Portuguese in the EFL classroom?

Português na sala de aula de inglês?

James CORCORAN

Abstract: *While many Brazilian private English language institutes prohibit or restrict first language (L1) use, research from English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts points to the benefits of both teachers and students using the L1 as an effective tool in the second language (L2) learning process. Stemming from recent research, this article explores the issue of why teachers include or exclude the L1 in the adult EFL classroom (teacher/student use), specifically focusing on Brazilian teacher beliefs and practices regarding L1 use. Two private EFL schools in Northeastern Brazil provide the sites for this mixed-methods research. Findings include a comprehensive list of reasons teachers limit or include the L1. This article concludes with the implications of this study's findings for private EFL institutions, including teachers, teacher educators, and administrators.*
Key words: *L1; EFL; Teacher beliefs; Teacher education; Private language institutes.*

Resumo: *Enquanto muitas escolas particulares de idiomas proibem ou restringem o uso da primeira língua (L1) na aula de inglês, pesquisas sobre contextos de ensino de inglês como língua estrangeira (ILE) indicam os benefícios, tanto para alunos quanto para professores, do uso da L1 como uma ferramenta eficaz no processo de aprendizagem de segunda língua (L2). Baseado em pesquisas recentes, este artigo explora os porquês de professores incluírem ou excluírem a L1 (usada por alunos e professores) da sala de aula de inglês como língua estrangeira para adultos. Duas escolas particulares de inglês como língua estrangeira do nordeste do Brasil são o contexto dessa pesquisa de método misto. Os resultados incluem uma vasta lista de razões pelas quais os professores incluem a L1 ou limitam o seu uso. A conclusão do artigo apresenta as implicações dos achados deste estudo para as escolas privadas de inglês como língua estrangeira, incluindo-se professores, formadores de professores e administradores.*
Palavras chaves: *Primeira língua; Inglês como língua estrangeira; Crenças de professores; Formacão de professores; Escolas particulares de idiomas.*

1 Introduction

Whether or not to use the L1 in the EFL classroom is a thorny, often polemic issue among administrators, teachers and students. Nowhere is this truer than in the private EFL teaching milieu. Having experienced teaching and learning in schools with both explicit and implicit monolingual language use policies, this issue has consistently tweaked my interest. As a multilingual EFL teacher in Brazil and Canada, I have used the L1 in my classrooms for several purposes, perceiving both cognitive and affective benefits for students. As a Native English-speaking teacher (NEST) in EFL contexts, however, I was certainly in the minority in using the L1 inside the adult classroom (or perhaps admitting such use). I was struck by the consistently negative attitude of EFL institutions and many Brazilian

teachers within these schools towards L1 incorporation, and was conflicted about my supposed improper practice.

This article highlights my study in which administrator, teacher, and student survey data was combined with teacher and administrator interviews and teacher focus groups to obtain a better understanding of why Brazilian teachers include or exclude the L1 from their teaching practice. The main research question guiding this study was, "Why do teachers include or exclude the L1 from the adult EFL classroom?"

1.1 Brazil and English Language Teaching

Brazil is the world's fifth largest country both in geographical size and population, boasting a population of approximately 200 million people. Portuguese is the first language of 95% of Brazil's population. Bordered by Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guyana to the north, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay to the west and Uruguay and Argentina to the South, Brazil is the only Portuguese-speaking nation on the continent and in all of the Americas. Economically, Brazil is a powerhouse, consistently ranking in the top-ten in gross domestic product (GDP) and behind only China and India in terms of economic development among developing nations.

For centuries, Brazil's nobility, intelligentsia and elite viewed French language and culture as the epitome of high culture and the main source from which to draw inspiration (Souza Campos, 1940). This influence is still evident in many aspects of Brazilian life, including government, judiciary, and educational systems. For the past century or so, French influence has been fading as English and, more recently, American influence spreads. Since the end of WWII, and specifically during the military dictatorship from 1964-85, cultural and economic ties have become stronger with the United States. It was during the late 70's that private commercial English language schools started popping up around the country in order to serve the elite classes' desire to acquire English (Bohn, 2003).

