# Implications for language diversity in instruction in the context of target language classrooms: Development of a preliminary model of the effectiveness of teacher code-switching

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> ABSTRACT**:** *This paper concerns the conceptual and pedagogical issues that revolve around target language (TL) only instruction and teacher code-switching in the context of TL classrooms. To this end, I first examine four intertwined ideas (that is, monolingualism, naturalism, native-speakerism, and absolutism) that run through the monolingual approach to TL teaching, with a discussion of why these assumptions cannot hold in light of what is actually going on in the world today – bilingualism. The paper then reviews contemporary classroom code-switching research within a sociolinguistic framework, arguing that teacher code-switching should be permitted as a legitimate pedagogical practice, as it is not only an example of natural bilingual behaviour, but it also has great potential in terms of contributing to the development of TL learners' bilingual competence. It is further argued that newly emerging studies on the effects of teacher code-switching on TL acquisition provide an important pedagogical rationale for its inclusion in TL teaching practices. Based on these discussions and research evidence, I propose a preliminary model of the effectiveness of teacher code-switching, which is designed to contribute to advances in both theory and teaching practices.*
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> KEYWORDS**:** *Bilingual instruction, classroom code-switching, English-only, L1 use, monolingual instruction, monolingualism, teacher code-switching.*

## INTRODUCTION

To begin with, let us examine an all-too-typical scenario in modern TL teaching:

> Consider the example of a female English teacher who is forced to adhere to an administrative policy of "English-exclusivity" in her EFL classroom with primary-level students who share the same first language with her. Her students frequently get bogged down by not being able to understand the messages which their teacher delivers via English-only instruction, and pretend they understand when in fact they do not. The teacher sometimes wonders why she cannot serve as a target model of an individual who has successfully learned and easily uses two languages – a competent bilingual, instead of effectively disguising herself as a monolingual speaker in her classroom.

For decades now authors and researchers in the fields of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics have discussed and investigated whether teachers should dismiss learners' first language (L1) in teaching a target language (TL), and how we could adhere to the pedagogical principle of "no L1". Rarely, however, do they discuss – particularly in scholarly articles – whether monolingual instruction (that is, using only the TL) is really a sound pedagogical policy. A strong belief that learners' L1 should not be used under any circumstances in TL classrooms seems to be partly rooted in

the influential "interactionist" research tradition in which the acquisition of TL elements (in many cases the TL being English) has been claimed to be possible through the use of pre-modified TL input, interaction among participants in the TL, learners' TL comprehensible output, and teachers' negative feedback to learners' errors (for example, de la Fuente, 2002; Ellis & He, 1999; Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki, 1994; Krashen, 1985; Mackey & Philp, 1998). An implicit premise in this research tradition is that TL input and interaction (frequently integrating output and teacher feedback) are necessary and sufficient elements of TL acquisition, and thus another language – learners' L1 – is uncalled-for. Then, this idea leads directly to a pedagogical maxim that teachers should maximise the amount of TL input and interaction, and they should not use the L1 at all costs. However, this research branch may only partially describe complicated TL learning processes (particularly in light of a recent chaos/complexity theory perspective, as suggested by Larsen-Freeman, 2002), and as I will illustrate in this paper, a decision as to whether we should accept monolingual (or bilingual) instruction in TL teaching must take a multitude of factors into account. With this article, I hope to tease out some hitherto unacknowledged considerations and perspectives which may aid in supporting the aforementioned decision.

With this in mind, the purpose of this paper is two-fold. First, it aims to examine the justification of monolingual instruction in light of Guy Cook's (2010) recent work in which he sparks a renewed debate over the issue of using translation in language teaching and learning. While his argument is largely grounded on the matter of *translation* (which is not identical to the issue of teachers' L1 use in language teaching), I find his framework of "the four pillars of the monolingual approach" highly useful and relevant to the reassessment of this instructional type. The objective here is not to provide a complete and exhaustive agenda of criticisms levelled at monolingual instruction, but rather to generally dispel myths about the major impetuses for this instructional type and their legitimacy in view of contemporary empirical studies and academic discussions.

This discussion then sets the stage for exploring the justification for integrating learners' L1 into teachers' instruction in light of recent sociolinguistic and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research that suggests a new direction towards bilingual methods of TL teaching. Throughout this discussion, I hope to illuminate the theoretical underpinnings of teachers' L1 use that have somehow been underestimated, and to contribute to a recent pendulum action that is swinging back to the revival of the bilingual approach. This paper will close with a call to researchers to establish an evidence-based protocol for teacher code-switching in TL classrooms, simultaneously proposing a preliminary model of the effectiveness of teacher code-switching, with which researchers and teachers will explore the optimal uses of code-switching. It should be noted that the term TL in this paper generally refers to English, unless otherwise specified.

## THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE MONOLINGUAL APPROACH

Cook (2010) contends that language teaching approaches that exclude or attempt to minimise learners' L1 are generally built upon four strongly-held, yet empirically untested assumptions: monolingualism, naturalism, native-speakerism and absolutism.

In what follows, I will call into question the legitimacy of these assumptions, and evaluate each of them in order to speak out against monolingual teaching methods, as a basis for seeking a more ecological and effective teaching approach.

**Monolingualism**

The first assumption, monolingualism, implies that languages other than the target one should be avoided in language teaching and learning processes at all costs. This simple assumption has been highly influential across a wide range of language teaching institutions and ministries of education around the world. Taking the Hong Kong EFL context as an example, the Curriculum Development Council (2004) dictates that "in all English lessons … teachers should teach English through English" (p. 109), negating the idea of diversity in language of instruction, despite the fact that teachers and learners in this context speak the same mother tongue. In the case of the United States (ACTFL, 2010), aiming for a maximum amount of target language use on the part of teachers is encouraged on the grounds that more exposure to a target language will lead to a better learning outcome.

Some authors (Bamgbose, 2006; van Lier, 2006), however, have questioned the validity of such a simply drawn correlation between the amount of input and the learning outcome (and TL learners have reacted quite negatively against this instructional mode in general, see *Absolutism* below); the equation of "more input, better learning outcomes" is too simplistic and ignorant of complicated TL learning processes. Interestingly, monolingualism has rarely been challenged in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) community, and the interactionist research – one of the mainstream branches that flourished in the 1980s and 1990s – has capitalised on this assumption in explaining the SLA phenomenon. The authors in this research tradition (for example, Krashen, 1985; Mackey, 2007) rarely resort to the concept of learners' L1 in their research designs and argumentations, but rather emphasise the roles of input, output, and interaction as the driving forces of SLA.

