INVESTIGATING TEACHERS’ PERSPECTIVES ON USING STUDENTS' FIRST LANGUAGE IN THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM IN GUANGZHOU CHINA

by

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Abstract

The widely-used monolingual approach, meaning avoiding or minimizing first language (L1) use in classrooms, by increasing the input in the second language (L2) in the course of learning can effectively develop students’ comprehension skills (Krashen, 1981; Genesee, 1978). However, the monolingual approach could not explain the transfer that happens between the L1 and L2. Different theories suggested different outcomes for the transfer between the L1 and L2. Studies investigating students’ opinions on using the L1 in L2 learning indicated that the L1 was necessary in classrooms (Dujmović, 2014; Schweers Jr., 1999; Tang, 2002). However, not many studies were conducted to investigate teachers’ perspectives on using students’ L1 in English language learning. Therefore, this study examines how teachers perceive the role of students’ L1 in English language learning and the related practices. The methodology for the study follows Tang’s (2002) research by first collecting teachers’ opinions through surveys with follow-up interviews. 18 middle-school English teachers in Guangzhou, China took the questionnaire and ten of them participated in the follow-up interview. The questionnaire provided an overview and the interview results were analyzed using theoretical frameworks by Krashen (1981) and Cook (2002). The results indicate that most of the participants would apply Krashen’s (1981) Input Hypothesis in teaching to gradually reduce the amount of the L1 used in the classroom and provide input for learning although they offered an adaptation. While all of the participants would allow the use of students’ L1 in explicit conditions, some participants observed that certain skills can be accessible in both the L1 and L2. Teaching experience influenced the participants more than the L2 learning experience. Two major implications for practice could be concluded from the results. First, the L1 is helpful in explicit learning and maintaining a low affective filter while minimizing the L1 allows the students to get used to an L2-speaking
environment. Second, ongoing support and reflection in teaching provides teachers with a positive development of their professional experience. Future research on a larger scale on those mechanisms is suggested to further establish the trustworthiness of those results.
Acknowledgements

“But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth” Deuteronomy 15:8, KJV

Being a teacher was not easy, supporting the students was even tougher, what about students in an immersion setting? I found myself sympathetic of my students when I became a teacher in an international school. The students were not willing to talk to the teachers, because their English was not good enough, or at least they thought their English was not good enough. It took me an entire semester just so that they could talk to me. But they need more than just chatting with the teachers, they need remedial support, transitional support and even social support given that the students and foreign teachers have distinctive backgrounds. If they had better English, everything would be easier, so it was up to the students to learn more English on their own, or was it? I asked the Lord, what could I have done to help those students? I wanted to help, but I was powerless because language learning was not my specialty at all.

Now, I have talked to the English teachers and understood something about supporting English language learners in class, but this could not have happened if I were on my own. I would like to first of all, thank my supervisor Dr. Myers for her continual support. Without her instructions and suggestions, I could not have completed this thesis. As a math teacher, my knowledge on linguistic was zero at the beginning of my course of study. But right now, I addressed the issues and discussed the theories which are works I would not have imagined existed three years ago. In addition to the instructions and suggestions, the revision and editing done on my thesis are also phenomenal. By comparing this version against the first draft, the enormous number of corrections is something that I would not have otherwise noticed if she had not been around. I managed thanks for all the support Dr. Myers has provided.
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“Let the words of my mouth, and the mediation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.” Psalms 19:14, KJV
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List of Abbreviations

L1: first language
L2: second language or target language
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Rationale

On the first day I taught, I was told by my students that all those mathematical concepts that I had introduced had already been learnt earlier. So I thought everything would be easy for them. I realized that I had made a horrible mistake after the first quiz when a lot of the students did not score as well as I had imagined. The students told me that language was an issue, not the content. The difficulties they faced transitioning from a regular school in China to an English-only international school were tremendous. They had just entered an English-only school from an environment which was pretty much Chinese-only. Nothing in the new setting was easy for them, because they could not even properly communicate with the teachers. There was very little that I could do at that time, as I was a math teacher, I was responsible for teaching the content. However, language teaching seemed to be a necessary skill to have in my class, because there was no way to properly teach the content when my students could not even understand the instructions for practice questions. I needed someone to give this poor math teacher some useful advice on second language teaching.

Statistics have shown that English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching has been a growing industry in Ontario and in the entire country of Canada. Over the past decade, the number of international students holding a valid study permit in Canada increased from 83,577 in 1995 to 336,497 in 2014 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014). In the year 2015 alone, 133,910 students enrolled in language programs in Canada, which
means a large amount of paid tuition fees and revenue were associated with this figure (Languages Canada, 2016). The numbers indicated that more and more international students are coming into Canada to pursue their studies. On the one hand, more money and time were dedicated to English Language Learning classrooms because the needs were increasing. To support ESL learners in all learning environments, it is necessary to examine the different approaches in English teaching in general. On the other hand, although there are different learning environments available, the traditional classroom remains a commonly used concept in English teaching and learning. Some traditional classroom settings that exist in Canada include but are not limited to those in Language Instructions for Newcomers of Canada (LINC), and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in various schools. The enrollment in those programs totaled well beyond 100,000 over the last ten years in Canada (Government of Canada, 2011). All those figures indicate that traditional classroom settings remained a popular choice over the years until the recent need to teach on-line due to COVID. In light of the various needs of students and the latest findings in language teaching and learning, improving the traditional learning environment should be able to considerably enhance students’ English language learning experience in general.

Many teachers or even school administrators would agree that in order to accommodate that many English language learners in schools, the best way would be to give all those students extensive input in English. Input given in an English-speaking country would be enhanced by a natural and authentic environment. Also, as more input would be given to the students, they would also be able to comprehend more as their language skills improve. This is the mode of communication we see very often in
international schools and immersion programs in Canada. This setting complies with Krashen’s input hypothesis which states that in order to acquire a language, comprehensible input needs to be given and comprehensible input needs to be going from level i, which indicates input in the target language, to level i+1 which is a level slightly more difficult than the previous level as the acquisition progresses (Krashen, 1981). The importance of input in second language learning is undeniable since input is indeed helpful for improving comprehension-related skills like reading and listening (Dekeyser, 1997). The most direct example of how input can benefit second language learning would be the French immersion program. The students in French immersion programs were observed to perform better in reading, listening and speaking compared to those in normal English school programs which indicated that the input given in the immersion program is indeed helpful in the course of language learning (Genesee, 1978). But is input in the target second language the only way to learn a language? Is there a way that is more efficient than using L2-only input? Those questions do not have a definite answer at the moment. Krashen (1982) mentioned that he thinks that comprehensible input is the only way to learn a language. However, Dekeyser (1997) argued that input cannot help automatize production skills. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the role of input in second language learning at the forefront. Namely, investigate the role of input in second language learning in classrooms instead of just looking at the theories. So, investigating what happens in the L2 learning classrooms is very important to developing effective approaches in L2 teaching.

In traditional classroom settings teachers are required to be instructors. Then, we need to look at what is to be instructed in an English language learning classroom and
how the content is delivered. Syllabi, curriculum guidelines and lessons look completely
different across teachers and schools. While we understand that all teachers have their
teaching style and every classroom has a different focus, as teachers, we have to be aware
that there are still various professional development programs and ministry documents
that outline different methods and approaches for English language teaching. Then, every
teacher’s question should be about what the best approach to English language teaching
is. Of course, this question has not been answered yet, otherwise there would not be the
need for multiple sessions of professional development workshops. Though we cannot
conclude that any approach is the best, it is still necessary for English language teachers
to reflect on their own practice. That is to say, the teachers can still choose the approach
that is more suitable for them and identify the reason why it is suitable.

The Ontario Ministry of Education reminded all English as a Second Language
(ESL) teachers that to make English language learning students acquire English, it takes
more than just classroom instructions (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). The teacher
would have to make the students comfortable and feel supported in the school in order to
have the students learn. It therefore becomes rather apparent that at beginning levels the
teachers need to make some strategic use of the students’ first language(s) in order to
achieve this goal, since not many people would feel comfortable and supported in an
environment that they could not even comprehend or in which they could not
communicate with each other. How can we make a strategic use of the students’ first
language(s)? Maybe the answers differ from one teacher to another. One cannot support
the students purely based on documents and theories, it is important to reflect and learn
from real teaching experience. Teachers are the group of professionals who have the experience, therefore, their voice needs to be heard to better support the students.

1.2 Purpose of the Present Study

Based on the rationale above, teachers’ voices would have to be heard, as they are the practitioners on the front line. On the one hand, exploring teachers’ views could allow researchers to see how teachers perceive using students’ L1 in English L2 teaching and how they integrate theories and experiences in their teaching to develop teaching methods for classrooms. On the other hand, exploring teachers’ views could also yield pragmatic value as other educators, especially teachers who just started their teaching career, could apply the methods of other teachers and develop their own approaches that fit their students’ needs.

Therefore, this study investigates teachers’ views on students’ L1 use in English language learning by investigating their approaches and practices. Also, the reasons why they choose the approach that they are currently using are also investigated. The reasons include but are not limited to experiences, outcomes and observations of students’ reactions. Teachers’ perspectives constitute the central purpose, as their teaching philosophies are based on them, which is an integral part toward reflection and development of teaching approaches (Campos, 2012). The teachers’ perspectives impact what methods they design for the class, so they are the key to understanding the approaches that are used in their class. In addition, teachers’ perspectives are formed by a lot of individual factors. For example, teaching experience and personal experience are both factors that influence teaching philosophy (Campos, 2012). This indicates that the individual factors form teachers’ perspectives and hence influence the approaches used in
class, which make individual factors a relevant part of the research investigating teachers’ perspectives and practices in class.

1.3 Significance of the Current Study

In reality, not all schools support the use or incorporation of the students’ first language(s). The author was once a teacher in an international school. In that school, there was an English-only policy so all students had to speak in English, otherwise they would face punishments. Yet the administrators did not communicate to the teachers the rationale behind such a method. The teachers’ job was to follow the instructions whatever they were. Yet most of the teachers were not against such a policy, because input in English was considered essential in that school. However, though there was this policy in place, some teachers allowed students to utilize their first language(s) in the process of completing assignments and writing and some did not. In this case, it was observed that some teachers supported a bilingual approach of language learning; the others supported a monolingual approach. Since the author was also a teacher at that time, she knows that the details and the rationale of those teaching approaches were briefly communicated, but never observed. Communicating the teaching approaches in detail would be an excellent way to understand how different teaching approaches actually work. These were the two things the author could not do in the past, but as a researcher, the author had the chance to talk to the teachers and actually ask about why they made certain choices in English teaching, and to see what approaches they used and how those approaches affected their classrooms. For a teacher in an international school, all the students in every single class are English language learners; all those students need to be supported. The teachers could choose teaching approaches based on theories, but the better way is to actually reflect and
learn from each other’s experiences since theories do not look into every single classroom.

After some brief talks with some experienced ESL teachers, it became evident that contrary to what my administrators suggested, the bilingual approach is actually an effective way of English teaching. One teacher briefly mentioned that English-only policies became more of a limitation for students because if the students could not understand English, no matter how much English they were exposed to, they still could not comprehend the content. Therefore, some of those experienced teachers were very interested in knowing more about how to use and implement the bilingual approach in English teaching in order to make their lessons more accessible. Hearing this reasoning from one teacher may mean that other teachers are also interested in the same topic. This was the time when a study was needed to investigate teachers’ perspectives on English language teaching. Hearing their approach to teaching English from many teachers was intended to provide a very comprehensive guide to teachers, especially beginners’ teachers, because they are the group who are exposed to the students that need the most support. So, in addition to enhancing teaching, providing better support to English language learning students and reflecting on personal practices, investigating the approaches teachers use in English teaching can provide all teachers with a better idea of the approaches used in English teaching and learning. It can serve as a guide for teachers who want to implement a new approach in English language teaching, namely, it provides the teachers with feedback on approaches on how to implement them and what are the observed effects of those approaches.
Researchers have investigated teachers’ practices in second language teaching (Pablo et al., 2011; Tang, 2002). However, those researchers only used a very short interview with very few questions focusing only on the conduct of the approaches and a brief rationale supporting the chosen approaches. There were more questions to be asked. For example, could teachers’ levels of teaching experience be a contributing factor when they choose different approaches? Sometimes, teachers chose a different approach by reflecting on their own practices teaching a second language (Brooks-Lewis, 2009).

Could teachers’ own experience learning a second language affect their approach? Some teachers expressed their anxiety when learning a second language and decided that they would choose the bilingual approach instead of just following the school-policy to avoid an anxiety inducing situation (Ariza, 2002; Brooks-Lewis, 2009). What are the observed outcomes in class? Do teachers who choose the monolingual approach see the students improve? Do the teachers who choose the bilingual approach see the anxiety level decrease? How is the bilingual or the monolingual approach implemented in the classroom? Those questions are not answered by previous researchers, but they are questions that appear in the literature. Therefore, this study looked deeper into the topic as to which approach is preferable and tried to gain some insight into the factors that influence the choice of approach. This study also looked into what are the observed outcomes of the approaches more systematically by examining the outcomes using theoretical frameworks.

The significance of this study does not stop at the classroom or teacher’s level. In fact, as reasoned at the beginning of this section, there is a need of investigating second language learning techniques not only in Canada, but also around the world. Many people
would have heard of globalization in this century. Globalization was described as the invocation of social relations that is not limited by the constraints of geographical location (Block, & Cameron, 2002). While many books and researchers discuss the importance of globalization in terms of economics and culture, there are also many discussions around globalization and education, in particular, language education. As technology brings people close to each other, people are not limited by distance in this digital age. However, language remains a barrier even if the distance is no longer a constraint. Therefore, to enable people to effectively communicate with each other, language teaching and learning would be in higher demand than previously. In particular, English becomes the language that is used internationally by a large number of people. A high percentage of those English-users’ first language is not English (Graddol, & Meinhof, 1999). This implies that English is popular among those non-native populations. Indeed, a research study in China indicated that though adults faced a lot of difficulties studying English, many adults continued studying English because English allows them to gain access to higher education and better employment (Wu, Wu, & Le, 2014). As English is not an official language in China, due to globalization, English becomes useful in China because this country is connected with a lot of English-speaking countries economically. Therefore, investigating English teaching approaches in China is crucial under the globalization setting. However, teaching English in China corresponds to teaching it as a foreign language rather than as a second language because it is not taught in an English speaking milieu like it is in Canada. Therefore, it is important also to keep in mind factors associated with glocalization, which is “the simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political,
and economic systems” (Blatter, 2013). Namely, globalization needs to adapt to a local setting. Therefore we need to be mindful of the fact that in the specific local settings adjustments have to be made in order to serve the populations concerned in the best way possible. In the context of teaching English in China, glocalization indicates that the English teaching practices have to fit the local culture and settings in order to be effective.

Concluding from all those aspects above, an investigation of the approaches used by teachers in ESL teaching can serve a lot of different purposes. Besides the demands of the English teaching profession and the enrichment of professional development, investigating approaches used by different teachers can also help teachers to better support the students at the school and classroom levels. It also allows the teachers to reflect and learn from their own and others’ experience in ESL teaching. Such reflections can be organized and serve as guidelines for both experienced and new teachers to implement the different approaches based on classroom needs. The demand for providing better English teaching support, especially in China, is high. Therefore, letting the new teachers, including those that teach beginners’ levels, analyze different approaches and identify what they can take away to let their class learn English more efficiently is a task that is of high importance in this era. This is why this study set out to investigate and summarize approaches used in the classrooms in accessible language for English teachers in China so that it can serve the purpose of providing educators with an outlook on the monolingual approach and the bilingual approach.
1.4 Organization of the Thesis

This study follows the typical structure of a thesis which starts with the literature review and includes the search of the literature on the topics of the monolingual and bilingual approaches among others. The literature review ends with the introduction of the theoretical framework and the philosophical assumptions. It is then followed by the methodology that introduces the settings, participants and data collection tools. The methodology also includes the analysis of the data collected. The data collection tools used for this study are surveys and interviews. This study includes a quantitative component, but is qualitative overall, as the purpose of this study is to extract opinions from teachers. Therefore, the focus is on the qualitative analysis of the interview data. After the major results are reported, the significance and the pragmatic value of the results are discussed to provide theoretical and practical applications for the results. Overall, the discussion aims to provide some advice to the readers on the approaches that are applicable in classrooms. The approaches in this study might not be optimal, but they are definitely practical as those are approaches used in English language learning classrooms by actual English teachers based on their views and perceptions they have developed over time from their personal and professional experiences.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Using English-only is one way to teach English in an English language learning classroom, but it is certainly not the only way. While some people would choose or work toward English-only for their classroom, some would gladly use the students’ L1 as a tool to facilitate English L2 learning. If those are two approaches that are used in classrooms, there must be merits and deficiencies in each for teachers to choose one over the other. Therefore, those two approaches and their underpinning theories are examined and their merits and deficiencies are reviewed. At the end, the theoretical frameworks are chosen based on the two approaches so that the answers to the research questions could be discussed based on these frameworks in later chapters.

2.1 Introduction

English as a Second Language (ESL) has always been a growing industry under education. As mentioned earlier, a lot of money and time were contributed to English Language Learning classrooms because the needs were increasing. Seeing the growth of the ESL industry, one question needs to be answered: after so much money and time being contributed into ESL classrooms, do we have a good approach and practice for teaching all those students? First of all, from the empirical studies, there are a lot of different approaches and frameworks guiding English language learning, like the Common European Framework of Reference, Canadian Language Benchmarks, Immersion, Alternating Language Approaches and various other approaches. However, that does not necessarily mean those approaches and guidelines are actively applied in
daily teaching. There are simply difficulties associated with the application of those approaches. First of all, creating an English environment is not natural for a group of students in a non-English speaking country. Second, even if some teachers are aware of the approaches or frameworks, it would be hard for individuals to apply only one set of guidelines, as the existing frameworks would normally have to cover the entire duration of a learning cycle from beginners’ to advanced levels. This could require teachers to teach at all levels to comply with the framework to ensure successful transitions between levels. If the framework is not applied school-wide, it would be hard for the individuals to apply any one of the frameworks as it might differ from the standards set up by the school, the school board or the administration. Therefore, just as is recognized by researchers, the research and existing approaches have little influence on actual classroom teaching (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Indeed, from my own observations in schools and classrooms, a lot of teachers consider the only way for students to improve their English skills is to remove their first language completely. Students should use and only use English wherever they are. The comment I heard most often in schools and classrooms with English Language Learners was that the best way to learn English is to use it. For a lot of teachers, using English means banning the students’ first language or at least encourage them to stop using it. Yet the Ministry of Education in Ontario proposed a completely different solution for teachers. A document named Many Roots, Many Voices was produced by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2005) to support English Language Learners (ELLs) in public schools. The document explicitly stated that teachers should deliberately welcome first languages in the classroom when different subjects are taught. This is an approach that looks completely different from the observed approach
used by the teachers in English teaching programs. As educators, we need to make sure we are aware of the two different approaches and compare them to see which one we want to adopt in our teaching. The purpose of this section is then to systematically explain and compare the two approaches by outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. The practice of minimizing students’ first language in English language teaching is called the monolingual approach and the practice of actively using students’ first language in English language teaching is termed the bilingual approach (Du, 2016; Schweers Jr., 1999; Tang, 2002).

2.2 The Monolingual Approach

There are some unofficial tenets held by many people, educators or students, in the ESL community as described by Gatenby (1965):

I. English is best taught monolingually.

II. The ideal teacher of English is a native speaker.

III. The earlier English is taught, the better the results.

IV. The more English is taught, the better the results.

V. If other languages are used too much, standards of English will drop.

(Phillipson, 1992, p. 185)

In fact, Gartenby’s original article stated that “what is essential is that the language being studied should be as far as possible the sole medium of communication in any given environment” (Gatenby, 1965, p. 48). From this point of view, the way to learn English is to use English and the students’ first language is to be avoided as much as possible. It is further noticed that in Gartenby’s original words, no mention was made of any form of
communication, which indicates that he believed that communication in any form, written or oral, in any environment, needs to be in English in order to improve English language learning. Under these tenets, students’ first language was assumed to play a negative role in English learning, which is what many teachers would agree with even today, regardless of whether it is actually correct or not. The approach that follows these tenets and beliefs that the only way to learn English, or any second language is to be immersed in that language, is called the monolingual approach in second language learning. The commonly observed English-only policy in schools is one of the most commonly used methods under the monolingual approach, which is referred to as “a natural and commonsense practice which can be justified on pedagogical grounds” (Auerbach, 1993, p. 9).

2.2.1 Theories behind the Monolingual Approach. Various theories on second language learning started to appear after people saw the weakness of the grammar-translation method. The grammar-translation method, which is a method that uses direct translation in second language learning, played an important role in language learning (Richards, 2001). Some English textbooks that include both English and the first language translations are examples of the method. However, the grammar-translation method lacks communication which makes it unsuitable for second language classes that use the communicative approach today. In the early 1950s, behaviourists believed that “[in] learning a first language the progress is relatively simple: all we have to do is learn a set of new habits . . . [the] second language learning process therefore involves replacing those habits by a set of new ones” (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013, p. 29). Based on this point of view, the idea is that learning a second language pretty much
involves the process of taking away the first language habits and ensure the habits of the second language get laid down properly. Based on this view, English language learning should definitely take a monolingual approach since the first language is to be avoided and replaced. This view received a lot of criticism after generative structure theory came onto the stage in the mid-1970s. Generative structure indicated that first of all, language is far more complex than a set of habits. Second, people, especially children, do not learn grammar or rules from merely remembering all the rules or sentences (Chomsky, 1957). When people observed a lot of sentences produced using a certain structure, they would create their own sentence based on the observed structure. This process of creation violated that basic assumption of the behaviourist view of language learning which only consists of adapting to a set of habits. Starting from here, views on second language learning became more complicated than just to get the correct rules and throw away the first language. Various other theories and hypotheses on second language learning started to appear after recognizing that second language learning is not as simple as it seemed.

Lado (1957) noticed a transfer between students’ first and second language, when he stated that “in the comparison between native and foreign language lies the key to ease or difficulty in foreign language learning” (Lado, 1957, p. 1). He further suggested that students would find the similar structures in first and second languages easier and more different ones more difficult. If Lado’s theory stopped right there, one may want to suggest that the first language should definitely be incorporated in second language learning. However, the idea of interference between first language and second language was what Lado discussed further in his book. Interference indicated that some structures will be transferred with errors. It was further discussed that interference happens in many
aspects of second language learning including writing and pronunciation. It was suggested that teachers should be able to identify the difference between the first and second language and avoid those interferences (Lado, 1957). Based on this view, though the first language can make second language learning easier in some cases, it was suggested that errors will be transferred to the second language due to interference of the first language. For those teachers who do not know about students’ first language, since they cannot point out the differences between students’ L1 and L2, the easiest way to reduce or eliminate the interference is to suggest the students do not use their first language as a primary tool to decode structures in the second language because the first language is the cause of the interference.

Krashen’s (1981) fundamental pedagogical principle was probably among one of the most famous set of theories in the field of second language learning and acquisition. Though this fundamental pedagogical principle has received a lot of criticism over time, it did state some remarkable implications for ESL teachers. Krashen’s fundamental pedagogical principle in second language teaching consists of five hypotheses: the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. The acquisition-learning hypothesis made a distinction between language acquisition and language learning where acquisition was referred to as a subconscious process and learning was referred to as a conscious process. The natural order hypothesis stated that “grammatical structures are acquired (not learned) in a predictable order” (Krashen, 1981, p. 51). The monitor hypothesis stated that acquisition plays the major role in second language production and learning merely plays the role of a monitor (testing hypothesis). The input hypothesis is the one
hypothesis on which Krashen has written the most. In the input hypothesis, Krashen suggested that people acquire a second language from input level i to level i+1 where i represents the current stage and i+1 represents the next stage. From level i to level i+1, more comprehensible input will be provided to the student to allow for acquisition. From this hypothesis, it is apparent to all readers that Krashen placed acquisition over explicit learning and he considered his notion of comprehensible input to be one construct above all others in second language acquisition. Indeed, in one of Krashen’s later publications, he explicitly stated that “the best way, and perhaps the only way, to teach speaking, according to this view, is simply to provide comprehensible input” (Krashen, 1982, p. 23).

The affective filter hypothesis stated that a lower level of anxiety, a higher level of motivation and a higher level of self-confidence are related to better outcomes in second language acquisition because the affective filter when high can block acquisition.

Krashen’s hypotheses left a lot of unanswered questions, for example, what does comprehensible input actually mean? What is the context of level i and i+1? Those questions are never answered in any of his articles.

Krashen (1981) recognized that using the L1 in English language learning could be effective in some ways, but he considered the interference being detrimental. This is why Krashen’s theories were in support of the monolingual approach because he considered comprehensible input much more important than the potential advantages that the L1 could bring. Overall, he suggested that English should be acquired monolingually by providing the student with a lot of comprehensible input. Krashen further discussed some teaching approaches based on his construct in the same article where he suggested
that in various settings, his construct remains true and the construct can be applied to subject matter teaching and academic ESL programs.

2.2.2 Benefits of the Monolingual approach. The monolingual approach in English language learning has some clear benefits. Its most obvious benefit is the extensive input it can offer. Input plays a very important role in second language learning. Based on Schmidt’s (1990) noticing hypothesis, consciously noticing particular forms in input is the entry point to further processing (Leow, 2010). To recognize target structure in second language, the student needs to notice the target structure in the input which indicated that attention to target structure in input is crucial to understanding (Rosa, & O’Neill, 1999; Sanz, 2004). When more attention is paid to input, richer intake can be derived (Wong, 2004). All those theories explained the importance of input in second language learning. As mentioned earlier, with the monolingual approach the interference between the L1 and L2 is also reduced. The L1 will not have a detrimental effect on English structure if the usage of students’ L1 is kept at a minimum. By using only English to teach English, a more natural acquisition environment could be created. Based on Krashen’s theory, this natural acquisition environment with constant comprehensible input is the utopia of English acquisition. Extensive input is indeed associated with increased competency in listening, reading and even speaking (Dekeyser, 1997; Leow, 2007; Ranta, & Lyster, 2007).

On the other hand, another obvious benefit of the monolingual approach is that it is easier to manage. The teachers do not need to decide when students’ first language should be used and when it should be taken out since it will mostly be out. Also, in many cases, teachers could not possibly understand all the languages in an ESL classroom.
Students may also not understand all the languages spoken in the ESL classroom since sometimes there can be students from more than two or three ethnic backgrounds sitting in the same classroom. By utilizing a monolingual approach, communication between teachers and the students can be bridged using the common medium, namely, English, although it has to be made comprehensible. Based on those benefits, it is not hard to understand why a lot of ESL teachers will choose the monolingual approach as their teaching approach in class.

2.2.3 Limitations of the Monolingual Approach. A primary criticism for the monolingual approach in English language learning is its lack of consideration for students’ background. An excerpt from a student’s narrative on English-only policy reads the following:

We are treated like garbage. I kept getting suspended because when I spoke Spanish with my homeboys, the teachers thought I was disrespecting them. They kept telling me to speak in English because I was in America. I wasn't going to take that. .... So I left and never went back. Some of those teachers don't want us. That hurts, that really hurts. (Ribadeneira, 1992, p. 7)

However, the monolingual approach does not actually mean students’ first language should never be allowed. The first language can be utilized for understanding in line with Krashen’s notion of comprehensible input. A better way to formulate the monolingual approach based on the theories stated earlier is that it assumes a minimalist view on students’ first language in second language learning or acquisition. Then, the question becomes, what caused the negative experience in that narrative? As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the English-only strategy is just one of the practices of the
monolingual approach, and also one of the most commonly observed practice. One can regard the English-only strategy as one extreme of the monolingual approach. With this being said, this criticism does hold some truths because indeed the ethnic background and cultural identity of the student is not a concern in most of the theories underlying the monolingual approach.

In terms of learning outcomes, the monolingual approach also has its own limitation. Empirical studies showed that although the monolingual approach gave better results in comprehension-related skills, learning grammatical rules and language production are not guaranteed by the monolingual approach (Dekeyser, 1997). An example would be that students in French immersion programs, though they developed ability in communication, did not have accurate grammar. (Genesee, 1978). A more specific example was provided by Swain (1988) where she noticed that students in French immersion programs misused grammatical structures like for instance using wrong tenses. In French immersion programs the students were allowed to take certain subjects in French, which is a Canadian model of the monolingual approach of second language learning in the public system. Under this setting, interference should be minimal, but then where did those mistakes come from? An interesting observation made by Harley and Swain (1985) indicated that in the observed Grade 6 French immersion classroom, teachers actually used only a limited set of verb tenses. This could provide some clue on the answer to why students misused their tenses. This phenomenon was understandable to teachers. When explaining English grammar to ESL students in English, teachers would tend to use less complicated words and phrases to make the grammar point more accessible. Inevitably, this approach will make initial registering
easier, the downside however, is that the expectation was being lowered which also lowered the outcome. The other reason for the non-native like production was that practice is skill-specific (Dekeyser, 1997). This means that input practice can only consolidate comprehension-related skills, not production. The monolingual approach applications like immersion programs or English-only policy only provide rich input which does not cover production-related skills. The fact that the monolingual approach was not as effective in aspects like use of correct grammatical structures as in comprehension-related skills is also one of the limitations of the monolingual approach.

