

# Desensitized or Tongue-Tied?: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Discontinuation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the Philippines

**Edzel Louise Vargas**

*University of the Philippines*

## Abstract

The recent legislative and administrative mandatory policies revolve around the discontinuing of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in the Philippines and not cultivation. In the height of curriculum development and transition, this marks a significant reversal in the country's linguistic and educational environment. This angle of Philippine education centers on the debate whether the change boosts or disrupts literacy among Filipino learners. This study investigates the discursive strategies used by Philippines' policymakers and pertinent administrators to justify the removal of the Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction, specifically in Filipino government schools. Moreover, this further questions whether the Philippine education system is becoming desensitized to linguistic diversity or if the discontinuation effectively renders marginalized learners as voiceless. Through adopting a qualitative approach grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this research analyzes a collection of data and selected documents of primary legal and administrative association including Republic Act No. 12027 (The Act of Discontinuing the Use of the Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 3) alongside significant Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) and recent Department of Education (DepEd) orders. Ultimately, the study maps the shift from pedagogical inclusivity to linguistic practicality. Preliminary analysis suggests that the discourse and justification created to suit implementation of RA 12027 reroute educational stakeholders and Filipino learners from refining and prioritizing English-language hegemony, as resources and educators' qualifications shall be modified upon mandatory enactment.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Language Policy and Planning, Linguistic Hegemony, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), Republic Act No. 12027

