



EdData II

Task Order 15: Data for Education Programming in Asia and Middle East

Philippines EGRA Four Language Study – 2015 Follow-On

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Task Order 15: Data for Education Programming in Asia and Middle East

Philippines EGRA Four Language Study – 2015 Follow-On

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| ARMM | Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao |
| BEE | Bureau of Elementary Education |
| BEIS | Basic Education Information System |
| CES | Central Elementary School |
| CID | Curriculum and Implementation Division |
| CLMD | Curriculum and Learning Management Division |
| clpm | correct letters per minute |
| COP | Chief of Party |
| cwpm | correct words per minute |
| cnwpm | correct nonwords per minute |
| DCOP | Deputy Chief of Party |
| DepED | Department of Education |
| DO | Division Office |
| DFID | UK Department for International Development |
| EA | Executive Assistant |
| EDC | Education Development Center |
| EdData | Education Data for Decision Making project |
| EGRA | Early Grade Reading Assessment |
| EPS | Education Program Supervisor |
| ES | Elementary school |
| G1 | Grade 1 |
| G2 | Grade 2 |
| G3 | Grade 3 |
| IMCS | Instructional Materials Council Secretariat |
| INGO | international nongovernmental organization |
| LAC | Learning action cell |
| LAPG | Language Assessment for Primary Grades |
| M&E | monitoring and evaluation |
| MA | master's degree |
| MTB-MLE | Mother Tongue-Based, Multilingual Education |
| MT | mother tongue |
| NEAP | National Educators Academy of the Philippines |
| NEPP | National English Proficiency Program |
| NETRC | National Education Testing and Research Center |
| NISMED | National Institute for Science and Mathematics Education Development |
| OIC | Officer In-Charge |
| ORF | oral reading fluency |
| RO | Regional Office |
| SDD | Staff Development Division |
| SDO | Schools Division Office |
| SEAMEO-INNOTECH | Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology |
| SES | socio-economic status |
| TEI | Teacher Education Institute |
| TNS | Taylor Nelson Sofres; TNS Global |

UK
UP
USAID

United Kingdom
University of the Philippines
United States Agency for International Development

I. Executive Summary

The completion of an Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in four mother tongues in the Philippines for a second consecutive year enables the Department of Education (DepED) to examine how the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based, Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) initiative is progressing. For example, is there evidence that schools and teachers are more successfully implementing MTB-MLE? Are students in grades 1 (G1) and 2 (G2) developing improved reading skills in their mother tongues? And, are they also developing initial skills in both Filipino and English?

Samples of 30 to 40 teachers and 375 to 400 students per grade were drawn in each of the four regions – Region I, Region VI, Region VII, and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) – from schools that were pre-identified as teaching in the target languages, respectively Ilokano, Hiligaynon, Cebuano, and Maguindanaoan. The sampled teachers were asked about their preparation for, level of comfort with, and understanding of MTB-MLE, and their instructional practice during a reading lesson was observed. Students completed an assessment of their letter sound knowledge, decoding skills, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension in their mother tongue, and their listening comprehension and ability to read familiar words in Filipino, as well as their oral understanding of common English vocabulary words and phrases.

MTB-MLE implementation: Regarding the implementation of MTB-MLE in the four regions, the 2015 survey, like the 2014 one, used the information from teacher interviews and classroom observations to construct an index that covers three areas of MTB-MLE: Teacher preparation and ability to provide instruction in the mother tongue; Availability and use of a diversity of MTB-MLE materials; and Instructional practice and the use of time during mother-tongue reading lessons.

Comparing the 2014 and 2015 scores of schools on these three components of the MTB-MLE index allows us to make the following general statements about how implementation of MTB-MLE is proceeding. We found that:

- In all four regions, a greater proportion of students have teachers who are better prepared and more comfortable teaching in the mother tongue, with the exception of students learning in Ilokano in Region I. In Region I, the decline stems mostly from fewer teachers stating that they use assessments such as EGRA (or others) to regularly evaluate student performance. Mother tongues are being spoken during the vast majority of observed reading lesson time, as was the case in 2014.
- The 2015 survey also revealed greater presence and use of MTB-MLE materials in three of the four regions. In ARMM the availability of diverse materials linked to MTB-MLE remains below what it should be as the region is still struggling to meet the challenge of ensuring their adequate supply and use.
- In Region I, VII, and ARMM, teachers displayed more of the practices associated with building reading skill and more time during reading lessons was being used to practice specific skills. Many more classrooms in Regions I, VI, and VII were showing better practice (35 to 40%) than in ARMM (11%). However, in Region VI, no difference was seen from 2014 to 2015 in the proportion of schools where teachers were demonstrating desirable practices.

- Teacher expectations regarding students' acquisition of literacy changed dramatically from 2014 to 2015 across all regions, with much higher percentages of teachers stating that students can learn to read in their mother tongues during G1.

Mother-tongue reading: Data related to each region's improvements in MTB-MLE implementation are provided in the appropriate sections of the report. The general picture is that implementation is improving as MTB-MLE moves into its second year of full implementation. Whether an additional year of implementation is leading to significantly better outcomes is revealed by looking at how students performed on the 2014 and 2015 EGRA subtests.

One way to compare performance in 2014 to 2015 is to look at the percentage of students in each year achieving a desirable level of reading proficiency. In September 2014, teams from each of the four regions came together to develop recommendations for benchmark levels of student performance in oral reading fluency (ORF).

The benchmarks (shown here) are specific to each language, owing to linguistic variations and differences in their orthographic conventions. Each student's performance can be

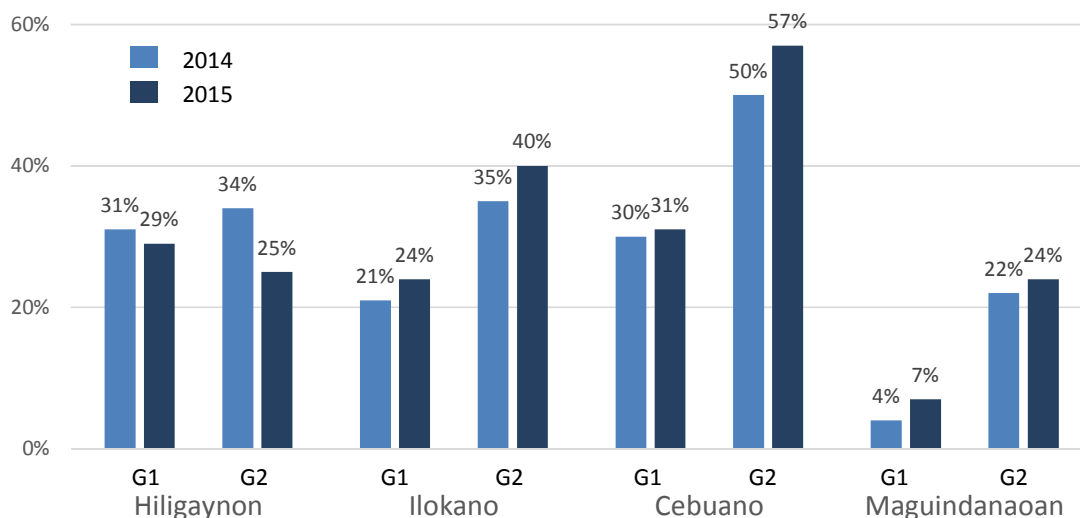
| Language | Grade 1 ORF Benchmark | Grade 2 ORF Benchmark |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Hiligaynon | 20 cwpm | 45 cwpm |
| Ilokano | 30 cwpm | 40 cwpm |
| Cebuano | 32 cwpm | 42 cwpm |
| Maguindanaoan | 35 cwpm | 45 cwpm |

measured with respect to what a recommended level of oral reading fluency is, based on what existing data showed were the ranges of oral reading fluency that correspond to students' ability to comprehend what they are reading.

Figure 1 below shows the percentages of students achieving the respective benchmark levels of oral reading fluency in each language, in G1 and G2, in both 2014 and 2015.

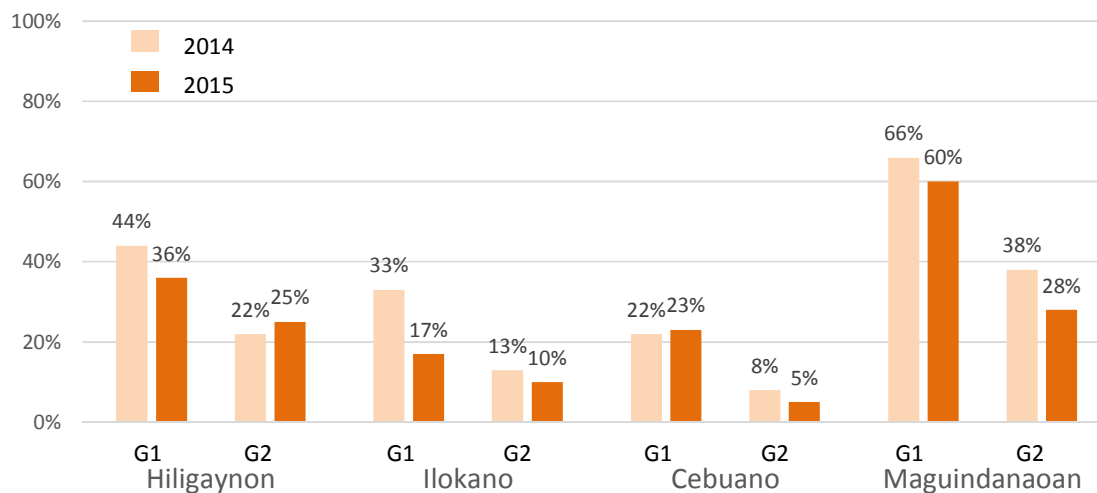
It is clear that in 2015 increased shares of students are meeting the benchmark in Ilokano, Cebuano, and Maguindanaoan, while a smaller percentage are doing so in Hiligaynon. *Figure 1* also shows that only in Cebuano are a majority of students (57%) achieving the oral reading fluency benchmark in G2 in 2015. The decline in performance in Hiligaynon may reflect the somewhat higher percentage of students included in the sample of Region VI schools who reported that they actually do not speak Hiligaynon at home.

Figure 1. Percent of students meeting the benchmark for oral reading fluency



Another indicator of improved performance is a decrease in the percentage of students unable to read a single word of connected text. In **Figure 2** below, the drop in the percentage of students scoring zero on the text reading portion of the EGRA is indicated by the darker bar (corresponding to 2015) being shorter than the lighter colored bar (2014).

Figure 2. Percent of students scoring zero on oral reading fluency



Reductions in zero scores are evident in both grades in Ilokano and Maguindanaoan. The proportion of students scoring zero was cut almost in half in Ilokano in G1. In Hiligaynon and Cebuano, the results are mixed. Hiligaynon had reduced zero scores in G1, but they increased slightly in G2; Cebuano had a very slight increase in G1 zero scores but a decline to only 5% of G2 students unable to read a single word of the short passage.

Filipino and English language development: The 2015 EGRA also included an assessment of G2 students’ oral language skills in Filipino and English, as well as a test of reading of familiar Filipino words. In each region, student performance on Filipino listening comprehension declined for students learning to read in Hiligaynon, Ilokano, and Cebuano. Only for those learning to read in Maguindanaoan did Filipino listening comprehension increase. Regarding whether students could correctly read a set of familiar, simple Filipino words, on average students could read from 61% to 86% of the short familiar words correctly in 2015 as shown here. However, the performance on this subtask of students learning to read in Hiligaynon declined from 2014 to 2015, while all the others improved.

| % of Filipino familiar words read correctly | 2014 | 2015 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Hiligaynon | 68% | 61% |
| Ilokano | 76% | 81% |
| Cebuano | 80% | 86% |
| Maguindanaoan | 55% | 62% |

G2 students’ knowledge of three categories of basic English vocabulary was also evaluated. The test covered words that name parts of the human body or objects found in a classroom, as well as basic prepositional phrases, such as “put the pencil on the book.” Students performed best on the vocabulary related to classroom objects, averaging 59% to 68% correct across the four languages. However performance on this subtest declined for children learning to read in Hiligaynon, Cebuano, and Maguindanaoan and only increased for those learning in Ilokano. On English vocabulary related to body parts, the percentages correct were similarly low in 2014 and 2015 (averaging 34% and 33% correct in 2014 and 2015 across the four language groups), with declines or little differences between the two years in all cases. Scores on English prepositional phrases were similar—averaging 29% and 26% correct in the two years—with little change from year to year.

Overall, the 2015 survey shows that for the most part, slow progress is being made, both in implementing MTB-MLE and in improving student performance in their mother tongues. Much progress is still needed. Teachers must have and use MTB-MLE materials and they must use classroom time more productively by focusing more on the instructional practices that engage students in reading and reading-related exercises. Acquisition of basic reading skills still needs to improve considerably so that much higher percentages of students become fluent readers in their mother tongues. And it would appear that more attention must be paid to developing Filipino and English oral language skills if students are going to be prepared to transition to reading in those languages.

II. Introduction

Background

For the past three years United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been supporting the Philippines Department of Education (DepED) to monitor progress of implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) through the use of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA).¹ The first implementation of EGRA was in the 2012–2013 school year; it assessed the English and Filipino reading ability of children in grade 3 ([G3] national sample) as well Ilokano in grade 1 ([G1] regional sample). The following year, DepED, with USAID support, administered EGRA in G1 and G2 in four regions and languages, including Ilokano, and collected data on classroom teaching using observations and teacher interviews. This year EGRA was again administered in the same set of four regional languages (see *Table 1*, below). Additional data were collected through classroom observations and teacher interviews from the classrooms where students were selected at random. In this way, the characteristics of teachers and classrooms could be used to explore differences in achievement. Fieldwork was completed each time at the end of the school year, so the studies can be interpreted each time as indicative of a full year of instruction in the grade level targeted.

Table 1. Overview of EGRA in the Philippines, 2013 – 2015

| Characteristic | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| Languages and grades | English (G3) Filipino (G3) Ilokano (G1) | Ilokano (G1/G2) Hiligaynon (G1/G2) Cebuano (G1/G2) Maguindanaoan (G1/G2) | Ilokano (G1/G2) Hiligaynon (G1/G2) Cebuano (G1/G2) Maguindanaoan (G1/G2) |
| Instruments | EGRA Student questionnaire Teacher questionnaire | EGRA Student questionnaire Teacher questionnaire Classroom observation | EGRA (shortened) Student questionnaire Teacher questionnaire Classroom observation |
| Implementing partners | DepED RTI TNS SEAMEO-INNOTECH | DepED RTI TNS | DepED TNS RTI EDC (USAID/Basa) |

G1=Grade 1; G2=Grade 2; G3=Grade 3

This series of end-of year, sample-based assessments is done with the objective of determining whether children are learning how to read in the mother tongue in G1 and G2 and if implementation experience helps improve instruction and raises overall achievement from one year to the next. Ultimately, it is expected that gains in mother tongue reading will translate to gains in English and Filipino reading in G3. As such, this series of measurements provides the baseline with which to establish performance benchmarks and targets, and then evaluate progress towards those targets periodically.

¹ For more information, including past reports from the Philippines, see www.eddataglobal.org

As part of these efforts, USAID’s Education Data for Decision Making project (EdData) and Basa Filipinas Projects (Basa) jointly supported a workshop in 2014 to use the results from EGRAs to draft benchmarks for reading performance in the first years of elementary education. These benchmarks are used in the analysis of results that follow for each language.

Research design and methodology

Sample methodology: The study was designed to be representative of the population of students attending public schools in the select regions that instruct in the targeted mother tongue. For example, although Ilokano is spoken outside of Region 1, and within Region 1 other languages are also used, the sample represents students in schools in Region 1 that use Ilokano as the language of instruction.

The 2012–2013 Basic Education Information System (BEIS) public school census was used as the sampling frame to sample schools. Prior to sampling, all schools that were not located in the four regions or did not instruct in the regions’ specified mother tongues were excluded. Schools were stratified by region, then 40 schools in each region were sampled proportional to the combined G1 and G2 enrollment. For each originally sampled school, two replacement schools² were automatically selected to replace the original school if the original school was deemed inadequate to assess.³ Once schools were sampled and verified to meet the necessary requirements for evaluation, teams went to each school and sampled one G1 teacher and one G2 teacher. For the sampled teachers, the assessors conducted the teacher questionnaire and the reading lesson observation. Students taught by the selected teachers were then sampled, and assessors completed with them the EGRA and student questionnaire. *Table 2* shows the three-stage sample of schools, teachers, and students for the 2015 study.

Table 2. Samples per stage

| Stage Number | Item Sampled (# of Items) | Stratified by | Probability of Selection |
|--------------|---|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Stage 1 | Schools (160) (40 in each region) | Region(4) | Proportional to G1 + G2 Enrollment |
| Stage 2 | Classrooms (320) 160 G1 160 G2 | Grade(2) [G1, G2] | Equal |
| Stage 3 | Student(3,200) 200 G1 boys, 200 G1 girls; 200 G2 boys, 200 G2 girls [In each region] | Gender(2) [Male, Female] | Equal |

It should be noted that the 2015 sample methodology was identical to the 2014 sample methodology and used the same 2013–2014 BEIS sampling frame to maintain a consistency

² Replacement schools were matched to the original sampled school by Division, District, Province City, and combining G1 and G2 enrollments.

³ Schools were initially deemed inadequate to assess if they did not meet any one of the following criteria: school must be open at some point during the data collection period; school must be located in the specific region and instruct in the specific mother tongue language; school must have some G1 and G2 enrollment. Schools could also be replaced if the safety or health of the assessors might be compromised by going to the school. Being far or difficult to access is not, alone, a criterion for replacement.

from year to year to ensure comparability. However, during data collection, ongoing conflict in the ARMM required further exclusions in areas that were deemed unsafe for the assessment team to enter. Schools already sampled in these areas were excluded from the sample and replacement schools not located in the conflict areas were resampled to replace these schools. Additionally, many schools in Region VI (Hiligaynon) were replaced because they were not using Hiligaynon as the mother tongue.

The final sample used for analysis is shown in *Table 3*, below. Where the total number of students in 2015 is less than 400, this indicates either difficulties in obtaining a full sample (due to school closures, security issues, absences, or other logistical constraints) or records were excluded if they were incomplete or showed other inconsistencies such as extreme performance outliers.

Table 3. Final sample and assessment counts of students, teachers, and classrooms observations by region, grade, and year

| | | Students | | Teachers | | Classrooms Observed | |
|----------------------|-------|----------|------|----------|------|---------------------|------|
| School type/Region | Grade | 2014 | 2015 | 2014 | 2015 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Cebuano/Region VII | G1 | 472 | 390 | 39 | 39 | 23 | 34 |
| Cebuano/Region VII | G2 | 434 | 390 | 39 | 39 | 25 | 34 |
| Ilokano/Region I | G1 | 400 | 398 | 39 | 38 | 35 | 39 |
| Ilokano/Region I | G2 | 399 | 399 | 40 | 37 | 33 | 38 |
| Hiligaynon/Region VI | G1 | 402 | 389 | 39 | 39 | 35 | 38 |
| Hiligaynon/Region VI | G2 | 400 | 391 | 38 | 38 | 23 | 38 |
| Maguindanaoan/ARMM | G1 | 402 | 370 | 38 | 28 | 37 | 31 |
| Maguindanaoan/ARMM | G2 | 404 | 374 | 36 | 32 | 36 | 33 |

Instruments: EGRA instruments used in all three years were the same, with the exception of the short story reading passages, which were revised year after year. This is to ensure equivalency in measuring progress from year to year by keeping the level of difficulty of the assessment items constant. For the sake of reliability, in 2015 all children read two different reading passages—the same story used in 2014 and a new story written for 2015.⁴ The purpose of having children read two passages was so that if the 2014 reading passages had been used in classrooms in the year between the two assessments then the new passage could be used to report progress in reading ability. Analysis of the data gave no indication that the 2014 passage had been used in schools or that children had been prepared for the test other than through regular classroom instruction.⁵ In fact, mean scores were very similar on the two

⁴ All stories were developed by Filipino teachers and education specialists using standard EGRA test construction guidelines during workshops facilitated by RTI. See previous EGRA reports for details.

⁵ Although as pointed out in each section, data from the student questionnaire indicate that a proportion of students report having already done “an assessment like this,” and teachers report using EGRA in the classroom. Therefore familiarity with the test format is on the rise. The effect of this on reading scores is uncertain.

reading passages. Therefore, we felt confident using the outcomes of the 2014 reading passage in this report to be sure that comparison of progress is based on entirely equivalent measurements.

The classroom observation instrument collects data on language use and instructional activities by recording observation ‘snapshots’ every 3 minutes over the course of the mother tongue lesson, which is where most reading instruction takes place. The classroom observation instrument was identical in 2014 and 2015, except that it was administered only in reading classes instead of across the curriculum. The analysis of observation data shows the proportion of total observations in a certain category, and this is used as a proxy for how much class time is actually spent on that activity. It is aggregated across the whole sample, not classroom by classroom. Although we are making comparisons in instructional time use from 2014 to 2015, this must be done with caution. The comparisons made in this report are only meant to be indicative of the use of instructional time and in no way should be taken to represent a reliable measure of classroom instruction throughout the year.

Students and teachers were also interviewed. Students were interviewed after their reading assessment in order to gather information about classroom and home language practices from their perspectives. Teacher interviews were conducted before or after the classroom observation, depending on the day’s schedule. Data from teacher interviews were merged at the student level prior to analysis, therefore the data can be interpreted as “the proportion of students whose teacher/classroom has this characteristic.” The scores were analyzed by calculating the mean score, and showing the distribution of scores. Most of the teacher questionnaire was the same as in 2014, allowing us to see if there is any evolution in trends. However, a few additional questions were asked or reformulated to yield more accurate results.

Finally, elements from all of these instruments were combined to create an index, or quantifiable measurement, of MTB-MLE implementation. The indices summarize data related to three areas:

- Teacher training, language ability, and the supports teachers receive at their schools (Component 1)
- Materials available and being used in classrooms (Component 2)
- Instructional practices observed during reading lessons (Component 3)

After calculating a score based on the relevant data from each instrument, we identified the score that corresponds to the 75th percentile and calculated the proportion of the sample equal to or above that score and the proportion below. Some teacher interview questions were added to or rephrased in the teacher interview in 2015, and some were removed. In order to ensure that index scores from 2014 and 2015 would be comparable, the index uses only data points that were collected the same way each year, and therefore the 2014 index scores were recalculated to ensure this consistency.

Fieldwork: Each year, a mix of private research contractors and employees of DepED carried out the EGRA, classroom observations, and interviews. Over the three years of EGRA work in the Philippines, RTI International (the main implementing partner for USAID) has been building the capacity of the government to take on a larger role in training and fieldwork logistics. In addition to Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE) central staff, regional

directors and MTB-MLE coordinators have been increasingly in charge of coordinating logistics, selecting staff, and conducting training for the EGRA surveys. In 2015, the assessor training was conducted entirely by Philippines-based staff from DepED and a local subcontractor (TNS Global) that has been involved with EGRA in the Philippines since 2012, with the support of two local consultants hired by RTI. Whereas in 2013 and 2014 assessors were a mix of DepED and TNS staff, in 2015 they were entirely made up of DepED staff, but some private researchers were involved in fieldwork coordination.

Given the research framework above, it is also useful to remember, when reading this report, that you can interpret findings for the system as a whole by comparing the difference between 2014 and 2015 performance, or you can interpret findings for one *cohort* by comparing G1 students in 2014 to G2 students in 2015. Although these are based on random samples and not longitudinal measurement of the same children from year to year, the random sampling allows us to treat the results as representative of a cohort's performance.

Description of study participants

Before presenting characteristics of each region/language in the sections that follow, we will present a general profile of teachers/classrooms in all four regions combined and some general data across the four languages.

Teachers: Data from one teacher per grade, per school, were collected through a teacher questionnaire. For analysis, the data were combined with the student data such that every student EGRA record is associated with the data from his or her teacher. Therefore, data here are reported in terms of “students who are taught by a teacher with the characteristic.” The data are also weighted, and therefore provide a relatively representative picture of the teaching force across the four regions. Some data, disaggregated by region, are presented in the sections that present the results by language.

- 97% of children are taught by a female teacher.
- Most children sampled were in heterogeneous classrooms (93%), however some classes were included that were either for slow learners or gifted learners, but these were in equal proportion.
- 91% of students have a teacher with a bachelor's degree, while 8% have a teacher with a master's degree (MA). The proportion of teachers with an MA was slightly higher in 2014 (12%).
- 83% of students have a teacher who received training in teaching reading from DepEdD, but 4% have a teacher with no training in beginning reading; 33% of students have a teacher who received training from USAID/Basa or another project. School-based training, peer learning, and even self-research are also strategies some teachers reported using to learn how to teach reading.
- This year 62% of students have teachers who report feeling ‘very’ confident using the mother tongue to teach reading, compared to 51% in 2014.
- 84% of students have a teacher who says they have the MTB-MLE materials as a resource for teaching reading, and 78% have a teacher in possession of the teacher's guide.
- 39% of students have a teacher who has leveled readers in the classroom.

Students: After the series of reading assessment exercises, children were asked questions about themselves, their classrooms, and the characteristics of their home environments.

Across the whole sample, the profile of G1 and G2 students is:⁶

- 17% of G1 and 25% of G2 students indicate that they have already done “a test like this.”
- 98% of students in both grades were at the school for the entire year, and 88% of G2 students were at the same school the year before, so we can be confident that the skills measured reflect teaching at the school level.
- 84% of G1 students and 90% of G2 students are the appropriate age for the grade they are in (6 or 7 for G1, and 7 or 8 for G2).
- 92% of students sampled speak the language of instruction of the school (and the language of the EGRA) with their parents; 68% use only that language in the home, while the remainder report that there are other languages used in the home.

This year, students were not asked questions about socio-economic status (SES) in an attempt to keep the questionnaire brief. The relationship between SES and results has been established in previous surveys; however, this limits the ability to control for SES in the regression analyses.

⁶ Data are weighted, and student-reported (not otherwise verified by the study).

