

English Language Performance and Difficulties of Pupils in the Mother Tongue – based (MTB) Medium of Instruction

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Abstract

This study that adopts descriptive and inferential research methods investigated the status of elementary grade pupils' English proficiency, particularly the Grades 1, 2 and 3 pupils who are simultaneously taking up subjects in the Mother Tongue and English that are integrated in their curricula. The research population was sourced from a single research locale, i.e. Don Amadeo Perez Sr. Memorial Central School-Main, during the SY 2017-2018. The study employed content-validated data-gathering instruments.

The pupils across the three curriculum grades have varied socio-demographic and language-learning characteristics. Sex-distribution in the three grade levels have different ratios. Regardless of curriculum grade designation, the pupils' mother tongues range from "Ilokano", "Tagalog", and "English". The family income of all the pupils regardless of curriculum grade are differentiated and range from "Very High", "High", "Above Average", "Average", "Low", and "Very Low".

Across the three grade levels, the pupils' academic performance in English registered into different levels from "Outstanding" (maximum) to "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum). Most of the pupils in each group registered densely in the lower strata of performance levels. Their academic performance in Mother Tongue registered in the levels of "Outstanding" (maximum) to "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum). Grades 1, 2, and 3 pupils' English proficiency levels range from "High" (maximum) to "Low" (minimum).

Relationship between the profile variables and English proficiency is dependent on the grade level of students. None of the profile variables are significantly related to EPL in the accounts of the Grade 2 pupils. Grade 1 pupils account for a significance in relationship between "academic performance in mother tongue" and EPL. Grade 3 pupils account for a significance in relationship between EPL and "sex", "academic performance in Mother Tongue" and "academic performance in English".

Teachers vary as to their level of agreement or disagreement on the positive

or negative implications of the MTB-MLE policy in the English proficiency of pupils.

Based on the aforementioned gist of research findings, several recommendations were offered to improve instructional efficiency and strategies that can alleviate pupils' difficulties and limitations in their English proficiency as well as their academic performance in English subjects. This shall be done adjacently as they are also expected to equally develop linguistic skills in their Mother Tongue. These involve the initiative and cooperation among the concerned English language and Mother Tongue teachers, the School management, and the pupils. Recommendations were also addressed for future researchers to continue their scholarly investigation on the effects or implications of the adjacent learning of Mother Tongue and English prescribed by the MTB-MLE policy of the Department of Education (DepEd).

Keywords: English Language Performance, English Proficiency, Mother Tongue-Based (MTB), MTB-MLE

Introduction

The Philippines as a multilingual country has a different scene setting when it comes to the institutionalization of a national policy requiring mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in the primary school years (Burton, 2013). With regards to such implementation, many studies have long supported the use of mother tongue as the language of instruction. However, these researches have primarily been conducted in the community rather than national settings.

In Southeast Asia, a rising number of educational programs encourages a mother tongue approach in teaching and learning different core areas. Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Timor L'Este and Vietnam are among the countries in the region which adhere to the emerging language-in-education policy (UNESCO, 2007). In line with this, the programs are being utilized at the community level with support from international non-governmental agencies. While the use of non-dominant languages in education is allowed in each of these countries, the Philippines is the single country to institute a national policy requiring their inclusion in the early grades.

It was 2009 when the Department of Education (DepEd) challenged the Bilingual Education Policy through the issuance of an order requiring different educational institutions to implement mother tongue-based multilingual education or MTB-MLE for brevity (Department Order No. 28, s. 2013). This order requires the first language of the learners to be used as the medium of instruction in all subject areas from pre-kindergarten through grade three with Filipino and English

being taught as separate subjects (Department Order No. 74, s. 2009). In 2012, another order was issued that offered more specific guidelines for MTB-MLE and embedded the reform in the newly adopted —K to 12 Basic Education Program (Department Order No. 16, s. 2012). This order shifted from the original mother tongue approach by specifying twelve major regional languages or lingua franca to be used as the languages of instruction and offered as a learning area. Under this order, teachers are provided government-issued materials in their regional languages but are expected to adapt them to reflect the students' first languages. Until recently, the MTB-MLE policy resided solely within DepEd.

Finally, in January 2013, Congress officially supported this effort by passing the Enhanced Basic Education Act. In addition to shifting toward a K to 12 educational structure, this legislation becomes as prerequisites in instruction, teaching materials, and assessments of the learners, considering further their regional and native languages as an accessory to learning from kindergarten through grade three with a mother language transition program from grades four through six.

Gradual implementation started with grade one students in 2012, followed by grades two and three in 2013 and 2014 respectively. This shift in language policy is part of a growing number of trends around the world which support mother tongue instruction in the early years of a child's education.

As a result, the implementation of MTB-MLE in the Philippines is being looked at as an example for the rest of the region. The adoption of MTB-MLE became the beginning of a bigger movement for the DepEd and Congress that solely relies on the findings of various and previous studies that elucidate the benefits of mother tongue as a language of instruction (Burton, 2013). These studies deduced that minority language pupils who gained literacy in their first language or mother tongue experienced higher academic achievement than students who learned in a second or third language. They suggested that second and third languages can be acquired more easily if a foundation in the first language is established early.

These studies also posited the importance of late-exit programs in which the mother tongue is utilized until Grade 6 with other languages taught as separate subjects. These findings are apparent in DepEd's policy statements about the objectives and outcomes of the MTB-MLE reform. Three outcomes cited in the 2009 order focused on the speed in which students will gain literacy skills under the MTB-MLE Reform.

Anent the above highlights and merits in the implementation of the MTB-MLE curriculum, it has likewise been the target of multiple criticisms by scholars, academicians, educational managers, teachers, students and their parents and other stakeholders of Basic Education. In 2012, Nolasco noted in Philippine Daily Inquirer that:

“[The changes in the K to 12] curricular content and focus emanate from the ... intention to do away with the bilingual policy and to affirm mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE). [It] provides that for kindergarten and from Grades 1-3, the regional or native language of the learners shall be used for instruction, teaching materials and testing. From Grades 4-6, there shall be a language transition plan so that Filipino and English are gradually introduced until these languages can become the primary modes of instruction in high school.

The transition plan addresses a critical flaw, which limits L1 use up to Grade 3 only. Research has shown that “short exit” schemes lead to the same disastrous academic results as complete immersion in a second language (L2) that learners cannot speak.