English is now officially the number one foreign language taught and learned in Brazil (Rajagopalan and Rajagopalan, 2005). Although exact figures are not available, it is thought that millions of students now study English in thousands of private EFL schools across Brazil (Bohn, 2003; Rajagopalan and Rajagopalan, 2005). There are tens of thousands of private EFL schools in Brazil, including approximately thirty in CITY, where the study takes place (personal communication Brazil TESOL president, July, 2008).

2 'Evolution' of ELT Methods: Monolingual Domination

Monolingual instruction has been the norm since the end of the 19th century, when the Direct Method (based on first language acquisition) usurped the Grammar-Translation Method (based on translation between first and foreign languages) as the predominant approach to language teaching (Yu, 2000). The appearance of the Direct Method contributed greatly to the consolidation of the idea that all L1s should be excluded from the classroom. During the past century, few have challenged the superiority of the Direct Method principle: language can be learnt best through the target language (intralingual) as opposed to comparing and contrasting it with the learner's L1 (interlingual) (Stern, 1983). The Direct Method, although not wholly embraced by the ELT profession, formed the basis for numerous monolingual methods that would come to dominate the profession to the present day. The next "best method" to appear was Audiolingualism in the 1950s and 1960s. The Audiolingual method proposed leaving the L1 "inactive" while learning the L2. This method, which enjoyed widespread popularity in ELT classrooms worldwide from the 1950s-1980s (including throughout Brazil), was influenced by research suggesting the compartmentalization of languages in the learning process (Hawks, 2001).

The past 30 years have seen a mixture of monolingual approaches fused together under the banner of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT, with its focus on speaking, has enjoyed incomparable success in the ELT world, with both ESL and EFL institutions claiming to employ its use. Although more recent methods, such as the Communicative Method and the Task-based Approach do not overtly exclude the L1 from the classroom, the L1 is only mentioned when describing avoidance of its use (Cook, 2001). Both schools involved in this study explicitly espouse a CLT approach to English language teaching/learning, as do the vast majority of EFL institutions worldwide.

2.1 Ideology in ELT

From approximately 1600-1900, the English language spread throughout the globe on the back of merchant enterprise and wealth extraction for the benefit of the British Empire (Pennycook, 1994). The English language and ELT has spread as a tool to aid British and, more recently, American hegemony. The spread of English and ELT in the 20th and 21st centuries has led to the flourishing of private English language teaching institutions, like those analyzed in the study at hand.

The 1950s and 1960s are seen by some as a watershed era in the ELT profession, with Britain infusing great sums of money into ELT to assert neocolonial control over newly independent nations (Howatt, 1984). The Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language, held in Makerere, Uganda in 1961, related the tenets and principles behind many of what Phillipson (1992) terms "fallacies" (p. 185) of the ELT profession. According to Braine (2003), this conference "bestowed legitimacy" to widespread beliefs of a profession that had "little theoretical foundation or pedagogical methods" (p. XIV). Two of these tenets, which Phillipson (1992) believes the modern ELT enterprise

accepts as "unchallenged dogma", favour his notion of linguistic imperialism: 1) English is best taught monolingually (the monolingual fallacy); 2) The ideal EL Teacher is a native-speaker (native speaker fallacy (p. 185). The idea that English is best taught monolingually is based on the idea that an exclusive focus on English will maximize the learning of the language, irrespective of whatever other languages the learner may know. Phillipson sees this idea as inextricably linked with a linguicist disregard of other languages, concepts and ways of thinking, ultimately inducing a "colonized consciousness" (p. 187). The monolingual fallacy is especially relevant to an EFL context as such a theory rejects learners "most intense existential experience" (p. 189) by excluding the L1 from the classroom. Phillipson emphatically states that when the L1 is excluded from the classroom, teaching leads to "alienation of the learners, deprives them of their cultural identity, and leads to acculturation rather than increased intercultural communicative competence" (p. 193). For the purposes of this study, this tenet is important in demonstrating the possible strength of the monolingual fallacy in relation to modern day English language teachers' beliefs and practices.

2.2 Support for Excluding or Ignoring the L1: Maximizing TL Use

The ascent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), an approach introduced in Great Britain in the 1960s, proposes exclusive use of the target language, providing an authentic, student-centered learning experience (Long, 1991). Indeed CLT embodies a method that includes the three main arguments for excluding or ignoring the L1 in the language classroom: 1) The learning of an L2 should model the learning of an L1 (through maximum exposure to the L2); 2) Successful learning involves the separation and distinction of L1 and L2; and 3) Students should be shown the importance of the L2 through its continual use (Cook, 2001, p. 412).

