Reading Achievement in the Philippines: Does Language Complexity Matter?

USAID/All Children Reading – Philippines

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Research question

– Does the complexity of an individual’s first language of literacy affect how well they learn to read a second (non-native) language.

• In Uganda (Brunette et al, 2019), it did. --Word length, syllabic complexity, transparency
• Philippines: G1 MT; G2 MT + Filipino; G3 MT + Filipino + English.
Method

– Secondary analysis of two large national EGRAs in the Philippines:

• 2013 (bilingual curriculum) – 2267 Grade 3 children tested in English and Filipino
• 2019 (early-exit multilingual curriculum) – 2214 G3 children, same tests, same schools
• Among the languages represented in this sample, analyzed the orthographic (spelling), phonologic (pronunciation), morphologic (meaning) and sociolinguistic characteristics (culture), and assigned them to relative complexity categories.
• Linear and logistic regression models controlling for other factors such as wealth, gender and availability of reading materials in the home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity group</th>
<th>Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Tagalog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Central Bikol, Sinugbuanong Binisaya, Hiligaynon, Bahasa Sug, Waray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>Ilokano, Kapampangan, Magindanawn, Mërアナw</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

- English and Filipino ORF score (cwpm) by language complexity group, 2013 and 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>English 2013</th>
<th>English 2019</th>
<th>Filipino 2013</th>
<th>Filipino 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 (least complex)</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>57.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3 (most complex)</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>49.0*</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>54.8*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = significantly different from control (Group 1)
Findings

- ORF zero scores by language complexity, 2013 compared to 2019

2013: No statistically significant differences
2019: the difference between Group 1 and Group 3 was statistically significant
Conclusions: Language complexity and reading in the Philippines

• Small trend: language complexity was found, in some instances, to be a significant predictor of reading outcome, even when socioeconomic status and regional variation was controlled for, but it was not consistent across years, complexity groups, or L2 and L3

• Confounding factors: sociolinguistic and socioeconomic factors that are related to things we could not control for, especially the quality of instruction under MTB-MLE (teacher preparedness, community support, etc.)

• Implications: Each mother tongue needs and deserves a unique and well thought out instructional approach, materials, and a bridging strategy to the L2+ that take into consideration the characteristics of the language.

All Filipino children have the potential to learn to read—or not—regardless of language complexity.
Completed ACR Research Products – 2019 to 2021

EdTech Ecosystem Landscape report and topic briefs (OER, EdTech Policy, Teacher Training, Last Mile Schools)

- Philippines Education Technology Ecosystem Profile | SharEd (rti.org)
- Open Educational Resources in Philippine Schools [Brief] | SharEd (rti.org)
- Education Policy and Strategy for Scaling EdTech in Philippine Schools | SharEd (rti.org)
- Going the Last Mile: Equitable Access to Enabling Infrastructure in Philippine Schools [Brief] | SharEd (rti.org)
- Teacher Professional Development on ICT in Education in the Philippines [Brief] | SharEd (rti.org)

ICT in Schools Survey Data

Findings report:
School-based technology and the shift to remote learning during COVID-19: Exploring remote learning readiness of school districts in the Philippines | SharEd (rti.org)
Completed Research Products – 2019 to 2021

2019 Regional Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA): Bahasa Sug, Chavacano, Magindanawn, and Mëranaw

Findings report:
2019 Regional Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA): Bahasa Sug, Chavacano, Magindanawn, and Mëranaw | SharEd (rti.org)

2019 Language Usage Study in Bahasa Sug, Chavacano, Magindanawn, and Mëranaw Mother Tongue Schools

Findings report:
2019 Language Usage Study in Bahasa Sug, Chavacano, Magindanawn, and Mëranaw Mother Tongue Schools | SharEd (rti.org)
Completed Research Products – 2019 to 2021

2019 National EGRA Report and Analysis:

Presentation: https://shared.rti.org/content/measuring-early-reading-achievement-philippines-how-data-can-support-policy-making-2019

Findings Report
2019 National Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA): English and Filipino, Grade 3 Findings Report | SharEd (rti.org)

Language complexity analysis

Findings Report
Reading achievement in the Philippines: The role of language complexity | SharEd (rti.org)

Languages Descriptions Report: Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) - Documents Detail (usaid.gov)
Thank You!


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