

Measuring the Impact of MTB-MLE on Private Pre-school Outcomes in Baguio City

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Abstract- *This study focused on the implementation of mother tongue based-multilingual education in the private pre-schools in Baguio City. Specifically, the study sought to answer the extent of implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education and the extent of seriousness of the factors that affect the implementation of Mother Tongue-based multilingual education. Descriptive survey method of research was adopted with questionnaire as the primary tool in gathering data. Respondents were total enumeration of thirteen (13) school heads and twenty-eight (28) or a total of forty-one (41) respondents. Descriptive survey approach and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The following conclusions were drawn based on the collated findings: majority of the respondents admitted the moderate implementation of the mother tongue based-multilingual education in the private pre-schools; the satisfactory level of skills of teachers in using mother tongue as a medium of instruction was confirmed by most of the respondents; a great number of the respondents viewed that the factors that affects the implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education is moderately serious.*

Indexed Terms- *MTB-MLE, Mother Tongue, Language, Instruction, Pre-School*

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, there are 50-70 million “marginalized” children who are not enrolled in school. Children whose primary language is not the language of instruction in school are more likely to drop or fail in early grades. In developing countries, an estimated 221 million children enter the classroom unable to understand the language they taught in. Many countries teach in the old colonial language, or in a dominant language or in a dominant national or international language which young children do not

speak at home. The role of language as a medium of instruction in promoting an effective teaching and learning is an issue that has occupied many scholars all over the world for many years (Orr 1987a, 1997 as cited by Deyi, et. Al., 2007).

This role of language as a medium of instruction has been concerned mostly in countries where immigrant children are in the minority as United States and Canada (Krashen, 1981 as cited by Deyi et. al 2007) The concept of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) has been the subject of increasing interest within the field of language education. MTBMLE is a theoretical approach which seeks to recognize and promote the use of a student’s Mother Tongue as the primary modality for teaching in the curriculum of pre-school education. This paper will examine the background of this method of instruction, as well as discuss its benefits for the student and the potential of how it is able to be implemented into the majority of pre-school curriculums.

The origins of MTBMLE as a pedagogical method can be traced back to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO’s) response to various projects concerning language development and use in education. In 1953, UNESCO initiated a project which has come to be known as the UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Universalization of Education¹. This project spearheaded many of the changes which promoted the use of a student’s Mother Tongue as the primary language of instruction within pre-school curriculums. Since this initial recommendation was made, other institutions have advocated for the use of MTBMLE within their own educational systems. In the United States, several states have gone so far as to enact legislation which recognizes the linguistic diversity of their student populations, and have set in place policies

which require the implementation of MTBMLE into the pre-school curriculums (González, Johnson, & Moll, 1992; Valdés, 2017). Furthermore, the work of international scholars has highlighted the various cognitive and pedagogical benefits of MTBMLE in early childhood education.

It has been suggested that using a student's Mother Tongue as the primary language of instruction in the pre-school classroom allows students to make connections between their own linguistic background and the new language which is being taught (Malone & Castañeda, 2010). Additionally, the use of MTBMLE is seen to provide the pre-school student with a pertinent context for language development, as the student is able to make use of their current knowledge of the language, creating the platform for further development (Nemser, 2001).

Moreover, the use of MTBMLE also allows pre-school educators to create a more comprehensive instruction which is tailored to specific cultural backgrounds. By introducing a student's native language as the medium of instruction, educators are able to better respect and understand a student's cultural values, creating an atmosphere which is more inclusive and conducive to the teaching-learning process (Bamgbose, 2000). In addition, evidence suggests that the use of MTBMLE has been linked to improved academic performance within the classroom, due to the fact that the student is able to more readily connect to the material which is being presented (Bradley, Maulana, van Buren, & Amelink-Verburg, 2019).

