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Using the First Language in the Second Language Classroom

by

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Abstract

Using the first language (L1) in the second language (L2) classroom has been a very controversial topic over the years. However, some researchers claim that L1 can play a significant role in L2 teaching and learning. This project reviews published literature on arguments against and for L1 use, attitudes of teachers and students on L1 use, the amount, the purposes and the reasons why L1 is used in the L2 classroom, as well as ways to use L1 judiciously. The research to date finds that despite some disagreement, many teachers and students believe that L1 can be used in the L2 classroom to facilitate L2 acquisition. Meanwhile, current research indicates that L1 use should be limited, judicious, and systematical. In accordance with the findings from the literature review, some suggestions are offered for English teachers, school policy makers and administrators and students in China on how to improve English teaching and acquisition by using Chinese properly.

Keywords: L1 use, L2 classrooms, L2 teaching and learning, Chinese EFL classrooms

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Chapter One: Introduction

Rationale

A few years ago, Cherry, a friend of mine, who worked for an international school in Shenzhen City, China, told me that the school required teachers to use English exclusively in the classroom, and if teachers were found to be using Chinese, they could be punished. Cherry had no choice but to abide by the rule although she felt uncomfortable in the practice and was not accustomed to this policy. There is no official policy from the Chinese government on whether using Chinese in English classroom or not. However, some schools have their own policies. It was the first time that I considered this topic, and I found that this kind of policy in my friend's school is totally different from my experiences in middle school and high school, but similar to my undergraduate experience.

Through my own six years' experience of English education from Grade 7 to Grade 12, I have noticed that my English teachers used some Chinese, our first language, to help us to understand the content in the English class. For example, teachers used Chinese to teach us grammar. However, at that time, I always thought that it would be better if an English Only

policy was carried out in my school since English classes could be the only opportunity for students to gain exposure to English, especially for students who are in rural areas where input is poor and teaching facilities are not as easily accessible as they are in cities. Some students in cities began their English learning at their elementary school or kindergarten, while I started to learn English in Grade 7. Because English classes would be the precious recourses for me to acquire English, I had to make the most of them. Moreover, considering many students with a low level of English proficiency, teachers may feel better using some Chinese in the classroom to assist students to comprehend English, which could be beneficial for their English acquisition.

However, I was impressed by the methods my English teachers used for teaching when I went to the China University of Political Science and Law for my bachelor's degree. I still remember that in the first Extensive Reading class, students were divided into several teams to play a game, like icebreaking, and teachers explained the game by using English exclusively. It was too difficult for me to understand so that I did not know how to play the game by the end. How embarrassing. Moreover, since I was an English major, many teachers used English in the classroom, which on the one hand, might be useful for some students with a higher level of

proficiency in English. On the other hand, from my own experience, English only could add pressure on students with a low level of English proficiency, similar to me. Nevertheless, my English learning journey did not come to an end. When I came to the University of Victoria for my master's degree, I found that professors of all the courses I took allowed students to use their L1, namely their mother tongues for group discussion. In that way, students can organize their ideas in L1, and then express and share their ideas and thoughts in English. In sum, my experience at different stages gave me great enthusiasm to dig deeper into this topic.

Furthermore, my motivation to do this project is my future plan to become an English teacher in China. I am curious about whether there is any value of L1 in L2 classrooms or not, and if there is some important value in using L1, what purposes or functions can L1 provide, and when and how teachers and students may use L1 judiciously in practice.

Significance

Using L1 in the L2 classroom has been debated for decades and now is still a controversial topic in the research area of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Since the 1900s, some methods have indicated the significance of using the target language (TL) exclusively in the

classroom, such as the Direct Method. In the Direct Method, meaning should be directly connected with TL without translations into L1, and thus the classroom instruction is conducted exclusively in L2. Theorists who are opposed to L1 use argue that learners acquire their L2 in the same way as they acquire their L1, and the prohibition of L1 use can maximize the exposure and input of L2 and thus enhance learners' SLA (Krashen, 1982). However, whether or not the monolingual approach is the best method for learners is still a question since the evidence is not conclusive (Macaro, 2009).

In recent years, some researchers began to explore the role that L1 can serve in the L2 classroom (e.g., Cook, 2001; Macaro, 2001; Turnbull, 2001). Cook (2001) argued that it was time to reexamine the time-honored view that the mother tongue should be avoided in the L2 classroom by teachers and students. Researchers advocating L1 use explain that using L1 judiciously can be of benefit to learners' SLA from the perspectives of cognitive processing theory, sociocultural theory and code-switching in naturalistic environment (Cummins, 2007; Lin, 2015; Macaro, 2009; Nation, 2003; Swain & Lapkin, 2013; Swain, Kirkpatrick & Cummins, 2011). However, some researchers (e.g., Cook, 2001; McMillan & Turnbull, 2009) still remind

people not to overuse L1, and it is still a mystery about how much of L1 use is too much, and it seems that more studies and research are needed before reaching a conclusion to this issue.

Considering L1 serves a role in the L2 classroom, what attitudes of teachers and students towards it and what purposes of L1 use become current research topics. The findings from following studies (Forman, 2007; Ma, 2009; McMillan & Turnbull, 2009; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Tang, 2002) revealed that attitudes of teachers and students on L1 use in the L2 classroom vary according to different factors. It seems that their attitudes and beliefs, to some extent, are related to their experiences and language proficiency. Nevertheless, many teachers and students are optimistic about L1 use. Referring to the functions of L1 in the L2 classroom, Cook (2001) suggested that L1 could be used in the classroom for various purposes, such as conveying meaning, explaining grammar, organizing class and so on, which is corroborated by other studies (e.g., Lin, 2015). Furthermore, studies on the amounts of L1 use and how to use L1 judiciously are also examined in this research area (e.g., Bozorgian & Fallapour, 2015; Cummins, 2007; De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Lo, 2015; Macaro, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that supports “using L1 in the L2 classroom” can be Vygotsky’s cognitive and sociocultural theory and Cummins’ linguistic interdependence hypothesis.

Vygotsky’s cognitive and sociocultural theory. Many researchers (e.g., Cook, 2001; Lin, 2015; McMillan & Turnbull, 2009) believe that language is the best cognitive tool to help people to understand concepts, deal with problems, and evaluate solutions. Moreover, among languages, L1 is the most powerful one we possess to mediate thinking, assisting us to explore and express our ideas in L2. Meanwhile, L1, as a social tool for people to communicate with each other in the L2 classroom, is the words that not only deliver information, but also express speakers’ ideas, emotions and identities.

According to Vygotsky’s cognitive and sociocultural theory, L1 plays a vital role in the L2 classroom. Students can learn language by building their dialectical relationships with the social world such as their peers and teachers. This kind of theory also has a major influence in the cognitive development when students learn a new language. Vygotsky believes that people learn everything on two levels. First, people interact with others and then integrate what they learn into

their individual mental structures. In the book *Mind in Society: Development of Higher*

Psychological Processes, Vygotsky (1980) mentioned that:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. (p. 57)

The other aspect of Vygotsky's cognitive and sociocultural theory is about Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD is the area which people can explore and be prepared cognitively with the help of other people. For instance, a teacher or a peer can provide learners with "scaffolding" to support learners' understanding of knowledge or skills development. That is to say, students' L1 can be used for scaffolding in the ZPD, directing their mediating and understanding the meanings of L2, which, to some extent, is beneficial for students' L2 acquisition.

Linguistic interdependence hypothesis. The second theory supporting L1 use in the L2 classroom is Cummins' linguistic interdependence hypothesis (1978, 1981, 1991), which reveals

the relationship between L1 and another language learning. Based on Cummins' theory, L1 and L2 are not independent of each other. On the contrary, they are actually interdependent psychologically and exist together in a balance. Cummins used "Common Underlying Proficiency" (e.g., 1981, p. 3; 2007, p. 232) to describe this interdependence. This hypothesis asserts that although L1 and another language are separated on the surface, such as pronunciation, the two languages are fused in the mind so that they do not function separately but operate through the same processing system. "This common underlying proficiency makes possible the transfer of cognitive/academic or literacy-related proficiency from one language to another" (Cummins, 2007, p. 232).

Furthermore, Cummins tried to explore deeper about the relationship between L1 and L2, and developed another theory referred to the developmental interdependence hypothesis (1979). The theory suggests that students' L2 competence is partly dependent on the level of competence that they have already achieved in L1. In other words, the more students develop their L1, the easier it will be to develop their L2. On the contrary, when their L1 is at a low stage, it will be more difficult for students to achieve bilingualism. Some researchers support the theory, and

those who favor the bilingualism have assumed that L1 can be used by students in L2 classrooms because L2 development relies strongly on L1 proficiency.

In sum, from Cummins' theory, proficiency in L1 will be able to support L2 learning because of their common underlying proficiency. Furthermore, their common underlying proficiency makes the transfer of cognitive, academic or some skills across languages possible.

Research Path

As the role of L1 in the L2 classroom has become a popular research topic for past decades, the review in this paper is limited to research published in peer-reviewed journals during the last twelve years, from 2006 to 2017. However, some articles which were published before 2006 but still have a significant effect on the research area are also reviewed (e.g., Cummins, 1981; Cook, 2001). I searched by the key words *L1 use, L2 classroom, target language, Second Language Acquisition, case study, English only, code-switching* from databases through University of Victoria Library. In addition, I scanned reference lists of articles that I reviewed previously to find some relevant papers.

Through quick examination of the first twenty papers shown in the top of the results, I

decided to include *attitudes*, *purposes* and *reasons* as other key words in searching. Following, I read the title, abstract and key words and found that some articles were not suitable for the topic, such as *Ethnolinguistic Vitality and Language Use amongst Eastern European Migrants in East Anglia* (Rasinger, 2010), which focuses on the relation between individual speakers' language use, societal factors and respondents' perceptions of ethnic, cultural and linguistic vitality. Through careful examination of these papers, I chose some papers based on the topic and research questions. For example, *The Amount, Purpose, and Reasons for Using L1 in L2 Classrooms* (De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009), which explores reasons, purpose and amount of L1 using in two German classrooms.

Next, the introduction, conclusion and the references of the articles were read to find some related secondary sources and sub-topics. Meanwhile, I developed some inquiry questions which are not exact and changeless. For example, what are attitudes and beliefs of teachers and students towards using L1 in the L2 classroom? After that process, I decided the criteria with which I chose to organize the literature review, which is based on three main areas: (1) arguments against the use of L1, (2) arguments for L1 use, and (3) policies and practices on using L1 in the L2

classroom, including attitudes of teachers and students on using L1 in the L2 classroom, purposes of L1 use, the amount of L1 use, and ways to use L1 judiciously in the L2 classroom.

