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ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
ISSN 1908-3181

Use of Mother Tongue in Teaching English and Second Language Proficiency of Grade 9 Students in a Public Secondary School

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Received: 02 February 2023

Revised: 27 February 2023

Accepted: 11 March 2023

Available Online: 13 March 2023

Volume II (2023), Issue 1, ISSN: 2945-3577

Abstract

Aim: This paper examined the use of Mother Tongue in teaching Grade 9 English and the proficiency of students in second language.

Methodology: This descriptive study utilized a survey questionnaire validated by experts to gather the profile of respondents and perceptions on mother tongue related variables. In the presentation of the data frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the general information about the profile of the respondents, as well as their attitudes towards mother tongue use. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to determine the significant relationship between the profile and the perception of students with the use of mother tongue and some of the related variables in their language proficiency in English.

Results: Based on the findings of the study, the respondents excel in logical arrangement followed by vocabulary, getting the main idea, and noting details and tenses. Among four mother tongue-related variables "on learning materials" has the lowest computed mean and "on implementation" got the highest. While all the variables were interpreted as agree. Meanwhile, the correlation between the respondents' profile and language proficiency is that, among the reading and writing skills it is only tenses which has a direct significance or relation to the language used at home while vocabulary, getting the main idea, noting details and logical arrangement were found not significant. The result shows that mother tongue does not affect most of the reading and writing skills. Furthermore, indicators found in "on teachers' competence", all the skills were found to be significant, except for noting details. "On learning materials", vocabulary and tenses were both significantly related while the rest of the skills were found to be not significant. On the other hand, "on implementation", vocabulary was found significant while all the rest of the skills has no direct correlation to the use of mother tongue.

Conclusion: The role of mother tongue in second language learning remains a controversy and subject for debate/ Based on the results of this study the hypothesis that the students' profile; the language used at home and ethnicity have no significant relationship to language proficiency is partially accepted. While the hypothesis that mother tongue-related variables: instruction, teachers' competence, learning materials and implementation have no significant relationship is also partially accepted.

Keywords: Mother Tongue, Proficiency, Second Language

INTRODUCTION

The role of language as a medium of instruction in promoting an effective teaching and learning is an issue that has occupied many scholars all over the world for so many years. It has been one of the common interests of research.

English language is a global and an international language. However, despite the fact that there are more people who speak English as a second language, studies have shown that the mother tongue of learners can play a useful role in learning the second language.

The term mother tongue refers to the first language that a child acquires and uses at home (Moyo, 2009). It may denote "first language" "home Language", preferred language", "native language" and sometimes "best language". It is meant to address the high functional illiteracy of Filipinos where language play a significant factor.



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The mother tongue plays a very important part in a child's identity and self-esteem. It provides the basis for the child's ability to learn and grow. Currently, few research are available about the effect that mother tongue has in language proficiency of the students. Students usually face the challenge of starting their learning in a language they do not understand and because they do not understand the language, they become discourage and they tend to drop out from school. Thus, a good foundation in mother tongue may also help strengthen the students' ability to understand English as their second language. As a language teacher, acknowledging the effects and impacts of mother tongue in teaching English can greatly affect the entire learning process.

Though there are many factors involved in delivering quality education (Natividad-Franco, 2022; Salendab & Dapitan, 2021a), language is clearly the key to communication and understanding in the classroom (Dizon & Sanchez, 2020). Language provides one of the most readily accessible windows into the nature of human mind.

Yadav (2016) states that learner's ability to learn a second or additional language still stand when their mother tongue is the main language of instruction. His research sees mother tongue as valuable teaching/learning resource instead of a source of interference.

The same situation is currently experienced by the researcher while teaching English in a public secondary school in Laguna, Philippines. Students tend to use their mother tongue in understanding and expressing their thoughts during lessons (Muñoz & Sanchez, 2023). It is also observed that mother tongue provides students with sense of security that enables them to learn with ease and in comfort. It serves social and cognitive functions in that students who work in groups discuss in their native language (Natividad-Franco, Dela Cruz & Carangan, 2023; Sanchez et al., 2022). This allows them to relate and have a sense of identity. The researcher views second language as a medium of instruction when possible since it is our target language but also considers switching to mother tongue when necessary. This idea is supported by Abergo (2013), stating that learners always depend on the mother language when they face hurdles, especially at the start of second language learning.

