

First Language Interference and Form Focused Instruction

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Abstract:

This paper addresses EFL/ESL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the use of the first language in a language classroom pertaining to the Form-Focused Instruction - a grammar instruction approach. In essence, this study looks into whether the judicious use of L1 in learning the foreign or second language is effective or not. A case study strategy was deemed appropriate for this study to explore and investigate the beliefs and practices of the non-native teachers on the use of L1 in learning English as a foreign language. To this end, six English language teachers were selected from a Chinese secondary school. The data were collected through classroom observations and stimulated recall interview questions. The audio-recorded data were fully transcribed in English, and subjected to a process of interpretative analysis. The findings revealed that teachers used L1 mainly to present the target grammar topics, to explain the grammatical rules and also to encourage students for the explanation of the grammatical rules in their L1. It is therefore imperative to consider the results of this study as it may highlight some notable pedagogical implications regarding the assisted effects of the use of first language on foreign/second language learning.

Keywords: beliefs, practices, form-focused instruction, L1 use

1. Introduction

In the previous fifty years it has been found that English language teaching moved rapidly and violently regarding its methodological transition, for example a transition from grammar translation to direct method, to audiolingualism, to cognitive code, and moreover the modification within each method (Pica, 1997). However first language use in foreign language teaching has always been debated in almost all the bilingual/multilingual contexts. In the same vein as Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain (2009) emphasized that the development of strong beliefs about the most effective way to master a language by second and foreign-language educators and researchers maybe inevitable, as beliefs are not always grounded in theory or research. However there are many educators who have the point of view that for the sake of effective language teaching and learning it is obligatory to avoid the interference from the learner's first language (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). There are some scholars (Atkinson, 1995; Calve, 1993; Ellis, 1984] who believed that at times it is easy to operationalize the target language by establishing a connection with the first language, but on the other hand also paid attention that the extensive usage of the first language will excessively lead to the reduction of learners' exposure to target-language input (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). Macaro (2005) and (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009) states that "there is a continuum of perspectives on target language and first language use". However he also highlights that with the extensive use of the target language by the teacher, accompanied by long periods of input alterations possibly bring about teacher-fronted lessons where the learners are permitted to speak the second language for restricted time limit (Macaro, 2000). However there are some other scholars who not only declared the importance of target-language exposure, but on the other hand believed that this exposure is not adequate to provide a formal assurance for target language learning, since target-language input must become intake (Ellis, 1994; Cook, 2001; van Lier, 2000). So understanding "the success of students and teachers lies in acknowledging the 'judicious' use of L1 in the target language (TL) classroom without malign" (Awan & Sipra: 19).

Basically "grammar can be viewed both as knowledge and as ability", however, "when viewed as knowledge, the focus is on rules for sentence formation" and "when viewed as ability, the focus is on how grammar is used as a resource in the creation of spoken and written texts" (Richards & Reppen: 5). However, according to Ellis (2009: 4) "research on grammar pedagogy may be of little practical value if teachers just use one single strategy or complex in the classroom". Considering what Ellis (2009) has stated, it is important to look into teachers' grammar pedagogy regarding their perception of beliefs and practices in their decision of their preferred strategy. The insights into teachers' beliefs and practices and to find out the rationale behind their choice of teaching strategies actually help to narrow the gap between theory and practice. Thus the current study not only provide an added knowledge about foreign language teachers' beliefs regarding the use of L1 in form focused instruction (FFI), which is comparatively under-explored, but also provide a chance to explore their teaching practices and their rationale behind that.

Hussain (2004) elaborated that due to the complex and irregular syntax of the English language there are not many Malaysian English teachers who feel pleasure in teaching grammar, instead they often question regarding the best way of grammar teaching. He also explained that grammar translation method as being popular in the beginning, required the students to translate the sentences into English based on grammar rules. However because of the methodical and arithmetic stance of this method, majority of the analysts condemned this method. As Borg (2006: 275) stated “The social, institutional, instructional and physical settings in which teachers work have a major impact on their cognitions and practices”. So in this study the focus is towards the impact and effect of the instructional setting on their thoughts and practices. Basically, the present study is a case study conducted with a group of six English language teachers working in the context of a Chinese secondary school in the Sabah State of Malaysia.