According to these criteria and considering the articles for literature review should be more diverse on quantity and background of participants, I selected papers about case studies from different contexts, such as French immersion program in Canada, EFL in Hong Kong, China, Japan, and ESL in the USA and Australia.

I created a matrix to record all the information from the individual papers according to the inquiry questions. The chosen papers include some case studies on Chinese ESL/EFL teachers and learners (e.g., Ma, 2009), Hong Kong EFL teachers and learners (e.g., Littlewood & Yu, 2011), Japanese EFL teachers and students (e.g., McMillan & Rivers, 2011) and French immersion program (e.g., McMillan & Turnbull, 2009), and papers on reasons why L1 can be used (e.g., Lin, 2015) and using L1 positively (e.g., Cook, 2001; Cummins, 2007).

Project Overview

This paper consists of four parts. The first part is about an introduction to my motivation and significance to the research, presenting an outline of the aim and objectives of the project,

theoretical framework which can support this project, and also the research path. The second part gives a general review of the relevant research, and I explore in greater depth in the research area on using L1 in L2 classrooms by looking more closely at teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs towards using L1 as well as the reasons why they use it in the L2 classroom. Furthermore, I try to figure out the amount of L1 use and how to use L1 judiciously in practice. Based on findings of the literature review and my own experience, Chapter Three points out several implications which lead to suggestions for Chinese EFL teachers, school policy makers and administrators, and students on how to better use L1 for L2 teaching and learning. For example, a professional development workshop is included in this project for teachers to improve their L2 teaching. Finally, in Chapter Four, I summarize the main findings of this project, reflect on my own experience, and discuss what I have learned during this project and how it has shaped and will shape my professional practice in future as well as limitation and directions for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Whether or not L1 has a place in the L2 classroom has been a controversial issue for decades. Despite a growing number of research studies have been explored on the potential role and functions of L1 in L2 teaching and learning, monolingual immersion ideologies are still dominant in many contexts all around the world (Lin, 2015). One of the arguments against L1 use in the L2 classroom is that learners need as much exposure to L2 as possible to achieve high proficiency in that language, similar to the acquisition of L1. However, L1 use in the L2 classroom has been gaining more and more support from researchers in recent years (e.g., Cook, 2001; Cummins, 2007; Lin, 2015), and they assert that L1 should not be eliminated from the L2 classroom according to theories such as cognitive and sociolinguistic theories. For example, Swain & Lapkin (2000) claimed that L1 could serve important cognitive and social functions, and “judicious use of the L1 can indeed support L2 learning and use” (p. 268).

As a result of the debate on this issue, many studies have examined the use of L1 in the L2 classroom recently (e.g., De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Litterwood & Yu, 2011; Lo, 2015;

McMillan & Turnbull, 2009). These case studies have explored teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs regarding the role of L1 in different contexts and have also analyzed the functions of L1 serving in the L2 classroom. In addition, researchers have found that the amount of L1 use varied among most teachers who use L1 in their classrooms.

This chapter aims to give a comprehensive literature review about L1 use in L2 classrooms, which is divided into three sections. First, arguments against L1 use will be explored. Secondly, I will introduce some arguments for using L1. Following will be an analysis of policies and practices on this topic based on case studies, including a brief introduction to policies in different contexts, attitudes of teachers and students towards using L1 in the L2 classroom, the purposes of L1 use in the L2 classroom, the amount of L1 that teachers and students use in their classrooms. Finally, this part will also review the literature concerning the judicious use of L1, which I hope may inspire the readers to seek their own best manner for L2 teaching and learning.

Arguments against L1 Use

The "English Only" movement, which spread throughout the United States in the early 1920s, still influences English teaching all around the world. The tenets of the "English Only"

movement seem common sense in the teaching. The tenets included that English was best taught monolingually, that an English native speaker was the ideal English teacher, that it was better to learn English earlier, and that if other languages, for example, students' L1 was used too much, the standards of their English acquisition would drop (Auerbach, 1993). Opponents of L1 use believe that the only way to teach and learn L2 should be using L2 exclusively, and thus "no L1 use" was the best.

Creating a L2 immersion in the classroom is considered the best learning environment and is mainly related to Krashen's "the input hypothesis" (1982, p. 20) from SLA studies. One point of the hypothesis is that learners facilitate SLA by getting the maximum amount of L2 input. In other words, if instructors use L1 in the L2 classroom, the quantity of L2 input would decrease, which is considered to hamper learners' L2 acquisition. These opponents of L1 use claim that using L1 in the L2 classroom looks like the Grammar Translation Method, which mainly focuses on translating from L1 to L2 as a way of learning L2 (De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009). In their opinion, it is better if L2 teaching take place without interference from L1. However, some people argued that it was not the quantity but the quality of L2 exposure counted (Dickson,

1992). Meanwhile, Krashen (1982) suggested that the input hypothesis should be combined with comprehensive input hypothesis. According to his view, the maximum input in L2 is effective only when the input is also made comprehensible. In that way, both quantity and quality of exposure to the L2 are indispensable.

Although the opponents of L1 use assert that L2 teaching and learning should not involve the L1 use in the classroom, they believe that it is impossible for students with lower L2 proficiency to use L2 exclusively. Meanwhile, some researchers (e.g., Krashen & Terrell, 1983) advised people not to give learners too much stress to learn L2 prematurely (De la Campa, 2006). However, from their perspectives, circumstances where L1 use is considered useful are very rare, and teachers are still expected to use as much as L2 as possible in the classroom. For instance, teachers may use L1 to deal with extreme indiscipline among students (e.g., Chambers, 1991). Harbord (1992) provided another example as he explored the differences between native and non-native speaking teachers. He concluded that non-native speaking teachers might be unable to conduct a class entirely in L2 without specific training. In that case, it is possible that non-native speaking teachers feel stressful under the “no L1 use”, and thus using L1 in the classroom would

be advisable. Meanwhile, Harbord criticized teachers' using L1 in order to explain grammar, save time, give instructions, and build good relationship with students. Still, he insisted on the principle of L2 acquisition by exposure and claimed that L1 use should only be allowed when learners were at a low level of L2 proficiency.

In conclusion, the opponents of L1 use argue that using L1 in the L2 classroom is possibly harmful in L2 learning. According to Krashen's "the input hypothesis", L2 learning is similar to L1 acquisition, and L2 learners should be immersed in L2. Furthermore, teachers can avoid L1 use with some proper training. All in all, despite the use of L1 having gained more support in recent years than previous, according to Cummins (2007), the dominant L2 teaching approach still encourages "no L1 use" in the L2 classroom.

Arguments for L1 Use

L1 use advocates believe that L1 can serve a role in L2 teaching and learning. In other words, using L1 in L2 classrooms, to some extent, can bring benefits to students' SLA. Auerbach (1993) stated that "the rationale used to justify English only in the classroom is neither conclusive nor pedagogically sound" (p. 15), and those who support L1 use argue that the

“English Only” movement is just based on some assumptions and common beliefs, while including students’ L1 in the L2 classroom has been proven to be successful (Snorradóttir, 2014). Moreover, one of the basic assumptions of “no L1 use” is meeting challenge, which asserts that the way learners acquire their L2 is similar to the way they learn their mother tongue. Cook (2001, 2008) argued that when acquiring another language, L2, for example, learners’ L1 and L2 are interwoven in their minds, and therefore it is impossible to try to separate them, which is agreed by Cummins (e.g., 1981, 1991), who believes that L1 and L2 exist in the mind at the same time, and these two languages share the common underlying proficiency (1981, p. 3).

Another theory that supporting L1 use in the L2 classroom is Vygotsky’s cognitive and sociocultural theory, which is used by some researchers to explore the functions of L1 in the L2 classroom. From this perspective, learners’ mother tongue is regarded as a tool to provide crucial scaffolding support. In other words, banning L1 from L2 classrooms may ignore the cognitive reality that connecting new concepts to prior knowledge can create better opportunities for language learning success (van Lier, 1995). For instance, Anton and Camilla (1999) emphasized the socio-cognitive role that L1 serves for students to collect ideas in collaborative group work.

Swain and Lapkin (2000) focused on L1 use by twenty-two pairs of grade 8 French immersion students as they completed two tasks, a dictogloss and a jigsaw, and concluded that L1 was a cognitive tool that could facilitate the completion of L2 tasks, and furthermore, using L1 judiciously and systematically can support L2 learning. Storch and Aldosari (2010) used sociocultural theory as theoretic framework to investigate the amount and functions of L1 (Arabic) in pair work in an English as Foreign Language class. Moreover, Tian and Hennebry (2016) examined Chinese students' preferences towards teachers' language use for explaining unknown lexical items, English-only versus Chinese-only, and discussed the implications of the study for classroom practice.

As an advocate for integrating L1 into L2 classrooms, Atkinson (1987) criticized the tenets of the "English Only" movement, and addressed some purposes and functions of L1, including translating vocabulary, checking comprehension, giving instructions for tasks. Furthermore, Atkinson proposed that it was proper to use 5% of L1 in the L2 classroom, and he concluded that using L1 was beneficial for L2 learning beginners since L1 could assist them to express exactly what they wanted to say. Furthermore, in his article, Atkinson (1993) probed into this topic of L1

use from different aspects, such as theoretical framework, feasibility, and desirability. First, he challenged “the input hypothesis,” claiming that whether or not the method of mother tongue learning could apply to L2 learning was still uncertain. Then, the paper found that some teachers felt it a challenge to conduct and manage the entire class in L2 exclusively without specific training. Meanwhile, from the perspective of desirability of using L2 only, Atkinson (1993) argued that banning L1 use in the L2 classroom implied denying the sociocultural identity of students. Instead, using L1 allowed students to retain a secure sense of their cultures and mother tongue. Finally, this article provided some suggestions for policy makers and teacher trainers. Atkinson advised them to re-examine “using L2 entirely” policy, and pointed out that some factors, such as students’ language proficiency and course level, might influence the L2 use exclusively. Furthermore, he stressed that the issue of L1 should be included in teacher training so that teachers could gain some strategies to manage the classroom and to handle some problems that they might confront during teaching.

