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First language usage in multilingual international school classrooms: a study of teacher beliefs and student attitudes

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master

in

Applied Linguistics

at

Massey University

Palmerston North, New Zealand

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2019

Abstract

International schools offer a unique style of education and are comprised of a diverse student body and teaching faculty in terms of both language and culture. Many of these schools have both students and teachers who are bilingual or multilingual. This means that English is the *Lingua Franca* as the classrooms have students and teachers who do not have English as their first language (L1). In language teaching education there has been a lot of discussion in regards to students using their L1. L1 usage is often viewed as an impediment to gaining English language fluency, although many now view L1 usage more positively than in previous years. In many schools, the place and role of students' L1 is defined within the school language policy; this may be in keeping with government laws and policies as to how schools need to support language learners.

This thesis explores the beliefs and practices of a small group of teachers towards students using their L1 in the classroom and how these beliefs influence their classroom practice. The data was gathered using a qualitative approach. Additionally, an intervention period provided an opportunity for students to trial L1 strategies to see if they perceived them as effective, while also examining if the strategies had an impact on teachers' beliefs and practices. The setting for this research was within a range of multilingual classrooms in an International school in Doha, Qatar.

Results indicate that while most teachers are aware that L1 use is beneficial and that there should be some encouragement to allow students to use it, many teachers have a number of concerns regarding students using their L1. The teachers were also unaware of the school's position on L1 use as they did not know anything about the school's language policy. The student responses revealed that students not only enjoyed using the L1 strategies during the intervention period, but found them to be beneficial both in terms of their learning and improving their sense of well-being within the classroom. To conclude, this thesis makes a number of recommendations on how to improve students' class engagement through L1 usage, as well as stressing the importance of all teachers knowing and understanding the language policy of the school in which they are working. Furthermore, the school has a responsibility to ensure that its language policy is reflective of current language teaching pedagogy and that all teachers are adequately trained to work with EAL (English as an Additional Language) students.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank the participants in this research. To the teachers who shared their beliefs and experiences so openly with me during the interviews and were willing to trial something new in their lessons, thank you and I appreciate your time and interest in my study. Thank you to the students whose voices helped to enrich the data and make it more valuable. I am also grateful to the school, where this research was conducted, for fully supporting me and allowing me to share some of the results during the early stages of this research.

I was fortunate to have two supervisors who were immensely patient, positive and encouraging. Without their support and guidance this thesis would not have been completed. Thank you, Dr. Gillian Skyrme and Dr. Arianna Berardi-Wilshire.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. My husband has patiently sat by my side throughout this process and made sure I did not give up on the many occasions when I thought it was time to. I hope that by completing this, I have inspired my daughter in her studies and shown her the value of being a student at any stage in life.

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List of abbreviations/acronyms

EAL	English as an Additional Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learner
ELF	English as Lingua Franca
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
HOD	Head of Department
IBDP	International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MYP	Middle Years Programme
NLE	Native Language Enrichment
TL	Target Language

Chapter One: *Introduction*

1.1 First language usage in multilingual classrooms

As the number of expatriate families has increased globally, so has the need to provide education for the school-aged children of these mobile families. The consequence of this is a rise in international schools in places which previously only had a few of these schools, as well as new schools being built in entirely new locations. In addition to providing school places for children, these schools have also provided new teaching opportunities for teachers in numerous destinations. These teachers may or may not arrive with the required skill set that they will need to be effective in the classroom. One of the main challenges that teachers will face in the international sector is the range of languages that their students will have as their first language (L1).

In the international school sector, both teachers and students are likely to have diverse linguistic backgrounds; each with unique experiences with learning another language, such as growing up bilingual or having been placed in an immersion environment. In the classroom, teachers may be presented with a group of students sharing the same L1 or they might encounter a number of English as Additional Language (EAL) students who all have different first languages. Additionally, there will be varying levels of English that these students have, which means that they will all require different degrees of language support in order to effectively access the curriculum. Individual learning styles will also mean that different strategies will be more effective with some students than others. A new teacher arriving at an international school may, therefore, be faced with not only familiarising themselves with a new curriculum, but will have to differentiate their teaching for the range of language learners and learning styles within their classrooms. This will often require being able to alter their previous teaching practice to suit their new setting.

Shifts in pedagogical practices in recent years can add an additional challenge for teachers, as they may not be aware of current research that has altered best practice approaches towards language learners. That means that even if a teacher did have some training to support EAL students, it may not reflect the most up-to-date teaching innovations.

Researchers themselves range in their opinions of how, or even if, students should use their L1 in the classroom. Within the communicative language teaching approach, some believe that L1 usage “hampers” TL achievement (Swan, 1985). Others may take a more judicial approach and at times “allow” L1 for specific purposes (Atkinson, 1993; Harmer, 2007).

One of the most pressing issues is around students achieving academic proficiency in their target language (TL) in order to be successful in a curriculum that is not taught in their L1. At the forefront of conducting research in the argument for allowing L1 in the classroom is Cummins (1986, 1992, 2005, 2007). Cummins’ work has challenged previous ideologies about the place and value of L1, presenting the concept of the L1 as a resource in the classroom for learning academic content and providing evidence of strategies that can aid EAL students in a range of settings. This, according to Cummins, also helps students to maintain their identity and he also proposes that students should always continue to study in their L1 to enhance overall learning.

So where does this leave the classroom teacher in an international school, who is faced with making quick decisions that affect student learning without truly understanding the implications of these decisions or even their own beliefs that have influenced them? This research seeks to find out the beliefs and practices of a small group of teachers who are frequently faced with these decisions in multilingual classrooms in the international sector.

Schools play a crucial role in supporting teachers by providing professional development/training opportunities and having a clearly communicated language policy that is updated regularly to reflect the most recent changes to approaches in language teaching. For this reason, the school’s language policy was examined as it has the potential to play a crucial role in communicating the school’s position towards supporting language learners (including the place of the L1) to the teaching faculty, students, parents and other key stakeholders.

This research involved both students and teachers at an international school in Doha, Qatar. The classrooms at this school can be defined as multilingual due to the varied languages spoken by both teachers and students. The school is a full International Baccalaureate (IB) school and the students involved in this research were either in the Diploma Programme (DP) or the High School Diploma Programme (the IB curriculum will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2 of the Literature review).

This research aims to fill a gap in current literature. There has been a lot of research into bilingual schools (particularly in the United States) and in the tertiary setting, but very little in the international school setting where the dynamics of both the students and teachers mean it is a very culturally and linguistically rich environment.

1.2 My personal interest in the topic

I spent a considerable amount of my schooling in the international sector. My family and I moved to Hong Kong when I was six years old and I attended what was then a very British primary school, followed by a similarly British secondary school. At that time, I do not remember languages being a valued part of the curriculum despite the presence of a large number of students who did not have English as their first language. I have always felt that this was a missed opportunity on my part to learn another language, however I am very aware that most of my daily interactions were in English, despite living in a predominantly Chinese-speaking country. In other words, during the colonial time it was possible to have only a few interactions in Cantonese.

As an adult, I returned to Hong Kong for my first teaching post and was completely unprepared for how to work with local Chinese students who had little knowledge of English. One of the first rules I implemented was an English-only rule in the classroom, purely in an attempt to gain some sense of control over the 40-45 students that were the average class size at the school I worked at.

Several years later, having taught in both Egypt and Qatar, I began studying for my Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics and became aware of the debate around the use of students' L1 in the classroom. I began to notice that many students, parents and teachers had strong beliefs on this as well.

During the course of my study, I had one assignment where I had to show pictures of my classroom environment. I had included two photos which had on them a set of rules that my students had decided on at the start of the year (see Figures 1 and 2). The students worked on creating the set of rules together and created posters to put on the wall so they could remember them. They were tasked with creating two sets of rules: one set of rules was 'general rules' that could be applicable in any classroom (see Figure 2) and the other was a set of rules that were specifically for the EAL classroom (see Figure 1 and 2). Two students in

this group shared the same L1, while the other three did not. One of the rules that the students came up with was to 'speak in English' (see the second picture of Figure 2). It did not occur to me to challenge the students on any of the rules that they had created and I remember thinking that if everyone spoke in English it would mean that English would be spoken more often, achieving more time in the target language (TL). I also thought that as we were a small group we would be more cohesive if we all spoke in this one shared language.

My supervisor at the time questioned this rule and asked me to consider if this was the best practice to have in the classroom. On the basis of this I did a mini project to try and better understand if, and how, my students were using their L1 in the classroom to help them. I also started listening more intently to the conversations around me about L1 usage as well as investigating my school's position on this. This led me into the Master's programme to continue research in this area, which I have become immensely passionate about.

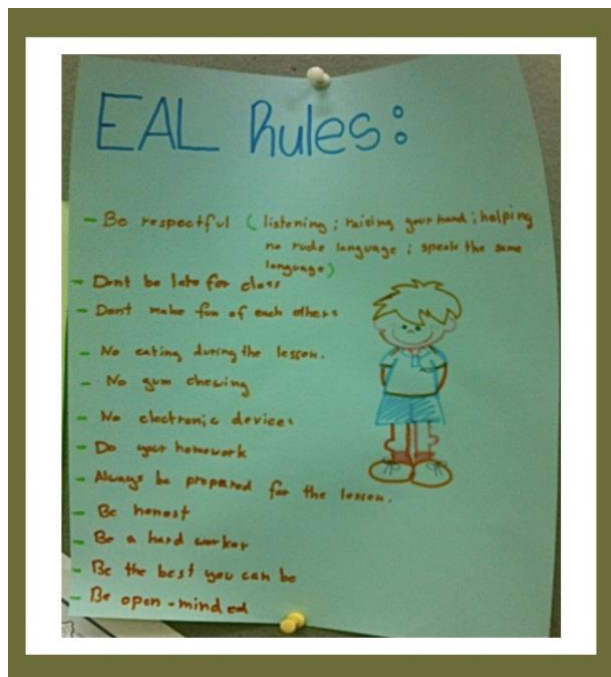


Figure 1: General EAL class rules

Note: Students in my class created these rules together in a small group during their EAL lesson



Figure 2: Language learning rules for the EAL classroom

Note: These photographs show the EAL rules and the general rules that were created by students in my class. They worked in small groups to come up with these rules. Each poster has then been enlarged in the subsequent images.

1.3 Aims of this research

As I began to research more about L1 usage, I realised how many of my own teaching practices were connected to my own beliefs about language and underpinned by my experiences as a language learner. Knowing how these beliefs and experiences had influenced my classroom practice, I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of how my teaching colleagues felt towards students using their L1 in their classrooms, and how their own beliefs and experiences shaped their practices.

Part of the ethics requirements of this research was to have permission from the school where I was working and conducting the research. The school was supportive of my research, but encouraged me to try to include a way of supporting students as an additional component to what I was already planning to do. So, I shifted the initial focus of this research into one which included an intervention period that provided L1 strategies for students to use. This meant that I not only had the full approval of the school to do my research, but I was able to add an additional dimension to the research, the student voice, while trying to understand if providing specific strategies could impact teacher beliefs.

The final stage of the research was to establish if the strategies had any impact on teachers' classroom practices, which also gave teachers an opportunity to amend any of their initial responses from the first round of interviews. I have always valued reflection as an invaluable aspect of teaching and having two rounds of interviews meant that I provided this opportunity to the teacher participants.

The main aims of this research, therefore, were to gain a deeper understanding into teachers' beliefs and practices about students using L1 during their classes, while the purpose of providing L1 strategies to students during the intervention period was to establish if students found them useful while simultaneously seeing if they had an impact on the teachers' classroom practice. As such, the research questions for this research are as follows:

1. *What are teachers' beliefs towards students using their L1 in a multilingual classroom in an English medium secondary school in Qatar and how do these beliefs influence their classroom practice?*
2. *How can the use of L1 strategies, during an intervention period, impact teachers' classroom practice and support EAL students learning in an English medium school?*

1.4 Terminology used

One of the unexpected challenges I had when writing this thesis was to decide on which terms to use. There is a range of terminology employed when describing how students acquire a second language and it became an important consideration for me to make sure I chose the term that was true to the essence of learning another language and remained consistent in my application of this. I did not want to use terminology that somehow suggested that being a speaker of more than one language represented a deficit, as this seemed connected to the idea of "subtractive bilingualism" (see section 2.5 of the literature review for a more detailed discussion and explanation of this term) and therefore gave a negative connotation to what was being described, or terms that suggested a language hierarchy.

This section discusses the terminology that I encountered through my readings, a description of each term and my rationale on deciding which one was best suited to this research. The terms discussed are as follows:

- ESL (English as a Second Language)
- EFL (English as a Foreign Language)
- EAL (English as an Additional/Associate Language)
- ELL (English Language Learner)
- Native and non-native speakers

1.4.1 ESL and EFL

ESL and EFL are often used interchangeably, but have quite different implications in terms of their definitions. The term ESL emerged from EFL in the 1950s and during this time these terms were distinct from each other and did not necessarily refer to a second language (Nayar, 1997). EFL was used to describe a learning situation when students learnt English at schools (or language centres) in countries where it did not have a status as an official language or use in daily life. That means that EFL students were (and in many cases still are) unlikely to encounter this “foreign” language outside their classrooms. This is similar to how students in British schools learn French or German in that unless they travel to these countries, they would be unlikely to hear or speak this language in everyday life. The word “foreign” was previously used to describe English language learners in these countries, but as English was often entrenched in both the history (particularly so of countries which used to form part of the British Empire) and the function of daily lives (in both work and education), it became important to make this distinction (Nayar, 1997). ESL can be thought of as a language of communication within the country it is being learnt in and at a global level, as opposed to EFL, which is often learnt in the isolation of the classroom. Kachru (1986) has argued that both of these terms denote sociolinguistic contexts more than they do applied linguistic situations and this shows that it is important to make the distinction between the two.

In contrast to EFL, ESL was used (and still often is) for learning situations when students learn English in countries where English has some sort of status either as an official language or one which is widely spoken e.g. Singapore, The Philippines and India.

1.4.2 EAL

Recently, the term EAL has emerged and this is in recognition that it might be a student's second, third, fourth (or even more) language. This term seems more fitting for an international school where students may come from a range of language learning backgrounds including being bilingual or plurilingual before entering the school. Nayar (1997) asserts that "the acceptance of EAL as a situation and discipline, separate and different from ESL and EFL, will be socio-politically and pedagogically significant for English in the world" (p. 31).

In terms of the logistics at the school level, it can often be confusing at the time of admissions as to which language is the student's L1. I have met students who have a high level of proficiency in spoken English (one parent often has English as their L1) but they have never been educated in an English-speaking school. The consequence of this is that there is a significant difference between how these students sound and their true academic abilities in English. This means that their proficiency in everyday oral English can mask deficiencies in other areas, most often in their written work. This impacts their ability to function in the demands of being in an English-medium school; it is not the students' academic ability that is in question (although in some cases teachers may perceive it as this) but their ability to express their academic ability in English. This also has implications for subject choices in the school as students may be expected into subjects which are beyond their ability as they are unable to access them with their level of English. This also has further consequences for staffing. In this situation neither ESL or EFL would be appropriate terms for these students. The term EAL with the word "additional" suggests adding to something. This creates a more positive approach to viewing languages; it is more holistic and less about taking something away (Webster & Lu, 2012).

I have mostly chosen the term EAL for this research as it does cover this broader range of situations and it was more fitting to the context where I was teaching at the time this research was conducted. Additionally, my title at the school was as an EAL teacher and the students were known as having EAL support and/or being EAL students. For this reason, it seemed appropriate to use this term as it would be known by the teacher participants and therefore would make the interviews run more smoothly.

1.4.3 ELL

Although, as mentioned, I have predominantly used the term EAL in some instances I have used ELL. This term is becoming increasingly popular and what is appealing about using it is that it “represents a neutral position with a focus on the student and learning context” (Webster & Lu, 2012, p. 89). This is why I have used ELL and language learners in a similar way.

1.4.4 Native and non-native

The next term to consider is the use of native and non-native. The school, where the research was conducted, had a Native Language Enrichment (NLE) programme and at the start of this research I used the term non-native but was not comfortable with how it sounded. It had a suggestion of being deficient in something and that being “native” is somehow what one is striving for. At the time of writing this, the school is currently reconsidering the use of the word “native” and changing the name of the NLE programme.

The term “native-speakerism” exists within English Language Teaching (ELT) denoting an ideology that is “characterised by the belief that ‘native-speaker’ teachers represent a ‘Western culture’ from which springs the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology” (Holliday, 2006, p. 385). This strongly suggests that there is a hierarchy in terms of having ‘native-speaker’ teachers above others. I have worked with both types of teachers and have seen (what I believe to be) highly effective ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ teachers. When I worked in Hong Kong, I relied on my Chinese colleagues to not only help me understand the local culture, but to also help with teaching grammar as they were grammar experts who knew how to teach in a way that the local Chinese students would connect with. Working in an international school, I have encountered many ‘non-native’ teachers in a range of subjects. In their classrooms, English became the *Lingua Franca* (ELF) as they and their students had a range of L1s. ELF has increasingly been used when there is communication in English between people who have different first languages (Seidlhofer, 2005).

1.4.5 Home language, heritage language or L1

The list of terms discussed in this section is not exhaustive and there is also a lot of discussion over the term L1 as opposed to home language or even heritage language as it is more frequently referred to nowadays. However, for the purpose of this research I have chosen to use L1 as again this was what was used within the school context (this made it easier for interview purposes and on the student questionnaires) and this term was used by Tan (2015) whose work inspired me to conduct my own research but in a different setting.

Near the end of writing this thesis, I attended a conference at which Jim Cummins presented. His view was that we should be using the term “multilingual students” as it shows students as being “defined by talents and intellectual/linguistic accomplishments” as opposed to ELL/EAL and ESL which are “defined by presumed linguistic limitations”. I felt that this was a strong argument, but it was too late to change the terms in this thesis at this late stage.

1.5 Thesis overview

This thesis consists of six chapters. After this introductory chapter, is the literature review. This chapter discusses both past and present literature on L1 usage, as well as considering the increase of English as a medium of instruction in the international school sector. The curriculum of the school, where the research was conducted, is also examined as is the importance of a school’s language policy.

Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter. This chapter explains the research approach that was used for this study; providing the benefits of qualitative research for delving into teacher beliefs and practices whilst also considering the limitations. The data collection methods are described in detail, as are the ethical considerations of this research.

The next chapter presents the findings of the research. The school policy was an area to be researched and examined and this begins this chapter. This is followed by the responses from both the teacher and student participants, organised according to the themes that emerged from their responses.

Chapter 5 is a discussion based on the findings as well as trying to consider them in light of the research that was presented in the literature review. Chapter 6 is the conclusion of this

thesis. This chapter reconsiders the research questions (presented above) in reference to the findings. It then considers the limitations of this research as well as making suggestions for further research in this subject field.

Chapter Two: *Literature review*

2.1 Predominance of English

English has increasingly become known as a global language and now has a “special” status in over 70 countries (Crystal, 2003; Nunan, 2003; Tavakoli & Hasrati, 2018). As more people have learnt English, first language English speakers are now outnumbered by EAL speakers, which shows the prevalence of English as a favoured second language (Árva & Medgyes, 2000). According to Crystal (2003) English is now taught in over 100 countries and is the most widely taught foreign language.

The reasons for English becoming so widely spoken could be attributed to geographical-historical factors and socio-cultural factors. Many English-speaking countries have historical ties to the UK, as being either former British colonies or part of the Commonwealth, which explains many of the previous factors. Additionally, the increasing powers of both the UK and the USA contributed to the rise of English at the global level (Crystal, 2003).

