

# The Cultural Language through Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education: As Medium of Instruction

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**Abstract:** This study aims to show the effectiveness of the Mother tongue – based instruction, as medium of instruction of the Grade 2 pupils in Opol District, Misamis Oriental.

It specifically sought to determine the significant relationship between the Academic Performance of the respondents and their profile when grouped according to Mother tongue and English based instructions. The respondents of the study are the Grade 2 pupils of Malanang Elementary School and Binubingan Elementary School, Opol District who are enrolled in the school year 2016 – 2017.

This study used the descriptive method which involved two groups: the first batch which uses Mother Tongue as the medium of instruction in the classroom, and the second batch is in English as a medium of instruction in the classroom. The researcher modified the questionnaire for ready reference to find out the realibility of the questionnaire can . The said questionnaires were taken from the Second Periodical Exam of the District Unified Test in Grade 2 and translated into two versions: Sinugbuanong Binisaya and English.

**Keywords:** Cultural Language, Mother Tongue- Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the changes in Basic Education Curriculum brought about by the new K-12 program is the introduction of Mother Tongue- Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) specifically in Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2 and 3 to support the goal of “Every Child- A- Reader and A –Writer” by Grade 1.”

Mother tongue based – multi lingual education (MTB – MLE) refers to first-language-first education that is, schooling which begins in the mother tongue and transitions to additional languages particularly Filipino and English. It is meant to address the high functional illiteracy of Filipinos where language plays a significant factor. Since the child’s own language enables her/ him to express herself easily, then, there is no fear of making mistakes. It encourages active participation by children in the learning process because they understand what is being discussed and what is being asked of them. They can immediately use their mother tongue to construct and explain their world, articulate their thoughts and add new concepts to what they already know.

The Philippines is an archipelago in the Pacific with rich linguistic and cultural diversity. According to the Ethnologue, there are 171 living languages spoken in the Philippines today. For the most part, this linguistic variety has not been accurately reflected in governmental and educational policies. The current constitution declares both English and Filipino (Tagalog) to be the official languages of the country, as both are spoken in Metro Manila, the nation’s capital.

Making English and Tagalog the official languages of the Philippines is a practical move, seeing as there needs to be language that can be used to do business and trade as well as to communicate on both national and international levels.

Still, the constitutional declaration of these two languages as official and the other languages as auxiliary takes a discriminatory tone when looking at how it resonates in other policies and in the public sphere.

The linguistic discrimination is present in the educational system in particular. For instance, as of 2011, the House government in the Philippines was still investigating instances when children in primary school were punished for not speaking English. These occurrences are not uncommon, and they stem from the view of English as the “language of success.” It is undeniable, that children able to speak English will be better able to communicate in international contexts.

However, a singular wish to teach children English at all costs, when coupled with punishment for using one’s mother tongue, is both psychologically and culturally damaging. On the psychological level, a child’s sense of identity is grounded in his or her mother tongue. If children are conditioned to pair English with success, they will increasingly view their own native language as irrelevant. They may not see the need to pass it on to the next generation, causing eventual language endangerment for minority languages, a significant cultural loss.

Furthermore, the definition of “mother tongue” is a contentious subject, as many parents teach their children English at home. “Mother tongue” is interpreted by some as the cultural language, but others as the language taught from birth, regardless of whether it is part of traditional heritage. Without a clear agreement, resistance to the bill and confusion within communities will remain.

While questions and concerns remain regarding the implementation of this bill, proponents of cultural preservation do believe this MTB-MLE bill is a step in the right direction. The reluctance of educators and administrators does not necessarily mean resistance.

And crucially, this bill has opened up a national dialogue about the linguistic diversity in the country and how to deal with homogenous English-based education. The historic legislation brings the issue to the forefront of the country’s mind, as it affects the future of Filipino children greatly. In this way, the years of linguistic discrimination, both intentional and unintentional, are now being discussed on a national level. The bill’s passage also sends a clear message to those partaking in linguistic discrimination, that it is a practice that will no longer be accepted or ignored by the government.

