

AN EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF MOTHER TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION ON THE ENGLISH LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF GRADE 1 LEARNERS

JOLLYNA B. ABEDOZA

Institute of Graduate and Professional Studies,
Lyceum-Northwestern University
Dagupan City

Abstract :

Education plays a crucial role in shaping a learner's future, especially in an increasingly globalized world where English proficiency has become an essential tool for academic advancement and wider opportunities. In the Philippines, the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) aims to strengthen foundational learning by using learners' first language in the early grades. However, concerns have been raised regarding its possible impact on the development of English literacy. This study examined the effects of MTB-MLE on the English literacy development of Grade 1 learners in Cuyapo West District, Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija. Using an experimental research design, the study involved 68 Grade 1 pupils from public elementary schools who were divided into two groups. Both groups were given the same pre-tests and post-tests. One group received instruction in the mother tongue, while the other group was taught in English. The collected data were analyzed using the t-test through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings revealed that learners who were taught using the mother tongue showed a decline in their English literacy levels compared to those instructed in English. These results support certain language acquisition theories and reflect the concerns expressed by some scholars regarding early language transition. The study concludes with recommendations for further research and policy review to ensure that early language instruction effectively balances foundational learning and English proficiency development.

Keywords: English literacy development, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, early grade learners

INTRODUCTION

Many countries have implemented strong English language policies in their belief that the English language will alleviate social, economic, and political problems, among others (Hillman, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2014). On one hand, some countries are adapting the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) policy to join the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in upholding the mother tongue of learners as the medium of instruction (Cruz, 2015; Wa-Mbaleka, 2014b). In this globalized world, on the other hand, the role of English language cannot be overlooked.

Linguistic imperialism has limited the accessibility of many resources to certain language groups. Because of this phenomenon, UNESCO (2003, 2010) advocated the MTB-MLE policy as a way of upholding equal rights and opportunities for all (Ball, 2011). It is also a means of safeguarding indigenous languages and promoting sustainable national development (Ouane & Glanz, 2011; SIL International, 2009; UNESCO, 1953; Wa-Mbaleka, 2015). MTB-MLE, however, poses potential adverse effects on English language acquisition considering the role of English in globalization (Alberto, Gabinete, & Rañola, 2016; Li & Majhanovich, 2010; Wa-Mbaleka, 2014b). These concerns are expressed by parents, teachers, and second language acquisition (SLA) experts alike.

To support the importance of indigenous and vernacular languages, UNESCO in 1953 released a policy paper recommending that every pupil should begin formal education in his or her mother tongue. UNESCO has clearly supported initial reading, writing, and learning in the language of the learner on psychological and pedagogical grounds. This position has since been strengthened by abundant researches that students learn to read and write most efficiently and effectively when instruction takes place through the medium of their mother tongue. In brief, there is overwhelming evidence that students learn to read more quickly when taught in their mother tongue; students who learn to read in their mother tongue also learn to read in a second or foreign language more quickly than those who initially are taught to read in a second language or foreign language, and students taught to read in their mother tongue acquire academic content and skills more quickly.

The use of mother tongue in education has ranged from psychological and pedagogical to human rights-based and to sociocultural context. This idea on the use of mother tongue leads to the multiple definitions of literacy such as literacy as not simply knows how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific cultural contexts. Moreover, Hymes (2004), as mentioned by Spolsky (2010), urged the study of language in context and inclusion of language in the study of cultures. He asserted that literacy should involve "ethnography of communication". The ethnography of communication is further defined that language can be learned in a cultural context.

The findings on the significance of mother-tongue based education have been paralleled by a large number of international agreements supporting this language policy. King and Benson (2009) have compiled these findings which include the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognizing the right of minority persons to use their language in communication with the other members of the group (Article 27); the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries requiring that children belonging to the peoples concerned shall wherever practicable, be taught to read and write in their own indigenous language or in the language most commonly used by the group to which they belong (Article 28); the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child confirming that the child's education shall be directed to the development of respect for the child's cultural identity, language and values; and the 1992 Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities noting that states should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue.

