

Factors Pertinent to First Language Use in Foreign Language Classroom: A Case of Content and Language Integrated Learning

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Abstract

The success of bilingual immersion programmes has promoted the debate about whether learners' first language (L1) should be used in foreign language classrooms. Nevertheless, Content and Language Integrated Learning, a pedagogical approach embedded in the development of multilingualism and multiliteracy theories, has overstepped the monolingual principle by allowing for more flexibility in the choice of instructional languages. Previous research has emphasised chiefly the reasons and effects of embracing a shared language, other than the target language, in content-based bilingual classrooms, while this paper intends to investigate the correlations between L1 use with learner factors, the understanding of which can shed light on more efficient translanguaging practices. Through a cross-sectional approach, the present study was contextualised in a large-scale, content-based English as a foreign language programme and drew on 335 undergraduates, who completed a series of questionnaires and tests. Correlation and regression analyses primarily demonstrated that English proficiency was the most significant predictor of learners' overall attitude to L1 instruction in classrooms, followed by content proficiency and language learning motivation. Gender was a non-significant variable for learners' overall perspective on L1 employment but was related to the constructs about using the L1 for phatic purposes, with male students requiring more translanguaging assistance. The paper concludes with the implication that the desire for L1 use is associated with various learner factors and that teachers should be aware of how to encourage and regulate translanguaging practices for differing instructional purposes as per the changing needs in classrooms.

Keywords: content and language integrated learning, English as a foreign language, first language use, medium of instruction, translanguaging

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Introduction

How to teach a second or foreign language (L2) is an intricate issue involving the consideration of various matters, and it is a golden question whose answers have been changing for decades with the reformation of Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories. The Reform Movement, a milestone in the history of modern language instruction, has been playing a vital role since its birth owing to its philosophy of regarding languages as living ones, and one of its initiatives against the prevalence of the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) characterised by excessive use of learners' first language (L1) as the medium of instruction has encouraged the emergence and popularisation of a direct method to education, emphasising the target language (TL) immersion with the proscription of L1 use in the classroom environment.

Against this backdrop, scholars presume that engaging learners in the TL environment in a way that is similar to how they have learned their L1 can facilitate SLA (Santacruz & Gollan, 2021; Vijayadasan & Tomy, 2020). Although there are different types of immersion programmes based on the amount of the TL used in instruction, total immersion, wherein exclusive use of the TL is statutory, tends to have attracted more widespread attention. However, the development of linguistic theories, such as translanguaging, has rationalised the indispensable role learners' L1 has in FLT to promote multilingualism against a monolingual mindset. On this basis, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a pedagogical approach arising from the multilingual European society and characterised by a dual focus on content learning and L2 learning, has stimulated considerable research interest due to its inclusiveness of L1 use. With previous research emphasising the ways and effects of utilising L1 in CLIL classrooms, however, little is known about how translanguaging practices are related to the diversity of learner profiles (Jules & Belgrave, 2020) and learner perceptions (Zhou & Mann, 2021). To this end, the present study placed in a CLIL programme foregrounds the exploration of how learners' attitudes to different ways of L1 instruction are associated with the learner factors justified to be essential for this issue, aimed at addressing the following research question:

- To what degree can learners' attitudes to L1 use in CLIL be explained by their L2 learning motivation (L2LM), gender, L2 proficiency (L2P) and content proficiency (CP)?

Literature Review

CLIL is a generic umbrella term representing "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p. 1). It is, then, a way of combining subject learning and learning a language that is not the learners' L1, just as the 'two for the price of one' metaphor proposed by Bonnet (2012). That said, CLIL emphasises both content learning and L2 learning as simultaneous academic goals, and learners are expected to acquire content knowledge via the medium of the TL and use and develop the TL through the content subject (Gabillon, 2020; Hu, 2021). Since the introduction of CLIL, it has gained considerable attention from educators and researchers for its unique feature that distinguishes it from other FLT approaches. It is now considered one of the most expedient ways of establishing interdisciplinary links and preparing future specialists who can communicate professional knowledge efficiently in an L2 (Latypova, 2020; State, 2020).

