

The Effectiveness of Teaching Mother Tongue Subject in Preserving the First Language of the Primary Students in Lasip Elementary School

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Abstract - *We need to involve community members with diverse language skills in formal school and train teachers with varying language capacities and levels of education to be effective in MTB-MLE classrooms. As knowledge develops, we must get better at communicating research findings so that practitioners, policy makers and donors are informed and motivated by evidence about how the potential of MTB-MLE can be harnessed to achieve Education for All. In this view, the researchers aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching mother tongue subjects in preserving the first language of the primary students in Lasip Elementary School. This study will also cover the current state of MTB-MLE implementation in the selected school. The results of this study will be applicable only to the respondents and will not be used as a measure of the effectiveness of teaching the Mother Tongue who do not belong to the population of this study. The main source of data will be a questionnaire, which is prepared by the researchers.*

Keywords - *Mother Tongue, First Language, MTB-MLE, diverse language*

INTRODUCTION

Since Philippines is regarded as a multilingual country, there are different concerns about the vanishing languages overtaken by our national language—Filipino—and our second language — English. One of these fading languages is Pangasinan. This kind of issue alarmed the bell and fortunately, the MTB MLE policy might be the response which is now being implemented since 2012.

Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) has carved its niche as a practical and effective approach in the educational landscape. It offers a plausible framework for preparing coming generations to become better adaptive and even rich contributors

in the globalized and intercultural world. (Cabansag, 2016)

As a subject, mother tongue education focuses on the development of speaking, reading, and writing from Grades 1 to 3 in the mother tongue. As a medium of instruction, the mother tongue is used in all learning areas from Kinder to Grade 3 except in teaching Filipino and English subjects. (Monroe, 2016)

Research indicates that having a strong mother tongue foundation leads to a much better understanding of the curriculum as well as a more positive attitude towards school, so it's vital that children maintain their first language when they begin schooling in a different language. (Savage, 2019).

Preserving Mother Tongue

Many linguistic groups are becoming vocal about the need to ensure that the youngest members of their communities keep their linguistic heritage. Some governments, such as in the Philippines, have recently established language-in- education policies that embrace children's first languages. A compendium of examples produced by UNESCO (2008b) attests to growing interest in promoting mother tongue-based education, and to the wide variety of models, tools, and resources now being developed and piloted to promote learning programs in the mother tongue.

Children Learn Better in their Mother Tongue

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 enroll 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).

We are beginning to get answers to some key questions: Under what circumstances and with what resources can education in the mother-tongue combined with multilingual education be an effective approach whereby children become proficient in their home language while laying the foundation for learning in additional languages? What are the costs and benefits of alternative approaches directed at the individual, family, community, school, region, and nation? What are meaningful yet efficient ways to measure costs and benefits? What are the implications of MTB-MLE for recruiting, educating, and mentoring teachers and teacher assistants and for creating and evaluating curricula in diverse language classrooms? What are the contributions of family and community in formal and non-formal MTB-MLE, and how can these be measured?

We need to involve community members with diverse language skills in formal school and train teachers with varying language capacities and levels of education to be effective in MTB-MLE classrooms. As knowledge develops, we must get better at communicating research findings so that practitioners, policy makers and donors are informed and motivated by evidence about how the potential of MTB-MLE can be harnessed to achieve Education for All.

In this view, the researchers aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching mother tongue subject in preserving the first language of the primary students in Lasip Elementary School.

Considering the premises aforementioned, the researcher deemed the conduct of this study timely, relevant and significant.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the influence of

mother tongue on the English language learning of grade 4 pupils in Lasip Elementary School of A.Y. 2020-2021.

Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the pupils in terms of:
 - a. Age
 - b. Sex
 - c. Language spoken at home
2. How does the child’s mother tongue affect his or her English language learning in terms of:
 - a. Pronunciation
 - b. Vocabulary
 - c. Grammar
3. Is there a significant difference with the profile of the pupils and the influence of their mother tongue on the English language learning of the pupils?

