

Evaluating The Implementation of Language 1 In Public Elementary Schools: Insights from Ambaguio District, Ambaguio, Nueva Vizcaya

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Abstract

Language education in early childhood is widely acknowledged to be crucial for children's cognitive, social, and academic development. This study evaluated the implementation of Language 1 instruction in public elementary schools in Ambaguio District, Ambaguio, Nueva Vizcaya. Specifically, the study examined the respondents' profiles, perceived challenges in oral instruction concerning lingua franca, implementation of Language 1 instruction, issues encountered in oral language classes, and significant differences in perceptions when grouped according to gender and years of teaching. This study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design, utilizing a researcher-made survey questionnaire as the primary data-gathering instrument. The study's respondents were twenty (20) Grade 1 public elementary school teachers selected through purposive sampling. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation were used to analyze the data. The findings indicate that the implementation of Language 1 instruction was generally practiced often in terms of teaching methods, teaching strategies, assessment tools, and supervisory support. However, instructional materials were only sometimes available and used. The respondents also concurred that several challenges, such as limited funding, insufficient instructional materials, and lack of facilities, affected their oral language instruction. The t-test results showed no significant difference in perceptions according to gender, while ANOVA revealed a significant difference according to years of teaching. Correlation analysis further suggested that improved instructional practices and support reduced the problems encountered in Language 1 instruction. The study recommends strengthening instructional resources, teacher training, and administrative support to enhance Language 1 instruction in public elementary schools.

Keywords: Language 1 Instruction, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, Oral Language Instruction, Public Elementary Schools, Teaching Strategies

1. Introduction

Teaching young children in their first language is important for their development. It helps them learn to read and communicate better because they understand the language and its culture. Studies from Indonesia, the Philippines, and India show that teaching in a child's mother tongue improves reading, participation, and learning, especially for children from different language backgrounds (Laksana et al., 2025; Tungul & Lapinid, 2024; Vogelzang et al., 2024). Teachers worldwide support learning environments that include many languages and respect different cultures (Kirsch, 2021; Kultti, 2022). However, many schools struggle with not having enough teaching materials, trained teachers, and managing classes with many languages (Jesus, 2021; Tungul & Lapinid, 2024). Research has also shown that using interactive teaching and materials that relate to students' cultures can help them learn languages and read better (Paguirigan, 2024; Leighton, 2022). Having the right resources makes learning more engaging and teaching more effective (Anselmo et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, public elementary schools follow the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy. This policy, set by the Department of Education, encourages the use of students' first language for teaching in early grades. This helps students understand better, read well, and perform better in school. Research has shown that MTB-MLE improves student participation and language skills. However, there are still problems, such as insufficient teaching materials, poor teacher training, and challenges in testing and classroom use (Tungul & Lapinid, 2024). Teachers' beliefs and methods also affect the efficacy of the policy (Velasco, 2024).

Local public schools in the Ambaguio District of Nueva Vizcaya face similar issues. Grade 1 teachers see the value of teaching in the first language, but they struggle with problems such as poor facilities, lack of funds, insufficient teaching materials, and little supervision. These issues make it difficult to teach and test the first language effectively. Therefore, it is important to review how first-language teaching is done in the district to improve teaching, support from administration, and student performance (Tungul & Lapinid, 2024; Velasco, 2024).