In addition to the above, Wyk et al (2016) noted in their research that despite the pervasive criticisms and ongoing arguments in favour of MT medium of instruction during the early years of education, multifaceted reasons have urged people to go against this notion and rather opt for the dominant language or the Language of Wider Communication (e.g. English) to be implemented in schools as soon as possible. Wyket all quotes Porter’s (Porter, 1999 in Wyk et al, 2016) explanation of the "maximum exposure hypothesis" or "time-on-task hypothesis" which states that the more a person is exposed on learning a language, the better a person will do in it. She further stipulated that students should be given more direct instruction in English, as this will result in them being able to do schoolwork in English earlier and more effectively.

Moreover, Kolawole and Dele (2002, in Wyk et al, 2016) contend that a firm foundation in English language is very important for better academic performance. They further suggested that the number of years of study and teaching periods in English should be increased.

Educational settings in the provincial regions have a considerable number of teachers, along with their students and the students' parents who cannot fully appreciate the MTB-MLE with their perceptions that it has inimical and debilitating implications to the development of students' skills in English. Some teachers think that the official languages of the academe already make use of both English and Filipino. Adding more languages to the medium of instruction, such as the mother tongue can pave more linguistic confusions on the part of learners who have to alternate their language mindsets each time and across the different courses that they take up in the school. Many educators have likewise doubted as

to how the students' mother tongue can be promoted as a medium of instruction for some academic subjects considering that most regional mother tongues are hardly "intellectualized languages". Even Filipino, which is already the national lingua franca, is challenged for its level of intellectualization, save more for the regional languages in the Philippines that were scarcely used at all in expressing and communicating scientific knowledge.

Also, it has likewise been contested that development of language skills in the mother tongue can be an essential preparation for second language acquisition in English. Many of the regional languages in the Philippines presuppose syntactic, lexical, orthographic, and phonemic features that are extremely aloof from the linguistic system of English. Accordingly, there is no way for the learners to draw so much parallelism in language rules across their mother tongue and the English language.

In the above context, that this researcher has observed among his fellow teachers and have read articles that indicate the still pervasive criticisms to the MTB-MLE, the researcher's assumption is that most of such opinions may be conditioned by teachers' less familiarity on the optimal benefits of Mother Tongue-Based medium of instruction. Thus, this study had been conceptualized to expose teachers' underlying beliefs and professional opinions based on their perceptions on the MTB-MLE. This study intended to provide an empirical basis to substantiate either one of the opposing lobbies as to whether or not mother tongue-based medium of instruction can interfere in the English language skills of learners who are concurrently taking up subjects in English and mother tongue. Moreover, the study also looked into the English language performance and difficulties of pupils which is within the researcher's area of specialization.

Related Studies

The conceptualization of this study is launched from the researcher's readings of prior conducted studies dealing with mother tongue-based instruction and its general effects to pupils' academic performance and second language learning, specifically in English.

One such study is that of Wyk et al (2016) which investigated the effect of mother tongue instruction and gender on second language acquisition using a causal-comparative quantitative research design. The two distinguishing groups compared were: (a) learners that were taught in their mother tongue (i.e. Afrikaans); and (b) learners that were not taught in their mother tongue but in English, from grades 1 to 3. The dependent variable was the second language acquisition that was accounted for by the learners' performance in grade 5 in three tests, i.e. on vocabulary, on syntax, and on oral communication tests. The sample included 2 schools in Windhoek and a total of 70 learners, with 35 learners that

had Afrikaans as medium of instruction, and 35 learners that had English as medium of instruction from grades 1 to 3. The study aimed to shed some light on the ongoing debate as to whether mother tongue instruction or immersion in L2 is more beneficial for the child's second language acquisition and competence.

The above mentioned study has extreme parallelisms to the study conducted in terms of the type of respondents, i.e. Grades 1, 2 and 3 pupils. However, Wyk et al's study involved an experimental approach that investigated learning conditions of students who were exposed to mother tongue-based education and those who were immediately taught using English. This set-up diverts from this study since in the Philippine setting, the MTB medium of instruction is implemented in Grades 1, 2, and 3 adjacent the use of English as instructional medium in the other subjects. This means that the respondents of this study were simultaneously exposed to MTB instruction and English language-based instruction contrary to the conditions in Wyk et al's study.

Likewise, the research design adopted by Wyk et al paves for a highly conclusive investigation as to the effects of MTB instruction on second language acquisition. Conversely, this proposed study presupposes a more modest investigation. This study will correlate the academic performance of pupils in their mother tongue subject and in their English subject, wherein the pupils are concurrently taking up the said courses. A specially prepared proficiency test will also identify the difficulty index to help determine the specific areas of difficulty among the pupils in terms of English-related skills. The difficulty index will be analyzed and interpreted alongside the linguistic features of their mother tongue to verify if any L1-L2 interference exists and which may be conditioned by their simultaneous instruction using the mother tongue and English. Although such analyses may generate findings as to the possible implications of MTB medium of instruction to pupils' development of English skills; nevertheless, the theory that such an impact exists can only be inferred from this study's prospective findings or which may ignite subsequent research that will employ a research design that can, more or less, establish greater certainty as to the causal relationship between the variables.

Another significant study is that of Ong'uti et al (2016) that dealt on the "Factors affecting teaching and learning in the mother tongue in Public Lower Elementary Schools in Kenya". Based on their findings, both teachers and learners had negative attitudes towards teaching and learning in mother tongue. It was also deduced that poor attitude of teachers towards mother tongue and preference of foreign languages as a mode of communication, could be attributed to lack of proper training among the teachers and the unavailability of resources for teaching and learning in mother tongue, while learners' preference for English and Kiswahili could be attributed to their prominence as languages of education and greater communication.

The above mentioned study reinforced the researcher's insight about the negative attitudes or perceptions that teachers have over the use of the mother tongue as an instructional medium or the teaching of the mother tongue as a subject in itself. However, the study of Ong'uti was designed to obtain the general reasons behind teachers' negative perceptions about MTB medium of instruction or MTB course instruction. In contrast, this proposed study narrows the investigation to teachers' perception about MTB medium of instruction in relation to the development of English skills by pupils who are concurrently taking up subjects in their mother tongue and in English.

Finally, the research of Zergani (2016) dealt on the "Effects of Using and Teaching with Mother Tongue Language in Primary School". The latter concluded that teaching the mother tongue alongside the second language allows the sounds and structures of the language to be transferred more easily. The child builds on what is already known and understood. Even if the written structures of the languages are different, literacy strategies, sensory motor skills and coordination are more easily transferred. As the language development progresses, concepts already understood in the first language are more easily transferred into the second language. The transition, however, shifts from reliance on the mother tongue to the second language. Thus, the research conclusively established that simultaneous mother tongue language and second language learners have enhanced linguistic and educational development. They develop a deeper understanding and are able to compare, contrast and use multiple linguistic systems, giving greater depth of understanding. Moreover, it was found that success and ability in the mother tongue is a strong predictor of success in the second language. The learners with strong first language foundation performed better in second language exams and education.

