En français s’il vous plaît :
Investigating use of the first language (L1) in the foreign language (FL) classroom

Erin White
239707

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree: Bachelor of Arts (Honours in Linguistics)

Supervisor: Dr. Neomy Storch
The University of Melbourne
Date: November 18th, 2009
Declaration:
I, Erin White, declare that this thesis is my own work, except where acknowledged, and that the research reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the principles for the ethical treatment of human subjects as approved for this research by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee.

Signed:

Date: November 18th, 2009
Acknowledgements

To Neomy Storch, for igniting my passion for second language learning and teaching, and for her constant support and encouragement.

To my intermediate French teachers, Kerry Mullan and Diane de Saint Léger, for being such inspiring language teachers and equipping me with language skills that have opened up a new world of exciting possibilities.
Teachers’ and students’ perceptions and attitudes regarding use of the L1
(English) in the FL classroom……………………………………………………… 58
Teacher interviews………………………………………………………………… 58
NS teacher………………………………………………………………………… 58
NNS teacher……………………………………………………………………….. 60
Student questionnaires…………………………………………………………….. 62

6. Discussion…………………………………………………………………….. 63
Amount of L1 use………………………………………………………………….. 63
Changes in amount of L1 use over time………………………………………….. 64
Rhetorical function of L1 turns……………………………………………………. 65
Changes in rhetorical function of L1 turns over time……………………………... 66
Purpose of L1 episodes…………………………………………………………… 68
Changes in purpose of L1 episodes over time…………………………………….. 70
Audience of L1 episodes…………………………………………………………… 74
Changes in audience of L1 episodes over time…………………………………….. 75
Teachers’ and students’ perceptions and attitudes regarding use of the L1 (English) in the FL classroom…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Abstract

The role of the first language (L1) in the foreign language (FL) classroom is a divisive issue among language teachers and teacher educators. The present study investigates teachers’ use of the L1 over the course of a semester, focusing on two French FL classes at the intermediate level at two Australian universities. A native French-speaking teacher (NS) and a non-native French-speaking teacher (NNS), were observed and audio-recorded by the researcher every couple of weeks over the course of a 12 week semester. The study investigated how much of the L1 teachers use in the classroom, the rhetorical function of L1 turns, the purpose and audience of L1 use, whether L1 use changes over time, and the teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards L1 use. Use of the L1 varied greatly between the NS and NNS teachers, with the NNS teacher using a significantly greater amount of L1 than her native French-speaking counterpart. The L1 use of both teachers served a variety of rhetorical functions, most notably to provide explanations and ask questions. Common purposes of L1 use for both teachers were vocabulary and task management and the teachers’ L1 use addressed different audiences depending on activity-type. The NS teacher’s L1 use showed a moderate increase over the observation period, while the NNS teacher’s L1 use increased dramatically in the second lesson (of four lessons) and declined slowly thereafter (but generally, remained high). Teacher interviews following the observation period suggested that the two teachers held different ideological beliefs about what makes an effective FL classroom, but both teachers expressed the opinion that L1 use is an individual choice and not influenced by native-speaker status (nor imposed by departmental policy at their universities). Overall, students of both classes showed positive attitudes towards their teacher’s use of the L1. Results of the present study may be of interest to language teachers and teacher educators who may not be aware of the amount of L1 use in the FL classroom and the rhetorical functions and purposes such use can serve.
While it cannot be disputed that the goal of foreign language classes is to expose learners to target language (TL) input and to encourage foreign language (FL) learning, the methods used by teachers to achieve this have been an issue of debate for some time. Kim and Elder (2005) note that of particular controversy in recent second language acquisition (SLA) research has been ‘whether language teachers should use learners’ first language (L1) as the medium of instruction in second language (L2) classrooms’ (p. 355). The other side of the argument questions whether ‘exclusive use of the target language (TL) in monolingual foreign language (FL) classrooms’ is a more effective alternative (Macaro, 2001: 531).

While methodological debate abounds on the issue of language choices in FL classrooms, empirical research into what actually occurs in FL classrooms is not as widespread (Duff & Polio, 1990) making it difficult, as Levine (2003) notes, for FL departments to make ‘sound pedagogical and policy decisions’ on language choices (p. 344). Further, due to the limited number of empirical studies available on L1 use in the FL classroom, many teachers may be unaware of ‘how, when and the extent to which they actually use English in the classroom’ (Polio & Duff, 1994: 320). Gearon (2006) argues that few studies have been conducted on TL/L1 distribution in FL classes ‘because this would surely prove that the majority of teachers can not or will not use the target language continuously’ (p. 450). However, as Kim and Elder (2005) note, the quantity of TL use in the FL classroom ‘should not be the sole basis for judging the linguistic quality of the classroom environment’ (p. 357) and, therefore, determining the success or otherwise of an FL class and FL teacher. Following this view, it is important, therefore, to look at the value of the L1 in the FL classroom; determining what it contributes to the FL class rather than deriding its use as being a detractor of TL acquisition. Use of the L1 is particularly important to investigate in FL classrooms as, unlike second language (L2) classrooms where students do not necessarily have the same L1 (such as learners of English as a second language in Australia), learners in FL classes are more likely to share an L1.
The present study aims to contribute to the growing amount of research on language choices in FL classrooms through the investigation of L1 use in two Australian intermediate-level university French foreign language classes. Through the use of classroom observations over the period of one semester as well as teacher interviews and student questionnaires, it is hoped that the present study can shed some more light on L1 use in the FL classroom and teacher and student attitudes towards such use. The L1 throughout this study refers to English.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In order to further explore the debate about teachers’ choice of language in the FL classroom, this chapter will address the following: the argument for TL-exclusivity, the argument against TL-exclusivity, empirical research into TL and L1 use in the FL classroom, empirical research into attitudes towards TL and L1 use in the FL classroom, and an introduction to the present study.

The argument for TL-exclusivity

In any language learning environment, input (the linguistic information learners are exposed to) is the key ingredient in exposing learners to the target language; this is no different in the FL classroom. Guthrie (1987) claims that ‘optimal input’ in the FL classroom is ‘reflected in high usage of the goal language’ (p. 174). Further, TL-exclusivity proponents argue that input in the TL is perhaps more vital in FL classrooms because, as the term “foreign language” suggests, the classroom is often the students’ only source of exposure to the target language (reported by Chambers, 1991; Polio & Duff, 1994; Turnbull, 2006). In the FL classroom, language teachers act not only as a language guide for their students, but also as an example of a successful user of the L2, particularly if teachers themselves are non-native speakers of the TL (Cook, 2005). Proponents of TL-exclusivity see TL-use in the FL classroom as an attempt to contextualise the already de-contextualised classroom and to replicate, as near as possible, an environment where the TL is the majority language (such as on the streets of Paris in the case of French). Cook reports that TL-exclusivity proponents also argue, somewhat contentiously, that “the two languages should be kept separate in the mind” in order for speakers to use the L2 independently of their L1 ‘and eventually to “think” in it’ (2001: 407; 2008: 181).

TL-exclusivity proponents argue that, whenever it is introduced or appears in the FL classroom, the L1 undermines the purpose of TL acquisition (reported by Macaro, 2001; Satchwell, 1997) and often, when it is used to provide instantaneous translations, denies students the opportunity to understand the message in the TL (noted by Gearon, 2006). Clark (1981) argues that teachers’ use of the L1 sends
students the message that it is acceptable to use their first language, often detracting from the goal of FL programs by suggesting students ‘use [the L1] when [they] have something real to say (and) use the foreign language when…doing exercises, question-and-answer work, and other unreal (non-communicative) things’ (p. 153). Further, Turnbull (2001) argues that use of the L1 when FL classes are already under time constraints is ‘an unfortunate waste of time and would likely lead to student demotivation’ (p. 535), with Satchwell (1997) adding that students’ concentration will diminish and their acquisition of the TL will be inhibited by excessive L1 use.

In order to minimise use of the L1 and promote TL use in the FL classroom, TL-exclusivity proponents suggest, firstly, that teachers use every opportunity to adopt the TL. For example, asking students to move their chairs to form a group provides students with real instructions with an immediate action for them to carry out and, as Cook notes, ‘hearing this through the first language would deprive students of genuine experience of interaction through the second language’ (2008: 181). Exclusive use of the TL, while it may be difficult for teachers to maintain and students may not always understand, can be aided by contextualising material through the use of verbal means, such as speech modifications and non-verbal means through the use of visual aids and gesture (Duff & Polio, 1990; Turnbull, 2006). Turnbull (2006) further suggests that teachers relate program content to the interests and daily lives of the students in order to contextualise the language for the students and to retain their interest.

The argument against TL-exclusivity

Opponents of TL-exclusivity argue that there is a place for the L1 in the FL classroom, even if it’s only used sparingly, and that use of the L1 can actually afford positive benefits to students’ acquisition of the TL (reported by Cook, 2001; Gearon, 2006; Turnbull, 2006). Firstly, opponents of TL-exclusivity counter the claim that the L1 and TL should be kept separate in the learners’ minds by arguing that language compartmentalisation does not actually occur in the minds of learners (Cook, 2001). Turnbull (2006) notes that language teachers know that their students don’t think in the TL, and that they have constant access to their L1. Taylor (2002) further argues that cognitive abilities can be transferred from the L1 to the TL, thereby helping
learners to comprehend the TL input and aiding in their attainment of proficiency. Turnbull (2006) further acknowledges the interplay between learners’ L1 and TL as natural, and reflective of the alternation between L1 and L2 which occurs in bilingual speakers on a daily basis.

Opponents of TL-exclusivity argue that incorporating L1 into the FL classroom provides a more realistic language environment for learners, rather than TL-exclusivity which, Cook (2008) argues, acts as a ‘pretend monolingual situation’ (p. 181). Guest and Pachler (2001) further criticise the TL-exclusive approach by arguing that ‘maximum TL use requires a suspension of disbelief both on the part of pupils and teachers’ that neither party speaks the L1 ‘and that the transactions and interactions of the classroom are “authentic”’ (p. 85). Guest and Pachler further believe that exclusive TL use hinders the development of social relationships between the teacher and students which ‘[require] non-curriculum-specific TL, which learners do not have at their disposal’ (2001).

Due to a prevailing attitude towards maximal TL exposure, teachers who use the L1 (to any degree) often feel guilt and shame for doing so (Cook, 2001). Cook (2001) suggests that in order for the L1 to be used positively in the FL classroom, the shame of using the L1 needs to be removed to allow teachers to feel more comfortable and to not feel like they are doing something “wrong”. Cook (2008) further suggests teachers employ the L1 to explain grammar, particularly when grammatical rules in the TL are not present in the L1, such as the learning of grammatical plural in English for Japanese students (2008). Cook (2001; 2008) also suggests that teachers explain tasks and activities to the students in the L1 if it is more efficient and helpful for students’ learning of the TL. Turnbull further argues for the coexistence of the L1 and TL in the FL classroom by claiming that the argument for maximisation of the TL ‘acknowledges that the L1 and TL can exist simultaneously’ (2001: 535); a view which aligns with sociocultural theory (SCT) by viewing language as a tool which mediates mental activity (Lantolf, 2000). Turnbull notes, however, that there is as yet no consistent recommendation for the amount of TL and L1 use in FL classrooms.
Empirical research into TL and L1 use in the FL classroom

It appears that, regardless of which side of the TL-exclusivity debate linguists and educators are on, few would deny the importance of maximising use of the TL in the FL classroom. However, while debate abounds regarding teaching methodology, there has been relatively little research into the actual amount of TL use in FL classrooms (Duff & Polio, 1990). Indeed, as a result of the lack of studies, many teachers are unaware of ‘how, when and the extent to which they actually use [the L1] in the classroom’ (Polio & Duff, 1994: 320). Studies which have investigated the distribution of TL and L1 use in FL classrooms (with the L1 here taken to be English), have shed some light on what actually transpires in the FL classroom.

Guthrie (1987) studied the distribution of TL-use in six second semester, university-level French classes in the United States, where all teachers were graduate teaching assistants. Through employing word counts, she found that teachers’ use of the TL ranged from 59 percent to 98 percent of their total talk in class. However, she noted that the majority of the teachers, five out of six used the TL at least 80 percent of the time in class, leaving just one teacher well-below that, at 59 percent. The native-speaker statuses of the teachers in Guthrie’s study were not given.

In 1990, Duff and Polio investigated the ratio of English to TL use and the factors related to language choice through the observation and interview of thirteen FL classes in their second semester of study at university level in the United States. The foreign languages ranged from European to Asian and indigenous and all teachers were native speakers of their respective TLs. In quantifying the data from the recordings of their classroom observations, Duff and Polio stopped the recording every fifteen seconds and classified the teachers’ speech at that time as either L1 (entirely L1), L1c (mostly L1 with a word or phrase in the TL), Mix of the L1 and TL (neither predominant), L2 (entirely TL) and L2c (mostly TL with a word or phrase in the L1). Duff and Polio found greater variation than Guthrie, with teacher use of the TL ranging from 10 percent to 100 percent, and six of the thirteen teachers employing the TL 90 percent of the time or more. However, in reflecting on their study, Duff and Polio questioned their coding method, namely whether fifteen second sampling was reflective of ‘the actual quantity of English and the TL spoken in the classroom’ (p.
156). Duff and Polio concluded that variables such as departmental policy, lesson content, materials and formal teacher training may play a role in determining the amount of TL and L1 use.