Theoretical Framework

The MTB-MLE Program being implemented in schools aims to teach children to read and write first in their MT and then to transfer their skills to the L2. This is consistent with the principle that, with sufficient environmental exposure and motivation, proficiency in one language can be transferred to a second. Jim Cummins calls this theory the "interdependence across languages" (2007) to which this present study is anchored.

To illustrate, he uses a two iceberg analogy (Figure 1) which explains that every language contains surface features; however, underlying those surface manifestations of language are proficiencies that are common across languages.

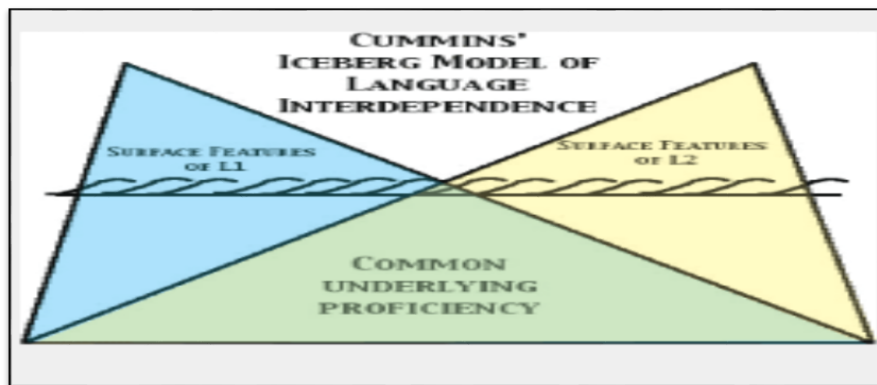


Figure 1: Cummins' Underlying Proficiency Model

Cummins' theory of Language Interdependence explains the importance of mother tongue in the success of second language acquisition. It reveals the relationship of the first language to the learning of another language. Specifically, this supports the idea of the researcher regarding mother tongue's valuable contribution in the language proficiency of the students in terms of reading and writing.



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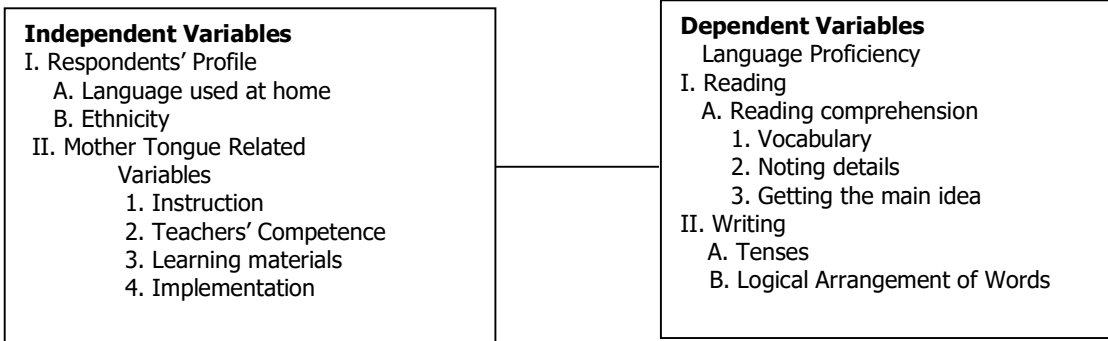
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ISSN 2945-3577



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Another idea that supports the current study is the Additive Bilingualism of Jim Cummins which utilizes the process where students develop both fluency and proficiency in the second language while continuing to develop proficiency in their first. The process involves adding the second language, not replacing the first language.

Conceptual Framework



Objective

The present study aimed to determine the relationship between the use of mother tongue in teaching Grade 9 English and the language proficiency of the students in a public secondary school in Laguna, Philippines. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of language used at home and ethnicity?
2. What are the perceptions of the students on mother tongue related variables, such as:
 - a) instruction;
 - b) teacher's competence;
 - c) learning materials; and
 - d) implementation?
3. What are the students' language proficiency in reading and writing?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the students to language proficiency in terms of reading and writing?
5. Is there a Significant relationship in the mother tongue-related variables to the language proficiency of the students in terms of reading and writing?