Littlewood (1981) argues that teachers should use the target language in all situations so as to set an example for students. The goal of this type of instruction, according to Littlewood, is to foster proficiency aimed at "successful communication in real situations" (p. 12). This type of claim is supported by MacDonald (1993), who sees the second language teacher as a coach who must provide a good example at all times, where using the L1 or encouraging its use is seen as a departure from the positive model necessary for achieving second language proficiency.

Recent arguments for L1 limitation offer a soft version of support for maximizing the amount of target language (TL) used in the classroom for a variety of purposes. This view is most clearly expressed by Nation (2003) who states, "second language use in the foreign language classroom needs to be maximized wherever possible, by encouraging its use and using it for classroom management" (p. 14). Nation concedes that the L1 has a "small, but important role to play in communicating meaning and content" (p. 19). Turnbull (2001) echoes the belief that maximum TL use is vital in the foreign language

classroom, stating that teachers and students must use the TL almost exclusively due to the limited time students receive to use the language. Again, Turnbull grants a limited, but important place for what he terms "judicious" (p. 539) uses of the L1, but also warns against teachers becoming dependent on the L1 and thereby wasting valuable class time and diminishing student motivation to use the TL. Nation and Turnbull are by no means rigidly anti-L1, but rather represent what I would term the middle-ground on the L1 inclusion issue.

As there is significant research showing a wide gap between what is espoused by CLT and what is carried out by teachers (Frolich, Spada & Allen, 1985; Mitchell, 1988), this study aims to investigate whether CLT, the dominant model adopted by private Brazilian EFL institutions (including those investigated in this study), manifests itself as a largely monolingual approach in this context.

2.3 Support for Including the L1
2.3.1 Cognitive and Affective Benefits

Cummins' (1981) *Interdependence Principle* is instructive in that it provides evidence of a "common underlying proficiency" (p. 7) that enables cross-linguistic transfer of academic/cognitive literacy skills. This principle seems to fly in the face of any theory that purports the superiority or correctness of separating languages from one another in the learning process. Further studies from the fields ranging from bilingual education to foreign language education show the cognitive benefits of teachers using students' L1s as a tool in the learning process (Anton and DiCamilla, 1998; Lucas and Katz, 1994; Macaro, 2009; Dailey-O'Cain and Leibscher, 2009; Swain and Lapkin, 2001). Results from these studies point to ways in which the L1 can serve a variety of educational functions, including serving as a scaffolding device, peer tool for task completion, and a tool for increased vocabulary acquisition. The above-mentioned studies are important as they display the benefits of not only teacher L1 use, but also allowance of student L1 use in the language classroom.

Researchers have also found affective benefits associated with teacher and student L1 use in the second and foreign language classrooms (Auerbach, 1993; Cummins et al, 2005; Harbord, 1992; Schweers, 1999). Auerbach (1993), a fierce critic of exclusive TL use in the adult ESL classroom, attacks a monolingual approach for being "rooted in a particular ideological perspective, being largely unexamined and reinforcing societal inequities" (p. 9). Overall, these studies point to the potential of the L1 to be used as for reducing student anxiety, forming stronger teacher-student bonds, affirming student identities, and as a tool for meaning-making.

Inclusion of the L1 in teacher/student practice is particularly relevant in an EFL context, where many classrooms are composed of homogenous L1 learning groups. The schools investigated in this study

have exactly these types of classrooms, where not only all of the students, but also all of the teachers share Portuguese as their L1.

2.3.2 Code-switching and EFL Classrooms

Code-switching or alternating between two languages is one aspect of bilingual instruction that has been seen to affect student learning outcomes. Recent research has pointed to the advantages of teachers using structured, consistent use of code-switching for vocabulary acquisition (Cook, 2001; Macaro, 1997; Macaro, 2005; Moore, 2002). Cook (2001), in his review of positive L1 modalities, asserts that teaching methods involving code-switching creates an especially authentic learning environment for FL learners. Macaro's (2005) recent research into FL teacher code-switching has further provided solid grounding for its use by bilingual teachers by both "reducing the cognitive load" (p. 81) of students while simultaneously reducing the dreaded teacher talking time during new lexical item introduction/acquisition.

