Nanung epektu na? (What's the effect?): Impact of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) policy on language use and language attitudes of 5th graders in Pampanga, the Philippines

Ryoma Oda & Camilla J. Vizconde

Corresponding author
Ryoma Oda
University of Santo Tomas, Manila, the Philippines
ryotamayooda@gmail.com

Camilla J. Vizconde
University of Santo Tomas, Manila, the Philippines

Additional information is available at the end of the article

Abstract

In 2012, the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy, which advocates the use of mother tongues as the language of instruction from kindergarten to year three, was implemented in the Philippines. However, issues regarding the impact of this policy on the language use and the language attitudes of the students exposed to it remain unexplored. Utilizing the Domain Analysis Framework of Fishman (1968) and a quantitative design, this study examined the language use and the language attitudes of Kapampangan 5th graders in relation to the MTB-MLE policy. The results show that Kapampangan 5th graders use the Filipino and the Kapampangan languages in both the home and the education domains and that they have positive attitudes toward these languages. Furthermore, the analysis suggests that the MTB-MLE policy has a positive impact on the language use and the language attitudes of the learners. They seem to favor the use of Filipino, the national language, over Kapampangan, their mother tongue, which is a possible indication of language shift.

Keywords: Domain analysis framework, Kapampangan, language attitudes, language use, mother tongue-based multilingual education

1.   Introduction

In recent years, language policies around the globe have been shifting their focus from the use of official languages in the classroom to the use of minority languages as media of instruction. This shift is brought about by a large body of data which supports the view that the use of L1 in the classroom results in better learning. As the Department of Education (2012, p. 6) puts it: "Students with well-developed skills in their first language have been shown to acquire additional languages more easily and fully and that, in turn, has a positive impact on

academic achievement." In the Philippines, the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual (MTB-MLE) Education implementation, through DepEd Order 31, s. 2012, elevates the status of local languages in schools.

Recently, there has been a growing interest in further investigating the MTB-MLE policy, and it has evolved into one of the preferred topics of recent research such as those by Mahboob and Cruz (2013), Sario, Guiab, and Palting (2014), Wa-Mbaleka (2014), Cruz (2015), and Valerio (2015) and reports such as those by Walter and Dekker (2008), Metila, Pradilla, and Digo (2014), Metila, Pradilla, and Williams (2016), Anudin (2018), Parba (2018), Perez (2019), Arispe, Capucao, Relucio and Maligat (2019), Cruz (2020), Adriano, Franco and Estrella (2021) and Arzadon (2021). Attitudes of students toward the use of local languages in the classroom and in different domains, however, remain unexplored. The impact of MTB-MLE on students' language use and language attitudes awaits further investigation as well.

1.1 Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in the Philippines

In June 2012, the Philippines implemented the K-12 curriculum. One of the educational mandates of the K-12 is the introduction of mother tongue-based (MTB) instruction in kindergarten, and grades 1, 2, and 3 (Valerio, 2015). Mother tongue refers to "a child's first language, the language learned in the home from older family members" (Bühmann & Trudell, 2008, p. 6). Instead of making MTB instruction mandatory until the sixth grade, the students' mother tongue shall be used until third grade where they are expected to have gained proficiency as beginning readers. After the third grade, a smooth transition from the students' home language to learning a second language and using the second language as medium of instruction (MOI) is expected. Several institutions such as the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), the Department of Education (DepEd), the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), and the Linguistic Society of the Philippines (LSP) strongly supported the Multilingual Education and Literacy Bill (Nolasco, 2008).

Prior to MTB-MLE implementation, its effectiveness was studied by scholars in the Philippines. The First Iloilo Experiment of 1948 and the First Language Component Bridging Program (FLCBP) of 1986 were two of the most notable studies that investigated the use of Hiligaynon and Tuwali as MOI in experimental schools, respectively. Remarkable improvement in the students' academic performance were noted in both studies, which also supported the findings of similar international research. In addition, Walter and Dekker (2008) tested the effectiveness of MTB instruction in the province of Kalinga. The results of the Lubuagan experiment clearly show that the students taught in their mother tongue (experimental groups) performed better in all school subjects. Notably, the control groups reached only 50% in their composite scores while the experiment groups nearly achieved the 80% mark. This proves that MTB instruction supports the learning of Filipino and English and does not obstruct the learning of content subjects (Nolasco, 2008).

