First language use among second language teachers: Views vs practice

Noor Hayati binti Romli[1*], Mohd Sallehhudin bin Abd Aziz[2], Pramela Krish N. Krish[1]
[1]National University of Malaysia, Malaysia
[2]UCSI University, Malaysia
*Corresponding Author: missusyati@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Although the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) had been shunned in second language teaching, the stigma of using the first language (L1) in teaching the second language (L2) has been continuously debated by scholars and teachers. Commonly, L2 teachers support the monolingual approach as they are exposed to this approach in their teaching training courses. However, previous studies revealed that teachers' stance towards L2 teachers is contrary to how they utilise L1 practice in the teaching process. This research study aims to explore the use of L1 (*Bahasa Melayu*) by L2 (English) teachers during the teaching process and to examine whether their beliefs matched their L1 practice. A total of eight English teachers from several schools in Pahang, Malaysia were interviewed and their lessons were recorded. The data from the interviews and lessons were thematically analysed using NVivo 12 software. The results demonstrated that the teachers had utilised *Bahasa Melayu* (BM) for certain functions and that their beliefs towards L1 actually corresponded to their language use in the L2 classrooms. This study suggests that it is imperative to look further into this matter and assist teachers in systematically using L1 in the L2 classrooms.

Keywords: first language, second language

INTRODUCTION

There are a few definitions of L1 in general. It can be someone's first learned language, a person's most frequently-used language or the most proficient language (UNESCO, 2003). L1 is generally considered by many modern-day educators and linguists as a representation of a person's mother tongue or first language. On the other hand, a second language which is being learnt is normally referred to as the L2 (Nordquist, 2020). Regarding this study, L1 refers to *Bahasa Melayu* (BM) while L2 refers to English. *The Malays*, as the largest ethnic group in Malaysia, utilise BM as their spoken language and is widely used for administration, education and communication in the country. Although BM acts as the national language, teaching of English is compulsory in the government schools.

Scholars and teachers have been conducting extensive discussions with regard to the controversial usage of L1 for the teaching of second language in L2 classroom (Fortune, 2012; Cook, 2001). Those who disagree with L1's usage believe that learners will be deprived of the chance to gain the highest language input, especially in second language learning (Krashen, 1981). In L2 classrooms, it is vital for teachers and learners to fully utilise TL since L1 is viewed as detrimental to L2 learning (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006). Despite the rejection of L1's integration in the learning and teaching process of L2 by many scholars and educationists, the general perspective has slowly shifted from complete rejection to the re-evaluation of the roles of L1. This is because there are no records of empirical proof which indicate that L2 learning can be improved by reducing L1 usage (Eldridge 1996).

Recently, L1's potential to improve L2 learning has been recognised in a large number of recent theoretical stances, particularly in social development, psychological and linguistic fields. Cummins (2000) proposed the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) theory, where L1's inclusion in L2 classrooms was firmly endorsed. On another note, Butzkamm (2003) outlines 10 maxims in his Mother Tongue as a Base of Reference theory to highlight the importance of L1 in L2 learning. This theory rejects the monolingual approach towards L2 learning and claims that L1 (mother tongue) is not inferior towards the learners' learning process. Instead, L1 has great potential as it is the language that learners learn to think, communicate, and acquire their intuitive grammar. Therefore, the roles of L1 should be re-evaluated in L2 learning as it can become a tool to master the language.

Functions of L1 in L2 Classroom

Numerous functions of L1 in L2 classrooms have been presented by the bilingual approach advocators and some further distinguished them into several domains. Although there is a wide range of L1 functions, the specific number of components or functions in each domain remains to be unclear (Ferguson, 2003). In fact, the components within each category are quite repetitive as they denote similar functions. Therefore, it is crucial to review the overall micro-functions of L1 that are proposed by the scholars and then identify the ones that share common traits or those with distinct features. For this current study, the overall micro-functions of L1 are adopted from Atkinson (1993), Cook (2001), Harbord (1992), Canagarajah (1995), Ferguson (2003), and Sali (2014). Based on the research by Atkinson (1993) and Cook (2001), L1 can be utilised for instruction provision, explanation of complex grammatical phrases, new vocabulary introduction and the improvement of learners' understanding. Teachers can exploit L1's micro-functions in L2 classes for the teaching of particular language elements where L1 can help learners and teachers to communicate better, as stated by Harbord (1992).

The functions of L1 are classified into three main categories by Ferguson (2003), namely the interpersonal relation, classroom management and curriculum access. On the other hand, Canagarajah (1995) divided the functions into content delivery and classroom management categories. In addition, the approach by Ferguson was integrated in the study by Sali (2014) as well. This study made use of three categories of L1 functions, namely the curriculum Access, lesson management and social & interpersonal domains. The Common Underlying Proficiency theory and the Mother Tongue as a Base of Reference theory are combined with the framework of micro-functions by L2 scholars to guide this study.

Studies on L2 Teachers' Use of L1

Numerous L2 studies had reported crucial information on how L2 teachers can utilise L1 in the teaching process, such as the study by Shabir (2017). According to Shabir, the L2 teachers utilised L1 to manage the classroom, to clarify the meanings of words, to explain grammar items, to provide response to learners, to clarify tasks instructions and to compare language structures between L1 and L2. Similarly, a large number of L2 teachers used L1 to teach lessons, to control the learners and to build relationship with them, as reported by Lai Ping (2016).

