IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE LITERACY IN DEVELOPING MATHEMATICAL SKILLS

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As English language is recognized as an international language in many countries, specifically, developing countries like the Philippines. Department of Education focuses on how to enhance the English language skills. Thus, learning English language is part of the Philippine curriculum. Going back in our history after Spain was vanquished by the US in 1889, the promotion of English language education in the Philippines began, and English has since taken over as the language of choice for communication.

Most of the people in the Philippines speak English. Moreover, the majority of the population in the Philippines speaks English at least somewhat fluently, making it one of the largest English-speaking nations in the world, according to Cabigon (2015). English has been used as a lingua franca in the Philippines, in which the government documents are mostly written in English. In addition to Filipino, which is the national language of the country and is spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos, English is one of the official languages of the Philippines as a lingua franca. Consequently, the primary language of instruction in the Philippine curriculum education is English. However, even the students are well-grounded and well-educated about the language, Filipino students consistently do poorly in international tests of English, Science, and Mathematics literacy, and the PISA 2018 results verified this once more, with Filipino students' average scores placing second to last among 78 countries with a score of 350.0 (Data Panda, 2018).

As mathematics teachers who use English as a medium of instruction, we must consider the importance of our students' literacy. When assessing math skills, reading may be a vital and significant part of total math proficiency and should not be

disregarded as such (Becker and Vanderwood, 2019). Moreover, for many Filipino students, understanding and speaking about mathematics is challenging. For instance, students might not comprehend the material in their textbooks or the instructions for the evaluation due to low comprehension level. Thus, teachers may consider students' inadequate English proficiency as a barrier that may be overcome by emphasizing extensive language instruction.

In this light, mathematics teachers are not only bounded in teaching the sequential formula in computing equations, but also, they are advocate of language in the teaching and learning process. Hence, there are multiple strategies that we can use in teaching mathematical literacy while developing the language literacy of our students. For instance, according to Sharma and Sharma (2022), Cognitively Focused Interventions (CFI) that focused on Schema-Based Instruction (SBI), students can acquire explicit word problem-solving techniques with the use of SBI. By letting students divide the process of problem-solving into a series of manageable-sized tasks. SBI can help students practice self-regulation when seeking solutions and lessen the strain on their working memory. The intervention strategies include explicit instruction and a clear emphasis on metacognition; teachers ask students to reflect on their own problem-solving strategies as they move through the various steps. Each intervention required students to move through a sequence of understanding the problem and its components before generating a strategy to tackle the problem. The labeling and nature of the steps in the various interventions were not the same. The students next carried out their strategy and assessed their responses. As students gained competency and confidence, teachers steadily reduced the number of scaffolds they used in the beginning of the instructional sequences. Therefore, through the use of communication using English language in collaborating their classmates, students are gradually developing their language proficiency.

In a nutshell, in order for students to deepen their grasp of mathematics and to explain their thinking both vocally and in writing, teachers must display a good grasp both in language and mathematics, for the students can emulate the language of mathematics because the language, itself, is crucial to study the broad arena of mathematics.

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