APPROPRIATE L1 AND L2 USE IN EFL CLASSROOM —PROMOTING GREATER SECOND LANGUAGE USE

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ABSTRACT

A few decades after the English-only (EO) policy and communicative language teaching (CLT) methodology were adopted elsewhere worldwide as the best method in teaching English, it is now a norm to consider students' first language (L1) to have a role in the English as foreign language (EFL) classrooms. Code-switching and translanguaging that believe students' L1 as a "bilingual resource" are thriving in the recent literature, advocating pedagogical advantages. Second language acquisition theorists acknowledge some L1 use in the language classroom as well. However, despite the government policy being revised in tandem with the worldwide English teaching trend, not much has changed in EFL classrooms in Japan. Research continues to indicate a lack of speaking and listening practice in the classrooms. Because Japanese students are in EFL contexts where students' use of the target language is limited to the classrooms, it is vital for the teachers to maximize the use of second language to increase students' input (Ellis, 2005). Through the recent literature, this paper unravels the effective way of the greater second language use in the classroom for Japanese English teachers while giving implications on the strategic use of their L1.

INTRODUCTION

Even though the notion that the maximum target language usage is necessary in a foreign language classroom (Nation, 2003) has become a common understanding among teachers and language educators around the world, Japanese English teaching contexts have shown little progress in incorporating this concept (Barker, 2018; Carson, 2015; Brennan, N.D.; Holthouse, 2006; Kikuchi & Browne, 2009). Though in Japan, it is perceived that communicative ability in English is vital for living in a globalized world (Abe, 2013), many English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms in secondary schools are still conducted in the traditional grammar-translation method where the first language (L1) dominates a significant portion of classroom time (Burden, 2001). For Japanese EFL teachers, using L1 as the main language of instruction has rarely been questioned. Indeed, the L1 can be a great resource rather than an obstacle (Auerbach, 1993). However, even though utilizing students' L1 is also a widely accepted notion in recent language teaching, the teachers' heavy reliance on the L1 is a serious problem as it is taking away students' second language (L2) opportunities. As Ellis (2005) mentions, English learners need extensive exposure to the target language for them to acquire it. Because Japanese students are in EFL contexts where students' use of the target language is limited to EFL classrooms, providing as much exposure to the target language as possible needs to be emphasized (Dearden, 2014).

In the first section, the author sheds light on the difference in language choices non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) and native English speaking teachers (NESTs) make in their English classes. Then this paper describes the various language learning contexts worldwide and explores how students' first language is viewed and used for second language learning. The author will then introduce the ideas of second language acquisition (SLA)

theorists who have inspired the author to promote the greater use of the second language. Finally, the author will present what appropriate use of languages could look like in EFL classrooms in light of recent researchers' studies.

DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE CHOICES BETWEEN NNEST AND NEST
Not all teachers perceive and have the same attitude towards L1 usage in their English classrooms. When discussing language usage, it is imperative to approach the reasoning for their language choices by distinguishing the teachers into English speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs). Research shows that NESTs occasionally use the L1 for creating a positive and friendly atmosphere (Ford, 2009, Hall & Cook, 2013), while NNESTs' decisions on their usage of L1 mainly depend on their ability in English (Kim and Elder, 2008 as cited in Hall & Cook, 2013). Along with NESTs, NNESTs are the primary resource for English language education in Japan. They can possibly transform EFL classrooms. Therefore, it is high time for NNESTs in Japan to shift their teaching style that focuses on learners' L2 input and provide meaningful learning opportunities while strategically using the common L1 with the students as beneficial scaffolding (Turnbull, 2018). The absence of guidance in L1 and L2 usage has been a concern among many researchers (Hall & Cook, 2013). Rather than letting Japanese English teachers create arbitrary language usage rules of their own, directions to support them in implementing target language-rich classrooms will be discussed in the following sections.

LANGUAGE CHOICE IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS AROUND THE WORLD
In the globalized world, English is by far the most used language. The contexts where English is used and taught are diverse and have followed their own transition in response to changing needs. It is now common to think of English as having a different role and meaning depending on users and the goal users have (Cook, 2001). It is purposeful to shed light on other EFL and ESL contexts around the world to learn how they perceive their version of English needs because getting the grasp of how they deal with the issue in their contexts could be applied in Japanese EFL classrooms as well.

ESL Contexts in Native English-Speaking Countries
ESL contexts such as the US, Canada, and the UK, where English is spoken as a native language, show different perspectives regarding L1 and L2 usage in the classroom compared to EFL contexts in a monolingual country like Japan. In many cases in ESL contexts, the use of the L1 is discussed alongside the English imperialism issue, and the L1 is often related to "linguistic human rights" (Ford, 2009, p.65). Spahiu (2013) says that in multilingual ESL classrooms, where students have different cultural backgrounds, if a teacher neglects the students' L1, it means that the teacher ignored the students' culture. As a consequence, students could feel their identities were neglected, and that could lead to the danger of demotivation. Besides such a socio-political perspective, though students' L1 is diverse, not utilizing students' L1 is perceived as equivalent to missing the possibilities for better language teaching (Cook, 2001).