Furthermore, the use of MTBMLE within the pre-school curriculum is seen to bring many benefits to the student and the educator alike. By recognizing the importance of the Mother Tongue as the primary language of instruction, educators can create an environment which is inclusive and encouraging, with improved academic performance as a result. In order to ensure the successful adoption and implementation of MTBMLE, pre-school educators must be aware of the benefits which are linked to the use of this method of instruction, and be sure to employ it to their maximum potential.

The results of this study will be significant because they may provide scientific support for stakeholders, curriculum planners, and curriculum designers in the assessment and evaluation of curricular programs specifically on the implementation of Mother Tongue-based multilingual education in the pre-school. This research also intends to understand teachers' strategies, intervention and pedagogies in using mother tongue-based multilingual education. Finally, it will be advantageous to the field of elementary education since it may contribute to the expanding body of study on educational researches. Following that, researchers of a similar kind should be encouraged to perform studies with more depth and breadth.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) is an approach to education that promotes the use of the mother tongue as the primary medium of instruction in the early years of schooling. It acknowledges the significance of the mother tongue for language acquisition and the importance of benefiting from a student's own language in the learning process. Therefore, MTB-MLE is the leading approach to language education that is especially beneficial to children, specifically in the pre-school.

The theoretical foundation of mother-tongue based multilingual education in the pre-school embraces a socio-cultural perspective on language and learning. Central to such an approach is the view that second language or additional language learning is part of a larger inquiry-based approach and is closely related to other aspects of language acquisition, such as the development of social and cultural understanding (Arnold & Rhodes, 2018). This perspective also places emphasis on recognizing the importance of building positive social and cultural relationships when learning language (Godefroid, 1997). Additionally, an approach to language education which acknowledges and values linguistic diversity and promotes learner autonomy is integral for effective mother-tongue based multilingual education (Godefroid, 1997; Coomans & Tabouret-Keller, 1997).

The primary goals of mother tongue-based multilingual education in a pre-school setting are to promote

fundamental communication and literacy skills, as well as to support the learner's development of their language-related social and cultural identity. The development of literacy and communication skills occurs when English language learners are provided with a foundation of proficiency in their home language, or their "mother tongue" (Taylor and Walz, 2005). This, according to researchers, will enable learners to access educational content offered in their classrooms and understand curriculum topics more effectively (Chavkin & Weismantel, 2008).

The Department of education (DepEd) implemented already the use of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program from Kindergarten to Grade 3 last June school year (2012-2013) through Republic Act 10157. The MTB-MLE programs use the mother tongue language at home as a medium of instruction inside the classroom (Dekken, 2010 as cited by Api-it, 2014). Based on DepEd's order no. 16 regarding the implementation of the MTB-MLE, the pupil's mother tongue will be used to teach in all learning areas from kindergarten to grade 3, except Filipino and English subjects.

The program stems from the findings of several international studies showing that the use of the language that is often used at home during a child's early-stage results in easier learning of second and third language (Dutches, 2003as as cited by Flepsin, 2011). The importance of mother tongue-based multilingual education has been highlighted in previous related literatures. In 2015, Gough and Nation stated that mother tongues are significant and have strong effects within children's earliest language memories (Gough & Nation, 2015). Additionally, they argued that mother tongues should be used as a foundation for the introduction of other languages, providing pupils with a strong base of understanding and literacy skills. Thus, the immense value of MTB-MLE is evident in the existing literature.

In addition to the research studies, other related literatures provide further support for the implementation of MTB-MLE. The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), for example, reported on the value of mother tongues in education in 2017 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2017). It

identified MTB-MLE as a key feature of successful educational systems, and most significantly, emphasised the strong foundation it can provide with regards to literacy and learning (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2017).

Effective mother tongue-based multilingual education also gives learners the opportunity to integrate two or more languages into their daily activities, such as when children communicatively participate in play, assign roles to each other, create stories or generate non-verbal signals (Godefroid, 1997; Muntanyola-Saura & DeCapua, 2009). In addition, learners should be provided with opportunities to use their language for learning activities such as singing, storytelling or open-ended problem solving, and to even reinvent transmitted cultural skills which can deepen their overall understanding of their identities and cultures (Tacelosky, 2013).