That said, how has the ideology of monolingualism been incorporated into TL teaching practices? According to a summary of TL teaching methods since the 1900s by Cook (2010), major directions in TL teaching are divisible into three distinct periods, namely the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) era, the first revolution of *focus on form*, and the second revolution of *focus on meaning*. Unlike the GTM, which makes explicit use of translation and the L1 in its pedagogy, teaching methods in the first revolution imposed a strict ban on using learners' L1, and indeed some of them (for example, the Direct Method) gained their popularity specifically due to their direct promotion of excluding the L1 as a major guiding principle. Teaching methods in this era quickly fell into disfavour, partly due to the academic movement away from branches of studies that supported these methods (for example, behaviourism from psychology and the audio-lingual method), and partly because they put too much emphasis on the structure (form) of the language. The 1970s saw a groundswell of opinion among sociolinguists and teaching practitioners that language teaching should be oriented towards "meaning" and the "communicative" aspect of the language. This movement was mainly driven by Dell Hymes' (1972) notion of communicative competence and Stephen Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis (1985), both of which have made significant contributions to the growth of modern language teaching methods. A common thread uniting the methods in this era lay in its focus on the

value of authentic communication, its detachment from form-oriented language teaching, and most interestingly its *tacit* approval of monolingualism.

The so-called communicative approach (Celce-Murcia, 2001) has been responsible for distributing a type of pedagogy conducive to enhancing learners' communicative competence, which has been "the broad eventual target" in language teaching since the second revolution mentioned above (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Teaching methods under this branch have been praised for taking a sizable step in the direction of enhancing learners' ability to "communicate" by drawing on activities that reflect real-life communication, and for stepping away from a structure-based curriculum. Whether learners' L1 deserves any place in TL classrooms has, however, hardly ever been discussed. On this issue, Vivian Cook (2001) points out that in the existing discussions of the communicative approach, "the only times that the L1 is mentioned is when advice is given on how to minimise its use" (p. 404). Monolingualism, thus, has been lurking behind the arguments of the advocates of the communicative approach, as if the role and effectiveness of the L1 do not even merit any serious consideration. Swan (1985) is one of those few in the English Language Teaching (ELT) enterprise who explicitly criticise monolingualism and link it to the communicative approach, stating that "Communicative methodology stresses the English-only approach to presentation and practice that is such a prominent feature of the British EFL tradition" and this goes against nature because "[it] is a matter of common experience that the mother tongue plays an important part in learning a foreign language" (p. 85). It is interesting to note that the rise of the communicative approach coincided with the heyday of the interactionist research tradition, with the importance of TL interaction and communicative skills being a shared concern of this approach and research.

One may now assume that monolingualism, the main thrust of monolingual teaching methods, may not be so fallacious *per se*, if it is originally (and only) meant to increase the amount of exposure to target language input and subsequently to contribute to one's language proficiency. In light of Cook's work (2010) and other recent work, I would like to suggest otherwise. Monolingualism inevitably advances other untested and somewhat problematic assumptions, to which we turn next.

**Naturalism**

As its name suggests, naturalism proposes that TL learners will come to terms with TL learning in a manner similar to infants who "naturally" pick up their mother tongues under "natural" (as opposed to formal and instructional) environments. It follows, then, that the inner state and learning milieu of TL learners would be more or less similar to those of children who learn their L1. How this assumption has become so entrenched in language teaching and SLA communities without being investigated is somehow mysterious, but I shall draw on some evidence below to suggest that its veracity needs to be reassessed.

Widdowson (2003) points to a fundamental error in applying naturalism to SLA mechanisms. That is, except for those simultaneous bilingual children who learn two languages from bilingual parents from birth and onwards, most TL learners are *bound* to go through the stages of what psycholinguists refer to as "compound bilingualisation" (Weinreich, 1968), meaning that the addition of the TL to the L1

will create some complex interlanguage phenomena (Selinker, 1972). This interim stage appears to be a natural one, and a great deal of psycholinguistic research has provided evidence that two languages make constant interaction in the linguistic domains of syntax (Dussias, 2003; Dussias & Sagarra, 2007) and lexicon (Jared & Kroll, 2001; Van Hell & Dijkstra, 2002) at least. And rarely is either language of a bilingual person totally deactivated (or switched off), even when he or she opts for the monolingual speaking mode (Grosjean, 2010; Hoshino & Thierry, 2011). It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a comprehensive review of this research tradition, but it suffices to mention here that research evidence points to the inseparable nature of, and constant interaction between the L1 and TL linguistic systems.

According to Widdowson (2003), what learners are supposed to go through with "a monolingual pedagogy" in language classroom, however, is closer to "coordinate bilingualisation" in which L1 and TL linguistic systems are held to be neither interfering with each other nor fusing into one single system. He further claims that monolingual teaching is strongly geared towards developing coordinate bilingualism, but most language learners will experience otherwise internally (that is, compound bilingualism) when learning the TL. This argumentation harmonises with the notion of multi-competence – the term coined by Cook (1992), through which he visualizes his idea of a fused L1 and TL system. He goes so far as to claim that a TL learner's linguistic system is so unique that it resembles neither that of his/her L1 countrymen nor that of native speakers of the TL. Both authors are fervent advocates of integrating learners' L1 into TL teaching, which, according to their point of view, is a more ecological and effective way of learning another language.

Other researchers like Robert Bley-Vroman (1989) attempt to grapple with the difficulty in explaining the reason why adults do not acquire their TL in the same manner as youngsters who learn their L1 by pointing to some differences in cognitive modules between the two populations. This is succinctly summarised in his words as follows:

> These general characteristics of foreign language learning tend to lead to the conclusions that the domain-specific language acquisition system of children ceases to operate in adults, and in addition, that foreign language acquisition resembles general adult learning in fields for which no domain-specific learning system is believed to exist (1989, p. 49).

Apart from the cessation of the language-specific module, having mastered one's native language is another noticeable difference that sets adult TL learners apart from youngsters. Bley-Vroman, though acknowledging that adult TL learners would make some linguistic errors due to differences between the L1 and TL, suggests that the L1 can also be a useful learning resource that may serve as a "surrogate" for the lack of the aforementioned language-specific module that is only accessible to those under a certain age. There is a complex interaction between the L1 and TL by which the interlanguage system in TL learners' minds is being constantly restructured, via their hypothesis-making with regards to the TL system in view of the L1 knowledge at their disposal. This then lends support to the arguments made by Widdowson and Cook that coordinate bilingualism is unlikely to materialise, and naturalism is not supported well when it comes to SLA.

