

Oral Interlanguages of Second Language (L2) Learners of Filipino and English

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Abstract - This study explored the oral interlanguage proficiencies of the Cebuano-Bisaya speaking college students who have ventured into majoring the two second languages. Moreover, this study analyzed the crosslinguistic influences of their languages as they orally narrate in English and Filipino, based on a short silent film. Twenty third year BEd Communication Arts Major in English-Filipino students were purposively selected to participate in the study. Their interlanguage proficiency was rated by two sets of English and Filipino instructors. Further, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PP-MCC) was incorporated to determine the correlational relationship between the students' performance in the said languages. Results revealed that the participants' oral proficiencies are higher in Filipino than in English revealing that oral interlanguage proficiencies of the learners in one language do not entail proficiencies in the second. Consequently, phonological, lexical and syntactic negative transfers were evident in the oral discourse of Cebuano bilinguals.

Keywords: crosslinguistic influences, oral interlanguage, transfer

INTRODUCTION

With the infusion of English and Filipino in the Philippine Educational System, the country has automatically emerged as a multilingual society. For non-Tagalog speakers, the task of schooling involves learning two second languages (L2) – one foreign and the other, another Philippine language. Ringbom [1] has an appropriate simile to this scenario:

The difference between learning a closely related language and a totally unrelated one can be likened to the situation of two friends, a good tennis player and a good soccer player, who both take up squash while still continuing to have tennis and soccer respectively as their main games.

The immensity of this challenge to undertake academic work in two second languages is evident in the observation that many college students, despite a 10-year instruction prior to tertiary education are still not proficient in both languages. Also, the dominance of the first language (L1) cannot be disregarded.

Approaches on the influence of native language on second language acquisition included contrastive analysis hypothesis, error analysis, interlanguage, and crosslinguistic influences [2] – [4] which tried to address the issue on transfer and interference. As the first inductive investigative approach that examined language interferences, “Contrastive analysis hypothesis predicts that where there are similarities between the first and the second languages, the learner will acquire second language structures with ease; where there are differences, the learners will have difficulty”[5]. When this approach declined in 1970s, error analyses developed which shifted the focus more on explaining learners' difficulty rather than predicting errors. Conversely, the *interlanguage (IL)* concept by Selinker [6] claims “that the language of second language (L2) learners is systematic and that the learner errors are not random mistakes but evidence of rule-governed behavior” IL further claims “that the L2 learners have internalized a mental grammar, a natural language system that can be described in terms of linguistic rules and principles” [6]. Simply put, the IL is the second language learners' own grammar.

Another phenomenon that is of great importance in the field of language transfer in the learning of second language is *crosslinguistic influence (CLI)*, which was first popularized by Weinrich [1] then investigated further by Lado [3]. CLI illustrates that the learning of one language may be influenced by another language. Usually a first language influences a second language in different levels of linguistic subsystem such as phonology, syntax and semantics but it does not take place all the time since a second language could also be a source of influence [2].

Locally, one of the universities in Cebu designed a curriculum with double major in the two second languages – English and Filipino. The more popular and established curriculum concentrates on just one – either English or Filipino. Ideally, this double-language curriculum is the answer to the bilingual education conceived by the proponents whose version of bilingualism excludes the L1 of the non-Tagalog regions. Consequently, learning two languages (e.g. Filipino and English) immensely aids students' academic and professional endeavor. Alumni of the said curriculum have been given opportunities to teach in humanities, literature and communication courses using English or Filipino medium.

This present study focused on the interlanguage of the Cebuano-Bisaya speaking students who have ventured into majoring two second languages. This study on crosslinguistic influences among their languages as they orally narrate is a research that fills a gap since most studies deal with only L1 and one L2.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Lakshmanan and Selinker [7] argue that “In order to make serious progress in the investigation of interlanguage, researchers should focus on the construction of linguistic descriptions of learners' languages that can shed light on their specific properties and their own logic”. Moreover, Adjemian [7] also stresses the importance of “investigating interlanguage competence of not only the target language system but also the native language system”.

An empirical investigation conducted [7] analyzed the IL of L2 learners' spontaneous speech. They emphasized that the learner's IL competence cannot be examined directly and can only be derived indirectly through an examination of IL performance data such as production data (e.g., spontaneous speech, and experimentally elicited speech data) among others.

