

Perceptions on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education Removal: Basis for Localized Literacy Enhancement Activities

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Abstract — In order to propose localized literacy activities, this study assessed teachers' opinions about the elimination of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program in the DepEd Schools Divisions of San Carlos, San Carlos City, Negros Occidental during the School Year 2025–2026. It specifically looked at teacher characteristics, how learners' comprehension, communication, and classroom engagement were affected by the absence of MTB-MLE, and how these factors related to learners' academic achievement in both English and Filipino.

A quantitative-descriptive correlational design was utilized. The respondents were primary school instructors recruited using purposive sampling. A researcher-made survey questionnaire collected data on teacher perceptions, while learners' grades in Filipino and English for the first grading period were utilized to assess academic success. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, weighted mean) defined instructor profiles and perceptions, whereas Pearson r indicated significant connections between variables.

Findings showed that teachers usually had neutral to positive attitudes on abolishing MTB-MLE. While some identified potential positives, such as faster learning progression, many remained concerned about students' comprehension and participation. Statistical results found few meaningful correlations between instructor characteristics and student accomplishment, while factors like experience and training may still impact views. The study advises localized literacy activities to boost students' Filipino and English skills while keeping cultural and linguistic relevance despite the phase-out of MTB-MLE..

Keywords: Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, policy removal, teacher perceptions, localized literacy, quantitative research

I. INTRODUCTION

The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) initiative was established to increase early literacy through learners' first language, but its likely withdrawal has prompted concerns. While some believe changing between English and Filipino will increase competition, others fear it may impair comprehension and confidence in the local populations. This study analyzes teachers' perspectives of MTB-MLE elimination and uses these findings to build localised literacy enhancement activities.

Literature Review

According to recent research conducted worldwide and in the Philippines, early training that is in line with learners' first language consistently improves foundational reading, facilitates the acquisition of a second language, and increases classroom involvement. Empirical data, however, also reveals a great deal of variance in the quality of implementation, teacher preparation, and accessible resources, all of which moderate results in different situations. International

syntheses (e.g., EGRA-based studies and UNESCO reviews) warn that fast, poorly scaffolded shifts away from mother-tongue instruction can impair comprehension in the short term unless explicit bridging methods are utilized. Philippine field reports and unpublished theses likewise show mixed results: where MTB-MLE was implemented faithfully, learners' literacy trajectories improved; where training and materials were weak, This literature establishes both the pedagogical rationale for mother-tongue use and the pragmatic need for localized bridging activities when LOI (language of instruction) changes.

Conceptual Literature

This study focuses primarily on Cummins' interdependence and threshold hypotheses, which suggest that a solid first-language (L1) background facilitates later academic language growth in multiple languages, provided learners acquire adequate proficiency. According to translanguaging research, teachers can use students' multilingual repertoires as teaching tools to maintain understanding and engagement during transitions. Perspectives on language ideology clarify how policy narratives and teacher perceptions influence the adoption of LOI reforms in classrooms. When taken as a whole, these frameworks support the investigation of (a) teacher views as mediators of policy effects and (b) the creation of localized literacy activities that retain conceptual access while enhancing English and Filipino proficiency through translanguaging and explicit bridging.

Research Literature

Empirical research on language-of-instruction (LOI) policies consistently reveals that early literacy outcomes are highly influenced by the degree of congruence between learners' home language and classroom teaching. Studies across low- and middle-income contexts suggest that mother-tongue instruction promotes decoding, comprehension, and involvement, particularly in the primary grades. Yet, evidence also indicates that these increases are largely dependent on contextual factors such as teacher preparation, availability of localized materials, and the

consistency of policy implementation. The advantages of mother-tongue programs fade and learners find it difficult to successfully transfer abilities to second languages when these supports are inadequate.

In the Philippines, however, research evaluating MTB-MLE has revealed similarly mixed outcomes. Some regional studies find benefits in learners' oral fluency and reading comprehension when instruction is offered in the local language, while others identify problems, including insufficient teacher preparation, limited resources, and difficulty managing multilingual classrooms. Several unpublished theses and program assessments demonstrate that teachers' views toward MTB-MLE and LOI transitions strongly impact classroom practices and learner results. Yet, only a small number of research have studied the immediate academic consequences following MTB-MLE's removal or how teacher perceptions interact with accomplishment data during this transition.

