

Early Childhood Educators' Profile and Their Perception in the Implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education

Jenny Rose M. Natividad*

Department of Education ,Zamboanga City

Analyn D. Saavedra

Western Mindanao State University

Janet C. Solis

Lizabeth G. Ringor

Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University

Cherry B. Alih

Mindanao State University – Tawi-tawi College of Technology and Oceanography

ABSTRACT

Mother tongue is recognized through DepEd order No.60 as the most effective way to improve student learning and shall also serve as the strong bridge for a learner to second language better and faster. Similarly, the Dept. Order No. 78 s.2009 of DepEd institutionalizes the mother tongue based-multilingual instruction. It is stipulated in this memorandum that the language in education is central to improving educational outcomes and addressing the problems of national development. Relevant to this, the present study aims to determine the early childhood educators' profile and their perceptions in using mother tongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education in terms of lesson planning, teaching strategies, communication, preparation of instructional materials and pupils' cognitive development. To meet this research objective, this descriptive quantitative study utilized the survey questionnaire with the 109 teachers assigned in handling the early childhood education (Kinder-Grade 3). Based on the respondents' data, this study concludes that a low relationship exists between the profile of the implementers, such as, educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken collectively and perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education in terms of lesson planning, teaching strategies, preparation of instructional materials and pupils' cognitive development. Moreover, the data also revealed that despite the moderate relationship which exists between the profile of the implementers, such as educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken collectively and their perceptions of Mother Tongue used a medium of instruction in communication, still the relationship is not significant or did not directly affect their perception in the implementation of the mother tongue-based multilingual education. Therefore, after several years of MTB-MLE implementation, frequent monitoring on the field is being recommended.

Keywords: *Early Childhood education, Educators' Profile, Perception, Implementation, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), length of service, educational attainment, Chavacano*

INTRODUCTION

During the American regime, English has been used as the medium of instruction. Until the year 1935, Tagalog was launched as the national language. This constitutional mandate was followed by the Bilingual Policy by virtue of Department of Education and Culture which specified the use of the national language, Filipino, as the medium of instruction. Thereafter, this was superseded by Department Order No. 52, series of 1987 which mandated the use of Filipino and English language as the Philippines' official language in instruction and communication. This was believed to be a great move of the Philippines in order to patronize its national language while using English as the global language. However, in 2013, there was a big shift in the educational setting not only on the curriculum but on the MOI as well. This started when President Benigno C. Aquino III signed Republic Act 10533 known as the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013." One of the features of the new curriculum, K to 12, is the mandate of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction from Kindergarten to Grade III.

Although, there are many people who share their negative opinions on this issue, positive ideas were expressed by others. According to DepEd secretary Bro. Armin A. Luistro, the language spoken at home and in the early grades helps improve the pupils' language and cognitive development in addition to strengthening their socio-cultural awareness.

According to Natividad et. al (2022), mother tongue is recognized through DepEd order No.60 as the most effective way to improve student learning and shall also serve as the strong bridge for a learner to second language better and faster. Similarly, the Dept. Order No. 78 s.2009 of DepEd institutionalizes the mother tongue based-multilingual instruction. It is stipulated in this memorandum that the language in education is central to improving educational outcomes and addressing the problems of national development.

In relation to the aforementioned MTB-MLE, the local government of Zamboanga City regarded the said policy as divisive since the pupils in coastal Muslim and Cebuano-dominated barangays are segregated according to their own dialects. He elaborated that MTB-MLE implementation in the city is totally unacceptable to local government. In response to this policy, Executive Order CL-459-2012 was issued enjoining the speaking of Chavacano in all schools, government offices and establishments in the city. This aims to preserve, perpetuate, and promote the Chabacano language (Natividad et. al , 2022).

This new feature in the k to 12 curriculum serves as a challenge to pupils whose mother tongue or first language is not Chabacano since they will have to learn the language first so they could understand the lessons taught using Chabacano as MOI. According to Rutherford (1987) the characterization of language learning entails the successful mastery of steadily accumulating structural entities and organizing this knowledge into coherent structures which lead to effective communication in the target language. If this is case, then we would expect that well-formed accurate and complete target language structures would, one after another, emerge on the learner's path towards eventual mastery of the language. If the learner went on to master the language, we could, in principle, tabulate the expansion of his/her repertoire up to the point where all of the well-formed structures of the target language had been accounted for (Beardsmore, 1982 and Hoffman, 1991).