English can be seen as being part of the era of modernisation and change and the leader of popular culture (Pennycook, 2017). Additionally, it is linked to changing modes of communication such as messaging and the internet (Pennycook, 2017). Subsequently, English is viewed as the modern language of communication and is crucial for those wanting to compete at a global level. However, more recently English has been moving away from being dependent on the UK and the USA, as there are many who have English as their second language. The outcome of this is the emergence of what has been called “Globish”; a simplified version of English, adapting to modernisation that has made it an effective tool of communication (McCrum, 2011).

2.2 The perceived advantages of learning English

English has not only increased its status as the most widely taught second language, but is also viewed as the medium of international communication in other areas such as knowledge, education and progress (Evans & Morrison, 2011). This has led to the perception of English having an elevated status/prestige as it can be seen as a way to expand employment prospects (Mark, 2000).

As a result of this elevated status has come an increase in English-medium schools around the world. Within these schools, there has often been an English-only approach adopted. This comes from the view that the target language (TL) should be promoted over the use of the L1 in the classroom (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). The place of the L1 will be discussed in more detail below as the increase in English international schools will be considered in more depth.

2.3 Increase in English-medium international schools

International schools were originally created to cater for expatriates' and diplomats' children to ensure they could get a 'Western' style education that would enable them to fit back into their school system in their home country (Wechsler, 2017). However, recently these schools have gained a new clientele and subsequent purpose in "educating the children of wealthy locals so those kids can compete for spots in western colleges and, eventually, positions at multinational companies" (Wechsler, 2017). The shift in this demographic has been substantial: 20 years ago, there were only 1000 English language international schools worldwide; today there are more than 8000 international schools, serving 4.5 million students with 420,000 teachers.

The definition of an international school can be debatable. Most international schools deliver a curriculum in English (or at least partially) outside an English-speaking country (Brummitt & Keeling, 2013). There are several exceptions to this; one of these is the presence of American schools in the UK and British schools in countries where English is one of the official languages. These schools would offer an international curriculum as opposed to a British or national one. There are also other kinds of international schools that support education in other languages. For example, to cater for the well-established French community in London there are several French schools as well as French-English bilingual schools.

Asia has the largest number of international schools, with the Middle East having the most rapid expansion since the early 2000s. Qatar, and other Gulf states, have seen an enormous number of schools develop. In 2000 there were 21 international schools in Qatar, but by 2013 this had increased to 112 with many more still being built (Brummitt & Keeling, 2013).

Many parents send their children to international schools as they are living away from their home country yet want their children to receive an education in their L1/English. However, there has been an increasing number of local families who now have their children educated in an international school. This is because of the perception that they will be educated amongst the “elite” which will help them build contacts for their future (Sharma, 2016). In fact, British expatriate children are no longer the majority in international schools; in many countries up to 80% of the school’s population now consists of local children (Harper, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, the curriculum delivered in International schools may be British if outside of the UK or an international one. Previous demand for the British curriculum has shifted and now up to 45% of international schools are choosing (either all or part) curricula such as the International Baccalaureate (IB), the International Primary Curriculum or the Cambridge International Programmes (Brummitt & Keeling, 2013). The next section will consider the development of one of these, the IB, in more detail.

2.4 IB schools

The International Baccalaureate (International Baccalaureate, 2019) is a curriculum that is now delivered in many international schools and has become increasingly popular as schools want to offer a curriculum that is more reflective of their clientele. It offers an alternative to both the British curriculum and the national curriculum that is offered where the international school is located. The students who were the focus of this research were enrolled in the IB programme, a qualification covering the final two years of secondary education. As the school where this research took place is an IB school, it is important to understand the history and development of this curriculum.

2.4.1 History and development

The International Baccalaureate project is a small-scale experiment in international education designed to solve very limited problems at present facing International Schools. Could it lead to something more substantial? (Peterson, 1977, p. 122)

The initial concept of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme was to develop a secondary curriculum that would meet the needs of an increasingly mobile group of multi-nationals throughout Europe. Prior to the IB there was no single curriculum that would work in the then separate European nations. According to Renaud (1974), the IB was

developed specifically for three types of students: the student living abroad, the native student returning from abroad and the native student likely to go abroad.

The IB has been referred to as the “most well-established of the ‘international curricula’ on offer” (Hayden & Thompson, 1995, p. 39). The IB is different from national examinations and curricula in “its derivation from an integrated educational philosophy rather than from subject-based considerations” (Fox, 1985, p. 60).

In the early 1950s, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation founded the International Schools’ Association (ISA) with support from the International School of Geneva. This meant there was a way for discussions on issues that were affecting expat families and international schools at the time to take place, the main issues being: constant mobility, variations of curricula from country to country, issues of school-to-school transfer, and the diversity of school-leaving and university entrance requirements (Fox, 1985).

In the early 1960s, the IB opened its headquarters in Geneva and began the “construction” stage of the programme. During this time trial exams were given without any certification. By 1970, while still in the trial stage, the IB began issuing certificates and diplomas. By 1974 the trial stage had finished and the IB had established itself and its curriculum to meet the objectives previously mentioned (Hayden & Thompson, 1995).

In 1970 there were 20 IB schools; by 1987 there were 350 in 53 countries. Today, according to the International Baccalaureate (2019), there are 4000 schools worldwide delivering the IB curriculum, with more than one million students.

2.4.2 IB curriculum

The IB curriculum aims to “do more than other curricula by developing inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who are motivated to succeed” (International Baccalaureate, 2019).

As mentioned previously, the students who took part in this research were either full IB students or studying for ‘certificates’ (see below for more information about the difference between these two). The full IB programme is referred to as the IBDP, which is an abbreviation for the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme. One of the main differences with the IBDP and other curricular is that students have to keep studying a

broad range of subjects. As a comparison, the British curriculum, where students study A levels, requires a minimum of three subjects and students are not obliged/required to take any particular subjects. The requirements for the IBDP are listed below:

- Studies in language and literature (students can choose to take their L1 for this course, if the school is able to provide a tutor)
- Language acquisition (if students have chosen their L1 for the previous course, then they would take English as this option)
- Individuals and societies (these are the subjects that are often called humanities e.g. history, geography, business etc.)
- Sciences
- Maths
- The arts

Additionally, students are required to take the following three subjects that are known as 'the core':

- Theory of knowledge (TOK) "in which students reflect on the nature of knowledge and what we know".
- The extended essay (EE) "which is an independent, self-directed piece of research, finishing with a 4000-word paper".
- Creativity, activity, service (CAS) "in which students complete a project related to those three concepts" (International Baccalaureate, 2019).

Three of these subjects have to be taken at what is called "higher level" with the others being taken at a "standard level". The difference being that higher level subjects are studied to more depth and students must get a total of 12 points from these three higher level subjects to be awarded the diploma. The standard level subjects contribute towards the points that are required to pass the diploma. The diploma requires a total of 24 points.

As well as taking the full diploma there is the option to take "certificates" in individual subjects. This allows for students some degree of flexibility if they are studying in an IB school (International Baccalaureate, 2019).

2.4.3 Changes by the IB to teaching and learning

In recent years, the IB has faced some degree of criticism regarding its diploma programme. One of the criticisms of the IB is that it is not an “inclusive” curriculum for language learners or students with learning difficulties. This is mainly as it is recognised as an academically rigorous programme that is designed to prepare students for university (Burdic, 2012; Carder, 2006). However, over the years the IB has responded to criticism of its programme in terms of its curriculum, training and philosophy.

In the late 1980s in response to the criticism that its language programme was not diverse and did not cater for a range of abilities (Tosi, 1987), the IB restructured how languages were taught in the IBDP by offering a range of levels and a Bilingual Diploma. Additionally, more languages were introduced and more flexibility in how students are taught (Carder, 2006). More teacher training programmes were introduced to offer professional development (PD) in the areas of language learning as well as the introduction of the online platform for PD, which allowed access for training in any location (Carder, 2006).

In a number of schools, the IBDP is offered in a similar way to an honours programme in that it is primarily for gifted students (Burdic, 2012). This may be because it is perceived as a way of preparing students for university as it is an academically rigorous course of study (Burdic, 2012). The IB developed an alternative programme to the DP called the “Career-related Programme” (CP) to give students who were not able to achieve success in the DP an alternative. This programme is marketed as one that “leads to further/higher education, apprenticeships or employment” (International Baccalaureate, 2019).

While an international school may offer a curriculum, like the IB, which is considered competitive in the global market, the delivery of that curriculum is mostly left to the classroom teachers. What drives the pedagogical practices of these teachers may or may not reflect what is considered current ‘best practice’. As many of the students have English as their second or third language, it is important to consider how language teaching has changed over the years.

2.5 The changing place of L1 in the classroom

Language teaching has undergone many changes in both pedagogical practices and ideologies. As new research is conducted on how students learn languages, new theories

emerge that have an impact on teaching practices. When a new method is implemented, there usually follows substantial research into that method that will consider both its strengths and weaknesses. At the core of many of the changes made is the role of the L1 in the classroom (Harmer, 2007).

Early methods of language learning focused on grammar rules and lists of vocabulary. The 'Grammar-Translation' (GT) method or the 'traditional method' was used based on the approach that was taken when Latin was taught at schools (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The focus of this method was to use the first language as a reference point for learning new grammar rules with little place for the spoken word or emphasis on the importance of communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The GT method is still used in some second language settings, however due to the limitations of this method, mainly the lack of importance placed on communication, a shift towards a new method emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century. So, the first language had a role in this method as it was used to talk about the learning itself in contrast to the direct method.

The Direct Method moved away from translation and focused on learners learning a second language in a similar way to that in which they had learnt their first one (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). Neither the first language nor translation any longer had a place in the classroom with this method. The active use of the second language (with a bigger focus on the spoken word) was supposed to enable learners to induce the grammar rules of the L2 without having to use their L1 (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

By the mid-1900s came another shift towards the Audiolingual Method (ALM). This method drew on behavioural psychology and language was viewed as a type of behaviour in which the student could be rewarded when they had correctly memorised set dialogues and drills (Rivers, 1964). As with the previous method, the first language did not play a role for the learner as the aim was to achieve the TL and to avoid translation (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) built on the work of the ALM and placed an emphasis on the importance of communicating. It was thought that when students are focused on the goal of communicating then "language learning will take care of itself" (Harmer, 2007, p. 32). In the strong version of CLT, Krashen pushed the idea of his "Comprehension Hypothesis" that essentially meant that when students could understand

what was being told in the language they were learning, as well as being able to read it, then they have acquired that language (Latifi, Ketabi, & Mohammadi, 2013). His hypothesis also states that “true language acquisition occurs without our conscious awareness and is stored in the brain subconsciously” (Latifi et al., 2013, p. 221). This meant that there was no focus on grammar rules. Additionally, students in the CLT classroom were encouraged to speak in English only and the students’ L1 did not have a place in this learning environment. This created an environment for students where the students were encouraged to communicate and not be concerned with form but to concentrate on meaning (Harmer, 2007).

As this method became increasingly popular, more studies were conducted into the effectiveness of CLT classrooms. Kumaravadivelu (2006) found that these classes were not in fact communicative, as opportunities may not have been created by the teachers for genuine interaction.

Immersion programs focus on students learning the language through content rather than a focus on the language itself. The language being learnt is, therefore, not taught as another subject but is the medium of instruction that the curriculum is taught in and this means the approach tries to emulate the way a first language would be acquired. This style of learning became increasingly popular in the United States after following on from its development in Canada during the mid 1960s, albeit with different purposes (Genesee, 1985). In Canada, the purpose was in response to English-speaking parents who felt their children were not acquiring sufficient skills in French. In the United States, one of the main objectives was to improve levels of English for students for whom this was a second language. In these settings, students were often discouraged or even banned from using their L1. There became a growing concern about the place of the students’ L1, which was viewed as a problem that needed to be minimised in its use (Turnbull, 2001).

In contrast, transitional bilingual education provides more support to students in their L1. Roberts (1995) explains how transitional bilingual education “provides content area support in the native language while teaching the student English” (p. 373). This model, therefore, helps to bridge students from their native language to English (Roberts, 1995).

The Ramirez report was an eight-year study that examined the role of students’ L1 in learning their L2. The study compared an English immersion programme to a late-exit

transitional bilingual education for language minority children with one of the main objectives being to establish which is a more effective way of acquiring a language (Ramirez, 1991). The major finding of this report is that a bilingual education that encourages students' L1 is more effective than an immersion programme (Ramirez, 1991). Other researchers such as Cummins (1992) support this claim. He states that "the better developed children's L1 conceptual foundation, the more likely they are to develop similarly high levels of conceptual abilities in their L2" (Cummins, 1992, p. 95). He also stated that "the most successful bilingual programs appear to be those that emphasize and use the students' L1" (Cummins, 1986, p. 23).

It is important to consider what the term "bilingual" is in this context. The aim of a bilingual programme is to develop both languages (L1 and L2) rather than transition from one to another (Cummins, 1992). This type of programme has three educational principles that are as follows:

- a) Continued development in both languages will enhance children's educational and cognitive development
- b) Literacy-related abilities are interdependent across languages
- c) While conversational abilities may be acquired fairly rapidly in a second language, upwards of five years are usually required for second language learners to gain grade level norms in academically related aspects of the second language (Cummins, 1992, p. 94).

Research by Lambert (1975 as cited in Landry & Allard, 1993) resulted in the terms "additive and subtractive bilingualism" to illustrate that bilingualism could have either a positive or negative impact on a student. Lambert found that students from minority groups were more likely to experience subtractive bilingualism. This meant that second language acquisition would lead to a loss in a student's L1 and culture. In contrast, if a student's L1 was more highly regarded in a community, the student would learn a second language with no apparent loss to their L1.

Recent research has continued to support the place of students' L1 in the classroom. Cummins (1986, 1992, 2005, 2007) has been at the forefront of this research and has written numerous articles on the importance of allowing students to use their L1 in the

classroom. A lot of this research was based in the United States where in certain states it was a legal requirement to not allow students' L1 in the classroom.

As well as having a positive impact on students' identities, allowing L1 has been shown to reduce anxiety amongst language learners. Translanguaging can be one way in which students do this. It denotes "flexible language use that occurs naturally among populations of bilingual children" (McCracken, 2017, p. 25). Translanguaging is a relatively new and developing term that emerged from Wales in the 1980s. It gained widespread popularity in the 2000s largely after the publication of two books (Baker, 2001 and García, 2009) that used this term.

In a way, translanguaging can be thought of as "mixing" of languages but rather than this creating confusion it instead illustrates how language learners are able to use differing linguistic systems to create purposeful meaning (McCracken, 2017). The students are, therefore, able to draw on all their language repertoires to make and investigate meaning, moving from one language to the other as it fits their purpose. When students' L1 is allowed to exist in the classroom and these connections happen, it creates enthusiasm in the learning process as it affirms the learners' identity (Cummins, 2007). This reduces language learner anxiety by boosting confidence levels. McCracken (2017) explains that "when a space for all languages is opened up for learning, the status of those languages equalises...this step is crucial for their confidence" (p. 28).

Anxiety amongst language learners has been a topic of interest amongst researchers for a number of years. Horwitz (2001) found that language learners felt more anxious in their mainstream classes than in their ESL class and that their relationship with their teacher also had an impact on their level of anxiety. Another factor contributing to a decrease in anxiety is the level of self-confidence that a student has in the second language; those with more confidence tend to rate lower on anxiety skills, which leads to greater learning success (Clément, Gardner, & Smythe, 1980).

In a bilingual setting, where the teacher and the students share the same L1 but the medium of instruction is the L2, it has been shown that teachers will use their L1 when they want to establish positive, social relationships with their students and also to form a sense of "solidarity" within the classroom (Kaneko, 1993). This illustrates that the first language is

important in helping students 'feel' better in the classroom setting and this is recognised by teachers.

Recently, the debate among researchers regarding the L1 has been centred more on how it should be used and to what extent this usage should happen, as it appears to have been largely acknowledged that it is beneficial. Turnbull (2001) has argued that although there is a place for students' L1 in the classroom, it should be limited in its use and that the more TL a student is exposed to the greater are their chances of being successful language learners. This means that although Turnbull (2001) recognises the importance of the L1, he believes it should be used strategically and with limitation. Turnbull (2001) argues for "systematic" use of the L1 and that as the L1 often "crept" into classrooms, teachers should make its use part of their practice. In this instance, the use of L1 would be instigated and directed by the teachers, rather than allowing the students to have autonomy over when they feel it would be beneficial.

Researchers' views on the use of L1 have shifted, but has this been reflected in teachers' practices? As there is a link between beliefs and practices, the next section will consider both of these.

2.6 Teacher beliefs

One of the main factors that has an impact on a teacher's practice is their beliefs. It has been shown that teacher beliefs are strong indicators as to what happens in classrooms and as such if there is to be positive change to both teaching and learning, it is crucial to understand beliefs (Borg, 2011). Beliefs can be considered as what teachers know and think as well as believe (Borg, 2011) and research in this area has clearly shown that there is a direct link between beliefs and practice (Phipps & Borg, 2009). Haukås (2016) asserts that a "Knowledge of teachers' beliefs is central to understanding teachers' decision making in the classroom" (p. 12). However, the complexities of the classroom mean that teachers face decisions about teaching and learning which are largely dependent on the context of the lessons and the learners. So, in order to understand teachers' classroom practices, it is crucial to understand the complex beliefs that are underpinning them, as although beliefs drive practices when making decisions in the classroom teachers may make decisions that

mean the connection is not simple and linear and that may mean some decisions appear to be contradictory.

Phipps and Borg (2009) describe the differences between core and peripheral beliefs. Core beliefs are ones that have a stronger influence on a teacher's behaviour and as such if a teacher's practice seems to contradict what they state are their beliefs they may be stating what their peripheral beliefs are not their core beliefs. So, it may be that a teacher is unaware of what is truly central to their belief system. This needs to be considered when conducting research with teachers as it may not be obvious what beliefs a teacher is sharing with the researcher.

The importance of teacher beliefs extends beyond the classroom. The use of L1 strategies, both at school and at home, can depend on teachers' beliefs in regards to L1. The advice that teachers give to parents should be reflective of a school's language policy and current pedagogy as teachers are often in a position to offer advice to parents. This is particularly important when this advice may hinge on L1 usage at home (De Angelis, 2011). Tosi (1987) explains the importance of students maintaining their L1 and that by not doing so they face tension with their families, loss of identity and loss of connection with family members. As teachers play a crucial role in supporting language learners by educating families as to what is 'best practice', it's important that they speak from a place of knowledge (based on current research) rather than expressing their beliefs, in particular in relation to advice that can have an impact on maintaining the students' L1.

Teachers may also hold positions of responsibility and be involved in decisions about policies and procedures that could also influence the role of the L1 within the school context. This illustrates the importance of teachers understanding the benefits of students maintaining their L1.

Most teacher education programmes do not provide teachers with information on teaching L2 learners which means teachers have to rely on their own beliefs and experiences to inform their practices (de Jong & Harper, 2005). In fact, it has been shown that despite teacher education, teachers' beliefs are mainly influenced by their own experiences from when they were learners (Holt-Reynolds, 1992). When teachers begin teaching, they have already spent a considerable amount of time as learners (Holt-Reynolds, 1992). This means that they have already acquired a set of beliefs based on their experiences as students,

which in some instances can prove problematic as they may be mistaken (Nishino, 2012). However, teachers' beliefs can be changed through professional development or teacher education courses and through learning from colleagues (Nishino, 2012). But although it can be fairly easy for a teacher to acquire a new belief, it can be more challenging to change a classroom practice. Research has shown that most teachers are unlikely to adopt new practices in second language teaching (Barrot, 2016).

