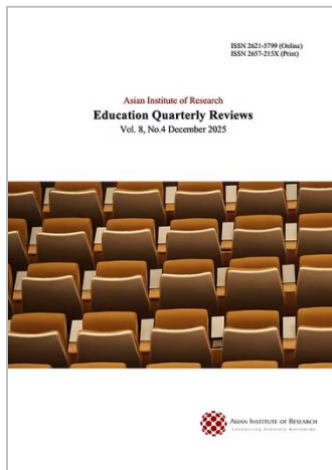




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The Perception of Filipino as a Medium of Instruction in Physical Education

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Abstract

This research examined the views of first-year Bachelor of Science in Physical Education students of Rizal Technological University on the efficacy of Filipino as the medium of instruction for their Physical Education (PE) courses. Employing a descriptive research design and a researcher-constructed questionnaire that was given to 129 randomly selected students, the research ventured into student preferences, the effectiveness of instructional materials and rubrics in Filipino, and the influence of Filipino as a medium in demonstrations, activities, recitations, and examinations. Results uniformly reveal a high level of preference on the part of the respondents for Filipino as the medium of instruction in all areas considered. Students indicated enhanced understanding, greater involvement, and better performance when Filipino was utilized in class discussions, instructional materials, rubrics, demonstrations, activities, recitations, and exams. These findings support that the utilization of Filipino as the major medium of instruction in Physical Education extensively improves learning and participation, especially in Tagalog-speaking areas. The research emphasizes the significance of language as a facilitator for effective pedagogical practice and encourages broader application of Filipino in teaching PE, complemented by sufficient development of materials and teacher training.

Keywords: Physical Education, Instructional Materials, Language Policy, Student Perception, Filipino

1. Introduction

Language is a crucial component of the learning process, significantly affecting students' understanding, engagement, and overall academic achievement. The dispute in the Philippines over the efficacy of English vs Filipino as the language of education has endured for decades (Bustos-Orosa, 2025). Although English has historically served as the principal medium of teaching, Filipino, as the national language, operates as the *lingua franca* across the archipelago, profoundly integrated into Filipino culture and everyday conversation. Although English has historically served as a primary language of teaching, Filipino is often regarded as the *lingua franca* of the island, profoundly integrated into Filipino culture and daily communication.

The topic of Physical Education (PE), which is heavily based on performance, demonstration, and execution, offers a special setting for this language study. Anecdotal evidence and disturbing percentages of low grades in content

courses, particularly performance-based courses, indicate that language could be a decisive influence on student success. This study is intended to assess the effect of Filipino as a medium of instruction on different dimensions of learning PE, such as classroom instruction, student taste, instructional materials, demonstration, and assessment methods. Through the provision of findings on student views, this research hopes to guide Physical Education instructors and educational policymakers on effective pedagogy that harnesses the use of the national language.

Recent studies indicate that employing a student's native language, or the language in which they possess the highest proficiency, might improve learning outcomes. Students may find it challenging to comprehend instructions and concepts presented in a foreign language, which might impede their academic progress (Velasco, 2024).

The historical backdrop of language policy in Philippine education highlights the importance of this matter. In 2024, the Philippine government implemented legislation to abolish the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy, requiring that the medium of instruction return to Filipino and, where appropriate, English (Bustos-Orosa, 2025). This policy change has elicited varied responses, with certain instructors voicing apprehensions over its influence on instructional efficacy and student understanding.

This study utilizes Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which asserts that cognitive development primarily arises from social interactions within a cultural framework. Vygotsky highlighted the significance of language in influencing cognition and learning, proposing that education in a student's native language might enhance comprehension and cognitive growth (Sarmiento-Campos, 2022). Cummins' Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis posits that competency in a student's first language might positively impact the learning of a second language, hence improving overall academic achievement (Clayton, 2024).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory offers a thorough framework for comprehending the diverse environmental layers that affect a child's development. This theory emphasizes the interrelation of several systems, including home, school, and society, and their cumulative influence on a child's educational experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 2023). Implementing this idea in language training indicates that utilizing Filipino as the medium of instruction fosters a more unified and supportive learning environment, consistent with the child's cultural and linguistic background.

This research investigates the impact of utilizing Filipino as the medium of instruction in physical education on enhancing learning outcomes and optimizing the teaching-learning process for Filipino students.

2. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to assess the perceptions of first-year Bachelor of Science in Physical Education students at Rizal Technological University regarding the use of Filipino language as the medium of instruction in their PE subjects. The descriptive method was chosen to accurately gather and present information about the existing conditions and the degree of detail concerning student preferences and experiences.

2.1. Participants and Sampling

A total of 129 first-year students from the Institute of Physical Education, out of a total population of 192 students across four sections served as the respondents. A random sampling technique was utilized to select participants, ensuring a proportional representation from each section. The demographic profile of the respondents, including age and gender, was also collected.