It is in this context that this study was conceptualized to determine the perception of the early childhood educators and how it can be correlated to the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE).

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. Is the Early Childhood Educators' Profile significantly affects their Perceptions in using MotherTongue as a Medium of Instruction in Multilingual Education in terms of the following:

- a. Lesson Planning
- b. Teaching Strategies
- c. Communication
- d. Preparation of Instructional Materials
- e. Pupils' Cognitive Development

RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Chavacano as Medium of Instruction

As highlighted on the K to 12 toolkit (Seameo Innotech,2012), one of the key changes in the elementary curriculum, is the institutionalizing of the Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) from Grades I to 3. The mother tongue will be the medium of instruction from grades I to 3. This will be the main vehicle to teach understanding and mastery of all subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Aralingpanlipunan, Edukasyonsapagpakatao, Music, arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH). From the start of the school year 2012-2013, Chavacano was one of the 12 major languages offered and utilized as a language of instruction. (Pado, 2012)

According to Natividadet. al (2022), mother tongue is recognized through DepEd order No.60 as the most effective way to improve student learning and shall also serve as the strong bridge for a learner to second language better and faster. Similarly, the Dept. Order No. 78 s.2009 of DepEd institutionalizes the mother tongue based-multilingual instruction. It is stipulated in this memorandum that the language in education is central to improving educational outcomes and addressing the problems of national development.

UNESCO (2003) on Education in a Multilingual World position papers supports that: mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality; multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies; and language as an essential component of inter-cultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights. Article 29 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child sets up that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for the child's cultural diversity, language and values (Education in a Multilingual World, UNESCO Position Paper, 2003).

The adoption of the K to 12 Curriculum through Republic Act No. 10533 or the enhanced Basic Education law, the Department of Education reverted to a multi-lingual education with the use of the Mother Tongue (the language a child use at home) as a medium of instruction from kinder to grade 3 and a separate subject from grade 1 to grade 3. The United Nations (UN) also supports this move in their "Education for All" program. The UN has come out in support of the move, because their own objective is to enhance education, with the belief that there needs to be national recognition of linguistic minorities. By starting with the language that one speaks at home, the gap in understanding can be bridged, and students can better learn the curriculum. Moreso, in Saavedra's (2020) study, using the mother tongue of the pupils in teaching reading in the L2 would have been more beneficial in their learning than using the lingua franca of the city which most of the pupils do not use and understand.

One way to achieve equity in education, opportunities and the goal of Education For All, as well as to counter linguistic and cultural loss is to deliver early childhood education and primary education through mother tongues (Ball cited in Boonroj, 2010). According to studies presented at the International Conference in Bangkok the use of mother tongues native languages in early childhood education has boosted youngsters' confidence and academic performance. It has also helped conserve ethnic languages, and restored pride and identity for minority people, while helping to boost their access to the fruits of development.

Nabutil (2012) stated that common problems grade I teachers met in the implementation of the MTB – MLE program were the lack of reference materials, pupils' diverse ethnic groups (multi-lingual groups), language gap and the lack of training of teachers on the program and the strategies adopted by the grade I teachers in addressing the problems met in the implementation of MTB – MLE Program were the translation of Chavacano words to Tagalog, the use of multi-lingual, code – switching, the use of multi-lingual, code – switching, the use of pictures, photographs and visual aids and the use of Chavacano as a medium. The grade I teachers considered the translation of Chavacano words to Tagalog as effective in addressing problems met in the implementation of MTB – MLE. Moreover, they also recognized the use of multi-lingual, code-switching, use of pictures, photographs and visual aids and use of Chavacano language in a particular school as effective. However, teachers acknowledged that Chavacano as a medium is not effective in solving problems met in the implementation of the MTB – MLE program in a particular school; instead they considered other languages such as Tausug and Bisaya since mostly of their pupils were Bisaya. In the Teachers' Preference on the Local Policy Implementation of the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education, teachers' agreed that Chavacano language should be used in the Mother Tongue subject only while Filipino and English are should still be used in the other subjects of the curriculum especially in a multicultural setting (Saavedra, 2020). Further, pupils acknowledged the importance of learning their lingua franca (Chavacano) but they also believed that Chavacano should not be totally used as medium of instruction in all the learning areas in the early grade education since not all pupils speak and understand the language (Saavedra&Karanain, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