TL-only instruction, as hinted above, promotes coordinate bilingualism and naturalism, as it aims to create a learning environment that resembles that of L1 acquisition. Although some (for example, Chambers, 1991; Krashen & Terrell, 1988; Macdonald, 1993) have argued for the use of exclusive or near-exclusive TL instruction based on arguments that match with monolingualism and naturalism, a discussion on whether it would have a negative bearing on TL learners is missing.

**Native-speakerism**

While naturalism is largely concerned with inner stages of learners' minds, native-speakerism – another problematic assumption inherent in the monolingual approach – has more to do with sociolinguistic issues. Holliday (2005) attempts to anatomise this complex concept by drawing on the recent literature in the fields of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), and EIL (English as an International Language). Native-speakerism, according to his view, advances the dichotomous view that separates native speaker teachers from their non-native counterparts. In a world where native-speakerism runs through the English-teaching business, the "native speaker" of English (who speaks the English variety of English-speaking countries) is the norm, target model, and an ideal English teacher. According to this view, English learners should set a native-speaker-like fluency as their ultimate goal (and attempt to approach native speaker standards), and subsequently native speakers from these countries are better entitled to teach English than other non-native teachers of English. It is not difficult to understand that monolingualism and native-speakerism are strongly connected, as a native-speaker teacher is likely to almost exclusively rely on TL-only instruction given lack of any knowledge of learners' L1 (unless one makes some effort to acquire learners' languages for personal interests or teaching purposes).

This assumption is problematic on several levels, but to begin with, it brings about inequality among TESOL professionals. This is partially related to a negative connotation attached to the "non" element of the term "non-native speaker (teacher)" (Holliday, 2005), which "usually signifies a disadvantage or deficit" (p. 4). On similar grounds, Jenkins (2000) claims that: "The perpetuation of the native/non-native dichotomy causes negative perceptions and self-perceptions of 'non-native' teachers and a lack of confidence in and of 'non-native' theory builders" (p. 9). It can be then postulated that this lack of confidence in non-native theorists, who presumably can give a much better insight into the bilingual approach, has resulted in a lack of discussion on the value of teacher code-switching and other bilingual resources, though a growing number of English as a second language theorists are raising their voices on this issue in the academic community today (for example, Canagarajah, 1999a; Medgyes, 1994). Meanwhile, the emotional and practical burden of trying to approach as closely as possible the native speaker norm presses down on both non-native teachers and learners alike (Kramsch, 1993). The problem here has to do, not so much with having an unrealistic goal, but rather with the issue that the native speaker norm has not been set out purely on pedagogical grounds.

Phillipson's *linguistic imperialism* thesis (1992) is a rare piece of work that attacks several of the ideas relating to native-speakerism head-on, criticising it as a hidden agenda of major institutions in the English-speaking West in an attempt to maintain the status quo of political power around the world by capitalising on the potential of English as a lingua franca. That is, they disseminate the thought that native speaker

teachers of English are ideal teachers of English (with their English variety being the norm), and thus they are entitled to control the way English should be taught, "based on the assumption that 'native speakers' of English have a special claim to the language itself, that it is essentially their property" (Holliday, 2005, p. 8). Although some may attack this idea for being too melodramatic to be taken at face value, there is indeed some evidence to suggest that native speaker teachers of English stay ahead of the game in the EFL and ESL job market by virtue of their nationality (Thomas, 1999).

Another problematic idea that emerges from native-speakerism is the "essentialist view of non-Western culture" (Holliday, 2005), in which non-native speaker students from diverse backgrounds are generalised to have rather similar learner attributes. In Sleeter's (2011) view, "*Essentialising* culture means assuming a fairly fixed and homogeneous conception of the culture of a minoritised group, with an assumption that students who are members of that group identify with that conception of who they are" (p. 14). Here they are often collectively considered as *A Generalised Other* in contrast to the *Unproblematic Self* – a group of native speakers of English themselves. *A Generalised Other* is a rather condescending term, because it does not take cultural characteristics of each population of learners into consideration, and yet worse, it is "constructed as opposite to the familiar, with often falsely attributed negative or exotic characteristics which are opposite to the positive characteristics of the Self" (Holliday, 2005, p. 19). For example, it is all too easy for TESOL practitioners to assume that ethnic Chinese learners under Confucian influence put high value on silence and group orientation in academic lectures (Flowerdew & Miller, 1995) or that the communication styles of Japanese learners are characterised as consensus and self-restraint (Miller, 1995). Surely, there is nothing wrong with remaining taciturn or making oneself stand out less during group work, but it is through the influence of the aforementioned essentialist view that these characteristics are often deemed "problematic" and "inferior" to the eyes of native speakers of English (Holliday, 2005). It is not surprising that learners' mother tongues are projected negatively within this essentialist perspective, as they belong to the idiosyncratic characteristics of a particular group.

Given that the essentialist view is deeply ingrained in those who take the helm in ELT pedagogy, it is not difficult to see how the "one-size-fits-all" approach to ELT (be it monolingual instruction or the culturally monolithic approach) has reigned over other bilingual/multilingual or localised teaching methods. Indeed, the danger of applying a single approach wholesale has been identified as a problem by some authors and researchers in the ELT field. In the US context, Sleeter (2011) claims that it is the movement towards neoliberalism in the last decades that has resulted in school reform driven by market competition, and that has pushed other bilingual and more culturally responsive pedagogies to the edge. While pointing to a dearth of research on culturally responsive pedagogy as the reasons for its marginalisation, she argues that "elite and white fear of losing national and global hegemony" may also have enforced a blockade against its rise in educational contexts (p. 12). The "one-size-fits-all" approach has also been claimed to cause immense harm to local non-native teachers of English, by "prevent[ing] them from developing their expertise in ways relevant to their local community needs, apart from forcing them to be obsessed with native-like pronunciation or other narrow linguistic proprieties" (Canagarajah, 1999b, p. 84). This is rather unfortunate, partly because a pursuit of the phonology of one particular

English variety is no longer considered appropriate in light of the phenomenon called *English as a Lingua Franca* (ELF), through which speakers from different L1s with different pronunciation features communicate with each other (Jenkins, 2000). Within the ELF framework, a major focus does not rest on how to approximate one's pronunciation as closely as possible to that of native speakers of English, but on whether English can serve as a medium of communication on an international level.