Language and culture cannot be separated... Our language and culture... tell us who we are, where we came from and where we are going. (Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, 2005).

Language is the primary tool for understanding and communicating, and indeed, for creating the world. As stated, it is in and through language that one can access to culture and humanity. Linguist Hale, K., who spoke more than 75 languages, put it in this way: When you lose a language, you lose a culture, intellectual wealth, a work of art... ("The Economist", 2001 as quoted by McCarty, et.al., 2005). Viewed in this light, it is a clear indicator that language does not only carry the syntax and the semantics, but it is also a carrier of ways of life. Romero and McCarty (2005) points out that rights to language are fundamental to collective and personal identity, and efforts to resist language loss are part of larger struggles for personal and communal well-being, self-determination, and cultural survival.

In the Philippines, one of the recent 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 is used as a Medium of Instruction (MOI) for Grades 1, 2 and 3 in teaching Math, Araling Panlipunan (AP), Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) and Edukasyon sa Pag-uugali (EsP). Mother tongue is taught as a separate Learning Area in Grades 1 and 2, and since the implementation of this three-year old language policy, it had been coupled by researches justifying its need in the Philippine educational system. One of these researches on the implementation of the MTB-MLE in the Philippines is conducted by Balce, M. (2005) recommending an adoption of the mother tongue (L1) as the language of learning and instruction (LOLI) for Science and Health at the elementary school level for two reasons: (1) The science process skills (or thinking skills) are linguistic: communicating, classifying, inferring, predicting, interpreting data, hypothesizing, defining operationally, and investigating. These skills are best developed and sharpened using the mother tongue. (2) Elementary school children are at a stage in which they are still mastering their mother tongue. They need time to focus and attain the full mastery of their mother tongue to understand complex science concepts.

Several studies relevant to MTB-MLE have been done in the Philippines (Alcazaren, & Rafanan, 2016; Burton, 2013; Wa-Mbaleka, 2014a). After thorough search, however, no study on the impact of MTB-MLE on English literacy development was found. Therefore, this study, founded on post-positivist and advocacy approach, sought to find the effect of MTB-MLE on English literacy development of children. The knowledge on the effects of MTB-MLE on English learning may help policymakers, school administrators, parents, and students make informed decisions.

There are opposing views about MTB-MLE. Many countries have decided to take the MTB-MLE direction while others have taken the opposite. The Philippines is no exception to this pulling of ropes, and it has chosen to be on the side of the proponents of the policy. This is the reason why this policy has become a controversial topic of debate in the country. This literature review introduces the history and goal of MTB-MLE then proceeds to the discussion of the impact of the policy on the individual and national levels as presented by different scholars.

The United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights was passed with its Article 2 affirming that everyone is entitled to education without discrimination (Ball, 2011). Then UNESCO, in the 1950s, advocated that children be educated in the language they know best to maximize learning. Later, Article 5 of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education reechoed the same sentiment that every citizen of a country should enjoy the right to education even in their mother tongue (Ball, 2011). MTB-MLE is education through learners' mother tongue and other languages as they are gradually acquired (Trammel, 2016). In other words, this policy lets children start formal education in their mother tongue and finish in a more dominant language (Malone, 2016). As a response to the act of UNESCO enjoining countries to preserve national identity and make education available to all, the Philippines passed Republic Act No. 10533 otherwise known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. Aside from the addition of years to basic education, this act requires instruction, instructional materials, and assessment to be in the learners' mother tongue from kindergarten through the first 3 years of elementary education (Official Gazette, 2013).

In the light of the critical period hypothesis (Hummel, 2014), MTB-MLE may cause many people to miss these privileges and be robbed of the opportunity to be at pace with the globalized world.

Another purpose of MTB-MLE is sustainable national development. Since MTB-MLE develops individuals who have solid mother-tongue foundation, it can prevent the death of many indigenous languages. Further, since language and culture coexist, cultural heritage is also preserved. This fact solidifies the identity of the nation. A country producing intellectually competent learners enjoys high productivity resulting to economic stability (Mohanty, as cited in Malone, 2007; Ouane & Glanz, 2011; SIL International, 2009; Stone, 2012; UNESCO, n.d.).

