



## EARLY GRADE READING ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN MOTHER TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

Reading is a fundamental skill and a pillar of literacy for learners. This study investigated the level of Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and academic performance in the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) among Grade 1 learners in Kinoguitan District, Division of Misamis Oriental during the School Year 2022-2023. Specifically, it determined the respondents' reading performance, their academic performance in MTB-MLE, and the significant relationship between their reading skills and academic performance in MTB-MLE. Descriptive-correlational method and document analysis were used based on the EGRA results and the learners' average grades in MTB-MLE. Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the variables and Pearson Moment Correlation  $r$  was used to determine the significant relationship between the variables.

The data revealed that most of the respondents had correct response in orientation to print; had spent 51-100 seconds for letter name and letter sound knowledge; had correct

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response in initial sound identification; and spent 26-50 seconds in familiar words reading. In terms of their academic performance in MTB-MLE subject, majority got a Satisfactory rating in the first Quarter while Very Satisfactory in the second Quarter. Further, it was found that there is a significant relationship between the respondents' reading performance and academic performance in MTB-MLE during the First and Second quarters.

In addition, the learners' reading skills has a bearing to their academic performance in MTB-MLE. It was recommended that teachers may use ICT equipment for the learners to learn the letter sounds and the alphabet more effectively to improve their reading speed. The Action Plan on the Implementation of Reading Program should also be updated and utilized.

**Keywords:** *Reading Performance, Academic Performance*

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill and pillar of literacy for learners. It unlocks other basic learning skills. Reading is important since it is a prerequisite skill to acquire another skill. It is essential for young learners. However, reading is found to be the major problem concerning the learners that needs to be addressed, be given time and attention to encourage pupils learn to love reading. It paves the way for them to gain self-confidence and grow independently in the community and to the world where they live in.

The importance of literacy cannot be overemphasized. If learners fail to learn how to read, they will find it difficult to study other disciplines. Truly, the ability to read is the foundation of academic learning. Literacy is a fundamental skill that unlocks learning and provides individuals with the means to pursue knowledge and enjoyment independently. Thus, literacy skills need to grow and mature over the course of a person's life, giving each individual the reading, writing and thinking skills needed for success in academic, workforce and personal situations (American Institute of Research, 2015).

In order to continue the learning of every Filipino child and ensure that no child will be left behind, the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented the learning delivery starting School Year 2020-2021. In Kinoguitan District, Division of Misamis Oriental, modular distance learning is used as the learning modality. Teaching reading in this set up is difficult, thus problem

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in reading emerges up to this present in face-to-face classes knowing that pandemic has lasted for more than 2 years.

In consonance with DepEd Order 12, s. 2015, the DepEd Memorandum No. 439 s. 2021 which is Utilization of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA) Tools for system assessment, one of the major curriculum reforms of the K-12 Basic Education Program is the use of the Mother Tongue (MT) as the medium of teaching and learning (MOTL) through MTB-MLE to improve learning in Kindergarten to Grade 3 (K-3). The MTB-MLE program was piloted in 921 schools all over the country in School Year 2011-2012. It was implemented nationwide in Grade 1 starting School Year 2012-2013 and was rolled out in the succeeding grade levels in the subsequent school years.

Since the initial implementation of MTB-MLE, there have been efforts to gather data on reading competencies in the early grades through EGRA. These initiatives were performed by independent service providers. DepEd, however, recognizes the need to build its own capacity for collection and analysis of assessment data. EGRA is an assessment tool in the early grades, designed to diagnose the literacy skill of the pupils. Likewise, it measures the pupil's progress toward learning to read. With EGRA tool and its administration, it enables to stimulate the proper administration and scoring/recording of EGRA data, and it enhances knowledge and skills on varied and appropriate reading interventions to address specific literacy problem and difficulty.

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Lastly, the researcher utilized reading materials through the use of EGRA-ARATA Assessment and wants to see how it will affect academic performance in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE).

Health Enews (2016) stated that reading to children helps develop cognitive ability, language and literacy skills, as well as social-emotional growth, but it also creates a stronger nurturing relationship between the child and parent. Parents also benefit from reading aloud as it creates a closer bond with their child. According to Children’s Bureau (2017), reading is the key for lifelong learning, and if one instills a love of reading at an early age, then a commitment to lifelong learning is sure to follow. Reading aloud presents books as sources of pleasant, valuable, and exciting experiences. Children who value books are motivated to read on their own, and will likely continue to practice independent reading throughout the rest of their lives.

