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The L1-based integration towards the in-class support in an international classroom of Thailand

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Abstract: The native-speaker fever influences the expansion of international schools all over Thailand and this incident brought about learning difficulties to students who have low English proficiency as students' language ability is related to their academic success in many aspects. This mixed method research aimed at (a) investigating the practical ways that students' L1 can be used in an international school context, (b) clarifying what learning situations that international school teachers and students function the L1 in the context, (c) and exploring the attitudes of international school teachers and students towards the implementation of students' L1. 40 students were randomly selected using simple random sampling; while sixteen teachers were chosen purposively as the insights from the multiple angles could be discovered. Thus, five research instruments were used to collect the data in this study including: perspective questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and non-participant classroom observation. The results revealed that; students and teachers at the research site have different ways of thinking when they applied L1 in their lessons, reading and writing skills allowed the careful application of L1 to help students learn better, teachers use of Thai in facilitating students' learning; however, they insisted that students' L1 should be purposively used only when necessary, and the overall students' attitudes towards L1 use in their lessons went to the positive side.

Keywords: *L1 use, language transfer, mother tongue-based instruction, international school*

1. Introduction

According to students' language ability is related to their academic success in many aspects (Cohen, 1998); thus, Thai students who have low English proficiency and study at an international school will surely encounter adjusting difficulties to the new environment of an international school in both academic and cultural aspects. Specifically, they find themselves in an educational environment where the teaching style, the language used in the instruction and learning context are different from their former experiences in terms of expectations, learning support and academic requirements (Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy, 2006). What makes the situation even worse is the diversity of language background that implies a complexity of a wide range of communication: two languages and literacy needed in teaching and learning context which lead to high frustration, confusion and stress amongst non-English speaking

background students trying to master the language of their disciplines and communicate with confidence and competence in the English tertiary environment (Alptekin, 2002).

One more similar investigation was presented by Nguyen (2011). This scholar studied the challenges of learning English in Australia. Students from selected Southeast Asian countries were chosen including: Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia. The study revealed that international students, who have low English proficiency and are unprepared for the language barrier, have faced learning difficulties during studying in Australia. This paper also discovered the challenges of Vietnamese, Thai, and Indonesian students in learning English at one of the largest language centre in Australia. Therefore, Thai students, who have faced language problem while they are studying in Australia, are counted as examples of the students from a public school in Thailand.

In addition to the above mentioned, it is in line with the present situation of international schools in Thailand: the parents are overlooking their children's English proficiency and rapidly move their kids from a public school into an international school. As a result, the incident brings about learning difficulties when ones have low English proficiency but are to study all subjects at an international school which are taught in English. Here comes the introduction to the issue "Is there a role for the use of students' first language in an international school setting?" This interesting question brings the researcher to the statement of the problem of this current study that how can learners overcome their learning difficulties in the environment which they may not understand all content taught in the lessons? (Mangubhai, 2006) It is inarguable to claim that the language barrier is one of the major learning difficulties the learners faced in the target language classroom: in this case is the English language. Moreover, using only the target language in the classroom may demotivate the learners to participate in classroom activities as they would be bored due to the doubtfulness in communication (Liu, Ahn, Baek, & Han, (2004).

Since less participation is paid during the lessons, the learners' learning ability would be decreased automatically: being in such a discouraged environment in which only the target language is used will be harmful to the learners who have low proficiency in the target language (Roberton, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000). It is important that the appropriate knowledge of what proportion and how to balance the effective ways to use L1 must be presented through academic research. Then instructors could be able to manage to use students' first language in the target language setting moderately. Since this current research focuses on the international school setting, it is considerable to investigate the appropriate ways that students' L1 can be used in order to improve students' learning ability; especially the ones whom are called "zero English."

1.1 Research Purposes and Research Questions

The purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate the practical ways that L1 can be used to facilitate teaching and learning in an international school context.
2. To explore what learning situations which international school students use their L1 to help them learn better.
3. To expose native-speaker teachers' and nonnative-speaker teachers' attitudes about the use of students' L1 in the classroom in an international school context.
4. To reveal international school students' attitudes towards the incorporation of L1 in their lessons.

This current investigative study is designed to answer the below questions.

1. What are practical ways that L1 can be used to help international school students learn better?
2. What are learning situations in which international school students use their L1 to help them learn better?
3. What do native-speaker teachers and nonnative-speaker teachers think about the use of students' L1 in their classroom at an international school context?
4. What are international school students' attitudes towards the incorporation of L1 in their lessons?