In order to determine the perception of the teachers in the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), this descriptive quantitative study utilized the survey questionnaire in order to meet the research objective. 109 teachers assigned in handling the early childhood education (Kinder-Grade 3) voluntarily participated in the study. The total enumeration system was used in the selection of the respondents. To answer the research question, the study employed a 5-point Likert type questionnaire – checklist which comprises of two parts which are validated by experts. The instrument is composed of 2 parts which solicited the respondents' personal data and the perceptions of teachers on mother tongue used as a medium of instruction in K to 3 in Multilingual Education. Their responses on every indicator was described using the 5-point likert scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the Profile of the Implementers Affecting their Perceptions in using MotherTongue as a Medium of Instruction in Multilingual Education in Terms of Lesson Planning

Table 1. shows that the coefficient of correlation ($r = 0.179$) which signifies a low relationship exists between the profile of the implementers , such as, educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken collectively and perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education in terms of lesson planning. According to Downie and Heath (1984) the coefficient r of 0.4 and below is considered low.

The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.032$) implies that about 3.2 percent of the variance of the perceptions of the implementers in the use of Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in lesson planning is explained by their profile , such as educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service. Furthermore, the F –Obs with a p -Value greater than the alpha level (p -Value>.05) suggests that the profile of the implementers taken collectively does not significantly affect their perceptions in the use Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in lesson planning. When profile of her implementers was taken individually, not one of the profile significantly affects the perceptions of the implementers in using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in lesson planning as indicated in their p -Values which are all greater than the alpha level (p -Values>.05). The alternative hypothesis which states that the profile of the implementers significantly affects their perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education is rejected.

Relevant to the lesson planning variable, Nochefranca (2022) mentioned that teachers’ responses on teachers’ teaching performance in terms of lesson planning is described as very satisfactory. It can be inferred that teachers were very satisfactory in lesson planning. They manifested good knowledge and skills in lesson planning because of their experiences. They manifested almost similar skills and perception.

Table 1. Profile of the Implementers Affecting their Perceptions in using MotherTongue as a Medium of Instruction in Multilingual Education in terms of Lesson Planning

Profile	Dependent Variables	R	R ²	F	p-Value	t	p-Value	Interpretation
Educational Attainment	Lesson Planning	.179	.032	1.097	.354	.228	.820	Not Significant
Mother Tongue						-1.730	.087	Not Significant
Length of Service						.614	.541	Not Significant

Table 2.presents the profile of the implementers affecting their perceptions in using mothertongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education in terms of teaching strategies. The data indicates a low relationship exists between the profile of the implementers, such as, educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service and their perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in employing certain teaching strategy as reflected in the coefficient r ($r = 0.209$). The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.044$) signifies that only 4.4 percent of the variance of the implementers’ perceptions in the use of Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in employing teaching strategy is explained by their profile such as educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken collectively. This further implies that about 95.6% of the factors that affect the perceptions of the implementers in the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in employing teaching strategy are not discussed in this study. The table further reveals that the F –Obs with a p -Value greater than the alpha level (p -Value>.05) implies that the profile of the implementers such as, educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service does not significantly affect their perceptions of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in employing teaching strategies.

This further shows that t -Obs with p -Values greater than the alpha level (p -Value>.05) suggests that profile of the implementers, such as, educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken individually does not significantly affect their perceptions of mother tongue as medium of instruction in employing teaching

strategies. The hypothesis which states that the profile of the implementers significantly affects their perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education is rejected.

The same thought was stated in the study of Jaani (2022) where it was emphasized that teachers should be encourage to explore and view other effective teaching strategies, methods and resources and find more ways to entice other students challenge themselves to create their own strategies to use in the field and to become more global in perspective.

Profile of the Implementers Affecting their Perceptions in using MotherTongue as a Medium of Instruction in Multilingual Education in terms Teaching Strategies

Profile	Dependent Variables	R	R ²	F	p-Value	T	p-Value	Interpretation
Educational Attainment	Teaching Strategies	.209	.044	1.513	.216	1.213	.228	Not Significant
Mother Tongue						-1.620	.108	Not Significant
Length of Service						-.192	.848	Not Significant

Table 3.shows the profile of the implementers affecting their perceptions in using mother tongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education in terms of communication. The data yielded a coefficient r (r = 0.400) which implies that there is a moderate relationship exists between the profile of the implementers , such as educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken collectively and their perceptions of Mother Tongue used a medium of instruction in communication. The profile of the implementers, such as educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken collectively explained 16 percent of its variance to their perceptions of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in communication. This further implies that 84 percent of the factors that affect their perceptions of Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in communication are not discussed in this study.