With regard to this study, BM's (L1) usage for teaching English (L2) classes is noted by Jumal, AlSaqqaf & Mohamed (2019). English teachers were found to have used BM to support learners, especially for explaining word meanings, teaching word pronunciation and repetition, and for interpersonal reasons. The utilisation of BM in English classroom was also reported by Krish, Mustafa & Pakrudin (2019) and Ja'afar & Maarof (2016) where English teachers had often switched to BM when speaking in order to improve the learners' comprehension regarding the lesson content and to strengthen the rapport with them.

Even though L2 teachers have not deliberated the issue regarding L1's usage to teach L2 openly, their practices in their classroom are actually distinct (Farrell, 2019). Specifically, the actual application of L1 by the teachers differ from their original perception despite the fact that maximum usage of L2 is supported by them. As a matter of fact, L1 was often used by those teachers for numerous functions in L2 lessons (Tsagari & Georgiou, 2016)

Various studies have investigated the L1's usage for the teaching of L2. However, the claims that the teachers' perspectives of L1 do not correspond to their teaching practices have yet to be proven. Therefore, a discrepancy exists with regard to how teachers view L1 and their actual utilisation of L1 in the teaching process. Therefore, this study intends to fill the gap in the literature by investigating the use of BM in teaching English for specific functions, namely in terms of Curriculum Access, Lesson Management and Social & Interpersonal domains. The main objectives of this study are to investigate the English teachers' views on the use of BM in teaching English as well as examining how they utilise L1 in their classrooms. Afterwards, the researcher intends to examine whether the teachers' perspectives towards L1 correspond to their language use in the lessons.

In order to have a deep understanding regarding the utilisation of BM by English teachers, three research questions were formulated:
1. What are the English teachers' views on the use of BM in teaching English?
2. How do the teachers use BM in teaching English in terms of Curriculum Access, Lesson Management and Social & Interpersonal domains?'
3. Are there any differences in terms of their beliefs and the actual use of BM in the teaching process?

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative research design to find out the English teachers' views on the use of BM and to examine its utilisation in their lessons.

Participants

This research was conducted in the state of Pahang involving English language teachers who were teaching L2 learners from several secondary schools. Since the main objective is to examine how L1 (BM) is used by L2 (English) teachers, there was a prerequisite that the teachers must be teaching a high percentage of learners who speak BM as their L1 and identify English as their L2.

Table 1. Teachers' information

No	Teacher	G	Age	Learners' L1 & proficiency levels	Teaching experience (years)
1	Teacher A	F	30	Malay / Low	6
2	Teacher B	F	42	Malay/ High & Intermediate	16
3	Teacher C	F	40	Malay/ Intermediate	15
4	Teacher D	M	37	Malay / Intermediate & Low	12
5	Teacher E	F	35	Malay/ Mixed proficiency	10
6	Teacher F	M	31	Malay/ Intermediate and Low	18
7	Teacher G	F	32	Malay/ Mixed proficiency	7
8	Teacher H	F	45	Malay/ Low proficiency	20

From Table 1, eight English teachers agreed to participate in the qualitative data collection stage where six of them were female while the others were male teachers (Teachers D & F). The teachers' identities were kept anonymous. Thus, they were identified as Teacher A until Teacher H. Meanwhile, their ages were around 30 to 45 years old and all of them are Malays. Apart from that, the teachers had experience in teaching English from 6 to 20 years.

The Instruments, Data Collection & Analysis

Two instruments were used to collect the qualitative data for this study, namely the semi-structured interviews and audio-recorded lessons. The interview protocol consisted of three sections in which the first section (Section Ai) was designed to gather participants personal information. Meanwhile, Section Aii of the interview protocol was made up of three items about the teachers' perspectives on the use of BM in teaching English. The items in Section Aii were

adapted from Abideen (2004) and Selamat (2014). This section closely followed the Common Underlying Proficiency theory and the Mother Tongue as a Base of Reference theory. Another section, Section B of the interview, was designed from the framework of the micro-functions of L1 to examine how teachers use L1. Teachers' use of L1 was examined based on the 43 L1 functions, namely 19 items in the first category (Curriculum Access), 14 items in the second category (Class Management) and 10 items in the last category (Social & Interpersonal).

There were several stages in conducting the interviews and recording the English lessons. An initial discussion was done before the interview sessions to get the teachers' consent to participate in the interviews. The second step in gathering the qualitative data was recording the English teachers' lessons in three different sessions. Each teacher was required to self-record his or her lessons using the recording devices which were provided by the researcher. Altogether, there were 24 audio recordings of the lessons by the selected eight English teachers in Pahang. Afterwards, all of the teachers were interviewed on separate dates to reassess their usage of L1 in the lessons.

Table 2. Research matrix

Research Question	Theory/ Micro-functions of L1	Tool	Analysis	
Research Question 1	Common Underlying Proficiency theory	Interview (Section Aii)	Verbatim Transcription	3 themes (three items of the interview)
	Mother Tongue as a Base of Reference theory			
Research Question 2	The framework of the micro-functions of L1 (42 micro-functions in three domains)	Interview (Section B)	Verbatim Transcription	Checklist of the micro-functions of L1
		Lesson recordings	Verbatim Transcription	Checklist of the micro-functions of L1
Research Question 3	Comparing results from (Research Question 2) namely Section B of the interview and the lessons.			

