# ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MOTHER TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION FOR ENHANCING EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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**Abstract**

This study evaluated the assessment of the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in promoting early literacy of primary school pupils in Anambra State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey study design. The population consists of 30,000 public primary school teachers and 76,612 private primary school teachers. The sample size comprised of 367 teachers, 260 private school teachers and 107 public school teachers in the 17 schools in six local government areas which was selected through a multi-stage sampling process. Questionnaire items constructed by the researcher titled Assessment of the Implementation of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education in Promoting Early Literacy Development of Primary School Pupils was used (AIMTBMEPELD). The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.71, 0.94, and 0.62 with an overall coefficient of 0.75 which shows that the instrument was reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The language of the child's immediate environment was used in instructional and assessment delivery in public primary school classrooms, but was not used in private school classrooms in primary schools in Anambra State. Findings showed that there were significant differences in the sectors: public schools use mother tongue (Igbo) to teach and provide learning materials, but the opposite is the case in private schools. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Ministry of education in Anambra state must enforce the application of the mother tongue (Igbo) as the first three-year primary education

medium of instruction both in the public and non-public schools in order to enforce equality in the acquisition of literacy Findings also revealed that the instructional materials (textbooks and workbooks) developed with the language of the child's immediate environment were used in teaching in public primary school classrooms, but were not used in teaching in private primary schools in Anambra State. It was further revealed that teachers in public primary schools were trained in the use of mother tongue for instructional delivery while those in private primary schools in Anambra state were not trained.

***Keywords:*** *Mother Tongue, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, Early Literacy Development.*

## Introduction

Language serves as the basis for human communication, cognitive and cultural development. The learning of early-language in societies comprised of multiple tongues, which, is a major scholastic performance and literacy predictor. The application of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) is an educational approach acknowledging the pivotal contribution played by a child's mother or native tongue as a foundation for learning second and third languages and subject matters. This foundational role operates through several mechanisms: firstly, by building strong conceptual understanding in the familiar language before transferring knowledge to new languages; secondly, by developing metalinguistic awareness that facilitates additional language acquisition; and thirdly, by ensuring cognitive development that is uninterrupted while new languages are gradually introduced (Jacob, 2016). According to Gomez (2022), who opines that the approach is being popularly discussed in education all over the world, especially in multilinguistic societies like Nigeria in which there are over 500 different languages being spoken in a country. Anambra State, in South-East Nigeria accommodates monolingually Igbo-speaking territory for use in schools as prescribed in National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The state is no different in reflecting nationwide dilemma in policy and practice regarding mother tongue instructions, particularly in early stages of primary schooling when literacy is consolidative and inceptively formed.

Mother tongue has been defined in many ways by scholars with different perspectives. Nishanthi (2020) opined that mother tongue is the language in which a person learns first,

identifies, knows best, and uses most often. Wiltschko (2022), also opined mother tongue as a language acquired in early years, which naturally becomes a person's instrument of thought and communication. In the context of this study, mother tongue can be defined as the indigenous language acquired first by the child, through which they first encounter and make sense of the world around them, develop initial cognitive structures and establish their cultural identity. According to Bosah, Okika and Anozie (2025), mother tongue is the language a person learned as a child at home which the child learns almost without any conscious effort on his/her part. In Nigeria, National Policy on Education (NPE) – FRN, (2013) has approved mother tongue as learning tool for early primary level. The policy states that the medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of the environment for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject". Also, according to National Language Policy (2022), the following are the application and usage in basic education: To ensure effective delivery of instruction and attendant positive learning outcomes. Mother tongue or language of the immediate community shall be used as the medium of instruction from Early Childhood care and development education to six years of primary education. However Arabic language shall be the medium of instruction for Islamic schools. During this period, English Language shall be taught as a school subject; English language shall be used as language of instruction at the junior secondary education level. However, a combined use of English language and mother tongue or language of immediate community shall be encouraged accordingly; in addition to the study of English language and the mother tongue, a child shall be allowed to study, as an optional school subject, the Nigeria language of the community, if it is different from the mother tongue; Federal, State and Local Governments shall ensure the effective supervision of the teaching and learning of Nigerian languages; Sustained efforts shall be made to develop orthographic and metalanguages for the teaching and learning of all Nigerian language; Efforts shall be made to develop and produce educational material in the various Nigerian languages. Registers in Nigerian languages for the various school subjects shall be developed; and programmes and activities aimed at promoting the development and production of educational materials in the various Nigerian languages shall be encouraged and sustained.

Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) is an educational framework and instructional approach that facilitates teaching and learning in and through a child's mother or native language before beginning instruction in foreign, second and/or third language(s). According to Namanya (2017), children most effectively acquire cognitive skills, literacy

competencies, and content knowledge when they initially learn in their most familiar language. Also, Lang-ay and Sannadan (2021) opined that initial teaching and learning in a child's most familiar language forms a strong framework for the additional languages to be systematically constructed through well-planned and purposeful transitional processes. MTB-MLE encompasses some key principles such as: learning is initiated in home best known to them; literacy is implemented in mother tongues and can be translated to foreign tongues; academic content is introduced in mother tongues prior to being introduced in foreign tongues; foreign tongues are introduced in a structured way while still learning in mother tongues; and information and cultural practices are integrated in learning context (Lang-ay and Sannadan, 2021; Wata *et al.,* 2024). The actual use of MTB-MLE however, had remained irregular and had glaring discrepancies in application and policy documented across Nigeria (Ozoemena *et al.,* 2021). These MTB-MLE implementation also have serious implications for the development of early literacy, which is a key educational purpose of language policy and planning in multilingual contexts.

Early literacy learning in multiple-language contexts is complex. It is the reading and writing behaviours that precede and develop into conventional literacy. According to Teale et al (2020), early literacy is seen as children's precursor knowledge, abilities, and attitudes related to later reading and writing. Li *et al.* (2019) posited that literacy learning in one is thought to be transposable to another, hence, early literacy learning in a child's mother language is justifiable. Also, UNESCO (2023), sees early literacy as the ability of children to identify, understand, interpret, create and communicate using language. Literacy achievement in research in varied contexts in Ethiopia (Seid, 2019), in the Philippines (Christina and Vinogradova, 2017), is better when early literacy in mother tongue is conducted prior to learning in second or foreign languages. In Nigeria, there are sufficient literacy improvement issues in instructional content shortage, class overcrowding, teacher training shortage and incoherence in policies (Sey, 2023). Similarly in Nigeria, Mizza (2014) opined that using a child's mother tongue in early literacy learning makes the process easier because it reduces mental effort which allows children to concentrate on understanding words and learning to read, without the added difficulty of trying to interpret a new or unfamiliar language at the same time; activating of existing language knowledge as scaffold for literacy skills, making meaningful connections between text and experience, and increasing metalinguistic awareness when comparing the two languages (Mizza, 2014). Operationally, early

literacy is the basic language of reading and writing skills children develops before formal schooling which prepares them for future reading and writing.

Despite policy and research promotion, Anambra State MTB-MLE may face with a string of problems. The resource is the lack of instructional and learning quality content in Igbo language, particularly subject content (Maretes, 2024). According to Ezepue *et al.* (2023) who opined that human resource constraints involve teacher preparation inadequacies, as many teachers lack sufficient training in mother tongue instruction methodologies and Igbo academic language proficiency. Similarly, Mbah *et al.* (2021) opined that sociocultural challenges are represented in form of declining intergenerational mother tongue use as the processes of globalization heighten, leading to some children entering schools lacking mother tongue literacy both in public and private schools.

Nigeria's educational framework is in a dual-sector model consisting of public and private schools (Ngene *et al.,* 2018), which take different approaches towards language of instruction policy. Studies show that private schools show low adoption rates of mother tongue use compared with public schools based mainly on market forces and preferences by parents for English-medium schools (Uba and Irudayasamy, 2023). Private schools make use of English as a competitive edge and sales promotional activity based on parents' belief that English-medium schools guarantee better socio-economic futures for their children (Uba and Irudayasamy, 2023). Socioeconomic indicators such as wealth, parents' educational level, and urban living are main drivers for private school enrolment so that families actively pursue English-dominated learning environments (Kumar and Choudhury, 2021). The gap between public schools and private schools extends further than rates of implementation to resource allocation and quality of instruction. Private schools' access greater infrastructure in libraries, computers, playgrounds, and laboratories relative to their public equivalents but show looser adherence to mother tongue policies in schools (Okediadi, 2011; Rahman *et al.,* 2020). Literature revealed student achievements in private secondary schools exceeding those in public schools based on English-medium instruction views (Mohammed and Abera, 2022; Sinabubaraga and Oniye, 2025). This generates difficulty, potentially provoking private schools with greater resources to disadvantage indigenous access in schools while schools with fewer resources in the public sector the better enforcer of policy goals for mother tongue bilingualism. Therefore, the study seeks to assess the implementation of mother

tongue based multilingual education for enhancing early literacy development among primary school pupils in Anambra state.

