

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Difficulties and strategies of teaching Spanish language to collegiate Chavacano learners

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**Abstract:** Spanish-based creole, Chavacano, is widely known for its close resemblance to the actual Spanish language especially in lexicons. Its Spanish-like quality seems to capture most of the vocabulary of the language. The purpose of this study was to determine the difficulties of Chavacano speakers in learning Spanish. Narrative data from eight Spanish language teachers teaching in southern Philippines were used to analyze the challenges of their students, as well as to determine the emerging strategies used by these teachers. The findings indicated that collegiate Chavacano learners had trouble in learning the verb conjugation, the structure, and its grammar in general. Additionally, the teachers observed that their students are “not very motivated” in learning the language. Notably, students do not consider Spanish as an important language in their future career. In regards to strategies, inductive methods were the most dominant strategies that Spanish language teachers harness and implement in their classrooms. The narrative data in this study set a new theoretical context for language learning which is essential in the fields of education, communication, linguistics, and learning. Nevertheless, this study encompassed how teachers were able to harness the Spanish language teaching within their challenging classrooms.

**Keywords:** Chavacano; inductive teaching; language learning; motivation

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## 1. Introduction

The Spanish-based creole language Chavacano, sometimes written as Chabacano, is spoken by roughly 400,000 people in the Philippines. This language integrates Spanish with Visayan and Malayo-Polynesian languages, along with other languages that are native to the Philippine central islands (Álvarez-Pier, 2018; Valles Akil, 1999). Chavacano is a language that has been spoken for hundreds of years and has been passed down from one generation to the next. Nowadays, most people who speak Chavacano live in Zamboanga City, which is in Mindanao in the southwestern part of the Philippines. Other dialects of Chavacano are still spoken in various parts of Mindanao, e.g., Cotabato and Davao City, as well as in some areas of Ternate and Cavite on the island of Luzon (Álvarez-Pier, 2018).

The study aimed to determine the difficulties of Chavacano speakers to learn Spanish. The nar-

rative data in this study is essential in improving the delivery of language education in early adulthood. There is a need to have theoretical foundation on how Chavacano speakers spend demanding time learning Spanish language and how their language teachers aid these challenges.

Learning and using a second language (L2) appropriately is a complex task. Besides in mastering grammar structures and vocabulary, students must also develop communication skills and cultural awareness, as these are intrinsically linked.

Students must absorb a large and varied vocabulary to achieve linguistic fluency, making this the most difficult aspect of learning a new language (My Duong et al., 2021). Spanish has a diverse range of grammatical structures, with different forms for various sorts of words (Mansor et al., 2022). Certain Spanish words are conjugated (inflected) to vary its morphological characteristics based on who is speaking, the subject of the phrase, and a number of other criteria. Depending on the tense of the verb and the person, many Spanish verbs contain two or even three different forms.

Previous theorists suggest motivation as an imperative component of language learning (Dornyei, 2019; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Singh et al., 2021). Specifically, students are motivated to learn a particular language when they see how useful it will be in their future career (Singh et al., 2021). Although intelligence, cognitive style, learning strategies, and aptitude can influence language learning of a person (Gardner, 1985), recent studies showed that motivation plays a vital role in integrating learning of students (Dornyei, 2019; Mazuin et al., 2020).

In line with motivation, learners' engagement to language learning benefits their cognition. The inductive method, specifically in learning Spanish, produces excellent outcomes to students in high schools and colleges (Askland, 2018; Russell, 2014). Some of the common teaching strategies that language teachers incorporate were the use of group activities, pair works, and performances. These helped students to learn the language faster than those students exposed in the deductive method (Askland, 2018).

Learning Spanish implies both lexical and grammatical skills, but because of the complexity of the language, most students, i.e., in Malaysia and Indonesia, have difficulties to learn the verb conjugation. Considering the previous theories, this study was able to determine the challenges of Chavacano speakers in learning Spanish language. Although both shared similarities in their forms and vocabulary, some emerging conditions were found to significantly delimit learning to young adults.