A number of research have also delved into the implementation of the MTB-MLE policy, e.g. Lartec et al. (2014), Wa-Mbaleka (2014), and Navarro et al. (2016). These

studies found the MTB-MLE problematic. Recent research, however, rarely focuses on the attitudes of students toward the languages used in the classroom and in other domains; hence, additional investigations along this line are deemed necessary.

1.2   Language Use

Language use is "all about applying rules that guide the production of utterances in a given language such that it is appropriate to a given context" (Deji-Afuye, 2016, p.52). Simply put, a speaker chooses which language or variety they shall utilize in a given situation. Deji-Afuye (2016) echoes that language use is highly dependent on communicative context as evidenced by the association of language varieties with specific settings.

In the field of language education, researchers have studied the language use of students to evaluate the disparity between the media of instruction and the language(s) students actually utilize. Gonzalez (1985) summarized 22 language use surveys in the Philippines from 1968 to 1983, and some of which included language use surveys in the school setting, e.g., Pascasio and Hidalgo (1978), Bautista et al. (1977), Barrios et al. (1977), dela Rosa (1976), Esquillo (1978), and Gaston (1978). Moreover, recent studies on language use in the Philippines have also provided valuable insights regarding Filipino's linguistic choices. Some notable studies recorded in this area include those by Borlongan (2009) and Pangilinan (2009). Borlongan (2009) investigated the language use of students from a private university in Manila. His findings suggested that the Tagalog language is preferred at home and in school. Pangilinan (2009) found that the Filipino language is used by the Kapampangan people in different domains.

Abroad, other studies, e.g., Romaine (2007), Torto (2014), Mei et al. (2016), have also investigated the language use of multilinguals at home and in school. Torto (2014) studied the linguistic choices made by multilingual students in Ghana. This study found that different languages were chosen for various social functions, resulting in language mixing. Mei et al. (2016) investigated the language use of a Malaysian public university's lecturers in the education domain. The results showed that teachers prefer to use English in both formal and informal situations and that they tend to use two or more languages in different contexts.

1.3   Language Attitudes

Attitudes, according to Baker (1992, as cited in Siregar, 2010), are "hypothetical constructs used to explain the direction and persistence of human behavior" (p. 7). Attitudes can be further described as concepts used to determine the specific behaviors of people toward something. Holmes and Wilson (2017) added that language attitudes are the thoughts or feelings of speakers toward their own or other languages. In one study, Pear (1931, as cited in Krauss & Chiu, 1998) discovered that the participants tend to make personality judgments based on the sound of a person's voice. The same concept is explained by Rice (2006) as linguistic profiling (a term coined by John Baugh in 2000), referring to the phenomenon where a listener makes assumptions about the ethnicity of a speaker based solely on auditory cues.

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Language-in-education studies have also explored the attitudes of learners toward MOI. An example of this is Huguet, Lapresta, and Madriaga's (2008) investigation of the attitudes of secondary students in Aragon, Spain toward regional and foreign languages. It was found that students favor their local language, Aragonese, more than the regional (Catalan) and the international (English) languages. In the context of Macao, Young (2009) investigated the attitudes of multilingual students toward Putonghua, Cantonese, Portuguese, and English. The findings revealed that students prefer multilingual education and generally have positive attitudes toward all languages, except for Portuguese. Finally, in Ghana, Agbozo (2015) reported positive attitudes toward the use of English as MOI.

In the Philippines, Otanes and Sibayan's (1969) pioneering work examined the language attitudes of Filipinos in different domains of society through a language policy survey. The results highlighted the respondents' positive attitudes toward English as MOI in all levels of education and preference for local languages, rather than Pilipino, as MOI in local schools. Also, Vizconde (2006) studied the attitudes of student-teachers toward English as MOI. Her findings show that the respondents exhibit positive attitudes toward English in the education domain. Borlongan (2009) also investigated the language attitudes of Filipinos, particularly an initial sample of tertiary students from a private university in Manila. This study reported that Filipinos feel most relaxed in communicating when using the Tagalog (Filipino) language in various contexts. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Taglish (mix of Tagalog and English) followed Tagalog as the language Filipino students prefer when communicating; English simply placed third. Mahboob and Cruz (2013) also found that Filipinos still prefer English as the MOI to other languages in the Philippines, including the Filipino language. Lastly, Asuncion and Madrunio (2017) examined the attitudes of Gaddang speakers toward Gaddang, Ilocano, Tagalog, and English. They found that among the four languages, Filipino is the most favored although there was a generally positive attitude toward the rest.