The absence of studies that combine perception-based data with real learner performance in the early stages of LOI changes is a significant gap in the current literature. Few studies propose actionable, localized interventions to mitigate comprehension losses when mother-tongue support is reduced. In order to close these gaps, this study proposes localized literacy activities that are intended to sustain comprehension and engagement in spite of the policy shift, as well as a link between teacher perceptions and first-quarter Filipino and English performance.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive–correlational research methodology to analyze teachers' opinions of the elimination of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program and to establish how these perceptions connect to learners' academic achievement in Filipino and English. The descriptive component was utilized to show the profile of teacher-respondents and their perceived consequences of the MTB-MLE removal, while the correlational component examined the relationships between teacher characteristics, perception scores, and

learner results during the first grading period. This design was excellent for obtaining measurable data and discovering connections among variables without changing any conditions.

A researcher-made, expert-validated questionnaire became the principal instrument, and reliability was confirmed by pilot testing using Cronbach's Alpha. Data were evaluated using descriptive statistics and Pearson's r to establish the significance of connections among variables. The arrangement permitted an organized review concerning the way the policy adjustment effected comprehension, communication, and classroom involvement, and offered evidence for establishing localized literacy programs.

Study Locale

The study was done in District I of the Schools Division of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, a public-school in the Philippines implementing the updated language policy that phases out Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). The district is made up of a number of elementary schools located in linguistic diverse neighborhoods where students get education in English and Filipino while speaking their native tongues at home.

Population and Sampling

Public elementary school teachers from San Carlos City, Negros Occidental's District I Schools Division made up the study's participants. These educators had been chosen due to their immediate involvement in the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) curriculum's implementation and later shift. They were the best group to explain how the elimination of MTB-MLE affected classroom instruction and how pupils performed because of their own experiences.

TABLE 1. FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Respondents	F	Percentage
Teachers	100	100.00%
Total	100	100.00%

Data Collection Instrument

As stated in Table 1, the study comprised of 100 respondents from teachers, or 100% of the overall sample. The selection of these responders was decided upon on their teaching experience, convenience, and desire to get involved in the research study. They were selected because to their direct experience instructing students impacted by the elimination of MTB-MLE and their capacity to assess how this change affected students' understanding, communication, and participation in classroom.

Data Collection Procedures

The gathering of data was done in a number of planned stages. Prior to conducting the study, the researchers obtained approval from the school administrators and the Schools Division Office. After clearance, the validated survey questionnaire was given personally to the teacher-respondents in District I.

Before responding, the goal of the study was briefly described, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Following the elimination of MTB-MLE, the teachers were given ample opportunity to answer the questionnaire based on their experiences in the learning environment. Once done, all finished questions were taken back on the exact same day to assure completion and prevent the loss of data. After collecting, the responses were examined, categorized, and encoded for statistical analysis.

Data Processing and Analysis

The finished questionnaires were reviewed, organized, and encoded for analysis. To find trends, frequencies, and correlations between variables, responses were totaled and summarized using statistical software. The results were then evaluated to address the research questions and objectives.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that all procedures in the conduct of the study adhered to ethical standards set by the Department of Education and general research ethics guidelines. The Schools Division Superintendent and the District I participating schools initially gave approval for the research to be carried out.

Each teacher respondent was requested fill out an agreement after being made aware of the study's objectives. They were assured that their involvement was completely optional and that they may stop at any moment without facing any repercussions. No names or identifying information were gathered in order to safeguard privacy, and all information was only given in summary form.

To guarantee accuracy and moral soundness, the questionnaire—which was modified from already-existing tools on language instruction—was examined and approved by professionals. Throughout the study, the researcher maintained honesty, transparency, and respect for the rights and dignity of all participants, following the ethical guidelines of AERA (2011).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The results of the research on public elementary school teachers' perceptions of the impact of the elimination of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in District I, Schools Division of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, are presented in this chapter. It provides a comprehensive grasp of how the removal of MTB-MLE influenced learners' comprehension, spoken expression, classroom participation, and academic performance. To support and clarify the study's conclusions, the results are displayed in tables and contrasted with previous research.