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study makes use of the descriptive-quantitative method of research. It describes all relevant data and information on the effectiveness of mother tongue as a subject in preserving the first language of the primary students in Torres Bugallon Elementary School. Together with their profile, language use at home and grade or performance in mother tongue subject.

The parents of the primary students - kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 in Lasip Elementary School will comprise the needed respondents for the study. The table below shows the number of students in each grade level and the needed number of respondents for the survey.

Table 1 shows the research sampling

adopted in the study.

Grade Level	Population Size	Population Sampling
1	47	16
2	53	30
3	60	24
Total	217	70

Sampling Technique

A checklist questionnaire was prepared as an instrument to gather primary data on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the teaching of mother tongue subject in preserving the first language of the primary students in Lasip Elementary School.

Data-gathering Instrument

The questionnaire is composed of two parts. The first part includes the profile of the students such as gender, grade level, language use at home and their grade in Mother Tongue subject. The second part is a checklist about the effects and current situation of mother tongue to both teachers and learners.

Procedure of Data Gathering

A letter of request to the School principal and teachers of Lasip Elementary School by asking a permission to conduct study and float questionnaires to the parents of the Kinder to Grade 3 pupils was prepared. After the approval of request, each respondent was provided with the questionnaire. The researchers personally guided and stated the purpose of the study.

Statistical Treatment of Data

In describing the profile of students in terms of gender, grade level, language use at home and grade in Mother Tongue subject frequency counts and percentages was used. To

determine the effectiveness of mother tongue subject in preserving the first language of the primary students, mean and its descriptive rating was utilized as to:

- 1.00 - 1.50 = **Highly Disagree**
- 1.51 – 2.50 = **Somewhat Disagree**
- 2.51 – 3.50 = **Neutral**
- 3.51 – 4.50 = **Somewhat Agree**
- 4.50 – 5.00 = **Highly Agree**

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age, Gender, Language Use at home and Grade in Mother Tongue Subject N=70

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	6-7	25	35.71
	8-9	45	64.29
Total		70	100.00
Gender	Female	38	54.29
	Male	32	45.29
Total		70	100.00
Language Use at Home	Filipino	15	21.43
	Pangasinan	12	17.14
	Filipino and Pangasinan	43	61.86
Total		70	100.00
Grade in Mother Tongue Subject	75-79	2	2.86
	80-84	41	58.57
	85-89	27	38.57
Total		70	100.00

Table 2 shows the Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age, Gender, Language Use at home and Grade in Mother Tongue Subject. It shows that 45 or 64.29% of the respondents are 8-9 years old and 25 or 35.71% of the respondents are 6-7 years old. In terms of gender, the highest number of respondents are female with a frequency of

38 or 54.29% and male comprise the lowest number of respondents which has the

frequency of 32 or 45.29%. In terms of language use at home, most of the respondents use mixed Pangasinan and Filipino (43 or 61.86%), followed by Filipino (15 or 21.43%), and Pangasinan (12 or 17.14%). It also shows that 2 or 2.86% of the respondents have a grade of 75-79 in Mother Tongue subject while 41 or 58.57% have a grade of 80-84 and 27 or 38.57% of the respondents have a grade of 85-89.

TABLE 3
Current Status of MTB-MLE Implementation in the Selected School

	Mean	Description
1. The teachers used varied teaching strategies in teaching mother tongue subject.	4.26	Somewhat Agree
2. The teachers who teach the mother tongue use effective instructional materials.	4.21	Somewhat Agree
3. The teachers are not experiencing any difficulties in teaching mother tongue subject.	3.68	Somewhat Agree
4. The students are not experiencing any difficulties in learning mother tongue subject.	4.01	Somewhat Agree
5. The MTB-MLE continuously provides positive results upon implementation	4.30	Somewhat Agree
Overall Mean	4.09	Somewhat Agree

Table 3 shows the current status of MTB-ML Implementation in the selected school. It shows that the respondents are somewhat agree that the teachers used varied teaching strategies in teaching mother tongue subject with the mean of 4.26, the respondents are somewhat agree that the teachers who teach mother tongue use effective instructional materials with the mean of 4.21, the respondents are somewhat agree that the teachers are not experiencing any difficulties in teaching mother tongue subject with the mean of 3.68, the respondents are somewhat agree that the students are not experiencing any difficulties in learning mother tongue subject which has the mean of 4.01 and respondents are somewhat

agree that the MTB-MLE continuously provides positive results upon implementation with the mean of 4.30. In overall mean of 4.09 with the description of somewhat agree, we can conclude that the MTB-MLE provides a positive result upon implementation and both teachers and students are not totally experiencing difficulties in teaching and learning mother tongue subject.