2.2.4 The Monolingual Approach in Action. As mentioned in the above sections, the two typical applications of the monolingual approach in English language learning are the English-only policy in many schools and the immersion programs that originated from the Canadian model of French Immersion. For some researchers “the rationale used to justify English only in the classroom is neither conclusive nor pedagogic” (Auerbach, 1993, p.15). Indeed, the English-only policy today could easily be interpreted as a lack of accommodation, exclusion and rejection of students’ identity (Phillipson, 1992). It was identified that for many teachers, this English-only view is not a pedagogical decision, but rather a choice based on common sense (Auerbach, 1993). Therefore, for teachers who consider an English-only policy as a practice in ESL classrooms, it is strongly recommended that they conduct a needs analysis for students to make sure they are comfortable and properly accommodated. In English-only classrooms, students can feel the pressure and segregation as in the narrative cited earlier which is something teachers want to avoid.
The immersion program is considerably more moderate than the English-only policy. In the Canadian model of immersion programs, a certain percentage of instructional time should be devoted to the target second language. In 1964, the “language bath” program started between few mothers who were eager to make their children know French, this program was the original Canadian French Immersion program (Hayday, 2015). The mothers first envisioned that their children would be taught using French curriculum from as early as kindergarten, which is the concept we currently regard as early immersion. In the course of around 15 years, this program quickly went from a camp to a school program, then to a national program in Canada. Many studies were conducted on the program and the enrollment of the program was soaring. Today, not only Canada itself continues to hold French immersion program in different schools, the Canadian immersion model was also widely adopted in various countries in the world to study English (Bettney, 2015). Studies on immersion programs have shown the effectiveness of immersion programs on various aspects of second language learning (Genesee, 1987; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). The immersion program takes a monolingual approach in the sense that it uses the target language as the language of instruction for different subject matters, but at the same time, it is not as segregated and culturally inconsiderate as the English-only policy in the sense that it does not completely ban the usage of students’ first language. In fact, multiple experimental studies on incorporating students’ first language in different strands of second language classes were conducted in French immersion classrooms. This could explain why there are a lot of people going against the English L2-only policy, and immersion programs just get more and more
popular around the world. From this point of view, the monolingual approach is used all around us, and it is a perfectly valid approach in English learning.

2.3 The Bilingual Approach

The bilingual approach in English language learning or second language learning in general is the approach that supports active use of the students’ first language. Instead of seeing the first language as the root of evil or something to be avoided, the bilingual approach views the first language as a useful tool that should be deliberately used in second language learning. One must note that this does not mean second language input is not important, but rather, that the first language plays an important or even central role in learning a second language. This means input and lessons in the target second language will still be given, but one does not need to minimize the use of the first language as in the monolingual approach. In the bilingual approach, the first language is to be used, to be encouraged or even to be actively used (Cook, 2001).

2.3.1 Theories behind the Bilingual Approach. The idea of language transfer was introduced earlier in the monolingual section as interference, which indicated that transfer between structures in first and second language could cause errors. An interesting observation made was that based on various studies on errors made in second language structures, at most 51 percent was actually attributed to interference (Ellis, 1994). This suggested that the L1 is probably not the root of all errors in second language structures. The L1 therefore may have a more positive role than just being the cause of errors. This view really resonates with the supporters of the bilingual approach. The bilingual approach in second language learning looked at language transfer in a more positive way
than Lado’s construct would suggest. Ma (2013) in his literature review categorized language transfer into positive and negative transfer. It was noticed in his review that:

Even nowadays, whenever transfer is mentioned, people are used to putting the blame on negative transfer and take it for granted that transfer is, at least, one of the important factors responsible for errors that second language learners committed. While they are putting overdue emphasis on negative transfer, they are ignoring the function of positive transfer that can accelerate L2 [second/target language] language learning. (Ma, 2013, p. 33)

Indeed later on, he discussed that positive transfer can help accelerate second language acquisition. For example, for languages with similar phonemes, it can accelerate learners’ pronunciations. When the L1 and L2 have the same pragmatic features, it accelerates ELLs’ second language acquisition (Ma, 2013).

Cook (2001) argued that first language and second language acquisition should look different because when children acquire their first language, there is no other language as background. But in second language acquisition, there is obviously a first language already in place. Also, Cook argued that the first language and second language are not distinct in students’ mind, they are interwoven in many different aspects, therefore, to keep first and second language apart is completely doomed to failure (Cook, 2001). Also, Cook’s notion of an integration continuum in multicompetence suggested that first and second language have interactions that can be captured using a continuous scale (Cook, 2002). He also suggested that this continuum can be related to different stages in second language development and the entire second language system may not be at the same stage on this continuum (Cook, 2003). This means a person’s syntax could
be integrated, but his or her phonology could be separate at the same time, which indicates that not all aspects of the second language system are at the same developmental stage at all times. These notions strengthen his original argument that second language learning is not an independent process and that the L1 and L2 go through stages of integration in language learning rather than separation as it is presented in the Interlanguage Theory (Selinker, 1972). Based on this view, in L2 learning, the role of the L1 is just as important as L2 since as the stages develop, the L1 is more connected to the L2.

Cook’s theories indicated that first language and second language have very close relationships in the process of second language learning. But exactly what kind of role does the first language play is a question that cannot be easily answered, since a language is not a mere object, it is a complex system (Chomsky, 1957). The first language may have a different relationship depending on which aspect of the target language we are focusing on. For example, an empirical study investigating the role of first language in second language reading showed that the first language not only acted as a translation tool, “the L1 [first language] [was used] by L2 [second language] readers to help them wrestle with word- and sentence-level problems, confirm comprehension, predict text structure and content” (Upton, & Lee-Thompson, 2001, p. 491). It was also suggested that the first language took the role of instructional tool for task completion (Halasa, & Al-Manaseer, 2012). Based on those results, the first language assumed a lot of roles, a theory that includes all those roles is the idea that the first language acts as a scaffold in second language learning (Artiles, & Ortiz, 2002). Namely, the first language, in various
aspects of second language learning, can help build understanding in the second language.

More recent research suggested multilanguaging based on the communicative approach. More people consider language as lingua franca instead of a subject. Therefore, learning language based on social context in this age of globalization should be the method that is more suitable for second language learning according to multilingualism. Methods under multilanguaging include transidiomatic practices which suggested that language learning is not about acquiring codes, but it is actually a flow of cultures (Jacquemet, 2005). In transidiomatic practices, the English language learners will not only learn the language, they would also be reterritorialized by English-related cultures. Previously, this could have meant that the English language learners had to go to different English-speaking countries in order to get themselves familiarized with the culture. However, since we are in a digital age right now, accessing transnational content or even talking to people in another country is far easier than how it was twenty years ago. In this case, transidiomatic practices happen very often in places where the students could access foreign materials.

Polylanguaging, which is similar to multilanguaging in the sense that it considers language more than just a single entity, is different from multilingualism as it does not keep each language separate as in multilingualism. Polylanguaging actually combines different features of different languages, or even different languages themselves, into linguistic production (Jørgensen, 2008). An example of polylanguaging would be that an English language learning student speaks a sentence with part of the sentence in English and part of the sentence in his or her first language or uses rules in the first language to
speak a sentence in English. Plurilanguaging, which is similar to polylanguaging, focuses on simultaneous use of different linguistic features of languages. The difference is that plurilanguaging looks at the dynamic and evolving aspects of interconnected features from the point of view of the language users, but polylanguaging does not specify this characteristic (Makoni, & Makoni, 2010). However, polylanguaging is not considered a sign of multi-competence although it involves code-switching in conversation as being bilingual should involve “gating out” a linguistic system when another one is needed (Lambert, 1990). Therefore, polylanguaging could be understood as an interlanguage stage, i.e. the transition stage to ultimate attainment, where coding-switching happens more frequently between L1 to L2 to make the speakers properly express themselves. However, as mentioned earlier in the first chapter, the context of globalization makes the English learning goal shift from ultimate attainment to English as a communicative tool. Within this context, the frequency of code-switching or polylanguaging no longer indicates the inability of gating out one language, but it becomes a normal part of communication. The form of this communication simply involves different languages integrated in one utterance (Jørgensen, 2008).

It can be noticed from the literature that the bilingual approach developed from just between the target language and the first language. Multilingualism and polylingualism view languages far beyond a mere system or a set of codes. However, since the purpose of this thesis focuses on investigating the views of classroom teachers, going into multilingualism would be beyond the topic. Therefore, in this thesis, the bilingual approach focused on the learning process and classroom teaching methods as described by Cook (2001, 2002).
2.3.2 Benefits of the Bilingual Approach. Empirical studies found a lot of positive results in allowing students to actively use their first language in second language learning classrooms. For example, by allowing the students to use their first language to rehearse their presentation, the amount of first language naturally decreased and more English started to appear and the group progressed during this process (Kobayashi, 2003). In French immersion programs, similar results were presented.

Students who prepared presentations in their first language were evaluated higher than students who prepared presentations using French though the presentations were all done in French eventually (Behan, Turnbull, & Spek, 1997). Even in writing tasks, students who were allowed to use their first language in preparation took less time than the others (Swain, & Lapkin, 2000). Those results suggested that by using the first language for planning and drafting, students could actually accomplish second language tasks more efficiently, which indicates that the first language is actually an effective scaffold. Also, students at the beginning level of second language learning may have difficulty both in understanding instructions and expressing needs. In such a case, using the first language can allow the students to have a deeper understanding, express themselves more precisely and explain difficult grammar and vocabulary (Liu, & Zeng, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, in Krashen’s fundamental pedagogical principle, the affective-filter hypothesis stated that low anxiety, high motivation and high self-confidence are associated with better outcomes in second language learning. Krashen did not mention details on how to lower students’ anxiety or to raise students’ motivation and self-confidence. Research findings showed that incorporating students’ first language(s) in second language learning can help reduce students’ anxiety and avoid students losing
their self-esteem (Auerbach, 1993). A more detailed experimental study was a qualitative study conducted by Brooks-Lewis (2009), where the author designed and delivered a 30-hour course that included active use of students’ first language. The participants of this study were 256 students from various ESL classrooms of two universities in Mexico. A lot of students reported feeling positive about the inclusion of their first language in this ESL course designed by the author. Students reported advantages of this course including reduced anxiety, developing thinking, promoting a positive learning attitude and the ability to compare between languages (Brooks-Lewis, 2009). In this case, the conditions as outlined by Krashen’s affective-filter hypothesis were actually fulfilled by the bilingual approach instead of the monolingual approach.

Another benefit of the bilingual approach was the positive transfer between languages. When a certain structure is the same in both the first and the second language, the transfer will be positive because no error will occur (Ellis, & Fotos, 1999). The first language will facilitate second language learning in this case so that the target structure does not need to be studied from the beginning. It is to be noted that the structure needs to be the same not just similar in the two languages in order to let the outcome be positive because if the structure is only similar, interference may occur and the transfer will be negative because as Lado (1957) says, the part that is slightly different between the two languages will be the part that causes error. Overall, if positive transfer occurs, second language learning can be accelerated (Ma, 2013).

The bilingual approach in English language learning can also promote peer support. Sometimes, when a certain class contains students that speak more than two or three first languages, it will be impossible for the teacher to understand all the languages
spoken in the class. Therefore, it is necessary to pair up English language learners with students who speak their first language. By utilizing peer support, it promotes a student-centered climate. Allowing the students to communicate with each other with assistance of their first language in this case can not only help ELLs to get used to using English, but can also allow them to build relationships with others (Ashworth, 2000; Artiles, & Ortiz, 2002). By doing so, the students can take leadership roles to support the other English language learners and they will also be more comfortable because they can have peers to help them with not only language but also through familiarizing them with the environment. By using the bilingual approach, students can truly be reached rather than experience segregation.

2.3.3 Limitations of the Bilingual Approach. If the bilingual approach had no weaknesses, the mothers would not have established the “language bath” program in the early French Immersion model. The key reason for the mothers to start the program was because they found that teaching French using English was not sufficient. Similarly, the international schools that adapted to the immersion program also saw the problem. The key disadvantage the bilingual approach has in comparison to the monolingual approach is the lack of L2 input. As stated earlier, input plays a very important role in second language learning. By using the bilingual approach, the first language is actively used and the input in the target second language would of course be decreased. For students who aim to effectively improve their comprehension and fluency in English, the bilingual approach may not be as suitable.

In addition, the bilingual approach may actually cause teachers more work than the monolingual approach. The use of students’ L1 is active in the bilingual approach, but
that does not mean that students can just keep using their first language without any restrictions. Therefore, teachers need to strategically incorporate students’ first language. For example, to identify when or when not to use the first language is one decision that the teacher has to make. Teachers also need to put more effort into lesson planning and teaching because the teacher needs to provide the bilingual support the students need while still teaching the content of the lesson. To balance the usage of students’ first language and teaching the content of the lesson in L2, teachers would also be expected to carry out a considerable amount of classroom management. All those extra efforts required could be overwhelming for some teachers, especially new teachers, who try to incorporate the bilingual approach, which is one of its disadvantages.

Of course, there is a worst case scenario for the bilingual approach, if a class has a huge variety of first languages and the school does not have any students with higher English proficiency who can speak certain first languages to act as resource persons for the newcomers. In such a case, it would be extremely difficult to incorporate the bilingual approach. The reason is because if a certain language is not spoken by anyone else in the school besides one or two students in the ESL class, when they are actively using their first language to learn English, they cannot be understood by the teacher or their peers. If they are in any difficulty or if they have any need, it will be very hard for them to express them and it will also be very hard for teachers or for peers to understand. If any ESL teachers who want to incorporate the bilingual approach get into this situation, they would have to look for someone who speaks the students’ L1 either in the community or in the group of educational assistants in order to make sure the students’ needs are met.
2.3.4 The Bilingual Approach in Action. Cook (2001) actually mentioned four second language learning methods that deliberately involve the use of students’ first language. The four methods are the alternating language approaches, the new concurrent method, community language learning and Dodson’s bilingual method. The alternating language approaches, as the name suggests, include methods that expose the students to their first and target second language in an alternating manner. Alternation can be done in various different ways. Examples of alternation include setting a percentage for instruction in each language or letting pairs or groups of students learn each other’s language. It is noticed that the second method of alternation is more widely used today because of the development of chatting software. An English-speaking student who wants to learn French and a French-speaking student who wants to learn English can get paired up. They would negotiate with each other to allocate time for them to interact. This is how the alternating language approach can be in action today.

The new concurrent method involves the teacher switching to the students’ first language when important concepts arise. This method is not seen very often in the recent literature because first of all, not all ESL teachers can speak a second language. Secondly, if the class has a variety of different first languages, even if the teacher can speak all of the L1s, to go through each key concept in each of the L1s takes a great amount of time. However, this method is actually observed in a different form in many schools. An application of this method is that students are given handouts, forms or information sheets in their first language. In this case, some key information and concepts can be conveyed and the translation of the sheets can be done by individuals out of class,
which is easier to implement than the original new concurrent method which assumed that the teacher does the translation orally as described by Cook (2001).

Community language learning is an approach that makes the class look like a community. Originally this method was used to help newcomers deal with the demands of daily tasks in their new community. Peers as well as the instructor helped them with language use in situational settings for which their needs were expressed. The teacher takes the role of a counsellor rather than an instructor. The students try to talk to each other in the L2 with the assistance of their L1 (Curran, 1976) around basic needs. The teacher will then translate the L1 and therefore whenever the L1 is spoken, teachable moments are created. It was suggested that the advantage of this approach was that it reduces students’ anxiety (Ariza, 2002; Hull, 1984). The disadvantage of community language learning was that it does not have a rigid structure as the teacher is not taking a role of content instructor (Hull, 1984). Earlier on, when second language learning was content-heavy, community language learning was not as popular because it lacks a rigid syllabus. However, as the paradigm of education shifts, needs analysis and situated learning become more important than content teaching. Community language learning came back onto the stage because when there was a group of students who were anxious about learning a second language, structure and content was not deemed as important as easing their anxiety. Those who implemented or piloted community language learning reported that this approach greatly eased students’ anxiety and stimulated their interest in learning a second language (Ariza, 2002; Handley, 2011). It was even suggested that based on the benefits of community language learning, community language learning
should be implemented as a program and promoted throughout the United Kingdom for students at different age levels (Handley, 2011).

Dodson’s bilingual method is the method that “requires the teacher to read an L2 sentence aloud several times and to give its meaning in the L1” (Cook, 2001, p. 413). This method is seen nowhere other than Dodson’s own literature and Cook’s article. But based on the same reason as for the new concurrent method, this method is too demanding and time-consuming to implement in day to day classes.

There are also other methods under the bilingual approach, but one can notice that these are generally of smaller scale than the methods under the monolingual approach. Most of the bilingual approach methods are only class-wide or school-wide, but the monolingual approach methods are going international. One reason could be that different teachers may choose their own way to incorporate students’ first language and it is hard to systematically describe all those ways. Another reason is that as observed from the four methods Cook presented, most of the methods assumed the teacher can speak the students’ first language, while in actual ESL classes, this hardly ever happens. This could explain why those methods are so small in scale, they are simply too demanding.

The monolingual and bilingual approaches should never be considered as totally separate. They should always be considered on a bipolar continuum, and instead of considering them as teaching approaches, they look more like perspectives on L2 learning because the teachers generally sit somewhere in the middle of continuum, which means they do not generally adhere strictly to any of the poles. The other reason for saying monolingual and bilingual approaches look like perspectives was because though the teachers might have a certain perspective, the methods they use to actually conduct
the lessons could be completely different, some of the methods they used might not even be represented by the corresponding approach, this was illustrated later in the Discussion section. Most methods that are discussed earlier actually stay closer to the center than the extremes, besides the English-only policy at one end and the possibility of a large amount of L1 use near the other end. However, teachers can certainly choose a stand point based on their own perception and professional judgement and then conduct their lessons, plan their activities and even react in class based on their stand point, namely, whether the L1 has a positive or negative role in L2 learning or whether the L1 should be actively used in L2 learning. Therefore, for most teachers, there should be a choice between favoring the bilingual approach or the monolingual approach, which means investigating teachers’ perspectives on the monolingual and bilingual approaches were very informative.

2.4 Gaps in Research

As mentioned earlier, empirical studies on the French immersion program indicated that the students enrolled in French Immersion Schools had considerably better French skills than the students in English school systems with limited contact hours in French (Genesee, 1978). In fact, the original St. Lambert experiment conducted by Lambert (1972) indicated that the immersion program is beneficial to the students in the sense that first of all, it showed no lasting negative effect on students’ first language (English in this case) in terms of various skills like reading, listening, understanding concepts and oral expression. In addition, the French immersion students’ comprehension skills in French were actually at native level compared to the group of students who studied French in regular English school. It was also noticed that students in the St. Lambert experiment were more open to the French-speaking community and were more
willing to communicate than those in the English system. In addition there was also less bias toward French-speaking populations in the French immersion program (Lambert, & Tucker, 1972). The only weakness was that the students in French immersion programs still consistently had lower levels of grammar skills and speaking skills including enunciation, rhythm and intonation (p<0.001) than native French speakers even in the early immersion settings (Genesee, 1978). However, the French immersion students showed no significant difference in English comprehension and production levels and had significantly higher French listening and speaking levels than the English control group, these were consistent results obtained in studies on the French immersion program (Genesee, 1978; Lambert, & Tucker, 1972). So, based on those findings, the immersion program which minimalizes the use of students’ L1 is indeed beneficial.

However, the weaknesses of the immersion program manifested themselves as the attrition rates increased. A search in the literature indicated that the reasons for students’ attrition from the French immersion program at an early stage include academic difficulties in both English and French, social and emotional difficulties and lack of remedial support (Halsall, 1994; Obadia, & Theriault, 1997). The social and emotional difficulties correspond to the results in the literature review, but the academic difficulties in both English and French seem to contradict the St. Lambert experiment’s result because the original and the follow-up studies all indicated that the immersion program has no negative effect on students’ English performance (Genesee, 1978; Lambert, & Tucker, 1972). This prompts a question, that is, are there any differences at a micro-level, namely, something at the class-level that was overlooked by the studies at the board level. For example, after surveying some French immersion classrooms, it was found that
teachers and students used a limited set of French grammar structures in class, which was a potential reason that the students misused some of the structures because they were not often used (Harley, & Swain, 1985, Swain, 1988). Then, a question that could be explored would be why the teachers chose to limit their grammar structures, and what were the underlying perceptions that made them do that? To broaden this question, one can ask, what are the teachers’ perceptions on teaching a second language and how did such perceptions influence their practice? This was a question that was hardly asked in a second language learning classroom that used the monolingual approach, but it was certainly a phenomenon that has an impact on research as classroom practice indeed made research show discrepancies in results as illustrated above. It was also obvious that the early immersion students were part of a select group and as it became more popular all students were able to join these classes.

Research in second language learning classrooms in different countries indicated that the majority of the teachers and students agreed with using the first language in classrooms. Studies were conducted in Puerto Rico, Croatia and China on whether to use the L1 in English language learning classrooms and when it should be used (Dujmović, 2014; Schweers Jr., 1999; Tang, 2002). Those three studies could be placed in parallel as the surveys they used were very similar. In all those studies, the percentage of students and teachers agreeing with the use of the L1 in class ranged from 70 to 100 percent. The students’ responses were more uniform on when the L1 should be used. The top reason to use the L1 in English learning classrooms for the students was to understand difficult concepts better, with 69, 81 and 86 percent reported in China (Tang 2002), Croatia (Dujmović, 2014) and Puerto Rico (Schweers Jr., 1999). Understanding new vocabulary
was also one of the reasons to use the L1, but the percentage varied drastically between the three studies with 23, 42 and 70 percent in Puerto Rico, China and Croatia respectively. Learning grammar was also a reason to use the L1 in studies conducted in China and Croatia, with over 90 percent of the student participants in favor in Croatia and 72 percent of participants in China (Dujmović, 2014; Tang 2002). Schweers Jr. (1999) did not include grammar teaching as an option in the survey. So, the occasions where students think the L1 is necessary are pretty clear. Teachers’ views were not really clear in this series of studies. First of all, Dujmović (2014) did not collect data from the teachers. Schweers Jr. (1999) collected the views from 19 teachers but the results hardly make sense as all the teachers agreed that the L1 was necessary, but not many of them agreed on any occasions where the L1 should be used. Tang’s (2002) study indicated that around 30 percent of the 20 participating teachers thought that using Chinese L1 aided understanding, boosted effectiveness and was less time-consuming. Tang’s (2002) interviews with three teachers indicated that the L1 was used for time-efficiency, helping students with low-proficiency and explaining difficult and abstract words, whereas Schweers Jr.’s (1999) results included explaining concepts, building rapport, helping students’ have better written production and valuing the students’ identity as short-answer results from the teachers. However, the results from the teachers do not allow to draw conclusions in either of the two studies as first of all they were qualitative studies with very limited quantitative analysis, and also because though the number of teachers who filled in the survey was around 20 in each of the two studies, the participants of the interview or the short-answer questions did not exceed four in either of the two studies, whereas the number of students participating in each of the three studies mentioned
earlier was around 100. In this case, though these studies provided a vague picture of when the L1 was needed in class, hence the teachers’ open-ended responses on the approach and perceptions definitely needed to be investigated further.

Based on the observations above, individual classrooms have to be investigated, because what the teachers decide to do in class eventually influences the results of L2 learning at a board or even program level. However, the teachers’ views were not investigated in as much detail in the studies as the students’ opinions. Therefore, the focus of the present study is look at the teachers’ perspectives and to let them talk about their approaches, and about what underlies their perceptions. This helps enrich the knowledge on teachers’ views in terms of research and at the same time, provides a clearer picture on more practices used by the teachers and the reasons behind their choices.

2.5 Theoretical Frameworks

I chose to use more than one framework for this study. As stated in the introduction, the monolingual and the bilingual approaches are two completely different approaches in English language learning and there are multiple theories behind both approaches. Some teachers support the monolingual approach while the others support the bilingual approach. For the monolingual approach, the theoretical framework that guided the analysis was Krashen’s (1981) fundamental pedagogical principle. Krashen proposed five hypotheses, which are the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. Therefore, for the teachers who hold a monolingual view, their interviews were coded and categorized using the five hypotheses. For teachers that support a
bilingual approach, some parts of the previous framework were reused, like the monitor hypothesis and affective filter hypothesis because these two hypotheses by Krashen were relevant in the bilingual approach. The monitor hypothesis stated that conscious learning plays the role as a monitor in second language learning. This hypothesis applies more to studying grammar as Krashen stated. Studies conducted with teachers and students in English as a second language classes indicate that a lot of teachers and students would utilize the first language when explaining grammar rules (Dujmović, 2014; Nazary, 2008; Schweers Jr., 1999; Tang, 2002). Therefore, how the first language aided monitoring was one of the aspects that was analyzed in the interview data. The affective filter hypothesis deals with the psychological aspects of second language learning and stated that the higher the anxiety, the worse the outcome. It was observed that a lower anxiety level was associated with the bilingual approach (Auerbach, 1993). The comparison between the observed outcome and observed anxiety in English language learning from teachers’ interview data was analyzed based on an affective filter level for all interview participants depending on whether the teacher observed any change in students’ anxiety toward English learning and whether such anxiety was observed to influence the learning outcome based on Krashen’s hypothesis.

The framework for teachers who hold a bilingual view was the continuum of integration model (Cook, 2002). This model is illustrated as follows:
Cook’s (2002) integration continuum model was adapted from Francis’ (1999) integration model that looks at the relationship between two languages at a cognitive level. Francis’ idea was that instead of talking about complete integration or separation, there should be a degree of separation or integration that sits on a continuum (Francis, 1999). Cook’s (2002) adaptation looks at the model from a point of multi-competence. First of all, the integration continuum model does recognize that styles are different between two languages. But there are a lot of interconnected elements between two languages that are accessible to learners. From the multi-competence perspective, lexical, phonological and even functional aspects are connected between two languages (de Groot, 2002; Major, 2002; Perdue, 2002). This indicates that a lot of skills from the learners’ first language could be accessed when learning a foreign language. Such a notion is also referred to as skill transfer by some studies, which covers not only the aspects of languages mentioned above, but also includes some processing skill transfer.
like transfer of reading and comprehension skills (August, Calderon, & Carlo, 2002; Gottardo, Van, Siegel, & Wade-Woolley, 2001). Interestingly, based on the idea of the integration continuum, transfer is a word that is not preferred under this schema, as “[t]he verb transfer implies that someone moves something from one place to another” (Cook, 2002, p. 18). While the integration continuum “does not treat the source and destination as separate mental objects … but as merged or overlapping systems; language acquisition or use is not transferring something from one part of the mind to another, but two systems accommodating to each other” (Cook, 2002, p. 18). The merged system includes a set of different aspects in linguistics including but not limited to phonology, functions, cognition and lexis (Cook, 2002). However, the processing skills were not discussed under the framework explicitly. Therefore, though the integration continuum does not include the notion of transfer, in this study I still used skill transfer as this notion was used in other studies (Karim, 2010). For teachers who hold a bilingual perception, it would make sense that they see certain connections between first and target language, which makes them prefer a bilingual approach in teaching. As the integration continuum is a model that describes such connections, it would be a suitable framework to describe the participants’ perspectives when seeing the relationship and connections between students’ first language and English.

In addition to the integration continuum, a set of methods suggested by Cook (2001) that actively uses students’ L1 in L2 teaching is connected to the theoretical framework that describes bilingual perspectives. This was added to allow delving deeper into practical aspects as some teachers used a bilingual approach in their classrooms not because of the connections between students’ L1 and L2 but simply because of the
convenience. As the studies indicated, improved comprehension is one of the benefits of using students’ L1 in foreign language learning classrooms, but the reason might not be connections between languages or skill transfer, at least the teachers might not perceive the connections or transfers at that point (Dujmović, 2014; Schweers Jr., 1999; Tang, 2002). The improved comprehension might just mean it takes the teachers less time and effort to explain a concept, namely, for the benefit of efficiency. The teacher might not think of skill transfer at that point. In this case, it would be unreasonable to use the integration continuum to describe this phenomenon as the connection between two languages is not evident for these teachers but include the use of these methods in the discussion. Situating the discussion based on Cook’s (2001) set of teaching methods that actively use students’ L1 in teaching an L2 is more suitable for such cases, as they are related more to observed outcomes than perspectives.

2.6 Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Framework

Seeing the two different approaches, an overarching question that naturally rises is about which approach is preferred in L2 learning. This question is important because by knowing which approach is used and what are the observed benefits and weaknesses of each chosen approach, it can help both educators and policy makers to decide which approach should be promoted and implemented. If we look at this question with the introductive statement provided above, a clear split of perspectives could be observed. People who prefer the monolingual approach see L1 from a very different point of view as compared to those who prefer the bilingual approach. The idea was using students’ L1 in L2 learning, and the study will aim to see this phenomenon from various different perspectives. Therefore, the underlying philosophical assumption of this study will be
ontology, since the characteristic of ontology is that “reality is multiple as seen through many views” (Creswell, 2013, p. 21). The interpretive framework in this case leads more toward pragmatism. The reason for choosing this interpretive framework is because the teachers saw the approach as being effective or if they observed effectiveness in their chosen approach. Essentially, by choosing pragmatism as the interpretive framework, the interpretation of the data in this study will focus on analysing how each approach was deemed applicable or useful based on personal views or the participants’ observations.