However, the popularisation of CLIL has given rise to several problems regarding its application, one of which is whether learners' L1 should be used to supplement L2 instruction.

To a large degree, this issue is a golden question without fixed answers. On the one hand, researchers assume that L1 merely "has a support function for explanation", the use of which should be minimised in CLIL; on the other hand, "L1 has a learning function", which can help to improve learners' L2P and metalinguistic awareness (Lasagabaster, 2013, p. 11). The dilemma is apparent, as using L1 can facilitate learners' understanding and reduce their cognitive loads, but overuse of L1 may deprive learners of exposure to the TL. However, regardless of the long-standing debate, CLIL, a young discipline, admittedly allows for more possibilities and flexibility in L1 instruction in L2 classrooms and distinguishes itself from the monolingual immersion models. When L1 is utilised appropriately to achieve specific purposes (e.g., helping learners understand concepts, comparing L1 and L2, creating a comfortable class environment, addressing disciplinary issues), language learning and content learning can be greatly scaffolded.

Indeed, many CLIL programmes have encouraged L1 use, such as the well-known Polish CLIL programmes, wherein different models have been developed to guide L1 instruction (Czura & Papaja, 2013). Code-switching and translanguaging are two crucial concepts underlying these programmes, as both of them highlight the potential of L1 in FLT. Although researchers tend to use these terms synonymously, their essence is different. Code-switching refers to the methodical switch of languages in a single utterance, while translanguaging "draw(s) on an individual's linguistic and semiotic repertoires" and includes code-switching and other practices with an assumption that a bilingual or multilingual person has a single language continuum that they can use to communicate without referring to separate language systems (Mazak, 2017, p. 5). In brief, code-switching is the process of changing two languages in contrast to translanguaging, wherein speakers attempt to create a complete repertoire of languages. They have contrasting ideologies, with translanguaging moving beyond the perspective of language separation and monolingual methodologies associated with code-switching but towards flexible language use and learning through more than two languages.

Recent research indicates translanguaging has a vital role in CLIL, and it is interesting to note that CLIL research on code-switching has "frequently adopted a stance that is closely related to translanguaging" and is "less focused on language separation than was previously the case" (Tuder, 2016, p. 37). With the acknowledgement of the necessity of L1, researchers have endeavoured to examine various issues about it, such as reasons for L1 use, learners' and teachers' perceptions of L1 use, effects of L1 use, etc. For instance, from a qualitative perspective, Sylvén (2015) asked students to take photos to show their experiences with L1 and L2 in classrooms, analysed them in combination with interview data and concluded that CLIL learners could be more inclusive of L1 instruction than non-CLIL students. Having recognised the indispensability of L1 application, Papaja and Wysocka-Narewska (2020) mainly worked on the ways L1 should be used and deduced that secondary school teachers in Poland encouraged L1 instruction in CLIL for specific purposes, such as explaining grammar and content knowledge, asking for clarification, motivating learners, etc. This reflects the general research finding, whether from teachers' or learners' perspectives, that L1 is embraced when it is considered functional (Bieri, 2018; Campillo-Ferrer, Miralles-Martínez, & Sánchez-Ibáñez, 2020; Salvadori, 2019; Zanoni, 2018). From a

different perspective, Moore and Stoelting's (2021) longitudinal study underlined the educational benefits of translanguaging, suggesting that secondary school students in Spain could improve English writing proficiency in a CLIL programme with proper L1 instruction. This finding mirrors the positive effects of L1 on L2 development, which has been systematically proven in previous research (see the synthesis done by Çelik & Aydın, 2018). However, L1 use in CLIL is still a less studied topic, with researchers focusing on why and how L1 should be used but overlooking how L1 use can be shaped by learner factors, namely learners' characteristics that have an influential explanatory role in learning.