It should also be noted that the positive effects of bi/multilingualism are also not included in teacher training, so teachers may be not be aware of this or even consider it when they are facing the students in front of them. This can also mean that they could offer advice based on beliefs rather than knowledge (De Angelis, 2011).

Recent research has focused on trying to understand the relationship between teacher beliefs' and practices in regards to the use of the L1 in the classroom (De Angelis, 2011; Haukås, 2016; Tan, 2015). It has been shown that teachers may ignore language policies or interpret them in a way that suits their teaching context more favourably and this means that teachers may choose to allow L1 in their classrooms even if school policy bans it (Nishino, 2012).

2.7 Strategies

Research shows that being a "good" teacher is not sufficient to support L2 learners in the classroom despite many schools expecting mainstream teachers to support language learners in their classrooms (de Jong & Harper, 2005). In order to successfully teach students who do not have the same L1 as their classmates or even their teacher, teachers should have specific training so they know how to support, differentiate and scaffold for their students as well as being sensitive to students' culture and knowing how to effectively use their L1 (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Through encouraging and teaching students to use specific language learning strategies in the classroom, teachers can effectively support language learners and enable to them to work more independently (Cummins, 2007).

Strategies can form part of a teacher's practice and can be used by either teachers or students to aid learning. The Ramirez report identified what could be called a "hidden curriculum" whereby teachers taught in a way that was often based on a belief system rather than empirical evidence (Ramirez, 1991). In some cases, teachers were not allowing

students to access their L1 to help them with their TL and as such were following a belief that they held regarding best practice in regards to language learning. This shows the importance of learning strategies and how teachers may work against them if they have underlying beliefs that these strategies have no place in the classroom.

Strategies can be described as either actions, behaviours, steps or even techniques that are used by students with the purpose of enhancing the student's learning and enabling them to access the curriculum more easily (Altunay, 2014). Chamot (2001) discusses the importance of learning strategies and asserts that there are two main reasons for researching them: investigating language strategies used by language learners "gives insight into the cognitive, social and affective process involved in language learning" and that "it may be possible to teach less successful language learners to use the strategies that characterize their more successful peers, thus helping students who are experiencing difficulty in learning a second language become better language learners" (p. 25). It has been shown that strategies can play an important part in teaching, allowing students to access subject content that they may otherwise struggle with (Cummins, 1992). Additionally, strategies can help students become more independent learners by being less reliant on their teachers or their peers (Altunay, 2014).

One of the difficulties in researching strategies is that not all learning strategies are visible. Chamot (2001) notes "most learning strategies are mental processes and as such are not directly observable in terms of outwards behaviour" (p. 26). Examples of these processes could be inferences when reading, students asking themselves if what they were listening to made sense, use of prior knowledge, translation and pausing for additional processing time (Chamot, 2001). While this research is focused on visible strategies, it is important to note the presence of these other strategies where students are using their L1 in ways that their teachers would not be aware of.

As the value of using the L1 to aid language learners has been recognised, so has the research into L1 strategies that can be used in the classroom. At the forefront of this research has been Cummins with a lot of his work focused on monolingual instructional assumptions that he believed teachers were using in the USA (2007). These assumptions are as follows:

- a) The target language (TL) should be used exclusively for instructional purposes without recourse to students' first language (L1)
- b) Translation between L1 and TL has no place in the language classroom
- c) Within immersion and bilingual programs, the two languages should be kept rigidly separate. (p. 221)

Cummins believes that current research does not support these assumptions but yet they are still prevalent in classrooms. He proposes:

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

The strategies that Cummins proposes are not complex; some are as simple as allowing students to use a bilingual dictionary as in this instance he focuses on the importance of translation. Other strategies suggested by Cummins include having discussions with other students who share the same L1, having a column when learning new words to write the word in the student's L1 and allowing students to write in their L1 for ease of expression. I used these suggested strategies as a basis for the strategies that I gave to the teachers to share with their students during the intervention period. This will be discussed in more detail in the methodology chapter.

2.8 Language policies in international schools

On the basis of the work of Cummins, this section will look at policies in international schools. It is important to note that Cummins states that while conversational skills can be gained fairly quickly (within two years to gain a level near to that of a native speaker), it can take considerably longer for students to acquire this level in academic aspects of English. Cummins (1992) proposes that it takes five to seven years while Collier (1998) has a wider range of four to nine years. This is important to note as it should underpin any language policy within a school. The premise should be that students will require some level of language support for at least five years, if not longer, and this should be taken into consideration when developing a language policy and considering budgeting and staffing implications.

Carder (2006) based a lot of his research and subsequent findings on Cummins' work. He suggests that all teachers in international schools should be provided with ESL training for teaching EAL students and that ESL teachers should determine when a student is exited from the language support programme, not parents, the student or administrators. This is connected to the length of time that it can take a student to acquire age level appropriate language skills. Carder (2006) also states that a school should have a mother-tongue programme that all EAL students are enrolled in; this again supports the work of Cummins in the importance of maintaining skills in the students' L1.

With the increase in popularity of international schools (see earlier discussion 2.3), Carder (2006) also stresses the importance of parents understanding the commitment that it takes for their children to be educated in another language. The implication is that this is not something that can happen without a proper programme, appropriate instruction, as well as support from both the school and at home.

In Qatar, the Supreme Council of Education ¹(SEC) made radical reforms to education in 2002 with English being made the medium of instruction for a number of subjects. In 2012, the SEC reversed this decision after coming under increasing pressure from local conservative groups who were concerned that the culture, and the language of local Qataris, was at risk due to the increasing number of expatriates who were coming to work in Qatar. Additionally, there was concern about globalisation and the loss of local identity (Carder, 2006; Mustafawi & Shaaban, 2018). This concern is amplified as Qataris make up only 10% of the population in Qatar. As a result, the Arabic language was made compulsory for all students in Qatar-including the increasing number of students studying in the international sector. In addition to language classes, Qatari students had to have lessons on Qatari history and Islamic studies, both in Arabic. This meant that any international school in Qatar had to have provisions in place for Qatari students and this should be found within the school policy (Ministry of Education, 2019).

It is important to note that there is only a small inclusion in this research on the local laws of Qatar as none of the students involved in the research were Qatari and as such this aspect of the policy is not relevant to the student or teacher participants during the intervention

¹ SEC later changed its name to the Ministry of Education

period. Despite this, it is still relevant to mention the context of the local environment and some teachers mentioned particular concerns regarding local students during the interviews (see Chapter Four: Findings). Further suggestions on how to include this are given in Chapter Six: Conclusion, particularly in regards to the limitations of this research.

This chapter has shown how the place of students' L1 in the classroom has gone through considerable changes as language learning pedagogy has come to view it as an aid to learning rather than a hindrance. The current debate is now more centred on the extent of its usage rather than if it should be used at all. School policy and curriculum need to also acknowledge the place of the L1. One of the ways to support students using their L1 is through strategy usage. Language learning strategies have been shown to have a significant impact on student learning and well-being in the classroom. In order to understand the data collected from the teacher interviews, the complexity of teacher beliefs has been discussed too whilst also looking at possible explanations for their classroom practices. This will help to understand the teacher participants' views on L1 usage.

Chapter Three: *Methodology*

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the methodological approach that was used for this research about teachers' beliefs towards students using their L1 in multilingual classrooms in an international school setting. An intervention period was included, which gave students the opportunity to trial a number of L1 strategies, while giving teachers an opportunity to reflect on their beliefs and classroom practices. Within this chapter is an explanation of the approach, the context in which the research was conducted, the instruments that were used as well as justifications as to why those particular instruments were chosen. Also, ethical considerations of the research are discussed and a timeline of the instruments and data collection period is clearly defined. An account of the actual implementation of the design is described in detail as well as any resulting adjustments that occurred during the research process.

3.2 The setting

The research was conducted at an international school in Doha, Qatar. The school follows the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum using both the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP) in middle and high school respectively. This means that any language learning students are learning content through English, rather than being overly focused on the learning of English as a language. The focus of the learning is, therefore, cognitive development of adolescents, but English has an important role to play as it is the medium of learning. There were approximately 960 students in the school from age 3-18 at the time the research was conducted. The student body was incredibly diverse with 50 different nationalities and 30 languages spoken. While English was the medium of instruction, Arabic was widely spoken at the school and it was mandatory for all local/Qatari students to take Arabic language classes (see earlier discussion in 2.8 of the literature review).

The teachers who took part in this research were all from different countries with very different experiences both as educators and as language learners. All the teachers taught both in the MYP and the DP.

The students also took part voluntarily and came from diverse backgrounds with a range of abilities in their English language skills. These students were taking a variety of different courses, some were full DP students (this meant that all their subjects were IB courses and they had to complete the 'core' as well-see earlier discussion in section 2.4.2 on the IB curriculum), whilst others were taking IB classes but were not enrolled to take the full DP (which meant that they would be aiming to get IB certificates) and would graduate with a high school diploma.

3.3 Research approach

A qualitative approach was taken to this research, as this allowed for open discussions around language assumptions and enabled more inquiry into teachers' beliefs. This was done through semi-structured interviews, which were held individually. I felt that this approach would enable me to understand the teachers' beliefs and also gain an insight into their classroom practice. Qualitative research "is based on the assumption that reality is multiple and constructed socially and can be studied holistically" (Dobakhti, 2016, p. 1382). The concept of being 'holistic' was important to the research as it allowed for an understanding of how the teachers' own experiences as language learners may, or may not, have an impact on their decision making and views that would shape their current day practice.

A qualitative approach differs considerably from a quantitative one. With qualitative approach, the researcher can begin the research without any preconceived ideas or notions of where the research will go. This means that the participants responses have a greater implication on the direction of the interview, and subsequent data that is collected (Dörnyei, 2007). Dörnyei (2007) states that most aspects of language are determined or shaped by "social, cultural and situational factors and qualitative research is ideal for providing insights into such contextual conditions and influences" (p. 36). As the main purpose of this research was to gain a deeper insight and understanding into teachers' beliefs systems it, therefore, made sense to do so through the qualitative framework. This meant it was not the purpose of this research to make broader assumptions as to all teachers having the same beliefs, but to understand at a precise point in time the beliefs of several individuals and how these beliefs have impacted their teaching practices. The limitations of this method in the context of this research are discussed in the conclusion.

3.4 Research design

To gain a deeper understanding of teacher beliefs regarding students using their L1 in the classroom, it seemed appropriate to consider each teacher's personal narrative around language learning. Additionally, the teachers' experience as language learners themselves may have influenced their current beliefs and therefore was included within the interviews. Researchers, such as Fang (1996) have shown that the beliefs that teachers have make up what is known as their 'general knowledge' and it is through this that teachers perceive, process and act upon information in their classrooms.

The research was divided into four different steps, which are as follows:

- Initial interviews to establish teacher beliefs
- An intervention period to trial L1 strategies with students
- Feedback from students to establish if they believed L1 strategies were effective
- Exit interviews with teachers

The flow chart below (Figure 3) illustrates the process of conducting the research:

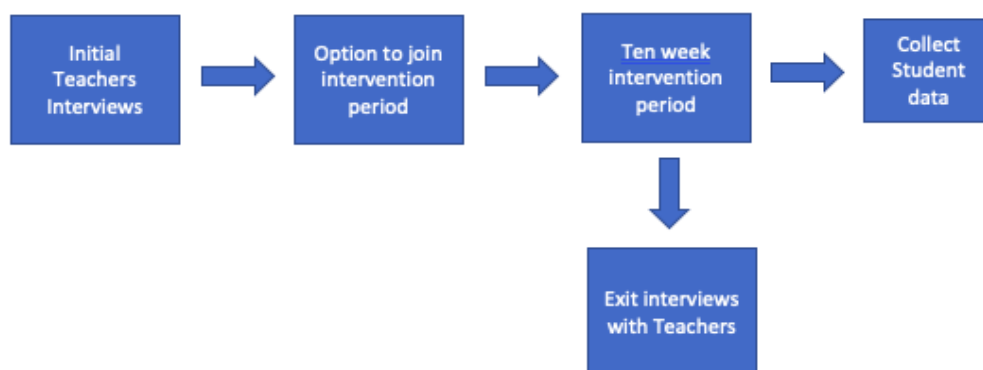


Figure 3: Summary of the research design steps

In recent years, qualitative methods of research have gained in popularity in applied linguistics, particularly when looking at beliefs around teaching practices. The role of the interview has changed from being viewed as a way to extract knowledge to a form of interaction, a social practice in itself where a reflective evolving process is occurring (Talmy, 2011). The interviews for this research are viewed as being "active", in doing so it means that "the interviewer's contribution to the co-construction of the interview content, and the

local accomplishment of the interview, is explicitly acknowledged and this becomes a topic for analysis” (Mann, 2011, p. 8).

Both parties to the interview are necessarily and unavoidably *active*. Each is involved in meaning-making work. Meaning is not merely elicited by apt questioning nor simply transported through respondent replies; it is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter. Respondents are not so much repositories of knowledge – treasures of information awaiting excavation – as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers. (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 4)

The interviews were organised as semi-structured; by conducting the interviews in this way, I hoped to guide teachers through a series of pre-planned questions in order to not miss anything while allowing opportunities for greater discussions in each of the areas (see Appendix A). The purpose of the research was to understand what teachers’ beliefs were towards students using their L1 in the classroom. By interviewing the teachers individually, they had the opportunity to share their beliefs and also reflect on their current teaching practices. Current research supports the use of students’ L1, but I wanted to understand if this was reflected in teachers’ beliefs. It was possible that teachers may hold assumptions about language learning and subsequently view L1 in a certain way.

I adapted the interview questions from Tan (2015) whose research was similar to mine, but conducted in a tertiary setting. This enabled my research to be more valid as it was based on the previously published work of a researcher in the same field. However, my research differed from that of Tan (2015) as I chose not to conduct any of the interviews in a focus group format, instead the teacher interviews were all conducted individually. The main reason was to assure teacher confidentiality while allowing teachers the space to speak freely. Furthermore, I wanted to make sure that I had the opportunity to ask teachers to clarify responses that they gave and as an inexperienced interviewer, I wanted to give each interviewee undivided attention. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and copies given to each of the teachers. The interviews ranged in time between 25 and 45 minutes. This was to fit in with the school timetable where individual lessons run for 45 minutes.

3.4.1 Timeline of data collection

In any research setting, there are a number of factors that need to be considered when collecting data. For this research I had to make sure that it was aligned with the school calendar and also factor in which times of the year would be the busiest for teachers. For this reason, the initial teacher interviews were to be arranged between October and November as this would allow time for any new teachers to settle in (the new school year begins at the end of August) and become familiar with the students in their classes.

Following the teacher interviews was the 10-week intervention period. This was to start in December and finish mid-February. This then gave me time to complete all the transcripts from the initial interviews and allow the teachers to have time to amend them before we had the final interviews.

3.4.2 Selecting teacher participants

Initially, I decided to try to find teachers who were working in the subject areas of English language arts, humanities and/or the IB DP required subject called TOK (Theory of Knowledge). These subjects are often areas where students can struggle with higher level thinking, particularly in TOK. They are also subjects which I have previously supported students in, and I therefore felt I would be in a better position to advise teachers on how to implement the strategies into their lessons if they needed more assistance. I did, however, open the research up to all teachers but specifically asked teachers of the previously mentioned subjects if they would be willing to participate. This was done by sending an email out to all staff explaining my research and asking for volunteers. This way of selecting participants could be regarded as 'Criterion Sampling', which is defined by Dörnyei (2007) as seeking "participants who meet some specific predetermined criteria" (p128); in this case the criteria involved teaching certain subjects to students of a certain age.

3.4.3 Intervention

The intervention period was designed to last for approximately 10 weeks and was due to begin on completion of the initial teacher interviews. The teachers were provided with a list of strategies to use, which was given to the teachers at a different time to the interviews (shortly after) so as not to overwhelm them. The list was emailed to the teachers and they

were also given a hard copy during a short meeting to go over how to implement them. This also gave the teachers an opportunity to ask any questions or raise any concerns that they may have had. During this time, the teachers would direct a student or students in their class to use the L1 strategies. This would hopefully further the reflection process through challenging or perhaps even confirming initial beliefs that the teachers had towards L1 usage, while giving students the opportunity to give feedback on the strategies' effectiveness. The list of strategies was not exhaustive and the teacher participants, or even the students, could add any other L1 strategy that they felt would benefit the student in the particular lesson in which they were trialling it.

3.4.3.1 Selecting student participants

Due to the ethical requirements of conducting research with young people, the students needed to be over 16 years of age and were to remain anonymous to me. That meant that the teacher participants were responsible for selecting which students they felt would be best suited to trial the L1 strategies with.

3.4.3.2 L1 strategies for students

The teachers were provided with a list of L1 strategies that they were to direct their students to use during the intervention period. The first language strategies used by students during the intervention period were as follows:

- Have a discussion with another student in their L1
- Use the translation app on Google docs or another app
- Use a dictionary for translation purposes. This could be either a bilingual dictionary or a L1 dictionary
- Use their phone to translate words and/or phrases
- Have a classmate explain something to them in their L1
- Explain something to their classmate in their L1
- Prepare work at home, which was translated into their L1 (the teacher needed to plan this ahead of time so the student had time to work on it)
- Discuss work at home with their parents/guardians or other family members in their shared L1

All of these strategies were adapted from the work of Cummins (2007).

The teachers could choose which classes and students they would use the L1 strategies with and the students were supposed to complete a short on-line exit survey at the end of the lesson in which they had used a strategy. The survey was arranged on Google as this is regularly used at the school with both teachers and students and I hoped this platform would make it the easiest way for students to access it. Additionally, most students in high school have their own laptops or phones with them, so they would easily be able to access it.

3.4.4 Student feedback

Gaining student feedback on the strategies was important to include as the students were the ones using the strategies and therefore were in an ideal position to give first-hand feedback on how effective they felt they were. I had initially hoped to gain feedback after each lesson where the student had used one of the strategies. The idea with that is that it would be fresh in their mind and they would not forget what they had done and how they felt.

However, including the students in the research was problematic as when I set up the research, during the summer holidays, I did not know which students I would be teaching in the upcoming academic year in which the research was to take place. In order to collect data from students, who I potentially might be teaching, I had to find a way to do so anonymously. It therefore fell to the teachers to choose which students to provide the strategies to and to collect the data from (in the form of anonymous exit surveys) so that I would be removed from this area of data collection (see Appendix B). While this seemed an appropriate way to conduct the intervention period it did not turn out as I had hoped and perhaps leaving teachers to collect data was expecting too much. As Dörnyei (2007) discusses in relation to sharing research responsibility with teachers in action research, “on the one hand, in an ideal world it ought to be a viable research area with a powerful impact. On the other hand, although it is undoubtedly a noble idea, it just does not seem to work in practice” (p. 191).

3.4.5 Exit interviews

A final round of interviews, at the completion of the intervention period, provided the teachers with the opportunity to reflect on and amend answers given during the initial

interviews whilst commenting on how they found the experience of trialling the L1 strategies with their students. These would again be conducted individually and were to be a much shorter length than the initial interview (around 15 to 20 minutes). The interviews were to be recorded and I also planned to take notes.

Conducting the second round of teacher interviews immediately after the intervention period served the dual purpose of understanding how effective the teachers found the L1 strategies, whilst also giving them the important opportunity to reflect on their first interview. Mann (2011) describes two ways to make a transcript strengthen the research. The first suggestion is that the interviewee should have access to the transcript to validate it. The second suggestion is to have a second interview, which uses the transcript from the first interview so that the interviewee has the opportunity to “enlarge on, clarify and sometimes cast doubt on earlier articulations” (p. 15).