### **1.1. Research questions**

Based on language complexity of Spanish, we ask:

- 1) What difficulties do teachers experience in teaching Spanish to adult Chavacano learners?
- 2) Which aspects of teaching Spanish is difficult for adults?
- 3) Which aspects of teaching Spanish is difficult for Chavacano speakers?
- 4) What strategies do teachers use in the Spanish teaching to adult Chavacano learners?

## 2. Methods

This study explored the difficulties and strategies that teachers experience in teaching Spanish language to college students. The narrative data collected in this study is essential in establishing theoretical and philosophical contexts of communication, learning, and languages. Through this method, further analysis and studies can be developed in the fields of language and communication with a strong theoretical base from the perspective of Spanish language teaching. Nevertheless, this approach defies the analysis of language learning, human interaction, cognition, and social connection.

### 2.1. Research design

This study was qualitative research that follows an exploratory approach. Exploratory studies explore new contexts that explain a phenomenon which provides future studies an opportunity to develop its ideas (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). In-depth analysis in the difficulties and strategies of teaching Spanish language to students provide insights on the learning and cognition processes involved in language learning. Narrative data was analyzed through coding of thematic variables that emerged in the situation. Themes were the characteristics of such difficulties and strategies that play an influential role to learning and language cognition.

### 2.2. Population and samples

Convenient sampling was used in this study to gather the participants for the interview. Non-probability sampling works well for exploratory studies especially when conducting an online or mobile data gathering process (Sue and Ritter, 2012). There were eight teachers who participated in the interview. There were four male teachers (Teachers 3, 4, 5, and 6) and four female teachers (Teachers 1, 2, 7, and 8). The teachers are teaching Spanish language to students in early adulthood, i.e., college and senior high school. Teachers 1 and 2 were teaching Spanish to senior high school students. Teachers 3, 4, and 5 both teach Spanish to high school and senior high students. Teachers 6, 7, and 8 teach Spanish language in college. Teachers have at least one year experience in teaching Spanish to collegiate Chavacano learners.

### 2.3. Data gathering procedure

The researcher requested permission and clearance from the academic institutions that the teachers are used to conduct the interview. All participants were given a copy of the approval letter. Written also in this paper were clarified aspects like the purpose of conducting the study, the ethical conduct, and voluntary clause to participate in the study. Upon agreement, teachers were interviewed in a specific time that they agreed on. Each teacher had 15 minutes to respond to the questions asked to them; they were allowed to speak in any dialect or language they were comfortable to use. The questions were semi-structured. The interview was done through phone call to maximize the research schedules. There were 4 advantages that phone call interviews have, i.e., (i) limited coverage bias, (ii) wide geographic reach, (iii) good for complex questions, and (iv) fast responses (Sue and Ritter, 2012). The data gathering process lasted from November 2022 to March 2023.

The responses were coded, and thematic analysis was used to analyze the responses of the participants. A thematic analysis provides the core skills for conducting different forms of qualitative analysis as it enables the researcher to communicate and translate data (Nowell et al., 2017). In

coding the responses, the data are “fractured” (or “separated”) into tiny bits of information to be used in generalizing the human process among the participants (Riessman, 2011). In conducting the thematic analysis for this study, the researcher used the approach of Lochmiller (2021) that aims to categorize the responses into simple themes that share similar and related patterns of codes.

### 3. Results

Question 1. *What difficulties do teachers experience in teaching Spanish to adult Chavacano learners?*

One of the major difficulties that the teachers experienced in teaching language was the motivation of their learners. Two teachers observed that their learners feel bored in their classes. Teacher 1 clearly expanded this finding where learners see Spanish as “not relatable” and Teacher 7 hesitantly argued they prefer to learn other famous language, i.e., Korean. This impression left teachers to improve the learning of Spanish language through incorporating innovative strategies.

