

# MOTHER TONGUE FOR PRIMARY GRADES

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## Abstract

*This study determined the teachers' profile, the learning outcomes or academic performance in the six facets of understanding: explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge using mother tongue instruction, the significant difference between the teachers' profile and pupils' performance and the problems encountered by the teacher respondents in the use of Sinugbuanong Binisaya (SB) textbooks in the three districts of Surigao del Sur: Tandag, Cortes, and Madrid. Findings revealed that educational attainment and length of service of teachers except ethnic background or dialect spoken do not affect the pupils' academic performance in the six (6) facets of understanding. As to problems encountered, teacher respondents found the availability of Sinugbuanong Binisiya Textbooks and Teachers' Manuals as moderately serious due to the inadequacy of these instructional materials. Difficulty even with the use of the Mother Tongue in Sinugbuanong Binisaya was also found serious considering geographical barriers and different dialects spoken by the pupils and teacher-respondents in the study. The degree of seriousness on language difficulty encountered by the respondents lies in the translation of Sinugbuanong Binisaya words, proper phrasing and intonation. This implies the need for more in-service training about Mother Tongue implementation and the use of Sinugbuanong Binisaya Textbooks based on the regional dialects spoken by both teachers and pupils.*

*Keywords: mother tongue, sinugbuanong binisaya textbooks*

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## 1.0 Introduction

Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI) from Kindergarten up to Grade III was implemented as a learning or subject area and as a medium of instruction. As a subject, Mother Tongue focuses on the development of reading and speaking and as a medium of instruction, it is used in all learning areas except in the teaching of Filipino and English subjects. Sinugbuanong Binisaya Textbooks were written, published and provided though limited in number to learners and teachers who actually do not speak Sinugbuanong Binisaya but other local dialects.

Callier, et.al (2001), Lubuagan (2010) and Pinnock (2010) conducted studies that showed the benefits of MTI to children who are educated using the Mother Tongue or native dialect. Both Callier, et.al (2001) and Lubuagan (2010) observed that using the language spoken at home and inside the classroom during the early years of schooling produce better and faster learners. Pinnock (2010) also noted that the foundations for learning begin with what is familiar. He concluded that the child's first language should be used as a primary language of instruction across the curriculum. The local culture and environment should be at the center of the learning process and that the use of mother tongue ensures an efficient learning process. A study is yet to be done assessing the learning outcomes based on the six facets of understanding using the Mother Tongue, the teachers' dialects spoken, the learners' ethnic background and the problems encountered in the use of Sinugbuanong Binisaya (SB) Textbooks.

The use of Mother Tongue in instruction with Sinugbuanong Binisaya Textbooks that are not the dialects of both teachers and learners poses a gap in the teaching-learning process. Nolasco (2009) opined that

it defeats the purpose of using the Mother Tongue for instruction that should be founded on the fundamental premise of starting where the learners are and from what they already know. Hence, this study was conducted to determine the respondents' profile, pupils' learning outcomes and the problems encountered in Mother Tongue Instruction for Grade 2 pupils based on the six (6), facets of understanding as influenced by the teacher's language and the pupils' dialect.

## 2.0 Research Methodology

The study used the descriptive-evaluative and qualitative survey using the rubrics developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay Mc Tighe's Understanding by Design (UbD) on the six (6) facets of understanding, as an assessment tool in measuring the academic performance of the learners in the three districts of (1) Madrid, (2) Cortes and (3) Tandag in the Province of Surigao del Sur. Informal interview or conversation with teacher-respondents, principals, and school heads was likewise conducted to verify the answers generated through the questionnaires on the problems met on the use of Sinugbuanong Binisaya Textbooks.

## 3.0 Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents. As presented in the table, only 33% of the teacher-respondents has units in the Master's Program, however learners under this teacher got lower scores compared to the learners of teachers without graduate units or Master's Degree. This implies that highest educational attainment does not affect the learners' academic performance. This findings negates the findings from the National Center

for Education Statistics (NCES) that students of teachers who hold Master’s Degree consistently outperform the students of teachers who only hold Bachelor’s Degree (NAEP, 2013). Rice (2003) and Buddin, et.al (2009) however, affirmed the finding by concluding that students’ academic performance is unaffected by whether classroom teachers have advanced degrees or not.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

Profile	Percentage (%)
Highest Educational Attainment	
with Masteral Units	33.0
BEED/BSED	67.0
Length of Service	
11-15 years	67.0
16-20 years	33.0
Relevant Trainings	
Attended 24 hours	6.45
Attended 300 hours	80.64
Attended 48 hours	12.91
Ethnic Background	
Boholano	33.0
Others	67.0
Dialect Spoken	
Cantilangnon	33.33
Bol-anon	33.33
Tagon-on/Tandaganon	33.33

