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## L1 Use in FL Classrooms: Graduate Students' and Professors' Perceptions of English Use in Foreign Language Courses

This report explores participant perspectives on L1 (English) use in foreign language classrooms. The study includes data collected from 25 participants, 23 students and 2 professors, from the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS). A combination of classroom observations, interviews, and questionnaires were used to collect data. The data were triangulated to determine if the participants' views reflected their actual classroom practices. The data show that while some students found comfort in L1 use, others felt threatened by the L1 and viewed it as an interference. Furthermore, the professors respected their students' views and thus attempted to use the L1 accordingly. Rather than relying on the L1 to facilitate all communication, the professors and students alike included the L1 in their repertoire of learning and teaching strategies. This study suggests that the participants understand the value of L1 but realize that it is not the only tool available.

Because of “English-only” rules or attitudes of various institutions, many language educators often feel confusion or guilt about the decision to use the students' L1 in foreign and second language classrooms (Butzkamm, 2003; Creese, 2010; Copland & Neokleous, 2011; Edstrom, 2006; Swain, Kirkpatrick, & Cummins, 2011; Tang, 2002). I have also experienced such feelings, and I am starting to understand that many language teachers share my guilty conscience. But research has shown that L1 use in the L2/FL classroom can serve a variety of important functions (Creese, 2010; Polio & Duff, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; van Lier, 2006). Polio and Duff (1994) found that university-level foreign language instructors used English in eight different ways, including grammar instruction, creat-

ing empathy and solidarity, and remedying student lack of comprehension. Swain and Lapkin (2000) found that students' L1 use during "collaborative dialogues" allowed them to "co-construct their L2" and "built knowledge about it [L2]" (p. 254).

Additionally, as an instructor I have experienced the benefits of L1 use in both EFL and ESL classrooms. Using Japanese while teaching English to Japanese speakers in the US and Japan allowed me to demonstrate an appreciation for my students' language and culture. At the same time, my students used Japanese for task management and to facilitate understanding in the classroom. The students used their L1 to plan and prepare before using the L2 to complete the tasks. Also, they often used their L1 to assist each other or clarify difficult concepts. Realizing, however, that all my teaching experience has thus far been with beginner and intermediate students, I wondered what role L1 might play in advanced foreign language classrooms. I was unsatisfied by the notion that although L1 use at the beginner level is acceptable and perhaps necessary, at advanced levels the use of the L1 in the classroom is unjustified and should therefore be used sparingly, if ever (Brown, 2007). Because the "first language is perhaps the most useful and least-used resource students bring to the classroom" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 250), I wanted to explore the potential role of L1 use in advanced language-learning environments. If beginning and intermediate learners can benefit from the use of the L1 in the classroom, it is possible that advanced students can benefit as well. Moreover, while investigating previous empirical findings on the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom, I discovered discussion concerning the students' views (e.g., see Edstrom, 2006). In fact, Polio and Duff (1994) expressed the need for further research of the "students' perceptions of issues related to classroom L1/L2 use" (p. 324).

### **Literature Review**

The use of the students' first language, native language, or mother tongue (L1) in the classroom has long been the focus of many pedagogical debates (Butzkamm, 2003). Even defining such terms can prove difficult so I will therefore use the term "L1" as the language in which students communicate most comfortably. L1 use is such a controversial topic that it tends to influence language education policies and practices. English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) programs, for example, often use "English Only" policies to create immersion-like environments to recruit potential students. Similarly, some universities take great pride in requiring students to sign language-learning pledges that prohibit them from communicat-

ing in anything but the target language (TL) during their course of study (e.g., see the Middlebury College website: <http://www.middlebury.edu/lis/approach/pledge>). Recently, however, McMillian and Rivers (2011) made a call for more flexible policies that allow teachers to adapt and adjust their practices to meet their students' needs and increase the likelihood of their success. They maintain that teachers and students, not administrators, are in the best position to make decisions about what languages, L1 or otherwise, enter the classroom.

Although traditionally L1 use was seen to limit target-language exposure and therefore considered detrimental to second language acquisition (see Polio & Duff, 1994; Ruiz-Funes, 2002; Turnbull, 2001), scholars have started advocating the use of L1 as a means to support language learning and teaching and also as a way to maximize L2 acquisition (Butzkamm 2003; Copland & Neokleous, 2011; Creese, 2010; van Lier, 2006). Van Lier (2006) writes that L1 use can grant access to and engagement with the L2, therefore creating learning opportunities and promoting deeper processing. Butzkamm (2003) proposed 10 maxims for the strategic use of L1 in the L2 classroom. He writes that the foreign language learner's greatest asset is his L1 because it is not only the language in which he learned to think, but it is also the language in which he learned to interact with the world. That is, restricting students to L2 use only is to deprive them of the wealth of linguistic skills and worldly knowledge they learned via their L1. Thus, Butzkamm (2003) suggests that instead of reconceptualizing the world by suppressing L1, students should instead adjust and refine their view of the world by augmenting it with their L2.