The bill itself can serve as an example for other countries seeking education reform. As No Child Left Behind expires in the U.S., the U.S. would do well to consider this bill when developing new policies. The MTB-MLE initiative was passed in when a complete education overhaul was already underway. The time may be right for a U.S. attempt at education that accurately reflects the country’s own linguistic diversity, especially when it comes to Indigenous languages in Native communities.

For such regard, this study, the Cultural language through Mother Tongue based - Multilingual Education: as medium of instruction for the Grade 2 pupils in Opol District to find out how the pupils vary in their academic performances. To gather significant data in generating the findings, conclusions and recommendations for the study, the researcher chooses two classes of Grade 2 pupils from different schools (Malanang Elementary School and Binubongan Elementary School). 1. the first batch of learners to undergo the Mother Tongue – Based instruction and 2. the last batch of learners to undergo English – Based instruction respectively. On the closing note, the researcher hopes that this endeavour would finally put an end to the exchange of argumentations among stakeholders, teachers and other individuals who compare the pros and cons on the Cultural language through Mother Tongue Based - Multilingual Education as medium of instruction and its impact to learners’ academic performance.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the sayings by Cong. Magtanggol Gunigundo of Valenzuela “Education is power and language is the key to accessing that power”.

The paradigm of this study connected to Cummins, interdependence theory which explains the positive transfer of literacy skills from Language 1 to Language 2. He argues that the level of literacy competence in L2 that a child attains is partially a function of the level of competence the child has in L1 at the time L2 teaching begins intensively. Thus, if an education system submerges learners in L2 without first trying to further develop the skill they already have in L1, the school risks impeding their competency in L2 for years to come, while also limiting continued, autonomous development of their L1.

Mother Tongue is typically the first language of the child and the language of the home. It can also be construed as the language of primary socialization, the language developed by a child from an early childhood. Mother Tongue education implies a linguistically homogeneous community, a teacher who speaks the language, and the curriculum materials in the Mother tongue.

Several pilot projects relating to the Mother Tongue - Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) disclose that the teachers observe a remarkable level of participation among students because they could readily relate the lessons to their own experiences, prior knowledge and other socio-cultural background.

Thus, the school or classroom is not an alien place for them anymore. Since children were much adept in their mother tongue, they learned faster and better. More so, they learned to read quickly and fluently.

Mother Tongue-Based instruction provides an opportunity for our children to exercise their right to learn in their first language. Therefore, it promotes literacy as it hastens the learning process. They are able to understand what the teacher is saying; think well; argue well and question properly and critically.

UNESCO has encouraged mother tongue instruction in primary education since 1953 (UNESCO, 1953) and UNESCO highlights the advantages of mother tongue education right from the start: children are more likely to enrol and succeed in school (Kosonen, 2005); parents are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's learning (Benson, 2002); girls and rural children with less exposure to a dominant language stay in school longer and repeat grades less often (Hovens, 2002; UNESCO Bangkok, 2005); and children in multilingual education tend to develop better thinking skills compared to their monolingual peers (e.g., Bialystok, 2001; Cummins, 2000; King & Mackey, 2007).

Some educators argue that only those countries where the student's first language is the language of instruction are likely to achieve the goals of Education for All. Research also suggests that engaging marginalized children in school through mother-tongue based, multilingual education (MTB-MLE) is a successful model (Benson & Kosonen, 2013; Yiakoumetti, 2012).

Having presented the above contrasting concepts, this study has been brought out with the endeavour to answer the question, Which group of learners in Grade 2 perform better in their academics, those who are taught in Mother Tongue – based instruction or those in English – based instruction? Their academic performance will be compared to another Grade 2 class who will undergo the English – based instruction. Hence, it is hoped that this study would be able to provide a comprehensive result on the academic performances of this group of learners having undergone different mode of instructions.

The schema of this research (Figure1 in the next page) shows the profile of the Grade Two pupils who are taught in the Mother Tongue – based and those who are taught in the English – based instruction as independent variables. On the other hand, pupils' academic performance level is deemed as dependent variables.

