingin ay mas gagaling na mga estudyante natin dahil di na ituturo ang mother tongue. Makatutulong daw ito para maging mas globally competitive ang mga estudyante. Nakakatawa lang kasi ang nagiging basehan na lang din ng pagiging globally competitive ay yung kayang makapagtrabaho sa ibang bansa, kaya kinakailangan daw ang English. Wag po sana natin kalimutan na magkarugtong ang wika at identidad. Ang batas na 'to ay binabalik lang tayo sa mga nakaraang sistema na napatunayang di rin naman epektibo. Another thing, may mga kinonsulta bang eksperto sa wika at edukasyon bago naipasa 'to? Sad lang pre.
>
> (It's just disheartening that most of the comments in the section agree with this law. They argue that the mother tongue isn't really necessary and even dismiss it as just a dialect. What's even more troubling is that many believe students will perform better simply because the mother tongue will no longer be taught. They say it will help make students more globally competitive. It's laughable, really, because their idea of being globally competitive is limited to being able to work abroad; hence, the emphasis on

> English. But we must not forget that language and identity are deeply connected. This law is merely dragging us back to outdated systems that have already been proven ineffective. Also, were any language and education experts even consulted before this law was passed? It's just sad, bro.)

The online users above reject the popular but misguided notion that learning English is a key to global competitiveness. Instead, they point out that such an idea devalues mother tongue and cultural identity. They also underscore the pedagogical value of L1s, citing their role in improving comprehension, concept development, and thinking skills. They also criticized the law's passage for its disregard of expert consultation in the policymaking process.

Amidst efforts to "kill" multilingualism, there is collective hope, as can be seen in the comments above, which continue to defend and promote inclusive multilingualism. Their resistance also demonstrates that inclusive multilingualism is not doomed but can persist and even thrive when people actively advocate for just, empowering, and inclusive language practices.

8. TRACING THE ROOTS

Online comments, on their own, do not provide sufficient context to comprehend the provenance of a person's beliefs on language; thus, I carried out interviews. Through interviews, it becomes possible to examine how ideologies are formed, internalized, and reproduced over time.

In this section, I draw from conversations with selected online users to trace the origins and development of their language ideologies. Based on interviews with five of the most active internet users who commented on the INQUIRER.net Facebook post (see Table 1), I found that ideologies of English monolingualism and standard language have become deeply embedded in their mindsets and behaviors, shaped by (1) *early childhood socialization* and reinforced by (2) *media representations*. I analyze each of these sources using exemplar interview quotations, presented unedited and accompanied by English translations in parentheses.

8.1 Socialization from Childhood

The influence of family on language choices is a key factor in shaping a monolingual mindset (Alvarez-Tosalem et al., 2025). Alona, an accountant living in Australia, explains how her parents prioritized her learning of English. She reflects that this early focus on English influenced not only her language habits but also her career achievements, reinforcing the notion that English is more valuable than other languages.

> Alona: We lived in Leyte, and I was surrounded with people who speak Waray. But at home, my parents wanted me to speak English instead. Back then, I didn't understand because my friends were not speaking English. Every weekend, my mom goes to National Bookstore to buy children's books in English, then started buying Nancy Drew as I grow older. She always reminds me to use English because it will be good for my future. And this habit of reading English books was helpful when I study. So, I guess Marcos was right that we should focus on English, training children as early as they can, because English will help them have, say, a good career in the future like me. Between local dialects and English, it's English no doubt.

In the above statement, Alona reflects on a personal experience of language use and language preference while growing up in Leyte, where Waray-Waray is commonly spoken. She shares that her parents encouraged her to speak English at home, despite the community predominantly speaking Waray-Waray. She perceives that her early exposure to English, reinforced by reading English books, was beneficial for her career success. She also expresses support for prioritizing English over local languages in the education system, citing the practical advantages of English proficiency for career opportunities.

Jennyln's personal experience of being raised in an English-speaking environment is heavily influenced by family members both locally and abroad. She shares that her relatives from the United States would bring English movie DVDs when visiting the Philippines, reinforcing English exposure from a young age. Additionally, her mother was strict about maintaining English use, even to the point of correcting grammar and discouraging the use of Tagalog at home.

> Jennylyn: I grew up in an English environment. My relatives from America, they bought DVDs of English movies for me when they visit the Philippines. My mother was also very strict. She corrects my grammar and sometimes, she scolds my father for speaking to me in Tagalog. Now that I'm a mother, I do the same things to my children. I am raising them to be good in English at an early age. They speak Tagalog, too, influenced by their friends, but as much as possible, I want them to be better in English than Tagalog. At home, I speak to them in English so they get used to it.

