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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE READING PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN MOTEHR-TONGUE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AREA OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

With the implementation of Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) under the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 and the lack of contextualized and localized teacher's guide and learner's materials has motivated the researcher to pursue this study which aimed to determine the reading performance of learners in mother-tongue. The respondents of the study were comprised of 312 grade 3 pupils from all the central schools in the Schools Division of Eastern Samar during the First Grading Period of the School Year 2021-2022. This study used descriptive design. Results of the study revealed that the reading performance of learners in mother-tongue showed that the learners are advanced in terms of segmental sounds compared to supra-segmental sounds. This means that the lack of system of writing for the Waray language, lack of vocabulary lists, lack of assessment and validation tools for reading materials, lack of grammar materials/explanation, and lack of proper contextualized and localized learner's materials affected the learners reading performance when dealing with complicated supra-segmental sounds. This study proved that even if teachers had a very satisfactory performance indicator, but there is a lack of development in contextualized and localized strategic intervention materials in MTB-MLE for local Waray language, particularly the Waray language used in Eastern Samar, there is still a language barrier between the teachers and pupils in understanding lessons taught in their respective school.

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Introduction:-

From many viewpoints, the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy is complicated. The policy presents difficulties in creating instructional materials, teacher training, and language teaching, to mention a few. There are just a few languages in which instructional materials are available. Several language backgrounds are represented in each classroom. MTB-MLE has divided opinions among classroom instructors as to whether it is appropriate for them and their pupils. While numerous promises have been made regarding MTB-tremendous MLE's value, many questions have remained unresolved. According to DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2013, many Filipino students encounter numerous educational obstacles, one of which is that they begin their education in a language that they do not understand. They do not comprehend the educational language that is utilized in the classroom as a medium of teaching.

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MTB has a number of advantages, but it also has certain disadvantages (Malone & Paraide, 2011; Oyzon & Fullmer, 2014; Wa-Mbaleka, 2014) that must be considered in this discussion. For starters, teaching resources in the majority of local languages are scarce. Second, teachers are not trained in the local languages that are utilized in their classrooms. Third, elementary school teachers may lack strong knowledge of L1 and L2 learning theories and studies. Fourth, certain indigenous languages may not be regarded as essential for formal education. Finally, parents may see MTB as a barrier to future employment in areas where English is highly prized. All of these are significant concerns that any government supporting an MTB strategy must address. Ignoring any of these will almost definitely fail. Despite being a strong supporter of MTB-MLE and hopeful about the policy's success in the Philippines, Nolasco (2008) stated that "the path to multiliteracy and multilingual education in the Philippines would be a long and torturous one."

The current MTB-MLE curriculum, which was introduced in 2012 (DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2012) and signed into law in 2013 (DepEd Order No. 28, s. 2013), operationalizes this vision by requiring children's mother tongues, or "languages understood by the learner," as the primary medium of instruction beginning in kindergarten, with the gradual introduction of Filipino and English in Grades 3-6. In Eastern Visayas or Region VIII, the language used as medium of instruction in MTB-MLE is the Waray language.

Waray, the language focus of this study, is part of the Visayan languages of the Philippines, along with Tagalog and Bikol which are parts of the Central Philippine languages. Over 30 languages compose the Visayan language family. The Visayan language with the most speakers is Cebuano, spoken by 20 million people as a native language in Central Visayas, parts of Eastern and Western Visayas, and most of Mindanao. Two other well-known Visayan languages are Hiligaynon, spoken by seven million in most of Western Visayas, and Waray spoken by three million in Eastern Visayas. Waray is a language which is a member of the Visayan branch of the Malayo Polynesian language family and is a lingua franca spoken by three million people in the Philippines in the provinces of Samar, Northern Samar, Eastern Samar, Leyte, and Biliran (Wolfenden, 1975).

Waray as a language has a unique feature of segmental and supra-segmental components. As a segment, Waray has vowels and consonants. Waray vowels are also called tiringgan. Waray language scholars such as Romualdez (1908), de Veyra (1967) and Wolff (1968), Rubino (2001), Lobel (2009) had similar inventory on the consonants and their corresponding graphemes; however, they disagreed with each other on the number of vowels. Romualdez (1908) in his book Bisayan Grammar proposed that Waray has twenty (20) letters consisting of fifteen (15) consonants and five (5) vowels namely a, e, i, o, u. Likewise, de Veyra (1982) writing in his *Ortograpiya han Binisaya* (Bisayan Orthography) corroborates the contention of Romualdez on the five vowels in Waray. Rubio (2001) and Wolff (1968) and even Lobel (2009) claim that Waray has three (3) vowels- a, i, u. They claimed that the vowels /o/ and /u/ are allophones; the same case is with /i/ and /e/. Lobel (2009) pointed out that Eastern Samar has "a reflex of Pan *e vowel "in their phonemic inventory, a fourth vowel. He described it as "a high central, tense unrounded vowel i." A consonant (or Mangarabay in Waray) is a speech sound caused by the stoppage or hindrance of the voiced or voiceless breath. The Waray language consists of sixteen (16) consonants. These are b, d, g, h, k, l, m, n, ng, p, r, s, t, w, y, and ` - respectively. The Waray Consonants are classified according to the manner of articulation and place of articulation. The manner of articulation is divided into stop, fricative, nasal, lateral, flap and glides. The place of articulation is also divided as bilabial, labio-dental, alveolar, palatal, and velar, and glottal.