1.1 Background of the Problem

Justifying the need and importance of first language in learning a second language Macaro (2009) narrated her language teaching experience after completing almost sixteen years of teaching in 1997. Recalling her previous time she was surprised and upset after hearing the policy statements from up to downwards, because during her teaching practices in the classroom she had been using little and justified quantities of first language. According to Awan and Sipra (2015: 16) “there are no separate boxes in human brain to restrict two different languages to interact with each other, as the practice on ground is strongly in favour of allowing L1 to support target language (TL)”. This situation is also similar here.

Considering the ‘English Only movement’ in the classroom there are few EFL/ESL educators who not only support but have organizational ties to this movement. Contrary to this movement “within the confines of the EFL/ESL classroom, many of those who may oppose the English Only movement on a policy level” (Auerbach, 1993: 1-2], but they advocate language rights and bilingual education. Discussing the role of ‘English-only-policy’, Auerbach (1993: 9) cautions, “[...] it is rooted in a particular ideological perspective, rests on unexamined assumptions, and serves to reinforce inequities in the broader social order”. She also has the view that suitable and logical use of the L1, in the L2 classroom can enhance the positive effects on the learners and their learning (Auerbach, 1993). In elaboration with this argument Butzkamm (2003: 31] presents a theory which challenges the English-only theory in foreign language teaching.

“Using the mother tongue, we have (1) learnt to think, (2) learnt to communicate and (3) acquired an intuitive understanding of grammar. The mother tongue opens the door, not only to its own grammar, but to all grammars, inasmuch as it awakens the potential for universal grammar that lies within all of us”.

Talking about the impracticality of the omission of the first language (L1) Hawks (2001) justifies the reason that a large number of English teachers are not native speakers. In the same vein Richard Miles (2004) elaborates that at times teachers

lack the command in English language and forcing the English only policy in the classroom can cause a severe damage on the part of teachers' ability to communicate and as a result affect their ability to teach. Similarly according to Pachler and Field (2001) another reason regarding the impracticality of the obligation of the solitary use of the target language is that most of the time this can lead the teachers towards a minimized execution of their performance, as well as the students' detachment from their learning process. Moreover considering from the learners perspective Edge and Garton (2009: 130-131] stated that, "although students are strongly encouraged to use the target language, they may use their first language".

It is shown in few of the studies conducted by Kim & Elder (2005) and Polio & Duff (1994) on grammar instruction in foreign language teaching contexts that grammar practice is usually done in the learners' first language. For example in Belarus a study conducted by Blackman (2014: 47) on teachers' use of the L1 in primary and secondary classrooms in a town. This study showed that, "almost half of primary school teachers use the L1 for at least a third of the lesson. The remaining teachers used it for over 10% of the lesson. Secondary teachers used the L1 less often - 67.5% used it sometimes, which equates to about 10% to 22% of the lesson. These numbers are indicative. Therefore, although common, teachers' use of L1 was not demonstrably extensive. Only 15% of primary teachers' used the L1 'always'".

It is found that the research conducted on the teachers' beliefs regarding the use of the first language (L1) in form-focused-instruction seems limited. According to Burns's (1996) case study, she allowed her students to use their L1 as a strategy, so her students become more self-reliant while talking with each other. In the same vein a study conducted by Levine (2003) elaborates that the respondents in a Canadian study encountered that the use of the target language is beneficial. This study also claimed that the greater extent of target language used by the respondents can reduce their anxiety level. Moreover there is another study conducted by Hassan Mohebbi and Alavi (2014). This study was undertaken by different private language schools in Iran on seventy two L2 teachers (39 females and 33 males). These teachers were probed into their beliefs and perception about employing learners L1 (Persian) in L2 (English) learning. The findings revealed from the study that the teachers made use of the first language for different reasons like providing feedback, teaching the new vocabulary, in explaining the grammar rules, building up rapport, managing the class and to save the lengthy task explanation the teachers helped the learners individually. According to these studies the variation can be seen in teachers' beliefs about the use of L1, but there is still a need to further research to find out the rationale behind their use of L1 and allowing the students to do so.

There are many other studies conducted elsewhere (Hobbs et al., 2010; Yao, 2010; Ambika, 2011) in which the attitudes regarding the use of code-switching amongst teachers were evident in EFL classes with conviction due to so many reasons. As these studies were conducted mostly on non-native speakers of language, so it is evident that non-native speaker teachers support the use of code-switching to the first language with conviction.

According to Ellis (2001: 1), Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) refers to “any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic forms”. Form-focused instruction “includes both traditional approaches to teaching forms based on structural syllabi and more communicative approaches, where attention to form arises out of activities that are primarily meaning-focused” (Ellis, 2001). In focus with the teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding form-focused instruction (FFI) and the role of the first language in FFI, is reported by Scott and de la Fuente (2008). According to this study Scott and de la Fuente presented the participants role of the first language in consciousness-raising, form-focused grammar tasks. In this grammar task the learners were divided into two groups and were supposed to discuss particular grammatical structures and articulate a grammatical rule. During this task they were allowed to use their first language (group 1) and second language (group 2). The findings showed that allowing the use of the L1 in group 1 facilitated the completion of the task collaboratively and coherently compare to group 2, who were allowed to use L2 for their task. In the same vein Aava [1], conducted a study on high-school students in Estonia. This study concentrated on Focus on Form (FoF) instruction to find out the effective ways to teach vocabulary to the learners of the foreign language. This study “dealt with learning the vocabulary from reading texts and by completing tasks on them” (Aava, 2015: 3). The reading text, used in this study was based on Meaning-Focused and also on FoF task to draw the students’ attention to vocabulary items, to find out is FoF tasks are also effective in teaching vocabulary. It was observed that by giving the students definitions, explanations or translations in their first language (Estonian) from the reading text is an effective way to teach them the new words.

The results also suggested that the explanation given to the students in their first language is easier for them rather than the explanation given to them in the target language. It is evident that still more studies are required to investigate and examine the language teachers’ beliefs and practices concerning the use of the first language in FFI, particularly in those contexts where teachers and students share the common L1. However considering the above details there are issues that still need to be under consideration regarding second language grammar pedagogy in connection with teachers’ interacting decisions about the focus of the language point, structuring and presenting the grammar lesson. Echoing these issues Borg (1998a: 10) insisted the need to investigate “teachers’ personal pedagogical systems” “formed largely through experience and grounded in teachers’ understandings of their teaching contexts” (Borg, 2008). This study elaborates the suitable and logical use of the first language to support the target language learning. Form focused instruction includes the grammatical forms and the communicative approaches as well, and here the learners have to pay attention to the linguistic forms. So this study explains the wise and sensible role of L1 in the grammar class (non-native environment) and the rationale behind the use of L1. Moreover the teachers’ beliefs do vary regarding the use of L1 in the grammar class, so there is a need to explore their beliefs that under what circumstances they think, that judicious use of L1 is appropriate for the non-native learners.

2. Material and Method

A qualitative, context-sensitive and in-depth investigation employing a case study research approach was employed for this study with one of the Chinese secondary school teachers in Sandakan district, East Malaysia. The strategies adopted in this study are classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews because of its similarity in nature to Borg's study (2006), and because of the advantages of the multiple-source qualitative approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) in exploring a phenomenon in its natural setting and in assuming an interpretive epistemology (Phipps & Borg, 2009) over other strategies such as questionnaires. All participating teachers in this study were observed two to three times, teaching three different grammar lessons to different groups of students. Moreover, stimulated recall interviews were conducted immediately after each lesson in a flexible manner, to elicit reflections and descriptions of the thinking informing classroom instruction and interactions (Burns, 1996).

3. Findings and Discussion

A mixed reaction of the teachers came out from the observation regarding the use of the first language in the English language classroom (grammar class). Few of the teachers made extensive use of the first language, but few of them gave it a priority if they really need to do so. The three dominant features that emerged from the findings regarding the use of the first language in the language classroom (grammar class) are presentation of the target grammar topics in the first language, explanation of the grammatical rules in first language and encouraging the students for explanation of grammar rules in the first language

3.1 Use of the First Language in English Language Classroom

As it was evident in the observational extracts, these teachers didn't make considerable use of the first language. There were a few teachers who used English language more compare to the other language teachers. In this way teachers were divided into two categories. Teachers 1, 2, 3 and 4, the senior teachers in the school, supported the use of English and used maximum English during their lessons (T1, T2, T3, T4), while Chinese language was used only when either the teacher or the students had faced problems with English (T1, T2).