Based on Table 2 (Research matrix), the results for Research Question 1 was from interview Section Aii while data of Research Question 2 was from the interview (Section B) and the audio recording lessons. The qualitative data gained from the interviews and audio recordings of the lessons were transcribed by using verbatim transcription. After that, the raw data was thematically analysed using the NVivo 12 by assigning them into appropriate themes. The thematic analysis for the qualitative data was done based on Interactive Model by Miles, Huberman & Saldaña (2018). There are three themes to represent items in the interview Section Aii while the lessons were analysed based on the checklist that consist of 43 micro-functions of L1 (Refer Appendix B). To answer research question 3, the interview results (Section B) were compared with the teachers' lessons.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis from the interviews and audio recordings of the lessons revealed crucial findings in terms of how the teachers viewed the use of BM in the teaching process, as well as the actual utilisation of L1 in the lessons.

Findings
Research Question 1
Interview Question 1: How important is BM when you teach English to your learners?
The analysis demonstrates the teachers' responses regarding this question, in which seven of them (except Teacher F) voiced out the importance of using L1 in teaching the TL.

Table 3. Teachers' responses to interview question 1

Teacher	Responses	Summary
Teacher A	It is **important to me**. For weaker classes, **the learners have a hard time to understand English**, as they don't understand at all. For learners in average classes, I can still use simple English to explain, one by one, to help them understand. But in the end, I have to use BM.	Important
Teacher B	It is okay for my school. **BM is used to help the learners understand the lesson content**. Additionally, when we use BM for weak learners, they will feel it is easier to approach us as teachers. If we always use English, they will be scared to approach us.	Important
Teacher C	**Yes, it depends on their readiness to learn**. If they are ready, then it's easy for me to use more English.	Important
Teacher D	To teach English, **as teachers, sometimes we have to use BM**. In my experience, when we teach very weak learners, we still have to use Bahasa Melayu, because they don't understand if we use 100% English.	Important
Teacher E	**BM is important** for my learners because the **majority of them are Malays,** so their first language is obviously BM. I think it is especially important for them when they don't understand some meanings of words and sentences.	Important
Teacher F	In relation to my teaching, in my honest opinion, **BM is not important in teaching English**, because we need to use English. If you don't use English, we use BM, the effectiveness of teaching English is no longer there.	Not important
Teacher G	**Yes**. Again, **it depends on which class we teach in**. I need to use BM to make them understand better. Sometimes it is to attract their attention. They're so loud, so noisy, and they play around; therefore, I have to use BM, so that they will listen and pay attention to what I'm saying.	Important
Teacher H	Yes, **it is important to me and also my learners**. If not, they won't be able to fully understand me.	Important

According to Teacher A and Teacher H, it was crucial to use BM in teaching English since most of the low-proficiency learners had difficulties to understand English words and sentences. Both of them stated that without some explanation using L1, they might not be able to fully understand the TL. In fact, Teachers D, E and G explained that BM could help the learners to understand English better. Not only did the teachers state that BM was important to increase the learners' comprehension, but they also mentioned its role in creating a non-threatening environment, where the learners felt more comfortable in learning the language. Teacher B explained that when she used BM, the learners became more confident to ask questions compared to when she used only English.

In contrast, only Teacher H stated that it was not important to use BM in the teaching of English. According to him, using BM could reduce the effectiveness of second language teaching as the essence of teaching an L2 was through exposure to the TL. Nonetheless, he still had to switch to BM during the teaching process.

In conclusion, most of the English teachers admitted that BM was an essential teaching tool in their classroom, especially if they had to teach classes with weak learners. Among the benefits of using BM were the learners became more confident to learn the language, it increased their understanding towards the content lesson and it helped to manage their discipline better. Even though the teachers were conscious on the importance of using TL, they also accepted that BM played significant part in their classroom.

Interview Question 2: How do you feel about using only English with your learners?

Based on the results, it was very clear that all of the English teachers were sceptical about the idea of using only English in the teaching process.

Table 4. Teachers' responses to interview question 2

Teacher	Responses	Summary
Teacher A	It is **like a conversation between chickens and ducks** if I fully use English. This is based on my class. For my better class, there are some who can understand, and some who cannot.	Impossible
Teacher B	I would be **so happy if I could fully use English**. **But**, **I cannot**. Considering that we already tried to fully use English, even with good classes, in the end they still need us to use BM. They will ask "Teacher, what is it in BM? They don't want us to explain one vocabulary too long in English. Maybe it's their attitude. Yes, even when they ask for permission to go to the toilet, they will speak in BM. I had to ask them to repeat it in English. Usually, they can, but they just don't want to.	Impossible
Teacher C	I feel a bit disappointed at times, I feel like **I had no choice but to just deal with it by using BM**. However, I cannot say I'm happy using BM in my class.	Impossible – Disappointed
Teacher D	It is **possible** to use **100% English for a very good class**, like the top and second-best class. They can understand our instructions, and they can do the task easily. As **for weak learners**, I **don't think it's possible to use 100% English** with them, because they don't have exposure to English.	Impossible
Teacher E	Personally, I like using full English in my class, but I have to teach mostly weak learners, so **I could not avoid using BM**.	Impossible
Teacher F	**It is impossible to fully use English**. Maybe only my **good class can learn with no problem**.	Impossible
Teacher G	I **can fully use English but it will take a long time to explain one simple thing**. It's not a problem for my good class.	Impractical
Teacher H	There **will be less participation from learners**. There is less involvement because: first, they don't understand; second, maybe the **learners will become less interested**. This is because there are some learners who don't understand even a single word, how can they respond?	Impossible

They said that it was impossible to establish a TL-only classroom since a lot of them were not really proficient in the language. Teacher A said if she were to talk to the learners using only English, the conversation would be similar to a discourse between a chicken and a duck. Teacher B lamented that some learners still refused to talk in the TL, although they were able to understand English.