3.5 Implementation

This section will discuss the chronological sequence of conducting the research, collecting the data and analysing the data. Prior to the start of the research, ethical approval was required. This also meant that the sequence of data collecting and the methods that were going to be used were all finalised before the initial teacher interviews. However, I was still able to make some minor changes along the way that enabled the process to be completed and important data to be collected.

3.5.1 Ethics approval

Ethics pertains to doing good and avoiding harm. Harm can be prevented or reduced through the application of appropriate ethical principles. Thus, the protection of human subjects or participants in any research study is imperative. (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001, p. 93)

One of the main considerations for this research was that it was conducted in my work place. I did not want to influence the research in any way so the students who participated did so anonymously. If they had questions about the research, they were able to contact me, but I did not know which classes or strategies were used with which students. There could have been a potential conflict if I was teaching any of the students, which is why the surveys were done anonymously. However, I was careful to comply with the ethical

requirements and applied and obtained approval from the Human Research Ethical Committee at Massey University prior to starting the research. One of the complications of my research was that I could not guarantee that I would not be teaching the students involved. This was in part due to the fact that I applied for ethics approval over the summer holidays and that the EAL students were all well known to me. I therefore had to be very careful that the students who participated did so anonymously to me. This was one reason why I did not want to be in the classroom when the strategies were trialled. I also did not want to include observations as part of the data collection, as I was concerned that the students would behave differently if I were present in the classroom, particularly as they were used to me working with them in a support role. This meant missing an opportunity to collect data and therefore is a potential shortcoming of this research. This will be discussed in more detail below in section 6.3 on limitations.

Additionally, I was also mindful of not creating any conflict with work colleagues and I often found it challenging to keep teachers on track during the intervention period without being too pushy.

All teacher participants were assured of as much confidentiality as is possible in this type of research. They were given pseudonyms and, as well as having access to the transcripts, they also had the opportunity to review the results section. As some of the teachers were the only ones teaching their subject, this was taken into consideration when dealing with data. As mentioned earlier, the teachers were interviewed individually so they could speak freely and also to ensure that their participation in the research was not obvious to others working at the school. In my role at the school, I often met with teachers individually to discuss students so this would not have seemed unusual.

3.5.2 Data collection

The timeline of the instruments was closely aligned to the school's calendar. The instruments and ethics approval were ready for the start of the school year in September. Unfortunately, the school's start date was later than in previous years due to the Eid² holiday. This created a lot of pressure for teaching staff to complete the IB curriculum, with

² Eid Al-Fitr is celebrated at the end of Ramadan which is a Holy month in the Islamic calendar. In Islamic countries schools usually close for at least three days during Eid.

particular pressure for the DP that requires students to sit external examinations in May. It also meant that students had an unusually long summer, which can make for a difficult 'settling in' period. With this in mind, I knew that the timing of my first interviews needed to happen fairly quickly, but this can be a difficult task in identifying potential participants when they are in a new country and in a new work environment.

3.5.3 Instrument 1 – Initial teacher interviews

After identifying teachers who might be suitable (see section 3.4.2 above for selection criteria), I approached them to give them a 'Teacher information sheet' (see Appendix C) and briefly explain what the research was about. The teachers were emailed the information sheet and given a hard copy. I met with them to briefly go over the information sheet and answer any questions. The teachers also were given a consent form (see Appendix D) that they had to read, sign and return to me.

After asking the teachers about the above statements and assumptions, a list of questions, in some cases prompts, were then prepared to guide the interview. However, not all the questions had to be used and the order was flexible as it was important to allow the teacher participants the opportunity to lead the interview with their experiences wherever possible. This means that a teacher may end up answering a question before it was asked and it would, therefore, make it redundant to repeat it at a later stage.

At the completion of the interview, the teacher participants were asked if they would be willing to trial a number of first language strategies over the course of 10 weeks (see section 3.4.3.2 for the list of strategies). This would provide the opportunity for an intervention period. If the teacher did not want to participate, they would still be invited to participate in the final round of interviews as this would offer them the opportunity to add anything they wished to their initial interview as they would have had time to reflect.

A summary of the teacher participants can be found in Table 1 below. It was important that the teachers knew that they could opt out of the research at any time, as often school years end up being chaotic and stressful, particularly for new teachers. I gave the teachers several days to read over the information and decide if they were interested at which stage we then arranged a time for the first interview.

Teacher pseudonym	Gender	Teaching experience (years)	Subject taught	Years at school
Aisha	F	8	IBDP Psychology and humanities	Second year
Helen	F	20	IB MYP and DP English	First year
George	M	10	TOK and Design Technology	Fifth year
William	M	8	IB MYP and DP English	Second year

Table 1: Summary of teacher participants

‘Iteration’ is the process of moving between data collection and analysis that many researchers believe is good practice and is done by keeping the participant selection period open as long as possible (Dörnyei, 2007). One teacher participant wanted to join the research at a time when the other three interviews had already been conducted. This meant that this interview was conducted in late December and the intervention period for this teacher was shorter than for the other participants.

All the teacher participants had considered the statements and list of ‘I’ assumptions prior to the interviews. I moved the order of some of the questions around while conducting the interviews depending on the teacher. For example, one teacher seemed incredibly nervous and it felt more appropriate to ‘break the ice’ with a lengthier discussion about his own language-learning and teaching experiences. With other teachers I put this discussion at the end, as they were keen to talk about L1 strategies and issues they had previously had with L1 usage in their classrooms.

The choice to conduct the interviews individually paid off because I had the opportunity to ask teachers to clarify responses that they gave and as an inexperienced interviewer, I was able to give each interviewee undivided attention. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and copies of the transcript were given to each of the teachers. The interviews ranged in time from between 25-45 minutes as mentioned before, this took up one teaching period.

3.5.4 Instrument 2 – The intervention period

As mentioned earlier, the teachers selected which students would use the L1 strategies as the students had to remain anonymous to me. The students were given an information sheet (see Appendix E) and a consent form (Appendix F). However, unlike the teachers' consent form, the student one did not have to be signed as they had to remain anonymous to me.

The intervention period was initially designed to last for 10 weeks. This length of time seemed appropriate for teachers to be able to trial a range of strategies while also collecting the data from students. However, all the teachers struggled to implement the strategies and collect data from the students. The reasons for this are discussed in more detail in the following chapter, but for three of the teachers it was mostly due to finding the time to appropriately incorporate the strategies into their lessons. For the other teacher, the reasons were more complex. Because of the delay in getting started, the intervention period was extended for another four weeks, which meant that this part of the research finished at the end of January.

There were also a few issues in collecting the data from the students. In the initial research design, the plan was to gather feedback from the students at the completion of the lesson in which they had used the L1 strategy through an online survey. However, I quickly became aware that this was going to cause some challenges. These challenges in finding the optimum way to elicit student views will be discussed further in the next chapter.

3.5.5 Instrument 3 – Final teacher interviews

The teacher exit interviews were scheduled soon after the completion of the intervention period so that the intervention period was still fresh in the teachers' minds. By this time, the teachers had also been given copies of the transcript of their first interview. The exit interviews were individualised by information that was given during the first interviews as well as some general questions that were asked to all (see Appendix A). Additionally, as teachers were provided with transcripts of their initial interview, they would be able to reflect on their earlier answers. The final interviews lasted between 20 and 30 minutes.

The final round of interviews was conducted in February. At this time, an adapted version of the student exit survey was given to the teachers to ask students to complete. That meant that all data collection was completed by February 2017.

3.5.6 Instrument 4 – Document analysis

The documents became such a crucial aspect of this research that they could be considered a fourth instrument, which is why they are explained in this section on the implementation. One of the areas I had to spend a lot of time on was locating and analysing the school policy on language learning. Figure 4 below shows the amended steps that were taken that were not shown in the planning stages, as I had not anticipated the process that would be involved in analysing the documents. This instrument continued throughout the collection of the data from the other instruments. Although I was not new to the school (this was my third year working there), I became aware through the process of this research that I did not have all the information that I should have had in my position as an EAL teacher.

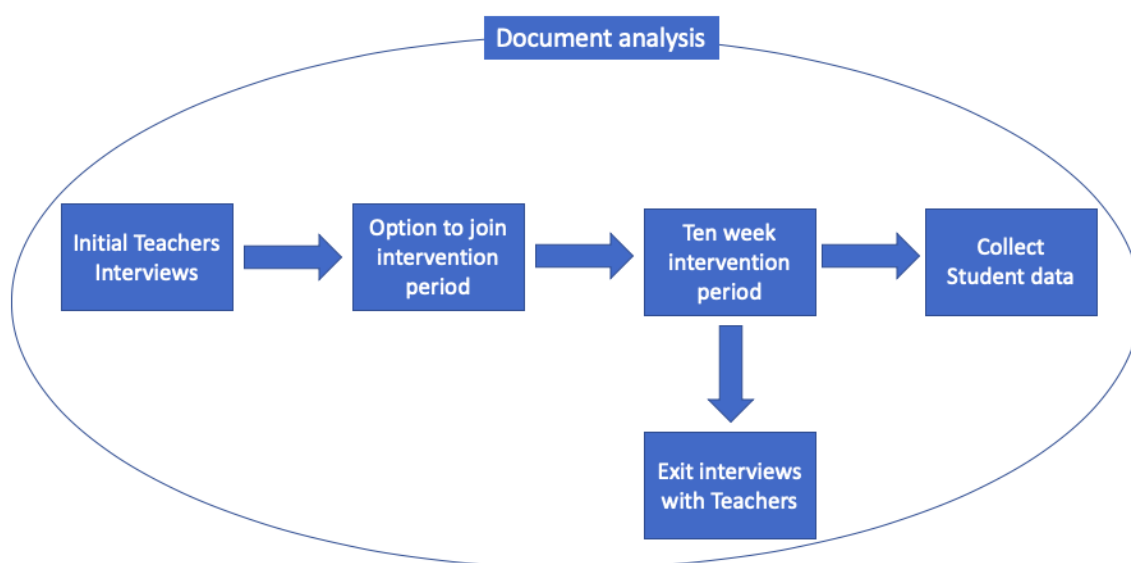


Figure 4: Summary of the revised implementation steps

There were several stages involved in the data analysis. First, was the process of locating the school's language policy. I started by asking several senior members of staff and searching the school's intranet which houses a plethora of information about the school. Neither of these yielded a result, so I asked the high school librarian who had recently located a set of language guidelines (see Appendix G for an extract of the school's language guidelines). I

then sent an inquiry to the school's Compliance, Accreditation and Policies Officer who confirmed that there was not a specific language policy, only the guidelines. Second, was to search through the Student Support Services handbook (see Appendix H for an extract of this handbook) where I remembered there was a section on EAL and the NLE programme. The final stage of the document analysis was to consider the content of both the guidelines and the section in the handbook in relation to the broader context of the school, the location and the responses from the teacher participants. This is done at the start of the next chapter. In the discussion, the policy and the guidelines are examined in closer detail by positioning them within the literature presented in the previous chapter.

3.5.7 Data analysis

As mentioned earlier, one of the advantages of conducting qualitative research is to not enter into the process of the interviews with any preconceived ideas or biases as to how the research will go. As such, until the data was collected I did not have any categories in place to help organise the data.

The first step in analysing the data was to transcribe all the interviews. This had several purposes: one was to be able to provide the teacher participants with a written transcript from the interview; the other advantage of doing this is that it helped me to get to know the data before deciding on how to organise it. The teachers were given the transcripts well in advance of the final interviews so that they had sufficient time to read them.

Once the transcripts were completed, I started to analyse them to look for ways to group the data into categories according to emerging themes. This is discussed in more detail below in the Findings chapter.

3.5.8 Role of the researcher

As this was my first attempt at conducting research, there were a few issues that I was aware of throughout the process. During the first interview I became aware of my inexperience as an interviewer and on reflection I should have conducted a pilot interview. This would have enabled me to have a run-through of the interview to find any areas that I needed to work on before conducting the main interview (Chenail, 2011). However, after the first interview I spent a long time transcribing it and listened to it multiple times. Through this I realised my shortcomings and could improve on my interview techniques for

the subsequent interviews. One area that I became mindful of was filling in the space, or periods of silence, in the interview instead of waiting in silence for the interviewee to respond. This is important as it gives the participant a processing time. Additionally, I was also aware that some of my fillers may have been perceived as agreeing with the interviewee and so I tried to make sure to avoid these.

Something I had not anticipated was that when the participants knew I had started recording they became nervous despite reassurance that the transcripts were only for me to analyse and that they would receive a copy. Ideally, I would have liked to video the participants and try to look at non-verbal cues as well. However, I realised after the first interview (only audio-recorded) that this could possibly make the participants even more uncomfortable so I did not do this. This also surprised me as all of the participants were my colleagues and as such I had not thought any aspect of the interview would make them nervous. I had, however, planned for this with the questions as I was able to change the order around. For the one teacher who was very nervous, discussing his own experience first helped him to relax and ease into the interview process.

As I was taking notes as well as recording the interviews, I noticed that the participants tried to read what I was writing and this could at times distract them from what they were talking about. I therefore, only took minimal notes during the interview.

Additionally, I was also mindful of not creating any conflict with work colleagues and I often found it challenging to keep teachers on track during the intervention period. This was an obvious disadvantage, as I realised later on in the research that the teachers did need many reminders to get started with the intervention period. Once they started trialling the strategies with the students, I think they then realised that it was easy to direct the students to use them. Despite my reassurance that the strategies would not in any way interrupt or hinder the delivery of the lesson, the teachers had to experience this for themselves and this became what I believe was an initial barrier to beginning the intervention.

3.6 Summary

The data collected for this research was done in four stages: initial teacher interviews, an intervention period (when student data was gathered), a final round of interviews with the teachers and an ongoing search into the documents that pertained to language learners. A

qualitative approach was used for the research and this has helped in gathering the detailed, individualised data that will be presented in the next chapter.

The intervention period had to be adapted due to circumstances not accounted for when setting up the research. Despite this, valuable student data was still able to be collected. This shows the importance of being flexible and adaptable while conducting research. It also illustrates that having a close relationship with the participants (in this case the teachers) was hugely beneficial as I worked with them to find a solution to solve the struggle in collecting student data.

The final round of interviews enabled the teacher participants to amend any information that they gave during the first interviews. It also provided an opportunity for teachers to give their opinions on how effective they felt the L1 strategies were with their students. This will help to understand if providing L1 strategies had an impact on teachers' beliefs.

Chapter 4: *Findings*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings. At the start of this chapter is the presentation of the school policy and the Native Language Enrichment (NLE) programme that is in line with the contents within the school policy. Following on from this, are the three research instruments which are ordered chronologically, to reflect the order in which they were collected. This helps to show how one set of data impacted the next. The order is as follows:

- Part one: teacher responses (responses from the teacher interviews that were conducted at the start of the research to gather baseline data on teacher beliefs and practices)
- Part two: student responses (that were collected during the intervention period)
- Part three: teacher exit interviews (final interviews with teachers that gave the teachers the opportunity to reflect on the initial interviews as well as providing feedback on the strategies that were used during the intervention period)

4.2 School policy

Finding the school's language policy was challenging. As mentioned previously, I found two documents that were used as a 'policy' but were actually guidelines (see Appendix G and Appendix H). At the time of writing this there was no official language 'policy' in place, just these guidelines, which are presented in more detail below. It should be noted that any local, Qatari, students had to take Arabic by law. These lessons were taken instead of a foreign language, which were also at the same time as EAL lessons. This meant that Qatari (and most other Arabic speaking students) students would not be eligible for English-language support in the same way as other students. This also meant that the Arabic speaking students are in an immersion situation. In addition to these lessons, they also had to take Islamic lessons which had to be taught in Arabic regardless of the level of Arabic that the student has. These rules were enforced by the Ministry of Education who would regularly inspect all schools in Qatar to make sure they were properly implemented within the curriculum.

As well as local law, the school is an IB world school using PYP (Primary Years Programme), MYP (Middle Years Programme) and DP (Diploma Programme) as the curriculum across all three divisions. The IB has guidelines for schools to follow to help them create a language policy. The school where this research took place referenced the IB guidelines by saying “The school has used the ‘IB Guidelines for developing a school language policy’ in preparing this document,” the document being the guidelines not an actual policy.

The two documents which serve as “guidelines” for how languages are taught and developed within the school are as follows:

- School language guidelines – a 10-page document that was created in 2013 and to my knowledge at the time of writing had not been updated. It was unclear who owned this document or had the responsibility of updating it. It was also unclear as to who had the responsibility of disseminating this information. I found it by accident when discussing my research with the school librarian who had a copy of it. (see Appendix G for an extract of this document)
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) guidelines section within the Student Support Services handbook (see Appendix H for an extract of this document). This handbook was created collaboratively with EAL teachers, Learning Support teachers and members of the school’s administrative team and printed in June 2014. It was very rarely used within the school and most of the staff were not aware of its existence.

The documents are similar in their beliefs and philosophy, but have slightly different wording. As neither of these documents were well distributed it is unclear who the intended audience was, but as one (the Student Support Services handbook) was housed on the school’s intranet this suggests it is intended for teachers as only teachers would have access to this.

Both documents refer to parents as being “important”. The handbook states that “working in partnership with parents is important for every child’s success” and I interpret this partnership to be teachers (and the school) with the parents although it is not explicitly stated. The guidelines show the importance of the role that parents have in maintaining their child’s L1 as well as stating that they will be provided with support in planning their

children's language profile and development. As an EAL teacher I was unaware of this expectation and none of the teacher participants were aware of this either, as they did not know this document existed.

The guidelines have a philosophy statement towards language learning that shows it is valued for a number of reasons. One of these is that language learning "enhances personal growth" and also that it has an "affective" factor that shapes learning. These along with the value places on culture and identity, show that the school has placed language learning at the core of its ethos.

The guidelines include the following statement of belief:

Since language is central to learning, all teachers at (school's name) are in practice language teachers, regardless of subject area or grade level.

This expectation that all teachers in the school are "language" teachers was not communicated with teachers in any way during the time I was at the school and to my knowledge none of the teachers knew this was what was being asked of them. The document also asserts that teachers will work "collaboratively" to "address the needs of first and additional language learner". Again, none of the teacher participants were aware of this expectation and it is unclear from the document as to how and when this collaboration should take place.

One of the other statements of beliefs in the handbook further enforces this concept of all teachers being responsible for teaching/developing the language of non-native English-speaking students. The statement is as follows:

Effective EAL education for EAL students is only possible when every teacher is aware of their role in EAL instruction.

As mentioned above, none of the teachers in this research were fully aware of their role in EAL instruction. Even Helen, who was the only teacher with training in this area, was not aware of any school policies or guidelines referencing languages.

Within the handbook there is no specific reference to students using their first language in the classroom. There is the following statement about the importance of students maintaining their L1:

First language proficiency supports new language development; it is therefore important that students continue to develop their native language

This shows that the school has realised and recognised the importance of students “continuing” with their studies in their L1, but does not reference how, or even if, they should use their L1 to support them while studying in English. The statement relates more to L1 supporting new language development, but not to its role in general learning and cognitive development. The implication of this is that for teachers, who do not see language as their focus, it may not have any resonance.

We can see this uncertainty is reflected in how the teachers view the place of L1 in their classrooms. Aisha was unsure of the school policy but noted “I do know that within this school as far as I’m aware, ummm them speaking their own language is not discouraged” (Aisha, interview 1). This shows that Aisha feels that students are allowed to use their L1. It does show a degree of uncertainty though as she does say “as far as I’m aware” and also says that they are not “discouraged” rather than having the knowledge that they are encouraged to maintain their L1, which is part of the school language guidelines.

