

# L1 as a Tool for Dialogic Discourse in an ESL Classroom during Pre-Writing Stage

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## Abstract

*This descriptive-qualitative study investigated L1 functions in the pre-writing stage in the L2 context. It explored how L1 in the pre-writing stage built dialogic engagement as a form of empowerment necessary to engage in L2 writing. Grade 8 students conducted community interviews to gather local and national issues needed to elicit small group pre-writing discussions. Guided by the sociocultural theory of learning by Vygotsky and the dialogic model of Alexander (2010), results revealed that the speakers' L1 has significant roles in L2 writing. These identified classroom L1-supported discourses further build dialogic engagement among the participants, showing their empowered roles through problem-posing, referencing, reflecting, and problem-solving. Such L1-dialogic engagement further allows learners to penetrate social realities, which helps them to build critical awareness of their society. Data open implications for teaching English, specifically promoting critical language pedagogy in second language learning.*

## Keywords

*dialogic discourse, first language (L1), second language learning, collaborative writing, critical language pedagogy*

## INTRODUCTION

While collaborative pre-writing tasks are often used in an ESL classroom (Dobao, 2012), studies related to them using L1 remain limited. In second-language writing, collaborative tasks can effectively produce learning opportunities as members negotiate meaning through feedback and meaning-making (McDonough & Neumann, 2014).

Besides, group interaction constructs a social context, empowering learners to produce language features to engage in conversations with new knowledge integrated with their existing knowledge (Lantolf, 2011). McDonough and Neumann (2014) further argue that by using collaborative pre-writing discussion, students participate dynamically and reflectively through feedback, comment evaluations, and justifications for their writing plans using an organizational tool as contrasted by the non-reflective episodes where members tend to listen and follow what is available to them.

Concerning L2 writing, the role of L1 gains considerable space as it has proven to have facilitative

roles, showing the overall impact and quality produced in L2 written production in significant writing features such as unity, development, structure, and mechanics (Ahmadian et al., 2016). Additionally, L1 also serves a function critical to guiding the learners to realize a shared understanding of designated tasks, thus helping them to scaffold support and externalize their inner speech (Antón & Dicamilla, 1999).

While the use of L1 has been discouraged in many ESL classrooms as a reference for teaching L2, L1 still serves purposes in L2 teaching and learning (Hunt, 2012). An antiquated view about L1 use in learning L2 traces from that of Ellis' (1994) claim that L1 overuse may deprive learners of valuable input in L2. When teachers refer to learners' mother tongue, there are aspects of language learning processes that they can handle most satisfactorily. Hence, careful use of L1 in L2 and FL learning and teaching was recommended (Cummins, 2001). In a contemporary approach to L1, Filipino language teachers maintain that L1-based instructions allow conscientization, necessary to penetrate social, cultural, and economic inequities through reflection and social action to free the world from oppression (Salayo & Geronimo, 2024).

In specific language classrooms, students utilize their L1 in L2 writing (Van Weijen et al., 2009; Yigzaw, 2012). Besides, the second language proficiency directly links to the quality of the second language. Woodall (2002) found positive use of L1 for high proficiency writers in cognate languages. In arguments about the L1's role in writing using L2, there was an implication for the benefit of L1 to solve linguistic (Beare, 2000; Qi, 1998; & Wang et. al, 2003), as cited in Van Weijen et al. (2009), as well as the higher-order activities, like, planning to avert cognitive overload (Beare, 2000; Van Weijen et al., 2009). Generally, L1 helps learners in the discovery and creation process; thus, the facilitatory effect of the mother tongue on learning L2 (Kieu, 2010, p. 121) has a facilitative role in the classroom (Miles, 2004).

Interestingly, this current study highlights the first language functions as an emancipatory consideration for the dialogic discourse to empower learners. Dialogic engagements do not just sustain conversational activities, but most significantly, they activate critical dialogues, allowing learners to produce authentic voices for social change (Salayo, 2023). Referencing Bakhtin, who recognized the multiple voices in the social world (Shirkhanian et al., 2015), dialogism involves a different kind of listening to attend to the intentions embedded in the speaker's explicit words, which facilitates conversational cooperation among the participants (Sennett, 2012). Kuhn and Crowell (2011) also used social issues to construct argumentative reasoning skills in essay writing through dialogue. Results revealed that the participants who engaged in argument skills constructed better compositions with more sophisticated and integrative perspective arguments. Hence, the value of dialogism in the classroom strengthened the connection between dialogic reasoning and expository writing.

Dialogic practices help individuals or groups to feel 'heard, respected, and validated.' These processes give Bakhtin's 'polyphonic conversation' space to reduce or eradicate the differences and diversity of the silent, oppressed, unheard, confused, and doubtful voices. Emphasizing listening and responding, reflecting allows them to freely engage in an 'open, participatory, transparent and jargon-free conversation' (Olson et al., 2014).

The claims on dialogic practices' effective influence are confirmed by studies like Gillies' (2016). Students develop essential thinking skills, manifested in their ways of responding, giving attention to critical issues, and reasoning. Gupta and Lee (2015) used selective dialogic strategies that encouraged the learners to practice the language through peer interaction, allowing them to produce knowledge and quality of learning overall. This same practice creates a shared space for the students to explore, clarify, and discover knowledge (Gupta & Lee, 2015). Lier (2007) believes that through meaningful activities, teachers encourage students to advance their identity in the new language. Hence, teacher-facilitated

group discussions provide opportunities for learners' comprehension and critical thinking that support oral and written discourse (Murphy et al., 2016).

Tadayon and Khodi (2016) maintained that language is the underpinning of the 'self' concept. Therefore, "language could play a critical role in the context of social empowerment in the second language because learners draw upon language skills in their first language as a self-empowering tool" (p. 133). From the transformative symbiotic system perspective, Tadayon and Khodi (2016) averred that language guides thought in a culturally specific interpretation of experience. Consequently, using L1 in a dialogic discourse highlights a solid structure that empowers multiple voices in an ESL classroom. Ultimately, critical language pedagogy could be shaped explicitly as learners' authentic voices question inequity that affects their quality learning.

Thus, this study addressed the following objectives: (a) determine the functions of

L1 in L2 class during the pre-writing stage, and (b) unpack how L1 in the pre-writing stage built dialogic engagement as a means of empowering ESL learners.

## Theoretical Framework

### *On L1 as a tool for empowerment in L2 learning*

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory justifies the use of L1 by stipulating what language learning involves in externalizing inner speech to regulate mental activity. Specifically, using the first language as a mediating tool promotes power among the learners as they engage in high cognitive thinking, such as language learning, which is needed for social and pragmatic functions. It also supports a dialogic link between the learner and the social world. Therefore, L2 learners, as active agents of learning with their vast L1 knowledge, are expected to play crucial and complex roles in learning, including task organization and clarification, vocabulary, and grammar. While experts do not encourage L1 replacing instruction in L2, "L1 allows learners to establish and sustain verbal interaction in their communication group" (Wang, 2017, p. 78).

### *On dialogic classroom engagement*

Focusing on students' engagement with the community's support using L1 spoken language, Alexander's (2010) Dialogic Teaching Principles offer a robust framework for dialogic discourse, contributing to learning, thinking, and understanding. His study enumerated justifications, oral and company collections, classroom indicators, and guiding principles (Alexander, 2006). Since the study is limited to a small-group dialogic discourse, which is primarily a student-led discussion and peer-teaching and brainstorming, this study used the guiding principles: (1) collective, which lets participants address together the learning tasks, (2) reciprocal, which allows them to listen to one another, share ideas, and accept alternative insights, (3) supportive, which enables the participants to express or elaborate their ideas freely without hesitations or fear or embarrassment about 'unsure' ideas and to assist or support other members achieve understanding, (4) cumulative, helps build the participants' ideas as they connect them to coherent lines of thinking and inquiry, and, (5) purposeful, that sets planning and structuring of the specific learning goals (Alexander, 2018). Dialogic discourse promotes the 'power of talk,' giving the learners a broader opportunity to develop critical learning. With the teachers' facilitative instruction models, students are empowered to "lifelong learning and active citizenship" (Alexander, 2010, p. 1). Relative to critical engagement through dialogism, Freire has established that such dialogue creates "a democratic process of engagement that can ultimately lead to transformative action and greater critical awareness of the concrete conditions that impact lives" (Darder, 2018, p. 113).

## METHODS

This study employed descriptive-qualitative research. Moser and Korstjens (2017) refers to a qualitative research as a type of research that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems. Specifically, Kim et al. (2017) mentioned that descriptive research generates data that describe “the who, what, and where of events or experiences” from a subjective perspective (p. 2).

Participants were selected Grade 8 students from a premier science school in the province of Cavite, the Philippines. Hence, these students are advanced learners as they successfully passed the requirements of a science curriculum in the country’s basic education. During the data collection, they were grouped into four (4) cooperative writing groups to write an editorial article as one of their written assessments in their English class. Each five-member group interviewed any community member to identify public or social issues that significantly affect people's lives. Community members participated in the study: barangay captain (village chief), teachers, parents, vendors, students, and out-of-school youth.

Despite the "English-Only Policy" (EOP) that the school strictly imposed during English class, the learners resisted the set language (English). They interacted using their L1 because of the involvement of the community in the discussion. After gathering pertinent data, the groups performed pre-writing tasks through dialogic discourse while one member from each group videotaped peer interaction. The pre-writing session included choosing a specific topic they needed to discuss in the editorial article from several listed issues and reasons for their choices. This stage allowed them to discuss the necessary details to justify their points. Planning, structuring, formulating, and generating ideas got organized.

This study used only two groups from the corpus of the videotaped interaction. These groups showed strong evidence of L1 in their L2 pre-writing stage. To maintain confidentiality, the researchers tagged the 12 students as Student 1 (S1) through Student 5 (S5) for Group 1, while Student 6 (S6) through Student 12 (S12) comprised the other group. S11 and S12 did not verbally participate in the excerpted discussions. To address the stated research problems, the researcher carefully segmented the episodes of the conversations.

To analyze the data, researchers followed the qualitative analysis stages of Lacey and Luff (2009): transcribing the video-recorded dialogic discourse, organizing the data, familiarizing the data, coding the data, and identifying emerging themes. Alexander’s (2010) dialogic teaching principles guided the creation of the themes.

To establish the study’s rigor, which covers validity and reliability, the researchers observed triangulation through other researchers as intercoders.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### L1 Functions in Forming Dialogic Engagement in the Pre-writing Stage

The groups presented the topics based on the interviews they conducted a few days before the pre-writing collaborative task. Every group member had individually presented the country's specific problems: graft and corruption, illegal drugs, and low quality of education. However, the flow of conversation also brought up another related issue on the hopelessness of ordinary Filipinos, which might be related to poverty, students’ involvement in illegal drugs, the presence and condition of out-of-school youth, and unemployment. These materials were among those selected topics in their editorial. From these topics, responses to the research problems were identified.

The first question was to identify the functions of L1 during the pre-writing stage for collaborative writing. Table 1 shows the first language (L1) functions in a dialogic engagement during the learners' pre-writing phase. These linguistic functions are guided by the dialogic teaching principles of Alexander (2010).

**Table 1. Functions of L1 in a dialogic engagement during the pre-writing stage**

L1 Functions in dialogic engagement	Frequency	Percentage
Expanding ideas (giving examples; justifying input; reinforcing ideas; extending discourse)	34	24.29%
Providing inputs/knowledge (sharing personal inputs and preferences; expressing beliefs and feelings about the issue)	17	12.14%
Offering and asking for solutions / making suggestions	16	11.43%
Expressing agreement (showing support, building rapport, and facilitating comprehension)	15	10.71%
Expressing disagreement (challenging or weakening the source or input; intervening discourse; establishing or initiating argument)	14	10.00%
Making citations (stating the source; referencing)	11	7.86%
Clarifying ideas	8	5.71%
Asking support	7	5.00%
Expressing humor	6	4.29%
Expressing hesitations or uncertainties	5	3.57%
Assigning tasks / Encouraging participation	4	2.86%
Expressing appreciation	1	0.71%
Offering possibilities	1	0.71%
Expressing empathy	1	0.71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Among the identified functions, the 'expanding ideas' or 'extending course,' shown through examples in making justifications of their ideas or statements, appears to be the most common discourse function during the assigned tasks. From the total frequency of 140, it occurred 34x or 24.29%. The excerpt below shows these data:

**Excerpt 1:**

*S11: Well, pwede naman. Tingnan mo na lang paligid natin kung gaano ka-terrible ang mga basurang di kinokolekta. Grabe sa amoy. Bawat kanto may kabundok na basura. Sa labas mismo ng school 194 meron. (S11: Well, that could be. Just look around and see how terrible the uncollected garbage was. It has a foul smell. Piled garbage is at every corner. This is seen even outside our school.)*

*S4: Walang magandang future. For example, dahil poor ang education, pwdeng mag-asawa na lang sila ng bata. So, ano ang mangyayari sa mga anak nila? Ayun poverty ang kasunod. (S4: No promising future. For example, they might marry at an early age because of poor education. So what will happen to their children? Poverty is obviously next.)*

S11 challenges everyone with "Just look around" to respond to the discussion on garbage in their community. This account intensifies when he says, "It smells terrible." The participant's statement gives a clear picture of his community, where garbage almost characterizes the place, including the school, which is must promote cleanliness. Similarly, S4 provides examples of the condition of quality education, which may be detrimental to the young learners' future, such as marrying at an early age, resulting in poverty in their lives, including the generations to come.

Next is 'providing inputs/knowledge' through expressing beliefs, feelings, and preferences. It gained a total frequency of 17 (12.14%). This L1 function is in the following excerpt:

**Excerpt 2:**

*S10: Wait, meron akong unemployment, poverty, education din, saka meron din nag discussed sa kin nung sa Spratly. (S10: Wait, I have unemployment, poverty, education too, and some discussed the problem on Spratly.)*

S10 enumerates the societal problems that may serve as the topic of their future activity, such as unemployment, poverty, education, and even territorial disputes with other countries. These were from their community interactions, an action assigned to them before the task. The participant presented a broad scope of the community's problems, both local and national concerns.

'Offering solutions and asking for solutions or options' came in next with a frequency of 16 (11.43%). Excerpt 3 shows offering solutions or suggestions:

**Excerpt 3:**

*S12: Well, i-emphasize natin yun. Then, magchecklist sila for monitoring. Kahit naman sino sa barangay pwede gumawa nyan! (S12: Well, let us emphasize it. Then, let them do the checklist for monitoring. Anybody in the 'barangay' (village) can do that!)*

*S10: Tapos, dapat may guidelines sa pagko-collect ng basura tulad ng proper segregation. Strict dapat sila. Walang segregation, walang collection. (S10: Then, there should be guidelines in collecting garbage like proper segregation. They should be strict. No segregation, no collection.)*

*S11: Saka maliban dun sa effects ng garbage sa health natin, importante rin na meron tayong solutions sa problems para balance lang yung argument natin. (S11: Also, aside from the effects of garbage to our health, it is also important that we have solutions to the problems to balance our arguments.)*

Interestingly, participants manifest their understanding of possibly solving the problem. Student 12 mentioned emphasizing the monitoring system to address the situation in the local community along with garbage collection. Student 10 aired support, suggesting guidelines for collecting and segregating the garbage. The discourse shows the participants' comprehensive understanding of the basics of health and cleanliness. Additionally, S11 invited other participants to offer solutions to the identified issue significant to their argument, whose purpose may be to gain original ideas to address the discussed problem.

'Expressing agreement/support/rapport' occurred 15x or 10.71%. The following shows how an agreement was arrived at using L1:

**Excerpt 4:**

*S8: Tamaaaaaaaaaaaaaa! Atakihin muna yung mga leaders natin o kahit si Mayor lang (smilingly). Tapos, magbigay tayo ng suggestions. Malay mo makatulong. (S8: Correeeeeeeeeeeeeeect! Let us first attack our leaders or even just the Mayor (smilingly). Then, let us give suggestions. Who knows, these may help.)*

*S4: Boto ako jan! Hahaha. Si Mayor muna hahaha. (S4: I agree. Hahaha. Mayor first, hahaha.)*

*S7: Oo. Basta magbigay din tayo ng suggestions. (S7: Yes, but let us also give suggestions.)*

Student 8's effusive expression of 'correct' shows his agreement with the speaker. S8 expressed agreement to discuss and criticize their leaders, especially their city mayor, followed by their agreement on giving suggestions. Other significant responses described in L1 showing agreement were "true," "yes," and "of course."

In addition to the stated discourse functions, the participants also exhibited significant shreds of evidence in 'expressing disagreement,' 'making citations,' 'clarifying ideas,' 'asking support,' 'expressing humor,' 'expressing hesitations or uncertainties,' 'assigning tasks or encouraging participation,' 'expressing appreciation,' 'offering possibilities' and 'expressing empathy,' the last three functions occurring the least. In Paez's (2018) study, several functions of Filipino in an English class were identified as facilitating comprehension, clarifying ideas, giving information, reinforcing ideas, giving examples, and initiating extended discourse. In his study, the participant emphasized reasons for using the Filipino language in the L2 class, like: "encouraging student participation and being more efficient in explaining" (p. 131). This study mainly covers the use of students' L1, where empowerment is the result of accommodating L1 in managing English as a second language.

Another interesting L1-influenced classroom practice is the practice of "translanguaging" in a pedagogical environment for meaning-making, communicating information, and executing identities through linguistic symbols familiar to them, thus enabling them to link with the audience in a community (Creese and Blackledge, 2010, in Paez, 2018, p. 131). Hence, through the learners' home language, Medilo (2016) observes that there is an improvement in their communication, enhancement of their global commitment, and development of their responsibility, dedication, and confidence despite their limited use of the second language.

Similarly, in Garcia's (2008) notion of translanguaging, the students' use of L1 in their dialogic discourse showed their 'dynamic languaging practices' (p. 1). With their L1, the students exhibited their capacity to tap into their diverse linguistic resources as they deemed necessary.

Kosonen and Young (2009) mentioned that even with the separation of Filipino and English (as language subjects), learners still use their home language mixed with their second language. They were having struggles with rich linguistic diversity in the Philippines (Wa-Mbaleka, 2014) and the schools' stakeholders' intense demands to observe the 'imperial wisdom of English in academic learning' (De Catalina & De Catalina, 2022; Nolasco, 2008). Having significant Philippine legal parameters such as DepEd Order 60, s. 2009 and DepEd Order 74, s. 2019, which recognizes the impact of L1 on learning and mandates the Philippine MTB-MLE. This perspective on the Philippine language shows that this country's policy on bilingualism becomes more efficacious if the learner's respective L1 is recognized in class (Tupas & Lorente, 2014).

### **L1: Toward Learners' Empowerment in Learning L2**

The second problem determined how L1 in the L2 pre-writing stage built dialogic engagement to empower ESL learners. The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky in the context of learning provides learners with robust discussion in their link with the language's cultural affiliations. In empowering the participants, the dialogic approach employed in the task also fostered equality of participation. Every member had a chance to present the topics (from interviewees to generation of ideas) and their stand on those topics. As Tadayon and Khodi (2016) claimed, when an interaction is drawn from L1 with peers daily, learners of ESL afford themselves learners' first language (L1). Table 2 shows how L1 discourse achieved dialogism.

The table shows Alexander's (2010) Model of Classroom Dialogism and how each principle works in the pre-writing stage using the learners' first language (L1). In the first stage, teachers assigned the learners to interview selected community members, helping students build community connections by asking about social issues or problems that could serve as their future task, collaborative writing. Both teacher and the learners worked together to address the assigned goals and tasks. The participants identified their sources of information (S5: *Based on the information I gathered [from our neighbor]*), 'taho'

(soya delicacy) vendor (S3: I interviewed the 'taho' vendor near the public market), barangay captain (village chief) (S1: I asked the 'barangay' captain), a teacher (S2: I interviewed Ma'am B), and even a childhood love interest (S4: I interviewed my... my... my childhood love interest).

**Table 2. Achieving Dialogic Engagement using L1**

Dialogic Model	Classroom Discourse
Collective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-task (Students' interview with the selected community members)</li> <li>• Pre-writing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Assigning tasks / Encouraging participation</li> <li>– Making citations (stating the source; referencing)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Reciprocal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Providing inputs/knowledge/Expressing beliefs/personal input/feelings about the issue/preferences</li> <li>– Offering/Asking solutions options/solutions/suggestions</li> <li>– Offering possibilities</li> </ul>
Supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Expressing hesitation/uncertainties</li> <li>– Asking support</li> <li>– Clarifying ideas</li> <li>– Expressing agreement/support/rapport</li> <li>– Expressing appreciation</li> </ul>
Cumulative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Expanding ideas/giving examples/justifying input/ reinforcing ideas/extending discourse</li> <li>– Expressing disagreement/challenging/weakening the source or input/intervening discourse/establishing an argument</li> </ul>
Purposeful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structuring the designed task (Collaborative Writing)</li> </ul>

Similarly, L1 became a tool for encouraging others' participation, as they negotiated turn-taking to share details, exemplified in the following: S4: Who first? I'll be the last. Why don't you start?; S10: We need one. 'Alex' hasn't shared yet, and S12: You may just read that 'Alex.'. S10 called "Alex" as he was the only one who had not shared input yet. S12 supported the call by asking him to read his information.

The reciprocal principle allows participants to listen to one another as they share data and accept new knowledge. In this study, the L2 pre-writing stage using L1 offered considerable knowledge by sharing and offering. It highlighted shared understanding focused on poor education, illegal drugs, out-of-school youth, graft, and corruption. The excerpts show how participants shape the reciprocal stage by providing inputs, expressing beliefs about the issues presented, and offering possibilities. The following illustrates this claim (Excerpt 5):

*"Mayroon talagang seryosong problema sa korapsyon sa bansa natin. Sabi nga nila, makikita raw ito sa mga mahihirap na Pinoy saka sa mabagal nap ag-unlad ng eknomiya... yan, 332 yan mga dahilan kung bakit bakit grabe ang korapsyon." ("There is really a serious problem with corruption in the country. Accordingly, it is reflected in the poor condition of poor Filipinos and in the slow economic growth ... these, these are the reasons why corruption is rampant." - S5)*

*Sabi n'ya ang pangunahing problema raw ng bansa natin eh illegal drugs. Sabi pa n'ya ang drugs talaga eh pwedeng mag cause ng kamatayan, nakikita naman natin yan sa TV araw-araw. Wala raw pinipiling edad 'yan kasama na tayo dun." ("He told me that our country's primary problem is illegal drugs. He added that drugs can even cause death; we see that on television every day. Indeed, it chooses no age at all, including students like us" - S1)*



The observed classroom task manifested this through expressing hesitation or uncertainties, asking for support, clarifying ideas, expressing agreement and support, and expressing appreciation. In the third feature, support helped participants elaborate on the presented ideas; however, they tended to show doubts, hesitations, fear, and embarrassment. Uncertainties are predominately expressed in these pre-writing occurrences, reflected in the following excerpts. For instance, when the last participant presented his input, S4 could hardly mention his source of information in a way that 'his childhood love interest' might not be a good source as compared to the previously stated sources of the other participants (Excerpt 6):

*S4: Eto na! Wag excited! Tinanong ko yung, yung, yung dati kong crush. (S4: Here it is! Do not be excited! I interviewed my... my... my childhood love interest.)*

Similarly, in sharing inputs, some of the learners doubted whether their piece of information would meet the expected input into class discussion, as manifested by a participant's lowering his voice and having a longer pause before each information.

#### **Excerpt 7**

*S10: Ahh.. nilista ko yung problems... sa korapsyon... pagcollect ng bausra... (S10: I... listed problems... on corruption... garbage collection...)*

S10 also hesitated in accepting the other participants' presented topic since it was about a local problem about garbage. Hearing the statement, he responded: You have a point, but our Mayor might get mad.

In a different perspective, S8 and S10 expressed their worry about writing the editorial, their final output after the group discussion (Excerpt 8).

*S8: So, paano natin isusulat 'yun? (S8: So, how are we going to write that?)*

*S10: Paano natin sisimulan? Ay teka, paano nga ba sumulat ng editorial? (S10: How do we begin? Wait, how do we write an editorial?)*

Next is cumulative, which supports the participants in building their ideas as a product of their interactions as they relate concepts to others that further provoke critical thinking and inquiry. Similarly, the pre-writing task offers the following functions to shape the cumulative stage: expanding ideas, giving examples, justifying input, reinforcing concepts, and extending discourse. To build a stronger claim, the researchers include the following: they are instrumental in constructing discourse solidarity: expressing disagreement, challenging or weakening the source or input, intervening in discourse, and establishing an argument. The following excerpts demonstrate that cumulative is achieved (Excerpt 9):

*S11: Maliban sa effects ng garbage sa health natin, importante rin na may maibigay tayong solutions para balance yung discussion natin. (S11: Aside from the effects of garbage on our health. It is also important that we offer solutions to the problems to balance our arguments.)*

*S12: Pwdeng mag suggest tayo na magkaron ng schedule ng pangungulekta ng basura sa bawat barangay. (S12: We can suggest having a schedule of garbage collection in each barangay (village).)*

*S10: So, dapat may guidelines sa pangungulekta gaya ng proper segregation. Dapat strict 387 sila. Walang segregation, walang collection! (S10: Then, there should be guidelines in collecting them like proper segregation. They should be strict. No segregation, no collection!)*

Finally, to complete Alexander's (2010) dialogic principles, the purposeful principle, which sets and structures specific learning goals, is achieved through the participants' readiness to proceed to the

final stage: collaborative writing. During this stage of dialogic engagement, the participants showed willingness to do the target goal after a thorough discussion involving the community and their voices. Throughout the discourse of all the different groups' participants, the learners show active and assertive engagement, which is evident in providing relevant social issues that affect their lives. Interestingly, behind their understanding of the national issues is their preference to deal with the local issues because of their direct connection. Associating themselves with the local problems is also a way of providing solutions. Hence, they tend to read not just the word, but the world in their own little ways. This means that their level of consciousness is not limited to academic matters but includes the advocacies that give meaning to their classroom learning through community participation, where voices are heard and acted upon.

The participants' conversations established that dynamic interactions can produce authentic knowledge from their experiences, observations, and interactions with their community. Through L1 use, their cultural intellect activates their wisdom to discuss avoided community issues fearlessly. The richness of the information is in the exhibited new knowledge and authenticity of their feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and perceived responsibilities about the identified local issues. As a result, L1 functions powerfully in enriching the needed contexts in producing L2 collaborative writing, proving L1's role in learning L2 better.

Parallel to these arguments, L1 is a learning resource facilitator and idea generator in the pre-writing stage of second language composition. It serves as a linguistic tool for expressing their ideas. In the end, L1 best serves to produce quality components in content, language, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics (Cook, 2001; Lai, 1996; Wang et. al, 2003; Woodall, 2002, cited in Yigzaw, 2012). For Tadayon and Khodi (2016), empowerment also leads to learning autonomy, which, in this study, is reflected by the learners' stand, views, and opinions as they stated the problems to intensify the topics.

Another significant point is the participants' resistance to using English as a medium during classroom discussions despite the English-only Policy. Resistance pertains to "students' refusal to learn in cases where the refusal grows out of a larger sense of the individual's relationship to liberation" (Fox, 2001, p. 74).

Huong's (2009) study illustrates practical applications of home language for students' language learning and development. Local communities were more engaged in the classroom or school activities as they quickly connected themselves to them. Noted also is the increased student attendance as the school becomes more appealing. However, the need to address challenges, especially in sustaining the positive effect of local languages, remains. For instance, Filipino teachers perceived that the use of home language could be a threat to L2 learning; hence, the sole use of English in class is an advantage to the future of the learners (Salayo & Gutierrez, 2023). While English remains a desired language for better career opportunities (Sespeñe et al., 2021), it reflects the locals' desire for empowerment of identities and values, such as their language, while being exposed to foreign influences, such as the use of English in their country (Le Ha et al., 2014).

## CONCLUSION

Using L1 in writing tasks in L2 is always controversial as various language myths impede the first language's value in the ESL teaching-learning space, especially in the Philippines. Behind this, several studies claim that the first language serves several facilitative roles in second language writing, particularly in the pre-writing stage. This study revealed that those functions include the following: expanding the idea,

giving examples, justifying input, reinforcing concepts, extending discourse, providing inputs/knowledge, sharing personal inputs and preferences, expressing beliefs and feelings about the issue, offering and asking solutions options, solutions, suggestions, telling agreement, showing support, building rapport and facilitate comprehension, defining disagreement, challenging or weakening the source or input; intervening discourse; establishing or initiating argument; making citations or referencing, clarifying ideas, asking support, and even expressing humor. Identifying these language functions has solidified that the L1 can be a source of new knowledge to enhance second language learning, especially writing. On a more critical side, studies revealed that the more learners are linked with sociocultural affiliations, the more that the learners engage in L2 learning. While this study upholds the influence of L1 on L2 classrooms, especially in writing, its primary concern is empowering the learners that L1 brings through collaboration and dialogism. The learners' positive participation in the pre-writing collaborative stage has confirmed that the group members have developed identity construction and resistance, which are instrumental in achieving second language writing effectively.

The results of this study provide yet another proof of the facilitative role of L1 toward L2 learning. Added to research in first and second languages is the students' noticeable use of L1 when they see the need to expound on their ideas. It emphasizes ensuring that they get the message and the content across, making L1 significant as well in learning in the content areas through L2. Highlighting L1, this study further established that learners' first language or home language is not just a tool to facilitate communication in ESL classes. Most importantly, L1 is a tool to construct critical language pedagogy, which aims to understand social inequities and social realities as classroom praxes to eliminate oppression and marginalization as learners' voices direct them to speak and 'write the world, more than just the word.' (Freire, 1985, cited in Salayo & Geronimo, 2024).

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