1 Hiligaynon

1.1 Background

Sample. The 2015 sample was drawn from the list of schools provided in 2014 (schools that reported using Hiligaynon as the mother tongue). During fieldwork planning, after the sample was drawn, it was determined that some of the schools in the sample were not using Hiligaynon as the mother tongue, and the sample was redrawn excluding the divisions of Aklan and Antique and the districts of Cauayan II, Hinobaan, Sagay City District I, San Carlos City District III, and Escalante II. The target sample was 800 students (400 G1 and 400 G2); the actual number of records used in the analysis was 389 G1 and 391 G2 for a total of 780 students assessed between March 2 and 6. Additionally, 39 G1 teachers and 38 G2 teachers were interviewed and 38 reading classrooms (for the same teachers) were observed in each grade. Characteristics of the region, based on weighted averages of student and teacher questionnaire items, are described in *Table 4*.

Table 4. Hiligaynon – selected characteristics by grade (2015)

| Characteristics | G1 | G2 |
|---|----------|----------|
| Percentage of children who... | | |
| ... are overage (>7 in G1; >8 in G2; student reported) | 6% | 15% |
| ... have been at the same school for two years (student reported) | 87% | 96% |
| ... had no recorded absences in Feb. 2015 (from official school records) | 65% | 69% |
| ... have a teacher whose native language is Hiligaynon (teacher-reported) | 79% | 87% |
| ... have <u>no</u> books at home | 40% | 41% |
| ... speak Hiligaynon at home (student-reported) | 91% | 89% |
| ... report that their teacher speaks mostly Hiligaynon in class this year | 92% | 88% |
| ... report that the teacher <i>never</i> uses the MTB-MLE reading book for Hiligaynon | 28% | 13% |
| Average number of days absent in Feb. 2015 for children with any absences | 1.9 days | 2.1 days |
| Percentage of children whose teacher... | | |
| ... is teaching in the mother tongue for the first time this year | 9% | 11% |
| ... has already used EGRA in the classroom with their children | 42% | 37% |
| ... has the MTB-MLE learner materials (textbook) | 93% | 89% |
| ... has a teacher's guide | 67% | 65% |
| ... has never received training in beginning reading | 8% | 6% |

Benchmarking. At the 2014 benchmarking workshop, the Hiligaynon team established, on the basis of previous survey work, the following recommended benchmarks and targets (see *Table 5*). This report describes progress towards benchmarks in these areas.

Table 5. Hiligaynon reading benchmarks drafted in the 2014 benchmarking workshop

| | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
|---|------------|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| | ORF (cwpm) | Comprehension (% correct) | ORF (cwpm) | Comprehension (% correct) |
| Long-range goal | 25 | 60% | 50 | 80% |
| Benchmark by end 2015–2016 | 20 | 40% | 45 | 62% |
| Maximum % scoring zero by end 2015–2016 | 25% | 40% | 10% | 15% |

1.2 EGRA results

1.2.1 Hiligaynon reading

Table 6 below summarizes the scores across grades, years, and subtasks in terms of average items correct per minute and percent of children scoring zero. As a reminder, a positive change is a *decrease* in zero scores, and an *increase* in the mean.

Table 6. Hiligaynon – Performance on Reading Subtasks

| | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
|---|---------|------|---------|-------|
| | 2014 | 2015 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Percent scoring zero | | | | |
| Letter sound knowledge | 22% | 24% | 14% | 26% |
| Decoding | 45% | 32% | 21% | 24% |
| Reading fluency | 44% | 36% | 22% | 25% |
| Reading comprehension | 64% | 59% | 31% | 39% |
| | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
| Average items correct per minute | 2014 | 2015 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Letter sound knowledge | 11.6 | 11.2 | 13.0 | 11.6 |
| Decoding | 9.8 | 9.8 | 21.1 | 16.3* |
| Reading fluency | 12.9 | 13.7 | 31.6 | 27.0 |
| Reading comprehension | 0.8 | 0.8 | 2.1 | 1.7 |

* Statistically significant difference from 2014 to 2015

No improvement in performance (in terms of average items read per minute) is apparent on any of the subtasks, in either grade, from 2014 to 2015; in fact, the mean items correct decreases for G2 students in 2015. Furthermore, G2 students did no better on letter-sound

identification than G1 in either year of the assessment. Surprisingly, the proportion of children who scored zero on the letter sounds task increased from 2014 to 2015 in both grades, nearly doubling in the case of G2 students. **Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6** show the distribution of scores by grade and by year for letter sounds.

The proportion of G2 children with zero scores also increased from 2014 to 2015 on the other subtasks, though not by as much as letter sounds. This is difficult to explain since the proportion of zero scores stays about the same or decreases in G1 from 2014 to 2015 on all of the subtasks. One explanation is the characteristics of the sample in this region; this is a region where community languages overlap geographically, and it may be that children are going to a school that is not using their mother tongue.⁷ According to exit interview data, about 10% of children in G2 (and 6% in G1) do not use Hiligaynon at home, compared to 2–3% in the 2014 sample. Although the two studies do not measure the same individuals, the random sampling allows us to assume that the cohort of 2015 represents the same cohort that moved up from G1 in 2014, and therefore it may indicate that children who did not achieve letter sound knowledge in G1 are still failing to master that skill in G2. Similarly, more teachers in this year’s sample are not native Hiligaynon speakers. Teachers report at least three different sequences for teaching the alphabet—vowels first, alphabetical order (a,b,c,d,e...), and a custom sequence (a,u,g,i,s,b,t,l,y....). The type of error made, as observed and recorded by the assessors, was mostly saying the letter name or saying the sound as a syllable, in equal proportions (40%). Thus the problem isn’t as serious as it could be—i.e., a total lack of recognition of the letters or mistaking a letter for a different letter; but the subtest isn’t allowing us to determine precisely if children understand letter-sound correspondence. However, we can determine this indirectly through their capacity to decode nonwords (invented words that nonetheless resemble real Hiligaynon words orthographically).

For nonword decoding, scores improve from G1 to G2 in both years. Although there are more zero scores for G2 in 2015, there are also more children in the lower ranges than in the higher ranges after two years of mother-tongue instruction. On the other hand, the difference between G1 and G2 is clear—children start to reach the higher ranges of words per minute read after two years of instruction. The 2015 G2 cohort shows clearly that performance for that group improved from 2014 to 2015 in terms of reducing zero scores and having more children reach higher ranges. **Figure 4** shows the distribution on the nonword decoding task.

Means on reading fluency and comprehension also improve from G1 to G2 in both years of the study, although the magnitude of the differences is not as great in 2015. For example, in 2014, the inter-grade difference between children in the same school was 18.7 correct words per minute on reading fluency; in 2015 that difference is only 13.3 words per minute. As shown in **Figure 5**, the change in ORF from 2014 to 2015 has improved for G1 in terms of reducing the proportion of zero scores by 18% and by increasing the proportion of children scoring in a measurable range. In G2 there are slightly more children with zero scores and in the lower ranges of the distribution than in the higher ranges. However, overall grade level differences are clear, in that more children start to read above 40 correct words per minute (cwpm) in G2. Also at the cohort level (G1 in 2014 compared to G2 in 2015) we see a drop in zero scores, a steady proportion of children reading in the lower ranges of fluency (11 to 30

⁷ And, as mentioned in the section 1.1 Background, the sample selection changed somewhat from 2014 because of last minute exclusions.

cwpm) and then a large increase in the proportion of children reading above 40 cwpm. Again, this can probably be explained by the approximately 10% of children who do not use Hiligaynon at home, but find themselves in a Hiligaynon school.

The benchmarks established were that, in the long term, G1 children should be able to read 25 cwpm and G2 children should be able to read 50 cwpm. The teams agreed that in the short term they would like to see at least 50% of children reading 20 cwpm or more in G1 and 50% reading 45 cwpm or more in G2. The data show that 29% of children in G1 are reaching the reading benchmark, and 25% of G2 students are reaching the comprehension benchmark. Thus there is still more to be done to increase the rate at which children achieve the higher level of fluency.

In reading comprehension, the benchmarks were that in the long term, children should reach 60% comprehension in G1 and 80% comprehension in G2. In the short term, the teams agreed that by the end of the 2015–2016 school year at least 25% of G1 children would achieve 40% comprehension, and 30% of G2 students would achieve 62% comprehension. These targets have been achieved in 2015, but actual performance is lower than in 2014. Comprehension scores from both years and grades are presented in **Figure 6**. G2 children are not achieving significantly higher scores in comprehension than G1 students, and the largest proportion of children in both grades is in the zero score range. The reasons for such low reading comprehension should be examined in more detail.

Figure 3. Hiligaynon – Letter sound identification (distribution)

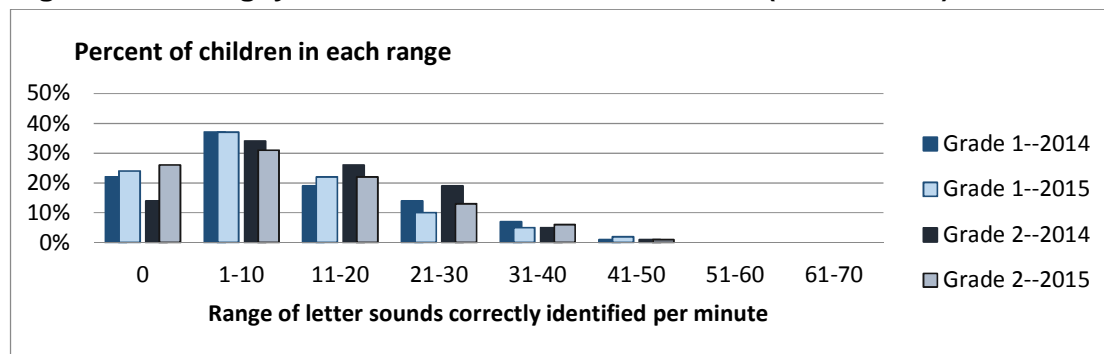


Figure 4. Hiligaynon – Nonword decoding (distribution)

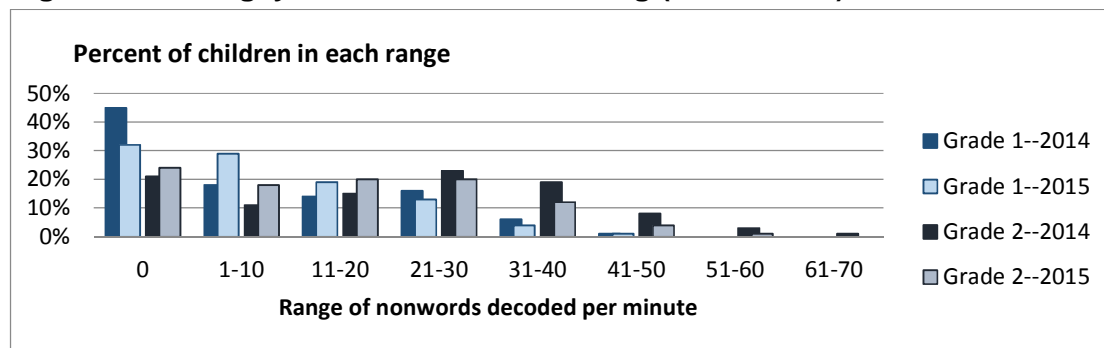


Figure 5. Hiligaynon – Reading fluency (distribution)

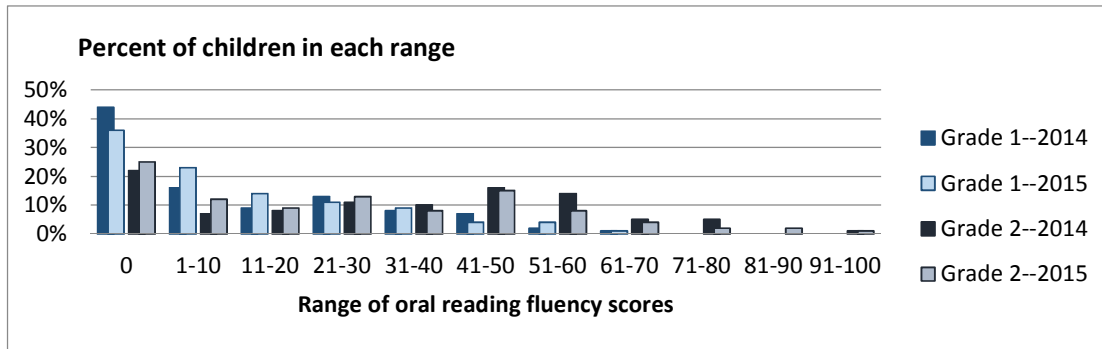
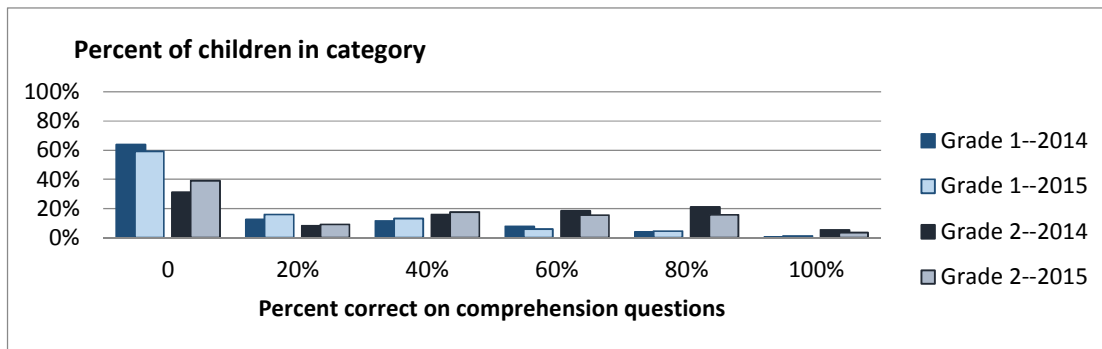
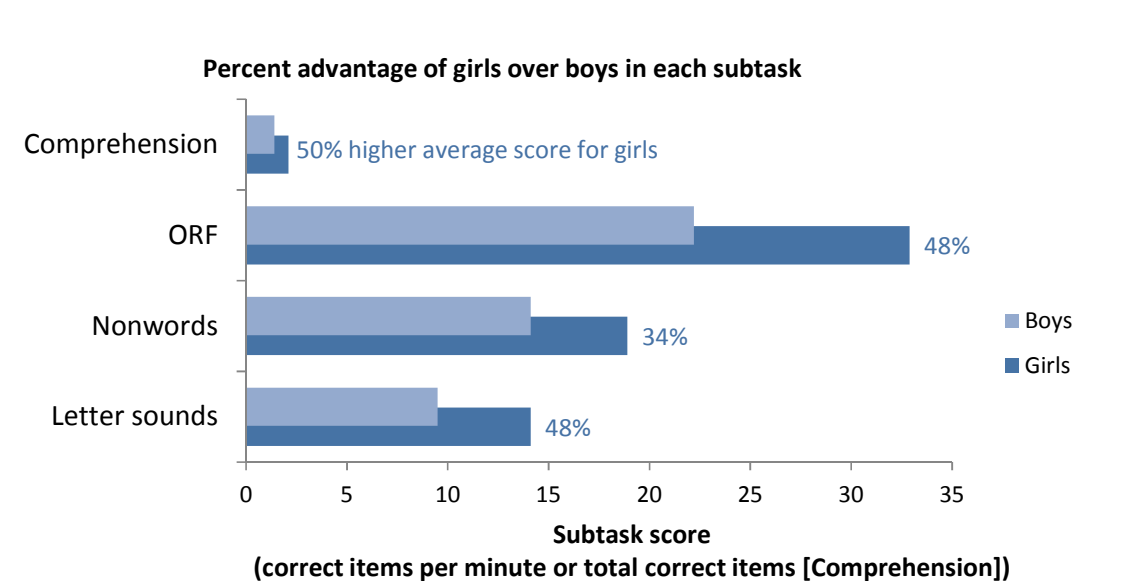


Figure 6. Hiligaynon – Reading comprehension (distribution)



Boys are also falling behind girls in all areas. *Figure 7* below shows that girls outperform boys by 34 to 48% on all subtasks (all differences are statistically significant). This translates to 10.7 cwpm more on oral reading fluency. Though not pictured, G1 differences between boys and girls were even larger—almost double in the case of ORF and comprehension.

Figure 7. Hiligaynon – Differences between boys and girls scores (G2 only)

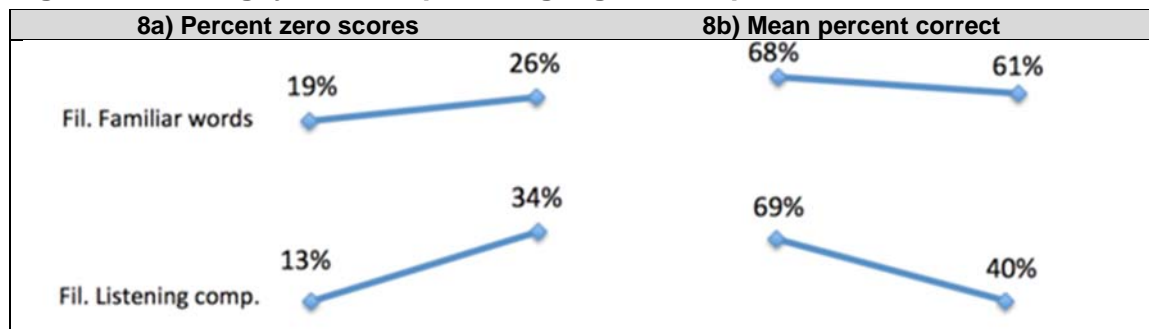


1.2.2 Filipino and English

The development of reading in Filipino should begin in G2, although oral language was introduced already in G1. All but 7 children confirmed that they were learning Filipino in school. However, in 2015 performance has declined on all measures compared to 2014. The mean cwpm on Filipino familiar word reading is 23, down from 29, and this is statistically significant (at the .05 level) although the decrease in percent correct and the increase in zero scores, shown in **Figure 8a** and **8b**, below, are not. For Filipino listening comprehension, student performance declined significantly: the percent correct declined nearly 30 percentage points, while zero scores more than doubled.⁸

As a reminder, when viewing these results, a positive result would be indicated by a downward sloping (decrease) line connecting zero scores (at left in the graph) and an upward sloping one (increase) connecting the means (at right in the graph).

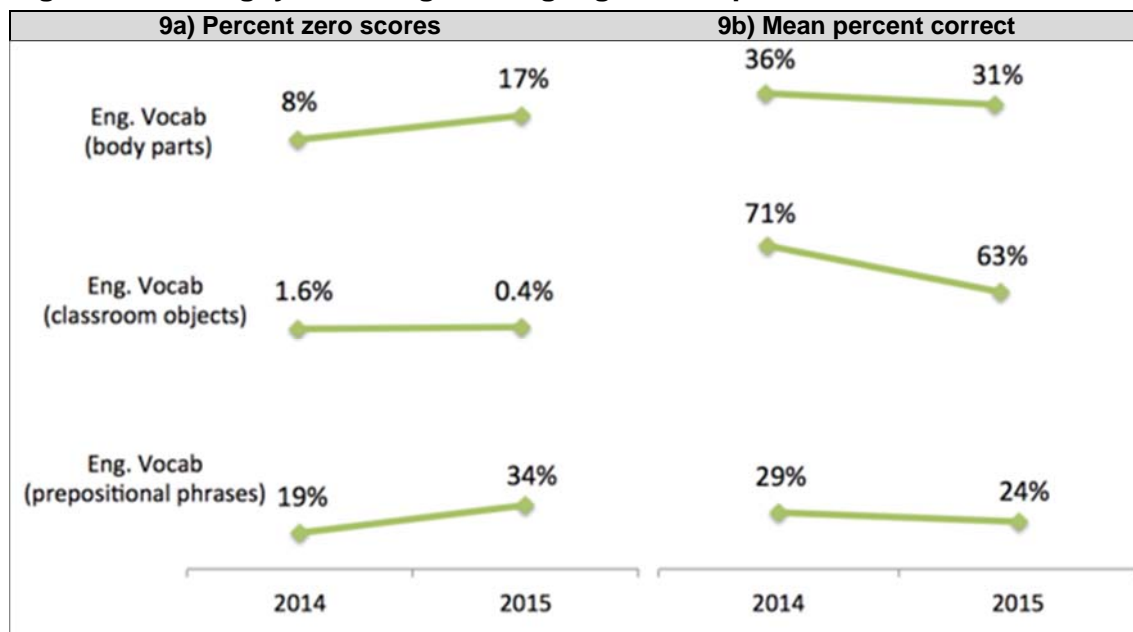
Figure 8. Hiligaynon – Filipino language development



English vocabulary development also shows a decline from 2014. There are more students who did not get any questions correct (zero scores) and a lower overall average number of correct responses (both differences are statistically significant at the .05 level). **Figure 9a** and **9b** below show the magnitude of the changes on these two tasks. A very low percentage of children scored zero on the component that asks them to identify objects around the classroom, but the average percent correct declines from 71% to 63%. The most difficult task is executing commands (prepositional phrases like “put the pencil behind you”), in which a third of children scored zero in 2015 and the mean percent correct decreased from 2014. Finally, zero scores more than doubled—from 8% to 17%—for identifying parts of the body.

⁸ Both these changes are statistically significant at the .001 level.

Figure 9. Hiligaynon – English language development

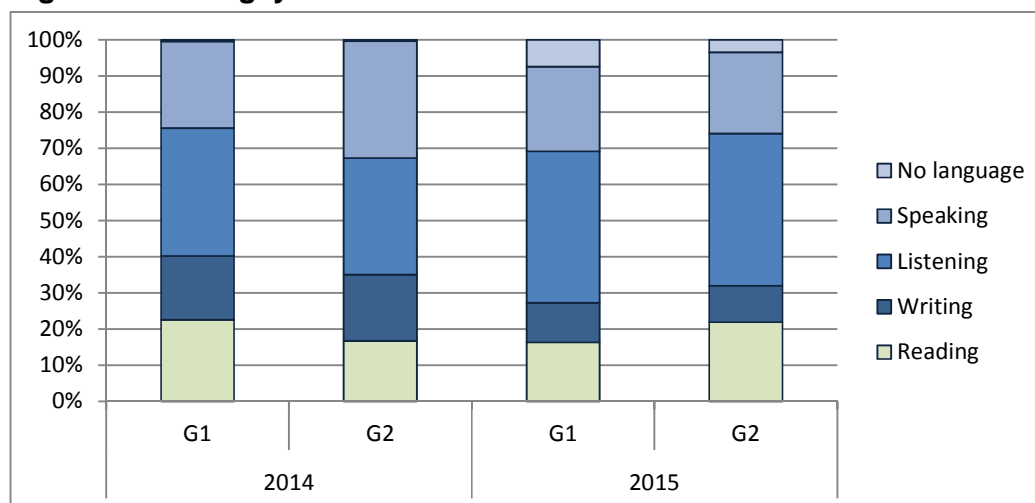


1.3 MTB-MLE implementation

Data from the classroom observation instrument and teacher interview provide some insight into what inputs are associated with the above outcomes, and they provide an idea of how MTB-MLE is being implemented in the region. For language in use, the proportion of time spent using Hiligaynon in the classroom decreased slightly, from 99% on average in both grades in 2014, to 92/96% in G1/G2, respectively, in 2015. The overall distribution of activities by type remains relatively constant, with listening and speaking representing the majority of class time. Overall time spent reading declined for G1 but increased in G2 from 2014 to 2015; moreover, in 2015, the proportion of time spent reading in G2 was more than in G1, which may reflect the fact that children are more capable of reading in G2 and so more instructional time is spent on this task. More details about the type of listening and speaking activities follow.⁹

⁹ Note that reading aloud is counted as “reading” and not “speaking.”

Figure 10. Hiligaynon – Classroom observation time



From the perspective of the G1 students (what was the student doing at the time of the observation?) the top four activities in 2015, representing 43% of the observations for the sample, were: Listening (*To instructions about aspects of literacy*); Listening (*Teacher asking questions*); Speaking (*Answering a question*); Writing (*Writing word- or sentence-length answers to questions [e.g. on the board, poster, or worksheet]*). All non-instructional time, including off-topic socializing, transitions between activities, disruptions, and fidgeting or horsing around account for 4.2%—of which 3.4% was transitioning between activities. This is a low percentage of class time, but considerably more than in 2014, when off-task activities accounted for only 0.4% of observations. This proportion would go up if we included the category “procedural directions” as non-instructional time.

In G2, instruction is still dominated by listening to the teacher and answering questions; however, 10% of observations concerned reading sentences or paragraphs. Writing based on prompts given by the teacher accounted for 14% of observations. Together, these top four G1 activities account for 45% of observations. G2 time spent off-task is close to 1% in both years. Additionally, during 9% of observations in 2015 students were listening to the teacher give procedural directions.

The teacher perspective tells a similar story, with instruction in both grades and years dominated by asking questions, explaining subject matter, waiting for students to respond or giving procedural directions. For G1, 41% of observations were coded as “*Waiting for pupils to respond*”—considerably more than in 2014 (23%). The proportion of time recorded as “*off task*” is close to 2% in 2015 in both grades, which is an increase from almost none in G1. Keeping in mind the limitations of a one-time observation of classrooms, we do get a sense that instruction is still largely teacher-led, with whole-class configuration accounting for at least 50% of observations in G1 in both years. However, the proportion of whole class “attention on teacher” instruction has gone down in 2015, from nearly 75% of observations in G1 and 66% in G2 in 2014, with modest increases evident in individual and group work.