None of the teachers specifically knew what was in the school policy in regards to language use. This was evident when they were asked if they had read it or were aware of it (see Appendix A), although they did make references to it throughout the interviews. That means that the teachers were acting on assumptions of what they thought might be in the policy without actually knowing of its true content.

George noted the importance of using English during lessons, saying: “it aligns them [the students] to the school’s expectations.” Although he did not specifically use the word “policy” in this quote, it can be assumed that a school’s expectations would be evident through its policy.

4.2.1 Native language enrichment programme

The school has an active Native Language Enrichment (NLE) programme that is run by parent volunteers and members of the community. At the time of writing, this programme was only offered for students in the primary school. At the beginning of each school year, a presentation of this programme is given to all the teachers during the first week of school. When asked if the teachers knew of the NLE programme they all said “no” or shook their

heads. This could be in part because they are teaching older students so it is of less relevance but it still is an important part of how the school views languages (this is discussed further in the next chapter).

4.3 Part one: Initial responses from teachers

This section presents and describes the teacher participant responses that were collected from the initial interviews conducted at the start of this research. As described in the Methodology chapter, each teacher was interviewed individually to ascertain their beliefs and practices towards L1 usage in their classrooms. The questions were designed so that the information that was gathered was not only about current practices but about any changes that may have occurred to both their beliefs and practices over time, while discovering more about the teachers' own educational and teaching backgrounds. By doing this, I hoped to find out more about any possible factors that were influencing the teachers' beliefs

During these initial interviews, a lot was revealed about how teachers viewed L1 usage in their classrooms. All of the teachers allowed L1 usage in their classrooms to various degrees. However, even though they were all allowing students to use their L1, they did have some degree of uncertainty as to if this was indeed best practice. Subsequently, two main areas of concern emerged from the data: firstly, that several teachers seemed to have reservations and worried about the effect that students using their L1 would have on their target language (TL); secondly, they felt a loss of control in their classrooms when they did not know what their students were talking about because they were using a different L1.

The responses were complex, intricate and unique as each teacher had a different story to tell about their own relationship with learning a language (or languages) as well as their differing experiences as teachers. Some responses clearly fell into a category of "allowing" L1 to some degree while other responses gave reasons for "avoiding" L1. A third category emerged from the teacher responses where there was a degree of "ambivalence" towards L1 usage. Therefore, the responses are presented in more detail below under the following three headings:

- Allowing L1 in the classroom
- Avoiding L1 in the classroom
- Ambivalence towards L1 in the classroom

4.3.1 “Allowing” L1 in the classroom

During the initial interviews, the teachers all revealed that L1 was being used in their classrooms. The reasons for this and the extent of its usage will now be presented in more detail.

The word “allowing” was used by several teachers (Helen, Aisha, William) and seems important as it suggests a certain amount of control that the teacher might feel they have over the students using their L1. It also suggests that there is permission granted by the teacher and an awareness that L1 is being used. For the teachers the word “allowing” mostly has a negative connotation as they appear to be uncertain of if they should “allow” students’ L1 in their classrooms. Aisha used the phrase “I don’t mind” when discussing how she felt towards students using L1 in her classroom. This is similar in intent to “allowing” in that although she supports its use, she is not actively promoting it. One of the aspects that is interesting with this is that although teachers have “allowed” L1 usage, they may not have explicitly told students that they can use it and this may be an area of uncertainty for students.

Translation was discussed in a similar way in that teachers may not have directed students towards using or even promoted translation devices, but they were comfortable with their usage.

4.3.1.1 Opportunistic translation

“Opportunistic translation” refers to when the teachers viewed the students using their L1 as helping them to learn more effectively; in some instances, they viewed it as helping to speed up the learning process and as such enabling the students to participate in the understanding of teaching as it happens, rather than have to wait for an explanation perhaps from a peer or the teacher.

All of the teachers viewed the use of translation devices positively, although some had a few reservations, which will be examined in more detail later. George believed that by using a device, students became more “independent”. He explained that “they can just look up whatever they... have to or want to errrr without having to ask any questions, it helps me as a teacher”. By this comment we can see that George saw what the benefits of translation were for both the student and the teacher. With students being able to use devices as the

need arises, George has shown the importance he has placed on wanting all the class to be able to participate in the understanding of teaching (as it happens) and has taken a pragmatic approach to students using dictionaries in his class. He realises the advantage that the students have in using dictionaries for translation purposes.

Helen was also supportive of students using their L1 for ease and efficiency in the classroom, both as a way to enable them to follow lessons and for her to move through lesson content quickly. Helen said “I’m allowing them to use it for clarification of things which makes it really efficient to cover things, especially with Grade 12”. Helen has shown in this comment that she acknowledged that the students were using their L1 for clarification and that this was of particular use to a specific grade level. The grade 12 students that she was discussing would have to sit external IB exams at the end of the school year. These exams cover a two-year learning period and the course is very content heavy. The class that she referred to had a number of students who shared the same L1 and additionally, Helen has some knowledge of this same language. She focused on the “efficiency” of allowing students to use their L1 as being of particular importance. As with George, this has also shown the significance they have both placed on students being able to access lesson content in a way that allows them to keep up with the class. For both of these teachers, there is the added pressure of having to complete a curriculum in a required amount of time in order to adequately prepare students for exams.

4.3.1.2 Overt encouragement of translation

Helen has the most teaching experience of all the teachers and has specific training for EAL students. This may have had an impact on how she views L1 usage and could be a possible explanation for how she has changed her beliefs. She noted that her earlier views on L1 usage differed greatly to the ones she now has. She said:

I used to think that was wrong [students using their L1] even until recently I would say come on speak in English as I thought that was what they were there for – to improve their fluency (Helen, interview1).

This transformation in Helen’s earlier beliefs had an impact on her practice as she now actively uses a specific strategy that enables students to use their L1 as she acknowledges that there is value in incorporating L1 into her lessons. She has recognised that the strategy

is not just simply convenient but something that can be built on. She said “It just helps them to, you know, understand better, and it saves me time”. The strategy she was referring to was to create an extra column for technical vocabulary that students needed to access subject-specific content in her lessons. She explained this by saying, “I put an extra column on vocabulary tables and I tell students to use that to translate words into their own language”. Helen has shown that she believes by allowing students to use their L1 (here in the form of translation) it not only saves time but allows for deeper understanding. Additionally, Helen has had a change in her conceptualisation of what the purpose of her class is – from a language focus on fluency to a content focus, where understanding is the priority. Again, as in the previous comment, Helen has mentioned the importance of “time” in allowing students to use their L1.

William said that he expected all the students in his classes to “use a dictionary of their choice or better still a thesaurus”. When questioned as to if this should be a translation device, he said it made no difference but acknowledged that “it might be easier for them to see the word in their language”. William has shown in this comment that he hopes for students who would go further than just using a dictionary as a way to translate something. In wanting students to use a thesaurus William is perhaps wanting students to find alternative words than those that would come up through translation and be more invested in their own learning.

4.3.1.3 L1 as a way of explanation

The use of L1 for explanation differs to that of translation. One of the ways in which this is done can be illustrated by William. He used the word “space” during the interview to refer to the way he would give students time to process difficult concepts. This concept of “space” could be time for students to think or discuss with other students, both of which William said “would and could be in whatever language they want”. Although William has not directed students to specifically use their L1 in the same way Helen has, there is a degree of acknowledgement that there is a place for its usage in his classroom and by doing this he shows that he has placed some degree of value in using the strategy of “space”.

In further explanation to allowing students “space”, William stated that he felt learning a language was not done through “osmosis”. This comment came as he was trying to elaborate on why he allowed students to use their L1 and why in particular he felt they

needed that “space”. It makes sense that William would be supportive of a L1 learning ‘space’ in the classroom, as this aligns well with his position on language learning. William was the only teacher who strongly disagreed with the concept of learning a language through an immersion-style environment. When asked about his belief about learning a language this way, he said:

I don’t know there are some people that believe that idea that just being immersed in the language is somehow...mmmmmm I don’t believe that...it’s not like osmosis where you just magically take it on board (William, interview 1).

Perhaps this was because William was put in an immersion situation when he went to secondary school, which seems to have had a lasting impact on how his beliefs are shaped towards learning another language and his own teaching practice. William is also suggesting that learning a language requires more than just “being immersed”.

4.3.1.4 Purposes for use

Aisha spoke of the difficulty that new students often faced when starting school. She was aware that many of them would feel “anxious” in the new environment, which she partly attributed to language difficulties. Aisha would, therefore, try to ease any anxiety that a new student to the school might have by having another student who shares the same L1 assist them in lessons. She explains:

I encourage them to pair up with students who are from their first, you know, same language to assist them with their learning in the classroom, so I don’t mind them speaking their language to aid their learning...I might even, you know, encourage that especially when students come from another school or a different country and are feeling anxious, I think pairing them up with another student who is a little bit, say more confident than they are in English also allowing them that space to speak their language to access the curriculum (Aisha, interview1).

This shows how Aisha has a lot of awareness as to how a student might feel when faced with a new environment and not feeling confident/able in English. She has used L1 as an affective purpose, whereby students are able to reduce their anxiety. She has pedagogical beliefs which see feeling at ease in the classroom, making connections with other students, as both important for their learning and part of her responsibility as a teacher to nurture.

This might be due to her understanding of the connection between language and identity (see below) or possibly due to the experiences she has had working in international schools. This belief has had an impact on her teaching practice to enable students to use their L1 in the classroom in this particular setting. Importantly, Aisha has actually gone beyond “allowing” L1 usage as she considers encouraging it.

Aisha and William both are bilingual. William was not exposed to his L2, which is English, until a later age. In this way, William is in the same situation as many of his students as they both share having English as their L2. Aisha grew up bilingual, but she separates the two languages that she speaks and has English as the academic language. Both William and Aisha referred to a link between language, culture and identity. Aisha spoke at length about how “culture and language are linked together” and this certainly seems to be from her own experience. She explained that her own culture and identity were very important to her as she is a British Pakistani. Her two languages seem to provide different purposes. She describes the differences between the two as follows:

English is my ‘academic’ language, you know, it’s the one that I...er... used at school and at uni whereas Kashmiri is what we speak with our grandparents and well the other older relatives, they don’t speak English you know (Aisha, interview 1).

From this quote we can see that Aisha has contemplated the place of language in her own life to understanding its importance as a reflection of culture and this has shaped her belief about the importance of this for her students. For Aisha, when students use their L2, it is not simply a mechanical process but one that carries traces of L1 and the culture connected to it. She appreciated the place of this in her classes when she spoke about how she felt when students used their L1 in her classes:

it’s interesting to hear what their interpretation of a word or image or something within their own cultural context, I think it adds a little bit more vibrancy to it (Aisha, interview 1).

Aisha shows through this comment an awareness of her students’ cultural differences and how important cultural context is when it comes to language. This comment illustrates how Aisha believes that the knowledge that her students have in their L1 can ideally be made

available to new learning done in L2 to enrich it and make it more meaningful on an individual/ personal level.

William elaborated more on the concept of “space” (that was discussed earlier) when he explained that it was important not to deny students’ identity. He said:

They should have a space to use their language because...there’s so much more tied to a language, right? There’s identity, values, beliefs – everything else and if you just completely deny it, it’s kind of almost denying their sense of identity, expression...I think that’s the biggest challenge with some students is that you make them and their language feel inferior they might not be as responsive (William, interview 1).

William shows from this comment that he is very aware of the link between language and identity and in particular how it effects students’ general sense of well-being. This belief could come from his own language-learning experience which he spoke at length to me about as being “difficult and upsetting”. William was placed in an English (EMI) secondary school after having previously being educated in French and having only a very basic understanding of English. As a student this had a profound impact on him as he still carries an emotional connection to his experience as a language learner.

In his first overseas teaching position, William taught at a school in India where he described the students as having a “higher level” of English than the ones at this school. He also had in-class support with a co-teacher who shared the same L1 as his students, which meant that L1 use was both accepted and supported. This classroom set-up was vastly different from the current one he is in as it was a bilingual environment where the place of L1 was clear, as it was not only accepted but also supported by the presence of the co-teacher in his classes.

William said he had “some degree of guilt” about his teaching practices as he felt that he was unable to fully support his students as he does not share their L1. However, it appears that his strong empathy for his students means that he was willing to try different strategies. His comments definitely show there is a link between his own language learning experience and how in his teaching practice he accommodates for EAL students.

It should also be noted that William came into teaching after already having had a career in another field, so although he is similar in age to Helen he does not have the same years of

experience. William was the oldest participant in the research, but in terms of teaching had the least amount of experience. So even though it was his second post in an international school it was really the first time he had to confront his own inability to effectively teach EAL students which could have had an impact on how he feels towards students' L1 in his classroom. In his first international school post, William had been in the classroom with a teacher who shared the same L1 as the students.

4.3.2 Avoiding L1 in the classroom

All of the teachers had some concerns about students using their L1 during lessons. The concerns mostly seem focused on the extent to which students were using their L1. As discussed in the previous chapter, all the teachers "allowed" students to use their L1 but the degree of usage is what seems to concern the teachers in this study. Only Helen actively/consciously directed students to use their L1, although the other teachers did use various strategies to a lesser degree.

4.3.2.1 Exclusion

Both William and George spoke of their apprehension that when groups of students who shared the same L1 spoke together they were excluding other members of the class.

George explained his concern as follows:

There are other people in the classroom that don't understand Arabic so it would be nice if they spoke in English so other would know what's going on -- you know not feel excluded (George, interview 1).

This comment shows that George felt that when the Arabic students spoke together it excluded the non-Arabic speaking students in the class.

William said that in certain "situations" they "need to use English as the medium so everyone feels ummmm included". When asked to clarify which "situations" he referred to, he said that it was mostly when the students were in small groups for discussions and other times where he felt that some students became "isolated" by not being able to understand the conversation around them.

4.3.2.2 L1 and behaviour

Aisha, William and George, all spoke of feeling concern about students becoming off-task when they were allowed to use their L1. Aisha said: “First of all, it’s a distraction and I can’t monitor it, and you know I don’t know if it’s to do with the actual lesson.”

From this comment Aisha has raised two concerns in regards to L1 use. She has said that L1 is a “distraction” which could be either to her or to the other students in the class and she also said that she “can’t monitor it” which could be referring to what the students are speaking about. Here she has shown that when her students use their L1 she feels that she does not know if they are on-task and also has no way of checking for understanding with her students. She also noted that there was a connection in the amount of time they were allowed to speak in that language leading more to off-task behaviour. She said:

I feel like yeah, I’m not gunna lie if I facilitate/If I allow ummmm students to speak in their own language for a long period of time I feel that behaviour is affected, definitely (Aisha, interview 1).

Although she did not specify what type of behaviour this would be, it is possible that it would also be disruptive for the class as a whole.

William also spoke about a similar concern saying “For me it’s hard to monitor what it is,” showing that he also felt that he was unable to know what students were talking about when using their L1.

George also expressed this same concern by saying:

The moment we allow students to speak their common tongue they start talking and we don’t know what is happening, we lose track of what’s going on in the class (George, interview 1).

George felt quite strongly about students using their L1 in a negative way and went on to explain further saying:

You hear them cursing and saying bad words in Arabic which I understand so...that’s what I mean, it tends to go off task because you don’t really know fully what’s going on in those conversations (George, interview 1).

In his explanation of when students are using their L1 in a negative way, George was aware of what his students were talking about as he knows they are saying bad words. So, although he might not know everything they are talking about, he does know enough to know they are indulging in behaviour that is inappropriate. This could be connected to George feeling a lack of control in his classes when this happens.

Aisha was aware of which students would try to use their L1 in a negative way in her classes when she was asked if she could tell if they were talking about subject-related material or off-task conversations. She answered by saying:

Generally, I can because it's the same offenders, it's the same students who would either try to do that in English and you can ummmmm from the way/ from their mannerisms that it's not to do with the subject at hand (Aisha, interview 1).

Her initial comment appeared that she could not monitor her students when they were using their L1, whereas this shows that she felt she could clearly identify which students were off-task as they would do the same in English, which indicates the issue is to do with behaviour, regardless of the language. However, it appears that this issue becomes exacerbated when they engage in their L1.

When William was asked if he could identify when students were off-task if they were using their L1 he said "yeah" and that he would move them back to the subject they were supposed to be discussing by asking them "questions" and giving them "reminders".

4.3.2.3 L1 limiting opportunities for the TL

George spoke about the importance of students speaking in English as it "aligns them to the schools' expectations". He also felt this was important as they have to take a course that is in English so they need the "practice".

Aisha spoke of a similar concern as she felt that they needed a "certain level to access the curriculum" and that "speaking and learning in English definitely helps this". They both, therefore, appear to have a belief that an immersion situation is important to maintain – in terms of both the school's expectations and the requirements of the curriculum. This is in contrast to William who felt strongly against an immersion environment.

4.3.3 Areas of ambivalence

This next section focuses on areas that were raised during the teacher interviews that did not clearly fit into either “allowing” or “avoiding” L1 usage. In many instances this occurred because the teachers were unsure of what they should be doing and this confusion created uncertainty in their teaching practices.

4.3.3.1 Translation devices

The use of translation as a strategy clearly illustrates how teachers had concern over the degree to which L1 was being used in their lessons. While all of the teachers supported their students using some form of translation device, their usage was not without reservation. During the initial teacher interviews, the second “I” statement was: “When my students use their dictionaries or their phones (for translation purposes) I...” None of the teachers raised any objections to this, but they did have some concerns.

Helen did not want her students to become “overly reliant” on them and wanted them “to think about the word first before jumping into using a dictionary”. This comment illustrates that Helen has a belief about language learning that students should spend time processing first before trying to find an easy answer. It might also be linked to her earlier comment about time, as it could become time-consuming for students to translate a number of words with attempting to infer their meaning.

William had a slightly different concern related to the complexities of translation. He felt that using Google to translate a phrase could “lead them into territory that isn’t correct”. William therefore, was worried about the effectiveness of using Google to translate phrases where the meaning could be lost.

4.3.3.2 Immersion

Throughout the interviews, the subjects of the school requiring English as an academic or target language and the idea of “immersion” appeared repeatedly, although not often directly referred to. George explained that “sticking to English as a medium of instruction is helpful in many ways because it brings out the message that we can only speak that language”. His belief here is supportive of an immersion-style environment where only the TL prevails.

Aisha spoke about having the “opportunity to practice that language, so that could be in any environment ummm but as long as they have the time to actually speak the language and have those opportunities frequently”. Aisha appears to not be promoting the concept of “immersion” in the same way as George does, but she does also say that “the best way to learn the language is to have it round you all the time”. This could be connected to her own experience as a language learner where she grew up bilingual from an early age which may give her a different viewpoint to someone who learnt a second language at a later stage.

To sum up, all the teachers were using some L1 strategies to varying degrees and were all willing to participate in trialling new strategies during the intervention period. A lot of the reasons that they gave were connected to their beliefs which came from personal experiences of language learning as well as any training that they had in teaching non-native English speaking students. One of the main issues for all the teachers was the lack of knowledge in regards to the school policy, guidelines, regarding how to support EAL students and the importance of languages.

4.4 Part two: Student responses

4.4.1 Intervention period

The intervention period followed the initial teacher interviews. During the intervention period, the teachers were given a list of L1 strategies to direct their students to use. This list was emailed to the teachers and I also met with them to give them a hard copy and discuss the strategies in more detail. The L1 strategies are listed in more detail in Chapter 3.

