

**STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES OF PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP IN CBTL IMPLEMENTATION IN IB MYP LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (MANDARIN): A PRELIMINARY REPORT**

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**Abstract**

In IB education, Pedagogical Leadership for language acquisition plays an important role in furthering a student's studies. This is because the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students develop in language acquisition courses provide a meaningful foundation for these further. Further, International Baccalaureate (IB) emphasises that Middle Year Programme language acquisition can develop meaningful explorations of identities and relationships, orientation in space and time, personal and cultural expression, scientific and technical innovation, globalization and sustainability, and fairness and development. Thus, the study of Pedagogical Leadership for additional languages in the IB MYP provides students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realize that there are diverse ways of living, behaving and viewing the world. In this study, data collection and analysis centred on identifying structural and pedagogic strategies that contribute to the teaching of the second language Chinese (Mandarin) using Concept based teaching and learning among the five IBMYP school settings. The core elements of the IB Programme Standards and Practices will act as a fulcrum to frame the analysis of this study. Triangulation of data from documents, interviews and observations will lead to ensure the internal validity and evidence against the IB Standards and Practices. Finally, the evidence examined will look for ascertaining as to how challenges and strategies identified might assist other IB schools that teach additional language using Concept based teaching and learning.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Leadership Strategies, IBMYP, International Baccalaureate World Schools

## INTRODUCTION

With the intense globalization and human migration taking place within and beyond the Asia-Pacific region, an appreciation of multiple languages and cultures and an ability to communicate effectively with people across languages, cultures, communities, and new digital media is crucial (Duff and Lester, 2008). Two of the languages generating the most international interest at present in the Asia-Pacific context are English and Chinese. Chinese (Mandarin) has become an important global or world language, used widely for communication in both Asian and non-Asian regions and among people from many different ethnicities and language backgrounds (Lo Bianco, 2007 in Duff and Lester, 2008).

The ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes multilingualism and intercultural understanding, both of which are central to the International Baccalaureate's (IB)'s mission (IBO, 2014). However, Pedagogical Leadership for Language acquisition seems to have challenges for the second language foreign learners as some of the researchers, point that, vocabulary acquisition is a major challenge for second or foreign language learners (Lan 2013; Li 2015).