In another examination of this issue, Cook (2001) suggested that it was time to re-examine the time-honoured view that L1 should be banned in the L2 classroom by both teachers and

students, and “to open a door that has been firmly shut in language teaching for over 100 years, namely the systematic use of the first language (L1) in the classroom” (p. 403). With a background in English as a Foreign Language and language teaching in England, this paper explored reasons for avoiding L1 in the classroom, concluding that “none of three arguments from L1 learning, compartmentalization of languages, and the provision of L2 use strongly support the view that the L1 should be avoided” (p. 410). Then, the author introduced some teaching methods that deliberately involving L1, seeking to better integrate L1 into L2 teaching. For example, to alternate language approaches, with which the students are at one moment learning the target language, at another using their mother tongue. This paper ended with providing teachers and students some ways of using L1 positively in L2 teaching and learning.

Similarly, Cummins (2007) argued for rethinking monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms by focusing on the analysis of three inter-related monolingual instructional assumptions: instruction should be carried out in L2 only when recourses in learners’ L1 is absent, namely the “direct method” assumption; there is no place for translation between L1 and L2 in the teaching of language or literacy, namely the “no translation”

assumption; L1 and L2 should be kept rigidly separated within immersion and bilingual programs, namely the “two solitudes” assumption. Then, this paper analyzed three theoretical perspectives to challenge the three assumptions mentioned above. The first perspective was from cognitive psychology research and stressed “students’ prior knowledge is encoded in their L1, then their L1 is clearly relevant to their learning even when instruction is through the medium of L2” (p. 231). Cummins (2007), citing Donovan and Bransford (2005), emphasized three major factors for the effective learning: namely, engaging prior understandings, then integrating factual knowledge with conceptual frameworks, and thus taking active control over the learning process by meta-cognitive strategies. The second perspective “interdependence across languages,” (p. 232) deriving from the interdependence hypotheses presented and developed by Cummins (1981), has already been supported by some empirical research and studies. For example, Thomas and Collier (2002) found that the proficiency of immigrant students’ mother tongue was related to their second language development. The third theoretical perspective is based on Cook’s multi-competence (1995), and “it refers to the presence of two or more languages in the same mind and highlights the fact that multi-competence is not comparable to monolingual

competence in each language” (Cummins, 2007, p. 234).

In light of analysis and arguments on this issue and a case study of bilingual instructional strategies in the greater Toronto area, Cummins (2007) concluded that students’ L1 was not the enemy to their L2 acquisition, but on the contrary, as students’ L1 is serving as a cognitive and linguistic resource through some bilingual instructional strategies, “it can function as a stepping stone to scaffold more accomplished performance in the L2” (p. 238).

In addition, referring to the role of L1 in a specific context, Lin (2015) discussed how people could conceptualise the potential role of L1 in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and content-based instruction (CBI). With her analysis of monolinguals ideologies, Lin examined how these ideologies could hamper a more comprehensive and balanced approach in order to conceptualize and study the role of L1 in CLIL. She agreed that it would be disastrous “if L1 is overused to the extent that the entire lesson is full of L1 without any L2 input” (Lin, 2015, p. 78). However, Lin (2015) reminded us not to ignore the potential role of L1 in helping L2 teaching and learning, and “we should not throw the baby out with the bath water just for fear of using too much L1” (p. 78).

Although summarising the diverse functions of L1 use, including its ideational functions, textual functions, and interpersonal functions, Lin (2015) saw some important gaps in the research literature. For example, lack of focus on analysis of instances of L1 use related to its position in the curriculum genre. Then, by outlining the curriculum goals and pedagogical principles of CLIL, Lin (2015) addressed how these goals and principles were compatible with the role of L1 in CLIL curricula and ended with suggestions for future research in CLIL.

From the literature reviewed above, involving L1 judiciously in the L2 classroom gained growing support from researchers and theorists in recent years. However, it is still a main trend that teachers and students are encouraged to use L2 exclusively in the classroom. There had been much debate on the issue of L1 use. Consequently, many studies have been conducted to explore the role of L1 in second or foreign language classrooms. The following part provides a review of these studies.

Policies and Practices on Using L1 in the L2 Classroom

With the controversy surrounding L1 use, researchers have conducted many studies on this issue in different contexts. They have explored attitudes of teachers and students towards using

L1 in the L2 classroom (e.g., McMillan & Turnbull, 2009) as well as the amount of L1 use (e.g., Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015), investigated purposes for which teachers and students employ L1 (e.g., Littlewood & Yu, 2011), and thus provided some suggestions and approaches for using L1 judiciously and systematically (e.g., Cook, 2001; Swain et al., 2011).

Policies in different contexts. Government and other official policies on using L1 in L2 teaching and learning vary in different contexts all around the world.

Using L1 in the L2 classroom is supported by a growing number of researchers, theorists, and some groups. For example, the International Teacher Training Organization suggested that involving L1 in L2 classrooms can save time by translating a word or two, but also warned teachers to use it cautiously (Brooks-Lewis, 2009). Also, the Council of Europe suggested exercises which include L1. However, the monolingual immersion ideologies are still dominant in many contexts, especially in Asia, such as Hong Kong, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Philippines (Lin, 2015). L2 is still used exclusively in many school systems. In Hong Kong, the government legislated that teachers and students should use English exclusively in the English-medium content classrooms over the past thirty years (Lin, 2015). Now the latest policy is that

secondary schools have autonomy and flexibility to use English or Chinese as the medium of instruction for different groups of students and courses (Tavares, 2015). In Japan, a largely monolingual country, many private English schools with the monolingual policy assert that conversational English should be taught by native English speakers (e.g., Carson & Kashihara, 2012; Shimizu, 2006). In the Republic of Korea, English-only teaching approach has gained support in English classrooms, and in 2000, the Korean Ministry of Education proposed “Teaching English in English” policy and recommended that elementary school EFL teachers should use English exclusively in the classroom, which met many parents’ expectations for a higher quality of English education (Kang, 2008). However, the policy on the English Only instruction has been a little changed when the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education said, “teachers may switch between English and Korean during class according to the content of the lesson and the students’ understanding in order to exercise flexibility” (Lee, 2012, p. 3). In China Mainland, although there is no government official policy on L1 use, the Chinese government actively promotes the reform that children’s English education should begin from the elementary school. Moreover, English-only policy is still carried out in some schools in China.

Similarly, in the context of French Immersion in Canada, Turnbull, Cormier and Bourque (2011) quoted from official policy of Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation and translated them into English as “Learning must be without drowning students. Very early in the learning process, students will be able to understand and use French to communicate. It is therefore essential that French be the only language for classroom communication.” (p. 182). Furthermore, policy makers or instructors seem to ignore that in recent years, using L1 gains growing support. Concerning this point, McMillan and Turnbull (2009) made a comment:

... a core principle of Canadian French immersion is that learning is best achieved when teachers and students use French exclusively. While the exclusive use of the target language has been accepted as best practice [in French immersion] since its inception in 1965, first language use has long been a topic of much debate and controversy in many teaching and learning contexts beyond French immersion. Current thinking leans towards acceptance of judicious and theoretically principled L1 use... however, the results of this debate have generally been ignored by French immersion policy makers throughout Canada. (p. 15)

To sum up, it seems that “L2 use exclusively” still dominate the area of the second or

foreign language teaching and learning from the perspective of policies mentioned above.

Nevertheless, practices behind policies may be quite different due to complex factors, such as teachers' proficiency, students' levels of proficiency in L2 and sudden cases. The following sections explore L2 teaching and learning practices in different contexts based on the various studies.

Attitudes of teachers and students towards using L1 in the L2 classroom. Since researchers have explored some theoretically evidences to support L1 use in the L2 classroom, it is important and necessary to know attitudes of teachers and students towards this issue.

In recent years, scholars have investigated teachers' beliefs regarding inclusion or exclusion of L1 from L2 classrooms, and teachers' attitudes on L1 use are different. Some are positive with it, and others are against it. According to Tian and Macaro (2012), the majority of teachers favored L1 use. Furthermore, from the study, Macaro (2009) concluded that teachers could be classified into three quite distinct groups. Some teachers believe that using L1 will be harmful to L2 learning and "that exclusive use of the second language provided a kind of 'virtual reality' classroom which mirrored the environment both of the first language learner and the newly

arrived migrant to the target language country” (p. 36), which is labeled the “virtual position.”

Some think that exclusion of L1 in the L2 classroom is an “unattainable ideal” since perfect learning conditions do not exist in L2 classrooms, resulting in the use of L2 as much as possible (Macaro, 2009, p. 36). Macaro calls it “maximal position,” (2009, p. 36) and people may feel guilty when using L1. The third group holds the view that L1 has some recognizable value in helping enhance L2 learning, and it is called “optimal position” (p. 36). Moreover, Macaro used the case study conducted by Turnbull and McMillan (2009) as the examples of “virtual position” and “optimal position.”

In their study, McMillan and Turnbull (2009) focused on the participants’ beliefs and attitudes towards code-switching in the late French immersion in Canada. The participants were two French teachers who had been teaching late French immersion for ten years and were teaching Grade 7 late French immersion at the time of the study. Pierre is a native French speaker while Frank’s first language is English. The data were collected through an initial one-on-one semi-structured interview, three classroom observations, and a final one-on-one interview. The results concluded that Frank and Pierre had different attitudes towards this topic in their teaching

practice. Frank believed that L2 learning would be most effective approach when kept from L1 and regarded L2 learning as equal to L1 learning. Meanwhile, he thought that if he used English, his students might use English as well, which therefore caused students to ignore the TL input.

On the contrary, Pierre believed that French-English translation should be used as a tool to ensure comprehension and scaffold the TL production as well. He mentioned that he would reduce the amount of L1 when students were familiar with basic vocabulary. From the class observation, Pierre mainly used L1 to express new or difficult words or complex concepts, while Frank believed he could use pictures and gestures to help students acquire new French words and expressions instead of using L1. However, regarding the French-only environment, Frank and Pierre both believed that it frustrated students, especially at the beginning. Furthermore, the study also explored reasons behind the differences briefly, and concluded that different experiences as a L2 learner might contribute to it.

Similarly, McMillan and Rivers (2011) carried out a survey of twenty-nine “native-English speaker” teachers at a Japanese university where English-only approach is promoted as the best practice. Results indicated that many teachers believed judicious L1 use could facilitate L2

learning. However, thirteen teachers argued against L1 use for different reasons, such as teachers should go along with the university's policy or more L1 use by teachers would lead more students to use L1. Although teachers' beliefs may be shaped by some factors, the study still encouraged researchers to focus on more detailed survey to determine how teachers' beliefs are shaped and what teachers and students are actually doing in the classroom. Moreover, the authors argued that it was the best for teachers and students themselves to determine whether or not use L1 based on the immediate context of the classroom, which "constitutes optimal use of the target language and the L1" (McMillan & Rivers, 2011, p. 251). These findings are in line with the study with the same context of university setting in Japan conducted by Ford (2009).