Profile of the Respondents. The majority of the respondents were young to mid-career educators, with one to ten years of experience in teaching and ages ranging from 20 to 40. The majority were female college graduates. This distribution indicates a wide set of instructors with varying backgrounds, giving a broad overview of perspectives throughout the district.

TABLE 4. THIS TABLE PRESENTS THE PROFILE AS TO AGE OF TEACHER RESPONDENTS OF DISTRICT I, DIVISION OF SAN CARLOS CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL.

Age Category	F	%
61 - 65 years old	3	3.00
51 - 60 years old	17	17.00
41-50 years old	17	17.00
31 - 40 years old	31	31.00
20 - 30 years old	32	32.00
TOTAL	100	100.00
Age Category	F	%
Mean Age: 38.07		
StDev. 11.68		

TABLE 5. THIS TABLE PRESENTS THE PROFILE AS TO SEX OF TEACHER RESPONDENTS OF DISTRICT I, DIVISION OF SAN CARLOS CITY, SAN CARLOS CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL AS TO SEX.

Sex	f	%
Male	18	18.00
Female	82	82.00
Total	100	100.00

TABLE 6. THIS TABLE SHOWS THE CIVIL STATUS OF THE TEACHER RESPONDENTS OF DISTRICT I, DIVISION OF SAN CARLOS CITY, SAN CARLOS CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL AS TO CIVIL STATUS.

Civil Status	f	%
Single	21	21.00
Married	79	79.00
Total	100	100.00

TABLE 7 PRESENTS THE PROFILE OF TEACHER RESPONDENTS OF DISTRICT I, DIVISION OF SAN CARLOS CITY, SAN CARLOS CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL AS TO HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT.

Highest Educational Attainment	F	%
Masteral Graduate	19	19.00
Masteral Level	24	24.00
College Graduate	57	57.00
Total	100	100.00

TABLE 8. THIS TABLE PRESENTS THE PROFILE TEACHER RESPONDENTS OF DISTRICT I, DIVISION OF SAN CARLOS CITY, SAN CARLOS CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL AS TO THE NUMBER OF YEARS IN SERVICE.

Years in Service	F	%
31 years above	4	4.00
21 yrs-30 yrs.	12	12.00
11 yrs-20 yrs.	21	21.00
1 yrs-10 yrs.	63	63.00
TOTAL	100	100.00
Mean Year of Service: 11.2		

TABLE 9. THIS TABLE PRESENTS THE PROFILE TEACHER RESPONDENTS OF DISTRICT I, DIVISION OF SAN CARLOS CITY, SAN CARLOS CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL AS TO THE NUMBER OF TRAININGS OR SEMINARS ATTENDED.

Number of Trainings/Seminars	f	%
11-20 trainings	16	16.00
1-10 trainings	84	84.00
Total	100	100.00

Perceived Effects on Lesson Comprehension

Teachers had neutral judgments on the affect of MTB-MLE removal on learners' comprehension. Many students were able to progressively adapt, but others needed longer time to comprehend lessons in both English and Filipino. This implies that there were problems with comprehension but they weren't serious enough to result in significant learning challenges.

Table 10 shows the perceived effects of the removal of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) on comprehension of lessons as evaluated by teacher respondents.

TABLE 10. ON COMPREHENSION OF LESSONS

S/N	Statements	\bar{X}	Std Dev	C
1.	Learners find it harder to understand lessons after the removal of MTB-MLE.	3.29	1.18	N
2.	The removal of MTB-MLE has created difficulties in bridging concepts from the mother tongue to Filipino and English.	2.95	1.13	N
3.	Using only Filipino and English affects learners' grasp of complex ideas.	3.28	1.23	N
4.	Learners require more time to understand lessons when taught in Filipino or English only.	3.46	1.34	A
5.	Learners often ask for repeated explanations due to language difficulties.	3.38	1.14	N
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN / STANDARD DEVIATION / GRAND MEAN / CATEGORY		3.27	1.20	N

Legend: (SA)Strongly Agree (4.20–5.00) (A)Agree (3.40–4.19) (N) Neutral (2.60–3.39)
 (D)Disagree (1.80–2.59) (SD)Strongly Disagree (1.00–1.79)

Perceived Effects on Spoken Expression and Communication

Teachers acknowledged that the adjustment decreased learners’ confidence and fluency in speaking. Many learners still leaned on their native tongue while they difficult to communicate thoughts. Despite this, most kids continued to participate in oral activities, exhibiting eagerness to communicate even with limited language.

