

# Hiligaynon Vocabulary Knowledge of Ilonggo Student Teachers

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## **Abstract**

The Department of Education in the Philippines is implementing the K-12 curriculum, mandating native languages in classroom instruction from kindergarten to grade 3. However, teachers are not well-versed in the native language, particularly Hiligaynon, and are learning to use it as the language of instruction. A 2006 World Bank study found that children experience lower learning levels when their language is not used in school. UNESCO recommends prioritising mother tongue acquisition, recruiting teachers with cognitive proficiency in the first language, providing teacher training, and promoting policies that position parents as "first teachers." Quantitative-descriptive research found that elementary teachers used 83% of the combination language, 6% of the mother tongue, and English was the least used. Hiligaynon vocabulary knowledge was highest in "Kinaandan Nga Panamyaw" and "Mga Numero", while English was the least used. Age, gender, high school, and elementary school did not significantly affect vocabulary knowledge.

**Keywords:** *Hiligaynon, Mother Tongue, vocabulary knowledge*

## **1. Introduction**

*Suppose teachers are the critical element determining the success or failure of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). In that case, teacher professional development and support are the ways to influence teachers' practice. We need to know more specifically what kind of support is needed and what kind of professional development is most beneficial to change teacher attitudes and beliefs.*

*-Paulson*

Philippine education is in the transition of implementing the K-12 where the use of the native tongue in classroom instruction is mandated by the Department of Education (DepEd), mainly from kindergarten to Grade 3 per DepEd order 74 series of 2009. Though using the mother tongue in classroom instruction is in progress, observations provide a sample basis that teachers are not that apt in the native tongue, Hiligaynon. While a few schools previously implemented MTB-MLE, many schools and teachers are now learning to use the local mother tongue as the language of instruction. However, as observed, some still need to become proficient in the mother tongue, such as in the Hiligaynon used in the province of Iloilo in Region 6.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Mother Tongue and Legal Bases**

Mother Tongue (MT) education, according to Rufufoundation.org (2023), refers to any form of schooling which uses the language or languages that children are most familiar with in order to help them learn. Usually, this is the language that children speak at home with their families. The 'mother tongue' does not have to be the language spoken by the mother. Children can and often do speak more than one or even two languages at home. For example, they may speak one language with their mother, another with their father and a third with their grandparents. Other terms used are home language, first language or heritage language.

Bernardo, Aggabao, and Tarun (2018) begin their education in the language they understand best, their MT, and develop a strong foundation in this language before other languages. MT instruction allows teachers and students to interact naturally and negotiate meanings together, creating participatory learning environments conducive to cognitive and linguistic development. Children with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop more potent literacy abilities in school. Their knowledge and skills will be developed through languages. Implementing MTB-MLE enables the learners to use different languages for success in school and lifelong learning.

De Guzman and De Vera (N.D.) cited literature in the context of Philippine education as having a unique approach to implementing MTB-MLE in primary school years, unlike other Southeast Asian countries. In 2009, the DepEd challenged the Bilingual Education Policy by issuing an order requiring educational institutions to implement MTBMLE for brevity. This order requires learners' first language to be used as the medium of instruction in all subject areas from pre-kindergarten through grade three, with Filipino and English taught as separate subjects.

In 2012, a more specific order embedded the reform in the newly adopted K to 12 Basic Education Program, specifying twelve major regional languages or lingua franca as the languages of instruction and offered as a learning area. Teachers are provided government-issued materials in their regional languages but are expected to adapt them to reflect the students' first languages.

In January 2013, Congress officially supported this effort by passing the Enhanced Basic Education Act. This legislation becomes a prerequisite in instruction, teaching materials, and assessments of learners, considering further their regional and native languages as an accessory to learning from kindergarten through grade three with a mother language transition program from grades four through six. Gradual implementation started with Grade One students in 2012, followed by grades two and three in 2013 and 2014, respectively.