As discussed above, naturalism and native-speakerism intersect with several negative consequences for learners' processing mechanisms and the status of non-native teachers. It further raises the untested view that monolingual instruction takes precedence over instruction that integrates learners' L1. Fortunately, researchers in the areas of ELT and Applied Linguistics have started to call into question the effectiveness of monolingual teaching methods and several assumptions that tag along with them: the swing of the pendulum has recently shifted towards re-examination of learners' L1 as a useful resource and of the value of non-native-speaker teachers. The implication of this research movement will be discussed in what follows in reference to absolutism – the fourth pillar of the monolingual approach.

**Absolutism**

Cook (2010) introduces this last assumption as the inherent confidence in monolingualism that abandoning learners' L1 in teaching and learning processes would be indisputably superior to not doing so. He goes on to note that "the superiority and popularity of Direct Method [referring to all TL-only teaching methods in his argumentation] has remained largely immune from investigation until recently" (p. 9). One of the core guiding principles of the direct method (and its variations) that teachers are advised to follow is to maximise their use of the target language (for example, Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Krashen & Terrell, 1988; Macdonald, 1993), and if possible to create a TL-exclusive environment. That said, the proponents of the monolingual method align themselves with what Macaro (2001) identifies as the Virtual or Maximal position:

1. *The Virtual Position:* The classroom is like the target country. Therefore we should aim at total exclusion of the L1. There is no pedagogical value in L1 use. The L1 can be excluded from the FL [foreign language] classroom as long as the teacher is skilled enough.
2. *The Maximal Position:* There is no pedagogical value in L1 use. However, perfect teaching and learning conditions do not exist and therefore teachers have to resort to the L1 (p. 535).

In contrast to these two positions, he adds the "Optimal Position" – one that he advocates – in which a variety of ways to incorporate learners' L1 into TL instruction are considered and explored. The monolingual approach and virtual (maximal) position, in his opinion, should not be blindly endorsed before being demonstrated as more effective than the bilingual approach. Though not abundant, some recent studies in the field of SLA have lent more weight to the Optimal Position, part of which we will briefly review below.

Second language (L2) vocabulary acquisition research is arguably one of the most promising areas that have paved alternative routes to monolingual methods, by

examining the effectiveness of drawing on learners' L1 as a pedagogical resource. Among various sub-branches of this research tradition is the comparison of the relative effects of L1 and L2 glossing on L2 vocabulary acquisition when reading L2 texts. While the findings are not conclusive (presumably due to different research designs), we do find a fair number of studies showing that L1 glossing is more effective than L2 glossing. Oskarsson's early study (1975) compared the relative effects of bilingual and monolingual glossaries on English vocabulary acquisition. Bilingual glossaries (Swedish in the study) were found to be more effective for the participants in the post-tests. Laufer and Shmueli (1997) examined the effects of L1 and L2 glosses in a more complex design, by including glosses with varying amounts of context when presenting L2 words, ranging from: 1) no context (that is only lists of words); 2) sentence context; 3) a normal text; and 4) an elaborated text. The study demonstrated that L1 glosses were consistently more effective, regardless of the length of the context. Laufer and Shmueli attributed the advantage of L1 glosses to their familiarity and explicitness that attracts learners' attention to a maximum degree. Their argument is parallel to that of Widdowson (2003), who suggests that "such explicit reference [to one's L1] would have the additional advantage of making formal features of the second language meaningful and noticeable at the same time" (p. 153). A more recent study conducted by Miyasako (2002) points to the differential effects of monolingual and bilingual glosses on L2 learners with varying proficiency levels, with the monolingual and bilingual glosses respectively being more effective for higher- and lower-level learners. These findings are highly encouraging for the proponents of the Optimal Position (Cook, 2001; Macaro, 2009), yet need to be treated as preliminary, owing to the rather small sample sizes.

Another problematic assumption that comes along with absolutism is that L2 learners are in favour of monolingual instruction. It is noteworthy that investigating learners' perspectives on language learning, let alone their preference for pedagogical instruction, has only recently been starting to capture the attention of L2 researchers. A limited number of recent studies on this issue, however, have to date released nearly unanimous findings against what absolutism claims. As one of the earliest attempts that directly addressed this issue, Macaro (1997) sampled English pupils at the secondary level and examined their attitudes towards teachers' language use, and found that only a minority were positive about dealing with a large amount of TL input (and saw the frequent use of the L1 as "an easy way out"), while a majority of the learners were rather worried about not being able to understand what was being spoken and taught. The students, however, on the whole desired some administrative information (for example, assignment, test instruction) to be delivered in the L1. Studies that followed Macaro's work have strengthened and extended these findings by either examining this issue in a very specific learning context or adopting a more complex design.

Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) looked into an introductory French course for university students in Australia. The context of the study was the Maximal Position (see above for Macaro's categorization), in which there was general agreement in the department of French that "the exclusive use of French in instruction was not only a sign of teaching excellence but also beneficial to learning the language" (p. 255). Despite the strong promotion of the TL-maximum approach on an institutional level, a majority of the university learners of French leaned towards keeping their L1 for understanding TL grammar explanations and having access to the meanings of TL

words (that is, medium-oriented purposes). These learners, however, were generally more ready to take the plunge and try out the TL instruction for framework-oriented purposes (that is, concerning the management of the lesson) than those in Macaro's study. The authors postulated that this might be due to a unique characteristic of this educational context, that the teachers in the sampled department may have been equipped with some pedagogical techniques that would have enabled their TL use for the framework-oriented purposes to be more learner-oriented. Chavez (2003), on the other hand, adopted a cross-sectional design with German-as-a-foreign-language learners in a US university, examining their attitudes towards L1 and L2 use in classrooms. The cross-sectional data comprised 330 participants enrolled at three different levels, all based on a communicative four-skills curriculum. An analysis of the questionnaire data revealed a developmental pattern across the groups at three different levels, suggesting a linear association between proficiency and preference for L2 use. However, she also noticed that the participants as a whole attributed a significant role to their L1, which serves "the most pressing and genuine communicative purposes", whereas "instances in which 'real' communication was carried out in the L2 often involved asymmetric interactions [between teachers and students]" (p. 193).