Relatively, little research attention so far in Thailand seems to have been devoted to consideration of the use of students' L1 functioning as a tool to overcome learning difficulties in an international school context. Therefore, it is indispensable to get into the real context in order to apprehend the present situation of the issue being investigated. What impact is this drive for an incorporation of students' L1 having in the classroom?, what challenges are teachers and students facing in the instruction?, and how to adequately implement students' mother tongue in an international school setting? These urgent questions need to be answered as it seems there is no clear guideline has been established regarding how native and nonnative teachers can balance the use between students' first language and a target language in order to improve students' learning ability and to facilitate students to handle with their learning difficulties.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. The role of students' L1

L1 vs Target language in an international school context

Although some teachers and researchers support an English- only policy in the EFL class, some advocate a bilingual approach to be implemented using the learners' L1 as a helpful tool to facilitate their learning. The issue of whether L1 should be used in the English class has been debated for several years. Both proponents and opponents propose rationales to support their beliefs. As Turnbull (2001) states that proponents of English-only in the class stress the benefits of the quantity of exposure to the target language: they firmly believe that L1 should be completely excluded in the class, and that there is room for students' L1 in the class. They also suppose that to maximise the exposure to the target language (TL) can lead to language learning attainments in the form of successful and confident language use.

Furthermore, a question has occured: what is the appropriate amount of TL to be applied in class? And is there any proper place or time for L1 use to facilitate the acquisition of the TL (Turnbull, 2001)? On the other hand, the supporters for L1 use have strong belief in the Threshold Hypothesis proposed by Cummins (1979). The hypothesis of the Threshold Hypothesis is that an individual's achievement in an L2 relies heavily on the level of his mastery of his native language. Therefore, the most positive cognitive effects come about when both languages are highly developed. In addition, in contrast to the "time on task" concept in which presents the idea of the greater the quantity of instruction in L2, the better the educational result will be, so instruction via the learner's L1 does not cause any harmful outcome on development in the TL (Cummins, 2000). It seems like the answer of the issue will not be concluded in short time, thus empirical studies are necessary to support whatever the answer is going to be promoted.

Evidence Against English-Only Instruction

According to Nation, the use of L1 in foreign language teaching creates a friendlier atmosphere than English-only in the class. An appropriate use of L1 offers a familiar and effective way for the learners in order to engage the learning materials, which will save time and keep the learner motivated, especially for learners who have limited English proficiency (Nation, 2003). One of the most obvious arguments for English-only instruction is that the employment of L1 will slow down the acquisition of the TL. Yet, there is a number of research evidences to against this argument. As Jingxia (2010) conducted a research on the topic of "Teachers' Code-Switching to the L1 in EFL Classroom." The investigation was undertaken at three Chinese universities aiming to find out the general situation of code-switching to Chinese as well as attempting to test positive role of the use of Chinese in the EFL classroom. The findings revealed that the switching to L1 is prevalent in the EFL classrooms of some Chinese universities and that it plays a positive role in the teaching and learning of English language. The previous research indicates that there seem to be some room for L1 use in the target language context; in other words, a careful use of students' L1 may be beneficial towards teaching and learning at an international school context.

Miles (2004) carried out two experiments for his study. All the students were male between the ages of 18 and 19, and non-English majors. The participants had studied English for six years at secondary school in Japan considering Japanese as their L1. They were of the three bottom classes after taking the placement test. All the teachers were experienced native speakers and some of them could speak Japanese. In the first experiment, Miles observed three classes for five months. English-only was implemented in one class; in the second class, students were allowed to speak only in Japanese; and in the third class, both the teacher and the students could talk in Japanese. The result of the experiment indicates that L1 use can help students learn English.

To further test the claim that L1 use could facilitate learning, Miles (2004) carried out a second experiment. In this experiment, only one class was selected because both the teacher and students were able to speak Japanese. Four separate lessons were given to the class and Japanese was used in two lessons out of the four; during the rest lessons, teacher and students were strictly prohibited to use Japanese. The first lesson was conducted as usual and Japanese was used when necessary. The following week, another lesson was taught without Japanese being available. The aim of the investigation was to see how much learners had learned at the end of both weeks. Then the two-week cycle was repeated in the reverse order with the remaining two lessons. The results of the tests showed that the average score for the class was improved. According to his findings, Miles contends that L1 use does not hamper learning; instead, L1 use in the class actually assists learning. In a similar study, after reviewing two studies about university-level students' and teachers' opinions towards the use of L1 in the class, Cianflone (2009) concludes in line with the previous study that using L1 is a preferable option for both teachers and students seem when it comes to explaining grammar rules, vocabulary items, and difficult concepts for general comprehension; thus L1 can facilitate the teaching and learning process. The conclusion also affirms the idea that using L1 may help acquire the TL.

Studies against L1 Use

Though many studies have disclosed positive perspectives in support of L1 use in the English class, some studies are in opposition to it. Mangubhai (2006) even assert that immersion language teaching is one of the most powerful ways to acquire a second language; in other words, "English-Only" approach is the best tool to help students learning L2. He claims that the reason why a limited amount of L2 learning occurs in the EFL classroom is because there is such a

limited amount of L2 input offered to students; hence the more L1 the teacher speaks, the less L2 input is available to the students in the class. To avoid this, the amount of L2 input should be raised substantively. As Prodromou (2002) investigated 300 Greek participants' attitudes on L1 use. The participants were divided into three groups regarding to different levels of proficiency: elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The findings show that the low English proficiency students were more willing to accept the idea of using L1. In contrast, the higher English proficiency students had a negative attitude toward L1 use in the class; specifically, they doubted of L1 use in the classroom.