**Statement of the Problem**

The persistent problem of literacy underachievement among primary school pupils in Nigeria and Anambra state specifically, warrants close examination of basic education strategies (that is instructional language). Despite the National Policy on Education's emphasis on mother tongue usage in the early years of primary school pupils, assessment of primary school pupils in Nigeria seems to have consistently shown low levels of improvement in early literacy development.

In Anambra state, the implementation of MTB-MLE appears inadequate and largely ineffective. Observations by the researcher shows that many primary schools in Anambra state continue to rely so much on the use of English language as the language of instruction in the early grades. It seems also that some teachers lack adequate training and competence in the mother tongue pedagogy. Again, the instructional materials in the local language appears insufficient and, in some schools, non-existent. In some cases, it was observed that school administrators and parents' emphasis English proficiency over mother tongue literacy. Hence this study seeks to assess the implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education for enhancing early literacy development among primary school pupils in Anambra state. Specifically, the study seeks to determine:

1. whether early primary school classroom instruction and assessment is being conducted using the mother tongue in public and private schools in Anambra State.
2. whether the instructional materials (textbooks and workbooks) used in teaching primary school pupils are developed with the mother tongue in public and private schools in Anambra State.
3. whether primary school teachers are trained in the use of mother tongue in classroom instruction and assessment in public and private schools in Anambra State.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

1. Are early primary school classroom instructional and assessment deliveries being conducted using the mother tongue in public and private schools in Anambra State?
2. Are the instructional materials (textbooks and workbooks) used in teaching primary school pupils developed with the mother tongue in public and private schools in Anambra State?
3. Are primary school teachers trained in the use of mother tongue in classroom instructional delivery in public and private primary schools Anambra State?

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public primary schools and those in private primary schools in Anambra state on the use of mother tongue in instructional and assessment delivery.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public primary schools and those in private primary schools in Anambra state on the use of instructional materials (textbooks and workbooks) developed using mother tongue in teaching in early primary schools in Anambra state.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean attitude of teachers in public primary schools and those in private primary schools in Anambra state toward mother tongue-based multilingual education in primary schools in Anambra State.

**Methods**

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Anambra State. The population of this study comprised 30,000 basic one to three public school teachers in the 1,098 public primary schools and 76,612 basic one to three private school teachers in the 2,694 private primary schools in the study area. The sample of the study comprises of 367 teachers; 107 teachers from public primary schools and 260 teachers from private primary schools using multi stage sampling procedure. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of the Implementation Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education for Enhancing Early Childhood Literacy Development (AIMTBMEEECLD). The validation of the instrument was done by three experts, two experts from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one expert from the Department of Educational

Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation Unit), all from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.71, 0.94, and 0.62 with an overall coefficient of 0.75 which shows that the instrument was reliable. The questionnaire was administered through direct delivery approach with the help of three research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

**Research Question One:** Are early primary school classroom instructional and assessment delivery being conducted using mother tongue in public and private schools in Anambra State?

**Table 1:** *Mean Ratings on the Use of Mother Tongue in Instructional and assessment delivery in Early Primary School Classrooms in public and private schools in Anambra State.*

| S/N | Instructional and Assessment in the language of the immediate environment | Public (n=260) | | Decision | Private (n=107) | | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | SD | | Mean | SD | |
| 1 | I use the language of the child's immediate environment (mother tongue) as the main medium of instruction in my classroom. | 3.12 | .69 | Agree | 2.41 | .91 | Disagree |
| 2 | I switch between English and the local language during teaching to aid comprehension. | 3.37 | .67 | Agree | 2.86 | .64 | Agree |
| 3 | I assess pupils using oral and written tests conducted in the local language. | 2.93 | 1.03 | Agree | 2.00 | .53 | Disagree |
| 4 | Continuous assessment is often done in the language of the child's environment | 2.45 | .98 | Disagree | 2.00 | .30 | Disagree |
| | **Mean of Means** | **2.97** | **0.84** | **Agree** | **2.32** | **0.60** | **Disagree** |

As shown in Table 1, the mean of means for public schools is 2.97 while that of the private schools is 2.32. This indicates that teachers in primary public schools generally agreed that instructional and assessment delivery is conducted using the mother tongue whereas teachers in private schools disagreed.