When it comes to reading to children, the benefits of the child’s life range far beyond the development of a close bond with them, although that is certainly one of them. Reading aloud to children is truly the single-most important activity for building these understanding and skills essential for reading success that the child will carry with them all throughout their life.

Llego (2016) states that EGRA is an assessment tool in the early grades designed to diagnose the literacy skills of the pupils. Likewise, it measures the pupil’s progress toward learning to read.

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## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational method of research. Using correlational approach, this non-experimental research measured two variables, understand and assess the statistical relationship between them with no influence from any extraneous variable. Furthermore, document analysis was done considering that the result of the learners' reading skills and their grades in MTB-MLE were taken from the teachers' class records.

The study focused on the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable was the result of the Early Grade Assessment. This variable was included primarily to determine the reading skills of Grade 1 learners. The dependent variable considered in this investigation was the pupil's academic performance in MTB-MLE using Summative test Assessment.

### Research Respondents

The study was administered to pupils in public elementary school of Kinoguitan, District, Division of Misamis Oriental during the School Year 2022-2023. There were 119 pupils involved in the study.

**Table A**  
**Distribution of Respondents**

Name of School	Respondents
Suarez Elementary School	19
Biray Elementary School	28
Esperanza Elementary School	31

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Bolisong Elementary School	23
Panabol Elementary School	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>

## Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was employed to get the desired number of respondents. The researcher relied on her own judgment when choosing specific people within the population who participated in the study. The main goal of purposive sampling was to focus on particular characteristics of a population that were of interest, which were best to answer the research questions. Specifically, the type of purposive sampling used was the homogeneous sampling. Table A shows the distribution of respondents among the schools involved in the study.

## Research Instrument

The study used Early Grade Reading Assessment Tool, a standardized tool used by the Department of Education from Kindergarten to Grade 3. This assessment tool is used to determine the reading profile and inventory of these primary grades.

In this study, the researcher utilized the reading materials such as alphabets EGRA-ARATA reading tools, short passages, syllables using Marungko approach to diagnose and measure the level of reading skills development among learners. The data were collected and the results were tabulated and interpreted using the Summative Assessment results. These tools were used to

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have inventory of reading skills profile of pupils in the public schools. Early Grade Reading Assessment is the Philippine’s Department of Education reading inventory for primary years, thus, formulated by experts and learned in the field of education.

In addition, records of the learners’ grades in MTB-MLE during the first and second periods were taken in order to measure the respondents’ academic performance.

### Scoring System

The following are the categorization of the variables to facilitate interpretation and analysis of the data gathered.

### Part I. EGRA Assessment

EARLY GRADE READING ASSESMENT													
Name of School	Enrolment	Orientation to Print			Letter Name Knowledge		Letter Sound Knowledge		Initial Sound Identification			Familiar Word Reading	
		Correct	In-correct	No Response	0-50 min	50-100 min	0-50 min	50-100 min	Correct	In-correct	NR	0-25 sec	26-50 sec
SUAREZ ES	19												
BIRAY ES	28												
ESPEANZA ES	31												
BOLISONGL ES	23												
PANABOL ES	18												
TOTAL	119												

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### Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)

Scale	Rating	Description
5	90-100	Outstanding
4	85-89	Very Satisfactory
3	80-84	Satisfactory
2	75-79	Fairly Satisfactory
1	Below 75	Did not meet expectation

### Statistical Treatment

For specific question numbers 1 and 2, the researcher used descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation to describe the reading performance level of Grade 1 learners.

For specific question number 3, the Pearson Product Moment of Correlation ( $r$ ) was used to determine the significant relationship between the learners' performance in Early Grade Reading Assessment and their academic performance in Mother Tongue Based–Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE).

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Respondents' Reading Performance based on the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)

**Orientation to Print:** The result reveals that out of the 119 respondents, 46 (38.7%) which comprise the **highest** frequency, got **Correct responses**. It may be the highest but there is only one difference with those who have Incorrect responses. Meanwhile, the **lowest** frequency of 28 (23.5%) had **No Response** in this component of the test which is orientation to print.

**Letter Name Knowledge:** The result indicates that out of the 119 Grade 1 learners, 71 (59.7%) of them which comprise the **higher** frequency, have completed the assessment of letter name knowledge within 50-100 minutes. This means that majority of the respondents had difficulties in identifying letters.