Research from EFL contexts are indeed the most empirically persuasive, with cognitive and affective benefits seen from student and, predominantly, teacher L1 use. Leading the critique of monolingual teaching approaches are Atkinson (1987) and Cook (2001), who, from their respective research, see various beneficial uses of L1 in the FL classroom for teachers, including negotiation of the syllabus and lesson (teacher-student), classroom management, scene setting, presentations of rules governing grammar, phonology, morphology, and spelling, discussion of cross-cultural issues, instructions or prompts, explanation of errors, assessment of comprehension, conveying meaning or concepts, maintaining discipline, establishing a closer relationship with students, and peer translation. Franklin (1990), Duff and Polio (1994), and Brownlie and Rolon-Ianziti (2002) have all investigated TL versus L1 use in FL classrooms, identifying particular patterns of L1 use. All studies found two common situations for beneficial L1 use: translating and contrasting grammatical forms. Cummins (2008) calls for an awakening to the benefits of "teaching for transfer" (p. 7), with a focus on linguistic transfer, where the teacher draws students' attention to similarities and differences between L1 and L2. Results from these studies are important as they show a consistent pattern of L1 use for certain pedagogical purposes. Of course, there is still much debate among theorists as to when and how this "teaching for transfer" should occur, with some (such as myself) arguing that it can be a helpful tool regardless of the age group, L1 proficiency, linguistic aptitude, or language learning level of the students. Findings from the study highlighted in this article produce a list of reasons why teachers include and/or exclude the L1 from their teaching practice.

3 Methodology

The mixed-methods design employed in this study included multiple phases of data collection (in chronological order): online teacher and administrator surveys, classroom observations, comprehensive interviews with teachers and administrators from each school, teacher focus groups, and an online student survey. Data collected during the teacher and administrator survey-questionnaire and observation phases informed the primary data collection tools: semi-structured teacher and administrator interviews and teacher focus groups. The two main qualitative phases built on and were used to explain and elaborate on responses given during the survey-questionnaires. The online student survey was the last method applied, adding to the quantitative data (regarding student preferences for teacher TL/L1 use) and allowing for a comparison of administrator, teacher and student beliefs on L1/TL use.

The rationale for this design was twofold: 1. Triangulation—where multiple methods could lead to convergent (or not) data on the topic and bring together the different strengths and "nonoverlapping weaknesses of quantitative methods with those of qualitative ones" (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007, p. 62); 2) Complementarity—where rich qualitative findings complement quantitative findings and seek "elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from another" (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989, p. 260).

3.1 Participants

Pompeo's Language School (PLS) is a private ELT school based in Northeastern Brazil. It is a relatively new school (established in 2003) and has no affiliates. PLS is owned by a husband and wife team who function as teacher-administrators. PLS employs approximately 10 teachers (7 teachers of adults), has approximately 150 adult students at various levels and runs semesterly/yearly teacher training workshops.

Antonio's Language School (ALS) is a chain of language schools (established in 1958) based in São Paulo, Brazil with over 300 branches throughout the country, including a branch in the city where the study was carried out in Northeastern Brazil. ALS, like PLS, is owned by a husband and wife team who function as teacher-administrators. The school employs approximately 18 teachers (15 teachers of adults), has approximately 200 adult students at various levels and runs its own weekly/bi-weekly teacher development workshops. For an overview of teacher participants, see Table 1.

4 Findings: L1 Limitation/Inclusion

This section outlines the main reasons teachers limited or included L1 use in the adult EFL classroom (See Table 2). Although data from the teacher survey-questionnaire shows 83% of teachers reporting 80-100% TL use and 100% agreement that English use should be encouraged in the classroom, not a single teacher or teacher-administrator reported to exclusively using the target language and thus completely excluding the L1. For this reason, this article highlights reasons teachers *limit* teacher and student L1 use as opposed to *exclude* it entirely. The following sections outline why teachers limit or use Portuguese largely in their own words.