Now a parent herself, Jennylyn continues this language practice by raising her two children to be proficient in English from an early age. Although her children are exposed to Tagalog through their friends, she prioritizes English and maintains an English-speaking environment at home to ensure that their children are more fluent in English than in Tagalog.

Alona and Jennylyn's interviews reveal the following ways in which childhood experiences contribute to the formation of monolingual English ideologies:

- If parents deliberately create an English-only environment at home, such as correcting grammar mistakes, discouraging the use of local languages, and promoting English media, children may develop the belief that English is superior or more valuable than other languages. For instance, when Jennylyn's

mother reprimands her husband for speaking to Jennylyn in Tagalog, it implicitly conveys that the local language is less appropriate or even inferior.

- When parents openly express the idea that English proficiency leads to better career prospects or social mobility, children absorb this value system. For instance, when Alona's mother emphasizes that reading English books will increase her chances of securing a good job, it reinforces the idea that fluency in English is synonymous with being educated or successful.
- When parents provide children with books, movies, and educational materials primarily in English, they may unintentionally communicate the idea that English holds greater prestige or practicality. For instance, Alona's exposure to English-language books, with her mother choosing not to purchase resources in other languages, reinforced this perception. Despite the presence of local languages within Alona's community, the dominance of English at home can lead to the belief that English is the "default" or "correct" language.

The long-term impacts should not be ignored. Childhood experiences can cultivate a mindset that favors monolingualism in English at the cost of maintaining L1s. As children grow up, they may internalize the belief that fluency in English is essential for socioeconomic success, while L1s are perceived as less practical or even obsolete. This monolingual mindset can be challenging to change later in life, as it becomes embedded in a person's linguistic identity and worldview. It also influences how they, as adults, raise their own children and perpetuate the cycle of monolingual ideology across generations.

8.2 Media Representations

Any language policy is influenced in part by broader societal perceptions of language, which are often shaped by media (Mason & Hajek, 2020). This influence is evident in the content consumption habits of Filipino audiences, where media preferences reflect prevailing language attitudes. For many, the appeal of content creators hinges on the language they use. This is evident in Niko's experience, where his preference for English-speaking vloggers reflects a broader trend of associating English with prestige. As he explains, vloggers who speak English tend to attract a larger following, which contributes to their popularity.

> Niko: Mahilig ako manood ng vlogs in my free time. Pansin ko na cool tignan ng mga vloggers na nagsasalita ng English like Heart Evangelista. (I enjoy watching vlogs in my free time. I notice that Filipino vloggers who speak in English look really cool like Heart Evangelista.) She speaks in English, right? She's so cool and beautiful. I think vloggers who speak English, they have a big audience. They have many followers, including me. I also watch vloggers in Tagalog sa Tiktok, but normally I don't follow them.

Niko's comment shows his preference for watching vlogs in English, particularly those by Filipino vloggers who speak English, such as actress Heart Evangelista. He observes that English-speaking vloggers often appear "cool" and "beautiful" and tend to have a larger following, which includes him. He admires their looks and communication styles. Although he also watches Tagalog-speaking vloggers on TikTok, he implies that he does not follow them as consistently or with the same enthusiasm.

Media representations not only shape the way we view different languages but also influence how regional languages are perceived and how speakers of these languages perceive themselves. This is especially true for speakers of Bisaya, a broad family of languages spoken in the Visayas and Mindanao regions of the Philippines, who often encounter negative portrayals in mainstream media. As Cristina explains, the mockery of the Bisaya accent in media has motivated her to change the way she speaks.

> Cristina: Madalas kasi sa TV, pinagtatawanan mga Bisaya. Saka sa mga movies na rin. Ang dami kong napapanood. Kapag nagsalita kasi kami ng English, may accent kaming Bisaya. Kaya pursigi talaga ako na mag-aral ng English, iyong tamang pronunciation. Ayoko kasi pagtawanan. Kaya 'pag may kausap ako na hindi Bisaya, ayoko ipakita iyong pagka-Bisaya ko na English. Ayoko ngang pagtawanan.
>
> (Bisaya speakers are often made fun of on TV, as well as in movies. I see a lot of it. When we speak English, we have a Bisaya accent. That's why I really made an effort to study English and improve my pronunciation. I don't want to be laughed at. So, when I talk to someone who's not Bisaya, I don't want to show my Bisaya accent in English. I don't want to be laughed at.)

Cristina's comment highlights how Bisaya speakers are sometimes subjected to mockery in the media, particularly on TV and in movies. She expresses frustration with the portrayal of the Bisaya accent as something to be laughed at and emphasizes the effort she has made to "correct" her English pronunciation to avoid ridicule. This effort reflects an underlying desire to conform to a linguistic standard that she believes will shield her from negative judgment. She also conveys a feeling of discomfort or self-consciousness when interacting with non-Bisaya speakers, as she tends to hide her Bisaya accent to avoid being mocked.