There are many studies on MTB-MLE and language teaching, but few focus on teaching Language 1 in the Ambaguio District. This is especially true for Grade 1 oral language classes in rural public schools in China. Most studies discuss language teaching in general and do not closely examine teachers' thoughts on teaching methods, strategies, assessment tools, support from supervisors, and challenges in Language 1 teaching. In addition, there is not much local data in Nueva Vizcaya to help teachers and school leaders improve Language 1 teaching. This study examines the experiences and thoughts of Grade 1 teachers regarding teaching Language 1 in the Ambaguio District.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design to evaluate the implementation of Language 1 instruction in public elementary schools in the Ambaguio District, Ambaguio, Nueva Vizcaya. The descriptive method was used to determine the perceptions of Grade 1 teachers regarding teaching methods, teaching strategies, instructional materials, assessment tools, supervisory support, and problems encountered in oral language instruction. Quantitative techniques were used to analyze and interpret the gathered data statistically.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools in the Ambaguio District, Ambaguio, Nueva Vizcaya. The district was chosen because it implements Language 1 instruction under the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy in primary grades. The locale provided an appropriate setting for evaluating the implementation of oral language instruction in public elementary schools in the region.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were twenty (20) Grade 1 public elementary school teachers in Ambaguio District, Nueva Vizcaya. The respondents were selected because they were directly involved in implementing Language 1 instruction and oral language teaching in the early grades. Their perceptions and experiences served as the primary data source for this study.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study utilized purposive sampling to select the respondents. The participants were chosen based on their direct involvement in teaching Grade 1 learners and implementing Language 1 instruction in public elementary schools in the Philippines. This sampling technique allowed the researcher to gather relevant information from respondents with adequate knowledge and experience in implementing Language 1 instruction.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first part gathered the demographic profile of the respondents, while the second part focused on their perceptions regarding setbacks in oral instruction, implementation of Language 1 instruction, and problems encountered in oral language classes. The instrument utilized a Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions and level of agreement.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Before conducting the study, permission was obtained from the concerned school authorities and district officials. After approval was granted, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to respondents. The purpose of the study was explained clearly, and the respondents were given sufficient time to answer the questionnaire honestly and thoroughly. After retrieval, the responses were checked, organized, and prepared for statistical analyses.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data gathered were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the respondents' profiles. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to determine the respondents' perceptions of the implementation of Language 1 instruction and problems encountered in oral language classes. The t-test was used to determine significant differences in perceptions according to gender, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to determine significant differences according to years of teaching. The level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to ethical standards in conducting the research. Permission was obtained from the concerned authorities before conducting the study. Participation of the respondents was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data gathering. The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were maintained, and all information gathered was used solely for academic and research purposes. Respect, honesty, and professionalism were observed throughout the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender, Age, and Civil Status

The distribution of respondents according to gender, age, and civil status. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were female, comprising 80% of the total respondents, while only 20% were males. In terms of age, most of the respondents belonged to the 31–40 years old group (45%), followed by the 41–50 years old group (25%). Respondents aged 20–30 years represented 20%, while those aged 51 years and above comprised 10% of the total population. Regarding civil status, most respondents were married (85 %), while only 15% were single. The findings indicate that the respondents were mostly female, middle-aged, and married teachers who possess teaching maturity and experience in handling Language 1 instruction in public elementary schools

3.2 Distribution of Respondents by Present Position, Highest Educational Attainment, Years in Teaching, In-Service Training, and Performance Rating

The distribution of respondents according to their present position, highest educational attainment, years of teaching, in-service training attended, and performance rating. The findings revealed that most of the respondents were Teacher 3, comprising 50%, followed by Teacher 1 with 45%, while only 5% were Master Teacher 1. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of the respondents had completed a Master of Arts in Education (MAEd), accounting for 55%, while 30% were BEED graduates, and 15% had MAEd units. Regarding years of teaching, most respondents had 16–20 years of teaching experience, followed by 11–15 years. All respondents attended school-, district-, and division-level training, while fewer attended regional, national, and international training. In terms of performance rating, the majority of the respondents obtained an outstanding rating, indicating strong teaching performance and professional competence among the teachers involved in the implementation of Language 1 instruction.