4.1 Reasons for Limiting L1 Use

4.1.1 Limited opportunities for TL exposure/use

Limited student exposure to the TL is a common explanation teachers give for limiting L1 use. Simone explains, hinting at the professional duty of teachers to use the TL: "Because that's our job, you know. I think we have to show students we are able and if we are able [to speak English], then they are able to speak English. I really think it's a rare exception when teachers should use Portuguese with adults." Simone seems to suggest that the teacher is an important role model for students and should demonstrate their proficiency and thereby encourage students to produce in the TL.

Teachers are even more adamant about the need for encouraging *student* TL use, thereby limiting student L1 use. Marta gives us a general sense of teacher and teacher-administrator sentiment regarding the need to encourage TL use: "When they are in the classroom, this is the only opportunity they have. They are not going to study it at home, in the mall, at work…If they don't use it at school, when are they going to use it?" Teachers seem all too aware that the majority of students do not use the TL outside the classroom and that this time is vital for student TL production.

4.1.2 Avoid grammar focus

The inclusion of the L1 for grammar instruction was a subject that elicited detailed, sometimes heated responses. This is likely related to the explicit adherence to a CLT approach, where grammar is addressed primarily through TL usage. Antonio (ALS owner) feels that his school does not condone the teaching of grammar out of context: "We don't do that here. We teach them through implicit use. They learn grammar because they are using it, not knowing about it. First, they need to learn how to communicate, even if they can't name any structure at

all." Many teachers expressed similar sentiment. Simone explains, citing the methodological superiority of an approach that avoids a focus on grammar:

> I tell my students, 'Oh, you want to know grammar, ok, *I go*, he does what? He ___? Right, *he goes*. We ___? Right, *we go*. See, you know the verb *go*. How? Because you use it.'…because before we learned the old grammar way, like in school [public school] with the teacher who only knows the grammar, but not how to use [the language]. No, here we teach how to use and then structure. It is how I learned, too, and much better.

Simone echoes many teachers in relating grammar instruction to a grammar-translation approach used in public schools, where EFL teaching and learning is seen as inferior.

4.1.3 Institutional Policy

92% of teachers responded on the teacher survey-questionnaire that they are expected to always use English in class. However, 79% of teachers also agreed to some extent that they were allowed to use Portuguese for some purposes. The qualitative data regarding institutional policy at PLS and ALS somewhat clarifies this murky picture.

"Use English in the classroom 100% of the time, if possible. It's not written; it's an unwritten rule. When teachers come to work for us, we explain they are supposed to use English. This is our policy. It's very clear to teachers and students. There are almost no exceptions" (Aisha-PLS administrator). Similarly, Carol states ALS policy regarding TL/L1 use: "The written policy is to use English all the time and only Portuguese when extremely necessary."

Some teachers, like Ester, see this policy as transparent and admit to the influence it has on her practice: "As far as I know, we are not allowed to use Portuguese—this is the official policy. I try to follow [this policy]…at least 95% [TL use]." Not all teachers find the policy so clear, however, and many state the wide-ranging exceptions to the largely monolingual policy. Paula mentions a situation in which the teachers approached the administrators with concern as to this policy and how it should be more flexible, especially with lower proficiency learners, a concern echoed by almost all teachers interviewed:

> So, the coordination [administration] is very strict when they say use English and only this. It was in the beginning course when we had some meetings between the direction [management] and the teachers…we said it was impossible to use English all the time, we have to use Portuguese sometimes with these students. And they were being flexible with some situations, ok, with beginner students you can use some Portuguese….(Paula)

Other main reasons teachers stated for limiting L1 use in the adult EFL classroom were teacher proficiency level, student demand for the TL, avoiding dependence on translation for vocabulary acquisition, and avoiding opening the floodgates to uncontrolled L1 use (see Table 2).

4.2 Reasons for Inclusion of the L1

4.2.1 Low student TL proficiency

By far the most common reason cited by teachers/teacher-administrators for using the L1 or allowing student use of the L1 was low student proficiency in the TL. Data from a focus group conducted at PLS gives us a general idea of teacher beliefs regarding L1 use with beginner-level students:

> M: You don't learn a second language in a non-natural environment, like a classroom. It's not like you acquire your first language, it's a different process. The classroom is something non-natural, so that's why sometimes, the mother tongue, in my opinion, is ok.
>
> PE: Especially for beginner learners.
>
> M: Especially for beginners.
>
> D: I agree with that. If they don't have a previous background about language, they will be completely lost if you just talk English all the time.
>
> R: Yes, but just using Portuguese sometimes, using some tips.
>
> D: No, I am not saying to speak Portuguese all the time, I'm not saying that.