Hypothesis

1. Students' related factors such as the language used at home and ethnicity are not significantly related to the language proficiency of Grade 9 students.
2. Mother tongue-related variables such as instruction, learning materials, and teacher's competency are not significantly related to the language proficiency of the Grade 9 students.

METHODS

Research Design

This study used a descriptive design to obtain a more detailed understanding of the perspectives of Grade 9 students. This view is supported by Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004: 5) who said that "a descriptive approach denotes an inquiry in which the qualities, the characteristics or the properties of a phenomenon are examined for the better understanding of it." Ezzy (2002: 45) adds that descriptive methods are those which "identify a person's perception and understanding of the situation as something to be discovered rather than assumed". Specifically, the main source of the information was survey method. Descriptive research is an innovative tool for researchers as it presents an opportunity to fuse both quantitative and qualitative data to reconstruct the "what is" of a topic (Murphy, 2018; Salendab & Dapitan, 2021b; Sanchez, 2022). In this study, the descriptive design was used to describe the relationship of mother tongue to the English language proficiency of Grade 9 students.



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Respondents of the Study

One hundred seventy eight (178) Grade 9 students from 5 sections in a public secondary school in Laguna, Philippines participated in the observation and completion of data through survey questions about mother tongue instruction and practice test on reading and writing.

Research Instrument

This study used a survey questionnaire prepared by the researcher and validated by experts in the field. The questionnaire is composed of two parts: the first part requires the profile of the respondents and the second part dealt with questions regarding use of mother tongue in classroom setting. Perceptions on mother tongue related-variables were about instructions, teachers' competence, learning materials and implementation.

A 100 item English proficiency examination through practice test was administered to the selected Grade 9 students from 5 sections in the same form consisting of two parts: reading (vocabulary, getting the main idea and noting details) and writing (tenses and logical arrangement of words). All papers were personally checked by the researcher to ensure the reliability of the assessment.

Procedure

To capture the essence of the phenomenon under investigation, a letter of request was presented to the principal in a public secondary school in Laguna, Philippines asking permission to conduct the research. Questionnaires used in the study were validated and approved by significant and able Master Teachers from two public schools.

After the approval, distribution of questionnaires followed. The questionnaires and practice test were given during their English class to ensure that they were properly guided by their English teacher while filling up all the information needed and if there were clarifications to be made. Gathering of data was done personally by the researcher in order to get the exact and accurate answer to every question asked. After the collection of questionnaires, results were counted, tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted.

Treatment of Data

Gathered data were classified, tabulated, and entered into the matrix.

In the descriptive presentation of the data frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the general information about the profile of the respondents as well as their attitudes towards mother tongue use.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to determine the significant relationship between the profile and the perception of students with the use of mother tongue and some of the related variables in their language proficiency in English.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

PART I Profile of the Students

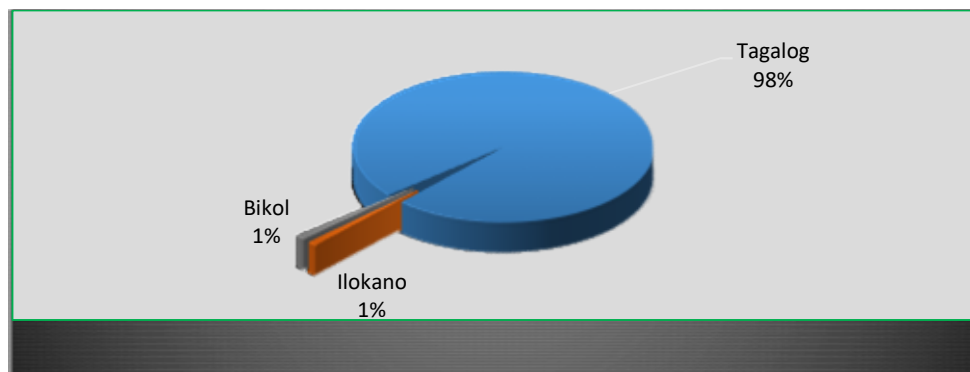


Figure 2. Distribution according to the language used at home.