Various factors can affect L1 use in FLT, and L2LM is one of the most studied. Based on classic theories, L2LM generally refers to the extent to which a learner strives to attain particular objectives and has different types (e.g., integrative, instrumental, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) (Zhang & Shao, 2021). Both theories and research indicate that L2LM plays an essential role in language learning and that motivated learners can achieve their learning goals and improve L2P more quickly than those who are less enthusiastic (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015; Al-Hoorie & Szabó, 2022). However, the relationship between L2LM and L1 use in L2 classrooms is still under debate, with researchers taking a dichotomy of views. On the one hand, they assert adhering to a monolingual mindset and prohibiting L1 use impair learners' motivation, and Saruwatashi's (2020) synthesis confirms that embracing the use of L1 can reduce the affective barriers and build rapport between teachers and students. On the other hand, researchers assume that maximising the TL use can increase L2LM, and previous research has confirmed that learners exposed to more TL instruction tend to be more motivated and engaged than those with less language exposure (Alshehri, 2022; Tanaka & Kutsuki, 2018).

This contradiction of views can be also seen in terms of gender as another influential factor in L2 learning. However, whether it is related to L1 use still remains unclear. Some researchers are suspicious about it because their studies have shown a non-significant relationship between these variables (Burat & Çavuşoğlu, 2020; Joyce, von Dietze, von Dietze, & McMillan, 2021). Others tend to be of a different mind. For instance, by reviewing available studies, Azkarai (2015) argues that females and males usually have different attitudes to L1 use due to differing communicative patterns. Her research as one of the few recent initiatives to investigate the gender issue in FLT further implies that female learners usually use more L1 than male learners, who instead prefer to employ some L1 when working in groups. Nonetheless, the relationship between gender and L1 use is still a scarcely studied area, especially in recent academia, and more research is needed to clarify whether this relationship exists.

Compared with gender, L2P is one of the most studied factors. Despite the widely accepted idea that proper L1 use can contribute to L2 development, it also seems to be a consensus that higher TL proficiency typically comes along with less L1 use in instruction and that learners' L2P justifies the amount of L1 utilised in teaching and learning. Many studies have confirmed this conception. For example, although Tajgozari's (2017) quantitative research has only disclosed mixed-level English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' favourable opinions of L1 use in classrooms without pointing out the negative correlation between students' L2P levels with their attitudes to L1, the data recorded in his paper can be used to verify that elementary learners agree with more L1 instruction than their advanced peers. This finding has been directly specified in

classroom studies, suggesting that beginner language learners are more inclusive of L1 utilisation in a multilingual classroom than proficient learners (Aly, 2020; Yüzlü & Atay, 2020). Almohaimeed and Almurshed's (2018) research has presented the same result regarding advanced L2 learners' critical attitude to using L1 in FLT, but they have further found that elementary and intermediate learners' attitudes to L1 could be judicious rather than positive. This in-depth analysis has shed light on the need to re-examine the tentative relationship between L2P with L1 use to offer a subtler train of thought about this topic.

The last factor is learners' CP, which is an essential variable in the present study because of the dual-focused nature of CLIL. Researchers have generally agreed about the function of L1 in CLIL to help learners understand cognitively demanding concepts and knowledge about the content area (Martínez-Adrián, Gutiérrez-Mangado, & Gallardo-del-Puerto, 2019; Tudor, 2016), and it appears commonsensical that learners with high CP adopt a less favourable attitude to L1 use than those who are academically weak. However, researchers simultaneously tend to have taken this assumption for granted and thus have spared little effort to verify it. This situation cannot be criticised on account of the reasonableness of the assumed negative correlation between CP and L1 employment, while Bobadilla-Pérez and Galán-Rodríguez's (2020) latest study on translanguaging has exhibited an exciting phenomenon that necessitates the re-examination of this relationship. In a secondary school CLIL programme offered in Spain, they found learners could well understand and utilise the TL in contrast to the expectation that the specific content subjects might be too obscure to facilitate L2 application. Although the researchers did not attach much importance to this finding due to the principal research focus on the functions of translanguaging, it has cast some doubt on the recognised negative correlation between CP and L1 instruction.

Methods

Research Design

The researcher adopted a cross-sectional survey approach in the study, which was characterised by the collection of data from a population at a specific point in time to examine perceptions as a snapshot and to compare differences of opinions among people with diverse characteristics within the sample (Cohen et al., 2017). This design was appropriate for the study and enabled the researcher to understand and compare L2 students' attitudes to L1 instruction as per the identified learner factors, namely L2LM, gender, L2P and CP.