Teachers D, E and F felt that it was possible to use only English in good classes, but it was less likely to be effective with classes that consisted of mostly weak learners. In addition, Teacher G mentioned that she had no problem with using only English, but it would take a very long time to explain something in the TL. Besides, Teacher H predicted less participation from the learners if the teachers avoided using BM in the lessons.

In general, all of the teachers felt that it was not possible to teach using only English and to avoid using BM in their classrooms since most of the learners were not really good in the language. They said even though it was their responsibility to maximize the use of TL, there were a few issues that prevented them from using only English. It was almost impossible to establish TL only classroom since all of them had to teach learners with different proficiency levels including the low proficiency learners.

Interview Question 3: Why did you use the micro-function of BM during the lesson?

Besides the above findings, the majority of the teachers (Teacher A, D, E, F, G and H) revealed that one of the main reasons they utilised BM in the teaching process was because they had to teach learners with low English proficiency. They stated that the weak learners had a hard time understanding the TL, hence causing them to use BM when making explanations.

Table 5. Teachers' responses to interview question 3

Teacher	Responses	Summary
Teacher A	I think it's **the learners' proficiency level**. Next, it is the mood of study and **mood of teacher**. Yes, if I'm well prepared, I can carry out more activities for them to engage in more English.	1) Learners' proficiency level 2) Teacher factor
Teacher B	Sometimes we think that we are using English, but actually we are using BM. Other times we feel that we are using BM, but actually we are using English. That is maybe the **teacher factor**. They feel a little bit confused, moody or emotional. But this is only for content. I think my weakness is when I start to use BM, I find it spontaneously easy to use BM after that.	Teacher factor
Teacher C	**The purpose is to explain things quickly**. If I can, I will explain in English. If I know they don't understand, I have to use a little bit of BM.	Save time
Teacher D	It is because of the **learners**. They have **poor understanding of English**. When they don't understand, I have to speak in BM with them.	Learners' proficiency level
Teacher E	Maybe it is because of the **learners' language level**. You can tell when they don't understand something you say. Generally, when I notice that they don't understand, I try to repeat it in English. If they still cannot understand, then I will use BM.	Learners' proficiency level
Teacher F	It is the **learners' proficiency level**. Also, it is **their attitude towards English**. If I want them to understand what I'm saying and the questions, I have to use BM. I try to explain many times in English. When I use English, they don't want to cooperate as much. Maybe this is because they are not exposed to English. The culture and also their environment are all in BM.	1) Learners' proficiency level 2) Learners' attitude
Teacher G	Basically, I use BM because **they don't understand**. If they understand, I think I will not use BM without a reason.	Learners' proficiency level – when they are unable to understand
Teacher H	It is because my weak classes have so **many learners from rural areas**, where the **exposure to English is very low,** so I have to use BM sometimes. However, with a good class, I can use English, because they understand simple English.	Learners' proficiency level

A few teachers (Teachers D, E and H) concurred with the idea that the learners' proficiency level was the major factor which caused them to switch to BM during English lessons. According to Teacher H, most of the learners came from rural areas with limited exposure to English. Indeed, Teacher G pointed out that there were no reasons for her to use BM unless the learners found it difficult to understand when the TL was used. Teacher F mentioned that the learners' attitude towards English could make things more complicated if teachers decided to use only the TL. Besides the student factor, Teachers A and B also highlighted that the utilisation of BM happened due to the teacher factors, such as mood or lack of preparation. Teacher B dismissed the idea that it only happened due to the learners' weaknesses. Rather, the teachers themselves could be the reason for the use of L1. Next, Teacher C suggested that she might use BM to explain things quickly to the learners.

In conclusion, the main factor affecting teachers to use L1 was the learners' proficiency level since all of the teachers had to teach English in classes consisted of mostly of weak learners. They stated that these weak learners had a hard time understanding the TL, causing them to use BM to explain something during the lesson. Besides that, a few major reasons, such as the learners' proficiency level and attitudes, teacher factor and time constraints could also affect the use of L1 in the teaching process.

Research Question 2:
A- Results from Interviews

The second part of the interview was done by asking the teachers to identify the specific functions of L1 that they utilised in BM. In order to do so, the teachers chose the L1 functions based on the 43 L1 functions provided by the researcher. The results would then be used to compare with the analysis of their lessons.