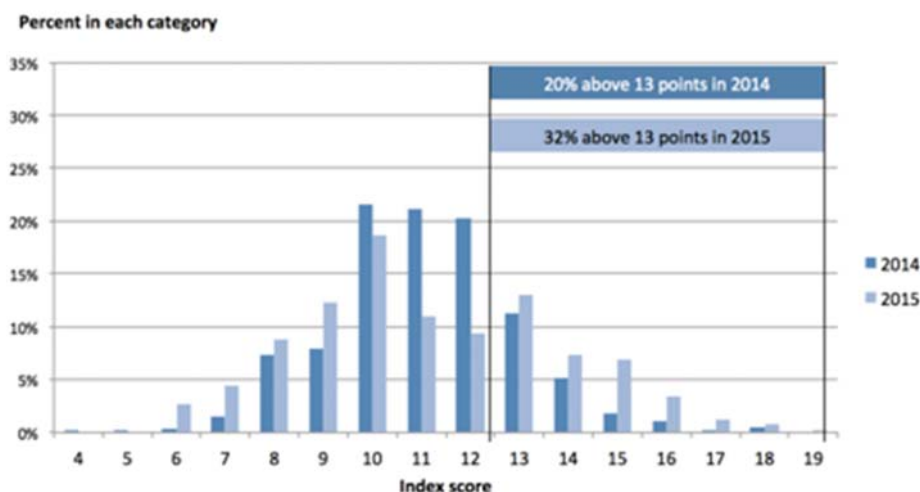
MTB-MLE index. A high-level look at the MTB-MLE index components shows that the region is improving in terms of MTB-MLE implementation.

Table 7. Hiligaynon – Summary of index scores (means)

| | 2014 | 2015 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Component 1 (out of 22 points) | 11 | 10 |
| Component 2 (out of 13 points) | 6 | 8 |
| Component 3 (out of 15 points) | 6 | 6 |
| Combined (out of 50 points) | 24 | 23 |

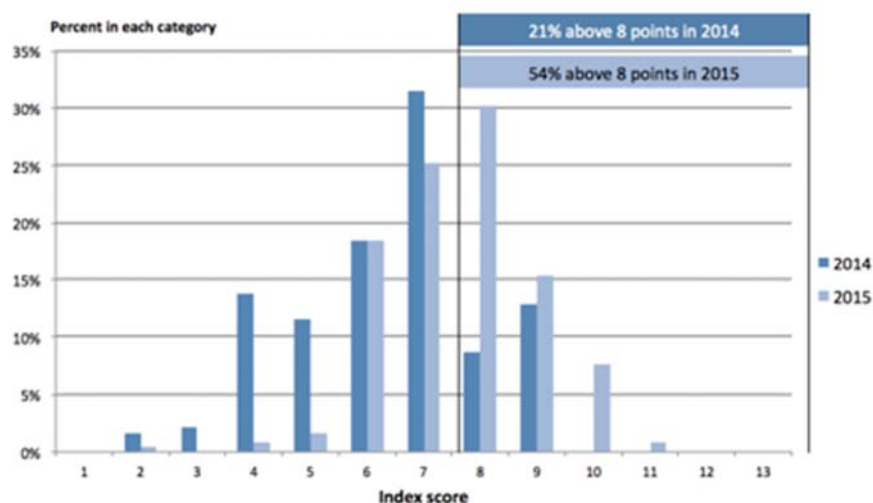
On the first category (teacher preparation, readiness, and support for MTB-MLE implementation), the score distribution shows more children in the top 25% of classrooms (for which the cutoff is 13 of 22 total points for this index), although the mean shows a slight decline. In other words, the proportion of children in a classroom environment that is more well-resourced (human and material) for MTB-MLE implementation has increased by 12 percentage points since 2014. More students this year have teachers who say they feel “very” comfortable teaching in the MT, for a total of 65% in G1 and 56% in G2. A much greater proportion of G1 teachers feel very confident in specific subject areas of teaching such as teaching alphabet sounds, spelling and grammar rules. This may be due to the fact that G2 teachers should be focusing on higher order reading skills, but given the persistence of children in G2 who struggle with basic reading concepts like letter sounds and decoding, it is important that G2 teachers know how to reinforce these skills.

Figure 11. Hiligaynon – Component 1 score index distribution



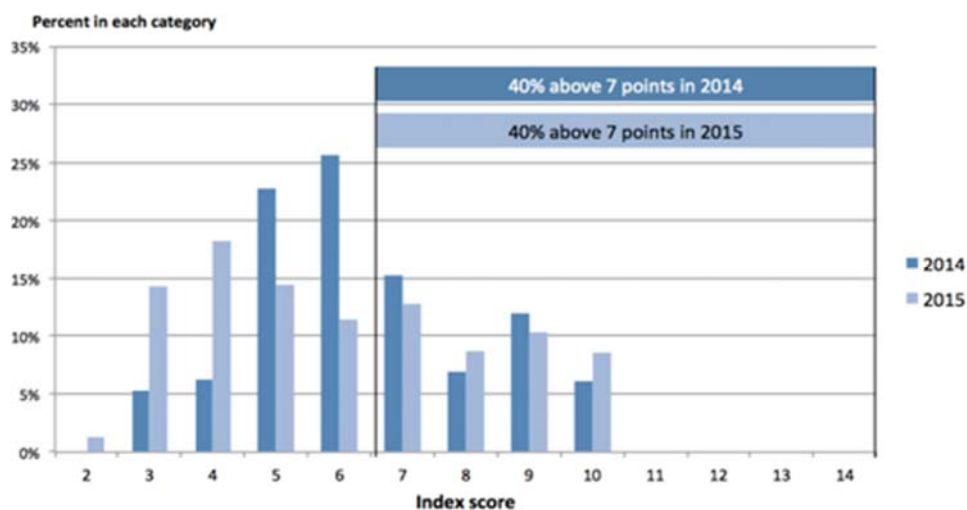
The shift in the availability and use of MTB-MLE materials (Component 2) is even greater, as shown in *Figure 12*, where over half of students are in classrooms with high MTB-MLE index scores, compared to 21% in 2014. Large differences were reported in 2015 for classrooms where “all” children have books, classrooms with “many (+8)” posters on the walls, including posters in the mother tongue. However, teachers’ use of specific materials such as big books, posters, multimedia, and visual aids showed little or negative change from 2014 to 2015.

Figure 12. Hiligaynon – Component 2 score index distribution



Finally, on the Component 3 (instructional practices), there is some change in the distribution by index score, but overall the proportion of children in classrooms with high index scores (above 7, in this case) is unchanged.

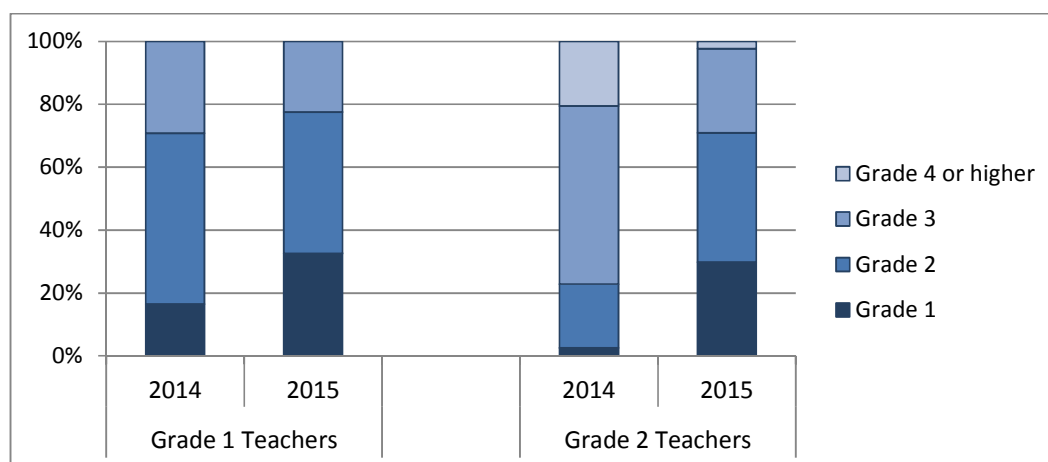
Figure 13. Hiligaynon – Component 3 index score distribution



Teachers in both grades have also evolved in their expectations of when children should be able to learn how to read. As shown in *Figure 14*, below, many more teachers now believe that children can learn to read in the mother tongue in G1. This is notable especially in the case of G2 teachers who, a year ago, overwhelmingly felt that children needed 3 or even 4 years of instruction to read fluently.¹⁰

¹⁰ Because the data are analyzed at the student level, the chart should be read as “percentages of children in the sample whose teacher believes....”

Figure 14. Hiligaynon – Teacher expectations for when children should know how to read



We see many positive developments in the region in terms of MTB-MLE implementation; nevertheless, these are not translating into improved learning outcomes. As a reminder, this survey measures only certain aspects of implementation and classroom instruction. Other aspects of MTB-MLE implementation should be explored through other types of research. For example, what is the quality of the MTB-MLE materials? How are teachers implementing the curriculum throughout the year? Is there sufficient time dedicated to reading during the school day? What type of support is being provided at home? What other demographic issues may be affecting school outcomes? Some additional research, support and training in this region may be necessary to identify specific areas of improvement in the implementation of MTB-MLE that could accelerate progress towards the benchmarks.

The draft report was shared with Region VI staff to solicit their reactions to the levels of student performance described above. A group of officials at the regional level who have been involved in the preparation and the implementation of the 2014 and 2015 studies solicited reactions to these results and shared with the authors of this report their responses to specific questions relating to how they account for some of the changes in performance from 2014 to 2015 and to offer their recommendations for how they intend to improve the teaching and learning of reading in Hiligaynon. The results of their consultations and discussions are presented in *Annex 2*.

Summary – Hiligaynon

Difficulties with the sampling in this region make it difficult to determine if performance in 2014 is actually comparable to performance in 2015. Although random sampling was used, the samples may be different enough due to district-level exclusions that they are not comparable. In particular, there were more children and teachers in the 2015 sample whose native or home language is not Hiligaynon. This may be affecting the mean scores in the sample.

If we do compare reading performance from the 2014 and 2015 studies, then there is a notable lack of improvement from one year to the next, and even a decline in performance in G2 from 2014 to 2015. The proportion of zero scores increased on all subtasks in G2. However, there was some improvement in performance from G1 to G2; children started to reach the higher ranges of fluency after two years of instruction. Nevertheless, G2 children were not achieving significantly higher scores in comprehension than G1 students, and the largest proportion of children were in the zero score range. Performance also declined on Filipino reading and listening comprehension tasks, and in oral English vocabulary.

Overall, fewer children were meeting the recommended benchmarks in 2015 than in 2014. According to this year's data, only about a quarter of G1 and G2 students were meeting reading fluency benchmarks, which is only halfway to the target proposed for next year. Similarly, 25% of G1 and 34% of G2 students were meeting the comprehension benchmarks.

Other data collected from classroom observations and teacher interviews suggest that there was also a slight decline in the use of Hiligaynon in the classroom, which may be related to the demographic issues mentioned above. However, it is also surprising to see that Hiligaynon is not the native language of more than 10% of teachers in G2 and 20% of teachers in G1, and many students reported that the teacher never used the MTB-MLE books in class. General instructional methods were dominated by teacher-centered, whole class instruction (question/prompt and answer/response). The combined index scores were higher in all components in 2015, indicating that MTB-MLE implementation is improving in the region. Yet this is apparently not enough to change overall average scores. There are several issues to consider:

- Are the factors we are looking at in our index really the ones that tell us whether teaching and learning are of good quality, and if so, what magnitude of change will make a difference?
- Is the lack of adequate attention to practicing reading (as measured by the classroom observation tool) slowing down students' progress?
- Or is it an issue of MTB-MLE running into the non-homogeneity of many Filipino schools/populations in terms of language use?

These are issues that DepED may want to look at in more detail in the region.

2 Ilokano

2.1 Background

For schools using Ilokano as the language of instruction, this is the third year in a row that a representative random sample has participated in EGRA, since MTB-MLE was piloted a year earlier in this region. The sampling framework included schools in Region I that have declared using Ilokano as the mother tongue, but within the region some other language groups are prevalent, particularly Pangasinan. Of the target of 400 children per grade, the final analysis includes 398 G1 and 399 G2 students, 38 G1 and 37 G2 teacher interviews, and 39 G1 and 38 G2 reading lessons observed. The report from the 2014 study noted that scores for G1 did not change significantly between 2013 and 2014. This year's study will determine if an extra year of implementation may have served to improve effectiveness of teaching methods resulting in improved averages. **Table 8**, below, shows an overall profile of teachers and students in the region, according to 2015 survey data.

Table 8. Ilokano – Selected characteristics by grade (2015)

| Characteristics | G1 | G2 |
|--|----------|----------|
| Percentage of children who... | | |
| ... are average (>7 in G1; >8 in G2; student reported) | 1% | 4% |
| ... have been at the same school for two years (student reported) | 89% | 95% |
| ... had no recorded absences in Feb. 2015 (from official school records) | 63% | 68% |
| ... have a teacher whose native language is Ilokano (teacher-reported) | 94% | 89% |
| ... have no reading materials at home (student-reported) | 18% | 14% |
| ... speak Ilokano at home (student-reported) | 80% | 77% |
| ... report that their teacher speaks mostly Ilokano in class this year | 83% | 86% |
| ... report that the teacher <i>never</i> uses the MTB-MLE reading book for Ilokano | 24% | 5% |
| Average number of days absent in Feb. 2015 for children with any absences | 2.4 days | 2.7 days |
| Percentage of children whose teacher... | | |
| ... is teaching in the mother tongue for the first time this year | 17% | 15% |
| ... has already used EGRA in the classroom with their children | 11% | 9% |
| ... has the MTB-MLE learner materials (textbook) | 67% | 83% |
| ... has a teacher's guide | 81% | 88% |
| ... has never received training in beginning reading | 2% | 1% |

In this region, 18% of children sampled said they had already done a test like this one; 48% and 59% respectively of G1 and G2 students have teachers who reported having received training from USAID/Basa or another international nongovernmental organization (INGO) program. Therefore, the test format may be increasingly familiar to children, and the additional investment in reading in this region may be influencing scores, although we cannot isolate the effect of any one program.

Benchmarking. At the 2014 benchmarking workshop, the Ilokano team proposed, on the basis of previous survey work, the following benchmarks and targets (see *Table 9*). The following section will determine the degree to which these benchmarks and associated targets are being met.

Table 9. Ilokano draft reading benchmarks

| | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
|--|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------|
| | Comprehension (% correct) | ORF (cwpm) | Comprehension (% correct) | ORF (cwpm) |
| Long-range goal | 80% | 40 | 80% | 50 |
| Benchmark end 2015–2016 | 60% | 30 | 80% | 40 |
| Minimum% scoring zero by end 2015–2016 | 28% | 20% | 14% | 10% |

2.2 EGRA results

2.2.1 Ilokano reading

Table 10 below summarizes reading performance according to two different measurements—the proportion of children who were unable to read at all (zero scores) and the average score across the samples. Overall, it shows considerable decrease in zero scores in both grades from 2014 to 2015, but stable average scores. The distribution graphs (*Figure 15*, *Figure 16*, *Figure 17*, and *Figure 18*) that follow will provide more details about why that is the case.

Table 10. Ilokano – Performance on reading subtasks

| Percent scoring zero | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
|-----------------------|---------|------|---------|------|
| | 2014 | 2015 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Letter sounds | 23% | 10% | 21% | 10% |
| Decoding | 41% | 32% | 20% | 15% |
| Reading fluency | 33% | 17% | 13% | 10% |
| Reading comprehension | 65% | 56% | 30% | 23% |

| Average items correct per minute | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
|----------------------------------|---------|------|---------|------|
| | 2014 | 2015 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Letter sounds | 14.7 | 14.5 | 16.8 | 17.8 |
| Decoding | 17.4 | 16.4 | 33.7 | 31.1 |
| Reading fluency | 14.7 | 17.7 | 30.1 | 33.4 |
| Reading comprehension | 0.9 | 1.1 | 2.2 | 2.4 |

The proportion of children with zero scores decreased on all subtasks in both grades from 2014 to 2015, with the largest decreases in letter sounds (G1 and G2) and G1 reading fluency as measured by the short story reading passage, where the percentage of students having no reading ability was cut almost in half. What is surprising, in the case of letter sounds, is that there is so little difference between G1 and G2 across the distribution of scores, as evident in *Figure 15*. This may indicate an overall lack of instruction on letter sounds in both grades, or interference in letter sound articulation by a certain subpopulation of the sample.

On the other hand, the skill of applying letter-sound knowledge is translating into decoding ability, which improves considerably from G1 to G2 for students learning to read in Ilokano in this region, where four times as many children are decoding at a rate of more than 40 correct nonwords per minute (cnwpm) this year (See *Figure 16*). As noted also in the 2014 report, in most languages we expect story reading fluency to be a bit higher than decoding words in isolation, since children can make use of context to anticipate words and draw on frequently used vocabulary to increase reading speed. In Ilokano, this was not the case, probably because of its agglutinative nature. In 2015, the averages do increase slightly, rather than decrease; however, these are neither large nor statistically significant increases, so we can still consider that decoding fluency and connected-text (story) reading fluency are very similar for this language. Both the means and the distribution are very similar.

In reading comprehension, children are also performing much better this year, doubling and tripling the number of children who answered 60% and 80% of questions correctly. Of G2 students 11% answered all questions correctly in 2015, compared to 1% in 2014. As a reminder, the reading passage that children read this year was exactly the same as the reading passage used in 2014. This means we can be sure that the change is not because the reading passage was easier. We also anticipated that there could be a chance that this reading passage, developed three years ago, and used last year, could have been circulated in classrooms and so children were already familiar with it. To reassure us that this was not the case, all children read a second, previously unused story. The results on the previously unseen reading passage were actually slightly better than the results on the 2014 reused reading passage. Thus the trend is going generally in the right direction, although the gains are relatively small and the region as a whole is still far from meeting the benchmarks and targets it has proposed.

Referring back to the characteristics of the sample (*Table 8*), several things stand out as surprising, more so since the overall trend is positive. First of all, more than 20% of students speak a language other than Ilokano at home. In most cases, the student reported using Filipino/Tagalog at home and the proportion (18% in G1 and 22% in G2) was double what it

was in 2014. Pangasinan was cited as the main language 1% of the time or less. This may also help explain the second rather surprising figure—that only 83–84% of students say Ilokano is the language the teacher uses most of the time in class. Nine percent of G1 and G2 students report that the teacher is using Filipino/Tagalog, and 5% report they are using English “most of the time” in G1 (3% in G2). A fourth of students also report that they do not use the MTB-MLE textbooks in class in G1; note that that only 67% of teachers have the textbooks. More teachers have the textbook in G2 (83%), but 5% of students still report that they never use it.

The benchmark recommended for this language was that, in the long term, G1 children should be able to read 40 cwpm and G2 children should be able to read 50 cwpm. The teams agreed that in the interim (by the end of the 2015–2016 school year) they would like to see at least 60% of children reading 30 cwpm or more in G1 and 80% reading 40 cwpm or more. This year’s data show that more children are meeting the benchmarks in 2015 than in 2014; 24% of children in G1 are reading more than 30 cwpm on the short story, and 40% of G2 students are reading more than 40 cwpm. This means the region is about halfway to meeting its short-term objective for G2. For comprehension, the benchmark is 80% comprehension; at present, 32% of G2 students are meeting this benchmark; much less than the short-term target of 86%.

Figure 15. Ilokano – Letter sound identification (distribution)

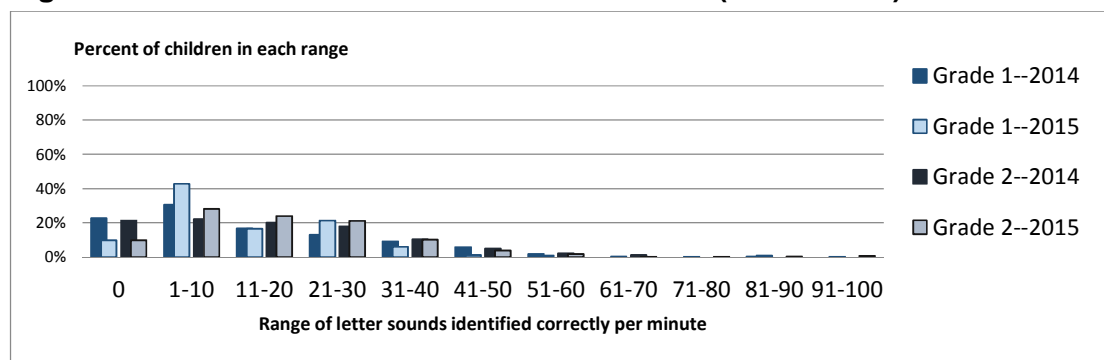


Figure 16. Ilokano – Nonword reading (distribution)

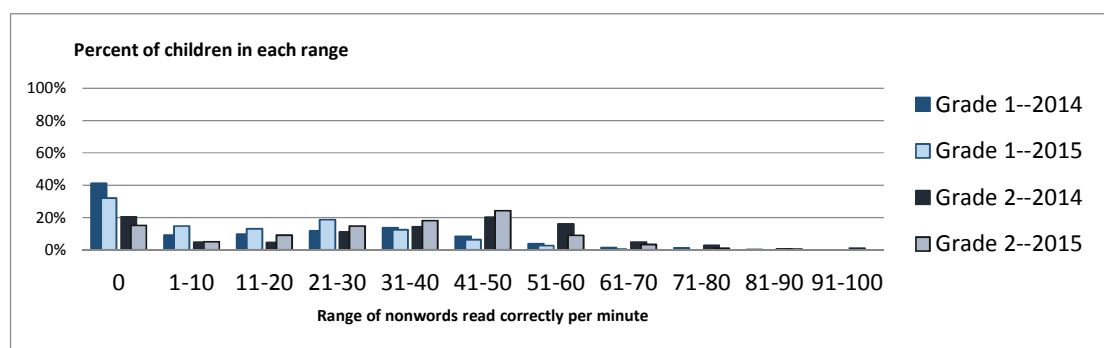


Figure 17. Ilokano – Reading fluency (distribution)

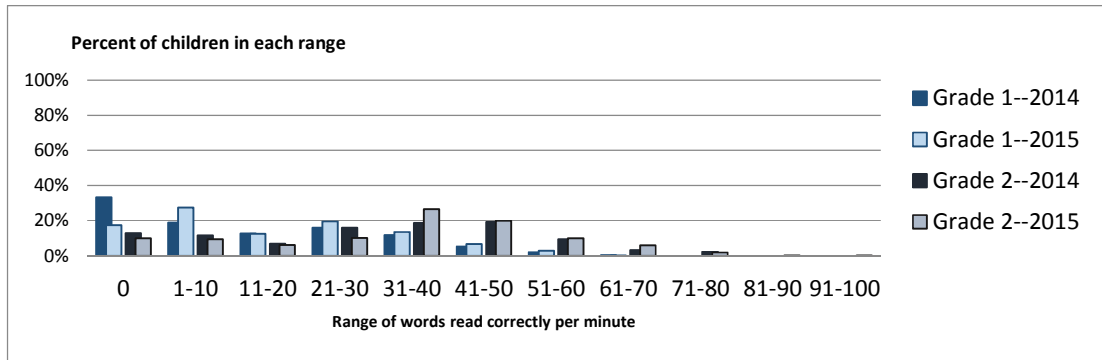
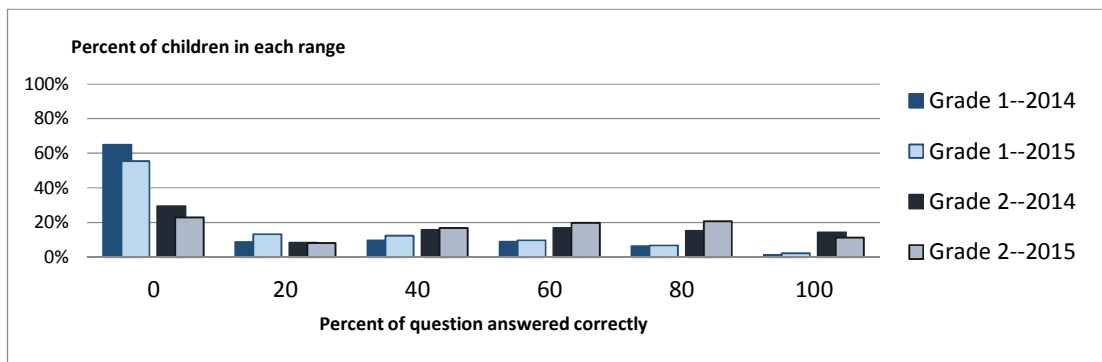


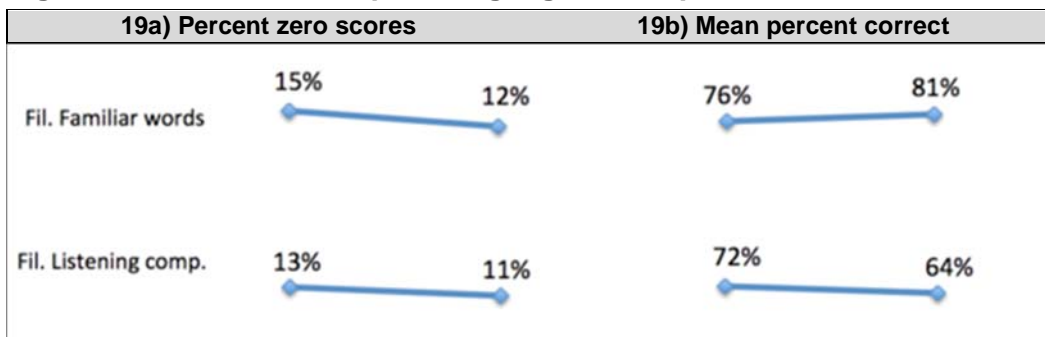
Figure 18. Ilokano – Reading comprehension (distribution)



2.2.2 Filipino and English

Performance in Filipino can be considered stable compared to 2015. Although familiar word reading improved (the mean percent correct increased and the proportion of zero scores decreased), as shown in *Figure 19a* and *19b*, below, the changes are not large or statistically significant. Average fluency scores (not pictured) increased from 37 cwpm to 40. Similarly, the scores for Filipino listening comprehension decreased in terms of percent correct (and this was statistically significant [*]), but the actual change is not large given that the measurement is based on three questions, so the average is still close to 2 out of 3 questions correct.