While IL is a “mental grammar” for L2 learners, its production however, whether spoken or written, is termed as crosslinguistic influence [7]. The development of CLI continues to grow and spread extensively in linguistics which permits Odlin [7] to declare that “transfer can occur in all linguistic subsystems”. Accordingly, Powell [8] stressed that considerable evidences support the role of CLI in the development of interlanguage. As Kellerman [8] pointed out, “CLI operates on the surface form of IL reflecting such processes as transfer. ...CLI operates on IL at smaller and larger levels than the sentence.

Advanced learners... are equally affected by CLI as are beginners”.

Although usually associated with CLI, transfer refers to those linguistic behaviors incorporated from L1 into IL without capturing other interlingual effect, while CLI refers to those L1 effects such as avoidance, L1 constraints on L2 learning and performance, and different directionality of interlingual effect” [9]. The most studied transfers are phonology, lexicon, and syntax.

Ellis [10] and Hansen [10] argue that strong effects of transfer are especially evident on phonology since the sound systems of the L1 are “deeply seated and difficult to change”. This is particularly true for languages which are typologically distant from each other as in the case of Cebuano-Bisaya and American English. On the other hand, Kellerman [10] also reports that lexicon is also affected by transfer and “interacts in interesting ways with learner perceptions of difficulty and plausible transferability”. Moreover, Ellis [10] also proposes that transfer also affects syntax although not as much as the other areas but this does not mean that “transfer influences [in syntax] have not been proposed elsewhere”. These mentioned linguistic subsystems were looked into in the present investigation.

As mentioned, transfer is most obvious in phonology. This *phonological transfer* is present when a “person's knowledge of the sound system of one language can affect that person's perception and production of speech sounds in another language” [2]. Meanwhile, *lexical transfer* occurs when a person's mental representation of his/her vocabulary often reflects the language he/she has learned whether as an L1 or L2 [2], and the production of such vocabulary in one language may indicate knowledge or influence of another language. Consequently, *syntactic transfer* also offers traces of potential language influence and “encompasses not only word order but also an entire gamut of well-formedness constraints” [2] such as in grammar-related cases such as grammaticality judgment, null elements (subject/object), adverbial placement, overproduction, and underproduction.

Further, the concept of transfer is divided into positive and negative transfer. *Positive transfer* is defined as the “facilitating influences that may arise from cross-linguistic similarities” [11] and in which the rules of the first and second language overlap; while a *negative transfer*, also known as interference, results in “errors because old, habitual behavior is different from that to be learned” [5].

Research objective and questions

This study aimed to investigate the oral interlanguage proficiency of the bilingual students in English (L2a) and Filipino (L2b) according to the raters' approximation and crosslinguistic influences in three languages.

METHOD

The elicited narratives in English and Filipino, narrated by 20 Bachelor of Science in Education (BSEd) Communication Arts Major in English-Filipino, served as the primary data. These students who have already enrolled in a number of core courses in English and Filipino and have been formally exposed to these languages for more than 10 years were purposively selected for this study. A structured interview was also conducted to establish the participants' profile, specifically their language history and language preference.

The interlanguage proficiency was rated by two sets of English and Filipino instructors. Initially, the participants watched a short film entitled JACK taken from YouTube, after which they were asked by a Filipino and an English teacher to narrate the film that they recently saw. TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) as well as its Filipino translation was used for assessment. Specifically, the three aspects of the speaking i.e. *delivery*, *language use*, and *topic development* were analyzed. After the participants were informed of the nature of the study, they gave permission to use the data.

Aside from the rating sheet, the raters were also provided with the transcribed narratives for them to countercheck the three types of transfer (i.e. phonology, lexicon, and syntax) identified, listed, and analyzed by the researcher. Moreover, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PP-MCC) was employed in determining the correlational relationship between the oral proficiencies and oral ratings of the participants.

FINDINGS

Oral Interlanguage Proficiencies

Learning two languages at the same time is evidently a challenge that needs to be addressed by these communication majors, who carry a big responsibility of recognizing, understanding, and applying each language's uniqueness and complexities in teaching. Oral facility in the languages of instruction is doubly important for these prospective teachers who are the "trained" mentors of developing

the language skills in the two official languages in the Philippines.

