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Learners' Beliefs and Use of Chavacano as Medium of Instruction

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Abstract: Philippines has been known to be an ethnically diverse country where people speak 181 different major and minor languages. Despite being a multilingual country, the Department of Education (DepEd) through the Republic Act 10533, implemented the Mother Tongue Based, Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in the primary level of the basic education. In the year 2012, Chavacano language was one of the languages used as medium of instruction in the primary level. Although Zamboanga City has been known to be the "Asia's Latin City", it is also known as the "melting pot" of the region because of the presence of different cultures bringing their own native languages. This scenario may give possibility of language mixing especially to children who do not master yet their L1. Thus this study aimed to determine the beliefs and use of the 39 participants about Chavacano (L1) as a Medium of Instruction (MOI) in L2 reading. Furthermore, study solicited the beliefs and use of the 39 participants about Chavacano (L1) as a Medium of Instruction in reading in English (L2). Using Descriptive Coding, the validated guided questions were coded, transcribed and analyzed. Results showed that the respondents were not yet proficient in their L2 and they were not exposed to L2 especially in reading as evidenced by their "sometimes" responses in reading and answering stories in English. There also seemed to be a dominant negative or unfavourable pattern on the students' views on the role of L1 to L2 particularly in learning how to read. Generally, students did not see yet the connection or association between the languages in reading, more so, the pupils did not see the importance of their L1 in learning their target L2. They did think that Chavacano and English are both difficult languages. Moreover, this supported Ellis (1997) and Cummins (1979) Threshold Hypohesis that learners construct their own interim rules in learning a target language using their L1 knowledge if they believe that this L1 would help them in learning the task at hand or when they have become sufficiently proficient in the L2 for transfer to be possible. This also supported the findings that some problems in the mother tongue instruction were Teachers' Guide and Learners' Manual inconsistency, limited number of LM's, lack of time in the preparation of localized instructional material, limited vocabulary.

Keywords: Qualitative, Chavacano, Medium of Instruction, Reading Skills, Mother Tongue

1. Introduction

Seameo Innotech in the K-12 tool kit highlighted the institutionalization of the Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) from Grades I to 3 as one of the key changes in the elementary curriculum in the Philippines. The mother tongue will be the Medium of Instruction (MOI) from Grades I to 3 [22]. This will be the main vehicle to teach understanding and mastery of all subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Araling Panlipunan, Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao, Music, arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) from the start of the school year 2012-2013 [6].

Several studies and agencies supported the use of mother tongue as MOI. UNESCO believes that mother tongue instruction is a means of improving educational quality; multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies [24]. Garbes reiterated that elementary learners can understand better the lessons with the use of their mother tongue [10]. Ball also revealed that children learned to read faster if they speak the language of instruction because they have the repertoire of

vocabulary, knowledge on syntax, and enunciation of sounds. Frigillano, Examen, Ferolino found that mother tongue based instruction improved the Professional Education performance of the 32 Education students of a school in the Philippines [9]. It has also been reported that if children are taught in languages which are not their own they drop out from school, do no perform better, and repeat classes due to a high failure rate [11, 16]. Upon the implementation of MTB-MLE results from studies suggest different drawbacks of the program. Estremera indicated that MTB-MLE is relevant to Grade III pupils' performance in Mathematics and Science due to limited vocabulary words that impede the learners to deal with the lesson [8]. Common problems were Teachers' Guide and Learners' Manual inconsistency, limited number of LM's, lack of time in the preparation of localized instructional material and recommended methods to address the present drawback. Mufanechiya and Mufanechiya studied the language use and challenges teachers and pupils face in the classroom in their attempt to use mother tongue in the teaching and learning of mathematics at junior primary level [14]. The research found that the use of mother tongue in teaching mathematics might not be achieved soon. Consultations with relevant stakeholders, attitude change and resource production and mobilization were among some of the many issues identified. Thus, even if Grade III teachers in Ilocos have positive attitude towards MTB-MLE, they still maintain the need for additional funding, learning resources, and teacher trainings to improve the implementation of the policy as also stated in the study of Berowa & Agbayani [2]. In terms of the influence of mother tongue (L1) to second language (L2) in reading, Caballero found that all the 45 readers of all levels use their first language (English) when reading in their second language (Spanish) [4]. Moreso, Saavedra's study on "Chavacano as a Medium of Instruction: Its Implications for the Reading Levels of English in Elementary School Pupils" also concluded that the reading skills of the students in their second language (English) falls on the category of frustration level which is below the competency level [18, 20]. Yamashita also in his correlation study between L1 and L2 reading attitudes and reading performance concluded that positive feeling towards reading in both languages facilitates learners performance in extensive reading [26].

