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Perspectives of Foreign Language Teachers on Influences, Challenges, and Practices Affecting Language Choice

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Perspectives of Foreign Language Teachers on Influences, Challenges, and Practices Affecting Language Choice

Brant M Lloyd

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Perspectives of Foreign Language Teachers on Influences, Challenges, and Practices Affecting Language Choice

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In light of the 2010 recommendation of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages that teachers use the target language (TL) “as exclusively as possible,” teachers face the necessity of promoting target language use and assessing how their language choices influence their students. The purpose of this study was to analyze teachers’ perspectives and practices of whether to use students’ first language or the target language. Data from over 100 foreign language teachers, predominantly those in the K-12 sector, were collected through a survey in order to measure how teachers manage the phenomenon of language choice. The findings were analyzed descriptively, categorically, and inferentially to find relationships among teachers in general, as well as within subgroups of participants. Findings indicate that teachers felt using the target language was more of a challenge for academic purposes because of their belief that they should be conducted in the TL. Academic tasks were also reported involving a greater quantity of speech functions, which made them more difficult to complete in the target language. Additional findings showed that teachers in general were most often influenced by student attitudes, motivation, and proficiency as well as their own attitudes, motivation, and proficiency. For certain subgroups, however, when teachers focused more on their own proficiency, motivation, training and experience they were more likely to reach 90% TL use or more. Furthermore, it was found that promoting the target language effectively equated with incorporating many strategies that supported TL goals. The most prevalent techniques found for promoting TL use were preparing for making input comprehensible, giving praise and recognition, and explaining its importance at the beginning of the year. Recommendations for increasing the ability of teachers to face the challenges of TL use are to simplify and increase the academic, social, and managerial purposes for which it can be used, prioritize and focus on the most influential factors of language choice (LC) within teachers’ control, and form and promote a plan for TL use built upon a foundation of most effective techniques and practices for optimizing language choices.

Keywords: Language choice, foreign language, target language use, first language use, teacher perspectives, self-evaluation, target language use strategies, motivation, proficiency, code-switching
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Adjectives such as “optimal,” “exclusive,” and “maximum” have described target language (TL) use in the foreign language (FL) classroom (ACTFL, 2010; Macaro, 2001). Target language refers to the language that an individual is attempting to acquire through study. Therefore, when teachers and students are using the target language optimally or exclusively then it becomes the default language. The statement by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) issued in 2010 “recommends that language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom” (Use of the Target Language, para. 1). This declaration, along with other policies and statements regarding the exclusivity of the target language, has raised questions about what Levine (2003) calls “language choice.” Language choice refers to the decision of which language, the target language or first language (L1) of students or teachers, to use to facilitate goals and objectives.

Many teachers are known and even defined by their TL use by themselves, their students, and the foreign language community. TL use has effectively become in many ways a measuring stick and a barometer for the foreign language classroom. With a growing number of recommendations for exclusive or nearly exclusive use of the TL (ACTFL, 2010; Macaro, 2008) as a mandatory practice in FL classrooms, the literature on how to make that choice as effective and principled as possible is limited (See Appendix D for ACTFL Statement). The body of research that informs about teachers’ true aims and purposes for TL use is also small. Even with the research that does exist about what teachers beliefs are regarding the TL, reports demonstrating how those beliefs impact practices are scarce.
The essence of language choice is the process of appropriately determining when the L1 and the TL are most effective in reaching desired learning outcomes. Levine (2003) addresses the need for formulating a method to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers’ TL use and decide when and if using the L1 is justifiable. The search for the proper balance and optimization of language choice was the focus of this investigation. Teachers such as myself, have always had the choice as to when, why, how, and how much TL and L1 they will use. Therefore, making informed decisions, based on pedagogically sound principles, becomes the prerogative of every teacher who desires to focus not only on the quantity, but also on the quality of input in the TL.

The research suggests pedagogical tenets that should be the basis of language choice. Furthermore, the research from Edstrom (2006) discloses the necessity of utilizing research-based practices to insure an effective method for applying pedagogical principles. For example, Edstrom demonstrated the effectiveness of self-evaluation techniques and tools in an effort to have a language choice check. The assessment worked as a technique for monitoring and adjusting instructional practices according to student need. Not only can self-reflection be used for evaluating individual lessons, but also to properly align language choice with all the goals and aims of the classroom. McMillan and Turnbull (2009) state that teachers need to go beyond discussing language choice by adopting a “professional development or action research approach, affirming teachers’ ability to develop their own strategies for maximizing student comprehension and use of the target language” (p. 34). Such practice is what fosters a holistic approach to teaching language in a nurturing environment.

The data for this study were gathered from the self-reported quantitative and qualitative answers given by teachers. Levine (2003) looked at self-reported uses of TL by teachers and students at the university level and how that affected anxiety. Other researchers such as Bateman
(2008), Polio and Duff (1994), and Macaro (2001) have begun creating a body of information from the secondary level. However, they were limited in the levels, languages, and experience of the teachers that they observed.

The population researched provides knowledge as to the purpose behind the TL practices across a broad continuum of teaching settings. Researchers such as Turnbull and Arnett (2012) have presented evidence that the L1 has a unique role and even a pedagogical function in FL learning. Motivation, classroom management, and specific classroom interactions are all reported as beneficial uses for L1 (Edstrom, 2006). The place of the L1 in FL learning has led to researchers such as Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005) in their title to ask “Why that, in that language, right now?”

**Statement of the Problem**

The fact that every language teacher confronts language choice while facing differing circumstances and factors warrants the need for a pedagogical process to identify and resolve recurring issues. For that reason, the first question of this research intends to identify what those challenges are. Knowing the challenges will provide insight into what the breakdowns in TL use are and how they can be resolved in a systematic and pedagogically-principled method.

The intent of the second question is to discover what influences teachers language choice (LC). Determining how teachers are influenced in their classroom interactions, and the language that would best suited, is another check in the act of balancing LC found in the work of Rolin-Iantzi and Varshney (2008). Identifying the types of goals for which language is being used prepares teachers to then set and categorize language goals as well as class goals that would provide direction and purpose for language use. Rolin-Iantzi and Varshney include within their
study a method for categorizing goals to determine what role the language would play, by either being medium-oriented, framework-oriented, or even affective-oriented.

Through the practice of evaluation, teachers can pinpoint whether language choice meets their aims and goals for language learning as well as the overall purpose of the class. For that reason, the third question asks what teachers are doing to promote TL use in the classroom, both their own and that of their students, and monitor the effectiveness. This third question investigates how teachers make what they are doing effective and how they know they are being effective.

**Purpose of the Study**

The relationships between teachers’ perceptions of effective practices, factors that most strongly influence those practices and teachers’ language choices, and the challenges created because of their beliefs and practices, is the ultimate purpose of the study. Therefore, the investigation of this topic seeks to clarify the roles of each language through the teachers’ eyes. This study will look in depth at teachers’ perspectives on the pieces that make up the puzzle of the language choice process.

Teachers who critically assess their preparation and practice of LC will become part of a group Macaro (2001) described as “optimal” language users. The end goal of this research is to increase awareness of language choice, contribute to the growing body of research on the topic, and give practical applications for teachers to be more precise in the how they decide to use the TL and L1 to accomplish their goals, aims, and purposes.

**Research Questions**

The research questions for the study are as follows:

1. What do teachers report are the challenges they face in teaching in the target language?
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2. According to teachers, what factors influence their choice of when to use each language?

3. What practices do teachers find most effective in promoting and evaluating their own use of the target language?

Terminology:

1. Target Language (TL): the language that is foreign to a learner that he/she is acquiring.
2. First Language (L1): the language that is first learned or originally learned from birth
3. Language Choice (LC): the process of determining when the L1 and TL will be utilized.
CHAPTER 2

Review of Relevant Literature

The purpose of this review is to analyze and discuss the body of literature on the changing beliefs of the FL community. Another purpose is to look at the different methods that have been used to promote and evaluate TL use by teachers. The review will examine teachers’ personal beliefs about the use of TL for instruction, how TL use can foment acquisition of language, and the possible role of the L1 in facilitating TL acquisition. Along with this aim, the need for research-backed tools to evaluate and make conscientious language choices is presented. The discussion will lay the foundation for research into how teachers can intentionally involve themselves in the process and evaluation of language choice. This will be discussed through an analysis of theory and practices, teacher and student beliefs, and purposeful use of the L1 and TL.

Practices of Target Language Use in the Foreign Language Classroom

A prevalent belief since the end of the nineteenth century is that foreign languages should be taught in a monolingual fashion. (Hall & Cook, 2012), meaning that only the TL should be used in order for as much acquisition as possible to occur. Continual development in second language acquisition theory has suggested that for the language to be “acquired” students need extended exposure to “comprehensible input” in the TL (Krashen, 1981). Students not only need exposure to great amounts of the TL, but they also need to understand that input and have the opportunity to add to their linguistic competence. Thus, the current literature discussing language use revolves around what Macaro (2001) calls the “optimal” amount of TL use and how teachers approach that in a wide range of FL settings.
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While the importance of the TL has been strongly supported through research, a push for an approach for fulfilling varying instructional functions has also been presented. McMillan and Turnbull (2009) discuss the need for creating a space where students can be bilingual learners. Their research discusses the need of students to function with a bilingual identity that allows them the opportunity for using both languages to facilitate language acquisition. This stance gives teachers the liberty to use both L1 and TL as needed to deal with the necessities of the learner and the learning environment.

Numerous recommendations and standards have arisen due to the research policy regarding the TL. In the United States, the recommendation given for TL use by the ACTFL (2010) is to speak and utilize the TL as exclusively as possible for “at least 90% of instructional time.” Increasing proficiency through the acquisition of language is the goal or principal aim of ACTFL. ACTFL’s recommendation comes in part from research and theory such as Krashen’s and additional studies that indicate this degree of TL use is requisite for maximal language acquisition. Krashen’s model requires teachers to use the TL as much as possible to increase the amount of language learners acquire. The input from the teacher is for many students the exclusive source of TL. For that reason, researchers such as Turnbull and Arnett (2002) argue that when given license to use the L1 teachers will tend to abuse and misuse it. To be certain that teachers can meet such a goal, a sound understanding and basis for TL use in the classroom must be encouraged. Along with the theoretical understanding, teachers need strategies, skills, and tools to make reaching the goal a possibility. A great deal of that training and preparation will come out of their own personal development. This can only occur through reflecting, evaluating, and making decisions that align their personal language choices more with the ACTFL recommendation.
The call for near exclusivity in the TL does not discount the use of the L1 entirely, hence ACTFL’s statement of 90%+ and not 100% TL use. Researchers such as Hall and Cook (2012) propose that a basis exists for a bilingual or multicultural classroom where both languages are used as appropriate sources for input to promote different types of learning. These authors suggest a paradigm shift concerning the reconceptualization of the language classroom as a bilingual environment. The role of the first language has continually been redefined since a monolingual methodology for teaching was instituted. In many FL classrooms language choice is based on assumptions, personal beliefs, training in teacher programs, and experiences that determine a great deal of TL practices. A lack of research-based pedagogical principles supporting LC is noted by Levine (2003), Macaro (2001), and Turnbull and Arnett (2002), in their investigations. They suggest continued research into the pedagogical tenets and principles for teachers to use as their foundation and framework for LC.

The claim made by governments and other institutions that the L1 has no place in FL classrooms has been heavily criticized in recent literature and studies. Macaro (2008) criticized the call set forth by the English government to “almost exclusively” use the TL (DES 1990, p. 58). Macaro (2001) claims that due to the lack of teacher training and preparation, the ban of L1 only ended up creating “a hegemony of target language use” (p. 545). In referring to a hegemony of TL use, Macaro describes a classroom controlled in all aspects by the requirement to only speak one language. In his own field, Macaro opted to present teachers in training with different approaches and provide guidance in actively evaluating and reflecting on teaching practices. In this way, teachers were enabled to decide for themselves what is best for the student. He contends that teachers who learn to evaluate critically their own teaching practices are more likely to make critical changes. Macaro views the teacher as a professional with the need for
continued support, as would a doctor or a lawyer in the process of becoming more principled and best-practice driven.

**Formation of language choice.** In the process of forming one’s philosophy regarding language choice exists the exigency to identify the driving forces behind how the TL and L1 are used. Four studies that looked at influences of LC were Bateman (2008), Levine (2003), Macaro (2001), and Polio and Duff (1994). Both Bateman and Macaro sought to identify factors that influenced student teachers LC, including proficiency, anxiety, and classroom management through self-evaluation and reflection. Levine asked teachers and students to identify their L1/TL beliefs and uses to investigate how they influenced practices and the anxiety of students. Polio and Duff (1994) gathered empirical data through observation in order to classify teacher language use into eight categories: administrative vocabulary, grammar instruction, classroom management, stances of empathy/solidarity, English practice, translation for vocabulary, remedy for a lack of comprehension, and personal interactions with students using English. Polio and Duff were able to identify that the most common use in the context they observed was the use of administrative vocabulary. These studies demonstrate the wide variety of investigative methods possible to determine influences on LC, and the need for further investigation to validate those claims.

**Balancing quantity and quality** Just as important as resolving doubts and issues about providing the optimal quantity, is finding how to balance the quantity and the quality of the input. Dixon (1992) concluded that quantity may not be as beneficial as quality, but as has been previously mentioned this conclusion is not an excuse for unbridled L1 use. Crause (2012) alludes to this when discussing the importance of valuing instruction time and the usefulness of the L1 when not doing so would be wasteful and detrimental. When TL use dominates all
pedagogy, and diminishes the motivation, achievement, and self-efficacy of students, then the issue of quantity over quality comes to the forefront. This is one gap that research is trying to fill by collecting data about when and how the quantity of the TL use may be negatively affecting the quality of the overall learning (Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005). This is an area where additional research on optimizing the quantity of TL without sacrificing quality is vital.

Elements affecting the quality and effectiveness of TL use discussed in Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005) are the cognitive load placed on the learner, whether the language being used is novel and complex or overly simplified and repetitive, and the types of interactions being facilitated in the TL. Üstünel and Seedhouse conclude that the quantity and quality of TL use depends on the pedagogical focus of the teacher and the specific types of activities for learning. For example, utilizing the L1 in preparation for completing a task gives students a cognitive tool for being successful (Cook, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Both students and teachers that are able to use language as a cognitive tool for creating knowledge and solving problems, benefit from having the choice and making it wisely.

**Teacher and Student Beliefs about Language Choice**

Authors such as Levine (2003) and Rolin and Varshney (2008) have researched the beliefs and attitudes of teachers and students in relation to LC. Mass data collected through surveys in Levine’s study have helped establish relationships between beliefs and practices. One of the key relationships was that in classrooms that reported more TL use anxiety was actually lower than in classes that had utilized more L1. This would indicate that more of the L1 is not necessarily going to make students more comfortable and does not necessarily lower anxiety. Students did admit that they experienced anxiety from the TL but the majority also agreed that it was a worthwhile challenge. Teachers also perceived greater anxiety in students than students’
self-reports did. These findings are important for understanding how teachers and students’ perceptions influence what may or may not affect the TL use of either party.

The findings of Thompson (2006) indicate that an inconsistency exists between what teachers and students believe about how language is being used and how much it is used, and in the ways LC is actually happening. This important conclusion makes finding objective ways of determining LC critical. In another study, Rolin and Varshney (2008) conclude that students are neither for nor against learning grammar and vocabulary and handling some procedural aspects of the class in the TL. Teachers ultimately have to decide on how to capitalize on student motivation and willingness to participate in the TL. This gives greater weight to the responsibility of the teachers to understand student attitudes and beliefs, and then to include them as a factor that influences LC. More research on teachers’ awareness and consideration of students’ beliefs in making language choice would empower teachers to focus on influencing their students’ learning. Teachers could then use knowledge of student motivation and willingness to participate in the TL to drive change in their own practices.