With the rapid implementation of MTB-MLE in Eastern Visayas, it has been a very challenging task for teachers in the field because of the lack of system of writing for the Waray language, lack of vocabulary lists, lack of assessment and validation tools for reading materials, lack of grammar materials/explanation, teachers often have English terms but lack the corresponding Waray vocabulary, and teachers have to accommodate different variations of the Waray language. Though the Department of Education Regional Office No. VIII issued an advisory to follow and institutionalize the working orthography - *Ortograpiya han Waray*, in their daily teaching, in materials development and in other situations where the orthography is applicable, still, teachers need to contextualized and localized the learner's materials to suit learner's needs and to address the different variations of Waray language spoken in Leyte, Biliran, Samar, Northern Samar, and Eastern Samar.

Given these backgrounds, the researcher aims to know the reading performance of learners in MTB-MLE in the Schools Division of Eastern Samar. The lack of training of teachers in terms of teaching MTB-MLE subject and the lack of contextualized and localized teacher's guide and learner's materials has motivated the researcher to conduct this study. This research may help assess the need for all the elementary teachers in the Schools Division of Eastern

Samar to undergo trainings or seminars regarding MTB-MLE, thus, inputs to contextualized and localized strategic intervention materials for MTB-MLE.

Statement Of The Problem

This study intended to determine the reading performance of learners in mother-tongue in the Schools Division of Eastern Samar during the school year 2021-2022. Specifically, it tried elucidate following:

1. To evaluate the reading performance of learners in mother-tongue in terms of
 - 1.1 Segmental sounds, and
 - 1.2 Supra-segmental sounds.
2. To develop a contextualized and localized strategic intervention materials for MTB-MLE.
3. Determine the acceptability of the contextualized and localized strategic intervention materials for MTB-MLE.

Methodology:-

This study used the descriptive research design. It provided an accurate assessment of the reading performance of learners in mother-tongue. It discussed new meanings, described what exist, and determined the frequency and category of the data which were generated from a secondary sources and instructional materials in reading developed by the researcher.

The respondents of the study were the grade 3 learners with MTB-MLE subjects in the Schools Division of Eastern Samar. Proportional sampling for the grade 3 learners of all the 27 Districts of the Schools Division of Eastern Samar were applied as sampling procedure in order to generate enough data that supported the conduct of the present study. The gathered data was tabularized and analyzed through mean/descriptive statistics.

Results And Discussion:-

Reading Performance of Learners in Mother Tongue

The reading performance of learners using mother tongue, the showed in table 2 that segmental sounds that had matching initial sounds, matching ending sounds, and matching sounds and letters had higher median of 3 that was interpreted as advanced, compared to supra-segmental sounds that used blending compound words, blending 2 syllable words, blending onset & rime, and blending phonemes that fell mostly under the median of 2 with the interpretation of emerging. However, one category under supra-segmental sounds namely segmenting phonemes was the only one that garnered a median of 3 with an advanced interpretation. This means that the lack of system of writing for the Waray language, lack of vocabulary lists, lack of assessment and validation tools for reading materials, lack of grammar materials/explanation, and lack of proper contextualized and localized learner materials affected the pupil's reading performance when dealing with complicated supra-segmental words.

The study of Oyzon and Fullmer (2014), about the readiness of Region 8's implementation of MTB-MLE supported the result of this study where the implementation of MTB-MLE particularly the Waray language created some practical challenges in its implementation to classroom grade school teachers in Grade 1 to 3 where it affected the reading performance of pupils in reading. Many non-Tagalog languages, including Waray, were not taught in school for a number of years, so that there are virtually no reading materials, instructional materials, grammar materials, adequate dictionaries, vocabulary lists for Grade 1-3 teachers and students particularly the variation of Waray spoken in the Province of Eastern Samar.

Table 1:- Reading Performance of Learners in Mother Tongue.