Literature has been extensively searched. Studies have been conducted on the different components and aspects of MTB-MLE. No empirical study conducted to see the actual effects of the policy to English literacy development, however, was found. Specifically, no study of this nature conducted in the Philippines was found.

The shift in language policy is part of a growing trend around the world to support mother tongue instruction in the early years of a child's education. In Southeast Asia, this is apparent in a rising number of educational programs that utilize a mother tongue approach. Examples can be found in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Timor L'Este and Vietnam (UNESCO, 2007). In all of these cases, the programs are being piloted at the community level with support from International Non-governmental

Agencies (INGOs). Similarly, this is true in other countries around the world where pupils' first languages are utilized in classrooms as part of small-scale efforts rather than national reforms.

In 2009, the Department of Education (DepEd) launched the Bilingual Education Policy by issuing an order that called for institutionalization of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE). This order requires use of the learners' first language as the medium of instruction for all subject areas in pre-kindergarten through grade three with Filipino and English being taught as separate subjects (Department of Education, 2009). Another order was issued in 2012 that offered more specific guidelines for MTB-MLE and embedded the reform in the newly adopted K to 12 Basic Education Program (Philippines Department of Education, 2012). This order shifted from the original mother tongue approach by specifying twelve major regional languages to be used as the languages of instruction. Under this order, teachers are provided government-issued materials in their regional languages but are expected to adapt them to reflect the pupils' first languages.

Teachers and students review that they have already learned about the concept. If the students do not understand, teachers use L2 and then translate into L1 so the students hear both languages used to discuss the concept. Teacher may use L1 to introduce the new concept that will be taught in the lesson, using objects and examples from the student's own lines as much as possible.

Nolasco (2008) suggests that national educational policy with respect to languages of instruction additionally constrains educational effectiveness for many Philippine children, especially those living in the rural areas and in regions of the country where neither English nor Filipino – the official languages of instruction is widely known.

The Lubuagan Kalinga Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) Program is a response to the late Secretary Andrew Gonzales' call for piloting innovative approaches to literacy and education in minority language communities. The municipality of Lubuagan lies in the province of Kalinga in the Cordillera Mountains of the northern Philippines with a population of around 12,000. Lubuagan and its barrios host one school district with 13 elementary schools. There are two private high schools and one public high school. Lubuagan and its barrios host one school district with 13 elementary schools. There are two school private high schools and one public high school. Lubuagan is a monolingual, almost homogenous community in which those who move to the area for business purposes or through marriage learn and use the local language, Lilubugan. Ilocano, the regional language of wider communication, is primarily used when one travels outside Lubuagan. Consequently, the children in Lubuagan typically begin school speaking Lilubugan but no other language (Dekker and Young, 2005).

Limos (2004) proposed early learning materials in reading in English for Grade I pupils in Aguilar District, Division of Pangasinan I. It used the descriptive method of research in the assessment of the oral reading skills of grade I pupils during the school year 2004-2005 using the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) word list and sentences. The result of the assessment was used as basis for the development of early learning materials in reading in English for Grade I. The acceptability of the proposed materials was determined with their evaluation in terms of certain criteria by the Grade I teachers who responded to a questionnaire. The research subjects in this study were the 40 Grade I pupils of the researcher to whom Phil-IRI component in Grade I was administered. Also employed as respondents to a questionnaire were the 28 Grade I teachers in Aguilar District. Frequency count, percentage and average weighted mean were the statistical tools used to treat the data.