Focusing on the context of Chinese teachers, Song and Andrews (2009) investigated four EFL teachers' beliefs about L1 use in L2 teaching and learning. Two of them advocated L1 use, believing that L1 played a positive role in connecting L2 with concept meaning, while the other two teachers believed that L1 use played a negative role in L2 acquisition. Other studies from different contexts (e.g., Forman, 2007; Manara, 2007; Ma, 2009; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014; Shimizu, 2006) concluded that many teachers supported L1 use in the classroom, yet they also

emphasized as much as L2 is needed for students, which supports the previous studies (e.g., Cook, 2001; Turnbull, 2001; Tang, 2002).

Referring to the factors influencing teachers' language choice, Corcoran (2009) made a list of eleven reasons why teachers restricted L1 use in the L2 classroom, such as learners' target language proficiency level, teachers' target language proficiency, teachers' education, institutional policy, and so on. To some extent, his findings echo with some research (e.g., Bateman, 2008; Lo, 2015; Manara, 2007). For instance, Bateman (2008) conducted a case study focusing on ten student teachers with respect to their attitudes and beliefs about using L1, and the factors that affect their decisions. The author concluded that linguistic limitations of non-native teachers would influence teachers' choice in using language. Teachers may feel difficult and uncomfortable if using L2 in the entire class. Therefore, factors affecting teachers' decisions about using L1 vary according to different classroom contexts, teachers' own experiences, faiths, or other factors. In another study, Manara (2007) found that the type of courses, difficulties and complexities of materials, and the goal of materials and tasks contribute to the teachers' attitudes on L1 use.

Meanwhile, some studies have explored students' perspectives towards L1 use. Similar to the teachers' beliefs and attitudes, some students adopted positive attitudes while others did not (e.g., Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Carson & Kashihara, 2012; Lee, 2012; Manaca, 2007; Norman, 2008). Norman (2008) examined the results of a survey on one hundred and ninety-one Japanese university students and found that although most students favored L1 use in the classroom, the students who have ever been abroad with much higher English proficiency did not think L1 use was a good idea. It is easy to understand that students in a lower level of L2 proficiency hope they can acquire what they are taught in the class with assistance of L1, which is consistent with studies by Ma (2009). In his study, Ma explored the attitudes of adult Chinese-background learners towards L1 use in an Adult Migrant English Program classroom in Australia. The data analysis indicated that learners with low English proficiency shared the same opinion with respect to the effectiveness of L1 use in English classes and regarded L1 use as a valuable pedagogical and cognitive tool.

In another case, Shimizu (2006) studied how English learners in Japan responded to L1 use in the classroom. Many participants were English majors. However, it was surprising to find that

the percentage of English major students who were positive with L1 use was higher than that of non-English major. These English major students with high English proficiency believed that L1 use in the L2 classroom would provide them a precious opportunity to practice their translation skills between L1 and L2, because some of them would be a translator in the future. Meanwhile, interestingly this study also found that students in the intermediate and low intermediate level were the most likely to disagree with L1 use, believing that they need as much English as possible to improve their listening skills. Furthermore, some students argued that classes taught entirely in English made them believe they had learned English well, which could be a fake impression.

Similarly, in the context of English as a Foreign Language classroom in Republic of Korea, Lee (2012) explored two hundred and eight young Korean learners' attitudes towards an English-only teaching approach and perceptions of teachers' English use. The study was carried out for two days with tests and questionnaire. The finding that students are not too much in favor of the English-only approach concurs with the results of studies mentioned above in this section. Furthermore, the finding revealed that students with higher test scores on the Korean proficiency

test also performed well on their English test, which, to some degree, can be best interpreted in Cummins' interdependence hypothesis (1981).

From these studies above, students' L2 proficiency seems to be a factor that affects their attitudes to use their L1 in the L2 classroom. Carson and Kashihara (2012) studied three hundred and five first and second year students in a Japanese university to examine students' desire to use L1 and to figure out whether or not proficiency levels influence students' L1 use. An anonymous bilingual questionnaire was adapted. The author found that students' desire for teachers to use the L1 in class was lower and declined with the increasing of L2 proficiency, which generally is supported by other studies (e.g., Bhooth, Azman & Ismail, 2014; Norman, 2008). Bhooth, Azman and Ismail (2014) investigated the role of L1 as a scaffolding tool in the English as a Foreign Language reading classroom in a university in Yemen. The participants included forty-five Yemeni university students, and the authors used a mixed method design, questionnaire and interviews, to collect data. One of the findings indicated that the dependence of L1 decreased as the students' proficiency in the L2 increased. However, in Lee's study (2012), referring to the relationship between EFL students' attitudes towards the English-only method and their English

proficiency, on the one hand, the author cited from McKay (2006) note that young EFL learners “need experiences that help them to succeed, to feel good about themselves” (p. 14). In other words, if using English-only as a teaching approach may result in the loss of learners’ self-esteem or sense of progression, it may be necessary for teachers to change their teaching approach. On the other hand, the results of this study revealed that although English proficiency and attitudes variables were correlated, learners’ attitudes may be influenced by other factors, such as motivation and learning strategies. Therefore, a learner may have a positive attitude towards English-only method even though he has a low English proficiency.

In sum, researchers found that many teachers and students were positive towards L1 use in the L2 classroom, but they were also concerned that L1 use should not be taken to an extreme. Moreover, some researchers related different attitudes and beliefs of teachers and students to their personal experiences, motivation, proficiency levels, goal of the tasks, and the type of courses.

Purposes of L1 use in the L2 classroom. Although there is still disagreement on the use of L1 among L2 researchers, findings provide evidence that L1 can be used in L2 classrooms for

various and important instructional purposes.

The article published by Cook (2001) mentioned that L1 could be used as a way to convey L2 meaning, to explain grammar, to practice the target language as code-switching and to manage the class. These finds concur with other studies reviewed (e.g., De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Grim, 2010; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; McMillan & Turnbull, 2009; Shimizu, 2006). Lin (2015) cited from a handbook (Swain et al., 2011) for the English language teachers in Hong Kong, stating that using L1 can make content comprehensible since it can be beneficial for teachers and learners to build new knowledge from what they have known, provide translations for difficult grammar and vocabulary, and use cross-linguistic comparisons as well.

De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) concentrated on the amount, purposes, and the reasons why L1 was used in the L2 classroom. The data consisted of instructor interviews, stimulated recall sessions, and video and audio recording of two German language teachers' classes in two university courses. The results showed that both teachers believed L1 could be used in L2 classrooms for fourteen purposes, such as administrative issues, activity instruction, comprehension check, humor, and so on, but the frequencies of the purposes were varied. Two of

the most frequent purposes of L1 use were related to translating words from L2 to L1 and giving activity instructions.

The purposes listed above are confirmed by some studies. For example, fifty students from Hong Kong were asked to do a survey about the purposes for which their English teachers were most likely to use L1, Cantonese or Mandarin (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). From a list of nine purposes, they were asked to indicate on a four-point scale whether their teachers used L1 “always” (=4 in the analysis), “sometimes”, “seldom”, or “never” (=1). The results indicated that the most common purposes were to establish constructive social relationships, explain difficult grammar, clarify complex meanings to ensure understanding, save time and exert control over the classroom.

In the same vein, Swain and Lapkin (2013) found that students use L1 for three main purposes. The first one is named “moving the task along,” (p. 109) which means using L1 to manage the task. The second main purpose is labeled “focusing attention,” (p. 109) including using L1 to lexical searches and explaining grammatical information. The third one is identified as “interpersonal interaction” (p. 110). For instance, L1 is used by students to argue and discuss

with each other. Except for the purposes listed above, Meyer mentioned that L1 could be used to “allay a possible perceived threat posed by the L2 to the cultural identity of the students” (2008, p. 145). Furthermore, the instructors use L1 not only to show their respects and values to student’s L1 and cultures but also to hold as a model of someone who successfully learned another language.

In sum, as shown in Table 1 which reviews another fourteen case studies, findings indicated that L1 use is beneficial for L2 teaching and learning by conveying meaning, managing the classroom, discussing culture issues, and establishing a friendly environment to help students feel less anxiety.

Table 1 *Summary of Studies of Purposes of L1 Use by Teachers and Students*

Study	L2 teaching context	Data collection instruments	Purposes of L1 use by teachers
Manara (2007)	EFL in Indonesia, university	class observations; questionnaires, interviews	give instructions; give feedback to students; check comprehension; explain new words, explain grammar; help students feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom; explain differences between L1 and L2; discuss assignments, tests, and quizzes; explain administrative information
Wilkerson (2008)	Spanish class, United States, college	interviews, observations	control the speed of classroom interactions and activities, eliminate waiting or lag time; avoiding ambiguity, saving time, establishing or asserting authority, and managing classroom
McMillan & Turnbull (2009)	French immersion in Canada, grade7	interviews	check student comprehension; explain new or difficult words or concepts
Ma (2009)	ESL in Australia, Adult Migrant English Program	interviews	learning the basics in English; facilitating the communication; explaining abstract ideas and grammar items
Grim (2010)	French class, United States, college	observation from video-recorded; audio-recorded	Metalinguistic explanation; task instruction; class management/discipline; empathy/solidarity; immediate translation; delayed translation
Storch & Aldosari (2010)	EFL in Saudi Arabia, college	collect data about learners' tasks	Task management; discussing and generating ideas; grammar deliberations; vocabulary deliberations; mechanics deliberations
Ghorbani (2011)	EFL in Iran	observation	scaffolding; private speech; create humor and boost the atmosphere
DiCamilla & Antón (2012)	Spanish class, United States, university	audio-recorded	solving problems; defining tasks; content; planning tasks; miscellaneous; interpersonal relation; evaluating forms; translating content
Moore (2013)	EFL in Japan, university	using analogue tape-recorded	task control; pedagogic roles
Bhooth, Azman & Ismail (2014)	EFL in Yemen, university	a questionnaire, interviews	carring out group work; checking for comprehension; clarification from classmates and teachers; providing individual help
Mohebbi & Alavi (2014)	EFL in Iran	questionnaire	teach new vocabulary; explain grammar; provide clarification; provide feedback; discipline; build rapport; giving individual help; save time in lengthy
Lo (2015)	EFL in Hong Kong, Grade 10	observation	social or effective functions; classroom management; content transmission
de Oliveira, Gilmetdinova & Pelaez-Morales (2016)	ELL in United States, kindergarten	interviews, observations	clarify and emphasize instructions; reinforce a concept, an important word, phrase, or sentence; check and improve comprehension and avoid potential confusion; manage the classroom; relate to students and provide encouragement
Tian & Hennebray (2016)	EFL in China, university	questionnaire, interviews	better comprehension; facilitating memorization; relieving anxiety towards an English-only environment; vocabulary explanations

The amount of L1 use in the L2 classroom. The amount of L1 use seems varied with classroom environments. For instance, De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) cited the study from Macaro (2001), which examined six student teachers of French in secondary school in the United Kingdom regarding the frequency of L1 used in the classroom. In his study, Macaro found that the six student teachers used L1 surprisingly rare, between 0 and 15.2%, with an average of 6.9% of the entire lesson duration. Meanwhile, the result of study conducted by De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) revealed an average L1 use with 11.3% in both German classes. In another study, Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015) investigated the amount and purposes of L1 use in EFL classroom by six teachers and one hundred and fifty-five students in two English language institutes in Iran for twelve sessions (ninety minutes one session). They gathered data through questionnaire and video, and the results revealed that although they believed L1 use could enhance teaching and learning, the teachers just used a limited amount of L1 in the classroom, which was 3.14%, and the minimum and maximum amounts of L1 utterances for twelve sessions were 0.33% and 11.33%, respectively. This study also assumed that L1 was used wherever the teachers thought it was needed, which means there was no reluctance for its use.