When taken the profile individually, mother tongue of the implementers significantly affect their perceptions of Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in communication (p-Value<.05). However, educational attainment and length of service taken individually does not significantly affect their perceptions of the Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in communication. The hypothesis which states that the profile of the implementers significantly affects their perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education is accepted.In the study of Martinez (2022) where MTB-MLE was being implemented in the research locale, it was recommended that curriculum planners carefully should look into the medium of instruction used in schools because it has an impact to reading skill of the pupils.

Table 3.Profile of the Implementers Affecting their Perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction in Multilingual Education in Terms of Communication

Profile	Dependent Variables	R	R ²	F	p-Value	T	p-Value	Interpretation
Educational Attainment	Communication	.400	.160	6.292	.001	.657	.512	Not Significant
Mother Tongue						-3.970	.000	Significant
Length of Service						-.773	.442	Not Significant

Table 4.shows the profile of the implementers affecting their perceptions in using mothertongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education in terms of preparation of instructional materials. It can be seen in table 4. the beta coefficient (r = 0.316) suggests that the relationship between the profile of the implementers, such

as, educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken collectively and their perceptions in the use of Mother Tongue as a medium in preparing instructional materials is low.

The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.100$) shows that 10 percent of the variance of the perceptions of the implementers in the use of mother in preparing instructional materials contributed by their profile, such as educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken wholly. This further implies that 90 percent of the factors that contributed to the perceptions of the implementers in the use of Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction are not included in this study. The F –Obs with a p-Value greater than the alpha level ($p\text{-Value} > .05$) suggests that the profile of the implementers, such as, educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service, taken collectively does not significantly affect their perceptions in the use of Mother Tongue as a medium in preparing instructional materials.

It further shows that the profile of implementers such as educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken individually does not significantly affect their perceptions in the use of Mother Tongue as a medium in preparing instructional materials. It is also important to note that in the preparation of the instructional materials, the language of the early grade pupils should be considered as it is an instrument for their development (Natividad et. al (2022) The alternative hypothesis which states that the profile of the implementers significantly affects their perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education is accepted.

Table 4. Profile of the Implementers Affecting their Perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction in Multilingual Education in Terms of Preparation of Instructional Materials

Profile	Dependent Variables	r	R ²	F	p-Value	T	p-Value	Interpretation
Educational Attainment	Preparation of Instructional Materials	.316	.100	3.650	.015	1.819	.072	Not Significant
Mother Tongue						-2.489	.014	Significant
Length of Service						-.693	.490	Not Significant

Table 5. presents the beta coefficient ($r = 0.269$) which implies that there is a low relationship between the profile of the implementers, such as educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken collectively and their perceptions in the use of Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction for pupils' cognitive development.

The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.072$) suggests that 7.2 percent of the variance of the profile of the implementers taken collectively explained their perceptions in the use of Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction for pupils' cognitive development. This further means that about 92.8 percent of the factors that affect their perceptions in the use of Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction for pupils' cognitive development are not discussed in this study. The same table reveals that the F –Obs with a p-Value greater than the alpha level ($p\text{-Value} > .05$) indicates that the profile of the implementers, such as educational attainment,

Mother Tongue and length of service, does not significantly affect their perceptions in the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction for pupils' cognitive development. Even in the development of the writing skills of the pupils in English and Filipino languages, teachers believed that the medium of instruction used by the teachers is a factor to consider since cognitive development may also be done by developing their writing skills in both languages.

When profile is taken individually, Mother Tongue of the implementers significantly affects their perceptions in the use of Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction for pupils' cognitive development. On the other hand, educational attainment and length of service do not significantly affect their perceptions of the Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction for pupils' cognitive development. The alternative hypothesis which states that the profile of the implementers significantly affects their perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a medium of

instruction in multilingual education is rejected. Relative to this finding, it is good to note that teachers' methods for inspiring language learners should be seen as an essential component in language learning. Motivation is one of the core factors that determine progress in learning a second language. Motivation in language teaching is just as important as it is in language learning. Teachers who use many motivational techniques in language teaching have significantly contributed to students' language learning progress (Sandal, O., Saavedra, A., Madrazo, C., & Ramos, M., 2022).