Research Participants

The sample of participants was drawn from an accessible population ($N = 1570$) in a comprehensive university in China, where a large-scale CLIL programme that integrated College English (CE) (i.e., a compulsory EFL course offered to undergraduates whose degree programmes are not related to English studies) with Ideological and Political Education (IPE) (i.e., a subject about the cultures, conventions and social values of China) was provided to first-year students. Based on a 95% confidence interval with a 5% margin of error, 335 students were recruited with informed consent through random sampling. This sample included 182 females and 153 males aged 18 to 20 years, and they needed to take two content-based CE classes per week, which contributed to approximately three hours of workload. The CLIL programme was designed by the CE teachers in collaboration with the IPE specialists at the research site, and it was implemented

to the participants by 39 qualified CE teachers in total, who used both English and students' L1, namely Mandarin, for instruction.

Research Instruments

Four instruments were used in the study to collect quantitative data, including two questionnaires and two tests. The details are as follows:

- Questionnaire on Learners' Attitudes to L1 Use: this group-administered questionnaire included two sections aimed at collecting the participants' demographic information and measuring their attitudes toward L1 use. The latter part was adapted from the one developed by Shariati (2019) with established validity and reliability. It included 41 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (one point) to 'strongly agree' (five points). Seven constructs (see Table one) were measured, which represented everyday purposes in applying L1 in L2 classrooms. The first three constructs were about students' attitudes to their use of L1, while the others were about their perceptions of teachers' use of L1. The questionnaire was translated from English to Chinese to ensure the participants' understanding. A pilot study organised before the research indicated each construct had acceptable reliability and that the Cronbach's alpha for the whole questionnaire was .86.

Table 1. *Constructs, items and Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire*

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
interacting with teachers (C1)	12	.85
checking comprehension (C2)	7	.79
examining and checking meaning (C3)	4	.82
explaining and teaching grammar (C4)	6	.73
classroom management (C5)	3	.91
explaining class activities and tasks (C6)	3	.81
maintaining contact with students (C7)	6	.80

- Questionnaire on L2LM: this group-administered questionnaire was adapted from the one designed by Zhang and Shao (2021) with well-proven validity and reliability. The questionnaire contained 15 items on a five-point Likert scale. Four constructs (i.e., integrative, instrumental, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation) were measured in the original questionnaire, whereas only the holistic score was reported and analysed in the present study to signify the participants' general L2LM. A Chinese questionnaire version was also prepared and pilot-studied, whose Cronbach's alpha was .78.
- CE test: the participants' L2P was measured by the test developed by the CE teachers at the research site as per the curriculum adopted in the semester, whose full mark was 100. Macro language skills were assessed at the end of the semester for summative purposes, and holistic scores were reported to students and used in the study as the indicator of general L2P. The test had satisfactory validity due to its rigorous design and implementation. The pilot study demonstrated it also had satisfying test-retest reliability in a 15-day interval, with Pearson correlation coefficient being .88.
- IPE test: the participants' CP was measured by the test designed by the IPE experts at the research site as per the learning objectives of the CLIL programme. It comprised several open-ended tasks, which were scored based on specific criteria and contributed to a total score of 100. Given the summative nature of this test, students were required to complete

it in Chinese because of the concern that they might have sufficient content knowledge but did not have adequate English proficiency in expressing it. The test was considered valid due to the compatibility between what was supposed to be measured with what it precisely measured. It also had acceptable inter-rater reliability, with Cohen's kappa coefficient being .79.

Procedure and Analysis

The CLIL programme in which the participants were involved lasted for 13 weeks in a semester. At the end of the programme, the questionnaires were administered to the participants with the assistance of their tutors, after which the tests were organised and scored by the teachers. All the students completed these paper-and-pencil instruments. Based on the prerequisite that there was a linear relationship between every two variables, that there was no significant outlier and that the data met normal distribution, the collected data were computed into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Pearson's correlation coefficient was measured to specify the direction and strength of the association between the dependent variable (DV) and independent variables (IVs). Due to the dichotomousness of gender, the relationship between it and the DV was presented by point-biserial correlations, with males coded as one and females as zero. Because of the limitation of Pearson correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis was also run to identify if the DV could be predicted based on the IVs.

