DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF A TANDAGANON LANGUAGE-BASED STRATEGIC INTERVENTION MATERIAL FOR GRADE 1 LEARNERS IN MOTHER TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the development and validation of a Strategic Intervention Material (SIM) for Grade 1 learners, using the Tandaganon language to address the least learned competencies in the context of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). Since the implementation of MTB-MLE in the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has focused on using the learners' first languages to support their literacy and language development. This study addresses a gap by creating a SIM that incorporates the local language, enhancing students' proficiency in reading, writing, and oral communication. Using a descriptive-developmental research design, the study involved experts and teachers in validating the content and functionality of the SIM through both qualitative and quantitative data. The results showed that the SIM was highly regarded by both groups, receiving excellent ratings for its content organization, clarity, and alignment with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs). The SIM was praised for its structured approach, which facilitates a better understanding of learning objectives and engages learners with culturally relevant materials. Designed to target the least learned competencies, the SIM supports the development of foundational literacy skills while honoring the cultural context of Tandaganon-speaking students. The study emphasizes the importance of developing localized, language-specific instructional materials to support multilingual education, promoting more inclusive and effective learning environments that contribute to improved learning outcomes for students in diverse linguistic settings.

Keywords: *Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), Strategic Intervention Material (SIM), Tandaganon language, Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), literacy development*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education (DepEd) has long championed the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy under the K–12 curriculum, emphasizing the use of learners' first languages to bolster foundational literacy and cognitive skills. With over 180 languages spoken across the Philippines, the initiative is not only practical but essential, especially in addressing the linguistic diversity found in classrooms. As Maulana et al. (2025) point out, the Philippines' rich linguistic landscape provides a valuable opportunity to observe the effectiveness of mother-tongue instruction in supporting student learning. Yet, this initiative also challenges educators to balance the needs of local languages with the broader goal of national language integration.

Despite the integration of MTB-MLE, there are persistent gaps in language inclusion and accessibility—particularly in regions where less commonly spoken languages are not represented in available learning materials. Tools like the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) are instrumental in gauging literacy, yet they currently cover only 19 of the Philippines' many local languages, leaving dialects like Tandaganon underrepresented (Zapanta, 2023). As Zapanta (2023) notes, localized instructional materials are vital for enhancing comprehension and literacy development among students, especially in underserved language groups.

Tandaganon, spoken in Tandag City and neighboring areas, has not been fully incorporated into DepEd's MTB-MLE curriculum, resulting in a mismatch between the language of instruction (often Sinugbuanong Binisaya or Sinurigaonon) and the learners' first language. This disconnect leads to significant challenges in comprehension and engagement, as evidenced by the low MTB-MLE scores of Grade 1 learners in the region, which averaged around 80% from 2017 to 2020.

This study aims to address this gap by developing and validating a Strategic Intervention Material (SIM) for Grade 1 learners, utilizing the Tandaganon language. The SIM is designed to address the least mastered competencies in the MTB-MLE curriculum and support the development of critical literacy skills—phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. By aligning the material with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), this research responds to the need for culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate teaching resources that can help bridge the gap in literacy education. Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of localized instructional materials in creating inclusive and effective learning environments for diverse linguistic communities.

Moreover, the study aims to answer the following:
1. What are the least mastered competency skills in MTB-MLE Grade 1?
2. How appropriate is the SIM based on the MELC as perceived by the pool of experts and teachers in terms of content and functionality?
3. Is there a significant difference in the perception of the pool of experts and teachers on the validity of the strategic intervention material in terms of content and functionality?

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-developmental research design to create and validate Strategic Intervention Material (SIM) for teaching reading through Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in Grade 1 classrooms. The research was conducted within the elementary schools of the City Division of Tandag, which were categorized into three groups based on school size: large, medium, and small. These schools were selected from comparative enrollment data across the school years 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024. The study utilized purposive sampling to identify key experts who would validate the SIM developed for this research.

The first group of experts included the Chief of the Curriculum Implementation Division, the MTB-MLE Coordinator, Education Program Supervisors responsible for learning material development in the Schools Division of Tandag, and a Learning Resource Coordinator from the Division of Surigao del Sur. The second group consisted of select Master Teachers from two districts within Tandag who held Master's or Doctorate degrees and had extensive experience in learning material development. The third group was composed of Grade 1 teachers with earned postgraduate units and a background in instructional material design and development. These groups of experts provided invaluable insights into the content and functionality of the SIM.