Research would indicate that teachers struggle to always define their LC beliefs and recognize how these beliefs affect their practice. In one study with student teachers preparing to enter the field, the beliefs were reported as being undefined and unprincipled (Macaro, 2001). Those who did uphold a strong belief about staying completely in the TL but were unable to do so experienced guilt and frustration. Additionally, the researcher found that some teachers had not set the expectation that the L1 had no role in their classroom, and that they were did not feel like bad teachers for having delayed success with using TL. These teachers were less likely to experience guilt and negative feelings towards teaching and the TL. This finding agrees with the conclusion of Bateman’s study (2008) recommending additional support and training in order to
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meet TL expectations, whether set by teachers or an external institution. These combined investigations are an excellent example of how research on the formation and molding of teacher beliefs and practices in a specific context can uncover relationships in the LC process. These studies were limited to the context of student teachers or teachers in training. Supplementary studies could extend the depth of knowledge for understanding varied stages of LC in diverse teaching situations.

Context has proven an important criterion for understanding the different practices and beliefs of language choice. Along with the examination of student teachers, Levine (2003) studied the impact of TL use on first-year students in. He found that many of them experienced more anxiety than second year students because of the TL use of their teachers. One reason this may be true is that students are more comfortable after having the expectations set and a foundation for TL use built. The benefits of using the TL may then be what was reported, that anxiety decreases and TL use is more likely. Edstrom (2006) believed that she used more Spanish with second-year students than she did with her first-year Spanish students, because of what she believed about her classes and the goals and outcomes she had set at each course level. Other contextual factors that have been reported as affecting student and teacher belief about L1/TL use were the comfort in class, size of the class, familiarity with classmates, differences in proficiency, and the task and approach (Moore, 2013). Teachers, whether consciously or unconsciously, vary their language use according to classroom factors, which in turn determines their learning outcomes.

Another factor affecting beliefs of teachers regarding TL use are the class outcomes that are set before the class ever starts and teachers and students’ preparation to fulfill those outcomes. Edstrom (2006), in a study of factors affecting her own language use, cites language
acquisition as not being her only goal as a teacher and describes situations in which using students’ L1 would more suitably help her to achieve objectives. She explains the natural impulse she felt to use the L1 to connect with students or motivate them to use the TL. She reflects that because of her feelings towards her beginning students it was more likely that her actual TL use and her perceived TL use would not align. Observations of herself and students created a lens for critically viewing her own practices and the inconsistencies with her pedagogical beliefs. She states that as a teacher she has a “moral obligation” for students’ overall learning and wellbeing. From her point of view, that belief requires some interactions with the L1 within the classroom to create the environment and the opportunities for her students’ success, both in and outside the language classroom.

Thompson (2006) proposes in his doctoral dissertation the importance of teacher training in the formation of their beliefs about TL use. Training could be used as a method for affecting the way teachers monitor and adjust language choice and positively affect teaching practice. The formation of teachers’ beliefs is a point of interest for researchers such as Edstrom (2006), Levine (2003), and Macaro (2001) as they recognize its importance in determining the role of language use in the classroom. Levine calls for further research to determine the beliefs that most affect language use.

Teachers and students are not the only ones to have a broad array of attitudes and beliefs about TL and L1 use. Macaro (2008) welcomes a new look into a bilingual approach in his review of the current state of language teaching in his country. Hall and Cook (2012) write an extensive literature review documenting the history of language use in the last hundred years and calling for reform and change in the approach to language choice. What consistently is supported and called for is the need for a framework and principled method that teachers can use to decide
which language to use as a resource and an aid in achieving their aims. The declaration from Levine (2003) at the end of his study is that “Finally, the findings of this study underscore the need for concrete, theoretically motivated guidelines, guidelines that indicate which sorts of code-switching behaviors facilitate TL acquisition and which behaviors undermine it” (p. 356).

**Purposeful Use of the Native Language**

Many studies (e.g. Crawford, 2004; Moore, 2013; Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005) look at what language was being used, when it was used, and why it was used. Due to TL use becoming so central to teaching, many of these studies looked at the purposes teachers had for using the L1. The purposes of L1 are closely tied to the question posed in the article title: “Why that, in that language, right now?” (Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005). Crawford (2004) suggests the use of the L1 for processing the cultural and language experiences of the student. The students who are in such an environment are “able to operate with two language systems as genuine TL users, not as imitation natives” (Cook, 2001, p. 419. This is similar to how researchers Turnbull and Arnett (2002) describe code-switching as a natural part of the foreign language environment. Cook further clarifies that teachers should use the L1 when “the cost of the TL is too great” (p. 418). When it is so difficult and inefficient to use the TL for students to process what they need to do, then making the switch just makes sense. Turnbull, however, describes Cook’s (2001) use of L1 as not leaving much room for the use of the TL. He calls for teachers and researchers to look more closely at the roles the L1 can play, such as acting as a catalyst for TL intake.

One method for determining L1 use is that of categorizing classroom goals by types of interaction. Rolin and Varshney (2008) describe these different interactions as being “medium-oriented” goals, “framework-oriented” goals, or “affective” goals, the former two coming from the work of Rod Ellis (1988). Medium goals are those focused on teaching the language.
Framework goals are those associated with the organization and management of classroom events. An example of a medium goal would be using the L1 to give new vocabulary or grammatical concepts. Framework goals would be used for explaining managerial items such as procedural instructions and assigning homework. Swain and Lapkin (2000) showed in their research that students strategically use the L1 to help with “medium-oriented” goals to complete collaborative tasks. Categorizing language use into goals can be beneficial for identifying the exact use of the L1 and its purpose. Further research about how teachers strategically mark their L1 use could provide data to support the language goals and overall outcomes of a course.

Creating a framework based on language goals and aims is an objective method for teachers to effectively make the critical L1/TL choice. Edstrom (2006) refers to different goals and purposes for her class besides language learning and defends her language use practices by those goals. Goals provide a way for teachers to categorize their language use (Rolin & Varshney, 2008) and facilitate discussion and decisions as to where changes need to be made. Documenting that discussion and thinking about classroom language use in these terms is research that would help drive changes that need to be made in the way language is being used.

In the end, the argument could be made that an optimization of the L1 becomes essential in the maximum expression of LC. McMillan and Turnbull (2009) propose this theory related to LC:

Optimal first language use in communicative and immersion second and foreign language classrooms recognizes the benefits of the learner’s first language as a cognitive and metacognitive tool, as a strategic organizer, and as a scaffold for language development. In addition, the first language helps learners navigate a bilingual identity and thereby learn to function as a bilingual. Neither the classroom teacher nor the second or foreign
language learner becomes so dependent on the first language that neither can function without the first language. Optimal language choice practices will ultimately lead to enhanced language learning and the development of bilingual communicative practices. If this is true, then the teachers’ responsibility is to help bilingual learners learn to navigate the waters of bilingualism through a principled method.

Chapter Summary

Language choice is a contributing factor to how a language classroom functions. Many perspectives exist on how and why TL and L1 use should happen in certain ways. Nevertheless, teachers are the ones making these choices and how and why they are making those decisions is largely unclear. The need for using the TL and the L1 in the classroom indicates that research on how those choices are being made and what influences them is a top priority. Additional research in the field will provide insight into the process and outcomes of teachers’ language choices.
CHAPTER 3

Research Design and Methods

Research Questions

Research on LC needs to be based on empirical and principled methods for teachers to be the most effective possible. That being the case, the following questions evaluated what challenges, influences, and practices teachers reported in their FL classrooms.

1. What do teachers report are the challenges they face in teaching in the target language?
2. According to teachers, what factors influence their choice of when to use each language?
3. What practices do teachers find most effective in promoting and evaluating their own use of the target language?

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze information relating to the challenges reported by teachers with TL use, the influences affecting choices regarding L1 and TL use, and the commonality and effectiveness of practices for gauging and promoting TL use. In order to make this inquiry data were collected through the administration of an online survey.

Data for the study were collected through a survey. A window was opened from March to June of 2015 for participants. In order to distribute the survey, a recruitment email (see Appendix A) was sent out to school districts throughout the state of Utah. The email specified the length, purpose, and anonymity of the survey and the potential compensation of a gift card if selected. The email also explained the importance of this research to the field to improve the pedagogy surrounding language choice and associated teaching practices. A link for the survey was posted online with a short description of the survey from the main points of the email. Various websites
and listservs such as the BYU Spanish and Portuguese Facebook page, the ACTFL and UFLA Facebook page, and Cortland Listserv were utilized. One additional way the link was distributed was through a group email of teachers who were attending a BYU summer institute for language teachers and participating in the session presented by the researcher.

Once respondents received the email or gained access to the link, they were able to read a brief introduction to the study. The respondents were informed that the time required would be approximately 10 minutes. The link was made public to facilitate sharing and participating within the FL community. The first step in filling out the survey was completing the page of informed consent. Within the informed consent page, further details explained the procedures of the survey. Respondents’ information was linked to responses in order to keep information confidential and trackable. At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to complete all the questions at once. They were not required to enter their emails, but had the option to do so in order to be entered into a drawing for two gift cards of $50. The researcher provided the gift cards. A disclaimer included with the item asking for emails stated,

Please enter your email if you would like to be entered into a drawing for one of two $50 gift cards. This information will not be used as a way of tracking responses and will be deleted at the conclusion of the drawing. You will not be contacted for anything else by entering your email.

Follow up emails were not sent directly to participants but rather to district supervisors to remind and ask possible candidates to participate. An additional email was sent as well to thank all those who had actually participated in the survey. After the email and link was initially distributed in March, a window of six weeks was set to allow for the collection of data. After this
time, no further contact was made except to those respondents who expressed interest in the drawing for the gift cards. They were notified via email and sent the gift cards through the mail.

**Participants**

The population for this study consisted of foreign language teachers mainly in K-12 education. The sample was not restricted to other characteristics in the effort to include teachers from the whole spectrum of K-12 FL teachers. Some university teachers were also included in the statistics because they also face many of the same challenges and influences only with a different population. Sampling was done in this way in order to describe and investigate a broad range of perspectives and practices so that commonalities and relationships that existed could be analyzed and the findings could be more generalizable. Data were collected from the 112 teachers who completed the survey, gave consent, and fulfilled the sample requirements. Because other similar studies have been completed for teachers of English as a foreign language, this study excluded data attributed to those teachers. Not every teacher responded to every item, meaning the total was variable for each item.

The majority of participants collected were teachers from Utah who were contacted via email and were willing to participate. Contact was made with the Utah world language and dual immersion specialist Gregg Roberts and in turn with district language specialists in the state to distribute the survey. Due to the fact this was a survey, the number of participants was not limited with the expectation that the more that responded, the broader the scope of the investigation would be.

A pre-survey section was administered to participants including questions aimed at understanding the background of the participants. The first question in the background (BG) section, or BG1, asked teachers about the type of school they taught in traditional public schools,
charter public schools, or private schools. The large majority, 86% of teachers, came from public
schools, with about 14% of teachers being from private or charter public schools. Secondly,
teachers were asked the grade level at which they taught. Nearly three quarters of all teachers
taught at the secondary education level (7-12), with the remaining quarter coming from
elementary and university teachers.

Seventy two percent of teachers reported working at the secondary level teaching grades
7-12 (the secondary categories were split into 7-8 and 9-12 categories). Only two immersion and
two regular elementary education teachers responded. Respondents in the “Other” category
marked either that they taught university, adults, or some other mix of grade level like 6-8, 10-
12, 8-12 and others.

Thirdly, in item BG3 teachers were asked to mark all levels that they taught in the
language. This question was included for teachers in the secondary level that generally have
programs classified by levels. Table 1 displays the number of teachers who taught at each level.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection of Class Levels by Teachers in LC Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourth, the teachers were asked to report all languages that they taught. Table 2 shows
the demographics of the languages. Teachers were allowed to select all languages that they
taught. The results are ordered by largest to smallest number of teachers for the language.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASL</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The languages reported in the “Other” category included Dutch, Latin, Ancient Greek, Sanskrit, Italian, and Russian.

Fifth, teachers reported their native language(s). Figure 1 shows these figures. Teachers were allowed to mark all languages that applied. The graph shows that nearly all respondents were native English speakers (83%), with Spanish being the only other language with more than one percent, at 11%. The representativeness of the population surveyed in comparison with the actual population of FL teachers is unclear. The participation of Utah teachers was a greater focal point for the researcher due to accessibility.
Sixth and lastly, the number of years of experience was asked. Figure 2 shows the number of participants that responded for each category. The biggest single group by far was teachers with 10+ years of experience.

*Figure 1* Native Languages of Teacher in LC Survey

*Figure 2.* Number of Years Taught by Teachers. This figure shows the number of years taught by the number of teachers with that selection.
Instruments

A cross-sectional survey was used to collect data from open and close-ended questions (see survey in Appendix B). A short demographics section, as was previously discussed in the participants section, included a few background questions about the school, teaching experience, language, and language level they teach. The survey then contained three sections: foreign language challenges (Chal), factors influencing language choice (FLC), and promoting TL use (PTL). The following are the questions for each section:

- **Chal 1**: Approximately what percentage of the time do you use the TL for the following classroom tasks? (List of tasks found in Table 3)
- **Chal 2**: Omitted from the survey
- **Chal 3**: During which classroom activities do you find it most challenging to stay in the target language, and why?
- **Chal 4**: ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language) has set a standard for teaching 90% or more in the TL. Is this a goal that you feel you currently meet? Why or why not?
- **PTL 1**: One of the greatest challenges is being motivated and keeping students motivated to use the TL. Check the items you are currently using.
- **PTL 2**: You indicated you use the following items. For each item, indicate how beneficial it is for reaching your overall aims and objectives of the class.
- **PTL 3**: How do you gauge the effectiveness of your choices regarding the use of the TL?
- **PTL 4**: What do you find is most beneficial for gauging the effectiveness of your TL use on student learning?
- **FLC 1**: Please rate how much each of the following factors influences your choices about whether to use English or the TL in the classroom.
- **FLC 2**: What would you say has the greatest influence on when and how much you use the target language in your classroom, and why?

The purpose of the Chal section was to extrapolate the data necessary for responding to the first research question. The intent was to understand activities that were generally more difficult to conduct in the TL. Then, teachers identified through open-ended responses the greatest challenges affecting the TL use in the classroom. The first section item asked teachers to indicate a percentage of TL used for 15 common FL classroom tasks.
TEACHERS’ PERSEPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE CHOICE

The tasks in this section come from a questionnaire given to student teachers to gauge their commitment to using the TL for the various FL activities (Bateman, 2008). The prompt asked teachers to use a scale to give an approximate percentage of the time they use the TL. The list is not inclusive of all activities that take place in the classroom. Nevertheless, the list does include major activities that require instruction and language use, and gives a good snapshot of the teachers’ TL use abilities concerning instruction. The follow up to item Chal 1 asked, “During which classroom activities do you find it most challenging to stay in the target language, and why?” The reason for asking the open-ended question was to probe further into how these challenges really affect the overall TL use in the classroom. Chal 4, a third question in the section, provided data that were used to analyze both challenges and factors of influence for teachers as they strive to meet the 90% ACTFL recommendation. This final item in the section also became a method for comparing data for other items based on groups created from the responses.

The following survey section, Factors of Language Choice or FLC, began with a survey item containing seventeen different factors and asked, “How much each of the following factors influences your choices about whether to use English or the TL in the classroom?” Teachers used a Likert scale including 1-Not at all, 2-Slightly, 3-Somewhat, 4-Greatly, and 5-Very Greatly influencing LC. The concluding question to this section and the survey was “What would you say has the greatest influence on when and how much you use the target language in your classroom, and why?” The purpose in collecting quantifiable data for factors of influence was to find patterns and create a hierarchy of influential factors. This is one of the areas Crawford (2004) says should be researched to recognize why teachers are making the language choices they do.
The final survey section, Promoting Target Language or PTL, gathered data for the third research question as teachers identified the most common practices for promoting and evaluating their own TL use. These items provided data for how teachers prepared themselves and students to use the TL, and then how they continually motivated students to use the TL and monitored its use. The PTL section provided the means for connecting practices that support and create the environment teachers seek to foster in the FL classroom.

Ideas for the first half of the PTL section came from the personal experience and investigation of the researcher, including an ACTFL language journal article about maintaining a 90%+ goal of TL use in the classroom (Krause 2010). The list was compiled with the intent of expanding it with teachers’ comments made in the free response questions. A checklist on how teachers gauge the effectiveness of their TL use was included in an attempt to have teachers self-report their efforts to improve and evaluate their use of the target language. Teachers were also given the chance to share what for them was the most beneficial for gauging the effectiveness of their TL use on student learning. The question was left open ended to give teachers the liberty to share what they wanted on the topic.