With those aspects being set, the choice of philosophical assumption and interpretive framework is based purely on the nature of the study. As the researcher in the study, I would define my worldview as very different from pragmatism. In fact, I would define myself holding a positivist worldview, this worldview is reflected in the analysis stage of the study in terms of the coding and association of themes. There may be some associations being made between codes that might be based heavily on cause and effect relations. Also, in such a context other types of data would be collected to justify the associations made. Therefore, even though the topic itself would remain on the pragmatic side of the spectrum, because of my own worldview of being more positivistic, the results reported may also seem more generalizable than they actually would be (Macionis, & Gerber, 2010). This could cause some potential bias in the results reporting section, since for myself, the results should be logical and generalizable. Yet L2 teaching itself is more complex than presented in this study, some people may find that the results produced by this study might not be applicable to other geographical locations. Therefore the reader should be aware of the difference between the nature of the research question and the
worldview of the writer when reading about the findings in this work to avoid overgeneralizing the results of this study.

2.7 Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the English teachers’ perspectives on using students’ first language in English language learning which provided the first question. In addition to perspectives, participants’ current practice was also a subject of interest because the perspectives would be reflected by the in-class practice. It was also noticed that in a lot of research related to teachers, the teachers’ experience teaching and learning played a very important role in forming their teaching philosophies, perceptions and practices (Ariza, 2002; Brooks-Lewis, 2009). Therefore, the participants’ teaching and learning experiences were also collected to see whether they are related to the participants’ perspective on using students’ L1 in teaching and will constitute a sub-question under the first question. The participants were also aware of the students’ outcomes based on their practice, as outcomes are feedback that indicates whether the participants’ practice worked. The participants were knowledgeable of how the students reacted to their practice in class and the observed pros and cons of their practice based on actual observation, as this observation serves as a reflection on their practice which could also influence participants’ perceptions. Based on this observation, the research questions were designed as follows:

1) How do teachers of foreign language schools perceive the role of students’ first language(s) in English language learning in Guangzhou, China?
2) What are the current practices on using students’ first language in an English language learning classroom in foreign language schools in Guangzhou, China?

3) How do teachers’ individual factors form their English teaching perspectives?

4) How do students’ English learning outcomes observed by the teachers form teachers’ views toward incorporating students’ first language(s) in English language learning?
Chapter 3

Methodology

The overall design for this study follows Tang’s (2002) study investigating students’ and teachers’ perspectives on using the L1 in English L2 learning in Beijing that starts with surveys and follow-up interviews. This study has a purpose similar to Tang’s (2002) study with only teachers as participants. The participants in this study are 18 middle-school English teachers at foreign language schools in Guangzhou, China, who took the survey and ten of them participated in the follow-up interview. The participants all had L2 learning experiences and a certain level of teaching experience. The surveys employ a 7-point Likert scale to increase reliability and validity and the interview includes detailed questions investigating teachers’ perspectives and practices. The method of analysis is also introduced in this chapter.

3.1 Design

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this study was to find out the teachers’ perspectives on L1 use in English L2 teaching. Based on this purpose, this study had to be of an exploratory nature. In addition, this study aimed to find out teachers’ views and approaches they were using, which means that there was a lot of input. The study followed the approach used by Tang (2002) where first of all a survey questionnaire is administered for the holistic views with a follow-up interview to let the participants be more specific about their practices and approaches. Also, since the study took place in China, as some of the participants did not have English as their L1, to avoid the stress of providing their views in writing, one of the more suitable data collection tools for this
study was interviews. First of all, exploration is easier with interviews compared to other data collection tools. As in interviews, especially less structured interviews, the questions can be open-ended and the interviewer could ask the participants to elaborate on any answers whenever needed (Patton, 2002). Second, a less structured interview does not only allow the participants to talk freely regardless of the grammar and structure as in providing written responses, it also allows the interviewer to ask for clarifications on the spot as the communication is more casual and spontaneous. However, less structure does not mean no structure, as the participants’ views and approaches would have to be investigated. In this case, an interview guide approach was used because it was more appropriate as there were specific topics that had to be covered in the interview, and the interview guide approach allowed the participants to talk more freely than with a standardized interview (Patton, 2002). As for some of the participants English was their L2, an interview guide allowed the interviewer to check whether the topics were covered, but at the same time, allowed the interviewer to build rapport with the participants because prompts and probes were given whenever needed and the interview looked more like a conversation than the more formal standardized interview. As there was more rapport under this setting, the participants could talk more openly and freely.

Besides the interview as a single data collection tool of a qualitative nature, a brief survey questionnaire was a quantitative first step of data collection before the interview. The survey served two different purposes. First of all, the survey provided the researcher with a general idea of the overall view of the participant, and was used as a tool for triangulation in the study to see whether the survey and interview results aligned, which also provided more validation for the study and increased trustworthiness. Second, with
the short survey, the participants had a general idea of what the interview would be about, more importantly, they could decide whether they were interested in the topic and whether they wanted to participate in the lengthier interview after the survey. In this case, the survey was an introduction to the study and at the same time, a tool for triangulation. However, this study is still qualitative overall with a quantitative component. Therefore, this study was qualified as an exploratory qualitative study rather than a mixed-method study.

The overall design was an exploratory qualitative study because the purpose of this study was to investigate how teachers perceived the need for students’ first language in English teaching and the associated approach used based on their perception. This study was also a case study, investigating issues in one setting, so further studies on the same topic would be interesting with different groups of participants or geographical locations, as the case here could be bounded by geographical location or characteristics of students that the teachers are teaching. The reason for making this research an exploratory qualitative study was that though there were studies indicating how to teach English and how first language could be used to facilitate learning, there were not as many studies trying to uncover how teachers actually teach in class. Different countries have different frameworks that serve different purposes in English teaching, and those frameworks all underwent extensive research (Duff, 2014). However, that never means teachers actually use all those frameworks or those frameworks could be applied to any classrooms, in fact, it was identified that there is a gap between research and practices (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Therefore, instead of trying to fit participants’ thinking into
research studies, participants’ perspectives and practices were explored to produce results that are more on the practical side of the spectrum rather than the empirical side.

3.2 Site

The location of this study was in China based on the various views among teachers reported in Tang’s (2002) study which was in Beijing, China. Since I had the opportunity to study in Guangzhou, China, which is also a large city with a lot of international schools just like Beijing, this was the chosen setting. The overarching question was how teachers perceive students’ first language in their foreign language classroom. This question was really hard to answer because there are too many languages in the world and second language learning can happen everywhere. In this case, second language was limited to English and the setting was limited to foreign language schools to provide manageable answers to the overarching question. As a foreign language school is more focused on foreign language teaching than a normal public school, with foreign language schools being the site of the study, questions on foreign language teaching were definitely applicable. In the end, after the schools and teachers were contacted individually, the setting of this study included two foreign language schools and one tutoring institute in Guangzhou, China. The foreign language schools had students with relatively high English levels compared to students in standard public schools according to the participants. And also, some participants indicated that the class size of one of the schools was smaller than the norm, with a maximum of 20 students per session. This indicates that the schools participating in this study are different from typical public schools, and according to the participants, under such settings, they used more English in English teaching than they would if they were in a typical public school (Participant 5, &
Participant 15, Interview). The participants in this case were all English teachers, so the settings in this case were all English classes. As the foreign language schools still need to participate in large-scale exams, the contents taught in the classes had to include the vocabulary and grammar points prescribed by the national curriculum.

3.3 Participants

All participants of this study were middle school English teachers in foreign language schools in Guangzhou, China with one exception. One participant was a teacher in a tutoring institute with six years of tutoring experience. All the participants who answered the demographic information in this study have at least three years of teaching experience which made the questions on their teaching experience applicable. All of the participants have experience learning at least two foreign languages, which also made the question on second language learning experience applicable. In particular, all the interview participants indicated that they all had experience learning exactly two foreign languages. The schools were first contacted at the administrative level to get the contact information of individual teachers. Then, each teacher was contacted individually to inform them of the study and ask for their participation. The sampling technique was purposeful sampling, since the participants of this study had to be English teachers of a foreign language school in Guangzhou. If the majority in the class were native English speakers, this teacher would not meet the criteria of participant selection because the class would not be a foreign language learning classroom. Thus 18 participants were recruited for the questionnaires with 10 of them agreeing to the follow-up interview. The demographic information in the interview indicated that all participants fit the criteria of teaching English as a foreign language as the participants identified that the majority of
their students did not speak English as their first language. According to the participants, although the city of Guangzhou houses a lot of local dialects, the students in the schools they taught were mostly from different parts of China. This means most of the students have the official language of China, namely, Mandarin as their L1 and all the students have to communicate with each other using only Mandarin. Therefore, the L1 in this study is limited to Mandarin, as that was the means of communication between the teachers and the students. A summary of the participants’ teaching experience is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Years of teaching experience</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire participants</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview participants</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interview participants all had experience teaching in at least two different settings, so their experience consisted of teaching various groups of students.

The first stage of data collection used a survey questionnaire as a data collection tool. The survey was delivered to all the participants who volunteered to participate in the study. There were 18 teachers willing to fill out the questionnaire. 17 of the participants were English teachers in foreign language schools in Guangzhou, while one of the participants was an English teacher in a tutoring institute. Three survey participants from
one of the middle schools did not provide the demographic information. Survey participants were then asked whether they would like to participate in the interview. The total number of participants who agreed to participate in the interview was 10, including the teacher from the tutoring institute. After some hesitation, the teacher from the tutoring institute was also included in the study, as this participant was involved in English teaching, but she was only asked about her perceptions and some approaches did not involve a classroom setting, because this participant had no experience teaching a class of students.

3.4 Instruments

3.4.1 Survey. For the first stage of data collection I utilized a survey questionnaire that investigated teachers’ general perspective on using students’ first language in English language learning classrooms. The survey was adapted from Tang’s (2002) and Grasso’s (2012) studies. Tang’s study was designed to ask for teachers’ opinions on whether first languages should be included in English learning classrooms, and how and why they should be used. The advantage of Tang’s survey was that it was short and comprehensive. It provided a clear indication on whether a certain participant would agree or disagree whether first languages should be included in English language learning classrooms. Also, Tang’s study was a replication of a study by Schweers Jr. (1999) with the difference that Schweers Jr.’s study only investigated students’ perceptions but Tang’s study had two surveys that investigated both teachers’ and students’ opinions. The same instrument was also used in two other studies on the same topic in different settings (Dujmović, 2014; Nazary, 2008). Though there was no
indication on the validity or reliability of the instrument, there were meaningful results obtained from this instrument in all those studies mentioned above. One of the disadvantages of Tang’s survey was that all the questions in the survey were based on multiple choices. Though Tang included blank space for participants to write down their opinion if none of the choices applied, the space was still limited. So I did not use multiple choice answers to questions.

The bigger problem with Tang’s (2002) survey was that by only having multiple choices, there was no way that (a) participants could indicate which choice they agreed with more than another. Therefore, Tang’s (2002) survey caused problems in reliability of the survey because when a participant slightly agreed with one option and strongly agreed with another, the multiple choice question showed the result as if the participant agreed equally with both options. To complement Tang’s survey, Grasso’s (2012) survey was used because it used a Likert scale to allow for differentiation in responses. The other advantage of Grasso’s survey is that it covered a wide range of questions that asked about views on the use of L1 in class and a set of situations where student’s L1 could be used to see whether students agreed with those statements. Grasso’s survey was designed for students instead of teachers, so in this study, the questions were modified to be applicable to teachers. The advantages of Grasso’s survey were that first of all, it included a question that asked for the participant’s first language. This question was related to one of the research questions that asked for the participant’s knowledge of a second language. Also, Grasso’s survey had two sections. The first section was a section asking for opinions on using the L1 in English language learning by using a 5-point Likert scale. The Likert scale allowed the participants to indicate how strongly they agree with each
statement in the question, which is a good way to increase the reliability as compared to Tang’s survey. The second section of Grasso’s survey included two open ended questions asking for the ways to use the first language in class and reasons to avoid using it in class. The answers to those open ended questions would get the participants to reflect on their perspectives of L1 use, and some interesting ideas and views would appear which could be investigated further in the follow-up interviews. The disadvantages of Grasso’s survey were its length, reliability and validity. Grasso’s survey was two pages in length and each open ended question provided the participants with 12 lines of answering space, which is a little overwhelming for later analysis since the survey was only the first stage of the data collection. The other problem was that Grasso’s survey provided no justification for its reliability or validity. This indicated that the survey’s validity and reliability depended completely on the reliability and validity of a 5-point Likert scale. There are multiple studies questioning the reliability of Likert scales (Lissitz, & Green, 1975; Matell, & Jacoby, 1971). However, based on some studies, making the Likert scale into a 7-point scale could potentially increase the reliability and validity of the instrument; this is one modification I made since at that time there were no other studies that used the same instrument on the proposed topic (Dawes, 2008). Grasso’s survey had some repetitive questions but did not cover some of the useful points in Tang’s (2002) survey, like explaining difficult and abstract concepts, giving suggestions in English L2 learning and translations etc. Therefore, question selections from Tang (2002) were integrated with Grasso’s (2012) survey to create the questionnaire in this study.

The survey for this study was modified from the two aforementioned surveys, adding a biographical component, and including questions that asked for the participants’
name, the percentage of native speakers in their classroom(s), whether they had any experience learning a second language, their years of experience teaching ESL and whether they would be willing to participate in the follow-up interview. The contact information of the participants who would be interested in the follow-up interview was also obtained from the survey. The complete survey questionnaire is in Appendix A.

3.4.2 Interviews. The interview in this study was semi-structured because this study was of an exploratory nature. In order to let the teachers freely talk about and express their views, some guiding questions and probes were included, but the questions were not fully structured. The interview guide can be found in Appendix B. When any discussions on the topic not guided by the interview questions started, questions were asked for clarification and extension to guide the discussion. The interview guide for this study was adapted and extended from a study that investigated students’ and teachers’ reasons for using the first language in a second language learning classroom (Pablo, Lengeling, Zenil, Crawford, & Goodwin, 2011). Questions on school and classroom policies, participants’ experience learning a second language, participants’ experience teaching English and participants’ own observations on the learning outcomes of their classroom’s current approach were added into the interview guide, to help answer the research questions. As well, based on the answers the participant had given in the survey and answers that needed clarification or any answers that could have been elaborated upon further were also discussed in the interview.
3.5 Data Collection

Each school was first contacted by e-mail shown in Appendix C at the administration level to make sure that the school administrator allowed recruiting posters in Appendix D to be placed in the school and allowed the author to come into the school for data collection. Then, the researcher contacted the teachers in each school by e-mail or Wechat in form of Appendix E to search for teachers who were interested in participating in the study. When the participants agreed to participate in the study, each of them received a consent form. The purpose of the consent form was to make sure the participants voluntarily participated in the study and to make sure the participants were informed of the procedure, possible risks and benefits of the study. The consent form included the contact information of the researcher, the supervisor and the General Research Ethics Board in case they needed any clarifications on the study. Ethical clearance was obtained as is attached in Appendix F. As well there was a statement about obtaining ethical clearance and the contact information of the person in charge.

3.5.1 Survey. After the consent form in Appendix G was signed, surveys were distributed to each participant that signed the consent form. As I received consent to enter all the participating schools and the institution, the surveys were mostly completed by pen and paper in a quiet place in the schools, with only one of the surveys completed by cell phone on an application called Survey Star, which was a software accessible for participants in China. Not much explanation was needed for the survey as most of the survey questions were self-explanatory. The survey fit onto one piece of A4 paper, which made the distribution and collection process rather easy. However, some of the participants only completed one side of the survey and did not complete the other side.
3.5.2 Interviews. After the survey was completed, the participants interested in participating in the follow-up interview were contacted to sign the interview consent form in Appendix H and arrange for a time and location for a meeting. The locations for interviews were mostly empty classrooms or offices with very few people having access. The interviews were mostly held during lunch break as one of the schools has an extended lunch break which allowed the participants to fit the one-hour interview. Some interviews were held after school when no students or administrative staff was around. Each interview took around an hour and each interview was audiotaped using at least two devices to protect against device failure. Notes were also taken for each interview. Before the start of each interview, the procedure of the interview was explained together with a short introduction of the study and the researcher. The participants were asked orally whether they gave consent to participate in the interview. Prompts were mostly given when the participant remained silent for more than five seconds, sometimes prompts were given when the participants could not find the right expression for what they wanted to say on the spot. Most of the participants were fine with completing the interview in English with few occurrences where their first language was needed for some expressions that could not be translated easily. One of the interviews had to be done in the participant’s first language because the participant produced very few utterances when only English was used. This interview was then translated by the researcher and underwent member checking. At the end of the interview, participants were asked whether they wanted a copy of the transcript after the transcription of their data and whether they would want a copy of the thesis after it was finished and in what format they wished to obtain it.
3.6 Analysis of Data

3.6.1 Survey. The results gathered from the survey were analyzed by IBM SPSS with some very basic statistical methods. Descriptive statistics are reported from the results using frequencies. For the Likert scale question items, results are presented in tables with mean and standard deviation to indicate the participants’ overall perception. It is noticed that the sample size was 18 in this study. Such number is too small for any robust hypothesis testing. Therefore, the results from the Likert scale question are only presented without much analysis.

All answers that appeared in open-ended questions were also reported. The surveys served as an introduction to the participants overall perspective in this study. The analysis of the open-ended questions was the same as for the interviews, using mostly open-coding, as the data of the open-ended questions serve as a prelude to the interview. The survey results did not only indicate the number of participants that support each approach, they also gave the researcher an idea as to what the views of the interview participants were so that during the interview, the researcher could guide the conversation to let the interview participants elaborate on the approach that they supported. The survey provided brief answers to the first three research questions as the survey asked for the participants’ years of experience, what practice they were currently using, whether they have learnt a second language, and most importantly, which approach they favoured.

3.6.2 Interviews. Audiotaped interviews were transcribed individually by the researcher. Before the formal analysis, the transcripts were checked by the researcher to make sure there was no error made during transcription. The transcripts were also
checked by the participants who indicated that they wanted a copy of their own transcript. The transcripts were encrypted using a password-protected computer. Participants’ personal identities were kept completely confidential as none of their names appeared in the survey and all locations in the interviews were masked. As the interview participants all filled out the questionnaire earlier, the participants’ numbers assigned in the analysis of the questionnaires stayed the same in the interview for easier correspondence between the questionnaires and interviews. The analysis was done by using coding software on a password-protected device. The coding methods used in the analysis of data were mostly open coding and inductive analysis with some deductive analysis. The reason for choosing open coding was because first, there was no pre-existing list of codes for this topic. Second, since the study was of an exploratory nature, the primary goal of this study was to find out the perspectives of the participants, so instead of fitting the codes into the theoretical framework, open coding was more suitable. The purpose of inductive analysis was to discover codes and themes in the interviews while deductive analysis was used for analysis under a certain framework (Patton, 2002). While coding was not done according to the frameworks, deductive coding was used because the research questions had naturally divided the major themes in this study. Namely, the major themes were teachers’ overall perspectives, current practices, second language learning experience, teaching experience and participants’ observed outcomes based on their approaches. Inductive analysis was used under those five major themes to develop sub-themes. Inductive analysis was used because this study is of an exploratory nature, so the codes under each major theme were organized and discovered using open coding, and then inductively the sub-themes built-up after initial coding. Those codes were emic because
they were not associated with external criterions, they were codes that emerged from 
individual or multiple interview participants. The participants’ perspectives were then 
classified and categorized based on the themes. The categorized codes were presented 
using tables. In the Discussion section, theoretical frameworks are referred to and 
relationships between themes are established. The implications are discussed afterwards 
to provide insights on the pragmatic value of the findings. In reporting findings I used 
numbers for participants, ex. Participant, 1, 2, 3…and for quotes I added where the data 
was extracted from, either the questionnaire or the interview. As well a page number and 
line number was provided with each quote as they appear in the transcript.

3.7 Validation

The trustworthiness of the study was established by triangulation, member 
checking and peer review. First of all, participants filled out a survey. Then, each of them 
was asked if they would like to participate in a follow-up interview. The survey was 
based on a series of studies investigating perceptions of using first language in second 
language learning classrooms. The questions were all written in simple English to make it 
accessible to all participants to improve its credibility. For the interview stage, each 
interview participant underwent a one-hour interview session. Some participants were 
contacted several times for clarification and extension of interview data. Five participants 
indicated that they wanted the transcript at the end of the interview, and four of them 
checked the transcript. After days of checking, the participants gave a clear indication 
that they were satisfied with the transcription. In this case, confirmability was achieved 
via member checking. The participants were also asked whether they wanted to add any 
additional comment at the time of checking. One of the participants provided some
additional comments and the others indicated that they thought that the interview questions were comprehensive and they did not want to add any more comments. Since this research contained different stages, all those data came together to establish trustworthiness by triangulation. Peer review was utilized consistently throughout the whole study as my thesis supervisor provided assistance and guidance for the analysis and the presentation of the results. Suggestions for improvements and editing were provided from the proposal to the finished thesis. Survey answers, audiotaped interviews, transcripts and field notes were checked repeatedly for congruency, especially the parts from which a lot of codes and themes were developed to further ensure the trustworthiness of the data.

3.8 Risk Management

Since this study involved studying human subjects, ethical clearance was required. Possible risks in this study included association between personal identities and information provided in the study. To reduce the risk, the participants’ names were never disclosed in the analysis and the participating school and institution’s name were never mentioned. The procedure for this study also underwent review by the Education Research Ethics Board and the General Research Ethics Board to make sure this study obtained ethical clearance. The participants’ name, contact information, teaching subjects and some possible release of their students’ names during the interview when collected remained confidential in the study. The date and location of the interview was only shared between the researcher and participants. The participants were informed that they could withdraw their participation or their data from the study up until their surveys were submitted to the researcher and their interviews were transcribed. Permissions from
school officials were obtained from individual schools since there was no uniform ethical procedure in the foreign language schools and the institution.
Chapter 4

Results

The participants in this study provided many details on how they perceived students’ L1 in their English classes. None of the participants could be simply regarded as employing a purely monolingual or bilingual approach, as they all see the L1 as acceptable or even as necessary some time while minimizing the L1 at certain points. This is clear in both the survey and interview results. However, different participants have different ideas on when the L1 could be useful and employed in class. This difference tied closely to individual factors like teaching and learning experiences, and is also influenced by the observed outcome of the practices. The participants’ practices are indeed informed by their perspectives, but their perspectives are channeled through more than just the goals that influenced their practice, this is presented later in this chapter.

The results of the questionnaires indicated that all the participants considered the L1 as necessary at some moment, especially in grammar instructions. The interview results essentially confirmed some aspects in the survey and added much more details on other occasions which were not mentioned in the survey. In addition, the interview results also showed the relationships between the participants’ perceptions, practices, outcomes and individual factors, which provided an indication as to how perspectives tie with all the other aspects.

As mentioned in the last chapter, the number assigned to the participants for the survey stayed the same for the interview. For the survey, the participants were each assigned a number from one to 18. Among those survey participants, Participant 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 15, 17 and 18 participated in the interview, and the numbers stayed throughout
the analysis with the addition after quotes in these cases if referring to Survey or Interview results.

4.1 Survey

Based on the survey results, most of the participants would not ban students’ first language completely, yet still recognizing that English use is positively correlated with outcome. Although the participants would not consider English-only use as allowing for a functional class, they hold different views on how students’ first language could benefit the class. Most of the participants would allow the use of students’ first language for grammatical points and abstract concepts and consider the first language to be helpful in easing anxiety and motivating students. Most of the participants would, at the same time, encourage the students to learn English vocabulary in English instead of resorting to the students’ L1 use for explanations and ask the students to use English when caught using their L1, except for something that is too abstract or too difficult to be explained clearly in English. However, on whether to give English learning suggestions in students’ L1 and use the L1 so that the students would follow in class, there are quite some discrepancies due to the students’ level.

To summarize, it was felt that in addition to grammar or abstract ideas, explaining highly cultural or logical concepts could also benefit from first language usage. Too much use of students’ first language could yield some relatively bad outcomes, but use of first language in instructions could boost efficiency on top of understanding in class. Reasons to avoid the L1 in class could let the students get used to an English-only environment, overcome the fear of using English in class, help the students to perform
better in listening and speaking and try to challenge the students to express themselves in the target language.

4.1.1 Results of 7-point Likert scale questions. The mean and the standard deviation of each question can be found in Appendix I. Though all the participants consider that the use of English in class correlates positively with students’ improvements in English (M=6.33), for most of the participants, reminding students to use English when they see students using their first language would be a regular practice according to question 14 in Appendix I (M=5.94). However, most of the participants would still disagree with simply prohibiting the first language completely in class according to question two (M=3.17). Most of the participants agreed that there are situations in class where English is insufficient and students’ first language would be necessary in question four (M=2.56). One of the benefits of allowing the use of students’ first language in class is reduced anxiety and more motivation as agreed upon by most of the participants without much disagreement in question five (M=5.00; SD= 1.37), which is in line with various research studies (Ariza, 2002; Brooks-Lewis, 2009). It is worth noticing that though the mean of Question three is close to neutral (M=4.22), the standard deviation went above two on a 7-point Likert scale (SD=2.16). This indicates that whether the participants would choose to use students’ first language in clarifying instructions is somewhat questionable.

An investigation on the frequency tables indicates some more interesting findings. Question three in the frequency table in Appendix J indicated that hardly any participants remain neutral on using students’ first language in clarifying instructions. Two-thirds of the participants were in favor of using L1. It is worth noticing that one-third of the
participants were on the negative side with no one choosing 3 on the Likert scale. This indicated that those who disagreed with using students’ first language for instructions did not just slightly disagree with it. The reason behind such difference will be explained in the analysis of interview data.

Most of the participants agreed with using Chinese to explain grammar points in class according to question six (M=5.47), yet they would be slightly more reluctant to let their students use Chinese in discussions according to question seven (M=4.72). Therefore, most participants would deem it acceptable to use students’ first language for instructional purpose, but they would prefer students not to use as much first language in discussions. Even for instructions, compared to where most participants would consider instructions on grammar between the students could benefit from the use of first language, most participants considered using students’ first language to learn new vocabulary not as helpful according to question nine (M=2.94). Also, participants generally agreed that an English-English dictionary would be more beneficial than a dictionary in students’ first language according to question ten (M=5.33). Does this necessarily mean English vocabulary should only be taught in English? Not necessarily. As indicated in question 12, most participants thought that difficult and abstract concepts and ideas would be better explained in students’ first language (M=5.17). This is explained by the following examples given by one of the participants:

explaining abstract ideas such as “tradition”, “table manners”, “behaviour”;
learning grammatical points such as passive voice;
explaining sth [something] typically Chinese such as “親戚”, “白蛇傳”, “紅樓夢”

(Participant 4, Survey)
As addressed by this participant, when explaining abstract ideas, grammar points and some culture-related words or phrases there are times when students’ first language would be helpful. This opinion is also held by a number of other participants as indicated in the short answer section of the survey.

Not many participants would dislike students’ first language being used in class because they could not understand students’ first language according to question eight (M=1.78). According to the demographic information collected from the participants, most of them share the same first language with the students with only very few exceptions. Therefore, not understanding the students’ utterances was not a problem for most of the participants.

Compared to when teaching grammar and abstract ideas, discrepancies appear when giving suggestions on English-learning tips which was question 13(M=3.72). A similar case is observed for question 15 when the participants were asked whether they think using students’ L1 could make students follow the lessons better (M=4.39). More participants were only slightly agreeing and disagreeing or remained neutral on those two statements. One reason behind this was because according to some of the participants, the students they are teaching decide how they feel about these two statements. Most of the participants who participated in the interview indicated that the students they met in the school had really high levels of English where they could understand most of what the teacher says even in an English-only class. Some of the participants who have taught students who did not have as high an English level moved slightly to the neutral or the first language side of the spectrum. Details about the students the participants were teaching will be explained later when analysing interview data, since some participants
did mention specifically how their decisions match the student population they are teaching.

The feeling towards whether the participants think translation is a good exercise in English learning follows a normal curve according to the frequency of question 11. While most people stay in the middle, some of the participants really liked it and some of them really disliked it, making the mean 4.44. This is actually special because translation actively involves the use of students’ first language. When most of the participants are at the middle point, does that mean the participants do not really have any specific feeling toward a bilingual approach? After asking some of the participants to elaborate on this, it turns out that translation is a normal practice for most of the participants, since translations always appear on tests. So, no matter what the participants think of it, it will appear in class and in tests anyways. Therefore, most participants stayed in the middle because they accept the fact that translation would appear no matter what. However, some teachers still have some stronger feelings toward translation as a teaching and learning method. This will also be explained later in the interview analysis.

4.1.2 Short answer. The short answer questions on the survey, in addition to providing some complementary information on the Likert scale questions, provided some more detailed points raised by the participants. In addition to the survey results earlier, two participants mentioned the following:

Sometimes the first language can help students get positive transfer when they learn the second language. (Participant 1)

compare and contrast languages

language transfer (Participant 13)
As those two participants have recognized, one way the first language could help with English learning is with the transfer between the two languages. While earlier linguists considered language transfer non-existent unless under complete immersion, more recent research studies uncovered language transfer in both positive and negative manners (Karim, 2010; Ma, 2013; McLaughlin, 1984).

But what is to be compared when the participants talk about language comparison? Is it that they compare syntax, lexicon or semantics as linguists did in their studies? One of the participants gave more details about the comparison that happens in class:

Students think and problem solve using the culture and logical stand points associated with their first language, as do we all. Creating links and comparisons to English from their first language helps them to better understand and utilize the new language they are learning. (Participant 7)

As identified by this participant, the comparison that happens in class is more than just comparing rules, it is actually a link between a different culture and logic, such a link would allow the students to understand a language from a different perspective. This is consistent with participant 4’s comment earlier that some culture and related custom are to be explained in the students’ first language.