Some authors aimed to track down changes in learners' attitudes when they were introduced to a certain type of instruction. In the context of communicative-oriented (and English-predominant) EFL classrooms in Japan, Burden (2004) administered the same questionnaire to university students twice, at the beginning and end of the semester. The findings indicated that the proportion of learners who thought that English teachers should know and use the students' mother tongue was very high (more than 90% at the beginning of the semester) and this fell only slightly after a period of one semester. Burden postulated that a study of a longer research span would have captured a growing preference for an English-predominant teaching approach among the learners. In contrast to Burden, Heugh (2009) examined whether there would be any significant change in the attitudes of South African grade 8 students towards bilingualism when their teacher introduced and adopted bilingual teaching in an English-medium school. The learners were initially rather pessimistic about teachers' use of languages other than English, as their parents had invested a considerable amount for them to attend this school, mainly because the school was expected to provide an English-immersion environment. However, the results showed that, after having experienced their teacher's systematic use of bilingual instruction, the learners were not only much less resistant to bilingual instruction, but also were observed using code-switching in asking questions of and communicating with their teachers. It was further found that the learners "used multilingual exchanges as their *lingua franca*" (author italic, p. 105) beyond the classroom, indicating that they would most likely develop bilingual (not monolingual) competence for their communication purposes.

Taken together, these results, along with the L2 vocabulary acquisition research reviewed above, show that the monolingual approach may not necessarily be more effective than the bilingual approach under some circumstances, and that it is not a favoured choice among learners. While accumulated evidence suggests that learners progressively find their feet in TL-based instruction, it also points to the need to critically re-examine the legitimacy of absolutism.

Having discussed the various problems related to adopting monolingual instruction without giving serious considerations to its negative impacts on learners, I will now turn to other lines of research that give a theoretical rationale for bilingual instruction.

## ARGUMENTS FOR BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION

This section will consider two arguments for integrating learners' L1 into TL instruction, with one being drawn from sociolinguistic literature and the other based on recent SLA studies. The sociolinguistic argument is concerned with the more fundamental question of whether a TL classroom can be viewed as a microcosm of a multilingual world, and thus whether we should allow for learners' L1 to be present therein. The SLA studies are concerned with the relative effectiveness of teachers' L1 use in comparison with that of monolingual instruction, and thus deal with an issue similar to the L2 vocabulary studies introduced in the previous section.

### Sociolinguistic arguments for bilingual instruction

It was mentioned above that TL teaching methods have been largely driven by monolingual ideology and native-speakerism, which assume that the target language is the exclusive medium through which people communicate at the societal level, and the language which teachers and students should solely rely on for classroom interaction. These assumptions, however, have not been taken up in the literature of bilingualism and sociolinguistics. Hamers and Blanc's *Bilinguality and Bilingualism* (2000) fittingly opens with the representative view of researchers in these academic disciplines:

> Languages in contact, that is bilingualism at the societal level and bilinguality, its counterpart at the individual level, are an integral part of human behaviour. With globalisation and increasing population movements due to immigration and greater geographical and social mobility, and with the spread of education, contacts between cultures and individuals are constantly growing. While bilingual individuals already outnumber monolinguals, it can be expected that this trend will continue in the twenty-first century (p. 1).

According to this description of what transpires in the world today, people from different language backgrounds are likely to draw on more than one linguistic variety at their disposal during communication, a phenomenon known as code-switching (Poplack, 1980). It is interesting to note that the psycholinguistic field once viewed this natural human behaviour as the by-product of the language system of incompetent bilinguals (Weinreich, 1968), which interestingly coincided in a timely way with the rise of monolingual and communicative approaches.

This strongly negative connotation to code-switching (CS) has gradually faded away, as a great number of researchers have argued that "Codeswitching is, perhaps, the most common, unremarkable and distinctive feature of bilingual behaviour" (Li Wei & Martin, 2009, p. 117), and found this behaviour to be "systematic, skilled, and socially meaningful" (Woolard, 2004, p. 74). Only recently have researchers in the SLA field (for example, Ferguson, 2009; Gearon, 2006; Hosoda, 2000; Simon, 2001) started to opt for this term over teachers' *L1 use*, which "appears to have no rules, conventions or limitations" (Tian & Macaro, 2012, p. 369). These authors, while

acknowledging that classrooms need to be geared towards TL acquisition (and consequently teachers' instruction should primarily be delivered in the TL, rather than in the L1), attempt to promote the view that classroom CS[1], like naturalistic CS, is a natural human behaviour and should be seen as a sign of bilingual competence.

We should ask ourselves then, if CS is a natural bilingual behaviour for people with two languages, and if the communicative approach is supposed to prepare learners optimally for outside-classroom language use, why has the idea of CS in TL learning contexts been so contentious among some researchers and teaching practitioners? This is presumably because the proponents of the Virtual and Maximal Positions (see the previous section for definitions) would argue that classroom discourse and CS cannot be seen as something comparable to naturalistic discourse and CS due to the differences in the contexts and participants' proficiency (bilinguals in naturalistic settings are more balanced in terms of their proficiency in two languages than TL learners).

One promising avenue to resolving the above collision of arguments regarding the use of classroom CS is to pursue the question of whether we can consider a TL classroom to be a kind of a bilingual community. This question is of theoretical importance, since whether we accept a TL classroom as a bilingual community or not gives us quite a different direction in terms of investigation into the justification for teacher CS. If we acknowledge that a TL classroom is a kind of a bilingual community in which CS is a widely used discourse strategy as mentioned above, communicative-oriented TL classrooms should permit the use of CS on the part of the teacher as well as learners. The rationale behind this proposition is that a communicative-oriented classroom, which aims to promote "real communication" (Richards, 2006, p. 13), should reflect (rather than ignore) discourse strategies or communicative repertories that exist outside TL classrooms. Given that using more than one language within the same discourse is increasingly becoming the linguistic norm across the world, as Myers-Scotton (2006) states in *Multiple Voices*, then monolingual instruction seems to go against the intention of the TL classroom adopting the communicative approach. However, this argumentation must be qualified, until we are able to suggest that a TL classroom *does* share some features with a bilingual community, and can prepare our learners to become competent bilinguals. We shall examine below classroom CS studies that cast a new light on the aforementioned collision of arguments.