To assess the validity of the SIM, the researcher adopted and modified the Feedback Questionnaire for SIM developed by Espadero (2016) in her study "Strategic Intervention Material in English." The original questionnaire was tailored to validate the content (60%) and functionality (40%) of the SIM. Modifications to the feedback questionnaire were validated through the survey instrument by Carter Good and Douglas V. Scates, which had been utilized in previous studies such as those by Cuartero (2020) and Hunahunan (2020). The study employed a quantitative research method to measure the appropriateness of the SIM in teaching reading using MTB-MLE, with data collected from the pool of experts and teachers.

The SIM, titled "Malipayon na Pagtuon," comprises several cards, each with a specific function to support effective learning. These include:

1. Kard sa Pag-giya (Guide Card): Provides the SIM title, learning competencies, objectives, and a brief explanation of the topic.
2. Kard sa Pagpakila (Introduction Card): Offers background on the lesson with simplified discussion, examples, and learner-friendly language.
3. Kard sa Himoonon (Activity Card): Contains interactive learning tasks with clear instructions and engaging exercises relevant to the learners' experience.
4. Kard sa Pagsusi (Assessment Card): Measures learning progress through quizzes or tasks aligned with the learning objectives, assessing comprehension beyond simple recall.
5. Kard sa Padugang sa Kahibawo (Enrichment Card): Provides extension tasks that deepen understanding and integrate other subjects for curious learners.
6. Kard sa Gigikanan (Reference Card): Lists sources and references used, including online materials, images, curriculum guides, books, and modules.
7. Kard sa mga Tubag (Answer Key Card): Includes correct answers for self-checking and guided facilitation.

The Tandaganon language, specific to the learners in the Tandag City Division, was used throughout the SIM, making the material culturally relevant, engaging, and easily accessible to Grade 1 students. This approach not only enhances proficiency in reading, writing, and oral communication but also fosters greater self-confidence in learners' native language, emphasizing their cultural identity. The SIM targets the least learned competencies, addressing specific skills that students struggle with, and aims to enhance their overall language development in an engaging and contextually appropriate manner.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Least Learned Competency Skills of MTB-MLE Grade 1

This table presents the Baseline data of Mean Percentage Score (MPS) and Least Learned Competency (LLC) of MTB-MLE in Grade 1 for the school year 2019-2020. These data reveal two to three LLC skills per quarter, as there were no reported LLC skills during the pandemic. This data was retrieved from the City Division Planning Officer III of Tandag City Division, Mr. Ronald L. Arnego.

Table 1. Least Learned Competency Skills of MTB-MLE Grade 1

First Grading	1. **MT1PA-Ib-i-2.1** Tell whether a given pair of words rhymes. 2. **MT1GA-Ig-h-2** Use naming words in sentences. a. Common Noun; b. Proper Noun 3. **MT1SS-Ig-i.2.1** Write basic information about yourself

Second Grading	1. **MT1GA-IIa-d-2.2** Identify pronouns: a. personal, b. possessive 2. **MT1LC-IIc-d-4.2** Identify the cause or effect of events in a story listened to
Third Grading	1. **MT1GA-IIIc-e-2.3.1** Identify the tense of the action in the sentence. a. Present, b. Past, and c. Future 2. Write with proper spacing, punctuation, and capitalization when applicable *(No Code in MELCs & CG)*
Fourth Grading	1. **MTGA-Iva-d-2.4** Identify describing words that refer to color, shape, size, texture, temperature, and feelings in sentences. 2. **MT1GA-Ivh-i-4.1** Give the synonyms and antonyms of describing words.

These LLCs resulted from several factors; first, there is a language mismatch between the school's mother tongue of instruction and the learners' actual first language. Ever since the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum with the MTB-MLE approach, our division has been utilizing the learning materials and teachers' guides in Sinugbuanong Binisaya, where our MT is Tandaganon. Padsuyan (2024) found that MTB-MLE became a challenge due to its emphasis on inequalities and multilingualism. He explained that the MTB-MLE focused on the language used by the majority but disregarded those of the minority; not all learners and teachers share the same mother tongue, which DepEd identifies as the medium of instruction in the classroom.