Specifically, the mean ratings indicates that teachers in public primary schools agreed that; teachers use the mother tongue as the main medium of instruction, teachers switch between English and the local language to aid comprehension, pupils are assessed using oral and written tests in the local language, but disagreed that continuous assessment in the language of the child's environment is less frequent . On the other hand, teachers in private Schools disagreed on all aspects of the use of mother tongue in instruction and assessment, but agreed that English and the local language are occasionally switched during teaching.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public primary schools and those in private primary schools in Anambra state on the use of the mother tongue in instructional and assessment delivery.

***Table 2:*** *Independent Samples t-test on the Mean Ratings Use of the mother tongue in instructional and assessment delivery by Teachers in Public and Private Primary Schools in Anambra State*

| **Source of Variation** | **N** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Df** | ***t*** | ***p*** | ***Decision*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public | 260 | 2.97 | 0.55 | | | | |
| | | | | 365 | 11.13 | 0.00 | Significant |
| Private | 107 | 2.32 | 0.40 | | | | |

The result displayed in Table 2 indicates that teachers in public primary schools and those in private schools differ significantly in their mean ratings of their use of the language of the child's immediate environment in instructional and assessment delivery in primary schools in Anambra

state, $t(365) = 11.3$, $p=0.00$. As the $p$-value was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Research Question Two:** Are the instructional materials (textbooks and workbooks) used in teaching primary school pupils developed with the mother tongue in public and private schools in Anambra State?

**Table 3:** *Mean Ratings on the Use of the Mother Tongue in Instructional and assessment deliveries in Early Primary School Classrooms in public and private schools in Anambra State.*

| S/N | Use of instructional materials developed with the language of the child's immediate environment | Public (n=260) | | | Private (n=107) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | SD | Decision | Mean | SD | Decision |
| 5 | The textbooks used in early primary classes are written in the child's mother tongue. | 2.24 | .93 | Disagree | 1.56 | .50 | Disagree |
| 6 | The workbooks used in teaching early primary pupils reflect the language spoken in the child's immediate environment. | 2.59 | .78 | Agree | 1.99 | .54 | Disagree |
| 7 | The instructional materials provided by the government are designed to promote learning through the child's first language. | 2.55 | .70 | Agree | 2.27 | 1.03 | Disagree |
| 8 | Locally produced teaching materials are available in the child's mother tongue. | 3.10 | .66 | Agree | 2.70 | 1.04 | Agree |
| 9 | The pictures, stories, and examples in textbooks reflect the child's culture and immediate environment. | 3.27 | .59 | Agree | 3.13 | .65 | Agree |
| 10 | Teachers have access to textbooks written in both the child's language and English for classroom use. | 3.20 | .74 | Agree | 2.84 | .84 | Agree |
| | **Mean of Means** | **2.85** | **0.72** | **Agree** | **2.42** | **0.81** | **Disagree** |

As shown in Table 3, the mean of means for public schools regarding the use of instructional materials (textbooks and workbooks) developed in the language of the child's immediate environment for teaching is 2.95 while that of the private school is 2.42. This indicates that teachers in primary public schools generally agreed that they teach the pupils using instructional materials developed in the pupils' mother tongue while teachers in private primary schools disagreed on using that.

The item-by-item means reveal that for public schools, teachers agreed with five aspects of the use of instructional materials developed with mother tongue such as; the pictures, stories, and examples in textbooks reflect the child's culture and immediate environment, teachers have access to bilingual textbooks, locally produced teaching materials are available in the child's mother tongue, the workbooks used in teaching early primary pupils reflect the language spoken in the child's immediate environment, and the instructional materials provided by the government are designed to promote learning through the child's first language . However, they disagreed that the textbooks are written in the child's mother tongue (mean= 2.24). On the other hand, teachers in private primary schools disagreed with three out of the six items with mean ratings from 1.56 – 2.27 while they agreed with three items with mean ratings ranging between 2.70 to 3.13. Overall, they disagreed to the notion of using instructional materials developed in the language of the child's immediate environment in teaching the pupils while teachers in public secondary schools agreed.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public primary schools and those in private primary schools in Anambra state on the use of instructional materials (textbooks and workbooks) developed in the pupils mother tongue in teaching in early primary schools in Anambra state.