The table, likewise reveals that length of service of teachers does not affect the students’ academic performance since the learners’ academic performance on the six facets of understanding under the teacher who taught for 16 years and above scored lower than the learners under the teachers who taught for 11 to 15 years. All teacher respondents have training but they differ only in the number of training attended. This corroborates with the findings of Harries, et.al. (2006) that teacher-training generally has little influence on productivity or academic performance of learners. Ethnic background particularly the dialect spoken by teachers can also influence the pupil’s academic performance as supported by Dee (2004) who stressed that pupils trust and respect someone with whom they share a salient characteristic which makes learning easy and comfortable.

*Learners Performance on Six Facets of Understanding*

Table 2 shows the performnace of the students on the six facets of understanding. The table shows that Districts 3 Grade 2 learners got the highest score of 21.34 or 37.76 percent, and District 2 got the lowest score of 16.39 or 29.01 percent. The data suggests that the learners from District 3 are more academically advanced than those in District 2 even if they don’t speak the Sinugbuanong Binisaya as their Mother Tongue.

Table 2. Learners’ academic performance on the six facets of understanding

Facets of Understanding	District 1	District 2	District 3
Explanation	3.01	2.43	3.52
Interpretation	3.08	2.35	3.52
Application	3.11	2.44	3.54
Perspective	3.13	2.75	3.61
Empathy	3.16	3.07	3.60
Self-knowledge	3.29	3.35	3.55
Total	18.78	16.39	21.34
Percentage	33.23	29.01	33.76

*Significant difference between the learners’ academic performance*

Table 3 presents significant difference the computed f value that is greater than the tabular f value. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that there is a significant difference in the learners’ academic performance in the three districts as influenced by the ethnic background specifically the dialect spoken by the teachers, and the learners’ mother tongue.

*Problems Encountered*

Table 4 reveals that there are problems encountered in the implementation of Mother Tongue as medium of instruction and as a subject or learning area for grade-2. Among the problems cited, lack of textbooks, lack of supplementary reading materials pictures, maps, charts, globe, reference materials and other apparatus, are found to be serious problems. Table 5 on the other hand, reflects the degree of seriousness of language problems encountered by the respondents. Difficulty in translating

Table 3. Significant difference between the learners’ academic performance and district

District	Pupils Academic Performance	Computed	F-value Tabular @ 5%	Decision on H <sub>0</sub>	Conclusion
1	18.78				
2	16.39	157.42	7.71	rejected	significant
3	21.34				

Sinugbuanong Binisaya words or concepts and the difficulty in reading with proper phrasing and intonation were found to be "serious" problems.

Table 4. Availability of sinugbuanong binisaya textbook

Indicators	WM	Description
Insufficient number of SB workbooks	4.00	Moderately Serious
No subscription of SB magazines, books and newspapers	4.00	Moderately Serious
No dialect dictionary available	4.00	Moderately Serious
Not enough professional books and magazines in SB	3.67	Moderately Serious
No enough amount to purchase SB aids and devices	3.67	Moderately Serious
No copy of complete SB – English dictionaries	3.67	Moderately Serious
No enough number of supplementary reading materials	3.33	Serious
Insufficient number of textbooks in SB grammar and literature	2.67	Serious
Lack of pictures, map, charts, globes references materials and other apparatus	2.67	Serious
No available copies of teaching guides in SB	2.33	Less Serious
Over All Mean	3.09	Serious

Table 5. Language problems encountered by teachers

Indicators	WM	Description
Difficulty in translating SB word	3.33	Serious
Difficulty in reading with proper phrasing and intonation	3.33	Serious
Difficulty in the use of correct tenses of verb in SB language	3.00	Serious
Inability to use the different parts of speech correctly in SB	3.00	Serious
Difficulty in pronouncing long SB words	2.67	Serious
Lack of sufficient vocabulary in speaking SB	2.67	Serious
Difficulty in translating SB sentence to English	2.67	Serious
Difficulty in translating SB to Filipino	2.67	Serious
Tendency in answering the teacher in MT or English	2.67	Serious
Difficulty in writing phrases, sentences, letters and poems in SB	2.00	Less Serious
Over All Mean	2.55	Less Serious

## 4.0 Conclusion

Highest educational attainment, length of service and training/seminars attended were not determinants of learners' academic achievement in Mother Tongue Instruction. Academic achievement is rather influenced by the teachers' language, the pupils' dialects or mother tongue and the use of appropriate textbooks or instructional materials.

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