This shift in language policy is part of a growing number of trends worldwide supporting mother tongue instruction in the early years of a child's education. The implementation of MTBMLE in the Philippines is being looked at as an example for the rest of the region. The adoption of MTBMLE became the beginning of a more significant movement for the DepEd and Congress, based on previous studies findings that elucidate the MT's benefits as a language of instruction.

Wa-Mbaleka (2014) stressed that the instruction of English in the Philippines causes quite some challenges to scholars due to its rich linguistic diversity. With more than 180 languages currently recorded in the country, the linguistic power struggle is unavoidable, although it may be silent. In this survey research, 467 English teachers' perceptions about the importance of the language policy were investigated. Findings were inconclusive on teachers' perception of the policy's importance on general learning and the nation's preparedness. Findings were positive, however, about teachers' perceptions about the role this policy plays in first language learning, students' culture, and the Philippines as a nation.

World Bank study in 2006 declared that children experience lower levels of learning when their language is not used in school. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) recommendations for successful MTBLE stressed that we must recognise mother tongue acquisition as a priority in judging achievement, recruit teachers with cognitive proficiency in the first language, provide pre-service and in-service teacher education and promote policies that position parents as "first teachers".

Literature declares that children learn better in their mother tongue. Globally, 50-75 million 'marginalised' children are not in school. Children whose primary language is not the language of instruction in school are more likely to drop out of school or fail in early grades. Research has shown that children's first language is optimal for literacy and learning throughout primary school (UNESCO, 2008).

While some children continue to develop proficiency in their first language while succeeding in school in a second language, this does not happen automatically. Increasingly, it leads to an inability to communicate about

more than mundane matters with parents and grandparents and a rapid depletion of the world's repository of languages and dialects and the cultural knowledge carried through them.

UNESCO has encouraged MT instruction in primary education since 1953 (UNESCO, 1953). From the start, UNESCO highlights the advantages of MT education: children are likelier to enrol and succeed in school (Kosonen, 2005).

Some educators argue that only those countries where the student's first language is the language of instruction are likely to achieve the goals of Education for All. With the continued implementation of the MT, questions related to what resources in the education of MT, when combined with multilingual education, can be a practical approach whereby children become proficient in their homes while laying the foundation of learning other languages.

Paulson (2010) indicated five main strategies essential to the success of any MTBMLE program: 1) supportive and enabling language policy and government support; 2) measuring systems that incorporate the local language; 3) local language materials; 4) advocacy; and 5) teacher professional development and support.

### **3. Objective Of The Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the *Hiligaynon* vocabulary knowledge of Ilonggo student teachers. It described the respondents of the study and determined the *Hiligaynon* vocabulary knowledge of the student teachers on areas such as *kinaandan nga manamyaw kag halambalananon; bahin sang lawas; katapo sang pamilya; mamumugon sa komunidad; kinanandan nga butang: sapat kag tanum, kinanandan nga lugar sa balay, eskwlehan kag komunidad; mga duag kag kurta; panimahu kag panabor, mga ti-on, kahimtangan sang panahon; balatyagon; numero; kag halambalanon sa pagtakus*. It also determined the *Hiligaynon* vocabulary knowledge of the respondents as a group and according to their age, sex, type of high school graduated, type of elementary school graduated, language spoken at home, language used in the elementary and language used comfortably in teaching.

### **4. Methodology**

#### **4.1. Research Design**

According to Siedlecki (2020), a descriptive research design is a type of research design that methodically collects data to characterise phenomena, events, or populations being studied. This study is based on objectivist epistemology, a theory of knowing relating to assumptions about how phenomena come to be known (Giacomini, 2010), and the idea that thorough investigation can arrive at this objective truth and meaning. It also presupposes that everyone can agree on the characteristics of social reality and that the social world is fundamentally knowable (Esterberg, 2002). When conducting research from this theoretical angle, descriptive research may be used, and quantitative statistical analysis may be used (Crotty, 1998).