Amongst the six teachers, teacher three (T3) and teacher four (T4) were the two teachers who didn't use their and their students first language, Chinese, for any of the pedagogical purpose. Neither, they used Chinese for presenting the target grammar topic, nor for explanation of rules, for giving instructions or for corrective feedback. Below are some example abstracts from their (T3, T4) lessons which shows how teacher three (T3- explanation of rules) and teacher four (T4-presentation of the target grammar topic) gave the explanation of rules and presented the lesson completely in English.

T: <Showed another slide regarding rules> Okay there are some rules for positive questions.

Slide #3

Rules

- 1). We form questions with verb to be – is/are/was/were/by
 - placing them before the subject
 - All singular subjects take the form of is/was
 - except for the pronoun I (uses am/was)
 - and you (uses are/were)
 - E.g:
 - Am/Was I hardworking?
 - Are/Were you humorous?

When we want some questions with the verb to be which are, ‘is’, ‘are’, ‘was’ or ‘were’, we just put this before the subject like what we did just now. Now look at Q.1, <referred to slide #2, Q.1> “Sally is attractive” or “Sally was attractive”, when you turn it into a positive question you put the verb to be in front of the subject, that is ‘Is’ or ‘Was’...Sally, “are’ or ‘Were’....Mr. and Mrs. Lee okay. And then for all the singular subjects we use the form of ‘is’ or ‘was’ all the singular subject, except for the pronoun ‘I’ and ‘You’ right. For ‘I’ we use ‘am’ and for the past tense ‘was’. And then for ‘You’ we use ‘are’, even though these two are singular we do not use ‘is’ you know or we do not follow...., and for ‘You’ we use ‘are’ and ‘were’ right. For example <pointed the example on slide no.3> “Am I working” or “Was I working”, this is singular haan. And this is also singular, “Are you.....” or “Were you.....”, these are the two exceptions, we have to use ‘is’, ‘are’ ‘was’ ‘were’.

T: <Showed another slide which is the continuation of the ‘Rules’>

Slide #4

- 2). We form questions with most verbs
 - by changing the verb to its base form and then adding the verb ‘to do’ (Do. Does, Did) before the subject.
 - for singular subject, we add the verb ‘does’ before the subject.
- E.g.
- Does Yvonne enjoy good food?
 - Does Lawrence play the guitar?
 - Does your cousin travel to London often.

T: And then we also form questions with verbs by changing the verb to its base form. Now look at the example here <pointed the example in slide 4> “Does Yvonne enjoy good food?” initially we have.... <reminded the first

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slide>look at this no.3, “Yvonne enjoys good food”, okay where is the main verb.....?

Ps: Enjoys

T: Yes ‘enjoys’ and ‘Yvonne’ is singular right.

Ps: yes.

T: So when we want to turn it into a positive question we put ‘Does’ and then we change the verb to the base form. And then for the same....., the rules apply to <pointed the next example in slide 4> ‘Lawrence’ is singular here and the verb is ‘play’. So we use the base form, ‘Does’ and ‘.....your cousin’, ‘cousin’ is also singular, as long as we have ‘Does’, in front before the subject, the verb is in the base form. Now how about plural subject.....?”

(T3.O2.Subject Verb Agreement.J3B.Line46-52)

“**T:** So turned to page 106, today we will discuss Unit 7.3. Here we will talk about active and passive voice. <Wrote the topic on the board> But today we will cover perfect tense and models.

Active and Passive Voice (Perfect Tenses & Models)
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T: Any volunteer....., what is perfect tense?

Ps: <Very low voice, almost inaudible>

T: Yes, perfect tense?

Ps: <Spoke all of them together> Has, have , had

T:with?

Ps: ed / past participle

T: <Repeated the answer> Past participle....., so for example <wrote on the board>‘had gone’.

Has, have, / had + Past participle

e.g. had gone

T: So this is past perfect tense. And then you also cover model, give me example?

Ps: <All spoke together and was not clear> has, have , they, you.....

T: Also ‘on’ okay. <Wrote example on the board> You don’t have to copy so we’ll discuss it together.

Ps: Okay teacher.”