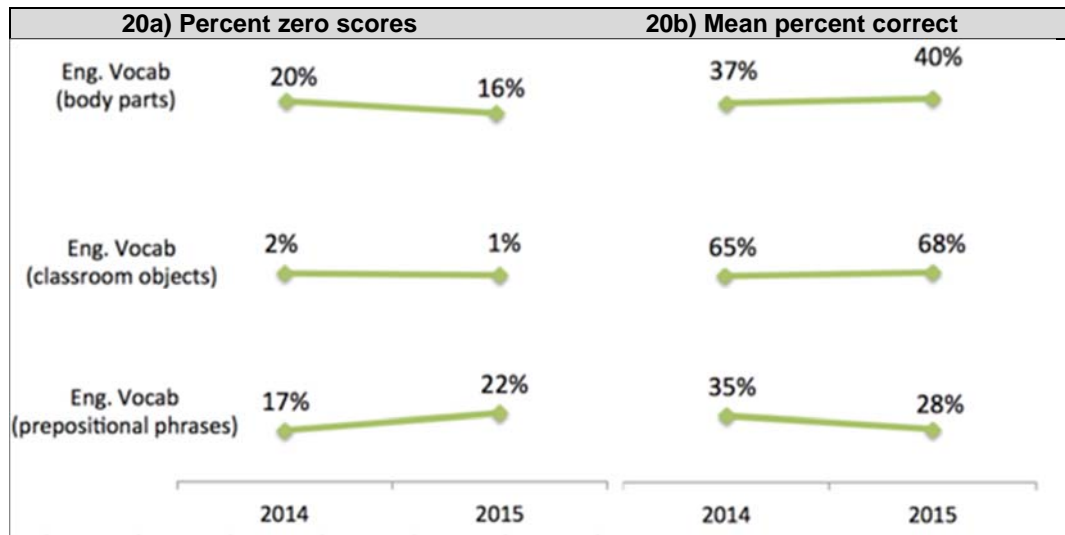
Figure 19. Ilokano – Filipino language development



English language development is also stable, showing neither large nor statistically significant increases or decreases in vocabulary knowledge. Differences are larger for the

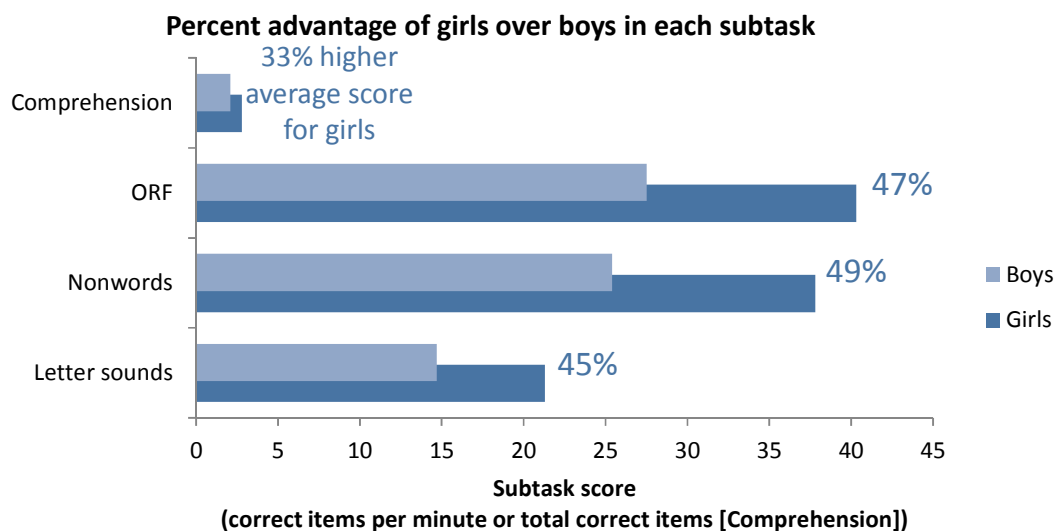
vocabulary items related to prepositional phrases, where the percent correct decreases and the proportion of zero scores increases (see **Figure 20a** and **20b**). The decrease in percent correct is statistically significant, but on this assessment of 6 items this does not signal a major change in ability. Similar to other languages, the vocabulary related to objects in the classroom is easiest for children, and very few children are unable to identify a single object correctly.

Figure 20. Ilokano – English language development



Similar to other regions, girls in Region I score about one and a half times higher than boys. **Figure 21**, below, shows that while boys’ oral reading fluency is 27.5 cwpm, girls average 40.3 cwpm.

Figure 21. Ilokano – Differences between boys’ and girls’ scores (G2 only)

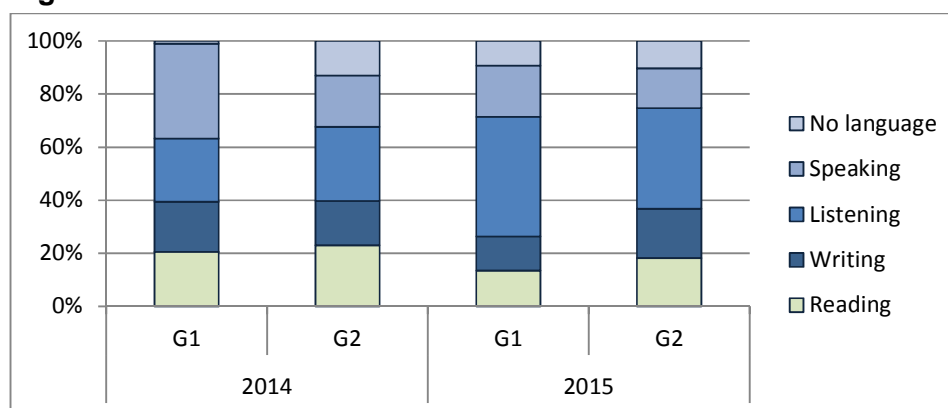


2.3 MTB-MLE Implementation

The 2015 survey only observed the mother tongue (reading) lesson and found that during the vast majority of observations, teachers were either using Ilokano, or no language was in use. The latter designation of “no language in use” refers to a moment where there is silence because children are listening to instrumental music, drawing, doing physical activities, or in transition between activities where no one is talking; silent reading should not have been counted as “no language.”

The overall distribution of activities by type is presented in *Figure 22*, below. Reading and writing are consistently less than speaking and listening activities in G1, and observations of student reading are only slightly more frequent in G2. Although we should be cautious about the reliability of comparing 2014 and 2015, it is striking that the amount of time “listening” in G1 and G2 is so much greater in 2015, apparently at the expense of reading time, for which the proportion of time spent dropped below 20% of class time in both grades.

Figure 22. Ilokano – Classroom observation time



Looking in more detail at the type of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities going on at each observation moment, we deduce that in G1-2015, the instructional model consists primarily of question and answer, in a whole class configuration. From the pupils’ point of view, 32% of observations concerned listening to questions or procedural directions, or answering questions. The next most frequent activity, at 8% of observations, was writing word- or sentence-length prompts. This pattern was very similar in G2 in 2015, with the same four activities accounting for the top 37% of observations. Similarly, student time off-task accounted for 6% of observations in both grades, with most of these coded as transitions between activities. In total, the teacher was noted as “off task” in 3–4% of observations.

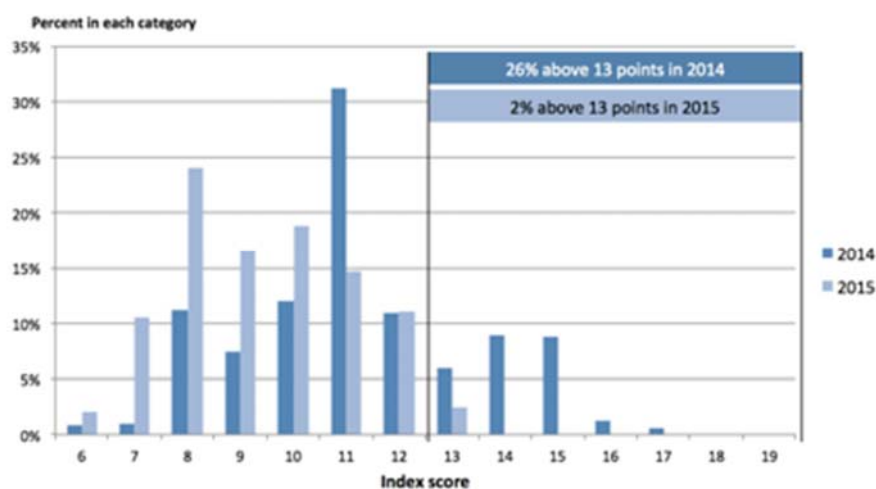
MTB-MLE index. The MTB-MLE index calculation is another way of understanding the profile of instructional practice using the mother tongue.

Table 11. Ilokano – Summary of index scores (means)

| | 2014 | 2015 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|
| Component 1 (out of 22 possible) | 11 | 9 |
| Component 2 (out of 13 possible) | 6 | 8 |
| Component 3 (out of 15 possible) | 5 | 6 |
| Combined | 22 | 23 |

In Region 1, Component 1 of the index, dealing with teacher training, language use and support for MTB-MLE at the school level is among the only one in the study showing a lower score in 2015 than 2014. The items that seem to be affecting this decline are fewer teachers who say they have ever used EGRA in the classroom or who use any kind of frequent oral evaluation to measure reading progress; less frequent lesson plans and observations by school leadership; and fewer teachers who address poor reading outcomes through designing teaching materials, planning new activities, or adapting teaching to better suit the needs of learners.

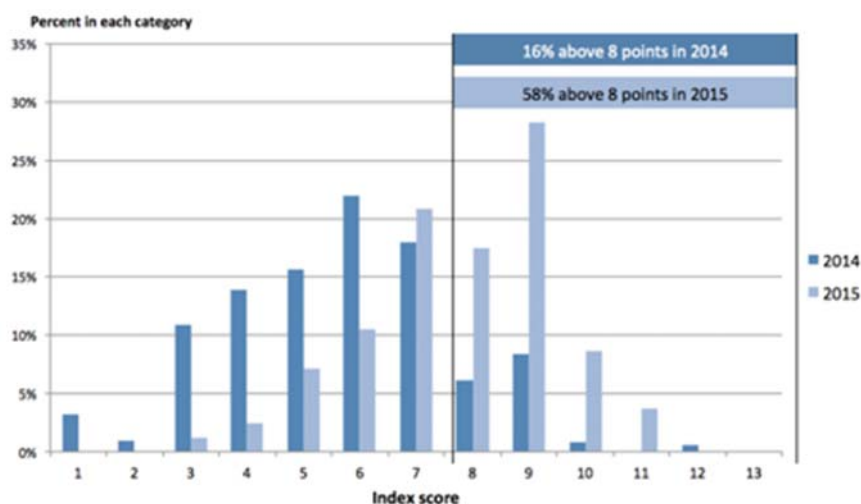
Figure 23. Ilokano – Component 1 index (distribution)



On the other hand, teachers in this region feel increasingly confident teaching using the mother tongue, although the proportion of teachers who feel “very” confident was already relatively high last year. This year 59% and 62% of G1 and G2 teachers, respectively, feel “very” confident. G1 and G2 teachers feel equally confident teaching spelling/orthography and grammar, although more G1 teachers feel confident teaching alphabet sounds, which is to be expected.

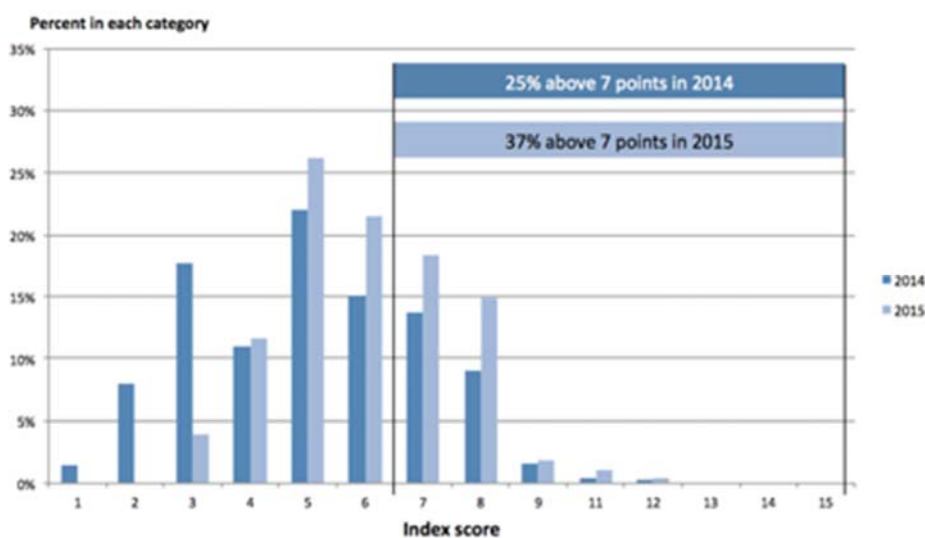
For Component 2 relative to teaching and learning materials the proportion of students in classroom environments scoring above 8 (out of 13) has increased by 42 percentage points. More teachers report having big books for read alouds, MTB-MLE learner materials, the teacher’s guide, multimedia materials, and visual aids (see *Figure 24*).

Figure 24. Ilokano – Component 2 index (distribution)



Finally, for the third component related to instructional practices, the distribution of scores shifted somewhat, and a larger proportion of students are learning in an environment that scores above 7 points in 2015 (see *Figure 25*). The scores for this component are affected when teachers show multiple strategies for supporting mother tongue language development in the classroom. In 2015, the teachers in this region more often reported “monitoring comprehension” and “using visual aids” as strategies.

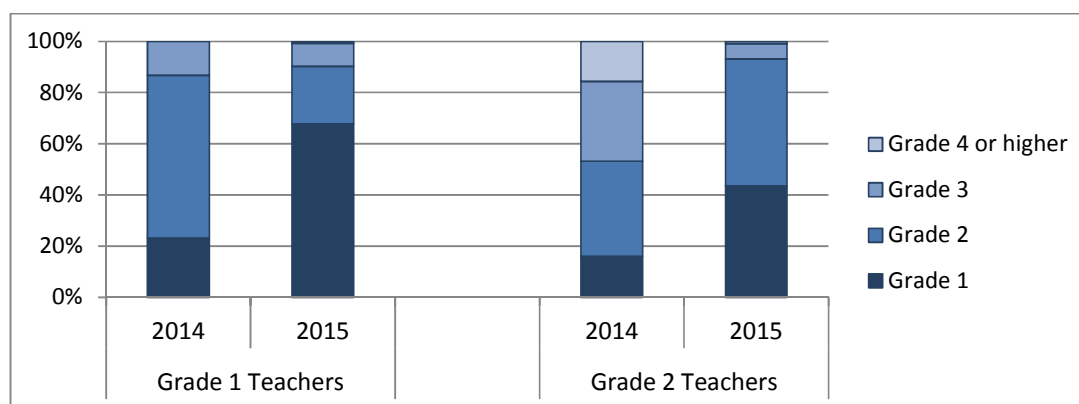
Figure 25. Ilokano – Component 3 index (distribution)



Therefore, using this aggregated method of summarizing indicators related to MTB-MLE implementation, the study finds positive trends in implementation, with the exception of the Component 1 index score.

Teacher expectations have also evolved, indicating dramatically more G1 and G2 teachers in 2015 who believe that children should be able to read in the mother tongue in G1 (see *Figure 26*).

Figure 26. Ilokano – Teacher expectations for when children should know how to read



Summary – Ilokano

In EGRA’s third year of implementation, results show considerable decrease in zero scores on all subtasks in both grades from 2014 to 2015, but stable average scores. Half as many G1 children were observed to have no reading ability in 2015 compared to 2014. Decoding ability improved considerably from G1 to G2 in this region, where four times as many children were decoding at a rate of more than 40 cnwpm this year. In reading comprehension, children were also performing much better this year, doubling and tripling the number of children who answered 60% and 80% of questions correctly. Thus the trend is shifting generally in a positive direction, although the region as a whole is still not meeting the benchmarks and targets it has recommended for mother tongue reading acquisition. Only 24% of children in G1 were meeting the benchmark of 30 cwpm on the short story, and 40% of G2 students were reading more than 40 cwpm, putting schools in the region about halfway to meeting their short-term targets. However, girls were outperforming boys by nearly a grade-level equivalent on all subtasks. For Filipino and English, there is no distinct positive or negative change in performance, and children read Filipino words at about the same rate of fluency as Ilokano sentences.

Certain demographic issues in this region may be affecting mean scores. For example, at least 20% of children in each grade speak a language other than Ilokano at home, and more than 10% of teachers in G2 are not native speakers of Ilokano. Additionally, there is still not universal access to learner materials and teachers’ guides, more so for G1 than G2.

According to the observations, class time was dominated by teacher-centered approaches, which involved a lot of listening activities for the children. Reading was the least frequent type of activity (among listening, speaking, reading, and writing-focused activities) in both grades. The general instructional approach used in the region, according to observation data, shows that the whole class, question and answer format was dominant. Reading and writing activities were consistently less common than speaking and listening activities in G1, and observations of student reading were only slightly more frequent in G2.

Although the MTB-MLE index score calculation showed the largest improvements in the area of materials, there was still not universal access, particularly in G1 classrooms where about one-fourth of students and teachers still reported that they do not have or do not use the MTB-MLE learner materials for Ilokano.

3 Sinugbuanong Binisaya (Cebuano)

3.1 Background

The sample for this language group came from Region VII (Central Visayas). Some of the schools sampled were in the divisions of Cebu and Bohol, where USAID/Basa Pilipinas is also operating. Other divisions represented (proportionally to the population of students in schools that were identified by the region as using Cebuano as the language of instruction) are Carcar City, Cebu City, City of Naga, Dumaguete City, Guihulngan City, Lapu Lapu City, Mandaue City, Negros Oriental, Talisay City and Toledo City. The final sample consisted of 390 students, 39 teacher interviews, and 34 classroom observations per grade.

General characteristics of students and teachers in schools that use Cebuano as the language of instruction are presented in *Table 12*, below.

Table 12. Cebuano – Selected characteristics by grade (2015)

| Characteristics | G1 | G2 |
|--|----------|----------|
| Percentage of children who... | | |
| ... are overage (>7 in G1; >8 in G2; student reported) | 8% | 11% |
| ... have been at the same school for two years (student reported) | 79% | 92% |
| ... had no recorded absences in Feb. 2015 (from official school records) | 64% | 62% |
| ... have a teacher whose native language is Cebuano (teacher-reported) | 99% | 100% |
| ... have no reading materials at home | 42% | 38% |
| ... speak Cebuano at home (student-reported) | 98% | 99% |
| ... report that their teacher speaks mostly Cebuano in class this year | 94% | 91% |
| ... report that the teacher <i>never</i> uses the MTB-MLE reading book for Cebuano | 14% | 2% |
| Average number of days absent in Feb. 2015 for children with any absences | 2.1 days | 2.1 days |
| Percentage of teachers who... | | |
| ... are teaching in the mother tongue for the first time this year | 22% | 8% |
| ... have already used EGRA in the classroom with their children | 88% | 89% |
| ... have the MTB-MLE learner materials (textbook) | 72% | 97% |
| ... have a teacher's guide | 87% | 96% |
| ... have never received training in beginning reading | 6% | 3% |

At the 2014 benchmarking workshop, the Cebuano regional team recommended, on the basis of previous survey work, the following benchmarks and targets.

Table 13. Cebuano recommended reading benchmarks

| | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| | Comprehension (% correct) | ORF (cwpm) | Comprehension (% correct) | ORF (cwpm) |
| Long-range goal | 80% | 45 | 80% | 50 |
| Benchmark end 2015–2016 | 40% | 32 | 60% | 42 |
| Minimum% scoring zero by end 2015–2016 | 25% | 15% | 15% | 5% |

A total of 48% of children in G2 and 28% in G1 reported that they have already gone through an assessment like this one. These numbers are not much different than in 2014. On the other hand, the proportion of children who say that Cebuano is the language their teacher uses most is higher this year than last, by more than 10 percentage points for each grade (see *Table 14*, below).

Combined with other questions on language use, we can be confident that this year’s EGRA measures skills of children who have been learning in the local language for two full years of primary school.

3.2 EGRA results

3.2.1 Cebuano reading

Table 14 shows that although performance in G1 is similar in 2015 and 2014, there is a modest positive difference in performance for G2, especially in terms of nearly eliminating zero scores in three subtests. This is evidence of the cumulative effect of two years of instruction in the mother tongue, since children in G2 in 2015 represent children who were in G1 in 2014 when MTB-MLE was introduced.

Table 14. Cebuano – Performance on reading subtasks

| Percent scoring zero | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
|-----------------------|---------|------|---------|------|
| | 2014 | 2015 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Letter sounds | 11% | 7% | 11% | 3% |
| Decoding | 28% | 29% | 10% | 7% |
| Reading fluency | 22% | 23% | 8% | 5% |
| Reading comprehension | 49% | 46% | 19% | 13% |

| Average items correct per minute | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
|---|---------|------|---------|------|
| | 2014 | 2015 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Letter sounds | 20.2 | 20.8 | 17.9 | 24.5 |
| Decoding | 14.5 | 14.3 | 25.4 | 27.1 |
| Reading fluency | 21.1 | 21.9 | 39.8 | 44.7 |
| Reading comprehension (out of 5, untimed) | 1.3 | 1.2 | 2.6 | 2.9 |

The proportion of zero scores on letter sounds has also been reduced this year in G1, even though the mean letters identified per minute is nearly identical. This can be explained by the distribution of scores (see *Figure 28*), which shows more G1 children in the higher ranges of fluency in 2015. Similarly for G2, there are only a few categories where G2 students outnumber G1 students in 2015, which is why the means are nearly the same, as shown in *Table 14*, below. This lack of large changes between G1 and G2 may point to a limitation of the subtest (some letter sounds are difficult to distinguish), of the language (children may always have difficulty isolating letter sounds even if they learn how to apply the sound in combination with others), or limitations of instruction (teachers stop teaching letter sounds once a child demonstrates reading ability, so “errors” are no longer corrected).

By G2 there are also fewer than 10% zero scores on nonword decoding and short story reading. Although G1 scores are nearly identical on all subtests in 2014 and 2015, there is a small increase in G2 average nonword decoding fluency (an additional 2 cnwpm) from 2014 to 2015. This comes from more children scoring in the range of 20–50 cnwpm.

The ability to identify letters and decode words translates into improved reading ability for connected text (short story) reading,¹¹ where more than half of children are reading above 40 cwpm in G2. We can see in the distribution (*Figure 29*) that there are a considerable number of children in the ranges of 51–60 and 61–70 cwpm in G2. Finally, reading fluency is a good predictor of comprehension, and this year 25% of G2 children answered all questions correctly about the reading passage that they read. Again, there is very little change in G1 performance from the first year of testing to the second, but a sizable gain from G1 to G2 in both years.

Therefore we can conclude that in this region, instruction is having a positive cumulative effect on performance. In fact the region is already meeting some of its short- and long-term benchmark targets; 57% of G2 students are meeting the short-range goal of 42 cwpm reading fluency, and 61% are meeting the short-range goal of 60% comprehension. Of G2 students 40% are meeting each of the long-range goals (50 cwpm and 80% comprehension). However, since G1 scores have not evolved much, neither have the benchmark percentages; still only about third of G1 children are meeting fluency and comprehension benchmarks.

¹¹ See *Annex 1* for the Pearson correlation among subtasks, which is very high.