Polio and Duff revisited their original study in 1994, using six of the original thirteen languages, to examine when teachers used the L1 as opposed to the TL and for what purpose. Teacher L1 utterances were coded based on function, the difficulty of the language being used and the interactive effect involving students’ use of English. The first category, *function of the utterance*, was used for administrative vocabulary, grammar instruction, classroom management, indexation of a stance of empathy/solidarity, and English practice by the teacher. *The difficulty of the language being used* was coded when translations were provided for unknown TL vocabulary and when the teacher tried to ‘remedy students’ apparent lack of comprehension’ (p. 317). The final category, *interactive effect involving students’ use of English*, was used when student responses in the L1 prompted the teacher to resort to the L1. Polio and Duff found that the most common use of the L1 was for isolated English words related to the academic context, eg. “review section”, “homework”. Polio and Duff were surprised by this finding, considering the high frequency of such words in the classroom, and the ease of learning these isolated words in the TL. The researchers also reported that the teachers in their study used English to varying degrees in grammatical explanations, using both isolated English words and entire phrases. They concluded that there needed to be some ‘consciousness-raising among teachers’ (p. 323) regarding their use of English in the FL classroom.

Macaro (2001), in a similar study to that of Duff and Polio, investigated the L1 use of six student-teachers in secondary schools in England. The student-teachers took French lessons with students at a beginner’s level (1-3 years of TL study). Similar to Duff and Polio’s study, data was quantified on the basis of five-second-sampling of recordings. However, Macaro recorded significantly different results to those of Duff and Polio. Macaro found ‘comparatively low levels of L1 use by the student-teachers and little effect of the quantity of student-teacher L1 use on the quantity of L1 or L2 use by the learners’ (p. 531). Macaro reported an average of 4.8 percent of L1 use across the lessons ‘as a proportion of total lesson time and only (an average of) 6.9 percent ... as a proportion of total talk’ (p. 537). Macaro believed that quantifying his
data by the mean length of utterance or through a word count would have produced a higher amount of L1 use, however he defended his use of five-second-sampling as he felt it "better addressed the issue of time in (the) L1 taking away from time in [the TL]" (p. 537). Macaro concluded that students were exposed to plenty of the TL by the student-teachers and that any instances of recourse to the L1 "were very short" and mostly in relation to "procedural instructions for activities" (pp. 544-545).

Also influenced by the work of Polio and Duff, Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie (2002) examined use of the L1 by four teachers (two native speakers and two non-native speakers) of first semester, university-level, beginner's French. Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie conducted a one-off recording of the four FL classes, from which they provided both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The researchers used word counts for the quantitative analysis, while the qualitative analysis involved looking at instances of codeswitching by the teacher which were transcribed and categorised according to their function. The categories used were based on those of Polio and Duff, but were varied slightly. The three categories created by Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie were translation (switching from the TL to the L1 to make input comprehensible), metalinguistic uses (switching from talking in the TL to talking about the TL in the L1), and communicative uses (switching from talking in the TL to talking in the L1 for communicative purposes). The researchers found that, while the teachers used all the categories to varying degrees, common to all teachers was the use of English for translation of vocabulary items, commenting on TL forms and/or culture, giving instructions, and, ironically, motivating students to speak the TL. They also concluded that the status of teachers as either a native or non-native speaker "did not lead to a significant difference in [L1/TL] distribution" (p. 421). Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie further concluded that the type of question raised by students may determine whether or not the teacher can avoid using the L1; "when a student asks for a translation, the teacher has little choice but to switch to [L1] to give the translation…but a request on forms may trigger either the use of [L1] or the use of [TL]" (p. 418).

Taylor (2002) conducted a qualitative study on use of the L1 in a university-level computer-assisted beginner’s French class. With classes taking place in computer labs, and with computer-use the main focus of the course, Taylor was interested to see how
the student-teacher interactions, and choice of language, were affected by the added element of technology in the classroom. Taylor investigated the social situations in which the L1 was used within the computer-assisted classroom, how use of the L1 differed between teachers and why the L1 was used. Taylor observed the classes of two native speaker French teachers (one male, one female) once a week over a two month period and found that the teachers displayed different patterns of language use. The male teacher was strongly guided by the development and maintenance of good social relationships with his students in his employment of the L1, whereas the female teacher preferred to keep more social distance from her students, using less L1 than the male teacher. Practical considerations also strongly influenced the teachers’ choice of language, particularly due to the technical environment in which the classes were held. Taylor noted that, while the female teacher wanted to give her lessons exclusively in the TL, technical problems with the computers forced her to switch to the L1 in order to help them and to avoid adding to the students’ frustrations. The male teacher also resorted to the L1 when faced with computer problems, mostly because that was what the students expected. Taylor concluded that the technical environment of the computer-assisted French classes was an obstacle in TL learning, as recourse to the L1 was often out of the teachers’ control and as a result of technical problems. Taylor did not report any changes in L1/TL distribution over the course of the observation period, however he did note the type of activity (and its relation to and reliance on the computer) as a determiner of L1 use; for example computer-related activities requiring students to navigate unfamiliar French websites.

Kraemer (2006) looked at the distribution of the L1 and TL among five teaching assistants (three of whom were native English speakers, one native German, and one a native of neither English nor German) in beginner’s German classes at the university level. Kraemer hypothesised that the native English teaching assistants would use more L1 than the non-native English assistants and that the use of the L1 could be attributed to specific functions. In quantifying the data, all occurrences of English by the teachers were transcribed and then classified according to categories based on those of Polio and Duff (1994). Kraemer found that the most common use of English ‘was for classroom management and administrative vocabulary’ (p. 441) followed by ‘the translation of individual words’ whereby teachers used a template such as “X means Y” (p. 442). Kraemer also found that the use of English was spread evenly
across the teachers, and that the L1 of teachers was not a factor in their use of English in the classroom.

Kim and Elder (2005) also aimed to explore the distribution of the L1 and TL in language teachers’ speech, by investigating seven native speaker teachers of four foreign languages (Japanese, Korean, French and German) at the beginner-level at secondary schools in New Zealand. The researchers observed and audio-recorded three lessons (of approximately an hour each) of each teacher. Kim and Elder used a coding scheme similar to that of Duff and Polio (1990) to determine the type of language used (L1, L1c, Mix, TL and TLc), and they also classified their data according to the goal of the interaction and its pedagogic function. Kim and Elder found that the teachers in their study ‘differed markedly from one another not only in the amount of TL used but also in the pedagogic functions they used most frequently and in the language (TL or English) they chose for these functions’ (p. 355). The use of the TL ranged from 23 percent for a Korean teacher to 88 percent for a French teacher, with ‘only three teachers…able to produce the majority of their…[lessons] in the TL’ (p. 368). Based on their results, Kim and Elder concluded that ‘being a native speaker of the TL (which all [their] teachers were) does not guarantee a high proportion of TL use’ (p. 375).

While they did not investigate it in their own study, Kim and Elder (2005) noted that an exploration of teacher’s attitudes towards TL use may shed some light on the distribution of TL and L1 use in the FL classroom. In addition to the classroom observations of their 1990 study, Duff and Polio investigated the attitudes of students and teachers through the use of questionnaires. One of their interesting results was the fear some teachers expressed ‘that if they spoke only the L2, students would not comprehend important information (eg. exam particulars, key grammar points)’ (p. 162).

Franklin (1990) surveyed the attitudes of 201 secondary school French teachers in Scotland (of whom only six were native speakers of French) in order to determine ‘why teachers find it so difficult to employ French as the medium of instruction’ in FL classes (p. 20). Franklin found that while 90 percent of the respondents recognised the importance of teaching in the TL, certain classroom management tasks posed
difficulty in doing this. Based on the responses from the surveys, Franklin composed a hierarchy of difficulty for classroom management tasks. The respondents felt that organising the classroom and giving activity instructions were relatively easy tasks to carry out in the TL, however disciplining, running tests, correcting written work and explaining meaning proved more difficult to do in the TL. The most difficult, according to the teachers surveyed by Franklin, were discussing language objectives and teaching grammar. Franklin did not investigate nor report any differences in attitude between the native and non-native speaker teachers.

Crawford (2004) also conducted a large scale investigation of language teachers’ views on use of the TL. Crawford surveyed 581 Australian high school language teachers of Japanese, German, French, Indonesian, Chinese, Italian and Korean, with 77 percent of respondents being non-native speakers of their respective languages. Crawford reported that while teachers had reservations about using the TL in lower level classes, these reservations declined in the upper years, or intermediate level. Some of the teachers in Crawford’s survey also expressed concern that current teaching practices were not maximising students’ exposure to the TL nor were they setting up expectations of success in language learning. Crawford concluded that ‘teacher beliefs about the purpose of the program may be a key factor in their attitude to language use’ with teachers whose primary concern was communicative TL acquisition ‘significantly more likely to support use of the TL’ (p. 17).

Whereas past attitudinal studies investigated the attitudes of teachers (and some of teachers and students), Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) wanted to investigate solely the views of students; ‘which functional uses do they attribute to the L1 and the TL (and) do they prefer…interactions to be performed in the L1 or in the TL?’ (p. 255). Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney surveyed 52 students enrolled in three beginner classes halfway through their first semester of French study at an Australian university. The teaching context in which the students were involved was noted to be one in which ‘L1 use was minimized’ (p. 257). The questionnaire sent to students contained 21 belief statements for students to rate as well as two open-ended questions. For the most part, the students surveyed by Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney held negative views towards the use of the L1 in the FL classroom, attributing such drawbacks as ‘lack of exposure to TL, an overuse of L1, and a dependence on the L1’ (p. 260) as well as
‘[rendering] learning too easy and [reducing] concentration’ (p. 265). Most participants related use of the TL with a positive learning environment, with 65 percent ‘strongly agree(ing) or agree(ing) that instructions should be given in the TL’ (p. 260).

The most recent survey of students’ attitudes towards L1 use in the FL classroom was conducted by Brooks-Lewis (2009). Differing from all of the other studies mentioned thus far, Brooks-Lewis’ study investigated the attitudes of university-level Mexican learners of English towards the inclusion of their L1 (Spanish) in the classroom. Students were asked to maintain language learning diaries, write an essay about their learning experience at the end of their course of study and answer a questionnaire about the incorporation of the L1 in the FL classroom. Brooks-Lewis found an overall positive attitude towards not only the inclusion, but also the incorporation, of the L1 in the FL classroom. Brooks-Lewis concluded that the L1 can be used as a resource in FL teaching to promote student confidence in the classroom and to make ‘learning meaningful and easier’ (p. 234).

The empirical studies to date have provided a basis for further research into the distribution of the TL and L1 in the FL classroom. The researchers discussed above have noted the need for further investigation into this issue, particularly into the factors prompting teachers to use the L1 (Macaro, 2001; Turnbull, 2001). While many of the previous studies have been one-off observations of teaching practices, Polio and Duff (1994) suggest that longitudinal studies take place in future research to examine ‘the effect of language choice over time’ (p. 324). Another area cited by researchers as of importance in future research is the relationship between teachers’ language choice and student proficiency (Krashen, 1985; Turnbull, 2001).

The present study

The present study aims to address some of the suggestions from previous researchers. Since the seminal work of Duff and Polio (1990), there have been a number of studies into the distribution of TL and L1 use in FL classrooms. However, studies which have investigated university-level FL classes have mostly been at the beginner level of FL study, where students have little to no prior knowledge of the TL (see Duff & Polio,
1990, 1994; Guthrie, 1987; Kim & Elder, 2005; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002; Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008; Taylor, 2002). Further, few studies, apart from that of Taylor (2002), have taken a longitudinal approach to investigating teachers’ use of the TL and L1 in order to examine what, if any, changes occur in teachers’ speech over the duration of a semester or longer. Kraemer (2006) notes that a longitudinal study, as opposed to one-off observations, would be beneficial in order to ‘prevent unnatural teaching style and thus offer broader insights’ in FL teaching practices (p. 448); teacher behaviour might be influenced by an awareness of being observed, but over time this awareness and self-consciousness may decline or disappear entirely.

The present study, building on the body of research already in existence, intends to further explore use of the L1 (English) in the university-level FL classroom. The present study aims to investigate teachers’ use of the L1 over the course of a semester, focusing on FL classes at the intermediate level and with both native and non-native speaking teachers. It is hoped that a more longitudinal study than that of previous research may provide a greater understanding of what transpires in the FL classroom and how, if at all, use of the L1 changes over time. The present study also intends to elicit both student and teacher attitudes towards L1 use, whereas past studies have tended to report one or the other (or neither).

**Research Questions**

The proposed study sets out to answer the following questions:

I. How much L1 is used in the FL classroom?

II. For what rhetorical functions, purpose and audience is the L1 used?

III. Does teachers’ use of the L1 change over time?

IV. What are the teachers’ and students’ perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of the L1 in the FL classroom?
Chapter 3: The Study

The following chapter will discuss the participants and data collection processes in the present study.

Participants

The two participating classes in this study were at the intermediate level of French study at two Australian universities. One class was taken by a native French speaker (NS) while the other class was taken by a non-native French speaker (NNS). Class sizes varied, with 17 students in the NS teacher’s class and 21 students in the NNS teacher’s class. The two classes were comprised of students from different French language learning backgrounds as the two universities had different entry criteria for language study. Entry into an intermediate-level of language study for students at the university with the NS teacher requires either a year of beginner’s French at university, high school French up until year 10, or VCE French with a study score of 33 or less\(^1\). Students at this university can study French as an elective, a major or as a concurrent diploma to their Bachelor degree. Entry into intermediate French at the NNS teacher’s university requires a minimum of one year of beginner’s French at university. Unlike the university of the NS teacher, the NNS teacher’s university does not have an upper-level cut-off point for students wishing to enrol in the intermediate French course; in fact, even native speakers of French were accepted, such was the need for enrolments in the course. The NNS teacher’s class, therefore, is more heterogeneous than that of the NS teacher’s class in terms of TL proficiency. At present, students at this university can only take French as an elective; however, plans are underway for students to be able to complete a major or a concurrent diploma in French in the future. The students in both classes were from a range of L1 backgrounds; however the language shared by all students and teachers (apart from the TL) was English.