Table 1. Average of Raters' Approximation based on TOEFL

	English	Filipino
Delivery	2.53	2.57
Language Use	1.65	2.56
Topic Development	1.62	2.61

Legend: 4 – highest, 0 – lowest

As evident in Table 1, all the average ratings in Filipino are higher than those in English, with just a slight disparity in delivery (0.04) and higher difference in language use (0.91) and topic development (0.99). The ratings of 2.53 and 2.57 for English and Filipino, respectively, in terms of delivery, are interpreted as "communicatively intelligible" which is not surprising considering that they are already in third year college.

The findings imply that the participants have developed comprehensible oral proficiencies with varying degrees in both second languages and have evidently displayed acceptable basic skills in speech, vocabulary, and grammar, particularly in Filipino. Moreover, their Filipino narrations were quite intelligible even if presented in different perspectives.

On the other hand, the participants' oral proficiency in English in terms of the delivery, language use, and topic development generally consisted of faulty pronunciation, limited use of vocabulary, and basic and simple sentence structure, which still results in grammatically incorrect formulation of sentences. Further, the majority of the participants demonstrated unorganized English narratives mainly due to the use of inconsistent tense, repetitious ideas, and as Hoff [12] added, the "non-mastery of linguistic devices that produce cohesion... in a mature narrative". These observations reflect the difficulties encountered by these English-Filipino majors in formulating their ideas. Moreover, this assessment shows that their grammatical construction and vocabulary usage still need more improvement, specifically when it comes to the oral aspect.

As it turned out, the majority of the raters' comments especially in English, coincide with those of the researcher's observations and comments (e.g. mispronunciation of interdentals, inappropriate lexical usage, shifts in tenses, no transitions but overuse of 'then', inconsistency in the subject-verb agreement, L1's manifestation in the pronunciation and accent). These comments were classified under the headings of

phonology, lexicon, and syntax, and were covered by the delivery (pronunciation), language use (lexicon and syntax), and topic development sections of the rubric.

Specifically, *delivery* includes the L1's influence on the vowel and consonant phonemes, and the overuse of fillers. The close relation of Filipino and Cebuano-Bisaya, coming from the same parent language, definitely accounts for the acceptable delivery in Filipino narratives. Very minimal L1 influence on Filipino was observed in terms of pronunciation.

The main concern, however, is in the delivery of English which appears choppy or fragmented since Cebuano speakers have a staccato effect in their language system. The evident transfer from L1's phonetic system to L2's *production of vowels and consonants* such as /æ→a/ and /ð → d/. This result corroborates Gonzales' [13] findings as one of the pronunciation deficiencies among student teachers and Filipinos, respectively. The absence of English / æ / and / ð / in the L1 leads the second language learners of English to resort to substitutions.

In another case, many were conscious of their pronunciation and instead of using pauses, employed *fillers* such as *ahm*, and *ahh* to fill the silence or to give them time to think of the next words. Likewise, fillers such *eh*, *ay (aw)*, and *ano* were also evident in the Filipino narratives. Although the term *ano* literally means the question marker 'what', its usage does not reflect such translation.

In terms of the *language use*, these major concerns were observed: 1) inappropriate use of lexical terms, 2) sentence fragments, 3) subject and verb disagreements, 4) inconsistent use of tenses, and 5) repetition of words and phrases. In addition, a number of subjects and verbs put together to form pseudo sentences or sentence fragments are blatantly extended throughout the narratives. The use of sentence fragment, as pointed out by Cruz and Quiason [14], is an "unsatisfactory way of communicating one's ideas", both in the oral and written aspects.

Moreover, this inadequacy in sentence structure is aggravated by the ubiquitous common errors in the subject-verb agreement. What is most surprising in the inadequacy discovered in the narratives, particularly in English, is the common error in the *subject-verb agreement*. These findings indicate that some of these majors have not fully mastered the structure of English which is essential in the correct usage of the language. Since the singularity or plurality (expressed

with *mga*) of nouns in Filipino does not affect its relationship with the verb, such inconsistency between the subject and verb is not observed in the Filipino narratives.

The data also revealed *inconsistencies in the use of tense*. In one of the English narrations, the tenses used were tossed among present perfect, simple present and simple past, past and present progressive, and present participle. For Filipino narrations, ongoing actions were mostly employed since iterative actions are usually used in Cebuano-Bisaya casual conversation. As indicated by Clark [15], in the linguistic form of narrative features especially in the complicating action which serves as the body of the narrative, the sentences are usually ordered into clauses with a verb in the simple past tense or simple present tense. This means that it is acceptable to use either tense in the narrative provided that there is consistency throughout the narration. In addition, Rosal [16] pointed out that the simple present and/or the simple past are the dominant tenses that occur in lengthy discourse. However, this is not the case in the majority of the participant's narratives.

Finding further confirms that one of the weak spots in learning a language is the complexity of its verb tense as it operates in the sentence level and discourse. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman [17] support this claim by remarking that "learning to use the tenses appropriately seems to be the greatest challenge that ESL/EFL students face". This confusion with the form, meaning and usage of tenses is expected as English has a complex tense system.

Data also showed the *frequent repetition in some words and phrases* in English narratives as presented below:

(E2) i: *afterwards*, HE DECIDE, HE
DECIDED *to go to the grocery store*

The highest frequency count of repetitious phrase is the combination of the subject and verb. Lapses were also apparent. Fortunately, a number of participants made some self-corrections in their speech especially when these involve the gender, number, and tense (e.g. E2). Evidences of self-correction in the Filipino narratives were also noted. Although spontaneous oral narratives elicit unorganized thoughts and sentence structures, such corrections indicate the participants' consciousness in providing suitable terms and correct sentence construction.

In the aspect of *topic development*, the findings include the participants' incoherence and uncertainty

in their narratives which are detected in the following: 1) lack of transition devices or the overuse of the transition word ‘then’, and 2) the use of tentative language or hedges. The overuse of the transition device ‘then’ implies the weakness in the use of other transition markers. Since the task requires narration, the appropriate transition chains showing chronological order such as *first... next... and then...* or *in the first place... also... lastly... first... next... later... then... afterwards... etc.* among others. Moreover, Gleason and Ratner [18] added that children between the ages of 4 and 8 constantly employ the chronological narrative which recounts a sequence of events using “*and then and then*” as opposed to children aged 8 to 9 or above who apply Labov’s [19] narrative structure, which is considered the most mature form of narrative. As observed, the participants employed more of the chronological narrative.

Aside from the overuse of the transition markers, *hedges* were also noted in the narratives. Hedges are tentative languages or “cautious notes” [20] which express fuzziness, hesitation and uncertainty in cases where the speaker or writer lacks conviction to a given statement such as the use of ‘seems’, ‘think’ and ‘like’, and their Filipino counterpart ‘parang’. Hedging is not a threat to academic discourse but rather a “linguistic resource for both oral and written discourse” [21]. Simpson [22] further added that hedging may also be used to fill pauses.

As revealed in the presented findings, the participants’ oral narratives in English and Filipino, although communicatively comprehensible, are somehow incoherent. This fact is evident in the deficiency of language structures, unorganized thoughts, and uncertainty in the use and control of the languages.

Crosslinguistic Influence or Transfer

As mentioned, crosslinguistic influence or transfer has been regarded as “a process through which mental representations from one linguistic system, such as the L1, are transferred over to another linguistic system, such as the L2” [2]. As evident in the findings, negative transfers manifested in the fields of phonology, lexicon, and syntax.

Phonological Negative transfer. The Cebuano speakers’ difficulties in English pronunciation, especially in vowels, are mainly due to the distinction between their L1 and their L2 as elicited in the oral narratives. Their production of L2 segments showed that majority of the sounds are described from the viewpoint of their comparison or contrast to the L1

sounds. Thus, before one can contrast sounds against the other, it is necessary to have an inventory of the phonemes of the participants’ base language and the phonemes of the target languages.

Although the Cebuano-Bisaya symbols are similar to those of American English, the “three vowel system” has no equivalences in the latter’s phonetic system [23]. Cebuano-Bisaya /i/ does not include the following AE characteristics of /i/: high tongue bunching, tenseness, and extended unrounding. In addition, /a/ is more open in AE, whereas /u/ involves protruded lips and tenseness. Unlike AE /u/, Cebuano-Bisaya /u/ entails only slight protrusion of the lips and is neither tense nor “clipped” [23]. In addition, Cebuano-speaking L2 learners of English have difficulty in producing the contrast between long and short vowels.

Since both languages come from different families, Cebuano-Bisaya from the Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesia) family and American English from the Germanic family, the occurrence of a positive transfer is unlikely. As such, vowel sounds in the AE are modified and substituted based on the available sound system of the first language, resulting in a negative transfer. Mack [24] even stressed that vowels are more predisposed to crosslinguistic influence than are consonants.