Results

The descriptive statistics were recorded in Table two, followed by Table three, which displayed the referential statistics of correlations between variables. The results showed a negative relationship between learners' overall attitude to L1 use with their L2LM, L2P and CP. The DV was the most strongly correlated with L2P ($r = -.52$), followed by CP ($r = -.49$) and L2LM ($r = -.36$). However, gender was not associated with the DV. A more minute analysis between the constructs of the L1 use variable with the IVs generated slightly different findings. Specifically, L2LM was negatively correlated with the need to use L1 to interact with teachers ($r = -.38$) and maintain contact with students ($r = -.33$). Still, it was positively correlated with L1 employment in grammar teaching ($r = .41$). Besides, although gender did not show any statistical association with learners' general attitude to L1 use, it was positively correlated with the desire for L1 use in student-teacher interaction ($r = .18$) and teachers' contact with students ($r = .23$), with male students wanting more assistance than female students. The participants' L2P was negatively correlated with most of the constructs except classroom management. The most robust relationship could be primarily found between L2P with L1 use in explaining and teaching grammar ($r = -.61$). In contrast, the students' CP was only correlated with the desire to use L1 to check comprehension ($r = -.52$), examine and check meaning ($r = -.42$), and explain learning tasks and activities ($r = -.45$).

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics of the variables*

Variable	M	SD	Min.	Max.
General attitude to L1 use	151.07	14.78	131	183
C1	43.47	4.32	37	51
C2	25.80	3.63	19	34
C3	14.80	2.24	10	18
C4	21.13	3.02	16	27

C5	12.47	1.64	7	15
C6	10.80	2.31	9	15
C7	22.60	3.76	15	30
L2LM	51.77	4.55	44	62
L2P	70.87	13.83	46	94
CP	76.12	11.42	53	96

Table 3. Correlation statistics of the variables

Variable	General attitude to L1 use	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
L2LM	-.36*	-.38*			.41*			-.33*
gender		.18*						.23*
L2P	-.52*	-.30*	-.53*	-.38*	-.61*		-.43*	-.21*
CP	-.49*		-.52*	-.42*			-.45*	

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed)

To further explore the relationships between the variables, multiple regression analysis was run. An initial analysis with all the variables displayed a significant statistical model, $F(4, 125) = 45.39$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .56$. This meant the IVs statistically predicted the DV and that the regression model was a proper fit of the data. However, gender was not a significant predictor ($p = .15$) and was then removed to repeat the analysis. A statistically important model was generated and contained the other three explanatory variables, $F(3, 132) = 57.23$, $p < .001$. As shown in Table four, the standardised partial regression coefficients demonstrated that L2P ($\beta = -.43$, $p < .001$) constituted the greatest independent contribution to the prediction of the attitude to L1 use, and it was followed by CP ($\beta = -.37$, $p < .001$) and L2LM ($\beta = -.26$, $p < .001$). The same analysis was also done to predict the relationship between the questionnaire constructs and the IVs. The main findings shown in Table five included: L2LM ($\beta = -.38$, $p = .01$) and L2P ($\beta = -.37$, $p < .001$) accounted most for the prediction of learners' attitudes to using L1 when interacting with teachers, followed by gender ($\beta = .14$, $p = .03$); L2P ($\beta = -.32$, $p = .03$) and CP ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .001$) mainly accounted for the desire for L1 use in checking comprehension; the attitude to utilising L1 in explaining and checking meaning could also be predicted by L2P ($\beta = -.36$, $p < .001$) and CP ($\beta = -.26$, $p < .001$); L2P ($\beta = -.37$, $p < .001$) and L2LM ($\beta = -.32$, $p = .02$) accounted for the use of L1 in grammar teaching; the attitude to employing L1 for classroom management could not be predicted by any of the variables; the desire for using L1 to explain learning activities and tasks could be predicted by L2P ($\beta = -.24$, $p = .01$) and CP ($\beta = -.16$, $p = .01$); applying L1 to maintain contact with learners could be predicted by L2P ($\beta = -.27$, $p < .001$), L2LM ($\beta = -.25$, $p = .04$) and gender ($\beta = .13$, $p = .01$).