The above quoted findings of Zergani were very programmatic and definitive. His study presupposed on the simultaneous exposure of students to MTB medium of instruction and English language instruction (i.e. English being the students' second language). On such account, Zergani found that the use of the mother tongue facilitated the acquisition of second language rules. However, the study was conducted in a setting outside the Philippines and presupposed a mother tongue based in another country. His findings at this point may be contingent to a possible semblance in the linguistic structures across a mother tongue and a second language which helped pave the complementation of learning two languages simultaneously. On the other hand, this study would like to find out if the linguistic features of the students' mother tongue (i.e. a regional language in the Philippines) can indeed facilitate second language acquisition in English. This is the reason that this study engaged in analyzing the difficulties of pupils along the different English skills with the anticipation that such difficulties might cue on possible interlanguage transference experienced by the pupils in

learning their mother tongue and English simultaneously.

The findings in the study of Burton (2013) entitled “Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the Philippines: Studying Top-Down Policy Implementation from the Bottom Up” indicated that teachers’ and parents’ views of MTB-MLE focused on the short-term benefits of the policy and the long-term disadvantages. While both groups were overwhelmingly satisfied with the increase in student understanding, they expressed concern about the future implications for learning in Bikol rather than in English. Though supportive of the policy, they remain to be tact in words and actions especially in demonstrating their full adherence. The results of her previous study bear a significant implication on how a language policy is being managed especially among educational institutions. The advent of such policy holds true to the fact that it is delivered from the top to bottom approach rather than considering ground level stakeholders.

Based on the above gist of Burton’s study, perceptions of teachers and parents on the MTB-MLE implementation were obtained. Accordingly, the parents and the teachers perceived MTB-MLE as having both benefits and disadvantages. Such level of investigation served as the basis in the proposed study to assert the ethical possibility of looking into teachers’ perceptions on the mother tongue-based medium of instruction. This research query is thus valid and ethical, having been a verified item of analysis in previous scholarly works. However, contrary to Burton’s study, this proposed research delimits such query on perception only to the English language teachers. Burton’s research population comprehensively covered a wide range of respondents which include teachers, regardless of what subjects they teach and regardless of whatever vantage points they can draw their perceptions on the MTB-MLE policy. Burton also included the parents of students as respondents.

The study of Cabansag (2016) explored the stakeholders’ perspective on the implementation of MTB-MLE as a pedagogical approach. The stakeholders’ perspectives were explored through the results of the different focus group discussions among teachers, pupils, parents, local school board, parents-teachers and community association, non-government organization and local government unit. Results indicate four main benefits of MTB-MLE, namely: expressing better ideas, building self-confidence, better retention, and promoting friendly environment. Meanwhile, the challenges which hinder the implementation of MTB-MLE are grouped into four significant themes, i.e. multilingual environment, difficulty in translation, inadequacy of instructional materials, and mandatory compliance to the Department of Education (DepEd) order.

The significance of the results of the above mentioned study points out important actions the program can benefit Filipino pupils. Notably, MTB-MLE emanated from the higher authorities in which grassroots sector were not

consulted, the Department of Education (DepEd) order should be executed by an interface between the higher level management and the local stakeholders. Involving them can undoubtedly contribute in the success of MTB-MLE.

Anent the above, Cabansag's study parallels with that of Burton with its emphasis of the implementation of the MTB-MLE as initiated by the Department of Education without grounding such policy on significant consultations with grassroots sectors. Since this was already the case, the purpose of Cabansag's research was to expose the perceptions of stakeholders on the features and implementing policies of MTB-MLE in the hope that such data generated will reach higher education authorities and initiate a possible interface with the local stakeholders, not necessarily to achieve negotiations as to whether or not MTB-MLE is deemed to continue. The interface hopes to inform higher authorities with insights that can help improve the implementing guidelines of MTB-MLE especially that some perceptions obtained have exposed certain inadequacies or disadvantages in the current policy guidelines. The most that can be done is to introduce possible reforms on the existing guidelines from where the problems seem to originate.

The above discussed purpose of Cabansag's study parallels the intention of this researcher when he conceptualized this study. However, this study secured a narrower investigation of the probable effects of MTB-MLE, and that is in relation to the English language teaching enterprise. MTB-MLE was just a recent implementation of the Department of Education compared to the English language curriculum in the DepEd that has operated for many decades. The implementation of MTB-MLE may have rates of implications along the interest of language learning in English and in Filipino, as well as probably the teaching of other content subjects. This is what this proposed study also aims to find out in its targeted locale. Like Cabansag's study, this researcher also hopes that the merits of the study's findings can be useful for improving the strategies and guidelines in implementing MTB-MLE to eliminate wrong perceptions.

Finally, the study of Valerio (2015) reveals that teachers were not yet confidently certain whether the instructional materials they presently have can assure that they can really appreciate the MTBE due to the unavailability of localized translation along the instructional materials. The study also provided empirical evidences to show that the mother tongue based instruction cannot really elevate the learners' academic performances. Several other factors can be considered in dealing with MTB instruction. Teaching materials and assessment have not been transcribed into the regional or native languages of the learners. Results also showed that the respondents believed that MTB-MLE policy must consider the development of graded transcribed reading materials in the learners' home language. Significant differences existed when the respondents were grouped according to their ethnicity and according to the number of years of

teaching experience. This implies that linguistic background or their ethnicity has caused variations or differences on the way they perceived the mother tongue based education. There were also significant differences on their perceptions when they were grouped according to the number of years they have been teaching. This implies that the way they perceive the mother tongue based instruction differs based on their teaching experiences. The use of the mother tongue in its pedagogic aspect reflects the desire of learners to promote national identity, however the teachers seemed to be unprepared yet with the mandate of the new curriculum on the use of mother tongue based instruction. Indeed, the use of local dialects along instruction is clearly a complex process that is continually being redefined by the bilingual and multilingual system of education.

The above gist of Valerio's study employed respondents among the teachers handling mother tongue-based courses. Accordingly, the findings of the study reveal that even MTB course teachers are not confident in the optimal benefits of using mother tongue as the medium of instruction due to several factors like lack of instructional resources transcribed in the mother tongue, among other factors.