Another benefit some participants have recognized was time-efficiency involved in using the first language in English class:

More efficient and to the point (Participant 6)
When facing some abstract knowledge like grammar rules, I prefer to explain them in students’ first language. This can help improve the class efficiency. (Participant 12)

When giving instructions, teachers can allow students to use the first language if they cannot understand immediately, as it can save more time. (Participant 16)

According to these three participants, using the first language (L1) could save time in terms of how one could get straight to the point in explaining some abstract knowledge about grammar or something that students just simply could not understand. This complements the multiple choice part of the survey that the reason first language is used in explaining grammar and abstract points is not only that students may not be able to understand completely, it could increase the class efficiency at the same time.

The reasons to avoid using students’ first language in English language learning classrooms are more uniform according to most of the participants in both a proactive and reactive manner. Proactively speaking, ‘improved oral English or speaking’ and ‘focus more on the target language’ are items mentioned by seven of the participants. Reactively speaking, if students’ first language is being used too often in an English class, it would be hard for them to speak or think in the target language, the students may not be challenged and they may not even try any more. In addition, creating an English-only environment or immersion is mentioned by five participants as the best environment for English learning. It was also mentioned by the participants that role modelling could be employed in class to encourage students to use more English in class, whether it be by teachers or students.
In addition to what’s foretold, some of the reasons to avoid using students’ first language in class are as follows:

At first, for students who have just begun to learn English, avoiding using first language forces them to speak English, and to overcome their fears (Participant 4);

To reduce the students’ anxiety by using effective means (Participant 5);

Maybe it’s mainly because the teachers don’t allow them to use and encourage them to speak as more English as possible. Some of students have the strong desire to speak and practice English in class (Participant 11);

Encouraging students to talk more

Improve their confidence in learning English (Participant 18)

According to those participants, first language is to be avoided so that the students would have more confidence in using English and overcome their fear using English in class, so rather than causing students fear and anxieties over the long term. The students would hence be more motivated rather than distressed. With that being somewhat contradicting some other research and even the Likert scale answers in which the participants said they would utilize students’ L1 to ease anxieties, some participants elaborated on this later on in the interview.

4.2 Interviews

All the participants agreed with the necessity of using students’ first language in teaching grammatical terms and some scientific or technical vocabulary. Most of the participants thought students’ L1 was acceptable when the students are doing group discussion, having some difficulties expressing themselves, for time-efficiency when
running short on time in class, when comparing syntax, giving important notifications and sharing casual experience that is not really related to the class. There are four occasions when participants deemed students’ first language unacceptable in class. First using L1 for a draft in writing tasks, second using it for the final product of in class tasks, third using it to express something that the students are familiar with and definitely capable of expressing in English and the last occurrence, using it to practice what the students had just learnt.

Most of the participants agreed that they saw that there were connections between performances in students’ L1 and English, namely better L1 performances led to better L2 performances. They could be positively correlated, or it could be a weaker version of positive correlation, this relationship was noticed in both speaking and reading. On the other hand, while most of the participants would consider English learning as being a process to separate English from students’ L1, some of them would consider integration as the goal. The first notion of integration is integration in both culture and languages, where students’ first language and English could interact with each other and that communication between the two languages could be presented by ‘beautiful translations’ as reported by Participant 5 and 15. The second notion of integration is not in terms of the language rules, but in terms of skill transfer, where language skills in one language could be used in the other.

Something that is not mentioned in detail in this section is how the participants view input in their class. Though this is not mentioned as a separate topic, it is mentioned by most of the participants. The reason for not having it as a separate topic is that the participants’ view is uniform and at the same time, their view of input is more or less
indicated in the methods they use in teaching. For all participants besides Participant 18, input is the way to learn a language, while output is more or less to assess learning. Most of the participants mentioned that output is something that takes a long time, and could be regarded as homework or output is just there to check whether students understand the input given to them. For nine participants, enough input would have to be given to make sure students have learnt, and two participants explicitly mentioned that there is no point in a lesson if there is no input (Participant 3, & Participant 13).

Upon first review of the interview data, English is the most frequent word that appears in the interviews, which surpasses all other words including pronouns and verb conjugations. While English itself is essentially the topic of the conversation, such occurrences did indicate that the participants did indeed focus on English more than the students’ L1.

The interview can be viewed from four different themes according to the research questions under the overall question of perspectives. The first theme is the current practice, the second, individual factors and the third, observed student outcomes. Those three subparts are all relevant to the participants, as the teaching experience of the interviewees ranged from four years all the way to seventeen years. All of them have a certain level of teaching experience that allows them to discuss their English teaching experience and student outcomes over time. Some of the participants had experience teaching in multiple schools, they also discussed the student outcomes in different schools that resulted from using different approaches. Also, all the participants had experience learning at least one foreign language in addition to English, which made the discussion on the second language learning experience richer than originally anticipated.
as some of them discussed the differences between learning English and the other foreign languages.

In this section, under every theme, participants’ views are grouped, organized and presented in order of popularity, that is, according to the number of interviewees who agreed with the view and relevance of the given statement. Each theme then ends with a summary of all the points presented, which were analysed using the theoretical frameworks in the next chapter.

4.2.1 Current practice. The results for this section were consistent with the survey results earlier where most participants would not agree with simply utilizing students’ L1 for vocabulary teaching, but they would use students’ L1 to explain technical, abstract and cultural terms. Some additional occasions where the participants perceive students’ L1 as necessary, acceptable or unacceptable were also presented in this section.

According to the participants, none of the schools in which they are currently teaching has a first language use policy. Two of the participants have previously taught in schools where only English was permitted. This means for all the participants, they could choose whatever approach they wanted with the students they were currently teaching.

In accordance to the survey, all the participants agreed that there are definitely cases in class when students’ first language is acceptable, and in fact necessary in some instances. One of the times when students’ first language is necessary is for grammar explanations as specified by nine interviewees:
but there are occasions where there is a word or some idea or grammar point that is nearly impossible to describe using other words. And using the first language is much more direct, direct yes (Participant 7, line 66-68)

I think it's necessary to use some Chinese in my class, especially in teaching grammar. Yea, a big necessary, but it's partly used... I think it should be partly used. Yea, especially for grammar, and sometimes the writing (Participant 3, line 13-15).

when I explain the… English grammar to them, I have to say a lot of grammatical terms and I think that’s very difficult for students, especially the beginners (Participant 4, line 120-121).

With these three participants’ opinion being representations of why the participants think using the L1 to explain grammar as being necessary, most interviewees mentioned the reason similar to the first one as they would try to paraphrase in most of the cases, but could not make themselves understood by their students in the case of grammar. Eight other participants identified with the second opinion that grammar itself is difficult for the students, which makes it even more difficult to explain it in English. For some of the participants, though they wanted to paraphrase grammatical terms and let the students understand the structure in context, they still recognized that it could have been done much faster and more efficiently if students’ first language was used.

Therefore, regardless of teachers’ overall perception of preferring a monolingual or bilingual teaching approach, first language use in teaching grammar is definitely acceptable for all the participants, and necessary for most of the participants. Here, one thing that is obvious in grammar teaching is the use of the first language, though two of
the participants who prefer to use as much English as possible in their classes would:

try not to use Chinese [in teaching]. … Yes, only when they could not understand.

I repeated some times [in English] (Participant 15, line 157, 163)

Yesterday, I taught grammar. It is modal verbs, I will choose some sentences include modal verbs from the passage they have learnt. The purpose is to let the students notice the grammar. Then, I will get them to conclude, work out the rule. And then some controlled practice, and then some free practice. So, mostly it's in English (Participant 17, line 104-108).

They would still recognize that:

and I found that they just couldn’t understand. Then I will stop and use a little bit of Chinese to add and to help them understand. But I don’t think that’s a very good way (Participant 15, line 163-165).

Just a little bit Chinese, when I work out the rule, I hope they can understand. For example, base form, they don't really understand what is base form. Then I will say the Chinese is {base form}. Just to emphasize, so that they can understand. I want to make sure all the students can follow me (Participant 17, line 108-111).

Though being reluctant in using students’ first language, they still recognized that making the class English-only at all times regardless of content is not a feasible approach in teaching, which is consistent with all the studies investigating both teachers’ and students’ opinion on using their first language in second language learning (Dujmović, 2014; Nazay, 2008; Schweers Jr, 1991; Tang, 2002).

Another occasion where English could be necessary in class is in vocabulary teaching, not for some common words where “I will try to use them in context and let the
students to just guess the meaning from the context. If they cannot understand it, I will use lots of ways (Participant 17, line 90-92)”, but for some terms, this method could be rather challenging:

Using other words to help them to understand, but there are occasions where there is a word or some idea or grammar point that is nearly impossible to describe using other words. And using the first language is much more direct, direct yes (Participant 7, line 70-72).

One example given by a teacher was the term “Sudan Hong Ji Dan” (Participant 5, line 86), a food-safety related issue where some eggs were dyed using a type of acrylic paint called “Sudan Hong” (Participant 5, line 86). The participant further elaborated why such term should be explained in students’ first language:

She might have searched in the dictionary, but even if she said the proper term in English, the audience might not have understood it anyways. So, I think in this case, using Chinese is acceptable. … Yes, beside those occasion[s], I think it’s not acceptable. Chinese in English class (Participant 5, line 83-86, 90).

The same participant also provided a second example:

Comparing to me talking in English the whole time with the students not understanding, it’s better off that I just use Chinese. Like last time we were talking about the “three beauties” in translation, that translations have to be beautiful in sound, appearance, and idea. {The three beauties, image, sense, rhythm} (Participant 5, line 62-65)

The two examples provided are different from each other in terms of subject. The first example was from when a teacher encountered a scientific term. The second example was
from when the teacher was trying to teach something technical from the field of literature. Though those two examples are from different areas, the participant nonetheless mentioned that even if one tried to explain those in English, the students would probably not be able to understand those, this is when students’ L1 has to be used to make sure the students can follow what is going on.

Other occasions where using students’ first language is necessary for the classroom include explaining the exercises (Participant 15, Participant 17), comparing language structures in sentence or passage analysis (Participant 13) and clarifying instructions during teaching and group discussions (Participant 6, Participant 8).

On top of those occasions, there are also situations where the participants think using students’ first language may not be necessary, but is acceptable. The most common type of occurrence is when students are sharing amongst themselves in class:

But sometimes if I think they did have some difficulty expressing themselves on excellent topic using English. I wouldn’t stop them. … Acceptable? I guess when the students have difficulties expressing what they want to say, but actually they have a lot to say about their topic (Participant 4, line 81-82, 101-102).

And sometimes, when they assign … when we do a group work, when I assign a task, it is okay for them to use Chinese, I think (Participant 8, line 60-61).

Group discussion and group work are occasions when all of the participants would accept the use of students’ first language in class, whether willingly or unwillingly. Participant 4 here mentioned specifically that the first language is acceptable when the students have difficulties expressing what they want to say and they happen to have a lot to say. Participant 8 would allow the students to use their first language for
group work and tasks in class, an example that is provided by the participant is that if the students are assigning each other a role in a role-play activity, students’ first language should be allowed, but not when they are discussing something related heavily to the content they are learning.

However, allowing L1 in group discussion here is limited to oral discussions. Eight out of ten participants would not allow the students’ to prepare a draft in their first language. There are reasons for this decision:

I don’t think it’s necessary, because they can just use some simple words to use the key points (Participant 13, line 183-184).

Actually the students do not do that, it is they think it wastes time (Participant 4, line 387).

Maybe they use English, just they may be saying something in the Chinglish way. … just we are all supposed to do so, and they would not have so much time [to write a draft in Chinese]. And actually what we are writing is not that difficult (Participant 6, line 58, 62-63).

The reason is that the students are supposed to use structures and vocabulary that they have already learnt, since writing is a part of their high-stake exam. The purpose of writing is to make sure they make no mistake, rather than being creative. Therefore, the teachers would first of all not want the students to spend the extra time drafting, at the same time, the students themselves would not want to waste time doing a draft in their first language during an exam. On the other hand, the writing task itself was not difficult as typical writing tasks in exams would only ask the students to write one paragraph on one topic in 100 words or less. So the teachers do not see the necessity using students’
first language for drafts, and would not allow it because it may cause error due to interference and it wastes precious time during an exam.

Though discussions in students’ first language are allowed in all the participants’ classrooms, this also leads into one of the four occurrences where students’ L1 is not seen as acceptable. Participant 7 has mentioned “as long as I can see that that is leading towards them preparing the English conversation, so I think it’s okay for them to use their L1 in preparation (Participant 7, line 109-110)”. This statement is a good summary of the acceptability and unacceptability of the use of students’ first language in group work. The process, the preparation could be in the first language, but the final product should definitely be English and English only:

But I don’t think using Chinese in presentation okay, I don’t think so. They can use Chinese in the discussion, but not in presentation (Participant 13, line 379-381).

Maybe when they are discussing, they ... what they think and what they say is in Chinese, but what they write down must be in English (Participant 17, line 150-151).

If it's the report of discussion, only English is allowed (Participant 6, line 94).

when the time comes to do their presentation or actually follow my instructions. It must in English (Participant 7, line 26-27).

As regards group discussions and group tasks where all the participants think using students’ first language is acceptable, the participants feel that output generated in front of the entire class and the finishing product of the discussions or task must always be in English. There was also consensus on this by all interviewees. No first language is
allowed in the final product regardless of the form, written or oral. And the reason is simply because they are allowed to prepare their output using their first language so that they can produce the final product in English and English alone, since if they have any problem or questions, it should have been resolved in the discussion (Participant 7).

Seven out of ten participants mentioned another reason why students’ first language is acceptable. Use of students’ L1 can be very efficient compared to using English alone, especially when the class time is limited. Examples are provided by two of the participants:

Sometimes, in order to save time, we will ask them ‘do you understand?’, they nod, and they will say the Chinese. Some of them will nod and some of them will say out the Chinese meanings, and then we know whether they have understood (Participant 13, line 67-69).

I will say, you should divide the writing into at least three paragraphs sometimes. But sometimes if time is not allowed, I will just say, remember, 分段. … Yea, two characters. 分段 (Participant 8, line 246-248, 250)

In the first example, the students could easily just shout out their understanding in Chinese so that the teacher knows that they have understood the material. It is rather obvious that by shouting out the answer in Chinese, even if there are some students who do not understand the concepts, they would have a chance to know the concept in their first language. The second example is much more direct. Participant 8 made clear that it is not that students’ first language is necessary in this situation as she just explained the instruction in English in the first sentence of the quoted text. To make the same statement in students’ first language, it would take only one second with zero additional instruction.
These two examples give a very clear image as to how using students’ first language can help save time in class.

While the use of students’ first language could make the class more efficient, it also brings out a case where participants think that using students’ first language is not acceptable. Seven out of ten participants specified that the students are not supposed to use their first language when they are talking about topics that they are very familiar with or something they can definitely express in English. Examples include the following:

When they can speak in English, they should use English in class, but a lot of students, they prefer to speak Chinese. Some very easy English, but they speak Chinese, this is unacceptable. For example, {keep silent}, it's very easy, you can just say, keep quiet, be quiet, but they prefer to speak Chinese, I think this is unacceptable (Participant 17, line 162-165).

Something that are quite similar… uh, that they are quite familiar with and something about, for example, daily English (Participant 4 line 148-149).

The first example is in contrast to the efficiency Participant 8 talked about earlier. They are very similar, in the sense that both of these talk about cases where students’ first language is used in giving commands in class. The difference between those two cases is that Participant 8 presented a case where a teacher is limited in time and is trying to give students a straightforward instruction, while Participant 17 is talking about a case where the students are talking to each other in class. The emphasis of Participant 8 is when time is limited, as we can see that Participant 8 also mentioned that English instructions would have been given otherwise. The emphasis of Participant 17 is somehow similar to Participant 4, that is, students are talking to each other in an English class on something
that is both simple and familiar to them, and yet the students choose to not speak in English. In fact, Participant 17 did mention earlier on in the interview that she would not try to force English instructions when she finds it “not very useful here, and not efficient” (Participant 17, line 43-44).

The last case where the participants think students’ first language should not be acceptable is when the students are supposed to be practicing what they learnt from the teacher. Five out of ten interviewees mentioned this as being a case where students’ first language is not acceptable. Though all the participants would consider using students’ first language in discussion acceptable, they would not consider it acceptable when the discussion is about something that the students have just learnt, as the purpose of such discussion is to practice (Participant 7). For example, Participant 8 was teaching a lesson on wildlife protection, she assigned a group discussion task on:

how to protect wildlife, animals, I think it is very important for them to use English to discuss questions like this. If they just use Chinese, it’s not what I want, right (Participant 8, line 61-63).

She would not have a problem with the students asking her how to phrase something that was not taught in class in their first language, like “建立自然保護區, they don’t know, some students don’t know 自然保護區. I will tell them that we can establish nature reserve” (Participant 8, line 276-277), because “reserve” is not a part of the lesson. But the group discussion itself must not utilize students’ first language, as the lesson earlier was on the topic of wildlife protection.

Other acceptable uses of students’ first language in English class include comparing between languages (Participant 6, Participant 13), giving very important
notifications (Participant 15) and talking about something casual (Participant 15).

In conclusion, the results of this section could be summarized using Table 4.1 below.
Table 4.1

*Current Practices with L1 in English Language Learning Classrooms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptability</th>
<th>Approaches</th>
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<tr>
<td>Necessary use of L1</td>
<td>• grammatical terms;</td>
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<td>• exercise take-up.</td>
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<td>Acceptable use of L1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• first language draft in writing tasks;</td>
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<td>• final product of in-class tasks;</td>
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<td>• expressions within students’ capabilities;</td>
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<td>• practising what was just learnt</td>
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**4.2.2 Individual factors.** Based on the literature review, the two individual factors that directly influence teachers’ teaching approach are the teaching experience and the needs of the students. Teaching experience was mentioned in earlier sections as some researchers chose to adopt and try new teaching approaches based on their reflecting on their own teaching experience (Ariza, 2002; Brooks-Lewis, 2009). It turns out that most of the teachers are significantly impacted by their teaching or professional development...
experience because all of the participants had very rich experience in English teaching as the minimum teaching experiences among this group of participants were 4.5 years at the time of interviews. Teaching goals and the students’ needs are other factors directly related to the participants’ perceptions, yet these are not individual factors, so this would be discussed when presenting the participants’ overall perceptions.

Another individual factor that is directly related and relevant to the participants’ perceptions and approaches is the second language learning experiences that participants had. According to the participants, they all had experience learning at least two second languages and eight of the ten participants were influenced by their second language teaching experience in the beginning of their English teaching career. This makes second language learning experience a natural theme under the individual factors in addition to teaching experience.

4.2.2.1 Second Language Learning Experience. All the participants have had experience learning at least two foreign languages. All but one of them were at some point in their teaching career influenced by their learning experience, whether they now consider it positive or negative. For most of the participants, the experience learning the first foreign language had a more decisive effect on their teaching approach, for example, Participant 17 was an English language learner, and later on, she learnt Japanese at university. But when she talked about how learning a second language impacts her teaching, she mentioned the following:

At that time, I like it, because that's the only way. And that's the way I was taught [English] when I was a student, you know. So I followed the way my teacher taught me. … I seldom get that, so the only method I can use is what I was taught
Participant 17 learnt English when she was in grade school, which was way before university. But when she mentioned how her learning experience impacted her teaching approach, she immediately mentioned the English learning experience instead of the Japanese learning experience. The same holds for seven other participants, instead of talking about their most recent experience, when asked how a second language learning experience formed their teaching approach, the first experience they referred to was the first foreign language they had learned.

For most of the participants, the second foreign language learning experience generally did not have much impact for two different reasons. First of all, most of the participants learnt their second foreign language purely for the sake of exams, so they focused on exam techniques instead of utilization. To half of the participants, the second foreign language learning experience was not a pleasant one:

We just have to read what's on the textbook. It's not about daily communication. … Um, and we don't have a chance to do that. It would be very strange for people to talk in Japanese. And also, what we have learnt is not enough for us to do that. It's just like, when we started learning English. What's this? This is an apple. I am a student. You are a worker. Just very basic Japanese (Participant 6, line 271-272, 275-278).

I feel like compared to English teachers, French teachers were not, according to me, as professional. He/she was like blah-blah-blah, and I was like, what was happening. There wasn’t a scaffold, as a person who doesn’t know French, how am I supposed to follow. It was not … just awkward (Participant 5, line 362-365).
And it turned out that I got a very high score in the test, but I am not used to speaking or to listening to Japanese, because my aim was to pass the exam. So this is my feeling. … I just know how to do the questions. It gives me a lesson, that's why I can't speak so much Japanese, but I did the questions quite well at that time, not now (Participant 3, line 290-292, 309-311).

In addition to those three participants, two other participants had the same problem. There was not much emphasis on second foreign language learning besides a textbook, rules and exams. The participants did not find it useful or enjoyable, most importantly, what was learnt in those lessons did not stay in the participants’ mind for long. Therefore, more than half of the participants, after being reminded of the second foreign language learning experience, reported either not being much influenced by it or thinking such learning experience only taught them what not to do (Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 8, Participant 17, & Participant 18). The few exceptions will not be analysed in detail here and will be presented later in this section as those are individual cases.

The first foreign language learning experiences played important roles in most participants’ teaching philosophy in their English teaching career. For all the participants who were influenced by their learning experience, that was how they tackled English language teaching, especially at the beginning of their professional career, as some of them have put it:

My English teacher also used a lot of Chinese when I was learning English. At that time, I thought it was acceptable and it was natural to use Chinese in English class (Participant 15, line 413-415).
that's the only way. And that's the way I was taught when I was a student, you know. So I followed the way my teacher taught me (Participant 17, line 20-21).

Amongst all the participants, only three of them currently have the perception that is formed by the approach that was used during their first foreign language learning experiences. Amongst those three participants, two of them got their approach from classroom learning experience, where they agreed with the approach their teachers were using when they learnt the foreign language:

Um, I think so, because in my English classes, when I was a student, my English teacher also taught in this way. My English teachers, they allow us to use Chinese. So, I think I have the same perception (Participant 13, line 410-412).

We used our first languages in the earlier years of study, but then as time progressed, I got to a point where we just used Chinese all the time. …We just spoke in Chinese all the time anyway, but if we did speak in English, the teacher would not challenge us on that. So, yes, it is kind of the approach that I use now. Maybe I was influenced by that, in some way (Participant 7, line 393-398).

Both of the two participants agreed that the approach they are using currently is influenced by their experience learning the first foreign language. They also mentioned that over the course of their own learning, they figured out what worked and what did not, and henceforth modified their approach according to their learning experience. This is the first case where the second foreign language learning experience influenced the participant’s perception of first language use. Participant 13’s perception was first formed in her first foreign language learning experience and then updated by the second foreign language learning experience in the following way:
My English teachers, they allow us to use Chinese. …And French. And I also combined … I also compared English learning and French learning, cause they are similar languages (Participant 13, line 411, 416-417).

Participant 13 first agreed with using the L1 in first foreign language learning, and then utilized comparison between languages in second language learning. Participant 13’s current approach involves allowing the use of the students’ first language, and one of the reasons for doing so was to “compare two languages” (Participant 13, line 198-199).

Participant 8’s perception of students’ first language also followed her first foreign language learning experience, but not from classroom learning experience. More importantly, her perception was not influenced by the approach her teacher used earlier, but from her self-learning:

I just study English by listening to it myself. … Otherwise I couldn’t hear any authentic English besides from the textbook recordings, I could only depend on those. But it was good, because it was authentic English.} … when we need to improve oral English, you need to imitate. When I was learning English when I was in junior high school, when I was in my university, I imitate (Participant 8, line 372-376, 380-381).

Not many of the participants had experience like Participant 8, as she developed her own learning approach and then kept the approach she developed on her own in her teaching career.

The other participants mentioned that they were influenced earlier in their career, but changed their perception after they accumulated experience in teaching. Their perception based on their teaching experience will be analyzed in the next section.
However, some of them did find some approaches that could be useful at some point in their career, but not under the current circumstances:

I have to tell you that we used the Chinese way to learn the second language, because to pass the exam, we have to be very clear about the grammar knowledge. … I think if you want to pass the written exam, you can focus more on grammar and you can speak more Chinese. Sometimes it's more useful…. if I use the Chinese, it could be very useful to get a high score … This is the problem. If I learn from my own experience, if I learn to use Chinese to analyze, I can learn very quickly and efficiently, yes, especially when there is a teacher for me to explain these difficulties (Participant 3, line 288-290, 295-296, 302-303, 306-308)

I thought that Chinese was acceptable in an English class. But as I was in a foreign language school, the parents, the students’ parents have different expectations about the students’ English language level (Participant 4, line 429-431)

Participant 3 and 4 thought that actively using students’ first language would be acceptable understand certain circumstances. Participant 3 thought that students’ first language is useful for the purpose of examinations. But when the quoted text is analyzed closely, it is obvious that the deeper reason is that the first language is more useful for explicit instructions, based on her experience she said “if I learn to use Chinese to analyze, I can learn very quickly and efficiently” (Participant 3, line 306-307). And teaching grammar happens to be an explicit mechanism for language learning, which indeed yields more improvement in learning target structure (Rosa, & O’Neill, 1999). But as for Participant 3, she would not consider explicit instruction the most meaningful
purpose in her class, as she did mention that “we have to cultivate the English thinking, to 
think in the English way” (Participant 3, line 26-27). So, for Participant 3, her first 
foreign language learning experience taught her something useful, but it does not fit her 
current perception. That approach from learning experience could be useful at some 
point, but not currently. Participant 4 is an opposite case. She actually found that 
students’ first language should be acceptable in English class, especially if they have a lot 
to express. Yet, she could not go with her learning experience and had to adopt another 
approach, because of the stakeholders, especially “the parents, the students’ parents have 
different expectations about the students’ English language level” (Participant 4, line 
430-431). In fact, earlier on in the interview, she mentioned that compared to an English-
only classroom with less output, motivation is what she would value in her class, which 
would mean using some Chinese in class, as she puts it:

Acceptable [use of Chinese in class]? I guess when the students have difficulties 
expressing what they want to say, but actually they have a lot to say about their 
topic. … I would encourage them to say that, for example, if students are learning 
something about UFO or about physics, I used to have a student who can actually 
say a lot of words about physics (Participant 4, line 101-102, 104-106).

As observed, the discussion is purely based on the students’ interest, but 
Participant 4 would be open to the use of the first language amongst the students because 
they could produce more output this way, which is consistent with her objective to keep 
the students “motivated” (Participant 4, line 254).

In conclusion, for all but one participant, the first foreign language learning 
experience was what influenced their perspective at some point, especially at the
beginning of their teaching career, but most of them found that their perception changed later due to their teaching experience. Some participants learnt something from their learning experience, but due to some other reasons, they purposely chose not to use the same strategies. For most participants, the approach they had when they learnt their first foreign language was that their first language was not only acceptable, but also constantly used (Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 8, Participant 13, Participant 15, & Participant 17).

The cases where their perspective was not changed by their teaching experience would be when participants agreed or liked the approach that they used or experienced when they learnt their first foreign languages. The approaches that were adopted from learning experience consist of both monolingual and bilingual approaches used in the classroom. For example, Participant 7 and Participant 13’s approaches were more bilingual as the approach they used actively involved the use of students’ first language. Participant 8’s approach was more monolingual as it involved extensive input and imitations.

The second foreign language learning experience had very limited influence on the current practice for the majority of participants. One exception was Participant 7, where it was mentioned during the second foreign language learning experience, that a direct approach was used and target language use was enforced. There was a similar case with Participant 15, with the difference that Participant 7 was not in a formal classroom setting, and Participant 15 was in a formal classroom setting. But from their learning experiences they concluded that simply forcing the use of, or instruction in, only the target language did not work for them. In Participant 7’s case, the communication aspect
was not at all effective. In Participant 15’s case, the instructor used the target language only and the lesson or the cliché was not understandable. The only positive influence from second foreign language learning happened for Participant 13, where the foreign language learning experiences were combined and updated by the participant and languages were actively used to compare with the target structure for analysis and deeper understanding.

4.2.2.2 Teaching experience. Teaching experience played an important role in a lot of the English teachers’ career. Through reflecting and training, teachers sometimes changed their perspective and would even develop some new teaching approaches based on their teaching experience (Brooks-Lewis, 2009). A lot of the participants are in this category. Ever since the participants started teaching, they have had a lot of chances to learn new approaches in the following manners:

I think I have changed, because I noticed that... because I also went to other schools, I have also observed other teachers teaching (Participant 3, line 264-265). If my experience impacts my approaches, it’s due to reflections. Reflect and see which approach is better, to explore and investigate (Participant 5, line 338-339). I get lot of training, and I read a lot of theory book. And then I know it's wrong to use grammar-translation and maybe it's better to use other methodology such as CLT and task-based learning and so on. … I changed a lot these years, because [of] my experience (Participant 17, line 53-55, 71).

The teaching experience contains different dimensions according to the participants. As teachers in Guangzhou, most of the teachers would receive training in their professional development activities designated for English teachers, which is one of the dimensions.
The professional development consists of both learning about theories and observations where teachers could observe how other teachers from the city teach. The second dimension of teaching experience is of course, reflecting on one’s own teaching experience.