Table 4. Statistics of multiple regression for variables predicting overall attitude to L1 use

Variable	B	S.E.(B)	β	T	p
L2LM	-.17	.02	-.28	-2.88	.000
L2P	-.12	.21	-.43	-3.67	.000
CP	-.25	.35	-.37	-3.15	.000

Table 5. Statistics of multiple regression for variables predicting L1 use constructs

	C1		C2		C3		C4		C5		C6		C7	
	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	P	β	p
L2LM	-.38	.01	-.26	.07	-.18	.13	-.32	.02	-.17	.06	-.16	.12	-.25	.04

gender	.14	.03	-.18	.14	-.17	.67	.17	.25	.11	.36	-.13	.08	.13	.01
L2P	-.37	.000	-.32	.03	-.36	.000	-.37	.000	-.18	.58	-.24	.01	-.27	.000
CP	-.26	.05	-.24	.000	-.26	.000	-.21	.06	-.21	.40	-.16	.01	-.14	.10

Discussion

This study examined the desire for L1 instruction amongst a sample of EFL learners. Complex relationships were established between perceptions of L1 use with several learner factors, which served as a brief response to the aforementioned research question. As shown in the statistics, firstly, both the correlation and regression analyses suggested that L2P had the most substantial relationship with learners' general desire for L1 use and made the most outstanding predictive contribution to the attitude to L1. Due to the negative connection, learners who had a preliminary level of L2P were favourable to L1 instruction, but their desire could decline with the improvement of their L2P. This finding corresponds to previous research, which has revealed that L1 use tends to be more common amongst beginner CLIL learners and that more experienced or proficient learners are typically independent of L1 use (Jiménez & Martínez-Adrián, 2020). Further analysis indicated that L2P was negatively correlated with a variety of situations of L1 employment. Regression analysis showed L2P was the most significant predictor of the desire for using L1 in teaching grammar, examining meaning, and checking comprehension, followed by the other constructs, including interacting with teachers, explaining class activities, and maintaining contact with students. It should be noted that the first three constructs mentioned above are related mainly to learning itself. In contrast, the others that were less predicted by L2P, as well as the non-predicted L1 use in classroom management, are somewhat related to the communication or interaction process in classrooms. This case accords with the one reflected in previous research, which has presented that less proficient L2 learners may be dependent on L1 instruction mainly to facilitate content learning (e.g., understanding complicated concepts) and language learning (e.g., grasping linguistic features) and that the other L1 functions, which seem less related to learners' academic performance but are still the reasons of L1 use, may receive less attention from learners (Bobadilla-Pérez & Galán-Rodríguez, 2020).

CP was the second most significant predictor of the perspective to L1 use in the study. Since it was negatively correlated with learners' general attitude, it seemed that students who had considerable proficiency in the content subject had less desire for L1 instruction than those lower proficiency learners. This finding is in line with the general expectation aroused from earlier research, which has spotlighted the vital role of L1 in helping learners understand the content knowledge and handle the cognitive loads of achieving the dual-focused learning goals of CLIL (Martínez-Adrián et al., 2019). From a more detailed perspective, CP was negatively correlated with and could predict the desire for L1 use to examine and check meaning, check comprehension, and explain class activities and tasks. That meant learners who were competent at the content subject required less translanguaging assistance in these learning activities. In contrast, CP was not related to the attitudes to using L1 for language learning (i.e., grammar teaching) or classroom communication and interaction (i.e., interacting with teachers, maintaining contact with students). Generally, this group of findings reflects that learners considerably need L1 instruction to support content understanding when they perceive the discipline subject as the principal learning focus in CLIL (Saito, 2020).