Niko and Cristina's interviews demonstrate the following ways in which media representations reinforce monolingual English ideologies:

- On platforms like TikTok, content creators who use English usually attract a wider audience and gain more followers. This trend reinforces the perception that English is a more prestigious or cosmopolitan language. For instance, Niko admits to favoring English-speaking vloggers over others, further emphasizing the global appeal of English in digital spaces and its association with higher social status or modernity.

- When regional languages feature in mainstream media, they are sometimes depicted humorously. Cristina, for example, points out that on TV and in movies,

> characters who speak English with a Bisayan accent are often the subject of humor, suggesting that their way of speaking is seen as inferior or amusing. This reinforces the notion of a Standard English, where any variation, such as regional accents, becomes a source of ridicule rather than a legitimate form of expression.

The effects of media representations in reinforcing monolingual beliefs can be profound and multifaceted. One consequence is the normalization of linguistic hierarchies. When the media consistently depict one language as the "correct" or most prestigious mode of communication, it reinforces linguistic hierarchies and deepens "inequalities of multilingualism" (Tupas, 2015; 2018). Additionally, the sustained dominance of a single language in media fosters the idea that linguistic diversity should be minimized or even eliminated. This marginalizes speakers of regional languages, who may feel compelled to abandon their mother tongues in favor of the dominant language, leading to a shift in language use and the gradual erosion of linguistic diversity. Finally, media representations can contribute to internalized linguistic insecurities. Over time, people may come to view speaking a language with an accent, or in a non-standard form, as undesirable or embarrassing. This can create linguistic insecurity, where speakers of regional languages feel pressured to suppress their natural speech in favor of adopting a more "acceptable" language form, often aligned with monolingual ideals. This process can affect their self-esteem and sense of identity. Gradually, these effects can shape generations, influencing how they view language, identity, and their sense of belonging within society.

9. DISCUSSION

The analysis of data derived from the comments of internet users such as Katrina, Dominic, Anthony, and others reveals three central themes: the perception that mother tongues create confusion in learning, should be confined to the home, and hinder global competitiveness. These perspectives align with monolingual, standard language, and neoliberal ideologies that prioritize dominant languages such as English and Filipino. A significant number of online users express frustration with the use of mother tongues in basic education, viewing them as impediments to academic success and global opportunities. Some advocate for the exclusive use of English as a means to enhance prospects abroad, reflecting the belief that proficiency in English is crucial for accessing international markets.

This trend of devaluing mother tongues also reflects a neoliberal approach to education, in which English proficiency is regarded as a commodity for global competition, rather than as a means of fostering personal or community development. The disproportionate emphasis on English diminishes the role of multilingualism in education and perpetuates the notion that success in both global and local economies is contingent upon proficiency in English alone, often privileging wealthier nations and multinational corporations.

The preceding analysis also illustrates how language ideologies are perpetuated through childhood socialization and media representations. Interview participants such as Alona and Jennylyn, who were raised in English-dominant environments, internalize the belief that proficiency in English is essential for success. These formative experiences influence their approach to raising their own children, thereby continuing a monolingual English cycle. Media also plays a role in reinforcing this by associating English with prestige and modernity, while regional languages, such as Bisaya, are frequently ridiculed. This dynamic contributes to the weakening of inclusive multilingualism and the internalization of linguistic insecurities, thereby reinforcing monolingual and standard language ideologies. Consequently, these ideologies have the potential to shape how future generations perceive language and identity.

It can be argued that negative sentiments toward mother tongues are not necessarily manifestations of "killing" multilingualism. However, such an argument stems from an understanding of multilingualism as merely the coexistence of multiple languages. In contrast, I take the position that disparaging one's mother tongues can be interpreted as a form of resistance to inclusive multilingualism, which, as I previously mentioned, involves the recognition, support, and equal valuing of all languages in society, especially those that are minoritized, Indigenous, or non-prestigious.

The online users in the present study are not opposed to multilingualism — that is, multilingualism in its traditional sense. Some of them express appreciation for learning Filipino and English, which are seen as languages of prestige and upward mobility. However, this selective endorsement of languages can be read as an ideological support to hierarchical multilingualism. Overt and subtle attacks on the mother tongue, even if not phrased as attacks on multilingualism per se, reveal the online users' alignment with dominant global and local standard language ideologies that privilege specific languages over others. This alignment, in turn, reproduces linguistic inequalities and marginalizes the very principle of inclusive multilingualism.