In another study, regarding teachers' and students' practice of using L1 in the English as Foreign Language classroom, Manara (2007) investigated nine non-native speaker teachers and two hundred and sixteen students from three universities in Indonesia by classroom observations, and each teacher was observed three times in different classes, including speaking, listening, reading, writing and grammar, and integrated classes. Findings revealed that the frequency of L1 use in particular was dependent on the different subjects. For example, the mother tongue was rarely found in listening and speaking classes since in the listening class, students spent most of class time to listen to the tape and then answered comprehension questions, as a result of little explanation in L1 involved. In the speaking class, L1 use is not negotiable since this class is for students to practice communicating in L2. On the contrary, in the reading course, L1 was usually used by teachers to tell jokes in order to "make students feel more comfortable" and "prevent students from getting bored" in the classroom (p. 165). Although no showing specific amount of L1 that teachers and students use, this study indicated that the quantity of L1 use was related to the type of courses.

Littlewood and Yu (2011) mentioned that from studies of various contexts, "there is a wide

discrepancy between official recommendations and the practice actually observed or reported in classrooms” (p. 67). They cited from Turnbull (2001), which found that the use of L1 ranged from 28% to 76% in the discourse of four French teachers in Canadian secondary schools, and Kim and Elder (2005) explored seven native-speaker teachers in secondary schools of Japanese, Korean, German and French in New Zealand and found a range from 12% to 77% use of L1. The study conducted by Littlewood and Yu (2011) explored fifty second-year university students from Hong Kong and Mainland China, asking them to recall the percentage of classroom time their teachers had spent using L1 (Cantonese or Mandarin) in junior-secondary-school English classes. The findings revealed that significant variation existed between the Hong Kong and Mainland China groups, 20% and 64% respectively. It also suggested that variation on the cultures of teaching and learning may be the reason.

In the same vein, a study investigated the teachers’ use English in the Spanish classroom in the United States by observation, note taking, and video recording (Wilkerson, 2008).

Surprisingly, five college teachers with similar academic background varied widely in the amount of L1 utterance in their classrooms. Wilkerson found that one teacher taught in English

totally with minimum use of Spanish while another teacher taught in Spanish but used English to translate and re-teach lessons outside the classroom. It concluded that variation in the amount of English use by teachers may have “serious implications for student articulation and transfer” (Wilkerson, 2008, p. 318). In another study, Lo (2015) collected data from thirty Grade 10 lessons from five secondary schools in Hong Kong, and found that teachers used different amounts of L1 in different schools. When teaching students with a lower level of L2 proficiency, teachers used a significant portion of L1. In contrast, when students were with higher proficiency in L2, teachers used less L1. There were two schools using L2 exclusively in their lessons (over 96%). Moreover, teachers in School A used about 80% L2 in lessons, while teachers in School B used mainly Chinese, about 80%. In conclusion, how much L1 is used seems to be varied based on different contexts.

Furthermore, concerning how much time students wish L1 should be used in the L2 classroom, in a Chinese university English as a Foreign Language context, Tang (2002) examined one hundred freshmen (English major) and twenty teachers at a university in Beijing by questionnaire. The results revealed that 63% of the students favored 5 to 10% of lesson time

could be used in L1, and 30% of the students suggested that it should be from 20 to 30% of class time.

In sum, the amount of L1 use in the L2 classroom is varied and may depend on the teaching contexts, teachers' and students' proficiency, the goal and content of courses, and teachers' approach. McMillan and Turnbull (2009, p. 33) cited from Macaro (2005) "suggests as a threshold (around 10–15percent) beyond which teacher use of the first language may begin to have a negative impact on student learning". However, how much of L1 use is the best remains a mystery which needs more detailed research and studies.

Judicious L1 use in the L2 classroom. With no conclusion about how much L1 use is the best, there are still some concerns that "once teachers open the 'floodgate' of uncontrolled and excessive use of L1, it would be difficult for them to keep the gate" (Lo, 2015, p. 273). Considering this point, some researchers, such as Cook (2001) and McMillan & Turnbull (2009), suggest that L1 use should be "limited," "judicious," and "systematical." Although how to define "judicious" is still a question, and possibly "judicious" L1 use looks different in different classrooms (Edstrom, 2006), researchers have provided some suggestions to use L1

appropriately.

Turnbull (2001) thought that in some scenarios, for example, an explanation of a difficult grammar or concept, L1 use may be efficient, but he emphasized that “it is crucial for teachers to use the TL as much as possible in contexts in which students spend only short periods of time in class on a daily basis, and when they have little contact with the TL outside the classroom” (p. 535). Therefore, how could L1 be better integrated into teaching and learning and be used in a judicious and systematic manner?

Cook (2001) proposed that the first step is to fall back on L1, which means to “license what teachers now feel guilty about doing” (p. 410), and then to consider overall teaching methods that make the best of L1 actively within the classroom. In that article, he also explained some occasions of using L1 positively in teaching through examples, such as when and how to convey meaning and manage the classroom. In the end, Cook provided some suggestions,

to carry out learning tasks through collaborative dialogue with fellow students, to develop L2 activities such as code-switching for later real-life use and to provide a short-cut for giving instructions and explanations where the cost of the L2 is too great. (2001, p. 418)

Meanwhile, he stressed that these were just a hint of techniques that teachers could develop in their practice.

Similar to Cook (2001), Swain et al. (2011) were concerned about teachers' feeling as well, especially in the L2-only context, and therefore they wrote a handbook *How to Have a Guilt-free Life Using Cantonese in the English Class*, which provided some suggestions and guidelines for teachers in Hong Kong on how to use Chinese or Cantonese in an English class without a sense of guilt. For example, they suggested teachers to make use of ideas and content taught in the L1 class which could be of cultural significance to provide material for the L2 class so that students could activate their prior knowledge rather than using simple and boring content.

Referring to when and how to use L1 in the L2 classroom, Forman (2007) suggested three activities, including pair work and group work, L1 literacy, and metalinguistic studies. Pair work and group work were also demonstrated by Swain et al. (2011). Students may work together in groups with the same language in lessons and probably use the medium of L1 to construct their ideas and share their experiences and insights, in which cognitive depth and creativity are required. In this occasion, it is a waste of time to remind students not to use their L1, since they

will use L1 covertly if not allowed to do (Swain et al., 2011). On the one hand, L1 can be the best approach to push students dig deeper and also accomplish complex tasks. After they construct ideas about the topic, they can present them in L2 by speaking or writing. On the other hand, teachers can observe how students transfer L1 to L2 in order to develop strategies to enhance teaching. Another example regarding this topic is identity texts from Cummins (2007). Identity texts mean that students can invest their identities in the creation of dual language texts in various forms, like written, spoken, musical, or combinations in multimodal form. L1 and L2 translations are important in creating dual language identity texts which can provide a chance for newcomer students to take part in activities actively (Cummins, 2007). Teachers can ask students to engage in the identity texts how they feel about using their L1 and how much L1 they think can help their learning. These kinds of activities in classroom with L1 use can facilitate learning since it reflects students' insights on L1's role and students' prior knowledge based on their experiences and as well as practice their cross-lingual transfer (Cummins, 2007).

In conclusion, although there is some theoretically and empirically compelling evidence that L1 use should be brought into L2 classrooms, it is crucial to keep in mind that L1 should be used

judiciously. Researchers have provided some suggestions about how to use L1 positively and systematically, but further research is needed so that teachers may use it with strategies and skills in teaching practice in the future.

Conclusion

The present literature review revealed the findings of different studies regarding rationale against and for L1 use, attitudes of teachers and students towards L1 use in different teaching contexts, purposes and the amount of L1 use in the L2 classroom, and how to use L1 positively and judiciously.

Results from studies (Ma, 2009; McMillan & Turnbull, 2009; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Norman, 2008; Shimizu, 2006) on both teachers and students' attitudes indicated that a majority of teachers and students were positive with L1 use in the L2 classroom, regarding L1 as a significant role in facilitating L2 teaching and learning. However, some teachers and students favor the exclusive L2 use in the classroom. These findings are similar to what has been found in other studies (e.g., Forman, 2007). For those who agreed to involve L1 use in the L2 classroom, they also stressed that L1 should be only used when it is necessary, in other words, L1 should be

used judiciously, which concurs with previous studies (e.g., Cook, 2001; Turnbull, 2001; Tang, 2002). Moreover, studies found that teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs may relate to their own experience and proficiency.

Concerning the purposes of L1 use in the L2 classroom, findings of studies (e.g., De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Meyer, 2008; Swain & Lapkin, 2013) are similar, and they shared some common views, such as the way to explain complex grammar, comprehension check, manage classroom, and save time. These findings support the former studies, for example, Cook (2001). Moreover, it is valuable to find that L1 use in the L2 classroom can also show respect and value to the students' cultures, which is indicated by Meyer (2008).

Furthermore, although the proper amount of L1 used in the L2 classroom is 10% to 15%, which was suggested by Macaro (2005), the results indicated variability among different teachers and schools from studies (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Lo, 2015; Tang, 2002; Wilkerson, 2008), case by case. The research also revealed that the amount of L1 use in the L2 classroom was dependent on the contexts, such as

teachers' and students' proficiency in L2.