4.4.2 Implementation of the strategies

The teachers were initially given a period of 10 weeks to trial the strategies with their students. The teachers had the responsibility to select the students who would participate in the trial and also to provide them with the link to the online Google survey (see Appendix B). They selected the students they felt would be suitable to participate based on their age (over 16 as per ethical requirements and practicalities of working with older students) and who they felt would benefit from the strategies. The students were given an information sheet about the research prior to the start of the intervention period so that they knew what the research was about and what the feedback they gave would be used for.

I planned on meeting regularly with the teachers to provide ongoing support and be able to problem-solve with them as the need arose. This proved invaluable as during these sessions a teacher shared with me the challenge of collecting the student surveys. I was aware that these were not being filled in as I could view the data through the results of the Google survey. This teacher told me that she felt it would be easier for the students to complete the survey if it was distributed in a paper format (hard copy). I adapted the online survey and this version of the survey was given out to all the teachers as an alternative to the online one (see Appendix I). However, the paper version also proved challenging for the students and the teachers. One teacher told me that the end of the lesson was always “rather chaotic” and as such it was difficult for her to single out certain students to stay behind. Despite her best intentions of distributing the survey earlier, this did not happen. The other teachers all cited similar problems with “busyness” appearing to be the main reason. I felt that it was crucial to include the student voice in this research and as such designed a one-off survey to be completed at the end of the intervention period (see Appendix J). This was not ideal as it meant that a certain amount of time had passed between when the students had used the strategy/ies and when they reflected on them but it enabled me to collect this valuable data.

William found it difficult to know which student/s to use to trial the strategies with and also was unsure of which strategies to use. He had initially misunderstood how to use the strategies as he thought that I would sit with him to plan them into his lessons and decide which student/s would be most suitable. Once I realised this I did spend time with William to decide which strategies he could use and suggest some students that may benefit from using their L1. As I was not supposed to know the identity of the student participants I gave several possible suggestions for which students I felt would benefit, but left the final decision up to him.

Helen admitted that she just kept forgetting. As she was a new teacher to the school she was finding the first term hectic and asked if she could delay starting the strategies until after the December break. Aisha and George did not specify why they had not used the strategies, but the intervention period was extended by a month as none of the teachers had used the strategies during the prescribed time.

4.4.3 Student surveys

The surveys had four questions about the strategy/ies that the students trialled during the intervention period as well as a space for comments. A total of 20 forms were collected from the students. However, it should be noted that this does not necessarily mean that 20 different students participated as the same students may have trialled the surveys in different classes. The questions below have both the original question and the adapted question that appeared on the summary survey.

The first part of the presentation of this data will look in detail at the responses the students gave to these questions and the second part will consider the comments that the students wrote.

4.4.4 Survey questions and responses

The four questions were designed to gauge how the students felt about the L1 strategies as well as how effective they felt they were. The strategies were given a scoring system from one to five, with five being a very positive response (see Appendix B).

Q1: How did you use your first language in today's lesson? Adapted to: How did you use your first language during the previous week's lessons? Which strategy/ies did you use?

The strategy that was used the most was having a discussion in the students' shared L1. This was followed by the strategy of a classmate explaining something to them and/or explaining something to a classmate. Having the students use an oral L1 strategy was what most of the teachers initially thought of when asked to consider how they used L1 in their classrooms. It is probably the easiest strategy to use as it takes only a small amount of direction from the teachers and perhaps some consideration given to the seating arrangements of the class.

When I decided which strategies to suggest for the intervention period, it did not occur to me that I had used several oral strategies

Q2: How useful was it for you to use your first language in class today? Adapted to: How useful was it for you to use your first language during classes over the last few weeks?

Over 75% of the responses were positive as the rating for this strategy was either a 4 or a 5. Which suggest that the majority of the students found using their L1 in class useful. Only one student rated the response as a 2 which would indicate that this student did not find using his/her first language useful.

Q3: If you had the opportunity to do so, would you use this strategy again? Adapted to: If you had the opportunity to do so, would you use any of the strategies again?

This question elicited a more positive response than the previous one as there were no responses less than a 3 with the majority of responses falling between a 4 or a 5. This is interesting as it means that even the student who responded negatively to the last question, saying he/she did not find the strategy/ies useful, would still use the strategies again.

Q4: Do you think using your first language in today's lesson had an impact on your understanding? Adapted to: Do you think using your first language during lessons had an impact on your understanding?

The answers to this question were all positive with all the responses either a 4 or a 5. This is perhaps the most important question as it clearly shows that the students who participated in this research felt strongly towards using their first language to improve their overall understanding.

4.4.5 Student comments

At the end of the survey form was space for the students to add any comments that they would like about using their L1. The purpose of this was to give the students the opportunity to voice any other opinions they had and to comment on any areas that may not have been covered by the questions. The comments fell into two categories. The first category was connected to feelings that the students had about using their L1 and the second category was about how it affected their processing.

4.4.5.1 Comments on feelings

The students used the L1 strategies for affective purposes. In other words, these strategies had a positive impact on the students' overall sense of well-being during the classes in which they were used. This was evident in the comments that two of the student

participants left on their surveys. Both of these comments were in relation to how the strategies made these students feel.

One student left the comment “I’m confident”. This comment shows that using L1 strategies goes beyond just aiding comprehension: they support students in the classroom by providing them with tools that give them more confidence. This increase in confidence would possibly improve the student’s academic performance and has certainly improved how they view themselves within the class.

Two students used the word “comfortable”. This contrasts with the point made earlier by several teachers where they felt that when students used their L1 it isolated them in the class. One said “I felt more comfortable” which shows a comparison to how the student usually felt in lessons compared to when they were allowed to use their L1. The other student said, “I understand better the concept, I felt more comfortable in class as it was easier for me to understand the concepts”. This student’s comment could be included in either category as it shows both a feeling with the word “comfortable” and also “understanding” which is connected to how a student processes information. The word “comfortable” for both of these students is obviously important and something that they feel positively about. In comparison, George felt less positively towards students feeling “comfortable” as he felt they needed to “step out of their comfort zone” in order to challenge themselves academically.

4.4.5.2 Processing comments

One student made a comment that suggests the strategy/ies helped him/her with understanding lesson content. This student said “It’s very useful in order to understand the difficult concepts”. This strategy supported the students’ academic task of understanding and learning new concepts.

One other student made a similar point, but gave a more detailed response, as follows: “I feel as if using my L1 is crucial for my understanding of difficult subjects, especially the ones in humanities compared to the sciences”. This comment is interesting as the student has been specific in regards to which subject they feel using their L1 is more beneficial for their understanding. When I set up this research, I thought that the L1 strategies would be of most use in either English or humanities subjects but did not want to restrict which teachers

took part. The thinking behind this was that the EAL students in my class had often told me that they struggled more in these subjects than maths and sciences mainly because of the writing they had to do and also because they found that the answers required a degree of complexity that they struggled with due to language barriers. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I did open the research up to all teachers but coincidentally only English and humanities teachers volunteered.

One of the comments is about the impact of oral L1 strategies on his/her understanding. The student stated that:

When there is something that I might not understand it helps me when they explain it in Spanish or when I can explain it to someone.

The fact that the student chose to write a comment here shows how strongly they feel towards using this particular strategy. As with the previous comment this could be to do with how the student is able to express him/herself during lessons which means the strategy not only enhances their learning but is for self-presentation. Here the importance to note is that it is not only receiving an explanation that helps, but also the opportunity to give one, and therefore being required to articulate the new learning in his/her own language.

Another student gave a similar comment: “It helps me explain and elaborate more on my answer”. This comment is interesting as it shows that the student may feel he/she has more agency connected to understanding as the student can give more detail in his/her answers and explain them more clearly.

The last comment is “It’s alright”. This comment initially appears to be quite flippant and written without much thought. This comment is from the student who did not find any of the L1 strategy/ies useful (see earlier) but still felt they had an impact on their understanding and would probably use them again. The student’s comment shows that even though the student did not view any of the strategies as being useful they still overall had a positive experience in using their L1 during lessons.

The student data revealed that they felt the L1 strategies had a positive impact on their learning and well-being during the intervention period. Although this research was mainly focused on teachers’ beliefs, the students’ input has proved valuable and insightful.

4.5 Part three: Exit interviews

The exit interviews were designed to be short (approximately 10 minutes) as the teachers had already given a lot of time for the first interviews and additional check-ins during the intervention period. The purpose of the interviews was to determine which strategies the teachers had used and get any feedback from them as to their effectiveness. Additionally, it was a time for the teachers to reflect on their initial interviews and make any changes to their answers. They were all provided with transcripts of their interviews.

4.5.1 Reflection and change

In some cases, the structured use of the strategies during the intervention period validated practices that the teachers already had, but possibly felt ambivalent about because of their confusion about the school policy.

The intervention period was a positive experience for three of the four teachers, despite the initial delays and problems in getting started. Helen, George and Aisha were all grateful for the experience of participating in this research. Helen said that, “It was really useful to be thinking about using students’ L1 and bring attention to it”. The difference for Helen, who was already actively using and allowing students to use their L1 in her classroom, was that it was given “direction” and “value”. She also noted that, “the students felt important being part of the research”. For Helen it was validation of practices she was already implementing as well. She said:

I didn’t think of what I was doing as...as actual strategies, you know it had just been something that was included, but...I realised I was using many of the strategies already – that made me feel that, well that I was doing something right (Helen, interview 2).

Aisha also felt positive about being part of the research. She explained:

the strategies made me realise how easy it is to make a small change to my lesson that might, or actually could help my students, particularly the older ones -- it was also, you know, a great time for me to reflect (Aisha, interview 2).

This comment is important as the strategies were not supposed to disrupt how a lesson would normally be delivered to the students and this shows that when they were being used the change to the lesson was minimal.

For George, the changes went beyond just what happened in his lessons as he shared his experience with other members in his department. He explained that:

I learnt a lot, it took a while to start using the strategies but once we got started it was easy. I told others in my department what I was doing and we have tried to be more on to/aware of using a students' native language to support them. We agreed to share this at the start of our department meetings (George, interview 2).

This showed a willingness by George to not only trial strategies but to share what he learnt with other teachers. He used the word "easy" to describe how he found using the strategies which shows that the strategies were not difficult to use and were integrated into lessons without complication.

One of the teachers, William, found it difficult to use any of the strategies and was unable to implement any of them into his lessons during the intervention period. During the exit interview he cited several reasons as to why he was not able to use the strategies. One of the students whom William had chosen had no interest in partaking in the study. William said, "he lacked motivation and that has nothing to do with language and everything to do with his attitude". William also felt that as he did not have a good rapport with this student he was not comfortable in getting him to trial strategies: "it felt like I was asking him for a favour by taking part in this". This is unfortunate as perhaps some of the difficulties this student faced may have been due to not having sufficient language skills. Overall, the class that William had chosen to use the strategies with was a challenging group of students who frequently required additional support due to behaviour. Perhaps William would have found it easier to use the strategies with a different class.

As well as the difficulties mentioned above with the student he chose, William also said that he was "simply too busy to get organised". This was a problem that all the teachers had as teaching often involves many different parts of school life that can fill a teacher's day. William did not realise that the strategies did not really require any organisation other than simple directing and getting a student/s to fill in a form. Perhaps for future studies/research

this really must be emphasised. However, despite this, William did acknowledge that taking part in the research was something he found beneficial as he was able to reflect on his own language learning experience. He said, “the first interview really made me think...you know it was a hard time for me and I don’t know, do I have the, the skill/training for the students”. William felt he would benefit from more training and additional support for some of the EAL students in his classes.

4.5.2 Strategies used

The teachers who did participate managed to use all of the strategies during the intervention period, but the ones that were used the most were oral strategies. These included: having a discussion in L1, explaining something to a classmate in a shared L1 and having someone explain something to them in their L1. Helen explained that although they were already using these strategies it felt different as it was with “permission” and as the students were aware of why they were using them she felt they were more “serious” in their approach to using their L1.

Some of the teachers (Aisha and Helen) were already using a few of the strategies prior to the intervention period. Aisha noted:

A lot of the strategies happen in the class without actively promoting them. Perhaps this could be more apparent with the Korean students (Aisha, interview 2).

Aisha went on to explain that she asked the Korean students to use the strategy of looking for information on subject content on a Korean website. She felt this was of particular use as the students could then use this to share with the rest of the class in English, which reinforces the value of articulating your learning. It also placed the students in positions of being valued imparters of new knowledge, which gave them a position of agency and autonomy as students.

George mostly used the strategy of getting students to have a discussion in their L1. He said that this was “useful” for TOK where a lot of the lesson content is designed for discussions. He felt some students were “disadvantaged” if their English was “not strong” as it did not allow for the discussions to happen “organically”, which is why this strategy was so useful. He said that following the discussion the students would “work together” to summarise in English how their discussion went.

Overall, it appeared that none of the strategies were difficult to implement and that they were easily understood by both teachers and students. The limitations of the strategies that were chosen and how this may have impacted the research will be explained in further detail in the next chapter. The themes that emerged from the exit interviews with the teachers can be summarised as follows:

- Validation of existing teaching practice in the face of confusion in regards to the school policy
- Enjoyment of participation in the research project as a means of self-reflection
- Ease of adaptation of existing practices to incorporate the strategies
- Sharing of strategies with those outside the research
- Importance of directing students towards strategies and explaining their purpose
- The challenges of time-management for teachers

4.6 Summary of the findings

The data collected revealed a lot about the teacher participants' beliefs towards students using their L1 in their classrooms. These beliefs were largely based on the teachers' own language learning experiences, as well as their experiences as teachers. The data also gave an insight into their pedagogical practices in supporting language learners. The teachers had various views about the place of the L1 in the classroom; while they all "allowed" it some did so with reservation and at times tried to "avoid" it. Additionally, the findings revealed how the intervention period provided L1 strategies to support teachers and the exit interviews showed that most of the teachers looked favourably on these strategies. By changing the approach to collecting the data from the students, this was able to be included in this research. This showed that the students looked favourably on being able to use L1 strategies to help their learning. The reasons for the results presented in this chapter will be discussed in more detail in the next, along with reference to the literature that was discussed in the literature review.

Chapter 5: *Research discussion*

This chapter will discuss the key findings presented in the previous chapter with reference to literature on some of the topics that emerged from the teacher and student participants' responses. The chapter begins by looking closely at the role of the teachers at the school followed by the experiences they had as language learners. Next is the role of the L1 at the school. This is followed by a discussion on the impact that the language policy had on the teachers. After this is the general inertia that the teachers had towards trialling something new. This chapter is concluded with a consideration of the value of teacher-led research.

5.1 The role of the teachers in the school

All the teachers in the school were teaching their subject classes in English, with the exception of language acquisition classes and Qatar history and Islamic studies for local and Arabic speaking students (as per governmental policy). However, these teachers all were faced with EAL students in their classrooms despite most not being language teachers or having specific training in teaching language learners. The teacher participants in this study were often focused on trying to cover content and felt a responsibility to complete the curriculum as many of their students were faced with external IB examinations. This meant that the teachers were not focusing on language learning or adolescent cognitive development. In the interviews it appeared as if some were faced with a dilemma – keep forging ahead with content or slow down and address the needs of all learners.

All the teachers involved in the research taught English, humanities or TOK. I had initially hoped to have these subject teachers involved in the research as I knew from my EAL students that these were areas that they struggled the most in. This is supported by research by both Collier (1998) and Duff (2001). Collier (1998) found that two years after arrival students in high school had reached the 50th percentile in maths whereas at the time of graduation they had not reached the 50th percentile in English language arts, reading, science or social studies. Collier's (1998) study comprised of 2000 immigrant students (65% Hispanic and 20% Asian) at an affluent American school in the suburbs (1998). It has also been shown that ESL students in mainstream social studies classes can often be at a disadvantage for several reasons: firstly, they may not have the linguistic, cultural and geographical knowledge that is required; they may have missed earlier social studies

courses which means they lack prior knowledge and finally the content with which they may have the specific expertise, familiarity and personal experience may not be in the curriculum that they are studying (Duff, 2001). This meant that teachers who taught in these subject areas faced an additional challenge compared to other subject teachers and had to differentiate their teaching to a greater extent to accommodate for language learners in their classrooms.

The teachers' role as 'language' teachers was made even more challenging by not having appropriate subject choices for the older students (aged 16 and up). The IB has, as part of the DP curriculum, the option for students to take English as a "language A" and their own language as their "language B" (International Baccalaureate, 2019). This allows for students to continue studies in their L1 even though their other subjects are taught in English. The advantage is that although they do have to study and complete an examination in English, if English is taken as a "B" subject it is considered the same as other language acquisition courses. However, at the time of this research these options were not available for students. Helen had the training and the experience to teach this subject, and yet she was teaching a "standard level" English class. In other schools, the option to have English as a "language B" was even offered from the start of the high school (ages 14-16) so that EAL students are focusing on acquiring language skills rather than taking a regular English class. This would have meant that a teacher like William would not have struggled so much with the range of EAL students that he had in his class. Although differentiation is an expectation in many schools, often teachers can struggle to successfully differentiate for the range of student abilities. William is a clear example of this as he was unable to address the learning needs of the EAL students in his class.

Many of the teachers were provided with IB subject training so even new teachers were able to quickly understand the curriculum requirements and the school made sure that at least one teacher in every department was current with their IB training. In contrast, the school did not provide any specific training for teaching language learners as there was an expectation that teachers would know how to accommodate for these students.

If the teachers were given language training, then they would understand that they cannot completely control when and how students use their L1 in the classroom. However, this research showed that the teachers all felt an element of control as to if they were able to

“allow” the students in their classes to use L1. Teachers are not able to completely ‘ban’ L1 usage or “avoid” or even “allow” it only in certain situations as there are many unseen ways that students use their L1. The only teacher who not only recognised the value of allowing students to use their L1, but also directed them towards using it with a specific strategy in place, was Helen. As Helen was the only teacher who had been trained to teach language learners, this illustrates the importance of providing training to teachers as Helen was clear that allowing L1 in her classroom was ‘good’ practice despite not knowing if she was in line with the school’s language policy. She was able to reflect on her earlier beliefs towards L1, where she had felt frustrated with her students for using it, to where she was at the time of the research as feeling it had a place and was valued within her classes. This level of confidence towards L1 in her classes most likely came from her training and shows the importance of providing staff with appropriate professional development if they are going to work with EAL students. Helen also was able to reflect and adapt both her beliefs and her classroom practice to current language teaching methodology.

In contrast, the other teachers allowed L1 usage, but did not seem as sure of its place or value in their classrooms. For several teachers they felt that by allowing L1 usage they were acknowledging a student’s identity. In these instances, the belief and importance of valuing this was stronger than perhaps their belief in the value of their student’s L1 as a learning aid or strategy; that is, even if they were unsure of whether a student (or often students) should use their L1, to deny them this felt as if the teachers were denying the students a link to their culture.

Teachers also need to encourage students to use specific strategies to aid their learning. The goal should be seen as trying to improve students’ level of English so they can more easily access the curriculum and achieve better results in assessments. In the interviews, the teachers often felt torn between maximising TL usage versus allowing students to use their L1. They seemed to view them as two separate ways of learning and that you could not have both simultaneously in the classroom.

5.2. Teacher experiences of learning a language

All of the teachers had some experience in learning another language. This was not intentional when I set up the research and I have discussed the implications of this in the

next chapter as a possible limitation. However, it became apparent that the teachers' experience of learning a language had an impact on their beliefs and their practices.

Helen had some knowledge of Spanish and managed to support several of her students by speaking this language, which showed her willingness to use her students' L1 to support them.