As to the bearing of Valerio's findings to the concern of this study, the researcher gained significant insight that the current status of instruction that uses the mother tongue as medium has its own problems and inadequacies. Anent that, it was previously established that MTB instruction aims to be beneficial in preparing pupils for second language acquisition. However, if MTB instruction is itself not adequately implemented, how then can a problematic instructional setting cause any beneficial effect to the pupils' development of language skills in English. At any rate, this study concentrated on the perceptions of teachers of English on MTB medium of instruction from the vantage point of how it relates to the development of the students' English skills. If Valerio's findings shall be credited, then it only implies that mother tongues being used in MTB learning area instruction have not been adequately intellectualized to teach important concepts in the different content courses. On such reality, it will be sound to project the same condition to English language courses. This study, however, aims to generate its own empirical evidences to substantiate or reject the conclusions of these previous studies.

Methodology

This study adopted the use of descriptive research design. As a descriptive research, it will feature an intensive analysis and interpretation of the characteristics of its respondent population as well as other variables related to them. The characteristics used to describe the situation or population in a descriptive method is known as descriptive categories (Shields & Rangarajan,

2013). Descriptive method was applied to this study relative to its aim to present a thorough description of several data sets that include: (a) the learner-variables based on the respondents' profile; (b) learner difficulties in English skills based on a difficulty index of their performance in a proficiency test; and (c) the perception of the English language teachers on the implications of mother tongue-based medium of instruction on the pupils' English language learning.

In addition, the study also employed inferential method. Inferential statistics is used to examine the relationships between variables within a sample, and then make generalizations or predictions about how those variables will relate within a larger population (Cole, 2018). Using a statistically valid sample and inferential statistics enables the conduct of research over a large scale population. Social scientists access various techniques to examine the relationships between variables, which include but are not limited to: linear regression analyses, logistic regression analyses, ANOVA, correlation analyses, structural equation modeling, and survival analysis.

Anent the above, this study sought to resolve its hypotheses as to significance in correlation between sets of variables. Inferential statistics was employed to determine: (a) if significant relationship exists between the pupils' level of academic performance in English subject and in Mother Tongue subject; and (b) if there is a significant relationship between the pupils' level of academic performance in English subject and their profile variables.

Respondents of the Study

This study presupposed several units of analysis. Data corresponding to each unit of analysis were retrieved from two sets of respondents, i.e. (a) pupil-respondents and teacher-respondents. The entire research population are based in Don Amadeo Perez Sr. Memorial Central School-Main, located in Urdaneta City (research locale).

Moreover, total enumeration was used to determine the research population. The research locale had three (3) sections for grade levels 1, 2, and 3. Adjacently, there were also three (3) English language teachers assigned for each section. Overall, the study employed a total of nine (9) sections and nine (9) teachers. In the final outline of the research, the pupil-respondent population was presented in a tabular form to show the specific number and rate of contribution of each section to the whole population.

Results and Discussion

Mother Tongue

As to the profile of the pupils in terms of mother tongue, Table 3 shows

the accounts corresponding to each group of the research population. Generally applicable across the three groups, the mother tongues of the pupils based on their self-report range from “Ilokano”, “Tagalog”, and “English”. No reports of other Philippine languages invoked as mother tongue has been found in as far as this research population.

In the Grade 1 group, most of the pupils (49 or 57.0%) registered “Ilokano” as their mother tongue, with lower incidences of Tagalog (36 or 41.9%) and English (1 or 1.2%) functioning as the mother tongue of the pupils. In contrast, a case of parallel findings was noted between the Grades 2 and 3 groups, in which majority of the pupils indicated “Tagalog” as their tongue, i.e. “74 or 73.3%” and “67 or 67.0%”, respectively. In the accounts of both Grades 2 and 3 groups, there are smaller traces of those who reported “Ilokano” and “English” as their mother tongue. As to the synthesis of the aforementioned findings on the distribution of the total research population in terms of mother tongue, majority of the pupils across the three groups registered “Tagalog” as their mother tongue, i.e. 177 or 61.7%. This is followed by the number of pupils that registered other mother tongues such as “Ilokano” (106 or 36.9%) and “English” (4 or 1.4%).

The above cited findings hardly align with the demographic description of Urdaneta City, Pangasinan in terms of “languages” used by its locals. It should be noted that the research locale of this study is Urdaneta City, where Don Amadeo Perez Sr. Memorial Central School-Main is based, and where all the pupils in the research population have their domicile in the said locale. In the demographic profile of Urdaneta City, it is indicated that historically, the first settlers of Urdaneta are “Pangasinenses”, although in the subsequent periods, the city has been gradually populated by “Ilokanos” migrating to the place as per 2015 census of population in Region 1. As such, the increased rates of migration of Ilokanos to Urdaneta City can possibly explain the finding in this study wherein the number of pupils who have Ilokano as their mother tongue constitutes a considerable fraction of more than one-third of the total research population. However, what is rather unexpected in the findings is that none of the respondents make use of “Pangasinan” as a mother tongue. This runs counter to the demographics of Urdaneta City wherein the expected dominant languages spoken by the locals are purportedly Pangasinan and Ilokano.

Academic Performance in a Mother Tongue Subject

The pupils’ academic performance in Mother Tongue is operationally based on the teacher-assessed ratings that the pupils obtained upon their accomplishment of a Mother Tongue subject in their curriculum. As with the foregoing section, the qualitative description of the pupils’ academic performance level is based on a rubric that uses a 5-point scale corresponding to the bracket of

the grades they obtained in a Mother Tongue subject. The performance levels, arranged in a hierarchy of descending order, are “Outstanding” (maximum), “Very Satisfactory”, “Satisfactory”, “Fairly Satisfactory”, and “Did not Meet Expectations” (minimum). Appendices H.1, H.2, and H.3 show the distribution of the pupils in their respective groups into the different percentile ratings corresponding to the grading system employed by DepEd. Table 4 reflects data configured from the tables in the aforementioned appendices, in which the pupils’ grades were directly used as bases for classifying their level of academic performance in Mother Tongue. The table also shows the distribution of the pupils per group into the different levels of academic performance in Mother Tongue. Moreover, the data in the table is organized to enable comparison and contrast across the groups’ respective accounts, as well as a summary of the accounts to reflect the profile of the entire research population.