(T4.O3.Unit7.3Active and Passive Voice, Perfect Tenses and Models.GradeJ3E.Line2-13)

While observing the lessons of teacher one (T1), it was noted that she used English most of the time in the classroom. Observational extract (T1.O2.Unit Academic Writing.GradeS3B.Line1), in which she was presenting the “Academic Writing,” is

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one example illustrating the way she used English to explain. However, there was no consistency in her pattern of code-mixing. During her lesson while presenting ‘academic writing’, she used English first, and then translated what she had said into Chinese. As it is evident in the extract, while presenting the rules of ‘coherence’ and ‘sequence connectors’ through academic writing she repeated the explanation in Chinese after the explanation in English.

Similarly as it is shown in the observational abstract (T2.O1.Composition & Unit 10.5 Adverbial Clauses Grade S2C.Line185) that while explaining the rules of ‘Adverbial Clauses’ she (T2) used very little Chinese and mostly conducted her lesson in English. She also elaborated in her stimulated recall interviews (T2.SR1.Line14), (T2.SR2.Line26.28.30) that she (T2) usually uses English during her lessons and Chinese she uses only when the students have problems with English language. She explained that during her lesson she tries to speak up simple English to make it understandable for the students, but tries to conduct her lessons mostly in English. She also told that at times she does explain in Chinese when she feels that her students didn’t really understand, for example the students from the weak sections. And in today’s lesson (T2.O1.Composition & Unit 10.5 Adverbial Clauses Grade S2C.Line185) according to her when she explained her student in English, he (student) gave her a look as if he didn’t understand, so she had to explain in Chinese to make the student understand. Contrary to other language teachers, teacher two (T2) mostly used English in the language class, unless she really needed to explain them (students) in Chinese.

The teacher five (T5) was the one of those teachers who used Chinese more, compare to T1 and T2, while explaining the rules (tenses) to the class (T5.O1.Unit7.4, 7.5 GradeJ2Cline49), (T5.O1.Unit 7.4, 7.5Grade J2C.Line51-52) as she believes that, it works for the weak students because English is not their mother tongue.

“**T:** Yes. *Sheng ru wo cheng gao sun i jia ru mei you biao shi shi jian ru “min tain”, ‘shu tian nei’ , xia xin qi’ de zhi yang, ni jiang yong guo qu shi* (As I told you before if you don’t have the time expression like tomorrow, in a few days, next week etc. so you will use past tense) right. Here you don’t have time expression. Do they or do they not. If you come tomorrow it is future continuous. So let’s say if we don’t have time expression you can use the past tense. Understand...?”

Ps: Yes.”

(T5.O1.Unit 7.4, 7.5Grade J2C.Line51-52)

Though she believes that English should be used in English class but she has to use Chinese to make her lesson understandable to the whole class especially for the weak students. She also told that today the students and also she herself was using English while explaining the rules of simple future tense and future continuous tense, because of my (researchers’) presence in the class, but normally its’ not like that. The students use more Chinese and she also has to use Chinese to make her students understand better. As stated:

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“Oh, actually it’s because you were today in the class so they tried to speak in English, otherwise they don’t and most of the time I also have to teach them in Chinese. At times I give explanation of rules in Chinese, as it’s their mother tongue. And for the weak students it really works.”

(T5.SR1.Line2.33)

She (T5) claimed that in today’s lesson (T5.O1.Unit 7.4, 7.5Grade J2C.Line51-52) she used English, but she also made use of Chinese during explanation of the target rules. However a consistency in her pattern of code mixing can be observed. Similarly in her (T5) second observed lesson which was about ‘Adjectives of Comparison’ she used Chinese while explaining the rules (adjectives of comparisons). During her (T5) lesson she used English first, then translated what she had said into Chinese (T5.O2.Unit, Adjectives of Comparison. Grade J2B. Line20).

“T: If you know the adjective is in one syllable. One syllable mean when you say a word and it gives only one sound (*Yi ge yin jie shi zi dang ni suo yi ge zi shi ji fa chu yi ge dan yin*) then you add -er or -est okay, for example ‘black’, only one sound okay, so you add -er or -est okay, more -er or -est. For example ‘black’, only one sound okay, so you add -er or -est okay, more -er or -est (*Li ru ‘hei’, ji you yi ge yin, suo yi ni jia ‘er’ huo ‘est’, bian sheng ‘gen’ huo ‘zui’*). But then if your adjective is in two syllables or more than three then you have to use ‘more’ or ‘most’. Therefore for example in ‘careless’ how many syllable?”