On the whole, previous studies suggest that Filipinos have positive attitudes toward English as the language of learning. However, more recent studies suggest that Filipinos report a more positive attitude toward the national language. This trend is worth exploring, especially in the context of post-MTB-MLE policy implementation. The current study hopes to gather new insights by examining the case of Kapampangan learners.

1.4   The Kapampangan Language

One of the most widely spoken languages in the Philippines is the Kapampangan or Pampangan language with around two million speakers (Pangilinan, 2009). For this reason, it was identified as one of the eight major languages of instruction in the MTB-MLE implementation (DepEd DO 16, s. 2012). Gonzalez (2005) narrates that the term *Kapampangan* was derived from the word "pampang" which means an area near a riverbank. Kapampangan is an "Austronesian language spoken in Indûng Kapampàngan or the Kapampangan homeland by the ethnic group known as Bangsâng Kapampàngan or the Kapampangan people" (Pangilinan, 2009, p.1). The Kapampangan language has been described as orthographically and phonologically distinct from its neighboring languages, Tagalog and Ilokano (Forman, 1971; Kitano, 2001).

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Recent studies, e.g., De Guzman (2018) suggest that the Kapampangan language is endangered. Pangilinan (2009) claims that the Kapampangan language is losing its status as the lingua franca due to the extensive use of the Filipino language in various social domains such as home, workplace, school, government, and media. In primary schools in Pampanga, Kapampangan pupils are exposed to the Filipino language as the MOI in local daycare centers as mandated in Republic Act No. 6972. There are also reports of the Kapampangan language being prohibited in schools; students who spoke the language were reportedly fined or reprimanded (Pangilinan, 2009). Apart from language-in-education policies, other factors contributing to the growing preference for Tagalog/Filipino include the migration of Kapampangan families to other regions in the Philippines after the destructive eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in the 1990s and the predominance of Tagalog/Filipino in the (social) media. While a recent study of Cruz (2020) claims that the vitality of the Kapampangan language is greater than what was reported by Pangilinan (2009), it also confirms that a shift is imminent, with respondents showing more favorable attitude toward Filipino and English. The present study aims to explore the language situation in the context of Grade 5 Kapampangan students.

This study, therefore, examines the language use and the language attitudes of 5th grade Kapampangan students in three public elementary schools in Pampanga, the Philippines. The specific questions addressed are:

1. What languages do Kapampangan 5th graders use in the domains of home and education?
2. What are the attitudes of Kapampangan 5th graders toward English, Filipino, and Kapampangan languages in the domains of home and education?
3. What is the impact, if any, of the MTB-MLE policy on the language use and the language attitudes of Kapampangan 5th graders?

The present study draws theoretical support from Fishman (1968) who proposed the concept of domain. Domain refers to "the idea that each language or variety of language is assigned to a particular function or space and particular participants in society such as language used in the work domain, family domain, education domain, etc." (Spolsky, 2012, p. 4). This concept is especially useful in describing "language choice among students and community which involves social factors such as who is talking to whom, where, the social context, the function, and topic of the discussion" (Giddens, 1989, as cited in Veerapaan & Ismail, 2011; see also Mei, Heng, & Kasim, 2016). In this study, the domains of home and school are the primary settings for language use.

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2. Method

2.1 Research Design, Participants, and Instrument

Quantitative in nature, the current study utilized a survey questionnaire as its main instrument for data collection. The said tool was accomplished by 238 pupils from three public elementary schools in Bacolor, Pampanga. The purposively selected participants are part of the first batch of students in the Philippines who experienced mother tongue-based education. Table 1 shows the reported L1 of the respondents.

Table 1
5th grade Kapampangan pupils' L1

Languages	N	%	
Kapampangan	122	Mandarin-English	
Filipino	114	French-English	
English	2	Japanese-English	
Total	238	German-English	

As shown above, the Kapampangan language is the first language of majority of the respondents. However, Kapampangan only leads by a margin of 3.36%. The Filipino language placed second at 47.90%. Lastly, only 0.84% claimed that their first language is English.

