



Reading Comprehension in L1 and L2: Evidences of Bilingual Learning

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is seen as a pivotal factor in reaching the frontier towards the learners' academic excellence, it is an ability to recognize a text and understand its meaning. This study examined the reading comprehension performances of the Grade 3 pupils of Milagrosa Elementary School in terms of their Mother Tongue (L1) and English language as (L2). This also found out the significant correlation between the L1 and L2 learning of the pupils as presented by their reading comprehension performance in both Mother Tongue and English language. This study used a correlational research method to gain an understanding of the reading comprehension performances of Mother Tongue and English language of the forty-two (42) Grade 3 pupils. These pupils were assessed through giving them reading selections with corresponding questions that are based on the levels of reading comprehension written in both Mother Tongue and in English language. With the use of Pearson's correlation and p-value, the results revealed that the proficiency level of the Grade 3 pupils in terms of Mother tongue and English language falls on Highly Proficient, which means that pupils can correctly read the texts and can easily comprehend the selections in both L1 and L2 without the supervision of their teacher and/or parent. It also revealed the p-value 0.0001 which indicates that there is a significant correlation between the L1 and L2 learning of the Grade 3 pupils as presented by their reading comprehension performances in Mother Tongue and English language.

Keywords : reading comprehension, bilingual learning, mother tongue, language, Milagrosa Elementary School

1. INTRODUCTION

This 21st century offers us a world of multilingualism. For several group or communities, this multilingualism has become an established fact for more than a score of decades; for some, it is more a recent occurrence – an outturn of people's greater mobility across the globe in this increasingly diminishing world. Due to this mobility, speakers of diverse languages bring with them their cultures and languages and create homes in communities that may or may not share their language background. Those communities might themselves become bilingual communities, and hence, children growing up there will become bilingual naturally; or the children of immigrant families may be learning one language at home and in their ethnic community and another language in the wider community I which they live. Children who are growing up in the 21st century, then, are much more likely to be growing up bilingual than monolingual and much more likely to be bilingual than in the past centuries (Cummins, 1992).

This means that educators of children in the 21st century are experiencing unnumbered decisions with regards to the bilinguality of pupils [henceforward 'bilingual(ism)' will cover both bilingual(ism) and multilingual(ism)]. These include, perhaps first and foremost, major issues regarding the language(s) of instruction in the classroom. Issues regarding bilingual education practices are critical and concern a combination of considerations of, not only children's language abilities (what they can currently understand and what the ultimate language goals might be), but also cultural and socio-political factors (Lacson, 2019). Transmission of a culture in any group, whether monolingual or bilingual, is intimately connected with transmission of the language, and socio-political issues and, often, tensions may influence decisions regarding the best language mix in the classroom (Kristina et al, 2021). These are pivotal aspects of the bilingual experience, and their significance when determining educational practices should not be overlooked. Decisions regarding language of delivery of instruction must be made at multiple levels — starting from policy decisions at the level of the educational au-

thorities in the whole community, through policy and logistical decisions at the level of the school head, to the individual instructor's time-by-time choice of language in interaction with his/her class and with individual learner in the class.

Manabat (2016) stated on her article on Business Mirror that the Department of Education (DepEd) said learners begin their education in the language they understand best—their mother tongue—and need to develop a strong foundation in their mother language before effectively learning additional languages. Currently, the DepEd uses 19 languages in MTB-MLE: Tagalog, Capampangan, Pangasinan, Iloko, Bikol, Ybanag, Sinugbuanong Binisaya, Hiligaynon, Waray, Bahasa Sug, Maguindanaoan, Maranao, Chavacano, Ivatan, Sambal, Akianon, Kinaray-a, Yakan and Sinurigaonon. The MTB-MLE is implemented in two modules: as learning or subject area and as medium of instruction. As a subject, Mother Tongue Education focuses on the development of speaking, reading and writing from Grades 1 to 3 in the mother tongue. As a medium of instruction, the Mother Tongue is used in all learning areas from Kindergarten to Grade 3, except in the teaching of Filipino and English subjects.