Figure 27. Cebuano – Letter sound identification (distribution)

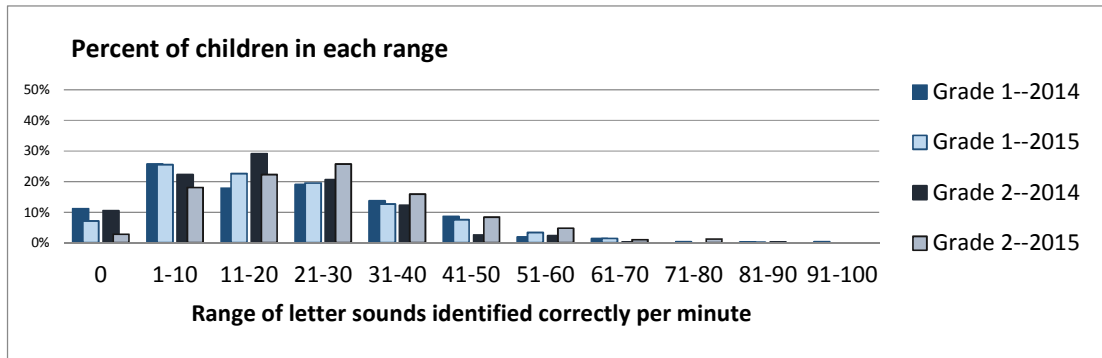


Figure 28. Cebuano – Nonword reading (distribution)

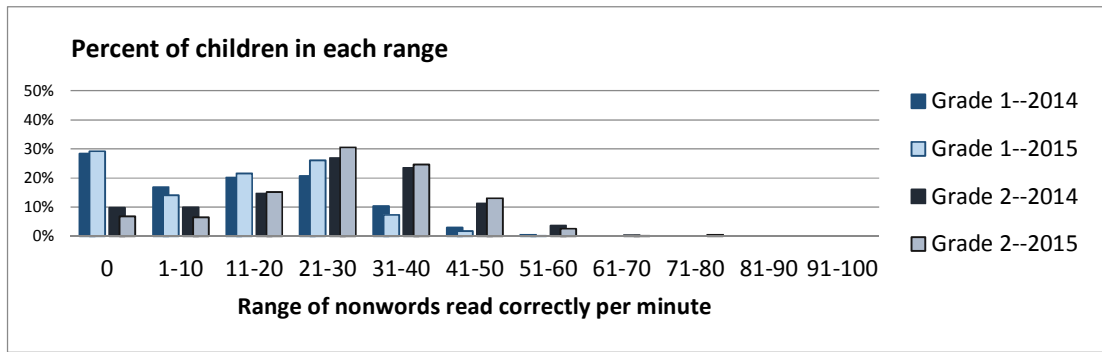


Figure 29. Cebuano – Reading fluency (distribution)

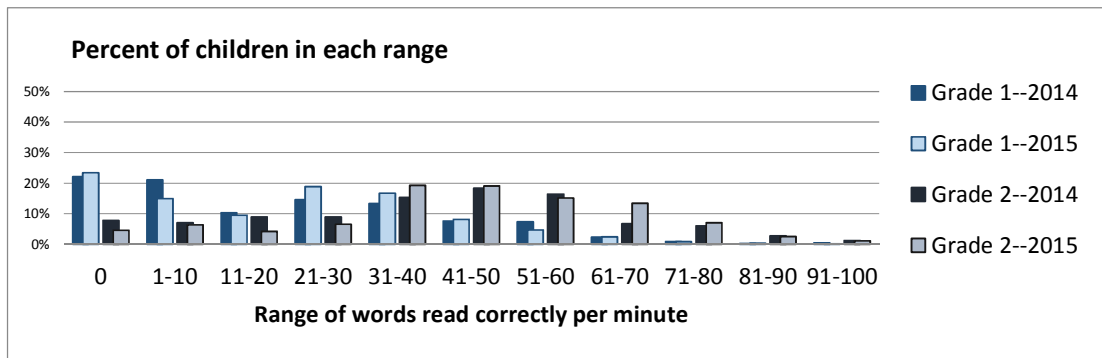
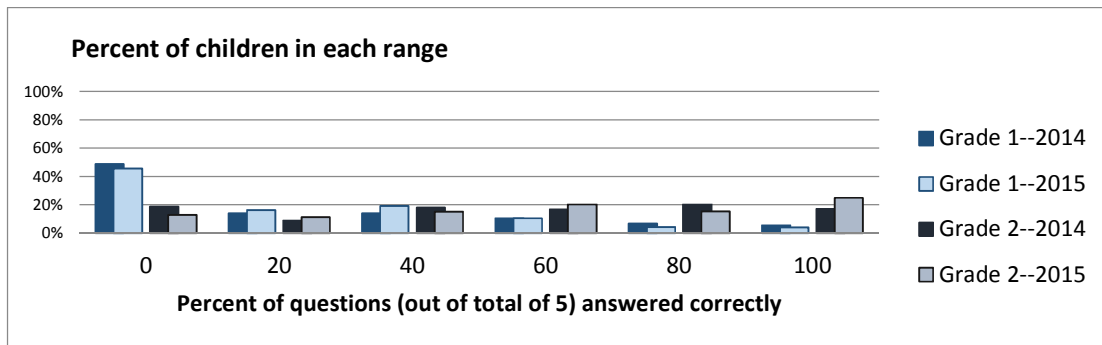
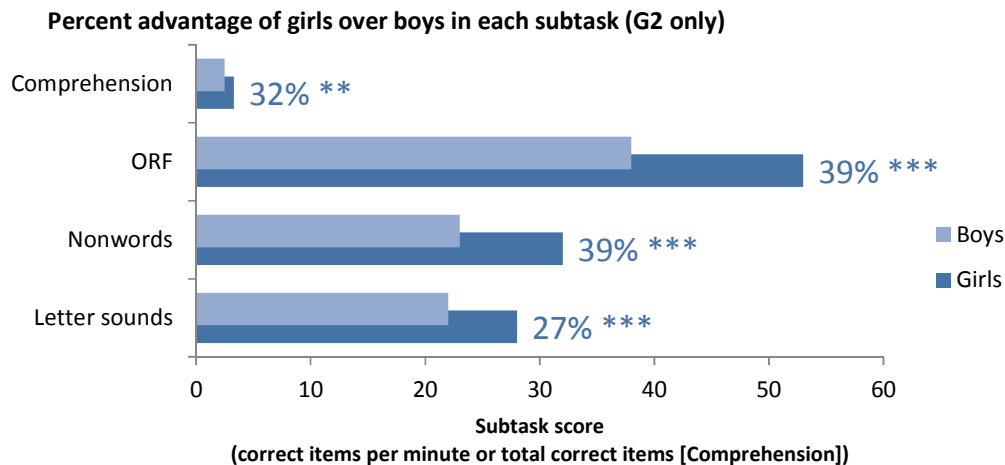


Figure 30. Cebuano – Reading comprehension (distribution)



It is important to note that in this region girls are doing significantly better than boys on all subtasks. **Figure 31**, below shows that girls score close to 30% higher on all subtasks than boys, and this is statistically significant.

Figure 31. Cebuano – Differences between boys’ and girls’ scores

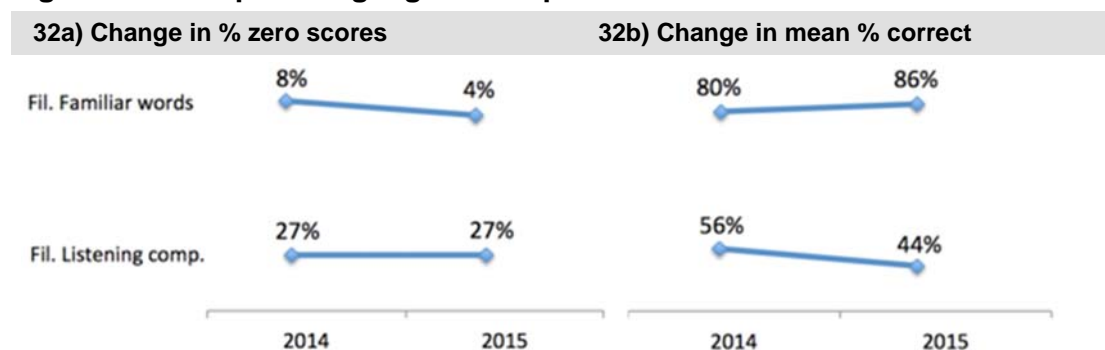


In sections that follow, we will see whether classroom practices are changing and what aspects of classroom and student characteristics have an effect on reading outcomes across regions. First we will look at Filipino and English language development according to the subtasks administered in G2 only.

3.2.2 Filipino and English

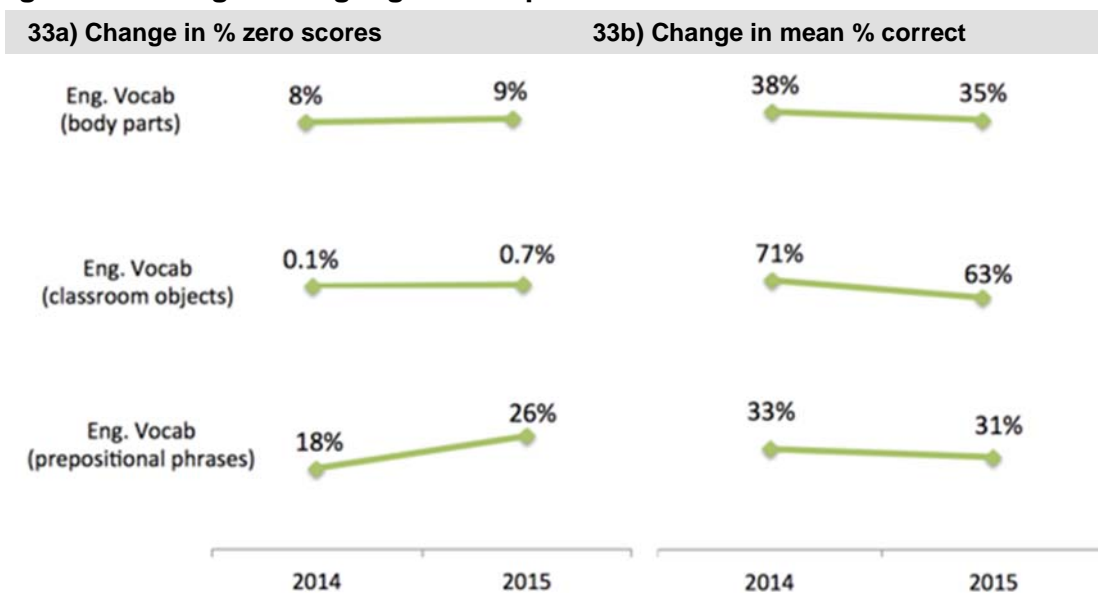
With the exception of slight gains in Filipino familiar word frequency, language development in the two additional languages of the curriculum is stable, as shown in **Figure 32** and **Figure 33**. The decline in percent of Filipino listening comprehension questions answered correctly is the only change that is statistically significant, but this is based on only three items, so the actual mean percentage of correct items (1.3) is only slightly less than in 2014 (1.4). Although there are not standards against which to determine expected performance levels, G2 students are reading Filipino familiar words at 42 cwpm—about the same rate at which they read sentences in Cebuano.

Figure 32. Filipino language development



Performance is highest for English vocabulary related to classroom objects but the task related to prepositional phrases causes more difficulty, and considerably more children scored zero on this task in 2015. Therefore although no strong evolution in skills is apparent, it may be that performance is already where it is expected to be—something that would need further discussion locally or that would need more advanced skills measurements to detect.

Figure 33. English language development

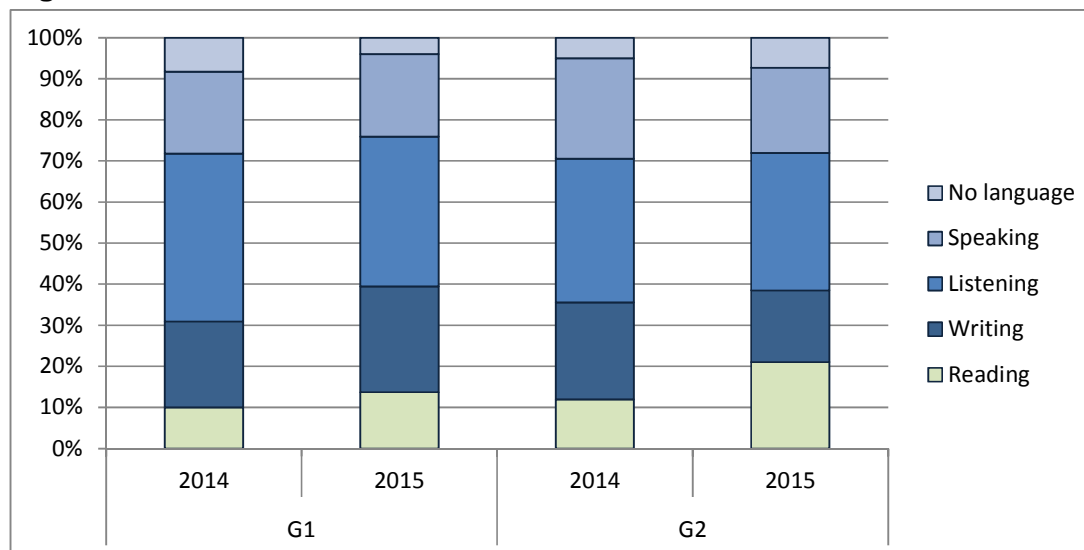


3.3 MTB-MLE Implementation

According to classroom observations, Cebuano is being used as the teaching language all of the time during mother tongue language lessons in 99% of G1 classrooms observed. However, that is only the case for 86% of G2 classrooms observed during a mother tongue language lesson. In the other 14% of classrooms, the classroom use of the mother tongue was coded as “most of the time [75–95% of the time]” and the other language used was English. The reasons given for code switching in the classroom were either to give procedural directions (13%) or to clarify a concept provided first in the mother tongue (3%).

At a high level, most time spent in the classroom is focused on having children listen (to the teacher or other students); this is the largest category in both grades and years of observation (see *Figure 34*). Having children read is still the least frequent activity, with the exception of G2 in 2015, where 21% of observations noted that the instructional focus was on reading. The change in time spent reading from G1 to G2 is much greater in 2015 than in 2014, where both G1 and G2 students spent about the same amount of time reading.

Figure 34. Cebuano – Use of classroom time



Recognizing that there can be some overlap in activities (for example, children can be reading passively while the teacher is talking), it is useful to also look at a more detailed breakdown of the type of listening, speaking, reading, or writing activity that was occurring at the time of the observation moment.

At this level, we see that 42% of classroom time in G1 is spent on the top four activities: Speaking: *answering a question*; Writing: *word or sentence length prompts*; Listening: *procedural directions and classroom management*; and Listening: *stories, poems, riddles, etc.* This last category accounted for 8% of observations, and in fact, this is the only region where this activity was counted a substantial number of times. There were also no instances of speaking off topic or waiting during some kind of class disruption. However, 2.4% of observations were transitions between activities. In G2, the same activities account for the top four types (equivalent to 49% of class time), with the exception of Listening: *stories*, which is replaced by Reading: *sentences or short paragraphs*. Again, time spent off-task is limited to transitions between activities at 2.3% of observations.

From the teacher perspective (the assessor records what the teacher’s focus was at each observation moment), the top activity in G1 is waiting for students to complete a task (37%) followed by asking/answering questions, giving procedural directions, and lecturing/explaining subject matter, which together account for another 40% of observations. The proportions are very similar in G2.

MTB-MLE index. Schools using Cebuano as the language of instruction in Region VII are showing improvement in all three areas of the index.¹² **Table 15** below shows the increase in the mean score by component, while the graphs that follow show the distribution of scores, highlighting the proportion of students who are in a classroom environment with the highest scores (based on the 75th percentile and above).

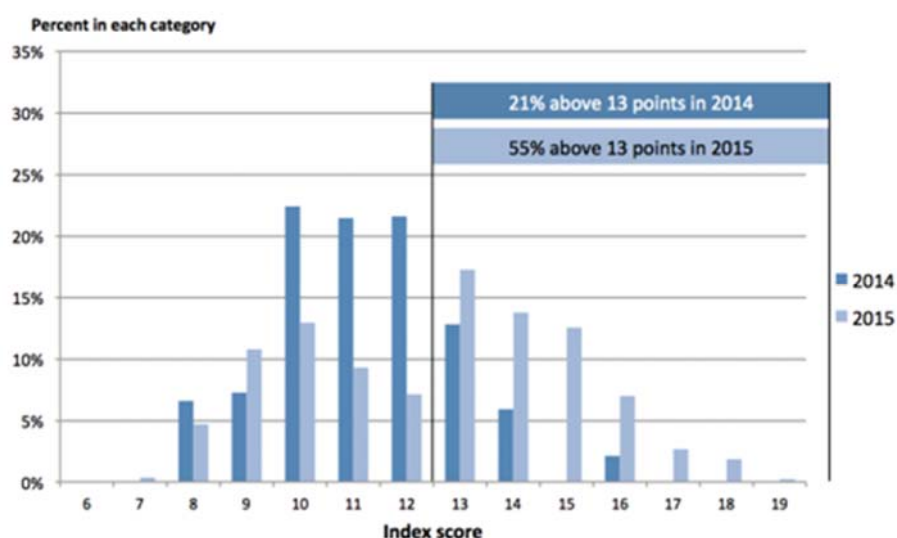
¹² Statistically significant to the .001 level, with the exception of Component 1, which was significant to the .05 level.

Table 15. Cebuano – Summary of index scores (means)

| | 2014 | 2015 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|
| Component 1 (out of 22 possible) | 11 | 12 |
| Component 2 (out of 13 possible) | 5 | 7 |
| Component 3 (out of 15 possible) | 4 | 6 |
| Combined | 21 | 26 |

For Component 1, relative to teacher preparation, attitudes and support for MTB-MLE, the mean increases only by 1 point, but the distribution shows a much larger proportion of the sample above the 75th percentile cutoff. One important difference in the characteristics of the sample is that nearly 100% of students have a teacher whose (self-reported) native language is Cebuano. Other than that, the main differences in the index score are attributable to more teachers reporting more types of methods for measuring student progress in reading.

Figure 35. Cebuano – Component 1 index (distribution)

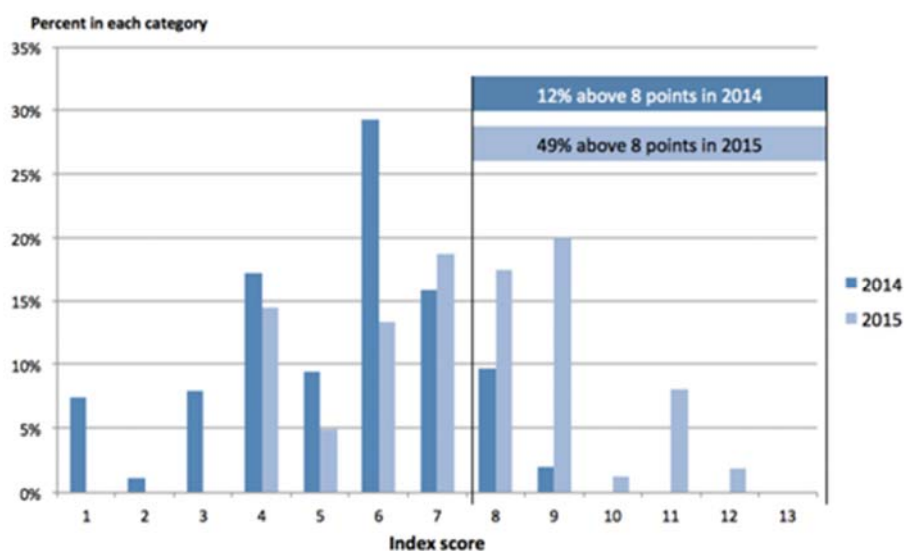


Teachers in this region are very well trained, with a majority having received training from DepED (though more in G2 [92%] than in G1 [77%]). Further, 61% and 53% of students have teachers in G1 and G2 that report having received training in early reading from USAID/Basa Pilipinas or another INGO program. Their confidence in teaching using the mother tongue has not changed much since last year, probably because about 65% of teachers already felt “very” confident teaching in 2014. Teachers in G1 and G2 feel most confident in teaching letter sounds. However, only about a third or fewer in each grade feel “very” confident in teaching spelling/orthography and grammar rules.

Component 2, relative to materials, shows a similar pattern—a small shift at the mean but a noticeable difference in the proportion of the sample above the cutoff. One significant factor is the increase in availability of the MTB-MLE learner’s material (official textbook). More

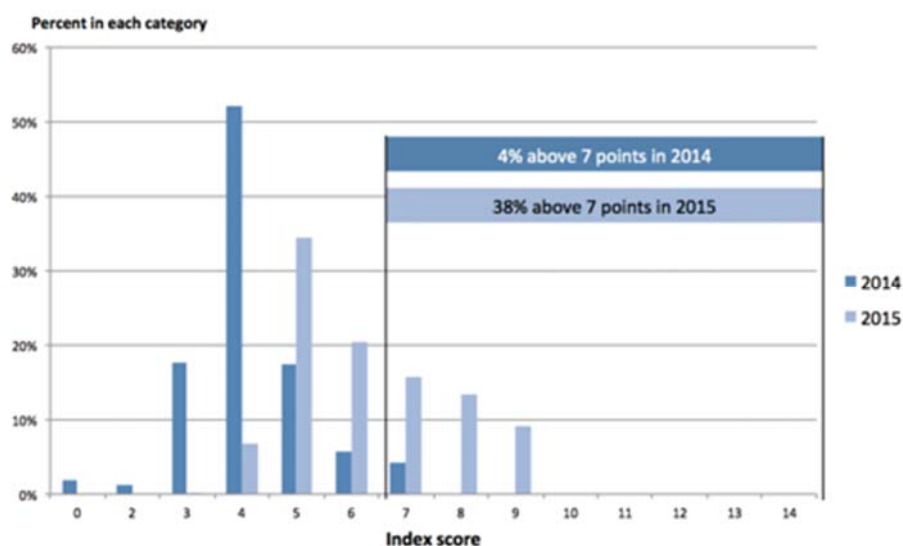
teachers also report having a teacher’s guide and multimedia resources for supporting reading.

Figure 36. Cebuano – Component 2 index (distribution)



Finally, on Component 3 (instructional practices), the increase of two points at the mean can be seen as 38% of the sample scoring 7, 8, or 9 points (out of 15 possible) in 2015, whereas only 4% of the sample did so in 2014 (see *Figure 37*). This is the result of more teachers demonstrating more ways of supporting understanding of the EGRA language.

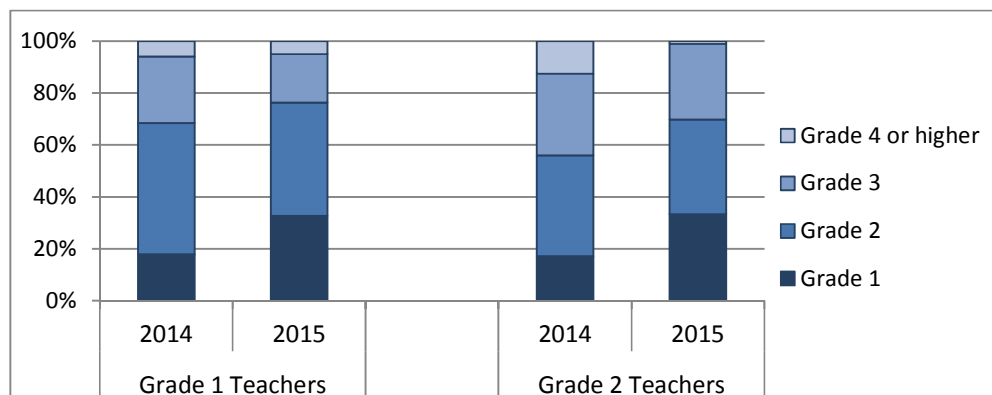
Figure 37. Cebuano – Component 3 index (distribution)



Teacher expectations have evolved modestly, with more teachers in 2015 who believe that children should be able to read in G1. However, the proportion of teachers who believe

children should be able to read after two years of instruction (G2) remains relatively constant, as shown in *Figure 38*, below.

Figure 38. Cebuano – Teacher expectations for when children should know how to read



Summary – Cebuano

In this region, instruction is having a positive cumulative effect on performance. Although 2015 performance in G1 is similar to what it was in 2014, there is a modest positive difference in G2 scores. There were fewer than 10% zero scores on three of the four subtests, and this region had the lowest overall proportion of children who scored zero on all subtests (in other words, who may have a more serious issue with reading, language, or overall confidence with the test format). More than half of children were reading above 40 cwpm in G2, and average ORF increased from 40 to 45 cwpm. In addition, 25% of G2 students were able to answer all questions about the story they read.

The region is already meeting some of its short- and long-term benchmark targets; 40% of G2 students were meeting the long-range benchmark for fluency (50 cwpm), and 40% were meeting the benchmark for comprehension (80% comprehension). There is a large and significant difference between girls' performance and boys'. Girls scored close to 30% higher than boys on all subtasks. Filipino and English language development was also stable, and familiar word reading fluency in Filipino was similar to story reading fluency in Cebuano.

Classroom observation data show that G2 classrooms were doing more reading activities in 2015 than in G1 or either grade in 2014. More time was spent in G2 classrooms reading than speaking or writing activities, although across grades and years of assessment "listening" is still the most common activity.

According to data from teacher interviews, teachers were well trained, a large share having received training in reading instruction from DepED or USAID/Basa Pilipinas. Teachers' expectations have also evolved, and more teachers believed that children should be able to read after one year of instruction. Yet G1 teachers seemed to be at a disadvantage in terms of materials—they had a lower percentage of MTB-MLE learner books and teachers' guides compared to almost universal access to these materials in G2. Given the strong relationship between a print-rich classroom environment and student outcomes, prior to the start of the next school year, DepED should ensure that G1 teachers are appropriately resourced and ready to implement the reading program with sufficient intensity. If G1 scores can be increased, it follows that G2 performance will also increase and the region may meet its targets sooner.

4 Maguindanaoan

4.1 Background

The 2015 sample was drawn from the same list of schools provided in 2014 (schools that reported using Maguindanaoan as the mother tongue). However, due to security concerns in the region, before and during data collection some schools had to be replaced. Furthermore, in some schools, reaching a full sample of 20 students was not possible either because the day was cut short or the schools were too small to begin with, and security concerns or limitations on time remaining in the school year prevented adding replacement schools to the sample.

The final analysis uses student reading assessments and interviews from 370 G1 and 374 G2 students, 28 G1 and 32 G2 teacher interviews, and 31 G1 and 33 G2 classroom observations, but we have to be cautious about comparing 2014 and 2015 since the sampling was different.

Table 16, below, shows an overall profile of students and teachers based on 2015 survey data.

Table 16. Maguindanaoan – Selected characteristics by grade (2015)

| Characteristics | G1 | G2 |
|---|----------|----------|
| Percentage of children who... | | |
| ... are overage (>7 in G1; >8 in G2; student reported) | 27% | 42% |
| ... have been at the same school for two years (student reported) | 73% | 82% |
| ... had no recorded absences in Feb. 2015 (from official school records) | 28% | 27% |
| ... have a teacher whose native language is Maguindanaoan (teacher-reported) | 72% | 71% |
| ... have no reading materials at home (student-reported) | 45% | 28% |
| ... speak Maguindanaoan at home (student-reported) | 92% | 93% |
| ... report that their teacher speaks mostly Maguindanaoan in class this year | 81% | 73% |
| ... report that the teacher <i>never</i> uses the MTB-MLE reading book for Mag. | 45% | 41% |
| Average number of days absent in Feb. 2015 for children with any absences | 3.6 days | 3.4 days |
| Percentage of teachers who... | | |
| ... are teaching in the mother tongue for the first time this year | 41% | 46% |
| ... have the MTB-MLE learner materials (textbook) | 59% | 53% |
| ... have a teacher's guide | 35% | 42% |
| ... have never received training in beginning reading | 18% | 11% |

Also, 26% of children in each grade said they have done a test like this before, but this is the region with the highest number of children who scored zero on all four subtests.

At the 2014 benchmarking workshop, the Mindanao regional team recommended, on the basis of previous survey work, the following benchmarks and targets (see *Table 17*).

Table 17. Maguindanaoan recommended reading benchmarks

| | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
|---|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------|
| | Comprehension (% correct) | ORF (cwpm) | Comprehension (% correct) | ORF (cwpm) |
| Long-range goal | 80% | 50 | 80% | 60 |
| Benchmark end 2015–2016 | 70% | 35 | 60% | 40 |
| Minimum % scoring zero by end 2015–2016 | 40% | 20% | 25% | 15% |

4.2 Summary of results

4.2.1 Maguindanaoan reading

Table 18, below, summarizes the scores across grades, years, and subtasks for the sample of schools using Maguindanaoan as the language of instruction. There is improvement in all subtasks and all years, according to both types of measurements.