The questionnaire administered is divided into four parts—demographics, language use, language attitudes, and the MTB-MLE policy. The questionnaire used a 4-point Likert-scale, with questions focusing on the language use (36 items), language attitudes (42 items), MTB-MLE policy (10 items). It was adapted from the studies of Borlongan (2009), Poon (2011), and Mahboob and Cruz (2013). Prior to data collection, the survey questionnaire was validated by two language experts and approved by the principals of the participating schools. The survey questionnaire was pilot tested among 15 5th grade Kapampangan pupils. The test resulted in a Cronbach Alpha value of .852, which means that the questionnaire is highly acceptable in terms of internal consistency.

After receiving the approval of the principals and the signed consent forms of the class advisers and the pupils, data gathering was conducted. The respondents spent 20 to 30 minutes in answering the questionnaire. After tallying all the responses, the data was subjected to statistical analysis.

2.2 Data Analysis

All the results, except for the impact of the MTB-MLE policy, were interpreted through mean scores. Each mean score was given a corresponding verbal interpretation as shown in

Table 2. It is important to note that negative statements in the language attitudes section were inversely interpreted, i.e., they were interpreted positively (in values) as they were stated negatively in the questionnaire.

Table 2
Mean values and their corresponding verbal interpretations

Range of Values	Verbal Interpretation
1.00-1.74	Strongly Disagree
1.75-2.49	Disagree
2.50-3.24	Agree
3.25-4.00	Strongly Agree

Furthermore, to determine the impact of the MTB-MLE policy on the language use and the language attitudes of the respondents, regression analysis was conducted. Regression was used to determine the impact of the MTB-MLE policy on language use (English, Filipino, Kapampangan) and language attitudes (toward English, Filipino, Kapampangan). In the test, the p-value of 0.05 was used. This means that a tested relationship with an outcome of less than 0.05 was considered significant.

3.   Results

3.1   What languages do Kapampangan 5th graders utilize in the domains of home and education?

3.1.1   Home Domain

Table 3 indicates that English is minimally used at home and that the respondents use all three languages when praying. Also, the use of the Filipino language in the home domain is evident. The results show that, generally, the respondents use the Kapampangan language at home for different functions such as talking with family members, i.e., grandparents, parents, siblings, cousins, etc.), praying, and giving commands. However, one item scored in contrast with the other entries - arguing with one's family. Despite frequent use of Kapampangan at home, the respondents hardly use it in arguing with family members. Overall, the respondents use the Filipino language more than the Kapampangan language in the home domain.

Table 3
5th grade Kapampangan pupils' language use in the home domain

Statements	English	Filipino	Kapampangan
I use the ___ language…			
… at home.	1.769 (*disagree*)	3.559 (*strongly agree*)	3.139 (*agree*)
… when I talk to my grandparents.	1.412 (*strongly disagree*)	3.441 (*strongly agree*)	2.975 (*agree*)
… when I talk to my parents.	1.702 (*strongly disagree*)	3.328 (*strongly agree*)	3.050 (*agree*)
… when I talk to my siblings.	1.664 (*strongly disagree*)	3.311 (*strongly agree*)	2.895 (*agree*)
… when I talk to my cousins.	1.798 (*disagree*)	3.307 (*strongly agree*)	2.819 (*agree*)
... when I talk to my aunt and uncle.	1.521 (*strongly disagree*)	3.261 (*strongly agree*)	2.807 (*agree*)
… when I give commands at home.	1.282 (*strongly disagree*)	3.059 (*agree*)	2.685 (*agree*)
… when I argue with my family.	1.139 (*strongly disagree*)	2.689 (*agree*)	2.324 (*disagree*)
… when I pray.	2.555 (*agree*)	3.349 (*strongly agree*)	2.723 (*agree*)

3.1.2 Education Domain

Table 4 presents the findings as regards Kapampangan 5th graders' language use in the education domain. The data show that the respondents scarcely use the English language in school. Although a majority answered that they use the English language in school, items, e.g., talking with teachers and classmates in different situations, indicate otherwise. It is noteworthy that in greeting teachers and administrators, the students opt to use English. As for the Filipino language, the results show the students' frequent use of it in the education domain. The mean scores signify the frequent use of the Filipino language in schools. Lastly, the results show that the students utilize the Kapampangan language in school and that in formal classroom activities, the students hardly utilize the Kapampangan language such as in reciting and reporting. The findings imply that the respondents use Filipino more than Kapampangan in the education domain.