Currently, DepEd recognizes 19 languages in MTB-MLE, including Tagalog, Kankanaey, Pangasinan, Ilocano, Bicol, Itawis, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Maguindanao, Maranao, Chavacano, Ibanag, Sambal, Akbayan, Kinaray-a, Yakan, and Sinugbuanon. These languages were also available in DepEd's new reading assessment, grounded in MTB-MLE, the Comprehensive Rapid Language Assessment (CRLA), a tool that helps teachers determine the reading profiles of learners in Grades 1-3 and develop appropriate reading instructional strategies for children who need additional support in reading. Second, there's a shortage of quality learning materials that are genuinely rooted in the local language and culture. Many of the available resources are written in more dominant languages, which often don't match the learners' mother tongue. It creates a disconnect—both for teachers trying to deliver the lessons and for children trying to understand them—since the content doesn't reflect the students' everyday lives or cultural backgrounds, making it harder for them to relate to and engage with what they're learning. With that, they need to employ translanguaging using the available materials to accommodate the learners' language while continuing to use the dominant language in instruction. Thus, it will take time and effort for both teachers and learners, causing the least learned competency. Third, teachers may not be fluent or confident in the designated mother tongue because they also have a different mother tongue and lack a strong background in how to teach early literacy effectively using local languages.

In the study by Alagasi and Baguio (2025), it was found that most teachers have uncertain feelings about implementing MTB-MLE especially on what mother tongue to use. In addition, Gatcho et al. (2024) noted that the multifaceted nature of literacy challenges in the Philippines is further complicated by systemic issues in educational resource allocation and teacher preparation, with only 40% of primary school teachers reporting that they have received sufficient training in evidence-based literacy instruction methods.

In the development of the SIM, the researcher utilized the Essential Learning Competency Skills for Grade 1, which DepEd introduced in SY 2020-2021 in response to the changing educational landscape brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and used until SY 2023-2024. According to Zalun (2023), MELCs help students acquire essential skills for the future and provide teachers with a clear focus for their lessons. It helps make teaching more purposeful and ensures students are ready for real-life challenges.

3.2 Appropriateness of the SIM based on the MELC as perceived by the Pool of Experts and Teachers

The evaluation of the SIMs appropriateness focused on two key parts: the content and functionality. The first part involved validating the content of the material by experts and teachers. The second part assessed the functionality or usability of SIM, based on the perceptions of both experts and teachers.

3.2.1 Content Appropriateness

Eleven experts validated the SIM in terms of its content using the modified Questionnaire for Content of SIM. These experts are Education Supervisors, Masters Teachers, Learning Resource Manager, and Grade 1 teachers who are adept in developing and evaluating instructional learning materials and resources. Table 2.1 indicates that the content validity of the SIM as scrutinized by the experts reached an average weighted mean of 4.83 or an 'outstanding rating'.

Table 2.1
Experts' Content Validation on the Appropriateness of the SIM

Indicators	Mean Score	Adjectival Description
1.1 Objectives	4.85	Outstanding
1.2 Competency	4.91	Outstanding
1.3 Organization	4.95	Outstanding
1.4 Activities	4.84	Outstanding
1.5 Assessment	4.91	Outstanding
1.6 Accuracy & Up-to-datedness	4.61	Outstanding
1.7 Gagne's 9 Events of Instruction	4.87	Outstanding
1.8 Language Context	4.69	Outstanding
Average Weighted Mean	4.83	Outstanding

This high rating is attributed to the mean scores accumulated in the eight indicators of content namely: objectives, competency, organization, activities, assessment, accuracy and up-to-datedness, Gagnes 9 Events of Instructions, and language content where were all rated 'outstanding' by the experts. The content of the SIM is very organized as evident in their rating on 'organization' which peaked at an excellent 4.95 rating which means these SIMs contents, ideas, and presentations are logically developed and organized throughout the material. This high rating on content is further supported by positive comments by the experts.

For example, Expert 5 noted,
> '*Activities are organized based on the listed competencies that allow learners to assess their understanding and what they have learned. Instructions are clear and comprehensive.*'

Expert 9 also remarked,
> '*The SIMs are comprehensively designed. The materials are engaging to the learners where activities and tasks allow learners to learn the skills.*'

The findings indicate that experts prioritize organizing content in a clear and logical way for Grade 1 learners. Students can more easily follow along and understand the material by presenting ideas in a structured and coherent manner. Additionally, the SIM aligns well with the students' comprehension and vocabulary levels, making the learning experience more engaging and accessible for young learners. Additionally, the SIM is well-suited to the learners' comprehension and vocabulary levels, helping to engage and interest Grade 1 learners in using the material. In the study of Patrick (2021), he asserts that if a learner does not exhibit enough competency to proceed, they must be given remedial instruction, assistance, and interventions that assist individuals in filling knowledge gaps and abilities. According to Tan-Espinar and Ballado, as cited by Lazo and de Guzman (2021), lessons in the learning materials should clearly demonstrate the concepts, skills to be developed, and other competencies.