As mentioned in that last section, teaching experience played a more important role in influencing the participants’ perceptions for this group of participants. The reason for such influence could be because the interview participants all have a certain level of teaching experience with the minimum being 4.5 years and the maximum being 17 years. Given that there are so many different types of resources available to them, it would certainly explain why for most of the participants, teaching experience played a more important role in their current approach in English teaching and in their using students’ first language in teaching. One participant did mention in the interview that such background may not be shared with other English teachers in other cities:

Not 10 years, seven and half years. Because at that time, I was a naive teacher, I didn't get any trainings about, for example, the theories about teaching and I also rarely get training like now, tomorrow, teachers' training, you know, in-service teachers' training. I seldom get that, … After I came to GZ, I get lot of training...And also the environment. Because the first school I taught is in a small city, you know, but now I work in GZ, you know, so it's different (Participant 17, line 50-53, 65-67).

Based on the two dimensions in the participants’ teaching experience, the analysis for professional development and the teachers’ own reflections are presented separately.
4.2.2.2.1 Professional development. With a total of thirteen years of experience in English teaching Participant 17 has had limited access to theories and training in the first decade of her teaching career. So, Participant 17 expressed a lot of gratitude for the benefits that the professional development has given her. Given this background, Participant 17 described the professional development as follows:

I get lot of training, and I read a lot of theory book. And then I know it's wrong to use grammar-translation and maybe it's better to use other methodology such as CLT and task-based learning and so on. … I studied in L university and I got trained in B university for three months. I think these two experiences changed me a lot. And also, I read some books, I read lots of theory books about teaching (Participant 17, line 53-55, 74-76).

Participant 17 considered theories obtained from professional development crucial. As Participant 17 started teaching “follow[ing] the grammar-translation way” because, she said, “the only method I can use is what I was taught” (Participant 17, line 53). And later, after professional development, she figured that there are other approaches out there available for her. A similar experience is shared by Participant 5, who also mentioned that she got her approach of using English-only in class from an English teaching program.

According to the interview, observations actually strongly influenced two of the participants’ perceptions, in particular, Participant 3 and Participant 8. But those two participants were influenced in completely opposite ways. Participant 3 started her career with beginners who had very limited understanding in English:
So, it's very hard to speak all the way, because they couldn't understand what you are talking about. Sometimes they even don't understand, good evening, ladies and gentlemen, so how can you go on your class? So I had to speak more Chinese

(Participant 3, line 255-258)

Participant 3 began her career with students’ first language in class. But as she observed more and more classrooms, she found the necessity for teachers to not use students’ first language in class:

because I also went to other schools, I have also observed other teachers teaching. I observed that, the more the teacher speaks English, if the teacher speaks more English, the students would be guided naturally to speak more English

(Participant 3, 264-267).

Participant 3 found that in class, English instructions have to be used by the teachers in order to let the students speak more English. If an English teacher fails to use English instructions as much as possible, the result would be as follows:

If you don't speak English so often in your common classes, and then one day, you have to give a seminar class, and then you speak English all the way. The students would be like what happened, they will go blank, because they don't use to speak English in the usual classes. … Because I also taught students at other schools, and I found that they don't... of course they are... although they are also working hard, they are also very clever, they are also working hard, because their teachers don't speak English so much, so they tend to use Chinese to speak and they couldn't understand me so quickly. Even I asked them to underline the words, the sentence, they were like what was that, CIR-CLE, I have to speak very slowly
for them to understand. Even there are students who are also as good as ours, but
if they don't get used to the English listening, they don't speak... they don't like to
speak English so often (Participant 3, line 267-270, 271-278).

Participant 3 had the experience of teaching students from other schools to count as
professional development. She had experience teaching a group of students who are
supposed to be at the same level as the students she was having at that time, but observed
devastating results because their earlier teacher might have not been using English
instructions as often in their class. As a result, she considers a teacher should be using as
much English as possible and reminding students to use English at all times as being a
good practice. Also, based on the participant’s observation, speaking English only seems
to be the basic level, on top of simply speaking, proficiency in English is also to be
valued, as she mentioned that:

To be a good English teacher, you have to speak English normally, naturally in
your class. Only in this way can you guide them. … And I also found that if the
English teacher doesn't speak very fluently in her English class, students will also
be influenced. Yea, that is why the oral-spoken English is quite important for
English teachers. If you are not good enough, your students will be affected
(Participant 3, line 270-272, 279-281).

So, Participant 3’s observation of other teachers’ students and classes influenced her and
drove her more towards the monolingual side of the spectrum.

As mentioned in the last section, Participant 8 would consider input and imitation
as her practice in English teaching. This kind of approach would naturally make the class
as English-only, which was indeed the case at the beginning of her teaching career:
I kind of forced myself to do a lot of things according to what we have learned in the graduate school. What we learnt pursuing the Master degree, it’s like English-only and stuff (Participant 8, line 312-314).

However, by observing other teachers’ classes, her perception changed:

I figured a lot of things have to be mediated by Chinese. Also, from observing other teachers’ classes, including displayed classes and normal classes, prepared and unprepared. I figured that the real classrooms could not be English-only, that’s real … Maybe when you go to other schools, you probably wouldn’t hear that much English, this is how it is. (Participant 8, line 315-317, 329-330).

Participant 8 started her teaching career trying an English-only environment, but as she observed different classes during her professional career, she found out that is not how a classroom works. So, though she would still think imitation and input as being a very good and useful approach, she moved a little to the bilingual side of the spectrum as she figured that English-only is not going to work in her class.

Therefore, in terms of professional development, one could say that it was eye-opening for some participants. It could provide teachers with new approaches and theories. It could also change the perspectives some teachers have. Yet, it influenced different participants in different ways.

4.2.2.2 Participants’ own experience teaching. The concept mentioned most often by all the participants regarding their own experience teaching was definitely differentiation. Amongst this group of interview participants, all of them had experience teaching different grades, with eight of them having experience teaching in different settings. As a lot of them have mentioned:
Because different students have different methods (Participant 13, line 169).

When I work in different schools, I work differently (Participant 17, line 35).

There are two reasons why the participants taught differently in different settings. One being the purpose of learning, the other reason is the students. The purpose is the easier one to understand, for example:

in grade 9, it’s very important to tell them how to do well in the exam. The skills are very important taking exams. But in grade 7, we think hobby, interest, raising their interest of learning English is very important. So, you can check those class activities, very fun (Participant 15, line 296-299).

As the students move up in grade, they would experience some large-scale standardized testing. As the participants have mentioned, then the purpose of English learning is different, so they taught differently. But students themselves are also reasons why the participants differentiate their approaches. One common characteristic mentioned by the participants was students’ English level, if the students’ English level was too low, approaches like English-only instructions and task-based learning would be impossible to implement or manage (Participant 3, Participant 17, Participant 18). The other characteristic would be students’ personality, some students prefer to talk more and some students are more silent, or some students would rely on teachers for help and some prefer assistance from peers (Participant 15, & Participant 4). Another characteristic would be students’ age or grade level, as different age groups would perceive teachers’ instruction differently (Participant 5, & Participant 7).

As differentiation is something that every single participant has gone through in planning and implementing their lessons with different groups, the methods the
participants have used over the years have changed their approaches toward using
students’ first language in English teaching in a lot of different ways. Just as in the last
section, different participants were going in different directions over the course of their
teaching.

Four participants moved toward the monolingual side as they would try to
minimalize the use of students’ first language as their experience increases:

In the past I used a lot of Chinese to teach grammar. But now, what I do most is in
English (Participant 17, line 103-104).

So I had to speak more Chinese, but after my post-graduate study, I worked here
and I began to contact students who are very active and are fond of English
learning, which pushed me to speak more English. And, also... so I am used to
speaking English in my English classes (Participant 3, line 258-261).

A similar situation happened with Participant 5 and Participant 15, with less
transition than Participant 17 and 3. As Participant 5 and 15 started their teaching career
with a monolingual approach, they moved more toward that side. In most of those cases
teachers found out that using too much of the students’ first language has some
detrimental effects over the years, and therefore, decided to go with minimalizing the use
of students’ first language in class.

Four participants decided to move toward the bilingual side as they accumulated
more teaching experience:

at the beginning when I was teaching, I was under the impression that, you know, I
should force them to use English in any circumstance. I did that, but slowly over
time I became more lax with that. I found that it made the class more interesting and more dynamic (Participant 7, line 335-338).

Maybe at first, because I think it's English class and the other teachers were saying we have to try to create an English-only classroom. I would put more emphasis on English-only. Now I think creating a free atmosphere is more important.

(Participant 6, line 258-260).

In addition to Participant 6 and Participant 7, some other participants like Participant 8, who we have talked about earlier, also moved from the monolingual side of the spectrum to a bilingual approach. Participant 4 was also decided to be more open with the use of students’ first language in order to let the students speak more. Those participants started with either an English-only or strongly monolingual intention, and then moved more toward the other side of the spectrum, including L1.

One other influence teaching experience had on the participant is change of teaching purpose. To some of the participants, teaching experience even changed how the participants perceived their own role as English teachers. Participant 13 mentioned that “in the past, I thought myself as knowledge … content provider, transmission, something like that. … But now I think, giving them the methods of learning skills, practising skills is more important” (Participant 13, line 495-498). Participant 18 mentioned that “I thought I should teach what I have learnt before, all of them. But actually the students have their requirement to learn English. So, maybe sometimes I do not need to teach all of those, sometimes I just taught my students the key points, the important points, and some skills of examination” (Participant 18, line 78-81). For those two participants, their perception of students’ first language use has not changed over time, but they did see
themselves differently and are placing a different emphasis on English teaching. In particular, instead of different aspects of language, Participant 13 focuses more on language skill development. This is actually an update on her perception formed by her learning experience as mentioned in the Learning Experience section where she explained that she thinks that languages are connected and therefore could be compared to enhance learning. Here, Participant 13 tries to give students the skills that she thinks are useful, and considers that as her emphasis in teaching, which overrides her prior focus which was on knowledge and content. Participant 18’s focus changes from everything in the curriculum to key points, in particular, something that fits the students’ need. The fact that teaching experience drove those two participants from teaching curriculum and content to teaching what is essential to the students shows a common goal in those two participants’ shift. This gives some hint on how they perceive students’ L1, as skills are what they are trying to develop, they both consider students’ L1 as a useful tool for analysis and scaffolding, which corresponds more to a bilingual approach. Some other participants’ emphasis in English teaching was also changed, for example, Participant 7’s emphasis also changed from using English only to include L1 to motivate students but since this switch did go from a monolingual to a bilingual standpoint, those participants were already included in the last two parts of this section, so how their focus switched is not presented here.

In conclusion, teaching experience changed a lot in the participants. First of all, they personally implemented differentiation in their teaching, so they became more flexible toward the students’ first language over this process, as none of them would think one approach fits all the students. In terms of participants’ perception toward
students’ L1 use in English language teaching, the influence on their perspective was
different for different participants. Some participants started with a more bilingual
concentration and moved more toward the monolingual side, for some participants it was
the other way around. If for some participants, perception may not have changed, the
emphasis in their teaching however changed from content transmission to developing
skills. Based on those observations, it is enough to conclude that teaching experience did
influence this group of participants a lot and they all underwent some changes in
approach or perceptions in teaching, and change in perception on using students’ first
language in English language teaching is just one change amongst many. The individual
factors and their effects are organized in Table 4.2.
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<th>Individual factors</th>
<th>Subdivisions</th>
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<td>First foreign language learning</td>
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<td>• Influence at the beginning of professional career;</td>
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<td>• Limited influence in the long run;</td>
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<td>Second foreign language learning experience</td>
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<td>• Updates first foreign language learning experience;</td>
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<td>• Minimal influence on teaching.</td>
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<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>• New theories and approaches;</td>
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<td>• Observation of other teachers’ classrooms;</td>
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<td>• Perspective-changing.</td>
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<td>One’s own teaching experience</td>
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<td>• Perspective-changing.</td>
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4.2.3 Outcome. The structure of this section follows the structure of the Literature Review section, as in the Literature Review I examined the benefits and problems with the monolingual and bilingual approach.

4.2.3.1 Benefits of a Monolingual Approach. Participant 4 and participant 15 are the two participants who have taught in English-only environments. Contrary to the thought that the students under English-only environments would have more of an English learning background, the situation was somewhat opposite in their situations when they talked about the levels of the students:

because in my former school, all the English teachers were required to use only English to teach students. Because they think that since our students’ listening and speaking were not so good, so we teachers had better use more English to make sure of enough input (Participant 15, Line 63-66).

because some of the students came to the school without learning even English alphabet … As far as I know, some students have taken part in TOEFL. Not TOEFL for university entrance, but TOEFL for middle school students. … Some of them can understand my speaking in the first class. … Yes, some of them can understand what I said in the first class. All English. (Participant 4, Line 64, 73-74, 76, 78).

As one can notice, though both Participant 15 and Participant 4 have worked in English-only environments, it is evident that their students are of very different levels. Participant 15’s students were generally of lower levels, the purpose of using English-only in class was to improve students’ level. Participant 4’s students backgrounds consisted of very
different levels, from true beginners to very advanced English learners. Yet the benefit of English-only environments was evident and similar for both of them:

By comparison, their listening and speaking improved a lot. And the students in my former school behaved the best in the exam, especially the listening test compared with other schools in the area. … There is proof that in all-English teaching, it’s useful for those students in that area, so they continue to do so (Participant 15, line 78-80, 82-83).

So, that’s why I think students in the last school have better oral English than student here (Participant 4, line 217).

Though the students those two participants have taught were of different levels, the outcome of using the direct approach was that the students had better language skills, especially in oral performance. For Participant 4, the students she was teaching at the time of the interview all had relatively high levels of English upon admission. The benefit of better oral English under English-only environments was evident for those two participants.

The other benefit of the use of English-only with a group of students at very different levels of English is the collaboration and involvement among the students, an example provided by Participant 4 was as follow:

when they learn a new word, other students, if they know the word, they can help explain the word to classmates, or give some examples. … I remember that I was actually explaining VIP or market manager in class. We were trying to explain market manager in class and that is a little bit difficult because the students do not understand market. I asked some students to explain it and they said the manager
who is responsible for selling something in a company. And the students did something like “Awww”, they got it. … that quite impressed me actually because I just sat there. I was trying to find something easy to explain that term and I didn’t find them (Participant 4, line 51-52, 275-279, 281-282).

This benefit was not evident for Participant 15’s students:

Their vocabulary sometimes limited their expression. So they have to look at me and ask ‘can I use Chinese to help me with my expression’, and at that time I usually will encourage them to continue with a little bit of Chinese (Participant 15, line 103-106).

In Participant 15’s case, students were of similar level in the class, and when any of the students faced difficulties, the others may not necessarily have been able to help that student. Therefore, the benefit that impressed Participant 4 through student collaboration was not usually the case in Participant 15’s class even though they both taught in an English-only environment.

The other participants who have not taught in English-only environments talked about how minimalizing students’ L1 and using more L2 could help with students’ learning. Improved speaking, getting more used to using more English in class and being able to have an English mindset are what the participants have come up with (Participant 3, Participant 7, & Participant 8). So, it does not matter whether a participant has taught in English-only environments or not, the benefits of minimalizing students’ L1 is a pretty common belief among the participants, especially for improved oral performance and being able to respond and grasp the content quicker in the target language. Cooperation seems to be an additional benefit. However, this is not uniform across all classrooms as
Participant 4’s English-only classroom with a lot of student collaboration consists of very diverse students, which was a unique setting.

### 4.2.3.2 Issues with a Monolingual approach.

The issues the participants have with minimalizing the use of students’ first language in English class fit perfectly with some of the results in the Literature Review. The first problem with trying to limit the use of the L1 in class is the lack of output:

Some foreign teachers use a principle, English-only, no Chinese, but the students will keep quiet, keep silent, because they... some of the students don't understand, some of the students, they understand, but they don't know how to speak in English, so they just keep silent. … Yea, I think those students may be nervous, and some students ... I don't know actually... but at the beginning, they used this principle in class, most of the students just keep quiet (Participant 17, line 120-123, 126-127).

They will be afraid of making mistakes, so they may not say so much (Participant 3, line 67).

Any maybe of course sometimes they would ignore what they want to say if they can't find the proper way to express (Participant 6, line 89-90).

Nine out of ten participants experience the problem of students having less to say in class. As seen in the quoted text, the level goes from being silent to speaking less. The reasons for speaking less include ‘not being able to understand the instructions’, ‘afraid of mistakes’ or simply ‘could not find the correct expression’. While some of the participants regard students not being able to understand instructions because “the students' level[s] are too low” (Participant 18, line 52), it was mentioned that participants
would not try to minimalize the use of students’ first language under this circumstance, as students’ understanding was important for most of the participants.

Most of the participants tried to implement the monolingual approach with the group of students they were currently teaching as most of them should have been at a level where they could understand the teacher’s instructions. And they still find the following issues.

‘Students afraid of making mistakes’ was phrased as “they need [to save] face” by Participant 5. Due to the shame and embarrassment that could be caused due to mistakes made in class, some students would prefer to be quiet. According to one of the participants’ experience, sometimes such situations became quite embarrassing not only for one student, but for the entire class, especially when the teacher was trying to do something new and wanted students’ participation:

Especially in the English debate class, because I have tried to arrange an English debate in my class, and would ask them to use English and everyone was silent. Especially someone want to... who have different opinions, he had a lot to say, he had a lot to refute, but he just didn't know how to speak it in English, so he give up (Participant 3, line 69-72).

Students speaking less or being silent is a problem noticed by six of the participants, the students were afraid of making mistakes and of being laughed at by others. Therefore, under peer pressure and experiencing anxiety, the students who thought that they might make a mistake would choose to be silent, which eventually turns into a situation where “this cause[s] another problem, that is usually the reporter would be the top student in their group” (Participant 6, line 238-239). As this phenomenon was
intensified, the students ended up becoming increasingly anxious when they were required to conduct discussions minimalizing the use of their first language. As some of the participants have seen the results of this intensified anxiety build-up, they reported:

they may become very nervous, they don't know what should be followed, sometimes (Participant 3, 82-83).

They feel less comfortable talking with each other, because they are afraid of making mistakes or afraid of sounding stupid (Participant 7, line 24-25).

most of the students have great difficulty and some even cried … some students, especially those who have greater difficulty in English learning, they feel more anxious. I can see that’s on their face … facial expression (Participant 4, line 202-203, 262-263).

As one can see, confusion and less comfort in following instructions and communicating with their peers were issues that popped up. Of course, Participant 4 described a case that was far more detailed than others, as she had spent a number of years teaching in a setting with a strictly enforced English-only policy school-wide.

Not being able to find the correct expression was an item in this case, as the students would try to avoid something that went beyond their English ability, because challenging themselves sometimes meant making mistakes. Therefore, even when the students tried to speak in English-only given clear instructions, the result was not as good:

the depth of English learning is not so... not so much as the Chinese learning (Participant 3, line 95-96)
when they are discussing something deeper, their knowledge is beyond their English vocabulary (Participant 6, line 95-96).

So, by forcing them to only use the English for the thinking process as well as the production, it limits them (Participant 7, line 267-268).

By not challenging themselves, the students ended up not able to have a deeper discussion and they could not communicate to each other what they actually had on their mind. This is a problem also noticed in research as in an immersion classroom where everyone speaks the target language, the students were not challenged as the language used was very limited (Harley, & Swain, 1985). Essentially, this meant that “they felt more confined in the way of thinking” (Participant 7, line 224-225). For some students, this would eventually turn into something emotional, as one of the participants talked about one of the students reporting “using English only makes them feel bored” (Participant 4, line 245-246).

The last problem with minimalizing students’ first language is causing an identity crisis. This was only mentioned by a few participants, but it was an issue that appeared in research (Ribadeneira, 1992). For students with certain backgrounds, even when they were facing only an English teacher, they would still have the following problem:

some of them just … they think, we are Chinese, why should we use English, they have this kind of emotion. They just reject to speak in English. They rejected to speak English because they think they are Chinese (Participant 13, line 356-358). They may got you back with English, but they won't talk to you any more. If you ask them to speak English with again and again, they will just talk to you in Chinese. If everyday you do so, they will think 'oh, the teacher is so {finicky},
you know. … they will think why you are so weird, why you are so crazy, why you are so mad, your mother language is Chinese, why do you speak English all the way, you don't love China, right? They will say so, yea (Participant 3, line 237-239, 244-246).

While this was not a problem for the majority of the participants, the identity issue for some students could be summarized as what one of the participants has mentioned “first of all, they are Chinese speakers” (Participant 6, line 249).

So, indeed, the problems that the participants were facing when actively minimalizing the students’ use of their L1 were centered on a couple of issues as outlined above. Those issues include lack of output or lack of depth in output caused by anxiety and fear of making mistakes, then, a more intensified case of anxiety would lead to confusion, refusal of communication in class and sometimes even emotional break down. On top of that, for some students, identity is one of the obstacles in the way, as they were not willing to use only English in communication due to their identity as Chinese speakers.

4.2.3.3 Benefits of a Bilingual approach. For all of the participants, a bilingual approach presents benefits that a monolingual approach would not be able to offer. Otherwise, they would not accept students’ first language in discussions to begin with. The benefit of a bilingual approach is rather obvious for most of the participants, which is seen somewhat as a complement to what a monolingual approach cannot offer. For example:

But if they are free to use any language, they will express so many many opinions. This is the difference I think. … And if you ask them to speak Chinese, oh,
everybody is so happy, everybody is so active to express his opinions (Participant 3, line 67-68, 72-73).

they get very excited, thrilled, to express themselves (Participant 13, line 107).

Compared to being silent, nervous and anxious, when the students were allowed to use their first language, they were described as happy, active, excited, thrilled and eager to speak in class. This observation was shared by eight out of ten interview participants. While a bilingual approach was used for beginners’ classes in a lot of previous research, students in this study were not beginners. This means that the benefit of a bilingual approach can potentially be shared between students at a variety of levels.

On top of students being more excited and more willing to share, “I found that it kind of scaffolds their creativity and communication” (Participant 7, line 21-22). This finding is also consistent with two other participants’ observations. Not only were the students able to produce more English, they were actually more willing to challenge themselves in giving something that was more out of the box. And on top of that, they did not just get stuck in presentations as one participant put it “the amazing thing is that they discuss in Chinese sometimes and stand up and tell me in English” (Participant 15, line 121-122).

As mentioned in earlier sections, one advantage of actively using students’ first language was that the students could make comparisons between two languages’ syntactical structures (Participant 13). But syntactical structure is not the only thing that can be compared, as identified by another participant, “[m]aybe some cultures, when teach them cultures, they can make a difference comparison, maybe they can understand easier” (Participant 18, line 19-21). In this case, for Participant 13 and Participant 18,
comparison was one way of learning and one practice in teaching. While not many other participants have specified using this method, comparing two languages by translation was reported as a common approach used by seven of the ten interview participants. And for four out of the seven participants, translation as a tool was used for learning instead of just for assessment (Participant 6, Participant 5, Participant 13, & Participant 15). As translation is a mechanism that goes from one language to another, it would be natural to compare the two languages’ syntactical structures during the translation. Therefore, the benefit of comparing between languages’ as explicitly mentioned by Participant 13 was enjoyed by a number of participants, yet not many of them recognized it.

Other benefits of a bilingual approach have already been listed in the prior sections where participants indicated that students’ first language was better for expressing emotions, such as anger and relaxation (Participant 15). Students’ first language was also deemed better for a scaffold in English learning (Participant 7, Participant 8, & Participant 13), and students’ first language was considered better for giving clear commands and clarification (Participant 6, Participant 8, Participant 15).

Therefore, the benefits of using students’ first language include three major aspects: increased output, increased creativity and comparison for learning. The minor aspects include a list of usages listed in the Current Practice section.

4.2.3.4 Issues with the Bilingual Approach. According to the participants, the issues with the bilingual approach contain three aspects: lack of improvement in speaking, unable to express what they want to say efficiently, and interference of first language in production.
As some participants have observed, by actively using their first language in class, the students are not getting into the habit of using English (Participant 13). This was mentioned in an earlier section by Participant 3, where she noticed that some students, though their English level was not low, still had trouble understanding her lesson in English, because in their previous classes they were not routinely using English. As Participant 17 mentioned:

They all speak Chinese and their English is poor. They are good at reading and writing, but their spoken English is very poor (Participant 17, line 14-15).

So, the problem lies in speaking mainly, rather than being related to other aspects. It is not merely that the students might take slightly longer in improving their speaking, as noticed by Participant 4, but because the students are too used to resorting to their first language in class:

because the students are using Chinese when they encounter some new words. … It seem that the students are accustomed to, are used to using Chinese to explain something. So, you see, they kept doing that, there is little improvement as far as I know (Participant 4, line 286-287, 289-291).

Here, Participant 4 was not talking about all aspects of language, as it was mentioned that the students were doing well academically. Participant 4 here was also talking about using English to explain something to their peers, which involved speaking. By actively using students’ first language, the students would be too used to using their first language, and would just turn to their first language whenever they had any difficulty understanding. Therefore, their improvement in speaking would be minimal because they were not practicing speaking L2 in class.
When students’ get too used to using their first language in class, it is not surprising that they would have trouble finding some expressions in English:

if they want to say something in English, they may stuck there or spend more time trying to find the word they want to use (Participant 4, line 238-239).

If sometimes, when they are asked to express their opinion before the whole class, they would still [be] wondering how they can express that (Participant 6, line 23-25).

they will not be as versed in it should be used as if they have used English to discuss that particular area (Participant 7, line 34-36)

These three issues follow the lack of improvement in speaking. The students could be stuck or require more time to find the expression they want to use, if the first language had been minimalized to begin with, this would not have happened as the students would have everything ready on the tip of their tongue in English to begin with. If the students had used English during discussions, they would not be wondering or not lack practice, as all they would need to do would be to organize what had already been discussed in the target language. Therefore, those are problems that could have been avoided by minimalizing the use of students’ first language, yet those were evident for the participants when they allowed the students to actively use their first language in class.

The participants have all seen errors in English that were caused by students’ first language, which is what was referred to as Chinglish (Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, & Participant 6). For example:
They do that a lot, for example, they say like this 'I am very like Toby', but they mean {I like Toby very much}, the structure, you know (Participant 17, line 245-246).

The students tend to use modifiers in front of the noun. In Chinese, that’s the correct sequence, but …. For example, a play football boy (Participant 4, line 379-380).

There were a lot people in the park, with older and younger ones. He wrote, “old old and young small” (Participant 5, line 100-101).

Example, 'doing something' as the subject, they will always use 'do something', because there is no difference in Chinese, right? (Participant 6, line 70-71)

For example, I was teaching in grade eight, I was teaching them the word ‘space’, and they … Space in English, we have two meanings for that, space referring to the space between two objects in here. And also space refers to outer space. And then Chinese, you have two different words representing those things. So when I teach the word ‘space’, at first, they find it difficult to understand that even it’s, even though it’s two different things, we use the same word to describe these two different things. That’s just one small example, so yes, I definitely can see the first language influencing mistakes by the same one (Participant 7, line 253-260).

Four examples are picked here for the purpose of illustration, Participant 17’s example is at a syntactical level; Participant 4’ example is about morphosyntax, Participant 5’s example is on the lexicon; Participant 6’s example is also on morphosyntax, but from a different perspective than for Participant 4; Participant 7’s example is on semantics. As one can observe from all those examples, interference not only happens at syntactical,
errors caused by interference occur at almost every linguistic level. In particular, Participant 4 and Participant 6’s examples are indications of the Contrastive Hypothesis at work, with specific considerations of sentence patterns. In Participant 4’s example, the sentence could be comprehended as ‘a football-playing boy’, where football-playing describes the boy. Chinese has a structure very similar to this, yet verbs in Chinese are not conjugated based on tense. Therefore, the interference could be clearly noticed as ‘a play football boy’ as mentioned by Participant 4. Participant 6’s example is similar. In Chinese, a verb could be the subject of a sentence, which is a feature that English also has. However, because verbs are not conjugated in Chinese, the interference could be noticed as the making the base form of a verb a subject of a sentence, like the error of making “do something” as the subject observed by Participant 6. In these two cases, the students’ L1 has similar structures corresponding to English structure, yet errors are also observed in those structures due to the differences. Those errors can be explained by Contrastive Hypothesis (Lee, 1968). The teachers taught the correct sentence patterns and developed the awareness of differences, also in an attempt to avoid this type of interference. Therefore it was not surprising that, when asked whether the participants would allow the students to write a Chinese draft for writing assignments, all the participants explicitly said no, and one of the reasons was because they wanted to avoid those problems caused by interference (Participant 6).

Interference also happened in the field of pragmatics, as Participant 7 put it: that would be the biggest con I think is the less English they are using, the less experience they have with it … sometimes they will know a word in Chinese and they will have the translation for it in English. But in English it can only be used
in certain circumstances, whereas it can’t be in others (Participant 7, line 36-37, 251-253).

However, such an issue has not been brought up by other participants. One reason for this could be that not a lot of participants had English as their L1, therefore, they may not have much experience in pragmatics, as one of the participants mentioned “even when I talk with you, my language is not authentic” (Participant 17, line 98-99).

So, as mentioned above, one issue with actively using students’ first language in class was that the students would have less improvement in L2 speaking, this led to students getting stuck, wondering or at a state of readiness when they needed to express something in English. The other issue was interference of students’ first language in English production. And interference was noticed at almost all aspects of linguistics, including syntactical, lexical, semantic and pragmatic levels.