As to features in the findings generalizable across the three groups, it is noteworthy that the pupils’ academic performance in Mother Tongue generally registered in the following levels, i.e. “Outstanding” (maximum), “Very Satisfactory”, “Satisfactory”, and “Fairly Satisfactory” (minimum). Such pattern applies to all the pupils in the entire research population regardless of grouping. No pupil registered a performance level of “Did Not Meet Expectations”. In addition, it appears that most of the pupils in each group registered densely in the lower strata of performance levels. For instance, the highest proportion of Grade 1 pupils were gauged to have “Fairly Satisfactory” level of academic performance in Mother Tongue (i.e. 31 or 36.2%). Although the fraction does not constitute the majority of the group, it is of the highest fractional proportion. There is obviously a small trace of pupils achieving a “Very Satisfactory” academic performance level in Mother Tongue (15 or 17.5%). If the accounts for the two lower levels of performance are combined, i.e. the rate of registrants under “Satisfactory” (2\3 or 26.8%) added to the rate of registrants under “Fairly Satisfactory” (31 or 36.2%), then the synthesis of these two accounts already

constitute majority of the groups’ population (i.e. 63%). This only shows that most of the grade 1 pupils were more likely susceptible to obtain lower levels of academic performance in Mother Tongue.

The above described case of the Grade 1 group somewhat parallels the case of the Grades 2 and 3 groups. Majority of the Grade 2 pupils registered a “satisfactory” level of academic performance in Mother Tongue (55 or 54.5%). In the same way, the highest proportion of Grade 3 pupils (44 or 44.0%) registered a “Satisfactory” academic performance level in English. In the respective accounts of Grades 1 and 3 groups, it is not possible to establish a typical performance level since the proportions allocated to each performance level failed to reach at least 50% of each group’s population. In the case of Grade 2 pupils, the typical

academic performance level in Mother Tongue that they are likely to achieve is “Satisfactory”.

There appears to be a slight leverage in the accounts of the Grades 2 and 3 pupils wherein these groups account for relatively higher rates of registration under “Very Satisfactory” level of academic performance in English, i.e. 54.5% for the Grade 2 group and 44.0% for the Grade 3 group. These registration rates are obviously higher compared to what is accounted for by the Grade 1 group (26.8%). For these aspects of the findings, it appears that, on a general basis, Grades 2 and 3 pupils’ academic performance in English are slightly higher than the performance levels obtained by the Grade 1 pupils. To confirm this, Table 5 presents a further configuration of the data to show the computed mean level of performance of the three groups. Accordingly, the highest mean level of academic performance in English is achieved by the group of Grade 2 pupils (84.12%), followed by the account of the grade 3 pupils (83.46%), and finally by the account of the Grade 1 pupils having the lowest mean (83.07). Although the magnitude of the gap in the mean performance level between the groups is not considerably huge, it remains noteworthy to indicate the degree of superiority in academic performance among pupils in the higher curriculum year levels. However, the progression of the performance is not linear across the three groups because the account of Grade 2 pupils is still higher than the account of the Grade 3 pupils.

A further analysis of the above mentioned findings reveals that the academic performance level of the pupils in Mother Tongue appears to have exactly the same pattern as to the characteristics of their academic performance in English. It is remarkable to note on the same sets of comparable and contrasting features across the three groups, whether their subject is English or Mother Tongue. The consistency in the pattern may be dismissed as having occurred only incidentally since it is not sound to conclude that learners’ performance in English can be ideally projected to their performance in Mother Tongue, or vice-versa, since these two different subjects presuppose different contents.

Likewise, the language competencies or skills aimed by the two subjects to develop are not also common between them. The only similarity between the two subjects is that they are both language subjects. As such, it may be the case that students’ linguistic skills in learning the Mother Tongue may be analogous at certain points with their skills in learning a second language, such as English.

Anent the above explanation, an article published in the “Language Magazine” attempted to theoretically establish the link between a person’s mastery of his / her Mother Tongue and the level of his / her acquisition skills in a second language. Portions of the article state that:

“[recent studies have been] exploring how a person’s native language can influence the way the

brain processes auditory words in a second language... [in relation to this issue, it has been generally accepted that] the speech processing system is extremely adaptive. Despite all the claims about the existence of a critical period for language learning, the speech processing system is actually very flexible.” (Language Magazine, 2017)

In the study of Yadav (2014), the latter took a rather neutral stance by invoking a balance between the positive and negative effects of the encouraging the use of the Mother Tongue in the school curriculum while subjecting the same students to subjects that require second language acquisition, such as the English subjects in school prescribed for ESL learners. Yadav quotes from the scholarly opinions coming from opposing lobbies to this dilemma. For language educators who oppose the simultaneous use of both Mother Tongue and Second Language in the subjects offered to ESL learners, the scholars in this lobby assert that:

“The role of mother tongue in second language learning has been the subject of much debate and controversy ... use of L1 should be minimized [especially] using it a lot ... English should be learned through English, just as you learn your mother tongue using your mother tongue. But the idea that the learner should learn English like a native speaker does, or tries to 'think in English', is an inappropriate and unachievable thought.” (Yadav, 2014)

In contrast to the above cited assertion by certain scholars, Yadav also noted on the equal number of SLA scholars who gave credit in the use and even in the teaching of the Mother Tongue even if it were adjacent to a learner’s subject in second language acquisition, since it produces no harm, challenge or confusion on the part of the learner. As explained by these scholars:

“The role of mother tongue in teaching and learning of English has long been discussed in literature. The influence of mother tongue is proven to have positive effects in teaching and learning of English. A learner's L1 is an important determinant of Second Language Acquisition. The L1 is a resource which learners use both consciously and subconsciously to help them arrange and re-arrange the L2 data in the input and to perform as best as they can. The cultural features connected with L1 use can

be put to good effect when teaching L2. Second language acquisition is a developmental process; L1 can be a contributing factor to it.” (Yadav, 2014)

As with the above quoted opposing opinions of language scholars, the findings of this study offers its modest premise to side with the lobby of scholars who assert that there may indeed be a link between learning the Mother Tongue adjacently with learning a second language such as English, especially in cases when students are simultaneously exposed to these subjects in School. In the MTB-MLE Program of the Philippine Department of Education, two subjects that impart the learning of skills in Mother Tongue and skills in English are offered simultaneously in the curricula of Grades 1, 2, and 3 which is the condition that the respondents in this study are exposed. In the foregoing presentation of the findings of the pupils’ academic performance in both their Mother Tongue and English subjects, one of the remarkable observations pointed out is the seeming commonality in certain patterns as previously discussed.