TABLE 11: ON SPOKEN EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION

S/N	Statements	\bar{X}	Std Dev	C
1.	Learners hesitate to participate in oral activities after the removal of MTB-MLE.	2.45	1.25	D
2.	The use of Filipino and English alone limits learners’ ability to express ideas confidently.	3.68	1.20	A
3.	Learners commit more errors in pronunciation and vocabulary usage.	3.66	1.06	A
4.	Learners often switch to their mother tongue when unable to express themselves in Filipino or English.	4.59	0.69	SA
5.	Learners experience anxiety or shyness in expressing their thoughts in Filipino and English.	3.62	1.08	A
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN / STANDARD DEVIATION /GRAND MEAN / CATEGORY		3.60	1.06	A

Legend: (SA)Strongly Agree (4.20–5.00) (A)Agree (3.40–4.19) (N) Neutral (2.60–3.39)
 (D)Disagree (1.80–2.59) (SD)Strongly Disagree (1.00–1.79)

Perceived Effects on Classroom Participation

Results demonstrated a mild impact on involvement. Learner grew more dependent on teachers for explanations and were less willing to volunteer during interactions. But the the general interest in lectures remained consistent, and students continued to engage in group projects when guided properly.

TABLE 12: ON CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

S/N	Statements	\bar{X}	Std Dev	C
1.	The removal of MTB-MLE has lowered learners' interest in class discussions.	2.97	1.21	N
2.	Learners are less active in group tasks and oral recitations.	3.23	1.24	N
3.	Learners become more dependent on teachers for explanation and translation.	4.12	0.96	A
4.	Learners show reduced enthusiasm in answering teacher's questions.	4.08	1.03	A
5.	Learners often avoid volunteering in class activities due to language difficulty.	4.23	1.03	SA
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN / STANDARD DEVIATION / GRAND MEAN / CATEGORY		3.73	1.09	A

Legend: (SA)Strongly Agree (4.20–5.00) (A)Agree (3.40–4.19) (N) Neutral (2.60–3.39)
 (D)Disagree (1.80–2.59) (SD)Strongly Disagree (1.00–1.79)

Learners' Academic Performance

Regarding whether academic achievement decreased with the elimination of MTB-MLE, teachers' responses revealed a neutral opinion. Some learners displayed difficulty with written work and understanding in Filipino and English, but many adapted as they had more exposure to the new languages of instruction.

TABLE 13 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS

S/N	Statements	\bar{X}	Std Dev	C
1.	Learners' performance in Filipino declined after the removal of MTB-MLE.	2.98	1.11	N
2.	Learners' performance in English declined after the removal of MTB-MLE.	3.35	1.10	N
3.	The absence of MTB-MLE created learning gaps noticeable in quizzes and written outputs.	3.73	1.06	A
4.	Learners' scores in written examinations reflect challenges in language comprehension.	4.20	0.84	SA
5.	Learners submit incomplete or incorrect assignments due to language-related misunderstandings.	4.34	0.74	SA
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN / STANDARD DEVIATION / GRAND MEAN / CATEGORY		3.35	0.97	N

Significant Relationships

Analysis found substantial connections between teachers' perceptions and their sex, educational attainment, years of employment, and training attended. This means teachers with more experience or higher studies tended to see the policy move differently than newer teachers. No significant association was discovered for age and civil status.

Similar trends were discovered when comparing instructor profiles to students' academic achievement, suggesting that professional background and teacher preparation have an impact on how classroom transitions are handled.