Table 6. Interview results

Domain	No.	Function	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8
Curriculum Access	1	Elicit meanings	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	2	Discuss content lesson	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
	3	Translate words or phrases	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	4	Give definition	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	5	Reinforce ideas	/	/	/	/		/	/	
	6	Reformulate ideas	/	/		/	/	/		
	7	Clarify concepts	/	/		/	/	/	/	/
	8	Provide example	/				/	/	/	
	9	Associate specific content with the culture	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	10	Explain specific sections of text	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	11	Compare different texts	/		/	/	/	/		/
	12	Clarify grammar rules	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
	13	Check learners' understanding on the text	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	14	Check learners' comprehension of a structure	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
	15	Ask L1 translation from learners	/	/	/	/		/		
	16	Elicit specific word in TL by using L1	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	17	Compare words or phrases in TL and L1		/			/		/	
	18	Present language structure		/						
	19	Teach language learning strategies								
Class Management	20	Monitor learners' progress	/	/			/			
	21	Introduce the lesson								
	22	Discuss the topic								
	23	Ask for help								
	24	Discipline the learners		/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	25	Give orders	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	26	Reprimand / give advice	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	27	Get learners' attention	/	/	/		/	/	/	/
	28	Discuss lesson procedures								
	29	Give instructions on activities	/	/	/		/	/	/	/
	30	Manage administrative affairs	/	/	/			/		
	31	Assist weak learner	/	/	/		/	/	/	/
	32	Compare tasks given		/			/		/	/
	33	Testing purposes								
Social & Interpersonal	34	Develop better rapport	/	/	/		/	/	/	/
	35	Share similar experience	/	/	/		/	/	/	/
	36	Motivate the learners	/	/			/	/	/	/
	37	Praise the learners		/			/	/	/	/
	38	Build greater personal warmth	/		/	/	/	/		/
	39	Encourage learners to participate	/	/	/		/			/
	40	Converse in L1 to alleviate learning anxiety	/							
	41	Provide humour	/	/			/		/	/
	42	Discuss learning								
	43	Talk about informal matters		/			/		/	

Based on the overall responses (see Table 6), the majority of the teachers admitted to using more than 10 micro-functions from the Curriculum Access domain. To be specific, Teachers A and B used 16 functions of L1, Teacher H identified 10 L1 functions and Teacher C identified 13 functions from this category. Other teachers (Teachers D, E and G) admitted to using 15 functions of BM. Coincidentally, all of the teachers agreed to using BM for 8 reasons, namely to elicit meanings, translate words or phrases, provide definition, associate specific content with the culture, explain specific sections of the text, clarify grammar rules, check learners' comprehension of a structure and elicit specific word in TL by using L1.

In terms of the Lesson Management domain, 5 teachers (Teachers A, C, F, G and H) admitted to using 7 L1 functions to manage their lessons. Meanwhile, Teacher D identified only three functions of BM while Teachers B and E used 11 and 8 L1 functions, respectively. Coincidentally, all of them admitted to using two similar functions, namely to give orders and reprimand the learners.

Lastly, the majority of the English teachers did not apply a lot of micro-functions from the Social & Interpersonal domain. It can be noted that they were using only a few functions, namely to develop a better rapport, to share similar experience, to motivate the learners and to talk about informal matters. In contrast, the other six unused micro-functions of BM were praising the learners, building greater personal warmth, encouraging participation, conversing in L1 to alleviate anxiety, providing humour and discussing about learning.

It can be inferred that all of the teachers admitted to utilising a lot of L1 in the teaching process, since they identified a total of 39 micro-functions. However, their responses during the interviews might not reflect their actual L1 usage in the classrooms. Therefore, it was necessary to compare their L1 usage with the results from the audio recordings of the lessons.

B-Results from the Audio Recordings of the Lessons

Table 3 shows the analysis from the lesson transcriptions in which the teachers mostly utilised BM to deliver the content lesson. The majority of the teachers frequently used BM for certain micro-functions of L1 from the first domain such as to elicit meanings, to translate words or phrases and to clarify concepts. Apart from that, the lesson transcriptions revealed the absence of some L1 functions, namely to provide definition, to compare different texts, to check comprehension of a structure, to ask for L1 translation from the learners, to elicit specific word in TL by using L1, to strengthen language structure and to nurture language learning strategies.

Table 7. Audio-recording lessons results

Domain	No.	Function	Participant							
			T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8
Curriculum Access	1	Elicit meanings	39	4	24	15	6	8	15	28
	2	Discuss content lesson	3	3	5	2	4	9	5	7
	3	Translate words or phrases	29	10	8	25	15	4	7	37
	4	Give definition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	5	Reinforce ideas	-	1	4	2	-	-	-	-
	6	Reformulate ideas	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
	7	Clarify concepts	12	2	6	3	13	3	8	17
	8	Provide example	2	1	8	1	9	-	4	3
	9	Associate specific content with the culture	-	-	8	-	1	-	-	1
	10	Explain specific sections of text	4	1	-	2	3	3	1	2
	11	Compare different texts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	12	Clarify grammar rules	1	-	-	-	-	16	-	-
	13	Check learners' understanding on the text	3	1	4	5	-	-	-	-
	14	Check learners' comprehension of a structure	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
	15	Ask for L1 translation from learners	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	16	Elicit specific word in TL by using L1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	17	Compare words or phrases in TL and L1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	18	Present language structure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	19	Nurture language learning strategies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Domain	No.	Function								
Lesson Management	20	Monitor learners' progress	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	21	Introduce the lesson	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	22	Discuss the topic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	23	Ask for help	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	24	Discipline the learners	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	25	Give orders	9	2	3	5	3	8	8	7
	26	Reprimand / give advice	4	2	-	-	1	1	3	10
	27	Get learners' attention	14	3	2	2	2	4	1	5
	28	Discuss lesson procedures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	29	Give instructions on activities	18	3	1	1	-	5	6	3
	30	Manage administrative affairs	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	31	Assist weak learner	11	-	1	-	4	3	17	3
	32	Compare tasks given	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
	33	Testing purposes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social & Interpersonal	34	Develop better rapport	3	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
	35	Share similar experience	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-
	36	Motivate the learners	5	2	-	-	-	3		
	37	Praise the learners	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	38	Build greater personal warmth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	39	Encourage learners to participate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	40	Converse in L1 to alleviate learning anxiety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	41	Provide humour	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	42	Discuss learning	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
	43	Talk about informal matters	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1