Evidently, plosives or stops readily substituted the selected fricatives. Such substitutions of /p/ for /f/, /b/ for /v/, /t/ for /θ/, and /d/ for /ð/ were also observed in the study of Gonzales and Alberca [25]. The two most evident negative transfers found in consonants are still on the interdental and alveolar voiced fricatives. With only one fricative /s/ in Cebuano-Bisaya, substitutions for the rest of AE fricatives are expected: /ð, θ, z/ with /d, t, s/.

Also present, but very minimal in the narrative production, are the usual substitutions of the voiced bilabial stop /b/ for /v/ as in *movie*; voiceless velar stop /k/ for /g/ as in *example*; and voiceless labial fricative /ʃ/ for /z/ as in *television*. Moreover, instances of aspiration (e.g. *people* instead of *p^hpeople*), hypercorrection (e.g. *smok^he* instead of *smoke*), vowel sequence (e.g. /*Ivent*[*Ua*lI/ instead of /*Ivent*[*U*lI/), and syllabic (e.g. *dIdInt* instead of *dIdnt*), although quite subtle, also occurred.

The similarities in the recognized vowels, which have been very often used to mean the vowel letters a, e, i, o, u, support the allocated phonemes which are represented by these letters in both Cebuano-Bisaya and Filipino. However, Tagalog Filipino has an edge of two vowel sounds. No instance of transfer occurs in

consonants between the L1 and L2b since both languages share the same inventory of consonant phonemes and findings that support transfer from L2a to L2b were not found.

As mentioned, the consonant phonemes of Cebuano-Bisaya and Filipino carry, approximately, the same set of phonemes which make the source of transfer difficult to identify between the two languages. This finding confirms that the participants' base language and/or national language influence(s) the perception and production, in one way or another, of the foreign language but not the other way around.

Lexical Negative Transfer. Based on the gathered data, the two commonly overused lexical terms, including the variations used by the participants, in the English narratives are *teenage boy* and *grocery store* as well as their Filipino counterparts, *binatilyo* and *pamilyhan*. Even with the same theme as the reference, such words are explicitly elicited in various manners indicating knowledge of the terms' accessibility, collocation and association.

Also, some terms found in the narratives are redundant such as *like, for example...* With respect to associations, hearing or thinking of a word such as *chair* makes one think of other words, such as *bench*. The participants have their own way of coping with their limited vocabulary by supplying the L2 terms with the L1 translation (e.g. CR or Comfort room, which refers to public toilet in the Philippines instead of the AE term bathroom or restroom; *Vix*, a child's game which refers to AE hopscotch; and *toothbrush*, which is a noun in AE but is used as a verb in the L1 context) as well as creating/coining their own vocabulary such as *flittering instead of fleeing*.

These findings imply that some English lexicons are localized, even Filipinized, and the positions of words are sometimes not based on or specific to particular contexts, thus the presence of negative transfer from L1 or L2b. This concurs with other studies [2]. Furthermore, their studies confirmed that the "choice of a specific L2 word in a specific context is often motivated by a corresponding L1 preference". Several studies on "Filipinism", dating back 1969, were also reported and documented [13]. Aside from the application of the inappropriate terms, some borrowed words like *eskwelahan* and *istorya* were preferably used instead of their Filipino counterparts '*paaralan*' and '*kwento*'. Although *eskwelahan* and *istorya* are also available terms in Cebuano-Bisaya conversations, the indigenous terms *tulunggaan* and *sugilanon*, respectively, come more naturally and spontaneously to educated Cebuanos. Jarvis and

Pavlenko [2] added that "it is particularly evident when L1-mediated concepts change their internal structure under the influence of the L2 in a way that induces bi- and multilingual speakers to resort to lexical borrowing, semantic extension, and framing transfer in the L1".