As we have also seen in the foregoing sections, much of the data presents the online users' language choices and preferences across the domains of home, school, and work rather than on explicit statements about multilingualism. However, following established scholarship in language ideology (Constantino & Atienza, 1996; Woolard, 1998), the study maintains that language choice is never neutral. It serves as a window into broader ideological orientations. This being said, patterns of language use, language preferences, and evaluative comments about specific languages are treated in the present study as ideologically significant acts. When online users reject their mother tongues in favor of Standard English or Standard Filipino, this reflects not just personal preferences but an alignment with hierarchical multilingualism. Although no overt statements about being "for" or "against" multilingualism can be found in the data, the online users' choices and valuations of languages bring to the fore underlying mindsets about linguistic diversity, language hierarchies, and the perceived legitimacy of certain languages over others.

10. DISCUSSION

As noted in Section 2, the dynamics of multilingualism are shaped by language management processes (Spolsky, 2009). They involve a "manager" who decides which languages should be used from a pool of available languages. The manager does not operate in a vacuum, but acts based on specific interests. Thus, it is important to focus our attention on the initiators of this management. By focusing on the managers, we come to understand that the "killing" of inclusive multilingualism is mobilized in two ways: *systematic* and *diffused systemic*.

I use the term "systematic killing" to refer to deliberate and organized efforts, often carried out through social, educational, or political policies, aimed at suppressing or eliminating the equitable use of multiple languages within a society. These actions are typically state-driven, with the goal of promoting a dominant language while diminishing the presence and value of others. One such example of this process is evident in the implementation of RA 12027. Although the law allows the use of both Filipino and English as MOI, and permits mother tongues for auxiliary use under certain conditions, it nonetheless narrows the scope of inclusive multilingualism. By centering multilingual education primarily on English and Filipino, and relegating mother tongues to a secondary or conditional role, the law institutionalizes a form of hierarchical multilingualism.

In contrast, I refer to the term "diffused systemic killing" as a kind of suppression that is not centralized by the government but occurs informally across several domains. In the present study, such domains include public discourse, where the general public expresses support for RA 12027 online; the home, where families police their children's use of English; and the media, where English is glorified while regional languages are humorously stigmatized. These domains collectively contribute to the everyday normalization of hierarchical multilingualism by making such linguistic arrangements seem "necessary" or "natural." Like the systematic kind, a diffused systemic killing is not random or isolated, but rather a regular occurrence of how multilingualism operates in the Philippines.

The convergence of systematic and diffused systemic "killings" can result in a scenario in which inclusive multilingualism is not only actively suppressed but also gradually fades from everyday practices. Both forms of "killing" work in tandem to reinforce hierarchical multilingualism, as well as the monolingual, standard language and neoliberal ideologies that sustain it.

Whether systematic or diffused systemic, both forms rests on an underlying assumption that multilingualism is a burden or a problem — a stance echoed by Buenaventura (1963): "The problem of multilingualism is one of the pressing problems of the Philippines. In fact, it is a vital problem which needs everybody's full attention" (p. 143). When multilingualism is perceived this way, it is seen as something that needs to be "fixed" or "cured," typically due to assumptions that a single language would be more

efficient for communication, education, or economic success. We must understand that there is nothing inherently problematic about multilingualism. Instead, problems arise from a context in which multilingualism is viewed as a source of problems (Auer & Li, 2007).

Lo Bianco (2020) makes the following assertions regarding contemporary multilingualism: first, that language diversity at the population level is greater and more widespread than ever before; and second, that there is a decline in extreme monolingual nation-building and aggressive assimilation practices. Given the findings above, however, can these claims truly hold in the context of multilingualism in the Philippines? In this study, I have shown that the truth is far from what is often portrayed: the Philippines is not growing inclusively multilingual but is instead becoming an increasingly hierarchical multilingual society.

As with most research studies, the previous discussions must be considered in view of certain limitations that inform the scope and interpretation of the data. One key limitation is its reliance on online discourse, which may not capture the diversity of public opinion regarding the use of the mother tongue in education. Because social media platforms tend to amplify the voices of more active online users, those who oppose mother tongue-based education maintain a stronger online presence. The findings, as such, may disproportionately reflect negative sentiments, thus limiting the representativeness of the data. That said, online spaces remain important arenas where policy debates and language ideologies play out. In this regard, the study provides critical insight into the discursive strategies and ideological stances that inform public discourse and potentially influence language policy.

The present study is also limited by its focus on data generated from a single event (e.g., the passage of RA 12027), a specific cohort (e.g., online users), and a small number of interview participants. Nonetheless, it offers important observations about the linguistic ideologies at play during a particular juncture, with its scope allowing for a more nuanced analysis that large-scale research may have overlooked. Afterall, the study does not make any generalizations but aims to shed light on specific, situated sociolinguistic phenomena that contribute to a deeper understanding of multilingualisms in the Philippine context.

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