Data Analysis

Three different types of analyses were used to interpret and mine the data that were collected from the survey. The first was the analysis of descriptive statistics, second was the categorization of the qualitative responses of teachers, and the third was done with inferential statistics completed with the use of ANOVA tests.

Descriptive statistics were used for the following:

1. To identify the most challenging classroom tasks to complete with the TL (Chal 1)
2. To determine what practices were most used for promoting TL use (PTL1) and how beneficial those practices were for promoting TL use (PTL2)
3. To report how teachers gauge the effectiveness of their choices (PTL3)
4. To show how much teachers were influenced by varying factors to use the TL or L1 (FLC1)

From these five items the average value, response rate, variance, minimum and maximum value, as well as the standard deviation for each of these items was used in this analysis. These statistics were in turn used to rank the different aspects of the variables and describe challenges of TL use, factors of influence, and practices for promoting the TL that affect LC the most and least.

The second analysis was completed by categorizing and looking for commonalities in the qualitative data for the following:

1. The most challenging activities for TL use (Chal 3)
2. The 90% recommendation for TL use (Chal 4)
3. The most beneficial assessment for effective TL use (PTL 4)
4. The greatest factor of influence of TL use (FLC 2)

Categories were created for each question, although overlap of categories did exist in some of the questions’ categories. Most of the categories and methods for categorization were created by the researcher, with the exception of one type of categorization for the most challenging TL use activities, which came from the work of Polio and Duff (1994). In that study, categories were created for different types of interactions where the L1 was found. Besides the categories from Polio and Duff, themes from the data.
The third method of analysis was the use of inferential statistics. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was run on the data by creating and coding a variable labeled ACTFL_GOAL. An ANOVA test was selected in order to identify statistical significance between the categorical variables, which are those based on qualitative values such as teacher preparation. The significance level for all tests was set at $p = .05$. The variable was created from respondents answer to whether or not they reached the ACTFL 90% goal. The groups arose from qualitative analysis based on the interpretation of the researcher and categorization of the responses in the following ways. One group consisted of respondents who did not meet the goal of 90% TL (NM Group), and were coded as “0.” A second group was made of respondents who reached the 90% goal some days, for some classes, or only some of the time (PM Group), and were coded as “1.” The third group included respondents who met the 90% goal either most or all of the time (FM Group), and were coded as “2.” With the data coded in this way, the responses to the ACTFL 90% goal became the first variable utilized to see what statistical significances existed among the three groups.

The first survey item that was tested for statistical significance with the ACTFL goal were the 15 common tasks measured by percentage of TL use in item Chal 1. For these tasks, descriptive statistics were calculated as well as a one-way ANOVA. Post-hoc tests were also run using Bonferroni and Dunnett T3 calculations, also configured based on a .05 level of statistical significance. Additionally, one-way ANOVA tests with the ACTFL goal variable tested the strategies teachers used for motivating students in item PTL1, how beneficial those strategies were rated in item PTL2, the ways teachers gauge the effectiveness of their TL use in PTL3, and the influences affecting TL use in item FLC1. Descriptive statistics and the same post-hoc tests were also completed for those questions with the ACTFL goal of 90%+.
The number of years of experience as a FL teacher was a second variable used to test for statistical significance among the same variables. The same variables and tests analyzed via the ACTFL goal variable were evaluated by the years of experience variable. The only different test run was the one that analyzed the ACTFL goal by the variable of years of experience.

Chapter Summary

A survey was created for K-12 language teachers with the purpose of obtaining teachers’ perspectives on the beliefs and challenges of using the TL. A second purpose was to find factors influencing the use of the TL by the teacher. A third was to investigate how teachers evaluate the effects of their language choices on students. Lastly, the survey probed for techniques and strategies used in promoting the target language. Through the data collected, factors were ordered and relationships made between factors associated with these aspects of TL use.
The purpose of the study was to obtain a snapshot of teachers’ perspectives about target language use in the foreign language classroom. The resulting data presented in this section contain the responses and data analysis of a largely convenience sample. This was due to the researcher’s residence in Utah. Hence, the majority of practitioners were FL teachers in Utah and a few from other states. The analysis in this chapter details survey items linked to research the three research questions (see beginning of Chapter 3 for research questions). The data were analyzed through the descriptive statistics provided from items Chal 1, PTL1, PTL2, PTL3, FLC1, and the categorical analysis as described in Chapter 3 of items Chal 3, Chal 4, PTL4 and FLC2 (see Appendix B for actual survey questions).

The analysis for each section first reports data for the population as a whole. Afterward, data from an inferential test, known as analysis of variance (ANOVA), explains statistical significance, if any, that was found. This test was run to find significance between categorical variables, those with qualitative value such as teacher preparation, among various classroom activities, factors of influence, and target language practices. The ANOVA tests were predominantly completed utilizing a variable created from qualitative data about whether teachers did or did not meet the goal of using 90% or more of the target language. From the data three groups were organized according to those who fully met (FM Group), partially met (PM Group), and did not meet (NM Group).

Research Question 1: Challenges of TL Use

Research Question 1 was “What do teachers report are the challenges they face in teaching in the target language?” Answering the first research question based on one single item
from the questionnaire was very challenging in itself. To be able to pinpoint what the greatest challenge is for teachers depends on the question asked. Two questionnaire items specifically related to this question. The first was an item asking teachers to give a percentage for their TL use for 15 common foreign language tasks (Chal 1). Classroom tasks refers to interactions that are integral to language teaching. The tasks utilized were taken from a questionnaire administered to student teachers by Bateman (2008). The second associated item collected qualitative responses about the most challenging activities for TL usage (Chal 3). The following section describes the analysis of the two survey items of percentage of time teachers used the target language for classroom tasks and the most challenging activities for TL use.

Percentage of time teachers used the TL for classroom tasks. This survey item asked teachers to indicate the percentage of the time they successfully used the TL to complete fifteen classroom tasks. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics from all tasks surveyed. The percentage of TL use for each task, the minimum and maximum percentage of TL use, and the standard deviation for each task are shown in the table. The minimum and maximum values are included to show that the whole range of percentages was selected for each activity. The exception to this being for teaching new vocabulary, which had a minimum value of 5% and starting class / daily routines at with a minimum value of 2% respectively. The task averages were ordered from greatest to least.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Statistics of TL Use for Classroom Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching new vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting class / daily routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting work as a class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Activity Instructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>TL Use (%)</th>
<th>Weight (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity instructions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>63.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting pre-reading or pre-listening activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>61.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting cultural information - When giving new information or trying to present ideas specific to the target culture</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>56.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing clarification - explaining to the class instructions, rules, or responding to questions involving the whole class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>55.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debriefing after activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>55.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining grammar concepts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>54.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining assignments or projects</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>53.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual conversations - speaking with students about unrelated topics to learning objectives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing culture - when talking with class about the similarities and differences or diving in depth into the perceptions of the culture together</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving individual help - assisting students with assignments or questions about tasks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing discipline problems in the classroom</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 3 above, all but three tasks had an average of 50% TL use or more. The practices above 50% began with casual conversation at 50.95% to teaching new vocabulary at 74.32%. Notice that the top three tasks of teaching new vocabulary, starting class / daily routines, and checking comprehension are all very regularly occurring tasks in the foreign language classroom. They are also very concrete and generally do not require the same depth of explanation, knowledge, or language as some of the tasks with lower percentages such as addressing discipline, discussing culture, and explaining grammar. Another relationship to pay attention to is the amount of time tasks with high TL use percentages take versus the tasks with lower percentages. An additional point of focus may also be that tasks that typically required more student interaction and input, such as casual conversations, giving students help, addressing discipline, discussing culture, and debriefing activities, had lower averages. In contrast, tasks that
relied more heavily on teacher input such as teaching vocabulary, checking comprehension, starting class, and activity instructions all had higher averages.

Another observation from Table 3 was that the standard deviations for the tasks were large; ranging from 29 to 35 points, indicating that many teachers fell well above and below that average. High standard deviations were the norm among classroom tasks and the overall standard deviation for all tasks averaged 33.2. This shows that teachers along the whole spectrum of TL use participated and were willing to mark themselves where they felt they fell.

**ANOVA results for challenging classroom tasks.** An ANOVA test was conducted for the groups that fully met (FM), partially met (PM), and did not meet (NM) the ACTFL 90%+ Goal variable to find statistical significance for the tasks. As might be expected with how groups were divided, statistical significance was found for most factors between the FM and NM groups. Tasks with statistical significance of less than or equal to .05 between the two groups included: teaching new vocabulary, casual conversations, activity instructions, debriefing after activities, explaining assignments or projects, explaining grammar concepts, conducting pre-reading or pre-listening activities, checking for comprehension, presenting culture, discussing culture, giving individual help, providing clarification, and addressing discipline. The only tasks not to have statistical significance between the groups were correcting work as a class, and starting class / daily routines. This can be seen in the short distance between the lines for the three groups in Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows the averages for the 15 tasks according to group. When going from the task with the highest percentage TL use to the lowest, the change in the averages for the FM Group was consistently less than a 4% decrease. The activity with the highest percentage, checking comprehension had 87% average TL use, activity instructions followed with 86%. All
averages for the 90% TL use group fell within the 70%-90% range as can be seen in Figure 3. The PM and NM groups greater volatility between percentages, 40% between the highest and lowest percentages of addressing discipline and starting class for the PM group, and 45% between the highest and lowest percentages for addressing discipline and teaching new vocabulary for NM group.

Figure 3. Average TL Use of Tasks by Group. This figure shows the average for each task by group with the top line and points pertaining to group FM, the middle pertaining to PM, and the bottom line pertaining to NM.

Another important point to notice are the differences between percentages for certain tasks among the groups. Looking at the case of discipline, the difference between the group that meets 90% TL use and the other two is a 30% and 45% percent change. The large drops between the group that meets the goal and the other two occurs for discussing culture and providing clarification. Explaining grammar has the third biggest difference of 43% between the highest
and lowest groups. The largest differences between the lower two groups is between conducting pre- and post-reading activities, explaining grammar, and casual conversations.

Average percentages of TL use per classroom task were computed for the three groups from the ACTFL 90% goal. These percentages provided added insight into the differences that existed among the groups. The following table shows the averages for the groups’ overall use for the fifteen different tasks. These figures are significant because they clearly show the margins between the groups, and the actual percentage of overall TL use. These percentages tie the respondents to their groups not only because of what they said qualitatively but also due to how they answered quantitatively to this item.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups based on meeting 90% or more TL use</th>
<th>Average % of TL use per classroom tasks (these were calculated using averages to the nearest .1%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not meet (NM Group)</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially met (PM Group)</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully met (FM Group)</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference of average TL use going from the lowest group to the highest is 33.3% per task, which, as expected, is a sizeable gap between the FM and NM groups. The gap between the NM and PM is much smaller at 12% per task, while the change in average percentage among the PM and FM groups is higher at 21.3% per task.

Statistical significance was nearly the norm for every activity between the NM group and the FM group; however, that was not the case for differences between the NM group and the PM group, and the PM group and the NM group. No statistical significance occurred in the ANOVA and post-hoc tests between the PM group and the NM Group. In fact, the data showed no statistical difference between the two groups in terms of both the teaching of new vocabulary and
the explanation of grammar. Between the PM group and the FM group many variables differed significantly, including giving activity instructions, explaining grammar, presenting culture, discussing culture, giving individual help, providing clarification, and addressing discipline problems. The two activities with zero difference were correcting work and going over the daily routine and classroom procedures.

Table 5 below shows how the groups differed in percentages for the high and low TL use tasks analyzed. All three groups had addressing discipline and giving individual help as two of the lowest three percentages of TL use. The only difference among the tasks was casual conversation for the FM Group. The PM and NM Group instead responded that discussing culture was one of the lowest for TL use.

Table 5 *Highest and Lowest TL Use for Classroom Tasks Compared by Groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY 1</th>
<th>ACTIVITY 2</th>
<th>ACTIVITY 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FM Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGH</strong></td>
<td>Checking</td>
<td>Activity Instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehension 87.0%</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PM Group</strong></td>
<td>Starting Class/Daily Routines 78.3%</td>
<td>Teaching New Vocabulary 69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NM Group</strong></td>
<td>Teaching New Vocabulary 68.7%</td>
<td>Starting Class / Daily Routine 67.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FM Group</strong></td>
<td>Addressing Discipline 68.8%</td>
<td>Casual conversation 70.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PM Group</strong></td>
<td>Addressing discipline 37.6%</td>
<td>Discussing culture 44.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Most challenging classroom activities for TL use.** This item asked the question “During which classroom activities do you find it most challenging to stay in the target language, and why?” The question was open-ended in order to provide respondents the opportunity to explain and qualify their answers. The first method of analysis was to categorize the responses based on the described purpose of the activity. The data were then analyzed by arranging them into eight categories of activity type based on those used in Polio and Duff (1994). Lastly, the various classroom and speech functions that were described were counted based on the number of times the word appeared or that function was described.

*Purpose of L1 use.* The term *purpose* was used when analyzing the reason for which teachers were describing their L1 use in the classroom. Comments were separated into three categories of purpose, namely academic – those dealing with the actual learning objectives of the class, managerial – those dealing with the rules and regulation of the classroom, and social – those dealing with interacting with students on a personal level with the purpose of developing interpersonal relationships. These align with the same type of categorization used by Ellis (1988) when describing the different goals achieved in a class as either medium-oriented, in this case being the academic purposes; framework-oriented which are managerial purposes; and affective, which are the social purposes. Seventeen of the 102 responses contained information relating to more than one purpose category.

Examples of each of the purposes are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NM Group</th>
<th>Addressing discipline</th>
<th>Discussing culture</th>
<th>Giving individual help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEACHERS’ PERSEPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE CHOICE

Academic: “Complex grammar explanations - it's hard enough for the students to understand the rules, if I use the target language the chance they won't understand is too large.”

Managerial: “When school business items need to be addressed it is difficult because they haven't been taught the needed vocabulary.”

Social: “Causal conversations I view as building a relationship with student and those are done before class or when they are meeting with me. You need to take time to talk about something without the obstacle of communication in the language such as, How did your band concert go? (These are short minimal conversations) It was also stated that it was unrelated to the objective so my class time is focused on the learning objective.”

The statistics utilized for this survey item analysis were based off of a count of the number of comments containing reference to one or more of the purposes. Percentages for each of the purpose groupings academic, managerial, and social, was calculated from the total number of L1 uses. This information is reflected in Table 6.

Table 6 Number of Comments and Percentage of Total Comments for Purposes of L1 Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of L1 Use</th>
<th>Number of Comments</th>
<th>Percentage of total comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>60.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interaction Type. After looking at L1 use by purpose, the responses were analyzed by interaction type. These interactions were associated with being challenging for TL use. The majority of the categories chosen for analyzing this question came from Polio and Duff (1994) and were classroom management, grammar instruction, culture instruction, vocabulary, comprehension, administration, and relationship building. An additional category of interaction was made for unspecified instruction labeled as “instruction.” One hundred and one responses
were analyzed with twenty-two responses containing data connected with multiple types of interaction. The following includes examples from the survey responses of the eight categories that were used:

- **Classroom Management:** “Misbehavior.”

- **Grammar Instruction:** “Teaching grammar constructs.”

- **Culture Instruction:** “When discussing culture. The students want to discuss the similarities and differences and at times they do not have the vocabulary to discuss in the TL.”

- **Comprehension:** “When checking comprehension because students have a tendency to say they understand when they really don't.”

- **Administration:** “It is most difficult to use the target language for administrative topics - explaining grading, class organization, etc., partially because I have to make sure the students have a 100% understanding, partially because there aren't always exact equivalents in Italian.”

- **Relationship Building:** “Causal conversations I view as building a relationship with student and those are done before class or when they are meeting with me. You need to take time to talk about something without the obstacle of communication in the language such as: How did your band concert go? (These are short minimal conversations) It was also stated that it was unrelated to the objective so my class time is focused on the learning objective.”

- **Vocabulary:** “I also find it challenging to teach vocabulary staying in the target language without taking large amounts of time to get the students to guess what the word means.”