Table 18. Maguindanaoan – Performance on reading subtasks

| | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
|---|---------|------|---------|------|
| | 2014 | 2015 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Percent scoring zero | | | | |
| Letter sound knowledge | 55% | 49% | 35% | 30% |
| Decoding | 68% | 62% | 36% | 29% |
| Reading fluency | 66% | 60% | 38% | 28% |
| Reading comprehension | 82% | 78% | 51% | 47% |
| | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | |
| Average items correct per minute | 2014 | 2015 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Letter sound knowledge | 7.1 | 12.7 | 14.3 | 16.3 |
| Decoding | 5.3 | 6.1 | 15.2 | 16.4 |
| Reading fluency | 6.9 | 8.2 | 20.9 | 23.6 |
| Reading comprehension | 0.4 | 0.5 | 1.4 | 1.4 |

Zero scores decreased by an average of six percentage points across grades and years. The largest decrease is found in G2 reading fluency, where zero scores decreased by 10 percentage points, from 38% to 28%. Zero scores decrease by 53% from G1 to G2 for the decoding and reading fluency subtasks in 2015, which is five percentage points more than the decrease shown in 2014. Nonetheless, 60% of children in G1 could not read any words of the

short story, and almost half of G2 children couldn't answer any questions about the story they read. Moreover, average reading fluency still remains very low, at 8.2 in G1 and 23.6 in G2.

Looking at the details of the subtests is a starting point in trying to understand why children are not acquiring reading fluency sooner. The score on letter sound identification is only moderately correlated to oral reading fluency, but the invented words subtest has a strong linear relationship (see *Annex I* for association). On **letter sound identification**, in both grades and years of the assessment the highest proportion of children are in the zero, and 1 to 10 correct items range (see *Figure 39*). The proportion of children reading more than 20 correct letters per minute (clpm) is negligible, although there is a slight peak at 21–30 clpm in G2.

On **nonword reading**, the proportion of children able to read words correctly starts to surpass those who cannot; in fact, in 2015 there are more children reading in the range of 21–30 cnwpm in G2 than those who scored zero, and many more reading between 20 and 40 cnwpm than in 2014 (see *Figure 40*). According to the high Pearson correlation for this subtask, these are also the children who make up the percentages in the higher range of **oral reading fluency**. Whereas children who score zero on the early subtasks (letters and invented words) tend to also score zero on the short story reading and comprehension task, children who demonstrate some reading ability in the early subtasks tend to have better fluency rates on the reading passage subtest. Therefore, although *Figure 41* (Oral reading fluency distribution) shows a very flat distribution, there are more categories of performance across which those non-zero scores are distributed. The target for 2015–2016 was to have 50% of children above 40 cwpm on the reading passage; the 2015 data show that 24% of children are meeting this benchmark.

Therefore it is encouraging that in this region, in schools that are using Maguindanaoan as the language of instruction, there is improvement overall now that schools have had two years to implement MTB-MLE, and considerable improvement from G1 to G2. On the other hand, the actual scores are so low that it may be misleading to consider the region “successful.” It is worth repeating the conclusions from 2014, which are still valid:

... there was a disproportionate amount of children with zero scores across subtests and persisting in Grade 2. ... in relation to other languages in this study, children learning to read in Maguindanaoan were taking two years to acquire the level that could be expected of one year of instruction [elsewhere].
(pg. 57)

Having established that it is possible to reduce zero scores and move children into measurable performance levels, and that performance on early skills is associated with better reading fluency, it will be important for decision-makers in the region to work on how G1 (or pre-G1 school readiness) can be improved or intensified so that the current magnitude of inter-grade improvement will result in achievement of the benchmarks.

Figure 39. Maguindanoan – Letter sound identification (distribution)

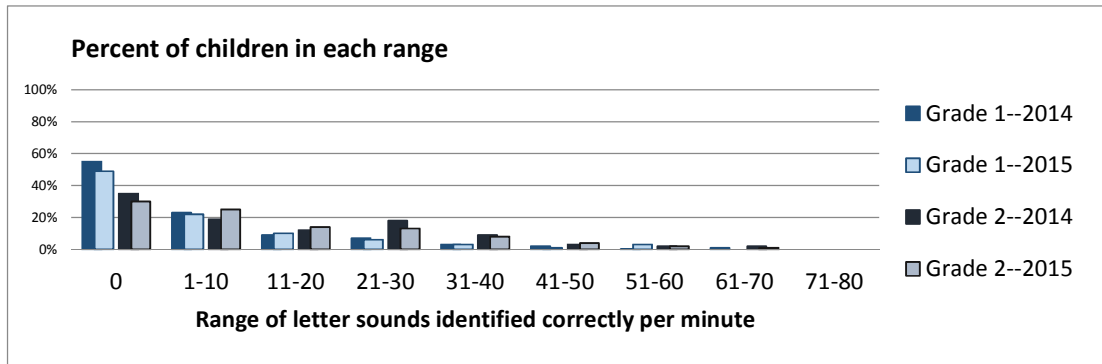


Figure 40. Maguindanoan – Nonword reading (distribution)

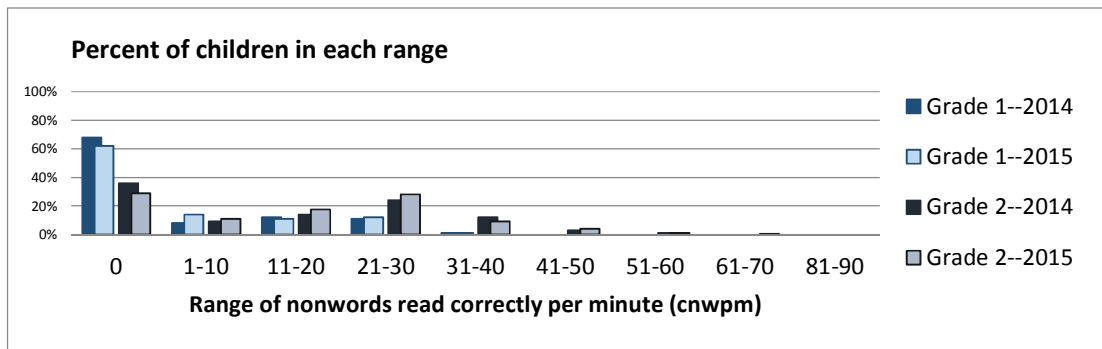


Figure 41. Maguindanoan – Oral reading fluency (distribution)

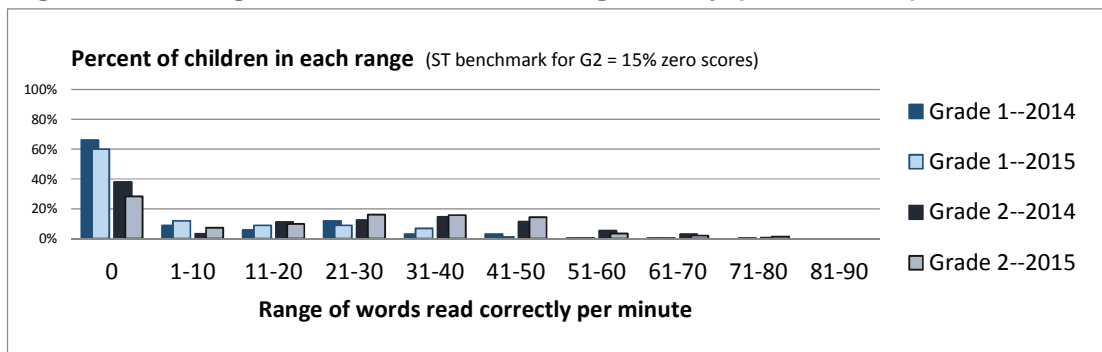
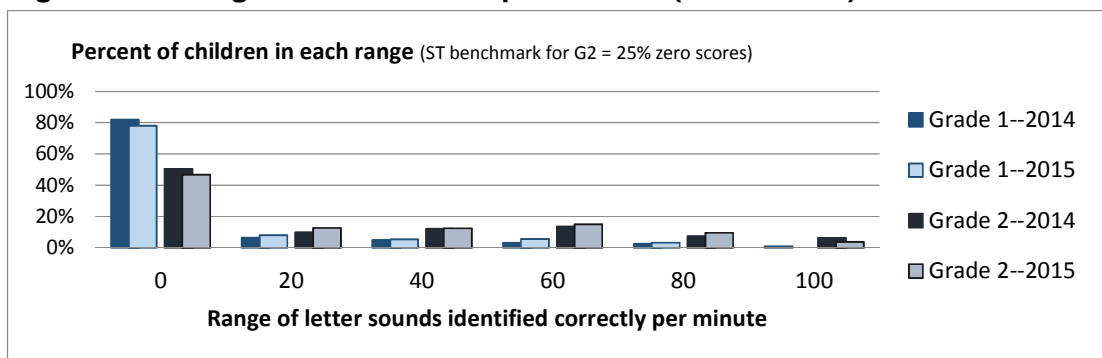
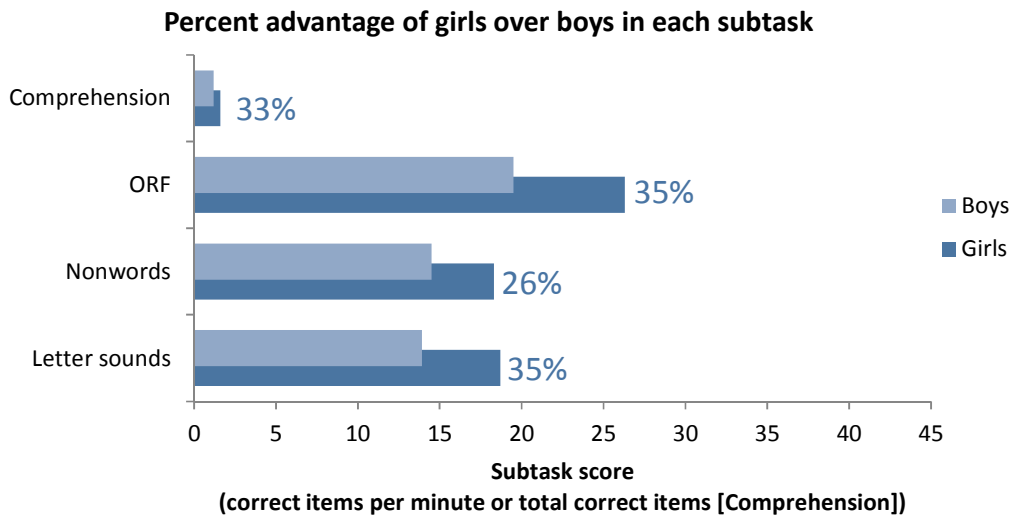


Figure 42. Maguindanoan – Comprehension (distribution)



Girls are outperforming boys on all subtasks (see *Figure 43*), although the differences are not as large or as significant (statistically) as in other regions.

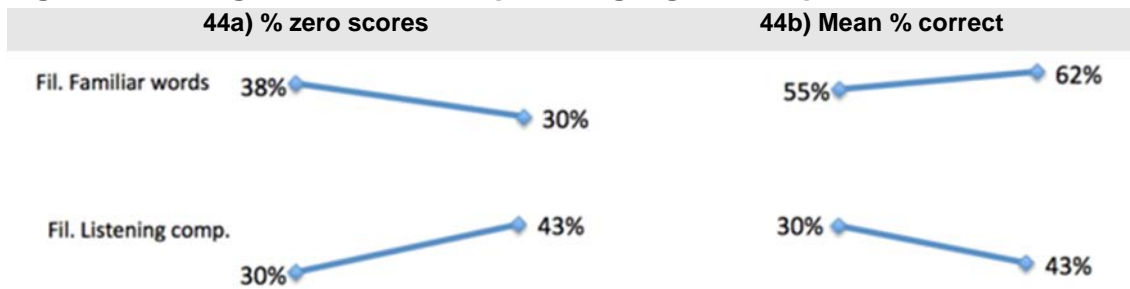
Figure 43. Maguindanaoan – Differences between boys’ and girls’ scores (G2 only)



4.2.2 Filipino and English

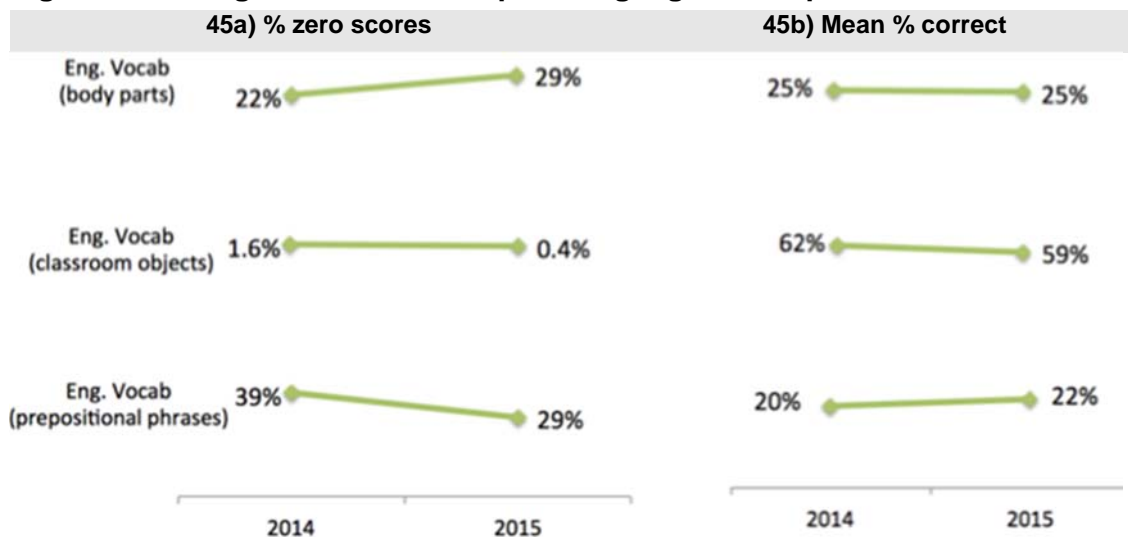
On the two measures of additional language development, children in the schools using Maguindanaoan show an overall stable to downward trend. Average Filipino familiar word fluency remained at 23–24 cwpm. *Figure 44* shows that the percent correct (out of items attempted) increased slightly, while the percentage of zero scores decreased slightly, but neither of these changes is statistically significant. Listening comprehension, on the other hand, shows a more sizable decrease in percent correct and an increase in zero scores; both are statistically significant (to the .001 and .05 levels, respectively).

Figure 44. Maguindanaoan – Filipino language development



In English, the trend is similar—mostly stable, although there is an improvement—a drop—in zero scores on the third measure of English vocabulary (prepositional phrases). On the second measure, there were already almost no children who could not identify any of the classroom objects in the room, so this is clearly the strongest area of English language development of the three measured.

Figure 45. Maguindanaoan – Filipino language development



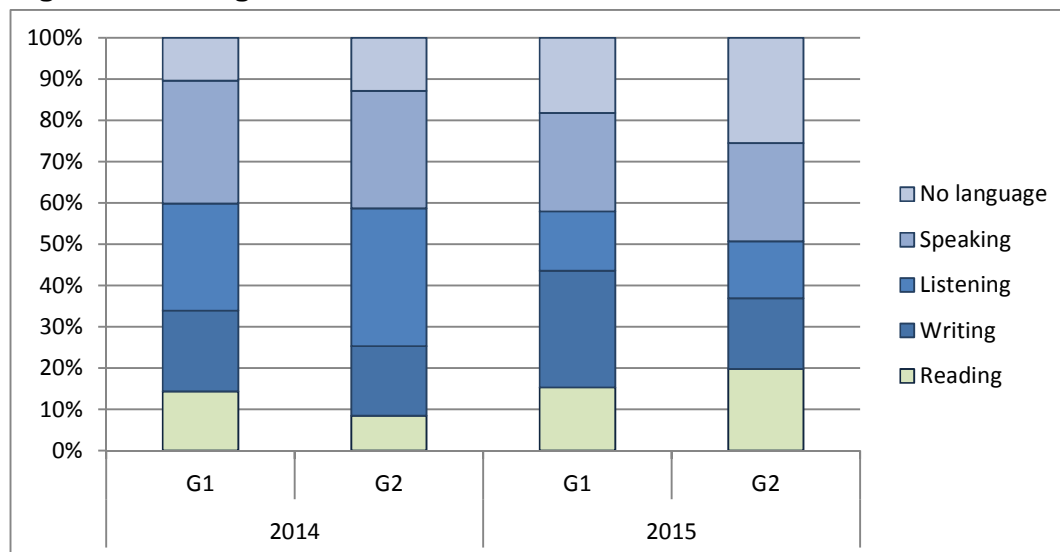
4.3 MTB-MLE implementation

Data from the classroom observation instrument and teacher interview provide insight into what inputs are associated with the above outcomes, and they provide an idea of how MTB-MLE is being implemented in the region.

It is important to recall from *Table 16* above (Maguindanaoan – Select indicators) that although 92–93% of students speak Maguindanaoan at home, nearly 30% of teachers are *not* native speakers of the language. This may partially explain why the mother tongue is being used most of the time, but not exclusively, during reading lessons. This year, classrooms in G1 were using Filipino during 15% of observations, and during 17% of observations in G2. This is higher than recorded in 2014 by about 7 percentage points per grade.

According to the distribution of classroom activities by type, reading was the focus activity for 15% to 20% of the observations, which is a slight increase over the proportions in 2014. As expected, more time is spent reading in G2 than in G1. Children in G1 are also spending a sizable amount of time writing, while “other” non-language related activities increase to nearly 25% of observations in G2-2015. See *Figure 46* below.

Figure 46. Maguindanoan – Classroom observation time



The top four pupil activities, accounting for 45% of observations in G1 in the region, were: Writing: *writing word- or sentence-length answers to questions* (e.g., on the board, poster, or worksheet); Speaking: *answering a question(s) (providing an answer)*; Reading: *words*; and Speaking: *conversation or discussion about subject matter*. Total time off-task including off-topic socializing, transitions, disruptions, fidgeting/horsing around was 1.4%—a fraction of what it was in 2014 (13.2%).

In G2 the top four pupil activities this year (47% of observations) were: Speaking: *answering a question(s) (providing an answer)*; Writing: *writing word- or sentence-length answers to questions* (e.g., on the board, poster, or worksheet); Speaking: *conversation or discussion about subject matter*; and Reading: *whole text (aloud)*. Time off-task in G2-2015 was also relatively insignificant (1.3%), and less than 2014, when the top ranked activity was speaking off topic. While we have to be careful about inferring significance in instructional time use from year to year, and in correlating this with EGRA results, it is encouraging that time off-task decreased in 2015 and EGRA results improved for both grades. However, it would be worth investigating whether or not instruction is appropriately sequenced for the level of the children, i.e., they are not starting complex tasks like sentence reading and writing before they have had a chance to master basics, including oral language development.

From the teacher perspective, the pattern is similar—instructional time is dominated by whole class instruction consisting of question and answer, direct instruction (explaining or writing on the board), and giving procedural directions. These activities represent at least three-fourths of observations in both grades and years.

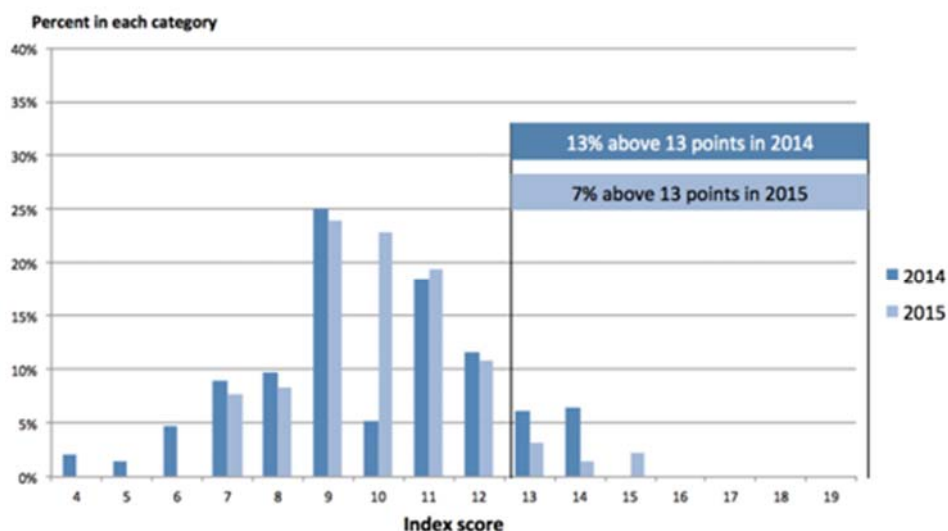
MTB-MLE index. For a combined picture of the different characteristics of schools and teachers in the regions, we use the MTB-MLE index. *Table 19*, below, shows average score, or “points earned” towards the total possible according to the way variables of interest were answered.

Table 19. Maguidanaoan – Summary of index scores (means)

| | 2014 | 2015 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|
| Component 1 (out of 22 possible) | 10 | 10 |
| Component 2 (out of 13 possible) | 3 | 4 |
| Component 3 (out of 15 possible) | 4 | 5 |
| Combined | 17 | 18 |

For Component 1, relative to teacher preparation, attitudes, and support for MTB-MLE, the mean stays the same, but the distribution actually shows a lower proportion of the sample in the top ranges of the index. As mentioned above, this may be in part due to a lower number of teachers who report that Maguidanaoan is their native language. The native languages mentioned were Ilongo, Iranun, and Bisaya. There are also fewer teachers who said they feel “very” comfortable teaching using the mother tongue. G1 teachers more often feel very comfortable with all aspects of the mother tongue (alphabet sounds, spelling rules, grammar rules). See *Figure 47* below.

Figure 47. Maguidanaoan – Component 1 index (distribution)

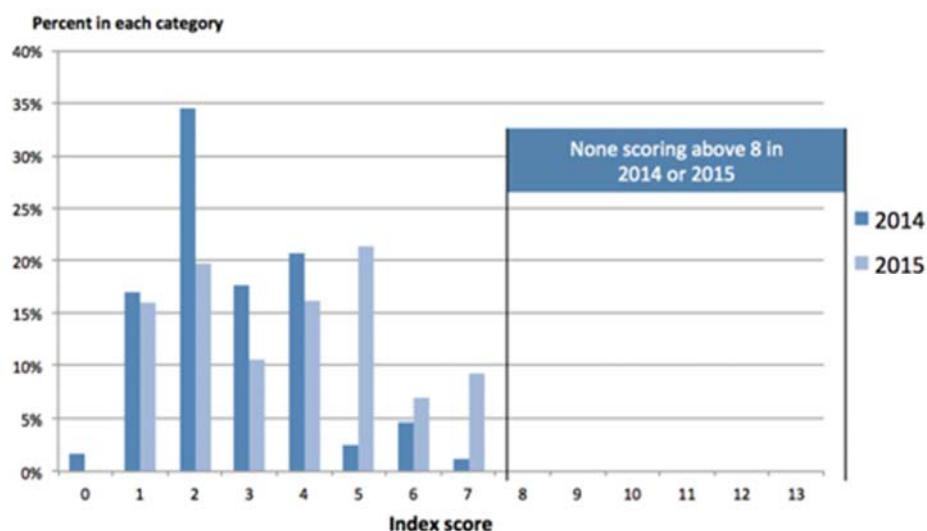


Also, as shown in *Table 16* above, more teachers in this region have not received training on beginning reading than anywhere else. Of those who have, 79% of students in G1 and 75% of students in G2 have teachers who have been trained by DepED and only 2% or 8%, respectively, by an INGO.

Component 2, relative to materials, shows that the region still appears to be struggling overall with adequate supplies of teaching and learning materials for reading. Although the mean index score increased by one point—to 4—that is still only about a third of total points possible. The detail of the index variables indicates that more children have books this year than last year, which is encouraging, but in real terms the change is from 83% of the sample

having no books to 53% of the sample having no books on the day of the classroom observation. See *Figure 48* below.

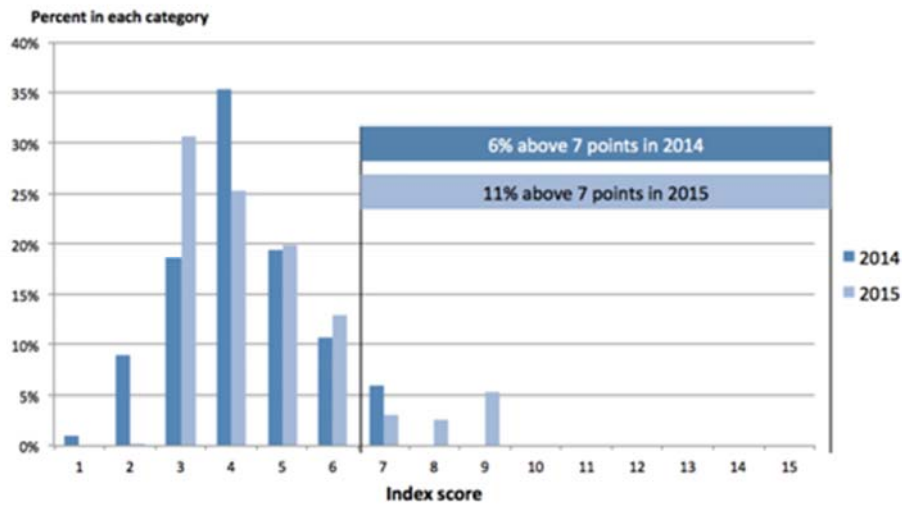
Figure 48. Maguindanaoan – Component 2 index (distribution)



Finally, on Component 3 (instructional practices), there is also a one point increase at the mean, but overall distribution is limited to the lower end of the scale of possible points. In this component, the score will increase if the classroom observer recorded, among other things, different types of strategies to support mother tongue language use and understanding, such as “praising or rewarding pupils for using the mother tongue appropriately,” “By pointing out or correcting EGRA language errors and misunderstandings,” “By using simpler form of EGRA language to explain more difficult language,” or “By monitoring comprehension (e.g., ‘Do you understand?’ ‘Need more explanation?’)”. None of the strategies were observed in use for more than 30% of the students in the sample, with the exception of “using a simpler form,” which was recorded for 45% of the population in 2015. By way of comparison, in other regions these strategies were often used for more than 50% of the sample.¹³ See *Figure 49* below.