Meanwhile, data on Table 2.2 shows another impressive evaluation from the teachers which led to an 'outstanding' mean 4.95.

Table 2.2
Teachers' Content Validation on the Appropriateness of the SIM

Indicators	Mean Score	Adjectival Description
1.1 Objectives	5.00	Outstanding
1.2 Competency	4.97	Outstanding
1.3 Organization	5.00	Outstanding
1.4 Activities	4.94	Outstanding
1.5 Assessment	4.96	Outstanding
1.6 Accuracy & Up-to-datedness	4.74	Outstanding
1.7 Gagne's 9 Events of Instruction	4.78	Outstanding
1.8 Language Context	4.87	Outstanding
Average Weighted Mean	4.91	Outstanding

Like that of the experts, the teachers also rated all content indicators of SIM 'outstanding'. From among all indicator's 'organization' and 'objectives' garnered the highest mean scores of 5.00 which means that because of organization this material has the potential to help learners arouse their interest. In addition, garnering a rating of 5, objectives address Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), stated in behavioral terms from the least mastered skills, and are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).

This excellent rating concurs with positive feedback from the teachers. For instance, one of the teachers stated that,

Teacher 4 commented,

'Using this SIM is an effective approach to enhance learning by providing targeted interventions that address specific learning needs.'

Teacher 9 added,

'The material and contents are aligned properly and well.'

The result reinforces the experts' evaluation that the SIM excellently meets the standards of a well-designed SIM that integrates teaching reading using the Tandaganon language. In addition, one of the experts said,

'The learners will enjoy and will learn as they go along with this SIM. This led to the excellent performance of the learners. Aside from this, learners will also develop their passion in reading.'

3.2.2 Functionality

Table 2.3 manifests the excellent validity level of SIM in terms of functionality as perused by the experts. The SIMs functionality score a mean of 4.75 which falls under 'outstanding'.

Table 2.3
Experts' Functionality Validation on the Appropriateness of the SIM

2.1 Design & Layout	4.48	Outstanding
2.2 Clarity of instruction	4.82	Outstanding
2.3 Easy to follow and navigate	4.82	Outstanding
2.4 Adaptability	4.86	Outstanding
Average Weighted Mean	4.75	Outstanding

All of four indicators of SIMs' functionality namely: design & layout, clarity of instruction, easy to follow and navigate, and adaptability recorded an outstanding rating. In fact, the experts gave an 'outstanding' rating.

One of the experts said,

'The SIM in Mother Tongue is very useful to the little ones. It really caters their needs

because it is readable, easy to comprehend and colorful which attract and motivate the learners to answer and learn.'

The other expert also expressed,

'The SIM provides active learning activities which aimed to increase motivation, understanding and development of higher-order thinking skills. It is suitable and appropriate for the Grade 1 learners.'

On the other hand, teachers also gave the SIM an outstanding rating on functionality as indicated in Table 2.4, with indicators: design and layout, clarity of instruction, easy to follow and navigate and adaptability with an outstanding rating. In fact, the teachers have east to follow and navigate and adaptability an excellent rating.

Table 2.4
Teachers' Functionality Validation on the Appropriateness of the SIM

2.1 Design & Layout	4.96	Outstanding
2.2 Clarity of instruction	4.94	Outstanding
2.3 Easy to follow and navigate	5.00	Outstanding
2.4 Adaptability	5.00	Outstanding
Average Weighted Mean	4.98	Outstanding

One of the teachers said,

'The materials are very appropriate to the different learning styles of learners. Kudos!''

The other teacher stated,

"The material is very useful and appropriate to the needs of the learners. The instructions are clear and easy to follow. The design and layout are crafted skillfully that certainly catch the interest and attention of the learners."

The outstanding rating and comments of experts and teachers on the content and functionality of the SIM indicates that this material exemplifies appropriateness of content and is highly functional material to be utilized by Graded 1 learners in mastering the least learned competencies while developing reading using their mother tongue.

3.3 Significant Difference in the Perceptions of the Respondents

Table 3 indicates the significant difference in the Perception of the Pool of Experts and Teachers on the validity of the Strategic Intervention Material (SIM).