A more contemporary view is therefore that the *judicious, strategic, or monitored* classroom use of L1 can aid in the acquisition of L2 (Creese, 2010; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Tang, 2002; van Lier, 2006). It is argued that L1 use serves as a cognitive tool that allows students to perform at higher levels than if they were limited to L2 use only (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Behan, Turnbull, and Spek (1997) found that French immersion students whose use of L1 (English) was unmonitored during instruction outperformed students whose L1 use was monitored. Swain and Lapkin (2000) noticed that as opposed to using L1 in nonproductive ways, students use it strategically to complete tasks in the L2. Students used their L1 as a way to negotiate task management, comprehend unclear linguistic information, and facilitate interpersonal interactions. The researchers concluded that L1 is a very important cognitive and social tool, without which students will be less effective at, or perhaps even incapable of, completing tasks in the L2 (Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Like Butzkamm (2003), Swain and

Lapkin (2000) maintain that prohibiting L1 use is a disservice to students because it denies them an important cognitive tool necessary to complete linguistically challenging tasks.

In fact, some researchers claim that it is impossible to completely repress the students' L1 in the L2 classroom (Cook, 2008; Creese, 2010; Edstrom, 2006). Edstrom (2006) writes that the L1 (English) was needed to clearly explain grading policies, assignments, and strategies for functioning in a primarily Spanish-dominated class. She also explains that the students' inability to understand complex grammar in the L2 requires the teacher's use of L1. Furthermore, Edstrom (2006) writes that only by using the L1 was she able to counteract student cultural misconceptions. When students' understanding of the target culture is restricted by their abilities in the L2, the only choice other than ignoring the problem is using the L1 (Edstrom, 2006).

Also, given Cook's (2008) claim that additional language learners become multicompetent, multilingual individuals unable to compartmentalize their language skills, a teacher's efforts to prohibit explicit L1 use is futile because the learners' minds are inevitably influenced by the knowledge and schema learned in the L1. I therefore believe that teachers should instead embrace the L1 as an important tool that can help facilitate the process of additional language learning. Similarly, Cummins (2010) writes:

Students' L1 is not the enemy in promoting high levels of L2 proficiency; rather, when students' L1 is invoked as a cognitive and linguistic resource through bilingual instructional strategies, it can function as a stepping stone to scaffold more accomplished performance in the L2. (p. 238)

Likewise, Creese (2010) writes about the "interdependence of knowledge and skills across languages" (p. 103). Though her research is based in bilingual education (use of two or more languages in the same educational setting to help students transition from L1 to L2 content-based courses), it provides valuable insight about L1 use in L2 learning environments. Creese (2010) discusses how teachers and students alike use "translanguaging" (see García, 2007) to create meaningful interactions. Translanguaging is similar to the earlier construct "code-switching" (movement between two or more linguistic codes), which, according to Martin (2005), provides "creative, pragmatic and 'safe' practices" that classroom participants can use to navigate between their L1 and the "official language of the classroom" (p. 89). Unlike code-switching, however, translanguaging is the fluid and simultaneous use of multiple languages to maximize communication

rather than the constant switching between distinct linguistic codes. Accordingly, Creese (2010) claims that only through the combination of the L1 and the classroom language, “translanguaging,” can students stay engaged and pedagogic tasks keep moving forward. Thus, classroom participants should recognize “that languages do not fit into clear bounded entities and that all languages are ‘needed’ for meanings to be conveyed and negotiated” (Creese, 2010, p. 112).

L1 use in the L2 classroom is considered to have affective applications as well (Bailey, 2005; Copland & Neokleous, 2011; Edstrom, 2006; van Lier, 2006). Allowing the use of L1 places value on the students’ native language, whereas prohibiting L1 use can give students the impression that their language is unappreciated. Students not allowed to use their L1 might feel as if they have lost their voice, become uncomfortable and frustrated in the classroom, and then resist using the L2 (Bailey, 2005; Butzkamm, 2003). Permitting L1 use can instead encourage students to take risks and build up their confidence toward using the L2 (Bailey, 2005). Also, instructors can use the L1 to connect with their students. Edstrom (2006), for example, used the students’ L1 (English) while teaching beginning-level Spanish to “relate to her students on a human level” (p. 284). She occasionally used English to fulfill a moral obligation to her students, because her “concern for them as humans transcends [her] concern about their second language acquisition” (Edstrom, 2006, p. 286).

In light of all the research supporting the use of the L1 in L2 classrooms, yet the lack of research regarding participant perceptions, I will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. When, why, and by whom is English used in advanced-level foreign language classrooms?
2. What perceptions do advanced language learners and language instructors have of the use of English in the foreign language classroom?
3. Do the perceptions of advanced language learners and professors reflect their use of English in the classroom?

## **The Study**

### ***Participants***

The 25 participants in the study were students and professors from a small private graduate school that focuses heavily on language studies, the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS). Of the participants, 14 students and 1 professor were from the Spanish language course Hispanic Language and Culture I and 9 students and 1 professor were from the Japanese language course Aspects of Japanese

Society. All participants are considered to be highly competent users of English. First of all, for most students English is their L1 while the remaining students received a score of 79 or above on the TOEFL iBT before being admitted to the particular graduate institution. Second, both teachers have a background in English education. Also, because of the high level of proficiency needed for admittance to the graduate institution (see the MIIS website: <http://www.miis.edu/academics/language/degreelanguages>), all students are considered to be advanced language learners. Likewise, the aforementioned language courses employ a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach; thus all the students actively participated in classroom discussion, debates, and conversations (see the MIIS website). Finally, both professors are native speakers of the languages they teach, and therefore their use of English seemed to be voluntary, rather than a lack of ability in the target language.

