

Chapter II

2. Review of Literature

2.1 The Role of the L1 in L2 Teaching Methodologies

The controversy of whether or not to include the learners' L1 in the L2 classroom is perhaps as old as the process of language learning and teaching per se. When empires such as Rome became fascinated by other contemporary cultures and their products such as Greek rhetoric, an interest which would soon become a necessity emerged around the year 500 B.C. (Kelly, 1969) and continued developing through the years, giving place to several language teaching methodologies that became more sought after through time due to the increasing globalization. By either failure or success, some of these methodologies were proven useful and prevailed while others were eventually dismissed; each of them having its particular point of view towards the role of the MT in the L2 classroom.

The first section of this chapter aims to present a brief overview of the role of the MT throughout the history of second language teaching, making reference to the uses that it has been given and the L2 approaches and methods that have either included or excluded it from the L2 teaching/learning process. The following section makes reference to research in the field in which experts either support or refute the inclusion of the L1 in the ESL context. Finally, the last section presents research on the role of the MT in the EFL context -- the focus of this research project.

The last two sections include suggestions by the researchers about the specific uses that may be given to the MT as a useful teaching/learning tool, as well as the possible negative consequences of its overuse in the L2 classroom. The studies will be presented in chronological order in order to emphasize how long there

has been an advocacy towards the inclusion rather than the exclusion of the MT from the L2 classroom in both ESL and EFL contexts.

2.1.1 Including the L1 in the L2 Classroom

According to Kelly (1969), during the 25 centuries that language teaching has existed (500 B.C.-1969), three main issues have been taught for getting the language across: 1) meaning, 2) grammar, and 3) pronunciation. Interestingly, second/foreign language teaching at its beginning was not at war with the use of MT; quite the opposite, it made use of it as a teaching/learning tool. Kelly (1969) mentions that teaching meaning through native-language equivalents was another resource, along with gestures and objects, pictorial procedures, and, of course, explanations in the L2. This author further adds that the natural reaction when facing an unfamiliar word in the L1 is to find out what it means. This is more common when learning a foreign language, reason why both exact translation and paraphrasing in the learner's L1 are some of the oldest techniques for demonstrating word meaning, being traced as far back as the schools of the Roman Empire.

In what refers to exact translation, Kelly (1969) makes reference to the Akkadians (2500 B.C.), who seem to have been the first to use bilingual lexicography, being the Romans their counterpart in the West, giving birth to the first glossaries (i.e. Greek-Latin) and leading to the appearance of the full-scale dictionary during the Renaissance. According to the author, bilingual vocabularies became a normal aid in grammars and readers from the mid-seventeen century, but it was until the late eighteenth century that teachers started to use the bilingual dictionary as a regular teaching tool.

Furthermore, translation was seen by nineteenth-century teachers as the only sure method for transmitting meaning, which was eventually challenged by the

advocates of the Natural and Direct Methods; nevertheless, according to Kelly (1969) many of these Direct Method advocates saw translation as a valuable resource. One of them was Passy (cited in Kelly, 1969), who stated:

As any hint of exaggeration must be avoided, I must add that it would not be good to reject, absolutely and systematically, all recourse to the mother tongue. In exceptional circumstances it could happen that one might be in too much of a hurry to use gestures and explanations in the foreign language (p. 25).

It is important to highlight how this author excuses the use of MT with being “in too much of a hurry to use gestures and explanations in the L2”, rather than accepting that such strategies may be very time consuming and not achieve the goal of conveying meaning, especially when teaching abstract lexical items. In addition, the MT has also long been present in the teaching of grammar. Kelly (1969) mentions that by the end of the eighteenth century the grammar of foreign languages was introduced by analyzing the pupil’s L1. An example of this was given by Rollin (cited in Kelly, 1969), rector of the Sorbonne, who in 1740 stated that there was general agreement in that the rules of Latin should be taught in French. Once again, it was the Direct Method advocates the ones who criticized this way of teaching, arguing that it was contrary to common sense.

Finally, Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) presented a brief overview of the most representative L2 methodologies that included the MT in the process of second language teaching and learning. Although methods such as the Audiolingual Approach (ALA) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) had a more tolerant view on the use of the MT, the authors only mention two L2 methods and approaches that implicitly included the L1: 1) the Grammar Translation Method, in which the MT

was used as the medium of instruction, to explain new items, and to compare the foreign language and the students' native language (Richards and Rodgers, cited in Kharma and Hajjaj, 1989), and 2) Community Language Learning (CLL), which, according to the authors was the only "modern" approach that emphasized the use of the mother tongue, at least in the first stages of learning.