#### **4.2. Respondents of the Study**

The study used a purposive, accidental sampling of ninety-five student instructors from the 2019 ISAT U's College of Education cohort. The researcher personally gave the respondents the questionnaire. The researcher provided instructions before asking research questions to ensure the objectivity of the outcomes at the end.

#### **4.3. Research Instrument**

A modified research tool was used from the Department of Education's *Mabasa na Kita MTB Hiligaynon Ortograpiya Teacher's Guide*. Part 1 of the study is the profile of the respondents, which consists of 7 questions and was amended to accomplish the correctness of the results as predicted. This form was utilised to collect data on the student's demographic information, which served as a basis for categorising the independent variables. The profile collected students' information, including the following: age, gender, type of high school they graduated from, type of elementary school they graduated from, language spoken at home, language used by elementary teachers, and language used comfortably in teaching.

Part 2 consists of 13 topics that tested respondents' knowledge of Hiligaynon vocabulary. A free-form question was included to elicit crucial data that the questionnaire omitted. These categories were described as very high, high, high, moderate and none.

**4.4. Data Gathering Procedure and Technique**

Data were collected for analysis using a reliability test-validated questionnaire. According to the guidelines established by the Department of Education, the researcher administered the questionnaire directly to the intended respondents. The head of offices was contacted in a letter requesting approval to conduct a study. The Data Privacy Act was followed by giving the respondents enough time to complete the questionnaire before it was publicly released. Some participants who could not complete by the deadline chose to transmit their comments through a representative whom the researcher had approved. All 95 surveys were completed and processed in order to analyse the findings.

**4.5. Data Analysis**

Using the most recent version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Software, the data collected for this study were subjected to appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics. Means and standard deviations were used for descriptive data analysis. The Inferential Data Analyses, on the other hand, utilised t-tests for independent samples and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Additionally, the ANOVA Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc test was used to identify the pairings of subcategories that differ substantially. This tool is useful when sample sizes are drastically varied, as in this study. The significance level for each inferential test was set at 0.05.

**5. Results And Discussion**

**5.1. Respondents' Profile**

**Table 1. Profile of the Respondents of the Study**

Category	f	%
<b>Age</b>		
Younger group (19-26)	89	94
Older group (27-35)	6	6
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	10	10
Female	85	90
<b>Type of High School Graduated from</b>		
Public	88	93
Private	7	7
<b>Type of Elementary Graduated from</b>		
Public	90	93
Private	5	5
<b>Language Spoken at Home</b>		
Hiligaynon	37	39

English	1	1
Karay-a	28	30
Mixed	29	30
<b><i>Language Used by Elementary Teachers</i></b>		
Native Tongue	6	6
Filipino	7	8
English	4	4
Combination	78	82
<b><i>Language Used Comfortably in Teaching</i></b>		
Hiligaynon	28	30
Tagalog	22	23
English	23	24
Karay-a	10	10
Mixed	12	13

The 95 sample respondents' characteristics are displayed in Table 1 below. 94% of the respondents (19–26 years old) were categorised as younger, and 6% (27–35 years old) as older. 85% of the participants were female, whereas 5% were men. 93% of high school graduates came from public schools, while 7% attended private institutions. Only 5% of respondents were graduates of private elementary schools, while 95% of the population had attended public elementary schools.

*Hiligaynon* received 39% of the vote in the question of the language spoken at home, followed by *Karay-a* and mixed at 30% and English at 1%. Regarding the respondents' preferred language for instruction, 30% preferred *Hiligaynon*, 24% preferred English, 23% preferred *Tagalog*, 13% preferred mixed, and 10% preferred *Karay-a*.