### Schematic Diagram

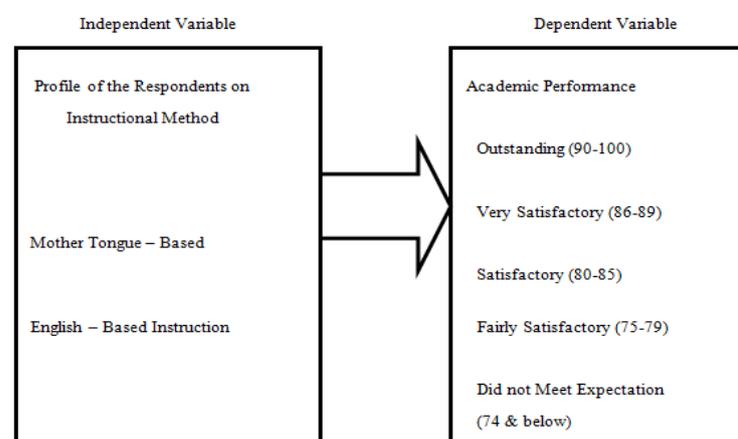


Figure1. The schema showing the Interplay between the independent and the dependent variables of the study

### 3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study primarily aims to find out the academic performance of the Grade 2 pupils who were taught in Mother Tongue – based instruction and those in English – based instruction at Opol District, Division of Misamis Oriental for School Year 2016 – 2017. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents when grouped according to:
  - 1.1 Mother Tongue – based instruction
  - 1.2 English – based instruction
2. What is the academic performance of the pupil – respondents in terms of:
  - 2.1 Outstanding
  - 2.2 Very Satisfactory
  - 2.3 Satisfactory
  - 2.4 Fairly Satisfactory
  - 2.5 Did not Meet Expectation
3. Is there a significant relationship between the academic achievement of pupils and the instructional method used in terms of:
  - 3.1 Mother Tongue – based instruction
  - 3.2 English – based instruction

### 4. STATISTICAL TREATMENT

To get the analysis and interpretation of data, the following statistical measures were employed:

1. Problems 1 and 2 were using frequency counts and percentage distribution to describe the profile of the instructional methods used and the respondent's academic performance.
2. Problem 3 used Pearson-Product moment Correlation was used to determine the significant relationship between the two variables.

### 5. FINDINGS

This study obtained the following findings as follows:

1. Result of the study revealed that sixty percent (60%) among the thirty (30) respondents obtained a correct answer in the Mother tongue – based instruction, only forty (40%) percent got mistakes.
2. Opposite to the result of Mother tongue – based instruction, respondents with 72.33% who committed a wrong answers in English – based instruction and only 27.67% who incurred a correct answer.
3. Result on the correlation disclosed that Mother tongue – based and English – based instruction with a computed value of .861 and .491 respectively gave a high and moderate relationship. Thus, the results are greater than the tabular value and the null hypotheses are rejected. Therefore, the study of the two variables came out to have significant relationship.

### 6. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Based on the findings, respondents obtained a high scores/ percentage in the Mother tongue – based instruction, thus, they found hard in comprehending and understanding the concepts in English – based instruction which resulted to a very low scores and percentage.

2. Based on the statistical treatment, study revealed, that both the Mother tongue and English based instruction gave significance on the Academic Grades of the respondents. It implied that the independent variables greatly affect the Academic Performance of the respondents.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the findings and conclusions generated from this study, the researcher hereby presents these recommendations:

1. Classroom teachers are reminded to be more creative with their teaching strategies and instructional materials to arouse pupils' interest for learning and integrate Mother tongue based instruction during discussion to help pupils comprehend the lesson.
2. Educational leaders and administrators alike are steered to be more resourceful in making the school a better and more conducive place for learning.
3. Parents shall engaged more in every school activities and would understand the essence of the implication of these educational curricula on how Mother Tongue and English based instruction impact the varied academic performances of learners in school.
3. Future researchers are advised to replicate this study using more subjects for general applicability of the findings and more variables may be used for the study.

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