4.2.2 Time-saving (instructions/translations)

The two main ways that teachers admitted to using the L1 for time-saving were switching to the L1 for giving instructions before completing a task in English and quick L1 translations of lexical items. Daniel explains his occasional Portuguese use, stating, "With some levels, especially beginners, when giving instructions, the teachers can use Portuguese to make the ideas clear to the students before the activity. Then, all in English if we can." Clarity is also an issue for teachers who describe their L1 inclusion as a time-saving device aimed at not only increasing student learning outcomes, but also allowing them to meet syllabus/curriculum demands and better use their classroom time (ostensibly in the TL): "You should use Portuguese to save time—otherwise you will not finish the program. If not, we will not finish on the day we are to finish" (Aisha, PLS Administrator-teacher). It should be noted that this L1 use is a departure from Aisha's stated administrative policy of solely TL use with adults (with the exception of occasional translations written on the whiteboard in Portuguese).

Other teachers describe situations where they allowed student-student L1 use. Vitória describes her practice of allowing a student to explain a translation to another student, thereby saving time and avoiding teacher L1 use: "In an activity if a student can help another student and they go [on] with the activity, it's better. The teacher cannot stop always to do translations and I think she shouldn't, so why not let the student save the time and help his friend?"

A recognizable feature in the tone of some teacher discourse surrounding L1 inclusion for time-saving is that of insecurity. Some teachers and teacher-administrators hesitantly admit the use of the L1 for translations and instructions, but were unsure as to whether or not this practice was unprofessional:

> You know, this is something that I am REALLY in doubt [about] because I know from my personal experience words that come too easily go away too easily, as well. So, I am kind of in doubt. Ok, in some cases I do say the word in Portuguese to save time, in some cases I clarify some explanations in Portuguese, yes. (Bia)

Other main reasons teachers stated for including the L1 in the adult EFL classroom were low teacher TL proficiency, student demand for L1 use, developing/maintaining teacher-student relationships, discipline, and dealing with administrative issues (See Table 2).

5 Implications and Future Avenues

From this study's findings arise corresponding recommendations for the participating institutions. The recommendations are largely based on the participating institutions' willingness to provide support for its teachers in becoming more competent, confident EFL teachers. It is hoped, not assumed, that this is the case.

The first implication stemming from the findings of this study is the necessity of a clearer institutional policy regarding L1 inclusion. Both schools have similar policies, advising teachers to use the L1 only as a last resort. However, teachers report to using the L1 for a myriad of reasons that do not fall within the murky parameters of 'as a last resort', and not a single teacher reports excluding the L1 altogether. Resistance to institutional L1 policies is not uncommon among teachers, especially when applied to beginner-level classroom situations. Further, many teachers express self-doubt as to their L1 inclusionary practices, fearing they are doing a disservice to their students and conducting themselves in an unprofessional way in the classroom. A clearer policy would allow for teachers to weigh their beliefs about L1 inclusion against the institutional policy, thereby eliminating confusion and increasing teacher self-efficacy. Of note is that many more of the reasons teachers state as to why they limit the L1 are more theoretical than practical, based largely, it appears, on 'common sense' CLT methodological principles.

Indeed, much of the teacher and teacher administrator discourse surrounding the exclusion or limitation of the L1 can be linked to the same line of arguments that form the backbone of a CLT approach: exclusive use of the target language is essential to providing an "authentic", "student-centered" learning experience which mirrors first language acquisition as much as possible. While there are many positive aspects to CLT, it should not be taken as a mantra, especially when considering the multiple potential benefits of L1 inclusion in the classroom.

Secondly, as the major source of teacher education for their teachers, both ALS and PLS wield a significant influence on teacher beliefs and practices regarding TL/L1 use. Indeed, for most teachers (including those with post-secondary degrees in Education), the issue of L1 use has only been addressed in teacher training courses/workshops offered by the schools. Therefore, these schools would improve teacher practice and self-efficacy through an open engagement with this issue. Specifically, workshops focused on TL/L1 use would allow for an exchange of ideas between administrators and teachers as well as between teachers. Throughout the study, teachers requested workshops geared at their pressing practical concerns. Addressing the TL/L1 issue from a teacher-centred perspective would be a way for institutions to meet this teacher demand. Placing teacher expertise at the forefront instead of adhering to methodological principles would be a big step forward for these institutions.