Two of the teacher participants grew up bilingual, George and Aisha, and both of these teachers had English as their academic language. Aisha felt that her "other" language was one that connected her with her family as this is the language she speaks with her grandmother. This obviously had an impact on Aisha's teaching beliefs as she felt that allowing students to use their L1 was connected to their identity (see below for further discussion). George really wanted his students to step out of their comfort zone and for him this meant not always using their L1. He did believe that maintaining TL was important and he himself had to use English almost exclusively when he was at school. This again shows the connection between a belief towards language learning and an experience as a language learner.

William had grown up with one language and then was placed in an English immersion environment for secondary school, which was something that has had a long-lasting negative impact on him. William struggled the most to support the EAL students in his classes and this caused him some degree of uncertainty and anxiety. William did not believe in learning a language through immersion and this was most likely as a result of his own experiences. He had felt unprepared when he was moved from a French school to an English one having only attended a brief course as an ESL student. From this we could ascertain that William was the least confident of the teachers on the power of immersion to lead to acquisition of L2. The other teachers were not as sure of if an immersion environment was positive or negative. William's certainty appeared to come from his unhappiness as an unsupported L2 speaker. Although William had a strong view on what he felt would not support the EAL students in his classes, he did not have an alternative way of working to support them. If William had been provided with specific training he may have been more confident as a teacher. In contrast, Helen had more experience as a teacher and specific training for language learners, which made her appear more confident and effective in the classroom.

5.3 A summary of the roles of L1

From the findings, it was apparent that L1 played a number of roles within the classroom. Some of these roles enhanced student learning and some were seen as enabling unwanted behaviours. Each of these will be looked at in more detail below.

5.3.1 L1 as a medium for affective support and affirming identity

Aisha used to pair students together who shared the same L1, as she believed that this would help reduce anxiety when one of them was new. Using L1 as a way to reduce anxiety shows an awareness that Aisha has about how potentially isolating it could be when you do not have anyone who shares your L1. By helping her students to connect through a shared L1, Aisha has illustrated that she places a value on the place of L1 in her classroom. As discussed in the literature review, the work of McCracken (2017) supports using students' L1 in the classroom to reduce anxiety.

L1 was recognised in affirming students' identities – helping them to connect to their culture and their heritage. This is important in an international school in a foreign country, where students could start to feel disconnected from older family members. Research by Cummins (2007) supports L1 usage and development for these reasons. In contrast, the other teachers allowed L1 usage, but did not seem as sure of its place of value in their classrooms. For several teachers they felt that by allowing L1 usage they were acknowledging a student's identity. In these instances, the belief and importance of valuing this was stronger than perhaps their belief in the value of their student's L1 as a learning aid or strategy; that is, even if they were unsure of whether a student (or often students) should use their L1, to deny them this felt as if the teachers were denying the students a link to their culture.

5.3.2 L1 as a means to achieve greater understanding to enable learning

Several of the teachers were aware that the L1 enabled more effective learning to take place in their classrooms, as well as being a way to accelerate this process.

In William's previous school, L1 played a significant place in his classes as he would often have a co-teacher in his lessons with him that shared the same L1 as his students. He noted that Hindi was often heard in his lessons and this did not cause him any concern. This

suggests that he was used to his students using translation as a strategy during lessons. Perhaps after being in this type of environment it made it difficult for William in a school where the place of L1 in the classroom was not clear and he may not have developed ways of supporting EAL students as he was previously reliant on the co-teacher.

William was supportive of his students using dictionaries, but wanted them to use a thesaurus as he felt this would provide them with a broader range of words to use and as such perhaps this would mean they would be more invested in their own learning. This appears to be more of an ideal situation that William would like for his classes than his current reality. This shows how William could still be adjusting to working in the current school and having to change the expectations that he has towards his students. He mentioned in the interview that the level of English in his previous school was much higher than this one.

He also expressed concern when his students used translation devices as he felt this would lead them in the wrong direction. This belief must have come from his experience as a teacher as he explained how this happened when students put phrases or entire sentences into Google translate, which would not have existed when he was a student.

William, George and Helen all had the additional responsibility of preparing students for IB exams. As mentioned before, the IB curriculum is very content-heavy and academically challenging. William did not have any EAL students in his IB English class as this was a high-level subject. Higher level classes are not 'higher' in terms of language level but rather in terms of content, which would make them less suitable for language learners. This is because the demands of these classes require a high proficiency to analyse the literature and the expectation is that the level of writing would be higher than English "B". Helen's standard-level English class had a majority of EAL students in it and many of these had only been in an English-medium school for a year prior to starting the course. Helen mentioned this class and the concept of translation appeared to aid her lessons and make them more time-efficient. Additionally, Helen realised that having students explain something to each other also helped save her time. In a similar way, George referred to translation also helping him in his classes and enabling his students to be more independent. Both of these teachers have, therefore, placed a value on students using their L1 for translation and explanation

purposes in courses that are both content-heavy and academically challenging. They have also realised the importance of the students not relying on just the teacher for explanations.

5.3.3 L1 as a way to mask off-task behaviours

L1 was sometimes used as a way to mask off-task behaviours. The teachers all felt that students could use their L1 to become off-task; particularly if they were left to have lengthy discussions which could not be monitored.

Both George and William felt concerned that if students who shared the same L1 had the opportunity to have discussions together in the class, this could “exclude” others and make them feel “isolated”. This is a complex situation and perhaps it is easy for a teacher in an EMI school to foreground the exclusion that use of L1 might cause English-speakers over the isolation that those struggling with English feel. We certainly learnt about this from William’s experience as a student.

Three of the teachers expressed concern with students using their L1 leading to unwanted behaviour in their classes. It did not appear to be an area that they were unable to manage as they were all able to identify which students were using their L1 in a negative way and bring them back on-task. They all seemed to have an awareness of when the students were not on-task despite not sharing their L1, with the exception of George who could tell when students were using swear words in Arabic. It might be possible that some of these students exhibited unwanted behaviour even when using the TL. Being off-task was cited as one of the unwanted behaviours but perhaps there were more general behavioural issues with a specific group of students that would be worth exploring beyond just their shared L1.

5.3.4 The impact of the vagueness of the school policy on teachers

A diverse array of language policies are put into practice in schools around the world, yet little research exists about the complex process of language policy implementation within educational contexts. (Garcia & Menken, 2010, p. 1)

At the centre of any decision-making about languages in a school should be a sound language policy. Language policies in education should be deliberately explicit in regards to their ideological assumptions and multilingualism should be seen as a resource (Lo Bianco,

2010). A language policy should include not only which languages are to be taught at the school, but also ideologies about languages (Garcia & Menken, 2010).

One of the areas of ambiguity that became apparent from the data was the school policy. Sometimes the teachers felt that they were avoiding L1 usage to be in line with school policy and at other times they were allowing it for the same reason. The significance of the students' L1 was understood by the school's documentation and yet this created confusion as these documents were not communicated effectively. This greatly contrasts with the work of those such as Cummins (2007) whose findings show that L1 needs to have a firm place in a school. Cummins work shows the importance of making the school policy clear for all the teachers (and other stakeholders) at the school. Without this clarity, teachers end up trying to do what they think is correct based on assumptions rather than reality. Teachers should be aware of how their practices align with school policy and be supported by the school administration in learning new strategies to help them achieve this.

One of the key statements within the guidelines is that all teachers at the school are "in practice language teachers, regardless of subject area or grade level" (School Guidelines, 2013). This would only be possible if appropriate training was provided and the reality was, at the time of this research, that none of the teacher participants were aware that they were supposed to be language teachers. Carder (2006) discussed the importance of providing training to teachers so that they could properly accommodate for EAL students within classes. There could also be provisions for working with EAL teachers during planning times to make sure that lessons were differentiated to support EAL students.

This was, unfortunately, not backed up with specific language training, which would have helped teachers to be more confident in the classroom. William, struggled with feeling that he did not do enough for his students, which could have easily been avoided if he had been armed with the knowledge of how to support language learners.

Teachers also lacked an understanding of what was expected of them when teaching language learners and one of the most interesting findings that emerged from the data was that teachers were not aware of the school language policy or even the stance that the school took towards language learners. This is interesting because it was referenced as both a reason for and against allowing L1 usage. This then positioned the school policy in an area of 'ambiguity', which is where it is placed in the previous section. This also contradicts what

the purpose of a school policy is supposed to be, which is to provide clarity and guidance on the school's position on certain areas – in this case in relation to language learners. There really needed to be clearer communication to teachers about the school policy.

The work of Cummins (2007) illustrated that it can take up to seven years for language students to achieve academic proficiency in the L2 they are studying in. Although there was an acknowledgement in the guidelines that academic proficiency can take six to ten years to reach (see appendix F) this should transpire into providing ongoing support for those students.

Even though it is mentioned in the guidelines that students can take two to three years to reach an appropriate conversational level, the implication of this needs to be understood by classroom teachers. Research by Cummins (2007) shows that there can often be a difference between the spoken level for general interaction of a language and the longer length of time it takes to acquire that level academically. This means that assumptions cannot be made about the level of support a student will require, of their level of English, just by speaking to them as there may be a difference between their receptive and productive language skills. Teachers may need to provide additional support for language learners in different areas of learning. For example, this needs to be considered when marking students work, students should be given extra time when taking tests (this is an approved IB accommodation) and bi-lingual dictionaries should be available to students whenever they are doing written work.

This also has implications for students who are considering moving to an international school or one where the medium of instruction is not their L1. At the time of admission, the prospective student should be properly assessed so that the school can determine the level of support that the student requires and if this level of support can indeed be provided. The length of time required to support an EAL student may be much longer than what a school would be prepared to offer. Cummins (2007) also stressed the relevance of the EAL teacher taking that decision rather than an administrator, the parents or the student. An EAL teacher is the most experienced member of staff when it comes to assessing a student's true language level and should only have this as the means to guide their decision making. An administrator may be thinking of other factors (staffing, costs, etc.) and parents can often be in a sense of denial about their child's true ability. Additionally, there should be a

clear exit point from the EAL programme based on a range of data from various sources. There was no clear guideline that referred to when and how a student should be exited from the EAL programme in this school.

Carder (2006) explains the significance of the families and the school working together and that the parents need to understand the commitment that is required for their child to be successful in a school where they are not studying in their L1. This should also be clearly communicated at the time of admissions and it may be that the student may require additional language support beyond what the school would be able to provide.

Both the guidelines and the handbook within this school are mostly in keeping with current research towards language learners in multilingual classrooms. One such area is in the provision for providing an NLE programme, which supports the research of those such as Cummins (2007), who advocates for language learners to maintain their L1. The term “subtractive” bilingualism was used to describe when one language essentially replaced another instead of being “added” to it (Lambert as cited in Landry & Allard, 1993). One way of avoiding “subtractive” bilingualism is to have a programme which allows students to continue to learn in their L1. However, without being properly shared and discussed they are only good in ‘theory’ not in ‘practice’. They would need to be clearly communicated with all key stakeholders and training provided where necessary and appropriate. It is also said that parents will be made aware of their role in ensuring their child’s L1 development. This suggests that it is not only the NLE programme that is responsible for L1 maintenance, but also the home. The implication of this is that parents need to be educated and provided with specific ways of helping their child/ren to maintain their L1. I would also argue that teachers need to be very aware of what advice is given to parents by the school and not give contradictory advice. I have been in many meetings where teachers have suggested that the family should “speak in English” at home.

While the school did have an NLE programme, again (as with the school policy) none of the teacher participants were aware of it. This may have been because there were no high school students enrolled in the programme at the time of this research and all the teacher participants were high school teachers. This means that there is no account taken of the normal expansion of linguistic proficiency that young people make through schooling in the L1, which these students are, therefore, deprived of. This was due to the disconnect with

the structure that was in place for an NLE programme and the practical application of how this was implemented. In order to truly support EAL students, the school needs to develop a more cohesive NLE programme that is well-subscribed in all divisions of the school. The importance of this programme needs to be explained to both parents and students with links to recent research such as that of Cummins (2007) to help explain the rationale behind the programme.

Both the language policy and the NLE programme did not transfer into the teaching practices in the classrooms, which had the effect of not providing effective pedagogy to support language learners.

One of the issues to come from the findings is that despite the intention of the guidelines to support L1 usage, this was not apparent from the teachers' beliefs or practices. Garcia & Menken (2010) explain that "teachers are the final arbiters of language policy implementation" (p. 2). This is relevant for this research as the teachers were all unaware of the school's position towards language learners and therefore the teachers were making decisions about the implementation of the guidelines without any knowledge of its existence or content.

5.4 The challenges of getting started with the L1 strategies

One of the problems that I encountered in this research was getting the teachers to actually start the intervention period. Despite the reassurance that the L1 strategies would not interfere with their lesson/s and would be easy for the students to use, the teachers were unable to start using them in their lessons. Many of the strategies should have already been in place for students to use and would have simply required the teacher to actively direct the student to use them in certain situations, so it was difficult to understand why they struggled to get students to use them. The teachers had all seemed very enthusiastic about the intervention period when they agreed to participate in the research. During the interviews they were also expressing excitement at the prospect of trialling something new. Why did this not transfer into participating in the intervention period?

When I met with the teachers to discuss how the intervention period was going, they all cited being 'busy' as the reason they had not managed to do anything. Helen was a new teacher and this could have been a valid reason for her to take a while to start using the

strategies. Also, as she was already using some L1 strategies, it may have felt like an additional unnecessary element to her workload.

Eventually, three out of the four teachers were able to successfully trial the L1 strategies during the intervention period. William, as discussed previously, was the exception to this as he was not able to use any of the strategies. His explanation for this was that he was unable to find the right student to use them with. William expressed a sense of guilt at not being able to support his students in the initial interviews, and was genuinely excited to participate in this research. It also seemed that William's workload may have also had an impact on his inability to use any of the strategies.

Unfortunately, workloads in many schools are not looked at holistically. A teacher's schedule only indicates one part of their day. Instead, it is important to consider other duties and responsibilities they may have as well as how experienced they are. A newly qualified teacher or a teacher who is new to the school should be given more time to observe and work closely with more experienced teachers. William would have greatly benefitted from working with Helen, as she had more experience and training than he did. In particular her experience in supporting language learners.

Interestingly, once the teachers began the intervention period they all commented how easy it was to use the strategies and how much their students enjoyed being part of the research. Hopefully, by having this positive experience the teachers will be receptive to more teacher-led research in the future.

5.5 The value of teacher-led research

Based on the comments from the teachers at the exit interviews, it was apparent that they all appreciated the opportunity to take part in this research, particularly as it provided them with a way of reflection on their beliefs and practices. When I trained as a teacher, reflection was presented as an important, on-going teacher practice that we should engage in. However, it often gets forgotten as teachers end up 'busy' and this shows the importance and value of teacher-led research.

One of the issues, as discussed above, was the reluctance of the teachers to trial the strategies. Within the school there was not a culture of collaboration and although there were other teachers conducting research within the school, it was not widely

communicated or celebrated. Poulos, Culberston, Piazza, and D'Entremont (2014) assert that the best way for teachers to improve their practices is in a collaborative environment and they are more likely to work on instructional issues with a colleague than a senior staff member such as a principal. This illustrated the importance of this type of research and the value for time being built into in-service days for collaborative planning.

The school where this research was conducted was very proactive in introducing new initiatives but these were often met with resistance from teachers as they involved a lot of time and effort to put in place and the new initiatives felt disconnected from the real problems that teachers faced in the classroom. Small-scale research, such as this one, provide more individualised opportunities that are more teacher-focused and centred on student learning. In my opinion, teacher-led research provides sanction and impetus for new action and needs to be actively promoted within all school setting.

Chapter 6: *Conclusion*

The conclusion begins with a summary of the response to the research questions, which have been the foundation of this study. Following this is a review of the implications of this study for students, teachers and schools as well as suggestions for future research.

6.1 Responses to the research questions

6.1.1 Research Question One

What are teachers' beliefs towards students using their L1 in a multilingual classroom in an English medium secondary school in Qatar and how do these beliefs influence their classroom practice?

The research shows that the beliefs of the small group of teachers who participated in this study towards students using their L1 in the classroom were mostly positive and supportive and that they all allowed it to be used to varying degrees for numerous reasons. These reasons were predominantly linked to personal experiences that the teachers had as language learners themselves. All the teacher participants spoke a language other than English with one being bilingual, two having English as their second language and the fourth participant speaking Spanish as their second language. Their own experiences appeared to give them a degree of empathy towards the EAL students in their classes, even though at times they felt the L1 may be used for off-task discussions. In one case, this empathy led to the belief that the L1 could provide an affective impact for students if used in certain situations; to another teacher this empathy led to mixed emotions in regards to their practice not being adequate to support EAL students.

Despite the teacher participants' beliefs towards L1 usage and some having L1 strategies in place prior to the research, there was considerable confusion as to if their classroom practices were supported by the school. This largely came from a lack of knowledge as to if L1 would be supported within the classroom, as the school policy was not clearly communicated or disseminated. This meant that the teachers were unaware if their practices were in support of the policy or going against it. Additionally, despite teachers believing that students using their L1 in the classroom was helping their learning, a lack of

training meant that they did not know how to fully utilise students' L1 and make this a part of their teaching practice.

6.1.2 Research Question Two

How can the use of L1 strategies, during an intervention period, impact teachers' classroom practice and support EAL students learning in an English medium school?

Overall, the L1 strategies provided during the intervention period had a positive impact on teachers' classroom practice. The L1 strategies (that the students used) were perceived by the teachers as being easy to use and affirmed their beliefs that there is a place for students to use their L1 in the classroom. The responses from the student surveys indicated that the students felt the strategies supported their learning. As the intervention period was supported by the school and formalised by my research, it gave the teachers license and incentive to try new ways of working with the language learners in their classroom. Once the teachers began the intervention period, they realised how easy it is to try something small which can have a significant impact on student learning.

6.2 Implications of the study

The study shows that there is a place in the classroom for students to use their L1, but teachers need more support (in terms of training) and reassurance (from school administration) in order for this to happen. The extent of this usage could be questioned, and is still debated amongst researchers, but from this study it is clear to see that students should use their L1 in some way to aid their learning. What became clear is that teachers need to have this message clearly communicated to them and students also need to feel that they are allowed to use their L1.

Teachers need to have ongoing professional development for supporting EAL students that uses current research and evidence to help teachers make informed decisions about classroom practices. This training needs to challenge preconceived and/or outdated beliefs that transpire into classroom practices that do not support language learners. From personal experience, this is best delivered by an outside agency as this can be viewed as more 'formal' training by staff members. Borg (2011) looked at the impact of in-service

teacher education on teachers' beliefs and found that the teachers all responded positively to this training, which had one of its aims as developing candidates' beliefs about teaching.

Additionally, time is needed for teachers to work "collaboratively". This was referenced in the guidelines under the heading of beliefs and principles as an expectation that teachers would work together to provide a programme of English language learning for all students and address the needs of EAL students. One way of doing this is to build this into either the pre or post planning days. I feel it would be better placed at the start of the school year when everyone is fresh and then new teachers would be involved. It also needs to be periodically reviewed throughout the school year and include data that (hopefully) would illustrate student progress.

One way of stressing the importance of incorporating students' L1 into the classroom is to look for evidence of this when teachers are evaluated. If teachers knew that they were expected to differentiate for English language learners by specifically incorporating their L1 into the classroom in some way, then this would become part of their regular practice. Additionally, this expectation needs to be clearly communicated to new staff at the time they are hired, so that they are fully aware of what is required of them in their position as both a classroom teacher and an EAL teacher.

During the intervention period, it was clear to the students that they were 'allowed' to use their L1 as the strategies directed students to use it and this was clearly communicated by their teacher. As this study showed, there was some ambiguity as to whether the teachers truly believed they should 'allow' students to use their L1 and this would have given a confusing message to the students. As the overall impact of the L1 strategies for the students was positive, and they all believed it helped them in some way during the lessons, this confirms the need for L1 usage.