“They feel bored. It’s not difficult to teach them because they are now young adults. It’s lighter than teaching high school. It’s difficult to teach them because of their impression that *it’s boring.*”

**Teacher 1**

“Most of the difficulties, students don’t see Spanish as a relatable language. Spanish is like an old language, unlike Korean, a modern one.” **Teacher 7**

In terms of the curriculum, it turns out that students were exposed to overloading schedules and units. This made them to be distracted in learning Spanish language. Teacher 5 highlighted that the landscape of the Philippine education saturates students’ schedules. For a teacher, this hinders the learning of their students especially in the context of learning Spanish language. This teacher also recommended that if a person wants to learn Spanish language, he must focus on it and put other subjects aside that overloads his or her schedule.

“Our educational landscape is that our learners in college have a high number of subjects that they deal with every day. In teaching our students, they have been exposed to different subjects, areas, assignments. Young adults need to learn Spanish to focus on the language not with other loaded subjects.” **Teacher 5**

Three participants agreed on teaching conjugation of Spanish verbs was challenging. This was the most common difficulty for teachers. In fact, some teachers also found it difficult to learn it by themselves. Teacher 3 cited an example highlighting how the word “to dance” (or *bailar*) has six different present tense forms in Spanish language according to the noun.

“The conjugation of verbs is difficult. In English, we only have two forms, in Spanish, we can express the single verb in six different forms.” **Teacher 3**

Question 2. *Which aspects of teaching Spanish is difficult for adults?*

Adults had hard time learning Spanish given to its complexity in terms of grammatical structures and forms. One teacher asserted that young learners have longer memory which helps them in vocabulary and structure learning. For adults, this was challenging especially in vocabulary because of

the limited memory they have.

“For the adult learners, it’s difficult to teach them because the memory is short-lived. Whereas for young learners, they have longer memory.” **Teacher 6**

“I think, it is easier to teach young ones than adults because of capacity to remember. For adults, their memory would hinder their learning.” **Teacher 7**

A teacher cites an example during their training. He said, age can influence the learning of Spanish language. Old Spanish learners had hard time memorizing the structures and forms of the language. One teacher thinks that younger learners were more motivated in learning the language than their older counterparts.

“During our training, one of the trainees is an adult in his 50s. Usually, the institution used to send young teachers for training. Now, he finds it difficult to learn the language because of how complex it is. Somehow, it shows that learning Spanish is much easier when you are young.” **Teacher 7**

Question 3. *Which aspects of teaching Spanish is difficult for Chavacano speakers?*

Although Chavacano is a Spanish creole, learning the actual language was more challenging than expected. It turns out that the only similarity in the Chavacano and Spanish was their vocabulary. Teacher 8 reflected during her training that Chavacano helped in her vocabulary, but this was just *part of a huge chunk* because she also had to learn the grammar and structures—learning these aspects was the challenging part for her. In fact, she labeled Chavacano as an “interference” for the learning process.

“When I was learning during teacher trainings, it was easy because I have an advantage in terms of vocabulary. In contrast, it’s not only the vocabulary when you are learning Spanish, we also learn other aspects like grammar. In my learners, there is language interference—it’s difficult for them to distinguish the spelling, structure, and meaning. Their current knowledge in Chavacano interfere their learning Spanish. Chavacano is easy, but in Spanish there are many things that needed to be considered.” **Teacher 8**

Teacher 1 described this difficulty like a “sewing a cloth” where it is easier to start from scratch than to repair a dress. For her, Chavacano speakers are like repairing a dress where it is difficult to make changes considering how fossilized their knowledge in Chavacano is. It is difficult to adjust what the learners previously known than those who are non-Chavacano speakers. Teacher 5 expanded this point, saying that to learn the Spanish language, one must leave his language of convenience, i.e., Chavacano.