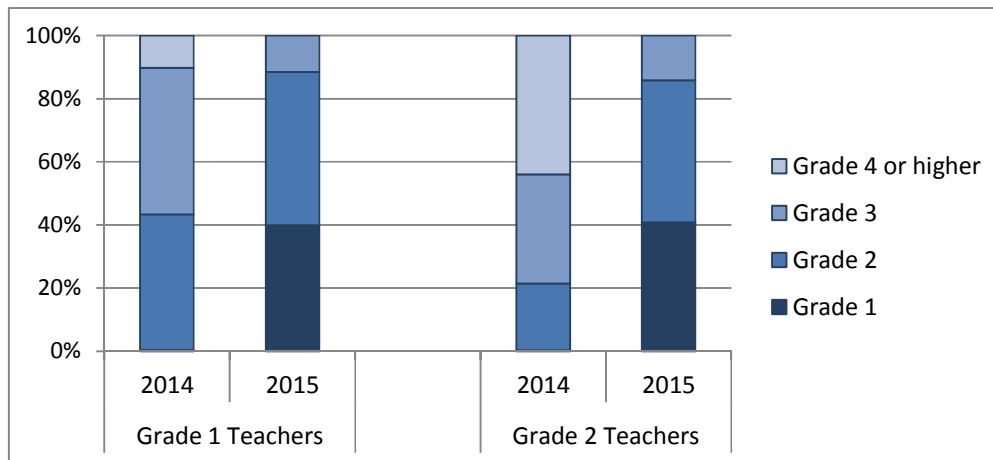
¹³ It is also important to remember that the accuracy of this measurement depends on the ability of the assessor to detect those behaviors. The classroom observation assessors were teachers or other DepEd staff from the regions, so in some regions the assessors might have been more attuned to these subtle strategies, especially if, as teachers, they use them in their own classrooms.

Figure 49. Maguindanaoan – Component 3 index (distribution)



Teacher expectations have evolved considerably in this region. Where almost no teachers thought that children should learn to read in the mother tongue in G1 last year, this year nearly 40% in each grade believe it is possible. See *Figure 50* below.

Figure 50. Maguindanaoan – Teacher expectations for when a child should know how to read



Summary – Maguindanaoan

The schools in this region have succeeded in decreasing the proportion of zero scores on all EGRA subtasks for Maguindanaoan, as well as increasing the mean scores. There are also large improvements in reading performance from G1 to G2. Nevertheless, average reading fluency was still relatively low at 8 and 24 cwpm in G1 and G2, respectively. Children in G2 read Filipino words at the same rate as Maguindanaoan words. As in other regions, girls outperformed boys on all subtasks by 25% or more. Teacher expectations have changed considerably since 2014, and nearly 40% of teachers in each grade now believe it is possible to learn to read in G1.

The instructional model, as inferred from the classroom observation tool, is similar to other regions: instructional time was dominated by whole class instruction consisting of question and answer, direct instruction (explaining or writing on the board), and giving procedural directions.

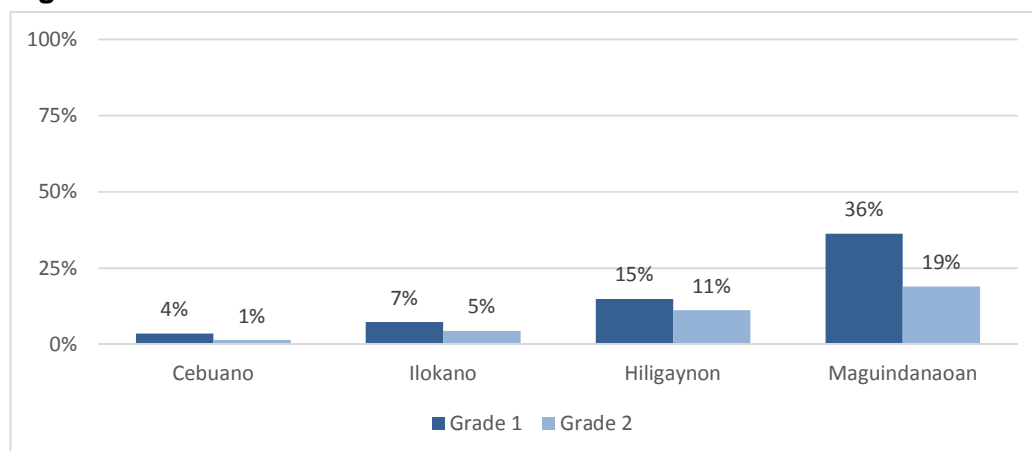
It is likely that demographic issues in this region are affecting outcomes more than instructional ones. For example, children were frequently absent; many children were overage for grade; Maguindanaoan was not the language of instruction for many teachers; children did not have books at home, etc. Overcoming these challenges may require unique and exceptional measures. However, ensuring that the basics are in place is still important. More teachers in this region had not received training in beginning reading; more children reported that the teacher did not use the MTB-MLE learner materials in class; teachers themselves reported not having the books.

5 Cross-Language Findings

5.1 EGRA

Although we remind the reader to be cautious of comparing scores across languages,¹⁴ particularly for timed measures such as reading fluency (cwpm), which can be affected by the characteristics of the language, it is possible to look at some results side-by-side for all school types. For example, a child receives a “zero” score on a subtask if he or she did not provide one correct answer. An incorrect answer can also be no answer at all (child is silent). Therefore zero scores indicate a lack of reading ability, but they may also be related to a child’s hesitation or discomfort with the unfamiliar testing format (especially in G1). It is reasonable to compare the proportion of children in different regions with no reading ability. Although we cannot know for certain what condition is underlying the zero scores, it can be important to see how many children get zero scores on all subtasks. **Figure 51** shows this calculation for each region, disaggregated by G1 and G2 students.

Figure 51. Zero scores on all subtasks



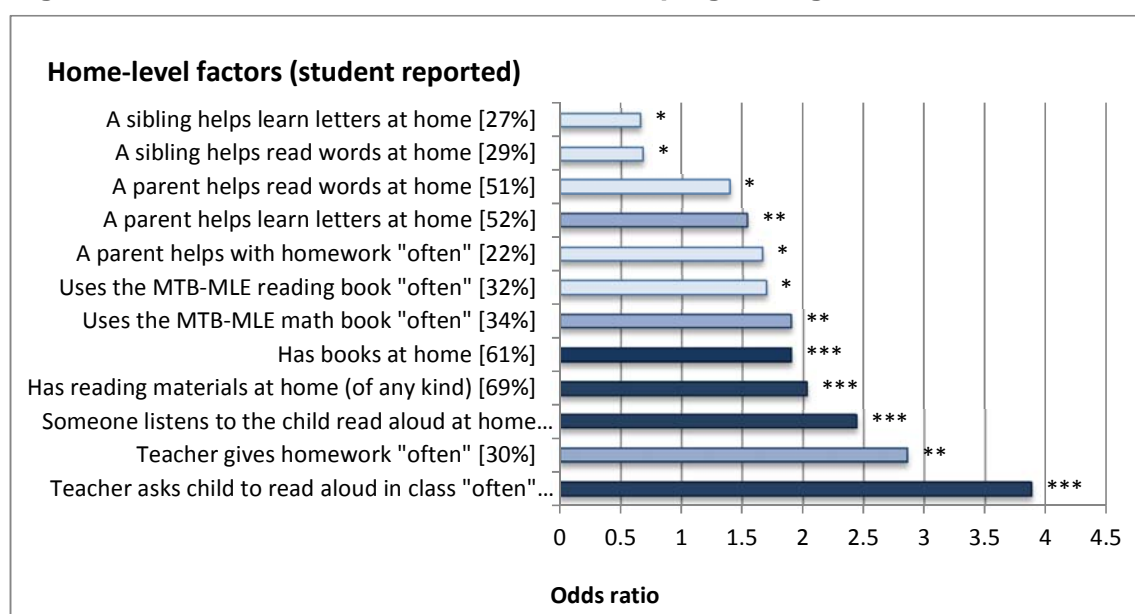
This is a quick and powerful illustration of disparities across regions. The cause of the disparities may be related to demographics (overage, underage, absences, poverty), or resource constraints (lack of materials, human resource limitations, etc.) all of which affect teaching and learning. These issues have been explored in some detail language by language above, and using regression techniques we can isolate some of the factors that are associated with higher performance.

Factors that contribute to reading achievement. The sample sizes in each region are sufficient to analyze reading scores on each subtest; however, when attempting to identify characteristics of the sample that may be associated with results, the sample sizes become too small to be statistically significant. Therefore, for the purposes of running regression analyses on student and classroom characteristics, we combine all languages into one sample. Because

¹⁴ Each language has its own specific linguistic features that affect the expected rate of literacy acquisition; for example, agglutinative languages like Ilokano consist of very long words, where another language might have broken the same concept into several words. Therefore, a reasonable expectation of word reading fluency by grade for one language might look very different for another language.

oral reading fluency scores can vary according to language characteristic, we use a more comparable variable across languages, which is “if the child is in the top 25% of readers in the region, by grade level” (adjusted for region, gender, and being overage). **Figure 52**, below, shows student self-reported characteristics that are significantly associated with being one of the top performers according to oral reading fluency. For the entire sample, 724 children were identified as being in the top 25% of the students in the region according to ORF. The analysis shows that time on task (having help at home, doing homework) and eyes on print (using the MTB-MLE materials and having books at home) are strongly correlated with reading outcomes. For example, if a child is asked to read aloud “often” in class, the child is nearly four times more likely (than someone who never is asked) to be in the top 25%.

Figure 52. Factors that contribute to developing strong readers



Note: Dark blue/three asterisks corresponds to .001 level of significance, medium blue/two asterisks corresponds to .05 level of significance, and light blue/one asterisk corresponds to 01 level of significance.

Linear regression concludes the same thing, but we see the actual difference in reading outcomes; that is, how many more words per minute a child reads, on average, if they have the characteristic. Children who:

- have a teacher who reads stories (in the mother tongue) to the class “often”: 5.9 cwpm
- use the MTB-MLE reading book “often” in class: 6.5 cwpm
- use the MTB-MLE math book “often” in class: 7.8 cwpm
- have any reading materials at home: 8 cwpm
- have a teacher who gives them homework: 9.3 cwpm
- have someone at home who listens to them read aloud: 10.7 cwpm
- are asked to read aloud (in the mother tongue) in class “often”: 13.3 cwpm

Teacher and classroom-level characteristics are also correlated with higher reading outcomes. From information gathered from teachers during interviews, we find the following to be the most important characteristics using linear regression.

- Teacher’s native language is the same as the language of instruction: 6.3 cwpm
- Teacher has already used EGRA in the classroom: 8.6 cwpm
- Teacher uses partner reading as a teaching strategy in the classroom: 5.3 cwpm
- Teacher has reading materials in the classroom, in particular:
 - MTB-MLE learner materials: 9.2 cwpm,
 - Teacher’s guide: 8.1 cwpm
 - Leveled readers/storybooks: 6.7 cwpm
 - Big books (read-aloud books): 8.6 cwpm

Students whose teachers have been teaching using the EGRA language for two years have slightly better outcomes (+6.7 cwpm) than those with less (one year) or more (three or more years) experience. Teachers with more than two years’ experience would have started teaching before MTB-MLE was generalized so this may explain this finding (i.e., and may have more trouble with the transition than teachers who have learned to teach only under the new curricular guidelines). However, being a teacher at the same grade level for more than two years is also associated with higher scores (+6.3 cwpm).

See below for more details on MTB-MLE implementation and regression results related to the index.

Intergrade progression. *Table 20* below shows the average inter-grade progression of skills based on the past two years of data. This shows what can be expected in terms of skill development, given the current inputs, with one year of instruction (G2). This is provided not for regional comparison, but as a reference, which can be used to help project future trends, to report the relative impact of specific interventions, or to fine tune benchmarks and targets.

Table 20. Intergrade gains by subtask and language (average of 2014 and 2015 scores)

| Subtask | Hiligaynon | Ilokano | S. Binisaya | Maguindanaoan |
|---------------------------|------------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| Letters (clpm) | 0.9 | 2.7 | 0.7 | 5.4 |
| Nonwords (cnwpm) | 8.9 | 15.5 | 11.9 | 10.1 |
| Reading fluency (cwpm) | 16.0 | 15.5 | 20.8 | 14.7 |
| Comprehension (% correct) | 1.1 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.0 |

5.2 MTB-MLE Implementation

The questions used and types of analysis used to construct the MTB-MLE index were not developed on the basis of an official, detailed set of standards for MTB-MLE implementation in the Philippines. Rather, they are more generally based on known good practices in reading

instructional programs. For this reason there is also no minimum or expected score on any of the index components. However, logistic regression is statistically significant (at the .05 level) for the relationship between the combined index score (Component 1, 2, and 3 combined) of a child’s environment and the likelihood that the child will be in the top 25% of readers in the region, even when adjusted for demographics such as gender and being overage. The cut points indicated in the analysis above are also indicative of the likelihood that a child will be a top reader, for Components 1 and 2 at least. (See *Table 21*).

Table 21. MTB-MLE index (logistic regression)

| Logistic Regression (Continuous) | Column1 | Column2 | Column3 |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----------|---------|
| | Overall mean | Odd ratio | p_test |
| Component 1 (22 total possible) | 11.15 | 1.14** | 0.00395 |
| Component 2 (13 total possible) | 7.29 | 1.12* | 0.0226 |
| Component 3 (15 total possible) | 5.97 | 1.03 | 0.57116 |

The assumption is also that these practices are equally applicable from one region to the next—in other words, if having textbooks is important in Mindanao, then it is equally important in Ilocos as well. Therefore a comparison of how the regions are doing can help set expectations, unless there are policy documents that outline what standards can be expected. See *Table 22*.

Table 22. Overview of all MTB-MLE index mean scores (2015 only)

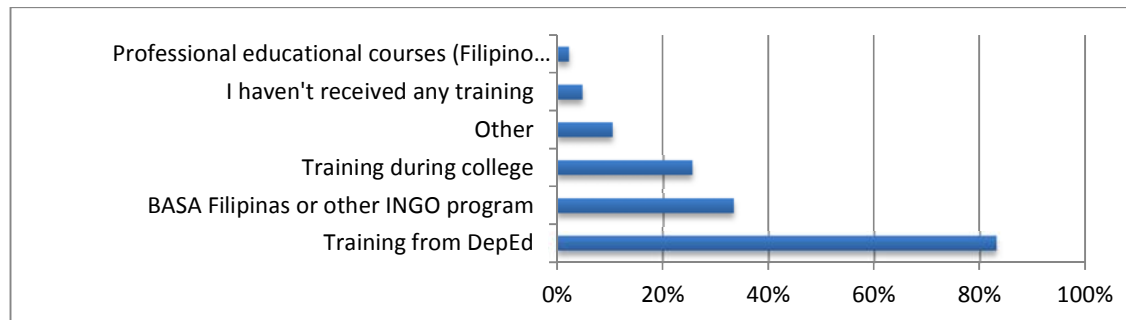
| School type | Component 1 | Component 2 | Component 3 | Combined |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Maguindanaoan | 10 | 3 | 4 | 17 |
| Cebuano | 12 | 7 | 6 | 26 |
| Ilokano | 9 | 8 | 6 | 23 |
| Hiligaynon | 10 | 8 | 6 | 23 |
| AVERAGE | 10.3 | 6.5 | 5.5 | 22.3 |

Average index scores are very close across regions for all of the components, except that Maguindanaoan schools score lower on Components 2 and 3, and have an overall lower average. Cebuano schools have the overall highest average, mostly due to the above-average score on Component 1. Therefore at present, a reasonable expectation for the MTB-MLE index could be a score between 50 and 75% of the total possible score of 50 for the three combined components. We would need to see more of a difference in total scores in order to determine the relationship between the component scores and student outcomes.

Teacher development. Most teachers report having received some kind of training in early reading instruction, and of those who have received training, most were trained by DepEd (see *Figure 53*, below). More teachers in Mindanao are untrained than in any other region (11–18% depending on grade, compared to a maximum of 8% in other regions); 91% of

teachers in 2015 have master's degrees, and 8% have bachelor's (the remainder have some other level).

Figure 53. Type of training in beginning reading that teachers have received



Training and professional experience both contribute to how confident a teacher feels in teaching specific aspects of early reading. As shown in *Figure 54* and *Figure 55*, below, teachers as a whole are increasingly confident teaching in the mother tongue, as shown by the comparison of comfort levels between 2014 and 2015. Although most teachers feel very familiar with the mother-tongue alphabet, they may need more support to feel confident with spelling rules and grammar in the mother tongue.

Figure 54. Comfort with the mother tongue

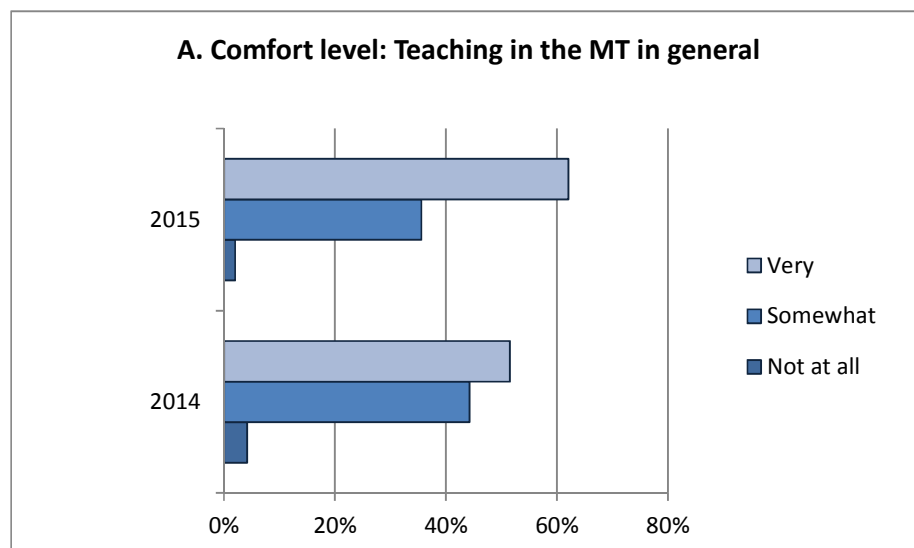
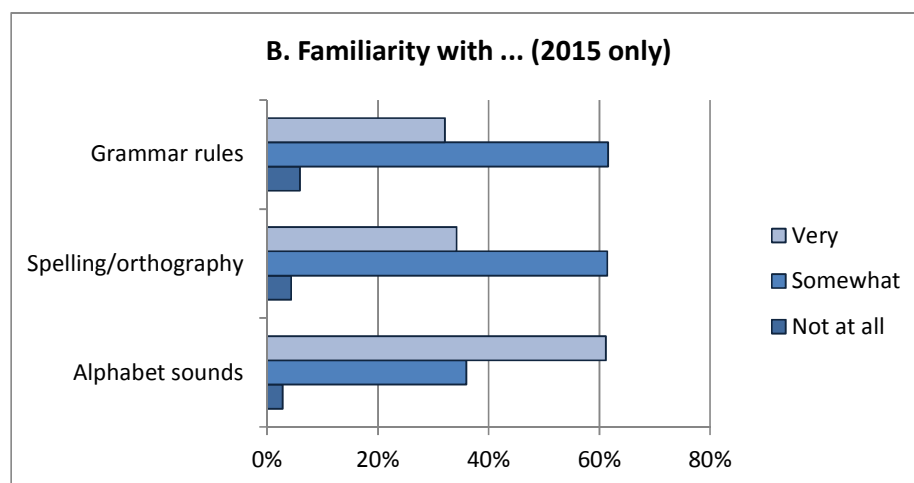


Figure 55. Familiarity with the mother tongue



As a reminder, between 4% and 27% of teachers are teaching in a language that is not their own mother tongue; this proportion is highest for Maguindanaoan schools and lowest for schools teaching in Cebuano in Region VII.

Materials availability and use. Home access to books (as self-reported by children) is consistently correlated with higher reading outcomes in the early grades. From a sample of RTI-administered studies, children who report having access to books at home score between 6 to 8 cwpm higher on reading than their peers who do not.¹⁵ In 2014, in the Philippines, having books at home was associated with a difference of 8 cwpm in reading fluency, or about half a year of instruction (see **Table 20**, Inter-grade gains). This year, 20% of children across the sample (G1 and G2 combined) report having no books at home. Close to the same proportion of children report having no support for reading aloud at home, no support for learning letters (19%), reading words (16%), or having stories read to them (28%), and no support with homework (25%).

Having books at home may be an indicator of increased time for reading; it is more likely a proxy for socio-economic status, which is also usually associated with better reading skills. Therefore it is also important to look at the literacy environment in the school, and the opportunities that children have to access print in the classroom. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) suggests that an “adequate supply is usually assumed to be a minimum of one textbook per three students, and at primary level enough reading books so that every child has the opportunity to read at least one new book every week.”¹⁶ However, in countries that can afford it, one textbook per child is the ideal, so that children can take the book home.

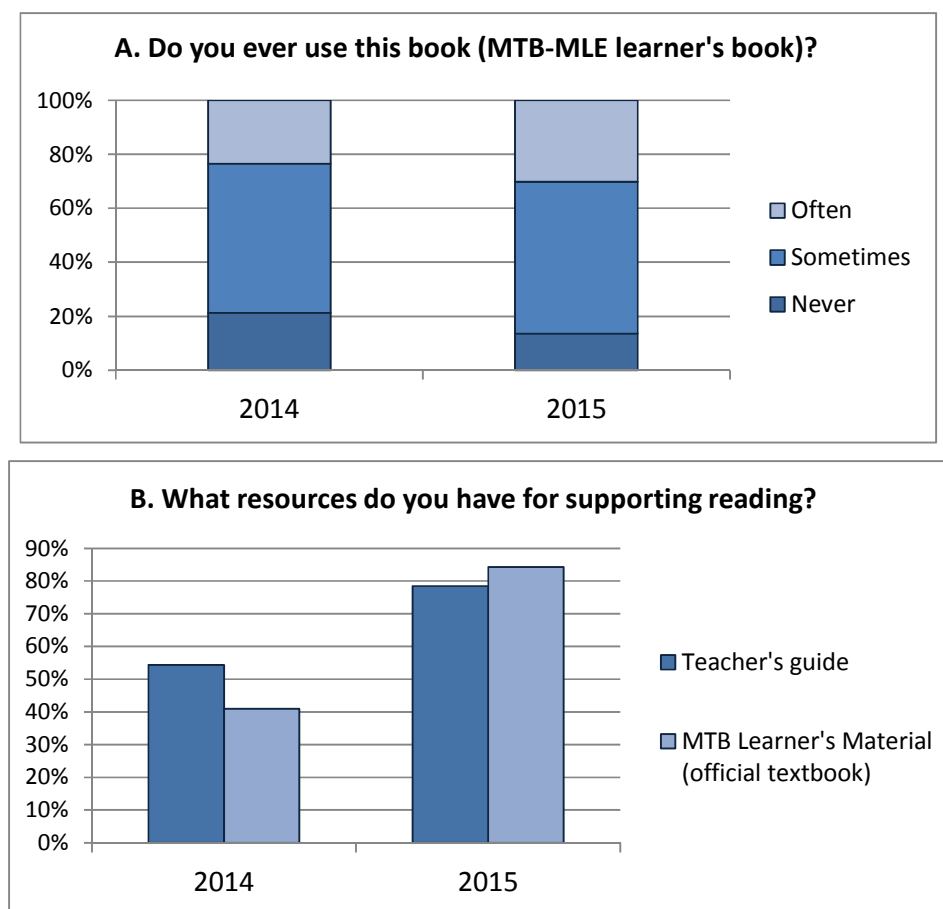
In this study, several data points shed light on materials availability in the classroom. In one instance, children are asked “Do you ever use this book [the assessor shows the MTB-MLE

¹⁵ All reports available on www.eddataglobal.org

¹⁶ Department for International Development (DFID). (2011). Guidance Note: Learning and teaching materials: policy and practice for provision. DFID. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67621/lrng-tch-mats-pol-prac-prov.pdf

learner book for reading] to learn to read?” The child answers “never,” “sometimes,” or “often.” **Figure 56a** shows the response rate for this question. Then teachers were also asked “What resources do you have to teach reading in the mother tongue?” One of the response options is “the MTB-MLE learner materials” and another option is the teacher’s guide. **Figure 56b** shows the response rate for this question.

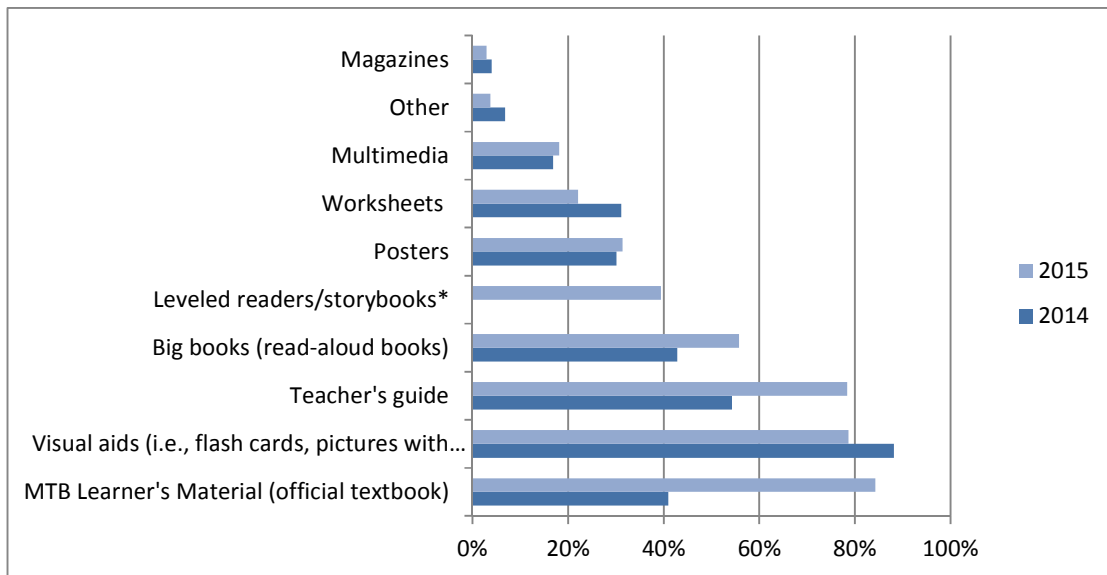
Figure 56. Availability of books in the classroom



These charts show that from 2014 to 2015 the trend is improving. Children report using the books more often, and fewer children say they “never” use the books. More teachers in 2015 have the teacher’s guide and MTB-MLE materials than in 2014. However, the question remains whether these findings match expectations. The figures above are not disaggregated by grade, but we noted that fewer G1 students have teachers who have the MTB-MLE materials than G2 teachers. Is there a reason why G2 teachers have and use the books more often? Should there be universal access to books by now or is it expected that some schools and some students will not yet have the MTB-MLE learner materials? These are issues that need to be discussed with and addressed by authorities from DepED.