### ***Data Collection***

The data were collected through three qualitative methods: (a) two teacher interviews; (b) four classroom observations; and (c) 25 questionnaires. Furthermore, all participants gave written consent to be part of the research study.

**Interviews.** The main purpose of the instructor interviews, which were based on a set of questions prepared in advance (see Appendix A), was to gain insight into the instructors' pedagogical philosophies related to classroom English use. Upon completion, the interviews were transcribed and analyzed for salient themes related to the instructors' opinions regarding English in their classrooms.

**Observations.** In total four classroom observations were conducted—two Spanish classes and two Japanese classes. All the observations were recorded and detailed field notes were kept by the researcher. During the observations I kept track of who initiated the turns in English, what time they initiated the turn, and what was said during the turn (see Appendix B). I also noted the turns that led up to (i.e., previous turn) and the turns that followed the English utterances (i.e., following turn). Afterward, I used my field notes as a guide when I transcribed and then analyzed the various episodes of classroom English use.

It is important to note that during the data collection process no explicit in-class discussions about English use were observed. In other words, the researcher did not observe the professors or the students commenting explicitly about their own or the other participants' in-class use of English. None of the participants ask for permission to use English, for example, nor did they complain about or protest the

L1 of others. Consequently, unlike the interviews and questionnaires, which were meant to elicit explicit responses from the participants, all speculations about the opinions and perceptions of English use made during the observations were based primarily on the participants' interactions.

**Questionnaires.** The questionnaires were administered after the final observation to avoid heightening the participants' awareness of their English use. They consisted of 10 multiple-choice questions. Some questions allowed for multiple responses while some allowed only one. When asked if English use were appropriate, for example, participants could respond with only "yes" or "no." When asked why English is helpful, however, participants could choose any combination of: (a) helps me understand difficult concepts, (b) helps me understand new vocabulary, and (c) makes me feel at ease, comfortable, and less stressed. Also, certain questions included an open-ended response that allowed participants to elaborate on their views.

Slightly different questionnaires were administered to the students and teachers respectively. The student questionnaires were designed to collect information related to students' views about: (a) the appropriateness of their instructor's using English; (b) their classmates' English use; and (c) their own use of English (see Appendix C). Similarly, the teacher questionnaires were designed to address the instructors' feelings and opinions about their own English use and the English use of their students (see Appendix D). My goal was to understand if there were occasions when the participants preferred to use English over the target language and if they thought English use was appropriate or merely inevitable. Accordingly, I wanted to know if the participants believed that L1 use aids or hinders foreign language learning.

### ***Data Analysis***

As a qualitative inquiry, the main objective of my research was to understand the participants' attitudes and beliefs. I therefore triangulated the data and analyzed it from multiple perspectives in order to be confident when drawing my conclusions (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). To this end, I first analyzed the observations for themes and patterns of actual English use. Using my field notes as a guide, I transcribed the various episodes of English use. Then as I read through the transcripts, I categorized the episodes into the following groups: meaning making, +/- attitude, teacher assistance, translanguaging, message strengthening, clarification, and connection.

Similarly, I analyzed the interviews for themes regarding the professors' perceptions of classroom English use. As with my analysis of



the observations, I transcribed the interviews and divided relevant comments into categories of English use: missing vocabulary, grammar and concept explanation, participant connection, providing assistance, and maintaining student voice.

Next, I tallied the responses to the 10 multiple-choice questions from the questionnaires and recorded them in two tables (see Appendices E and F). In addition, I compiled all the open-ended responses and additional remarks in a separate table (see Appendix G). Once the data were tallied and organized, I calculated the percentage of students who made each response on the questionnaire. For example, I found that 15 of the 23 students (65%) thought English should not be used in the foreign language classroom. After completing the calculations, I analyzed the open-ended responses as I had done with the observations and interviews. I placed the students' and teachers' comments into the following categories: assistance, +/- attitude, meaning making, and smooth communication.

Finally, I compared the interviews and questionnaires with the classroom observations. I looked for similarities between the participants' comments on the questionnaires, the views expressed in the teacher interviews, and the observed use of English during the observations. In other words, I triangulated the different data sources to determine if the participants' responses during the interviews and on the questionnaires corresponded with their actual in-class behavior. For example, I tried to determine if the participants who adamantly deplored L1 use on the questionnaire stayed faithful to their beliefs and avoided using English at all costs, or if they used their multicompetent multilingual abilities to translanguage with the other participants.

### **Findings**

In this section I will discuss how the data from the teacher interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaires were triangulated to answer the research questions. First I will focus on the observed uses of English. Next, I will discuss the participants' perceptions of English in the foreign language classroom. Finally, I will demonstrate that regardless of expressed opinions about L1 use in L2 classrooms, all participants used English to facilitate communication in the language classroom.

#### ***Reasons for English Use***

In response to the first research question (When, why, and by whom is English used in advanced-level foreign language classrooms?), I observed how the participants used English to sustain an interactive and communicative environment. Comparable to Creese's

(2010) study, the participants “translanguage” during the classroom activities and discussions. Students often used English if they lacked L2 vocabulary or grammar while the professors used English to compensate for students’ L2 gaps. The participants also used English to tailor their messages in an effort to be better understood. After triangulating the data, I chose two overarching themes that I think best describe the majority of the participants’ L1 use: (a) facilitating smooth communication, and (b) message strengthening.

