

## Conference Paper

# Juan Tama, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) Storybooks: Their Effectiveness on Pupils' Learning

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### Abstract

This study analyzed the effectiveness on pupils' learning of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) Storybooks. The use of Cebuano, Minasbate, and Filipino versions, entitled "JUAN TAMA", for Grade 1 pupils of School A in Claveria South District and School B in Cawayan East District, Division of Masbate for SY 2012-2013 were evaluated. Each school covered 20 Grade 1 Pupils (Social Group A) and another 20 Grade 1 Pupils (Social Group B). The demographic profile of respondents in terms of language they used at home and school, showed that majority used Minasbate dialect in School A while Cebuano in School B. The average achievement rating of Grade 1 pupils in Social Group A was 62.18% while Social Group B obtained 81.76%. The use of mother tongue in the teaching story "Juan Tama" appears to have significantly affected the academic achievement level of Social Group B when compared to Social Group A. This demonstrates that pupils develop literary appreciation, literacy, cognitive skills and master content material more easily when they are taught in a familiar language. Teachers teaching in the mother tongue using Juan Tama storybooks perceived this medium of instruction as effective. Their suggestions included: increasing information dissemination on importance of mother tongue based instruction; recognition of mother tongue acquisition as first priority in judging children's achievement; training teachers in creating storybooks; and provision of instructional materials and references in MTB-MLE.

**Keywords:** Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education, Storybooks, Pupils Learning

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## 1. Introduction

The Philippines is an archipelago which is composed of 7, 101 islands for which multi-lingual education suits well. Research studies in the Philippines and around the world proved that the use of first language is the best option for literacy education in multilingual countries. Bro. Andrew Gonzalez, FSC and Dr. Bonifacio Sibayan, who are pioneers in Philippine linguistic and languages-in-education research, supports multilingual education.

The government implemented the "10 Point Program for Educational Reform" at the start of former President Benigno Aquino's administration. It aims to improve the education in the Philippines that can be compared worldwide. To attain this goal, there

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is a need in educational reform because until now researchers say that student performs less. One main reason of low performance of schoolchildren is the medium of instruction used in all subjects (Nolasco, 2012).

Another salient feature of the study is to address bullying on schoolchildren. The researcher handled Grade 1 class where three pupils had a similar name, Juan. In the Philippines Juan Tamad is a popular folklore which means Lazy Juan. The situations of these three pupils worsen as days go by. They experienced receiving bad words, physical harm, insult, and psychological trouble. As adviser of the class, he taught of something that will solve bullying. From there, Juan Tama was born. A children's storybook where a boy named Juan is a responsible and good Filipino citizen. Juan is the reversed version of Lazy Juan. After finishing the story, he looked for an illustrator. Big books and small books were produced. E-book version was also made. Afterwards video clip of the story was made to incorporate the macro skills to be developed in learners: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing. Since the Department of Education have different activities every month stipulated in school calendar which runs for the whole school year, and to make Juan Tama more interesting and productive, the researcher made different series depicting occasions being celebrated by month. On month of June the story is entitled "Balik Eskwela na si Juan Tama" (Juan Tama, Back to School). For July the title is "Juan Tama, Matanong na Bata" (Juan Tama, a Curious Child) which focuses on Nutrition Month Celebration. Month of August is entitled "Juan Tama, Lingguwistik na Bata" (Juan Tama, a Linguist Child) which celebrates national language and other dialects. September issue is entitled "Juan Tama: Salamat Titser" (Juan Tama: Thank You Teacher) which celebrates the World Teacher's Day. October issue is entitled "Scout Juan Tama, Laging Handa" (Scout Juan Tama, Always Ready). November issue is entitled "Isport Lang, 'yan si Juan Tama" (Sportsman! That's Juan Tama). December issue is entitled "Juan Tama: Disyembre Siyempre Happy" (Juan Tama: It's December! Be Happy).

The researcher wants to know the initial result of the implementation of MTB-MLE using the "JUAN TAMA, MTB-MLE Storybooks in Claveria South District and Cawayan East District wherein Minasbate and Cebuano are the first language used in Grade 1. The research study started June 2012 both in Claveria South District and Cawayan East District. It is important that whatever experiences and result of the study on this endeavor is based on the conditions given by DepED. This will serve as bases and guidelines for those who will do the same study. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: (1) What is the profile of Grade 1 pupils of School A and School B in terms of the language they used at home and school? (2) What are the average achievement ratings of the Grade 1 pupils with the use of local dialect? (3) Does Juan Tama MTB-MLE Storybooks affect significantly the academic achievement level of the Grade 1 pupils? To what extent? (4) Is Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education worth the effort? Why? and (5) What suggestions can the teachers offer for MTB-MLE teaching and how effective are they as perceived by themselves?