TABLE 4
The Effects of Mother Tongue subject in preserving the first language of the primary students in Selected School in terms of Communication ad Culture Awareness

a. Communication	Mean	Description
1. The mother tongue subject enriches the communication skills of the learner's first language.	4.20	Somewhat Agree
2. The students frequently use Pangasinan as a medium of communication at home.	4.11	Somewhat Agree
3. The students express themselves using Pangasinan language.	3.79	Somewhat Agree
4. The students understand instructions written/conveyed in Pangasinan.	4.19	Somewhat Agree
5. The students use Pangasinan in engaging themselves in a long-term conversation.	4.10	Somewhat Agree
Overall Mean	4.07	Somewhat Agree

Table 4 shows the effect of Mother Tongue subject in preserving the first language of the primary students in the selected school in terms of communication and culture awareness. It shows that the respondents are somewhat agree that the mother tongue subject enriches the communication skills of the learner's first language with the mean of 4.20, the respondents are somewhat agree that they frequently use Pangasinan as a medium of communication at home with the mean of 4.11, the respondents are also somewhat that they express themselves using Pangasinan language with the mean of 3.79, the respondents are somewhat agree that they understand the instructions written or conveyed in Pangasinan with the mean of 4.19, and the respondents are somewhat agree that they use Pangasinan in engaging themselves in a long-

term conversation with the mean of 4.10. In overall mean of 4.07 with the description of somewhat disagree, we can conclude that mother tongue subject enriches the communication skills by frequently using Pangasinan as a medium of communication which they use to express and engage themselves in a conversation.

Table 4 also shows that the respondents are somewhat agree that there are improvements on how students use their mother tongue in their respective homes with the mean of 4.22, the respondents are somewhat agree that they acquire new Pangasinan words or terms and able to use it accordingly with the mean of 4.23, the respondents somewhat agree that Mother Tongue Subject helps in preserving student's first language with the mean of 4.29, the respondents are also somewhat agree that they can identify the differences between Pangasinan and other language with the mean of 4.28 and they can also distinguish the pronunciation of Pangasinan words/terms with the mean of 4.14. In the overall mean of 4.23, we can conclude that Mother Tongue subject has something to do in preserving the first language of the students through the enhancement of their knowledge in terms of word acquisition, proper usage of word, language recognition and distinction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

1. Most of the respondent's grade level is in grade two (2), majority of them are 8-9 years old, mixed; Filipino and Pangasinan are the most used language inside their home, female is the dominant number of respondents and most of the students grades in mother tongue subject is in average of 80-84.

2. Most of the respondents

answered "Somewhat Agree" that the implementation of Mother Tongue Subject that after implementation, the MTB-MLE yields a positive result, with neither teachers nor students facing significant challenges in teaching and studying mother language subjects.

3. Most of the respondents said that Mother Tongue subject helped in preserving the first language by frequently using Pangasinan as a medium of communication and by improving their understanding of word acquisition, proper word usage, language recognition, and distinction.

Recommendation

1. There's a requirement for a constantly checking utilizing mother tongue-based instruction as the key in learning in securing suitability within the usage of the curriculum. Implementers are energized to reliably look at and administer the usage to address the issues and the educational modules itself.

2. It would be great hone for the educational programs implementers to improve and upgrade the newly executed educational programs. They may conduct extra trainings and workshops to the teachers with respect to the usage of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the classroom.

3. It would be alluring in case the grade 1 teachers appear eagerness in altering themselves and in receiving the mother tongue-based instruction as commanded within the Department of Education. It makes each learner learns effectively.

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