The different outcomes of both the monolingual and bilingual approaches are organized in Table 4.3.
Table 4.3

*Benefits and Issues with the Monolingual and Bilingual approaches*

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<td>• Improved quicker;</td>
<td>• lack of depth in output;</td>
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<td>• More cooperation in class.</td>
<td>• anxiety, fear, potential breakdown;</td>
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<td>Bilingual approaches</td>
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<td>• increased output;</td>
<td>• less improvement in speaking;</td>
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<td>• increased creativity;</td>
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<td>• comparison for learning;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• scaffold.</td>
<td>• interference in almost all aspects of linguistics (syntax, morphosyntax, lexicon, semantics and pragmatics).</td>
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4.2.4 Relationships between the major themes. As mentioned earlier, all the interview participants agreed that there are situations when they would think using students’ L1 is acceptable and necessary. However, that does not mean all the participants would encourage or willingly accept the use of students’ L1. In this section, we focused on what the participants thought about students’ L1 use. According to the coding of the interview, three themes naturally emerge out of the participants’ interview
data. First of all, all participants had an overall goal for their course tied to students’ success in the course, in particular, students’ success in the exams, and have indicated how they allowed the students to achieve that goal. Based on this overall goal, they tried to increase or decrease the use of students’ first language accordingly. Of course, in addition to their goals, all the participants at the same time had their idea of optimal use. This in a sense means what the participants wish to let the students do or achieve, but are probably not able to. In an ideal state, at what level would the students’ English skill be? What would their surroundings be? More importantly, when the students were at that level, what would the role of students’ L1 be? That was the second theme coming out of the interview under this heading. Third, all the participants talked about the relationship they saw between students’ L1 and the L2. Whether they thought that the L1 and L2 integrate or separate, whether being good at using the L1 necessarily means being good at using the L2. Those aspects were included under the third theme in this section.

4.2.4.1 Teachers’ Goals. The goals of participants vary quite a lot. The goal that is mentioned by most of the participants is for the students actually passing the exam. Seven out of ten participants during this study or previously had the exam as their goal of teaching, especially those who were teaching or have once taught grades nine and twelve as large-scale high-stake exams are administered at those two grade levels. As some participants put it:

And I want to say another goal is important for the school and the students is to pass the exam, get high scores in the exam, that is also one goal. I think this should be the first goal in the school in China (Participant 17, line 234-236).
So they don’t spend a lot of time practicing speaking. Because we only have 40 points in the speaking test…. You know, we have teaching objectives, we have to get the students to pass exams with higher scores, so the time is limited

(Participant 13, line 157-158, 504-505).

In grade 9, we attach more importance to their abilities to deal with the exams, I have to say that. We have no choice, because the very important exam is coming [up] in June. So, in grade 9, it’s very important to tell them how to do well in the exam. (Participant 15, line 295-297)

So, no matter whether the participants were willing to use English-only or not, once they had such high-stake exams coming up in front of them, the very first goal they had was for the students to do well on exams, so oral communication was not a priority. As Participant 17 has pointed out, it was not about this group of teachers or the few schools in this study, working on getting good grades in the exam was the first goal for any school in China. Participants 6, 13, 15 and 17 have tried various methods and approaches in class to teach English as mentioned in earlier sections, they employed Communicative Language Teaching, task-based learning and comparisons between languages. As Participant 13 pointed out, there should have been speaking, but the importance of other components outweighs speaking, therefore, getting a good grade on the exam was a far clearer goal than any other goals. As Participant 15 has mentioned, “in grade 7, we think hobby, interest, raising their interest of learning English is very important. So, you can check those class activities, very fun” (Participant 15, 298-299).

But Participant 15 would also admit that, in grade nine, there was just no other choice As another participant mentioned, “the students have their requirement to learn English. So,
maybe sometimes I don't need to teach all of those, sometimes I just taught my students the key points, the important points, and some skills of examination” (Participant 18, line 78-81). So, it was not about whether the participants thought the exam should be a goal or not, it was the fact that the students would have to have the exam on their agenda. It was the students’ requirement to do well on the exam, so, teaching toward the exam in this case had to be a goal for the participants.

Some participants describe the exam-oriented approach as follows:

I think if you want to pass the written exam, you can focus more on grammar and you can speak more Chinese (Participant 3, line 295-296).

They have to pass the examination, sometimes we just focus on the grammar, right? … all you can do for English assessment is actually just a piece of paper… So, it’s just a piece of paper, then, we have to make the students have higher marks, we just have no way other than using Chinese to explain and analyze. Just like when we take up the reading comprehension in tests, for this question, where did you find the answer in the reading? Why did you find the answer this way? If you insist using English, sometimes the students couldn’t understand, though they really want to listen. They want to listen, but they couldn’t comprehend, because their skills are just there. So, they couldn’t get the strategies they are trying to teach (Participant 8, line 101, 216-224).

Here, Participant 3 and 8 are actually two participants who have more of a monolingual perception in English teaching as mentioned earlier. But when they talk about examinations, their comments are as above. Just as mentioned above, Participant 3 did figure that explicit instructions, especially grammar instructions could be done better
in students’ first language than in a foreign language. As Participant 8 also mentioned, insisting on English may not get the students to understand the exam techniques, as those techniques are very explicit. This is consistent with the earlier section where participants who teach grammar would mostly agree with the necessity of students’ first language in grammar instructions. In addition, three other participants also mentioned that if they are taking up exercises in class, students’ first language would have to be used. So, for any participant who has success on exams as their current goal, students’ first language had to be actively used with no other alternative.

The second most popular goals are interest stimulation and teaching thinking skills. Six of the ten participants have had those two as their goals. For the participants who considered interest stimulation as their goal, they mostly considered it as the goal for lower grades where students do not have the pressure from exams, just as Participant 15 has mentioned earlier. Participant 7 gave a more detailed description of how the interest of the students is valued:

Basically in the end, when I am teaching, I try to make the lesson comfortable for them and enjoyable, because at the end of the lesson, even if they haven’t learnt as much as they might have if I force them to use English. If they leave enjoying it, then they will associate that enjoyment with the language as supposed to thinking of the language as a … (I: Burden?) Burden! Exactly! Yes, so I kind of aim more to give them an enjoyable experience in that way. So that they are associating English with fun and they want to learn more (Participant 7, line 57-63).

This is a good summary of how the participants want students’ interest to be stimulated. At this stage, participants wanted to get the students interested and at the
same time to be encouraged in exploring English content themselves, so that they had a good experience and were willing to learn more (Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 15). Looking at it from another perspective, though some of the students may still find themselves not loving English learning, they would at least consider English learning less of a burden, so that they could “feel safe to speak out” (Participant 17, line 131). Safety, comfort and willingness are affective aspects of English learning, though it was not directly related to the role of students’ first language, it was obvious that a strict monolingual approach would not help with such a goal as mentioned in the last section. Therefore, this goal indicates that the majority of the participants would not choose to absolutely minimalize the use of students’ L1.

Developing students’ thinking skill was a goal for some teachers because “it's a hot topic. I remember top one skill is thinking skill, so we try to develop the students' thinking skills in class” (Participant 17, line 222-223). However, the definition of “thinking” differs between participants. There are two different kinds of thinking that the participants are talking about, the first referred to as an “English mindset” or “think in the English way”, which means to think and construct in English rather than students’ first language (Participant 3, Participant 4, & Participant 18). The second was thinking that goes beyond the scope of language, something more on the line of critical thinking (Participant 5, Participant 13, & Participant 17). The first definition of thinking would make the participants tend to go monolingual, as one participant has mentioned:

I think we can use English as much as possible. Especially the way they think, I don't think we should use Chinese, because we have to cultivate the English thinking, to think in the English way, not Chinese way. I don't want them to go
back to the Chinese thinking way, because if they think in the Chinese way, they will write in that way. And that will cause a lot of trouble, they will forget all the grammar (Participant 3, line 25-29).

So, for these participants, thinking meant to develop such a mindset that the students can construct English output or production in English, so that they can bypass the stage where there are inferences from their first language.

For participants who thought of thinking as being something that goes above and beyond language, the idea was to “broaden their horizon” (Participant 17, line 230-231). While the participants did not have any novel methods to achieve this, they “[did] have processed materials to encourage that” (Participant 5, line 165). Activities used in such situations would include brainstorming, prediction, summarizing and continuation, which are activities that are on the connection and extension side of Young and Wilson’s (2000) Ideas, Connections, and Extensions model (Participant 13). Examining those approaches, the first definition of thinking would require the students to give extensive output in English. The second definition of thinking would both give the students extensive input and produce output in English. For both of these two cases, though students’ first language could be an aide in the process, just as mentioned by Participant 3, the class should use as much English as possible. Therefore, students’ first language is to be minimalized, but not forbidden in this situation, which means by having thinking as a goal, the perception of students’ first language use would naturally be more on the monolingual side of the spectrum, but not at an extreme.

Other goals include utilization of English, authenticity of students’ output, cultural goals, curriculum goals and language skills. Although those also appeared in
multiple participants’ utterances, they were not looked at in detail because they were supported by no more than half of the participants. Those goals would also entail a mixed perception of students’ first language, as it was identified that to properly use English and to produce authentic English, it would be very important to have lots of input and produce lots of output at the same time (Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 7, Participant 8, & Participant 13), while cultural and curriculum goals and explicit language skills could make active use of students’ first language during the process (Participant 3, Participant 6, Participant 8, Participant 13, Participant 15, & Participant 18). Therefore, different goals would be on different sides of the monolingual and bilingual approach, but the obvious fact is, this would place none of the participants as being strictly monolingual, because the first two goals, which would definitely employ the bilingual approach, were identified by the entire group of interview participants.

4.2.4.2 Teacher’s wishes. The participants’ practices do not necessarily correspond to their actual perception of how teaching an English class should look. Among the participants who mentioned examination as their teaching goal, none of them enjoyed or preferred to only teach students for the sake of exams. So, the participants also talked about their ideal practices that were unreachable. First of all, for some of the participants, the objective of thinking in English is an ideal situation:

it’s very important, I think, for English teachers to try to lead the students to think in English, but it’s difficult. … It’s the ideal way, maybe in our daily teaching, it’s kind of unapproachable. (Participant 13, line 129-130, 302-303)
I think they (the two languages) could [be separated], just like you. Just like you, right? This is only for... I think it only exists in an ideal world, even for me (Participant 3, line 185-186).

Five of the ten participants would think that separating English from the first language and thinking in English only without being influenced by the L1 as being an unpractical ideal. Some of the participants did mention that an immersive learning environment would be a way to achieve this ideal:

I think, only they can experience the full-English environment atmosphere, only if they have been immersed in an English atmosphere. But for most people, we... of course, we have watched a lot of English videos, films and talk to the foreigners, but we haven't experienced the native English life. I'm thinking... we haven't, you know, we haven't experienced that real English life for a very long time, so it's very difficult for us to keep, to stay at the English-thinking (Participant 3, line 187-192).

Actually I think that depends on how long students have been learning or how long students have been immersed in English learning (Participants 4, line 404-405).

And for Participant 4 who has taught in an English-only environment, it seems that this ideal could be achieved by an English-only environment:

At the beginning, they would translate word by word from Chinese into English, that means they’ve got a lot of Chinglish. But after two or three years of learning, they can actually produce some English sentences without even realizing what the Chinese meaning is (Participant 4, line 406-409).
Some of the participants who have stated “thinking in English” as their ideal did make an attempt to let the students use English at all times to create this immersion environment, only then they realized that it was not really realistic for a list of reasons:

I would like … I hope they can use English, they can use the target language. But sometimes, they just don’t, but I will, sometimes, I will ask them to use English to talk to discuss, but sometimes, they just don’t listen to you. I hope they can use the target language (Participant 8, line 51-53).

they don’t have that kind of proficiency. I don’t think (Participant 13, line 327).

It’s difficult to always do the same thing and never change. Sometimes, you have to use some [Chinese] in class, right? You cannot avoid that. Reason? Too many. It’s a goal, I wish that I wish I can stick to [English] in my career (Participant 15, line 362-364).

Participant 3, 6 and 8 have tried to let the students use English-only, but found that it was impossible, because of the students’ habitual use of their L1 in discussions. Participant 3 and 8 would remind the students whenever they heard students using their first language in class but saw little change in the students’ behavior. Participant 6 decided to no longer regard thinking in English or immersion as an ideal practice.

Participant 13 and 17 pointed out that the students would not have the proficiency to achieve the ideal objective, as they needed their first language for understanding.

Participant 15’s opinion summarized the entire first section of this chapter, saying that there were simply situations where student’s L1 was necessary for all the participants. Participant 15’s statement, “It’s difficult to always do the same thing and never change”
refers to the experience teaching in an English-only environment. So even with such teaching experience, it was hard to stick to English-only in class.

Interestingly, as mentioned earlier, Participant 13 would actively use students’ first language in class for comparison between syntactical structures. However, later in the interview, it was specified that the reason why students’ first language was actively used was because they are not at the required level of readiness. The ideal situation was to “make [it] a habit for students to just speak in English or mostly speak in English, then after maybe several weeks, they have formed this kind of habit” (Participant 13, line 336-337). But it is too difficult for the students because they first of all do not have the level of proficiency to cope with an English-only environment and because the students have some more realistic goal to achieve, like for the sake of the examination.

So, essentially, fifty percent of the interview participants believed that the ideal situation was to separate students’ first language from English and to let the students think in English only if possible. Namely, for the participants, the ideal choice would be a monolingual approach that eventually leads into an immersion setting. But currently, none of them was able to do that because the situation was not ideal, and they had more realistic goals to reach for. The other participants considered their current goal sufficient and did not talk about an ideal context apart from their current goals. Of course, there were also participants who thought that keeping the two languages integrated was not a problem, and considered it to be something potentially beneficial (Participant 6, Participant 8, & Participant 15).

4.2.4.3 Perception of Relationship between students’ first language and English. The relationship between students’ first language and the target language is a
question that has been discussed a lot in the past few decades. As mentioned in the Literature Review section, different views of students’ first language lead to different approaches in English language teaching and learning. For this group of participants, views vary a quite a bit.

4.2.4.3.1 Relation between Performances of First Language and English. Most of the participants mentioned that they saw a correlation between students’ first language and English, in particular:

I notice that if someone is good at Chinese learning, he always has a strong understanding in English learning. The reading, especially reading. If someone is good at Chinese learning, he can usually read longer passages and has strong understanding of the English article. The content, the reading comprehension, yea. We notice that, it's highly connected (Participant 3, line 106-109).

There are, I think, some relationship between English and Chinese. Generally speaking, if a student likes Chinese, he may also have greater … show greater interest in English learning. The students are more sensitive to the fluency and intonation and the language they are using. And students, if they are better at using Chinese orally, they would show greater fluency in speaking their English, yea (Participant 4, line 395-399).

Here, the relationship between students’ first language skills and English skills covered two aspects: fluency and reading skills. Reading skills were also mentioned by Participant 6 and 15. A weaker version of this view is given below:

If the student's Chinese is pretty good, it's not necessary that their English is good. But if their Chinese is poor, their English is always poor. For example, writing, if
they cannot write Chinese well, cannot write a good Chinese essay. They cannot write English essay (Participant 17, line 207-209).

Participant 18 held a similar view. This weaker version corresponds to saying that someone with limited first language skill would not be exceptional in English learning. As mentioned earlier, Participant 17 considered developing thinking skills as one of her teaching goals, and the reason was because:

No matter he uses Chinese or English, the altitude decides the person. I think language is just a tool, thinking and knowledge and so on determine this person.

So, no matter how it is presented, I think they are related, because the person's knowledge structure, ways of thinking are related [to language] (Participant 17, line 212-215).

For Participant 17, it is not languages that are connected because they are both influenced by thinking. In fact, based on this view, language is a way that thinking can be presented. Therefore, having the thinking skills may not mean a person knows the language rules. But not having thinking skills would make a person unable to successfully acquire any language.

Another observation made earlier refers to the fact that as students can understand syntactical structure, they have more freedom to compare between languages, and therefore they have better analytical skills to distinguish between sentence structures. Based on this view, students’ first language skills were seen as related to explicit English learning mechanisms (Participant 5, & Participant 13).

4.2.4.3.2 Integration and Separation between First Language and English.

According to all the participants, students’ first language is integrated with English. This
can be shown via the interference between the two languages and how the performance of one would affect the other. Also as mentioned earlier, half of the participants have an ideal goal to separate students’ first language from the second in thinking. This indicates that for those participants, by learning English, students are working toward separating the two languages, with complete separation being the goal and ultimate attainment.

Other participants have a different opinion in the sense that students’ also start with their first language integrated with English, but the two languages would stay integrated even as they continue their learning process. Their mindset would still on integration, but there were different views toward how first language and English were integrated as language skills grew. The first view was that languages would have to be integrated in students’ mind to produce beautiful translations:

sometimes when we are appreciating some beautiful poem, beautiful sentences. I think the English version is beautiful, the Chinese one is also beautiful. When we put them together, they create a beauty (Participant 15, line 402-404).

Participant 5 and 15 both held this view. The difference is that Participant 15 would consider this being a snapshot of language attainment, while Participant 5’s idea was split between utilization and cultural aspects of language. As Participant 5 mentioned “[f]rom the aspect of culture, I think it’s integrated, from the aspect of utilization, it should be separated, for they are two different kinds of mind-sets and backgrounds…. Regardless of our Chinese culture or Western culture, the students should get a hold of and have some understanding of it. This way, they can have a better understanding of the corresponding literature and therefore better at using it” (Participant 5, line 130-132, 141-144). Namely, for these two participants, as students moved up in English learning, they
would be able to communicate between two languages or two cultures so that they could understand different genres in both languages and then be able to gain better skills at both of them.

The other point of view was that students may be able to be at an advanced level in English and think of English expressions when they are speaking or writing. But the students could still benefit from skill transfer from Chinese to English (Karim, 2010). For example:

I like them thinking in English in writing. But they can use their Chinese writing habit to organize the structure. For example, again, talking about how to protect wildlife animal. You know in Chinese we have general, specific, general right? In English, we can follow this structure (Participant 8, line 163-166).

This kind of integration is different in the sense that the students would have to think of the English expression they already knew. But they would be able to transfer their skills, in this case their first language writing skills, into something that could help them organize their writing structure. And this held true even for advanced learners according to Participant 8. Similar to Participant 8, Participant 6 gave an example on how this integration worked on reading skills transfer, “[b]ecause things like reading speed and reading habit can also do good to English learning” (Participant 6, line 171-172). For Participant 6, reading speed and habits of students’ first language could be transferred and integrated with students’ English learning. So, for Participant 6 and 8, though the languages themselves could have different rules and seem to be separated, the skills behind them are integrated between the two languages for students at all levels.

4.2.4.3.3 Conclusion.
As a conclusion, teachers’ perspectives could be organized in the following manner.
### Teachers' Perspectives

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Chapter 5
Discussion and Conclusion

This section brings in the theoretical frameworks discussed earlier to categorize the different views, practices and methods. As seen in the Results section, the themes from interviews are organized in accordance to the research questions. In this chapter, the results are discussed in connection with the theoretical frameworks to identify where they come together. This chapter ends with the limitations of this study and a list of issues that could be investigated further.

5.1 Teachers’ perspectives

This section discussed the teachers’ perspectives which provided an answer to the first research question. As the first research question is the central question which relates to all the sub-questions, those sub-questions had to be discussed together with the first question. In particular, the third and fourth research questions directly influence the teachers’ perspectives. Therefore, the discussion of the third and fourth questions was included in this section to show the connections, and the second question was discussed in a separate section.

To begin with, the following figure briefly summarizes the relationship between the research questions and the major findings:
Figure 5.1 Major results and relationships between the research questions

- Necessary use of the L1:
  - Explicit instructions
    - Grammar
    - Technical and abstract terms
- Acceptable use of the L1:
  - Group discussions;
  - Time-efficiency;
  - Comparing syntax
- Unacceptable use of the L1:
  - Draft in writing tasks;
  - Practicing what was just learnt

(RQ2: What are the current practices on using students’ first language in an English language learning classroom in foreign language schools in Guangzhou, China?)

- Foreign language learning experience:
  - First language was actively used;
  - Comparison between languages;
  - Exam-focused;
  - Explicit teaching of grammar.
- Teaching experience:
  - New theories and approaches;
  - Observation of other teachers’ classrooms;
  - Differentiation;
  - Flexible with approaches in class.

(RQ3: How do teachers’ individual factors form their English teaching perspectives?)

- Benefit of Monolingual approach:
  - Improved speaking ability;
  - Improved quicker;
  - More cooperation in class.
- Benefit of Bilingual approach:
  - Increased output;
  - Lower Affective Filter
  - Comparison for learning;
  - Scaffold.

(RQ4: How do students’ English learning outcomes observed by the teachers form teachers’ views toward incorporating students’ first language(s) in English language learning?)
5.1.1 Perspectives tied to theoretical frameworks. The results of this research are in line with Krashen’s (1981) Fundamental Pedagogical Principles in particular, the Comprehensible Input Hypothesis although comprehensible input is viewed differently by the participants, the Affective Filter Hypothesis and to some extend the Monitor Hypothesis.

Where Krashen’s Comprehensible Input hypothesis is supported, is as regards the definite need for comprehensible input, where the results deviate from it, is in the fact that the participants include input in L1. However the participants agreed that in such a situation, students’ first language would not be needed in class after enough input is given so as to equip students with a manageable amount of L2 for them to be functional in it. This notion fits the statement of the five participants who considered that to ‘think in English-only’ when producing English was the goal in the ideal situation, with six of the participants considering developing an English mindset as a goal in the interview. As for the five participants who considered the ideal objective being the separation of the L1 and the L2 when students would think in English without assistance or even interference from their L1, the goal in practice would be to learn English L2 without the help of L1 instructions. Understanding instructions that are in English L2 could be achieved by some of the students in participants’ classes as indicated in the Results section. However, immersion is a practice where there is maximum L2 input in class, which is also a situation that Krashen (1981) was suggesting in an academic setting. Such a practice would be ideal, but as mentioned by the participants, it is technically impossible in their situational context given the high stakes examination and limited class time.
Nine interview participants considered input as essential in learning, regardless of their goals or ideals. However, this alone does not fit within Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, as according to the Input Hypothesis, a gradual increase in comprehensible input from $i$ to $i+1$, i.e. step by step, is required. This approach was used by Participant 8 when learning English, but no one else specifically mentioned acquisition and gradual increase of L2 input besides Participant 8 as mentioned in the interview. However, the Input Hypothesis was presented in a different manner by some interview participants. By observing their ideal goals and practices in the results section, it appears that they would like to gradually make the students get the habit of using English-only, but they would also agree that the process would need to have a scaffold that uses students’ first language for understanding, but gradually removing it (Participant 3, Participant 13, & Participant 17, Interview). Gradually withdrawing input given in students’ L1 indicates more input would be given in the L2, so, though no participant explicitly mentioned the process of increasing input as Krashen did, scaffolding the English learning process and lead the students into thinking in English is achieved by the participants, which somewhat corresponds to the Input Hypothesis, interpreted differently. Explicitly encouraging the students to speak in English when they are spotted to use Chinese was also a practice in line with the Input Hypothesis, as the teachers’ purpose was for the students to make use of English for all activities in class, which is also an attempt to promote immersion in English. In addition to using English to state school or class policies and reminders, the methods of encouraging the use of English-only in class also includes setting up a student or teacher role-model in class whether this role-model is an advanced student or the teacher (Participant 3, Interview). Such findings correspond to another study on students
(Nazary, 2008), showing that the reluctance to use the first language is mostly because the students, especially intermediate students, want more exposure to English and would prefer less first language being used by both the teachers and the peers. The difference is that here, the participants are teachers, but some of the teachers have the same idea and consider that maximizing exposure to English L2 is more beneficial for the students. But as mentioned in the results section, those who have separation of the two languages as an ideal, i.e. having English L2 and the L1 function separately like in the last stage of Interlanguage Theory, all agreed that immersion in L2 in their classroom is technically impossible due to the practical goals they have. Therefore, though the Input Hypothesis was applied partially by some of the participants in class, it remains an ideal objective since none of the participants has actually really applied it.

The Affective Filter hypothesis is also supported by the study results. Anxiety, motivation and self-confidence are three dimensions under Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis (1981) that have an impact on acquisition. Though Krashen’s notion of the Affective Filter indicates that lower anxiety, higher motivation and higher self-confidence would speed up the process of acquisition, he connected the affective filter more to different levels of biological and cognitive developments (Krashen, 1981). It was mentioned in the Fundamental Pedagogical Principles that too high an affective filter because of too much anxiety and other negative factors, would not only reduce the efficiency in learning, it could even block learning and acquisition altogether. Raising students’ interest and overcoming their fear of using English were the goals of six interview participants. Though some survey participants thought that avoiding the use of students’ L1 was a measure to reduce anxiety, and overcome fears in the long run by
developing the habit of using English from the start, it was still evident that the majority of the participants agreed that using the students’ L1 is a way to reduce the students’ anxiety (Question 5; M=5.00, SD= 1.37, Survey Questionnaire). This indicated that for most of the participants in both the questionnaire and the interview, reducing students’ anxiety in English language learning is a goal and using the students’ L1 is a way to achieve that goal. According to the Results, nine interview participants agreed with students’ use of their L1 in group discussions. Most of the participants did associate such acceptance with reducing anxiety and better motivating the students. While allowing students to do group discussions in their L1 and translating what caused the students difficulties helped reduce the Affective filter. This practice would go hand in hand with two methods, counselling teaching (Curran, 1976). Counselling teaching as its name indicates is a gentle method, which is later on referred as Community Language Learning. Community Language Learning is a method that reduces students’ fear and anxiety by actively using students’ L1 during students’ discussions (Cook, 2001). In research, Community Language Learning showed some positive results in easing students’ anxiety, especially when the students are not familiarized with the target language (Ariza, 2002). As the participants themselves have also observed, by accepting the use of students’ L1 in group discussions and peer interactions, students’ anxiety during English classes was indeed reduced. This indicates that the affective filter is not only related to the biological and cognitive developments as described by Krashen (1981), it could be influenced by classroom practice. The key is, that the affective filter is eased by methods under the bilingual approach instead of the monolingual approach in
this study. It is interesting to point out that Krashen (1981) mentioned an affective filter, but did not provide any practical measure to lower it.

Krashen’s (1981) principles, especially the Input Hypothesis, focus on reducing students’ L1 in English language learning so that an eventual immersion setting could be achieved. As the five participants have mentioned, their perspectives fit around Krashen’s principles, they would like to slowly reduce the use of the L1 so that they can work toward the immersion ideal. On the other side of the spectrum sits the bilingual approach. Cook’s (2002) integration continuum is one of the representations of the Multicompetence Theory under the scope of bilingual approach. While there are a lot of different perspectives under bilingual approach, Multicompetence Theory has its own unique view toward how bilingualism or multilingualism functions. Contrary to the Interlanguage Theory where language is slowly acquired, originally by heavily relying on the L1 while over time different patterns in languages emerge up to a point where they can appear to function independently in the mind, the integration continuum made a lot of aspects across languages accessible in the course of language learning or acquisition. This corresponds to findings from the four participants who see the integration aspects of languages. It is noticed that the integrated aspects here correspond to skills like thinking, reading, writing, and even translation. For the participants who point to critical thinking as their goal for teaching, they mentioned that thinking could be manifested by language production, regardless of which language was used in production. This indicates that they feel that thinking is a skill that is transferable between languages during language learning, just like the reading and writing skills transfer mentioned by some of the participants. The question is whether we have separate thinking mechanisms rather than
one that then leads into language use to express our thoughts. Moreover, the correlation of performance between students’ first language and English also indicates that those aspects or skills are transferable between languages. According to Cook’s notion of an integration continuum, foreign language learners start with a separation between the two languages because of their different styles if such is the case (Cook, 2002). The notion of transfer is the middle stage of an integration continuum where skills from first language are transferred to the foreign language. At this stage of interconnection as shown in Figure 2.1, language items or skills could be accessed in both languages by students, but Cook (2002) mostly looks at language items. As mentioned earlier, the accessed skills correspond to skill transfer, which refers to skills in one language accessed or used in the course of learning another language (Karim, 2010). Therefore, skill transfer is a phenomenon that better corresponds to the participants’ practice. For example, Participant 8 mentioned in the interview that she did not allow the students to write a draft in their first language, but the L1 could be used as a tool to organize the structure of writing, so the organization and planning skill could be accessed by both L1 and L2 in writing. There exists this logic link as a method to organize ideas, and the use of such functions of the first language was consistent with recent research in the context of reading (Upton, & Lee-Thompson, 2001). Therefore, that transfer of skills noticed by the participants comes under the bilingual framework. Instead of going from mixed to separation as in Interlanguage Theory, the model goes in an opposite direction. The final stage of the integration continuum as mentioned by Cook (2002) considers the final stage of multicompetence as being where “[t]here is no more separation between the two languages in the multicompetent mind than there is between different styles and genres in
the monolingual” (Cook, 2002, p. 16). At this stage, the L1 and L2 become inseparable, as the languages are all connected by the underlying concepts. This fits the integration mentioned by some of the participants where the language and cultural aspects both communicate with each other (Participant 5, & Participant 15, Interview). The result of this kind of integration is that code-switching could be done efficiently and as one participant states ‘some beautiful writings like poems can be translated from one language to another elegantly’ (Participant 15, Interview, line 402), which is something that could not be explained if separation between two language systems is the goal of learning. This could however pinpoint to a very advanced level of language knowledge as translations are more in the realm of specialists. While the completely separate language systems in Interlanguage Theory could not explain the translations, the integration continuum could easily explain it. Since in the integration continuum, “[t]he L1 concepts are not separate from the L2 concepts” (Cook, 2002, p. 16). Words in the L1 and L2 are both accessible to the multi-competent mind, so the person at the point of multi-competence could go from the L1 to L2 easily and accomplish elegant translations as noticed by the participants (Participant 5, & Participant 15, Interview). The teaching practices under this view include translations, comparison between two languages and doing more readings in the first language to improve reading skills in English L2 (Participant 6, & Participant 13, Interview). Those practices are classified under this framework because they would actively use students’ first language and English at the same time to promote positive transfer between the two languages. It is noticed that for the participants who thought translation to be an indication of integration, the translation they mentioned is not the same as the translation in the Grammar-Translation method.
Here, the translation is an outcome of learning instead of the learning method. Namely, for those participants who thought of translation as a transferred skill, their idea is similar to Lambert’s (1990) idea of efficient code-switching such that one language could be gated out when the other one is needed for production, while having the two languages inseparable in the mind (Cook, 2002).