Another investigation conducted by Nazary (2008) exploring 85 students' Attitudes towards L1 use as well as studied the relationship between students' proficiency levels and their attitudes toward L1 use: the L1 of these participants was Farsi. Based on the participants' English proficiency level, they were chosen from elementary level, intermediate level, and advanced level. Moreover, the study indicated that all participants attended extracurricular programs to improve their general English at Tehran University. The research findings suggest that Iranian university students were reluctant to utilize their L1 in learning English. From the three proficiency level mentioned, most of them disagreed on the importance of L1 use. They tended to think that maximising exposure to English was the best way to sharpen their English proficiency. In addition, the comparison among the elementary, intermediate, and advanced level students revealed that the students of intermediate English proficiency had a tendency not to employ their L1 in class activities. They did not expect their teachers to speak L1 when delivering lectures, either.

Lately, scholars seem to separate into two major groups which are positive supporters and the dissenters. Some researchers encourage practitioners to use L1 to facilitate their students' learning in a second language environment, but the others try to push out the conceptual idea of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in which to have students interact with only L2 during the lessons. These two opponents have been colliding for their victory for almost a decade (Wongsathorn et al., 2002). It is not an easy question to be answered though; therefore, the result of this research will, at least, provide an empirical evidence to confirm such issue being discussed in an international school setting. Since it was mentioned, this investigation is an empirical study so that the findings of this study can be used to call for the attention from the authorities, whose influence is to develop and improve the educational system, to pay more consideration on the notion of student's first language.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Context and Site

The setting of the study was conducted at the international school where the researcher works: it is one of the most popular international schools in the Northeast of Thailand. The school employs British curriculum and it was certified by Cambridge University. It is a medium size school with less than two hundred students. There are eighteen native speaker teachers from various countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, China, and etc.; also the school is supported by sixteen Thai staffs including teachers and TAs. Most of the students in all year groups are Thai: the students at the research context have wide range of differences in terms of English proficiency background. Some are native English-speakers, some are bilingual, some are Thai with good native-like proficiency, some are just capable of communicating in English fairly and some are considered as "zero English" e.g. new students. To be more specific, "zero English" refers to the students who are deficient in the English language:

thus students are taken out of a particular subject and study basic English in the ESL Department instead.

At the school, all subjects are instructed in English accept the Thai language and the Thai culture class; hence, being deficient in the English language can be considered as a problematic issue in the context being studied. However, most subjects are provided with a TA who can speak both Thai and English that students' L1 can be used during the lessons if it is needed. As the researcher has described, you can see briefly how students' L1 was implemented in the research context.

3.2. Research design

To pursue the purposes of the study, the researcher employed a mixed-method research procedure consisting of both quantitative and qualitative methodology (Dörnyei, 2003) to collect the data in this current research. Mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analysing and integrating quantitative (e.g., experiments, surveys) and qualitative (e.g., focus groups, interviews) research (Kinn&Curzio, 2005). This approach was used as it provides a better understanding of the research problem than either of each alone. By mixing both quantitative and qualitative research approach, the researcher gained in breadth and in-depth understanding and corroboration; while, offsetting the weaknesses inherent to using each approach by itself (Kelle, 2006).

3.3. Participants

As the researcher intended to discover all directions of the data from multiple angles of the participants, there were four major groups of participants including native English-speaker teachers (NET), nonnative English-speaker teachers (NNET), high English proficiency students (high achiever) and low English proficiency students (low achiever).

There were eight native English-speaker teachers (NET) combining both experienced and in experienced in teaching ESL and EFL students at the research context. Since the NETs were not able to communicate in Thai, the researcher would like to examine how they perceived the use of students' L1 in the context. Also, the notion from different angles could be discovered to avoid bias in the study. Turn to the population of the nonnative English-speaker teachers (NNET), there were eight NNETs chosen from the research context: all of them are able to communicate in English proficiently. As NNETs are Thai who passed through the stage of learning English and their experience in teaching at an international school in ESL and EFL context: the notion being gathered from them would be useful in studying the incorporation of students' L1 in the context being studied.

Another group of the participants in this study was the students; there were totally 131 students in all year groups at the research context. The researcher randomly chose eight students from Year 3&4, Year 5&6, Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 to be studied simply because the in-class support is mainly conducted in these classrooms: as most of the low English proficiency students are attending in these year groups. Again, both high achiever and low achiever students were chosen to participate in this study in order to gain in-depth notion about the implementation of the students' L1 in the context.