## 2. Review of Literature

Research studies on language use in education revealed that when the mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction, learners become better thinkers and learners in both their first and second language. Sadly, House of Representative legislators ignore those studies and approve a bill on English as the medium of instruction (MOI). But that was before. A better alternative came and that is Multilingual Education and Literacy Bill or House Bill No. 3719. The bill was filed by Congressman Magtanggol T. Gunigundo of Valenzuela which is more better than the “English only” Bill based on pedagogical principles. In sum, Gunigundo Bill is based on sound pedagogical principles. It is the result of countless research on the efficacy of MLE throughout the world. And finally, it is pro-L1, pro-national language, and pro-English. There is also an omnibus education bill pending before the Senate, which was filed by Senator Mar Roxas (Senate Bill No. 2294), with language provisions that are consistent with MLE. The Bill provides that the L1 shall be used as MOI up to Grade 3. It is different from the Gullas Bill, however, because it categorically blames the worsening competencies in English, Science, and Math to the Filipinos’ “bias for English as a medium of learning”.

DepEd Order No. 74 s. 2009, Senate Bill No. 2294, and House Bill. No. 3719 focused on MTB-MLE and education reform program. Bongartz & Schneider, Cook, Hatch, and Liu clarified that L1 and L2 acquisition by young and older children differ significantly while Nicholas and Lightbown focused on distinctive nature of young children’s L2 acquisition. August & Shanahan, Benson, and Cummins as reported by UNESCO and cited by McCarty that the mother tongue symbolizes a deep, abiding, even cord-like connection between speakers and their cultural identity. Delpit & Kemelfield reported the effect of MTB-MLE on respect for heritage, language and culture of parents and children.

This study was anchored on the concept that using first language with the use of mother tongue reading materials promotes general cognitive development and love for Filipino culture that is needed for a more easily and rapidly learning of a second language and be cultural sensitive.

## 3. Research Method

This study used a descriptive survey questionnaires and interviews to collect quantitative data. Convenience sampling was used to extract forty (40) pupils from Social Group A and forty (40) pupils from Social Group B both of which are respondents from two schools in different districts. The study also target Grade 1 teachers from School A and School B to get their views on language preferences of parents and pupils in learning since they interact with pupils and parents most of the time. They will get significant issues from parents through comments and suggestions during consultations. Methods and data source was used in this study in order to give comprehensive answer to problems prevailing in existing condition.

## 4. Discussion

Philippine basic education needs to be revisited based on our commitment to Education for All (EFA) 2015 where all should be involved. The goal of this study on mother tongue is higher achievement scores in teaching using MTB-MLE storybooks. This perspective is echoed by the goal of Education for All (EFA) for schoolchildren to be provided quality education (UNESCO, 2008).

From the interviews and retrieved research questionnaire accomplished by the teachers teaching Grade 1 in School A and School B, the following data were gathered: (1) Demographic profile of respondents in terms of language they used at home and school, showed that majority used Minabate dialect in School A while Cebuano in School B; (2) The average achievement rating of Grade 1 pupils in Social Group A was 62.18% while Social Group B obtained 81.76%; (3) As shown in the result of the achievement ratings of pupils, the use of mother tongue in teaching story specifically “Juan Tama” affects significantly the academic achievement level of Social Group B compared to Social Group A. Pupils develop literary appreciation, literacy; (4) The research conducted was worth the effort because it provided the children to learn in language they understand and get inspired by the good attitudes portrayed by the main character, Juan Tama; (5) Teachers teaching mother tongue in Juan Tama storybooks perceived this medium of instruction as effective. Their suggestions offered included: information dissemination on importance of mother tongue based Instruction; recognize mother tongue acquisition as first priority in judging children’s achievement; train teachers in making storybooks; and provide instructional materials and references in MTB-MLE like what is being used in this study as research tool.

## 5. Conclusion

Language instruction and knowledge of languages play important roles in teaching and learning. Importance of mother tongue instruction should be recognized in early childhood and primary school”. The principal aim of the use of local dialect in teaching Grade 1 is in light of the findings where these conclusions were drawn: (1) Information dissemination on the importance of mother tongue-based Instruction; (2) Support the government programs on mother tongue-based multilingual education; (3) Encourage mother tongue development to the level of cognitive academic language proficiency to scaffold additional language learning; (4) Recognize mother tongue as priority in judging children’s achievement in primary school.

Hire teachers who are fluent in the language of instruction in reading, writing, and speaking; (6) Provide trainings for teachers on effective pedagogy, cultural competence, subject-matter knowledge, and can teach lively to young children; and (7) Promote policies that position parents and other family members as ‘first teachers’ and involve them and community as well in all stages of program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Discourse about language in education goes well beyond educational policy. The issue of mother tongue based instruction is technical, political, and ideological— and

for parents and communities, extremely personal as well. While supporting the academic success and linguistic empowerment of children is an oft-stated goal, not all societies are prepared for the social and political ramifications of realizing these goals. Political will and ongoing government support are key to developing ongoing, effective program in mother tongue-based multilingual education and to realizing the potential benefits of this program. Mother tongue based multilingual education initiatives for young children, especially those in the early years before formal schooling. However, research and experience to date have indicated the promise of this approach to advancing our shared goals of preserving and optimizing cultural and linguistic diversity and promoting the success of all children in learning and in life.

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