(T5.O2.Unit, Adjectives of Comparison. Grade J2B.Line20)

She (T5) also elaborated in the stimulated recall interview that she does explain the rules in Chinese when she doubts that her students won’t be able to understand, and secondly if she feels that the rules are difficult for students and the instructions are hard to understand, but otherwise she seldom uses Chinese.

“Usually seldom use Chinese, but at times depending upon the kind of rules and sometimes the rules are quite hard for them to understand in English, so I have to translate them for the students in Chinese, use Chinese when I explain the rules, because I doubted the students won’t understand if I’ll explain them only in English. I just translated the instructions in Chinese the ones’ which are hard to understand”.

(T5.SR2.Line47.53.49.51)

Contrary to her (T5) second observed lesson (T5.O2.Unit,Adjectives of Comparison. GradeJ2B.Line20), where she explained the rules first in English then in Chinese, in her (T5) third observed lesson while explaining the rules she used Chinese first, but also translated that instruction in English after that (T5.O3.Unit, Preposition of Time. Grade J2B. Line 21-28). She also elaborated in her third stimulated recall interview (T5.SR3.Line20) regarding her third observed lesson that she believes it was suitable for the students to get the whole explanation in English especially about

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the easy grammar rules like prepositions, but she did mention a few words in Chinese which she thought that her students didn't understand.

Moreover in teacher six (T6) fourth observed lesson (T6.O4.Unit 11.2.Grade S1B.Line 30.31) while presenting the concept of direct and indirect speech he wrote the sentence on the board and told that when there is a fact then the sentence won't change and we do change what is between the quotation marks. So while presenting this statement he explained also in their (students) native language so they can understand better. However it was noticed that there was consistency in her pattern of code-mixing, as he used English while presenting the target grammar topic then in between switched over to Chinese. There is an example of the extract from his lesson (T6.O4.Unit 11.2.Grade S1B.Line 30.31) illustrating the way he used code mixing (English and Chinese) while presenting the grammar topic. In his (T6) fourth observed lesson (T6.O4.Unit 11.2.Grade S1B.Line 7.11), (T6.O4.Unit 11.2.Grade S1B.Line 16), while presenting the target grammar topic, "direct indirect speech", not only verbally he used the first language (L1) but also wrote it on the board. Because he believes that the students can understand this in a better way, as Chinese is their mother tongue and this way is also less time consuming (T6.SR4.Line 26).

"T: <Wrote on the board>.

Clementi said, "I scored 100% for my biology".

Conveying chuan da 傳達

T: Okay so this is what you say is, I scored 100% for my biology. This is something a recorded statement, a recorded version of what you say, a recorded direct speech, it is what coming out from the mouth. So once I got this information and I send it to another person, I will send it and convey the message okay."

(T6.O4.Unit 11.2.Grade S1B.Line 7.11)

Teacher six (T6) was the only language teacher who disagreed the extensive use of English in 'Writing and Grammar' (W & G) class, while teaching the grammar rules. His (T6) first observed lesson was about factual writing. Though he believes that in English lessons it is not possible to conduct the lesson mostly in English. But during that lesson it was barely noticed that he used the first language (L1) regarding any of the explanation (T6.O1.Factual Essay.GradeS1A.Line2-8). Because he (T6) was of that view that in essay writing lessons he is able to conduct the lessons mostly in English. But in grammar lessons he mostly uses the mother tongue, because according to him the explanation of rules needs a language that the students are fluent with (T6.SR1.Line16).

In his (T6) second observed lesson which was about present perfect tense (T6.O2.Unit 3.4 Grade S1E.Line5-12) most of the time the teacher used Chinese (L1) for the explanation of rules. The teacher (T6) told that since young, the students were exposed to Chinese more than any other language so in order for them to

understand something especially for the grammar rules think that the easiest way is to explain English grammar rules using Mandarin or Chinese to make the students understand better, otherwise students will find it a bit confusing (T6.SR2.Line17). Moreover he (T6) told that we as teachers have to explain the rules in Mandarin for a deeper impression, though he thinks it might be inappropriate in English lesson but in order to make them understand he personally think that it is a must otherwise they won't be able to understand. He also elaborated, that the students are not really that good in English so by explaining the rules in English they will have two big problems the first one understanding the language and second is, it takes long time for them to comprehend the rules (T6.SR2.Line19).