All participants were selected by employing two sampling techniques: firstly, the student participants were chosen by simple random sampling as there was a small number of the population. Therefore, the lucky draw technique was used to ensure that all population had an equal chance to be chosen. The second sampling technique was the **purposive random sampling** in which its major role is to capture a wide range of perspectives from the participants. The basic

principle behind maximum variation sampling is to gain greater insights from the context by looking at it from all angles. This can often help the researcher to identify **common themes** which are evidences across the sample (Tongco, 2007). NETs and NNETs were chosen based on the maximum variation sampling to capture a wide range of perspectives from both NETs and NNETs. The following data below presents the specific details of the participants from each group:

Table 3.1

The conclusion of the participants in the study

Teachers	**Native English-speaker teachers**	**Nonnative English-speaker teachers**	**Sampling technique**
	8	8	Purposive Random Sampling
Students	High achievers	Low achievers	Sampling technique
	20	20	Simple Random Sampling

3.4. Data Collection

The study was conducted in three sessions and the research instruments used in each session was discussed accordingly:

The data in the first session were collected using the quantitative method which is the perspective questionnaire: the questionnaires were used with international school teachers and students to see how they perceive the role of L1 in an international school context. The questionnaire was adapted from the attitude of using native language (Korean) in ELT classrooms of Kim and Petraki (2009) and Liao's (2006) investigation conducted about the student participants' belief towards the use of L1 in their classroom. Meanwhile, the questionnaire for the students contains two parts which are general information and 44 questions about the participants' beliefs towards the use of L1 in their learning process.

Next, the qualitative method was implemented in the second session: the semi-structure interview was conducted with the teachers and students whom were randomly selected from the whole participants. A set of the interview questions provided five questions asking about teachers' attitudes towards the use of L1 in their teaching; also, they will be asked in what ways L1 can be used practically in their instruction. Moreover, further questions can be used in order to collect other interesting issues related to the use of L1 at an international school, thus the researcher will be free to collect such data during the interview. For the teachers and high achiever students, the researcher interviewed them in English since all of them were able to communicate in English. On the other hand, the interview questions were translated into Thai when the researcher interviewed the low achiever students as they were more comfortable to do the interview in English due to their language barrier. Moreover, using Thai helped them to express their answers more clearly and accurately.

The last session was incorporated with another qualitative method which is the classroom observation check list: the non-participant observation was divided into three sets in order to investigate different levels including beginner to pre-intermediate level, intermediate level, and upper-intermediate to advanced level. The researcher wrote down all data which occurred during the classroom activities, also the researcher's perspectives were noted alongside with the actual incidents that are performed by both students and teachers in the classroom in order to see the reflection of the use of students' L1 in the instruction as well. Both teachers and students were observed in all year groups being studied, also the researcher conducted several observations in order to get an accurate result.

Moreover, an informal pilot study was conducted with a small group of the teachers and students at the researcher's home institution. Conducting a local pilot study permitted the researcher to ask the participants for suggestive feedback on the research instrument and it also helped eliminate the author biases (Mason, 2006). Once the pilot research instruments were modified by using educational expert's feedback, all research instruments were used to collect the data from the participants in the study.

Table 3.2
Data collection of the study

Session	**Research Instrument**	**Participants**
1.	Perspective Questionnaire for student participants	• Administer all perspective questionnaires to both teacher and student participants • Allow the participants to take the questionnaire home since accurate answers are needed
	Perspective Questionnaire for teacher participants	
2.	Semi-structured Interview for student participants	• 2 foreign teachers (both experienced and inexperienced in ESL/EFL context) • 2 Thai teachers (both experienced and inexperienced in ESL/EFL context) • 4 high achievers • 4 low achievers
	Semi-structured Interview for teacher participants	
3.	Classroom Observation Check list	• Teacher and students participants from each Year group will be observed 3 times (50 minutes each time) • The observation will last 3 weeks

3.5. Data Analysis

The data analysed in this recent study primarily included 56 questionnaires from teacher and student participants, 8 semi-structure interviews (both teachers and students), and 10 Classroom observations. The result from the questionnaires, interviews and observations were submitted to the participants in order to confirm reliability. A combination of deductive and inductive approaches was used for the analysis of both types of data (Patton, 2002).

SPSS Programme

The SPSS is specifically made for analyzing statistical data from, firstly, the perspective questionnaire in which to be administered to all participants; it offered a great range of methods, graphs and charts: it helped the researcher to present a clearer picture of the result of the study. Secondly, the programme was used to calculate the result of the classroom observation check list in order to present a clearer picture of the correspondence amongst the research instruments used in the earlier steps. Moreover, such graphs or charts worked well with numbers; especially for people who do not enjoy statistics. Meanwhile, general programs may offered other procedures like invoicing and accounting forms, but specialised programs are better suited for this function (Benefit of SPSS, n.d.).