The final implication of this study is for ESL/EFL teacher educators. Given the largely uncritical acceptance of what Phillipson (1992) labels "fallacies" (p. 185) in global ELT, including the belief that English is best taught monolingually, teacher educators in EFL contexts should address the issue of monolingual practice with a focus on the multiple cognitive and affective advantages to L1 inclusion for both teachers and students. Making this pedagogical issue part of the curriculum in teacher education courses could potentially open up space for a more critical engagement with the issue as well as provide a segue into other related issues such as debates surrounding World Englishes.

It is not unreasonable, based on the results of this study and many others, to suggest that EFL institutions across Brazil (and globally for that matter) should heed the call of not only theorists, but also teachers and students (as seen in this study) for greater L1 use in the classroom for both the cognitive and affective benefit of the learners. Further, as it appears that adherence to CLT principles is one major factor hindering the effective use of the L1 (by teachers and students), it would be advisable for school administrators to respond progressively to calls from students and teachers to increase L1 use in given situations, particularly with beginner students. This would, I believe, improve student comfort levels as well as their learning outcomes.

Further research into teacher beliefs and practices regarding L1 use is necessary at similar institutions across Brazil, Latin America, and at private EFL institutions worldwide. The lack of research into these institutions is unsurprising considering the lack of connection these institutions generally have

with government, whether it be at the local, state or federal level. This is unsatisfactory, however, as a greater and greater number of English language learners worldwide turn to the private sector for language education.

Far from providing definitive answers as to how much L1 should be used, this study perhaps raised more questions than it answered. It is my sincere hope that this article stimulates critical reflection among all educational stakeholders on the issue of L1 use in the ESL/EFL classroom. It is only through this critical reflection that our language classrooms may become spaces for improved language learning as well as serving as contexts for potential teacher and student empowerment.

6 Acknowledgements

References

ATKINGSON, D. (1987). The mother tongue in the classroom: A neglected resource? *ETL Journal,* 41, 4, pp. 241–247.

AUERBACH, E. (1993). Reexamining English only in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27, 1, pp. 9–32.

BOHN, H. (2003). The educational role and status of English in Brazil. *World Englishes*, 22, 2, pp. 159–172.

BRAINE, G. (2005). A history of research on non-native speaker English teachers. In E. Llurda (ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perspectives, challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp. 13-23). New York: Springer.

BROWNLIE, S. and ROLAN-IANZITI, J. (2002). Teachers' use of learners' native languages in the foreign language classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 58, 3, pp. 402–426.

BUTZKAMM, W. (2003). We only learn language once. The role of the mother tongue in the FL classroom: Death of a dogma. *Language Learning Journal*, 28, pp. 29–39.

CARACELLI, V. J. and GREEN, J. C. (1997). Crafting mixed method evaluation designs. In J.C. GREENE and V.J. CARACELLI (eds.), *Advances in mixed-method evaluation: The challenges*

and benefits of integrating diverse paradigms: New directions for evaluation. No. 74. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 19–32.

COOK, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57, pp. 402–423.

COOK, V. (2005). Basing teaching on the L2 User. In E. LLURDA (ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession.* New York: Springer, pp. 47-62.

CUMMINS, J. (2008). Teaching for transfer: Challenging the two solitudes assumption in bilingual education. In J. CUMMINS & N. HORNBERGER (Eds.) *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, 23, pp. 1528-1538. New York: Springer.

CUMMINS, J. (1981). The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. In CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (ed.), *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework.* Los Angeles: California State University, Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, pp. 3-50.

CRESSWELL, J. W. and PLANO-CLARK, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed-methods research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

DAILEY-O'CAIN, J. and LEBISCHER, G. (2009). Teacher and student use of the first language in foreign language classroom interaction: Functions and applications. In J. DAILEY-O'CAIN and M. TURNBULL (eds.), *First language use in second and foreign language learning.* Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, pp. 131-144.

DUFF, P. and POLIO, C. (1994). Teachers' language use in foreign language classrooms: A qualitative analysis of target language and native language alternation. *Modern Language Journal*, 78, 3, pp. 313–326.