First of all, there is now a growing body of research which has demonstrated that the discourse patterns of TL classrooms *do* resemble those of bilingual communities, at least in some aspects. It is well established in the field of bilingualism and sociolinguistics that people in bilingual communities interact with each other with the shared knowledge of discourse constraints and values attached to each language code in a particular community, and sometimes negotiate their social status via the use of CS (Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Myers-Scotton, 2006). This often entails the following: shifts between different sets of "frames", negotiation of pre-established status levels between interlocutors, or the presentation of different identities. Classroom CS studies

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[1] While I am very much aware of the fact that classroom code-switching research concerns both teacher code-switching and learner code-switching issues (with the latter having garnered much attention from those working on sociocultural paradigms), I will mainly focus on the issue of teacher code-switching, since one of the primary purposes and innovations of the present paper is to propose a preliminary model of the effectiveness of teacher code-switching.

conducted by Simon (2001), Canagarajah (1995), and Merritt, Cleghorn, Abagi and Bunyi (1992), which have analysed classroom discourse from a micro-ethnographic approach, have found that these characteristics are also observable in TL classrooms. That is, these studies have shown that teachers and learners do share some knowledge of the particular constraints on the use of each language code under certain situations, occasionally shift between different frames, and consequently present dual identities as community members sharing the L1 and as participants in the classroom. Through a stretch of discourse, classroom members can shift frames from a "formal institutional learning" frame to "social" frame (Simon, 2001, p. 321), or signal "alignment and disalignment" between classroom members (Eldridge, 1996, p. 307) via code-switching, all frequently observed features from bilinguals in naturalistic settings. To put it differently, classroom CS is not a random phenomenon.

Some studies present even more promising findings that TL learners' CS has a potential to develop as bilingual competence over time. A study by Arnfast and Jørgensen (2003) demonstrated that American learners of Danish used CS as a compensation-type strategy (using the L1 for their lack of language resources) in early stages of language proficiency. However, as their proficiency increased, their pattern of CS started to resemble that found in naturalistic settings. In the authors' words, their findings suggest that "code-switching can be both a communicative strategy for the learner and a competence (or resource) used with the specific aim of facilitating both language acquisition and social acceptance" (p. 50). Saxena (2009), in the context of postcolonial English classrooms in Brunei, showed how learners' CS could extend well beyond the purpose of compensating for their linguistic gap, serving in addition some discourse functions. In one classroom where the teacher was assertive in maintaining English-only instruction, the learners were purposefully using their L1, which, according to Saxena, can be seen as "students' resistance displayed by the use of Malay [their L1] in … micro-level interactional encounters" (p. 176). The students' rather negative reaction seems to be partly due to them occasionally getting flustered by not being able to understand what the English-only instruction meant, and partly because an English-only ideology in the classroom marginalised their own culture and language.

As a growing number of researchers view a TL classroom as a microcosm of bilingual communities (and L2 learners as prospective competent bilinguals), there have been some efforts among classroom researchers to draw on theoretical and methodological frameworks originating in the fields of bilingualism and sociolinguistics in investigating classroom discourse and CS. For example, one of the most frequently cited frameworks from sociolinguistic CS literature is a distinction between two different types of CS: discourse-related and participant-related CS (Auer, 1998). Discourse-related CS is speaker-oriented, working as a strategy for signalling an interactional meaning during bilingual discourse, which may be related to a certain participant, topic or phase of the discourse. On the other hand, participant-related CS concerns switching which corresponds to addressing language competency or linguistic preference in the organisation of conversation. Martin-Jones (2000) points out that the notions of discourse-related and participant-related CS are of considerable relevance for research into bilingual classroom interaction. That is, the motivation for switching codes in bilingual classroom interaction can be explained to a large degree in light of the discourse-related and participant-related switching paradigm. For

example, Martin-Jones identifies the functions of teachers' discourse-related switching, based on the research literature, as being:

> to signal the transition between preparing for a lesson and the start of the lesson; to specify a particular addressee; to distinguish "doing a lesson" from talk about it; to change footing or make an aside; to distinguish quotations from a written text from talk about them; to bring out the voices of different characters in a narrative; to distinguish classroom management utterances from talk related to the lesson content (p. 2).

While discourse-related switching, which once was believed to occur mainly in naturalistic discourse, is indeed noticeable in a wide range of teachers' discourse, participant-related CS is even more pertinent in TL classroom contexts, as it is the place where the teacher's and learners' linguistic proficiency levels vary to a great extent, and where CS is likely to take place to accommodate others to enhance the degree of mutual understanding (see also Dailey-O'Cain & Liebscher, 2009, for more recent evidence). For example, when the teacher provides the L1 equivalent of a difficult English word for the sake of the learners' comprehension, we could understand this as participant-related switching. It can be said, then, that teacher CS serves as appropriate input in terms of modelling functions of naturalistic discourse and CS, which learners will take advantage of in developing their own bilingual competence.

That said, the discussions above enable us to arrive at a tentative conclusion that a TL classroom can resemble a bilingual community at least in some aspects, provided that the L1 is available to all classroom participants, and a teacher and students share some knowledge related to the characteristics of both language codes in their local context (usually the TL being the more formal/instructional one and the L1 being the language of the community). Even if there exist some differences between a language classroom and a bilingual community, classroom discourse and CS therein may deserve to be seen as having an *authentic* value for classroom participants. Tian and Macaro (2012) rightly suggest:

> Classroom discourse does not need to simulate naturalistic discourse in order for it to be authentic but is "authenticated" by the participants in the discourse....It is true that in classroom discourse codeswitching occurs both for communication and for teaching/learning purposes [unlike naturalistic discourse that occurs primarily for communication purposes]; but that is its *actual* discourse function (p. 369).

The point is that classroom CS (especially teacher CS) should not be denigrated, simply because it is not an exact replica of naturalistic CS; it has its own functions and boundaries in classroom contexts. Moreover, we have seen some possibility that classroom CS can later develop into bilingual competence. This proposition here, of course, will have to await more classroom studies with both sociolinguistic and SLA perspectives. However, the future looks promising in light of studies such as Arnfast and Jørgensen (2003) and Dailey-O'Cain and Liebscher (2009) that attempt to bridge the gap between classroom and naturalistic discourse/code-switching.

**SLA studies on the effects of teacher code-switching**

The sociolinguistic arguments for teacher CS discussed above would be pointless to some theorists if such an instructional type were not beneficial to learners' TL acquisition. That is, we need further empirical evidence showing that teacher CS not only helps one develop discourse skills that resemble those of competent bilinguals, but also enhances one's TL acquisition, particularly in comparison to TL-only instruction. This issue was raised by many in the early 2000s (Cook, 2001; Macaro, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002), but only recently have we seen a limited number of studies that have attested to the effectiveness of teacher CS. We shall look at each of them briefly below.