The NS teacher holds a BA from a university in France, and a Diploma in Education and Masters in Applied Linguistics from an Australian university. Prior to teaching the present course, the NS teacher worked in the secondary school sector in Australia,

\(^1\) Each subject in the Victorian Certificate of Education is graded out of 50 (called a “study score”). Some language subjects at VCE level are marked up due to their perceived difficulty. A study score of 33 or less (after marking up) indicates an average performance.
teaching French and working in the Department of Education. At the university-level, the NS teacher has mainly taught intermediate and advanced level students.

The NNS teacher originally comes from England, where she learnt French as a foreign language from primary school through to the end of secondary school. Following this, she spent 10 years working in various jobs in Luxembourg, and a further year in Belgium, where the majority of her work and daily life was conducted in French. The NNS teacher moved to Australia in the mid-1990s and commenced a Bachelor of Arts, during which time she taught English as a second language and worked as a replacement teacher for French classes. The NNS teacher went on to complete a Masters and PHD in Linguistics, and has been teaching French at university since 2004. At the university-level, the NNS teacher has taught predominantly beginner and intermediate students.

Data Collection

The data in the present study comes predominantly from classroom observations and recordings conducted by the researcher and is supplemented with teacher interviews and student questionnaires. Prior to the data collection process, an application was made (and approved) for ethics clearance. For the plain language statements and participant consent form, see appendices 1, 2 and 3.

Observations and classroom data:

Classes were observed and audio-recorded on four occasions throughout the observation period (one semester). Both universities follow a twelve-week semester, and classroom observations took place in weeks 3, 4, 7 and 12 for the NNS teacher’s class and weeks 4, 5, 7 and 12 for the NS teacher’s class. The NNS teacher’s class ran once a week for three hours, during which time a variety of content was covered such as grammar, cultural discussions and aural activities. As a result of the variety of content and activities, the NNS teacher’s lecture style was quite interactive. Class tasks included oral dictations (both teacher- and student-led) and comprehension and grammar questions, with a combination of individual, pair and group work. Due to the length of the NNS teacher’s classes, the researcher observed approximately 1.5 hours
of each lesson. The course textbook used in the NNS teacher’s class was *Personnages* (Oates, 2003), a textbook containing both English and French. The NS teacher’s class was held twice a week, with a one-hour cultural discussion class and a two-hour grammar based class. The NS teacher’s class used a textbook and student workbook called *Interaction* (St. Onge, 2007); the textbook contained both French and English while the student workbook was entirely in French. Due to timetabling issues, the researcher was unable to attend the NS teacher’s grammar-based class. Therefore, four observations were conducted of the NS teacher’s cultural discussion class, each of an hour’s duration. Tasks conducted in these classes were mainly comprehension activities discussed in pairs and reported back to the whole class and direct teacher-students lecturing. In week 12, the NS teacher agreed to audio-record one of her grammar-based classes on the researcher’s behalf in order to provide a comparison between the grammar-based and cultural discussion classes. In total, data was collected for five of the NS teacher’s lessons and four of the NNS teacher, resulting in just over 10 hours worth of audio-recordings.

**Teacher Interviews:**

Interviews were conducted with the teachers after the observation period had ended and the researcher had coded and analysed the data, as it was hoped that this would better inform the researcher when asking questions. Teacher interviews followed a semi-structured format, based on questions used in teacher interviews by Duff and Polio (1990) and Kraemer (2006). The interview schedule covered the teachers’ educational and teaching background, their attitudes towards, and self-perceptions of, use of the L1, and a brief discussion of departmental guidelines regarding choice of language in the FL classroom (for interview questions, see Appendix 4). The teacher interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each, and were audio-recorded and later transcribed.

**Student Questionnaires:**

All students were given questionnaires at the beginning (see Appendix 5) and end of the observation period (see Appendix 6). Both questionnaires were based on, and modified from, Duff and Polio (1990). The first questionnaire asked students general
questions about their background and their reasons for taking the class, while the second questionnaire asked students to reflect on the semester and indicate how often they believed their teacher used the L1 and their attitudes towards such usage. All students in both classes completed the first questionnaire, and the second questionnaire was completed by all 21 students in the NNS teacher’s class and 16 of the 17 students in the NS teacher’s class.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The following chapter will discuss the processes of data analysis in the present study. The chapter will describe the transcription and coding of classroom recordings, the quantification of L1 use and the calculation of inter- and intra-rater reliabilities on the coding of data.

Transcribing and coding classroom recordings

In transcribing the audio-recordings of the classes observed, a methodology similar to that of Kraemer (2006) was employed, whereby all instances of English use were transcribed (rather than the entire lessons). As the focus for this study was on teachers’ use of the L1 it was felt that this would best capture the data required, rather than the sampling technique used by Duff and Polio (1990) and Macaro (2001) which may not have captured all L1 turns, particularly those of the NS teacher (which were found to be infrequent).

Quantifying L1 use

To quantify L1 use, turns containing L1 words were identified. L1 turns ranged in length from one word to 410 words (although turns of this length were rare). L1 turns, therefore, could contain a single sentence or a number of sentences. These were categorised according to the amount of the L1 within each L1 turn because, as Kraemer (2006) notes, ‘merely counting instances of English does not say anything about the actual length of each occurrence’ (p. 444). Similar to the coding scheme used by Duff and Polio (1990) and Kim and Elder (2005) and influenced by the work of Storch and Aldosari (forthcoming), turns were classified as either wholly, predominantly, or partially in the L1. Note that in all examples, the TL used by the teacher appears in italics, L1 use is indicated in bold, and translations appear in square brackets either immediately after use of the TL or in an adjacent column when TL use is particularly long.
Turns entirely in the L1 were classified as wholly L1 turns, as in example 1 below:

Example 1. A wholly L1 turn

41 T : Ok, who got totally confused with this homework? Ok, was it the first part that confused you, or the second part?  
- NNS Lesson 1

Turns with more L1 words than TL words were coded as predominantly L1 turns. In turn 57 of example 2 below, there were more L1 words (21) than TL words (6).

Example 2. A predominantly L1 turn

55 T : Neuf cente et demi. [Nine and a half percent.]
56 S: Percente? [Percent?]
57 T : Et demi. [And a half.] So it’s, we, in English we’d say nine and a half percent, in French you say nine percent and a half. Neuf percente et demi. [Nine and a half percent.]
- NNS Lesson 2

Finally, turns with either an equal number of TL and L1 words or more TL words than L1 words were classified as partially L1 turns, as in example 3 where there were more TL words (14) than L1 words (8).

Example 3. A partially L1 turn

142 T : Oui, parce que c’est d’habitude, d’accord? [Yes, because it’s something habitual, ok?] It’s, it’s c’est une habitude [it’s something habitual], it’s something that keeps repeating itself, d’accord? Donc [inaudible] est habitude, continue…[ok? So it’s habitual, continue…]
- NS Lesson 5

Rhetorical functions of L1 use

All L1 turns (regardless of whether they were wholly, predominantly or partially in the L1) were also coded for their rhetorical function. The coding categories used in the present study were based on those of Polio and Duff (1994), Kraemer (2006) and Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie (2002) but modified slightly to suit the present context. When coding L1 turns for rhetorical function, the following six categories were
identified: question, repetition (self- and other-), feedback (corrective and positive), translation, explanation and imperative.

**Question**
This category includes direct questions, rhetorical questions, statements with a rising intonation and comprehension checks (eg. "ok?"). In turn 133 of example 4, below, the L1 is used to ask a direct question.

Example 4. L1 use for the rhetorical function of asking a question

133  **T**: Donc j’avais lassé mon passeport dans le tiroir de mon bureau comme d’habitude et quand j’ai commencé, oui ça c’est marche, et quand j’ai commencé a faire mes valises je...et quand j’ai commencé a faire mes valises je le...chercher partout, *is that what you said?*

134  **S**: Ah yeah, *to look for*

135  **T**: Je l’ai cherché partout. Oui, ça marche. [So I had left my passport in the drawer of my desk like I normally do and when I had started, yes that works, and when I had started to pack my suitcases I…and when I started to pack my suitcases I looked for them everywhere.]

**Repetition (self- and other-)**
The category repetition includes L1 use for both self- and other-repetition. L1 turns are coded for self-repetition when the teacher repeats, in the L1, something which students should have understood in the TL to provide emphasis or clarification (this differs from translation where students are not expected to have understood the original TL message). In example 5, below, the NNS teacher gives a student an instruction in the TL, which she follows up with a comprehension check ("d’accord?"). Perceiving that the student may need further clarification, the teacher repeats herself in the L1 to ensure comprehension.

---

- NS Lesson 5
Example 5. L1 use for the rhetorical function of self-repetition

T: Ok, alors, Harry vas-y et je t’écoute, je corrige ta prononciation, d’accord? [Ok, so, Harry go ahead and read. I’ll listen to you and correct your pronunciation, ok?] *You read it and I’ll just check your pronunciation as you read it the first time.*

- NNS Lesson 4

L1 turns are coded for other-repetition when the teacher repeats a student’s use of the L1. Example 6 shows the NNS teacher using the L1 for other-repetition, as she repeats (in turn 65) an L1 word used by the student in the immediately preceding turn (perhaps to confirm that the student has the right word):

Example 6. L1 use for the rhetorical function of other-repetition

S: *What is montagne? [Mountain?]*

T: *Mountain. What do you think? Do you remember the text?*

- NNS Lesson 2

Feedback (positive and corrective)

L1 turns are coded for feedback when teachers use the L1 to confirm student’s work (positive feedback) or to indicate an incorrect answer and provide correction (corrective feedback). Turn 153 in example 7 below was coded as giving positive feedback:

Example 7. L1 use for the rhetorical function of positive feedback

S: *Je suis (inaudible) [I am]*


S: *Is that right?*

T: *Yeah it is!*

- NS Lesson 5
In contrast, turn 8 in example 8 was coded as providing corrective feedback:

Example 8. L1 use for the rhetorical function of corrective feedback

6  
T : Ok, on va commencer avec la question la plus facile. Oui, Aileen. [Ok, we’re going to start with the easiest question. Yes, Aileen]

7  
S :  The first one, is it Jacques Chirac?

8  
T : The first one is not Jacques Chirac. And the second one is not Jacques Chirac. Jacques Chirac n’est pas sur le tableau. [Jacques Chirac isn’t on the board]

- NNS Lesson 1

Translation

L1 turns are coded for translation when the teacher uses the L1 due to a perceived lack of student understanding resulting from unfamiliar vocabulary or peculiar TL phrasing. Translation differs from self-repetition in that the TL phrase or vocabulary item being translated into the L1 is perceived as unfamiliar to students, whereas self-repetition repeats, in the L1, something which students should understand in the TL to provide emphasis. Example 9 shows the NNS teacher providing an immediate translation for a TL phrase which, perhaps, she perceives the students will not understand. The NNS teacher provides the translation of the phrase and then reverts back to the TL to explain this particular point of French punctuation.

Example 9. L1 use for the rhetorical function of providing a translation

4  
(dictation)

Prochaine question, qui a dit...qui a dit, ouvrez les guillemets on dit. [Next question, who said...who said, open speech marks you say.] open speech marks, enfin en français c’est toujours comme ça. Ouvrez les guillemets et puis fermez les guillemets. [In French it’s always like that. Open speech marks and then close speech marks]

- NNS Lesson 1

Explanation

L1 turns are coded for the rhetorical function explanation when teachers use the L1 to talk about TL form, TL culture or the activities being conducted in class. In example 10 below, the NS teacher is discussing the past tenses in French with a student. She
switches into the L1 to provide a brief explanation of the difference between the simple past and the imperfect past tenses.

Example 10. L1 use for the rhetorical function of providing an explanation

149 T: Pensez à l’emploi du temps de passé, d’accord l’imparfait [Think about the use of the past tense, ok the imperfect tense] what you used to do, imperfect, what you did passé composé, d’accord ? Essayez d’utiliser les temps du passé pour parler de votre expérience professionnelle de vos qualités etc. [past tense, ok ? Try and use the past tenses to talk about your professional experience and your personal qualities etc.]

- NS Lesson 5

**Imperative**

L1 turns which give orders are coded as providing imperatives. Example 11 shows the NNS teacher discussing grammatical sequencing of French with a student. In this example, the NNS teacher uses the L1 to give an imperative.

Example 11. L1 use for the rhetorical function of giving an imperative

112 S: *Do I say « J’aime le français beaucoup » [« I like French a lot»] or « j’aime beaucoup le français » ? [« I like, a lot, French » ?]
113 T: *J’aime beaucoup le français. Oui. [I like, a lot, French. Yes.] Peter just you explain that to him, s’il te plait [please], ’cause I can see yours is right.

- NNS Lesson 2

Long turns in which the L1 had more than one rhetorical function (eg. translation and self-repetition) were coded for both rhetorical functions. Example 12 shows an L1 turn coded for both translation (“at the same time”) and self-repetition (“so just worry about answering…”):
Example 12. Multiple rhetorical functions within an L1 turn

58  T: Avec votre partenaire, première chose. Trouvez le quiz et essayez de trouver les réponses au quiz; ok, d’abord. Après, vous pouvez me demander des questions en même temps, at the same time, translation

je vous...uh, vous me demander les questions de vocabulaire. D’accord ? [I, uh, you ask me questions about the vocabulary. Ok?]

So just worry about answering the quiz for now, and then I’ll answer vocab as it comes up while you’re looking for the answers, ok?