Furthermore, the establishment of a bilingual-multilingual learning environment allows learners to make use of multiple strategies to support language and literacy development in their home language and other languages (Muntanyola-Saura & DeCapua, 2009; Coomans & Tabouret-Keller, 1997). This also broadens the possibilities for learners to express themselves beyond what might be possible in only one language, as a multilingual environment provides opportunities for learners to 'translate' between their home language and the language of instruction, if necessary (Cummins, 2015).

In MTB programs, pupils have the opportunity to learn core concepts primarily in a familiar language and later they learn the labels or vocabulary for those concepts in a new language. MTB education is especially beneficial in early childhood programs, pre-school, and early grades (up to Grade 6), when children are learning to read and gaining new concepts. (Flepsin, 2011 as cited by Api-it, 2014). The DepEd, MTB-MLE programs aims for language development which establishes as a strong education for success in school and for lifelong learning and cognitive development which focuses on higher order thinking skills competencies in each of the learning areas.

Moreover, the review of the related literature regarding MTB-MLE in the pre-school has concluded that there are numerous benefits to the implementation of this approach both in the pre-school and wider education system. Many research studies have identified the value of mother tongues in the early learning process, finding that MTB-MLE leads to increased literacy and other academic achievements. Moreover, further literatures from esteemed institutions have recognized the importance of mother tongue instruction, endorsing the approach as an integral part of education. Therefore, this review of the literature has self-evidently highlighted the immense value of MTB-MLE in the pre-school.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a quantitative approach, which gathers pertinent information through survey method that pays attention to comprehending and deciphering the significance participants and to understand the extent of implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the private pre-schools in Baguio City. This quantitative design deals with the information that is mainly It is focused on the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. The participants of the study were thirteen (13) school heads and twenty-eight (28) teachers or a total of forty-one (41) respondents. Total enumeration sampling method was used. This study used a survey questionnaire which were validated by the experts in the field.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Extent of Implementation of the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education

Table 1 presents the extent of implementation of the Mother Tongue based Multilingual Education as perceived by the school heads of the private pre-schools.

Table 1: Extent of Implementation of MTB-MLE by the school heads

INSTRUCTION	TWM	WM	DE
1. The language instruction is delivered entirely in learner's L1	16	1.23	NI

2. Two language are used as the medium of instruction or dual language instruction	25	1.92	MI
3. Formal use of more than two language	27	2.08	MI
4. Immersion of Foreign Language instruction	32	2.46	FI
5. Submersion (speaker of non-dominant in a language they do not understand)	25	1.92	MI
6. Transitional/ Bridging (transition for learners to move from learning in L1 to learning L2.	31	2.38	FI

AWM	2.00	MI
Legends: 2.35-3.0	Fully Implemented (FI)	
1.68-2.34	Moderately Implemented (MI)	
1.00-1.67	Not Implemented (NI)	

The moderate implemented Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual education in descending order according to their weighted means were: formal use of more than two languages with a weighted mean of 2.08; two languages are used as the medium of instruction or "dual instruction" and submersion (speakers of non-dominant in language they do not understand) both with a weighted mean of 1.92. Further noted that majority of the school heads agreed they do not implement that the language instructions is delivered entirely in learner's L1 with a weighted mean of 1.23.

Overall findings imply that the mother tongue-based multilingual education was asserted by the school heads in the private pre-schools in Baguio City was not fully implemented. This sends a strong signal that private pre-schools were not all implementing Mother Tongue-Based education. On the point of view of the teachers, it is obvious that the majority of them also indicated that the Mother Tongue-Based instructions was moderately implemented as proven by the computed average weighted mean of 2.08. The moderate implementation could be attributed by the fact that teachers in the private pre-schools preferred dual language instruction. Teachers also put a heavy emphasis on two languages are used as the medium of

instruction or “dual language instruction” with a weighted mean of 2.46 described as fully implemented.