The common pattern seems to cue that the pupils’ performance in their English subject parallels their performance in their Mother Tongue subject. What the extent of the findings, however, cannot definitely explain is which between the two subjects is causing a possible influence to the other. It can get as confusing as framing the right question --- Do pupils who poorly perform in their Mother Tongue subject susceptible to have poor performance as well in their English subject? Or Do students who poorly perform in their English subject susceptible to have poor performance as well in their Mother Tongue subject? These two questions may appear structurally the same, although they do not suggest the same meaning.

The first question makes the assumption that a pupils’ performance in Mother Tongue projects an impact to his / her performance in learning English, thereby indicating that it is the learning of the Mother Tongue which generates influence or impact to English language learning. The second question offers a reversed assumption wherein it is English language learning that causes impact on Mother Tongue learning. The extent of what this current study’s findings can only shed light to is the seeming parallelism in the pattern of pupils’ performance across the two subjects. Even with that finding, the circumstances may only have been incidental or that there is really a link between them. And in case that the hypothesized link is worth crediting, the remaining issue is which between the variables is the active one that influences the other. A follow up research to clarify further the findings of this study is highly recommendable.

Academic Performance in English

The pupils' academic performance in English is operationally identified based on the teacher-assessed ratings that the pupils obtained upon their accomplishment of an English subject in their curriculum. Likewise, the qualitative description of the pupils' academic performance level is based on a rubric that uses a 5-point scale corresponding to the bracket of the grades they obtained in an English subject. The performance levels, arranged in a hierarchy of descending order, are "Outstanding" (maximum), "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory", "Fairly Satisfactory", and "Did not Meet Expectations" (minimum). Appendices I.1, I.2, and I.3 show the distribution of the pupils in their respective groups into the different percentile ratings corresponding to the grading system employed by DepEd in assigning course ratings to pupils across the different subjects in the curriculum.

Table 6 reflects data configured from the tables in the aforementioned appendices, in which the pupils' grades were directly used as bases for classifying their level of academic performance in English. The table also shows the distribution of the pupils per group into the different levels of academic performance in English. Moreover, the data in the table is organized to enable comparison and contrast across the groups' respective accounts, as well as a summary of the accounts to reflect the profile of the entire research population.

As to features in the findings generalizable across the three groups, it is noteworthy that the pupils' academic performance in English generally registered in the following levels, i.e. "Outstanding" (maximum), "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory", and "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum). Such pattern applies to all the pupils in the entire research population regardless of grouping. No pupil registered a performance level of "Did Not Meet Expectations".

In addition, it appears that most of the pupils in each group registered densely in the lower strata of performance levels. For instance, the highest proportion of Grade 1 pupils were gauged to have "Fairly Satisfactory" level of academic performance in English (i.e. 30 or 35%). Although the fraction does not constitute the majority of the group, it is of the highest fractional proportion. There is obviously a small trace of pupils achieving an "Outstanding" academic performance level in English (13 or 15.2%). If the accounts for the two lower levels of performance are combined, i.e. the rate of registrants under "Satisfactory" (27 or 31.4%) added to the rate of registrants under "Fairly Satisfactory" (30 or 35%), then the synthesis of these two accounts already constitute majority of the groups' population (i.e. 66.4%). This only shows that most of the grade 1 pupils were more likely susceptible to obtain lower levels of academic performance in English.

The above described case of the Grade 1 group somewhat parallels the

case of the Grades 2 and 3 groups. Almost half of the population of the Grade 2 pupils registered a “satisfactory” level of academic performance in English (50 or 49.5%). In the same way, the highest proportion of Grade 3 pupils (41 or 41.0%) registered a “Satisfactory” academic performance level in English. In the respective accounts of the three groups, it is not possible to establish a typical performance level since the proportions allocated to each performance level failed to reach at least 50% of each group’s population.

There appears to be a slight leverage in the accounts of the Grades 2 and 3 pupils wherein these groups account for relatively higher rates of registration under “Very Satisfactory” level of academic performance in English, i.e. 20.9% for the Grade 2 group and 23.0% for the Grade 3 group. These registration rates are obviously higher compared to what is accounted for by the Grade 1 group (18.6%). For these aspects of the findings, it appears that, on a general basis, Grades 2 and 3 pupils’ academic performance in English are slightly higher than the performance levels obtained by the Grade 1 pupils.

Although the magnitude of the gap in the mean performance level between the groups is not considerably huge, it remains noteworthy to indicate the degree of superiority in academic performance among pupils in the higher curriculum year levels. However, the progression of the performance is not linear across the three groups because the account of Grade 2 pupils is still higher than the account of the Grade 3 pupils.

One noteworthy feature in the above discussed findings is that the academic performance in English of the Grade 3 group is slightly lower than that of the Grade 2 group. That seems to induce greater curiosity than the finding that the academic performance of the Grade 2 group is higher than that of the Grade 1 group. However, these aspects of the findings do not necessarily imply a case of regression in the pupils’ acquisition of English skills. The risk of comparing academic performance level across learners belonging to different curriculum year levels is even flawed. For one, the set of language competencies expected of each curriculum grade level are different. It is possible that a pupil may have achieved higher levels of academic performance in Grade 2 but subsequently obtained lower grades in his / her succeeding grade levels. As explained in the official page of “Supporting English Language Learners” (https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/tracking_strategies.html), regress in performance and acquisition skills on the part of ESL learners may be a normal condition:

“[...] Learners may sometimes appear to regress when acquiring English. This can happen due to a number of factors, such as:\ challenges adjusting to academic language expectations between grade levels; experimenting with new vocabulary and

sentence structures, for example, an English language learner may revert back to simple sentence structures when using new vocabulary, especially when trying to be accurate adjusting to life or school changes returning from a break in their learning and/or an extended absence from school

A learner's progression through the ESL Benchmarks from division to division may not be linear. For example: A student transitioning between divisions may be assessed at a lower benchmark. This does not indicate regression. As the benchmarks move between divisions, what is expected at each division increases in terms of linguistic complexity. The student assessed at Level 5 in one division may be assessed at Level 4 in the next division as developmental and linguistic expectations increase."

Summary

This study investigated the status of elementary grade pupils' English proficiency in the context of those who are simultaneously taking up separate subjects in the Mother Tongue and English but are integrated within the same curriculum year level. The respondents of the study are Grades 1, 2, and 3, purposively selected because of their adjacent learning of Mother Tongue and English subjects as per MTB-MLE policy implemented by DepEd. The entire research population was drawn from a single research locale, i.e. Don Amadeo Perez Sr. Memorial Central School-Main during the SY 2017-2018.