- NNS Lesson 2

Multiple occurrences of the same rhetorical function in a single turn were only counted once; turn 144 in example 13 shows use of the L1 to provide three explanations (“was it, was it doing outside”, “so, you’re used to talking about…”, “that’s just in the imperfect”) and two translations (“is outside”, “what was the weather like?”). Turn 144 was coded once for explanation and once for translation, despite multiple occurrences of both rhetorical functions throughout the L1 turn.

Example 13. Coding once for multiple occurrences of the same rhetorical function in L1 turns

142  T: Oui, quel temps. [Yes, what weather,] what weather

143  S: What weather? Oh, was it out?

144  T: Was it, was it doing outside. Dehors [Outside] is outside. So, you’re used to talking about the weather in the present tense. Quel temps fait-il? [What weather was it] That’s just in the imperfect. Quel temps faisait-il? [What weather was it] What was the weather like?

- NNS Lesson 2
Further, short turns of no more than one sentence in the L1 were only coded for one rhetorical function. In cases where the rhetorical function was difficult to determine, the turn was coded for what seemed the more predominant rhetorical function.

L1-related episodes

In order to gain an understanding of the context surrounding teachers’ use of the L1, all turns before and after such occurrences were also transcribed, forming “L1-related episodes”. An episode can contain one turn or a number of turns, and a number of occurrences of L1 use by the teachers. Episodes in the present data set ranged in length from 1 turn to 38 turns. The creation of L1-related episodes was used to code for purpose and audience of L1 turns as often a number of L1 turns were used for a single purpose, such as to provide explanations about grammar or vocabulary.

Example 14 shows an L1-related episode containing 4 turns, with the teacher’s turns (63 and 65) containing L1 use.

Example 14. An L1-related episode

62 S: What’s forêt?[forest ?]
63 T : Oui, forêt ? [Yes, forest ?] Forest. Alors Montréal doit son nom, [So Montreal owes its name,] it owes its name, ça c’est du verbe devoir, [that is from the verb “has to”] it owes its name to, une rivière, une petite montagne ou une forêt ? [a river, a small mountain or a forest?]
64 S: What is montagne ? [mountain ?] Mountain ?
65 T : Mountain. Qu’est-ce que vous pensez ? Vous vous rappelez le texte ? [What do you think ? Do you remember the text?]

-NNS Lesson 2

All L1-related episodes were coded for audience and purpose (the most salient in each case).

Purpose served by L1 use

Coding L1 episodes for purpose elicited the following five categories: grammar, vocabulary, task management, general classroom management/administration and other (which includes a number of purposes which occurred infrequently).
**Grammar**

Episodes which discuss TL grammar rules and how to construct particular grammatical constructions are coded for the purpose of grammar. Example 15 below shows the NS teacher using the L1 to discuss with a student the difference between the French simple past and imperfect past tenses.

Example 15. An L1-related episode with the purpose of discussing grammar

129  
S:  
(inaudible)

130  
T:  *Unless something else happened as you were going home and something else happened. Because that would be considered background.*

131  
S:  *So if it was just saying “when I (inaudible)”*

132  
T:  *No, so if it’s “as I was returning to (inaudible)” you know, something happened, then it would be background information. But if you just say [inaudible] that’s an action and that’s completed. Unless if they, if they uh have an adverb. Peut-être qu’il dit “souvent” [Maybe if it says “often”] or something like that suggests that it’s something you used to do a lot in the past. Est-ce que vous avez la même réponse? [Do you have the same answer?]

- NS Lesson 5

**Vocabulary**

Episodes which discuss TL vocabulary are coded for the purpose of vocabulary. In example 16, the NS teacher uses the L1 to discuss unfamiliar TL vocabulary with a student.

Example 16. An L1-related episode with the purpose of discussing vocabulary

102  
T:  *Un romancier c’est un écrivain qui écrit les romans. (inaudible). [A novelist is a writer who writes novels] A novelist.*

103  
S:  *student inaudible*

104  
T:  *Ah no, this doesn’t mean romance.*

105  
S:  *So it’s just who writes the books*

106  
T:  *Voilà, c’est ça. Donc il écrit des romans...[There you go, that’s it. So they write novels]*

- NS Lesson 4

36
**Task Management**

L1-related episodes are coded for the purpose of *task management* when the teachers use the L1 in relation to the task at hand. In example 17, the NNS teacher checks students comprehension of the task in the TL (line 110 “ça va?” [“how’s it going?”]) and gives students their next activity (to look at the board and determine the standard French version of certain French-Canadian expressions).

**Example 17. An L1-related episode for task management purposes**

110  **T:** Ça va?  [How’s it going?]
111  **S:** Ça va.  [It’s going well.]
112  **T:** Did you…oui? C’est juste? Oui, c’est juste. Regarde le tableau parce qu’il y a d’autres expressions québecoises [yes? It’s right? Yes, it’s right. Look at the board because there are some other Quebec expressions.] Can you guess what they are in standard French? What would you normally say for them?

- NNS Lesson 2

**General Classroom Management/Administration**

Episodes which discuss classroom organisation, behaviour management and homework (among other administrative matters) are coded for the purpose of *general classroom management/administration*. Example 18 shows the NS teacher giving students their homework. In this example, the L1 is used to provide clarification of the homework task.

**Example 18. An L1-related episode for general classroom management/administration purposes**

113  **T:** Le siècle des lumières c’est le dix-huitième siècle, c’est le siècle où il y avait progrès  [The enlightenment is the 18th century, it’s the century where there was progress]
114  **S:** Can I please not do that...
115  **T:** Ah, it’s not the whole century mais c’est juste les grandes tendances, les grandes tendances.  [but it’s just the main ideas, the main ideas]

- NS Lesson 4
**Other**

This category includes a number of purposes which occurred infrequently. Episodes which discuss cultural points, demonstrate interpersonal communication between teachers and students, or show an awareness of the presence of the researcher in the classroom are coded for other purposes.

**Audience of L1 use**

When coding for audience, four different types of audience were identified: whole class, large group (of low, high or mixed ability), student(s) public and student(s) private. Coding for audience was based on classroom recordings and observation notes.

**Whole Class**

This category was used for L1 episodes in which teachers spoke to all of the students and the messages teachers conveyed were intended for all students to hear.

**Large Group (low ability; high ability; mixed ability)**

Coding for this audience arose as the NNS teacher occasionally divided her class into groups based either on ability or due to other factors, depending on the task. Coding for this audience did not apply to the NS teacher’s class.

**Student(s) Public**

Coding of L1 episodes for this audience occurred when teachers spoke to one, or two, students in front of a large group or the whole class. This audience differs from the whole class category as the teacher is specifically addressing particular students, except she is doing so in an ‘open forum’ in front of all students.

**Student(s) Private**

In contrast to student(s) public, L1 episodes were coded for this audience when teachers spoke to individual and pairs of students in a more private manner. Typically this involved the teacher talking to students at their desks rather than talking to them from the front of the classroom and in the hearing of the whole class.
Reliability of coding

Another Honours student in the Department of Linguistics was asked to code a portion of the data (one lesson from each teacher) to determine the inter-rater reliability of coding. Discussion with the fellow Honours student led to a further refinement of the coding categories of purpose and rhetorical function; task management was not in the initial coding scheme proposed by the researcher but was added to distinguish L1 episodes related specifically to lesson tasks as opposed to those related to TL grammar and vocabulary more generally.

Dividing the total number of agreements by the total number of coded items produced the following inter-rater reliabilities: 75% for rhetorical function and 83% for purpose of the NS teacher data and 76% for rhetorical function and 90% for purpose of the NNS teacher data. Further, a portion of the data was re-coded by the researcher one month after the first coding, resulting in an intra-rater reliability of 83% for rhetorical function and 80% for purpose of the NS teacher data and 93% for rhetorical function and 84% for purpose of the NNS teacher data. The relatively high inter- and intra-rater reliability scores gave the researcher confidence that the coding categories (and original coding) were adequately reliable.

Data obtained from the teacher interviews and student questionnaires were summarised as follows: the transcripts of the teacher interviews were coded by salient themes which emerged, while student answers to selected-response questions were counted for frequency and short answer questions were coded by salient themes.
Chapter 5: Findings

The following chapter will discuss the findings of the present study. First, the findings of the amount of L1 use will be presented, showing the types of L1 turns displayed by both teachers, the length of teachers’ wholly L1 turns, and the rhetorical function of all of both teachers’ L1 turns. Second, the findings of the purpose of L1 episodes will be presented, showing the main purposes of L1 episodes for both teachers overall and the distribution of each purpose across all of each teachers’ lessons. Third, the findings of the audience of L1 episodes will be presented, showing the main audience of L1 episodes for both teachers overall and the distribution of each audience across all of each teachers’ lessons. Finally, this chapter will present the findings of the teacher interviews and student questionnaires. Note that in the figures presented in this chapter frequencies of coding categories have been converted into percentages in order to show categories in relation to one another.

Amount of L1 use for both teachers

Use of the L1 differed markedly between the NS teacher and the NNS teacher. Table 1 below shows the number of L1 turns for both teachers across the observation period. Because the total number of lessons observed was not equal, the average number of L1 turns per teacher is also given.

Table 1. Number of L1 turns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>NS class</th>
<th>NNS class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total L1 turns</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average L1 turns</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the outset, it is clear that the NNS teacher had more L1 turns than the NS teacher. Overall, the NNS teacher had five times the amount of L1 turns than the NS teacher and, on average, seven times the number of L1 turns per lesson. It should also be noted that this is even with an extra lesson from the NS teacher.
**NS teacher**

Figure 1 below shows the total number of L1 turns across the NS teacher’s five lessons.

Figure 1. Number of L1 turns per lesson (NS)

![Graph showing the number of L1 turns per lesson (NS)](image)

Figure 1 shows that the NS teacher’s amount of L1 turns increased from 4 turns in Lesson 1 to over 10 turns in subsequent lessons, apart from Lesson 3, an outlier.

The NS teacher’s L1 turns were further classified according to the amount of L1 use in each turn. Table 2 shows the L1 turns of the NS teacher categorised as either *wholly*, *predominantly* or *partially* in the L1.

Table 2. Breakdown of L1 turns for the NS teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Turns wholly in L1</th>
<th>Turns predominantly in L1</th>
<th>Turns partially in L1</th>
<th>Total L1 turns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2 shows, in more detail, the distribution of L1 turns *wholly, predominantly* and *partially* in the L1 across the NS teacher’s five lessons.

![Type of L1 turns (NS teacher)](image)

As Table 2 shows, the majority of the NS teacher’s L1 turns were *partially* in the L1 (85% in total). Figure 2 shows that this usage remained fairly steady across the observation period, only decreasing in Lessons 4 and 5 where there was a slight increase in turns *wholly* and *predominantly* in the L1. Many of the NS teacher’s turns *partially* in the L1 contained single L1 words, as shown in examples 19 and 20:

**Example 19. L1 turn *partially* in the L1**

8 **S:** *Leave*

9 **T:** *Leave, d’accord. Donc, quittent Paris, uh pardon, quittent la campagne, leur province natale pour s’installer dans la capitale. Donc, pour s’installer à Paris.*

[ok. So, leave Paris, uh sorry, leave the countryside, their place of birth to move to the capital city. So, they move to Paris]

- NS Lesson 1
Example 20. L1 turn partially in the L1

57 T: Camerón, tu as écrit au travail pour demain?
[Cameron, have you written the homework for tomorrow?]
58 S: Ah, oh I’ve already written it.
59 T: Alors, comment dis ça “already”? 
[So, how do we say that, “already”?
60 S: Déjà 
[Already]
61 T: Je l’ai déjà écrit. Tu es très efficace!
[I have already written it. You are very efficient!]

- NS Lesson 2

While the majority of the NS teacher’s L1 turns were partially in the L1, it is worth examining closer the NS teacher’s turns wholly in the L1; specifically, the length and rhetorical functions of this type of L1 turn. Figure 3 shows the length of rhetorical functions of the NS teacher’s turns wholly in the L1, and Figure 4 shows the rhetorical functions of these turns.

Figure 3. Length of wholly L1 turns

![Graph showing length of wholly L1 turns](image)

The NS teacher had wholly L1 turns in Lessons 2, 4 and 5 (see Table 2) with the greatest number of such turns occurring in Lesson 4, where there were 3. Figure 3 shows that the NS teacher’s longest wholly L1 turn occurred in Lesson 5 (the grammar-based lesson) and contained 19 words. The average number of words in the NS teacher’s wholly L1 turns was 7.5.
Figure 4 shows that the NS teacher’s turns wholly in the L1 mainly served the rhetorical functions of asking a question (three instances in total across Lessons 2 and 4), providing feedback (two instances, one each in Lessons 4 and 5), and providing an explanation (one instance in Lesson 5).

Figure 5 below summarises the rhetorical functions of all L1 turns by the NS teacher.

Figure 5 shows that, overall, the NS teacher’s L1 turns predominantly served the rhetorical function of providing an explanation (32.65%) followed by repetition.
(26.53%) and asking a question (18.37%). The only rhetorical function category not used by the NS teacher was imperative.

Figure 6 below further examines the rhetorical function of all L1 turns by the NS teacher, showing the distribution of rhetorical functions across the five lessons. Note that the frequency of L1 turns (on the Y axis) have been converted into percentages of the total number of L1 turns in each lesson.