Coding

The interview data analysis was conducted by repeated reading the transcripts gathered from the interview then the researcher coded the repeated data according to the participants' explanation of their perspectives towards the interview questions. The coding was coded deductively by using priori categories derived from the literature review and the research questions. Also, the inductive coding was used to identify the concepts which form all categories. Next, the inductive process continued to identify and carefully improved such categories.

There were three steps in coding the transcript from the interview including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Firstly, the open coding was done by using the markers with different colours to high light the sentences related to each other. Then the researcher applied the axial coding in the second step: the coloured sentences were grouped according to the research questions as the researcher will considered the relationship among those coloured sentences and put them into the same category. The last step was selective coding. Once all coloured sentences were put into the same category considering the relationship amongst them, all chunks of the data belonged to the same category were gathered together and were refined to develop to theoretical themes. Additionally, repeating comparisons, revisions, and modifications were made in order to validate the categories and themes (Patton, 2002).

4. Results

4.1. Native and nonnative speaker teachers' sensitivity to language difficulty from learners' perspective

The data from this current investigation revealed that both native and nonnative speaker teachers agreed towards the use of students' L1 in the research context. Everybody agreed to use Thai as teaching and learning tool in order to enhance students' learning ability. In addition to this agreement of the students' L1 use at an international school, teachers and students advertised several practical ways which were useful in overcoming learning difficulties that occurred during the instructions at the research site.

The outstanding practical ways according to the research findings were, firstly, inexperienced teachers advocated the use of students' L1 at the beginning stage of the instruction which is to give instruction; however, experienced teachers, who have been teaching in the ESL and EFL context, saw the drawbacks of giving the instruction in Thai. Secondly, all inexperienced teachers saw the benefit of telling the meaning of words or expressions of the target language in students' mother tongue and over a half of the participants, in terms of experienced teachers, found students' L1 is good for clarifying English sentences. Another good

point was both experienced and inexperienced teachers emphasised that classroom management and the encouragement of students' discipline should not be incorporated with the students' mother tongue. Thirdly, the students, both high achievers and low achievers, agreed to use their L1 to explain the complicated content such as grammar rules and sentence structures. High achieving students strongly agreed to use the mother tongue to explain the content being taught in the classroom. Additionally, low achiever students were more comfortable to use their mother tongue to ask and express their thoughts in the classroom. Once they had confidence to ask and talk, they would be moved on to another step in their learning pathway.

In summary, both high achievers and low achievers sometimes had different ways of thinking when they applied their mother tongue in their lessons. Those practical ways presented above show significant practices in terms of facilitating teaching and learning at an international school.

4.2. Students' L1 use in different language skills

The format of this section was divided into four minor sections based on the four skills of learning a language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Firstly, the results showed an unusual finding as the data from the low achievers was different when the researcher asked the same question: high achievers' and low achievers' incorporation of their L1 in listening skill. High achievers agreed that they used L1 to translate when they listened to English; they also asserted that mentally translating English into Thai helped them to understand more. Surprisingly, low achieving students gave the different data under the same question: the result from the questionnaire showed that low achievers strongly disagreed about the use of Thai translation in their mind while they were listening to English. However, more than half of the low achievers strongly agreed that the mental translation of English bettered their comprehension when they listened to English.

Secondly, move on to the speaking skill which is considered as the highest expectation from the parents in moving their children to study at an international school; one of the most interesting research findings under this research question was both high achievers and low achievers did not think of what they would like to say in Thai then translated it into English; however, they just expressed their sentences in English while they were speaking. Even though the participants did not think in Thai first when they wanted to speak English; there were several learning situations that they used their L1 to better their learning ability. For instance, a participant from the low achiever group described the way he used his mother tongue to ask questions in the classroom during the questionnaire quite clearly. As mentioned earlier, both high achievers and low achievers seemed to use Thai to help them in speaking skill: especially the low achieving students who needed more English support. In the regard of this finding, it can be concluded that asking questions and continuing the conversation are important skills to be incorporated with students' L1 in an international school context.

Thirdly, the researcher would like to introduce the use of students' mother tongue in reading skills. In terms of reading skills, the researcher found that Thai translation was helpful for the low achieving students as they described detailed information about the use of their L1 in reading skill. The low achievers indicated that they used their L1 to help them learn better and most of the interviewees in the low achiever group told the researcher that after they read English passages, they used an available Thai translation to check their comprehension. Moreover, both high achieving students and low achieving students learned English idioms and phrases by reading their Thai translation. Furthermore, both high achieving students and low achieving

students thought that English-Thai and Thai-English dictionary were important to help them with the reading skills.

Finally, the researcher will present the implementation of students' mother tongue in writing skills. The previous research findings showed that the students in the research context used their L1 in different ways as well as to have different perceptions towards the same issue as they were from different groups. However, both high achievers and low achievers worked together in the same situation. Moreover, the interviewees from both groups explained how they used L1 in writing skills that they always took notes in Thai while the teacher taught them in the classroom; also, they wrote Thai translations in their book as well.

