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On Instructional Materials: The Pre-Service Teachers Preferences in Time of Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic did not only surprise many but also caught most of the academic institutions unprepared. As such, the best option to continue the academic year is to go distance education through flexible learning modes. However, several issues are tied to the implementation of the different modes to learning. In order to find the most appropriate materials in teaching, this study tried to assess the voice of the learners as one of the considerations in the learning system. Using mixed method approach in which the textual responses were converted to quantitative data to establish patterns and qualitative response analysis to capture the implications of the participants' responses, the researchers analyzed the proposals of the pre-service teachers and its implications to teaching and learning. Findings reveal that the participants implicitly based their preferences on some considerations. Hence, the diversified instructional materials imply their capability and willingness to use various sources and are in favor of engaging in hybrid form of

instructions. Results also indicate that teachers' preparations should be parallel to the preferences of the learners to meet the demands of new normal teaching set up.

Key terms: distance education, hybrid learning, instructional materials, pre-service teachers, preferences

Introduction

Education is an avenue of constant change and improvement in the teaching and learning process. Over the years, a lot of approaches have been implemented not only to affect quality education but to catch up with the ever-changing trends in education especially in the so-called 21st century industrial revolution.

Thus, despite the pandemic, Ria (2020) in his review cited that learning should not be hampered. Several programs are being introduced to push the education cycle, one of which is through distance education. Distance education or distance learning, is a field of education which highlights the dominant use of technology in the delivery of instruction to learners in a non-physical environment (Buselic, 2012). The CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 62 S. 2016 defines distance education as a mode of educational delivery whereby teacher and learner are geographically separated and instruction is delivered through materials and methods using communication technologies, and supported by organizational and administrative structures and arrangements. Thus, distance education allows flexible learning opportunities and open access to education as it frees the learners of the constraints of time and place (UNESCO, 2002). Sadeghi (2019) cited that distance education programs and courses have unlimited opportunities and will surely stay as they increase in the next years.

Furthermore, Buselic (2012) mentioned that distance learning is becoming an essential part of the mainstream educational systems in both developed and developing countries. Growing literatures indicate that in the last two decades, there has been a significant increase in the establishment of distance education. Findings reveal that in terms of academic achievement, there is no difference in the performance of the learners taking distance learning as compared to those who are taught in the traditional classroom setting (HanoverResearch, 2011; Ainin, Muzamil Naqshbandi, Moghavvemi, & Ismawati Jaafar, 2015; Gagne & Shepherd, 2001). However, the proliferation of the programs also involve many emerging issues and challenges which need to be addressed. Despite the attempts to include online learning, most of the learning institutions in the Philippines are utilizing face to face class interaction in the delivery of lessons due to many reasons. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many institutions to abruptly shift from the traditional mode of teaching to distance, flexible, even remote learning approaches to control the spread of the virus and safeguard the health of all stakeholders. Thus, the pandemic triggered the major shift in the teaching and learning approaches.

The Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) including Technical and Vocational Institutions like Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) have been busy finding solutions on how to best implement the school year 2020. A lot of consultations and surveys had been conducted in order to arrive with the best approach. DepEd emphasizes that during the no face to face interaction, several modalities will be devised (DepEd, 2020). While CHED suggests the strengthening of online platforms and blended learning (CHED, 2020). Even (UNESCO, 2020) introduces online learning platforms to boost the delivery of instruction. However, one of the many realities faced by the teaching force is the rushed implementation of distance education.

One of the many preparations to be considered by the teacher is the selection of instructional materials to be used. According to Chang in 2009, Charles and Coombs in 2010 and Slavin in 2010 as cited by Adelowo & Babatunde in 2015, input is one of the components of education by which human and material resources should be prepared. These instructional materials play essential role in arousing the learners' interests and motivations, helping them understand the lessons and enhancing their performance.

Consequently, the desire to prepare for the new normal teaching set-up led to the conduct of this study. While the education sector is busy figuring out the most appropriate method to be used, the researchers tried to explore the voice of the pre-service teachers both as learners and aspiring teachers as to their preferences of instructional materials to be used during the transition period. Assessing the preferred instructional material of the learners will guide the teachers in preparing the appropriate tools and approaches to teaching while aiming to match their styles and capabilities towards learning. Thus, exhausting the implications of their responses will aid not only the teachers but also the administration in finding the remedy to solve the impeding gap between teaching, learning and quality education. Moreover, this study will serve as source of data in the planning, decision and policy making of the institution.

Materials and Methods

This study utilized mixed method approach where it has been described to understand an empirical-based research that involves collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data (Niglas, 2009). Descriptive method was specifically used in assessing the responses of the participants by which the textual responses were converted to quantitative data to establish

consolidated data. While the qualitative section included content analysis to capture the implications of the participants' responses.