Figure 6. Rhetorical function of L1 turns (NS)

For the NS teacher, use of the L1 for repetition declined significantly across the observation period from 67% of all L1 turns in Lesson 1 to 8% of all L1 turns in Lesson 5. L1 use for translation also declined across the observation period, from 33% in Lesson 1 to 18% in Lesson 4 and 0% in Lesson 5. Use of the L1 increased across the five lessons to provide explanations and to ask questions. Any patterns shown in Figure 6, it must be noted, are skewed by the presence of an outlier, Lesson 3. Table 3 shows the raw frequencies of the rhetorical functions of the NS teacher’s L1 turns across the five lessons.
Table 3. Raw frequencies of rhetorical function of L1 turns (NS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Repetition</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NNS teacher**

Figure 7 below shows the total number of L1 turns across the NNS teacher’s four lessons.

Figure 7. Number of L1 turns per lesson (NNS)

Figure 7 shows a peak in the NNS teacher’s number of L1 turns in Lesson 2 (87 turns). Her number of L1 turns remains stable in Lesson 3 before declining in the final lesson.

The NS teacher’s L1 turns were further classified according to the amount of L1 use in each turn. Table 4 shows the L1 turns of the NNS teacher categorised as either *wholly, predominantly or partially* in the L1 and Figure 8 shows the distribution of these types of turns across the NNS teacher’s four lessons.
Across the observation period (and summarised in Table 4 and Figure 8), most of the NNS teacher’s L1 turns were predominantly in the L1; this remained fairly stable across the four lessons. However, it is worth examining closer the NNS teacher’s turns wholly in the L1; specifically, the length and rhetorical functions of this type of L1 turn. Figure 9 shows the length of the NNS teacher’s turns wholly in the L1.
Figure 9. Length of turns wholly in the L1 (NNS)

![Length of wholly L1 turns (NNS)](image)

The NNS teacher had *wholly* L1 turns in all four lessons. As Table 4 shows, the greatest number of wholly L1 turns occurred in Lesson 4, where there were 18. Figure 9 shows that the NNS teacher’s longest wholly L1 turn occurred in Lesson 3 and contained 55 words. The average number of words in the NNS teacher’s wholly L1 turns was 13 (almost double the NS teacher’s average of 7.5 words). Figure 10 below shows the rhetorical functions of the NNS teacher’s wholly L1 turns.

Figure 10. Rhetorical function of turns *wholly* in the L1 (NNS)

![Rhetorical function of turns wholly in the L1 (NNS)](image)
Figure 10 shows that the majority of the NNS teacher’s L1 turns wholly in the L1 (47%) serve the rhetorical function of providing an explanation; the second most-used rhetorical function in wholly L1 turns was asking a question (26%).

Figure 11 below summarises the rhetorical functions of all L1 turns by the NNS teacher.

Figure 11. Rhetorical function of all L1 turns (NNS)

Figure 11 shows that the NNS teacher’s L1 turns serve all of the rhetorical functions; predominantly the provision of explanations (36.05%), followed by asking questions (18.81%) and the provision of translations (15.04%).

Figure 12 below further examines the rhetorical function of all L1 turns by the NNS teacher, showing the distribution of rhetorical functions across the five lessons. Note that the frequency of L1 turns (on the Y axis) have been converted into percentages of the total number of L1 turns in each lesson.
Figure 12. Rhetorical function of L1 use (NNS)

Figure 12 shows that, across the observation period, the NNS teacher increasingly used the L1 to provide *explanations* (with a slight decrease only in Lesson 2). L1 use for *repetition* also increased across the four lessons. Use of the L1 to ask *questions* fluctuated over the first two lessons before increasing and remaining stable in Lessons 3 and 4. The NNS teacher’s use of the L1 to provide *translations* peaked in Lesson 2 but declined thereafter, while L1 use for *feedback* and *imperative* fluctuated slightly across the observation period.

Further, Table 5 shows the raw frequencies of the rhetorical functions of the NNS teacher’s L1 turns across the four lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Repetition</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
L1 episodes

Table 6 below shows the number of L1 episodes for both teachers across the observation period. Because the total number of lessons observed was not equal, the average number of L1 episodes per teacher is also given.

Table 6. Number of L1 episodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>NS class</th>
<th>NNS class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total L1 episodes</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average L1 episodes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS teacher

Purpose of L1 use

Figure 13 shows the distribution of purposes for all of the NS teacher’s L1 episodes.

Figure 13. Purpose of L1 episodes (NS)
Across the observation period, the NS teacher used the L1 predominantly for the purpose of talking about **vocabulary** (33%), followed by **task management** (21%). **Grammar** was the purpose of the least L1 episodes (10%) however this may be due to the presence of only one grammar-based class (Lesson 5).

Figure 14 shows the NS teacher’s distribution of L1 episodes coded for purpose across the observation period.

Across the observation period, the NS teacher’s L1 episodes most commonly discussed **vocabulary** (31% of the total number of L1 episodes). However, while the L1 was used predominantly for **vocabulary** purposes in the first two lessons, there was an increase in the NS teacher’s use of the L1 for other purposes from Lesson 3 onwards. In particular, L1 use for **task management** increased from Lesson 3 onwards, while L1 use for **general classroom management/administration** increased in Lessons 4 and 5. **Grammar**-related L1 use peaked in lesson five, as to be expected, due to the grammar focus of that class.
Audience of L1 use

The NS teacher addressed three audiences throughout the observation period; the whole class, student(s) public and student(s) private. Figure 15 shows the distribution of audiences for all of the NS teacher’s L1 episodes.

Figure 15. Audience of L1 episodes (NS)

Figure 15 shows that, when using the L1, the NS teacher mostly addressed the whole class; 26 out of the 39 L1-related episodes were addressed to this audience (67%). L1 episodes were less frequently addressed to student(s) public and student(s) private (20% and 13% of all L1 episodes respectively).

Figure 16 shows the NS teacher’s distribution of L1 use for the three audiences across the observation period.
Figure 16 shows that, when using the L1, the NS teacher predominantly addressed the whole class, although there was not a positive linear relation for this category over the duration of the observation period. Use of the L1 to address students in public increased until lesson 3, after which time it decreased. This coincided with an increase in the amount of L1 use addressed to students in private from lesson 4 onwards. In Lesson 5, this may be due to the grammar activities undertaken in class, as opposed to the cultural discussions of the previous four lessons.
**NNS teacher**

**Purpose of L1 use**

Figure 17 shows the distribution of purposes for all of the NNS teacher’s L1 episodes.

**Figure 17. Purpose of L1 episodes (NNS)**

![Purpose of L1 episodes (NNS)](image)

Figure 17 shows that the NNS teacher predominantly used the students’ L1 for **task management** (50%), followed by **vocabulary** (21.19%) and **grammar** (12.71%).

Figure 18 shows the NS teacher’s distribution of L1 episodes coded for purpose across the observation period.
The NNS teacher displayed an increase in use of the L1 across the observation period to discuss task management. Use of the L1 for this purpose declined slightly in Lesson 4, correlating with the overall decline in use of the L1 in this lesson by the NNS teacher. Use of the L1 for vocabulary purposes reached its peak in Lesson 2 and declined thereafter; similarly, use of the L1 coded as other (in this case an awareness of being observed) peaked in Lesson 1 and decreased thereafter. There was a gradual increase in L1 use for general classroom management/administration across the observation period, while use of the L1 for all other purposes fluctuated across the four lessons.

**Audience of L1 use**

The NNS teacher addressed four audiences throughout the observation period; the whole class, student(s) public, student(s) private and large groups of students (of either of low, high or mixed ability). Due to the flexible entry criteria for the NNS teacher’s class, the class was often divided into groups based on ability. Figure 19 shows the distribution of audiences for all of the NNS teacher’s L1 episodes.
As figure 19 shows, the NNS teacher used the students’ L1 predominantly when addressing students privately. Of the total 118 L1 episodes, an overwhelming 67 (56.78%) of these were addressed to students in private, followed distantly by the whole class with 28 L1 episodes (or 23.73%).

Figure 20 shows the NNS teacher’s distribution of L1 use for the four audiences across the observation period.
The NNS teacher predominantly used the L1 when addressing students in *private*; despite peaking in lesson two and decreasing from that point, the NNS teacher directed most of her L1 episodes to this audience. L1 episodes addressed to the *whole class* varied across the four lessons, while use of L1 to address students in *public* increased slightly over the four lessons. The NNS teacher did not group students together based on ability in every class, which may explain the decline in frequency in L1 episodes addressing a *large group*.

**Teachers’ and students’ perceptions and attitudes regarding use of the L1 (English) in the FL classroom**

**Teacher interviews**

The interviews conducted with both teachers after the observation period elicited their attitudes towards L1 use in the FL classroom. The salient points which emerged in the teacher interviews include the desired classroom environments of both teachers, their self-perceptions of L1 use, their attitude towards L1 use more generally in FL teaching, their perceptions of the influence of native-speaker status on language choice in the FL classroom, and their perceptions of student expectations of L1 and TL use.

**NS teacher**

Reflecting on her teaching practice and, in particular, the classes observed by the researcher, the NS teacher expressed a strong belief in using the target language as much as possible. The NS teacher expressed a desire to use the TL to create an authentic language environment for students and to make the most of the limited amount of time shared with students (three hours in total per week). Further, the NS teacher expressed a belief that students wanted to challenge themselves through TL exposure and that resorting to the students’ first language sends them a message that they may not be capable of understanding the teacher’s TL use:

‘[Students] find that this exchange with you is really authentic. And it’s almost the reason why they’re doing French. So if you take that away from them…it’s
also believing in their own ability, I mean, they might not understand everything but if you start speaking in English, what are you trying to tell them? They might not be up for it, so, oh well, what the heck.’

The NS teacher believes that she uses the L1 when something is particularly important, such as assignments and other administrative items, for certain grammar points which are difficult for students to grasp due to their subtlety (such as the difference between the two past tenses in French), and in personal communication with students either at the end of the class or via email. The NS teacher notes that she feels more comfortable speaking English with pairs of students;

(Interviewer): ‘So when you’re talking to pairs, if they speak French to you...’

(NS): ‘In pairs, I would probably because it’s more one on one. So I feel more comfortable to speak English with them because it’s helping them to deal with a particular aspect of whatever.’

In regards to the NS teacher’s attitude towards English usage in the French classroom more generally, she states that it depends on the individual teacher and the teaching environment. Further, the NS teacher does not think that the use of English in the French classroom is influenced by whether or not the teacher is a native speaker of the target language.

‘I know that even in French 1 (post-VCE, advanced) there were some tutors that said “oh I’ve got to speak English because they really can’t understand” so is it because they don’t use the right sort of language, is it because they expect too much of the students, is it because the students are really weak? You know what I mean?’

The NS teacher also notes that there is no official departmental policy at her university regarding the use of the students’ L1 in the FL classroom; again, this decision is left to individual teachers.
The NNS teacher notes that she has ‘no qualms about using French in the classroom at any level’, but that

‘I tend to still sometimes go into English because, not because I can’t explain it, but because I think we’ll waste so much time if the students can’t understand it. And I think that if I really, really, want them to understand a certain grammar point, asking them to also decode a whole load of content and vocab and terminology is just additional work which, you know, we can save that time and I can give them other things to do. We can get to the point more, it’s easier.’

For the NNS teacher, therefore, it’s not a question of whether she feels comfortable in French,

‘It’s whether I think [the students] will be or not.’

The NNS teacher notes that, while it is often a conscious decision to switch from talking in the TL to talking in the L1, she is now more aware of when she makes the switch and why. The NNS teacher believes that, above all, she uses English to create a welcoming classroom environment:

‘I crack stupid jokes, and I do it in English. ‘Cause if I do it in French no-one’s going to get it and then you think, well perhaps you could just leave it out anyway! But I think a big part of what I believe in the classroom is, first and foremost the class atmosphere. Because if there’s a good class atmosphere people get over being intimidated and they find it easier to learn if they feel comfortable with one another.

The NNS teacher further notes that she will often use the students’ L1 to check their comprehension, particularly when she’s saying something important:
'...it's just the added trauma of them trying to understand it in French and I want to know that they've understood it.'

The NNS teacher believes she mostly uses the L1 with 'students [she] perceive(s) have the most difficulty'. Further, the NNS teacher notes that there are many international students studying French at her university, many of whom have an Asian, character-based, first language, which quite often makes it difficult for students to understand the target language.

'...an English speaker would look at French and understand 25% of it, but international students, even though they speak English, they’ll look at something in French and even if they know the word in English they won’t make the connection, it’s really weird, because they’re going three ways.'

However, while the NNS teacher notes that she tries to make things easier for students who are having difficulty, she also perceives this to have

'a negative effect because the other students see me doing that and then they try to speak to me in English as well.'

Further, the NNS teacher believes that if she were a native French speaker she could simply pretend she didn’t speak English, however,

'if I say anything in English, and even my name, they know I'm not a native speaker (of French), so it's harder for me because they know I'm going to understand English.'

The NNS teacher also believes that avoidance of the L1 in her classroom is hindered by the presence of English in the course textbook. The NNS teacher notes that choice of textbook (and the language(s) of that book) is something she has discussed with her colleague. There is no departmental guideline at the NNS teacher’s university on use of the L1 in the FL classroom; decisions are left to individual teachers. The NNS teacher believes language choice in the FL classroom is an often debated issue which,
Student questionnaires

Of the 17 students in the NS teacher’s class, 16 completed the second questionnaire; all of these students indicated that their teacher used English very little (occasionally). Further, 14 students (87.5%) felt that this was adequate, indicating that they were happy with their teacher’s infrequent use of the L1. Ten students noted that they would like their teacher to use English when explaining French grammar or difficult concepts, such as philosophy. The majority of students in the NS teacher’s class (68.75%) indicated that, when their teacher spoke in French, they understood most of what she was saying; however, some students expressed difficulty in understanding new vocabulary or cultural discussion points when presented in French. Asked whether they would prefer a native or a non-native French-speaking teacher, twelve students expressed preference for a native speaker, one student preferred non-native, and three students had no preference.