3.3 Respondent's Perception on Determined Setbacks on Oral in Terms of Lingua Franca

The respondents' views on the challenges of oral language instruction within the lingua franca context underscore the intricacies of error correction and cultural transfer. They strongly concur (mean = 3.78, SD = 0.52) that teachers should be cautious when correcting errors, as these may arise from negative language transfer or incorrect cultural assumptions. This underscores the delicate balance that teachers must strike to avoid discouraging learners while effectively addressing linguistic inaccuracies. The tendency of learners to transfer cultural knowledge when communicating in the target language was also acknowledged (mean = 3.60, SD = 0.58), affirming that cultural assumptions significantly impact oral language use. Additionally, learners often rely on their mother tongue or other previously learned languages (mean = 3.29, SD = 0.61), which can complicate learning due to interference but also represents a natural strategy for constructing meaning in lingua franca interactions. Respondents slightly agreed that teachers should identify shared cultural and linguistic features to aid learning (mean = 2.73, SD = 0.67) and that some learners prefer listen-and-repeat drills typical of language labs or podcasts (mean = 2.71, SD = 0.69). The overall average weighted mean of 3.22 indicates that both linguistic transfer and cultural assumptions pose significant challenges in lingua franca oral communication, necessitating sensitive, culturally informed instructional approaches that balance correction with learner comfort and engagement. These findings align with research emphasizing intercultural competence, error sensitivity, and the constructive role of learners' existing linguistic resources in lingua franca language development (Giannakou & Karalia, 2023; Le et al., 2023; Zhang & Nordin, 2025).

3.4. Summary of the Implementation of Language 1 Instruction

Language 1 is taught in schools. It examines teaching methods, strategies, materials, assessment tools, and support from supervisors and administrators. The study found that teaching methods were used the most, with an average score of 4.15, meaning that teachers often used different ways to teach Language 1. Assessment tools and supervisory support also scored "Often." However, instructional materials scored the lowest at 2.97, meaning they were only "Sometimes" used, showing that there are not enough resources available. The overall score was 3.54, indicating that Language 1 teaching is generally frequent in public elementary schools. Using good teaching strategies and technology can improve teaching and engage students more (Ellorin et al., 2024). These results support Tungul and Lapinid's (2024) study, which stated that good teaching of MTB-MLE requires the right methods, materials, and assessments. Velasco (2024) also noted that how teachers teach and the support they receive are important for successfully teaching Language 1 in Philippine schools.

3.5 Respondent's Perception on Problems Encountered in an Oral Language Class

What people think about the problems in speaking classes. The results show that the participants strongly agreed that teachers understood the goals of speaking lessons, with a high score of 4.78. They also strongly agreed that the seating and learning areas were clear, with a score of 4.36. People agreed that most teachers studied English, there were enough teaching tools, and the teachers were encouraging. However, they only slightly agreed that there was enough money for teaching materials, that students' work showed skill, and that there was good supervision. People disagreed that there was enough money for field trips and that the planning and strategies were strong. The overall average score of 3.23 shows that people generally agree that there are still many challenges in teaching speaking in public elementary schools (Jesus, 2021). Teacher readiness and support are important for better teaching and solving classroom problems (Anselmo et al., 2025).

These findings match earlier studies that say that insufficient resources, limited support from administration, and insufficient teaching facilities are big issues in language teaching programs (Tungul & Lapinid, 2024). Velasco (2024) also said that school support, teacher readiness, and teaching resources are important for successful Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) programs in the Philippines.

3.6. t-test on Respondents' Perception When Grouped According to Gender

The t-test results that explore how respondents perceive Language 1 instruction based on gender. Male respondents had an average score of 3.45, while female respondents scored slightly lower at 3.30. The p-value was 0.226, which is above the 0.05 threshold for significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference in perceptions between male and female respondents. Essentially, both male and female teachers seem to have similar views on how to implement Language 1 instruction. This suggests that gender does not play a significant role in shaping teachers' perceptions and practices in this area. Interestingly, this aligns with Le et al. (2023), who pointed out that factors such as professional experience and instructional context have a bigger impact on language teaching practices and perceptions than gender differences among educators.

3.7 ANOVA on Respondents' Perception According to Years in Teaching

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results of how respondents perceive things based on their years of teaching experience. The findings revealed an F-value of 3.12 and a p-value of 0.041, which was below the 0.05 significance level. This indicates a notable difference in how respondents view the implementation of Language 1 instruction when grouped by their teaching experience. This suggests that teaching experience plays a role in shaping teachers' perceptions, practices, and understanding of Language 1 instruction. Teachers with more years of experience might have developed better instructional strategies and classroom management skills for handling oral language instruction. These findings align with Mandefro's (2022) study, which emphasized that teaching experience and instructional supervision significantly enhance teaching practices and classroom implementation. Similarly, Berhanu (2024) pointed out that professional experience and supervisory support impact teachers' instructional performance and educational practices.