**Facilitation.** While in the classroom, I observed how the participants used the occasional English word or phrase to sustain an interactive and communicative environment. The following transcription, with bolding to mark English use and XXX to mark inaudible speech, shows how a Spanish student used English to aid his discussion about public views of the church in Argentina.

- S1            People are not confident in the church because they cannot, uh, **trust**?
- T            They cannot tru ... st
- SS          Trust
- S1            Oh, trust, yeah. They have broken the confidence.

The next example shows how the Japanese professor used English to aid her students’ understanding during a discussion about the dichotomy between work and leisure in Japan.

- T            What is often heard is that Japanese people are worker bees. Do you understand worker bee, **worker bee**? Worker bees don’t rest. People ask, “Why don’t Japanese people rest,” but in fact when you look at the statistics, **statistics**, Americans work more than Japanese ...

She used English again when instructing the students to discuss their own ideas regarding the balance of work and leisure.

- T            In your lives about how much weight [does leisure have], **weight**, do you think. It’s a little **philosophical** question but, please discuss it in groups of three.

When students from the same Japanese class refrained from using English, however, their ability to communicate appeared to be hindered. In contrast to the Japanese professor’s successful use of English to facilitate meaning making, the following example shows

that if a student's utterance is interrupted by missing vocabulary, the conversational flow is derailed and the message is lost.

- S4            Maybe Christmas and ... [looks at S6] and what was **New Year's** again?
- S6            Special times, Christmas and, **New Year**, what is **New Year**? [appears frustrated]
- S4            XXX — [Shaking his hand at S6 and encouraging him to move on].

In this example, S4 and S6 struggled to recall the word for *New Year's* in Japanese, but because the meaning was conveyed with the English word, S4 wanted to move on and keep the conversation going.

**Message Strength.** Another reason the participants used L1 was to add strength to their message. Even a highly proficient Japanese student who expressed strong opposition to L1 use in the foreign language classroom used English as a means to increase the power of his utterance.

- S1            In English, **make your passion your profession**. Make your passion your profession.
- T            If you can do that, that would be ideal.

Although S1 clearly knew how to express his ideas in Japanese, he used English to strengthen his message and make it more accessible to his interlocutors. The fact that he even prompted his L1 use with the Japanese phrase *In English* further demonstrates that his use of English was intentional and not out of necessity.

In a similar fashion, a Spanish student used English to strengthen her message when discussing the relationship between two characters from a movie watched during the previous class.

- S11           They had a history. Therefore, you don't break up with your wife without problems, with emotion. So I think think that she hugged her husband with love and understanding, **like understanding**, um ...
- T            Understanding, yes.

In this example, S11 seems unsure about the Spanish word for *understanding* but appears to compensate for her lack of confidence by using the English equivalent. Consequently, her utterance gains strength and she is able to confidently and effectively convey her message.

Next, despite there being numerous Japanese equivalents of the word *guilt*, S6 and the teacher used English while discussing a report on why Japanese workers fail to take all their annual paid leave.

- S6            The two are the same, right? So both are like ... **guilt**  
                 [with hesitation].
- T             No not the same ... The top one means difficult to take,  
                 hard to take, **physiologically hard** ... yeah does seem like  
                 **guilt**. Number four really is like burdening one's col-  
                 leagues, for example if there is a three-person job, and  
                 one person doesn't show up, then the other two are stuck  
                 doing all the work
- S6            Isn't that **guilt** too?
- SS&T        [laughing]
- T             Might be **guilt**. I guess so. Yeah, I guess it is **guilt!**

Considering that S6 paused and hesitated before saying *guilt* in his first turn, it is possible that he may not have known a Japanese equivalent. His use of the word *guilt* in his second turn, however, demonstrates that he used English to strengthen his point that the reported reasons Japanese fail to take paid leave are nearly identical. In turn, the teacher, perhaps even unknowingly, continues to use the English word as she considers and eventually decides that S6's claim is valid. Because the English word *guilt* was understood by all the participants, its use remained prevalent as a means of effective communication. Had the teacher switched to the Japanese form in the middle of the conversation, the strength of the message might have been lost and the students might have become confused.

### ***Perceptions of English Use***

Regarding the second research question (What perceptions do advanced language learners and language instructors have of the use of English in the foreign language classroom?), the participants expressed a wide range of beliefs about L1 use in L2 classrooms (see Appendices E-G). The professors, for example, had relatively positive views and thought English use was advantageous in explaining vocabulary, grammar, difficult concepts, and aiding in comprehension. In contrast, 65% of the students thought English use should be prohibited. Ironically, however, the same number of students thought that English aided their target language learning to some degree. Furthermore, although 76% thought that English helped them better understand vocabulary, grammar, or difficult concepts, 61% thought the use of L1 prevented them from thinking in the TL, 35% thought English

use limited their exposure to the TL, and 35% thought that using the L1 allowed them to avoid using the TL. Overall, I found that the students were undecided about their views on L1 use. Often, students who claimed that English use should be prohibited also wrote that it aided their comprehension of vocabulary, grammar, and so on.

The professors, on the other hand, seem very confident in their views that student L1 use should be allowed because it is a useful pedagogical tool. They added the caveat, however, that too much L1 use can affect the language-learning atmosphere and inhibit students from getting into a TL mind-set. Nonetheless, although the professors were never observed explicitly justifying nor discussing the benefits of in-class English with their students, they did express feelings to the researcher that the use of English was both “necessary” and “natural.” The Japanese professor, for example, explained that when discussing the death of Apple CEO Steve Jobs, “The feeling was shared among everybody and it was so natural to say things in English that time.” Also, referring to his students, the Spanish professor said, “If they don’t know something it’s gonna be OK for them to say the word [in English]. ‘OK, how do I say this?’ and using the phrase in English. I wouldn’t be against that, I think that is natural.” Then when asked if he preferred his students to refrain from using English, he said, “No, I’m not against it [L1 use]. I think that it is very necessary sometimes.”