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As shown by the result presented in Figure 2, 178 or 98% of the student respondents speak Tagalog at home, and only 1 or 1% among them uses either Bikolano or Ilokano at home. This implies that most of the respondents speak Tagalog at home.

The result is evident because the study was conducted in Alaminos, Laguna, part of Southern Tagalog where people used to speak Tagalog in majority.

This only proves that one's own language enables a child to express himself easily, as there is no fear of making mistakes. Tagalog, which the participants of this study are used at, encourages lecture participation by students in the learning process because they understand what is being discussed. They can immediately use their mother tongue to construct and explain their world, articulate their thoughts and add new concepts to what they already know (Nolasco, 2010).

By using the child's home language, we start from what they already know and build on this. Since the child is already familiar with the language used, learning to read and write becomes the focus and not learning the medium of instruction (Sanchez, 2023).

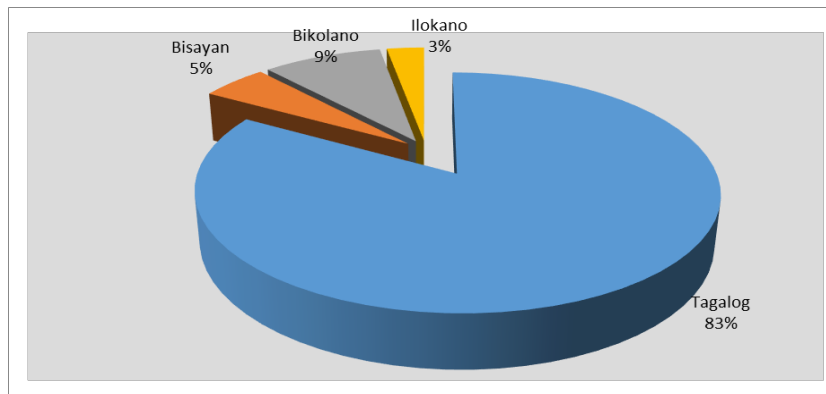


Figure 3. Distribution according to ethnicity.

Figure 3 shows that out of the 180 respondents, 150 or 83% are Tagalog while only 5 or 3% are Ilokano. The other ethnic groups comprising the respondents were 16 or 9% Bikolano, and 9 or 5% Bisaya. This figure reflects that Tagalogs dominate the respondents in this study. The result only proves that the respondents are natives of the Southern Tagalog region and very few were migrants from other areas in the Philippines.

This in turn may imply that students are well-versed in using Tagalog since they are the natural inhabitant of Alaminos, Laguna.

Part II. Mother Tongue Related Variables

Table 1. Perception on Mother Tongue in terms of Instruction.

Indicators (On Mother Tongue Instruction...)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. improves my language appreciation	4.11	.66	SA
2. allows me to easily interpret information from the text	3.81	.88	A
3. helps me improve my self-confidence during activities and discussions	3.92	.87	A
4. enhances my communication skills in English	3.65	.87	A
5. gives time to create clear ideas before answering in discussion	3.71	.87	A



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6. provides an opportunity to share ideas in class	3.87	.69	A
7. improves my learning capacity in English	3.74	.85	A
8. allows me to organize my ideas first before writing	3.83	.85	A
9. prepares students to a more complex activities	3.76	.80	A
10. makes me feel comfortable during class discussion	3.90	.77	A
OVERALL MEAN	3.83	.81	A

1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree
1.81-2.60 Disagree

2.61-3.40 Neither Agree nor Disagree
3.41-4.20 Agree

4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree

Table 1 shows that among the indicators, "mother tongue instruction improves my language appreciation" got the highest mean with 4.11 and interpreted as strongly agree, while "mother tongue instruction enhances my communication in English" has the lowest mean of 3.65 and interpreted as agree. The computed mean in this figure represents the student's perception regarding mother tongue as an instruction and the rest of the indicators were interpreted as agree.

This result implies that mother tongue instruction has a positive influence to students learning. Mother tongue is the medium of one's inner thoughts and reflections. Galino (2014) mentioned that mother tongue being the primary tool for thought processing and knowledge acquisition is considered as the best medium of instruction. As source of creativity and social expression, it opens opportunities for dialogue necessary for understanding and cooperation. It also means that students of the participant-school find mother tongue as a means of enhancing their communication skills. This is because they are more familiar and comfortable using Tagalog in their daily conversation.