ELLIS, E. M. (2006). Language learning experience as a contributor to ESL teacher Cognition. *TESL-EJ,* 10, 1.

FROLICH, M., SPADA, N. and ALLEN, P. (1985). Differences in the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms . *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, pp. 27–45.

GREENE, J. C., CARACELLI, V. J. and GRAHAM, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation design. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11, pp. 255–274.

HARBORD, J. (1992). The use of the mother tongue in the classroom. *ELT Journal,* 46, 4, pp. 30–55.

HAWKS, P. (2001). Making distinctions: A discussion of the mother tongue in the foreign language classroom. *Hwa Kang Journal of TEFL,* 7, pp. 47–55.

HOWATT, A. (1984). *A history of English language teaching*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

JOHNSON, K. (1992). The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices during literacy instruction for non-native speakers of English. *Journal of Reading Behaviour*, 24, 1, pp. 83–108.

KRASCHEN, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. New York: Pergamon Press.

LI, S., MARQUART, J. M. and ZERCHER, C. (2000). Conceptual issues and analytic strategies in mixed-method studies of preschool inclusion. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 23, pp. 116–132.

LITTLEWOOD, W. (1981). *Communicative language teaching: An introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

LONG, M. H. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K. DE BOT, R. GINSBERG and C. KRAMSCH (eds.), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 39-52.

LUCAS, T. and KATZ, A. (1994). Reframing the debate: The roles of native languages in English-only programs for language minority students. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, pp. 537–562.

MACARO, E. (1997). *Target language, collaborative learning and autonomy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

MACARO, E. (2005). Codeswitching in the L2 classroom: A communication and learning strategy. In E. Llurda (ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession.* New York: Springer, pp. 63-84.

MACDONALD, C. (1993). *Using the target language*. Cheltenham, UK: Touch.

MITCHELL, R. (1988). *Communicative language teaching in practice.* London, UK: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.

NATION, P. (2003). The role of the first language in foreign language learning. *Asian EFL Journal*, pp. 12–24.

PENNYCOOK, A. (1994). *The cultural politics of English as an international language.* New York: Longman.

PHILLIPSON, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

RAJAGOPALAN, K. and RAJAGOPALAN, C. (2005). The English language in Brazil: A boon or a Bane? In G. BRAINE (ed.), *Teaching English to the world.* City: Publisher, pp. 1-10.

SCHWEERS JR., W. (1999). Using L1 in the L2 classroom. *English Teaching Forum*, 3, pp. 6-13.

SONG, Y. (2009). An investigation into L2 teacher beliefs about L1 in China. *Prospect*, 24, 1, pp. 30–39.

SOUZA CAMPOS, E. (1940). *Educacão Superior no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Ministerio da Educacão.

STERN, H. H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford, UK: OxfordUniversity Press.

SWAIN, M. and LAPKIN, S. (2000). Task-based second language learning: The uses of the first language. *Language Teaching Research.* 4, pp. 251–274.

TURNBULL, M. (2001). There is a role for the L1 in second and foreign language teaching, but…. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57, pp. 531–540.

YU, W. (2000). Direct method. In M. Byram (ed.), *Routledge encyclopedia of language teaching and learning.* New York: Routledge, pp. 176–178.

Table 1

Average age	26-35
Male/Female	68% female
Post-secondary education	22/24
Post-secondary educated in field of education	6/24
Formal ESL/EFL training	19/24
Formal ESL/EFL training abroad	3/24
Experience living abroad	7/24
Experience teaching adults	24/24
Average teaching experience	10 years
English language proficiency (self-rating)	6/24 very proficient 18/24 proficient

Participant Profiles

Table 2

Reasons	Limit	Include
Learner proficiency level	☐	☐
Previous learning experience	☐	☐
Student demand	☐	☐
Teacher proficiency level	☐	☐
Teacher education	☐	☐
Institutional policy	☐	☐
Lack of student TL exposure	☐	
Need for TL negotiation	☐	
Avoid grammar focus	☐	
Discourage translation	☐	
Avoid 'opening the floodgates'	☐	
Save time (instructions/translations)		☐
Grammar explanations		☐
Develop/maintain teacher-student relationships		☐

Reasons Teachers Limit or Include L1 Use