Table 14 presents the correlation between these variables as the basis for determining their significant relationship

**Table 14 CORRELATION TABLE
PROFILE OF TEACHERS AND THE EFFECTS OF REMOVAL OF MTB-MLE**

	Profile of Teachers		Extent of Involvement	Decision on H ₀
Pearson r	Age	Correlation Coefficient	.076	Accept H₀
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.452	
		N	100	
	Sex	Correlation Coefficient	.210	Reject H₀
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	
		N	100	
	Civil Status	Correlation Coefficient	.047	Accept H₀
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.639	
		N	100	
	Highest Educational Attainment	Correlation Coefficient	.212	Reject H₀
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	
		N	100	
	No. of years in service	Correlation Coefficient	.201	Reject H₀
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	
		N	100	
	No. of relevant trainings attended	Correlation Coefficient	.199	Reject H₀
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	
		N	100	

**TABLE 15 CORRELATION TABLE
 PROFILE OF TEACHERS AND THE LEVEL OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
 LEARNERS IN FILIPINO AND ENGLISH AFTER THE REMOVAL OF MTB-MLE
 DURING THE FIRST GRADING PERIOD**

	Profile of Teachers		Extent of Involvement	Decision on H₀
Pearson r	Age	Correlation	.063	Accept H₀
		Coefficient	.529	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	100	
		N		
	Sex	Correlation	.245	Reject H₀
		Coefficient	.014	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	100	
		N		
	Civil Status	Correlation	.068	Accept H₀
		Coefficient	.501	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	100	
		N		
	Highest Educational Attainment	Correlation	.226	Reject H₀
		Coefficient	.024	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	100	
		N		
	No. of years in service	Correlation	.204	Reject H₀
		Coefficient	.042	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	100	
		N		
	No. of relevant trainings attended	Correlation	.221	Reject H₀
		Coefficient	.027	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	100	
		N		

Learners demonstrated the capacity to adjust over time, but the elimination of MTB-MLE generated transitional difficulties in comprehension, communication, and involvement. Teachers had a vital role in assisting this shift, especially those with excellent training and longer experience. The findings underscore the necessity for continual teacher development and customized literacy

activities to assist maintain learner engagement and performance during language policy adjustments.

Discussion

The results of the study demonstrated that the elimination of MTB-MLE had variable but manageable effects on learners. Teachers stated that some learners struggled to understand teachings in Filipino and English at first, especially if ideas were more complicated. Many needed further and additional explanations to completely grasp the lessons. Yet, as teachers offered assistance and constant exposure to the new languages, students eventually adapted.

Teachers found that while students were conversant in both Filipino and English, they were not as proficient when speaking in their mother tongue. Despite this, learners built confidence via practice and classroom activities. Additionally, classroom involvement remained largely favorable, particularly when instructors employed contextualized examples and techniques that linked courses to students' backgrounds and prior knowledge.

According to the correlational findings, teachers' opinions regarding MTB-MLE removal were highly influenced by professional characteristics, including their sex, years of service, educational attainment, and relevant trainings. Age and civil rank, on one hand, did not correlate with these views. This indicates that educators with more expertise and professional training were better equipped to comprehend and handle the difficulties posed by the language transition.

A strong association was also established with the reported impacts of MTB-MLE elimination and learners' academic achievement. This implies that throughout the transition phase, learners' performance in both Filipino and English is influenced by the mediums utilized in instruction.

Overall, the research reveals that despite the elimination of MTB-MLE caused changes, teachers as well as pupils were able to manage through contextualized education, continued exposure to the new languages, and successful classroom practices.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The research concluded that the elimination of MTB-MLE generated moderate impacts on learners' comprehension, communication, and involvement. Learners encountered early difficulty with Filipino and English, although with instructor assistance and contextualized techniques, they proved ready to adapt and sustain excellent academic achievement. Their educational attainment, years of service, and related trainings played a vital impact in influencing how well they handled the change and helped their pupils

The findings also showed that teacher adaptability and continuous professional development are essential for successful language transitions. By using strategies that are responsive to learners' linguistic backgrounds, teachers can help ensure that shifts in language policy do not negatively affect classroom engagement and learning outcomes.

Recommendations. In accordance with the results, it was suggested teachers continue to adopt multilingual and contextualize teaching methodologies to help fill pupils' comprehension deficiencies in Filipino and English. Teachers should use translanguaging methodologies, scaffolded exploration, along with culturally appropriate scenarios to promote understanding. These techniques were reinforced by García and Wei (2018), who stated that integrating the pupil's native dialect to the medium of teaching increases deep comprehension and competence.

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