On the other hand, the **lower** frequency of 48 (40.3%) of the respondents were able to read **letter names** more quickly. They completed the reading task within 0 – 50 minutes only. This means that less than half of the respondents find it a little easy to show their letter name knowledge and familiarize alphabetic knowledge in a sequence that begins with letter names, then letter shapes and finally the letter sounds. **Letter Sound Knowledge:** Out of the 119 Grade 1 learners, the **higher** frequency of 68 (57.1%) have read within 51-100 minutes. This means that the majority of the respondents had difficulties in identifying letter sounds since they have spent much longer time performing the task. Aside from the letter name knowledge, giving

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the sound of each letter is one of the most important factors of reading development and yet this is also a challenging stage for Grade 1 learners to master the sounds of each letter.

On the other hand, the **lower** frequency of 51 or 42.9 percent has articulated the **letter sounds** within 0-50 minutes only. This means that less than half of the total number of respondents can identify letter sounds at a faster pace.

**Initial sound identification:** The result reveals that the **highest** frequency of 46 (38.7%) had **Incorrect response** to their reading task on initial sound identification. Although, the difference between those who were able to give a Correct response is only one. This means there were also a good number of respondents who were able to identify the initial sound of words. Learners learn to perform and start their phonics journey by giving the sound out of words in the beginning, middle and ending sounds. Learning to read and learning to write is the language development that every child must have to learn to create them to be a literate person.

On the contrary, the **lowest** frequency of 28 (23.5%) had **No Response**. This means that when the respondents were asked to identify the Initial Sounds of the words, there were only few who were not able to identify the initial sounds of the words in the EGRA tool.

Familiar Word Reading: The result reveals that the **higher** frequency of 79 or 66.4 percent has read **familiar words** for 26-50 seconds. This means that majority of the Grade 1 learners who were involved in the study encountered difficulties in reading even the familiar words in the EGRA tool.

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Meanwhile, the **lower** frequency of 40 (33.4%) have read the Familiar Words for 0-25 Seconds only. This means that less than half of the total respondents can read faster on the familiar words and in order for these learners to maintain their reading skills, proper monitoring through paired reading that improve learner's literacy and lead to increased learners' socialization and class engagement.

## 2. Respondents' Academic Performance in Mother Tongue Based- Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)

**First Quarter:** The data revealed that the **highest** frequency of 79 or 66.4 percent have **Satisfactory** performance in MTB-MLE during the **first quarter** based on their average grade, this indicates as a good start for Grade 1 learners to practice and improve their reading skills through the use of modern Filipino Alphabet despite after dealing with two years of pandemic they still have enough time to cope up especially in reading up to the last quarter.

On the other hand, the **lowest** frequency of 7 or 5.9 percent obtained an **Outstanding** performance level in MTB-MLE during the **first quarter**. The data disclosed that only very few among the Grade 1 learners involved in the study are very good at reading the mother tongue and other class activities in the MTB-MLE subject during the first quarter. This implies that there is a need to increase this number of highly performing learners.

The data further revealed that the **Grade Average** of the respondents is 84.95% which is described as **Satisfactory** which indicates that they have a High-performance level in MTB-

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MLE. This indicates that they have not reached the highest level of their academic performance which should have been Outstanding. The result implies that the respondents were not able to achieve at a full extent the objectives of the quarter. This can be attributed to the fact that they have just started the first stage of their learnings in Elementary. It should be noted that when they were still in kindergarten, they only learned more on socialization and not much on academic learnings.

**Second Quarter:** The result revealed that the **highest** frequency of 55 or 46.2 percent has **Very Satisfactory** performance level in their MTB-MLE subject during the second quarter. This means that the Grade 1 learners who participated in the study have a **High** level of performance after two quarters or barely 6 months of learning in the first-grade level

On the other hand, the **lowest** frequency of 8 or 6.7 percent got the lowest performance level which is **Fairly Satisfactory**. The result reveals that a few of the respondents have encountered challenges in the MTB-MLE during the **second quarter** which made them belong to the **Very Low** level of academic performance. This implies that on the part of the teachers, there is a need to apply other approaches or strategies that will improve the learners' academic performance not only in MTB-MLE but even in other subject areas

**Comparison of the Respondents' Academic Performance in MTB-MLE** The data revealed that the respondents' general average grade is **Very Satisfactory** when the first and second quarters are combined. It is indicated in the **overall** mean score of 3.42 (SD=0.73). However,

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this implies that there is still a need for the learners to work harder in order to increase their academic performance since they have not reached to the outstanding rating.

The respondents' average grade during the first quarter is lower than that of the second quarter. The **overall** mean of the average grade of the 119 Grade 1 learners for the **first quarter** is 3.23 (SD=0.68) described as **Satisfactory** only. This means that most of the respondents were not able to perform best in MTB-MLE subject during the first quarter.