2.1.2 Excluding the L1 from the L2 Classroom

According to Kharma and Hajjaj (1989), several approaches and methods were developed as a reaction to the Grammar Translation Method such as the Direct Method, Total Physical Response (TPR), the Silent Way, the Natural Approach and Suggestopedia, which advocated the exclusion of the mother tongue from second language teaching and learning. These methods and approaches had in common their advocacy for teaching the L2 by imitating the "natural" process that children follow when learning their L1.

According to Richards and Rodgers (cited in Kharma and Hajjaj, 1989), the advocates of the Direct Method argued that, as long as meaning was conveyed through techniques such as demonstration and action, there was no need to use the learner's mother tongue for teaching a foreign language. However, Palmer (cited in Kelly, 1969) considered this emphasis on the rejection of translation as "the fallacy of the Direct Method" (p. 26), which eventually became its trademark.

2.2 MT in ESL Contexts

As specified in Chapter I, ESL contexts are those in which non-native speakers of English learn this language in settings where it is an official language. Examples of this are migrants and exchange students, phenomena that continue increasing due to ongoing globalization. As a result, it is very common to find

multilingual classrooms in English-speaking countries where the ESL teachers deal with classrooms full of learners who speak different L1s.

Due to their complexity, many researchers have focused on these contexts, but only until recently the role of the MT has become a center of attention. Sood (1981), for example, approached the problem that learners of English in regional-medium schools (aged 12) in India had when choosing the appropriate form of the indefinite article in the target language. According to this author, there were two main possible causes for this problem; the teaching methodology used being the first.

Learners at this school level are taught that the indefinite article *a* should be used before nouns that start with a consonant and that the indefinite article *an* should be used before nouns that start with a vowel. In addition, they are only given examples where there is correlation between the initial orthographic symbol and its sound based on the English alphabet (i.e. *an* elephant, *a* book).

Therefore, the learners associate this rule to the letter, either consonant or vowel, with which the noun after the indefinite article starts, rather than the sound. Teachers do not make emphasis on the concept of sound, considering that the students will learn it at more advanced levels. However, this is not the case since Sood (1981) found that both pupils at school level (aged 14-18) and undergraduates (aged 18-20) continue to write *an useful book* and *a M.P.* instead of *a useful book* and *an M.P.* In addition, they also fail when presented with phrases such as *a one-rupee note*.

The second cause that Sood (1981) presents is the disparity that exists in the English language between an orthographic symbol and its sound, in addition to the fact that what is called a vowel in the orthographic system does not necessarily correspond to a vowel sound or a consonant letter to a consonant sound. Since there

is always a one-to-one correspondence between an orthographic symbol and its sound in Hindi and in other Indian languages, and in Urdu all vowel sounds begin, in writing, with the first letter of the Urdu alphabet, the author concluded that using the MT for teaching learners to choose the appropriate form of the indefinite article was the best solution.

Of course, many may argue that by modifying the teaching methodology used for presenting this topic, there is no need to bring the MT into the classroom. However, in Mexico (EFL context), the indefinite article is generally introduced to students at elementary school (aged 6-11) with the same methodology described by Sood (1981) because of failures in attempts to explain learners in the L2 why they have to say *an umbrella* but *a unicorn* and to explain to them the concept of sound, as well as the various sounds that a single orthographic symbol may have, leading to errors such as those mentioned by Sood at more advanced levels and error fossilization as a consequence.

Baynham (1983) concluded from a case study of an eighteen-year-old learner from Chile living in Britain that using MT materials and diverse translation activities from Spanish into English (i.e. literal translation, fair copy, summaries, discourse organization, free writing) and English into Spanish (i.e. read a passage in Spanish translated into English and answer comprehension questions in English, write a summary in English in his own words, translate a section of the text back into Spanish, compare his version with the original Spanish text), helped the learner to overcome a block in motivation, which, as a result, helped him succeed in his learning of the target language. According to the author, the materials used helped to transform an unmotivated student into one who produced quite complex writing tasks

in both English and Spanish and who made an effort to finish his assignments to the point of staying after class instead of taking the first excuse to stop work.

Baynham (1983) concluded that the use of bilingual methodology through activities such as summarizing and translating across languages improves the development of coherent discourse organization. In addition, this author suggests that, instead of expecting the mother tongue interference as the only result, the positive influences of such work should be analyzed.