The purpose of a multilingual education program is to develop appropriate cognitive and reasoning skills enabling children to operate equally in different languages—starting in the Mother Tongue, which is the first language of the child.

Due to the emergence of this issue, educators must be equipped with the awareness of such differences, as they may affect the performance of the children in various school tasks. That is why, learning various strategies to assess children's bilingualism is a pivotal act for teachers to better evaluate and understand the factors that affect their performances.

In the case of Milagrosa Elementary School, the vast majority of the children speak Cebuano as their official native language; however, a high level of English proficiency is of great importance to the academic frontier of the pupils as English has become the medium of instruction in government and other public and private higher education institutions. One of the English skill areas that many pupils have difficulties with is reading and that birthed this study. Though it is undeniable that many children can read, the act of reading is a distinct process from the act of comprehending what has been read. Reading requires the fluent parsing and blending various phonetic sounds to create words. Reading comprehension, on the other hand, involves analysis of text, thinking about the words that were just read and deriving a meaning. In simpler terms, reading comprehension is the ability of pupils to read, understand, process, and recall a text/message. Hence, supporting effective Mother Tongue – English bilingual reading development is vital to the academic success of the pupils in Milagrosa Elementary School.

Thus, the researcher gave birth to this study that aimed to find a significant relationship between the L1 learning, which was represented by the learner's reading comprehension in Mother Tongue, and L2 learning, which was represented by the learner's reading comprehension in English language in relation to the MTB-MLE reform that learners who have learned to read and write in their first language learn to speak, read, and write in a second language (L2) and third language (L3) more quickly than those who are taught in a second or third language first.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Brgy. Milagrosa, Alicia Zamboanga Sibugay (Figure 1.) particularly in Milagrosa Elementary School, located nearby the Birhen sa Rosaryo Chapel. This school aims to provide a quality education and a gender and culture sensitive environment. The school also envisions to produce and excellent learners.

The Barangay Milagrosa contains people with different beliefs and culture such as the *Bisaya* people, the *Subanens*, *Illongos*, and some Muslim people. However, due to huge number of the people's population who used Cebuano language as their first language (L1), it was adopted by people of Barangay Milagrosa to use Cebuano language or the *Bisaya/Binisaya* in their daily conversation.

This locality, the Barangay Milagrosa, was formerly known as Baluno, is one of the 27 barangays in the municipality of Alicia in the province of Zamboanga Sibugay. Its population as determined by the 2015 Census was 1, 520. This represented 4.22% of the total populations of Alicia (www.philatlas.com, 2015).

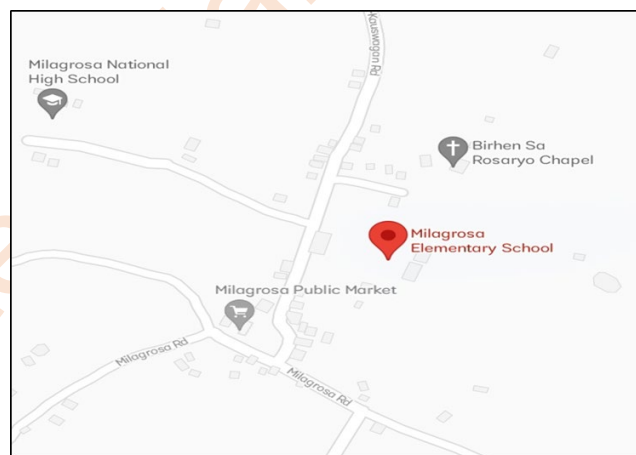


Fig. 1. Map of Barangay Milagrosa, Alicia, Zamboanga Sibugay

A correlational research method was used to gain an understanding of the reading comprehension performances of Mother Tongue and English language of Grade 3 pupils of Milagrosa Elementary School. This has provided insights into the problem and developed ideas or hypotheses for potential bilingual research studies.

As a correlational research, this described the studied population and then featured a relationship of the reading comprehension performances of the Grade 3 pupils of Milagrosa Elementary School as represented by their reading comprehension performances in Mother Tongue and in English language.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following tables show the reading performances of the Grade 3 pupils of Milagrosa Elementary School in both L1 and L2 and the correlation between the L1 and L2 learning of the pupils as presented by their Reading Comprehension Performances in Mother Tongue (L1) and English language (L2).