Table 4
5th grade Kapampangan pupils' language use in the education domain

Statements	English	Filipino	Kapampangan
I use the ___ language...			
...at school.	2.571 (*agree*)	3.550 (*strongly agree*)	3.013 (*agree*)
...when I talk to my classmates while in class.	1.424 (*strongly agree*)	3.042 (*agree*)	2.718 (*agree*)
...when I talk to my classmates during breaks.	1.592 (*strongly* dis*agree*)	3.332 (*strongly agree*)	2.815 (*agree*)
...when I play with my classmates.	1.479 (*strongly disagree*)	3.345 (*strongly agree*)	2.971 (*agree*)
...when I talk to my teachers while in class.	1.790 (*disagree*)	3.080 (*agree*)	2.567 (*agree*)
...when I greet teachers after class.	1.508 (*strongly disagree*)	3.244 (*agree*)	2.815 (*agree*)
...when I greet teachers and administrators.	2.761 (*agree*)	3.252 (*strongly agree*)	2.550 (*agree*)
...when I recite in class.	2.454 (*disagree*)	3.286 (*strongly agree*)	2.424 (*disagree*)
...when I report in font of class.	2.328 (*disagree*)	3.197 (*agree*)	2.353 (*disagree*)

3.2   What are the attitudes of Kapampangan 5th graders toward the English, Filipino, and Kapampangan languages in the domains of home and education?

3.2.1   Home Domain

Table 5 presents the respondents' attitudes toward the languages in the home setting. Generally, Kapampangan 5th graders have negative attitudes toward the use of the English at home. They tend to exhibit unease particularly when using English in conversing with their parents. Conversely, the respondents exhibit strong and positive attitudes toward the Filipino language. When using Filipino at home, e.g., when talking to parents and siblings, the respondents strongly agree that the national language is more suitable. Table 5 also shows that the respondents generally have positive attitudes toward the use of Kapampangan at home. However, it is notable that Kapampangan 5th graders have stronger positive attitudes toward the Filipino language than the Kapampangan language.

Table 5
5th grade Kapampangan pupils' attitudes toward languages in the home domain

Statements	English	Kapampangan
I like...		
...using the ___ language at home.	1.870 (*disagree*)	3.050 (*agree*)
...talking to my parents using the ___ language.	1.756 (*disagree*)	3.017 (*agree*)
...talking to my siblings using the ___ language.	1.777 (*disagree*)	2.962 (*agree*)
I feel uneasy...		
...using the ___ language at home.	1.735 (*strongly agree*)	2.840 (*disagree*)
...talking to my parents using the ___ language.	1.714 (*strongly agree*)	2.870 (*disagree*)
...talking to my siblings using the ___ language.	1.756 (*agree*)	2.870 (*disagree*)
I feel uneasy...		
...using the ___ language at home.	1.845 (*agree*)	2.845 (*disagree*)

3.2.2   Education Domain

Table 6 reveals that the pupils demonstrate negative attitudes toward the use of English in school. The attitude indicators, however, are less negative compared with the respondents' attitude toward the use of English at home. The results show that the participants have strong positive attitudes toward the use of the Filipino language in school and that the pupils exhibit positive attitudes toward the use of the Kapampangan language in school. However, attitudes toward the use of Kapampangan in the home and the education domains are less positive compared with those toward Filipino.

Table 6
5th grade Kapampangan pupils' attitudes toward languages in the education domain

Statements	English	Filipino	Kapampangan
I like…			
… using the ___ language at school.	2.223 (*disagree*)	3.538 (*strongly agree*)	2.924 (*agree*)
… talking to my teachers using the ___ language.	1.933 (*disagree*)	3.466 (*strongly agree*)	2.853 (*agree*)
… talking to my classmates using the ___ language.	1.899 (*disagree*)	3.408 (*strongly agree*)	2.874 (*agree*)

Table 6 continued...