In IB education, Pedagogical Leadership for language acquisition plays an important role in furthering a student's studies. This is because, the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students develop in language acquisition courses provide a meaningful foundation for these further studies and the world of work in global economies and international business (IBO, 2014). Further, International Baccalaureate (IB) emphasises that MYP language acquisition can develop meaningful explorations of: 1) identities and relationships, 2) orientation in space and time, personal and cultural expression, 3) scientific and technical innovation, 4) globalization and sustainability, 5) fairness and development. Thus, the study of Pedagogical Leadership for additional languages in the IB MYP provides students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realize that there are diverse ways of living, behaving and viewing the world (IBO, 2014). Teaching with the idea that students are not simply learning new words and memorizing them, but are in fact learning language concepts is crucial when integrating English Language Learners (Matt Yard, 2017). At the same time, Pedagogical Leadership for the teaching and learning of second languages in schools has been the source of much debate and investigation (Coyle et al., 2010; Hassan Soodmand Afshar & Moslem Yousefi, 2019; Pennycook, 1994a; Tokuhama Espinosa, 2008). Thus, this seem to pave way for further investigation in this area of concern, where the overarching goal of this study will contribute towards the understanding of the strategies and challenges that encapsulates the Pedagogical Leadership of concept based teaching and learning (CBTL) among the IBMYP Mandarin learners during their language acquisition.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Although second language choice differs from country to country, still two of the languages generating the most international interest at present in the Asia-Pacific context are English and Chinese. Chinese (Mandarin) has become an important global or world language, used widely for communication in both Asian and non-Asian regions and among people from many different ethnicities and language backgrounds (Lo Bianco, 2007 in Duff and Lester, 2008). At the same time, Chinese has been taught for a long time to Western learners (Lu, Zhao, 2011). However, research of the Pedagogical Leadership for the Chinese Language teaching is relatively new and not yet thoroughly examined (Lo Bianco, 2007; 2011; Wang, Moloney & Li, 2013). Fortunately, scholars, researchers and teachers inside and outside China have written numerous articles which have created one field of research – ‘Chinese language research’ (ChFL research) examining the Chinese language teaching and acquisition process, which will be, hopefully, applied in today’s actual teaching of the Chinese language (Cao & Yu, 2013; Everson & Shen, 2010). In one of the most complicated aspects of the Chinese language learning is without a doubt its writing system. Learning how to read and write characters is a difficult task that can discourage many students. Many students who are anxious to learn Chinese as quickly as possible decide to put aside studying writing to focus on learning how to speak Chinese through the phonetic system (pinyin) (Innovative Language Learning, 2020). There is no doubt that learning Chinese exclusively through pinyin is the most common mistake committed by people when starting to learn Chinese. Aware of this, over the past years, many “miraculous” Chinese courses based on this principle have appeared, promoting it as an easy way to learn Chinese in a few months. Nonetheless, in Chinese, just like any other language, there are no shortcuts. It’s true that some ways of learning are more efficient than others, but learning Chinese only through pinyin is certainly not the way to go. While pinyin is very useful in the beginning, its problem resides in the phonetics of mandarin (Innovative Language Learning, 2020). Thus, there seems a need to explore into more ways that are possible for the beginners of Chinese (mandarin) language learners for an easy mechanism to learn the language (mandarin). At the same time, for early age, Pedagogical Leadership for learning concepts are very important for deeper understanding of various informatics topics. The “concept” can be described as extensive piece of information on particular object existing in human sense. The content of a concept can vary a lot as it depends on personal experience. In formal sciences, “concept” is defined as an abstract idea, which generalises separate objects, defines attributes and some relations between objects. Concepts that should be introduced in general school education and represented in assignments and tasks, are still a subject of research and discussions (Hromkovič, 2006; Kalaš and Tomesányiová, 2009; Vaníček, 2014). Thus, there seems to be a need to explore on the strategies and challenges for implementing this Concept based Teaching and Learning, particularly in the second language learning (Chinese Mandarin).

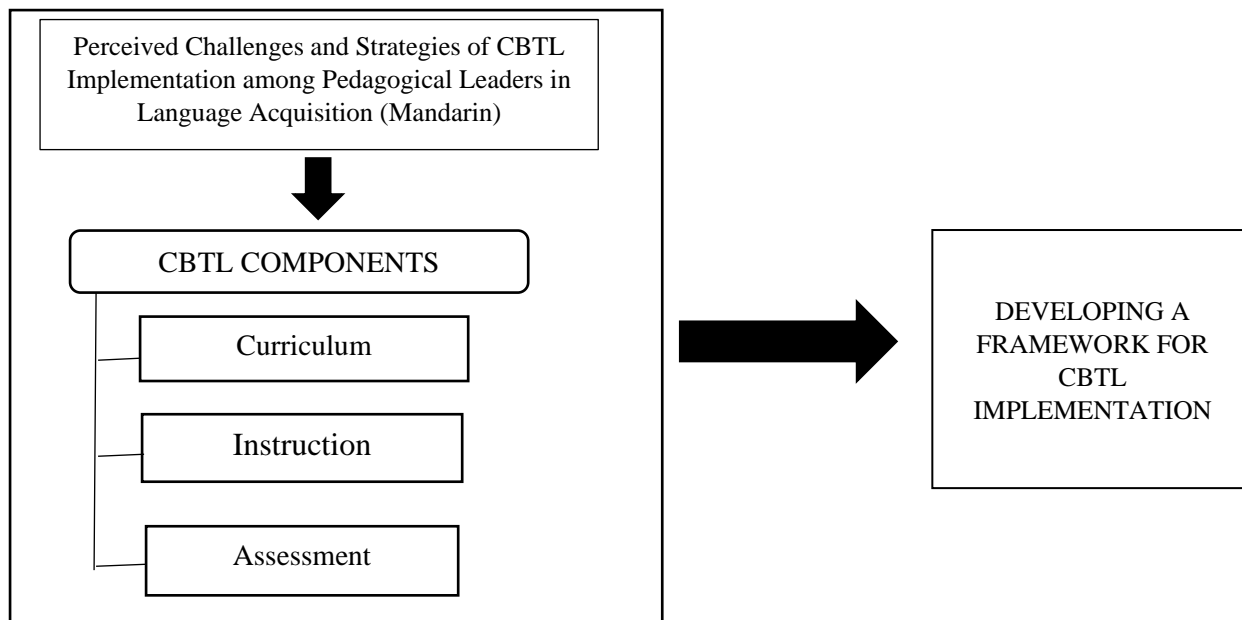
In Pedagogical Leadership, teachers can observe and reflect on when and how the underlying concepts are extracted and applied by the students; provide scaffolding for the students to reflect upon the experiences in the learning activities, and to abstract their understanding (Barab, et al 2007). The assignments, as a type of formative assessment, need to help learners see the connection between the context and the underlying concepts, rather than merely measuring the academic content disconnected from the experience during learning. At the same