Although translation is widely seen as taboo and immediately related to obsolete language teaching methodologies such as the Grammar Translation Method, researchers have proven its effectiveness in certain situations, as in this case of Baynham's work on second language literacy, Nation's work (1978) on the use of translation for teaching meaning, and Titford's work (1983) with advanced learners and the use of translation for building on what the learner already knows by leading him to find translations for himself. In addition, Edge (1986) describes a successful classroom procedure for translation classes and states:

The teaching of translation has perhaps not benefited as much as it might have done from the developments in classroom procedure that have taken place in foreign-language teaching over the last decade. The thirty years' war (still going strong in many countries) against Grammar Translation as the basic method of language teaching seems to have made us see foreign language teaching (FLT) and translation as unconnected (p. 121).

Finally, Tudor (1987) proposes that the use of translation may be beneficial not only for ELT but also for ESP, as he showed in his study with a group of ESP learners in Germany.

Years later, with the emergence of the English Only movement Auerbach (1993) stated:

U.S. ESL educators continue to uphold the notion that English is the only acceptable medium of communication within the confines of the ESL classroom. Although the exclusive use of English in teaching ESL has come to be seen as a natural and commonsense practice which can be justified on pedagogical grounds... it is rooted in a particular ideological perspective, rests on unexamined assumptions, and serves to reinforce inequities in the broader social order... the rationale used to justify English only in the classroom is neither conclusive nor pedagogically sound (p. 9).

Auerbach (1993) further criticizes the fact that many language teachers recur to extreme measures to avoid the use of the L1 in the classroom, such as “fining” the students. According to this author, “teachers devise elaborate games, signals, and penalty systems to ensure that students do not use their L1 and justify these practices with the claim that use of the L1 will impede progress in the acquisition of English” (p. 10) and even those who may oppose the English Only movement on a policy level insist on their students using only English for communicating in the ESL classroom.

Auerbach (1993) insists that movements such as the English Only are more political than pedagogically grounded, being the learners the most negatively affected, and presents a historical overview supporting her assumptions, as well as relevant evidence from both research and practice against this movement, which includes the work of many experts such as García (1991), Gillespie (1991), and others (see Auerbach, 1993) from whose work she concludes:

The result of monolingual ESL instruction for students with minimal L1 literacy and schooling is often that, whether or not they drop out, they suffer severe consequences in terms of self-esteem; their sense of powerlessness is reinforced either because they are de facto excluded from the classroom or because their life experiences and language resources are excluded. This, in turn, has consequences for their lives outside the classroom, limiting job possibilities and perpetuating their marginalization (p. 18).

Auerbach (1993) also provides evidence supporting the use of the native language emphasizing the fact that practitioners, researchers, and learners have consistently reported positive results when the native language has been used in the ESL classroom, making reference to the work of D'Annunzio (1991), García (1991), and others (see Auerbach, 1993). In addition, Auerbach (1993) suggests uses of the L1 beyond beginning levels, claiming that the work of Brucker (1992), Collingham (1988), and others (see Auerbach, 1993) provide evidence which again suggests that the L1 may be a potential resource rather than an obstacle.

In reference to this, Piasecka (cited in Auerbach, 1993) states:

Teaching bilingually does not mean a return to the Grammar Translation method, but rather a stand point which accepts that the thinking, feeling, and artistic life of a person is very much rooted in their mother tongue. If the communicative approach is to live up to its name, then there are many occasions in which the original impulse to speak can only be found in the mother tongue. At the initial stages of learning a new language, the students' repertoire is limited to those few utterances already learnt and they must constantly think before speaking. When having a conversation,

we often become fully aware of what we actually mean only after speaking. We need to speak in order to sort out our ideas, and when learning a new language, this is often best done through the mother tongue (p. 20).

In 2002, Karen Stanley, editor of the Teaching English as Second or Foreign Language Electronic Journal (TESL-EJ), edited a compilation of posts received between May 2000 and June 2001 discussing the use of the first language in second language instruction. From the 33 posts selected, 27 language teachers, master students, teacher trainers, directors, coordinators, and editors of both ESL and EFL contexts accepted the use of their students' L1 in the classroom, of course, with some limitations.

These language experts seemed to agree in many aspects such as the characteristics of the students that should be more allowed to use the L1 (i.e. beginner-level students, adults) and the situations for using it, that is, grammar explanations, vocabulary teaching (especially abstract lexical items), classroom management, introduction of the first lesson, and improving teacher-student rapport. Most of them also agreed that using the L1 in the classroom helps using class time more efficient and effectively and that there should be a balance between the use of both L1 and L2. Interestingly, some still mentioned the use of "penalization" when students use the L1 in the classroom, for example, bringing candy the next day.

In a more recent article, Coelho (2006) claimed that maintaining the first language is not a disadvantage in learning another but on the contrary, its continuous development provides many academic and social benefits to the learners while learning English. This author presents three main reasons to support community languages: 1) A strong foundation in the L1 supports the acquisition of English, 2)

continued development of the L1 contributes to academic success, and 3) students' languages support their sense of identity and help maintain effective communication within the family and the community. In addition, she proposes various ways in which the L1 can be implemented in the L2 classroom for the benefit of students, teachers, parents, and administrators.

Zemach (2006) further directly confronts the reasons for not allowing MT in the L2 classroom by stating:

The arguments against letting students use their native language in class are many. It wastes time. It distracts other students. It excludes students who do not understand that language. It increases a teacher's paranoia (Are they talking about you?). It decreases the opportunities for those students to practice speaking and listening to English. Even in my earlier days, I recognized the value of sometimes using the native language to help teach English. It is a far more efficient use of class time to let a low-level student ask, 'How do you say *bengoshi* in English?' than to try to explain or mime *lawyer* (p. 16).

Zemach (2006), an experienced language teacher, comments on her own experience as an adult language learner of Arabic and her failure on learning this foreign language due to her teacher's "Arabic only" methodology. She acknowledges that "if two students in one class share a native language, they're probably going to use it at times – or at least wish they could" (p. 16).

Finally, Balosa (2007) suggests that using the students' first language in class helps them achieve the instructional goals, improves their self-image and motivation, and overcomes some of the limitations of the English-only instruction. From his own experience, the author presents three situations in which the use of the

L1 in the L2 classroom helped to promote the learners' self-esteem, make the input more comprehensible, and helped students to understand cultural concepts. He concludes "... judicious use of the students' L1 can build an atmosphere of confidence and friendship in the classroom... the students' self-image and motivation improve when they are no longer frustrated by not understanding classroom instruction presented in the target language only" (p. 1).

As it can be seen, in a multilingual context such as ESL, despite movements such as English Only, there seems to be an advocacy towards the inclusion of the MT in the L2 classroom, depending on the situation and keeping a healthy balance between the use of the L1 and the L2.

2.3 MT in EFL Contexts

In 1985, Lu (abstracted in *Language Teaching*, 1987) claimed that "it is impossible to ignore the mother tongue when teaching and learning a foreign language" (p. 42). According to this author, NS teachers of English using the Direct Method were less effective than NNS Chinese teachers of English and the best method to teach students was through presentation in the L1 and repetition in the L2.

In 1987, Atkinson stated:

The role of the mother tongue in monolingual classes is a topic which is often ignored in discussions of methodology and in teacher training... I contend that the potential of the mother tongue as a classroom resource is so great that its role should merit considerable attention and discussion in any attempt to develop a 'post-communicative' approach to TEFL for adolescents and adults (p. 241).

Atkinson (1987) proposed a variety of activities using the learners' MT in the ESL classroom which he found useful when working over a period of ten months with

students in monolingual classes who had between 0 and 200 hours of English. Two decades ago, he claimed that it was “unfashionable” by that time to totally prohibit the use of the students’ native language in the L2 classroom, but argued that there was very little attention given to its role in teacher training and that further research on its potential in the classroom was necessary. He presented four reasons to explain the lack of attention given to the role of the MT:

1. The association of translation with the Grammar Translation method.
2. A backwash effect whereby native speakers, who often enjoy a disproportionate degree of status in language-teaching institutions, have often themselves been trained in an environment where the trainer (also a native speaker and perhaps a monoglot) focuses mainly or exclusively on the relatively unrepresentative situation of a native speaker teaching a multilingual class in Britain or the USA.
3. The influence of Krashen and his associates whose theories have promoted the ideas that ‘learning’ (as opposed to ‘acquisition’) is of little value and that transfer has only a minor role to play.
4. The truism that you can only learn English by speaking English (p. 242).

As some general advantages of MT use, Atkinson (1987) mentioned the preference of learners for translation techniques as learning strategies (for which empirical evidence is needed), that it allows students to say what they really want to say (Bolitho, cited in Atkinson, 1987), and the efficiency of MT techniques in the amount of time needed to achieve a specific aim. This author also suggested the following uses for the MT: At early levels: Giving instructions, co-operation among learners, discussions of classroom methodology, presentation and reinforcement of

language; at all levels: eliciting language, checking comprehension, checking for sense, testing, and development of useful learning strategies.