**Table 4:** *Independent Samples t-test on the Mean Ratings of Teachers in Public and Private Primary Schools on their Use of instructional materials (textbooks and workbooks) developed in the pupils' mother tongue in teaching in Early Primary Schools in Anambra State*

| **Source of Variation** | **N** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Df** | ***T*** | ***P*** | ***Decision*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public | 260 | 2.82 | 0.51 | | | | |
| | | | | 365 | 6.64 | 0.00 | Significant |
| Private | 107 | 2.42 | 0.59 | | | | |

As shown in Table 4, there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public primary schools and those in private primary schools regarding their use of instructional materials (textbooks and workbooks) developed in the language of the pupils' immediate environment, $t(365) = 6.64$, $p$=0.00. The null hypothesis was rejected as the $p$-value was less than 0.05 level of significance.

**Research Question Three:** Are primary school teachers trained in the use of mother tongue in classroom instructional delivery in public and private primary schools Anambra State?

**Table 5:** *Mean Ratings on the Training of Primary School Teachers on the Use of the Mother Tongue in Instructional Delivery in Early Primary School Classrooms in Public and Private Primary Schools in Anambra State*

| S/N | Training on the use of mother Tongue in classroom instructional delivery | Public (n=260) | | | Private (n=107) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Mean** | **SD** | **Decision** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Decision** |
| 11 | I received formal training on the use of mother tongue for classroom instruction during my teacher education. | 3.04 | .85 | Agree | 2.28 | .45 | Disagree |
| 12 | My training institution emphasized the importance of using learners' mother tongue in early grade teaching. | 3.17 | .80 | Agree | 2.42 | .91 | Disagree |
| 13 | I have attended workshops/seminars on mother tongue-based instruction. | 2.82 | .93 | Agree | 2.28 | .71 | Disagree |
| 14 | The training I received adequately prepared me to teach using pupils' mother tongue. | 2.90 | .91 | Agree | 2.13 | .65 | Disagree |
| 15 | The use of mother tongue was demonstrated during my teaching practice. | 2.98 | .84 | Agree | 2.00 | .00 | Disagree |
| 16 | Continuous professional development opportunities on the use of mother tongue are available to teachers in my school. | 2.83 | .83 | Agree | 2.29 | .70 | Disagree |
| 17 | The Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) provides support for teachers' training on mother tongue instruction. | 2.85 | .73 | Agree | 2.14 | .84 | Disagree |
| | **Mean of Means** | **2.94** | **0.84** | **Agree** | **2.22** | **0.61** | **Disagree** |

Table 5 displays the mean of means for public schools regarding training teachers in use of the language of the immediate environment of the child in teaching is 2.94 while that of the teachers in private primary schools is 2.22. This indicates an agreement that teachers in public schools have received training in mother tongue instruction, and a disagreement that teachers in private primary

schools have received training in mother tongue instruction. Specifically, teachers in public schools agreed among other things that; teachers received formal training during teacher education, training institutions emphasized mother tongue instruction, demonstration of mother tongue use occurred during teaching practice and that training was adequate for teaching in the mother tongue. Teachers in the private schools, on the other hand, disagreed with all aspects of teacher training in mother tongue usage for instruction as shown by the mean ratings ranging from 2.00 to 2.42.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public primary schools and those in private primary schools in Anambra state regarding the training of teachers in the use of mother tongue in classroom instructional delivery in early primary schools Anambra State?