In summary, both high achievers and low achievers used their mother tongue to facilitate themselves in different language skills. However, there were two skills which were very similar to each other in terms of incorporation with students' mother tongue: reading and writing skills allowed the students to think carefully and they could take time in order to apply their L1 to help them learn better. This is why both skills were similar when it came to using L1 in helping students achieve reading and writing skills.

4.3. ESL/EFL experience affects the use of L1 in the lessons

The attitudes of both native and nonnative speaker teachers towards the use of students' L1 in their instructions at an international school were presented in this section. According to the data collected from both questionnaires and interviews, the teachers from both groups agreed that the use of Thai helped students to learn at an international school; likewise, both experienced and inexperienced teachers had the same attitudes towards the incorporation of students' L1 in their instruction. This can be concluded that teachers support the use of students' mother tongue as a helpful tool to enhance their teaching in the research context.

Even though both native and nonnative speaker teachers agreed to use L1 with low achieving students, they did not support the use of L1 with the students at all time. All experienced teachers strongly agreed to use L1 with low English proficiency students; also, they agreed so far not to use Thai with low achieving students at all time in the classroom. Surprisingly, half of all experienced teacher firmly disagreed with the use of students' mother tongue with intermediate level students; on the other hand, all participants from the inexperienced teachers' side advocated the use of L1 with intermediate level students.

All in all, native and nonnative speaker teachers had varying attitudes towards the use of students' L1 in their lessons. Some results may reflect similar attitude such as the incorporation of L1 with beginner students; however, some may not end up with the same conclusion like the use of mother tongue with intermediate students. Furthermore, experiences seem to affect the attitudes of the corporation of the students' L1 for both native and nonnative speaker teachers; therefore, it is critical to distribute ample experiences to novice international school teachers about how to effectively implement student's' mother tongue for teaching in heterogeneous classroom at an international school and yet experienced teachers are responsible in sharing their notion about what it is like when students' L1 can be useful in the classroom.

5. Discussion of the Findings

5.1. The effects of ESL/EFL experiences on the integration of students' L1

As the research findings presented in the previous section, the researcher has presented many perspectives regardingthe use of students' L1 in an international school context. Actually, both native and nonnative speaker teachers had almost the same attitudes towards the use of

mother tongue in their instruction and more than 50% of the agreement went to the positive pendulum. However, there were a few issues on which the participants from the two groups did not make the same conclusion. Interestingly, most of the time in which native and nonnative speaker teachers ended up with the different conclusion; the factor which took the important role was ESL and EFL experience. The research findings indicated that native and nonnative speaker teachers felt differently about the use of L1 with intermediate students. Native speaker teachers felt guilty to use L1 with intermediate students; however, nonnative speaker teachers advocated using students' mother tongue in the classroom.

5.2. The use of mother tongue on pedagogical purposes

Furthermore, the researcher would like to point out the issue of guiltiness concerning the use of students' L1 in the instruction at an international school. As the conclusion of Halasa and AI-Manaseer' s study suggested that nonnative-speaker teachers have no need to feel guilty using their mother tongue in the classroom if they make a decision to use L1 based on pedagogical reasons (Halasa&AI-Manaseer, 2012). Moreover, Ahn (2010) adds that students' first language is believed to be a helpful tool in terms of enhancing learning ability as long as it is pedagogically used. She points out that students' L1 facilitated teaching activities in the target language classroom; however, she emphasised that teachers should not overuse L1 during the instruction.

According to the above investigations, they point out that both native and nonnative speaker teachers do not need to feel guilty to use students' L1 in the classroom as long as the L1 use is based on the academic purposes. It is in line with the findings of this current research, they point that most experienced teachers did not feel guilty to use students' L1 in the classroom. The findings showed that the native speaker teachers use L1 to help them better their classroom activities; however, they disagreed to use L1 to encourage students' discipline. The researcher brought this research finding to be discussed at this stage in order to make a clear conclusion that both native and nonnative teachers accept the advantage of using students' L1 in the classroom in the research context.

To support the research findings mentioned above, Miles (2004) carried out a study on teachers' and students' perspectives towards the advantages of students' mother tongue on pedagogical purposes. The students had studied English for six years at secondary school in Japan and considered Japanese as their L1. They were of the three bottom classes after taking the placement test. Further to this, the teachers were experienced native speakers and some of them could speak Japanese. Miles observed three classes for five months. English-only was implemented in one class; in the second class, students were allowed to speak only in Japanese; and in the third class, both the teacher and the students could talk in Japanese. The results of the experiment indicated that L1 use can help students learn English.