Vallo (2014) assessed the problems being met in the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum by the Grade II teachers in District II, Dagupan City during the school year 2013-2014. The assessment focused on the profile of the implementation of Mother Tongue in the K to 12 Curriculum by the Grade II teachers in District II, Dagupan City in terms of first language of the teachers and pupils and proficiency of the Grade II pupils in the Mother Tongue as a subject and as a medium of instruction in the teaching of other subjects, and the problems met by the Grade II teachers in the implementation of Mother Tongue in the K to 12 Curriculum by the Grade II teachers as a language subject and medium of instruction in the teaching of other subjects and instructional materials. The output of this study is a proposed intervention measures to address the identified problems of the Grade II teachers in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based education in the K to 12 Curriculum as a language subject and medium of instruction in the teaching of other subjects. In this study, the Grade II teachers' first language are English, Pangasinan, and Filipino. The Grade II pupils predominantly used Filipino as their first language and followed by Pangasinan. The Grade II teachers proficiency in Mother Tongue as a subject revealed that Grade II teachers are "proficient" in Filipino with 4.20 AWM, in Pangasinan with 3.30 AWM with descriptive equivalent of "Moderately Proficient". Majority of the Grade II teachers are "very proficient" in the three subjects, using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction. Generally, Grade II teachers revealed that they have a problem on how to "appreciate the subject" and the "Difficulty of using Code Switching".

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to assess the Effects of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education on the English Literacy Development of Grade 1 Learners in Cuyapo West District, Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija during the school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the current state of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) implementation in public elementary schools?
2. What is the current English literacy rate and level in public elementary schools?
3. What relationship exists between Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) and the English literacy of Grade 1 learners?
4. How can this relationship affect the English literacy of Grade 1 learners in the future?
5. Based on the findings, what intervention program can be proposed to improve the English literacy development of Grade 1 learners?
- 6.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the method and procedure to be employed to answer the research problems identified in the study. More specifically, it discusses the research design, sources of data, the instrumentation and data collection, and tools for data analysis.

Research Design

This study employed the experimental design. The experimental design is a quantitative research design used to test the effect of a treatment on a result if indeed it affects the result. In other words, this design is used to create a cause and-effect relationship between variables—the independent and dependent variables. This design also involves a pre-test which is administered before the treatment procedure and a post-test which is administered after the treatment (Abbuhl, Gass, & Mackey, 2012; Creswell, 2012). This design was used for this specific study because it was the best design to meet the purpose of the study. Hence, the independent variable in this experiment was the mother tongue instruction while the dependent variable the English language learning of the participants which was measured through an English proficiency test.

The between-subjects experimental design was specifically used. This design involves at least two comparison groups—the experimental group and the comparison group. The experimental group is the group treated with the idea being experimented. The comparison group is the group treated with another idea (Abbuhl et al., 2012; Creswell, 2009, 2012). In this study, the experimental group was the group that was taught in the mother tongue; that is, Tagalog, while the comparison group was taught in English.

Sources of Data

The sampling procedure that was used for this study was multi-stage random sampling. Multistage random sampling is a sampling procedure that involves two or more stages. The first stage is the random selection of a cluster or a fixed group of people. The final stage is the random assignment of the members of the cluster to participate in the study or to belong to different groups (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007).

The first stage of this study involved the random selection of the participants among the Grade 1 learners. This process was done through lottery random sampling (Asthana & Bhushan, 2016). The second and final stage involved the lottery random selection of two heterogeneous sections that served as experimental group and comparison group. There was no more need to randomly assign learners to the experimental and comparison group since they were already randomly assigned to their sections upon enrolment as confirmed by the teachers and the principal.

This sampling procedure was chosen over other sampling procedures for three reasons. First, random sampling is required of a study for it to be considered a real experimental study (Abbuhl et al., 2012; Creswell, 2009). Second, the total population size was too large for this study. Third, having learners from the same grade level study together in one class is most ideal especially in an elementary school. After all, the administration would not have possibly approved the mixing of students from different grade levels in one classroom.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The collection of the data for this study involved several steps. First was the administration of the same pre-test to both the experimental and comparison groups. Second was the treatment process which began the day after the pre-test was administered. The homeroom teachers of each class taught the participants using the assigned medium of instruction. During these teaching sessions, there were short daily observations of the classes of both groups to ensure that they learned using the language designated for them as treatment. The treatment went on for about two weeks. Finally, after the treatment process, the same post-test was administered to both groups.