All 21 students in the NNS teacher’s class completed the second questionnaire. Of these, four believed their teacher used English a lot, ten thought she used it some of the time, and seven students perceived English to be used very little in their classroom. An overwhelming majority of students (20, or 95%) would prefer the NNS teacher’s amount of L1 use to remain about the same; four of these students had also indicated in the first question that their teacher used a lot of English. Only one student would have liked the NNS teacher to use less English. Most of the students in the NNS teacher’s class (80.95%) understood all or most of their teacher’s speech in the TL, with some students citing this as a result of the NNS teacher’s clear manner of speaking. Five students expressed difficulty understanding unfamiliar vocabulary or task instructions when presented in French. In response to the question of whether they would prefer a native or a non-native French-speaking teacher, six students expressed no preference, while the remaining fifteen students preferred a non-native teacher due to reasons such as difficulty of understanding a native-speaker’s accent and the empathy expressed by non-native teachers in their understanding of difficult aspects of the language itself and the language learning process.
Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter will discuss the findings of the present study in relation to the research questions set out earlier in this paper. Discussions in this chapter will follow the order of the research questions, however RQ3 (Does teachers’ use of the L1 change over time?) will be mentioned throughout the chapter, subsequent to each of the following discussions: the amount of L1 use, the rhetorical function of L1 turns, and the purpose and audience of L1 episodes. The final part of this chapter will discuss the findings from the teacher interviews and student questionnaires.

Amount of L1 use

The results of the present study show the amount of L1 use by the two French teachers to vary greatly. Kraemer (2006) notes that ‘relatively little is known about the amount of teachers’ language use in the classroom when comparing native speakers of the foreign language with non-native speakers’ (p. 435). In the present study, the NNS teacher had five times the number of L1 turns than the NS teacher, almost nine times the amount of wholly L1 turns (53 to 6), and an average word length of wholly L1 turns almost double that of the NS teacher (13 words and 7.5 words respectively). However this may not necessarily be reflective of the native-speaker status of the teachers. While the present study found a large difference in the amount of L1 use by the NS and NNS teachers, other studies have found native-speaker status did not lead to any significant differences in L1 use (Kim & Elder, 2005; Kraemer, 2006; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002). As only two teachers were observed in the present study, there is not enough evidence to suggest that their native-speaker status was a factor in their language choices. Further, the two teachers in the present study expressed the opinion that use of the L1 is a personal choice rather than a result of native-speaker status:

(NS teacher)

’I know teachers who are French who would use English so I don’t know if it’s that much a simple equation really.’
Changes in amount of L1 use over time

The study found a moderate increase in L1 use by the NS teacher (despite the outlier Lesson 3) and a marked increase in L1 use by the NNS teacher in Lesson 2 (87 L1 turns compared to 27 L1 turns in Lesson 1) which remained fairly stable for the remainder of the observation period, decreasing slightly in Lesson 4. These patterns are interesting as they may suggest, firstly, that the NS teacher’s controlled language choices became more relaxed as the semester wore on, or perhaps, similar to the teachers in Taylor’s (2002) study, that the NS teacher wanted to reduce any social distance between herself and the students. Example 21 below, taken from Lesson 4 (the final week of semester), shows the teacher using the L1 to communicate with students on an interpersonal level (“I feel far away”).

Example 21. L1 use for interpersonal purpose (coded as “other”)

74 T : What’s with this table? Alors, Je me sens loin, [So, I feel far away] I feel far away. Alors, comment est-ce qu’on va faire...Bien alors, derniere semaine ! Où sont les élèves?! [So, what are we going to do...ok so, it’s the final week ! Where are all the students?!]

- NS Lesson 4

The L1 turn in example 21 occurred within minutes of the start of Lesson 4 and set the tone for the rest of the lesson, where the NS teacher recorded her highest number of L1 turns (16).

Contrary to the NS teacher’s pattern of L1 use, the NNS teacher showed a moderate decrease in her amount of L1 turns following Lesson 3 (although her amount of L1 turns overall was still relatively high). The NNS teacher’s L1 use was smallest in Lesson 1, where there were 27 L1 turns. This may be attributed to an awareness of being observed in the first lesson which may have subsided by subsequent lessons. In
Lesson 1 the NNS teacher used the L1 on three occasions to express an awareness of the presence of the researcher, such as in example 22 below:

Example 22. Awareness of observation

2. *Alors, je dois vous dire quelquechose.* [So, I have to tell you something]
   
   *Luckily Erin isn’t recording how much English you guys are speaking. Parce que là, c’est une activité orale... (inaudible) de preference en français.*
   
   [Because this is a French oral activity about your favourite things]

- NNS Lesson 1

**Rhetorical function of L1 turns**

While the two teachers used the L1 to vastly different degrees, common to both teachers was a predominant use of the L1 for the provision of explanations. L1 use serving this rhetorical function ranked third in Kraemer’s (2006) study, and (although labelled comment instead of explanation), was also used frequently by the teachers in Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie’s (2002) study. The predominant use of the L1 (by both teachers) for this rhetorical function may be due to the need for them to comment on TL culture, explain TL grammatical forms, clarify activities and explain homework tasks. The top three rhetorical functions of L1 turns were as follows: provision of explanations, followed by repetitions and questions for the NS teacher, and provision of explanations followed by questions and translations for the NNS teacher. While Kraemer (2006) found translation of items to be the second-most frequently used rhetorical function in her study, this ranked fourth among the NS teacher’s rhetorical functions of L1 use, and third for the NS teacher. The FL classes in Kraemer’s study, however, were at a beginner’s level which may have prompted more instances of translation than the intermediate classes in the present study. Further, the NNS teacher may have used the L1 to provide translations more than the NS teacher due to the different content taught in the two classes. The cultural discussion classes of the NS teacher tended to follow-on from one another in terms of their theme (therefore resulting in less unfamiliar vocabulary requiring translation as the semester wore on). The NNS teacher’s class, on the other hand, incorporated a variety of different activities (such as student-led dictations where students chose their own TL materials,
and an entire lesson on the different dialects of French) which involved much more unfamiliar vocabulary which required translation.

Guest and Pachler (2001) and Cook (2008) note that giving imperatives in the TL provides an opportunity for students to carry out a real task. Cook further notes that conducting this rhetorical function in the L1 ‘deprives the students of genuine experience of interactions through the [target] language’ (2008: 181). Across all five of her lessons in the present study, the NS teacher never used the L1 to give an imperative. In the post-observation interview, the NS teacher expressed a desire to use the TL as much as possible in class:

‘There’s only three hours of class per week for twelve weeks, so every opportunity, it’s a real communication situation when they talk with me.’

The NS teacher maximised her TL use, and therefore minimised use of the L1, by performing classroom functions, such as giving imperatives, in the TL. In the post-observation interview, the NS teacher stated:

‘What I really find is that students are really grateful for you to speak French, they actually love it.’

This belief statement (and the data showing that the NS teacher never gave imperatives in the L1) supports the findings of Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008), where students expressed a preference for receiving imperatives in the TL rather than the L1. Further, the findings from the student questionnaires in the present study showed that the majority of students in the NS teacher’s class were happy with her infrequent use of the L1 and that they understood most of their teacher’s TL use.

**Changes in rhetorical function of L1 turns over time**

Across the observation period, the NS teacher increasingly used the L1 to ask questions and to provide explanations. The NS teacher’s use of the L1 for the rhetorical function of providing an explanation showed the greatest increase across the five lessons, peaking in Lesson 5, the grammar-based class. The increase in use of
this rhetorical function coincided with an increase in the NS teacher’s use of the L1 for the purpose of grammar in Lesson 5 (however it must be noted that the amount of L1 use in this class did not increase from the previous lesson). Further, the decline in the NS teacher’s use of the L1 to provide translations correlated with a decline in L2 use for vocabulary purposes; it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that this purpose and rhetorical function (for the most part) go hand-in-hand.

The NNS teacher also increasingly used the L1 to provide explanations (with a slight decrease only in Lesson 2) and to ask questions. This may correlate with the increase in L1 use for task management purposes across the four lessons. Lessons 3 and 4, in particular, included a variety of activities, for which some students required clarification. Example 23 below shows the NNS teacher using the L1 to check a student’s comprehension (turn 314) and to provide an explanation (turn 316) of the activity at hand.

Example 23. L1 use to ask a question and to provide an explanation

314  T : Ok, did you understand the questions?  
315  S : The first one I don’t…  
316  T : It means “what place does music have in your life” basically. 

- NNS Lesson 3
Purpose of L1 episodes

The NS teacher used the L1 predominantly for the purpose of talking about vocabulary (33% of the total number of L1 episodes). The NS teacher particularly used the L1 for unfamiliar vocabulary items, such as in example 24 below:

Example 24. L1 use for vocabulary purposes

4 T : Quel est le mot, vous vous souvenez ? Mercredi dernier. Quel est le mot qui est utilisé ?
[What is the word, do you remember ? Last Wednesday. What is the word that was used ?]
5 S : Je me souviens ?
[I remember ?]
6 T : Qui bouge, d’accord ? C’est une ville qui bouge. C’est une ville qui bouge, d’accord ? Une ville qui bouge c’est un peu comme, uh, on the move, d’accord ? C’est marqué sur vos, uh, sur les voitures, d’accord ? Melbourne, « une ville qui bouge ». D’accord ? C’est une ville qui bouge alors il y a beaucoup à faire, beaucoup à voir.
[Which moves, ok ? It’s a city which moves. It’s a city which moves, ok? A city which moves it a bit like, uh] [ok? It’s marked on your, uh, on your number plates, ok? Melbourne, “on the move” Ok? It’s a city which moves so there is lots to do, lots to see]

- NS Lesson 1

This is in contrast to the finding in Duff and Polio’s 1994 study, where teachers used ‘isolated English words…related to the [academic context]’ (p.317), a finding which surprised the researchers. It must be noted, however, that Duff and Polio’s study was conducted with beginner level classes where, perhaps, TL words for ‘review section’, ‘midterm’ and ‘homework’ (p. 317) were still unfamiliar to students. The NS teacher’s predominant use of the L1 for purposes of vocabulary, task management and general classroom management/administration are in line with the findings in Kraemer (2006) where general classroom management and vocabulary were the most common purposes of L1 use among teachers.

Past studies have highlighted activity-type to be a factor in teachers’ use of the L1 (Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002; Taylor, 2002). While Kim and Elder (2005) note
that ‘task-based activities (are) more conducive to rich TL input’ (p. 377), provided that ‘the activity does not require complicated instructions’ (p. 376), the present study found an overwhelming majority of the NNS teacher’s L1 use for task management (56.43%). The predominance of L1 use by the NNS teacher for this purpose may be reflective of the organisation of this class; there was only one three-hour class per week, and classes incorporated a variety of tasks such as dictations, oral activities, and comprehension and grammar exercises. This finding supports the suggestion of Cook (2001; 2008) that teachers explain tasks and activities to the students in the L1 if it is more efficient to do so. This finding is also similar to Macaro (2001) who found that most instances of recourse to the L1 in his study were in relation to ‘procedural instructions for activities’ (pp. 544-545).

Guest and Pachler (2001) note that ‘grammar is often perceived to be a difficult – if not the most difficult – part of [language] subject(s) to be taught in the TL’ (p. 92); indeed, 88% of respondents in Franklin’s (1990) teacher survey study found teaching grammar to be most difficult to conduct in the TL. Both teachers in the present study, however, rarely used the L1 to discuss grammar, ranking third most-common across all lessons for both teachers. The NNS teacher noted that, because her background was in Linguistics,

‘I have a tendency to be more grammar-focused or more comfortable with teaching, or explaining, grammar [in the TL].’

For the NS teacher, L1 use for grammar purposes represented only 10% of all L1 episodes and all occurred in Lesson 5, the grammar-based class. That all of the NS teacher’s grammar-related L1 episodes appeared in the grammar-based class supports the sentiments of Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie (2002) and Gearon (2006) who note L1 use to increase when dealing with grammar. The grammar focus of Lesson 5 did not result in a greater amount of L1 use in the present study (as Lesson 5 contained three fewer L1 turns than Lesson 4). In order to gauge the effect of grammar on L1 use of the NS teacher, more grammar-based lessons from other weeks in the observation period are required.
Changes in purpose of L1 episodes over time

The data of the NS teacher shows a decline across the five lessons in use of the L1 to discuss vocabulary; in the cultural discussion classes of Lessons 1 to 4, this may be due to the continuation of discussion themes across these lessons. For example, Lessons 2 and 3 discussed social issues in France and Australia; vocabulary that was unfamiliar in Lesson 2, therefore, may have become familiar by Lesson 3. Lesson 4 of the NS teacher saw a large increase in the amount of L1 used for general classroom management/administration. As Lesson 4 was in week 12, the final week of the semester, this increase may be explained by the looming exam period. In example 25 below, taken from lesson 4, the NS teacher provided students with details on how to sign up for their exam:

Example 25. L1 use for general classroom management/administration

83  T : Bien, donc savez où c’est? [Good, so you know where it is ?]
84  S:  Yep
85  T : Très bien. Uh, voilà, d’accord. Alors, vous devez vous inscrire, d’accord ?
On vous dit, [Very good. Ok, so there we go. So, you have to sign up, ok? So that means] please sign up, vous devez vous inscrire pour l’un des deux examens. Pourquoi ? Parce que si vous êtes absents on sait toute de suite que vous êtes absents, d’accord ? [you have to sign up for one of the two exams. Why? So that if you’re absent we’ll know straight away that you’re absent, ok?]

