

**Emotions, orientations and intentions for linguistic variations:  
Guide for language teaching - a report**

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**Abstract**

*Language is an essential component of education as a means of communication and a vehicle for personal and social development. Therefore, it is essential to recognize language's role in education and promote linguistic diversity and inclusivity in the classroom. We, as educators, are frequently aware of students' activities involving linguistic variation, but we need to pay attention to the uncovered aspects. This paper is based on direct observations made among multilingual Filipino students from various regions of the Philippine archipelago. Furthermore, the article discusses first-hand observations used to understand the contexts of students' emotions, orientations, and intentions while receiving classroom instruction in the English language.*

**Keywords:** *language affective domain, mother tongue, linguistic diversity, classroom instructions, communication*

**Introduction**

Teaching is a challenging and rewarding profession that requires a significant amount of emotional labor. As a result, teachers often experience a wide range of emotions when teaching learners (Lee 2019). Overall, teaching can be an emotionally complex profession that requires patience, empathy, and resilience. However, effective teachers can manage their emotions and use them to connect with their learners and create positive learning environments.

Sometimes as educators, we can become so focused on our teaching objectives that we overlook the emotional needs of our students. However, it is essential to recognize that emotions play a crucial role in learning and that addressing the emotional needs of our students is vital to creating a positive learning environment. Meanwhile, students can exhibit several common qualities inside the classroom, which can contribute to their academic success and overall performance. Educators can foster these qualities in students by creating a positive and supportive classroom environment, providing opportunities for engagement and collaboration, setting high expectations, and providing feedback and support for student growth and development.

When teaching a language, it is crucial to recognize that linguistic variations are a natural and normal aspect of language use. Students may use different language varieties based on their cultural, social, and regional backgrounds, and it is vital to understand the emotions, orientations, and intentions behind these variations.

The Philippines is one of the most linguistically diverse nations in the world. According to Ethnologue, a catalog of world languages updated yearly, there are 171 living languages in the archipelago (Mojarro 2021). In the Philippine classroom setting, English prevails as the predominant medium of instruction. It is used more in teaching than the national language, Filipino. All subjects except the subject of Filipino are taught in English.

Efforts have been made to promote language learning and preservation in the Philippines, such as by including regional languages in education and establishing language museums and cultural centers.

However, there is still much work to be done to fully harness the benefits of linguistic diversity while addressing the challenges it presents.

Conversely, some higher educational institutions (HEIs) in the country implement English Only Policy (EOP). It generally aims to mandate a common language, English, which can improve communication and reduce misunderstandings among individuals who speak different languages.

Despite the pursuits mentioned, linguistic variation is common during classroom instruction (Heineke and McTighe 2018), as students come from different backgrounds and may use language differently based on their cultural, social, and linguistic experiences. These variations include pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure differences. It can sometimes create communication barriers between teachers and students, making it difficult for teachers to understand and respond to students' needs. Moreover, this can impact students' academic performance and overall learning experience. However, as educators, we have yet to pay attention to our students' emotions, orientations and intentions for doing such activities.

It is commonly observed in classroom activities; students use their mother tongue. Most often than not, we allow them with such recurrent circumstances with my classes. The researcher has investigated the uncovered aspect of students' emotions, orientations and intentions for linguistic variation.

*Emotions:* According to Cordaro et al. (2018), students may have emotional associations with their language varieties, and it is vital to recognize and respect these emotions. For example, students who speak a non-standard dialect may be proud of their cultural heritage and have a solid emotional attachment to their language variety. Therefore, teachers should recognize and respect these emotions while emphasizing the importance of learning standard variations for academic and professional settings.

*Orientations:* Students' orientations toward their language varieties may differ, influencing their language use. Some students may see their non-standard dialects as a source of identity and resistance to dominant cultural norms, whereas others may see them as a barrier to academic and professional success. This is supported by Alfaro and Bartolomé's (2017) investigation, which highlighted that teachers should be aware of these orientations and work to promote positive attitudes toward language learning and standard varieties.

*Intentions:* It is essential to comprehend the intentions of our students when they use their language varieties because these intentions may differ. A student may switch between speaking standard English and a non-standard dialect, for instance, in order to fit in with their peers or communicate effectively with various audiences (Kuteeva 2020). Teachers should therefore assist students in understanding the value of code-switching and the use of appropriate linguistic varieties in various contexts.

The following statements were summarized based on observation conducted by the researcher.

1. Students felt comfortable and at ease when using their mother tongue, including Tagalog, Cebuano, Hilagyanin, Ilocano, Bisaya, Waray, Kapampangan, Tausug, Minasbate, Ilonggo, Pangasinense, Maguindanaon, Zambal and Karay-a. The mother tongue is essential to a student's identity and cultural heritage. In addition, speaking the mother tongue helps students *connect with their cultural roots, family, and community*.
2. Students' orientation using their mother tongue was seen while discussing a particular topic. It was noted that it could benefit students such as *clarification, comprehension, cultural relevance and confidence*. In addition, using the mother tongue is a supportive tool to help students understand complex concepts and build confidence in their abilities.
3. Intentions for linguistic variation encompass: (a) *asking for clarification*, (b) *for entertainment (jokes)* and (c) *explaining ideas*. Students tend to use their mother tongue to clarify complex or abstract concepts in English further. Meanwhile, linguistic variation occurs whenever students aim to enhance their interactive engagement with topics closely tied to their culture. Finally, students more proficient in their first language/dialect may have better comprehension skills,

particularly in grammar and sentence structure. Using their first language/dialect to explain new concepts helps them understand the material more quickly and easily.

### Conclusion

Teachers need to recognize the value of dialects and create a classroom environment that includes all students, regardless of their linguistic background. We can do this by incorporating our students' dialects into classroom discussions and activities, providing opportunities for them to share their linguistic and cultural knowledge, and promoting a positive attitude towards linguistic diversity.

Specifically, feeling comfortable speaking the mother tongue is essential for students' personal, cognitive, and linguistic development. We can support students' mother tongue proficiency by providing opportunities to use their mother tongue in the classroom and valuing and respecting linguistic diversity. Using their mother tongue is a supportive tool to help students understand complex concepts and build confidence in their abilities. It is also crucial for us to understand and communicate in our students' first language so that we can support their learning effectively. However, it is essential to note that using the mother tongue should differ from learning and using English in the classroom. Students still need to develop their English language skills, particularly if they plan to use English in academic or professional settings.

In reality, understanding the emotions, orientations, and intentions of students using their mother tongue can be challenging, especially for us who do not speak the same language. Overall, we need to approach communication with our students using their mother tongue with sensitivity, patience, and a willingness to learn. By actively seeking to understand our students' emotions, orientations, and intentions, we can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.

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