Table 2. Perception on Mother Tongue in terms of Teacher's Competence.

Indicators (On Teacher's Competence)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. speaks in mother tongue fluently	3.84	.87	A
2. has attended seminars on the use of mother tongue	3.52	.95	A
3. often allows us to ask questions in mother tongue	3.72	.90	A
4. can explain difficult grammar and vocabulary lessons in Tagalog	3.82	.94	A
5. is a well-versed mother tongue user	3.85	.83	A
6. uses mother tongue to check my reading comprehension in English	3.83	.86	A
7. provides a clear and exact instruction through the use of mother tongue	3.75	.86	A
8. uses local films or videos to introduce a lesson for better understanding	3.81	.88	A
9. explains the lesson in English using mother tongue without any apprehensions	3.67	.93	A
10. is a native user of our mother tongue	3.71	.77	A

1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree
1.81-2.60 Disagree

2.61-3.40 Neither Agree nor Disagree
3.41-4.20 Agree

4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree

Table 2 shows the students' perception on the teachers' competence in using mother tongue. It reveals that indicator no. 5 stating that "my teacher is a well-versed mother tongue user" has the highest mean with 3.85 and indicator no.2 which states that "my teacher has attended seminars on the use of mother tongue" has the lowest mean of 3.52 . Each indicator was interpreted as agree as shown in their computed mean.

This result is accepted because it was found out that their teacher in English is not a native Tagalog user but a Bikolana. Also, there were no sufficient trainings and seminars attended by teacher as shown by the result especially with the use and implementation of mother tongue instruction.

The result is supported by Darling (2000), Salendab (2023), and Sanchez and Sarmiento (2020), which state that qualifications of the teachers have a great impact in establishing a great educational reform. Darling also



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mentioned that a well-designed professional development can improve practice and increase student achievement. In relation to the present study mother tongue use will be effective if teachers themselves will be equip with knowledge and skills necessary in using mother tongue for a successful second language teaching.

Preparedness of teacher plays an important role in developing students' attitude in learning and acquiring second language.

Table 3. Perception on Mother Tongue in terms of Learning Materials.

Indicators (On Learning Materials)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. I use bilingual English-Tagalog dictionaries when I do extensive reading.	3.77	.91	A
2. I rely on Tagalog-English dictionaries for words and expressions to be used in English writing.	3.76	.88	A
3. I use English-Tagalog dictionary in order to expand my vocabulary.	3.76	.86	A
4. I consult reference materials in our mother tongue in order to increase my knowledge.	3.73	.85	A
5. I read Tagalog books or novels regularly.	3.67	.87	A
6. I have access to books and reading materials in mother tongue.	3.72	.89	A
7. I learn best using pictures and images in presenting the lesson.	3.69	.87	A
8. There is a one is to one ratio of learning module for all students to be used for advance reading at home.	3.66	.82	A
9. I read local books to enhance my literary appreciation.	3.71	.84	A
10. I watch local films to help improve my understanding.	3.84	.79	A

1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree **2.61-3.40** Neither Agree nor Disagree **4.21-5.00** Strongly Agree
1.81-2.60 Disagree **3.41-4.20** Agree

Table 3 clearly posted that respondents agree with the ten indicators regarding the use of learning materials: with the highest mean of 3.84 in indicator no. 10, "I watch local films to help improve my understanding" and 3.66 as the lowest mean in indicator no. 8 stating that "there is a one is to one ratio of learning module for all students to be used for advance reading at home". The result is similar to the study of Post (2000) and Sanchez (2020a), where he established a substantial relationship between the use of manipulative materials and students' achievement in classroom. The study showed effective learning outcomes with the use of an appropriate learning material.

The result manifests that adequate learning materials aid students learn, especially in the understanding of their lessons in reading and writing. Most of the respondents perceived learning materials as an important factor in learning. It is a tough responsibility for us teachers to find ways on how we can provide meaningful materials for our students. A careful selection of authentic learning materials can provide the depth and richness of the learning process. Mother tongue teaching materials create motivation in learning by supporting the entire learning process. In this case, for any language skills to be successfully imparted to the students, a classroom must have the readily available materials especially those written in mother tongue to support the needs of the students in language.