Statements	English	Filipino	Kapampangan
I feel uneasy…			
… using the ____language at school.	2.188 (*agree*)	3.387 (*strongly disagree*)	2.752 (*disagree*)
… talking to my teachers using the ___ language.	2.067 (*agree*)	3.361 (*strongly disagree*)	2.794 (*disagree*)
… talking to my classmates using the ___ language.	2.017 (*agree*)	3.408 (*strongly disagree*)	2.794 (*disagree*)
I dislike…			
…. using the ___ language at school.	2.076 (*agree*)	3.227 (*disagree*)	2.790 (*disagree*)

3.3 What is the impact of the MTB-MLE policy on the language use and the language attitudes of Kapampangan 5th graders?

3.3.1 Policy Awareness and Implementation

Table 7 presents the data regarding the Grade 5 pupils' awareness of the MTB-MLE policy. The results show that a majority have little knowledge of the MTB-MLE policy. The results also show that, based on the pupils' perspective, their teachers comply with the policy, use the Kapampangan language to teach, and produce instructional materials written in the Kapampangan language.

Table 7
5th grade Kapampangan pupils' awareness of the MTB-MLE policy

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
I know what the MTB-MLE policy is.	1.983	Disagree
Our teachers taught using the Kapampangan language from kinder to 3rd grade elementary.	3.198	Agree
Our teachers taught well using the Kapampangan language.	3.164	Agree
Our books and other learning materials during the 1st to 3rd grade of elementary were written in Kapampangan.	2.950	Agree

Table 8 presents the results of the regression analysis conducted to determine the impact of the MTB-MLE policy on the language use and the language attitudes of 5th grade Kapampangan pupils. As shown in Table 8, the results reveal that the MTB-MLE policy

has strong impact on the respondents' use of the Kapampangan language, with a significant regression weight of .279   (p = .000). Likewise, the findings also suggest that the policy implementation, despite pupils' reported low awareness of it, influences their language attitudes toward the Filipino and the Kapampangan languages, which resulted in regression weights of .225 (p = .000) and .272, (p = .000) respectively.

Table 8
Impact of MTB-MLE policy on Grade 5 Kapampangan pupils' language use (LU) and language attitudes (LA)

	LU Eng	LU Fil	LU Kap	LA Eng	LA Fil	LA Kap
Standardized Coefficient	0.081	0.071	0.279*	0.057	0.225*	0.272*
Sig.	0.213	0.276	0.000	0.378	0.000	0.000
N	238	238	238	238	238	238

*Beta is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Kap: Kapampangan; Fil: Filipino; Eng: English

In addition, regarding the impact of the policy on the use of English (p = .213) and Filipino (p = .276), and the attitudes toward English (p = .378), the results show that the variables' respective relationships with the MTB-MLE policy are statistically insignificant since their p-values exceeded the 0.05 margin of error. Despite resulting in some insignificant relationships, all dependent variables presented positive results when analyzed through regression with the independent variable. This suggests that the MTB-MLE policy, indeed, has an impact on the language use and the language attitudes of the respondents, although the impact differs per language. Compared to Kapampangan, the MTB-MLE policy seems not to have the same impact on the students' use of English and Filipino.

Furthermore, Table 8 shows the impact of the MTB-MLE policy on the general language use and language attitudes of the respondents.

Table 9
Impact of MTB-MLE policy on the language use (LU) and language attitudes (LA) of Kapampangan 5th Graders

	Language Use	Language Attitudes
Standardized Coefficient	.259*	.328*
Sig.	.000	.000
N	238	238

*Beta is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

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The significant regression weight of .259 (p= .000) suggests that the MTB-MLE policy has a strong impact on the language use of Kapampangan 5th graders. Similarly, the regression weight of .328 (p = .000) implies that the policy also has a strong impact on the pupils' language attitudes. Since both p-values are less than .05, this proves that, in general, the MTB-MLE has a significant impact on language use and language attitudes. Overall, the findings indicate that the MTB-MLE policy has a strong impact on the language use and language attitudes of Kapampangan 5th graders. In particular, the policy was found to significantly impact the respondents' use of Kapampangan and their attitudes toward the Filipino and Kapampangan languages.