**Table 6:** *Independent Samples t-test on the Mean Ratings of Teachers in Public and those in Private Primary Schools on their Training on the Use of Mother Tongue in Classroom Instructional delivery in Early Primary Schools in Anambra State*

| **Source of Variation** | **N** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Df** | ***t*** | ***P*** | ***Decision*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public | 260 | 2.94 | 0.64 | | | | |
| | | | | 365 | 10.83 | 0.00 | Significant |
| Private | 107 | 2.22 | 0.40 | | | | |

As shown in Table 6, there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public primary schools and those in private primary schools regarding the training of teachers in the use of mother tongue in classroom instructional delivery in early primary schools Anambra State, $t(365) = 10.83$, $p=0.00$. The null hypothesis was rejected as the $p$-value was less than 0.05 level of significance.

**Discussion of Findings**

Findings from the study revealed that Mother tongue was used in instructional and assessment delivery in public primary school classrooms, but was not used in private school classrooms in primary schools in Anambra State. This result is consistent with the results of Okediadi (2011) and Moganedi *et al.* (2025) who observed that the adoption rates of using the mother tongue in the private schools are usually low because of market forces and preferences of parents towards using English as a medium of instruction. On the other hand, it seems that public schools adheres more fully to the National Policy on Education (NPE) that requires the implementation of the mother tongue, as a primary school instruction medium, in the first three years of study. It can be implied that the social actors in the implementation of a national language policy are the state institutions, which are the main implementers of the policy, whereas the institutions within the privatized sector consider English as a commodity of marketing and a status indicator, according to Uwen *et al.* (2020). The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there was a significant difference between public and private primary school in the use of mother tongue for instructional and assessment delivery in primary schools in Anambra state. This is in collaboration with the findings of Obiakor, (2024) who noted that private schools in Nigeria have lower implementation rates of the mother tongue language policy compared to public schools, indicating significant differences in instructional delivery.

Findings revealed that the instructional materials (textbooks and workbooks) developed with mother tongue were used in teaching in public primary school classrooms, but were not used in teaching in private primary schools in Anambra State. This finding is complemented by Okediadi (2011) who stated that private schools usually focus on the English-based resources although they have superior infrastructural facilities. The absence of mother tongue resources in the private schools poses a twofold cognitive burden to the students, who have to learn a foreign language, at the same time struggling to learn to read and write. This is different to the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis that argued that the development of a strong literacy base in the first language (L1) will help in acquisition of a second language (L2). The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public primary schools and those in private primary schools in Anambra state regarding the use of instructional

materials (textbooks and workbooks) developed in the pupils' immediate environment in teaching in early primary schools' pupils in Anambra state. This is in contrast with the findings of Abijo (2014) who opined that here was no significant difference between public and private schools in Nigeria (South west) regarding the use of mother-tongue instructional materials in early primary education.

Findings revealed that Teachers in public primary schools were trained in the use of mother tongue for instructional delivery while those in private primary schools in Anambra state were not trained. This observation aligns with that of Adeyemi (2007) and Omiunu (2014), who found the lack of human resources and insufficiency of teacher preparation to be some of the biggest impediments to Nigerian education. In the absence of special training, the teachers are not able to adopt the techniques of "translanguaging" or correct the divide between local dialects and academic Igbo. The absence of training in the privates' schools could be another aspect that strengthens the dependency on English as teachers are likely to feel more qualified providing the instruction in the language they are professionally trained to use. The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public primary schools and those in private primary schools regarding the training of teachers in the use of mother tongue in classroom instructional delivery in early primary schools Anambra State. This is in collaboration with the findings of Asurquin (2025) who stated that there is a significant difference in the effectiveness of MTB-MLE implementation between private and public schools, with factors such as teacher training and capability building influencing this difference.

**Conclusion**

This study concludes that the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Anambra state is characterized by divided situation. Although the state system of schools has a laudable degree of dedication to the use of the mother tongue in the early years of schooling, with trained teachers and locally specific instructional resources, the private sector of education is still largely opposed to the policy. This implies that in most cases, the learning of children in the private schools is not taking the cognitive and cultural advantages of studying in a language that they are familiar with and instead they are being taken through to learning English as early as possible.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Ministry of education in the state of Anambra must enforce the application of the mother tongue (Igbo) as the first three-year primary education medium of instruction both in the public and non-public schools in order to enforce equality in the acquisition of literacy.
2. Linguists and State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBE) must join hands to produce a standardized set of technical and abstract terms in Igbo language in science, math, and social studies, to help teachers during teaching.
3. Teachers of the private school should be given a compulsory training on the use of the MTB-MLE pedagogy as a precondition of school accreditation and renewal.

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