Tian (2009) investigated whether teacher CS to learners' L1 could bring about positive learning outcomes in an EFL context at the university level. A group of 117 first-year, English-major Chinese EFL learners were randomly distributed to either an English-only, or a CS condition, with the rest of the participants being allocated to the control condition. The purpose of the study was to examine whether a brief explanation of target vocabulary in either CS or the target language (that is, English) embedded in listening comprehension activities (what she proposed constitutes meaning-oriented learning) would be more effective in terms of vocabulary acquisition than the lack thereof. And if it were found to be more effective, which instructional mode would result in a greater amount of acquisition. She considered this vocabulary instruction contextualised by such listening activities as "Lexical Focus on Form" (Laufer, 2005), suggesting that understanding listening texts was of primary focus, and the vocabulary explanation was integrated into this meaning-oriented activity as "an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students" during a "meaning-focused classroom lesson" (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 23). The findings showed that the participants who received Lexical Focus on Form fared better than their control counterparts on the delayed post-test, and that teacher CS was found to be more effective than English-only explanations for the participants, but only showed a short-term effect. Though the long-term beneficial effect of CS was not found, this study has contributed significantly to the CS versus TL-only debate, by illuminating the value of teacher CS.

In light of Tian's study, Lee (2010) aimed to take the debate over this issue one step further by investigating whether there would be any differential effects of teacher CS on the vocabulary acquisition between college-level adult EFL learners and sixth-grade elementary EFL youngsters. In this study, native speaker teachers who maintained English-only instruction and bilingual Korean teachers who predominantly used English but occasionally switched to Korean for teaching purposes were respectively sampled in order to operationalise the English-only versus CS difference in pedagogy. The study resembled Tian's, in that it examined the effects of teachers' verbal instruction on vocabulary acquisition, but differed in that reading comprehension activities were employed as the target-learning context. In total, 286 adults and 443 young learners were taught by either native speakers of English or by Korean bilingual teachers, with target learning materials being tailored to each population's cognitive level and English proficiency. The results revealed that teacher CS brought about better learning outcomes than English-only instruction, but it had greater benefits for the young participants. The beneficial effect was found to

be maintained over three weeks after the instructional sessions. A major implication of the study was that learners' age may be an important consideration when it comes to the decision-making process regarding teacher CS. It was further found in the study that the adult learners were generally more sympathetic to English-only instruction, and were able to see its pedagogical value to a greater extent than the youngsters.

Vocabulary is not the only linguistic aspect on which the effects of teacher CS have been measured. Viakinnou-Brinson, Herron, Cole and Haight (2012) set out contextualised grammar activities as the target teaching context in which the relative effects of teacher CS and TL-only explanations of TL grammar were examined. The participants were US college students registered in a beginners-level French course, and they were taught by one bilingual French-English instructor over a period of ten experimental sessions (respectively dealing with distinctive TL grammar elements). The study adopted a "counter-balanced within-subjects research design" (p. 76), through which each participant was exposed to all the experimental treatments (TL-only instruction and CS in the case of this study) provided by one single teacher. The finding did not concur with that of Lee, as French-only instruction resulted in better performance on the multiple-choice test of the target grammar patterns administered at the end of the semester than the instruction mixed with English (that is, learners' L1). The results of the study need to be read with some caution, however. The sample consisted of those learners with a very limited range of TL proficiency, and the acquisition of most grammatical elements were measured through only one multiple-choice item.

The three studies reviewed above provide only initial evidence of the effects of teacher CS (and TL-only instruction), and the findings of these studies do not concur to the extent that they can offer any strong pedagogical direction towards teacher CS. Nevertheless, they allow us to propose a preliminary framework model of the effectiveness of teacher CS that has theoretical and methodological implications for future classroom CS research, to which we turn next.

## A PRELIMINARY MODEL OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER CODE-SWITCHING

I have to this point presented the sociolinguistic arguments for classroom CS, followed by a review of recent studies that specifically examined the effects of teacher CS on TL acquisition. It is the purpose of this section to propose a preliminary model of the effectiveness of teacher CS – a pedagogical compass with which teachers can make judicious and an effective use of CS. It is important to note, before I propose this model, that "tight parameters" need to be established for it to be meaningful and useful. That is, the discussions on the effects of teacher CS should indicate the use of a context where "the interaction between teacher and learners [is primarily driven by] the TL, and [in which] the participants in the discourse respect many of the conventions of code-switching found in the naturalistic environment" (Tian & Macaro, 2012, p. 383). Herein lies the conflict between the TL classroom as a place in which learners need to be exposed to a great amount of TL input/interaction for the acquisition of TL knowledge, and the classroom as a microcosm of bilingual communities in which CS should be permitted for the sake of authentic communication (which is the goal of the communicative-oriented approach). Striking

a balance here then would be to provide a sufficient amount of TL input/interaction, while using teacher CS as both a pedagogical resource and a language model of competent bilinguals. Keeping these points in mind, a preliminary model of the effectiveness of teacher CS is given in Figure 1. Discussion of each of the factors involved in this model will be given individually below.
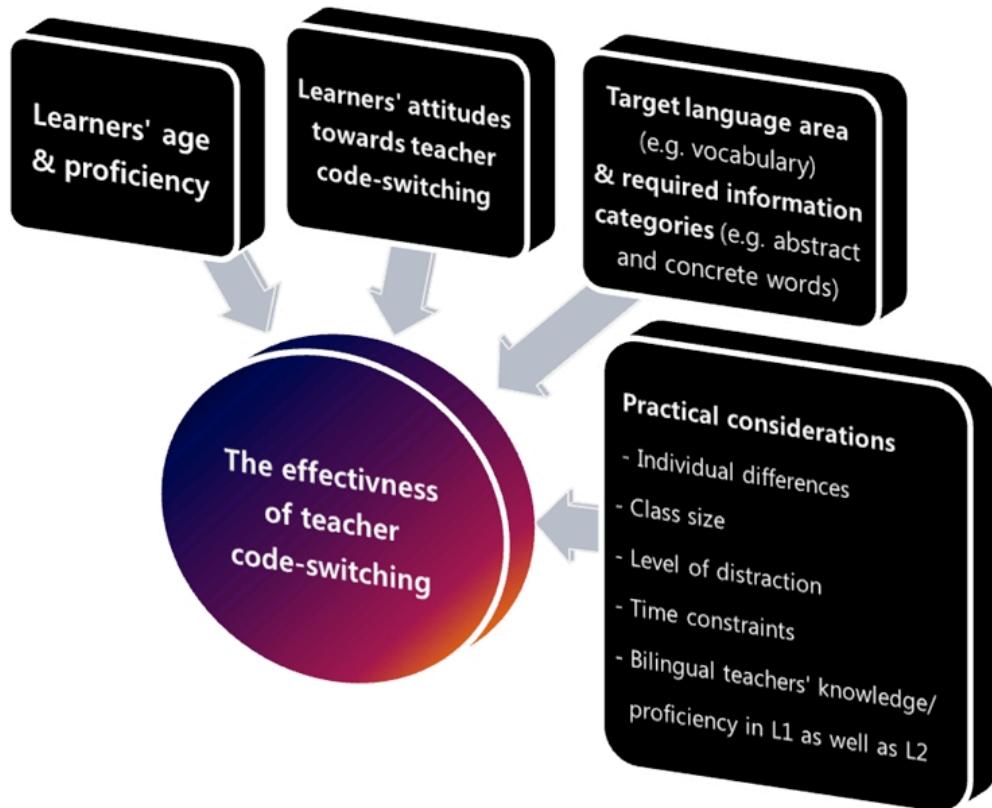