Table 4. Perception of the Respondents on Mother Tongue in terms of Implementation

Indicators (On Implementation)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1.enhances teaching-learning result.	3.81	.73	A
2. helps students gain awareness of current issues and practical way of solving problems.	3.73	.82	A
3. has a positive effect in learning English.	3.83	.80	A



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4. serves as an aid to an active participation in the discussion.	3.86	.70	A
5. helps develop students' basic skills in learning.	3.93	.87	A
6. develops desirable attitudes towards people, his country, issues etc.	3.93	.75	A
7. develops teaching methods and strategies in different subjects.	3.88	.80	A
8. allows teachers to discuss their lesson without apprehension.	3.71	.81	A
9. helps preserves our culture and language.	3.84	.80	A
10. is helpful to both students and teachers.	4.03	.85	A
1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree	2.61-3.40 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree	
1.81-2.60 Disagree	3.41-4.20 Agree		

This table states the perception of the students regarding the implementation of mother tongue. The data showed that indicator no. 10 which states that "mother tongue is helpful to both students and teachers" got the highest mean of 4.03 while indicator no. 8 stating that "mother tongue allows teachers to discuss their lesson without apprehension" got the lowest computed mean of 3.71.

As manifested in the data, the students agree in all indicators given. This only means that mother tongue implementation in our school is perceived to be helpful in student's achievement.

Table 5. Summary of the students' perception on mother tongue related variables.

VARIABLE	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
Instruction	3.830	0.508	A
Teachers competence	3.752	0.553	A
Learning materials	3.730	0.528	A
Implementation	3.853	0.55	A
1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree	2.61-3.40 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree	
1.81-2.60 Disagree	3.41-4.20 Agree		

Table 5 clearly shows that among the mother tongue related variables, on implementation has the highest computed mean of 3.830 and interpreted as agree while learning materials found to be the lowest mean. All the rest of the variables were interpreted as agree.

The implication of this study is clear, that the implementation of mother tongue in Alaminos Integrated National High School is perceived to have a positive impact on learning. As the result yielded to agree on the indicators cited. It is noticeable that despite the importance of instructional materials in learning, students' perceptions were found weak especially on the availability of the materials used in their mother tongue.

In the same way, learners automatically transfer knowledge acquired in one language to another as soon as they have learned sufficient vocabulary in the new language.



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Part III. Language Proficiency

Table 6. Summary of the students' language proficiency

Language Proficiency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
<i>Reading</i> Vocabulary	12.939	3.764	Fair
	12.650	3.872	Fair
	8.993	4.331	Needs Improvement
<i>Writing</i> Tenses	8.483	3.492	Needs Improvement
	12.978	4.215	Fair
	11.209	14.952	Fair
OVERALL			

1.00-4.99 Poor **9.00-12.99** Fair **16.00-20.00** Excellent
5.00-8.99 Needs Improvement **13.00-15.99** Satisfactory

As shown in Table 6, among the five language proficiency skills logical arrangement has the highest computed mean of 12.978 followed closely by vocabulary with 12.939 computed mean. Noting details and tenses have a lower mean of 8.993 and 8.483 respectively which is interpreted as needs improvement. The data also showed that Grade 9 respondents got a fair result in vocabulary getting the main idea and logical arrangement. For the overall interpretation the result proved that the students performed fair enough their language proficiency test.

Among experts in the field, it is widely accepted that a child's ability to develop in their L2 depends on their development of fluency in reading and writing in their mother tongue. This result is supported by Burton's (2013) which revealed promising findings on the positive impact of mother tongue in language learning. The result also implies a need for a constant training or practice in terms of noting details and tenses which were computed weak or low in this study.

This also helps teachers identify the skills which must be given careful attention and more time of discussion.

Table 7. Correlation between language used at home and language proficiency.