Regarding the micro-functions from the Lesson Management domain, teachers were recorded to be using BM to address classroom issues such as to give orders, to reprimand or advise the learners, to get the learners' attention, to provide instructions for activities and to assist the weak learners. On the other hand, the majority of the teachers did not utilise BM for several functions such as to begin the lesson, to discuss lesson direction or plan, to request help from the learners, to manage the discipline of the learners, to discuss classroom methodology, to solve administrative issues, to compare learners' work or tasks and for testing purposes.

Another significant finding is that most of the English teachers did not utilise a lot of BM to address Social & Interpersonal reasons. There were only 4 L1 functions that were used, namely to develop better rapport, to share similar experience, to motivate the learners and to talk about informal matters. In other words, the other 6 unused micro-functions of L1 were praising the learners, building greater personal warmth, encouraging learners to participate, conversing in L1 to alleviate anxiety, telling jokes in L1 and talking about learning.

In conclusion, it is very apparent that most of the teachers utilised a significant number of micro-functions from the Curriculum Access domain compared to the Lesson Management or Social & Interpersonal domains. Besides that, the occurrences of the micro-functions of L1 in the teachers' lesson were fairly similar. The reason for this could be the fact that all of the teachers taught classes that consisted of weak learners.

Research Question 3

The third research question is addressed by comparing the teachers' responses in the interviews with the actual utilisation of L1 in the lessons.

Table 8. Comparison of teachers' use of L1 during the interview and the audio recordings of the lessons

Domain	No.	Function	Interview	Audio-recording Lessons
Curriculum Access	1	Elicit meanings	/	/
	2	Discuss content lesson	/	/
	3	Translate words or phrases	/	/
	4	Give definition	/	
	5	Reinforce ideas	/	/
	6	Reformulate ideas	/	/
	7	Clarify concepts	/	/
	8	Provide example	/	/
	9	Associate specific content with the culture	/	/
	10	Explain certain sections of text	/	/
	11	Compare different texts	/	
	12	Clarify grammar rules	/	/
	13	Check learners' understanding on the text	/	/
	14	Check learners' comprehension of a structure	/	/
	15	Ask for L1 translation from learners	/	/
	16	Elicit specific word in TL by using L1	/	
	17	Compare words or phrases in TL and L1	/	
	18	Present language structure	/	
	19	Nurture language learning strategies		
Lesson Management	20	Monitor learners' progress	/	/
	21	Introduce the lesson	/	
	22	Discuss the topic	/	
	23	Ask for help	/	
	24	Discipline the learners	/	/
	25	Give orders	/	/
	26	Reprimand / give advice	/	/
	27	Get learners' attention	/	/
	28	Discuss lesson procedures		
	29	Give instructions on activities	/	/
	30	Manage administrative affairs	/	/
	31	Assist weak learner	/	/
	32	Compare tasks given	/	/
	33	Testing purposes		
Social & Interpersonal	34	Develop better rapport	/	/
	35	Share similar experience	/	/
	36	Motivate the learners	/	/
	37	Praise the learners	/	
	38	Build greater personal warmth	/	
	39	Encourage learners to participate	/	
	40	Converse in L1 to alleviate learning anxiety	/	
	41	Provide humour	/	
	42	Discuss learning		/
	43	Talk about informal matters	/	/

Based on teachers' positive responses in the interviews, it can be concluded that their perspectives of L1 matched with their usage of the micro-functions in the lessons. They said BM should be used in the classroom to assist teaching the lessons content, to manage the class, and for social and interpersonal reasons. As a matter of fact, they did utilise L1 from these domains when teaching English. However, the only difference was the teachers mostly believed that they had utilised a lot of L1, while in fact, they used significantly less L1 functions in the lessons. The interviews demonstrated that the English teachers admitted using 39 of the L1 functions, while the lessons demonstrated only 27 functions.

To highlight the differences, it can be noted that during the interview sessions, most of the teachers identified 18 L1 functions from the Curriculum Access domain while the recorded

lessons revealed that they utilised only 13 micro-functions. In terms of Lesson Management, the teachers admitted using 11 micro-functions while the lessons revealed that they only used 9 from 14 functions. Regarding the Social and Interpersonal domain, the teachers admitted incorporating 9 functions of BM, while the researcher noted 5 micro-functions in the recorded lessons. In conclusion, the English teachers' beliefs actually corresponded to their use of L1 in the classroom.

Discussion

In general, the English teachers in this study supported the use of BM in teaching English on the premise of helping low proficiency learners to understand the TL. They were teaching English in areas in Pahang where English does not play a communicative role in the community. Thus, considering their school contexts, it is not surprising that the teachers utilised BM to support the teaching of English. Besides using L1 to help the weak learners to understand the lesson, they also revealed other critical reasons for using L1, such as the learners' behaviours, time restriction, and teachers' preparation. According to them, it was impossible to deliver the lesson effectively without the use of BM, especially in the presence of the low proficiency learners. Nonetheless, they were still very concerned with the utilisation of L1 in the teaching process.