EFL Contexts Outside Japan
In EFL contexts where students' exposure to the target language is not likely outside the classroom, more opportunities for students to use the L2 are perceived as vital (Dearden, 2014). While most researchers agree that exposure to and use of the target language is crucial for language learning, L1 is perceived as vital in many countries.

To review the researchers' perspectives in some countries, according to Brevik & Rindal (2020), in Norway, it is widely accepted that the use of L1 is necessary for reasons such as authentic language use, a means for teachers to show empathy, explaining complex terminology, and scaffolding (Brevik & Rindal, 2020). In Greece, research was conducted to investigate teachers' and students' beliefs regarding the use of L1 in EFL classrooms. The study concluded that students find teachers' L1 use supportive when teachers explain grammar, define new vocabulary, explain text comprehension, and give instructions (Tsagari & Diakou, 2015). In Korea, in an effort to advocate for a communicative approach in English classrooms, the government implemented an English Only (EO) policy in 2000. The situation in Korea somewhat resembles that of Japan. In Korea, the best practice in the classroom regarding the EO approach and bilingual approach has been actively debated among scholars. However, while the government and scholars were debating the ideal language usage, no significant change has been seen in the actual classroom. Dash (2002) says that instead of promoting an all-or-nothing argument regarding language usage as a nation, there should be flexible and diverse measures so that teachers, schools, and other stakeholders can adjust to the different contexts, needs, and levels of the students. He further says that Atkinson's (1997, as cited in Dash, 2002) view that advocates 95% target language use and 5% L1 use in the classroom would be a reachable goal to start with.

LANGUAGE CHOICE IN THE CLASSROOMS IN JAPAN
Looking at the situation in Japan, the development of communicative ability has been the primary objective of English education (Kikuchi & Browne, 2009) since 1989. In 2009, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) further stipulated in the national curriculum that English should be used as the medium of instruction (Aoyama, 2020). The argument of whether L1 has a place in the English classroom or not has gone through much debate in Japan since then. In fact, in recent studies, many researchers admit and advocate the positive use of L1 (Ford, 2009; Carson & Kashihara, 2012; McCarthy, 2021). Among scholars, it has become a common understanding that as much as ESL classroom values the students' L1s, L1 has a place in many Japanese EFL contexts as well. However, with or without the push on L2 usage by the government or recent studies, not much has affected the language chosen by the Japanese English teachers in the classrooms.

APPROPRIATE USE OF L1 AND L2—WHAT RECENT STUDIES TELL
Alongside the growing study supporting the L1 use in the L2 classroom, some studies investigated the issue further. For example, McCarthy (2021) studied students' impressions regarding language usage and gave implications for teachers on how and when to implement English and Japanese authentically in the classrooms. Holthouse (2006) emphasized language usage in his paper and said that L1 and L2 usage should be consistent with local expectations and describes that because Japanese students prefer their mother tongue to be used in their L2 learning and are accustomed to the translation method, teachers should adopt the preference of students' and incorporate translation/transfer into methodologies to be more in line with the students' expectation. Iwanaka & Nakagaki (2018) observed several secondary schools to study how English as a medium of instruction (EMI) was implemented and pointed out that many teachers were merely switching the language of instruction without any change in their methodologies, which means that teachers were explaining abstract grammar concepts in English. Authors claimed that EMI should be implemented as means to enhance communicative activities, and it should be used as means to increase the chance for students to negotiate the meanings in English and engage in meaning-focused activities. Carson (2016) studied students' preference on how they prefer the L1 and L2 to be used in their EFL classrooms and how the preference changed among different levels and/or time. The study

showed that Japanese students overall had a positive attitude toward speaking English during classroom time, though many preferred supports in the L1 to some extent.

Moreover, in Carson's (2016) research, she found that the lower the proficiency level, the more students tended to rely on L1 support. In the same study, students were asked which of seven factors required the most support: (1) emotional support, (2) grammar, (3) teacher L1 ability, (4) tests, (5) review of previous material, (6) comprehension, (7) culture and society. The result differed among the students' proficiency levels, but overall, students showed a need for support in the area of L2 comprehension. Her study indicates the need for teachers to tailor their instruction in the L2 and the amount and type of L1 usage to the students' levels and conditions.