Like Butzkamm (2003), Cook (2008), Creese (2010), and Swain and Lapkin (2000), the instructors think that L1 use is both “natural” and “necessary.” Perhaps they recognize that students, especially adult learners, possess a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience in their L1. The Japanese professor explained that

cognitively they [students] have so much experience or knowledge to share but it’s prohibited if they can’t do that [use L1], because linguistically, obviously they can’t. I believe the language course is one of the few disciplines that people can bring their life experiences, their background, to build this community. It’s such a rich resource wasted if you prohibited them from doing *anything* in their native language.

Consequently, the instructors try to embrace the “rich L1 resource” and permit students to express themselves in English when acceptable. The Japanese instructor added that teachers should have their own philosophies on L1 use while remaining flexible when considering student wants and needs. More explicitly, she thinks that while some of her students appreciate L1 use, other students, especially those paying high tuition fees for quality language instruction, expect

her “to provide all the input in the target language” and she “respect[s] that.” This, along with aforementioned comments, provides great insight into the professors’ perceptions of English use in the foreign classroom, and thus answers part of the second research question. They see English as a useful pedagogical and learning tool but realize the decision to use it is highly dependent on student needs, wants, expectations, and desires not only in the classroom, but also during specific classroom activities. Like McMillian and Rivers (2011), the teachers believe policies on L1 use should be decided by the classroom participants, not administrators.

### ***Relation Between Use and Perceptions***

Finally, in response to the third research question (Do the perceptions of advanced language learners and professors reflect their use of English in the classroom?), I noticed that the professors’ expressed desires for uninterrupted fluent interaction truly reflected how they used and allowed others to use English to facilitate communication. Never were the professors observed reprimanding or explicitly discouraging their students from using English. Instead, the professors seemed to promote an atmosphere in which English use was accepted but target language use was encouraged. In accordance with her statement during the interview, “That’s when I just shot, one shot of word in English, not to hinder the communication,” the Japanese professor, as discussed above, used English while discussing Japanese workplace culture. At the same time, the example also shows how she often used English only after first providing Japanese equivalents in what appears to be an effort to foster target language use. Her acceptance of English, but inclination toward Japanese, can also be seen in her responses to student English use with Japanese.

S6            I have a question. For example in France and XXX I have heard that, well in English, um, **not live to work, but work to live**, philosophy.

T            That’s true.

Even when the class was dismissed and the students switched to English to discuss their classmates’ presentation, the professor used a Japanese valediction.

S8            **Both disturbing and interesting. A little bit of both. When he really got into it, and the last part, and it was clearly over, the *poki* was like gone, he was like ...**

SS            [laughter]

- S5           **And did you see the guy on the other side who was, like, operating?**
- SS           XXX [laughter]
- S5           **It was like the most awkward.**
- S4           **I was wondering how you were gonna top toilets, but that's it there. That tops toilets!**
- SS           [laughter—students continue discussion about the presentation]
- T            Good job today, everyone.

Similarly, after the Spanish professor explained in the interview that “in a natural conversation that you’re having with students in the classroom, students will need probably a word ... there’s nothing wrong with it,” his student was observed using English when she lacked the Spanish vocabulary for *naive*.

- S            We said that before talking to Ana and Grandma, Alicia’s hair was kept up because Alicia was more conservative, formal, traditional, and ... What’s the word for **naive**?
- T            Naive.

Like the Japanese professor, the Spanish professor’s in-class behavior indicates that he welcomes English use but promotes target language use. Instead of shutting down in-class English use, he creates opportunities for Spanish use by prompting his students to provide their classmate with missing vocabulary.

- S10          How do you say **forgiveness**?
- T            How do you say **forgiveness** in Spanish?
- SS          Forgiveness.

Students’ views on L1 use, in contrast, often contradicted their in-class L1 use. Though some comments corresponded with the use of English as a means of maintaining smooth, uninterrupted communication—English is appropriate “to keep the conversation flowing even if there is part when [classmates] can’t say,” and English helps in the Japanese classroom “when difficulty in explaining concepts is delaying the flow of class ...”—most students’ views conflicted with their actual English use in the classroom. Despite the majority of students’ being adamant that English not be used in foreign language classrooms, almost all students used English in one way or another during observation. As shown above, even the Japanese student who strongly deplored the use of English used it to communicate with his classmates.

## Discussion

As shown in the study, the professors' expressed beliefs about L1 use during the interviews and on the questionnaires were in accordance with their in-class behavior. As stated above, no explicit teacher and student discussions about the in-class use of English were observed, nor were the professors observed reprimanding or openly discouraging students from using English. On the contrary, the teachers were observed actively using English themselves and permitting regular student English use. There were times, however, when the professors interjected with a target language equivalent of English utterances in what appeared to be a means of maintaining a target language atmosphere. The Japanese teacher, for example, bid her students farewell in Japanese, while the Spanish teacher used a question formed with English to create an opportunity for his students to teach each other Spanish vocabulary.