The teachers' positive responses on L1's usage to teach L2 were similar to the findings in previous studies such as Ja'afar & Maarof (2016) and Tsagari & Giannikas (2018). It was reported that the L2 teachers responded positively towards the use of L1 in the L2 lessons and believed that systematic use of L1 would not reduce the learners' exposure to the TL. In addition, the English teachers utilised mainly the L1 functions from the Curriculum Access domain, while using less of those from the Lesson Management and Social & Interpersonal domains. Interestingly, based on the interviews and the recorded lessons, the teachers applied the same L1 functions from the Content Management domain. This indicates that it was necessary for the teachers to use BM to control the learners' behaviours, to clarify instructions, or to monitor the learners' progress.

Another significant implication of this study is that the teachers' perspective of L1 was proven to be similar to how they utilised it in the L2 teaching process. All of the English teachers stated that they mostly used BM to help learners with low proficiency to learn English. Based on the recorded lessons, this was in fact true. The utilisation of BM occurred in classes that consisted of a lot of low proficiency learners. Therefore, this finding was contradictory with Farrel (2019), Tsagari & Georgiou (2016), and Imran & Wyatt (2015) who claimed that L2 teachers' beliefs on L1 were different from their practice.

In short, the utilisation of the micro-functions of L1 by English teachers in their day-to-day lessons happens due to a few critical reasons such as the students' proficiency level, the students' behaviours, time restriction, teachers' preparation, and limited strategies to address students' comprehension problems. Nonetheless, L2 teachers must try to maximise TL and only use L1 after explaining in the TL. Lastly, to avoid overusing L1 to teach English, teachers can adopt various strategies to increase the learners' interest to learn the language and to avoid dependency on their L1.

CONCLUSION

In essence, the results reveal significant findings in terms of the teachers' actual use of L1, which similar to their teaching practice. In addition, the English teachers also applied BM for certain functions that can assist them in teaching English, particularly when teaching the low proficiency learners. Contrary to some findings from previous studies, L2 teachers were noted to be using more L1 than their initial views. English teachers' use of micro-functions of L1 in their day-to-day lessons is influenced by a few crucial factors such as the learners' proficiency level, time restriction, and teacher factors. It is almost impossible to deliver lesson effectively without the use of BM, especially if they have to teach low proficiency learners. Regardless of that, the use of TL shall be encouraged by all teachers to ensure that the learners can experience an English environment in the classroom.

Although some scholars do not recommend legitimising the use of L1, the initial step is to recognise the roles of L1 in L2 classrooms. This is especially true for learners at the initial stage of learning English, as they are subconsciously or consciously applying their knowledge of BM to make sense of the TL. Eventually, when they no longer need the assistance of BM, they can become independent learners. There are a few recommendations for future studies regarding the use of L1 in a L2 classroom. Since BM's usage in teaching English was investigated in this study, researchers can further investigate the use of L1 functions in teaching other L2. Apart from that, future researchers can also try to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall 43 L1 functions for the teaching process.

To sum up, the issue related to the use of L1 by L2 teachers implies that they need assistance in improving their teaching process and overcoming the challenges in delivering the lesson content and TL knowledge. Using L1 based on instinct or habit should be avoided as it may result in the overuse of the language. Hence, L2 teachers' awareness regarding the use of L1 is crucial to overcome the feelings of anxiety among learners and to identify steps to resolve any problems faced by the learners in L2 learning (Spring & Shewack, 2018).

REFERENCES

Nordquist, R. (2020). What Is a Second Language (L2)? Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com/english-4688281

UNESCO. (2003). Education in a multilingual world: UNESCO education position paper. France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Retrieved from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000129728

Cook, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*(57), 402-423. doi:https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.57.3.402

Fortune, J. (2012). Fortune, J. The forbidden fruit: Using the mother tongue in a Bogota university EFL programme. *Colombia Applied Linguistics Journal, 14*(2), 70-87.

Lightbrown, P., & Spada, N. (2006). *How language are learned.* (Third ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Eldridge, J. (1996). Code-switching in a Turkish secondary school. *ELT Journal , 50*(4), 303-311. doi:doi.org/10.1093/elt/50.4.303

Krashen, S. (1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.* Oxford, CA: Pergamon Institute of English.

Butzkamm, W. (2003). We only learn language once. The role of the mother tongue in FL classrooms: Death of a dogma. . *Language Learning Journal , 28*, 29-39. doi:doi.org/10.1080/09571730385200181

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Atkinson, D. (1993). *Teaching Monolingual Classes.* London: Longman.