Variables	r-value	p-value	Verbal Interpretation
<i>Reading</i> Vocabulary	.082	.274	No Correlation
	.008	.913	No Correlation
	.016	.835	No Correlation
<i>Writing</i> Tenses	.015	.084	No Correlation
	.032	.666	No Correlation

Legend: **r- value**
 .00-.10- No Correlation .51-.75- High Correlation
 .11-.25- Negligible Correlation .76-1.00- Very High Correlation
 .26-.50- Moderate Correlation

Table 7 shows the link between language used at home and the language proficiency of the respondents. The result clearly states that all language proficiency skills in reading and writing were found not correlated to mother tongue use.

This only implies that vocabulary, getting the main idea, noting detail, tenses and logical arrangement have no relationship to the student's first language (MT) or language used at home. Some words in the second language may not have mother tongue counterparts at all, and these may be overlooked simply because learners do not expect them to exist, or avoided because they are felt to be difficult to handle.

Clearly, the more aware the learners are of the similarities and differences between their mother tongue and the target language, the easier they will find it to adopt effective learning and production strategies.

This is in contrast with Macaro's study, (2001) which cited that first language use can facilitate connections between the target language and prior knowledge and ideas already developed in the first language. He found out



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that students used their first language to reduce working memory constraints, to avoid losing track of meaning, to consolidate in long term memory and to covert the input into more familiar terms.

Table 8. Correlation between ethnicity and language proficiency.

Variables	r-value	p-value	Verbal Interpretation
<i>Reading</i> Vocabulary	.013	.861	No Correlation
Getting the main idea	.094	.211	No Correlation
Noting Details	.019	.875	No Correlation
<i>Writing</i> Tenses	.100	.182	No Correlation
Logical Arrangement	.103	.170	No Correlation

Legend: **r- value**
 .00-.10- No Correlation
 .11-.25- Negligible Correlation
 .26-.50- Moderate Correlation
 .51-.75- High Correlation
 .76-1.00- Very High Correlation

Table 8 shows the connection between ethnicity and the language proficiency of the students. This direct correlation is however computed as weak. The respondents' ethnicity does not significantly affect their language proficiency.

It only implies that ethnicity has no relationship to the language proficiency of the students. This means that it does not matter whatever ethnic groups the respondents came from. It only explains that even if they are not a natural born Tagalog, skills in reading and writing were still unaffected.

Through extensive exploration, researchers have discovered many factors that influence academic achievement and performances in school (Sanchez, 2020b). After the observation, it was realized how unique and important each individual is, that everyone has a unique way of learning. This research showed that ethnicity in some way has no direct relation to student's achievement in school.

The researcher recognized the individuality of each student and the result may only emphasize the need for a wider understanding of unique abilities and skills of students.

Table 9. Correlation between instruction and language proficiency.

Variables	r-value	p-value	Verbal Interpretation
<i>Reading</i> Vocabulary	.062	.408	No Correlation
Getting the main idea	.012	.868	No Correlation
Noting Details	.007	.929	No Correlation
<i>Writing</i> Tenses	.217	.003	Negligible Correlation
Logical Arrangement	.045	.545	No Correlation

Legend: **r- value**
 .00-.10- No Correlation
 .11-.25- Negligible Correlation
 .26-.50- Moderate Correlation
 .51-.75- High Correlation
 .76-1.00- Very High Correlation

Table 9 reveals the relationship between mother tongue instruction and the language proficiency of the respondents. The result found a negligible correlation in tenses with r-value of .217. While the rest of the variables such as vocabulary, getting the main idea, noting details and logical arrangement were interpreted as not significant or no correlation.

This result is supported by Farhana's (2008) study about the effects of mother tongue on student's performance which shows that perception and attitude on mother tongue affects the performance of the students in terms of communication. He stressed that positive attitude towards students' first language affect their academic performance. As mother tongue instruction allows learners to make suggestions, ask and answer questions, and create and communicate new knowledge with enthusiasm. In relation with mother tongue in understanding and using different tenses, mother tongue or Tagalog serve as an aid in understanding the thought of the sentence



especially that there are three tenses in Filipino while aside from the simple tenses in English we also have the perfect tenses.

Table 10. Correlation between teachers' competence and language proficiency.