In Zamboanga City, the then Mayor regarded the MTB-MLE as divisive since the pupils in coastal Muslim and Cebuano-dominated barangays are segregated according to their own dialects [16]. He elaborated that MTB-MLE implementation in the city is totally unacceptable to local government. In response to this policy, the Mayor issued Executive Order CL-459-2012 enjoining the speaking of Chavacano in all schools, government offices and establishments in the city to preserve, perpetuate, and promote the Chavacano language. Chavacano is one of the major languages spoken in the Philippines. According to Molina, Chavacano is a Spanish-based creole language spoken in our country [14]. This language was developed in Cavite City, Ternate, Zamboanga City and Ermita. It has survived for more than 400 years, making it one of the oldest creole languages in the world. Presently, there are 689, 000 recorded native speakers of Chavacano but it has said that this number is decreasing due to the different languages that are also used by other people who migrated in the city. The Zamboanga City Government stated that approximately 64% if the city's population consists of the native families of the old Zamboanga who are significantly inclined to Spanish way of life especially the language. However 36% of the city's population is composed of the cultural minority members In lieu of this concept, there are three major languages spoken in the city: Tausug, Yakans, Bisaya, Badjaos and the Subanons which complicates the Mayor's EO Executive Order CL-459-2012.

Considering this statistics, this new mandate is indeed a challenge to the 36% minority considering that they have different L1. The degree of differences among these languages and Chavacano is higher since the latter is a Spanish creole. This study is anchored on the belief that in learning a target language, learners have their own perception of what is transferable and by their level of development. They make their own temporary rules with the aid of their L1 knowledge, but only when they think it will help them in learning the task or when they have become sufficiently proficient in the L2 for transfer to be achievable [7]. This thought has been found out in the study of Saavedra and Barredo wherein one of the factors that contribute to the poor writing skill in second language is their perception that writing is a hard task which made it difficult for them to convey and organize their ideas in Filipino and English as their L2 [19]. As Berowa and Regala-Flores argue, following the conventions of the native tongue to arrive at second language production is a natural occurrence among Filipino learners [2]. Cummins in his Threshold Hypothesis states that the level of competency that L2 learners reach in their two languages serves as intervening variables that facilitate the effect of their bilingual understandings in cognition [5].

Zamboanga City has been known to be the "Asia's Latin City", it is also known as the "melting pot" of the region because of the presence of different cultures bringing their own native languages. This scenario may give possibility of language mixing especially to children who do not master yet their L1. Thus this study aimed to determine the beliefs and use of the 39 participants about Chavacano (L1) as a Medium of Instruction (MOI) in L2 reading.

2. Method

This research made use of the Descriptive-Qualitative Research Design. The supplied answers of the respondents in the guided questions were used as qualitative data. There were 39 Grade 3 pupils under the K to 12 curriculum with Chavacano as the MOI who were purposively chosen as respondents of the study. There were 21 or (53.85%) female and 18 or (46.15%) male respondents.

The questionnaire was made of five Chavacano questions/statements using 3 point Likert scale aimed to

solicit the views of the participants about Chavacano as MOI in their L2 (English) reading skills. After these, the respondents were required to answer essay questions composed of 5 queries that were organized using Thought Unit (T-Units) as the unit for qualitative data. Thought unit is composed of one independent clause plus one or more dependent clauses [12]. Using Descriptive Coding (Miles & Huberman, Saldaña, Wolcott), the validated guided questions were coded, transcribed and analysed by the researchers to find out the impact of Chavacano as MOI to the English reading skills of the participants [13]. As cited in Saldana, this type of coding is appropriate for qualitative data wherein the content is the substance of the message [21].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. On Pupils' Views on the Use of L1 in Relation to L2 Reading

Table 1 presents the Grade III pupils' views on the use of L1 Chavacano in relation to L2 Reading. In question 1, *Pirmi ba ta le maga istoria na Ingles?* [Do you usually read stories in English], the data reveal that 26 (66.667%) perceive they *sometimes* use English in reading stories. Only 12 (30.770%) think they *always* use English and only 1 (2.60%) say they do not use English in reading stories.

In question 2, *Bien interasao oi na maestro si ta ensinia le usando el lenguaje Chavacano?* [I find it very interesting when my teacher uses Chavacano in her teaching?], it shows that 20 (51.28%) perceive that they *sometimes* find it interesting when the teacher uses Chavacano in her teaching. 12 (35.90%) think that they *always* find it interesting on teacher's use of Chavacano. Only 4 (10.26%) say that they do not find it interesting when their teachers utilize Chavacano in his/her teaching.

In question 3, *Ta puede contesta na maga pregunta del maga cuento na Ingles,* [I can answer questions about the

story in English], data reveal that 34 (87.18%) are sometimes able to answer questions about the story in English. 14 (35.90%) think they are *always* able to answer questions about the story in English. None of the pupils manifest negative response on this question.

In question 4, *Ta usa lenguaje Chavacano si ta converza na maga maestro/maestro y maga condicipulo* [I use Chavacano language in communicating with my teachers and classmates], it reveals that 24 (61.54%) perceive that they *sometimes* use Chavacano with their teachers and classmates. Only 5% think they always use Chavacano with their teachers and classmates. It is interesting to note that 10 (25.64%) of the pupils say that they do not use Chavacano with their teachers.

In question 5, *Ta usa lenguaje Chavacano si ta converza na maga mayores y familia na casa* [I use Chavacano language in communicating with my parents and family members at home]. Data show that 20 (51.28%) out of 39 pupils perceive that they *always* use Chavacano in communicating with their parents and family members at home. 19 (48.72%) think that they *sometimes* use Chavacano at home. It is already expected that none of the respondents would give a negative response since all target participants were Chavacano speakers.

The data reveal that respondents are not yet proficient in their L2 and they were not exposed to L2 especially in reading as evidenced by their "sometimes" responses in reading and answering stories in English which is why they "sometimes" like their teachers to speak Chavacano in teaching and talking with them. This study is anchored on the belief that in learning a target language, learners have their own perception of what is transferable and by their level of development. This supports the Threshold Hypothesis of Cummins that learners have to become sufficiently proficient in the L2 for transfer to be achievable from L1 [5].

Table 1. The Pupils' View on the use of L1 in relation to L2 Reading.

Question/ Statement (Pregunta/Declaracion)	Pirmi (2)		Tiene Vez (1)		Jendeh (0)		Total	%
	F	%	f	%	F	%		
1. Pirmi ba ta le maga istoria na Ingles? *(Do you always read English stories?)*	12	30.77	26	66.67	1	2.60	39	100%
2. Bien interesao oi na maestra si ta ensinia le usando el lenguje Chavacano. (Are you interested to listen whenever your teacher uses Chavacano language in teaching?)	14	35.90	20	51.28	4	10.26	39	100%
3. Ta puede contesta na maga pregunta del maga cuento na Ingles. *(Can you answer questions in English stories?)*	4	10.26	34	87.18	0	0	39	100%
4. Ta usa lenguaje Chavacano si ta converza na maestra y na maga condicipulo. *(Do you use Chavacano language when talking to your teachers and classmates?*	5	12.82	24	61.54	10	25.64	39	100%
5. Ta usa el lenguaje Chavacano si ta converza na maga mayores y familia na casa. *((Do you use Chavacano language when talking to your parents and other family members at home*	20	51.28	19	48.72	0	0	39	100%

After the 5 questions/statements above, the respondents were required to answer essay questions composed of 5 queries. These qualitative data were organized using Thought Unit (T-Units) as the unit for qualitative data.

Table 2 presents the students opinion on the use of English in Reading. On the question, *Mas pronto ba tu entende cosa tu ta le na Ingles?* [Do you understand better what you read

in English]. A closer look at this table, it reveals that 17 (43.59%) out of 39 pupils think that they do not understand what they read in English based on the 23 (46%) T-units out of 50 total T-units elicited from students' written output. 13 (33.33%), out of the 16 (32%) T-units, view that they do comprehend better on reading in the English language. Only 9 (23.08%) are undecided. The results imply that majority of

the respondents (43.59%) don't easily understand English stories/passages. They find English difficult given the fact that they sometimes read and answer English stories in school and at home. Also, their English vocabulary is limited that made it difficult for them to comprehend English stories supporting Estemera's study [8].

Below are sample transcripts in T-units expressing *unfavorable* response:

Sample Transcript

Poko lang yo ta entende porcausa tan lisud yo na otro. Tiene vez lang yo ta converza Engles [I only understand a little because I find the others difficult. I only speak English once in a while] (Respondent 1, Q1, T-unit 1 and 2).

Jendeh iyo sabe le Ingles por causa dificil [I don't know how to read in English because it is very hard]

(Respondent 2, Q1, T-unit 3).

Jendeh porcausa dipisil el lenguaje de Ingles (Not, because English is a difficult language) (R 13, Q1 T-unit 17).

Tan lisud yo conversa na Ingles (I find it hard speaking in English) (R29, Q1, T-39).

The following Favorable opinion was given by the pupils:

Mas pronto ta le na Ingles kay chene vez lang iyo le na libro del chavacano (I read better in English since I seldom read Chavacano books) (R17, Q1, T-unit 22).

Si, por causa yo ta entede na ingles cay di mio auntie Ingles (Yes, because I understand English, my Auntie speaks in English) (R20, Q1, T-Unit 27).

Si porcausa di mio nana y tata tan insinia comigo na casa. (Yes, because my mother and father are teaching me at home. (34, Q1, T-unit 44).

Table 2. Pupils' Opinion on the use of L2 in Reading.

Question	Responses	Respondents		Thought Units	
		F	%	f	%
1. Mas pronto ba tu ta entende cosa tu ta le na Ingles? *(Do you easily understand what you read English passages?)*	Favorable	13	33.33%	16	32%
	Unfavorable	17	43.59%	23	46%
	Undecided	9	23.08%	11	22%
Total		39	100%	50	100%

Table 3 presents the pupil's opinion on the influence of L1 Chavacano to L2 English. As shown in this table, 28 (71.79%) of the pupils, out of the 4 (8%) T-units elicited by the pupils in their written output, think that there is no connection between English and Chavacano in their learning the L2. Only 9 (23.08%) are favorable on the influence of L1 Chavacano to L2 English. A very small frequency/percentage of 2 (5.13%) are undecided. This is perhaps due to the fact that the degree of difference of English and Chavacano is quite high since chavacano is a Spanish creole. This result has also similarity on the study of Saavedra (2019) which concludes that most of the teachers strongly agree to use the Chabacano language in teaching the Mother Tongue subject only and translate some words in Filipino whenever the children do not understand the concepts in Chabacano language. On the other hand, they are undecided whether Chabacano should be used as a medium of instruction in all subjects except for English and Filipino. The respondents' preference on the implementation of the MTB-MLE absolutely concurs to the national guideline of the DepEd Order no. 74 Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education which clearly states that "the mother tongue of the students shall be a medium of instruction to be used in the classroom". Also, their preference in translating

Chabacano words in Filipino also supports the Philippine constitution, article 14 section 7 which states that for purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law, English. The regional languages are the auxiliary official languages in the regions and shall serve as auxiliary media of instruction therein.

3.2. Sample Transcript

Unfavorable

"Jende kay nuay igual palabra ingles y chavacano" (No, because there is no similar words in English and Chavacano) (11, Q2, T-13).

"Jende kay mas ta entende yo na palabra Chavacano" (No, because I understand better in Chavacano) (12, Q2, T14).

"Jende yo pirmi ta uwi na casa pati na escuela" (No, I don't always hear it at home and in school) (20, Q2, T-24)

"Jende mas dipisil el ingles compara na chavacano" (No, English is harder compared to Chavacano).

Favorable:

"Si, kay ya intende yo na mi maestra na Ingles. Mi maestra tan ingles" (Yes, Because I understand my teacher. My teacher speaks in English) (6, T-7 and T-8, Q2).

Table 3. Pupils' Ppinion on the Influence of L1 Chavacano to L2 English.

Question	Responses	Respondents		Thought Units	
		F	%	F	%
2. Mas pronto ba tu ya aprende conversa na Ingles porcausa kay Chavacano el di tuyu primer Lenguaje? *(Did you easily learn to speak English because Chavacano is your first language?*	Favorable	9	23.08%	11	22%
	Unfavorable	28	71.79%	4	8%
	Undecided	2	5.13%	35	70%
Total		39	100%	50	100%

Table 4 presents the Pupils' Opinion on the Beneficial/ Positive Influence of L1 to L2 Reading. It shows that based on 21 (48%) of the T-units, 24 (61.54%) out of 39 pupils believe that Chavacano do not positively influence their learning of the English language. 12 (30.77%) out of 15 (34%) T-units view Chavacano as beneficial in learning English. Only 3 (7.69%) are undecided. This finding again supports the claim that learners make their own temporary rules with the aid of their L1 knowledge, but only when they think it will help them in learning the task [7].

Unfavorable:
"Jindeh ta ayuda el lenguaje Chavacano Porcausa bien dipisil" (Chavacano language doesn't help because it's too hard. (4, Q3, T-6).
"Jendeh ta ayuda el chavacano na casa". (Chavacano doesn't help at home) (Respondent 7, Q3, T-unit 7).
Favorable:
"Ta ayuda comigo el lenguaje chavacano kay ta conversa kame na casa" (Chavacano language helps me because we use it at home)(R6, Q3, T-unit 6).

Table 4. Pupils' Opinion on the Beneficial/ Positive Influence of L1 to L2 Reading.

Question	Responses	Respondents		Thought Units	
		F	%	F	%
3. Pakilaya ta ayuda contigo el lenguaje Chavacano si ay le tu na Ingles?	Favorable	12	30.77%	15	34%
	Unfavorable	24	61.54%	21	48%
	Undecided	3	7.69%	3	7%
Total		39	100%	44	100%

Table 5 presents the pupils' opinion on the beneficial influence of L1 Chavacano to L2 English. As shown in this table, it reveals that 17 (43.59%) of the 39 pupils out of 18 (41.86%) T-units view this statement to be favorable. 13 (33.33%) out of 15 (34.88%) think that it is unfavorable. Only 9 (23.08) are undecided. The results here negate some previous studies (Klaus, Ball, Rai et. Al, Garbes, Frigillano et al,) saying that L1 facilitates learning L2. On the other hand, this supports Estremera that lack of vocabulary impedes learning [11, 1, 17, 10, 9]. This result could have connection to the respondents' belief that Chavacano and English are both difficult languages.

Favorable:
"Jende iyo tan lisud conversa na Ingles cay ta ensenia el di mio maestra na Ingles" (I don' find it hard speaking in English because my teacher teaches is teaching me) (R23, Q4, T-unit 26).
"Hindi yo tan lisud habla Ingles por causa sabe ya yo el dos" (It's not hard for me to speak in English because I know the two languages.) (R26, Q4, T-unit 29).
Unfavorable:
"Tan lisud kay hende yo ya queda na America" (It's difficult because I didn't live in America) (R6, Q4, T7).

Table 5. Pupils' Opinion on the Beneficial Influence of L1 Chavacano to L2 English.

Question	Responses	Respondents		Thought Units	
		F	%	F	%
4. Porcausa kay Chavacano el di tuyu prier lenguaje, hinde ba tu tan lisud conversa na ingles?	Favorable	17	43.59%	18	41.86%
(Since chavacano is your first language, do you find it hard to speak English?)	Unfavorable	13	33.33%	15	34.88%
	Undecided	9	23.08%	10	23.26%
Total		39	100%	43	100%

Table 6 presents the pupils' opinion about the similarity between Chavacano and English. It shows that 31 (79.49%) of the pupils out of 33 (80.49%) students are obviously undecided about the two languages' similarity Only 5 (12.82%) out of the 41 T-units view it as unfavorable. 3 (7.69%) out of 41 T-units are favorable.

79.49% of the respondents stated undecided answers perhaps because the respondents are too young to have enough knowledge on the grammatical composition and etymology of both languages and they still did not have proficiency in both languages.