Harbord, J. (1992). The use of the mother tongue in the classroom. . *ELT Journal , 46*(4), 350–355. doi:doi.org/10.1093/elt/46.4.350

Canagarajah, A. (1995). Functions of codeswitching in ESL classrooms: Socialising bilingualism in Jaffna. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development , 16*(3), 173-195. doi:doi.org/10.1080/01434632.1995.9994599

Sali, P. (2014). An analysis of the teachers' use of L1 in Turkish EFL classrooms. *System, 42*, 308–318. doi:doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.12.021

Shabir, M. (2017). Student-teachers' beliefs on the use of L1 in EFL classroom: A global perspective. . *English Language Teaching, 10*(4), 45-52. doi:doi.org/ 10.5539/elt.v10n4p45

Jumal, N. A., AlSaqqaf , A., & Nik Mohamed, N. (2019). Code switching in Malaysian secondary ESL classroom: A preliminary study from Sabah. *International Journal of Asian Social Science, 9*(5), 327-334. doi:10.18488/JOURNAL.1.2019.95.327.334

Krish, P., Mustafa , S., & Pakrudin, F. (2019). Teaching speaking skills: Practices and techniques in rural schools. *Journal of Education and Practice, 10*(29), 117-123. doi:10.7176/JEP/10-29-15

700

Ja'afar, N. S., & Maarof, N. (2016). Teachers' beliefs of code switching in the ESL Classroom. *Open Journal of Social Sciences, 4*, 212-222. doi:10.4236/jss.2016.44030

Farrell, T. (2019). 'My training has failed me': Inconvenient truths about second language teacher education (SLTE). *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language, 22*(4), 1-16. Retrieved from http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume22/ej88/ej88a1/

Abideen, J. Z. (2004). The use of Malay as a support language to teach English. . Master Thesis, National University of Malaysia.

Selamat, J. T. (2014). Code Switching in the Malaysian ESL Classroom. Master Thesis, University of Otago. Retrieved from https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10523/4909/SelamatJoannaT2014MA.pdf?sequence=1

Imran, S., & Wyatt, M . (2015). Pakistani university English teachers' cognitions and classroom practices regarding their use of the learners' first languages. *Asian EFL Journal, 17*(1), 138-179.

Spring, R., & Shewack, E. (2018). The importance of L1 awareness in teaching English as a foreign language: Examples from Korean and Japanese EFL learners. *Bulletin of the Institute for Excellence in Higher Education Tohoku University, 4*(3), 269-276.

Ferguson, G. (2003). Classroom code-switching in post-colonial contexts: Functions, attitudes and policies. *AILA Review, 16*(1), 38 - 51. doi: https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.16.05fer

Lai Ping, F. (2016). Examining the functions of L1 use through teacher and student interactions in an adult migrant English classroom. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 22*(6), 1-16. doi:10.1080/13670050.2016.1257562

Tsagari, D., & Georgiou, E. (2016). Re-evaluating the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom: Students vs. teachers. *Mediterranean Language Review, 23*, 101-126. doi:10.13173/medilangrevi.23.2016.0101

Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook. (2014). London: Sage.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2018). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Tsagari, D., & Giannikas, C. N. (2018). Re-evaluating the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom: Students vs. teachers. T. *Applied Linguistics Review, 11*(1), 1-31. doi:10.1515/applirev-2017-0104

APPENDIX

Appendix A Source and the development of interview items

No	Source (Study)	Original Item No	Original item	Adaptation for current study (After verification and pilot testing)	New Item No	Theory
1	Abideen (2004)	6	Do you think the support from Bahasa Melayu helps the students to understand English lessons more effectively? Why? How?	Do you think the support from Bahasa Melayu helps the students to understand English lessons more effectively? Why or how?		Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP)
				How important is BM to teach English to your students	1	
		10	To what extent/How much of the L2 lessons would your students understand when it is conducted using only English? Could you explain? If so, what is your solution?	How do you feel about using only English?	2	Mother Tongue as a Base of Reference
2	Selamat (2014)	4	What are the factors which you consider when using code switching during English lessons?	What are the factors which you consider when using BM during English lessons?		Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP)
				Why did you use the micro-function of BM during the lessons?	3	

701

Appendix B Checklist of audio-recording lessons

No	Micro-Function	Lesson	Reference/ Evidence from NVivo 12
1	Eliciting (meaning)		
2	Review content of (text / lesson)		
3	Translating words and sentences		
4	Definition of terms		
5	Explanation/reinforcing by repetition		
6	Explanation/reinforcing by reformulation (to express something precisely)		
7	Explanation/reinforcing by clarification		
8	Explanation/reinforcing by exemplification (illustrate)		
9	Relate aspects / ideas to be culturally relevant		
10	Clarify the meaning of certain sections of text		
11	Differentiate text by providing comment		
12	Explaining a grammatical item		
13	Checking comprehension of a listening or reading text		
14	Checking comprehension of a structure (phrase or sentence)		
15	Allowing or inviting learners to give a translation of a word as a comprehension check		
16	Eliciting vocabulary by giving the L1 equivalent		
17	Comparison with L1 for irrelevant / illogical translation		
18	Presentation and reinforcement of language		
19	Development of useful learning strategies		
20	Monitoring		
21	Opening the class		
22	Discuss lesson direction / plan		
23	Request help		
24	Managing discipline		
25	Teacher commands		
26	Teacher warning / scolding / advice		
27	To gain learners' attention and focus		
28	Discussion of classroom methodology		
29	Giving instructions for a task to be carried out		
30	Asking or giving administrative information		
31	Giving individual help to a weaker student		
32	Comparison between learners' work or discussion on work done		
33	Teacher use of L1 for testing		
34	Establishing rapport		
35	Drawing upon shared expression		
36	Encouragement		
37	Compliment		
38	Create greater personal warmth		
39	Encourage and elicit learners' participation		
40	Chatting in L1 before the start of the lesson to reduce student anxiety		
41	Telling jokes in L1		
42	Talking about learning		
43	Unofficial interactions (off record)		