During the observations it was observed, the teachers who supported extensive use of English (T3, T4), did so, but it is not sure whether this was because they were being observed or it was their regular practice. Meanwhile, those teachers (T5, T6) who did not practice the regular use of English they used Chinese quite a number of times in their lessons. They believed that it is not possible to use extensive English in the class because of the reason their students are non-native speakers of the target language so understanding is always a problem for them. Below are some dominant functions of their use of L1 in the classroom.

3.2 Presentation of the Target Grammar Topics

Unlike teacher three (T3) and teacher four (T4), teacher one (T1) during her lesson while presenting 'academic writing', she used English first, and then translated what she had said into Chinese. As it is evident in the abstract, while presenting the rules of 'coherence' and 'sequence connectors' through academic writing she repeated the explanation in Chinese after the explanation in English (T1.O2.Unit Academic Writing.GradeS3B.Line1). Similarly in teacher six (T6) fourth observed lesson while presenting the concept of direct and indirect speech (T6.O4.Unit 11.2.Grade S1B.Line 30.31) he explained also in their (students) native language so they can understand better. Moreover while presenting the target grammar topic, "direct indirect speech", not only verbally he (T6) used the native language (L1) but also wrote it on the board (T6.O4.Unit 11.2.Grade S1B.Line 7.11). Because he believes that the students can understand this in a better way, as Chinese is there mother tongue and this way is also less time consuming (T6.SR4.Line 26).

3.3 Explaining the Grammatical Rules

Unlike teacher three (T3) and teacher four (T4), teacher five (T5) is one of those teachers who used Chinese more, compare to T1 and T2, while explaining the rules to the class (T5.O1.Unit 7.4, 7.5Grade J2C.Line49), (T5.O1.Unit 7.4, 7.5Grade J2C.Line51-52). She (T5) believes that it works for the weak students because English is not their mother tongue. Though she believes that English should be used in English class but she has to use Chinese to make her lesson understandable to the whole class especially for the weak students (T5.SR1.Line2.33). Similarly in her (T5) second observed lesson which was about 'Adjectives of Comparison' she used Chinese while explaining the rules (adjectives of comparisons). During her (T5) lesson she used English first, then translated what she had said into Chinese

(T5.O2.Unit, Adjectives of Comparison. GradeJ2B.Line20). She also elaborated in the stimulated recall interview that she did explain the rules in Chinese (T5.O2.Unit, Adjectives of Comparison. GradeJ2B.Line34) when she doubts that her students won't be able to understand, and secondly if she feels that the rules are difficult for students and the instructions are hard to understand (T5.SR2.Line47.53.49.51), but otherwise she seldom uses Chinese. Contrary to her (T5) second observed lesson (T5.O2.Unit, Adjectives of Comparison. GradeJ2B.Line20), where she explained the rules first in English then in Chinese, in her (T5) third observed lesson while explaining the rules she used Chinese first, but also translated that instruction in English after that (T5.O3.Unit, Preposition of Time. GradeJ2B.Line21-28). She also elaborated in her third stimulated recall interview (T5.SR3.Line20) regarding her third observed lesson that she believes it was suitable for the students to get the whole explanation in English especially about the easy grammar rules like prepositions, but she did mention a few words in Chinese which she thought that her students didn't understand.

Teacher six (T6) is the only language teacher who disagreed the extensive use of English in 'Writing and Grammar' (W & G) class, while teaching the grammar rules. He (T6) is of the view that in grammar lessons he mostly uses the mother tongue because according to him the explanation of rules needs a language that the students are fluent with (T6.SR1.Line16).