APPROPRIATE USE OF L1 AND L2— IN RELATION TO SLA THEORIES
As stated, for the acquisition to take place, Japanese students need opportunities to communicate and practice English (Barker, 2018) in classrooms. Teachers should maximize the use of L2 to give students more exposure and opportunity to use the language (Ellis, 2005; Cook,2001). In that sense, as the government states, indeed, English should be used as a medium of instruction, and communicative language teaching (CLT) should be seen more in classrooms. However, it shouldn't necessarily mean banning L1 or "to 'push' students with incomprehensible input" (Carson & Kashihara, 2012, P. 42) in L2. L1 should be used authentically to enhance comprehension (Cook, 2001; Holthouse, 2006; Turnbull, 2018). Auerbach (1993) states that when students start learning a second language, they don't start by thinking in the second language right away. She says that it is a developmental process where learners grasp ideas of L2 with an L1 scaffold, and the L1 "drops off" naturally when learners get used to the L2. Therefore, some L1 use in the language classroom is acknowledged as beneficial by SLA theorists. Furthermore, some scholars apply Krashen's affective filter in the logic that optimal use of L1 would lower learners' anxiety (Auerbach, 1993). Also, classrooms that aim for maximum use of the L2 are justified by many theories such as Krashen's input hypothesis (1982, 1985), Swain's output hypothesis (1985), and Long's interaction hypothesis (1996) (Lightbown & Spada, 2017).

Hence, in understanding L1 roles in the foreign language classroom, it is vital to set the premise that, in principle, L2 use should be maximized by encouraging its use, but L1 should not be banned at the same time. In regards to actual L1 and L2 language usage in a classroom, Nation (2001) describes that while L1 has a role to play, L2 use, such as using L2 for classroom management, is beneficial. His statement is that classroom management discourse input by the teachers is especially effective as it usually uses high-frequency words and sentence structures. Furthermore, it is said that students need to get in contact with a new term at least six times in meaningful situations in order to remember it (Dormer, 2016). In that sense, attempts to use L2 as much as possible, including for classroom management, could be an authentic opportunity to give students some adequate learning opportunities through meaning-focused input.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS — TEACHERS' EDUCATION AND KACHRU'S WORLD ENGLISHES
Though holding the premise that L2 should be used as much as possible by the teachers, Barker (2018) describes teachers as the most limiting factor in improving English education in Japan, depicting their low language ability and teaching skills. Providing specific strategies and training for effective L1 and L2 usage would be necessary to support Japanese English teachers. A teacher training program that equips teachers with useful English phrases that they can actually use in their English classrooms would help teachers' consistent L2 use, increasing students' input in EFL classrooms (Ellis, 2005). Needless to say, to maximize the effectiveness

and sustain EMI-based classrooms, teachers need to use simple but grammatically correct language (Nation & Newton, 2009). Therefore, teachers' education to allow teachers to learn and practice to build fluency in actual phrases for different classroom scenarios would lead them to build confidence as practitioners. Nation and Newton (2009) say fluency is a skill, and it cannot be built "simply through an increase in speed of processing. Substantial increases in fluency also involve changes in the nature of the knowledge of the language" (P.152). Therefore, along with training to equip Japanese English teachers, it is also vital to educate teachers with language knowledge such as second language acquisition theories.

Also, the fact that many EFL classrooms in Japan use the native speaker model gives teachers pressure to speak like Americans, British, and other native speakers (Harris, 2012). Therefore, it is crucial to change their mindset of how they perceive themselves and empower them to embrace their English and their students. In doing so, Kachru's (1992) idea of "World Englishes" could empower reluctant teachers who are unconfident about their English proficiency (Matsuda, 2003; Abe, 2013; Kurniawati & Rizki, 2018). The idea is that the concept of "World Englishes" (Kachru, 1992) would motivate ELs, including teachers, to take ownership of their version of English (Matsuda, 2003). For the classroom to change from the current situation, both teachers and students must be informed enough to abandon old-fashioned, stereotypical views toward English based on the idea that standard English is what native English speakers speak. According to Kachru, English is not just Native English speakers' language. Instead, it's the language of those who use it. Also, Abe (2013) sheds light on how students put themselves down as English speakers. In her study, she found out that only 9% of her students thought that English with a Japanese accent could be intelligible. She emphasizes educating students that native-like competence is not the goal for them to achieve; providing them with an achievable goal would let them acknowledge their own purpose of learning English without being affected by the native speaker fallacy (Abe, 2013). The idea of "world Englishes" (Kachru, 1992) is a powerful and meaningful message for Japanese English teachers to convey, as it would help eliminate students' prejudice against their own English (Abe, 2013; Matsuda, 2003).

CONCLUSION
It is an ultimate truth that students will not be able to learn the L2 unless it is practiced and used. Therefore, ELs need adequate input and output opportunities to learn the target language. Classroom time is the main opportunity for students to practice and use the language when it comes to EFL contexts. Therefore, providing a language-rich learning environment should be in teachers' primary interest. However, simply switching the language from the L1 to the L2 does not solve the problem either. Instead, teachers must create an environment where language acquisition is likely to occur, requiring teachers to shift the language of instruction from Japanese to English and use L1 as scaffolding.

Also, if teachers are afraid of using the target language, effective education cannot be achieved. As Kurniawati and Rizki (2018) say, steps need to be taken to improve Japanese English teachers' capacity in both language and methodology. Therefore, along with pre-service teacher education, continuous professional development is essential. Further research for the concrete plan to equip teachers with communicative competence, which would empower teachers to offer better language education, would be expected.

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