The relationships among the variables are schematically represented in Figure 1 which illustrates the impact of the MTB-MLE policy on the language use and the language attitudes of Kapampangan 5th graders with respect to the standardized coefficients (Beta).
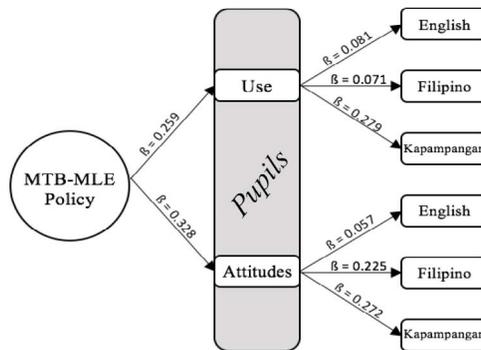

Figure 1. *Resultant Model*

As mentioned earlier, the MTB-MLE policy is found to have a strong impact on the use of Kapampangan, attitudes toward Filipino, and attitudes toward Kapampangan with regression weights of .279, .225, and .272, respectively. These findings suggest that the MTB-MLE policy has a positive impact on language use (ß = .259) and language attitudes (ß = .328) of Kapampangan 5th graders.

4.   Discussion

The study suggests that the 5th grade Kapampangan pupils utilize the Filipino language in the home and education domains and that the respondents have more positive attitudes toward the Filipino language as compared with the English and the Kapampangan languages. Despite positively scoring in language use and language attitudes, Kapampangan scored comparably lower than did the Filipino language. Furthermore, the results also imply that the pupils prefer to be taught using the Filipino language. The findings also confirm that teachers

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implement the MTB-MLE policy, teach effectively using the Kapampangan language from kinder to 3rd grade, and develop instructional materials written in Kapampangan. The MTB-MLE policy has a positive impact on the language use and language attitudes of the pupils.

A majority of the participants identified Kapampangan as their L1; however, Filipino appears to be gaining leverage particularly in terms of use. De Guzman (2018) claims that Kapampangan families of younger generations adopt Filipino, rather than Kapampangan, as their L1, believing that proficiency in Filipino will help their children secure a better place in society.

Previous studies, e.g., Borlongan (2009) and Pangilinan (2009) emphasized that the Filipino language appears to be the dominant language at home and in school. Examining language use in Kapampangan settings, Pangilinan (2009) argued that borrowings from Tagalog endanger rather than enrich the Kapampangan language. These reports relative to the Filipino and the Kapampangan languages are validated in the results of the present study. With the extensive use of the Filipino language in both the home and the education domains, the Kapampangan language appears to be gradually losing its status as the lingua franca of Pampanga and, if left to be minoritized, could potentially find itself at the brink of language death (De Guzman, 2018). As Cruz (2020) pointed out, the language vitality of Kapampangan is gradually diminishing. Padilla (2021), citing Parba (2018), explains why the mother tongue has given way to English and Filipino:

> In other words, the two languages—English and Filipino—have enjoyed the hegemonic privilege of being used, circulated, and taught in many facets of Philippine society for many years now. While the Constitution promotes the use of Filipino and English all over the country, efforts to preserve and promote the use of the local non-dominant and regional languages remained scant before MTB-MLE was put in place (p. 28).

This paper argues that there is a hierarchical use of languages in the domain of education with Filipino, the national language, as the superior choice from the perspective of 5th grade Kapampangan learners. This may be caused by the restriction in the use of the Kapampangan language in the classroom for the past years. Pangilinan (2009) also reported that prior to the implementation of the MTB-MLE policy, teachers prohibited the use of the Kapampangan language inside the classroom to the extent that students were penalized or reprimanded every time they uttered a Kapampangan word. In addition, the exposure of the students to media, which are usually in Tagalog/Filipino, have made it easier for them to acquire facility in the language and appreciate it more. Also, with Pampanga's location and proximity to Bulacan where Filipino or Tagalog is the first language, it is not surprising that many work in nearby municipalities; thus, they have greater use for the languages in the workplaces in these areas.

The Filipino language is the language of the respondents' home and school. In all the functions listed in both domains, the Filipino language ranks first as regards language use. This practice seems to contradict one of the goals of the MTB-MLE policy that is to facilitate

maintenance of local languages like Kapampangan. This finding suggests that   language shift in the province of Pampanga is taking place.