Favorable:
"Tiene igual de hamburger" (Yes, like hamburger).
"Tiene porcausa difisil conversa Ingles y Chavacano" (Yes, because it's hard to speak English and Chavacano).
Unfavorable:
"Nuay maskin uno" (None, even one).
"Jendeh" (No).
"Nuay porcausa otro el lenguaje Chavacano y Ingles" (None, because English and Chavacano are different).

Table 6. Pupils' Opinion about the Similarity between Chavacano and English.

Question	Responses	Respondents		Thought Units	
		f	%	F	%
5. Tiene ba semejante el lenguaje Chavacano y ingles? Si tiene, dale maga ehemplo.	Favorable	3	7.69%	3	7.32%
(Is there a similarity between Chavacano and English languages? Give examples.)	Unfavorable	5	12.82%	5	12.20%
	Undecided	31	79.49%	33	80.49%
Total		39	100%	41	100%

In sum generally, the respondents are not yet proficient in their L2 and they were not exposed to L2 especially in reading as evidenced by their "sometimes" responses in reading and answering stories in English. There also seems to be a dominant negative or unfavourable pattern on the students' views on the role of L1 to L2, particularly in learning how to read. Generally, students do not see yet the connection or association between the languages in reading, more so, the pupils do not see the importance of their L1 in learning their target L2. In fact, in question 5, students, in general, are undecided about Chavacano's relationship to English. They think that Chavacano and English are both difficult languages. Moreover, this supports Ellis and Cummins Threshold Hypothesis that learners construct their own interim rules in learning a target language using their L1 knowledge if they believe that this L1 will help them in learning the task at hand or when they have become sufficiently proficient in the L2 for transfer to be possible [7, 5]. This also supports the findings that some problems in the mother tongue instruction are Teachers' Guide and Learners' Manual inconsistency, limited number of LM's, lack of time in the preparation of localized instructional material, limited vocabulary, (Estremera and Mufanechiya and Mufanechiya [8, 15].

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

In sum generally, the respondents are not yet proficient in their L2 and they were not exposed to L2 especially in reading as evidenced by their "sometimes" responses in reading and answering stories in English. There also seems to be a dominant negative or unfavourable pattern on the students' views on the role of L1 to L2, particularly in learning how to read. Generally, students do not see yet the connection or association between the languages in reading, more so, the pupils do not see the importance of their L1 in learning their target L2. In fact, in question 5, students, in general, are undecided about Chavacano's relationship to English. They think that Chavacano and English are both difficult languages. Moreover, this supports Ellis and Cummins Threshold Hypothesis that learners construct their own interim rules in learning a target language using their L1 knowledge if they believe that this L1 will help them in learning the task at hand or when they have become sufficiently proficient in the L2 for transfer to be possible [7, 5]. This also supports the findings that some problems in the mother tongue instruction are Teachers' Guide and Learners' Manual inconsistency, limited number of LM's, lack of time in the preparation of localized instructional material, limited vocabulary.

Finally, the attitude of both the learners and the teachers toward these languages are also a very important determinant of success or failure in these languages. From the findings, the researchers feel that most respondents and even teachers favour the use of English more than their mother tongue, it could then be implied that perhaps, teachers still advocate the English only policy in the classroom as evidenced by the respondents who said that they do not use Chavacano with their teachers. Perhaps, contributory to this is the stature of English in the international arena that is why teachers still incorporate English in teaching reading in mother tongue, notwithstanding the fact that Grade III curriculum level mandates the use of the pupils' mother-tongue.

Thus students and teachers alike should spend more time to explore reading materials in Chavacano and English languages to develop their proficiencies in both languages, develop a more positive attitude toward the use of mother tongue especially in its influence on English metalinguistic skills, Administrators, on the other hand should also monitor the implications of the Mother Tongue curriculum in all schools to assist especially the non-native teachers teaching Mother Tongue. Curriculum planners should also provide more avenues for the development of materials in Chavacano so learners will better understand and appreciate their native tongue, develop their vocabulary more, and enrich their proficiency in L1 for L2 transfer to be possible. Future researchers can also do triangulation to validate the results of the study and/or extend the scope of the study to include the teachers, their first language and their schools.

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