Last, researchers found that L1 played a role in the L2 classroom, and many teachers and students favored L1 use to facilitate and promote teaching and learning. Therefore, to use L1 judiciously, namely when and how to use it properly becomes a crucial issue. The findings of present literature review showed that there was not enough research in this area. However, some studies (e.g., Cook, 2001; Cummins, 2007; Forman, 2007; Swain et al., 2011) provided suggestions or activities which may guide people to use L1 positively in teaching practice and L2 learning.

By analyzing the above findings, we would provide insights into the issue of using L1 in the L2 classroom in a Chinese EFL context. Meanwhile, it is necessary to offer some suggestions for improving English teaching and learning in China, which is explored in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Implications

Introduction

Although using L1 in the L2 classroom is still a disputable issue, it is acknowledged that based on some theories, such as Vygotsky's theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and linguistic interdependence hypothesis developed by Cummins (Cummins, 1981), in recent years L1 use has gained increasing support from more researchers, who believe that involving L1 in the L2 classroom can be regarded as a cognitive and social tool for students to acquire L2. Moreover, a majority of teachers and students have a positive attitude towards L1 use, showing their preference for it under some specific occasions (Bhooth et al., 2014; Carson & Kashihara, 2012; Forman, 2007; Ford, 2009; Lee, 2012; Manara, 2007; Ma, 2009; McMillan & Turnbull, 2009; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014; Norman, 2008; Shimizu, 2006; Tang, 2002).

From my literature review, I found that L1 can be used in the L2 classroom for many purposes, such as expressing and clarifying meaning of vocabulary and grammar, managing the classroom, checking comprehension, and so on. Despite the fact that L1 use plays a role in the L2 classroom, it is still uncertain how much L1 use is best for L2 teaching and learning. In my

review of literature, I was not surprised to find out that the amount of L1 varies according to the specific teaching context. However, researchers suggest that L1 should be used judiciously and systematically, and teachers need to be well equipped with strategies and skills for using L1 in the future (e.g., Atkinson, 1993; Cook, 2001; Grim, 2010; Karathanos, 2009; Kibler & Roman 2013; McMillan & Rivers, 2011).

As previously discussed, researchers have carried out many studies on using L1 in the L2 classroom in different contexts. As is mentioned before, one of the reasons why I chose this project is to prepare myself to be an EFL teacher in China. There are potential differences between Chinese EFL and other contexts that could yield distinctive learning environments. For example, teaching methods. In Chinese classes, usually teachers give lectures and students just listen, with few interactions, which is a teacher-centered approach. Moreover, the Chinese educational system is exam-oriented, which, to some extent, means the purpose for students to learn English is just for achieving a high score in Gaokao (National College Entrance Examination). Taking into account my motivation and these differences, I would like to choose EFL classroom in China as the specific context for this section, and I will focus on implications

for Chinese English teachers. I hope that the knowledge I have learnt about the importance of using L1 in the L2 classroom could be applied to the situation in China EFL classes.

Given the findings of literature review and my own experience, this section is divided into three subsections. First, several implications were drawn, which lead to suggestions for Chinese EFL teachers on how to improve skills and strategies on using Chinese judiciously in English classrooms. Secondly, I propose that school policy makers and administrators should take action to better help and create a comfortable learning environment for teachers and students. Following are some guidelines for students on how to better prepare themselves for L2 acquisition. Furthermore, I hope that my suggestions could provide Chinese English teachers, policy makers and students with some inspiration and motivate them to further think of using Chinese in an English class.

Implications for English Teachers

Since L1 can play a significant role in L2 teaching and learning, it is necessary to raise teachers' awareness on the importance and purposes of L1 in L2 acquisition. Moreover, it is possible that some teachers would use L1 with a sense of guilt or overuse L1. In the following

part, I provide some suggestions for teachers to address the issue.

Increase awareness and feel guilt-free. As previously discussed, since the “English Only” movement influences English teaching all around the world, including China, many people still believe that English should be taught in English so that students will learn English more efficiently. Therefore, it is no surprise that English teachers may feel guilty for using Chinese in English classrooms, especially when the school has the rule specifying English-Only. However, some teachers may still use Chinese in spite of this warning and receive punishment accordingly. Swain et al. (2011) wrote a handbook *How to Have a Guilt-free Life Using Cantonese in the English Class* to provide guidelines on how to use local languages “guilt free” in L2 classes, which in my opinion, can be a material for professional development workshop or as a handbook for teachers. Following are two suggestions offered to increase teachers’ awareness on L1 use.

Professional development workshop-session one. English teachers play a significant part in using Chinese in English classes. Studies (e.g., Atkinson, 1993; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Tian & Hennebry, 2016) have suggested that teacher training should be included so that teachers can acquire strategies and skills to properly use L1 in the classroom. Moreover, Grim (2010)

believed that equipping L2 teachers with skills and strategies to optimize or avoid the L1 will improve linguistic success in the L2 classroom. Therefore, some educational programs could be designed and offered to train English teachers concerning the purposes of L1 use and judicious L1 use in an English class. I propose to design a professional development workshop for English teachers who would benefit from this awareness and training. The workshop covers history of this issue and the benefits of L1 use in L2 classroom as well as guidelines for how to use L1 effectively and judiciously. The number can be limited to twelve participants so that some activities would be carried out effectively. There are three sessions available for this workshop with one core question for teachers to explore: how to use L1 in a judicious manner in teaching practice. Following will be the session one, and the session two and three address the issue relating to implementation and reflections, which will be explained in detail later in this chapter.

The first session is an introduction to historical view on this topic, including arguments against and for L1 use and purposes of L1 so that teachers can have a general understanding of L1 use, which could enhance teachers' awareness. This session begins with a brainstorm activity, a debate, which can activate teachers' prior knowledge on this topic. Twelve teachers will be

divided into two teams at random. One team is against Chinese use in an English classroom, and the other team is for Chinese use. The debate takes about thirty minutes, and I will list their main points in the blackboard. Then back to their real practice in English teaching, there are two questions for teachers to discuss, which are “Do you use Chinese in an English class and when?” and “What do you use Chinese for?” Both questions enable teachers to explain their real ideas about L1 use and also reflect their own teaching practice. Then, I give them a PPT presentation, which sums up the main points of the studies on the role and purpose of L1 in the L2 classroom. The session ends up with the group discussion about whether what they learned in this session change their thoughts towards this topic and future teaching practice.

Brochures or handbooks. For teachers who are not available to attend the professional development workshop-session one or teachers who would like to access basic information about L1 use, distributing some informative brochures or handbooks, for instance, the handbook *How to Have a Guilt-free Life Using Cantonese in the English Class* (Swain et al., 2011) to them is a great and feasible way to enhance their awareness on the significance of L1 use in the L2 classroom. Corcoran (2009) suggested that teachers should be encouraged to discuss the issue of

L1 use with their colleagues, including other teachers and administrators since this kind of “critical reflection and discussion will surely benefit teachers and students alike” (p. 13).

Therefore, the content of brochures or handbooks can be material for teachers to get together and discuss, which could include arguments for L1 use, the functions or purposes of L1, and basic guidelines that can help teachers use L1 in a planned and judicious way. The arguments for L1 use could be some theories, such as Cummins’ interdependence hypothesis, Vygotsky’s cognitive and sociocultural theory, and Cook’s multi-competence. The functions of L1 could emphasize on grammar explaining, comprehension checking, time saving, vocabulary teaching, classroom managing, etc. Referring to guidelines for judicious L1 use, some suggestions are provided by researchers. Take an example from Swain et al. (2011). To ask students to share their personal stories in Chinese, then write the story in English, and in the end, tell it in English. This three-stage progress provides students a way to make use of Chinese to arrange the content they wish to express and then work to say and write it in English (Swain et al., 2011). In addition, a list of suggestions given by Cook (2001) could be references for teachers, such as conducting learning tasks through collaborative dialogue, developing L2 activities such as code-switching, and

establishing interlinked L1 and L2 knowledge in students' minds. Other suggestions for teachers could be creating a secure and comfortable classroom environment where students can engage in interactions with confidence (Swain & Lapkin, 2013) and showing respect and friendly for students' L1 by removing "English-only" signs from classroom walls (Corcoran, 2009). By acknowledging the suggestions, teachers are possible to change their attitudes towards L1 use which would further facilitate their L2 teaching and also improve students' L2 learning. In short, brochures or handbooks can be of importance to increase teachers' awareness on L1 use.

In sum, in order for teachers to feel guilt-free, the first step for teachers is to generally realize the role of L1 playing in the L2 classroom with the assistance of brochure or handbook or workshop. In that way, teachers may feel comfortable and confident because they would realize that what they do actually may be of benefit to students' L2 acquisition.

Consider teaching context. Teachers in the L2 classroom need to consider their classroom context "as a multilingual social space in which teachers and learners take advantage of 'dynamic, creative, and pedagogically effective use of the target language and the learners' L1(s)'" (Levine, 2014, p. 332). As teachers realize L1 use is helpful in L2 teaching and learning

and decide to use L1 in the L2 classroom, teachers have to consider their teaching context during the practical implementation. It is known from literature review that teachers' attitude towards L1 use and the amount of L1 use depend on many factors, such as the goal of the course, students' levels of proficiency and attitudes towards L1 use.

Consider the goal of the course. Before using Chinese in the English class, teachers need to consider the goal of the course. Manara (2007) concluded that if the goal teachers hope to achieve in their class is to understand the content of the course, L1 could be used to provide comprehensible input; on the contrary, if the goal of the course is to practice and improve students' communication skills, L1 use is not negotiable. According to my own experience as a student, in the Chinese EFL context, to a great extent, I consent to this finding. However, considering the goal of the course for most students in China is to achieve the best academic marks in Gaokao, which does not require high standard for the speaking test, teachers can decide whether or not to use Chinese in this part. On the contrary, for students in some international schools whose goal is to study abroad, it seems that speaking, listening, writing, and reading are all significant for them. In that way, the goal of the course seems to be an essential factor that

teachers need to consider when involving Chinese in English classes.

Consider students' levels of proficiency. When contemplating what amount of Chinese (if any) to use, teachers need take into account students' levels of proficiency in English. From the review, we found that many case studies agreed that L1 use depends on the students' levels of proficiency in L2. Many students with a low level of proficiency prefer to involve L1 use, while some students with a high level of proficiency tend to use L2 exclusively. Based on my own experience, I believe that if teachers conduct the whole class with English, it will be torturous for students with a low level of proficiency since they do not understand what teachers say in English. As a result, it could temper students' enthusiasm for learning English, and meanwhile, the confidence of the students may be undermined. Therefore, I suggest that teachers could conduct an English proficiency test at the beginning of the course so that they would have a fair idea of students' levels of proficiency in English, and then they can do a needs assessment with students to find when and how to use Chinese naturally in English classes.