In general, however, there was no need for the professors to actively monitor or control English use in the class. Actually, the students appeared to be self-governed and the researcher believes that, perhaps because of their advanced language skills, there was never a point when in-class English use was excessive. The students appeared to realize the importance of speaking and interacting in the target language and relied on their L1 (English) only for certain instances when they were unable to express themselves in a clear articulate manner or when they assumed their interlocutor would benefit from an English interjection. This suggests that there were no instances of L1 use out of laziness or lack of effort on the part of the students. L1 use was merely a way of enhancing communication and maintaining fluidity during in-class discourse.

When students and teachers use the L1 as a tool to facilitate communication, not as a crutch to avoid target language use, ultimately it can help promote target language learning. L1 use may even help classroom participants realize their shortcomings in the target language and therefore provide a means of assessment. If students tend to use their L1 in certain grammatical situations or with specific vocabulary, both they and the teacher can take note and then attend to the issue at the appropriate time. Both professors were observed keeping logs of student difficulties during the lesson. They noted the students' grammatical and lexical errors and then discussed them with the class as a whole at the end of the lesson. Like allowing L1 use, this method allowed the students to engage in their communicative acts without constant interruptions.



## Conclusion and Implications

Given the limited number of participants and small number of classroom interactions observed by the researcher, this study provides only a localized perspective of L1 use in foreign language classrooms. To fully understand the role of L1 use and the perceptions of L1 use by teachers and students alike, further research is needed. In particular, the researcher is interested in how teachers and students use a combination of L1 and L2 to co-construct meaning. Accordingly, because he observed that students, especially in the Japanese classes, seemingly avoid speaking their L1 by pronouncing English lexical items with Japanese-like phonetics, the researcher would like to explore how language classroom participants attempt to stay in “target language character” as a means of promoting language use and facilitating language learning.

Despite the study’s limited scope, it provides valuable insight into the attitudes that learners and instructors have about English use in advanced foreign language classrooms. The data also show that despite a tendency for negative perceptions about L1 use in the classroom, L1 use can serve numerous functions, including, but not limited to, facilitating communication and increasing message strength. In addition, the study shows that communication, and therefore language learning and teaching, require an assortment of strategies. A complement to the idea that successful language learning is a complex multifaceted endeavor is that teaching should incorporate a myriad of strategies, including but not limited to the L1. It is only one of a teacher’s many tools, and therefore must not be overused but rather used appropriately and incorporated with various other pedagogical practices. Furthermore, given the variety of observed educational, affective, and pedagogical functions of L1 use, it is the opinion of the researcher that the politics and practices surrounding L1 use should be discussed openly in the language classroom so that decisions about L1 use can be made by the teacher and students themselves.

### Author

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**Appendix A**  
**Teacher Interview Questions**

1. Do you use English in your classroom?
2. If so, in what circumstances do you use English?
3. How do you feel about using English? Guilty? Comfortable? Indifferent?
4. Does the use of English allow you to create solidarity with your students?
5. Does the lack of English use create distance between you and your students?
6. Do you allow your students to use English?
7. Do you think English can help your students, or is it detrimental?
8. If English is allowed in the classroom does it prevent students from practicing the target language?
9. If so, in what circumstances do you allow them to use English?
10. How do you feel when your students use English? Disappointed? Indifferent?
11. Does it upset you when students speak English?
12. Even if you don't allow or don't appreciate English use in the classroom, do you consider it as an inevitable part of teaching native English speakers?
13. If so, what strategies have you developed for controlling the use of English in the classroom?
14. In your opinion, what are the advantages or disadvantages of using English in the class?
15. Was there a time when you used English a greater or lesser degree, and if so, what caused you to change?

**Appendix B**  
**Field Notes From Researcher's Observations**

T = Teacher S# = Student

<i>Time</i>	<i>Initiator</i>	<i>English utterance</i>	<i>Previous turn</i>	<i>Following turn</i>

**Appendix C**  
**Student Questionnaires**

**Using English in the Spanish (Japanese) Classroom (Student)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

(I only need your name to match the questionnaire results with my classroom observations)

**This questionnaire aims to find out your attitude toward using English in the Spanish (Japanese) classroom. Your answers will be used for research purposes only. Thank you for your cooperation!**

**1. Should English be used in the Spanish (Japanese) classroom?**

- a. Yes                      b. No

**2. How often should your professor use English in the classroom?**

- a. never                      b. rarely                      c. sometimes                      d. frequently

**3. When do you think it is appropriate for your professor to use English in the classroom? (choose all that apply)**

- a. defining new vocabulary  
b. explaining complex grammar points  
c. explaining difficult concepts or ideas  
d. giving instructions  
e. suggesting learning strategies  
f. teachers should never use English  
g. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**4. How often should your classmates use English in the classroom?**

- a. never                      b. rarely                      c. sometimes                      d. frequently

**5. When do you think it is appropriate for your classmates to use English in the classroom? (choose all that apply)**

- a. speaking to the professor  
b. speaking to other classmates  
c. taking notes  
d. students should never use English  
e. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**6. If you think it is appropriate for students to use English with their classmates, why? (choose all that apply)**

- a. defining vocabulary items
- b. explaining grammar points
- c. clarifying difficult concepts or ideas
- d. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Do you think the use of English in the classroom helps you learn Spanish (Japanese)?**