Schools need to implement an NLE programme that is well-supported, age-appropriate and helps to maintain students' L1. The school in this study had a small after-school programme that mainly focused on conversational activities and games that was run by parents with no set curriculum. While the after-school nature of this programme needs to be less formal than lessons that have taken place during the day, it is still important that there is a structure to the programme that moves it beyond just games. While the school had taken the right steps in setting this programme up, it needed to be more firmly established into

the school's identity and the importance of this programme needs to be clear to staff, parents and students. Cummins belief is that cognitive development needs to continue in L1 and this could be shared with the parents as part of the programme.

To move L1 usage beyond the classroom, there should be celebrations of language diversity within the school itself. Students could share their L1 with others as well as having more awareness built around different cultures in the school in order to celebrate language diversity. By doing this, students would have both their L1 and their identity viewed positively within the school. One successful example of this is an intermediate school in Palmerston North that runs an annual programme where they bring together speakers of each L1 with a mentor and work on writing a text which then becomes part of an exhibition (Cities of migration, 2018).

Finally, an obvious implication from this study is the importance of a clearly communicated and up-to-date language policy in schools. It needs to be understood whose responsibility it is to disseminate the policy and it needs to be visible for all stakeholders. The policy should celebrate language diversity and be something the school is proud of. Included in this policy should be the school curriculum (in this case the IB) that is taught in a language that is not that of the community and that can be linguistically challenging for English language learners.

One way of integrating the language policy into the classroom is to have class rules that are based on it. At the start of this thesis I explained that the inspiration came from being challenged on a set of class rules that I had by my supervisor (Figures 1 and 2). If these rules had been formed on the basis of the school's position towards language learners, they may have been very different. With the knowledge that I have gained through this research, I would approach this activity in a completely different way.

6.3 Limitations of the study

One of the main limitations of this research is that it was a very small-scale study. Unfortunately, this became even smaller than originally intended as one of the teachers did not participate in the intervention period, this in turn led to less data being collected from both student and teacher participants as to the impact of the L1 strategies. However, despite being a small-scale study, I still believe it has provided valuable insights by allowing

the researcher and the audience for the study to delve into the real lives of teachers to understand the beliefs that underpin their practices.

Another significant limitation of this study is that no Qatari or Arabic speaking students took part in the research. Although the students were anonymous to me, I was aware of this limitation as I knew that there were not any Arabic speaking students in the classes that the teachers trialled the strategies with. This is unfortunate as, because the research took place in Qatar, it would have been interesting to have heard their voice. As discussed earlier, the Arabic speaking students were placed in a more immersion-style environment as they did not receive the same amount of language support as other EAL students, which makes it even more important to provide them with strategies that would aid their learning.

It would have also been interesting to have a monolingual teacher participate in this study. As all the teachers had experience as language learners, it is possible that this limited the research. Although, as mentioned previously, I had thought it best to have English, humanities and TOK teachers participate, I had not considered the extent to which teachers' own language learning experiences would have an impact on their beliefs, practices and perhaps even their approach to trialling the strategies in the intervention period. All of the teachers expressed varying degrees of empathy towards the EAL students in their classes, possibly as a result of their own experiences, which would have made it valuable to see if this still occurred with a teacher who did not have this same experience.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

For further research, the link between the reduction in anxiety from students using their L1 in the classroom could be examined in more detail. From the few comments that were collected from the students, this appeared as making a difference to how they felt in the lessons where they had used the L1 strategies. Additionally, one of the teachers had recognised that pairing a new student up with another student who shared their language would help them to settle in more easily, again, suggesting that there is an affective impact on L1 usage.

Because the students had to remain anonymous to me, I was unable to conduct any class observations. This data would have been useful to include in this research and so for further research into a similar area, I would suggest finding a way to have observations as one of

the data instruments. This would also be a way to see how students use their L1 from the viewpoint of someone impartial as this research showed teacher beliefs and student attitudes but did not include this component.

The teachers chose the students that they felt would be best suited to trial the strategies with and, unfortunately, (as mentioned previously) they did not select any local students. Qatar is experiencing an enormous amount of growth and change which are only set to continue in the lead-up to the Football World Cup in 2020. The changes to the local education laws were briefly mentioned in the literature review, but even as I was writing this even more changes were happening. Many of these changes are part of a continued effort from the government to maintain local culture with a particular emphasis on language and religion. Despite this, many parents still want their children educated in an international school and often chose to send them to universities abroad. This is an ideal time to conduct research as Qatar is in such a state of transition.

To summarise, here are the main areas for further research:

- examining the link between L1 strategies and language learner anxiety as well as their long-term effect on teacher beliefs and practices
- gaining further understanding of the relationship between language policy and classroom practice
- looking at the changes that are occurring to education in Qatar - in particular focusing on the impact this has on Qatari students

In spite of these limitations, the research has been able to provide rich answers to the research questions, and it was a privilege to work closely with this group of teachers. These teachers showed that they had a deep concern for the welfare of the students in their class struggling with language issues at the same time as they were going through a period of emotional and cognitive transition. The student contribution to this study gave an added dimension and understanding to the importance of both strategy use and finding a place for the L1 in the classroom-I am grateful for the suggestion to include their voice.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Questions for teacher interviews

Questions to use with teachers in the semi-structured interview

Start with a reminder of what the research is about and review ethics documentation to check if any clarification is needed. Beginning/opening questions can be around finding out about the teacher's previous teaching experience. Such as: years of teaching, subjects taught, countries and type of school taught in (general overview of teaching experience). Ask about their experience as a language learner-do they speak another language? How fluently? How did they learn this language? This will be revisited for question 11 if more clarification is needed.

Warm up questions around L1. These will be given in advance to the teachers so that they have time to think and reflect on them.

1. When my students speak in their first language in the classroom, I...
2. When my students use their dictionaries or their phones (for translation purposes) in the classroom, I...
3. When my students speak in English only during lessons I...

Language-learning assumptions and teacher beliefs:

4. I would like to know your views on these language-learning assumptions:
 - a. English should be used exclusively for instructional purposes in the classroom
 - b. Students should not translate from English to their first language or vice versa
 - c. Students' first language should be kept separately from English
 - d. Using the first language could impede rather than enhance the learning process
 - e. Some people believe that one of the best ways to improve in a second language is to spend more time in the second language environment

Deeper/further questioning on L1 usage in the classroom

5. Please tell me more about your beliefs when your students use their first language in your English-medium classroom
6. To what extent do you think your students using their first language in your class affects or influences both their learning experience and your teaching experience? If you like you could share some examples here.
7. How important is it to you that your students function and operate in English in your classroom?
8. What advice would you give to students on how to improve their English? What advice would you give to their parents?
9. I would like to find out about your views on students using the following in your classroom: bilingual dictionaries, translators, discussion in their L1, other

Class rules and school policy on L1:

10. Please tell me your views on any language rules in place in your classroom. these could be departmental rules or based on school policy, or even your own classroom rules. I would like to know how these inform your teaching practice.
11. Do you know about the school's policy on language learning or on L1 usage?
12. If the teacher speaks another language, ask questions around this such as: what age were they when they learnt their L2? How many languages do they speak and to what level of fluency?

At the completion of the interview, thank the teacher for their participation and ask if they would be willing to trial a number of first language strategies over the course of the next ten weeks. If they are willing to participate in the intervention period, then explain in more detail what this will entail.

Appendix B: Exit survey for students

First language (L1) usage in the multilingual classroom

This survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. In completing the survey, you understand that the information that you give can be used anonymously for Mrs Aham's research.

1. Please click on which lesson you just had:

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ TOK
- ☐ English SL
- ☐ English GR 10
- ☐ Humanities
- ☐ English SL
- ☐ Psychology
- ☐ Other: _____

2. How did you use your first language in today's lesson? Which strategy did you use:

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ I had a discussion in my first language
- ☐ I used the translation app on google docs
- ☐ I used a dictionary
- ☐ I used my phone to translate words and phrases
- ☐ I took notes in my first language
- ☐ a classmate explained something to me in my first language
- ☐ I explained something to my classmate in my first language
- ☐ I researched something in my first language
- ☐ my teacher gave me work to prepare at home which I translated into my first language
- ☐ I discussed my school work at home with my parents in my first language
- ☐ Other: _____

3. How useful was it for you to use your first language in class today?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not useful at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very useful

4. If you had the opportunity to do so, would you use this strategy again?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Definitely not	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I would love to!

5. Do you think using your first language in today's lesson had an impact on your understanding?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
No-it made no difference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes-it really helped me

6. Please add a comment about how you feel using your first language to help you study.

Appendix C: Information sheet for teachers



First language usage in the multilingual classroom: A case study

Information Sheet for Teachers

Dear teacher,

My name is Karen Axam and I am an EAL (English as an Additional Language) teacher in high school. I am doing research on the use of the first language in the multilingual classroom. For my research I would like to find out what teachers' beliefs are regarding first language usage in the classroom. I also want to provide some first language strategies to trial to see if they have any impact on how teachers view first language usage. The research is for my Master's in Applied Linguistics, which I am studying through Massey University in New Zealand.

Research stages:

Step one:

We will arrange a time to sit together for the interview. During the interview I will ask you a number of questions so that I can understand what your beliefs are in regards to students using their first language in the classroom. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. We can find a time together that we both have free or alternatively I can arrange for cover for one of your lessons. The interview will be recorded and then transcribed. If you are not comfortable with the interview being recorded, we can stop recording at any time.

Step two:

After the interview, you can then decide if you would like to trial a number of first language strategies in your lessons. If you do not wish to continue you can opt out at this stage and just have the interview as your only involvement in this research. If you do choose to continue, I will provide you with first language strategies to trial in your classroom during the first term. The strategies will be shared with you via a Google classroom and will be trialled for a ten-week period during the first term. The strategies that I provide you with are designed to enhance student learning and will not require you to change what you already have planned. As there are a number of strategies, you can choose ones that are best suited for your classes. For example, if you have allowed time for students to discuss something that they have recently read, a strategy here would be to allow students who have the same first language to discuss the content in this language. You will need to reflect on how useful you found the strategies, as will the students that you are using them with. The reflections will be done on iPads after the lesson and should take about 5 minutes to complete. It will also be useful if you are able to submit a lesson plan to show how the strategy/strategies were incorporated into your lessons. This is not a requirement of participating in the research.

Step three:

After the trial period has finished, we will arrange another interview to discuss how useful you found the strategies. The interview will be conducted in exactly the same way as the first interview.

Your rights:

You are a volunteer in this research, so you have the right to:

- Decide not to join
- Opt out at any stage
- Ask questions at any time about the study
- Decide not to answer a question you are asked if you don't want to
- Ask for the recording device to be turned off during the interview
- Be given a summary of the project findings when it is finished

Some of the information that you tell me might be in my thesis. However, your name will not be used and your identity will not be known from the information that is used. The transcripts and the recordings will be kept confidential. If you would like, I can give you a summary of the information when the project is finished. Please remember that participation in this research is voluntary.

Any questions?

If you have any questions, you can email me at (researcher's school email address) or call me on (researcher's school phone number). You can also contact my supervisors Dr Gillian Skyrme (Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand, email at g.r.skyrme@massey.ac.nz) or Dr Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire (Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand, email at a.berardi-wiltshire@massey.ac.nz).

Best wishes,

Karen Axaam

School of Humanities

Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand **T** 06 951 6587 **http://**soh.massey.ac.nz

Appendix D: Participation consent form for teachers



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

First language usage in the multilingual classroom: A case study **Participation Consent Form-Teachers**

I have read the Information sheet and have had the details of the research explained to me.
I have had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered satisfactorily. I
understand that throughout the research period I am able to ask more questions if I need
further clarification.

I agree/ do not agree to have an interview to discuss first language usage in the classroom

I agree/ do not agree to have the interview recorded

I agree/ do not agree to trial a number of first language strategies in my classroom over a
ten-week period

I agree/ not agree to have a follow up interview

I agree/ do not agree to have this interview recorded

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Full Name (please print):

Email address:

Appendix E: Information sheet for students



First language usage in the multilingual classroom: A case study

Information Sheet for Students

Dear student,

My name is Mrs Axam and I am an EAL (English as an Additional Language) teacher in high school. I am also doing my Master's through Massey University in New Zealand. Your teacher has agreed to help me out with this and I need your help too. I want to understand what your teacher thinks about students using their first language and also give your teacher some ways to help you use your first language. Over the next few months, during some of your lessons, your teacher will be encouraging you to use your first language in different ways. At the end of these lessons, the teacher will ask you to use your phone, iPad or laptop to complete a short survey. The survey should only take you about five minutes to complete. The survey will show me how you felt about using your first language. Your identity will not be known, just like when you complete a survey for your teachers.

If you don't want to complete the survey you don't have to. If you change your mind after you have done one survey and don't wish to do another, you don't have to. You can ask me questions about the research at any time.

Thank you for your time and please email me if you have any questions or ask your teacher for more information.

Appendix F: Participation consent form for students

First language usage in the multilingual classroom: A case study

Participation Consent Form-Students (to be included on the survey)

I have read the Information sheet and have had the details of the research explained to me.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered satisfactorily.

In completing this survey, I understand that the information that I give can be used anonymously for Mrs Axam's research.

School of Humanities

Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T 06 951 6587 <http://soh.massey.ac.nz>

Appendix G: Extract from school's language guidelines

Note: The school's name has been removed to protect identity. Where the name of the school was written, in place is '*School*'.

Language Guidelines

School Language Philosophy

School recognises that language learning enhances personal growth, reasoning skills and life-long learning and that "language stands at the centre of the many interdependent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning" (Corson, 1999). *School* values that all languages and cultures affirm the identity of each learner and promote self-esteem. The school recognises that learning in more than one language is essential to enriching intercultural understanding and international mindedness. The school has used the "IB Guidelines for developing a school language policy" in preparing this document.

Statement of Beliefs and Principles

Since language is central to learning, all teachers at *School* are in practice language teachers, regardless of subject area or grade level.

All teachers will work collaboratively to provide a programme of English language learning for all students to address the academic proficiency needs of first and additional language learners.

School teachers will use a variety of instructional materials across the curriculum to show the connection between reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The language of instruction at *School* is English and therefore additional support will be given to students who need it, as resources allow. Islamic Studies and Qatari history are offered in Arabic for Qatari nationals as required by the Supreme Education Council and for other students by choice.

Arabic, the language of the host country Qatar, will be promoted at *School* through our world language programme offered in grades K through 12.

School values the learning of foreign languages, which are gateways to other cultures, as well as vehicles for developing language awareness. All students in grades K through 12 will study at least one language in addition to their mother tongue. Those children whose specific learning differences are such that it is felt that it is more beneficial to not study a foreign language will receive additional learning support during world language programme time.

School aims to create a positive learning environment for language acquisition and learning by providing opportunities for students to be engaged in meaningful learning experiences within well designed programmes.

School acknowledges that the maintenance of the mother tongue/native language is vital in order to maintain culture, heritage and community links and essential in establishing a foundation for the thinking processes and developing communicative and literary competence.

Parents will be made aware of their important role in ensuring the development of their child's mother tongue/native language and will be given support in planning their children's language profile and development.

All school staff (including administrators, teachers, and librarians) will be given professional development in the fields of language teaching and learning.

Our Approach to EAL

- ☐ Language acquisition is a lifelong process.
- ☐ Language learners acquire language at different rates and with different learning styles.
- ☐ Language learners can take 2-3 years to reach basic conversational level and 6-10 years to reach academic proficiency.
- ☐ Students acquire language through meaningful and relevant interaction.
- ☐ Students acquire language more quickly through immersion and should be integrated into the mainstream as soon as possible. They should be provided with the language support necessary to facilitate their success.
- ☐ Acquiring a language effectively in an academic context requires structured support and differentiated practices and resources.
- ☐ First language proficiency supports new language development; it is therefore important that students continue to develop their native language.
- ☐ The level of a student's English language is not a measure of intelligence, nor is it an indicator of what he or she knows.
- ☐ Like all students, EAL students should be encouraged to take risks and be given opportunities to realise their full potential. Positive self-esteem is a vital element in language acquisition.
- ☐ More than one language can be learned simultaneously.

- Effective education for EAL students is only possible when every teacher is aware of their role in EAL instruction.
- Language awareness across the curriculum is critical to the EAL students' integration into the mainstream life of the school.
- Working in partnership with parents is important for every child's success.

Appendix I: Paper version of student exit survey

First language (L1) usage in the multilingual classroom: exit survey

This survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. In completing the survey, you understand that the information you give can be used anonymously for Mrs Axam's research. You also should have read the information sheet for this research.

1. Please tick the box ☒ of the lesson you just had:

- ☐ TOK ☐ English SL ☐ English GR10 ☐ Psychology
☐ Other-please state which:

2. How did you use your first language in today's lesson? Which of the following strategies did you use? Please tick the box. ☒

- ☐ I had a discussion in my L1
☐ I used the translation app on Google docs
☐ I used a dictionary (please state which one eg bilingual or L1)
☐ I used my phone to translate words and phrases
☐ I took notes in my L1
☐ A classmate explained something to me in my L1
☐ I explained something to my classmate in my L1
☐ I researched something in my L1
☐ My teacher gave me work to prepare at home, which I translated into my L1
☐ I discussed my work at home with my parents/family member in my L1
☐ Other...please explain

3. How useful was it for you to use your first language? Please tick the box

- ☒
☐ 1=not useful at all ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5=very useful

4. If you have the opportunity to do so, will you use this strategy again?

- Please tick the box. ☒
☐ 1=definitely not! ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5= I would love to!

5. Do you think using your first language in today's lesson had an impact on your understanding? Please tick the box. ☒

- ☐ 1=no, it made no difference ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5=Yes, it really helped me!

6. Please add a comment about how you feel about using your first language to help you study.

Thank you!

Appendix J: Final student survey

First language (L1) usage in the multilingual classroom: exit survey

This is a short survey to help me gain some information on how you recently used your L1 in the classroom. In completing the survey, you understand that the information you give can be used for my research. Your teacher should have given you an information sheet about this research. If you have any questions, please come and see me. Thank you for your time.

Mrs Axaam
NW GF RM10

1. Please tick the box of the subject where you used your L1. If you were part of this research in more than one subject, please fill in a different survey for each subject.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> TOK GR 12 | <input type="checkbox"/> English SL Gr 11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TOK GR 11 | <input type="checkbox"/> English GR 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English SL GR 12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other-please state which: | |

2. How did you use your L1 during the lessons? Please select from the list of L1 strategies below.

- ☐ I had a discussion in my L1
- ☐ I used the translation app on Google docs or another app
- ☐ I used a dictionary, please state which type e.g. bilingual, L1 dictionary or other-state which:
- ☐ I used my phone to translate words and/or phrases
- ☐ I took notes in my L1
- ☐ A classmate explained something to me in my L1
- ☐ I explained something to my classmate/s in my L1
- ☐ My teacher gave me work to prepare at home, which I translated into my L1
- ☐ I discussed my work at home with my parents in our shared L1
- ☐ Other...please explain

3. How useful was it for you to use your L1? Please tick the box.

- ☐ 1=not useful at all ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5= very useful

4. If you have the opportunity to do so, will you use any of the L1 strategies again?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes-please state which one or ones:

5. Do you think being able to use your L1 during lessons helped your understanding of the subject?

- ☐ 1=No, it made no difference ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5=Yes, using my L1 really helped me

6. Please add a comment about how you feel about using your L1 to help you learn: