

## MTBMLE: FOUNDATION OF FIRST LANGUAGE IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LEARNING

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Every individual experiences the process of nature and nurture language acquisition as theorized by Noam Chomsky in his theory of Universal Grammar. According to Chomsky (1986), a person has a so-called Language Acquisition Device (LAD) which is like a wire programmed in the brain. It acts as a pitcher that is filled up with water (linguistic knowledge). In terms of nature, a person is born with a natural identity of language. On the other hand, nurture refers to a person's learning of a language through an exposure to the environment. With this, an individual learns a language quickly in early stages of life since there is enough space in mind to fill it up with language.

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Upon entering school, a learner becomes acquainted with the formal instruction of a language. This is when a teacher becomes crucial in supporting a child to enhance his or her linguistic skills. These skills have two subsets namely: Receptive and Productive skills. Receptive skills refer to listening, reading, and viewing (inputs in language learning) while productive skills refer to speaking, writing, and interpreting (outputs of language learning). In a bigger picture, I can say that learning a language formally becomes more difficult in higher phases.

However, the problem lies in the contextual situation of the Philippine Curriculum in language learning. The following are the specific predicaments in schools regarding language acquisition and learning:

First language is not taught in some private schools.

In public schools, there are not enough training for teachers to teach mother tongue to the pupils.

There is little foundation of the first language, becoming a reason to make second language harder to learn and acquire.

The new language curriculum is too advanced in a way that the fundamentals are being forgotten.

There is not enough discourse that the students can apply as enrichment practices to develop and improve both first and second languages.

One of the answers in these quandaries is the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) as stipulated in the K to 12 System. Filipino and other regional language variations in the Philippines must be taught solely from Kindergarten to Grade 3 while gradually integrating the second language such as the subject, English. Researchers believe that for someone to start acquiring the second language, there should be a stronger foundation in the first language - knowing the rudimentary of grammatical structure and pragmatics, especially highlighting sociolinguistics.

As a language teacher, it is my job to make my students embrace language because it is a skill they need in their daily lives. It also targets their self-esteem/ self-confidence and shapes both of their intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. It is also my hope to eradicate the feelings of unease and anxiety from my students, so that they will be able to be more confident to speak up and communicate.

MTBMLE is gradually setting a good standard in our new curriculum. Although it has not yet reached the zenith of successful implementation, but the next years will provide a better outcome. Teachers, as the most skillful professionals, shall be the ones to

support the learners up the ladder of potential. In the end, language will help everyone to establish a harmonious relationship.

*References:*

Chomsky, N. (1986). Principles of Universal Grammar in Second Language Acquisition. Retrieved from researchgate.net last July 10, 2022.

Republic Act 10533 – Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013.