The findings give some insights on the possible point of cross-over between Cook’s Integration Continuum and the Interlanguage theory. Although positioned differently, both theories can be related, as interlanguage is one aspect that was recognized by a lot of participants. Interlanguage describes an intermediate system in which the learner goes from the beginning stage stemming very heavily from L1 to a nativelike stage where L1 and L2 are seen as separate (Selinker, 1972). While the Integration Continuum is one way of viewing this stage, which is proposed by those who support multicompetence like Cook (2002), another popular view toward interlanguage is that interlanguage consists of a set of patterns emerging from using the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). While some aspects of Interlanguage Theory surfaced in the Results section, the Integration Continuum and the Fundamental Pedagogical Principle were chosen as the theoretical frameworks due to two reasons. First, the participants who had the ideal goals of having the L1 and L2 as completely separate systems in students’ mind, all planned to achieve this ideal by providing more input in English, which is the practice outlined by the Fundamental Pedagogical Principle, namely providing students with more comprehensible input, rather than the Interlanguage Theory. Second, the Interlanguage stage was actually not discussed by the participants to be included in the Results. There the errors caused by interference could be explained using the
Interlanguage Theory, however according to the participants those errors are to be avoided and corrected, so they are not a part of the interlanguage theory, where errors are seen as part of normal language development. While eight participants saw language items, like syntactical structures, and language skills, like reading and writing skills, in common between students’ L1 and English L2. These common grounds could be accessible or made manifest by both the L1 and L2, this notion fits the Integration Continuum more than the Interlanguage Theory, which also made the Integration Continuum a more suitable theoretical framework for this study. The possible reason why the Interlanguage stage seems to be missing from the Results could be because Chinese and English are too different to have a separate linguistic system or a series of processes as described in the Interlanguage Theory (Selinker, 1972). Some errors the participants noticed could however be explained by the Interlanguage Theory, but the two languages were hardly compared by the participants in this study, the only comparison that was mentioned was the comparison between syntactical structures. It is also worth noticing that the participant who made most of the remarks on comparisons between the two languages was Participant 13 who once used this approach in learning French as a foreign language as mentioned in both the questionnaire and interview. The existence of an interlanguage stage for French immersion students with English as L1 was pretty clear as Harley and Swain (1985) have illustrated. This could be an indication that the distance between two languages families could be connected to the interlanguage theory, with English and French being closer.

The results also support Krashen’s Monitor Hypothesis although participants develop their students’ awareness using L1 in teaching. It is worth noticing that some of
the participants’ views actually fit the transitions in Krashen’s theories well. Most interestingly the results may suggest a solution, a ‘Bridging Phase’, to bridging the gap between Krashen’s Input and Monitor Hypotheses. There was an effective measure put in place to make sure students get enough Comprehensible Input and practice what they have learned by producing output. After all, according to all the participants, explaining the technical terms in English-only would not help understanding as the input may not be comprehensible in L2-only (Participant 5, Interview). Using the L1 was also more effective a transition as the results in French immersion showed that using L2-only may simply mean using a limited set of structures, which allowed for little progress in L2 learning (Harley, & Swain, 1985). For example, a lot of teachers’ practices and goals fit within Krashen’s thinking, namely as regards various types of input given by teachers, the way grammar was taught and practiced as output in order to afford students the possibility to monitor their output, to ensure the language points are properly acquired. This would fit with both the notion of giving Comprehensible Input and controlling language use with teaching based on the Monitor Hypothesis. As mentioned earlier, though Krashen’s framework is mostly used for categorizing monolingual approaches, as Krashen’s Input Hypothesis indicated that as Input increases from i to i+1, less of students’ L1 would be involved at the same time, as the purpose of students’ L1 is to ensure Comprehensible Input is provided to the students. After this ‘Bridging Phase’ during the process of learning, the L1 is to be minimized as time goes on, since input would no longer require the L1 to be comprehensible. So, eventually the L1 is no longer needed in the learning process, which fits Krashen’s (1981) Comprehensible Input model. The Monitor Hypothesis serves a similar purpose, as it is to make sure the target structure
is learned, so that less L1 is needed as language items are both learned and acquired. Both
the teachers and the students are able to monitor language use through the process of
learning and pay attention to grammatical forms, initially resorting to L1 to make it
possible as the Monitor could not function at early stages for lack of grammatical
knowledge if only L2 is used for explanations. Then later on, after more language content
is known, Krashen’s Monitor model would be workable in L2. Though workable, it was
pretty clear that most of participants in this study chose a bilingual approach, as in the
New Concurrent Method, by using the L1 to explain difficult concepts and explaining
exercises (Participant 8, Participant 13, & Participant 15; Survey questionnaire, &
Interview). There are two reasons behind this choice according to the participants. First,
both the survey and the interview participants have mentioned that using the L1 for
explaining grammar, difficult concepts and exercises is time-efficient, which is consistent
with the teachers’ opinions in other studies of a similar nature (Schweers Jr., 1999; Tang,
2002). Second, using students’ L1 could greatly lower the affective filter, as mentioned in
the Results section. The lower the affective filter, the better the outcome of acquisition
(Krashen, 1981). The effect of outcomes on teachers’ perspectives and practices will be
explained later. In this case, the use the L1 made the teaching and learning processes
more efficient and effective. Although Krashen includes the Monitor in his theory, his
goal is to let the learners communicate and learn on their own, he also mentioned that
“[t]he goal of the classroom, in [his] view, is not to produce native speakers or even
error-free second language performance” (Krashen, 1981, p. 61). In Cook’s integration
continuum there is no mention about L2 use being authentic or nativelike either (Cook,
2002). Thus, authenticity is not in the scope of this study, so it is not classified or
discussed. The cultural goal is a difficult one to classify. Some participants thought cultural goals could be achieved by using students’ first language for comparison (Participant 18, Interview). Some participants think though that a cultural goal would be achieved by getting more input like, for example, from literature in the target language (Participant 5, Interview). The opinions are too diverse for a definite conclusion to be drawn regarding a cultural goal amongst the participants and at the same time, neither of the chosen frameworks has culture as a goal for language learning. Therefore, a cultural goal is not discussed here any further.

5.1.2 Other influences on their perspectives based on individual factors.

According to the Results section, individual factors, which include both the participants’ language learning and teaching experience, influenced the participants’ perspectives on using students’ L1 in English language learning. In this section, the influence individual factors had on the participants’ perspectives is discussed in detail. This discussion provides answers to the third research question, which states “how do teachers’ individual factors form their English teaching perspectives?” These factors include second language learning experience and impact of teaching experience.

5.1.2.1 Impact of Second Language Learning Experience. The second language learning experiences for most of the participants were related to exams and explicit grammar teaching. This aspect was discussed earlier as the New Concurrent Method which uses the first language to explain key concepts together with the use of English. The difference was that according to most of the participants, less English was used when they were learning English, like one participant has mentioned “when we were in English class, the only English we have heard was ‘class begin’ and ‘class over’ and everything
else was in Chinese” (Participant 8, Interview, line 318-320). Imitation was the method used by Participant 8, which is a method that sounds somewhat behaviouristic. A similar method was used by Participant 5, when she considered reciting English passages as being a way to learn translation. Imitation as learning is more on the monolingual side of the spectrum, as it would require a lot of input and not involve the use of the L1 in the process. Yet it is not a method that could be classified by any of the two frameworks, as the input is comprehensible but does not follow the progressive manner as specified in the Input Hypothesis, nor is it using a kind of monitor as no teaching was involved. It might offer a form of acquisition, but the imitation used by Participant 5 and 8 was definitely not subconscious or implicit as to correspond to how acquisition was defined although some of the language items learners were in contact with could have been acquired. Such view fits the notion of behaviourism, which considers language as something that students adapt to through repeated and reinforced stimulus (Skinner, 1957), it also corresponds to ways to introduce the L2 early on. While behaviorism was a popular view toward language learning or any learning in general, it is not under any frameworks chosen for this study, so it is not discussed any further.

5.1.2.2 Impact of Teaching Experience. As mentioned in the Results section, the influence teaching experience had on participants’ perception did not follow any specific pattern. Some participants shifted from monolingual to bilingual. For some, it was the other way around. However, there is something they have in common. Teaching experience looks like a neutralizer that mediates participants’ perception. Most participants’ perceptions moved more toward the other side of where they had started. The only participant who indicated that her perception affirmed through her teaching
career was Participant 15, as it was observed that the English-only teaching method worked for her.

Professional development under teaching experience provided the participants with new theories and ways to reflect on their teaching. In particular, task-based learning and the communicative approach are mentioned multiple times by various participants. For most participants, tasks are defined differently than how they were supposed to be defined. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the tasks designed under this very framework should focus on functional aspects so that the focus of language learning is to communicate with others (CEFR, 2001). The approach that focuses on language for the purpose of communication is commonly referred to as communicative language teaching (Duff, 2014). As shown in the Results section, communicative language teaching was mentioned in Participant 13 and Participant 17’s interviews, and task-based teaching and learning was mentioned by Participant 6 and Participant 17. Task was mentioned by a total of seven participants in the course of the interviews. However, the tasks mentioned by the majority of participants were equivalent to activities, for example, speaking task, reading task and lead-in task (Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 7, & Participant 8, Interview). According to those participants, such tasks are merely activities in class that allow the students to practice what they have learnt, and the contents or materials for learning were mostly from textbooks instead of based on communicative goals. Even for the participants who were talking about tasks under the communicative language teaching approach, they still recognized that their focuses were mainly on textbooks due to the curriculum goals and exams that the students had to face (Participant 6, & Participant 13,
Interview). It was also recognized that due to class size and class duration, it would not be realistic to actually use communicative language teaching in class because the interaction in class was minimal, while the CEFR suggests the use of situational learning so that the students could communicate in a variety of different settings as much as possible during class time. In fact, even for other references like the Canadian Language Benchmarks, the functions of language are very important in language learning (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2002). The only participant who was able to focus on communicative competencies and functions was Participant 7 as the examination was not a goal for that class. With the examination set aside, incorporating communicative language teaching could still be pretty hard in some cases. For example, Participant 17 mentioned that though she tried to implement communicative language teaching by using the task-based learning approach, the students’ levels were sometimes too low to implement the method properly, as she tried to use more English in class to facilitate the task, but found out that the students were not able to understand or follow the lesson. Therefore, though the participants know something about the CEFR and communicative language teaching and task-based teaching through professional training, actually implementing the methods in class has been difficult for them. With that being said, a communicative language teaching focus does not fit either of the theoretical frameworks in this study, but it is worth mentioning here because most participants know something about it through their teacher’s college training or ongoing professional training, but due to various reasons, implementing it became extremely difficult. Therefore, though communicative language teaching and task-based teaching are encouraged by theories
and studies, it was not a common practice within this group of participants (Ribe, & Vidal, 1993).

Differentiation is something that almost all participants have mentioned, but it does not seem to be something that is relevant to their perceptions of L1 use. But it was evident that Krashen’s (1981) framework did not provide an approach that would accommodate differentiation. As the Fundamental Pedagogical Principle indicates that Comprehensible Input is the way to acquire a language, no matter how students’ language differs or how the input differs in terms of content, the process is entirely the same. Cook’s integration continuum did not mention differentiation either, as the integration continuum was used to describe the relationship between first and target language rather than teaching (Cook, 2002). However, Cook’s idea of using the first language in the classroom is related to differentiation in some ways, as it provides educators with different ways on how to use the first language in classrooms (Cook, 2001). A list of usages of the first language in class is provided, so that educators could decide when they want or do not want to use the students’ first language in class. However, it was clear that none of the frameworks would be able to classify differentiation properly, though it was a word that stands out in how teaching experience influenced participants’ perception on using the students’ first language in class, which corresponds mostly to the awareness of students’ needs in class.

5.1.3 Influence of observed outcomes on their perspectives. Observed outcomes in class influence how teachers plan and implement their approaches in class. According to the Results section, a lot of participants saw the outcomes of their approaches and decided to tailor they own approaches accordingly for better results.
Therefore, the impact observed outcomes had on the participants’ perspectives was discussed in this section, which provided answers to the fourth research question, which stated “[h]ow do observed students’ English learning outcomes as perceived by the teachers form teachers’ views toward incorporating students’ first language(s) in English language learning?”

The outcome of the bilingual and monolingual approaches results from this study was organized in the same manner as in Literature Review section. It is evident that most of the outcomes noticed by the participants were also mentioned in the Literature Review section. However, there are some aspects that become clearer after hearing what the participants observed. Weaknesses of the monolingual approach become somehow clearer. It was already mentioned in the Literature Review that the monolingual approach could cause some level of distress and identity crisis among students, and that students are more likely to stick with what they have known already instead of trying something new, as if there were comfort in using their first language. However, it was not entirely sure how the mentioned identity crisis and anxiety would be made manifest. According to the participants, the identity crisis could be identified when students sometimes mentioned specifically how they would not wish to communicate in English, especially for older students and outside of English class (Participant 3, & Participant 13, Interview). Anxiety could also be presented as fear to produce English, confusion or even emotional breakdown in class (Participant 3, Participant 4, & Participant 7, Interview).

Most of the benefits of monolingual approaches are also mentioned in the Literature Review, like more improvements and better speaking. The new aspect that was not mentioned in the literature was the cooperation noticed in class in a foreign language
context. It was rather interesting as cooperation was mostly associated with the bilingual approach, like in Community Language Learning when two languages are used rather than in a monolingual approach in this study. But one must recognize that cooperation took place in a very special formulation for students, that is, contrary to most classrooms, the monolingual approach was used in a students’ group whose English skills varied drastically for the cooperation to start because it was needed. Does that mean it might be a good idea to put students of different levels into one class? This cannot be expanded upon, as the sample size of this study is too small to draw specific conclusions. But it is definitely something worth looking into.

The benefits of using a bilingual approach were just as mentioned in the Results section. Essentially, the bilingual approach complements the monolingual approach in the sense that the bilingual approach takes care of some of the biggest problems with the monolingual approach in class. For example, the students’ anxiety is reduced by the bilingual approach. Also, the students would produce more output in discussions using their first language for preparation as compared to using English L2 only. The students would try their best to convey what they had discussed in their first language, which was something more creative than when they would have done the preparation in English-only, and then produce output in the target language. This is consistent with a research study that compares how monolingual and bilingual groups perform on presentations (Kobayashi, 2003). So, indeed, the two output-related issues in a monolingual approach were solved by using the bilingual approach when the depth of the discussion was concerned.
Though the participants would agree that both positive and negative features resulted from the use of students’ first language, most of the participants would still think that it would be in their students’ best interest to use more English in class. As mentioned in the Results section, most participants did notice interference in students’ English production, such interference was noted in all areas of linguistics including syntax, morphosyntax, lexicon, semantics and pragmatics. Interference is an important topic in linguistics to begin with (Lado, 1957). Many studies tried to find how interference is caused at different levels of language; therefore, to find answers we examined both the strong and moderate version of the Contrastive Hypothesis (Lee, 1968; Oller, & Ziahosseiny, 1970). Errors can be caused due to interference, but the interference noticed by the participants was far more comprehensive than studies have shown, as studies mostly focus on morpho-syntactical structures and syntax (Behla, 1999; Ellis, 1994). Most of the participants indicated that they do not like this interference, which was the reason why none of the participants wanted students to write a draft in their first language (Participant 6, & Participant 8, Interview). Based on interlanguage theory, there is a back and forth between the first and the target language in learners as patterns in the L1 and L2 emerge, until they reach a bilingual status with a separation of language systems so in fact this interference would eventually disappear. But interlanguage not only appears in writing, as most participants have mentioned, they noticed some erroneous utterances produced by students in speaking as mentioned in the Results section. This ties the participants’ ideal goals together with the expected outcome, as mentioned earlier, some participants’ ideal was to separate students’ first language and English in students’ mind so that the students can think in English only when learning and producing English so
that the interference could be avoided (Participant 3, Participant 4, & Participant 13, Interview). However, this will only happen after they reach a bilingual status according to interlanguage theory, which has not happened yet in any of the participants’ classes as no participant considered that the students reached the ideal stage of language learning. With that being said, there are some positive transfers that can be seen between languages, like one can do explicit comparisons between first language and target language, which was a way that could be used in teaching and learning according to the participants (Participant 5, & Participant 17, Survey questionnaire, & Interview). However, for the participants, it was hard to find an example on positive transfer in class, but the errors made by the students could be recalled immediately, which indicates that the mistakes made during transfer were far more obvious than the positive transfer (Participant 17, Interview).

Therefore, with this being the case, the participants who would have liked to promote an English mindset within students, most likely saw the interlanguage transfer, but because the negative outweighed the positive at this stage, five of the ten participants hoped for the bilingual separation as mentioned in the Results section, which is an ideal objective that none of them sees reachable in the near future. The question is whether using English-only would speed up the process of learning and whether this learning corresponds with the objective of the class.

Although seven out of the ten participants indicated that they do not like such interference and therefore want the students to think in an English way, Participant 6 argued the other way around:
if you make a mistake and you notice that, you will remember the target language much {deeper}. Enhance your understanding by using the L1 (Participant 6, Interview, line 133-135).

This indeed fits with the Noticing Hypothesis where consciously noticing aspects of the input would result in learning (Schmidt, 1990). This observation is rather interesting, because as mentioned earlier, most participants considered interference as something they wanted to avoid, and hence wanted to see students separating their first language and English L2 as a sign of ultimate attainment. However, this means extra work was done in Participant 6’s class so that the students would notice and understand that their production was erroneous. According to the studies on feedback provided in class, oral feedback in class does make a difference (Russell, & Spada, 2006). It is also noticed that such error correction was carried out only in speaking, not writing, as the fact was mentioned earlier that no participant would allow the students to produce drafts in their first language because the translated product would have a lot of errors due to interferences. The difference is that oral feedback is immediate compared to feedback on writing assignments where the participants would have to collect all the assignments and then correct each of those. By providing feedback which allows the students to notice their own mistakes immediately, one of the biggest problems with the bilingual approach, namely, interference could be used as a learning moment, which would make the students notice language aspects more according to Participant 6. Yet feedback in L1 may be better noticed.

Therefore, this means that interlanguage transfers were definitely noticed in the participants’ use of students’ first language in class. Negative transfer seems to be a more
obvious outcome in using students’ first language compared to positive transfer, though the participants would generally agree that positive transfer definitely does exist. While trying to go with a monolingual approach could potentially limit negative transfer, it is worth looking at how feedback could be provided to make negative transfer aid students’ learning.

5.2 Practices

Practices show what teaching actually takes place. The Results section stated a lot of practices that the teachers were using. This section discusses the relationships between teachers’ practices and their perspectives on using the L1 in English language learning, which provided answers to the second research question, “[w]hat are the current practices on using students’ first language in an English language learning classroom in international schools in Guangzhou, China?”

5.2.1 On first language use. Compared to the results obtained from three studies in the Literature Review, this study enriched the results provided by the teachers teaching English L2. First of all, this study conformed to the results of the studies on the occasions where teachers considered using students’ L1 as necessary, such occasions include explaining grammar points and complex or abstract ideas and vocabularies (Schweers Jr., 1999; Tang, 2002). The importance of affective factors and better production in both spoken and written forms were however not mentioned either in Schweers Jr. nor Tang. While those aspects were all covered in Cook’s (2001) review, the idea behind using the L1 in group discussions was that it could provide a scaffold for the students. According to the teachers in this particular study, the use of the L1 does not only help with scaffolding learning, it actually triggers the students’ interest and challenges them to express more
complex ideas or ideas of their interest in the target language in presentations. This explains the reason why the students who rehearsed in their L1 did a better job in presentations than those who rehearsed exclusively in the target language in Kobayashi’s (2003) study. This study also shed some light on the problem in the French immersion program as to why the teachers preferred to use a limited set of tenses (Harley, & Swain, 1985) because with only L2 input, more restrictions were in place. The participants in this study are all English teachers, even in their cases, all the nine participants who are responsible to teach grammar agreed that grammar teaching would benefit from the students’ L1 as some of the grammatical terms are not easily explained in the target language. The reason for using the L1 in instructions was that understanding was the priority for all the participants in this study, that’s why all participants agreed with resorting to the L1 when the students encountered difficulties in understanding. In the French immersion program where the instruction of other subjects was conducted in the L2, it would be natural for the teachers to use the structures known by the students as this would not cause problems in understanding. If the students misused certain structures to begin with, the teachers might follow the misused structures to make sure the students got the content, which therefore resulted in students not acquiring the correct structure (Swain, 1988).

In addition, the teaching experience and individual factors underlying the teachers’ perspectives and approaches indicated that the individual factors are directly related to their perceptions. The teachers who just entered the teaching profession preferred to stick with their experience learning their first foreign language, and as time went on, they started to reflect on their teaching based on the teaching experience and
professional development to modify their approaches. This corresponds to Ariza’s (2002) and Brooks-Lewis’ (2009) reason for experimenting with bilingual approaches in their classrooms, as they were both influenced by their teaching experience over the years. As noticed in the Results, teaching experience and professional development played a more important role in the participants’ perceptions and teaching approaches as nine out of the ten participants indicated that they were indeed changed as they gained teaching experience and engaged in professional development. If this is generalizable, it means that professional development and constant reflections on one’s own or even other teachers’ teaching should not only be recommended, but is actually crucial in helping the teachers develop.

5.2.2 Influence of perspectives on practices. The overall perception of first language use amongst the participants was that the L1 is an important tool in all of the participants’ classes, regardless of whether they wanted to avoid it or not. Just as found in the literature, simply avoiding the first language would avoid a lot of the benefits that the L1 could bring about (Auerbach, 1993). For educators, explicit teaching would benefit a lot from the use of students’ first language according to the experience of the participants, the bilingual teaching methods and the integration continuum model (See Cook, 2001; Cook, 2002). This does not mean that the bilingual approach fits all, but for this group of participants, at the current stage, or in the current setting, they were definitely not able to stick to as much English L2 as possible, as most of the participants cannot avoid explicitly teaching language rules to the students in a class. Just like what the participants had learned from their teaching experience, differentiation in class is a key when teaching different groups or choosing different approaches. Their approaches depended on their
purpose, their students, their students’ levels and a number of other factors. For example, though researchers said that the monolingual approach might cause a high level of anxiety within students, one participant found that younger students might be eager to speak a second language from the start and it was better to start it rather than wait for them to become nervous by postponing it (Participant 7, Interview). Another participant also mentioned that the anxiety level seemed to have a negative correlation with age because the students seemed to adapt to an L2-speaking environment more easily when they were younger (Participant 5, Interview). So, there is no approach that can fit all students, in the end, it is important for the teachers to make their own decision as to what would fit their students.

However, this study does provide some useful assistance as to how different approaches can be implemented in class. The English-only class off the start was not seen as completely radical as some studies have mentioned (Ribadeneira, 1992). Some students may have some issues of identity or anxiety, but once it is implemented, the students would slowly get used to it and improve quicker, but all of the participants who taught in such a setting or tried such a setting did mention that this was pretty difficult (Participant 4, Participant 6, & Participant 15, Interview). The benefit of the direct method was rather clear; it was considered to considerably improve students’ speaking in a rather quick manner. And some students would even be able to bypass the stage of thinking in their first language after a long period of immersion (Participant 4, Interview). At the same time, it was felt that even in an English-only class there would need to be some strategic planning overall, for instance, in addressing problems like how to ensure students are not afraid of making mistakes and challenge themselves in using new
structures in order to optimize the direct approach. In addition, by noticing anxiety levels the participants recognized the potential problem the direct method may have on students’ affective filter, and taking into account these factors they thought that it is for the educators to decide whether to enforce an English-only environment from the start.

A monolingual approach that aims to slowly withdraw the use of students’ L1 based on their level is a more popular approach among the participants. For educators who would like the students to use only English in class at some point in their class, this would be a good approach to go with. The participants’ implementation of such an approach included encouraging the use of English in class and trying their best to use English in instructions at all times in class. The aim of such a practice was so that the students could bypass their L1 and think in English. This could potentially minimize the problem of interference because the students would not take an extra step to translate from their L1 to English (Participant 4, & Participant 6, Interview). This way of withdrawing the L1 progressively (method) was felt to be easier to implement compared to the direct method that starts with English-only, as this method provides students with scaffolding such that the students would be able to progress one step at a time, which was a method suggested by researchers in an inclusive classroom as it would not cause as much anxiety for the students (Santamaria, Fletcher, & Bos, 2002). It is worth noticing that such a practice supports Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, though it was phrased in a different manner (Krashen, 1981). More and more input was given one step at a time in class, but such input was not on explicit language skills, but rather given in a more authentic or natural environment like for instruction, facilitation and discussions, which is preferred by Krashen. Also, an extension that came out of scaffolding strategies indicates
that pairing students of high and low proficiency provided a mediated scaffold to help the students of lower proficiency, and then this support was gradually withdrawn as the low proficiency students improve in line with research results (Santamaria, Fletcher, & Bos, 2002). However, the support from high achieving students was not withdrawn. In fact, the pairing of high and low achieving students was found to be beneficial for students of all levels rather than having them working alone (Singhanayok, & Hooper, 1998). This could potentially be the reason why Participant 4 saw the cooperation in her class which no other participants had seen, because in her case, the class consisted of a large group with students of all levels. It is worth mentioning that such improvement and cooperation was only evident in a class that employs a monolingual approach, because when students actively used their L1 in class, they were more likely to rely on their L1 instead of trying to get help in English from their peers (Participant 6, & Participant 15, Interview).

Monolingual approaches, or even the direct method are seen as useful. They have their usage and their advantages, especially if the ideal of the teacher is so that the students would be able to think in an English mindset when producing English. The monolingual approach that aims to withdraw the use of students’ L1 was in fact, practiced and turned out to be something that was implemented by multiple participants, though no one had reached a point of immersion just yet due to the pressure of examinations (Participant 3, Participant 13, & Participant 17, Interview). The importance was recognizing that the monolingual approach has the advantage of improved speaking and quicker improvements in comprehension related skills, but could not effectively cover teaching explicit language skills like proper grammar usage (Genesee, 1978). The teachers whose primary teaching goal was to enhance students’ speaking and
comprehension skills, thought that the monolingual approach was not a bad idea. The gradual increment of comprehensible input in class was a way that did not seem to have a devastating effect on students’ affective filter (Participant 3, Participant 6, Participant 9, Participant 13, & Participant 17, Survey questionnaire, & Interview). So, though the monolingual approach was felt to have disadvantages as shown in both the research literature and this study, by carefully differentiating and accommodating the class, some of the disadvantages were minimized.

The bilingual approach in this study covered two very different aspects. One aspect was its use for explicit language skills teaching that are related to examinations. The other was the bilingual approach based on the transfer that happens between two languages. The use of the New Concurrent Method under the bilingual approach to teach exam-related language skills was practiced by all participants who had to prepare their classes for exams. No matter what ideal goal or perceptions the participants had, once they talked about the curriculum goal or examinations, they all agreed that the monolingual approach was both inefficient and redundant, as a monolingual approach would take longer to explain the key concepts and explicit language skills (Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 9, Participant 13, & Participant 15, Survey questionnaire, & Interview). The New Concurrent Method was used in this case because it is a method that gets straight to the point. The teacher would teach the lesson in English, but would repeat key information using students’ L1 to make sure they understand the most important content (Cook, 2001). This is the way practiced by most of the participants who had examinations as one of their teaching goals (Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 8, Participant 15, & Participant 17, Interview). For some of the other participants, they
would simply use students’ L1 for key concepts like in grammar to begin with, as this could save a lot of time in class compared to using English L2 (Participant 1, Participant 13, Participant 16, & Participant 18, Survey questionnaire, & Interview). This is consistent with research conducted in another city in China on what teachers thought about using students’ L1 in class, instead of skill transfer or competencies which were more of a concern for researchers. Plus the gained benefits that the teachers observed from using students’ L1 were improved comprehension, effective and less time-consuming instruction, just like what most participants in this study reported (Tang, 2002). But here, the participants also recognized that the exam was an important factor in using this New Concurrent Method, because they needed to make sure that the students got the language points they needed to know for the exam.