- **Instruction:** “When explaining a new concept. I want the students to understand it.”

A graphical display of the comments categorized into one of these interactions is available in Figure 4. Several items should be noted from Figure 4. First, grammar instruction had nearly double any other interaction, and accounted for one-third of all data categorized for
this item. Grammar instruction, combined with classroom management, administrative uses, and cultural instruction, totaled 103 mentions and accounted for over three quarters or 78.3% of all interactions reported by teachers.

![Figure 4](Figure 4. Interaction Types found in Comments About the Most Challenging Activities)

Figure 5 shows the selection of functions of language, or the purpose for which the language was being used to communicate in item Chal 3, and gave insight into what teachers were using the target language to accomplish in their classroom. These data were gathered through a simple count. The most frequently found function was to explain, which tripled the amount of any other. Some comments contained more than one language function, although multiple repetitions of a function in a comment were not double counted. Figure 6 only included functions with three or more instances.
This section of the survey corresponded to Research Question 2 “According to teachers, what factors influence their choice of when to use each language?” The items from the survey that were analyzed in this section are those that asked about why or why not teachers met the 90% goal and the average means for the factors of influence. These sections will be broken down into student, teacher, and classroom factors that indicated influencing teachers’ LC.

**Meeting 90% or more in the TL.** Teachers were given the following prompt: “ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language) has set a standard for teaching 90% or more in the TL. Is this a goal that you feel you currently meet? Why or why not?” This question was open-ended so that teachers could qualify their response and give evidence to support their answers. The methods for analysis included first sorting and codifying respondents into a group based on the wording of qualitative answers to the question about 90% TL use. Teachers explained that they met the goal with all classes and most of the time, they met the goal in some classes or some of the time, or they did not meet the goal at all for any classes. Secondly, responses were analyzed in terms of the factors of influence. These were related to either teacher,
classroom, or student sources. One characteristic of these factors is that they were generally reported as negatively influencing TL use. This in part was due to the fact that most of the responses analyzed were those of teachers explaining why they partially or completely did not meet the goal. These teacher-, classroom-, and student-related factors were further dissected into thirteen influences that were subgroups of either teacher, student, or classroom factors.

*Sources of factors of influence.* The total number of respondents that was analyzed for this item was 101. There were 32 respondents classified as fully meeting 90% TL use, 28 respondents classified as partially meeting 90% TL use, and 42 respondents classified as not meeting 90% TL use. Of the reported factors, the greatest quantity belonged to classroom factors with 44 associated responses. These factors had to do with how TL use for the classroom or program was regulated, as well as the influences from the teaching situation. One example of a teacher’s response highlighting this is the following:

Generally yes. It very much depends on the course. You cannot discuss, for example, the French law on headscarves in public school in a beginning college French class during the 3rd week of courses. The student have no TL language skills to do that. So do you teach the simplest elements of culture (baby culture, e.g. name the capital of France? do you have a dog or cat), or do you assign students a 3-5 page serious article in English and spend 10 minutes discussing it in class. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for using as much TL in the class as possible, but when students are taking 4-5 other classes and are in a language course not because they are passionate about it but rather because it is a requirement, 90% is not always possible at every level or for every situation.”

Another example is “No, its jr high. I feel that if I spoke that much Spanish I would lose 70 % of the kids.” Teacher factors had the second highest mentions with 30, and student factors came in
last with 16 mentions. Student factors were those that were attributed to students’ characteristics such as motivation, proficiency, and preparation. Figure 6 shows the percentages that each source of influence had.

Figure 6. Student, Teacher, and Classroom Factors Represented by Percentage

Subcategories of teacher factors of influence. From the main teacher factors, three subcategories were created of practices, beliefs, and attributes in order to more clearly pinpoint the source of the influence. Teacher practices included asking students permission before they speak English, which demonstrated how teachers implemented TL use. Teacher beliefs are those involving teachers’ feelings, ideas, and assumptions about the language, such as the belief that 90% TL use is less effective than using more of the L1 to explain and clarify instruction. Teacher attributes are characteristics associated with the teachers’ use of a language, for instance being too lazy or overwhelmed to use the TL or being confident in their TL abilities.

Some practices mentioned clarified how a teacher actually completed an activity or gave instruction with the TL or L1. An example is the following:
Yes! I meet it because I consistently teach with Comprehensible Input strategies including: Non-linguistic representations (i.e. gestures, pictures), TPRS, Movie Talk, reading novels, Free Voluntary Reading, etc.”

This comment directly relates the strategies and teaching practices to teachers’ ability to use 90%+ in the TL. One comment exemplifying teacher beliefs about using 90% TL in the classroom is:

For the most part no, but I'm close. Again, as stated before, it just isn't practical in every situation. I realize it is the best way to get students to reach a higher proficiency level, but that must be balanced with the needs of the students and the nature of the class.

This teacher feels that logic and practicality should be used as strategies for determining the most appropriate TL/L1 use. Lastly, a comment indicating teacher characteristics is “No. I probably resort to English often due to lack of adequate preparation on my part to effectively use the TL in some situations.” This comment indicates preparedness and preparation as an attribute affecting teachers’ TL use.

Classroom elements affecting language choice. After determining the source of influences as either class-, teacher-, or student-related, the data were analyzed according to specific elements of the classroom that were reported as influencing language choices. The most frequently reported elements were the level that was being taught, the time necessary for the preparation and teaching of the language in the TL, and the curriculum that was being taught. The following contains a selection of comments from the elements affecting teachers LC:

Level – refers to the different class levels: “This is a goal I partially meet-- I am at 90% or higher in Levels 3, 4, and 5, but only about 50% in Level 1.”
Curriculum – refers to what teachers felt about the content they needed to teach and its depth and breadth: “I think it would be much more attainable if we, as world language teachers had a more consistent curriculum with very specific standards and resources, activities, assessments, etc... that we all had in common.”

Affective Factors – refers to how the TL use specifically affected students’ and teachers’ anxiety and ability to function emotionally and otherwise in the class: “No. Ideally, 90% would be what I teach, but I unfortunately do not, mostly because I notice that students shut down because they don’t understand. They don't "rise" to the occasion. They would rather sink than swim.”

Requirement – refers to differing requirements placed on teachers in their specific teaching situation: “90%-100%, the world language coordinator requires it.”

“AP Spanish is taken by students that are self-motivated and want to learn the language. Spanish 2 students are required to take this course. I have attempted to stay in the target language however I have found that students become discouraged and frustrated with the language.”

Relationship Building – refers to the efforts of educators to build rapport with students: “no. hard to develop a rapport in the TL. my language is much more difficult for students to understand than romance languages.”

Fatigue – refers to the loss or lack of energy and ability by teachers to sustain TL use: “No, I am trying to work towards that. It is difficult and requires a lot more energy to teach in the target language all the time. I know it is important but sometimes it is exhausting.”

Preparation – refers to the needed preparation by teachers and students for successful TL use: “No. I probably resort to English often due to lack of adequate preparation on my part to effectively use the TL in some situations.”
Environment – refers to the classroom and school environment that influence the ability to use the TL: “No, because the other teacher at our school doesn't teach very much in the TL (and when she does, she translates the instructions into English) and then the administration doesn't always support me in trying to use the TL as much as possible in class.”

Motivation – refers to the interest, desire, and willingness of students and teacher to participate: “No. I guess it's hard for me to stay in the language when the students obviously don't know what I'm saying. Also, so many of them seem to be indifferent about learning, that they don't even attempt to understand.”

Classroom Management – refers to the ability to manage student behavior: “I think so, but it depends on the day, especially if there are lots of discipline problems to resolve.”

Time – refers to the challenges with the amount of time available to reach goals and objectives of the class: “No I do not meet it. I speak a lot of the target language and I strive constantly to speak more, but it takes a lot of time and I can't have the same relationship with my students as I do when I speak some English in the class. The students need a little bit of casual, non-learning time.”

As can be seen in the comments above, many of the elements are interrelated. In the last comment, the element of time as a limitation to TL use is described in conjunction with the ability to build relationships and the affective aspects that help lower students’ affective filter. Of the comments with multiple elements, commonly found together were the elements of Time and Fatigue, Level and Curriculum, and Level and Preparation. Many of the comments expressing that teachers either met or almost met the 90% goal also explained more of their personal beliefs and less about the elements that were analyzed. Figure 7 shows the actual number of times each element was counted, ordered from highest to lowest. The top three elements are all classroom
factors. After these three, one can see that five of the elements are almost exactly equal, including preparation, affective filter, requirements, fatigue, and environment.

**Factors of influence.** The prompt for this item was “Please rate how much each of the following factors influences your choices about whether to use the L1 or the TL in the classroom.” The purpose of this item was to be able to order specific influences according to the most and least affecting language choice. The list was not inclusive of all influences but did allow teachers an “other” category to list anything that they felt were missing. Eighteen influences, including the other category, were rated on a Likert scale from a ‘1’ being “not at all” and ‘5’ being “very greatly” influencing language choice. The means of the influences ranged from a high of 3.67 for teachers’ own motivation to a low of 2.37 for teachers’ collaborating partners. All but four of the influences in the table below “somewhat” influence teachers LC and are: curriculum requirements, the ACTFL statement regarding 90% use, special needs students, and lastly teachers’ collaborating partners. The top three factors influencing LC were teachers’ motivation, students’ proficiency, and students’ motivation. These three factors are all very
similarly rated and within .04 of each other. The results of the Likert scale rating for each influence are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 *Ratings of Factors of Influence by Teachers in LC Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors of Influence</th>
<th>1- Not at all</th>
<th>2- Slightly</th>
<th>3- Somewhat</th>
<th>4- Greatly</th>
<th>5- Very Greatly</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your own motivation and attitudes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your students' language proficiency</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' motivation and attitudes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your own language proficiency</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your own training as a teacher</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive load of the lesson</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your own experience as a language learner in a classroom setting</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program goals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your desire to build rapport with students</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time - Amount you have to teach and reach objectives</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources to support TL (projector, realia, authentic materials, etc.)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your own level of experience with the target culture(s)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effectively handling classroom management issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>FM</th>
<th>PM</th>
<th>NM</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum requirements</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTFL statement regarding 90% or more TL use</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special needs students</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your collaborating partners</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ‘total responses’ column in this table was included to show that not all teachers rated every influence. As can be seen in Table 7 teachers’ own motivation and attitudes as well as their own language proficiency had the greatest influence out of teacher factors. Students’ language proficiency was the greatest influence of student factors. Some of the “other” category responses had to do with certain practices such as preparation time and planning. This category also contained comments regarding stresses or requirements placed upon teachers such as the pressure to maintain enrollment levels, the requirement to teach 100% in the TL, and dealing with student confusion. Lastly, some of the comments in the “Other” category had to do with own personal connections teachers made such as the belief that the “best way to learn to swim is get in the water”, their love of the culture, and their own pedagogical beliefs.

ANOVA results for factors of influence. When looking at the data by the FM, PM, and NM groups, many statistically significant differences were found. Looking at Table 8 below, the highest means show that the NM and PM Groups placed student influences at the top. The FM Group, however, did not even rate student influences in the top five. Instead, their responses focused more on themselves and what they controlled, such as their own proficiency,
TEACHERS’ PERSEPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE CHOICE

motivations and attitudes, training, and experience with the culture. Both the PM and NM groups included only one of those influences as being among the most influential, their own motivation and attitude.

Table 8 shows that not only was teachers’ own level of experience with the target culture not part of the NM and PM Groups top influences, the factor was rated as being in the lowest five. One difference between the PM and FM groups and the NM Group is program goals, which the NM group rated as their fourth to lowest influence. All groups had collaborating partners and special needs students in common as some of the lowest influences. Interestingly, the ACTFL statement on TL use was also the second lowest rated influence for the NM Group and the fourth lowest for the PM Group.

Table 8 *Factors Influencing TL Use Divided by Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Means (high-low)</th>
<th>Lowest Means (low-high)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NM Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 3.98 Student motivation and attitude</td>
<td>1. 2.13 Collaborating partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 3.88 Student Proficiency</td>
<td>2. 2.46 ACTFL statement on TL use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 3.61 Cognitive load of lesson</td>
<td>3. 2.75 Special needs students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 3.60 Time</td>
<td>4. 2.80 Program goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 3.58 Own motivation and attitude</td>
<td>5. 2.85 Own level of experience with target culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 3.58 Own desire to build rapport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PM Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 3.85 Student proficiency</td>
<td>1. 2.56 Special needs students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 3.74 Student motivation and attitudes</td>
<td>2. 2.59 Collaborating partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 3.56 Own proficiency</td>
<td>3. 2.85 Curriculum requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 3.56 Program goals</td>
<td>4. 2.85 ACTFL statement on TL use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 3.54 Own motivation and attitudes</td>
<td>5. 2.93 Own level of experience with target culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FM Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 4.06 Own Proficiency</td>
<td>1. 2.44 Collaborating partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 3.94 Own motivation and attitudes</td>
<td>2. 2.56 Special needs students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 3.72 Own training</td>
<td>3. 2.78 Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 3.84 Program goals</td>
<td>4. 3.03 Resources to support TL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 3.59 Own level of experience with target culture</td>
<td>5. 3.06 Curriculum requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 3: Promoting and Evaluating TL Use

The research question guiding this section was “What practices do teachers find most effective in promoting and evaluating their own use of the target language?” Four items, PTL 1-4, were created and analyzed to collect data to investigate this question. These items had to do with the strategies teachers were using to promote the TL, the ratings of the benefits of those strategies, the assessments utilized to gauge the effectiveness of teachers’ TL use, and the most beneficial assessment for gauging the impact of teachers LC on students.

Methods for promoting the TL. Item PTL 1 asked teachers to mark all practices they currently use to keep themselves and their students motivated and to use the TL. Fifteen practices were listed including an “Other” option for teachers to include their own. Five practices were selected by over half of the participants including planning, praise and recognition, explaining the importance of TL use, posting common phrases and vocabulary, and TL spotlights. Figure 8 shows a broad range in the popularity of the practices going from planning, selected by 89 respondents, to a “No English” contract, with only 10 instances. The top three practices of planning, praising/recognizing, and explaining the importance of TL use were all similar in the number of times they were selected. Figure 8 shows the results from this section in order of most selected to least selected.

One statistic to highlight is that the average of practices per teacher, which was 6.4. Another statistic that was highlighted from this analysis was how much of the total responses each individual practice made up in terms of percentages. Planning, for example, had 89 of the total 715 selections, meaning it made up 12.4% of all practices selected. Signing a no English
contract, on the other end of the spectrum, only had 10/715 responses, which meant it only represented 1.4% of the total practices. Figure 8 gives the number of selections for each practice.

![Rate of Response for Practices Promoting TL Use](chart.png)

**Figure 8.** Rate of Response for Practices Promoting TL Use

Looking at the “Other” practices listed by teachers, several themes were present. One theme had to do with classroom activities performed in or about the language such as reflection journals, paired speaking activities in the TL only, assessments in the TL and observing students’ practices or conversations. Another theme was practices relating to the regulation of the L1, such as throwing a llama to those speaking English, and designating immersion activities. A third had to do with the type of environment being fostered in the classroom. That environment was created through practices such as letting students know the expectation to only speak the TL in the classroom, making the class exciting, and relaying the personal need of the teacher for the TL
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to communicate, especially when a teacher is a native and may not possibly be able to communicate in the learners’ L1.

The results for the ANOVA to determine differences among the FM, PM, and NM groups in terms of practices for promoting TL use are the following. For all three groups, the most often reported practices selected for promoting TL use were 1) planning carefully for making input comprehensible; 2) giving special praise and recognition for language use; and 3) explaining the importance of TL use at the beginning of the year. The only exception was the PM Group, which gave higher priority to posting common phrases and vocabulary in the TL than to giving recognition for TL use. The practices with the lowest average selection demonstrated similar homogeneity. The lowest means for each group were for 1) holding inter- and intra- class competitions for language use; 2) signing a “no English” contract; and 3) designating immersion days. One exception to the previous list of lowest means is that the NM Group’s mean for using a sign or signal was lower than designating immersion days.

Although homogeneity existed among the high and low means for all three groups, three differences of statistical significance did emerge, as determined by post-hoc Bonferroni and Dunnett T3 tests. The first and greatest statistical difference occurred for the practice of planning carefully for making input comprehensible. The mean for planning carefully for comprehensible input for the NM Group was 64%, whereas for the PM Group it was 93%. The difference between these two groups was found to be statistically significant $(p=.01)$. The next greatest statistical difference was with making the TL use part of the grade $(p = .031)$ between groups NM and PM. The NM Group used this practice 38% of the time, in contrast with the FM Group, which used it 69% of the time. The final difference was with giving recognition for language use
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\( p = .036 \). The difference existed between the NM Group, which used this practice 86% of the time, and the PM Group, which used it 62%.

One unanticipated result was that differences among the three groups were found for only some of the practices. It might be expected that the NM Group would be lower than the PM Group, which would be lower than the FM in using practices to motivate students since the FM group reported meeting the 90% TL use goal. However, this only held true for six of the fourteen practices including using a sign or signal, using a reward system, having a “no English contract”, acting as though one does not speak English, making TL use a part of the grade, and holding class competitions for language use. The remaining eight practices were incongruent with that sequence. Actually, the PM Group had the highest mean in six of the practices including explaining the importance of TL use, giving talks or spotlights, planning carefully, posting common phrases, posting expectations in the TL, and including TL use in the syllabus. The NM Group had the highest average for two practices including giving praise and recognition and designating immersion days.

**Ratings of methods for promoting TL use.** The follow up to PTL1 was a rating of each item selected according to how beneficial it was for reaching overall aims and objectives of the class. The Likert scale ranged from 1 “Not at all beneficial”, to 5 “Extremely beneficial”. All practices had an average above a 3, which means they were rated at least “Somewhat” beneficial. Only four of the fourteen categories had the mean rating of “Very Beneficial,” including planning, posting common phrases and vocabulary, giving praise and recognition, and making TL use part of the grade. Table 9 contains the mean ratings for the practices selected by respondents in PTL2.
Table 9 *Usefulness of Practices for Promoting TL Use as Rated by Teachers in LC Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan carefully for making input comprehensible</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post common phrases and vocabulary in the TL</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give special praise and recognition for language use</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make TL use part of the grade</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act as though you don't speak English</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a reward system (pesos, points, etc.)</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold inter- and intra-class competitions for language use</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give motivational pep talks or spotlights on the importance of the language throughout the year</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post expectations, class rules, and consequences in the TL</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designate immersion days</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain the importance of using the TL at the beginning of the year</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a sign or signal to separate the use of L1 and TL</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have students sign a &quot;no English&quot; contract</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include TL use in the syllabus</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluations for gauging effectiveness.** The question for this item was “How do you gauge the effectiveness of your choices regarding the use of the TL?” This question gave teachers the opportunity to select all methods they utilized for determining the effectiveness of their TL use. As can be seen in the data, many teachers use a variety of practices, both student- and teacher-centered, with the greatest focus being on students’ willingness to use the TL. Figure 9 illustrates the number of teachers selecting each form of evaluation. The figure shows that the highest four forms of evaluation are similar in response rate after, which several drops ensue.
Figure 9. *Ways of Evaluating the Effectiveness of TL Use*

An ANOVA test was also conducted in order to determine any differences among the three groups in terms of their use of different ways of evaluating the effectiveness of TL use. These data were analyzed when 103 participants had responded and therefore has slightly different mean totals than the above table, although the ranking of means does not. Trends show the FM Group does more to evaluate than PM and NM Groups. However, if one looks at the means finding a pattern for the means is difficult. Almost every group had a higher mean for at least one form of evaluation. The ANOVA test showed that the only statistical significance between the three groups occurred for including TL use in student grades at $p=.037$. The post-hoc tests did not show a specific statistical significance between the different groups although the means were respectively 21% for NM Group, 17% for PM Group, and 44% for FM Group.

**Most beneficial tool for assessing the impact of teachers’ TL.** The question for this item was “What do you find is most beneficial for gauging the effectiveness of your TL use on student learning?” Ninety-two comments were analyzed from this question. A smaller percentage of the population answered this item, which may be in part due to it being near the end of the survey. This item was analyzed in a two-step process as well. First the data were separated into
whether the effectiveness was evaluated based on the student performance or the teacher performance. The purpose behind this method was to identify who was being evaluated; therefore, factors associated with those subjects could be analyzed. The types of evaluation analyzed from student-related evaluations were motivation, proficiency and participation, and formal assessment. Teacher-related evaluations had to do with awareness, practices, and feedback generated either by reflection or from external evaluation sources.

When discussing the most beneficial gauge, 73% of teachers reported student evaluation as being the most effective, 20% reported teacher evaluation as being most effective, and about 7% could not be categorized. Those that were not categorized commented that they did not know, were running short of time, or did not respond in an understandable manner. Teachers’ responses generally only contained either student or teacher-related evaluation, although four comments did contain data relating to both. Examples of the different types of evaluation that teachers reported can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10 *Examples of Student and Teacher Evaluations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Evaluation</th>
<th>Teacher Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation: &quot;My students are comfortable using the TL with me and their classmates in and outside of the classroom. They are excited to speak Spanish.&quot;</td>
<td>Awareness: &quot;My own reflections on success of lessons and units in reaching goals.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency and Participation: &quot;Student proficiency and their ability to understand and speak the language.&quot;</td>
<td>Practices: &quot;If I go slow, use gestures, and point to words and pause.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment: &quot;Results of the department reading, listening, speaking and writing assessments given at the end of the year and linked to ACTFL proficiency guidelines.&quot;</td>
<td>Feedback: &quot;Student feedback via questionnaires and surveys.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzed factors affecting the activities that were challenging to complete in the TL, factors influencing teachers LC, practices for promoting TL use, and evaluations for determining the effects on students. Although discipline had the lowest use of TL, teachers more frequently reported using the L1 for academic purposes. Grammar and cultural instruction were the top academic uses for TL along with explaining, teaching, instructing, and discussing being the functions most often associated. Of the factors influencing LC, the overall category that indicated whether teachers would use the TL was teacher factors such as their own motivation and beliefs; however, when responding to why they did or did not reach the ACTFL 90% target, they most often responded with classroom factors such as the level and the curriculum. Promoting the TL required a foundation to be built based on teacher preparation, communicating the purpose of the TL, and reinforcing it with special praise and recognition. Student-based evaluation was more common than teacher-based but both indicated high use by teachers.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Implications

The data analysis in Chapter 4 provides the context for the following discussion of the research questions. Each section of discussion addresses one of the three research questions. The Challenges section will point out different teacher, student, and classroom factors associated with TL and L1 use. The Influences section will discuss how key factors such as attitude and motivation, proficiency, the teachers’ role, and the demands and expectations of the classroom impact a teacher's focus on and perspective toward the TL. The final section discussing techniques for promoting the use of the TL and evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies use is separated into sections discussing foundational and framework practices and student-versus teacher-focused evaluation. Recommendations are made for specific pedagogical techniques for the optimal use of the TL. The discussion includes commentary on both the group of teachers surveyed as a whole, as well as the Groups FM (fully meets), PM (partially meets), and NM (does not meet).

Research Question 1: Challenges of TL Use

The first research question is “What do teachers report are the challenges they face in teaching in the target language?” The analysis of this question led to the discovery of several important factors that pinpoint what challenges teachers face most often and where they come from. Challenges mainly came from either a specific type of activity or interaction such as discipline or grammar instruction, or a specific purpose such as academic, managerial, or social. This discussion centers on the sources of the factors being either student-, teacher-, or classroom-oriented.
Managerial purposes. The most challenging task to complete in the TL according to the teachers’ responses to survey item Chal 1 was discipline. This activity falls within the managerial purposes of the classroom. One reason discipline may have been so difficult, as well as some of the other factors related to managerial purposes, is because of the lack of background and time teachers have to deal with some of these issues. This is supported by many responses in survey question Chal 4 that mentioned time and discipline together. Furthermore, the issue of using the TL for discipline may involve other factors such as the amount of time teachers are actually doing it, the importance or belief that classroom management should be dealt with in the target language, and even training on how to discipline.

Through an open response question, the research found that factors such as the desire and pressure teachers feel to maintain control, creating a conducive learning environment, and being able to reach class goals and objectives, pushed teachers more towards L1 use. Further findings suggest that teachers feel that if students do not understand instructions after having multiple explanations with the class, then individually they will not understand and will need support through the L1. Teachers also wanted to be clear about their behavioral and academic expectations as well as the consequences. Culturally, one teacher explained that if she wanted the discipline to carry the “force necessary” she felt she needed the L1. Clarity and conciseness are a recurring theme for the reasons why FL teachers felt the need to use the L1 for discipline as well as many other framework-oriented activities.

The nature of the challenge of discipline depended largely on how the teacher viewed the interaction. One perspective found within the data is that teachers view discipline as a framework goal. Framework goals, according to Ellis (1988), do not have to do with the content that is actually being taught. For that reason, some teachers argued it should not be counted as a task for
which TL use should be required. For some teachers, time spent on discipline and matters of classroom management is separate from the time allotted for language and culture objectives. A comment that highlights this is

I reach that goal when I am teaching German language and culture. When I am disciplining or going over the class syllabus or talking with the class about a non-German related school activity like a lock down or a survey everyone has to take or some other school-wide activity I do not meet that goal.

This teacher identifies both medium-oriented and framework goals (Ellis, 1988) as two separate entities tied to different purposes, linking the medium-oriented goals to TL use and the framework goals to the L1. This method for viewing discipline as a certain type of interaction is evidence that teachers are already organizing their interactions in a systematic way and giving preference to a language based on what goal that interaction fulfills in their classroom.

Although teachers reported using the TL at a lower rate for discipline, they did not regard discipline as the greatest challenge. Challenges associated with academic purposes were reported much more frequently in association with LC in general. Not only was the L1 found more often with academic purposes but also with related functions of speech such as explaining, teaching, instructing, and discussing. This would indicate that teachers prefer the TL for academic purposes to managerial ones, but still struggle with the complexity of the associated tasks and functions.

The data do not suggest, however, the exclusive use of L1 for managerial purposes or framework-oriented goals. In fact, in several instances the languages were described as being used simultaneously to explain and clarify concepts and assignments. This is evidence of the bilingual nature and code-switching that exists in many FL classrooms, as described in the work
of McMillan and Turnbull (2009). Explaining and clarifying strongly related to challenges faced with staying in the TL. Some teachers support a more dominant role of the TL for managerial purposes. They stated that L1 use is “silly” because they actually tend to have fewer discipline problems when using the TL. Additionally, other framework goals related to managerial purposes, including explaining assignments, providing clarification, correcting work, and starting class are all interactions that were performed the majority of the time in the TL. Some teachers believe framework-oriented goals provide significant opportunities for language acquisition and may be key to a successful FL environment. Having said that, teachers feel that certain administrative and managerial matters require students’ mother tongue, and ultimately need a keen awareness of what falls within the course objectives and the limitations of certain administrative matters.

**Academic purposes.** Of all activities with an academic purpose, giving individual help had the lowest use of the second language. Teachers explained that they wanted to make sure all students were able to get the instruction that they needed and would therefore resort to the L1 as a resource for helping struggling students. The types of individual help reported included explaining difficult assignments, giving instructions for activities, calming fears and lowering affective filters, and answering students’ questions.

Another explanation for the lower TL use with this activity is that the students being helped have high affective filters or are simply too afraid to ask questions. One teacher explained, “it is worth the compromise to speak in English if it gives that child confidence and more willingness to try.” The belief is that if students’ anxiety decreases then they will be able to ultimately succeed in the end. Teachers pointed out that reaching students through the L1 was done for specifically identified students. Students that struggled more than average were given
L1 support on an individualized basis. Using students’ first language in this way demonstrates
one method teachers have for determining the priority of their language choices. This method
also demonstrates teachers’ ability to make language choices for the benefit of the individual
student.

Discussing culture is the second lowest TL use activity with an academic purpose, but the
first specifically related to a medium-oriented goal. Medium-oriented goals are those having to
do with the medium of instruction or academic purposes, in this case being the TL. This activity
may therefore be of greater impact on the FL classroom and importance to many teachers FL
teaching methods. The data from the survey item about challenging activities corroborate this
claim, showing that the majority of comments related to academic purposes. Another indicator of
this claim’s veracity is the variety of functions involved with cultural instruction. The quantity
utilized far exceeds those associated with managerial purposes. The actual instruction for culture
involved instructing, discussing, explaining, teaching, analyzing, balancing, engaging,
conveying, comparing, contrasting, and presenting. The large quantity and variety suggests that
cultural instruction and discussion is a more complex process involving a wider variety of
language and depth of knowledge. Some teachers feel that when an activity is more complex,
broader in scope, or greater in depth, then first language use is more likely to aid in facilitating
the activity.

The belief about cultural knowledge and skills, and similarly grammatical knowledge and
skills, is that they are more in depth, and generally more complex, than what students are able to
handle in the TL. Another way of expressing the same idea would be to say that these content
areas are outside the sphere of the TL’s functionality. Comments about TL use challenges
indicated that L1 use for culture and grammar strongly related to the student level and depth of
knowledge teachers were trying to reach. When analyzing this relationship of breadth and depth, teachers decide what they can and cannot accomplish with the TL according to factors including time, student preparation and background, realia, and student interest and motivation. Based on that analysis, and what teachers believe about the challenges they face, teachers are using more or less of the TL. Some teachers reported not meeting the ACTFL 90% goal, for example, because of the amount of time that it takes to cover the depth and breadth of material they feel appropriate on cultural topics. Others reported that they meet the standard because they do focus on culture as a piece of the puzzle that allows them to use the TL. These two conflicting views demonstrate that more important than the challenges an activity may pose is the influence those challenges have on a teacher's beliefs about LC.

Many reasons for L1 use with cultural discussion were reported. Some of them included students’ lack of vocabulary or background knowledge, concepts being overtly advanced, making sure students aren’t too busy trying to understand the language and culture at the same time, lack of cognates to help students with topics, avoiding confusion, increasing higher order thinking, decreasing time needed, and understanding similarities and differences between the target culture and students’ own. These are all evidence of the belief that cultural knowledge and skills are more in depth and generally more complex than what students are able to handle in the TL. Culture was reported as being influenced by the factors of time and curriculum, which also may be related to why teachers felt a greater need to switch languages more often.

Like cultural instruction, grammar is another content area in which the issues of depth and breadth affect TL use. Although teachers reported successfully explaining grammar slightly more in the TL, more instances of grammar instruction (GI) as a challenge were mentioned in open-ended responses than any other activity. GI was the largest category reported in challenging
TEACHERS’ PERSEPETIVES ON LANGUAGE CHOICE

activities strongly associated with the function of explaining. The language function of discussing, as well as others such as clarifying, teaching, instructing, guiding, answering, and comparing, were also reported with the difficulty of TL use for grammar. More language functions were reported in connection with grammar than any other category of L1 use.

The most commonly mentioned problem with explaining grammar is that the concept was “over students’ heads,” or they “lacked sufficient background” or preparation to handle the instruction. One comment exemplifies this:

I find that very rarely are students equipped with grammar-related vocabulary and terminology, even in English, so cognates do them no good if I teach it in Spanish. With more difficult concepts (like If-Then Statements, Pret. V. Imp, DO and IO pronouns, Subjunctive, etc.), it can be like playing charades or Pictionary if I stick to the TL, which I feel is a loss of time. So I go to English.

Teachers also said that they were afraid of students generally feeling lost and frustrated with GI and, to avoid demotivating students, teachers spoke the L1.

A relationship found between the data regarding GI and the NM Group is that after the level of student, the next most reported factor affecting L1 use was curriculum and content. All three of those factors - level, curriculum, and content - may be consequential because of the curricular goals that teachers set at each class level for GI. In order for students to succeed at those levels, teachers feel pressured to cover the required curriculum, and especially feel the burden of all a student should “know” before leaving their class. One way to address this issue is for teachers to focus on the proficiency levels that they are working towards more than the amount of culture, grammar, or other content they hope to cover.
Many teachers mentioned being fearful of student confusion and anxiety as a result of their own experience with students dropping their class in order to go to a “easier,” more appealing class. Depending on the school administration and the culture of language teaching in the school, this can be a great motivation behind L1 use, especially for more difficult concepts. Time also is a constant motivation for teachers to help students move along and build enough background with a concept so that they can actually use it in practice. In order to address the fear of losing students, teachers need to find clear ways to communicate to stakeholders involved with students’ learning, such as parents and administration, regarding the purposeful nature of their TL and L1 use. They can also provide and incorporate strategies for dealing with anxiety so students are assured that they will be supported both in and outside the classroom.

In summary, teachers face differing academic, managerial, and social challenges due to the differences in their medium-oriented, framework-oriented, and affective-oriented goals. The greatest quantity of reported challenges were associated with academic activities. One significant challenge dealing with the academic side is how to reach language objectives in the TL for students at differing levels depending on the depth and breadth of content. The most challenging activities to successfully use the TL have to do with framework and affective oriented goals such as addressing discipline, giving individual help, and casual conversation. The challenge with framework- and affective-oriented goals in the class is deciding what priority to give them, and how and when the TL can be used to facilitate their successful completion.

Research Question 2: Factors of Influence in Language Choice

The second research question is “According to teachers, what factors influence their choice of when to use each language?” This question is of great importance in understanding the reasons behind the language choices that teachers are making. In the analysis of this question, the
data were separated into groups according to teacher, student, and classroom factors. For that reason, not only were teachers asked if they met the ACTFL goal of 90% TL use, but also to elaborate on this issue. This question was the first to probe into the beliefs about and motives for TL use. The item was followed up with questions regarding factors influencing language choice, which asked teachers to rank the influence of different factors, then to report their greatest factor, and again to explain why. Comparing the results from these three questions, and then taking into account what was reported on the amount of use for different classroom activities adds new insights into how practices and beliefs are influenced by varying factors. The most influential of these factors, and how they relate to LC practices, is discussed in this section.

From the quantitative and qualitative data, a description of some important relationships can be seen among the factors influencing TL use. One clear relationship is the effect of the context of the class, including the level and the background of teachers and students, on how teachers are predetermining their approach to LC in the class. A second relationship is the belief by teachers that of the three sources of influences (teachers, students, and class), teachers feel they are most central to LC. Although teachers recognize their role as the responsible party for LC, how they respond to the demands and expectations of those choices is key to their commitment to and use of the TL.

**Attitude and motivation.** Within the responses concerning attitude and motivation, the word “willingness” appears frequently. Teachers talked about the “willingness” of the students to “take on something hard,” “buy into the concept,” and several times to “use/communicate in the TL.” One teacher says that what students want and need “pushes me” to use the TL.

The data from this study connects motivation to the language choices teachers make. In this case, both the teachers’ and students’ motivations and attitudes are key in LC. In fact, they
are minimally separated in the data and the most frequently reported characteristic of teachers and students in the qualitative responses. Student motivation is mentioned more than all other student factor comments, the next closest being language proficiency. Motivation was connected with other factors such as teacher practices. One teacher expressed that students’ “responsiveness...is greatly based on how interesting and engaging I as a teacher make the lesson.” Teachers are affected by this “responsiveness” in a very real way. This affects teacher anxiety about the TL because they know that when students “don’t care and don’t try it makes it difficult to stay in the language.”

When the focal point of a teacher’s classroom practice is engagement, then motivation and attitude become a barometer for LC. Some teachers were focused on student engagement so much that “if they (the students) are not motivated and difficult to engage I break down. I am desperate to get them to engage.” Another teacher described the situation this way: “I can use the language 90% of the time, but if the students do not understand or are engaged in the conversation/routine, what is the point of that 90%?” This brings the discussion back to the relationship between engagement and motivation. Teachers feel students want “class to be fun and engaging or they will not take the class”. This shows a dilemma teachers find between keeping students interested while finding the best method for increasing proficiency.

When asked to state the factor that most influenced LC, one teacher responded, “Maintaining student interest and morale. It is too easy for students in my school to drop language and not have to see it through and work harder. It can be demotivating for me as a teacher.” Another teacher, equally preoccupied with the amount of TL use stated that “I have had many kids drop my class the first couple of days because of it.” This comment was followed by the explanation that “Spanish is an elective at my school so if it seems hard they can drop and go
to choir or an easier class.” This shows a link between motivation, level of difficulty, and even the external requirements of the class, such as whether it is required or an elective. This shows that student motivation and attitudes, combined with other factors, regulate to some degree teachers’ use of TL.

**Proficiency.** According to the analysis of this study, proficiency plays a key role in how likely or unlikely a teacher is to use the TL. Of the four highest means of factors influencing teachers’ LC, students’ proficiency was second and teachers’ own proficiency was third. In the qualitative responses, the data indicate that although proficiency may not be the greatest factor influencing LC, it is a part of the myriad of factors making up the background of the students, the teachers, and the classrooms that affects a teacher’s LC. In one comment a teacher begins by describing “what students can do,” then discusses the different starting points for “beginners” and “a more advanced class,” stating that he will continue with the TL if students are “willing.” From this one comment one can see that students’ proficiency, level, and motivation play a role in whether the teacher continues or “backs off” using the TL. A dependent relationship exists between the proficiency level of students and teachers’ TL use.

Another teacher’s response highlights the fact that proficiency alone is not enough to make this decision but also one’s own beliefs about proficiency:

I believe that a combination of the ACFTL guidelines along with my own proficiency have the greatest influence on when and how much I use the TL in my classroom because I continually am aiming for using the TL at least 90% of the time.

Even teachers’ own practice of improving proficiency outside of class can be essential to creating the right conditions:
I would say my own level of proficiency and the fact that I never use the language outside of my beginning classes to talk with anyone. I try to read and study online but it is not enough. I love the language and would like to use it more.

This teacher describes the process of building his TL proficiency so that he can have the option of greater use and perhaps increase the TL in the classroom.

**Teachers’ role is central.** When asked about factors that had the greatest influence on TL use, teachers’ responses included teacher factors 54% of the time. This means that teachers recognized either their own characteristics, beliefs, practices, or experiences as having the greatest impact on their decisions in the majority of the cases. Characteristics included motivation, language proficiency, training, and fatigue. Of these factors, the most frequently mentioned was motivation, followed closely by proficiency. The data imply that teachers recognize their own essential role of establishing norms, monitoring and adjusting, and strategically controlling the influences of TL. They can in this way strategically improve their own preparation and proficiency, and determine what “optimal” TL use is for their classroom.

Within the factors that influence teachers’ LC, educators understand that their own experiences, beliefs, and practices are paramount in making those choices. Of the factors rated in this survey, the top ten all fall within teachers’ control. Looking at the last three - the ACTFL statement, special needs of students with disabilities, and what collaborators will do - all fall outside the teachers’ sphere of influence. The ACTFL language target was set by a collaborative board of educational leaders and then presented to teachers to adopt into their own philosophy and practices. Teachers recognize that they have to decide what the statement would mean for them and their classroom and how it would affect their TL use.
Another aspect of LC control that teachers demonstrate is that they make the decision as to what their norms and expectations will be before they make decisions about how they will use the TL. The goal for one teacher was “to work real hard to establish 90% or higher” even when other colleagues did not. This teacher makes it part of her classroom culture and implements procedures and practices such as giving students an amount of time they can use English, and dedicating time at the end of class for questions and clarification. Another element of LC that can make all the difference for some is the “when.” A teacher who “decided before I ever started that I would be a 100% TL teacher” finds this helps from “breaking into English” when frustrated with classroom management or other classroom activities.

Some teachers recognize that LC is something over which they have final say and responsibility. Findings of the study suggest that teachers in the FM Group are more likely to focus on factors of TL use for which they feel the greatest ability to change. The FM Group consistently rates factors affecting themselves such as proficiency, motivation and attitudes, training, and experience with the target culture as having greater influence. The PM and NM groups, however, focused more on student motivation and proficiency as being the greatest influence.

Demands and expectations. Before teachers ever step into the role of TL user, they realize they have some demands and expectations because of classroom factors at play. The expectations to increase student proficiency, to maintain or increase motivation, to maintain a nurturing and orderly environment, and to prepare students for additional classes and levels of study are all placed upon teachers. Not only this, but they are required to fulfill their district and school course and language requirements, the expectations of the parents, evaluations by administrators, and the aspirations of students from whom they want to learn and gain respect.
Teachers are also in a situation in many cases where they have to worry about building a
program because of its elective status. These are all components of the pressures that are put on
teachers as they are making one of thousands of choices they have each day as to what is
“optimal” or best practice for their class.

Eighteen factors were reported as being the most influential for making language choices.
Few teachers reported more than one or two specifically. Many teachers described the factors
influencing them to varying degrees. Ultimately, the quantity and of factors indicated that
teachers have a lot of pressure, not only from themselves and their students, but many factors of
the classroom itself. No wonder that with all that is asked of teachers, time becomes the most
influential classroom factor that teachers report. Nearly half of all comments containing
classroom factors discussed time and curriculum. The two factors were often found within the
same comments increasing the strength of this relationship.

The amount of stress experienced due to the need to complete objectives within a specific
period depends largely on the personal philosophy and vision of the FL teachers for their
students and classes. Teachers’ mention of time in many comments is connected with the
challenge of depth and breadth. Due to the breadth of their curriculum, some teachers simply
cannot “get through everything” if they have to “act out everything.” Another teacher describes
the influence of time in relation to “curriculum goals being met.” When teachers feel they need
to cover a certain amount of curriculum, they struggle more to use the TL. On the other hand, the
belief was found that class time is important in “maximize[ing] students’ exposure to the TL.”

When facing the demands of teaching challenging curriculum, a teacher explained the
need to help students with “difficult concepts.” This comment was connected to the influence of
a lack of time to “pretend I don’t speak English so students can guess” about a concept. In this
instance, the teacher indicated the possibility that the L1 be used as a resource, and that a teacher should be able to be a bilingual person in his or her own classroom. The fact that the teacher has a choice between the L1 and TL is the basis for this research, and a necessary reality that all teachers can see from this teacher’s comment.

Teachers want to be clear and do not always believe they can accomplish that with the TL. One belief is that clarity trumps exposure, especially when it comes to important speech functions like explaining grammar or giving instructions. A teacher explained this in these terms: “In these situations [explaining grammar or giving instructions] I believe clarity is more important than the small amount of practice or exposure that comes from using the TL.”

Connected to the necessity of clarity are the feelings of frustration that come when instructions and concepts are not clear. Teachers strive to help students avoid such feelings of helplessness. Krashen (1981) states that when students become too frustrated this can raise their affective filters are and negatively impacts their ability to learn and process new material. The comment was made that “I get too frustrated when kids don’t get it... I want to keep things moving and bring everyone along.” This attitude denotes the desire of the teacher to be as inclusive as possible with instruction and input, which for one teacher “sometimes leads to me teaching more about the language than actually teaching the language.”

**Building programs.** Being inclusive of all students, motivating, creating interest and maintaining that interest and motivation with taking language courses were the highest student and teacher factors reported for justifying the use of the L1. Without this interest and motivation, teachers of elective classes face the reality of losing their jobs. This is another reason why student responses to TL use is the most powerful gauge teachers report. Student engagement
with the language in meaningful ways was an indication for many teachers that students will continue taking the course and register to take more.

For many teachers, having enough students to teach is the highest priority. Many teachers believe the answer was getting students to engage with the language, and creating interest in language learning. These were the circumstances that caused teachers to respond in the following manner about engaging students:

As foreign language teachers, we teach a completely elective subject. It has to be fun and engaging for students, or they will not take the classes. In those classes where there is a general positive attitude about learning the language, it is easy to use the TL. In classes where students do not really care about actually speaking the language, it is more difficult to keep their attention when they have a hard time understanding.

Meeting 90%+. The ACTFL 90% + statement was another factor related to influences of teachers LC. This section discusses in depth how this target affected the whole sample and the three groups analyzed by an ANOVA test. The ANOVA tests indicated that there are variations within the NM, PM, and FM Groups of successful TL use. Variability can be seen in the high standard deviations for all the percentages of TL use for classroom activities. Many of the responses to why they did or did not meet this goal showed different stages of development along the spectrum of 90%+ classrooms and with the commitment to meet this goal completing the recommendation. The following paragraphs describe the different factors affecting why teachers in Group NM, PM, and FM self-categorized themselves in this manner.

Some teachers believe that the TL should be used all of the time and that there are no exceptions ever. Schoolwide policies, such as those in effect for immersion programs, directly impact TL use practices. Additionally district language programs may set policy that greatly
influence TL use. Basing LC practices on different classroom requirements was commonly reported.

Other teachers claim 100% TL use based on the level they teach, such as advanced placement courses, since it is a higher course, and students are expected to have the prior skill and ability to handle full immersion. Some teachers are attempting to use only TL at certain levels not because of student proficiency but because of their attitudes and motivation. One teacher wrote, “Level 1 students seem to be more excited about and engaged in learning the language, so I focus more of my energy and planning towards those students.” Admittedly, this teacher’s focus on Level 1 due to her belief about the attitudes and emotions of that type of student is a greater influence than the level itself. In fact, later on the comment states, “I am admittedly to blame for my Level 2/3 students’ lack of engagement.” This teacher demonstrates what the data shows, that the motivation and attitude of the students in great part determine the response of the teacher. Students who have low motivation or desire for a challenging or rigorous course can easily drop the elective. At the same time, the teacher recognizes the conundrum between catering to students’ attitudes and motivation over their proficiency level, which is indicative of the burden of guilt expressed. This again demonstrates how teachers’ beliefs about students’ attitudes is a greater indication even than the actual attitude. Teachers’ beliefs about factors influencing TL use ultimately determine what they will do with their LC.

Many other respondents indicated they were very close to 90% and believed that they can, or eventually should be able to reach that goal. They are the PM group that are in between and may partially reach the goal or be close enough to reach it on some days or with some classes. The main characteristic of this group is that they are reaching or “working towards it.” They are making an effort and recognizing that they are on a journey.
Level is a major factor for many teachers who believe that they can reach the goal. One teacher wrote, “In intermediate and advanced levels yes, but not always in the beginning levels.” The trend being that “The higher it (the level) is, the lower percentage (of English) is appropriate.” The reasons range from the students’ frustration and affective filter being too high to the fact that “some students often need more clarification because they are novice listeners.”

Teacher beliefs about the influence of the quantity and quality of TL use with the lower levels varied significantly. One stance is that although the novice level does mean novice listeners, some teachers feel they are to blame for their “inconsistent” TL use and could do better. Others are afraid that at lower levels “learners get frustrated if you don't sometimes clarify things in English.” This comment puts into question how much “sometimes” may be and whether the clarification in English follows any TL input or is simply the norm, and again for what tasks is this mostly happening. One comment suggests that the level is not as important as the background and experience of the students in an actual FL classroom. One teacher expressed the opinion that the goal was met more with Spanish 1 than with Spanish 2 because “some of the students in the class were not in my class the previous year; therefore, they are not used to hearing the target language most of the time.” With no previous preconceptions, teachers found greater success with new students than those who had already been exposed to one method of teaching and were now being asked to adapt to another where the TL was being used more often.

The largest of the three groups categorized was the NM Group. The most common reason for this group not reaching 90% +, as well as the PM Group, was the level of the students. The next greatest reason was time and the content and curriculum that teachers were trying to cover and teach with the time that they had. Along with the level of the students, the preparation of the students before they entered the classroom was mentioned in nine different comments. After
students’ preparation, affective factors, requirements of the school or district language programs, fatigue, and school environment are the most common factors affecting these teachers’ ability to use the TL.

What is unclear with teachers in the NM Group is whether lower levels of TL use is due to students’ maturity, interest, school environment or otherwise. When NM teachers mentioned issues of curriculum, it was usually in regard to a specific aspect of the curriculum. One example is “Not quite. I’d love to get there, but am still struggling a little bit with making the cultural stuff as engaging to them in the target language.” Those teachers expressed that they did not use the TL out of personal belief. Instead, they felt that the need of the student and the ability to connect and engage with them intellectually and personally necessitated less than 90% use.

Research Question 3: Promoting and Evaluating TL Use

The third research question is “What practices do teachers use to promote TL use? What practices do they find most effective in promoting and evaluating TL use?” A mistake teachers reported making with TL use is believing that students by the very act of being in their class were ready and willing to use the TL. Students do not necessarily know expectations before they step into the classroom, nor understand them simply because a teacher expects it of them. For this reason, the third research question asked what techniques teachers were using to promote TL use, and what they found most effective for doing so. The findings in this section outline how teachers are building a foundation for TL with careful preparations and scaffolding to successfully reach TL use goals.

Establishing a foundation for TL. Before students get deep into TL use, many teachers are getting students to buy into using the TL by teaching about its importance and getting students to see the benefits. Says one teacher, “best way to learn to swim is get in the water.” On
the other hand, students who shut down because of their beliefs about the TL “don't rise to the occasion. They would rather sink than swim.” For such reasons, getting students to believe that TL use is a necessary nutrient for their proficiency growth is at the top of what teachers responded motivates students to use the TL.

The data show that teachers recognize that students’ beliefs about TL use largely dictate their response to it, and go to great lengths to get their students to believe in the benefits. They begin by making certain students understand how comprehensible input and their own TL use leads to acquisition. Three quarters of all teachers reported that they explain the importance of using the TL at the beginning of the year and found it very beneficial. Half of teachers reported extending the practice of strengthening TL beliefs by giving pep talks and spotlighting TL use throughout the year. By doing this they consistently emphasize the importance of TL use in a manner they believe to be very beneficial to students.

In addition to teaching students about the importance of using the TL, some teachers report that heavy reinforcement of such behavior is key. Giving special praise and recognition to students for their use was very frequently reported practice. Teachers found this practice more effective than the explanation of TL use. An additional step that more than half of educators took to ensure TL use was to include it on the course syllabus, and almost as popular was making it part of the grade. These were closely followed by using some sort of reward system such as giving out pesos or points in hopes of externally rewarding students in an effort to motivate them to use the TL.

Before teachers ever gave input in the foreign language, not only did they insure students’ readiness to receive that input, but also their own preparation to give it comprehensibly. Preparing lessons so that input is comprehensible and students will be successful with their TL
TEACHERS’ PERSEPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE CHOICE

use is key to reaching TL goals and standards according to the data. Teachers recognized this and chose planning more than any other practice for promoting TL use. This is especially true for FM Group and PM. Interestingly, the PM Group reported carefully planning more than any other group. This gives credence to the need that PM Group sees above all else to plan. One reason the PM Group may be higher than the FM Group is that so many of them see planning as the way to make it into the FM Group. This finding supports the hypothesis that reaching the ACTFL goal is a process that many are trying to reach through sound pedagogical practices.

The next most beneficial practice selected was posting common phrases and vocabulary, which is another step towards scaffolding input and was utilized in more than half of the participating classrooms. Prepping the classroom and lessons were two factors that strongly corresponded to the FM Group. The PM Group, however, had the highest percentage of teachers posting phrases. FL teachers indicated that scaffolding through these practices is very beneficial for helping them reach their course goals and aims. This finding confirms the idea that good teaching practices such as planning and scaffolding for TL use are as important in a language classroom as in any other regular education classroom. Additionally, teachers who are willing to prepare their students, classroom, and curriculum adequately beforehand are more likely to use the TL.

The core or “must have” practices that more than half of teachers report using were planning carefully, giving special praise, explaining the importance of TL use, posting common phrases and vocabulary, giving spotlights and pep talks on TL use, and including TL use in the syllabus. All of these practices helped students understand why TL use was important or gave them access to doing it and are categorized as what will be termed foundational practices.
Explaining the why and giving access are non-negotiables for the majority of teachers who want students to see the value and give them resources for being successful with TL use.

All practices surveyed for promoting TL use, except including TL use on the syllabus and signing a “No English” contract, were rated as very beneficial to reaching aims and objectives of the class. The rating for including TL use on the syllabus was somewhat beneficial and the lowest rated of all practices for promoting TL use. The benefit may be lower due to the lack in strength necessary on its own to have the impact teachers’ desire. Another reason why these practices may be lower is that they depend on a foundation of TL use being laid first.

Practices such as using a reward system, a language sign, or having students sign a “no English” contract are focused primarily on how the TL is used within the class. These practices, although rated very beneficial, are not as widely practiced. They are the helpful-to-have, can have, and nice-to-have practices of the classroom, but not as essential. They will depend more on the motivations and attitude of the teacher, the students, and the context in which the teacher is working. They deal more with the organizational aspects of TL use, and help students know when and how much they should be using the TL. A structure is built by these practices for TL use, and for that reason they are categorized as structural practices.

Evaluating TL use. Research Questions 1 and 2 attempted to look at what goes into TL use. Question 3 looks at what teachers do to make it useful, and how they know if it is useful. This final question was intended to change the point of view from the cause of TL use to the measurement of the impact. Approaching the topic from an evaluation standpoint was meant to add understanding to and increase awareness of the process teachers undergo within their LC to continue to formulate their pedagogy. If TL use were only about quantity, then this would not be important; but research reports that quality is a key element of successful LC (Van Lier, 1995;
Walsh, 2002). Understanding how teachers evaluate their TL use provided data on how they monitor and adjust not only their attitudes and perspectives, but also their practices and performance.

When asked to gauge the effectiveness of various practices for promoting TL use, a paradigm shift in the focus of teachers occurred from a teacher-centered focus to a student-centered one. Teachers readily recognized that their TL use has a direct impact on student learning, and turned their attention towards student evaluation when gauging their effectiveness. The majority of teachers’ responses evaluating their own effectiveness focused on the measurement of learning. This happened in the form of students’ progress, proficiency, and motivation. These responses show that teachers are more likely to use student-focused evaluation over teacher-focused evaluation. Teacher evaluations or the feedback obtained from teacher performance was present but among the minority of evaluation practices used.

The number of teachers’ responses mentioning student evaluation was more than triple that of teacher evaluation. The data indicate that the most prevalent way to recognize if TL use has a beneficial effect on student learning is to assess learning. This is not to say that teacher evaluations were unnecessary; in fact, 73% of teachers use self-reflection as a gauge of their effectiveness. A response that communicates the student-led focus of TL use states “when I see students learning the language, I know my TL use is effective.” The question that teachers want to answer through evaluation is “Are [the students] learning the vocab/grammar/concepts and able to put it together into something comprehensible, written or spoken?” In large part, teachers monitor their own TL use through student proficiency, assessment and motivation.

Student evaluations were based on either affective aspects or performance aspects of how students were doing. Some teachers reported that students were completing skills-based
assessments in a particular area such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers who reported these practices said they wanted to be able to see students producing the language in order to measure the effectiveness of their TL use. Comments also included assessment of students on specific tasks as a form of assessing teachers TL use. The affective and motivational methods for evaluation included those having to do with students’ willingness and emotions such as if students seemed confused or disinterested.

**Student participation.** The effectiveness of TL use was largely measured by the willingness and ability of students to uptake and utilize input. One testament to this is that “when [the students] start to use English, it’s an indicator for me that they aren’t getting it.” When students “respond appropriately,” in whatever form that may be, teachers feel they are successful. They may also use end of unit tests, speaking and writing tasks, comprehension questions, and many other assessments to help them identify what students are getting out of the TL use.

Teacher evaluations were mostly an attempt for teachers to recognize where they were at and what they could do better with their own personal TL use. These evaluations were used to raise awareness of the consequences of TL use, to get feedback, or to focus on specific practices that were beneficial. When teachers gauged their own TL use, it happened most often through personal observation. Some teachers also used feedback from students’ evaluations and responses to questionnaires or surveys to get another perspective. Others reported that their most effective assessments were some of the practices that they incorporate into their teaching. Overall, teachers did not use as wide a variety of methods to evaluate themselves as they did with students to validate their LC.
Table 11 contains the practical suggestions that come from these findings. Teachers can use these to help them to optimize their TL use. These findings are meant for teachers to personalize to themselves and their own teaching situation.

**Table 11 Practical Suggestions and Advice for TL Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 Practical Suggestions for Teachers to Optimize TL Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Build your TL use.</strong> Consider to increase the academic, social, and managerial purposes for which you are currently using the target language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Control what you can.</strong> Recognize whether the factors influencing your language choices are more teacher, student, or classroom related. Choose to focus on factors that are more teacher related and over which you have more control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Choose now!</strong> Decide from the beginning of the year what the goal for target language use will be for your classes. Communicate that goal to students, parents, and administration and ask for input as to how to make that goal manageable and effective for you and your students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Promote, encourage, and inspire.</strong> Students need to understand why this is so critical and buy in to your philosophy. As soon as you see some students catching the vision let them know and keep showing them their successes with the TL no matter how hard it gets. (This is true for parents, fellow language teachers, and administrators as well)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Simplify and shorten.</strong> Choose a depth and breadth of curriculum and content that aligns with student level and the target language goal for that level. If it does not fit, cut it out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Scaffold for TL use.</strong> Prepare yourself and students for target language use through careful planning and scaffolding for giving comprehensible input and increasing proficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Assess, assess, assess.</strong> Use self-assessments, student assessments, and other professional assessments to get feedback about how your target language use is affecting student proficiency and motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. <strong>Adjust and Improve.</strong> Not every class is the same so make adjustments and use new techniques. Professional development for target language use should be on your agenda every year!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. <strong>Change your beliefs.</strong> Do not change your expectations but your beliefs about your expectations. Many teachers believe they should use the target language and have the expectation too, but when they have challenges, they lower their expectations instead of changing their beliefs about how to reach those expectations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Pedagogical Implications

All educators confront challenges and varying factors that influence their teaching. In FL education, those factors multiply when you add into the equation TL use. In fact, the overwhelming feeling of pressure can be constantly looming and have a very real effect in the classroom. Applying the Macaro (2008) statement about “optimal” TL use and the need to find this optimal state would imply the need for finding the right balance. That would mean creating an equilibrium in the classroom between TL use and other goals, purposes, and aims to be accomplished in the FL classroom. The recommendations here attempt to tip the scales in favor of an optimized approach. This section describes possible pedagogical guidelines as called for by Levine (2003) to build teachers’ confidence in their LC abilities. A systematic method for making and adjusting a plan for LC is also outlined.

Change your beliefs, not your expectations. Expectations in the classroom are either teacher-driven or institutionally driven. Certainly, overlap exists, and in the end, the responsibility for setting the actual classroom standard rests squarely on teachers’ shoulders. However, as has already been outlined, stress comes from all directions including national, state, district, and school standards as well as parent and student expectations, not to mention teachers’ own motivations and attitudes. Feeling squeezed by all these influences in addition to managing the classroom challenges necessitates a certain focus or emphasis as previously described. Having that focus does not eliminate the stress and pressure but rather channels it in a specific direction. The question then becomes, how do teachers manage to keep expectations high with
all the pressure pushing and sometimes dragging them down? What if, instead of being a negative force, teachers saw these factors as simply a part of teaching and life? The research from this study suggests doing just that through a specific method of viewing those influences and challenges that puts emphasis on changing beliefs about their expectations for TL use.

Beliefs have a powerful impact on behaviors that can be seen clearly throughout this study. Mentioned in the analysis were some of these beliefs and behaviors, including teachers who believe lower levels were more accommodating to TL use than upper levels, and vice versa. Examples include the belief that discipline had to be done in the L1 to be clear and effective versus the belief that TL use eliminates management issues and creates a more constructive environment; the belief that grammar and culture should be taught in the L1 to facilitate discussion and deeper understanding or that it is a critical opportunity for comprehensible input in the TL; and the belief in building rapport through L1 so students are not overwhelmed, or conversing in the TL and finding meaningful ways to communicate with students in the TL about life. All of these contrasting beliefs highlight some of the most prominent academic, managerial, and social challenges related to with TL use, and indicate the different behaviors driven by two systems of belief.

This research proposes that the response or the reaction to influences and challenges in the FL classroom is what drives teacher and student behavior and determines how both parties will be influenced. Similarly, in the field of psychology, a study completed on the effect of stress in the lives of adults indicated that it was not the amount of stress but the perception of stress that decided the consequences of stress (Keller et. al, 2012). Participants who perceived stress as negative were in fact more likely to die and be negatively impacted by stress, whereas if participants with high stress did not believe it was bad for them, they were less likely to die and
be negatively affected than someone with much lower stress but who viewed it as detrimental to their health. The conclusion was that the fear (or lack thereof) of stress was what ultimately decided the fate of the person.

As can be seen with the FM Group and NM Group, although the groups experience similar factors of influence, the FM Group consistently selected factors such as their own proficiency and attitudes as having the greatest impact on the TL use. Teachers who consistently use more TL tend to place less emphasis on the level of student. They also stress less about other factors outside their immediate influence. The driving force of the decisions they make and the expectations they establish and maintain depend more on what they can control than what they cannot. On the other end of the spectrum, the NM teachers would say an influence is the “pressure to maintain enrollment levels - to not lose students who are unwilling to speak in the TL,” those from the FM Group say “my own pedagogical beliefs” are motivating the actions taken regarding the policies and expectations set in the classroom.

Other research, such as Levine (2003), showed that it made no difference according to the students what language was used and that they were open to learning the content in either L1 or TL. If students and teachers both agree that either tongue will facilitate learning, then LC truly is the teacher’s prerogative. Teachers ultimately make the decision to optimize TL use, set clear expectations through clear course and daily objectives, and plan and prepare to reach their aims.

**Language goals before language choices.** It is one thing for teachers believe and say that they will not let all the challenges and influences on LC will not diminish TL use is one thing, and another to actually make it happen. As the Spanish refrain says, “*Del dicho al hecho hay gran trecho,*” or as said in English, “easier said than done”. The stress alone that many FL teachers put on themselves to implement pedagogical principles and apply best practices is
enough to shorten and even end careers. Therefore, how do teachers deal with a plethora of influences, and put themselves in the best position to reach TL goals? One answer may be for teachers to understand the orientation of course objectives and their alignment with the teachers’ LC aim.

In order to understand what purpose a course objective is seeking to fulfill, a framework is necessary for identifying and categorizing that purpose. When Ellis (1988) described different classroom interactions, he referred to them as goals that were categorized as either medium- or framework-oriented. A third type of interaction exists, as discussed in Rolin-Iantzi and Varshney (2008), dealing with affective aspects dealing with the emotions of the class. The three types of goals (medium, framework, and affective) can be equally be used to classify FL interactions and even identify the orientation of course goals. This method of classifying extends to all interactions within the classroom, and is an excellent way of understanding the relationship between interactions, course goals, and LC.

As teachers consider their LC through the lens of class and TL goals, their LC can be more clearly linked to optimal TL use. Some teachers are already doing this, stating they “reach that goal [ACTFL 90%+] when teaching German language and culture.” However, when the LC changes from the medium-oriented goals in relation to language and culture teaching to disciplining, talking about non-language related school activities, or other school-related jobs, they will explain and clarify in the language that best suits their purpose. As an educator, I personally feel this is validating because I do not have to feel guilty and punish myself for interactions that are outside the sphere of interaction described in the aforementioned comment. In essence, viewing LC as interdependent with TL use and classroom goals gives teachers the freedom to create additional language spaces within which they can have separate
and distinct contact with their students to fulfill their many roles as an educator in addition to that of TL use facilitator.

An important reason why goals must precede choices is the focus that it brings to LC. When one or more clear goals are established and communicated, they not only help set expectations but also provide a lens for analyzing both curriculum and methods for teaching. Several teachers in the study communicated the challenge of covering the breadth of material they wanted to, at the desired depth. Hence, many comments talked about the depth vs. breadth battle. When looking at curriculum and content with the perspective of a TL goal, teachers can narrow down their lessons to the critical aspects. They can also plan and prepare for the different instructions they will give, the different functions they will need to perform with the language, and the different sources they will use to provide comprehensible input.

In addition to providing guidelines for making content and curriculum decisions, another way that LC goals provide focus is through the delivery of content and instruction. Many teachers already have a viable and working curriculum that does not need to be changed. Bateman (2008) suggests that by applying different techniques and strategies teachers can compensate for the challenges they face with TL use in the classroom. This researcher recommends that every year teachers dedicate some of their professional development to learning and implementing strategies and techniques for supporting their TL goal.

If the critical and essential cannot be completed according to the TL goal, then other methods can be implemented so that the L1 can facilitate the desired learning outcomes. One important thing to remember is that the teacher does not have to be the only source of input for instruction in areas such as grammar and culture. Many resources besides the teacher exist for
culture and grammatical instruction. They can be utilized in lieu of the teacher, so as not to waste
time and opportunities for the teacher to be a source for comprehensible input.

A third reason why a goal needs to be set before choices are made is the commitment and
strength of resolve it provides for teachers. Both teachers’ training and program goals were rated
as more than somewhat influential, and if these are tied to teachers’ own motivations and
attitudes, they can become a tremendous force for TL use in the classroom. After I gave a
workshop at BYU on LC and shared results of this research, teachers spoke of the impact it had
on their resolve and commitment to using the TL and making their choices count for what they
wanted. One survey respondent alluded to the resolve she had made and the resulting impact,
stating that she made the decision and then stuck to it. Others commented on the fact that at the
beginning of the year they are so much better with TL use but slowly wear down. Bateman
(2008) also reports fatigue being a factor affecting student teachers’ TL use. Teacher fatigue,
which was reported in several comments, is very real and teachers need a reason to push through,
even when their students do not or will not.

One caution and possible solution for maintaining teachers and students’ motivation and
attitude towards TL use is to make certain the goal and plan associated with the goal specify the
conditions of TL and L1 use. Teachers may clarify, for example, how they are going to use the
TL originally to introduce the grammar and vocabulary for an activity, but further resources and
explanation will be made available at some point during the class to help those who did not
master the concept or content that they needed to during the original lesson. Some teachers
described doing this by setting aside a portion of time at the end of class for explaining and
clarifying in the L1. Others use a translation method and give the input in both languages.
Ultimately, the goal and plan for TL use should drive the strategy, keeping in mind how
teachers’ and students’ motivations and attitudes, in addition to their proficiency, fine tune efforts to reach target TL use.

**Prepare before you practice.** One important way to focus on motivating students is giving extra time and energy to the practices that prove to be beneficial for TL use. Great differences exist among the teachers who categorize themselves as not meeting, partially meeting, and meeting the ACTFL 90%+ standard, which strongly relate with important practices for motivating TL use in the classroom. In the PM and FM groups had more teachers use careful planning as a strategy than the NM Group. However, the FM Group is not as high as the PM Group, possibly because they have already passed through the phase where they needed extra careful planning time to make input comprehensible. This could also be due to differences in classes that they teach, and warrants further research into what practices and beliefs are driving TL use at the varying class levels.

Although reaching students at varying levels with a wide range of abilities and attitudes is not easy, preparation makes it possible. Insuring quality TL use takes greater preparation and proficiency on the part of the teacher. Interestingly, teachers with more than 10 years of experience value preparing through careful planning more than any other group, which gives a possible reason they may have made it so long in the profession. Nearly 80% of all teachers readily recognize planning to make input comprehensible as the most important practice for keeping students motivated to use the TL.

Preparing the classroom environment - talking about expectations, facilitating the communication - this needs to be done and the L1 can help facilitate. According to Varshney and Rolin (2008) teachers need to determine how L1/TL use contribute to creating a nurturing environment for TL use. Many teachers talk about the environment or affective impact TL and
L1 have, often mentioning the challenge of using the TL in creating the environment they desire. This could therefore be a use of the L1 to develop a safe space for teachers and students. Bateman (2008) concurs, suggesting that teachers should use techniques such as preparing students beforehand for TL use by teaching them a top-down approach. This means explaining to students that they are not expected to understand everything rather what is necessary to survive, the same way they would as a traveler in a foreign country. Again, this has to do with preparing students for proficiency, especially within the level they are currently at, to progress and take steps toward becoming more proficient. In this manner, teachers are focusing on their own abilities and not letting students’ inabilities hold them back.

One of the most important findings about promoting TL use is that preparing students for TL use begins with teaching them its importance. Students need to be taught what proper TL use looks like. Therefore, a proposed technique of LC pedagogy is to lay a foundation and framework for promoting TL use. A foundation for TL use must be laid and a framework with scaffolding for such use before practice begins. Once students are prepared for the TL, incorporating other practices, such as a language contract, have a clear context and purpose. Even so, students have the choice to accept or reject framework practices based upon their attitudes towards TL use and must constantly be monitored and adjusted. Feedback from the students will let a teacher know if framework practices are effective or not.

The process for implementing an LC plan to establish a foundation and framework for LC can be separated into five steps. The first step is to communicate to students what the goal and plan for TL/L1 use. Clear expectations of both students and teachers must be conveyed. As they take this step, teachers need to make certain they discuss and converse with students about doable expectations. Second, teachers need to reinforce the LC plan by giving students feedback,
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and by providing the necessary scaffolding for them to be successful with the TL. Third, teachers need to monitor the effectiveness of the TL on students’ proficiency and motivation. This should be done with information from both student- and teacher-focused evaluations. Fourth, adjustments should be made as necessary and continual communication and reinforcement applied to make certain the plan leads to the fulfillment class goals. The fifth and final step is improving TL use by learning and applying strategies to manage the student, teacher, and classroom factors influencing LC.

Focus on your sphere of influence. Educators tend to understand to some degree or another that they can only influence that which is within their sphere of influence. That knowledge empowers them to act for themselves and make decisions. This principle can also be a pedagogical tenet for teachers’ TL use. Bateman (2008) writes in his concluding remarks, “although some factors identified by this study are beyond student teachers’ control..., there are many things student teachers can do to increase their own use of the target language and that of their students.” When teachers focus on what they can control, they are more likely to see TL use and L1 use as a choice instead of something controlled by the environment and the context in which they are teaching. This does not imply that the teaching situation does not heavily affect what a teacher should do; in fact, this study indicates that the level, background, and preparation of both students and teachers were the most frequent explanations of why the ACTFL recommendation was only partially met. However, how teachers focus on those factors and others such as time and curriculum will greatly affect what they believe they can, and ultimately do accomplish.
Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings and results of this data. First is the sample, which as previously mentioned, was largely a convenience sample of teachers who were willing to participate and perhaps motivated by the incentive of the gift card. Second, the majority of those who participated are K-12 teachers from Utah. A third limitation is that of the sample there were two teachers that were from dual immersion programs and there requirements are different than a traditional FL program. Teachers of classical languages, only two cases were reported, also do not follow the same requirements and are not spoken nearly as often. A final limitation is that the groupings of the classification of fully met (FM), partially met (PM), and did not meet (NM) the ACTFL 90% target were created from the interpretations of the researcher based on qualitative data.

Suggestions for Future Research

In future research, the link between the percentage of TL use and the effect on proficiency and motivation needs to be clarified. Without knowing how TL use is affecting students with specific statistical evidence, there is no way to clearly determine the most effective methods of TL use. Research could focus on either determining longitudinally or on a smaller scale the impact of TL use on different classroom outcomes.

Research could also continue to investigate the impact of L1 use for specific interactions or purposes such as managerial or social on proficiency. Other factors influencing what influences teachers to make the choices they do could also help create further subgroups for comparison such as the language taught, the difficulty of the language, and the background of the student.
Research on training for TL use could also be beneficial to the body of research. Macaro (2001) and Bateman (2008) both discuss methods for training prospective teachers, but a lack of research exists as to what can be done to continue helping experienced teachers in refining and reforming their methods for TL and L1 use. This could in turn yield discoveries about what impacts certain practices and methodologies may have on TL use.

One area in which this investigation did not enter was that of strategies. Teachers are already using strategies as can be seen by how they make their TL and L1 choices; however, what impact that has on student proficiency and reaching course objectives remains to be seen. Strategies for dealing with student, teacher and classroom factors could facilitate optimizing TL and L1 use. Table

Conclusions

Teachers’ language choice is a model for their students. If teachers help students to see that although they cannot control everything in the classroom, they are going to focus on what they can control, and successfully model that behavior for students, then students are likely to do the same. If teachers focus on building their own foundation for using the TL successfully with those with whom they are interacting, in this case students, then students will also focus on doing the same. If teachers focus first on their goals and their own plan for teaching the language, and help students to create their own strategies so that they are creating their own self-fulfilling prophecy of language use, then students will be more likely to do that. The same is true of changing beliefs rather than expectations. In modeling how to effectively be a multilingual person in a multilingual environment, a teacher creates a multilingual learner that will see a successful model to follow.
REFERENCES


TEACHERS’ PERSEPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE CHOICE


Appendix A – Recruitment Email

Dear World Language Teachers,

My name is Brant Lloyd; I am a Spanish teacher at Lakeridge Junior High and currently conducting a research study as part of my master’s thesis on the use of the target language in the classroom. The purpose is to identify what practices you as professionals find most effective. The following questionnaire takes between 10-15 minutes. The length has been shortened in consideration of your valuable time and in hopes that what is collected will be of great worth.

Thank you so much for your time, for your professionalism, and for what you do for education! I hold you all in high esteem as I myself am a language teacher struggling to make what I do for my students a meaningful learning experience.

Two $50 gift cards will be given out as an additional incentive to two randomly selected participants. Participants will have a 1 in 300 chance of winning.

Please feel free to share this link with any other K-12 world language teacher that you know.

Sincerely,

Brant Lloyd
Spanish Teacher
Lakeridge Junior High School
# Appendix B – Survey

**Bg 1 Type of School**
- Public (1)
- Private (2)
- Public Charter (3)

**Bg 2 School Grade**
- Primary (K-6) (1)
- Primary Immersion (K-6) (2)
- Secondary (7-8) (3)
- Secondary (9-12) (4)
- Other (9) ____________________

**Bg 3 What levels are you currently teaching? Mark as many as apply**
- Level 1 (1)
- Level 2 (2)
- Level 3 (3)
- Level 4 (4)
- AP (5)
- Immersion (6)
- Other (7) ____________________

**Bg 4 Languages that you teach Choose all that apply**
- Spanish (1)
- French (2)
- Chinese (3)
- Portuguese (4)
- German (5)
- ASL (6)
- Japanese (7)
- Arabic (8)
- Other (9) ____________________

**Bg 5 Native Language Please mark your native language(s)**
- English (1)
- Spanish (2)
- French (3)
- German (4)
- Chinese (5)
- Other (6) ____________________
TEACHERS’ PERSEPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE CHOICE

B9. Experience How many years have you been teaching foreign language classes?
- 1-2 years (1)
- 3-5 years (2)
- 6-10 years (3)
- 10+ years (4)

Ch 1 Approximately what percentage of the time do you use the TL for the following classroom tasks?
- Starting class / daily routines (1)
- Casual conversations - speaking with students about unrelated topics to learning objectives (2)
- Activity instructions (3)
- Debriefing after activities (4)
- Correcting work as a class (5)
- Explaining assignments or projects (6)
- Teaching new vocabulary (7)
- Explaining grammar concepts (8)
- Conducting pre-reading or pre-listening activities (9)
- Checking comprehension (10)
- Presenting cultural information - When giving new information or trying to present ideas specific to the target culture (11)
- Discussing culture - when talking with class about the similarities and differences or diving in depth into the perceptions of the culture together (12)
- Giving individual help - assisting students with assignments or questions about tasks (13)
- Providing clarification - explaining to the class instructions, rules, or responding to questions involving the whole class (14)
- Addressing discipline problems in the classroom (15)

Ch 3 During which classroom activities do you find it most challenging to stay in the target language, and why?

Ch 4 ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language) has set a standard for teaching 90% or more in the TL. Is this a goal that you feel you currently meet? Why or why not?
TEACHERS’ PERSEPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE CHOICE

PTL 1 One of the greatest challenges is being motivated and keeping students motivated to use the TL. Check the items you are currently using.

☐ Explain the importance of using the TL at the beginning of the year (1)
☐ Give motivational pep talks or spotlights on the importance of the language throughout the year (2)
☐ Give special praise and recognition for language use (3)
☐ Plan carefully for making input comprehensible (4)
☐ Post common phrases and vocabulary in the TL (5)
☐ Act as though you don't speak English (6)
☐ Post expectations, class rules, and consequences in the TL (7)
☐ Use a reward system (pesos, points, etc.) (8)
☐ Make TL use part of the grade (9)
☐ Hold inter- and intra- class competitions for language use (10)
☐ Have students sign a "no English" contract (11)
☐ Use a sign or signal to separate the use of L1 and TL (12)
☐ Designate immersion days (13)
☐ Include TL use in the syllabus (14)
☐ Other (15) ____________________

PTL 2 You indicated you use the following items. For each item, indicate how beneficial it is for reaching your overall aims and objectives of the class.

PTL 3 How do you gauge the effectiveness of your choices regarding the use of the TL?

☐ My own reflections on success of individual lessons and units in reaching goals and objectives (1)
☐ Student grades (2)
☐ Students’ proficiency (3)
☐ Students' evaluations (4)
☐ Students' attitudes and morale (5)
☐ My own attitude and morale (6)
☐ Students' willingness to use the TL (7)
☐ Other (8) ____________________

PTL 4 What do you find is most beneficial for gauging the effectiveness of your TL use on student learning?
FLC 1 Please rate how much each of the following factors influences your choices about whether to use English or the TL in the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>1-Not at all (1)</th>
<th>2-Slightly (2)</th>
<th>3-Somewhat (3)</th>
<th>4-Greatly (4)</th>
<th>5-Very Greatly (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time - Amount you have to teach and reach objectives (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources to support TL (projector, realia, authentic materials, etc.) (2)</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<td>Your own training as a teacher (3)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Your students' language proficiency (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students' motivation and attitudes (6)</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your own motivation and attitudes (7)</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<td>Curriculum requirements (8)</td>
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<td>Your collaborating partners (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program goals (10)</td>
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<td>Special needs students (11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your desire to build rapport with students (12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTFL statement regarding 90% or more TL use (13)</td>
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<td>Cognitive load of the lesson (14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your own level of experience with the target culture(s) (15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effectively handling classroom management issues (16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your own experience as a language learner in a classroom setting (17)</td>
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<td>Other (18)</td>
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<td>Click to write Statement 19 (19)</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FLC 2 What would you say has the greatest influence on when and how much you use the target language in your classroom, and why?
Q24 Please enter your email if you would like to be entered into a drawing for one of two $50 gift cards. This information will not be used as a way of tracking responses and will be deleted at the conclusion of the drawing. You will not be contacted for anything else by entering in your email.
Appendix C – Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form

Introduction

My name is Brant Lloyd, I am a graduate student at Brigham Young University and am conducting this research under the supervision of Professor Gregory Thompson, from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. You are being invited to participate in this research study of language choice. I am interested in finding out about how teachers make choices regarding the language of instruction and what they find is effective. Procedures Your participation in this study will require the completion of the Qualtrics survey. This should take approximately 15 minutes of your time. Your participation will be anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. You will not be paid for being in this study. This survey involves minimal risk to you. The benefits, however, may impact society by helping increase knowledge about language use. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer for any reason. We will be happy to answer any questions you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research related problem you may contact me Brant Lloyd at brant.m.lloyd@gmail.com or my advisor, Greg Thompson at gregory_thompson@byu.edu. If you participate you have the possibility of winning one of two $50 gift cards. Chances of winning are 1 in 300. The completion of this survey implies your consent to participate. If you choose to participate, please complete the Qualtrics survey by May 31. Thank you! Questions about the Research If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the IRB Administrator at A285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602;
irb@byu.edu; (801) 4221461. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

I have read, understood the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study

Yes

No
USE OF THE TARGET LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM

Research indicates that effective language instruction must provide significant levels of meaningful communication* and interactive feedback in the target language in order for students to develop language and cultural proficiency. The pivotal role of target-language interaction in language learning is emphasized in the K-16 Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century. ACTFL therefore recommends that language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom. In classrooms that feature maximum target-language use, instructors use a variety of strategies to facilitate comprehension and support meaning making. For example, they:

- provide comprehensible input that is directed toward communicative goals;
- make meaning clear through body language, gestures, and visual support;
- conduct comprehension checks to ensure understanding;
- negotiate meaning with students and encourage negotiation among students;
- elicit talk that increases in fluency, accuracy, and complexity over time;
- encourage self-expression and spontaneous use of language;
- teach students strategies for requesting clarification and assistance when faced with comprehension difficulties; and
- offer feedback to assist and improve students’ ability to interact orally in the target language.

*Communication for a classical language refers to an emphasis on reading ability and for American Sign Language (ASL) to signed communicative ability.

Approved by the ACTFL Board of Directors 5-22-10