“Even if you are a Chavacano speaker, you still find it difficult to learn Spanish. It’s like repairing a cloth, it is much easier for dressmaker to sew a dress from a start than repairing a dress to look new. In learning Spanish, Chavacano speakers are accustomed in speaking Chavacano, it’s challenging to teach Spanish because these two are somehow different. The learners sometimes were confused between the two.” **Teacher 1**

“We have Tagalog, Ilonggo, Visayan, Chavacano speakers—and there is difficulty in terms of vocabulary. In our class, there was an accommodation of the language, we thought that the words



have same meaning and the Chavacano. But in turns out, it was emphasized that we need to leave the language of our convenience (the Chavacano) for us to learn the new language. It's also not necessarily that if you are a non-Chavacano speaker, you will have a difficulty.” **Teacher 5**

Lastly, based on the experiences of the teachers, they observed that non-Chavacano speakers are more motivated in learning Spanish language than native Chavacano speakers. Teacher 8 was hesitant to say that non-Spanish speakers were more motivated in learning a new language.

“For me, non-Spanish speakers will be more motivated and interested to learn the language than those having background in Chavacano.” **Teacher 2**

Question 4. *What strategies do teachers use in the Spanish teaching to adult Chavacano learners?*

In terms of teaching strategies, teachers had differences on how they incorporate innovative learning. However, one major contributor on how they design their strategies was to *improve the motivation of their learners*. Teacher 2 used imperative practices like using Spanish in stating the procedures of cooking. She also integrated the learning through conversation-type setting, i.e., phone calls.

“I give activities to teach Spanish to students. For example, lessons like imperative or actual practice (e.g., cooking). I use strategies that can be used in steps and procedures using Spanish language. For conversation, we use different activities like telecommunication or how to pick up a phone call.” **Teacher 2**

Teacher 3 incorporated songs in teaching Spanish language. For him, using an audio-visual approach like watching Spanish movies and listening to songs allowed learners to acquire the culture of native Spanish. He also thinks having “cite words” helps in their learning; he gives his learners books to read to have a reference as he teaches them. Gamification was also an emerging strategy which helps in improving the motivation of learners.

“So far, the best practices, I would say incorporation of songs is effective in learning. Our learners do not have enough cite words, we incorporated reading texts. Even though I'm teaching at a higher level, I really give textbooks to read. If we allow our students to be hooked up the students to the culture like culinary and movies, it is effective.” **Teacher 3**

“We innovated the learning. I actually have a tabular game, it's like a snake and ladder but I changed the mechanics. With the incorporation of games, the learner is being motivated. In a specific tile, they are asked to give a conjugation of a verb. Before they can go to the next tile, they need to create their own sentence.” **Teacher 4**

Formative assessment was also a common practice for teachers. Working by pair or group where learners can apply their learning helps them to assimilate the structures of the language among themselves.

“In teaching, two is better than one. I normally do pair works group works to accomplish. I also work with language teaching where they will actually apply what they have learned and create an output out of that.” **Teacher 8**

## 4. Discussion

Question 1. *What difficulties do teachers experience in teaching Spanish to adult Chavacano learners?*

Some of the factors that influenced the learning outcome, according to Gardner (1985) and Singh et al. (2021), are the personality cognitive style, intelligence, language learning strategies, aptitude, and learning language motivation. Among these, motivation appears to be the dominant factor that influences the language learning of a learner (Singh et al., 2021). In fact, theorists like Skehan (1991) also agreed that apart from the aptitude to language, motivation is the “most significant element” that contributes to individual differences specific in foreign and second language learning. Recent studies also made remarkable results indicating that motivation is imperative in determining the language learning success of a person (Singh et al., 2021).

In addition, the theory from Dornyei (2019) points out that without motivation, cognitive abilities and aptitude do not guarantee an optimal language learning experience or even achieve their learning goals. Recent studies from Mazuin et al. (2020) and Singh et al. (2021) have figured out that to enhance learning, a teacher should prioritize motivating their learners in learning a particular language.

Integrative motivation, in the theory of Gardner and Lambert (1972), is the interest of a person towards a culture, and instrumental motivation reflects the purpose of learning the language. Singh et al. (2021) extended these dimensions in language learning where learners differently perceive language and the community behind it. Surprisingly, both faces of language motivations were observed in this current study. Singh et al. (2021) determined that (i) students “feel bored in learning Spanish” that there is a need to introduce the culture first of all to make the learners hook up with the language (*integrative motivation*), and (ii) teachers also believe that their learners do not see Spanish language to be used in their future career (*instrumental motivation*).

In Malaysia, students encountered similar situation where learning foreign language is challenging because of the absence of “target contextual” and “naturalistic” environment for Spanish language (Mansor et al., 2022). However, it is also noteworthy to discuss that these students are not exposed to supportive environment that practice Spanish naturally unlike those students in Spanish-speaking environment. In the current study among Chavacano speakers in the Philippines, such observation was also evident but with slight differences—their environment also practices Spanish-like dialect. As it turns out, there is more than the supportive environment. This imposes new dimension of language learning aside from environment-induced motivation.

In the study of Mansor et al. (2022), Malaysian students also had trouble in grammar, i.e., verb conjugation. The teachers in this study pointed out that even themselves have hard time learning verb conjugation during their trainings. Spanish has a complicated grammar structure (Mansor et al., 2022; My Duong et al., 2021) and students compare these structures to their mother tongue to break down its components. Mansor et al. (2022) also highlighted that learning the grammar rules and basic structures is imperative for a Spanish language learning.

One emerging threat to language learning is the curriculum, which delimits the learners to acquire an optimum level of language proficiency (Glozah and Pevalin, 2014) and when it is not based

on the difficulty of the situation (Chavez, 2022). Empirical studies are constantly pointing out that academic stress caused by overloading subjects influenced the academic achievement of a learner (Glozah and Pevalin, 2014; Habiban et al., 2011; Jahara et al., 2022; Moghimisalam et al., 2011). As supported by the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory and the Self-Determination Theory (Hobfoll, 2002), learners disrupt their personal and contextual resources to withstand their stressful environment. As a consequence of this, the Job Demand-Resource Model suggested that work and demands of individuals contribute to burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001; Jahara et al., 2022). Such networks of complex academic stressors were later used in language learning studies, i.e., Singh et al. (2021), and Jahara et al. (2022), in relation to the stress which learners of a language is exposed into. Teachers realized that the curriculum in Philippine education is overloaded with different subjects which impacted the learning of their students. In fact, some teachers consider minor subjects to overload the units and cause learners to lose their focus in learning essential subjects in school.

Question 2. *Which aspects of teaching Spanish is difficult for adults?*

A major contributor to the difficulties of teachers in teaching Spanish language to adults was memory. In particular, “long-term memory is required for storing and maintaining lexical ideas” (in the mental lexicon) and grammatical rules if language is considered the intrinsic and static manifestation of linguistic knowledge, e.g., meta-linguistic knowledge (Bunting and Wen, 2022). Once language is processed (perceived and parsed), it is paired with information stored in long-term memory, making linguistic knowledge crucial at these lower levels (Wallace, 2022). One of these overarching ideas is that working memory is responsible for organizing and storing recent sensory information until it can be appropriately integrated into the cognitive process responsible for doing so (Bunting and Wen, 2022).

Initially, one of the defining characteristics of this basic building block of human mind is its finite dimensions (Bunting and Wen, 2022; Carruthers, 2003; Hasson et al., 2018; Klingberg, 2009) which grants access to information needed for ongoing processes (Hasson et al., 2018). When viewed in this light, working memory has far-reaching implications for the structure, learning, processing, and long-term growth of any given language (Bunting and Wen, 2022). In line with this context, working memory constraints limit and influence important components of language, e. g., phonology to grammar, studies demonstrated with examples from English and Korean (MacWhinney and O’Grady, 2015). This study described that memory plays an important role in learning Spanish based on the experiences of Spanish language teachers in the Philippines. Some of their students find it difficult to learn the language because of their inability to memorize basic rules of the language.