In addition, he presented four possible problems that may arise if the MT is overused or there is an excessive dependency on it (see Appendix E). Atkinson (1987) concluded that the mother tongue could serve a variety of purposes at all levels in foreign language teaching and learning which are at present consistently undervalued. In his own words “to ignore the mother tongue in a monolingual classroom is almost certainly to teach with less than maximum efficiency” (p. 247). It is important to highlight the similarities between Atkinson’s ideas and the present situation, twenty years later.

The prevalent use of MT is further documented in specific studies. In 1989, Kharma and Hajjaj provided empirical evidence with a field study in which Arabic-speaking teachers, supervisors, and students learning English were asked about their attitudes and actual use of the MT in the L2 classroom, as well as the situations and purposes for which they used it. Through class observations, interviews, and questionnaires, the authors found that 93% of the participant teachers and 95% of the participant students used the MT in the L2 classroom for various purposes.

According to Kharma and Hajjaj (1989), 71% of the participant teachers used it for explaining new or difficult items, 66% for grammatical points, and 63% for difficult questions. A smaller number used it for explaining instructions, reading the attendance list, advising late-comers, conducting part of the discussion, assigning homework, explaining reading passages, giving everyday instructions, explaining lesson procedures and greetings and leave-taking. 64% of the teachers allowed students to use the MT for explaining wrong behavior, 53% for asking about new items, 40% for expressing lack of comprehension, and to a lesser degree, for talking

with peers/groups, responding to daily instructions, greeting and taking-leave and inserting MT words in utterances. Finally, 67% of the participant students made use of the MT for asking for explanation, 61% for inserting MT words in utterances, and 52% for responding to instructions.

From these results, Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) arrived to the following conclusions:

1. The use of the mother tongue is mainly manifested in explaining difficult lexical items, grammatical points, or providing a context of situation for the “communicative” use of the second language.
2. Most teachers believe that the use of the mother tongue in fact facilitates second language teaching and learning.
3. Teachers use the mother tongue out of conviction, rather than in obedience to the authority of the textbook instructions or the suggestion of the supervisor.
4. Judging by what both teachers and students say, the latter feel that the use of the mother tongue is useful and they are pleased with that use (p. 230).

Although Kharma and Hajjaj’s (1989) and other earlier research focused on the reasons and purposes of the use of MT, little research had been done on the amount of MT used in the FL classroom. In 1990, Duff and Polio approached this issue by investigating thirteen native-speaker (NS) teachers teaching “typologically unrelated” language courses at UCLA. Through classroom observations, student questionnaires, and teacher interviews, the authors found that there was a huge range across the amount of FL in teacher talk in the FL classroom, ranking from 10 to 100 percent, implying that, independently of the language taught, all teachers used

the L1 to a bigger or lesser extent in the L2 classroom. They also found that most students were satisfied with the amount of L1/L2 used by their teacher.

Although Duff and Polio (1990) did not make any generalizations, the authors concluded that some variables that may have played a role in determining the amount of L1/L2 use included: 1) language type; 2) departmental policy/guidelines; 3) lesson content; 4) materials; and 5) formal teacher training. It is important to highlight that Duff and Polio's (1990) participant teachers were all native speakers of English, implying that the use of MT in the L2 classroom is not subject to whether language teachers are native or non-native speakers. In addition, these authors propose some uses for MT in the L2 classroom which at the same time might help avoid its overuse (see Appendix E).

Finally, Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) suggest a "pragmatic approach" for the use of the mother tongue in the foreign language classroom in which the techniques used "serve a purpose, are usable by teachers, and are useful to learners" (p. 232). They further add that "such an approach should take into account the practical realities of the classroom and [...] aim at systematizing and legalizing teaching practices based on informed and knowledgeable common sense, no matter what methodological philosophies may underlie them" (p. 232).

Harbord (1992) further adds three categories of MT strategies that he found in various parts of Europe in teacher training and through discussion with colleagues: 1) to facilitate teacher-student communication; 2) to facilitate teacher-student rapport (i.e. chatting in L1 before the start of the lesson to reduce student anxiety, telling jokes in L1); and 3) to facilitate learning of L2 (i.e. translation of single words or phrases in context).