Table 3. Significant Difference in the Perception of the Pool of Experts and Teachers on the Validity of the Strategic Intervention Material

	Respondents	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Content	Teachers	0.638525	Failed to reject the null hypothesis	not significant
	Experts	0.117393	Accepted null Hypothesis	not significant
Functionality	Teachers	0.03997	Reject null Hypothesis	Significant
	Experts	0.079881	Accepted null hypothesis	not significant

The table above displays the significant difference between the perception of the pool of experts and teachers on the validity of the Strategic Intervention Material as to the content and functionality.

Based on the data presented, the p-value for the perceptions of teachers and experts regarding the content and functionality of the strategic intervention material for Grade One MTB using the Tandaganon context are as follows: Content (Teachers): p-value - 0.638525, Content (Experts) p-value - 0.117393, and Functionality (Experts) p-value - 0.079881. Since not all p-values exceed the standard alpha level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis for each case. It indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the pool of experts and teachers regarding the validity of the content and functionality of the strategic intervention material.

The data suggests that both teachers and experts have similar views on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the material, as the differences in their perceptions are not significant enough to reject the null hypothesis.

On the other hand, the table presents data regarding the functionality of the strategic intervention material (SIM) as perceived by teachers, with a p-value of 0.03 97. We reject the null hypothesis since this p-value is less than the alpha level of 0.05. It indicates a statistically significant difference in the teachers' perceptions of the functionality of the SIM. Therefore, teachers place high importance on the functionality of the materials, recognizing their critical role in supporting young learners. This significant difference suggests that teachers believe the SIM is particularly effective and suitable for the intended educational context. Graves (2021) stated that educators should be able to define the baseline on what they aim to achieve for the students; capitalize currently that there are gaps in student learning to develop higher quality of instructional methods and materials for students.

With that, Erlina et al. (2023) also emphasizes the significance of contextualizing language learning using authentic teaching materials, facilitating learners' attainment of learning targets. Research supports the efficacy of authentic materials in enhancing students' communication skills, fostering increased motivation, and promoting more effective language acquisition ((Mitrulescu & Negoescu, 2024). By leveraging authentic materials, educators can create engaging and relevant learning experiences that better prepare students for real-world communication. Additionally, there is a similarly high level of implementation in creating activities that enhance students' awareness of their culture. Teachers are also adept at providing engaging, stimulating, and challenging tasks related to MTB, employing innovative methods for MLE programs, and initiating school-wide activities that support MTB-MLE initiatives. According to Mo (2024) teachers play an imperative role in educational practice, and students' success, development and well-being are the primary objectives. Moreover, Parsons et al. (2017) emphasizes that teacher adjustment is pivotal in determining teaching effectiveness.

4. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the Least Learned Competency (LLC) skills in Grade 1 MTB-MLE reveals significant challenges faced by both students and educators in the context of the mother tongue-based multilingual education system. The mismatch between the school's official medium of instruction, Sinugbuanong Binisaya, and the learners' first language, Tandaganon, is a key factor contributing to the difficulties observed. The lack of learning materials rooted in the local language and culture further exacerbates these issues, making it difficult for students to connect with the lessons. Teachers also face the challenge of teaching in a language they are not fully fluent in, which affects their confidence and effectiveness in delivering the curriculum. These factors collectively contribute to the LLCs observed in various competencies, such as identifying pronouns, understanding tenses, and recognizing describing words.

The development and validation of the Strategic Intervention Material (SIM) based on the MELC was highly praised by both experts and teachers, demonstrating its appropriateness and functionality for addressing the least learned competencies in Grade 1 MTB-MLE. The content of the SIM received outstanding ratings for its organization, clarity, and alignment with the competencies required for Grade 1 learners. Experts and teachers both commended the SIM for its structured approach, which facilitates a better understanding of the learning objectives. The high ratings for the material's clarity, organization, and adaptability suggest that the SIM provides an effective tool for overcoming the challenges posed by language mismatches and insufficient resources, enhancing both student engagement and learning outcomes.

However, the study also revealed a significant difference in the teachers' perceptions of the SIM's functionality, as compared to the experts, highlighting the importance of functionality in facilitating young learners' educational experiences. The teachers' perceptions emphasize the practical aspects of the SIM, such as its clarity and ease of use, which are essential for effective teaching. These findings underscore the need for continuous

improvement in instructional materials to better address the diverse needs of learners, particularly in regions with multilingual challenges. By prioritizing teacher feedback on functionality and content, the education system can develop more effective, culturally relevant teaching materials that contribute to better learning outcomes for all students.

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