The Philippines is an archipelago in the Pacific with rich and diversified linguistic and cultural diversity and there are at least 171 living languages spoken in the Philippines today. The current constitution of the Philippines declares both English and Filipino (Tagalog) to be the official languages. Making English and Filipino (Tagalog) the official languages of the Philippines is a practical move, seeing as there needs to be a language that can be used to do business and trade as well as to communicate on different races both in national and international levels.

In 2009, the Department of Education (DepEd) recognized the benefits of teaching pupils using their mother tongue or first language. Research has found that children learn more quickly in their first language on how to speak, read, and write and later on can pick up a second and third language more easily if taught in their local or first language. Through Department Order 94, DepEd instituted Mother Tongue - Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), followed by major languages as languages of instruction in teaching: Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Iloko, Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausug, Maguindanaoan, Maranao, Chabacano, Ivatan, Sambal, Akianon, Kinaray-a, Yakan, and Sinurigaonon. Mother Tongue Based - Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy involves implementation of local mother tongue or their first languages as the language of instruction in Kindergarten to up to grade three, with the official languages (Filipino and English) being introduced as the language of instruction starting grade four onwards.

With a very small number of schools previously implemented MTB-MLE, schools and teachers nationwide are now learning how to use their local mother tongue as the
first language of instruction. Schooling which begins in the mother tongue and the transitions to additional languages particularly Filipino and English. It is meant to address the high functional illiteracy of Filipinos where language plays a significant factor in daily basis. Since the pupils own language has enabled her/him to express him/herself easily, then, there is no fear of making mistakes. It also encourages active participation by the pupils in the learning process because they understand what is being discussed and what is being asked for them. They can immediately use their mother tongue to construct and explain their ideas, articulate their thoughts and add new concepts to what they already know.

References:

http://www.cu.edu.ph/?page_id=3290