**Table 2. Hiligaynon Vocabulary Knowledge of the Respondents in Different Areas**

Areas	X	Description	SD
Kinaandan Nga Panamyaw	9.59	Very high	0.692
Bahin Sang Lawas	7.36	High	1.924
Katapo Sang Pamilya	7.85	High	1.509
Mamumugon Sa Komunidad	5.78	Moderate	2.429
Kinaandan Nga Butan	6.80	Moderate	2.346
Kinaanda Nga Lugar	6.17	Moderate	2.77
Mga Duag Kag Cuarta	3.09	Low	2.717
Panimahu	6.19	Moderate	1.720
Mga Ti-on	8.12	High	1.573

Kahimtangan Sang Panahon	7.46	High	2.249
Mga Balatyagon	7.43	High	2.368
Mga Numero	9.49	Very high	1.529
Halambalanon Sang Pagtakus	6.39	Moderate	2.647
<b>Entire Group</b>	<b>7.05</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1.144</b>

*Mga Duag kag Kwarta* scored the lowest regarding respondents' knowledge of *Hiligaynon* vocabulary across all topics, with a mean of 3.09, considered very poor. *Kinaandan nga Lugar* came in second with 6.17, and *Panimahu* in third with 6.19, both considered moderate. The *Kinaandan nga Panamyaw*, on the other hand, obtained a mean of 9.59, which is exceptionally high and is on par with *Mga Balatyagon's* mean of 9.49 and *Katapo sang Pamilya's* high of 7.85.

**Table 3. Hiligaynon Vocabulary Knowledge of the respondents according to Age, Gender, Type of High School and Elementary Graduated from, Language Spoken at Home, Language Used by Respondents' Teachers, and Language, the Respondents are Comfortable with.**

Category	X	Description	SD
<b>Age</b>			
Younger group (19-26)	7.01	High	1.134
Older group (27-35)	7.79	High	1.131
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	7.15	High	0.827
Female	7.05	High	1.179
<b>Type of High School Graduated from</b>			
Public	7.05	High	1.150
Private	7.18	High	1.143
<b>Type of Elementary Graduated from</b>			
Public	7.09	High	1.134
Private	6.38	Moderate	1.243
<b>Language Spoken at Home</b>			
Hiligaynon	6.99	Moderate	0.766
English	9.23	Very High	0.500
Karay-a	7.24	High	1.357
Mixed	6.89	Moderate	1.144
<b>Language Used by Elementary Teachers</b>			
Native Tongue	6.94	Moderate	0.770

Filipino	6.58	Moderate	0.768
English	8.50	Moderate	0.581
Combination	7.03	High	1.170
<b><i>Language Used Comfortably in Teaching</i></b>			
Hiligaynon	7.36	High	1.174
Tagalog	7.02	High	1.226
English	6.89	Moderate	1.068
Karay-a	7.26	High	1.083
Mixed	6.58	Moderate	1.050

**Table 4. Significant Differences in the Hiligaynon Vocabulary knowledge when they are categorised according to specified variable**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. Value</b>	<b>Description</b>
Age	-1.648	93	0.103	Not Significant
Gender	0.280	93	0.795	Not Significant
Type of High School Graduated	-295	93	0.776	Not Significant
Type of Elementary School Graduated	1.356	93	0.178	Not Significant

Table 4 shows the significant differences in the Hiligaynon vocabulary knowledge of the study's respondents. The result shows that in terms of age,  $t$  is -1.648 with a significant value of 103. Gender has a result of 280 with a significant value of .795. The type of high school where the respondents graduated  $t$ -has-295, and the significant value is .776. Regarding the type of Elementary, the  $t$  is 1.356 with a value of .178. Generally, there are no significant differences in the vocabulary knowledge of the respondents regardless of the variables such as age, gender, and type of high school and elementary school where the respondents graduated.

**Table 5. Significant Difference Between the Hiligaynon Vocabulary Knowledge as to Language Spoken at Home**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Between Groups	1127.29	3	375.832	1.740	0.164
Within Groups	19658.92	91	216.032		

*Not Significant @ .05 level*

Table 5 shows that between groups of the language spoken at home, the sum of squares was 1127.49 in the degree of freedom of 3 with a mean score of 1.74. Within groups, the sum of the squares is 19658.92 with a  $p$  of 91, and the mean square is 216.032. The  $F$  of the two groups is 1.74, and the significance is 1.64. This result

declares no significant difference between the vocabulary knowledge of the respondents in the language spoken at home.

**Table 6. Significant Differences in the Vocabulary Knowledge of the Respondents and Language used by their Teachers in the Elementary Level**

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig
Between Groups	1695.57	3	565.19	2.69	.051
Within Groups	19090.84	91	209.78		

*Not Significant @ .05 level*

As shown in Table 6, when a significant difference was measured between Hiligaynon's vocabulary knowledge and language by their teachers in elementary, the sum of squares between groups is 1695.57 with a degree of freedom of 3, the mean square is 565.19 F is 2.69, and the significance value is .051. Within groups, the sum of squares is 19090.84, degree of freedom of 91, mean square of 209.78 with the f of 2.69 is also significant at .051. The result shows a significant difference.

**Table 7. Significant Difference in Hiligaynon Vocabulary Knowledge and The language the Respondents are with Comfortable with the Teaching.**

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig
Between Groups	1079.077	4	269.78	1.232	.303
Within Groups	19707.344	90	216.970		

*Not Significant @ .05 level*

The result in Table 7 shows that within groups, the sum of the square is 1079.07, and the df is 4, with a mean score of 269.78. Within groups, the sum of the squares is 19707.34, the degree of freedom is 90, and the mean score is 216.97. In both groups, the F is 1.232, and the computed value is .303. This value shows no significant difference between the Hiligaynon vocabulary knowledge of the respondents and the language they are comfortable with in teaching.

**Table 8. Significant Relationships between Hiligaynon Vocabulary Knowledge and Variables in the Study.**

Variables	X value	df	Sig. value	Significance
Age	38.664	48	.830	Not Significant
Gender	33.064	48	.950	Not Significant
High school graduated from	52.258	48	.312	Not Significant
Elementary school graduated from	51.546	48	.337	Not Significant



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Language used at home	142.067	144	.530	Not Significant
Language used by elementary teachers	185.839	144	.011	*Significant
Language comfortably used in teaching	187.194	192	.574	Not Significant

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*\*Significant at .05 Significance Level*

The results show that age has a significant value of 103; gender has 795; type of high school where the respondents graduated .776; and the elementary school where they graduated.178. The relationship manifests as significant. This result means that the variables in the study have no significant relationship with their Hiligaynon vocabulary knowledge. This finding means that age, gender, type of high school, and elementary school where the respondents graduated are not related to the respondents' vocabulary knowledge. However, the language used by the elementary teachers of the respondents has a significant relationship with their vocabulary knowledge.

## **6. Conclusions**

Most of the respondents are using the Hiligaynon language. This finding may be influenced by Hiligaynon and the combined language used by their teachers in elementary and high school. Respondents are well-oriented and at ease with the Hiligaynon language. There were areas of Hiligaynon language vocabulary where the respondents were knowledgeable but only true to some.

The public elementary schools had a more significant influence on the Hiligaynon language of the respondents. This outcome may mean that language should be best taught in elementary. Whatever the language used at home has a more significant influence on one's language. Hiligaynon has contributed to the comfort of teaching used by the study's respondents.

Personal variables did not affect the difference in their vocabulary knowledge. Language spoken at home, language used by their elementary teachers, and language comfortably used in teaching obtained no significant difference in respondents' vocabulary knowledge.

Elementary teachers' language is the foundation of learners in acquisition and mastery of learning language. There is a need to enhance the vocabulary knowledge of the respondents.

## **7. Recommendations**

Enhancement of the language skills and competence among student teachers is needed. Teachers in the elementary should be conscientious in using Hiligaynon terms and vocabulary in the classroom. A Hiligaynon Manual for teachers in Kindergarten to Grade 3 may be developed to improve teachers' competence in teaching Hiligaynon; accordingly, a training program on language should be designed to enrich teachers' skills and competence, considering that they influence learner's acquisition development and mastery of the language.

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