It has been acknowledged that L1 use can create a safe and engaging learning environment and strengthen CLIL learners' motivation (Coyle et al., 2010), while the relationship between L2LM with L1 utilisation was multifaceted in this study. L2LM was the third-highest predictor of learners' general attitude to L1 use and was negatively correlated with the DV. Thus, it could be assumed that more motivated learners usually preferred less L1 instruction but more L2 exposure than those with lower motivation. Further analysis displayed that L2LM was negatively correlated with the desire to use L1 in student-teacher interaction, meaning that motivated learners preferred TL application in classroom communication. This aligns with the expectation that learners with high motivation usually favour more TL immersion to improve language proficiency. In comparison, L2LM was positively correlated with the use of L1 in grammar teaching and served as the strongest predictor of this construct, which entailed that enthusiastic learners preferred to utilise L1 when learning grammar. This finding supplements previous ones that CLIL learners usually prefer L1 use when learning the linguistic features of the TL (Campillo-Ferrer et al., 2020; Papaja & Wysocka-Narewska, 2020), but it is not surprising to see this result in contrast with the negative correlation between L2LM and L1 use for other purposes when China's GTM-oriented EFL teaching situation is considered. In other words, it makes sense in the way that if learners have a significant desire to master the linguistic forms, they will resort to the language that they are familiar with to gain a thorough understanding. However, it is somewhat surprising to see that L2LM was related to the constructs concerning L1 use for interactive purposes instead of the ones as signs of L1 use in academic contexts (e.g., checking comprehension, examining and checking meaning), which somehow contrasts the view that L2LM, L1 use and academic learning are constantly interwoven in CLIL (Tuder, 2016). This requires further evidence to be collected to substantiate the previously assumed relationships existing in the translanguaging practices.

Gender was not related to learners' overall attitude to L1 use. However, it was positively associated with and could predict L1 use for student-teacher interaction and contact. It meant male learners wanted more L1 instruction or use in these activities than female learners. As mentioned above, gender is a less studied variable in previous CLIL research, and thus no comparable finding can be consulted here. In the general FLT context, Azkarai's (2015) study, as one of the few in-depth investigations into the relationship between gender and L1 use, can serve as an interesting comparison. Her research implies that female learners may switch to L1 use more frequently for phatic purposes (e.g., interacting with teachers and peers) than male students, who use the TL as much as possible to increase language proficiency but may employ some L1 when learning new linguistic items. This assumption appears contradictory to the finding of this study, but this comparison highlights that the role of gender can be different in various contexts and that teachers need to consider the characteristics of their contexts to judge the positions of gender in L1 employment.

Despite the multifaceted relationships between the variables, none of the learner factors was related to the use of L1 for classroom management. However, that does not mean L1 is futile to manage L2 classrooms or that the participants dismissed L1 as something unessential in classroom management, as both theories and classroom research have confirmed that L1 instruction can be an effective way to regulate classroom behaviours (Jules & Belgrave, 2020; Saruwatashi, 2020). Instead, the study only demonstrated that the changing of L2LM, L2P and CP, as well as gender differences, would not cause any swing in learners' attitudes toward using L1 to

manage CLIL. It is hard to explain this situation without further data from the participants or compatible studies. However, Al Balushi's (2020) study conducted in the Asian context has revealed an interesting phenomenon. In his classroom observation, L1 was scarcely used to manage L2 classes simply due to students' well-behavedness. This fact is in line with the assumption that compared to Western classrooms, where behaviour problems often occur, Asian classrooms may offer L2 teachers little chance of using L1 to manage the classroom with firm school discipline rooted in learners' minds (Forman, 2016). From this perspective, possible speculation over the research finding is that there were few behaviour issues in the participants' learning contexts, which rendered the construct of L1 use for classroom management and its relationship with the studied learner factors negligible. However, this is simply a tentative assumption, and further examination is needed to explain if L1-supported classroom management is essential or not in the research context.

Compared to previous research, this study has moved beyond the exploration of why and how L1 should be used in CLIL and presented a detailed account of how students' and teachers' L1 use in different situations was related to crucial learner factors. Therefore, teachers, as the most straightforward guide of learning, should be aware of the potential role these factors have in L1 instruction and thus encourage and regulate L1 use in classes accordingly. There has already been some evidence of this, such as the general case reflected in Zanoni's (2018) study that the learning circumstances of students as the ultimate recipients of CLIL methodology were considered by teachers concerning L1 instruction, as well as the more specific instance shown in Papaja and Wysocka-Narewska's (2020) research that teachers considered learners' feelings and emotions in order to adopt and give an explanation for L1 instruction. These classroom practices have exemplified how a student-centred CLIL programme can be run as per the actual needs of learners to engage them in learning, which, along with the findings of the present study, reinforces that the choice of instructional languages should lie in both students' and teachers' parts so that teaching and learning can progress.