Consider students' attitudes towards L1 use. After having known students' levels of proficiency, teachers still need to consider students' desires and attitudes on using Chinese in

English classes. It is possible that some students with a low level of proficiency would prefer teachers to use English exclusively in English classes since they believe that English classes are the only opportunity for them to learn English. Meanwhile, for some students with high level of proficiency, they may feel that using Chinese is more lovely and comfortable. In my home town, Zhangzhou city, schools usually advocate streaming students, educating them according to their needs, which means students are separated into different classes based on their academic scores. In that way, possibly in one class, students' levels of English proficiency are quite similar, and thus their attitudes towards L1 use may be the same. There are some ways for teachers to know students' desires on this issue. For example, to carry out a quick survey of students during the first class to gauge students' will on using Chinese and how much Chinese they would like teachers to use. Using a quick survey takes little time but provide direct and visual data, which in my opinion, can be a helpful reference for teachers before using Chinese in English classes.

Professional development workshop-session two. The second session of the workshop focuses on the practical implementation, which includes factors that teachers need to consider when using Chinese in their English classes and strategies and skills for L1 use. In the beginning

of this session, I prepare one question as a hook to introduce the topic of this session to participants. That question is “Based on your teaching experiences, what factors may affect you on using Chinese in English classes?” Then, an experienced instructor gives a PowerPoint presentation, which summarizes the factors that may influence L1 use. Following this, the instructor will give teachers thirty minutes model teaching with using L1 effectively in the class, which is consistent with the suggestion that Bateman (2008) provided for teacher training. This part will facilitate a discussion on strategies and skills that teachers saw from the model teaching, and how they could incorporate into their own practice. Furthermore, they are also given opportunities to share challenges and difficulties that they may encounter during applying these strategies and skills to their classes. From observation of the experienced instructor’s teaching and discussion, participants can not only know how others use L1 in practice but also learn and involve some skills in their classes in the future based on classroom contexts. The session will end with conclusions and explanations of assignments for the last session of the workshop.

Overall, it is difficult to define “judicious” L1 use, and it looks different in different classrooms. With the second session of workshop, teachers will have a basic understanding of

factors that may influence their L1 use and acquire some strategies to assist their teaching in the future.

Reflect on the L1 use that occurs in the classroom. After using Chinese in an English class, teachers need to evaluate their practice to make sure that Chinese is used properly in English classes. Some researchers used themselves as participants to explore L1 use in the L2 classroom, and Edstrom (2006) is one of them. Edstrom (2006) emphasized the value of self-recording in teacher development. Inspired by these studies, I provide some ways for teachers to reflect on their L1 use in the classroom, such as classroom recordings, peers' observation and talk, feedback from students, and evaluation of students' performance and learning outcomes.

Classroom recordings. As previously mentioned, there are some ways for teachers to examine their practice on L1 use, and classroom recordings could be one of them. Making the best use of classroom recordings, teachers could examine how much and why Chinese is used in their English classes so that they may find out whether or not Chinese is used in an appropriate way or whether or not there is something that need to be improved. It seems to be impractical if asking teachers to analyze the data of classroom recordings after every class. However, if

possible, selecting one recording randomly every month for their teaching improvement would be a good idea.

Peers' observation and talk. In many schools in China, there is an interesting assessment measure, which is asking some peers or school leaders to one teacher's class to evaluate the teacher's performance. Inspired by this, I believe this method also can be used here. Teachers can invite their colleagues to their classrooms to observe how they use Chinese to teach English. After observation, on the one hand, peers can provide teachers written feedback outlining their improvements and what they need to work on. On the other hand, peers and teachers can get together to discuss this topic and share their own experience and their strategies and skills of using Chinese with each other for their teaching improvement.

Feedback from students. Feedback from students is also essential, whether it is positive or negative, since students can provide firsthand feedback about quality of teaching based on their experiences. Students have their own views on whether or not teachers' L1 use is helpful for their understanding. For example, teachers use Chinese to explain new grammar or new vocabulary. Therefore, I suggest teachers conduct a survey ordinarily to explore students' insights on their

practice. Teachers can hand out questionnaires and explain to students the goal of this survey before the class and ask students to complete questionnaires with their real feeling during the class or after the class, which not only can reveal students' thoughts but also reduce the possibility that students would forget details. Moreover, teachers can develop activities on a regular basis, such as students' talk, providing students opportunities to comment on teachers' teaching face to face. By communicating and sharing, teachers would hear suggestions from students directly and know what they should do to make their teaching better in the future.

Evaluation of students' performance and learning outcomes. Comparing with feedback from peers and students which give teachers reflection on their L1 use, it seems that students' performance and learning outcomes may reveal influences and results of using Chinese in English classes more directly and clearly. From students' learning outcomes, such as monthly tests, midterm examination, and final examination, to a large extent, teachers can find out using Chinese is positively or negatively affecting students' English acquisition. Furthermore, on the basis of students' performance and learning outcomes, teachers can know the knowledge that students do not master so that they can change their methods and figure out some strategies for

using Chinese positively in the class.

In sum, whether or not using Chinese in the English classroom benefits students' English acquisition should be the criterion for teachers to examine their practice. With reflections on their practice, they can change and adjust strategies and skills to suit students' needs and furthermore improve their teaching in the future.

Professional development workshop-session three. This session aims to provide an opportunity for participants to practice and for their reflections. Twelve participants are divided into four groups to complete the assignments including a lesson plan, twenty minutes model teaching and five minutes books share. There is no limitation about the topic for lesson plan, and participants can choose one that interests them. From the lesson plan and twenty minutes model teaching, participants can apply what they acquire from the session one and session two of workshop to the real teaching practice. As a group, it is an opportunity for three participants to share different insights based on their own experiences which may diversify the lesson plan and model teaching. Meanwhile, participants can comment on other groups' model teachings with positive or negative feedback or questions so that participants can learn from each other for their

improvement. Book share, in my opinion, is a good way for participants to share what they learn from valuable books. Each participant need to share two or three books or journals on L1 use in L2 classrooms with others. In that way, participants can get various references to help them teach English in a judicious and suitable way in the future. The activities mentioned above will possibly benefit for participants' practice and reflections on L1 use. This session concludes with an opportunity for participants to comment on this workshop and provide suggestions as to how we can improve the quality of workshops in the future.

Overall, it is necessary and significant for teachers to reflect on their own practice for their improvement in practice. Feedback from themselves, peers and students is like a mirror reflecting teachers' practice on using L1. Similarly, based on evaluations of students' learning outcomes and performance, teachers might also examine their skills on L1 use and figure out something that they need to improve.

Summary. Teachers are essential to the students' L2 learning. The first step is to increase teachers' awareness on L1's role and functions of L1 in L2 classrooms, with the help of brochure or handbook or workshop. When deciding to use how much and how to use Chinese in an

English class, teachers need to consider their teaching contexts, such as the goal of the course, students' levels of proficiency and students' attitudes and will towards using Chinese. After using Chinese in the classroom, teachers need to reflect on their L1 use by various ways, such as classroom recordings, feedback from peers and students, and evaluation of students' performance and learning outcomes. These are some guidelines and suggestions, by which I hope teachers will be inspired to ponder this issue and apply the suggestions that are suitable for their contexts to their teaching.

Implications for School Policy Makers and Administrators

As previously discussed, policies on L1 use in the L2 classroom seems different in different contexts. However, English-only still prevails in most parts of the world. In China, although there is no official policy from the Chinese government providing that English should be taught in English, some schools have their own language policies. As L1 use gains more and more support from researchers, I suggest that school policy makers and administrators need to take action to adapt to change. Following are some suggestions provided for them to consider.

Adjust policies properly. School policy makers and administrators need to pay attention to

the recent research studies on this topic so that they can get some firsthand information about L1 use. For example, schools can develop partnership with some colleges and invite some scholars to give lectures for policy makers and administrators. In recent years, research and studies on this topic are carried out by many researchers. It is true and clear that using L1 in the L2 classroom, to some extent, can facilitate L2 teaching and learning. Policies makers cannot just ignore these findings. In that case, I suggest that policy makers can adjust their policies (if any) and leave teachers to make decisions on whether using L1 or not according to their own teaching contexts. Therefore, teachers would feel comfortable if they are not confident to conduct the whole class in English-only. Meanwhile, students also could benefit from it since teachers would consider their needs and differences.

Provide support for teachers' professional development. There is no doubt that teachers need support and encouragement from schools referring to this issue. Inspired by Pro-D days in B.C., Canada, I think one support that school could provide for teachers is the professional development. It is true that teachers need time to “hone their skills, improve practice, and stay current with changes related to teaching and learning” (Coates, Hodgson & Lombardi , 2000, p.

13), and Pro-D days can be used for teachers to keep on top of changes that influence their work with students (Coates et al., 2000). Recently it seems impossible for language-in-education policy makers in China to add Pro-D days to the school calendar. However, schools can choose specific time once a month for English teachers' professional development in accordance with their conditions and needs. For example, supporting them to attend workshops and conferences, from which teachers can address the issue on L1 use collectively, share new ideas about English teaching and learning, and learn new technologies and skills which they can take back to the classrooms.

Establish a positive environment. A friendly environment is to teachers and students what water is to fish. Except teachers and students, school policy makers and administrators also should realize the crucial role that a good language learning environment plays in arousing students' passion for learning English. Schools can take measures to show their support and respect for students' L1 and diversity. For example, using bilingual signs in the notice board. Meanwhile, allowing Chinese appear in the classroom could make teachers and students relieve their anxiety towards an English-only environment, especially for the students with a low level

of English proficiency (Tian & Hennebry, 2016). In addition, it is also schools' responsibility to create a positive and secure environment in which students can engage in interactions with confidence and teachers will feel confident and comfortable to teach.

Summary. To sum up, school policy makers and administrators also play a key role in the implementation of L1 use in the L2 classroom. They can provide their support by reforming and adjusting policies, conducting training programs for teachers' professional development, and establishing a positive and friendly environment.

Implications for Students in the L2 Classroom

From what have been discussed above, it is concluded that teachers should consider students' levels of proficiency and attitudes towards L1 use, and schools are also responsible for creating a positive environment. Students themselves, however, are also of great value to L2 learning. In order to use Chinese effectively for English learning, I suggest students to know their levels of proficiency, choose appropriate tools and strategies, and maintain a positive attitude that using L1 would be respected and valued.