2.2. Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire was the primary data collection instrument. This questionnaire was developed to assess students' opinions on the effectiveness of Filipino as a medium of instruction in PE. It was divided into four main parts:

1. **Demographic Profile:** To gather information on the participants' age and gender.
2. **Student Preference:** To determine if Filipino as a medium of instruction is more effective in terms of general learning preference, classroom performance, and understanding of PE lessons.
3. **Instructional Materials and Rubrics:** To assess the preferred language for preparation and comprehension of instructional materials (visual aids, directions, equipment, books) and rubrics.
4. **Execution of Activities:** To evaluate the preferred language during demonstrations, activities, recitations, and examinations, and its impact on participation, expression, and performance.

The questionnaire was consulted with the thesis adviser and validated by a thesis professor to ensure its relevance and appropriateness.

2.3. Data Gathering Procedures

Permission to conduct the study was first secured from the Dean of the Institute of Physical Education. Upon approval, copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the selected respondents. The researchers ensured that all instruments were retrieved after the participants completed them.

2.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative methods were employed for data analysis, focusing on objective measurements and statistical interpretation. The following statistical tools were used:

2.5. Slovin's Formula

Used to determine the sample size (n) from the total population (N) with a specified margin of error (e) and confidence level (Z -score). $n = \frac{1 + N \cdot e^2}{1 + N \cdot e^2}$ Where $N = 192$, $e = 0.05$ (5%), Z -score = 1.96.

2.5. Proportional Determination of Respondents per Section

The total sample size was divided by the number of sections to ensure equal distribution. Respondents per section = Number of sections Total samples = 4

2.6. Weighted Mean

Used to compute the mean score for each question, allowing for verbal interpretation based on a Likert Scale System. $\text{Mean}(\bar{x}) = \frac{\sum (x_i \cdot f_i)}{n}$ Where x_i is the score for each response option (1-4), f_i is the frequency of that response, and n is the total number of respondents.

The Likert Scale System used for verbal interpretation was as follows:

- 4: Strongly Agree (3.26 – 4.00)
- 3: Agree (2.51 – 3.25)
- 2: Disagree (1.76 – 2.50)
- 1: Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.75)

3. Results

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from the survey, focusing on the demographic profile of the respondents and their perceptions regarding the use of Filipino as the medium of instruction in Physical Education.

3.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study involved 129 first-year PE students. The age distribution revealed that the majority of respondents (57.36%, $n=74$) were 18 years old, followed by 19-year-olds (31.01%, $n=40$), and 20-year-olds (11.63%, $n=15$).

In terms of gender, females constituted a slight majority (51.94%, n=67) compared to males (48.06%, n=62). This demographic composition provides a representative sample of young adult tertiary students in a Physical Education program.

3.2. Student Preference for Filipino as Medium of Instruction

The results consistently indicated a strong preference for Filipino as the medium of instruction among the respondents. For instance, the statement "I like to learn Physical Education using Filipino language" yielded a weighted mean of 3.24, falling within the "Agree" range. Similarly, students "Agree" (weighted mean = 3.21) that they perform better when teachers use Filipino, and "Agree" (weighted mean = 3.14) that they better understand PE lessons in Filipino. A particularly strong agreement was observed for "I talk to my classmates in Filipino during group activities," with a weighted mean of 3.42, categorized as "Strongly Agree." Conversely, while still in the "Agree" range, students showed less preference for English as a medium of instruction (weighted mean = 3.02). These findings align with Castillo and Yap (2001), who noted that students from Tagalog regions often exhibit loyalty towards Tagalog traditions, suggesting that familiarity with the language significantly aids comprehension and comfort in academic settings. Sarmiento-Campos (2022) asserts that instruction in a native language lowers cognitive burden, hence enabling pupils to assimilate new concepts more effectively. Moreover, Velasco (2024) emphasized that learning in a familiar language enhances engagement and involvement, as students have greater confidence in articulating their thoughts and communicating with classmates. The data strongly support the notion that Filipino facilitates a more conducive learning environment for these students.

3.3. Instructional Materials in Filipino

The use of Filipino in instructional materials also garnered positive perceptions. Respondents "Agree" that they understand visual aids better (weighted mean = 3.09), instructions/directions more clearly (weighted mean = 3.18), and remember materials and equipment concepts more effectively (weighted mean = 3.12) when presented in Filipino. Furthermore, a significant number of students "Agree" (weighted mean = 3.05) that they would prefer all written PE materials and books to be published in Filipino. They also "Agree" (weighted mean = 3.11) that they can use equipment appropriately when mechanics are discussed in Filipino. These results underscore the importance of language in the accessibility and effectiveness of learning resources. The current lack of instructional materials in mother tongues, as noted by Nolasco (2012), presents a valid concern, but the student preference highlighted here suggests a clear benefit to addressing this gap. Combong (2025) underscores the beneficial effect of employing Filipino as a medium of teaching on students' academic achievement in Physical Education. The study revealed that students instructed in Filipino exhibited enhanced comprehension and engagement with the subject matter. This corresponds with study's findings, which also shown that instructional materials in Filipino enhance comprehension and retention among students.