A non-negligible limitation of this research concerns the nature of quantitative data, which cannot provide any further insight into why the studied relationships have occurred (Cohen et al., 2017). This invites researchers to consider a pragmatic paradigm in future research to extend and explain quantitative results from a qualitative perspective, with more classroom stakeholders involved. Indeed, a majority of CLIL research about L1 use has taken a worldview that is either positivist (Jiménez & Martínez-Adrián, 2020; Salvadori, 2019; Zanoni, 2018) or interpretivist (Bieri, 2018; Sylvén, 2015; Tudor, 2016). Although there are some mixed-methods studies, such as Papaja and Wysocka-Narewska's (2020) one wherein close-ended and open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to investigate teachers' perceptions on why L1 should be used, it seems that most of them have focused on examining the various functions of L1 to justify or refute the use of it in CLIL. The findings of those studies may be different from case to case due to contextual characteristics, but they have generally reinforced the beneficial role of L1 in content learning, language learning, affective learning, classroom management, etc. Thus, it is expected that the design and results of the present study can help researchers to step out of the conventional research agenda to a wider one, which shifts the emphasis to the investigation of how L1 use for differing purposes or in divergent situations can be possibly shaped by various elements. Admittedly, the factors are more than what has been probed in this study, and diverse

characteristics are essential for this issue, such as “language policies and practices, parental discourses about linguistic capital, and societal discourses on ethnicity, nationality, and marginalisation” (Rajendram, 2021, n.p.). These factors include learner factors and contextual factors, the combination of which sheds light on a much broader agenda to be explored in terms of translanguaging practices in FLT.

Conclusion

In this study, the possible relationships between learners’ attitudes to L1 use with different learner factors were explored to provide in-depth insight into the translanguaging issues in CLIL. The results demonstrated that L2P, CP and L2LM were essential variables to predict the value of students’ overall desire for L1 instruction, but their relationships with the constructs were multifaceted. To summarise, increasing L2P could bring about a less strong desire for L1 use for both academic and interactive purposes, which was somewhat similar to that strong CP learners favoured less L1 instruction in learning as reflected by the constructs of checking comprehension, examining meaning, and explaining learning activities. Increasing L2LM could account for learners’ appetite for more TL use in student-teacher interaction and communication and was also a non-negligible predictor for learners’ greater desire for L1 use in grammar teaching. Regarding gender, although a non-significant relationship was found between it with learners’ general attitude to L1 instruction, it was indeed correlated with some phatic situations of L1 use (i.e., interacting with teachers, maintaining contact with students), with male learners needing more translanguaging assistance than their female counterparts. As such, this paper has provided a thorough examination and account of L1 employment concerning various learner factors.

Undeniably, an L2-only classroom is not always suitable for FLT, and appropriate L1 use should be encouraged for different purposes. Thus, teachers, the most straightforward stakeholder and guide of classroom instruction, should bear in mind that there is no one-size-fits-all principle of L1 application and that both learner factors, the focus of the study, and contextual factors, which await to be explored in future research, should be taken into account when allowing of and regulating the use of L1 as the supplementary medium of instruction in an L2 classroom. As such, an implication of the study is that classroom homogeneity can contribute to efficient identification of learners’ needs and targeted L1 use. Joyce et al. (2021) have mentioned the possibilities of student placement in creating a homogenous L2 classroom for meaningful L1 instruction. However, this act may undermine classroom ecology and is sometimes challenging to be ideally implemented in line with educators’ expectations, especially when the student population is too large to be effectively and fairly categorised. In this sense, the onus for creating a multilingual learning environment rests with teachers, whose awareness and expertise in differentiating the learning process as per the profiles of students and classroom discourse are of great consequence.

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