The pre-test that was given to the participants was the Cambridge Young Learners English Starters Sample Test Volume 1. The post-test was the Cambridge Young Learners English Starters Sample Test Volume 2. Both tests were paper-based. These tests, although samples, closely resemble the real tests given by Cambridge English Language Assessment (Cambridge, 2017b). In addition, although these tests are not primarily designed as research instruments, they are reliable measures of children’s English language proficiency.

Cambridge English Language Assessment is affiliated with Cambridge University and is an English testing center recognized around the globe. It has been providing English tests for more than 100 years. It has partnerships with both private and government institutions in different parts of the world as well (Cambridge, 2017a). Most importantly, it is comprised of a team of experts in English language teaching (Cambridge, 2017c). Permission from the administrators to use the sample tests was secured through in writing.

Tools for Data Analysis

The data that were gathered were analyzed and interpreted using the appropriate statistical tools based on the problem raised. The data gathered were checked, organized, and coded. Due to the nature of the study, inferential statistics was employed for data analysis. The data were analyzed through both independent and dependent *t*-test using SPSS. The independent *t*-test compared the average scores of the two groups in the pretest and the post-test separately. The dependent *t*-test measured the progress in English proficiency of each group (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals in the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered relative to sub-problems in the study. After performing independent *t*-test analysis in SPSS, it was found that there is no statistically significant difference ($p = .064$) between the pre-test scores of the experimental group and the comparison group. This finding is shown in Tables 1 and 2. In other words, both groups began the experiment at approximately the same level of English proficiency. This fact establishes the grounds for comparison.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of the Pre-test Scores

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test scores	MTBE Group	37	14.7568	5.55480	.91320
	English Group	31	17.4516	6.13644	1.10214

Table 2
English Proficiency Pre-test Scores

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.33	.57	-1.90	66	.062	-2.69486	1.419	-5.527	.13755
Equal variances not assumed			-1.88	61.26	.064	-2.69486	1.431	-5.557	.16697

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of the Post-test Scores

Groups	N	Mean Scores	Std. Deviation English Group	Std. Error Mean	Post-test	MTBE Group	37	12.08	5.565	.915
				31	18.84				1.075	

Table 4
English Proficiency Post-test Scores

	F	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.358	-4.819	66	.000	-6.758	1.402	-9.557	-3.958
Equal variances not assumed		-4.788	62.07	.000	-6.758	1.411	-9.579	-3.936

The result of the independent *t*-test performed on the post-test scores reveal that there is a significant difference ($p = .000$) between the post-test scores of the experimental group and the comparison group. This is shown in Tables 3 and 4 above. After about two weeks of treatment, the group taught using English as the medium of instruction obtained a higher average score in the English proficiency test than the group taught in the mother tongue.

The dependent *t*-test performed on the pre-test and post-test scores of the group taught in the mother tongue, as shown in Tables 5 and 6, shows that there is a significant difference ($p = .000$) between the group's pre-test and post-test scores. This difference is positive. This is because the mean of the scores for the pre-test is higher than that of the post-test. This means that there is a significant decline in the group's English proficiency.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics of the MTB-MLE Group Pre-test and Post-test Scores

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Test	14.7568	37	5.55480	.91320
Post-Test	12.0811	37	5.56466	.91482

Table 6
MTB-MLE Group Pre-test and Post-test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Std. Error	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Mean	Lower	Upper
Pre-Test - Post-Test	2.67568	2.77943	.45694	1.74897	3.60238
				5.856	.000

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics of the English Group Pre-test and Post-test

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Mean
Pre-test	17.4516	31	6.13644	1.10214	
Post-test	19.0000	31	5.74456	1.03175	

Table 8
English Group Pre-test and Post-test

Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of the Mean	Std. Error	Difference	Interval of the	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df
		Pre-test –				
-1.54839	2.73055	.49042	-2.54996	-.54681	-3.157	30
		Post-test				.004

The dependent *t*-test performed on the pre-test and post-test scores of the group taught in English, as shown in Tables 7 and 8 above, shows that there is a significant difference in the group’s pre-test and post-test scores. This difference is negative. This is because the mean of the scores for the post-test is higher than that of the pre-test. In other words, there is a statistically significant improvement ($p = .004$) in the group’s English proficiency.