- a. no
- b. a little
- c. a fair amount
- d. a lot

**8. If you think the use of English is helpful in the Spanish (Japanese) classroom, why? (choose all that apply)**

- a. helps me understand difficult concepts
- b. helps me understand new vocabulary
- c. makes me feel at ease, comfortable, and less stressed
- d. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Do you think the use of English in the classroom prevents you from learning Spanish (Japanese)?**

- a. no
- b. a little
- c. a fair amount
- d. a lot

**10. If you think the use of English is harmful in the Spanish (Japanese) classroom, why? (choose all that apply)**

- a. prevents me from thinking in Spanish (Japanese)
- b. limits my exposure to Spanish (Japanese)
- c. allows me to avoid speaking in Spanish (Japanese)
- d. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix D Teacher Questionnaires**

### **Using English in the Japanese (Spanish) Classroom (Teacher)**

**This questionnaire aims to find out your attitude toward using English in the classroom. Your answers will be used for research purposes only.**

**Thank you for your cooperation!**

**1. Should English be used in the Japanese (Spanish) classroom?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**2. When do you think it is appropriate to use English in the classroom? (choose all that apply)**

- a. defining new vocabulary
- b. explaining complex grammar points
- c. explaining difficult concepts or ideas
- d. giving instructions
- e. suggesting learning strategies
- f. never
- g. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Is English helpful in the classroom, why? (choose all that apply)**

- a. it aids comprehension
- b. it is effective for explaining difficult concepts
- c. it is less time-consuming
- d. it allows me to connect with my students
- e. English is not helpful
- f. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Do you allow your students to use English in the classroom?**

- a. not at all
- b. a little
- c. sometimes
- d. a lot

**5. When do you think it is appropriate for your students to use English in the classroom? (choose all that apply)**

- a. speaking with the professor
- b. speaking with their classmates
- c. taking notes
- d. students should never use English

**6. If you think it is appropriate for students to use English to speak to their classmates, why? (choose all that apply)**

- a. task management
- b. defining vocabulary items
- c. explaining grammar points
- d. clarifying difficult concepts or ideas
- e. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Do you think the use of English in the classroom helps students learn Japanese (Spanish)?**

- a. no
- b. a little
- c. a fair amount
- d. a lot

**8. If you think the use of English is helpful in the Japanese (Spanish) classroom, why? (choose all that apply)**

- a. helps them understand difficult concepts
- b. helps them understand new vocabulary
- c. makes them feel at ease, comfortable, and less stressed
- d. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Do you think the use of English in the classroom prevents students learning Japanese (Spanish)?**

- a. no
- b. a little
- c. a fair amount
- d. a lot

**10. If you think the use of English is harmful in the Japanese (Spanish) classroom, why? (choose all that apply)**

- a. prevents them from thinking in Japanese (Spanish)
- b. limits their exposure to Japanese (Spanish)
- c. allows them to avoid speaking in Japanese (Spanish)
- d. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E**  
**Student Questionnaires Responses**

	<i>Question</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
1	Should English be used in the Japanese/Spanish classroom?	Yes = 1 No = 5 Other (no) = 3	Yes = 5 No = 7 Other (yes) = 2
2	How often should your professor use English in the classroom?	Never = 1 Rarely = 7 Sometimes = 1	Never = 1 Rarely = 9 Sometimes = 2 Other = 2
3	When do you think it is appropriate for your professor to use English in the classroom?	•Grammar = 3 •Concepts = 6 •Instructions = 1 •Other = 2	•Vocab = 10 •Grammar = 9 •Concepts = 6 •Instructions = 1 •Suggest learning strategies = 1 •NEVER = 1 •Other = 2
4	How often should your classmates use English in the classroom?	•Never = 2 •Rarely = 7	•Never = 5 •Rarely = 7 •Sometimes = 2



	<i>Question</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
5	When do you think it is appropriate for your classmates to use English in classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Taking notes = 2</li> <li>•NEVER = 1</li> <li>•Other = 6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•To professor = 2</li> <li>•To classmates = 2</li> <li>•Taking notes = 3</li> <li>•NEVER = 4</li> <li>•Other = 6</li> </ul>
6	If you think it is appropriate for students to use English with their classmates, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Vocab = 2</li> <li>•Concepts/Ideas = 2</li> <li>•Other = 5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Vocab = 5</li> <li>•Grammar = 3</li> <li>•Concepts/Ideas = 5</li> <li>•Other = 1</li> </ul>
7	Do you think the use of English in the classroom helps you learn Japanese/ Spanish?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•No = 3</li> <li>•A little = 3</li> <li>•A fair amount = 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•No = 6</li> <li>•A little = 5</li> <li>•A fair amount = 3</li> </ul>
8	If you think the use of English is helpful in the Japanese/Spanish classroom, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Concepts = 4</li> <li>•Other = 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Concepts = 7</li> <li>•Vocab = 7</li> </ul>
9	Do you think the use of English in the classroom prevents you from learning Japanese/ Spanish?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•No = 2</li> <li>•A little = 5</li> <li>•A fair amount = 1</li> <li>•Other = 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•No = 6</li> <li>•A little = 1</li> <li>•A fair amount = 1</li> <li>•A lot = 4</li> <li>•Other = 1</li> </ul>
10	If you think the use of English is harmful in the Japanese/Spanish classroom, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Prevents me from thinking in Japanese = 8</li> <li>•Limits exposure to Japanese = 4</li> <li>•Allows me to avoid using Japanese = 5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Prevents me from thinking in Spanish = 6</li> <li>•Limits exposure to Spanish = 4</li> <li>•Allows me to avoid using Spanish = 3</li> <li>•Other = 3</li> </ul>