The Integration Continuum is another way to view the use of the bilingual approach in class. And this model is an interesting model to implement. It recognizes that at first language points or forms are new to foreign language learners as they are different from students’ L1, and they are very important as a first step (Cook, 2002). However, the purpose of this model is that on top of the language points, there are other skills in students’ L1 that can be used. Some of those examples were both identified in this study and the literature, like using thinking skills, analytical skills, reading skills and writing skills (Cook, 2002; Karim, 2010). In this study, encouraging the students to engage in critical thinking, read and write more in their L1 were also ways to improve their foreign language learning skills, as those skills could be transferred, which was noticed to be the case for some of the participants although they did not encourage writing in L1 (Participant 3, Participant 6, & Participant 17, Interview). Another method used to
promote transfer of skills and habits was to allow the students to actively compare the syntactic structures between the different languages to acquire sentence patterns, which is a linguistic research method commonly used in analysing acquisition of functions (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013; Perdue, 2002). Successes were found in implementing such comparisons in learning and teaching English among the participants (Participant 5, & Participant 13, Survey questionnaire, & Interview). Participant 13 provided an example saying “I love you, I, subject. But they don’t know the Chinese meaning” (Participant 13, line 201-202, Interview). The grammatical term “subject” could be novel to the students even in their L1, but a comparison between the sentence in the L1 and L2 provided a clear picture of the sentence element. Research indicated that such comparisons could also be employed in lexical representation (de Groot, 2002). However, a comparison of lexical representations was not present anywhere in this study because the language system and even alphabets in students’ L1 and English were completely different under the setting of this study. For teachers whose teaching goal was so that students could make use of their existing skills and integrate different languages, the integration continuum would be a model that could be considered, and methods that could promote positive skill transfer would also be helpful.

Community language learning or counselling learning is an interesting example under bilingual approaches. First of all, it is a method that actively uses students’ L1 (Cook, 2001). Second, it adds all the benefits of bilingual approaches on all aspects of the affective filter hypothesis, which are reduced anxiety, increased motivation and self-esteem across learners of all age groups (Ariza, 2002; Curran, 1976; Hull, 1984; Samimy, & Rardin, 1994). However, in addition to corresponding to a bilingual perception,
community language learning would fit into the agenda of some of the participants whose ideal was to encourage the ultimate separation of students’ L1 from English language learning. Community language learning would allow the students to discuss using their L1, and the teacher would be non-judgemental, facilitate the discussion and then translate what the students have produced into the target language (Curran, 1976). While facilitating discussions might not be possible in the participants’ classes due to class size, some of the participants would allow the students to utilize their L1 during presentation if they got stuck, then translated what they had said into English and asked the students to repeat the English expression (Participant 7, & Participant 8, Interview). However, Participant 7 indicated that the ideal was that the students could learn English using only English, because it could make the students learn quicker. While quicker improvement is indeed an advantage of the monolingual approach, the ideal in this case was to withdraw students’ L1 in English L2 learning, which is a goal that eventually meets Krashen’s (1981) Comprehensible Input target. This corresponded to Participant 7’s personal experience learning an L2, where the students started foreign language learning using the language they preferred with no judgement from the teacher, then as they progressed, they naturally withdraw their L1 in speaking and discussions. Therefore, though community language learning is a bilingual method, it could fit into both the monolingual and bilingual approach depending on the teacher’s goal.

Oral feedback could potentially be a solution to negative transfer as mentioned in the last section, since noticing a mistake upon occurrence may be a learning opportunity rather than being harmful. However, it is important that the mistake is noticed as soon as possible to avoid fossilization which could be extremely hard to correct (Tajeddin, &
Tabatabaieian, 2017). Even if immediate feedback does make a difference in the participants’ opinion, it is very important to notice that there are different kinds of feedback that can be given in class according to various research findings. For example, though recast was the kind of feedback most commonly used in class, it was not as effective as feedback that allows students to modify their output (Lyster, & Saito, 2010; Ranta, & Lyster, 1997). By allowing the students to correct their mistakes in output through providing feedback, it allows the students to have a deeper understanding, not merely just being aware of their mistakes; they actually notice their mistakes through correction (Long, 1996). There are different types of feedback categorized by Ranta and Lyster (1997), which could provide educators with a guide with how to deal with errors noticed in students’ output, especially interferences. Therefore, looking at it from this point of view, just like in a monolingual approach, by carefully tailoring and differentiating between teaching methods, some of the disadvantages of bilingual approaches could also be reduced or even used to make students have a deeper understanding while learning and avoid future errors in the target structure.

Based on the participants’ perception, bilingual approaches serve a purpose different from monolingual approaches. For educators who need to explicitly teach language points, the New Concurrent Method is a way to highlight key points that could aid comprehension. In addition, if the educators’ goal is to see transfer happening between languages, comparing different languages, developing language skills in one’s L1 are practices that could be used to achieve that transfer. Even for educators who have a monolingual ideal, methods like community language learning present practices that could be used even if they actually actively uses students’ L1. Bilingual approaches have
advantages and disadvantages, but just as Participant 6 mentioned, disadvantages do not have to be detrimental. By providing appropriate feedback, even interferences, which were considered as negative transfer or even at the root of a lot of errors, can be learning opportunities for students.

Therefore, though each participant had personal opinions and a set of methods they would have liked to use, ultimately, what they chose depended on their goals, ideal objectives and their students. They all differentiated their teaching based on their students’ levels and attributes. As the participants have indicated, if they had a different group of students, they would have definitely changed their approach based on their students (Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7, Participant 13, Participant 15, & Participant 17, Interview). But eventually, through differentiation, they would use what they considered as the appropriate approaches and practices to reach their goals and based on their ideals. The practices and approaches mentioned above are all associated with perceptions they had. Therefore, the practices and approaches organized above are simply guidelines on how students’ L1 could be used in class. Even for the participants in this study, those will be modified and updated once their students progress in English learning or when they shift their focus in studying. Such update and modification serve the purpose of matching students’ needs and coping with the weaknesses their teaching approaches have. What the participants have been using could be applied directly to classes, but one would have to figure out what the teachers would do in ideal situations and the goals that are set for the class in order to use the corresponding approaches then differentiate based on their students just like the participants in this study did. The most important lesson all those participants have learnt
throughout their teaching career, regardless of their views toward the use of students’ L1 and English teaching in general, was the need for differentiation, that is, there is not one size that fits all, which implies the need to also get to know each of one’s students well.

5.3 Limitations

The limitations of this study are rather obvious. First of all, as the nature of this study is an exploratory qualitative study, the sample size is rather small. There were 18 participants for the survey and ten participants for the interview. While the interview participants provided a lot of information, some of the survey participants skipped some questions which made some survey answers turn out to be lower than the number of participants. This study also focused on foreign language schools in one city, and the foreign language schools in that city could not represent other cities in China or even other schools in the same city. As some of the participants have mentioned, the students had better English skills than a lot of other students in the city and the schools they taught in were private schools that have more resources and smaller class sizes compared to the majority (Participant 5, Participant 6, & Participant 17, Interview). So, some of the participants also recognized that though most of their students right now could understand their instructions that were mostly in English, they would definitely change their teaching approaches and amount of English used if the setting changed because most students’ English would not be as advanced in other settings. These points indicate that this group of participants under this particular setting would not be able to represent the English teaching community. In addition, multiple studies have indicated that teachers’ learning experience when they were students in class form a large part of their teaching philosophy and practice (Edwards, 2013; Moodie, 2016). However, the results
in this study indicated that the participants were majorly affected by their own observations of their teaching and professional development experience. The reason for this difference might be due to the rich experience possessed by the participants, as all interview participants in this study had at least four years of teaching experience and up to 17 years. Therefore, the participants in this study were not representatives of the general English teaching population, and this could have brought possible bias on the results of the study. However, the focus of this study was not on generalization, but rather on getting what participants think of students’ L1 use in English learning and what approaches or methods they are using with their classes. Therefore, the key information in this study would not be affected too much by the limitations in generalization. It was also mentioned in the *Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Framework* section that the author held a positivist worldview, which might make the results of this study sound more generalizable than they actually were. The worldview could trigger a potential bias, but as mentioned multiple times throughout this study, the nature of this study was a qualitative exploratory study which simply investigated the participants’ perspectives. The participants were not sampled to be representative and the results provided indications but not generalizability.

As mentioned earlier, the survey served as a prelude to the interview. Therefore, the survey provided indications on some of the themes that appeared later in the interview. However, the interview participants might have remembered what they wrote in the survey and spoken of what they wrote instead of their actual practice. In this case, the survey could be a potential limitation for the participants as they might not recall their practice, but repeated what they had gleaned earlier from the survey questions. This could
be complemented by having class observations as a data collection tool, as class observations could expose what actually happens in the classrooms. However, because of potential ethical concerns, observation was not a part of this study. Therefore, the results in this study might not reflect the complete set of in-class practices used by the participants.

5.4 Future Outlook

This study mostly focuses on teachers’ approaches and methods in class, a lot of data were not analysed in great detail due to their different focus. For example, whether the participants would want the students to use English outside of class and the potential benefits of using English out of the class are areas that the participants have discussed. There are some other very interesting methods that match some of what Cook (2001) has mentioned, but they are not analysed in detail because they deviated from the focus of this study. On the other hand, there are various individual cases that are interesting, but could not be analysed in great details. For example, there exists one case where a certain participant was not at all impacted by her learning experience, and when learning experience was reflected upon, the participant suddenly realized that the teaching approaches that were currently used in class contradicted the learning experience completely.

Additional factors that could have an impact on the outcomes of different approaches could also be investigated. For example, some participants mentioned that the outcomes of monolingual approaches may differ if the students’ age group or the motivations for English learning are different (Participant 3, Participant 7, & Participant 17, Interview). It is rather clear that some of the disadvantages of both monolingual and
bilingual approaches could be avoided if the methods are carefully tailored. Could some of the advantages be more explicit and some of the disadvantages be reduced by some other factors? As the sample size of this study is limited, it would be hard to conduct those kinds of analyses in a meaningful way. However, those could be investigated as it would give a clearer picture as to how to differentiate among different groups and how to improve the existing approaches and methods, so that those methods can be generalized into something that can be practiced in classrooms.

5.5 Final Remarks

The purpose of this study was to see how teachers perceive the role of students’ first language in English teaching. Their perception was based on reflections on the approaches and methods of their choice and as all the participants have a certain level of teaching experience, they all see some outcomes resulting from their practice. Those approaches and methods are not based simply on theories; they are what the participants think that can be seen in their classrooms. The results from this study are different from what is written in research and theories, as all the participants have their own views on English teaching, but no matter what they thought, the views were simply based on goals that they had to achieve. The participants would choose whatever fit their teaching philosophies and goals at the same time. Therefore, nothing practiced by the participants would be identical to theories that are written, because teaching is very complex and our description would correspond closer to a theory of practice. Although the participants have their ideal objectives, they would still have to make sure the students know how to deal with their examinations. As it was observed, research has little influence over demands of classroom practice (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). This group of participants had
experience, and a lot of them reflected on their own experience and learned different teaching theories at the same time. But the classroom reality is different from theories, just like their ideals are different from their goals. The practical goal of this study is not to develop new theories or new practices, but to provide some existing views on using the L1 in foreign language learning classrooms and on existing practices that could be utilized in classroom settings. Those approaches may not be associated with some of the latest theories or experimental studies, but from a pragmatic perspective, they are approaches that work in the participants’ classrooms through their practices and experiences. And those approaches and methods are explained in a simple and understandable manner to promote practice. In the end, what is in this study might not be able to change existing perceptions educators have, but it could provide new foreign language instructors with some useful practices and approaches that can be implemented in the classroom.
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Appendix A

Survey on teachers’ perception toward using student’s first language in the classroom

This survey is VOLUNTARY and CONFIDENTIAL. It will only take 10-20 minutes of your time and your results will be used for research on English teaching.

Name: _____________________________

Which school are you working for? _____________________________________

Circle the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements using the following number scale with 1=Strongly Disagree and 7=Strongly Agree.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I believe the more English students use in the classroom, the more their English will improve.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I never allow my students to use their first language in the classroom.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>If I could speak the students’ first language, I would use it to clarify instructions in class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I believe there are no situations in which students should use their first language in the classroom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>The students would be more motivated and less anxious if they are allowed to use their first language in class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>I would allow my students to use their first language to explain grammar points to each other.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>I believe that students should use only English when working together on an assignment in the classroom.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I don’t like my students speaking their first language because I cannot understand what they are saying.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I believe that students can learn new English vocabulary better by using their first language.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>An English-English dictionary would be more beneficial than a dictionary in the students’ first language in English learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Translation between students’ first language and English is a great way to learn English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Difficult and abstract concepts and ideas in English would be better explained in students’ first language instead of in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I believe that suggestions on English learning and learning tips should be given in students’ first language.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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14. I would remind students to use English when I see them using their first language in class.

15. I believe that students could follow the lesson better if support in their first language is given.

16. How could students’ first language be beneficial in English language learning classrooms?

17. What do you think are the main reasons to avoid students’ first language in English language learning classrooms?

How many years have you been teaching? _________________

How many years have you been teaching ESL (English as a second language) students? ______

What is your first language? ________________________________

Do you have any experience learning any second language? Yes ☐ No ☐

To the best of your knowledge, estimate the percentage of students in your class that are ESL students. ________________________________

E-mail: ________________________________________________

Phone number: _________________________________________

Which method of contact do you prefer? E-mail ☐ Phone ☐ Other ☐

If your choice is other, please specify:

________________________________________________________

May I contact you if I have questions regarding to your answer in this survey? Yes ☐ No ☐
Appendix B
Semi-structured Interview Guide

Greetings: Thank you for accepting the invitation for this interview. My name is Jing and I am a Master of Education student in Queen’s University. I am currently investigating different approaches in English language learning. The purpose of today’s interview is to investigate different approaches by seeing how you perceive student’s first language in English language learning classroom. Your interview will be audiotaped and I will also take some notes when asking questions. Are you comfortable with participating in this interview?

1. First of all, could you briefly introduce yourself?
   Probe: What courses did you teach that are related to English language learning?
   How many years have you worked as a teacher?
2. Do you know how many languages do the students speak?
   Probe: What is/are there first language(s)?
3. What do you think of the use of students’ first language(s) in your English language learning classes?
4. Do you allow your students to use their first language(s)?
   Probe: Any pros and cons you noticed based on your decision?
5. When do you think using students’ first language(s) is acceptable?
   Probe: In what occasions?
   For what materials/content?
6. When do you think using students’ first language(s) is unacceptable?
   Probe: In what occasions?
   For what materials/content?
   What will you do if you see students use their first language in a situation when you think it’s unacceptable?
7. Are there any occasions when you think using their first language(s) is necessary?
   Probe: In what occasions?
   For what materials/content?
   Will you ever tell your students to use Chinese in any situations?
8. What do you perceive as the role of students’ first language(s) in English language learning classrooms in general?
   Probe: Do your perceptions change based on settings?
9. What do you perceive as the role of students’ first language(s) in out of the class?
   Probe: Do you think the students should use English out of the class?
10. Do you know if there is any first language policy in the school?
    Probe: How do you perceive this policy?
    How do your department or school in general perceive this policy?
    If there is no policy, will you prefer making a policy on the use of students’ first language or not?
11. Do you have any experience learning a second language?
    Probe: How does this affect your teaching approach?
    Did your perception of the use of first language changed based on your experience learning a second language?
12. Did your teaching experience form your perception of students’ first language in second language learning?
   *Probe:* Any incidents, occasions or observation that changed your perception?

13. Based on your own opinion, what is the relationship between students’ English and Chinese skills?
   *Probe:* Do you think students who have good Chinese skills will also have better English skills or the other way around?
   Do you have any observed such relationship on your students?

14. What are the language goals you set up for your class?
   *Probe:* What do you expect your students to have learnt when leaving your class?
   Can those students achieve your goals without using their first language at the current stage?
   Are you expecting your students to achieve the learning goals without using their first language in the future?

15. From your own perspective, if your students finish your course or the school completely, how well would the students master English?
   *Probe:* Will the students’ be able to process English and Chinese separately?
   Will the students have a more integrated mind set?

16. Given the classes here are limited in time, if you would have to choose only one, would you allow your students to get more English input or produce more English?

17. What kind of outcomes have you observed from your approach of allowing/disallowing students to use their first language in class?
   *Probe:* In terms of speaking? Writing? Listening? Reading?
   What’s your students’ currently level in each of those skills?

18. Do you consider learning English without the help of their first language a sensible goal of your course?

19. What method/activity did you use in class to facilitate English language learning?
   *Probe:* Movies (subtitles?)? Translation exercise? Presentation? Compare the two languages?
   Will you allow students to use Chinese in those activities?

20. How are students emotionally when they are allowed/disallowed to use their first language in the class?

21. Would you like to have a copy of your transcript? Do your mind help proofreading your transcript?

22. Do you want a copy of the thesis after it is finished?
Closing: Thanks for your participation in this interview. This interview provided me with very rich information and I really appreciate your cooperation. Thanks for your time. Good bye.
Appendix C

Recruitment e-mail (Administrators)

Dear principal/administrator of the school,

I am a Master of Education student at Queen’s University in Kingston, Canada. I am currently conducting a study investigating teachers’ perspectives on using students’ first language(s) in teaching the English language to ESL students. I would love to talk to the English teachers to see their views facilitating English language learning using students’ first language. Would you mind me getting the contact information from your school directory or offer me the contact information of English teachers of the school? I would only contact them to ask whether they are interested in participating in the study.

I also have a recruitment poster, could I post it in the school so that the teachers can contact me if they are interested in the study? If you have any concern or questions, please email me, Jing Wu, at 9jw38@queensu.ca.

Best

Jing Wu
Appendix D
Recruitment Poster

Faculty of Education, Jing Wu, Queen’s University

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for

ESL Teaching Study

We are looking for volunteers to complete a survey and a follow-up interview on perspectives on using students’ first language in ESL teaching. As a participant in this survey, you would be asked to share your view on using students’ first language in ESL teaching. During the interview, you will answer a few questions about your view.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes for you to complete and you can complete it online or by paper. The follow-up interview will take approximately 1 hour at a place you prefer. Participation in the survey and the interview is voluntary. You may stop to participate at any stage during the study.

If you are interested, please email Jing Wu on or before Mar. 31, 2019 at 9jw38@queensu.ca
Appendix E

Recruitment e-mail (Teachers)

Dear ESL teachers,

I am a Master of Education student at Queen’s University in Kingston, Canada. I am currently conducting a study investigating teachers’ perspectives on using students’ first language(s) in teaching the English language to ESL students. I obtained your contact information from the principal/school directory indicating you have taught an English-language/English-related subject. I am writing this e-mail to ask if you are interested in participating in the study.

We are looking for volunteers to complete a survey and a follow-up interview on perspectives on using students’ first language in ESL teaching. As a participant in this survey, you would be asked to share your view on using students’ first language in ESL teaching. During the interview, you will answer a few questions about your view. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes for you to complete and you can complete it online or by paper. The follow-up interview will take approximately 1 hour at a place you of your choice. Participation in the survey and the interview is voluntary. You may stop to participate at any stage during the study.

If you are interested, please email Jing Wu at 9jw38@queensu.ca on or before Mar. 31, 2019 to participate in the study. Please also indicate your preferred contact method if you wish to know more details about the study.

Best

Jing Wu
Appendix F
Ethical Clearance from Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board

December 01, 2018

Ms. Jing Wu
Master’s Student
Faculty of Education
Queen’s University
Duncan McArthur Hall
511 Union Street West
Kingston, ON, K7M 5R7

GREB Ref #: CEDUC-937-18; TRAQ #: 6015392
Title: “CEDUC-937:18 Investigating Teachers’ Views on Using First Language in English as a Second Language Classroom in Guangzhou, China”

Dear Ms. Wu:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled “CEDUC-937:18 Investigating Teachers’ Views on Using First Language in English as a Second Language Classroom in Guangzhou, China” for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS 2 (2015)) and Queen’s ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 6.14) and Standard Operating Procedures (405.001), your project has been cleared for one year. You are reminded of your obligation to submit an annual renewal form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/simon.html; click on “Events;” under “Create New Event” click on “General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies”). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form in Romeo/traq indicating that the project is ‘completed’ so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion; there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one-year period (access this form at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/simon.html; click on “Events;” under “Create New Event” click on “General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form”). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint; a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes to the level of risk; applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To submit an amendment form, access the application by at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/simon.html; click on “Events;” under “Create New Event” click on “General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies.” Once submitted, these changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Mr. Geoff Irving, at University Research Services for further review and clearance by the GREB or Chair, GREB.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dean Tripp, Ph.D.
Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c: Dr. Maria Myers, Supervisor
Dr. Benjamin Bolden, Chair, Unit REB
Mrs. Erin Reenie, Dept. Admin

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November 18, 2019

Ms. Jing Wu
Master’s Student
Faculty of Education
Queen’s University
Duncan McArthur Hall
511 Union Street West
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

Dear Ms. Wu:

GREB IRAQ #: 6025392
Title: "CEDUC 391.18 Investigating Teachers’ Views on Using First Language in English as a Second Language Classrooms in Guangzhou, China"

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has reviewed and cleared your request for renewal of ethics clearance for the above-named study. This renewal is valid for one year from December 3, 2019. Prior to the next renewal date, you will be sent a reminder memo and the link to ROMEO to renew for another year. You are reminded of your obligation to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at http://www.queenu.ca/traa/irform.html; click on "Events;" under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies"). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Completed Form in ROMEO/iraq indicating that the project is ‘completed’ so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion; there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one-year period. An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher, or participant or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours. To submit an adverse event report, access the application at http://www.queenu.ca/traa/irform.html; click on "Events;" under "Create New Event" click on “General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form.”

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes in study procedures or implementation of new aspects into the study procedures. Your request for protocol changes will be forwarded to the appropriate GREB reviewers and/or the GREB Chair. To submit an amendment form, access the application at http://www.queenu.ca/traa/irform.html; click on "Events;" under "Create New Event" click on “General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies.”

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Chair, General Research Ethics Board (GREB)
Professor Dean A. Tripp, PhD
Department of Psychology, Anesthesiology & Urology Queen’s University

c.: Dr. Maria Myers, Supervisor
Dr. Pascale Basch, Chair, Unit GREB
Rebecca Carnevale, Dept. Admin.
Appendix G
Letter of Information (Survey)

Study Title: Investigating teachers’ perspectives on using students' first language in the English as a second language classroom in Guangzhou, China

Name of Researcher: Jing Wu, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Maria Myers, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University

I am inviting teachers teaching English language learners in international schools in Guangzhou, China to participate in a research study examining their perspectives on using students’ first language in teaching English language learners. If you agree to participate, you will complete an online or paper survey which is expected to take 10-20 minutes. There are no known risks for taking part in this study. The benefit for you as a participant will be that you will reflect upon your own teaching method systematically and that you can obtain information on the results of the study if you would like. The study results would be beneficial to other teachers teaching English language learners, especially beginners’ teachers, in that it can provide information regarding utilizing students’ first language in teacher practice.

There is no obligation for you to say yes to take part in any stage of this study. You don’t have to answer any questions you don’t want to. You can stop participating at any time without penalty. You have the right to withdraw from the survey at any time up until Jun. 30, 2019. If you request to withdraw, your data will be destroyed. Please contact me at 9jw38@queensu.ca if you wish to stop participating or withdraw from the study. I will keep your data securely for at least five years and then your data will be destroyed securely. Your biographical and contact information will be collected in the study. Your confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible by replacing your name with a pseudonym for all data and in all publications. The code list linking real names with pseudonyms will be stored separately and securely from the data on an encrypted device. Other than me, only my supervisor will have access to any of the data.

I hope to use the results to complete my Master of Education thesis. I will include quotes from some of the surveys when presenting my findings. However, I will never include any real names with quotes, and I will do my best to make sure quotes do not include information that could indirectly identify participants. Please let me know if there’s anything you do not want me to quote during the survey.

If you have any ethics concerns please contact the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or chair.GREB@queensu.ca. Call 1-613-533-2988 if outside North America.
If you have any questions about the research, please contact me at 9jw38@queensu.ca or Dr. Maria Myers at myersmj@queensu.ca.

This Letter of Information provides you with the details to help you make an informed choice. All your questions should be answered to your satisfaction before you decide whether or not to participate in this research study. Keep one copy of the Letter of Information for your records and return one copy to the researcher, Jing Wu.

By signing below, I am verifying that: I have read the Letter of Information and all of my questions have been answered.

Name of Participant: ________________________________

Signature: _________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________

☐ Please check here if you want more information on the follow-up interview. What is your preferred method of contact for interview participation? ☐ phone ☐ e-mail ☐ wechat

Phone no./e-mail address/wechat ID:
_________________________________________________
Appendix H
Letter of Information (Interview)

Study Title: Investigating teachers’ perspectives on using students' first language in the English as a second language classroom in Guangzhou, China

Name of Researcher: Jing Wu, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University
Name of Supervisor: Dr. Maria Myers, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University

I am inviting teachers teaching English language learners in international schools in Guangzhou, China to participate in a research study examining their perspectives on using students’ first language in teaching English language learners. If you agree to participate, a one-hour interview will be conducted privately at a time and place of your choice. The purpose of the interview is for you to elaborate your view toward utilizing students’ first language in the process of English language teaching. The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. There are no known risks for taking part in this study. The benefit for you as a participant will be that you will reflect upon your own teaching method systematically and that you can obtain information on the results of the study if you would like. The study results would be beneficial to other teachers teaching English language learners, especially beginners’ teachers, since it can provide information regarding utilizing students’ first language in teacher practice.

There is no obligation for you to say yes to take part in any stage of this study. You don’t have to answer any questions you don’t want to. You can stop participating at any time without penalty. You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time up until Jun. 30 2019. If you request to withdraw, your data will be destroyed. Please contact me at 9jw38@queensu.ca if you wish to stop participating or withdraw from the study. I will keep your data securely for at least five years and then your data will be destroyed securely. Your biographical and contact information will be collected in the study. Your confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible by replacing your name with a pseudonym for all data and in all publications. The code list linking real names with pseudonyms will be stored separately and securely from the data on an encrypted device. Other than me, only my supervisor will have access to any of the data.

I hope to use the results to complete my Master of Education thesis. I will include quotes from some of the surveys and interviews when presenting my findings. However, I will never include any real names with quotes, and I will do my best to make sure quotes do not include information that could indirectly identify participants. During the survey or the interview, please let me know if there’s anything you do not want me to quote.

If you have any ethics concerns please contact the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or chair.GREB@queensu.ca. Call 1-613-533-2988 if outside North America.
If you have any questions about the research, please contact me at 9jw38@queensu.ca or Dr. Maria Myers at myersmj@queensu.ca.

This Letter of Information provides you with the details to help you make an informed choice. All your questions should be answered to your satisfaction before you decide whether or not to participate in this research study. Keep one copy of the Letter of Information for your records and return one copy to the researcher, Jing Wu.

By signing below, I am verifying that: I have read the Letter of Information and all of my questions have been answered.

Name of Participant: ________________________________

Signature: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________
## Appendix I

### Descriptives of Questionnaire Answers

| Q1: I believe the more English students use in the classroom, the more their English will improve. | 18 | 6.33 | .91 |
| Q2: I never allow my students to use their first language in the classroom. | 18 | 3.17 | 1.82 |
| Q3: If I could speak the students’ first language, I would use it to clarify instructions in class. | 18 | 4.22 | 2.16 |
| Q4: I believe there are no situations in which students should use their first language in the classroom. | 18 | 2.56 | 1.98 |
| Q5: The students would be more motivated and less anxious if they are allowed to use their first language in class. | 17 | 5.00 | 1.37 |
| Q6: I would allow my students to use their first language to explain grammar points to each other. | 18 | 5.47 | 1.38 |
| Q7: I believe that students should use only English when working together on an assignment in the classroom. | 18 | 4.72 | 1.93 |
| Q8: I don’t like my students speaking their first language because I cannot understand what they are saying. | 18 | 1.78 | 1.17 |
| Q9: I believe that students can learn new English vocabulary better by using their first language. | 18 | 2.94 | 1.55 |
| Q10: An English-English dictionary would be more beneficial than a dictionary in the students’ first language in English learning. | 18 | 5.33 | 1.88 |
| Q11: Translation between students’ first language and English is a great way to learn English. | 18 | 4.44 | 1.42 |
| Q12: Difficult and abstract concepts and ideas in English would be better explained in students’ first language instead of in English. | 18 | 5.17 | 1.62 |
| Q13: I believe that suggestions on English learning and learning tips should be given in students’ first language. | 18 | 3.72 | 1.60 |
| Q14: I would remind students to use English when I see them using their first language in class. | 18 | 5.94 | 1.00 |
| Q15: I believe that students could follow the lesson better if support in their first language is given. | 18 | 4.39 | 1.75 |
### Appendix J

**Frequency Table of Questionnaire Answers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1: I believe the more English students use in the classroom, the more their English will improve.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2: I never allow my students to use their first language in the classroom.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3: If I could speak the students’ first language, I would use it to clarify instructions in class.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4: I believe there are no situations in which students should use their first language in the classroom.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5: The students would be more motivated and less anxious if they are allowed to use their first language in class.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6: I would allow my students to use their first language to explain grammar points to each other.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7: I believe that students should use only English when working together on an assignment in the classroom.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8: I don’t like my students speaking their first language because I cannot understand what they are saying.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9: I believe that students can learn new English vocabulary better by using their first language.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q10: An English-English dictionary would be more beneficial than a dictionary in the students’ first language in English learning.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11: Translation between students’ first language and English is a great way to learn English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12: Difficult and abstract concepts and ideas in English would be better explained in students’ first language instead of in English.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13: I believe that suggestions on English learning and learning tips should be given in students’ first language.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14: I would remind students to use English when I see them using their first language in class.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15: I believe that students could follow the lesson better if support in their first language is given.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>