time, an ineffective leadership persisted to plague education (Casas, 2017). Nonetheless, Pedagogical Leadership represents more of teachers who are in the role of making key decisions regarding education and pedagogical approaches rather than school management or administrators (Casas, 2017). Nonetheless, it is pertinent to discuss this issue here as Pedagogical Leadership for gives direction to pedagogical approaches (Luqman et al., 2012; Lamichanne, 2011). Luqman et al. alluded the need for educational leaders to make effective decisions and disseminate sound judgement (2012).

At the same time, pedagogical leaders for need to demonstrate collaborative partnership, distribution of power in decision making and democracy when making judgement on issues (Hoy and Miskey, 2001; Dereli, 2003). An IB-MYP classroom demonstrates the principles of international mindedness in its pedagogical approaches (IBO, 2014a). Teaching environment may often consists of teachers and students from different cultures and nationalities. IB's education succoured the challenges of "a rapidly changing world and changing understanding of human development and process of learning" (IBO, 2014a, p.3). The "rapidly changing world" alluded by IBO (2014a, p.3) can be incited by alarming and harmful trends in the consumption of social media materials (Primack et. al., 2017). It seemed that students of the 21st. century are over-stimulated with the attraction of social media materials and this appeared to have adverse effects on the learning (Graafland, 2018). Thus, there seem to be a need from the pedagogical leaders to formulate sound decisions and judgement on appropriate pedagogical approaches to remedy the ills of over-consumption of social media which is indirectly attributed to active learning approaches (IBO, 2014a; Luqman et al., 2012; Lamichanne, 2011). In the MYP, Approaches to Learning (ATL) encompasses both general and discipline-specific skills. Many ATL skills are applicable to all MYP subject groups; these general 'tools for learning' are then tailored to meet the specific needs of students and subjects. In order to develop ATL skills through Pedagogical Leadership that facilitate effective and efficient learning, students need models, clear expectations, developmental benchmarks (or targets), and multiple opportunities to practice. Every MYP unit identifies approaches to learning skills that students will develop through their inquiry and demonstrate in the unit's summative assessment.

The most effective way for pedagogical leaders to develop approaches to learning is through ongoing, process-focused disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Teachers as pedagogical leaders can use key and related concepts along with global contexts as vehicles for teaching effective learning strategies (IBO, 2014). Courses in language acquisition help students to develop key approaches to learning (ATL) that lead to success and enjoyment in the MYP projects. In language acquisition, students have important opportunities to practise ATL skills, especially communication skills (MYP Language Acquisition guide, 2014). Thus, language acquisition plays an important role among the IB MYP students. Therefore, the overarching goal of this study is to understand the challenges and strategies that encapsulates pedagogical leaders in concept based teaching and learning (CBTL) among the IBMYP Mandarin learners during their second language acquisition.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**



*Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the study*

Based on the research gaps in the literature review (and illustrated by the theoretical framework of the study), the following research question were framed for the future pursuit of the study;

1. What are the strategies used by pedagogical leaders in Concept-based Teaching and Learning (CBTL) implementation in IBMYP Language Acquisition Mandarin?
2. What are the challenges faced by pedagogical leaders in Concept-based Teaching and Learning (CBTL) implementation in IBMYP Language Acquisition Mandarin?
3. What is a successful framework of Concept-based Teaching and Learning (CBTL) implementation among IBMYP Language Acquisition Mandarin learners?

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The choice of the methodology is based on several researchers' positive observations on the adaptability of design-based research (Barab & Squire, 2004; Barab, 2006; Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer & Schauble, 2003; Sandoval & Bell, 2004; Wang & Hannafin, 2005). Design-Based Research Collective (2003, p.5) defines design-based research as "an emerging paradigm for the study of learning in context through the systematic design and study of instructional strategies and tools". Even when they define design-based research as a paradigm, most design-based researchers consider it as a methodology. For the purpose of this study, design-based research is considered as a methodology aligned with the pragmatic paradigm.

Creswell (2007) upholds that the pragmatic paradigm places “the research problem” at the centre and applies all approaches to understanding the problem. Since this research encapsulates on learning in context through the systematic design and study of Concept based teaching and learning, it is therefore used in the context of this research study.

Pragmatist researchers focus on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the research problem. In achieving its aims of improving educational designs and advancing understanding of learning, design-based research draws on the full range of social science research methods, combining a variety of quantitative and qualitative approaches. In this methodology, researchers collaborate with participants to achieve theoretical and pragmatic goals that change and improve educational practices. Hence, one of the tenets of design-based research (DBR) is that theory informs practice and practice informs theory.

Bell (2004) highlights the different kinds of design-based research. According to Bell (2004, p.245), design-based research is “by necessity a manifold enterprise with regard to research focus, practice, and underlying epistemology” and this diversity can be used across paradigms in order to advance our understanding of the learning phenomenon. Concurring with these views, Chotto (2010, p.85) summarises the different kinds of design-based research as follows:

- a) *Developmental psychology design-based research*: focuses on the theory and design work such as developmental phenomena, socio-cognitive development, dimensions of human growth (identity formation, moral growth, perceptual learning, or gender development).
- b) *Cognitive science design-based research*: focuses on cognitive phenomena such as perception, analogical or schematic reasoning, meta-cognition, decision making, and problem solving. Internal validity and generalisability are core commitments.
- c) *Cultural psychology design-based research*: focuses on the cultural mediation of mind and on the cultural-historical foundations of development and learning as it develops thorough patterned interactions between individuals and artefacts. Recognizes the significant impact of the social context in which the work takes place.
- d) *Cultural anthropology design-based research*: focuses on how the participants, in an educational intervention, create meaning through their engagement in the activities that frame the intervention.

The two last approaches: cultural psychology and cultural anthropology are interrelated and are aligned with the learning theory of socio-constructivism adopted as one of the frameworks guiding the present study. The cultural psychology approach guided the historical, social and cultural contexts in which the intervention is embedded and the anthropological approach provided the tools to understand how the teacher-participants responded to, and interacted with, the Concept-based Teaching and Learning framework.

#### *Population and Sampling size*

The study intends the use of purposeful sampling, whereby teachers from 5 international school will be the population of this study from which the school leaders who are in the role of Principals, Co-ordinators, Heads of Department, alone will constitute the sampling size for the study. This study will be conducted in two phases: The first phase of the study targeted International School teachers in two international school in Malaysia (pilot study), the second phase targeted teachers teaching in the five International Schools in the Peninsula Malaysia. Research Advisors (2006) spreadsheets in calculating the sample size (100) for this study

yielded 80 at a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error (degree of accuracy) 5%, which is greater than the minimum sample size suggested by Research Advisor (2006).