Description of the Respondents

The participants in the study were the second year English major students from both campuses whom during the conduct of the study were taking the course Preparation and Evaluation of Language Teaching Materials. Most of them are between 19-26 years old. The table below shows their profile in terms of campus of enrolment and sex.

Table 1: Profile of the respondents in terms of campus of enrolment and sex

Campus	Male	Female	Total
Mandaluyong City Campus	7	53	**60**
Pasig City campus	6	64	**70**
Total	**13**	**117**	**130**

Table 1 shows that out of the 130 total no. of population, 60 respondents are from Mandaluyong City campus while the 70 respondents are from Pasig City campus. The table also shows that there are more female respondents equivalent to 117 as compared to the male respondents who are only 13. The participants are both learners and aspiring pre-service language teachers who are being trained to prepare instructional materials which they will use during their practice teaching.

Data Gathering Procedure

In the conduct of the study, the respondents were required to submit proposals of instructional materials to be utilized in the distance education classes as their final requirement in the course. After the students submitted the output, the researchers tallied the output and presented them in

tables. Afterwards, the responses were analyzed qualitatively in order to disclose the learning implications.

Results and Discussion

Based on the submitted proposals, the following data reveals the preferences of the students. The data were sorted and classified according to categories

Table 2. Preferences of Print Instructional Materials of the Respondents

Categories	Preferences	Mandaluyong City Campus			Pasig City Campus			Total	Percentage	Ranking
		Frequency	Percentage	Ranking	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking			
Print Materials	Modules	10	50%	1	16	35.55%	2	26	40%	1
	Books	8	40%	2	17	37.78%	1	25	38.5%	2
	Worksheets/ Activity Sheet	2	10%	3	12	26.67%	3	14	21.5%	3
	Total	20	100%	-	45	100%	-	65	100%	-
Electronic Sources	Offline printed materials/OER	2	33.3%	1.5	8	28.6%	2	10	29.41%	2
	PDF copy of modules	2	33.3%	1.5	13	46.4	1	15	44.12%	1
	E-books	1	16.7%	3.5	3	10.7%	4	4	11.76%	4
	E-Journal	1	16.7%	3.5	4	14.3%	3	5	14.71%	3
	Total	6	100%	-	28	100%	-	34	100%	-
Online Media Platforms	Google Classroom	10	29.41%	1	7	10.9375%	3	17	17.347%	2
	Facebook	8	23.53%	2	11	17.1875%	1	19	19.39%	1
	Messenger	6	17.65%	3	9	14.0625%	2	15	15.306%	3
	Youtube (VLOGS)	4	11.77%	4	6	9.375%	5.5	10	10.204%	4
	Twitter	1	2.94%	8	1	1.5625%	12.5	2	2.041%	11
	Email	1	2.94%	8	4	6.25%	8	5	5.102%	6.5
	Edmodo	1	2.94%	8	6	9.375%	5.5	7	7.143%	5
	Quipper	1	2.94%	8	-	-	-	1	1.02%	14.5
	Gmail	1	2.94%	8	1	1.5625%	12.5	2	2.041%	11
	Slideshare	1	2.94%	8	1	1.5625%	12.5	2	2.041%	11
	Prezi	-	-	-	1	1.5625%	12.5	1	1.020%	14.5
	Google hang-out	-	-	-	2	3.125%	9.5	2	2.041%	11
	Zoom	-	-	-	8	12.5%	3	3	8.163%	8
	Skype	-	-	-	2	3.125%	9.5	2	2.041%	11
	Moodle	-	-	-	5	7.8125%	7	5	5.102%	6.6
	Total	34	100%	-	64	100%	-	98	100%	-
Other media sources	Recorded Materials/ podcast	4	57.14%	1	8	26.667%	2.5	12	32.43%	2
	Radio	2	28.57%	2	8	26.667%	2.5	10	27.03%	3
	TV	1	14.29%	3	14	46.667%	1	15	40.54%	1
	Total	7	100%	-	30	100%	-	37	100%	

Table 2 shows that there are four (4) types of instructional materials extracted from the proposals of the respondents categorized as **print**, **electronic**, **online media platforms** and **other media sources**. In terms of print materials, 50% of the Mandaluyong campus respondents preferred modules while 37.78% of the Pasig campus respondents preferred books. Data shows that 40% of the total population preferred modules.

In terms of electronic sources, 33.3% of Mandaluyong campus respondents preferred Offline printed materials/ OER and PDF copy of modules. 46.4% of Pasig campus respondents preferred PDF copy of modules. In total, 44.12% preferred PDF copy of modules.