The study presupposed several objectives slated in a total of six (6) research questions. The research population was treated as three groups, in which the pupils were clustered based on their curriculum grade. Presentation and analyses of data were also organized per group with a final synthesis to compare and contrast the accounts of the groups. The respondents were initially profiled in terms of socio-demographics and language-learning characteristics. Their academic performance in Mother Tongue and English were also noted and analyzed. Moreover, the pupils were subjected to English Proficiency Tests (EPT) to determine their English Proficiency Level (EPL). Three EPT variants were used as they are sensitized to the varying proficiency standards appropriate for Grades 1, 2, and 3 pupils. Each EPT accounted for five (5) different areas which served as the indicators of English proficiency. The respondents' scores in the EPT were used to qualify their EPL as a whole and their rates in the component indicators. The results of the EPT served a dual purpose as basis to determine

their difficulty index in English as basis to gauge the level of their limitation in English proficiency, i.e. LEP level. The pupils' EPL were further correlated to their socio-demographic and language-learning profiles to resolve the hypothesis if the latter set of variables are significantly related to the likelihood of achieving certain English proficiency levels. Finally, a separate set of teacher respondents also sourced from the same research locale were requested to report their perception on the possible positive or positive implications of the MTB-MLE policy to the aim of developing pupils' English proficiency. The findings of the study were compared with analogously related findings in previous studies.

The following provides a summary of the salient points in the research findings. The findings are aggregated into the accounts of the three groups of pupil that comprise the total research population.

Profile of the Grades 1, 2, and 3 Pupils along Socio-Demographic and Language-Learning Variables

The Grade 1 pupils accounted for equal number of male (43 or 50%) and female members (43 or 50%). In the Grade 2 group, the male pupils (53 or 52.5%) outnumber the female (48 or 47.5%), which is the exact opposite in the Grade 3 group wherein the female pupils (55 or 55%) outnumber the males (45 or 45%). As to the respondents' profile in terms of mother tongue, generally across the three groups, the mother tongues of the pupils range from "Ilokano", "Tagalog", and "English". Among the Grade 1 pupils, most of them (49 or 57.0%) registered an "Ilokano" mother tongue. In contrast, a case of parallel findings was noted between the Grades 2 and 3 groups, in which majority of the pupils indicated "Tagalog" as their mother tongue, i.e. "74 or 73.3%" and "67 or 67.0%", respectively.

As to the profile of the students in terms of the income of their respective families, the consolidated self-reports of the respondents reveal that the family income bracket of all the pupils regardless of curriculum grade are differentiated and that they range from "Very High", "High", "Above Average", "Average", "Low", and "Very Low". The only exception is that of the Grade 3 group who have no registered account of "Very High" income range. Majority of the Grade 1 pupils (56 or 65.1%) belong to families with "Very Low" income range (i.e. P 10, 999.00 and below). This parallels the accounts of the other groups where majority of them also registered a "Very Low" income range of their respective families on the part of Grade 2 pupils (58 or 57.4%) and Grade 3 pupils (79 or 79.0%).

As to the pupils' academic performance in English, across the three groups, the pupils' academic performance in English generally registered into levels of. "Outstanding" (maximum), "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory", and "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum). Most of the pupils in each group registered

densely in the lower strata of performance levels. For instance, the highest proportion of Grade 1 pupils were gauged to have “Fairly Satisfactory” level of academic performance in English (i.e. 30 or 35%). Almost half of the population of the Grade 2 pupils registered a “satisfactory” level of academic performance in English (50 or 49.5%). In the same way, the highest proportion of Grade 3 pupils (41 or 41.0%) registered a “Satisfactory” academic performance level in English.

On the other hand, findings on the pupils’ academic performance in Mother Tongue that are generalizable across the three groups show that their grades registered in levels of “Outstanding” (maximum), “Very Satisfactory”, “Satisfactory”, and “Fairly Satisfactory” (minimum). The highest proportion of Grade 1 pupils were gauged to have “Fairly Satisfactory” level of academic performance in Mother Tongue (i.e. 31 or 36.2%). Majority of the Grade 2 pupils registered a “satisfactory” level of academic performance in Mother Tongue (55 or 54.5%). In the same way, the highest proportion of Grade 3 pupils (44 or 44.0%) registered a “Satisfactory” academic performance level in Mother tongue.

English Proficiency Level (EPL) of the Grades 1, 2 and 3 Pupils

Across the groups of Grades 1, 2, and 3 pupils, each groups accounts for pupils’ whose English proficiency levels range from “High” (maximum) to “Low” (minimum) which thus implies extreme differentiation in the pupils’ EPLs. The highest proportion of grade 1 pupils (32 or 37.2%) registered an “Average” EPL. The combined ratio of Grade 1 pupils consigned to the lower bracket of EPLs constitute the majority of the group’s population. The account of the Grade 2 pupils is slightly superior, with the highest proportion of the group’s population who registered an “Above Average” EPL (39 or 38.6%). The combined fractions of Grade 2 pupils with “average” and “above average” EPL already constitutes the majority of the group’s population (72.3. Parallel to the case of the Grades 1 and 2 groups, there is also a dearth of Grade 3 pupils who achieved a “High” EPL (7.0%). The highest proportion of pupils across the three groups are the ones who were assessed to have an “Average” EPL (i.e. 100) constituting 37% of the total research population. This is followed by the number of pupils who obtained an “above average” EPL (92 or 31.0%), “Below Average” EPL (20.1%), “Low” EPL (24 or 8.1%). The least goes to the fraction of pupils who have “High’ EPL (21 or 7.1%).

Limitations in English Proficiency (LEP) of the Grades 1, 2, and 3 Pupils

On account\ of the Grade 1 pupils, their index of difficulty across the five areas of the EPT range from Moderate level of difficulty (maximum) to Very Low level of Difficulty 9minimum). They have low level of difficulty in most of the

areas of English proficiency, i.e. “Phoneme Recognition”, “Vocabulary Synonym”, and “Reading Comprehension-Inferential”. They accounted for a Very Low level of difficulty in terms of “Reading Comprehension-Interpretative”. Generally, they are more challenged when it comes to the area of “Identifying Describing Words”, although their assessed level of difficulty in the latter is only “Moderate”. Overall, their level of difficulty across the five areas of English proficiency is “Low”.

As for the Grade 2 pupils, their index of difficulty across the five areas of the EPT range from High level of difficulty (maximum) to Moderate level of Difficulty (minimum). They have moderate level of difficulty in most of the areas of English proficiency namely, “Identifying the Right Word”, “Identifying a Sentence”, and “Reading Comprehension-Creative”. Generally, they are even more challenged when it comes to the areas of “Phoneme Recognition” and “Correct Usage of Prepositions” in which their assessed level of difficulty in both areas is “High”. Overall, their level of difficulty across the five areas of English proficiency is “Moderate”.