It is remarkable to note that during the **second quarter**, the respondents were able to improve their performance. The respondents' grade average is 84.95 described as **Very Satisfactory**. The result implies improvement in teaching reading in MTB-MLE classes is effective in enhancing the reading level of the Grade One pupils of Kinoguitan District to some extent only since the respondents' performance level have not reached to the highest level based on their grades in the subject.

### **3. Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Reading Performance Based on the Results of EGRA and Their Academic Performance during the First and Second Quarters in MTB-MLE Subject**

The data disclosed that **there is a significant** relationship between the respondents' reading performance and their academic performance based on their average grade in MTB-MLE during the first and second quarters. The p-value is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Hence,

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the null hypothesis is rejected. The result implies that the respondents' reading performance has a bearing on their academic performance in MTB-MLE.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the EGRA results, most of the respondents had Correct Response in Orientation to Print; had spent 51-100 seconds for Letter Name and Letter Sound Knowledge; had Correct Response in Initial Sound Identification; and spent 26-50 seconds in Familiar Words Reading. However, there were learners who had No Response in the reading test.

Herring (2023) highlighted the major findings included the effectiveness of early foundational literacy assessment and interventions in the younger grades. Specifically, interventions focused on: letter and letter-sound recognition, phonemic awareness, and word recognition. Most respondents demonstrating correct response in orientation to print suggests a good understanding of how print works (left to right, top to bottom). This is a crucial foundation for reading development. Relatively fast reading time (26-50 seconds) for familiar words indicates some fluency in recognizing known words. The time spent (51-100 seconds) suggests some challenges in identifying letter names and sounds. This can hinder decoding new words. The presence of incorrect responses indicates difficulty associating letters with their corresponding sounds. This is a critical skill for early reading development. Some learners not responding to the

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reading test necessitates further investigation. There could be factors like reading anxiety, limited vocabulary, or difficulty with the specific text used in the assessment.

In terms of academic performance in MTB-MLE subject, the majority of the respondents got a Satisfactory rating with Grade Average of 83.36% in the First Quarter while Very Satisfactory rating with a Grade Average of 84.95% in the Second Quarter. Notably, there is an increment in the grade average of the respondents during the second period which can be attributed to effective instruction. Learners perform better when taught reading with the intervention that is fit to their level. As beginning readers, the use of mother tongue has evidently made the Grade 1 pupils learn how to read and develop basic reading skills.

UNESCO (2022) asserted that education in the mother tongue is a key factor for inclusion and quality learning, and it also improves learning outcomes and academic performance. This is crucial, especially in primary school to avoid knowledge gaps and increase the speed of learning and comprehension. The increase in grade average from satisfactory (83.36%) in the first quarter to very satisfactory (84.95%) in the second quarter indicates improvement in academic performance. As the pupils progress through the MTB-MLE program, their foundational skills in reading, writing, and comprehension might be solidifying. The material covered in the second quarter might have been a better fit for the students' learning level compared to the first quarter. Even with the first-quarter results being "satisfactory," a grade average above 83% suggests a strong foundation in the subject.

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The data revealed that there is a significant relationship between the respondents' reading performance in all the components of EGRA and academic performance in MTB-MLE during the First and Second quarters.

Cubillas and Pardo (2023) revealed in their study titled, "Enhancing Pupils' Narrative Text Reading Comprehension in Mother Tongue through Directed Reading Thinking Activity", that there was significant relationship between reading components of EGRA and academic achievement in MTB-MLE. Furthermore, there was an increase of reading performance after conduct of reading assessment and intervention. This means that pupils with good scores on all parts of the EGRA likely have a strong foundation in reading skills. These strong reading skills translate to better performance in their Filipino language classes following the MTB-MLE approach. This finding supports the effectiveness of MTB-MLE programs. By building a solid reading foundation in their native language, students are better equipped to succeed in academic subjects taught through that language.

## CONCLUSION

The first quarter was considered as the transitional phase for the DepEd, as it implemented a full face-to-face classes after a couple of years of pandemic. This period was a challenging and tough times for Grade 1 learners who have to strive the intricacies of the learning process amidst the adjustment. However, the use of Early Grade Reading Assessment helped in developing the

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learners' reading skills. In fact, it was found to have a bearing on the learners' academic performance in MTB-MLE.