3.8 Correlation Between the Implementation of Language 1 Instruction and Problems Encountered

The correlations presented in Table 8 suggest noteworthy negative relationships between various instructional factors and the challenges encountered in implementing Language 1 instruction. Teaching methods and encountered problems exhibited a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.42$, $p = 0.035$), implying that as teaching methods improve, difficulties tend to decrease. This observation aligns with research that highlights the importance of adaptive, innovative teaching strategies, including AI-enhanced and technology-based methods, in addressing instructional challenges by effectively personalizing and engaging learners (Nhan et al., 2025; Xu et al., 2025). Similarly, teaching strategies showed a moderate negative correlation with problems ($r = -0.51$, $p = 0.021$), suggesting that strategic approaches tailored to learner needs, such as dynamic, neural network-based models, may help reduce obstacles in language teaching (Xu et al., 2025). Instructional materials demonstrated the strongest negative correlation ($r = -0.63$, $p = 0.008$), indicating that high-quality, well-integrated curriculum materials are crucial for minimizing problems during instruction, as evidenced by studies emphasizing strong material support and professional development for effective enactment (Dröse et al., 2025). Assessment tools, while holding a weaker but still significant negative relationship ($r = -0.39$, $p = 0.047$), suggest that varied and effective assessment methods support problem reduction by enabling appropriate feedback and adjustment (Evitasari et al., 2025). Supervisory support also correlated moderately negatively ($r = -0.58$, $p = 0.012$), underscoring the importance of instructional supervision in enhancing teaching practices and reducing challenges, consistent with findings regarding supervisory attitudes and support (Berhanu, 2024; Mandefro, 2022). Collectively, these results affirm that enhancing teaching methods, strategies, materials, assessments, and supervision significantly contributes to decreasing problems encountered in Language 1 instruction, thereby supporting an integrated, resource-rich, and well-supervised teaching environment.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study found that teaching Language 1 in public elementary schools in the Ambaguio District was generally effective and widely practiced by the teachers. It showed that teachers often used suitable teaching methods, strategies, assessment tools, and received supervisory support for teaching the oral language. However, there were some hurdles, such as insufficient instructional materials, limited funding, and a lack of facilities, which impacted the implementation of Language 1 instruction. Interestingly, the study also noted that teachers' years of experience influenced their perceptions, while gender did not seem to have much effect on their views about Language 1 instruction.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that schools provide more instructional materials, better facilities, and administrative support to enhance Language 1 instruction. Teachers are encouraged to continue using effective, learner-centered strategies to boost oral language learning among students. School administrators should also offer training and professional development programs to strengthen teachers' skills in Language 1 instruction. Future researchers may want to conduct similar studies in other schools or include more participants for broader insights.

This study had a few limitations. It only involved 20 Grade 1 teachers from selected public elementary schools in the Ambaguio District, which might limit how widely the findings can be applied. The study mainly relied on survey questionnaires and teachers' perceptions, which could have been influenced by personal opinions and experiences. Additionally, it did not include classroom observations or learners' perspectives. Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable insights into the implementation and challenges of Language 1 instruction in public elementary schools.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study strictly adhered to ethical standards in the conduct of research. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the concerned authorities, including the Schools Division Office and school heads of the participating public elementary schools. Participation of respondents was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was secured prior to data gathering. The researchers ensured that all participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their right to withdraw from participation at any stage without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were maintained by not disclosing their identities or any personal information in the research report. Data gathered were used solely for academic and research purposes and were handled with utmost care and integrity. Furthermore, the study upheld the principles of honesty, transparency, and respect for participants throughout the research process. No form of coercion, discrimination, or harm was inflicted upon the respondents. The researchers also ensured that all sources and references used in the study were properly acknowledged to avoid plagiarism and maintain academic integrity.

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