3.4. Rubrics in Filipino

Regarding rubrics, the plurality of respondents "Agree" that they understand and comply with rubrics written in Filipino (weighted mean = 3.14), and believe that rubrics can assess activities accordingly when given in Filipino (weighted mean = 2.79). They also "Agree" that they can meet desired learning outcomes (weighted mean = 2.76) and easily apply strategies (weighted mean = 3.07) when rubrics are in Filipino. Interestingly, respondents "Agree" (weighted mean = 2.86) that rubrics written in English would negatively affect their performance. This reinforces Brown's (2012) assertion that rubrics are essential tools for clear communication of expectations, and this study demonstrates that this clarity is enhanced when the language of the rubric is the students' preferred language.

3.5. Filipino in Classroom Execution (Demonstration, Activities, Recitation, Examination)

The study extensively examined the impact of Filipino during various classroom activities:

3.5.1. Demonstration

Students “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.15) that they learn and understand better when teachers demonstrate using Filipino. They also “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.20) that they can understand demonstrations when delivered in Filipino. A strong agreement (weighted mean = 3.26, “Strongly Agree”) was found for getting the instructor’s point more easily in Filipino. This indicates that direct instruction and modeling are significantly more effective in the native language.

3.5.2. Activities

For individual and group activities, students “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.16) that they like participating when instructions are in Filipino. They also “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.16) that teachers can encourage creativity more effectively using Filipino. Furthermore, students “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.17) that they are more participative in group activities and “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.18) that they enjoy activities more when conducted in Filipino. The highest agreement (weighted mean = 3.20, “Agree”) was for actively participating in different activities using Filipino. These findings support Luistro’s (as cited in the thesis) view that mother-tongue based education fosters faster and better learners, leading to increased participation and engagement.

3.5.3. Recitation

In recitations, a larger part of the population “Strongly Agree” that Filipino language paves the way for them to express their thoughts more freely. Specifically, they “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.24) that they can express themselves well in essays, “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.15) that they use Filipino during recitation, and “Strongly Agree” that they can give opinions spontaneously (weighted mean = 3.39), express thoughts (weighted mean = 3.40), and are not afraid to share opinions (weighted mean = 3.36) when using Filipino. This highlights the confidence and fluency students gain when communicating in their preferred language.

3.5.4. Examination

The results show that students “Agree” (weighted mean = 2.98) they get higher scores in quizzes when notes are given in Filipino. While they “Agree” (weighted mean = 2.91) that they prefer exams in English, they “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.17) that they understand questions easily when written in Filipino, “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.19) they can follow instructions very well, and “Agree” (weighted mean = 3.18) they find it easy to answer PE worksheets in Filipino. This suggests that while English might still be perceived as the standard for formal examinations, Filipino significantly aids in comprehension and execution during assessments, potentially leading to better performance.

4. Discussion

The demographic composition reflects a representative group of young adult learners, with age and gender variety enhancing the learning environment. These attributes are crucial to examine when assessing the impact of demographic variables on students’ motivation, engagement, and success in physical education activities and coursework.

The result of students’ preference for Filipino as medium of instruction in teaching Physical Education suggested that students typically experience more comfort and confidence when instruction is conducted in their home language. This choice may stem from the language familiarity and cultural relevance of Filipino, which can improve understanding and participation in classroom discussions.

The result in the use of Filipino instructional material in teaching Physical Education underscored the educational importance of incorporating Filipino into instructional delivery and learning resources. The results support the cognitive and sociolinguistic assertion that understanding and retention are enhanced when instruction is delivered in a language that learners comprehend most effectively. In the realm of physical education, where visual, verbal, and kinesthetic components intersect, employing Filipino can facilitate communication, promote diversity, and enhance skill learning and performance.

The results indicated that employing Filipino in several classroom activities—demonstrations, tasks, recitations, and assessments—significantly improves student understanding, involvement, and achievement. During demonstrations, students indicated a clearer comprehension and increased facility in understanding the instructor's points when Filipino was utilized, highlighting the language's significance in effective modeling and education. In activities, the utilization of Filipino fostered increased involvement, inventiveness, and enjoyment, consistent with Luistro's assertion that mother-tongue education cultivates more engaged and self-assured learners. The consensus during recitations that students articulate ideas, opinions, and thoughts more freely in Filipino underscored its empowering influence on communication and self-expression, alleviating anxiety and linguistic obstacles. Ultimately, although students continue to link English with formal assessments, their increased consensus on comprehending questions, adhering to instructions, and responding more accurately in Filipino suggests that the local language enhances knowledge and improves evaluation outcomes. The persistent preference for Filipino in various educational situations underscores its pedagogical significance in enhancing clarity, inclusion, and substantive learning in Physical Education.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the findings strongly support the hypothesis that Filipino as a medium of instruction is highly effective in teaching Physical Education to first-year tertiary students in a Tagalog-speaking region. Students consistently expressed a preference for Filipino across all aspects of learning, from understanding lectures and instructional materials to actively participating in activities and performing better in assessments. This preference translates into tangible benefits in terms of comprehension, engagement, and academic performance. The study reinforces the importance of leveraging the students' mother tongue or most familiar language to optimize learning outcomes, aligning with established theories on cognitive development and language acquisition. The implications suggest a need for educational institutions to further embrace and support the use of Filipino in PE instruction, coupled with the development of appropriate resources and continuous professional development for teachers.

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