The school of the setting of this study has been implementing MTB-MLE since 2013. In other words, the school implemented the policy the very year it was approved (Official Gazette, 2013). This policy has added a subject to the curriculum of the grade levels affected. This subject is rightly called MTB-MLE because in this subject, students study their mother tongue the way they study English and Filipino. The mother tongue of the students in this school is Tagalog. The school also has enough materials for the subject.

The results of the study are both alarming and encouraging. It is alarming to see that even in as short as about two weeks, students taught purely in their mother tongue showed a significant decline in their English proficiency. On the other hand, it is encouraging to note that even in so short a time, students taught in English showed significant progress in their English proficiency.

The results of this study affirm what many scholars have already concluded that MTB-MLE may adversely affect children’s English literacy development (Alberto, Gabinete, & Ranola, 2010; Krashen, 1982; Li & Majhanovich, 2010; Saville-Troike, 2006; Wa-Mbaleka, 2014a, 2014b, 2015). Additionally, this study confirms the fears of many scholars and parents alike that children’s global competence will be weakened (Alberto, Gabinete, & Ranola, 2010; Medilo, 2016; Regalado & Calica, 2013; Wa-Mbaleka, 2014b).

Summary

This study covered the Grade 1 learners of Cuyapo West District, Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija. It was delimited to the current state of MTB-MLE implementation in Grade 1; current English literacy rate and level of Grade 1 learners; relationship exists between MTB-MLE and the English literacy of Grade 1 learners; and the relationship that affects the English literacy of Grade 1 learners.

The result of the independent *t*-test performed on the post-test scores reveal that there is a significant difference ($p = .000$) between the post-test scores of the experimental group and the comparison group. The dependent *t*-test performed on the pre-test and post-test scores of the group taught in the mother tongue, shows that there is a significant difference ($p = .000$) between the group’s pre-test and post-test scores. This difference is positive. The dependent *t*-test performed on the pre-test and post-test scores of the group taught in English, shows that there is a significant difference in the group’s pre-test and post-test scores. This difference is negative. This is because the mean of the scores for the post-test is higher than that of the pre-test. In other words, there is a statistically significant improvement ($p = .004$) in the group’s English proficiency.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

MTB-MLE has always been a highly debated policy from the time of its conception. Those who propose it claim that it is the best way to give all children equal chance for education. Those who oppose it do not altogether disagree with the argument of the proponents. They are, however, concerned about its long-term effect on children, especially in this globalized world where English is the lingua franca.

The findings of this experimental study reveal that MTB-MLE may indeed adversely affect children’s English literacy and, therefore, jeopardize their fighting chance in the global arena. The experimental and the comparison groups’ average pre-test scores confirmed that students in both groups started the experiment with nearly the same English literacy level. After about two weeks of treatment, the average scores of the group taught in the mother tongue went significantly low, while the average scores of the group taught in English went significantly high.

There are certain limitations to this study, however. First, the treatment duration was only about two weeks, which is very short. Second, the sample size of 68 learners is small. This sample size shrinks even more compared to the approximately 960 students in the school who are under the MTB-MLE program.

As such, it is recommended that a similar study be done with a larger sample size. It is also more ideal to lengthen the treatment duration to one school year. A similar study can also be done in a different research setting with participants from other language groups. Additionally, studies should be done on how countries that have implemented MTB-MLE are performing in the global arena. Further, the government should make a periodic assessment of the policy to see whether it is fulfilling its purpose. Finally,

the government should examine the nation's top priorities and implement a language-in-education policy that will address these needs.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn, the following are hereby recommended:

1. Procure more reference materials, textbooks, and module for pupils use to improve the performance of pre-school pupils in English, Filipino and Mother Tongue.
2. Similar studies in other division offering Mother Tongue should be conducted in order to validate the findings of the present study.

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