Harbord (1992) concludes:

Perhaps the most important point to be made in the discussion on the rights and wrongs of using the mother tongue in the classroom is that translation, and indeed use of the mother tongue generally, is not a device to be used to save time for 'more useful' activities, nor to make life easier for the teacher or the students. Instead, as Duff says, it should be used to provoke discussion and speculation, to develop clarity and flexibility of thinking, and to help us increase our own and our students' awareness of the inevitable interaction between the mother tongue and the target language that occurs during any type of language acquisition (p. 355).

More empirical evidence is provided by Tang (2002) who, through classroom observations, interviews, and a questionnaire, investigated 100 first-year English major students from China and 20 faculty members whose teaching experience ranged between one and 30 years. This author found that the L1 (Chinese) was used by the three randomly selected teachers observed to explain the meaning of words, complex ideas, and complex grammar points; that is, the MT had a supportive and facilitating role in the L2 classroom in those situations where the L2 (English) explanations did not work.

From the interviewed teachers in Tang's (2002) study (the same that were observed), teacher 1 used some L1 because it was more effective and less time-consuming, to explain parts of the text, or to give instructions; teacher 2 used it to compare the two languages and to discuss the meaning of some difficult, abstract words and the grammar and ideas expressed in long and complicated sentences; and teacher 3 used it to keep order in the classroom. The questionnaires data showed that a high percentage of the students (70%) and the teachers (72%) think

that the L1 should be used in the classroom. In addition, the vast majority of the students liked it when their teachers used some L1.

Furthermore, according to Tang's participant students, the L1 was mainly used to explain complex grammar points and to help define some new vocabulary items. It was most necessary to practice the use of some phrases and expressions and to explain difficult concepts or ideas. Students further added that using the L1 in EFL classes helped them to understand difficult concepts better, understand new vocabulary, feel less lost, understand jargon, and improve their translation ability. Finally, the author concluded from this study that in the EFL classes observed, the L1 played only a supportive role whereas the L2 remained as the chief medium of communication.

Kraemer (2006) further documents the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom in her qualitative study of five German teaching assistants (TAs): three native speakers of English, one native speaker of German, and one whose first language was neither English nor German. The author found that, independently of the TA's native language, they all used English to a bigger or lesser extent in the L2 classroom and that there were eight common functions for the use of the learners' MT among the participants: Activity explanation, classroom management/administrative vocabulary, cultural points, empathy/solidarity, grammar instruction, repetition or explanation to prevent/remedy lack of comprehension, talking to individual students, and translation.

From these, Kraemer (2006) concluded that the most common use of L1 was for classroom management and administrative vocabulary. The second most frequent function was the translation of individual words. Repetitions or explanations to prevent and remedy students' lack of comprehension ranked third place. In fourth place was the use of L1 to talk to individual students during individual, pair, or group

activities. Grammar instruction was fifth, but this may have been due to the fact that the German textbook used by the TAs explicitly required them not to teach grammar in class. Students were expected to read the grammar explanations (presented in the L1) at home and practice the structures in the classroom using the L2.

In reference to grammar explanations in L1, Kraemer (2006) cites one of her interviewed TAs, who comments:

We test students on grammar and therefore we should teach grammar in class, offering explanations, rules, and examples. The only way students will really understand grammar is to teach it in their native language. The department says that grammar should be taught “deductively” using the target language for providing examples. The idea that students will learn it “deductively” is not supported by our current method of evaluation, which tests them on grammar in a less than communicative, contrived situation (p. 444).

It is important to mention that the grammar explanations, cultural information, and direction lines in the activities of the first three chapters of the German textbook used by the TAs and the students were in the L1 (English). For this reason, the TAs continued doing activity explanation in the L1 even when the book started presenting the instructions in the L2 after Chapter III. The seventh position was using the L1 for establishing empathy/solidarity with the students and the last function was teaching German history and culture, although only one TA used the L1 for this purpose. Kraemer (2006) also concluded that previous language teaching experience and teacher training reduced the amount of L1 used.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight how similar the findings are in terms of the possible benefits from the inclusion of the MT among research performed more

than 20 years ago and recent studies. As can be seen, there seems to be a pattern in the use of MT in both ESL and EFL contexts, independently of whether the teachers are English native or non-native speakers. A summary of the studies discussed in this chapter is presented in chronological order in terms of the reasons in favor of and against the use of the MT in the L2 classroom in Appendix E, and will later serve as a point of comparison for the findings of this research.

Evidence shows that, for over two decades, there has been an advocacy towards the inclusion of the L1 in the L2 classroom, which goes hand to hand with warnings of the negative consequences of its overuse. Based on this background, the next chapter will present the methodology followed in the present research in hopes of adding useful and current findings to this controversial topic.