Listeners with a wider range of language experience decode more thoroughly and accurately because they have a larger repertory of mental models from which to draw (Wallace, 2022). “Primary memory, secondary memory, and attentional control” are all assumed to be part of its underlying mechanisms (Shipstead et al., 2014), which humans draw upon when completing complicated cognitive tasks (Baddeley, 2003). This finding confirms Wen et al. (2013), who suggested that the processing part of working memory is more crucial for language performance than the retention aspect. The findings partially support Peng et al. (2018) that personal factors in working memory could not be essential for comprehension or that they may be more significant for activities such as vocabulary.

Question 3. *Which aspects of teaching Spanish is difficult for Chavacano speakers?*



Although Chavacano is a Spanish creole, it is sometimes referred as an “imperfect Spanish” (Álvarez-Pier, 2018) because people “spoke Spanish, although with odd phrases and expressions” (Álvarez-Pier, 2018; Montero y Vidal, 1886). Chavacano used in Zamboanga was a combination of Spanish with Cebuano and Tagalog (Álvarez-Pier, 2018). In historical perspective, because Chavacano evolved separate from the actual Spanish language, it developed its own form and structure different from those of Spanish. In fact, it was regarded to be a language midway between Spanish and the Visayan language (Álvarez-Pier, 2018). This explains why native Chavacano speakers found it difficult to learn Spanish especially in terms of its grammar, especially conjugation.

In Chile where Spanish is a medium of instruction in schools, some teachers find it difficult in delivering mainstream contents to their Haitian students. In the study of Tapia Parada and Tour (2022), it was difficult for Chilean educators to engage Haitian children in learning. Both teachers have seen a lack of engagement and low involvement in learning activities. They had problems with the inadequate Spanish language skills of their students and how to overcome such challenges. Both the language requirements of the curriculum and those of the subject area were excessively high for recently arrived multicultural students who had limited exposure to Spanish (Tapia Parada and Tour, 2022). The participants of the study reflected that it was challenging for them to teach Spanish to non-native Chavacano speakers, especially those who are new in the city and had little to no background to the dialect. Although some native and non-native Chavacano speakers use the creole, in essence, learning Spanish language was generally challenging regardless of their language background in Chavacano.

One context that further discussed why Chavacano speakers had low Spanish language competency was the simplicity of the Chavacano creole. Historically, it is sometimes asserted that languages with higher numbers of non-native speakers likely in becoming “morphologically simpler”, probably because non-native speakers acquire the language inaccurately (Berdicevskis and Semenuks, 2022). When simplification is initiated by the three generations of short-term learners, it may be continued by following generations regardless of their education duration (Berdicevskis and Semenuks, 2022). Such mechanism caused Chavacano to become a simple form of Spanish language that does not influence the learning of students in that language. Long-term language users reliably reproduce the initial language with complicated and consistent structure but continues to simplify input languages having irregular structures which could be “less over-specified” but also “more irregular” (Berdicevskis and Semenuks, 2022; Parkvall, 2008).

In historical context, the *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española*, in fact, labelled “chabacano” as “of uncertain etymology” which connotes *bad taste*. The use of the word chabacano was dated back to Diego Sánchez de Bajadoz in 1545, which refers to “sharp” yet “cheap object that is badly made”. It is said that the Chavacano creole originally acquired this name because it was deemed an improper variety of Spanish, spoken by commoners and lacking, among other qualities, verbal agreement and grammatical gender (Álvarez-Pier, 2018).

Question 4. *What strategies do teachers use in the Spanish teaching to adult Chavacano learners?*

Borg (2015) investigated old studies on teacher cognition and grammar instruction. These findings show that teachers’ major source of linguistic accuracy is their own language learning experiences. This configured their strategies based on which suits them the most. Teachers used strategies

that also helped them in learning Spanish language when they were also in their language trainings.