On the part of the Grade 3 pupils, their index of difficulty across the five areas of the EPT range from High level of difficulty (maximum) to Low level of Difficulty. The areas which they found low level of difficulty are on “Semantic Conceptualization” and “Reading Comprehension-Literal”. Their level of difficulty rises one scale higher (i.e. “Moderate”) when it comes to the area: “Identifying the Right Word” to which they registered a high level of difficulty. Overall, their level of difficulty across the five areas of English proficiency is “Moderate”. In synthesis, the Grade 1 group had the lowest level of difficulty, while the Grade 2 group were assessed to have the highest level of difficulty.

Significant Relationship between the Pupils’ English Language Proficiency and Their Profile Variables

None of the profile variables were found to be significantly related to EPL when statistically tested using the accounts of the Grade 2 pupils. On the contrary, using the accounts of the Grade 1 pupils, “academic performance in mother tongue” was found to be significantly related to English Proficiency level. The correlation coefficient value obtained (-0.236) indicates a negative correlation.

Using the accounts of the Grade 3 pupils, the latter’s “sex” was found to be significantly related to English Proficiency level. Moreover, the correlation coefficient value obtained (5.076) further indicates a case of a positive correlation. Furthermore, findings reveal a significantly higher EPLs achieved by the male Grade 3 pupils over their female counterpart.

The accounts of the Grade 3 pupils also indicate a significant relationship between the pupils’ academic performance in Mother Tongue and their English

proficiency level. Moreover, the correlation coefficient value obtained (0.675) further indicates a positive correlation. In addition, the accounts of the Grade 3 pupils also indicate a significant relationship between the pupils' academic performance in English and their English proficiency level. Moreover, the correlation coefficient value obtained (0.732) further indicates a positive correlation.

Perception of English Language Teachers on the Implications of MTB Medium of Instruction on Pupils' English Language Learning

Majority of the teachers "fairly agree" that pupils' simultaneous learning of Mother Tongue and English is indeed favorable as such. The two subjects are complementary and mutually supportive to develop the pupils' language skills in the two languages. Likewise, majority of the teachers also noted that they "fairly agree" that their professional capability to teach Mother Tongue and English subjects in accordance with the policies set in the MTB-MLE is sufficient, without having to cause pernicious effects to the language learning abilities of the pupils in both the Mother Tongue and English.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the merits of the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Grades 1, 2, and 3 pupils simultaneously taking up subjects in Mother Tongue and English are male and female. Sex-distribution in the three grade levels are different. Regardless of curriculum grade designation, the pupils' mother tongues range from "Ilokano", "Tagalog", and "English". The family income of all the pupils regardless of curriculum grade are differentiated and range from "Very High", "High", "Above Average", "Average", "Low", and "Very Low".

2. Across the three grade levels, the pupils' academic performance in English registered into levels of "Outstanding" (maximum), "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory", and "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum). Most of the pupils in each group registered densely in the lower strata of performance levels. Their academic performance in Mother Tongue registered in levels of "Outstanding" (maximum), "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory", and "Fairly Satisfactory" (minimum).

3. Grades 1, 2, and 3 pupils' English proficiency levels range from "High" (maximum) to "Low" (minimum).

4. Grade 1 pupils' index of difficulty across the five areas of English proficiency range from Moderate level of difficulty (maximum) to Very Low level of Difficulty (minimum). Their difficulties center on "Phoneme Recognition", "Vocabulary Synonym", and "Reading Comprehension-Inferential". The Grade 2 pupils' index of difficulty range from High level of

difficulty (maximum) to Moderate level of Difficulty (minimum). Their difficulties center on “Identifying the Right Word, “Identifying a Sentence”, “Reading Comprehension-Creative”, “Phoneme Recognition” and “Correct Usage of Prepositions”. The Grade 3 pupils’ index of difficulty range from High level of difficulty (maximum) to Low level of Difficulty. Their difficulties center on “Semantic Conceptualization” and “Reading Comprehension-Literal”.

5. Relationship between the profile variables and English proficiency is dependent on the grade level of students. None of the profile variables are significantly related to EPL in the accounts of the Grade 2 pupils. Grade 1 pupils account for a significance in relationship between “academic performance in mother tongue” and EPL. Grade 3 pupils account for a significance in relationship between EPL and “sex”, “academic performance in Mother Tongue” and “academic performance in English”.

6. Teachers vary as to their level of agreement or disagreement on the positive or negative implications of the MTB-MLE policy in the English proficiency of pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. On account of the pupils’ profile revealing their differentiated mother tongues, this should raise the consciousness of the school management and teachers in the research locale as well as in other school settings so that they can adjust the instructional design of the Mother Tongue subjects sensitized to the needs of pupils whose mother tongues are not covered in the Mother Tongue subjects.

2. On account of the finding that majority of the pupils across the three grade levels register lower levels of academic performance in English, it should serve as a launching point for English teachers and the school management of the research locale to reinforce and reinvent their instructional designs, their instructional materials, and language programs to elevate the performance of their pupils in the English subjects.

3. On account of the finding that there remain to be traces of pupils with low level of English proficiency, this should cue impetus for advancement. Concerned pupils are recommended to work harder to improve their English proficiency with the able assistance of their teachers and the school management who can device alternative or reinforced strategies and intervention programs to reinforce their advancement in English skills.

4. On account of the finding that several pupils were assessed to have moderate to high levels of difficulty in English, intervention strategies and supplemental learning materials are highly recommendable to assist the special needs of these learners with limited English proficiency (LEP). This taps the cooperation among the school management, the teachers, parents and pupils.

5. On account of the finding that male Grade 3 pupils outperform their female counterpart in terms of English proficiency level, care must be taken to gender sensitize the learning tasks prescribed in English subjects in order to make them appealing to both genders and generally make English language learning enjoyable to all pupils regardless of sex. As to the finding that mother tongue learning is either negatively or positively correlated to English language learning, this dichotomy of findings in the current study should inspire future research to produce more conclusive results via the conduct of a parallel study.

6. On account of the varied perception of teachers which indicate their opinions of both positive and negative implications of the MTB-MLE policy on the aims of English language teaching, teachers should work harder to strengthen their appreciation of the policy via their own initiative to research on the benefits of MTB-MLE and how the policy can be executed effectively in their classroom teaching.

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