Furthermore, Dietze, Dietze, and Joyce (2009) investigated a survey study to explore the attitudes of 21 English language teachers from J. F. Oberlin University in Japan on their use of L1 (Japanese) in their classes based on pedagogical purposes. All the teachers were qualified in English language teaching with master's degrees or above. The research findings indicated that the careful use of L1 during the instruction could improve students' achievements. They also made good use of L1 when necessary to help students learn based on their students' English proficiency levels and switched between the two languages when they felt it was necessary. Those teachers with bilingual capabilities strengthened the notion that the use of L1 makes acquiring L2 easier and more effective.

Nevertheless, the integration of students' L1 in an international school context should be based on only educational purposes in which it is considered a helpful tool to facilitate teaching and learning.

5.3. The benefits of students' L1 seen by native speaker teachers

One more crucial point to be discussed is the alimentation of using students' mother tongue in an international school context from the native speaker teachers rather than from the nonnative speaker teachers. In addition to McMillan and Rivers (2011), they conducted a research exploring native-English speaker teachers' attitude towards the "English Only" at a Japanese university. They administered an attitudinal survey of 29 native –English speaker teachers instructing English classes at university level: the university policy emphasised on the "English Only" concept thus students were taught using L2 in EFL context.

Not surprisingly, different conceptual arguments were found among the participants. For instance, thirteen participants made comments against the use of students' mother tongue; also five foreign teachers stated that prohibiting L1 use in the classroom provided more opportunity to negotiate for meaning in the target language (TL). In contrast, twenty native-English speaker teachers acknowledged that students' first language could be used in the English lessons to facilitate and to ensure successful communication between students and teachers. The overall result showed, interestingly, that most native-English speaker teachers, twenty-two out of twenty-nine agreed with the idea of selective use of students' first language in which to be compatible with Communicative Language Teaching approach in EFL setting. The result of this investigation is in accordance to the research finding of this current study.

5.4. The advantages of students' L1 transfer during the transition period

In the regard of this current study, the researcher looked into both teachers' and students' angles in teaching and learning in an international school context: the researcher now presents the notion found from the students. The research findings from all three research instruments showed that high achievers and low achievers had different attitudes towards the use of their mother tongue in several learning situations.

The outstanding examples according to this regard are that the students had different attitudes towards the use of L1 in the English speaking lessons. As high achievers strongly disagreed to the use of L1 in their instruction; in contrast, low achievers were willing to be able to use their mother tongue in all subjects. Another good example is when both groups perceived the use of L1 in different learning functions such as asking questions during their lessons: one piece of data from the interviews revealed a low achiever student stated that *"If I cannot use Thai to ask questions in my classroom, I will not ask any thing and keep silent."* Furthermore, another low achiever student said that *"This is helpful when I ask question because I can ask what I really want to know and the teacher can answer the right point."* Additionally, the researcher noticed from the classroom observation that low achiever students were more comfortable to participate in classroom activities if their Thai was allowed in such activities.

From the findings presented above, it can be implied that students' L1 should be purposively used with low achiever students at the beginning stage in order to bridge the transition between Thai-speaking and English-speaking classroom. Once the newcomers (low achiever students) get settled in the new environment and move from the beginner level to intermediate level, teachers can be sure that English can be used with them firmly. In doing so, teachers will be able to break down the language barrier students carried with them when the first day of moving to a new school. Furthermore, the use of students' L1 can be purposively

incorporated with low achiever students as it will be helpful to facilitate students' learning ability as well as will make students more comfortable at the beginning stage of leaning at an international school.

Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) presented their research findings in line with the above discussion that even the learners who did not use their L1s reported in the interviews that the L1 could be a useful tool, especially in more meaning-focused activities such as the joint composition task. They noted that the shared L1 could enable them to discuss the prompt and structure of the composition in more depth and thus complete the task more easily. They felt that the L1 would be less useful in the text reconstruction task, which was the more grammar-focused task. Our data suggest that some use of the L1, even in an L2 setting, could be useful.

Furthermore, a study of Hopkins (2003) supported the research findings of this section, he found that some of the students in the English-speaking classroom felt uncomfortable to participate in different classroom activities because they did not understand the native teachers' L2 and they would like to understand the correct meaning of words and phrases used in the classroom. As the sequences of participants in the study were not able to comprehend the subject matter, they were not capable of achieving their homework or classroom assignments. On the other hand, high English proficiency students felt comfortable with the native speaker teachers' pedagogy and there was no evidence pointing in the direction of higher achieving learners (faster leaners) feeling more at ease with L2 exclusivity.

Moreover, the use of the L1 may assist learners "to gain control of the task" (Brooks &Donato, 1994, p. 271) and work with the task at a higher cognitive level than might have been possible had they been working individually. Thus, in Vygotskian terms, we postulate that the learners may have been extending their zone of proximal development (Lantolf, 2000). Only when learners gain a shared understanding of what they need to do can they proceed with the task. The use of the L1 could also help learners provide each other with definitions of unknown words more directly and perhaps more successfully. The results suggest that L2 teachers may need to reevaluate views concerning the use of the L1 in L2 group and pair work.