Know their levels of proficiency. To figure out how to use Chinese to improve their

English learning, students should know their levels of proficiency. There are various ways that students can know their levels of English proficiency. According to my English learning experience, generally I used quizzes, exams or kinds of exercise to know my English proficiency so that I would know how much knowledge I have mastered and realized what I should improve and work harder on. Therefore, only knowing your own level of proficiency can you find out suitable strategies and tools for your English acquisition.

Choose appropriate tools and strategies. After knowing your level of English proficiency, students can choose some tools and strategies for their English acquisition. It is known from the review that students can use some tools referring L1 use, such as bilingual dictionaries and using L1 as part of learning activity, such as pair work or group work. I would like to take using L1 in pair work or group work as an example based on my own experience here at the University of Victoria. In some classes, by chance all Chinese students were divided into one group for discussion, and it is interesting that usually we shared ideas with Chinese, which was allowed by our professors, especially when we met a very challenging topic. Using Chinese in the pair work or group work help us to explore and reflect the topic more easily and explain our ideas in

English with more confidence. There are other suggestions, for instance, communicating with teachers on using Chinese. However, they are just suggestions, and students need to find out the suitable tools and strategies for English learning depending on their circumstances.

Maintain a positive and friendly attitude. Referring to the role of L1 in the L2 classroom, no matter what their English proficiency may be, students need to maintain a positive and friendly attitude. It does not mean that all the students are required to use L1 in the L2 classroom. However, when some students use Chinese in an English class, especially students with a relatively low level of English proficiency, other students with a high level of proficiency or those who object to L1 use need to show their respect and understanding. In that way, students would benefit from a good learning environment.

Summary. To summarize, in order to learn English more effectively with L1 use, students need to know their levels of proficiency so that they would figure out tools and strategies which facilitate their English acquisition. Furthermore, it is necessary for students to maintain a positive and friendly attitude to establish a great environment in which L1 would be valued and respected.

Conclusion

In this chapter, based on the findings from the literature review, I present some implications for English teachers, school policy makers and administrators, and students in an English class. Furthermore, some suggestions and guidelines are offered for them respectively.

The literature review shows that although there is convincing evidence that L1 can be involved in the L2 classroom, it is crucial to keep in mind that decisions about whether and how much L1 use is judicious and appropriate depend on the teaching context (Spada, 2007).

Therefore, it is necessary to raise and enhance teachers' awareness on the role of L1 in the L2 classroom so that they may feel guilt-free, and brochures, handbooks, or workshop can be ways to deal with this issue. Moreover, teachers should take into account their teaching contexts when deciding to use L1, including the goal of the course, students' levels of proficiency and students' will and attitudes towards L1 use. In addition, reflections on L1 use that occurs in their classrooms, from my perspective, is also essential for teachers' development. Teachers can make the best use of classroom recordings, feedback from peers and students and evaluations of students' performance and learning outcomes to examine whether they use L1 effectively and

positively in the L2 classroom or not.

Meanwhile, school policy makers and administrators should take action, such as adjusting policies properly, supporting teachers' professional development, and establishing a comfortable and positive environment in which students and teachers may feel less anxiety and more confident.

Furthermore, students, as the core of English learning, are encouraged to use Chinese in their English classrooms based on their needs. After they realize their levels of proficiency, they could figure out tools and strategies for L1 use which suit them. Moreover, to create a positive environment that values and respects L1 use can only be reached through a collective effort of schools, teachers as well as the cooperation with students themselves.

Finally, I designed a professional development workshop with three sessions for teachers to receive training on using L1 so that they may improve teaching skills and incorporate the strategies that they learned from this workshop in their teaching in the future.

In sum, the implications and suggestions mentioned above are based on the findings and my own experience. They may be not perfect for L2 teaching and learning, and may not suit all

teachers, schools, and students in China. However, I hope that these suggestions, considerations, and options for implementation could be the inspiration that they are looking for to improve their L2 teaching and learning.

Chapter Four: Coda

This capstone project has explored arguments against and for L1 use in the L2 classroom, attitudes of teachers and students towards L1 use, purposes of L1 use, the amount of L1 use, as well as strategies for using L1 judiciously. Furthermore, implications are offered for teachers, schools, and students in Chinese EFL context to use L1 in an effective and positive manner. This final chapter includes limitations and directions for future research, provides a few concluding remarks, and returns to my personal reflections.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are several limitations to both the literature review and the implication section, such as small samples of research, limited case studies based on the Chinese context, and providing suggestions based on my own experience as a student.

In the literature review, the findings of the existing research on this topic seem to be various on similar themes, in particular attitudes of teachers and students, purposes and the amount of L1 use, “without providing new research questions or new research approaches to achieve new insights beyond what is already known in the literature” (Lin, 2015, p. 79). Meanwhile, the small

sample used limits the possibility to generalize the finding (e.g., De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Norman, 2008), and since they are not longitudinal studies, it is difficult to figure out how L1 use in the classroom enhances L2 learning in the long run.

Another general limitation of the research on which this study is based is lack of enough research that choosing Chinese EFL classrooms as the context. As I mentioned in the research path, considering that the papers for literature review should be more diverse on quantity and background of participants, I selected case studies from different contexts, including Chinese EFL context. However, the lack of enough case studies in Chinese EFL contexts may restrict my thinking. Perhaps if more research based on Chinese context was conducted, I could provide more appropriate and practical suggestions for teachers, schools and students in China.

Meanwhile, regarding the studies from different contexts, possible further research can explore whether or not there are some significant differences between French Immersion and other EFL/ESL contexts concerning the L1 use in the L2 classroom. English, to some extent, is linguistically related to French. For instance, affected by French culture, some English vocabulary related to religion, arts, and life originated from French, such as baptism, ballet and

champagne. Therefore, in the future study, researchers could compare the French Immersion to the situation with other contexts to dig this topic deeper. Take Chinese EFL contexts as an example, which are not cognate languages.

Last but not least, the literature review lacks studies which draw up the goals and develop strategies of judicious L1 use to achieve these goals in the L2 classroom. Not enough papers provide suggestions and strategies about how to use L1 judiciously to address specific issues and problems, which deserve to be further explored in the future.

Referring to the implication section, I could only provide suggestions based on my own experience as a student. Although I have some experience in private tutoring, I have no experience in teaching English systematically in schools, which may be a limitation to the project since I cannot imagine the specific challenge and obstacle that English teachers may encounter during the teaching. Moreover, some provinces in China have adopted different curricula, and even different schools in the same province, such as private schools and public schools, may carry out different teaching policies. Therefore, the suggestions may not suit all the Chinese EFL classes.

Research gaps and limitations mentioned above may provide a direction and extend some detained topics or issues for further research in order to facilitate L2 teaching and learning in practice in the future. Furthermore, as having some experience in teaching English in China in the future, I may provide some suggestions which will be more insightful and proper for English teaching and learning.

Concluding Remarks

Using L1 in the L2 classroom is a very controversial issue in the research area SLA. However, recent research showed that using L1 offered a cognitive tool to L2 acquisition, which gains much support (e.g., Cook, 2001; Cummins, 2007; Lin, 2015; Tian & Hennebry, 2016).

This project focused on attitudes of teachers and students on L1 use in L2 classrooms, purposes of L1 in L2 teaching and learning, the amount of L1 use, as well as judicious L1 use in practice. As discussed in Chapter Two, researchers have found that L1 and L2 are interlinked in our mind so that L1 can help us to acquire L2. Researchers have also found that most teachers and students have a positive attitude towards using L1 in the L2 classroom, and L1 can be used for many purposes, such as explaining grammar, managing the class, and checking

comprehension. In addition to these benefits, L1 use helps create a positive classroom in which teachers and students feel comfortable and confident. However, teachers need to use L1 with strategies and skills in case they overuse it.

In my Chapter Three, I made proposals on how to help teachers and students use Chinese effectively in the English classroom from various perspectives. That teachers attend training or workshops provided by schools is possibly beneficial for both teachers and students. Meanwhile, teachers and students work with schools to build a positive environment that values and respects L1 use and also stimulates L2 teaching and learning.

The goal of this project is to raise teachers, school administrators and students' awareness of making the best use of L1 to improve students' L2 learning. In addition, this project offers detailed suggestions about how to use L1 in a planned and judicious manner, and thus teachers, students, and schools are able to work collectively to accomplish it. In sum, I hope that this project can serve as a reference for English teachers, schools and students who are interested in using L1 to facilitate L2 teaching and learning.

Reflections

Before exploring this topic, based on my own experience, I just assumed that to some extent, using Chinese in an English classroom is helpful, at least to me, and I had no idea why using L1 may be beneficial for L2 learning. However, after doing the research and reading the papers on theories that support L1 use in the L2 classroom, such as theories from Vygotsky, Cook and Cummins, and examining the different case studies, I believe that I have gained a good understanding of L1 use.

Many studies found that although some disagreements existed, most teachers and students had a positive attitude on using L1 in the L2 classroom, which means the number of people who are in favor of L1 use predominates, and thus in my opinion, it is worth using L1 for L2 teaching. Meanwhile, it was interesting to find that some English major students with a high level of proficiency preferred L1 use for practicing their translation skills, while some students with a low level of proficiency preferred to use L2 exclusively.

When I explored the amount of L1 use occurring in the L2 classroom, concerning the real practices, I was not surprised to find that the amount of L1 varied in accordance with teaching

contexts, which inspires me to explore factors that contribute to a teaching context. For example, students' individual differences. It is frustrating to see that in China, a teacher-centered approach seems still to dominate the classrooms in some schools. In that way, teachers possibly ignore students' different needs when using Chinese in English classes. On the contrary, if teachers acknowledge a student-centered approach, I believe that they would make a difference, as they would know they should take into account students' individual differences. Personally, I hope English teachers in China can realize that whether using L1 judiciously or not, to a great degree, depends on whether they are concerned about their classroom contexts or not, and I propose that teachers should spend more time knowing students' differences, such as their needs and levels of proficiency in English, at the beginning of one course.

Moreover, reading all these papers for this project, I have a deeper understanding of responsibilities that teachers, students, and schools should share to build a positive and great environment in which L1 could be used to facilitate L2 teaching and learning. They should assume their respective roles and work together to fulfill their responsibilities.

I think I am well equipped to support my teaching in the future with the knowledge I gained

from this project. In addition, the investigation of the research questions drives me to ponder over more questions and dig deeper on this topic in the future. For instance, we have known the role and purposes of L1 in the L2 classroom, but we still do not know whether or not L1 use actually facilitates L2 learning in the long term. From my perspective, this is the essential issue that need to be dealt with, which can contribute significantly to the debate surrounding L1 use in the L2 classroom.

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