**Figure 1. A preliminary model of the effectiveness of teacher code-switching**

- *Learners' ages/proficiency levels:* In many contexts, though not all, learners' ages and proficiency are correlated to some extent. Previous L2 vocabulary glossing research and Lee (2010) hint that teacher CS may have differential effects on learners with different ages or proficiency levels. It can be further postulated that older learners are more equipped with learning strategies with which to tackle TL-only instruction than younger learners, and thus require CS to a lesser extent in comprehending TL input (see Tragant & Victori, 2006 for some evidence on the correlation between learners' ages and the uses of learning strategies).
- *Learners' attitudes towards CS and TL-only instruction:* The existing literature displays a paucity of empirical studies on the possible connections between the effectiveness of teacher CS (or TL-only instruction) and learners' attitudes related thereto. However, based on previous research on learners' perceptions/attitudes that has linked these variables with their learning outcomes (for example, Donato, Tucker, Wudthayagorn & Igarashi, 2000) and the empirical studies introduced in *Absolutism*, it seems possible that a student's learning outcomes could be mediated by his or her attitudes towards teachers' language in instruction.

- *Target language areas and required information categories:* We have seen that the effects of teacher CS have been investigated in only limited areas of linguistic knowledge (that is, grammar and vocabulary). Future research should set out to examine other language areas, as well as delving into subcategories of each area. For example, it would be interesting to study the effects of CS/TL-only instruction on learners' acquisition of abstract and concrete words.

- *Practical considerations:* In reality, a lesson is carried out within a limited time period and the class may consist of a large number of students with a wide array of individual differences. Also, bilingual teachers may vary in terms of how effectively they can use CS in teaching a TL. It can be assumed that these practical considerations are not likely to be independent of the effectiveness of teacher CS. In Tian (2009), for example, it was found that teacher CS was not only more time-efficient than English-only instruction in explaining English vocabulary, but also brought about better learning outcomes, albeit with a short-term effect.

The proposed model of teacher CS is only preliminary, and subject to change in light of future empirical studies. Its value lies not in its exhaustiveness, but primarily in its theoretical and methodological framework for future research. When adapting this model, researchers should be reminded that it is important to examine the effects of teacher CS in the classroom where the TL, not learners' L1, is the primary language of instruction, and where TL lessons revolve around communicative and meaning-focused activities (as they would fit in with modern TL teaching approaches) (Macaro, 2009), rather than grammar/translation-oriented and form-focused activities. It is expected that this model will benefit from further research that examines how the factors introduced above interact with each other in determining the effectiveness of teacher CS. The model is also subject to expansion, with research that explores other unknown factors that contribute to the effectiveness of CS.

**CONCLUSION**

The present paper began by illustrating the problematic nature of the four intertwined assumptions inherent in the monolingual approach, suggesting that they need to be re-evaluated in light of the bilingualism that transpires in the real world. It was mentioned that monolingualism has been a prominent idea in modern TL teaching methods since the demise of the grammar translation method, and has seen its heyday without being theoretically questioned as to its effectiveness and legitimacy. The paper then suggested that naturalism goes against what TL learners go through in their L2 learning processes, with coordinate bilingualism being a rather unrealistic goal. In terms of native-speakerism, I drew on the linguistic imperialism thesis and relevant arguments, pointing out that it brings about several negative consequences such as unequal status between native speaker and non-native teachers of TL, cultural stereotypes about non-native learners, and the implementation of the monolithic pedagogical approach.

This discussion was followed by one on absolutism, which does not fit in well with accumulated empirical evidence; monolingual instruction cannot be claimed to be superior over its bilingual counterpart, and we cannot assume that learners will

naturally open their hearts to this dogmatic approach. In summary, it was stated that the propositions of the monolingual approach cannot constitute a pedagogically sound and politically appropriate experience for TL learners, and as a consequence we have no choice but to revisit the value of teacher code-switching – an alternative to TL-only instruction, but one that departs from an unbridled use of learners' L1.

The study of teacher code-switching has reached across discipline boundaries, and this seems to be because the interactions of different areas of research propel and fuel the arguments for its use. The present paper has attempted to reinforce the arguments of the proponents of classroom code-switching working within the sociolinguistic framework that teacher code-switching should be permitted as it is a natural bilingual behaviour among people with a command of two languages, and it has a great potential to contribute to the development of learners' bilingual competence. A review of the recent studies on the effects of teacher code-switching then followed, and they were introduced as those that provide more concrete implications with regard to the ways teacher code-switching can be implemented for the acquisition of target language knowledge. These studies are critical for establishing the arguments for teacher code-switching, as most opponents of this instructional type with an SLA perspective will obdurately refuse to see its value until they are convinced that it is more effective to use teacher code-switching (in terms of learning outcomes) than its monolingual counterpart.

Lastly, I proposed a preliminary model of the effectiveness of teacher code-switching. This model does not exhaust all potential learner-related and external factors that would contribute to the effectiveness of code-switching or confidently adjudicate on what constitutes the best teacher code-switching practice. However, I hope that this model, with the input of more research evidence from future studies, will lead to a number of important insights on issues of interest to teaching practitioners and empirical researchers, including questions such as "which learner group will most benefit from code-switching?" "for which linguistic knowledge it is most cost-effective to use code-switching?" and "how do learners' attitudes towards teachers' language of instruction affect the effectiveness of teacher code-switching?" to list only a few. Future prospects for code-switching research and the preliminary model of teacher code-switching seem bright if more common ground between disciplines (in particular sociolinguistic and SLA fields) develops to facilitate theoretical and pedagogical coordination of the search for the optimal use of teacher code-switching.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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