Profile of the Implementers Affecting their Perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction in Multilingual Education in terms of Pupils' Cognitive Development

Profile	Dependent Variables	R	R ²	F	p-Value	T	p-Value	Interpretation
Educational Attainment	Pupils' Cognitive Development	.269	.072	2.574	.058	.452	.652	Not Significant
Mother Tongue						-2.633	.010	Significant
Length of Service						-.136	.892	Not Significant

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the respondents' data, this study concludes that a low relationship exists between the profile of the implementers, such as, educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken collectively and perceptions in using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction in multilingual education in terms of lesson planning, teaching strategies, preparation of instructional materials and pupils' cognitive development. This implies that the profile of the early childhood educators did not significantly affect their perception in the implementation of the mother tongue-based multilingual education. Moreover, the data also revealed that despite the moderate relationship which exists between the profile of the implementers, such as educational attainment, Mother Tongue and length of service taken collectively and their perceptions of Mother Tongue used a medium of instruction in communication, still the relationship is not significant or did not directly affect the affect their perception in the implementation of the mother tongue-based multilingual education. Still, despite the absence of significant relationship between the early childhood educators' profile and their perception to the implementation of the MTB-MLE, this study recommends that curriculum planners may continue to monitor the implementation to ensure language development and academic progress among the Kinder to Grade 3 which is the ultimate goal of the K to 12 curriculum through the MTB-MLE program.

REFERENCES

Ball, J. (2010). *Enhancing learning of children from diverse language backgrounds: Mother-tongue-based bilingual or multilingual education in early childhood and early primary school years*. Paper commissioned by UNESCO Basic Education Division, Paris. Retrieved December 10, 2010, from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001869/186961e.pdf>

Beardsmore, H.B. 1982, *Bilingualism: basic principles*, Tieto, Avon.

Hoffman, C. 1991, *An introduction to bilingualism*. Longman, London

Jaani, A.-N.A. (2022). Tertiary teachers' instructional methods, strategies and resources used. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S1), 14161–14174. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS1.8591>

Martinez, J.S. (2022). Reading strategies: its implication to the reading level among early grade learners. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (INT-JECS) ISSN: 1308-5581 Vol 14, Issue 04 2022*.

Nabutil, V. G. MA. (2013). Problems in the implementation of Mother-Tongue Based – Multi-lingual Education Program in Grade I in Baliwasan District. Unpublished Thesis, Zamboanga City State Polytechnic College, Zamboanga City.

Natividad, J.R, Analyn D. Saavedra, A.D, Jainal, E.A, Barredo, C.P, Toto, S.G, Marcial, B.B. Mother tongue as a medium of communication and as an instrument for development among learners in the early childhood education. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (INT-JECS) ISSN: 1308-5581 Vol 14, Issue 04 2022*

- NocheFranca, A. (2022) .Delving into the physical education teachers' teaching performance as a factor of students' academic achievement: A pre-pandemic correlational study. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S1), 11060–11080. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS1.7653>
- Pado, F. (2012).The Mother tongue-Based Multilingual Education. Retrieved from ceap.org.ph/upload/download/20136/417420447_1.pdf
- Rutherford, W. E. (1987). *Second Language Grammar: Learning and Teaching*. England: Longman.
- Saavedra, A.D &Barredo, C.P (2020).Factors that contribute to the poor writing skills in Filipino and English of the elementary pupils.*International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change* 14 (5), 1190-1106
- Saavedra, A.D &Karanain, F,A (2022). Learners' beliefs and use of chavacano as medium of instruction.*Journal of Language and Linguistics* 10 (1), 40-46
- Saavedra, A.D (2020). Chavacano as a medium of instruction: its implications for the reading levels of English in elementary school pupils. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change* 10 (10)
- Saavedra, A.D (2020)Teachers' preference on the local policy implementation of the mother tongue based-multilingual education: an assessment. *Asian EFL* 27 (2.2), 217-238
- Sandal, O.O, Saavedra, A.D, Madrazo, C. A., Maria Socorro Yvonne H. Ramos, M.H (2022). Gender and socio-economic status: revisiting its role on the English language learning motivation among secondary language-specialized students. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*.Vol. 6 No. 4 (2022) pp. 2689 – 2704
- SeameoInnotech, (2012) K to 12 Toolkit.
- UNESCO.(2003). Education in a multilingual world.UNESCO Education Position Paper. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved March 1, 2013 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001297/129728e.pdf>