Table 2: Extent of Implementation of MTB-MLE by the school heads

INSTRUCTION	TWM	WM	DE
1. The language instruction is delivered entirely in learner's L1	52	1.86	MI
2. Two language are used as the medium of instruction or dual language instruction	69	2.46	FI
3. Formal use of more than two language	65	2.32	MI
4. Immersion of Foreign Language instruction	59	2.11	MI
5. Submersion (speaker of non-dominant in a language they do not understand)	46	1.64	NI
6. Transitional/ Bridging (transition for learners to move from learning in L1 to learning L2.	58	2.07	MI
AWM		2.08	MI
Legends: 2.35-3.0	Fully Implemented (FI)		
1.68-2.34	Moderately Implemented (MI)		
1.00-1.67	Not Implemented (NI)		

Noted also on the table the moderate implemented instruction these were: the language instruction is delivered in learners' L1 with a weighted mean of 1.86; formal use of more than two language with a weighted mean of 2.32; immersion to the mother tongue with a weighted mean of 2.11; and transitional / bridging (transition for learners to move from learning in L1 to learning L2) with a weighted mean of 2.07. Finally, submersion (speakers of non-dominant languages haven no choice but to receive education in a language they do not understand) was found to be not implemented with a weighted mean of 1.64.

According to the research, "the language instruction is delivered in learners' L1 (Shahrokni et al., 2015) and

uses formal use of more than two language immersion to the mother tongue as perceived by the respondents. Moreover, according to UNESCO (2003) teaching using the mother tongue in the early grades enhances children's ability to learn better compared to the use of a second or foreign language. However, in this study it was found out that it was moderately implemented as proven by the combined average weighted mean of 2.04.

Nonetheless, despite the enthusiasm for MTB-MLE, the literature clearly indicates that implementation is extremely variable in terms of coverage and access across countries and regions" (Muyanja, Kasirye, & Dale, 2019). This was further confirmed in the study of Quintero and Cenci (2017) that the success of the MTB-MLE approach will depend on social recognition for minority and indigenous languages, which is often lacking. In some countries, there is only partial implementation of mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in many of its primary schools" (Kivunike-Nyaga, Tarus, & Maina, 2019). Schools are also failing to meet the minimum requirements for offering MTB-MLE, such as providing textbooks in local/regional languages" (Worachew, 2018).

In many instances, MTB-MLE is seen as a low-priority and appears to be neglected in national language policies and strategies" (Barta & Aggarwal, 2017). Overall findings imply of the claims of the majority of the teachers that they somewhat implement or apply the mother tongue based multilingual education in the teaching and learning process in the private pre-schools in Baguio City.

V. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

• Findings

The main points of this study are as follows:

1. Research findings show that the majority of respondents reported moderate implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education in private pre-schools;
2. Most respondents perceived the teachers' skills in using mother tongue-based multilingual education as satisfactory;

3. The factors affecting the implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education were also viewed as moderately serious by a majority of respondents; and
4. School heads reported never using interventions to improve the implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education compared to the moderate use reported by teachers.

• *Conclusions*

The end results of the study are the following:

1. Majority of the respondents confirmed the moderate implementation of the mother tongue based-multilingual education in the private pre-schools;
2. The satisfactory level of skills of the teachers in using mother tongue based-multilingual education were confirmed by most of the respondents;
3. A great number of the respondents viewed that the factors that affect the implementation of mother tongue based-multilingual education is moderately serious; and
4. Teachers affirmed their moderate use of the interventions to improve the implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education compared to the never use views of the school heads.

• *Recommendations*

Based from the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are respectfully presented:

1. Teachers should be versatile in order to address the heads the needs of the learners;
2. Teachers should always utilize mother tongue-based multilingual education to be more competent;
3. School heads provide training programs on mother tongue-based multilingual education for the teachers to enhance their skill and enrich their knowledge; and
4. Teachers always use the listed interventions to improve the implementation of mother tongue based-multilingual education; and
5. To conduct the same study like this in wider and deeper breadth.

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