Additionally, Llovet Vilà (2016) interviewed and monitored eighth-grade Spanish teachers and noted a mismatch between curriculum aims and classroom implementation. Previous attitudes towards language, the teachers' own educational experiences, and their own teaching experiences appeared to influence the degree to which the curriculum was implemented.

According to Jain et al. (2012) and Singh et al. (2021), the attitude toward language learning is an essential component in the teaching and learning of a language, and this attitude is driven by motivation. As a result, teachers must improve the teaching and learning environment by incorporating more motivating interactive activities.

The pedagogical implications of this study (Singh et al., 2021) include that teachers should provide feedback to motivate learners, as results indicate that teacher-specific attitudes can influence the learners. In brief, the classroom environment and learning scenario, including the instructor, course material, resources, and practices, can be altered to accommodate the motivational orientations of learners (Dornyei, 2019).

Findings of small-scale studies among college students specifically built to analyze French grammatical structures indicated that grammatical accuracy is greater when an inductive approach is utilized (Vogel and Engelhard, 2011). One recent research that focused on narratives data in Irish L2 education among 11- to 12-year-old children in Ireland demonstrates similar performance (Ní Dhiorbháin and Ó Duibhir, 2017). Additionally, some studies of Spanish as a foreign language also report excellent outcomes of an inductive method in both university and upper secondary school settings (Russell, 2014; Shaffer, 1989). The inductive method was also used by Spanish teachers in teaching the language to Chavacano speakers. This showed that student-centered strategies are the most widely adapted strategy which also aids the learning of their students.

Further, learners ought to be motivated and given opportunities to use the language more frequently in class (Askland, 2018; Tsou, 2005). Significant as it is to provide input in language lessons, input probably must also be observed and thereafter used by students in conversation for it to become a part of their speech (Askland, 2018; Swain and Lapkin, 2000; Swain, 2005).

Research indicates that peer activities, for instance, seem to be more accurate than teacher-led instruction to result in high rates of student language development (Chavez, 2016). In addition, if the instructors make regular use of the target language in the classroom, it will be easier for the learners to learn the language (Askland, 2018). Literacy activities for the whole class, e.g., story time and sing-along, were conducted in English first, with a simultaneous Spanish translation provided. While addressing questions about executive function-related skills such as planning and recall, teachers utilized both English and Spanish alternately (Chan et al., 2022).

This finding shows that educators are looking for teaching methods that are beneficial for students who come from a variety of backgrounds (García et al., 2010). Teachers noted a shortage of educational resources as evidence of their willingness to broaden their teaching approaches with different learners (Campos-Bustos, 2019).

Learners' prior linguistic proficiency aids them in learning a new language. It is considerably simpler to comprehend something that the student has already experienced. Students ought to be

urged to create connections between the language they understand and the language they are currently learning, and to communicate those comparisons in class (Widyasari and Dardjito, 2022).

## 5. Conclusion

Lexical ideas of Chavacano provided an advantage to the learning of Spanish to native Chavacano speakers. Because of the similarities of Chavacano and Spanish in their vocabulary, learners were able to adapt to the learning process. However, the creole was also found to hinder the optimal learning of the new language. Although previous studies had shown that students can crossmatch the language they are currently learning with a language they know, the similarities in the lexicons of Chavacano and Spanish posed confusions to students. In fact, it has been determined, to learn a new language “one must leave the language of convenience”.

The findings provided a theoretical ground for why Chavacano speakers had hard time learning Spanish language. One major contributor was that Chavacano is an oversimplified Spanish-based dialect which separated the actual grammar from lexicon. Chavacano of nowadays inherited only the lexical concepts and vocabulary while the Spanish grammar and structures were left behind by early speakers of the creole. Nevertheless, the narrative data from this study served as the foundation of further introducing Spanish to Philippine education with an emphasis on learning the grammar over the plain lexical term. There is still a need to extend the scope on language transfer analysis, network assessment, cognition skills, and comprehension to represent the components of language learning.

## Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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