#### *Qualitative Data Analyses*

The qualitative data collection for this study would firstly emerge from semi-structured interviews and secondly from a focus group interviews. According to Jameel, Shaheen, and Majid (2018), qualitative research seeks to answer the “why” and “how” of phenomena as opposed to the “what” and “how much.” In this research study the researcher will attempt to investigate how to Develop a Framework for Pedagogical Leaders in Implementing CBTL among IB MYP Language Acquisition (Mandarin) Learners from the School leaders and principles by capturing their perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using open-ended questions facilitated by the researcher to gather information about instructional leadership behaviors that contributed to their students’ literacy achievement. The development of effective questions was of great importance in order to direct the discussion and to draw rich information from the principal participants (Ferrari, 2018). Although the questions were designed before the interview, new questions that arose during the interview were then included in the interview, which yielded results that strengthen the study (Ferrari, 2018; Jameel et al.,2018). The results of this study may offer useful implications in regards to pedagogical leadership responsibilities and roles in the implementation of CBTL in the context of Language acquisition among the Chinese (Mandarin) language learners.

In the case of conducting focused group interviews, several approaches exist to analyse focus group interviews. These include constant comparison analyses (Kuckartz, 1998); classical content analysis (Morgan, 1997) and keywords-in-context (Fielding & Lee, 1998). Krueger’s (1994) approach complemented by Ritchie and Spencer’s (1994) framework was adopted for the analysis of the focus group interviews. The framework analysis approach provides a clear series of steps which are useful for first-timer researchers in managing large data. The framework uses an analytical process made up of five stages notably familiarisation, identifying thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation.

From Krueger (1994), Ritchie and Spencer (1994) framework, the first stage is familiarisation with the data collected through keen listening, watching and transcription of the data from the recorded video. A thorough reading of the transcribed data led to the emergence of new themes. The familiarisation stage was followed by the identification of the thematic framework. This was achieved by writing memos in the margin of the text in the form of short phrases and concepts which developed categories. Thereafter, the identified thematic framework led to the indexing of the data. The indexing process involves scrutinising the data by highlighting and sorting out quotes and comparing the data between and within cases. All the data collected will be analysed using ATLAS.ti or NVivo content analysis software tools.

#### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Data collection and analysis centred on identifying structural and pedagogic strategies that contribute to the teaching of the second language Chinese (Mandarin) using Concept based teaching and learning among the five IBMYP school settings. The core elements of the IB Programme Standards and Practices (2011) were used to frame the analysis. The analysis will look into the critique the philosophy, organisation and curriculum processes that existed within the selected school setting.

The local data will be collected via four methods, namely: 1. Document analysis of the IB Programme Standards and Practices (2011), the school's MYP policy documents, curriculum materials, relevant school records, and IB MYP language acquisition guide 2. A literature review centred on current additional language practices and processes for implementing educational interventions in the IB Context. 3. Interviews with key stakeholders in the early stage of implementation. All interviews will be recorded. 4. School visits by the researcher to observe and conduct interviews in the respective school context, artefacts and CBTL in action will to be analysed via a coding system relating to the three research questions. Data from documents, interviews and observations outlined above will then be triangulated to achieve internally validated evidence against the IB Standards and Practices. Finally, the evidence will be examined to ascertain how challenges and strategies identified might assist other IB schools that teach additional language and/or integrated CBTL inquiry based learning.

## CONCLUSION

This study is preliminary concept paper for discussing the strategies and challenges that the pedagogical leaders at the IB MYP face in implementing the Concept-based teaching and learning during their intervention of language acquisition in Chinese (Mandarin). Five IB world school pedagogical leaders from Peninsula Malaysia will be invited to be involve in this research as participants who be given adequate support in responding to their interview questions. Data collected from these school leaders will be subjected to Qualitative data analysis using Software tools such as ATLAS.ti as the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). These preliminary data findings once obtained will then be subjected to the second phase of the major research which will be utilized do develop a frame work for IB leaders to implement CBTL in their schools.

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