**Appendix F**  
**Teacher Questionnaires Responses**

	<i>Question</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
1	Should English be used in the Japanese/Spanish classroom?	yes	yes
2	When do you think it is appropriate to use English in the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•vocab</li> <li>•grammar</li> <li>•concepts/idea</li> <li>•suggest learning strategies</li> <li>•not all the time of doing the above</li> <li>•WHEN APPROPRIATE TO DO SO!!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•grammar</li> <li>•concepts/ideas</li> <li>•in the middle of a presentation and the student gets stuck and asks for a word</li> </ul>
3	Is English helpful in the classroom, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•aids comprehension</li> <li>•effective for explaining</li> <li>•less time-consuming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•explaining difficult concepts</li> <li>•allows me to connect with my students</li> </ul>
4	Do you allow your students to use English in the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•sometimes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•a little. I hate to impose but sometimes cannot help it</li> </ul>
5	When do you think it is appropriate for your students to use English in classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•with professor</li> <li>•with classmates</li> <li>•taking notes</li> <li>•up to each individual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•taking notes</li> </ul>
6	If you think it is appropriate for students to use English to speak to their classmates, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•task management</li> <li>•defining vocab</li> <li>•explaining grammar</li> <li>•clarifying concepts/ideas</li> <li>•when it is necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•explaining grammar</li> <li>•clarifying difficult concepts/ideas</li> </ul>

	<i>Question</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
7	Do you think the use of English in the classroom helps students learn Japanese/Spanish?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•a lot</li> <li>•if used appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•a fair amount</li> </ul>
8	If you think the use of English is helpful in the Japanese/ Spanish classroom, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•understand concepts/ideas</li> <li>•understand new vocab</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•understand concepts/ideas</li> <li>•understand new vocab</li> </ul>
9	Do you think the use of English in the classroom prevents students learning Japanese /Spanish?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•a little if done appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•no, it has to do with the moments in the class</li> </ul>
10	If you think the use of English is harmful in the Japanese/Spanish classroom, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•if used too much it would “break” the atmosphere and SS may abort the effort to express themselves in the TL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•it’s not harmful in the sense that certain decisions have to be taken to allow or not.</li> <li>•If a student feels sick and need to express, is one thing but if you want them to express ideas through circumlocution and they use English a lot, that’s another thing.</li> </ul>

**Appendix G**  
**Additional Student Questionnaire Responses (Other)**

	<i>Question</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
1	Should English be used in the Japanese/Spanish classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•maybe - influence of English (and other languages) is very in Japanese, many words are adopted</li> <li>•no, rarely</li> <li>•no, to the extent possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•clarification</li> <li>•occasionally</li> </ul>
3	When do you think it is appropriate for your professor to use English in the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•when explaining VERY confusing/ specific concept/ assignments that require thorough comprehension</li> <li>•when all else fails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•rarely</li> <li>•<i>sólo cuando es necesario</i> [only when necessary]</li> <li>•depends on the level by intermediate level most every thing can be explained with easier vocab. beginning level needs a-e</li> </ul>
5	When do you think it is appropriate for your classmates to use English in classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•only as an absolute last resort</li> <li>•clarification</li> <li>•only when an idea can't be conveyed any other way</li> <li>•when they don't know an essential word</li> <li>•when they can't communicate otherwise</li> <li>•when all else fails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•when they can't express themselves in Spanish</li> <li>•when there is still confusion after several attempts to explain</li> <li>•only to explain thoughts that are even difficult in English (Religion to pics, political issues) Rarely</li> <li>•<i>cuando no sepan como decir o explicar algo en español</i> [when they don't know how to say or explain something in Spanish]</li> <li>•students should rarely use English</li> <li>•to clarify an idea they've tried several times to express in Spanish</li> </ul>

	<i>Question</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
6	If you think it is appropriate for students to use English with their classmates, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•defining vocab only when definitions are more complicated then the term or requires complex terminology</li> <li>•I don't think there's ever a "need"</li> <li>•to keep the conversation flowing, even if there is a part they can't say</li> <li>•when it can't be explained in Japanese or if it takes too long to explain</li> <li>•when all else fails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<i>cuando no sepan como decir o explicar algo en español</i></li> <li>[when they don't know how to say or explain something in Spanish]</li> </ul>
8	If you think the use of English is helpful in the Japanese/Spanish classroom, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•when difficulty in explaining concepts is delaying the flow of class it may be better things along quickly</li> <li>•99% of the time, no it's not helpful.</li> </ul>	
9	Do you think the use of English in the classroom prevents you from learning Japanese/ Spanish?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•I think it's better to learn in the language, your vocab grows quicker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•depends on how much is used. if frequently yes, if rarely no</li> </ul>

	<i>Question</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
10	If you think the use of English is harmful in the Japanese/Spanish classroom, why?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•depends on how much is used. if frequently yes, if rarely no</li> <li>•it's too easy for students give up explaining in Spanish to just use an English word. If you're using English it usually means you're thinking in English instead of Spanish - limiting the immersion</li> <li>•prevents me from taking the initiative to lookup what I didn't understand in class on my own which would help me learn more than being told the answer.</li> </ul>