	Variables	r-value	p-value	Verbal Interpretation
Reading	Vocabulary	.248	.001	Negligible Correlation
	Getting the main idea	.154	.039	Negligible Correlation
	Noting Details	.121	.107	Negligible Correlation
Writing	Tenses	.231	.002	Negligible Correlation
	Logical Arrangement	.147	.049	Negligible Correlation

Legend: **r- value**

.00-.10- No Correlation

.11-.25- Negligible Correlation

.26-.50- Moderate Correlation

.51-.75- High Correlation

.76-1.00- Very High Correlation

Table 10 shows the relationship between teachers' competence and language proficiency of the respondents where vocabulary, getting the main idea, noting details tenses, and logical arrangement were interpreted as having negligible correlation.

It is in line with the study of Bee Bee (2010), which focused on the teacher's communication skills on teaching. The result of the study reveals that a teacher must be competent and qualified enough to teach multi-languages. Teachers must possess an effective communication skill in the delivery of pedagogy, classroom management and interaction with the class. Their attitude towards mother tongue, their teaching strategies, the instructional materials they use all count in the achievement on the MTB objectives.

This suggests training programs for teachers to enhance their skills and to enrich their knowledge regarding the implementation of mother tongue-based instruction and to improve noting details which has been computed the lowest mean in all five skills used in this study.

Table 11. Correlation between learning materials and language proficiency.

	Variables	r-value	p-value	Verbal Interpretation
Reading	Vocabulary	.180	.016	Negligible Correlation
	Getting the main idea	.110	.141	Negligible Correlation
	Noting Details	.053	.479	No Correlation
Writing	Tenses	.215	.004	Negligible Correlation
	Logical Arrangement	.090	.227	No Correlation

Legend: **r- value**

.00-.10- No Correlation

.11-.25- Negligible Correlation

.26-.50- Moderate Correlation

.51-.75- High Correlation

.76-1.00- Very High Correlation

Table 11 clearly shows the correlation of learning materials and language proficiency of the respondents. It declared that vocabulary, getting the main idea and tenses are negligibly correlated to learning materials in mother tongue. While noting details and logical arrangement were found to be not significantly related or have no correlation to learning materials. It simply implies that sufficient learning material is important in vocabulary and tense learning.

The result is supported by Kurdziolek's (2011), case study on Classroom resources and impact to learning where she mentioned that classroom arrangement together with equipped learning materials can contribute to the holistic environment that the child needs to learn. Basically, any resource a teacher uses to help him teach his students is an instructional material.

It is of utmost importance to first establish a supportive environment and a child friendly classroom with instructional materials suited to their ability. Every teacher needs supplies and resources in order to have a successful classroom. Textbooks should have correct, natural, recent and standard content which direct students ability and needs.



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ISSN 1908-3181

Conclusion

MTB-MLE has been a very important policy that needs to be given time and effort. It is a long and debatable topic and as educators we should be concerned with its long term effect to our learners so they can catch up to a globally fast changing world.

This study has established that ethnicity and the language used at home are not significantly and generally related to the English language proficiency of Grade 9 students. The mother tongue related variables, such as teachers' competence, learning materials, and implementation generally do not, as well, significantly relate to the students' English language proficiency.

Every language teacher would always try his/her best to make sure their students will learn the target language. It is a tough responsibility but we should employ every single possibility for learning to happen. As McKay(2002) rightly notes, "there is no one best method and no one method that is best for a particular context." Thus, we should be very careful when choosing the best approach to use whether teaching directly using the target language(English) or using the mother tongue, what is important is we consider what's best for our learners.

Recommendation

Based on the result and conclusion the researcher recommends that a similar study be done with a larger population. Since this study only focuses on the reading and writing skills, other researchers may include the other macro-skills in English such as speaking, listening and viewing.

Language teachers may be provided with enhancement trainings and authentic instructional resources to enrich their capabilities in using the mother tongue while teaching the English language to further deepen their understanding on the effects of mother tongue. Finally, providing basic and updated Instructional/learning materials may help for any reforms to be effective. Further researches employing other variables are also encouraged.

Acknowledgment

The researchers would like to acknowledge the following persons for their contributions to the study. Eden C. Callo, EdD, Cecilia B. Diva, EdD, Cecilia Q. Velasco, EdD, Edna O. Briones and Mr. Joemar L. Prestado.

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