- NS Lesson 4

Further, Lesson 5 was the last class of the semester, and therefore the last opportunity for students to ask the NS teacher questions about the impending exam. Example 26 further shows the NS teacher using the L1 for general classroom management/administration:

Further, Lesson 5 was the last class of the semester, and therefore the last opportunity for students to ask the NS teacher questions about the impending exam. Example 26 further shows the NS teacher using the L1 for general classroom management/administration:
Lesson 5 was also the students’ final opportunity to clarify grammar points with their teacher before the final exam. The NS teacher’s use of the L1 to discuss grammar peaked in this lesson (indeed, the L1 had not been used for this purpose prior to Lesson 5). Cook (2008) suggests that language teachers use the L1 to explain TL grammar, particularly when it differs from the L1 grammar; in Lesson 5, the NS teacher discussed the two French past tenses (the simple past and the imperfect past) which are realised as a single past tense in English. In the post-observation interview, the NS teacher noted that she would use the L1 when discussing grammar, particularly when there were subtle differences in form between the TL and the students’ L1:

“When it’s about subtle differences, especially with the past tense, it’s similar yet it’s different to English. And it’s different in ways that aren’t that logical you sometimes need to move into English because it’s too frustrating for them, it’s too much.”

Across the observation period, the NNS teacher showed a decline in use of the L1 to discuss vocabulary. Use of the L1 to discuss vocabulary peaked in lesson 2; the lesson during which discussions centred on the different dialects of French. Much of the vocabulary discussed in Lesson 2 was the Canadian French equivalent of Standard French words, such as in example 27:
Example 27. L1 use for vocabulary


S: Sorry, what’s water of melon?

T: Watermelon. So what the Québécois do, what the Québécois do is often they take the English expression and translate it absolutely word for word like “chien chaud”, [“hotdog”].

Across the four lessons, the NNS teacher increasingly used the L1 for general classroom management/administration; similar to the NS teacher, use of the L1 for this purpose peaked in Lesson 4, the final class of the semester. During lesson 4, the NNS teacher discussed at length the students’ final written assignment, their final oral exam, and their subject choices for the following semester. Example 28 shows the first part of an L1 episode for general classroom management/administration where the NNS teacher uses the L1 to discuss the final written assignment:

Example 28. L1 use for general classroom management/administration

T: J’avais presque oublié que votre dissertation sur « Etre et Avoir » c’est pour la semaine prochaine aussi. [I had nearly forgotten your essays on « To Be and To Have”. That’s for this week too.]

S1: When does it say that you were looking, reading through them?

T: Oui, lundi. [Yes, Monday] If you want to send me a draft, it needs to be in by Monday because there’s a lot of you (sic). If I get them by Monday I can get them back to you by Wednesday to give you time to correct them before Friday. If they come any later than Monday I can’t look at them, ok?

S2: Which Monday?

S3: This Monday!

T: The Monday before it’s due, so next Monday.

-NNS Lesson 4
A later excerpt from the same L1 episode as above shows the NNS teacher using the L1 to give students information about the subject which will be offered the following semester. Example 20 below is one of the NNS teacher’s longer predominantly L1 turns (containing 145 words).

Example 29. L1 use for general classroom management/administration

429 T: ...Voilà, on y est prèsque.[Ok, we’re nearly there] French 4, si ça vous intéresse au deuxième semestre, [if you’re interested in that subject for next semester] by popular demand, and not necessarily from anyone in this class, we have decided to do an experiment with the higher levels of languages for French and Spanish and we’re changing the one block of three hours to two blocks of two hours next semester. Ok? I have organised the timetable based on the International Studies timetable, ‘cause that’s where most of you come from, it might not catch everyone. I have tried to overlap with as little as possible. I have overlapped with some tutes, but there are always choices for your tutes, there is one subject where I overlap one hour with another elective, so I’m hoping that I will catch most of you. If for some reason someone is desperate to do that other elective and you need to miss an hour we can negotiate, ok? That might be possible.

- NNS Lesson 4

Later in the same episode, the NNS teacher gives more detail in the L1 about what the second semester subject will incorporate, perhaps to ensure students understand what the subject will entail and to entice students to enrol in the subject so that there are enough numbers enrolled for the subject to go ahead.

Finally, the NNS teacher displayed an increase across the observation period in use of the L1 for task management. During Lessons 3 and 4, students presented oral dictations to small groups. Students chose the dictation texts themselves and, prior to reading them to their peers, the NNS teacher checked their comprehension of the text and translated any unfamiliar vocabulary, as shown in example 30:
Example 30. L1 use for task management

312  T : Breanna, est-ce que tu peux lire une fois en totale ? Oui? [Breanna, can you read the whole thing once? Yes?] So read through it once and don’t write yet. So that you listen and you get an idea what it’s about and then it’s easier when you write. Et j’ai l’impression que c’est très long. [I got the impression that it’s very long]

313  S :  Is that too long?

314  T : Oui, peut-être.[Yes, maybe] Ah, but it’s a joke so you have to read the whole thing.

315  S :  It’s mostly simple.

316  T : It’s just going to take a long time. See you how go, I would go with the first paragraph and that might be enough. And then you can read the rest. Ok, so only read the part you’re going to dictate to them.

- NNS Lesson 3

Audience of L1 episodes

The majority of the NS teacher’s use of the L1 was addressed to the whole class (65%). This may be reflective of the cultural discussion theme of Lessons 1 to 4; in these classes the teacher spoke to students about French culture and history in a lecture-style. Students answered questions working in pairs, but the majority of interaction in these classes was directed from the teacher to the whole class.

The NNS teacher, on the other hand, addressed most of her L1 turns to students in private (60.08%), which may be reflective of the flexible entry criteria for her class (and the subsequent varying levels of ability among her students), as well as the interactive lecture style and predominance of pair- and group-work activities. In the post-observation interview, the NNS teacher noted that,

‘with some students I know they’re absolutely capable of understanding it in French, and I’ll, I won’t say anything if they speak to me in English, but I’ll always try and reply in French and I try and do it by email as well’, whereas with ‘the students I perceive have the most difficulty, I’ll switch into English’.
This finding is similar to that of Kraemer (2006) who found the teachers in her study used the L1 quite often when ‘talking to individual students during individual, partner, or group activities’ (p. 443). Taylor (2002) also found one of his two teachers used more of the L1 in private conversations with students than with other audiences.

### Changes in audience of L1 episodes over time

The NS teacher addressed three audiences throughout the observation period: the whole class, student(s) public and student(s) private. The NS teacher’s L1 episodes were predominantly addressed to the whole class, and distribution of the audiences of the NS teacher’s L1 episodes remaining fairly stable across the observation period. Lesson 5, however, saw an increase in use of the L1 towards student(s) private. This may be due to the grammar focus of Lesson 5, where students were grappling with the subtle difference between the two past tenses of French. In the post-observation interview, the NS teacher noted that she would use the L1,

> 'In pairs… because it’s more one on one. So I feel more comfortable to speak English with them because it’s helping them to deal with a particular aspect of whatever.'

The NS teacher’s increased use of the L1 with student(s) private in Lesson 5 may also be reflective of the pair-work activities undertaken in this class as opposed to the lecture-style organisation of the previous four lessons.

While it appears that the NNS teacher’s L1 use was increasingly addressed to student(s) private as the semester wore on, the audience of the NNS teacher’s L1 use may have been dependent on the activities undertaken in class. The NNS teacher did not address student(s) private in the L1 in Lesson 1. Observation notes show that the activities undertaken in this lesson were a class dictation and a grammar-related explanation and activity (all directed to either the whole class or student(s) public). Lessons 2 to 4 included much more group- and pair-work activities, such as student-student dictations, grammar exercises and comprehension activities, which may explain the NNS teacher’s increase in L1 use to students in private from Lesson 2 onwards. In particular, Lesson 2 showed a dramatic decline in the NNS teacher’s L1
use towards the *whole class*, most likely because in this lesson students did a lot of
group and pair work.

The audience of L1 use for both teachers, therefore, appeared dependent on the
content and type of activity being conducted; a finding echoed in Kraemer (2006) and
Taylor (2002).

**Teachers’ and students’ perceptions and attitudes regarding use of the L1
(English) in the FL classroom**

**Teacher views**

Interviews with the teachers following the observation period shed some light on their
attitudes towards L1 use and may go some way to explaining the findings of this
study.

While Polio and Duff (1994) note that many teachers are unaware of ‘how, when and
the extent to which they actually use [the L1] in the classroom’ (p. 320), the teachers
in the present study believe that they are mostly conscious of their language choices in
the FL classroom:

(NS teacher)

‘*In terms of the language I use, it’s very controlled*…’

(NNS teacher)

‘*It’s a conscious reason to switch*’

The most salient theme emerging from the interviews was that both teachers were
caredned, first and foremost, with the type of classroom atmosphere they created.
The NS teacher noted that she preferred to use the TL to contextualise the FL
classroom and to create an interesting language learning environment showing
students, as Crawford (2004) notes that ‘languages are different but not to be feared,
that learners can understand and that it is fun when they do’ (p. 7).
‘…if you start speaking in English, what are you trying to tell them? They might not be up for it…’

In order to do this, the NS teacher noted that she carefully controlled her language use,

‘… as in, ok I’ve used a word that is unlikely to be understood, let’s re-phrase it, let’s write it on the board. I mean, I really believe that. I mean, yeah sure they can’t understand everything but if it’s on the board that’s a visual clue. And if they can’t understand that word there’s a synonym for it, so it’s controlled in that sense.’

Previous studies have also noted the use of speech modifications, visual aids and gesture to aid in the maximisation, and student comprehension, of the TL (Duff & Polio, 1990; Turnbull, 2006). The NS teacher’s controlled language choices, therefore, may help explain her small amount of L1 use. Further, the NS teacher would revert student requests for translation back to the class using, as Guest and Pachler (2001) have previously noted, the students ‘as “translators” to verify meaning in English’ (p. 89).

The NNS teacher, on the other hand, cited use of the L1 to create a welcoming classroom environment:

‘I think a big part of what I believe in the classroom is, first and foremost the class atmosphere. Because if there’s a good class atmosphere people get over being intimidated and they find it easier to learn if they feel comfortable with one another.’

The NNS teacher’s desire to create a comfortable language learning environment was also echoed in Brooks-Lewis’ (2009) study where reducing language and culture shock in the FL classroom was attributed to use of the L1. Similarly, Taylor (2002) found teacher recourse to the L1 to be influenced, for one of the teachers in particular, by a desire to create an amicable social dynamic within the classroom. Guest and Pachler (2001) further argue that too much TL use can hinder the development of
social relationships between the teacher and students which ‘[require non-curriculum-specific TL, which learners do not have at their disposal’ (p. 85).

The teachers’ different desires for their FL classes may help to explain their different amounts of L1 use across the observation period. The NS teacher, guided by a desire to contextualise the classroom and show students they are capable of understanding the TL, used much less of the L1 than the NNS teacher who was guided by a desire to facilitate TL learning by creating a welcoming, amicable environment (achieved through L1 use).

External factors such as class organisation, timetabling, and class materials may have also influenced the NNS teacher’s amount of L1 use. The NNS teacher noted the presence of English in the course textbook made it hard to avoid using English in the classroom; the alternative however (using a French-only textbook) has been criticised by Guest and Pachler (2001) for providing materials which ‘are usually too ambitious for the…skills of pupils’ (p. 90). While both classes in the present study used an French/English textbook, the NS teacher’s class used a French-only homework book, whereas the homework book used in the NNS teacher’s class was French/English; the NNS teacher explained in the post-observation interview that the choice of a textbook and workbook in both French and English was because,

‘if everything’s in French the students will say they can’t do their homework because they can’t even understand the instructions.’

Moreover, as Guest and Pachler (2001) note, ‘a whole lesson is a long time for pupils to concentrate’ in the TL (p. 91); the NNS teacher’s class ran once a week for three hours, which may have attributed to the NNS teacher’s use of the L1.

‘Ask students to sit in any class for three hours. But learning a language can be so tiring as well, especially at the [lower levels], the last half hour can be really hard to maintain. It’s on a Friday, some of them are Friday afternoon, and you can put in a couple of breaks, but the fact is a three hour language class is really quite heavy going, so you don’t get the full three hours’
While Turnbull (2001) and Satchwell (1997) argue that L1 use takes precious time away from use of the TL and leads to student demotivation, the NNS teacher felt that, as she only saw her students once a week, switching into the L1 would actually save time rather than, as Turnbull argues, waste it:

‘If I think it’s really complex, I tend to still sometimes go into English because, not because I can’t explain it, but because I think we’ll waste so much time if the students can’t understand it. And I think that if I really, really, want them to understand a certain grammar point, asking them to also decode a whole loud of content and vocab and terminology is just additional work which, you know, we can save that time and I can give them other things to do. We can get to the point more, it’s easier.’

Finally, the teaching backgrounds of the teachers and the amount of prior TL learning of the students in the present study may have been a factor in their amount of L1 use in the classroom. The NS teacher stated in the post-observation interview that she had mostly taught at the advanced level of language study, where students have a high TL proficiency (and therefore have little requirement of L1 use). The NNS teacher, on the other hand, has taught mostly beginner and intermediate classes where students still have a limited TL proficiency. Further, while both classes observed in the present study were at the intermediate level of French, the different entry criteria at the two universities meant that the students from the two universities could not be equally compared; the NS teacher’s class comprised of a more homogeneous group of students than the NNS teacher’s class (see Chapter 3 for details on entry criteria for the two classes). The results of the present study, therefore, may suggest a relationship between teachers’ L1 use and student proficiency.