In his (T6) second observed lesson which was about present perfect tense most of the time the teacher used Chinese (L1) for the explanation of rules (T6.O2.Unit 3.4 Grade S1E.Line5-12). The teacher (T6) told that since young, the students were exposed to Chinese more than any other language so in order for them to understand something especially for the grammar rules think that the easiest way is to explain English grammar rules using Mandarin or Chinese to make the students understand better, otherwise students will find it a bit confusing (T6.SR2.Line17). Moreover he (T6) told that we have to explain the rules in Mandarin for a deeper impression, though he thinks it might be inappropriate in English lesson but in order to make them understand he personally think that it is a must otherwise they won't be able to understand. He also elaborated, that the students are not really that good in English so by explaining the rules in English they will have two big problems the first one understanding the language and second is, it takes long time for them to comprehend the rules (T6.SR2.Line19).

3.4 Encouraging Students for Explanation

In the second observed lesson the teacher six (T6), let the students do the exercise which was a mixture of 'past tense' and also 'present perfect tense'. Later on at random he asked the students to speak up the right sentences regarding tenses. He (T6) encouraged the students to get the reason for their answer in Mandarin because he believes that allowing them (students) to give the explanation in Mandarin, at least they can understand, and it is also acceptable for him. He also stressed that of course it's even better if they manage to answer in English, totally correct English even better but if they answer the question in Mandarin as long as they understand, its' fine because at this stage (W & G lesson) the main goal is to make them

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understand the grammar rules. According to him the use of first language, do matters if it is (L & S) listening and speaking lesson.

T: No. 9.....? Yes Jeremy.....?

Jeremy: <Stood up> Sheila has already.....(Inaudible)

T: Okay, so here you chose to use present perfect is it.....? Can you tell why?

Jeremy: <Quiet>

T: Its' okay you can explain in Mandarin....., that, why did you use present perfect. Which one.....? So it is first condition, second or third?

Jeremy: <Quiet>

T: <Laugh> Okay let me lead you, so the first one "She has already seen the coach but you do not know when she went to see the coach. Okay No. 10.....?"

(T6.O2.Unit 3.4 Present Perfect
Tense.GradeS1E.Line56-62)

"Encouraged the students to get the reason of particular answer in Mandarin like I said they do not understand why there is a need to use such tense and they might not be able to really tell you what they are thinking. So sometime we do not expect much from them. What we expect is that they understand what we have taught whether they will be able to explain back to me in English fluently that's a different story for W & G lesson. But, if you want them to speak really well then perhaps it is concerned in listening and speaking (L & S) lesson. For us our main objective the main goal is to make them understand the grammar rules. So for me personally I do not really expect or force them to speak 100% or fluent English and correct English with me. As long as they understand what I am teaching I do not mind if they answer my question in Mandarin. At least giving me the explanation in Mandarin, at least they understand and then it's okay for me. Of course it's even better if they manage to answer my question in English totally correct English even better but for this stage my main goal is to make them understand the grammar rules".

(T6.SR2.Line27)

Table:

Beliefs	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
1). Presentation of the target grammar topics.						√
2). Explanation of the grammatical rules.	√	√			√	√
3). Encouraging students for explanation.						√

3.5. Use of the First Language in English Language Classroom

According to the findings, the teachers supported the role of target language during the English grammar lesson, but at times conducted the lessons in the first language (L1). This was because of the reason if the students had to face the problems in understanding or if the teacher felt that the rules were difficult for students and the

instructions were hard for them to understand. The teachers believed that being the non-native speakers of the language this strategy works better for the weak students and moreover the explanation of grammar rules needs a language that the students are fluent with. Hence they believed in order to develop a deeper impression and to avoid the confusion in understanding the grammar rules the use of L1 is a must, otherwise students will have two big problems the first one understanding the language and second is, it takes long time for them to comprehend the rules. Moreover the order of consistency and inconsistency in the pattern of code-mixing was also observed during the lessons, especially in presenting and explaining the grammar rules.

4. Conclusion

This study elaborates the effectiveness of first language (Chinese- Mandarin) use. The teachers used their first language (Chinese) while explaining the grammatical rules, as they have the view that it works for the weak students or when students have problems; for better understanding because English is not their mother tongue; and explanation of rules needs a language that the students are fluent with. One of the teachers has the view that explaining the rules in English they will have two big problems: understanding the language and it takes longer time for them to comprehend the rules. The consistency and inconsistency was found in pattern of code-mixing. Sometimes, the teachers used English first, and then translated what has been said into Chinese, particularly when doubted that students won't be able to understand and secondly if they feel that the rules are difficult for students.

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