The investigation conducted by Nazary (2008) presented the opposite side of students' attitudes towards L1. He explored 85 students' attitudes towards L1 use as well as undertaking a study of the relationship between students' proficiency levels and their attitudes towards L1 use: the L1 of these participants was Farsi. Based on the participants' English proficiency level, they were chosen from elementary level, intermediate level, and advanced level. The study indicated that all participants attended extracurricular programs to improve their general English at Tehran University. The research findings suggested that Iranian university students were reluctant to utilize their L1 in learning English. From the three proficiency level mentioned, most of them disagreed on the importance of L1 use. They tended to think that maximising exposure to English was the best way to sharpen their English proficiency. In addition, the comparison among the elementary, intermediate, and advanced level students revealed that the students of intermediate English proficiency had a tendency not to employ their L1 in class activities. They did not expect their teachers to speak L1 when delivering lectures, either.

In summary, the research findings had presented various discussions to provide the notion of how to integrate students' L1 use in an international school context in which should be based on only academic purposes. Therefore, a careful guideline is always needed to conduct an appropriate teaching and to facilitate students' learning ability. This current research had introduced such notion for all international school associates as well as authorities to see significant points of the integration of students' L1 in an international school context.

5.5. Discrimination against student's mother tongue: nonnative speaker teachers' perspective

According to the several interviews and classroom observations, the researcher noticed that most native speaker teachers supported the use of L1 in their lessons as they thought L1 was an important tool to help students understand what they were taught in the classroom. A significant piece of evidence to support this statement is the quote taken from the interview of a native speaker teacher explaining that *"I do not see any disadvantages of using L1 in my classroom since there are some low English proficiency students who are not yet ready for the mainstream classroom. So, I ask my TA to help these students by using Thai to explain the subject content."* In contrast, most of nonnative speaker teachers agreed with the idea of 'English Only"; as you can see from following quotation *"The only reason that the parents move their kids here is to have them learn English, so for the general thing like managing the classroom should be in English as I think the students should be in English speaking environment."*

The previous strong quotation against the L1 being use in the English-speaking classroom is in line with several research studies advocated the so called "English Only" approach. In spite of many studies have disclosed positive effects on the incorporation of students' L1 used in the L2 class, some studies are in opposition to it. Mangubhai (2006) even asserts that immersion language teaching is one of the most powerful ways to acquire a second language; in other words, "English-Only" approach is the best tool to help students learning L2.

He claims that the reason why a limited amount of L2 learning occurs in the EFL classroom is because there is such a limited amount of L2 input offered to students; hence the more L1 the teacher speaks, the less L2 input is available to the students in the class. To avoid this, the amount of L2 input should be raised substantively. This is in accordance with the investigation of Prodromou (2002), 300 Greek participants were studied on attitudes towards the L1 use. The participants were divided into three groups regarding to different levels of proficiency: elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The findings show that the low English proficiency students were more willing to accept the idea of using L1. In contrast, the higher English proficiency students had a negative attitude toward L1 use in the class; specifically, they doubted L1 use in the classroom.

However, the research findings presented above are diverse and different from the investigation of Kim and Petraki (2009). The investigation revealed that there was a division between the native speaker and nonnative speaker teachers about benefit of students' mother tongue. Nonnative speaker teachers saw very little benefit in the students' L1 use and avoid L1 use in the classroom, even though it affected their classroom management and lead to student confusion. In contrast, native speaker teachers recognized the importance of L1 and L2 use, although they acknowledged their excessive use of L1 due to their lack of confidence. This could have detrimental effects in both classes as noted in the observations and as perceived by the students. The lack of the L1 option, especially with mixed ability students, could lead to cultural misunderstandings and can create an unsupportive environment where there is a lack of sympathy and negotiation on both sides.

Furthermore, Lily and Yinon (2008) studied the novice teachers 'concerns about students' mother tongue in the target language classroom. The study showed that an important insight gained from novices' numerous concerns with the use of L1 pertains to the crucial function that they attributed to the use of mother tongue in the foreign language lesson, as a channel for establishing relationships with their pupils, as a strategy for maintaining control and for conveying empathy towards pupils who exhibit difficulties in learning a foreign language. The use of L1 for these purposes suggests something about novices' shared effort to survive their first

year of teaching, by resorting to students' mother tongue as a strategy in the process of building their new professional image.

It is convincing that nonnative speaker teachers feel guiltier when they use students' mother tongue in the instruction; in the meantime, native speaker teachers are willing to employ students' L1 in achieving classroom activities. With this regard, it can be inferred that nonnative speaker teachers need supportive insights about effective roles of students' mother tongue in the target language classroom. They may be more comfortable to use L1 with low guiltiness if they are told to incorporate students' mother tongue and to confirm the preference of students' L1 in the classroom by native speaker teachers.

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