TABLE 1
 READING COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 3 PUPILS IN MOTHER TONGUE

Range of Score	Frequency	Description
25 – 30	22	Highly Proficient
19 – 24	17	Proficient
13 – 18	3	Moderately Proficient
7 – 12	0	Approaching Proficiency
0 – 6	0	Least Proficient
Mean:	25.00	Highly Proficient

In terms of the learners reading comprehension performance in Mother Tongue, there are twenty-two (22) out of forty-two (42) pupils who are Highly Proficient having scores within the range of 25 – 30; seventeen (17) pupils who are Proficient, having scores within the range of 19 – 24; three (3) pupils who are Moderately Proficient having scores within the range of 13 – 18; and none got score within the range of 0 – 12, which means none of them belongs to Approaching Proficiency and Least Proficient.

Based on the scores of the forty-two (42) pupils, the mean garnered for their reading comprehension performance in their Mother Tongue is 25.00. Generally, the reading comprehension performance of the Grade 3 pupils is Proficient in terms of their Mother Tongue. This indicates that the Grade 3 pupils of Milagrosa Elementary School can easily read the text and can correctly comprehend the selections written in Mother Tongue or in their first language.

TABLE 2
 READING COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 3 PUPILS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Range of Score	Frequency	Description
25 – 30	27	Highly Proficient
19 – 24	12	Proficient
13 – 18	3	Moderately Proficient
7 – 12	0	Approaching Proficiency
0 – 6	0	Least Proficient
Mean:	25.59	Highly Proficient

It can be drawn from the result that in terms of the learners reading comprehension performance in English Language, out of forty-two (42) pupils, only twenty-seven (27) are Highly Proficient, having scores within the range of 25 – 30; twelve (12) pupils are Proficient, having scores within the range of 28 – 36; three (3) pupils are Moderately Proficient having scores within the range of 13 – 18; and none pupils belong to Moderately Proficient, Approaching Proficiency, and Least Proficient having scores within the range of 0 – 12.

Based on the result of the reading comprehension performance among the Grade 3 pupils in English language, the computed mean is 25.59 which falls within the Highly Proficient level. Generally, the Grade 3 pupils of Milagrosa Elementary School are Highly Proficient in terms of their reading comprehension performances in their L2 or English language. This means that the Grade 3 pupils of Milagrosa Elementary School can correctly read the texts and can easily comprehend the selections in English language without the supervision of their teacher and/or parent.

TABLE 3
 CORRELATION BETWEEN THE L1 AND L2 LEARNING OF THE PUPILS AS PRESENTED BY THEIR READING COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCES IN MOTHER TONGUE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE

	N	Pearson R	P-value	Result	Decision
Reading Comprehension performances in Mother Tongue and English Language	42	0.8728	0.0001	Significant	The Null Hypothesis is Rejected

The statistical result shows that the Pearson R is 0.8728 which has a P-value of 0.0001 which further indicates that there is a significant correlation between the L1 and L2 learning of the Grade 3 pupils as presented by their reading comprehension performances in Mother Tongue and English language. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. This result indicates that there is a significant correlation between the L1 and L2 learning of the pupils as presented by their reading comprehension performances in Mother Tongue and English Language.

4. CONCLUSION

Both the Mother Tongue (L1) and English language (L2) reading comprehension performances of the Grade 3 pupils in the two (2) reading comprehension levels – the Literal level and Interpretive level, are Highly Proficient. The result further shows that there is a significant correlation between the L1 and L2 learning of the pupils as presented by their reading comprehension performances in Mother Tongue and English Language.

Thus, this study asserts that the development of Mother Tongue is important as a basis for learning second language. If the Mother Tongue is not sufficiently developed, the second language cannot be mastered because of the lack of cognitive skills acquired for mastery of other languages. The development and nurturing of the Mother Tongue facilitate transfer of skills across the languages.

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