**Student views**

The results of the student questionnaires in the present study suggest that students are fairly accurate in their perceptions of their teacher’s L1 use. The majority of students in the NS teacher’s class perceived their teacher to use English *very little* while the majority of students in the NNS teacher’s class believed their teacher used English *a lot*. In regards to students’ attitudes towards teachers’ L1 use, a majority in both
classes would have liked their teachers’ L1 use to remain about the same. This suggests that the students in the NS teacher’s class, similar to those surveyed in Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie’s (2002) study, would prefer a small amount of L1 use, while students in the NNS teacher’s class prefer much more use of the L1. It may be that the students’ attitudes to their teacher’s L1 use affected the amount of L1 use; indeed, students’ own use of the L1 may have also affected the teachers’ amount of L1 use. Further, 71% of students in the NNS teacher’s class indicated that they would prefer a non-native French speaking teacher because, as one student noted, ‘they can relate to the difficulties of learning French, as they have had to learn it before too’. This student belief supports Cook’s (2005) statement that ‘non-native speaker teachers provide models of proficient L2 users in action in the classroom’ (p.57).
Chapter 7. Conclusion

The present study found the amount of L1 use to vary greatly between two teachers of intermediate-level, university French courses. This study also found that the NS teacher’s L1 use moderately increased over time, while the NNS teacher’s L1 use moderately decreased following Lesson 3. Both teachers predominantly used the L1 to provide explanations, with L1 turns serving this rhetorical function increasing across the observation period for both teachers. While the NS teacher predominantly used the L1 for to discuss vocabulary, L1 use for this purpose declined across her five lessons, while L1 use for general classroom management/administration increased. The NNS teacher also increasingly used the L1 for general classroom management/administration and task management across her four lessons. Although on the surface it may seem to be related to whether the teacher is a native speaker or a non-native speaker of the TL, closer analysis shows that it is more likely teachers’ ideological desires about the class which influenced L1 use in the present study. Other factors such as the teaching background of the participating teachers, the homogeneity (or otherwise) of student ability in the class, and the organisation of classes, with relation to timetabling and the content of lessons, may have also contributed to the participating teachers’ amount of L1 use.

The difference in findings of the rhetorical function of L1 turns between the present study and past studies conducted at a beginner level of language study, such as Kraemer (2006) and Macaro (2001), may suggest that L1 turns at the intermediate level may serve different rhetorical functions. Further investigation of intermediate-level FL classrooms is required to determine whether or not this is the case.

The present study also found that type of activity was a determiner of L1 use; with individual, pair and group work activities resulting in an increase in L1 episodes addressed to student(s) private while activities such as class dictations and whole class discussions were more conducive to L1 use directed towards the whole class. Just as there may be a relationship between activity-type and audience of L1 use, the findings of the present study also suggest that there may be a relationship between purposes and rhetorical functions of L1 use, such as vocabulary and translation. Contrary to expectation, grammar tasks did not elicit a higher amount of L1 use than
other activities. Grammar activities elicited more L1 use for *grammar* purposes, but not a greater amount of actual L1 turns.

There have been few longitudinal studies of L1 use in the FL classroom and none, to the author’s knowledge, which have looked at changes in teachers’ L1 use over time. Kraemer (2006) notes an advantage of longitudinal research is that it ‘prevent(s) unnatural teaching style and thus offer(s) broader insights into [L1 use in the FL classroom]’ (p. 448). The present study found the amount, rhetorical function, purpose and audience of L1 use changed over time for both teachers; and hence suggests the need for more longitudinal studies. A further strength of the present study is the incorporation of teacher interviews and student surveys with classroom observation data.

Despite its encouraging findings, the present study has its limitations, most notably in the difficulty of coding classroom observation data. In particular, the coding scheme adopted in the present study may have failed to capture the complexity of classroom interactional events where, as Kim and Elder (2005) note ‘various contextual factors come into play’ (p. 357) and ‘teachers may be simultaneously orienting to multiple pedagogical concerns’ (Seedhouse, 2004: 64). Coding for rhetorical functions, in particular, proved to be difficult.

Furthermore, while the present study went some way to quantifying the amount of L1 use, through the categorisation of L1 turns as either *wholly, predominantly or partly* in the L1, due to time constraints, it was not possible to quantify L1 use as a proportion of all language use. Transcribing all classroom data, rather than just instances of L1 use, would have provided a more accurate measure of the amount of L1 use in each lesson, from which more quantitative comparisons between teachers could be made.

A further limitation to the present study was the presence of only one grammar-based class for the NS teacher; more grammar-based classes in the data set would help to either strengthen or reject claims made in this study that grammar did not elicit more L1 use.
While most research into language choices in the FL classroom have been conducted in beginner level classes, future research has the potential to continue the investigation set out in the present study on intermediate level FL classes. In particular, as the present study has shown, there appear to be changes in teachers’ L1 use over time which require further investigation. Further, future research may wish to look at students’ L1 use to see whether this triggers teachers’ L1 use.

As the present study has shown, the L1 has found itself a place in the FL classroom (whether teachers, students, and educational theorists want it to have or not). Turnbull (2001), therefore asks ‘how do we decide what is an acceptable amount of…L1 use? And when is it optimal for a teacher to use the L1?’ (p. 536). As the teachers in the present study have shown, the amount of L1 use varies between teachers (regardless of their native-speaker status) and decisions on when and how to use the L1 remain up to the individual teachers and require further empirical investigation in order for FL teachers and departments to make appropriate pedagogical decisions.
References


Storch, N. & A. Aldosari. (forthcoming). Learners’ use of L1 (Arabic) in pair work in an EFL class. *Language Teaching Research*


Turnbull, M. (2001). There is a role for the L1 in second and foreign language teaching, but…*The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57 (4), 531-540

Appendices

Appendix 1. Ethics Application: Plain language statement (for teachers)

En français s’il vous plaît : investigating use of the target language in the foreign language classroom

Researchers: Dr Neomy Storch
Erin White, honours student,
School of Languages & Linguistics,
University of Melbourne

You are invited to participate in the above named project. The aim of this project is to investigate the use of the target language (the language being studied) in a foreign language classroom. The project also aims to collect the views of the teacher and students about the use of the target and first languages in the foreign language classroom. The project has received clearance by the HREC.

If you agree to participate, you agree to allow the student researcher to observe your foreign language classroom every couple of weeks over the course of a semester. Teachers will be asked to complete a short, informal interview with the researcher before and after the observation period.

With your permission, the classroom observations would be audio-recorded so that the researcher can make an accurate record of what transpires in the foreign language classroom. Recordings will not be played publicly; they will be used for research purpose only.

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of observation data and interview/questionnaire responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your responses by the researchers. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity.

The data we will collect (notes on classroom observations, questionnaires and interviews) will be kept securely for five years after all data has been analysed and findings published. After that time, all data will be destroyed.

Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data (interview or questionnaire data) you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. The researchers are not involved in the ethics application process. Your decision to participate or not, or to withdraw, will be completely independent of your dealings.
with the ethics committee, and we would like to assure you that it will have no effect on any applications for approval that you may submit.

If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it to the researcher.

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Erin White by phone (0439 359 214) or email (e.white6@ugrad.unimelb.edu.au), or Dr Neomy Storch phone (8344 5208) or email (neomys@unimelb.edu.au). Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on ph: 8344 2073, or fax: 9347 6739.
Appendix 2. Plain language statement (for students)

En français s’il vous plaît : investigating use of the target language in the foreign language classroom

Researchers: Dr Neomy Storch
Erin White, honours student,
School of Languages & Linguistics,
University of Melbourne

You are invited to participate in the above named project. The aim of this project is to investigate the use of the target language (the language being studied) in a foreign language classroom. The project also aims to collect the views of the teacher and students about the use of the target and first languages in the foreign language classroom. The project has received clearance by the HREC.

If you agree to participate, you agree to allow the student researcher to observe your foreign language classroom every couple of weeks over the course of a semester. Students will be asked to complete two short questionnaires; one at the beginning, the other at the end, of the observation period. The questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes. Students will also be invited, at the end of the observation period, to discuss with the researcher their views on language choices in the foreign language classroom.

With your permission, the classroom observations would be audio-recorded so that the researcher can make an accurate record of what transpires in the foreign language classroom. Recordings will not be played publicly; they will be used for research purpose only.

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of observation data and interview/questionnaire responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your responses by the researchers. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity.

The data we will collect (notes on classroom observations, questionnaires and interviews) will be kept securely for five years after all data has been analysed and findings published. After that time, all data will be destroyed.

Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data (interview or questionnaire data) you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. The researchers are not involved in the ethics application process. Your decision to participate or not, or to withdraw, will be completely independent of your dealings.
with the ethics committee, and we would like to assure you that it will have no effect on any applications for approval that you may submit.

If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it to the researcher.

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Erin White by phone (0439 359 214) or email (e.white6@grad.unimelb.edu.au), or Dr Neomy Storch phone (8344 5208) or email (neomy.s@unimelb.edu.au). Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on ph: 8344 2073, or fax: 9347 6739.
Appendix 3. Consent form (for all participants)

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS:

Consent form for persons participating in research projects

PROJECT TITLE: En français s’il vous plaît : investigating use of the target language in the foreign language classroom

Name of participant:
Contact details: (day time phone number):    email:
Name of investigator(s): Erin White & Dr Neomy Storch

1. I consent to participate in the project named above, the particulars of which, including details of observations and interviews, have been explained to me. A written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.

2. I authorise the researchers to use for this purpose the observations and interviews referred to under (1) above.

3. I acknowledge that:
   (a) The possible effects of the observations and interviews have been explained to me to my satisfaction;
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice
   (c) The project is for the purpose of research
   (d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.
   (e) I consent to being audio-taped during the classroom observation and/or interviews
   (f) I have been informed that I will be referred to by pseudonym in any publications
   (g) I have been informed that once signed and returned, this consent form will be retained by the researchers.

Signature    Date
            (Participant)
Appendix 4. Teacher Interview Schedule

Background questions
1. What is your native language?
2. If it’s not the target language, how many years have you spoken the TL for?
3. How long have you spent in a country/countries where the TL is spoken?
4. Could you please describe your experience in teaching a foreign language (eg. how long, where, etc.)
5. For the students in the present class, what prior learning of the TL is required of them to enter this course?
6. What are your perceptions of their TL proficiency?

Teaching Experience
7. How do you feel about your proficiency in spoken French?
8. What is your level of comfort in using French in general?
9. Do you feel as comfortable speaking French as you do speaking English when you teach?
10. Does this depend on factors such as the level of the students you’re teaching or the topic?
11. How often do you think you use the students’ first language, English, in the classroom?
12. Is the use of English something that you’re conscious of?
13. What tasks do you think you carry out in English? (Eg. administrative, activity-related, grammar teaching etc.)
14. Do you find that you speak English to some students more than others?

Philosophy of Teaching
15. What is your opinion on the use of English in the French classroom?

Departmental Policy
16. Is there a departmental policy on the use of English in the foreign language classroom?

17. Is this something that is spoken about among members of the department?

Appendix 5. Student questionnaire 1

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS:

Student Questionnaire – Part 1: beginning of semester

PROJECT TITLE: En français s’il vous plaît : investigating use of the target language in the foreign language classroom

Please take a couple of minutes to answer the following questions. This information will be used for a project investigating the use of the target language (the language being studied) in a foreign language classroom.

(Please tick or write answers where appropriate)

__ Undergraduate student    __ Graduate student
Your age:   __ 18-25 years  __ 26-35 years __ 36+ years
Your major: ________________________________________________

This course name: _________________________________________

1. Why are you taking this foreign language class?
   __ interest
   __ requirement
   __ major
   __ easy credits
   __ other (please explain) ___________________________________

2. Where have you had exposure to this foreign language? Please tick all that are relevant.
   __ at home or elsewhere in the local community
   __ in the country where the language is spoken
   __ previous courses before this academic year
3. Prior to taking this course, what other courses have you taken in this foreign language?
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

4. How many years have you studied this foreign language?
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

5. What level learner would you consider yourself? (Eg. beginner, intermediate, advanced, etc.)
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

6. What are you hoping to achieve in this course? What area(s) of your French, if any, are you hoping to improve?
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your participation!
Appendix 6. Student questionnaire 2

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS:

Student Questionnaire – Part 2; end of semester

PROJECT TITLE: En français s’il vous plaît : investigating use of the target language in the foreign language classroom

7. How much English did your teacher typically use in class?
   __ a lot (most of the time)
   __ some (some of the time)
   __ very little (occasionally)
   __ none

Extra comments (if necessary):
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

8. How much English would you have liked your teacher to have used in class?
   __ more English than was used
   __ about the same
   __ less than was used

9. When would you prefer your teacher to speak English? (eg. To explain grammar…)
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
10. How much of your teacher’s foreign language speech did you understand in class?
   __ all
   __ most of it
   __ some of it
   __ very little

11. Did you have any difficulties understanding your teacher’s foreign language speech? If so, what in particular do you find difficult?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

12. Would you prefer to have a native-French speaking teacher or a non-native French speaking teacher? Why?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

13. Any further comments?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

Thank you for your participation. If you would be interested in participating in a brief, informal interview with the researcher please provide your contact details below. This interview will involve a short discussion based on the questions above.

Name:

Email:
Author/s: WHITE, ERIN

Title: En français s’il vous plaît : investigating use of the first language (L1) in the foreign language (FL) classroom

Date: 2009

Citation: White, E. (2009). En français s’il vous plaît : investigating use of the first language (L1) in the foreign language (FL) classroom. Honours thesis, Faculty of Arts, Languages and Linguistics, The University of Melbourne.

Publication Status: Unpublished

Persistent Link: http://hdl.handle.net/11343/35246

File Description: En français s’il vous plaît

Terms and Conditions: Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.