The results suggest that Kapampangan 5th graders have negative attitudes toward the use of English at home. Conversely, the participants showed positive attitudes toward Filipino and Kapampangan. It is important to note that the respondents have stronger and more positive attitudes toward Filipino than Kapampangan, their own local language. As mentioned, Malone (2011, as cited in Lontoc, 2018) stated that one of the goals of multilingual education is the maintenance and development of local languages. However, with results pointing out that the respondents have less positive attitudes toward their local language, the sociocultural goal of the policy appears to be unattained. This might be caused by one of the challenges which the MTB-MLE policy currently faces, that is, the roles of mother tongue and lingua franca are often interchanged. Most teachers have difficulty in using the mother tongue of the students as a medium of instruction; hence, they resort to using the lingua franca in the classroom (Lartec et al., 2014). Since some students hardly understand or speak the mother tongue, teachers tend to use Filipino in the classroom, which results in more positive attitudes toward the said language.

Attitudinal studies, e.g., Otanes and Sibayan (1969) and Vizconde (2006) claim that Filipinos had positive attitudes toward the English language in the education domain. Furthermore, prior to the implementation of the MTB-MLE policy, Mahboob and Cruz (2013) confirmed that Filipinos, indeed, have more positive attitudes toward English than any Philippine languages. However, the findings of the current study suggest that Filipino learners nowadays put more prestige on the Filipino language in the education domain for both formal and informal functions. Henson (1965, as cited in Pangilinan, 2009) blamed the past Philippine educational systems for depriving the Kapampangan people of the opportunity to use their mother tongue in schools.

Kapampangan learners have more positive attitudes toward the national language, Filipino, rather than the local language, Kapampangan. This confirms the studies of Borlongan (2009) and Asuncion and Madrunio (2017) which reported that Filipinos have very positive attitudes toward the use of Tagalog or Filipino as the language of home and school. This might be a result of the early use of Filipino language as MOI. In Pampanga, local daycare centers utilize the national language as the MOI in compliance with Republic Act No. 6972: Barangay-Level Total Development and Protection of Children Act (Pangilinan, 2009). Hence, even before formal schooling, Kapampangan learners are already exposed to the Filipino language, rivaling the use of the region's mother tongue, Kapampangan.

Finally, studies of Mahboob and Cruz (2015) and Otanes and Sibayan (1969) claim that Filipinos put prestige on the English language and prefer that it be a medium of instruction. In contrast, the present study offers evidence to Filipino learners' preference for the Filipino language as MOI.

5.   Conclusion

Anchored on Fishman's (1968) domain analysis, the current study aimed to examine the language use and the language attitudes of 5th grade Kapampangan pupils vis-a-vis the MTB-MLE policy. Specifically, it investigated which languages they prefer and use at home and in school. It is posited that the MTB-MLE policy, which aims at the promotion and use of local languages, should aid regional areas in language maintenance. While it is true that policies shape language attitudes (Baker, 1992, as cited in O'rourke & Hogan Brun, 2012) and influence language use, other social factors come into play.

The study found that despite the MTB-MLE's promotion of local languages, learners still prefer Filipino to Kapampangan and use Filipino at home and in school. The young learners' tendency to prefer the national language to local languages may be attributed to several social factors, including exposure to media, proximity to Tagalog-speaking regions, and their use of Filipino in daily conversations.

This study invites further examination of the impact of MTB-MLE in the language practices of learners. For one, the tendency to interchange or shift from the mother tongue to the lingua franca and vice versa in MTB-MLE instruction may be explored. This may be done by observing actual language use in the classrooms, which could extend the study findings which focus only on pupils' perceptions and reported practices.

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Ryoma Oda obtained his Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies degree (magna cum laude) from the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in 2018. Right after graduation, he went to Japan to study Japanese Business in Asahi Kokusai Gakuin. His research interests include language and education, specifically mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) and sociolinguistics.

Camilla J. Vizconde is Professor 3 at the University of Santo Tomas (UST). Currently, she is the Assistant Dean of the UST Graduate School. She has authored and co-authored several papers published in national and international journals in the fields of literacy, language education, and teacher training. She is a member of the Editorial Board of the Asian Journal of English Language Studies and a reviewer for The Journal of Asia TEFL.