Reading Performance	Median	Interpretation
Segmental Sounds		
Matching Initial Sounds	3	Advanced
Matching Ending Sounds	3	Advanced
Matching Sounds and Letters	3	Advanced
Supra-Segmental Sounds		
Blending Compound Words	2	Emerging
Blending 2 Syllable Words	2	Emerging
Blending Onset & Rime	2	Emerging
Blending Phonemes	2	Emerging

Segmenting Phonemes	3	Advanced
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Acceptability of the developed contextualized and localized strategic intervention materials for MTB-MLE

In the study of Mendoza (2012), this refers to the teaching aid she used to determine the reading level of the Grade V & VI multi-grade pupils, the reading level includes literal, interpretive, critical and applied level of reading.

The graph below features the responses of the respondents as to the acceptability of the reading material in MTB-MLE titled “Contextualized and Localized Strategic Intervention Materials in MTB-MLE” The said reading material was developed by the researcher as an output of this study. It was used in the teaching – learning process to determine its usability and adaptability in terms of content, style, and instructions. These standards were in accordance to the guidelines of the Department of Education relative to instructional materials development and utilization before it can be approved by the Schools Division Superintendent for future reference.

It revealed that 68% thereabouts of the respondents said that reading materials was “excellently acceptable” in terms of usability and adaptability with great considerations on its content, style, and instructions. This would clearly presuppose that the reading materials was excellently acceptable to the majority of respondents. This turn-out could be attributed to the local selections infused thereunto, which in the process, established connections to the pupils; thus able to comprehend the content of the lesson.

On this note, Ozdemir (2010), stressed that reading is fundamental in getting knowledge as all the lessons and learning activities are mostly based on the power of comprehensive reading; indeed, it is really necessary to read comprehensively. In addition, reading comprehensively affects a learner’s education and his life as a whole. Learning in any lesson depends on understanding of the learning instrument of that lesson; thus a learner who cannot read comprehensively finds it difficult for him/her to be successful in his or her lessons.

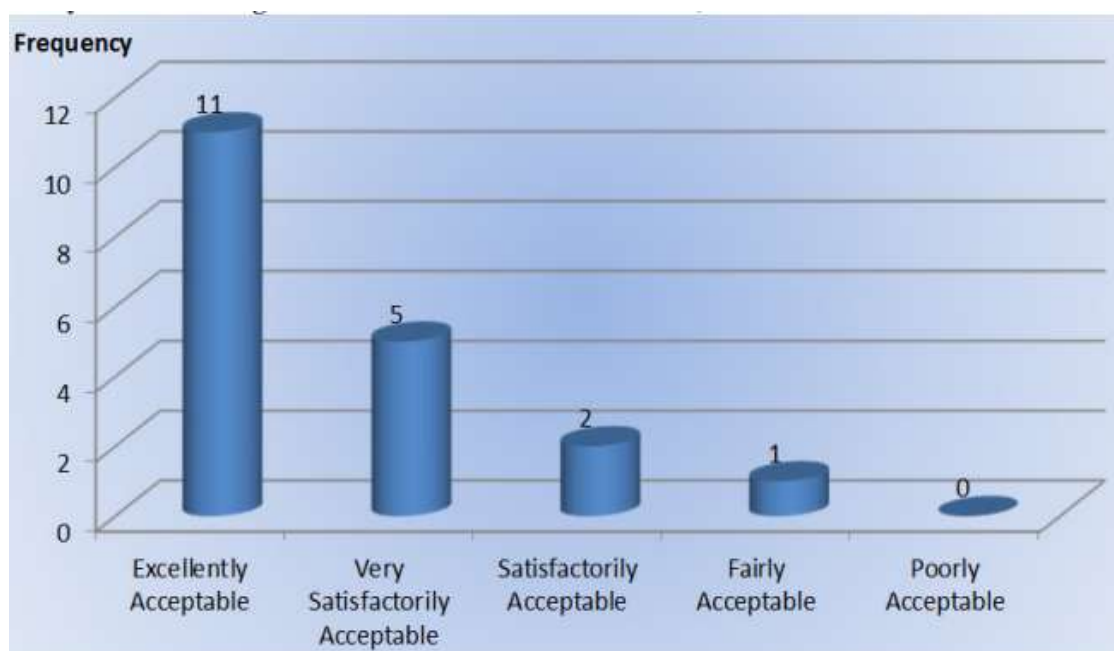


Figure 1:- Acceptability of the developed contextualized and localized strategic intervention materials for MTB-MLE.

Conclusions:-

Considering the findings obtained in this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The reading performance of learners using mother tongue, results showed that the learners have difficulty dealing with complicated supra-segmental sounds in the Waray language. This means that the lack of system for the Waray language, lack of vocabulary lists, lack of assessment and validation of tools have affected the learner’s reading performance in MTB-MLE subject.

2. A contextualized and localized intervention materials in MTB-MLE was developed to improve teacher's instruction and learner's learning in MTB-MLE subject.
3. The developed reading materials was "excellently acceptable" in terms of usability and adaptability with great considerations on its content, style, and instructions.

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