Syntactic Negative Transfer. The non-observance of the governing rules between the subject-verb and simple tenses reflect syntactic transfer since these are the obvious, dominant faults of the participants in the oral narratives. L2 learners found no problem in learning basic Filipino syntax because, unless specified, this language does not deal with the complexities of English number and gender. Contrary to the popular belief, Filipino follows the SVO or VSO pattern. Cebuano-Bisaya, on the other hand, usually follows the VSO pattern while AE follows the opposite pattern. It was quite surprising to discover a number of grammatically incorrect sentences due to subject-verb incongruence as well as the inconsistency in the improper use of the verb forms and tenses. This finding is also in concordance with that of Gonzales [13]. The result implies that their proficiency in both L2s have not reached the advanced stage thus, reliance on L1 strategies continues in the reception and production of the L2 structure, especially verb application. However, this influence produces a negative transfer between L1 and L2a or L2b. Data also revealed that the use of the progressive tenses in Filipino is in fact, an L1 strategy used by the participants since this tense is used in casual conversation most of the time. Since Filipino is typologically related to CB, the said strategy is subtle. As observed, the base form of the verb and the progressive tense comprise most of the verb forms in the narratives. Aside from the numerous incongruence between SVA, and inconsistencies in the tense, minimal occurrences were also evident in the insertion/omission of 's' in certain contexts (e.g. in *details*), adding unwanted articles or prepositions (e.g. going *to* somewhere), and omission of necessary words like the indefinite article (e.g. he went *to* grocery).

Additional data revealed the presence of syntactic transfer which involves both overproduction and underproduction of the prepositions and articles. The omission or addition of selected grammatical features implies simplification of the L2's structure to facilitate in the production in the target language.

Based on the above discussion on transfers, the learners' interlanguage is clearly at play. The oral proficiencies reflected in the data prove that the

participants are still in the process of learning and acquiring their second languages as evident in the L1 interferences. Language instructors might be disappointed with these findings since the participants were in 3rd year college when the study was conducted, plus, they were majors of two languages and yet, L2 pronunciations obviously exhibit L1 influences. Further, the choice of words/vocabulary is still limited and some basic sentences are still grammatically incorrect.

However, Mesthrie and Bhatt [26] emphasized that “errors are evidence of learning” (p.160). This opinion shows that language learners are constantly making hypotheses of and testing the language structure contextually. Since the spontaneous elicitation of the narrative task requires less time to prepare and in an oral narrative, there is no way to review or edit their pronunciation, lexicon and grammatical errors; hence, the tendency is to fall back on the L1.

In addition, input plays a major role in the perception and production of language structure. Specifically, these three different sources of input inside the L2 classroom include the teacher, teaching/supplementary materials or textbook and other students’ interlanguage [27]. These inputs assist in classroom interaction and allow learners to produce significant output. These outputs, manifested orally or in written form, are evidences of the interlanguage.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Evidently, the oral interlanguage proficiency in a linguistically related language (Filipino) is higher than that in a language belonging to a different family of language (English) i.e. Their oral proficiency in Filipino is acceptable as majors (“generally clear”, “effective use of grammar and vocabulary”, and “coherent”); and their oral proficiency in English falls short of that expected of majors (“limited control of grammar and vocabulary,” and “limited development of ideas” though “speech is generally clear”).

Based on the raters’ approximation, the participants’ oral proficiencies are higher in Filipino than those in English, with just a slight disparity in delivery and higher differences in *language use* and *topic development*. On the other hand, based on the crosslinguistic influences, the participants’ oral interlanguage proficiencies exhibit outputs. Although there were no findings of positive transfer, negative transfers in phonology, lexicon, and syntax were quite evident from the L1 to the target languages. Specifically, L1 interference in the production of

vowels and interdental consonants manifested; Some of the L2s’ lexicons were localized; and overproduction and underproduction of the prepositions, and articles reveal simplification of the L2’s structure.

As Pascasio [28] emphasized, facilitating the language performance of college students may raise their language competence. In this light, Communication Arts (English-Filipino) majors should be given more exposures, trainings, and opportunities to use English and Filipino languages, especially in the speaking skill to improve their potentials in using these languages in classroom setting when they become teachers later on. Moreover, challenging students to interact and to accept feedbacks rather than spoon feeding them with information will maximize their potential in using the language. However, language educators should not limit the use of the second languages inside the classroom but also, encourage the application of these languages in the naturalistic contexts through activities or exercises which explore the learners’ output and expand their horizons of the learning-production process. In this way, the learners are prepared to face the challenge in the language mainstream, both national and international languages. For this to be effective, class size should be reduced to 25.

Since the results revealed negative transfer, a future inquiry could focus on the nature of positive transfer in the local context (e.g. the use of Cebuano-Bisaya in the city and province) which would offer essential insights on the nature of the varieties of Cebuano language. Future studies on transfer should also consider other features of phonetics (e.g. suprasegmental or prosody), lexicon (e.g. semantic properties), and syntax (e.g. verb aspects) aside from those covered in the present study.

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