The DepEd Misamis Oriental allocated 1 hour and 30 minutes or 90 minutes, time in the class program. The purpose of this implementation is to give enough time for teachers to focus on reading as intervention to address learning gap that caused the main problem nationwide due to pandemic and through the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction. The learners were able to cope up and accelerate their learning most especially in reading. This was shown in their reading performance in all the components of EGRA and academic performance in MTB-MLE is constantly increasing from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters. It was proven that the respondents' reading performance in all the components of EGRA have a bearing to the academic performance in MTB-MLE during the first and second quarters.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are given based on the findings and conclusions of the study:

1. Teachers may craft more exciting reading activities such as the use of ICT equipment and materials for the learners to learn the letter sounds, can familiarize the letters of the alphabet and can read in their own pace and in a convenient way. Parents should maximize their involvement to keep on track the reading status of each learner at home. Teachers and parents

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must have a consistent communication for an easy access of child's monitoring progress in reading both at home and in school.

2. Educators such as the administrators, principals and teachers need technical assistance to engage themselves to educational seminars that help create an effective learning environment, improve teaching-learning situations, update their knowledge and increase the effectiveness of their learning styles and teaching strategies correlate with Grade 1 pupil's academic performance in MTB-MLE.

3. Action Plan on the Implementation of Reading Program should be updated because this serves as teachers' guide to continually assess the learners' reading level through Phil-Iri and Egra-Arata. Parents should engage and encourage their children to attend Enrichment classes and National Learning Camp Program (NLCP) which are the summer reading class programs implemented by the DepEd.

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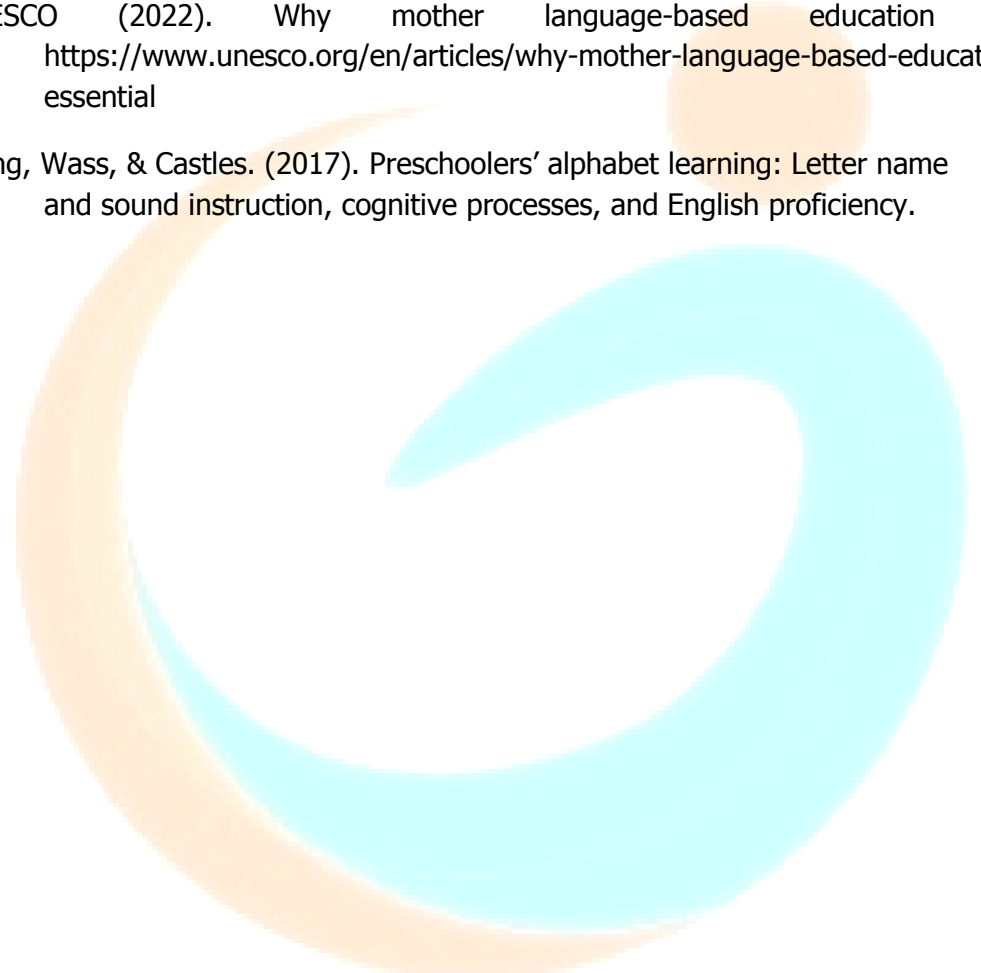
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