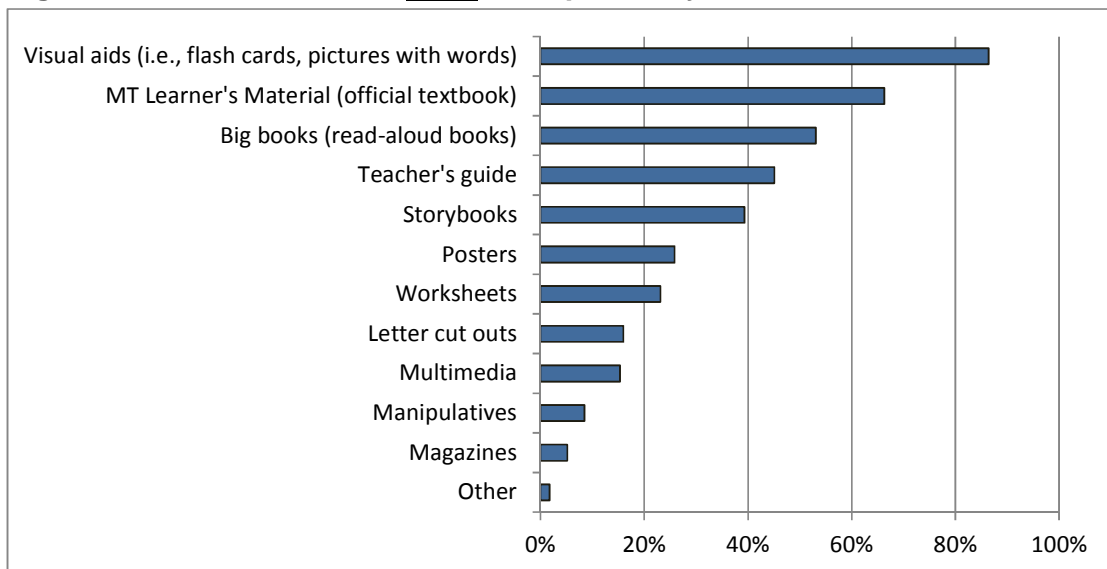
More detail is provided in **Figure 57** and **Figure 58** to show the materials that teachers report having above and beyond the textbook and teacher’s guide in 2014 and 2015. **Figure 57** tabulates the materials that teachers report having (multiple responses possible), and **Figure 58** shows the teaching material they report using the most (one response possible), which was only asked in 2015.

Figure 57. Materials used, as reported by teachers



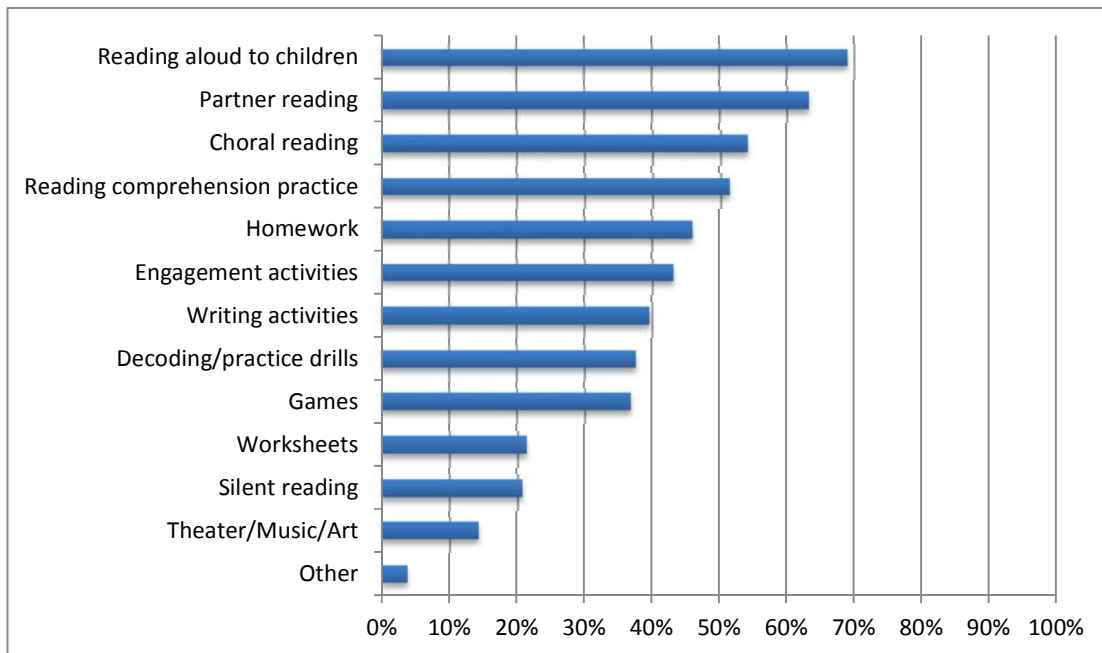
* 'Leveled readers' was not a response option in 2014

Figure 58. Materials used most, as reported by teachers



Instructional practice. When asked about what instructional practices they are using, teachers report a lot of reading to children but very little silent reading (see *Figure 59*, below).

Figure 59. Instructional strategies in the reading classroom



A question was added to the teacher questionnaire this year, to which the answers are revealing in an interesting way. The teachers were asked: “What sequence do you use when teaching the alphabet?”. The answers fell into at least 5 categories, with some teachers who teach the alphabet starting with vowels, some who teach it in alphabetical order, some teaching using the “Marungko” method (based on the frequency of letters in the Filipino alphabet), and others who use a completely custom version, presumably for the language in which they are teaching. (for example, “a n i t k s o y m l...” in Region 1 (Ilokano), or “a u g i s b t l...” in the Region of Hiligaynon. Marungko (m s a i o b e u t k l...) seems popular in Cebu region. In Mindanao the answers were almost exclusively “abcde...” or “abkde...”. Again, it would be important to know what the expectation is for each language—was a specific sequence provided for each language by DepED? If so, why aren’t teachers following it? Is it because they don’t have the materials or lack training? These are potential issues for follow-up.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

In the interest of drawing on all the available information related to children learning to read in the early grades of elementary education, DepED collaborated with two USAID-supported activities to host an Early Grade Reading Summit. The Summit, held on August 14, 2015, enabled participants to consider data from the recently completed pilot implementation by DepED of the Language Assessment for Primary Grades (LAPG), from an evaluation of learning outcomes in two regions conducted by the USAID/Basa Pilipinas project, and from the 2015 and 2014 EGRAs in four mother tongues. Participants were asked to discuss these findings, determine what they see as their implications, and make recommendations for how to improve the teaching and learning of reading in mother tongues.

Undersecretary for Programs and Projects, Dina S. Ocampo, opened the Summit by stressing that DepED sees early grade literacy as an urgent priority. She reiterated that grades K–3 are the most important foundation for the success of DepED’s K–12 reforms. She pointed out that when the MTB-MLE policy was begun, there were no data available on how children learn to read in mother tongues, and that now there are three years of data to inform DepED’s monitoring and evaluation of MTB-MLE. These data are enabling actors throughout the system to reflect on their contributions to improving implementation of MTB-MLE.

In addition to having these data, Undersecretary Ocampo emphasized the importance of asking, “What happens next? Is our intervention good enough? Do we need to support teachers more? What do we do to help them?” In response to these questions, Dr. Ocampo indicated the importance of strengthening what she referred to as the “academic spine” within DepED so that programs are aligned from the center, to the regions, divisions, districts, and schools. The Undersecretary also asked the participants not to look at early grade education in a vacuum, but to consider it as integral to the entire education program of DepED. Dr. Ocampo finished by imploring the participants not to always think of new programs to implement and to instead reflect on how to improve and get the most value out of the programs, which the Department is already implementing.

Following Undersecretary Ocampo, Brian Levey, the Director of the Office of Education in USAID/Philippines, recalled the contributions of USAID’s support to DepED, notably the two projects that have been most active over the last three years, Philed Data and Basa Pilipinas. Mr. Levey referred to USAID’s agenda, which emphasizes evidence-based programming, new partnerships, innovation, and a relentless focus on results. He pointed out the close alignment between USAID’s education strategy and the priorities of DepED—both recognizing and emphasizing the importance of assuring literacy acquisitions in the early grades of elementary education.

The Director of the Bureau of Elementary Education, Dr. Marilyn Dimaano, introduced the three presentations through which the participants would be able to examine the most recent available data on learning outcomes in the early grades. First, Dr. Nelia Benito, the Director of the National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC), presented the results from the pilot implementation of the LAPG. LAPG is a comprehensive, system assessment designed to evaluate language learning of pupils in the first key stage. This initial application of LAPG serves to establish baseline data for the Filipino, English, and mother-tongue

learning in the K to 12 Curriculum. The test was administered to over 2.3 million G3 students in March of 2015 and covered seven domains, including listening comprehension, spelling, vocabulary, book and print knowledge, study skills, grammar and reading comprehension, as well as basic numeracy. The average results in each domain and in each language were presented. Joe DeStefano, RTI Senior Policy Advisor for PhilED Data, then presented the results of the 2015 EGRA conducted in the four mother tongues, along with a comparison of those data to the same assessment carried out in 2014. Lastly, Dr. Nancy Clark Chiarelli and Dr. Lisa Hartenberger-Toby, technical advisors on the Basa Pilipinas Project, presented results from an assessment English and Filipino reading (using a slightly modified EGRA) of G2 students in a select sample of schools supported by Basa. The data showed that in project-supported schools, students are performing better across all reading skill areas when compared to control schools.

Following the presentations in the morning, participants were assigned to four working groups organized to discuss the following implications of the assessment findings for the following four topics: literacy instruction and materials, supervision and teacher training, educational policy and curriculum, and assessment strategies. Each group identified the priorities for each topic that they think are suggested by the assessment results. These are presented below.

Implications for literacy instruction and materials

1. Instructional emphasis should be on developing listening and reading comprehension. Allow students to discuss and reflect.
2. Use read alouds/books/printed materials, etc., inside the classroom for better reading performance.
3. Target specific areas/domains/skills for improvement. Explicit instruction in developing reading comprehension. Strengthen the use of language.
4. Differentiated instruction and in-class strategies to motivate boys.
5. Increase time spent on reflecting and processing the understanding of learners.
6. Continue implementation of Basa Pilipinas Project as instructional intervention in all schools.

Implications for supervision and teacher training

1. Supervision –
 - a. Training of principals as mentors/instructional supervisor
 - b. Proper assignment of teachers
 - c. Team-based supervision
 - d. Revisit the classroom program
 - e. Establishing linkage with stakeholders
 - f. Division office should study and learn the data
 - g. Design district reading plan

- h. Teacher's profile for staffing
 - i. Gender-based program
2. Teacher training –
 - a. Training of G1 and G2 teachers on beginning reading
 - b. Strengthening Learning Action Cell (LAC) Session
 - c. Training of multi-grade teachers

Implications for educational policy and curriculum

1. Time allotment for languages (Filipino and English) could be increased earlier.
2. Increase time in pre-service for teaching beginning reading plus MTB curriculum and practice teaching (Teacher Education Institutions, TEI).
3. Strengthening teachers training with emphasis on bridging through LAC Session.
4. Strengthening teachers' assistance to division to schools
5. Make MTB-MLE materials accessible to all learners

Implications for assessment strategies

1. Conduct classroom-based assessment to provide immediate results to address the needs of learners (diagnostic for learners).
2. Mentoring tools responsive to the schools' and teachers' professional development needs (diagnostic for teachers).
3. Resolve issues on national and sample-based assessment.
4. Establish the comparability of results across mother tongues and between LAPG and EGRA.
5. Administer LAPG and EGRA annually.

Following this initial discussion, participants worked in regional groups, with central DepED colleagues forming an additional group. Given the information presented and the key findings and recommendations as determined by groups in the first workshop session, each group then identified specific actions they can take to improve the situation in their region and/or make specific recommendations regarding what they think should happen related to each of the four technical topics mentioned above. Below the results are presented by each group.

Region I — Recommendations and actions to be taken

| Components | Actions | Responsible Party | Recommendations |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Literacy Instruction & Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an inventory of developed materials for MTB-MLE | RO-CLMD & Quality Assurance Department, DO-CID | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of a review team Approval and uploading of material through the learning resources portal Improved M&E of materials |
| Supervision & Teacher Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on differentiated and gender-responsive instruction Teaching loads of teachers trained in early grade reading so they are assigned to early grades for at least three years Require mother tongue proficiency of teachers in early grades Training with emphasis on language bridging | School level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Division Policy School Learning Action Cell (LAC) |
| Educational Policy & Curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase time allotted for Filipino and English in the early grades | School heads Teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on phonemic awareness, letter sound, vocabulary, spelling |
| Assessment Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilization and dissemination of assessment results to all stakeholders | RO Schools Division Office (SDO), School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action plan for dissemination Education and reading summit |

Region VI — Recommendations and actions to be taken

| Components | Actions | Responsible Party | Recommendations |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Literacy Instruction & Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make adequate relevant teaching & learning resources accessible to all learners and teachers Maximize utilization of learning resource center & classroom reading corner | Regional Director School heads Stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish partnership with stakeholders Network with Basa Pilipinas, TEIs & local government unit |
| Supervision & Teacher Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen teacher training with emphasis on beginning and development of reading to include bridging process through LAC Training of school heads, supervisors, or mentors on reading pedagogy | RO DO School Master Teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutionalize LAC, District LAC, Division LAC Conduct mentoring / coaching among mother tongue and subject area specialists |
| Educational Policy & | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit class program to allocate time for reading | School heads Teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise class program to include specific time for |

| Components | Actions | Responsible Party | Recommendations |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|--|
| Curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged-time-on-tasks Institutionalize multi-literacy & numeracy program | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reading Enhance engaged-time-on tasks |
| Assessment Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop school-based assessment with the school head to support the national assessment | School heads Teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage teachers to conduct school-based reading assessment to support national assessment results |

Region VII — Recommendations and actions to be taken

| | Actions | Responsible Party/Office | Recommendations |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Literacy Instructions and Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop materials to support/address the least learned competencies | RO SDO School heads Teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify pool of writers/subject specialists |
| Supervision and Teacher Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensify instructional supervision Strengthen capability building of teachers | School heads & teachers SDO, school heads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the conduct of LAC sessions Conduct school-based in-service training on beginning reading |
| Educational Policy and Curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensify teacher induction program | SDO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include topics on current trends in language literacy and numeracy |
| Assessment Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct classroom-based assessment focusing on the early grades | SDO & schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train teachers on the preparation of the tool and utilization of results |

As stated throughout this report, the 2015 survey in the four regions revealed that progress is being made in implementing MTB-MLE, especially regarding improvements in teacher preparation and readiness to teach reading in mother tongues and in changing teacher expectations of when their students should learn to read. However, instructional practice has not dramatically improved. Student performance in three of the four regions tested is trending upwards, albeit the rate of improvement is still slow as the education system adjusts to the complete overhaul of the curriculum that has been undertaken over the last three years. As stated by Undersecretary Ocampo, this is not the time to switch to something new, but rather is the time to seek ways to improve the programs and initiatives that DepED is already trying to implement. Renewed and intensified efforts are going to be needed if DepED is to succeed in helping teachers in early grades build their capacity to effectively develop foundational reading skills in mother tongues, before expecting children to transfer those skills to Filipino and English.

Annex 1: Pearson Correlations by Language and Grade

Hiligaynon: Grade 1 – 2015

| | Letter sounds | Invented words | ORF | Comprehension |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------|---------------|
| Letter sounds | 1 | | | |
| Invented words | 0.564 | 1 | | |
| ORF | 0.565 | 0.949 | 1 | |
| Comprehension | 0.48 | 0.808 | 0.862 | 1 |

Hiligaynon: Grade 2 – 2015

| | Letter sounds | Invented words | ORF | Comprehension |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------|---------------|
| Letter sounds | 1 | | | |
| Invented words | 0.588 | 1 | | |
| ORF | 0.526 | 0.921 | 1 | |
| Comprehension | 0.501 | 0.812 | 0.869 | 1 |

Ilokano: Grade 1 – 2015

| | Letter sounds | Invented words | ORF | Comprehension |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------|---------------|
| Letter sounds | 1 | | | |
| Invented words | 0.517 | 1 | | |
| ORF | 0.469 | 0.918 | 1 | |
| Comprehension | 0.413 | 0.796 | 0.814 | 1 |

Ilokano: Grade 2 – 2015

| | Letter sounds | Invented words | ORF | Comprehension |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------|---------------|
| Letter sounds | 1 | | | |
| Invented words | 0.484 | 1 | | |
| ORF | 0.422 | 0.906 | 1 | |
| Comprehension | 0.429 | 0.78 | 0.808 | 1 |

Cebuano: Grade 1 – 2015

| | Letter sounds | Invented words | ORF | Comprehension |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|------|---------------|
| Letter sounds | 1 | | | |
| Invented words | 0.643 | 1 | | |
| ORF | 0.612 | 0.951 | 1 | |
| Comprehension | 0.517 | 0.841 | 0.87 | 1 |

Cebuano: Grade 2 – 2015

| | Letter sounds | Invented words | ORF | Comprehension |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------|---------------|
| Letter sounds | 1 | | | |
| Invented words | 0.441 | 1 | | |
| ORF | 0.406 | 0.887 | 1 | |
| Comprehension | 0.388 | 0.746 | 0.813 | 1 |

Maguindanaoan: Grade 1 – 2015

| | Letter sounds | Invented words | ORF | Comprehension |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------|---------------|
| Letter sounds | 1 | | | |
| Invented words | 0.352 | 1 | | |
| ORF | 0.384 | 0.87 | 1 | |
| Comprehension | 0.332 | 0.791 | 0.807 | 1 |

Maguindanaoan: Grade 2 – 2015

| | Letter sounds | Invented words | ORF | Comprehension |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------|---------------|
| Letter sounds | 1 | | | |
| Invented words | 0.488 | 1 | | |
| ORF | 0.486 | 0.923 | 1 | |
| Comprehension | 0.443 | 0.757 | 0.811 | 1 |

Annex 2: Outcome of Regional Discussion of EGRA Results in Region VI

Reading the 2015 report and results, are there any findings that are surprising? How do you explain these results? Please indicate how positive or negative findings align with local standards and expectations. For example, if the report finds that 50% of teachers do not have a teaching guide, is that the expected teacher-to-manual ratio? If not, what could explain the fact that half of teachers don't have the manual? If the teachers report using a certain sequence in teaching the alphabet, is that the same one that is recommended by the official materials or not?

| Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|---|
| Most pupils manifest non-mastery/confusion between letter name and letter sounds | Grade 1 and 2 teachers will have to give more focus on mastery of letter sounds and other basic skills |
| Grade 2 pupils were confused during decoding task because teachers are at the same time also introducing beginning reading in English and Filipino | Proper time/enough time needs to be allotted to the mastery of MTB-MLE reading skills before introducing English and Filipino |
| Students promoted from G1 to G2 have not mastered reading and oral fluency | Intensify remediation and interventions for those pupils who have not mastered basic reading skills |
| Teachers focused too much on improving reading comprehension | Teaching needs to be holistic and more balanced across all subtasks of reading |
| Poor Hiligaynon and English development may in part be due too much focus on teacher activities in teacher training | More focus in teacher training needs to be given to pupil activities and pupil interaction that teachers should be facilitating |
| MTB-MLE implementation increases, while learning outcomes decrease | Intensify instructional supervision with focus on developmental reading. Conduct curriculum review in teacher education institutions to ensure adequate focus on development reading subjects. |
| Insufficient number of teacher's guides distributed to the field. An increased number of classes leaves the new teachers without teacher's guides and without training in MTB-MLE | Additional procurement of materials through local, national agencies, and through NGOs. Provision of teacher's guide from Central/Regional Office to newly hired teachers in Grades 1 and 2. |
| In teaching the alphabet, teachers do not follow the suggested sequence as indicated in the official materials. Most of the teachers are simply teaching the letters in order. | Capacitate school heads on instructional supervision with intensified attention during supervision on developmental reading and basic skills development. |

The EGRA and associated instruments (student questionnaire, teacher questionnaire, classroom observation) only measure some aspects of MTB-MLE implementation and student learning. However, there are of course many other factors that are unmeasured that no doubt have an influence on results. What are some other important initiatives or events in the region that could have had an effect on the results? For example, if many schools were closed due to weather or conflict? Were there other special reading-focused initiatives launched in the region? Are there known problems with children being matched to a school that uses their mother tongue as language of instruction?

Reading Programs

- Include MTB in the remedial reading program
- Hangkat sa Kinaalaman of Iloilo Province
- Parade of characters during reading month
- Various languages used at home
- Conduct of Search for Outstanding Reading Teacher (SORT)
- Literacy and numeracy training for teachers
- Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)
- Reading Recovery Program
- Reading month

Factors:

- Educational attainment of parents
- Socio-economic status
- Inequitable teacher's training
- Topographical location of schools
- Peace and security situation
- Natural calamities
- No proper assessment of children with special needs
- Time of year/day in which the pupils are being assessed

Annex 3: Participants in the Early Grade Reading Summit

DepEd Central Office Participants

1. USec. Dina S. Ocampo, Undersecretary for Programs and Projects
2. Dir. Marilyn D. Dimaano, Director IV, Bureau of Elementary Education
3. Dir. Marilette R. Almayda, Director III, Bureau of Elementary Education
4. Dir. Nelia V. Benito, Director III, NETRC
5. Ms. Joy Pangilinan, NETRC
6. Ms. Anne T. Choi, EA for Programs and Projects–EGRA
7. Ms. Josephine Gayl Laurel, EA for Programs and Projects–EGRA
8. Maria Veronica Vergara, EA for Programs and Project–EGRA
9. Dr. Rosalina J. Villaneza Head, NEPP and MTB-MLE Program, BEE
10. Dr. Abelardo Medes, OIC-Chief, SDD-BEE
11. Dr. Jocelyn S. Tuguinayo, Senior Education Program Specialist, BEE (EGRA)
12. Dir. Edel Carag, OIC-Director, Chief Education Program Specialist, IMCS
13. Dr. Besy Agamata, IMCS
14. Dir. Maria Lourdes Pantoja, Director III, NEAP

Region 1 Participants

15. Dr. Vivian Pagatpatan, Chief, CLMD
16. Dr. Fatima Boado, City Schools Division Superintendent, San Fernando
17. Mr. Renator Umipig, EGRA Assessor (Student Test)
18. Mr. Nelson Robiñol, EGRA Assessor (Teacher Interview)
19. Ms. Nery Ann T. Limon, G1 Teacher, Bagani ES, Candon City Division
20. Ms. Lyka B. Mata, G2 Teacher, Bautista Central School, Pangasinan 2

Region 6 Participants

21. Donald T. Genine, EPS
22. Dr. Elena P. Gonzaga, Chief, CLMD
23. Dr. Myrna S. Castillo, Schools Division Superintendent
24. Ms. Dominica T. Parcia, EGRA Regional Coordinator
25. Mr. Nerio Benito E. Eseo, EGRA Assessor (Student Test), Iloilo CES
26. Ms. Dymphna Leizel G. Jocson, EGRA Assessor (Teacher Interview), Madurriao ES
27. Ms. Editha Saldo, G1 Teacher, Bitoon ES, Iloilo City
28. Ms. Catherine Verbal, G2 Teacher, Bitoon ES, Iloilo City

Region 7 Participants

29. Dr. Luz C. Jandayan, Chief, CLMD
30. Ms. Maurita Ponce
31. Dr. Arden D. Monisit, Schools Division Superintendent, Cebu Province
32. Ms. Jocelyn M. Conta, EGRA Assessor (Student Test), Region VII
33. Ms. Irene T. Pilapil, EGRA Assessor (Teacher Interview), Region VII
34. Ms. Sheila R. Dumagil, G1 Teacher, LapuLapu City Central School
35. Ms. Brenda Lee Faelnar, G2 Teacher, Pilipog ES, Cordova

ARMM Participants

36. Ms. Saada Tubing, EGRA Regional Coordinator, ARMM

Basa Pilipinas Participants

37. Mr. Marcial Salvatierra, COP
38. Ms. Lisa Hartenberger-Toby, DCOP for Programs
39. Mr. Ilya Son, DCOP for Operations
40. Ms. Nancy Clark-Chiarelli, Senior Technical Director
41. Ms. Chin Ruba, M&E and Research Specialist
42. Ms. Ophelia Armilla, Administration and Logistic Officer
43. Harry James Creo, Communication Officer
44. Paolo Balderia, Communication Assistant Officer
45. Ms. Carolyn Fruto, Operation Manager

UP-NISMED

46. Dr. Monalisa Sasing, Researcher, UP NISMED

RTI International

47. Mr. Joseph DeStefano, Senior Technical Advisor
48. Mr. Rufino Jamilano, In-Country Task Coordinator, Philed Data Project

SEAMEO-INNOTECH

49. Dr. Ramon Bacani, Executive Director
50. Mr. Philip Purnell, Research and Training Director

USAID Philippines

51. Mr. Brian Levey, Director, Office of Education
52. Ms. Erica Rounsefell, Deputy Director, Office of Education
53. Ms. Marie Antoinette Reyes-Hayles, Program Management Specialist, Office of Education
54. Ms. Nancy Ebuenga, Development Program Specialist
55. Mr. Albert Aquino, Development Program Specialist

Social Impact

56. Mr. Mike Duthie, Senior Evaluation Specialist
57. Jessie Barrot, Education Specialist