For online media platform, Google classroom ranked 1st in Mandaluyong campus with 29.41% respondents. While at Pasig campus, 17.1875% preferred facebook as online media platform. Facebook is the overall online media platform preference of the respondents with 19.39%.

Other media sources illustrate that TV ranked 1 as preference for other media sources both at Mandaluyong and Pasig campuses with 40.54% respondents.

Table 3. Summary of Instructional Materials Preferences

Category of IM Preferences	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking
Print materials	65	50%	2
Electronic sources	34	26.15%	3
Online media platforms	94	72.31%	1
Other media sources	37	28.46	4

** No. of population= 130*

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Table 3 reveals that among the proposed instructional materials to be used in the distance learning, 94 or 72.31% of the total population prefer online media platforms. It was followed by print materials with 65 or 50% of the total population. Electronic sources ranked 3 with 34 or 26.15% of respondents while other media sources ranked fourth with 37 or 28.46% respondents.

The data reveals that print, electronic, online media, real time media platforms and other media sources are the extracted categories of proposed instructional materials of the respondents Thus, it could be surmise that *print materials* and *other media sources* pertain to be used in **remote learning** while *electronic sources* and *online media platforms* are used in **asynchronous learning**. However, notice also that a number of respondents included *real time online platforms* which are categorized as **synchronous learning**.

The data further implies that three approaches to learning are unraveled. These are **remote, asynchronous** and **synchronous approaches**, making teaching and learning diversified. Panchabakesan (2011) defines distance education or remote learning as a situation where communication between the teacher and learners occurs via certain systems like electronic or other modalities to promote learning, conduct assessment and provide support to learners. While In the article of Tavukcu, Arapa, & Ozcan (2011) discussed that distance education is a field of education focusing on pedagogy, technology, and instructional design which aim to provide learning to students who are not physically present in the classroom. In the study conducted by Owens, Hardcastle, & Richardson (2009) on the experience of remote undergraduate and graduate students revealed three key issues: sense of isolation, the attitudes and knowledge of the teaching staff; and the students' knowledge and use of learning technologies in which researchers suggested that educational institution should enhance of the existing programs regarding remote learning and it should increase students' knowledge regarding information and communication technology in order for them to abreast themselves in gradual development in teaching and learning. In terms of synchronous learning, Salmon (2014), stated that it provides an online learning environment which can serve as collaborative process between the teacher and students. It also requires simultaneous discussion and conversation integrated with an online activities. In addition, Shahabadia & Uplaneb (2015) described it as live, real-time (usually scheduled), facilitated instruction, and learning-oriented instruction. On the other hand, Perveen in 2016 described asynchronous learning as time-free learning where learners can do their activities in their own pace. Asynchronous learning provides the learners with readily available materials for instruction and assessment through learning management system of the institution or in other online platforms. Asynchronous learning is the most adapted modality because students are not time-bound and can respond during

their leisure time. The delayed response makes the learner utilize their higher order thinking skills as they can keep thinking about the activity for an extended period of time and may develop divergent thinking as they go along with the process (Parsad & Lewis, 2008).

Findings also imply that despite the present pandemic condition, the learners are not only capable but are also very much willing to engage to different modes of learning. On the other hand, it could be gleaned that the proposed instructional materials were based on *accessibility* or *availability* and *economy* of the materials, Moreover, the participants' *convenience* and *familiarity* of the learning tools which mark a practical mindset were considered in selecting instructional materials.

Islam & Hasan (2016) and Dela Pena-Bandalaria (2007) classified technology use as hardware or software. Print and other media sources are examples of hardware while electronic sources and online media platform are categorized as software technologies which could cater remote learning. On one hand, synchronous learning environments provide real time interaction, which can be collaborative in nature incorporating e-tivities (Salmon, 2014) and provides an opportunity of teacher- student and student-student interaction (Perveen, 2016) while asynchronous e-learning is the most adopted method for online education (Parsad & Lewis, 2008) and the most prevalent form on online teaching (Hrastinki, 2008). The opportunity of delayed response allows them to use their higher order learning skills, provide more time for thoughtful contributions, leads to socialization and real time interaction while creating an independent, student-centered learning (Murphy, Rodriguez-Manzanares, & Barbour, 2011)

Conclusion

Instructional or teaching materials are as important as teaching and learning, the participants preferences unveil that as both learners and aspiring teachers, they agree on the use of various

instructional materials in distance learning which are based on several factors. Hence, in the conduct of language learning, hybrid approach is implicitly revealed as an option to teaching. Findings entail that in language teaching, designing, preparing and providing instructional materials that integrate meaningful content and language objectives while addressing a particular need especially in times of crises should be the outmost considerations. As such, it is recommended that instructional materials should be as authentic as those from real life language situation to maximize learning.

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