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Building confidence and linguistic knowledge

CRICOS PROVIDER 00123M

Using Students' First Languages in the Multilingual Classroom

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seek LIGHT

Teaching experience



Learner experience



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Similarities

- Multiple nationalities and languages
- Mostly young adult students
- Focus on the use of the target language in class

Differences

- No exclusive language policy
- First languages acknowledged and used for clarity/comparison

Why the difference?

- **No shared language**
 - ‘Monolingual mindset’ (Adoniou 2007)
 - First language ignored in texts/teacher training (Ellis 2007)
 - Learner’s first language viewed as ‘a nuisance and a source of interference’ (Sridhar cited in Ellis 2007)
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Find ways to stop students speaking their own languages in class.

Encourage maximum use of English while respecting and understanding the role of the first language in class.

Find ways of using the first language to develop joint linguistic understanding.

Outline:

- Arguments for the use of first language
 - The current classroom situation
 - Practical classroom activities
 - Benefits for teachers
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Arguments for the Use of First Language

Language Acquisition

- ‘FL is our most formidable cognitive resource’ (Swain and Lapkin 2005)
 - ‘TL processing cannot be cut off from FL’ (Cook 1992)
 - ‘Successful (second language) learners capitalise on the...linguistic experience and world knowledge they have accumulated via (their first language)’ (Butzkamm 2003)
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Arguments for the Use of First Language

Learner Identity

- ‘The adult learner’s sense of self is inextricably intertwined with their mother tongue’ (Forman cited in Ellis 2007)
 - ‘The learner’s perspective, experience, opinions and linguistic resources remain untapped if the FL is rendered inaccessible’ (Murray & Wigglesworth 2005)
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Arguments for the Use of First Language

Real world skills - translation

- ‘The current movement... towards bilingual teaching and translation as a part of that is very important... for the contemporary situation in a globalised world’

(Cook 2010)



How do students use first language?

A fly on the wall

Chau (2007)	Storch & Wigglesworth (2003)	Grasso (2012)
Beginner Comprehension checks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammar • Vocabulary Clarification of task FL as meta-language to complete a task	Intermediate Sub-vocal language (composing text/working with numbers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong understanding of the expectation to use TL • Reluctance to use FL • Learner perception of FL as 'helpful' 	Upper-intermediate Strong understanding of need to use TL (90%) 78% used FL sometimes or often <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand vocabulary • Understand a grammar point • Clarify instructions • Feels 'more natural'

Implications

- **First language *should not* be prohibited in pair and group work**
 - a language learning resource (Chau 2007)
 - a normal psychological process (Storch & Wigglesworth 2003)
 - a part of the adult learner's identity (Grasso 2012)
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How can we use students' first
languages in our multilingual
classes?

Using the first language in class

Promoting confidence and embracing learner identity

All levels: First language show and tell



Using the first language in class

Translation – Authentic Texts

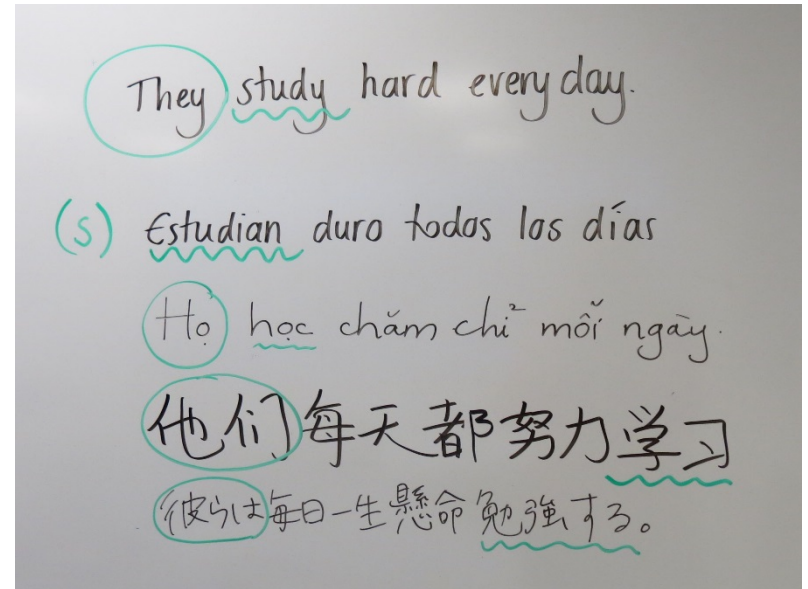
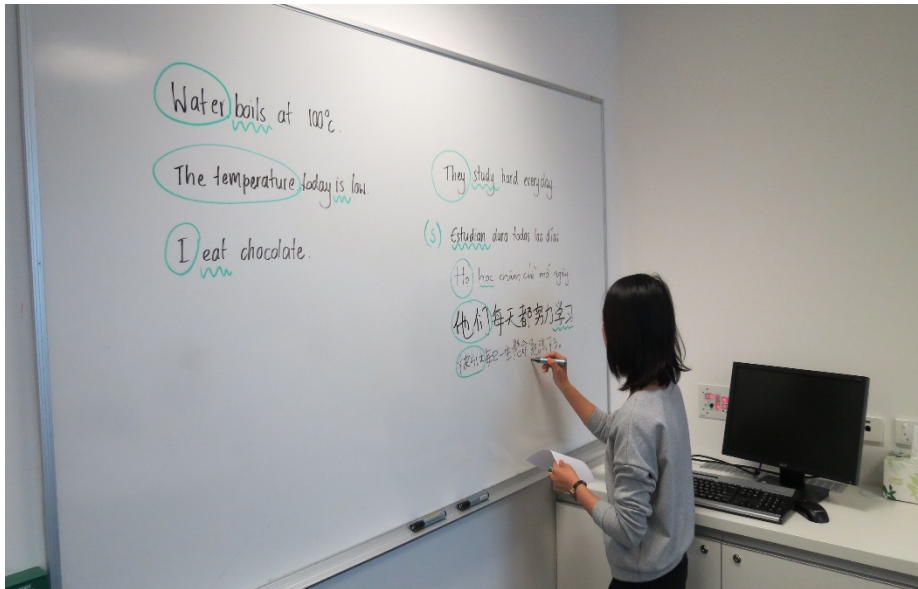
- **Use of authentic FL texts**
 - **Find** a news article
 - **Take** short notes
 - **Explain** to a friend
- **Language rich**
- **Motivating/engaging**
- **Student as expert**



Using the first language in class

Understanding linguistic transfer

- Grammar comparison – multilingual groups



Using the first language in class

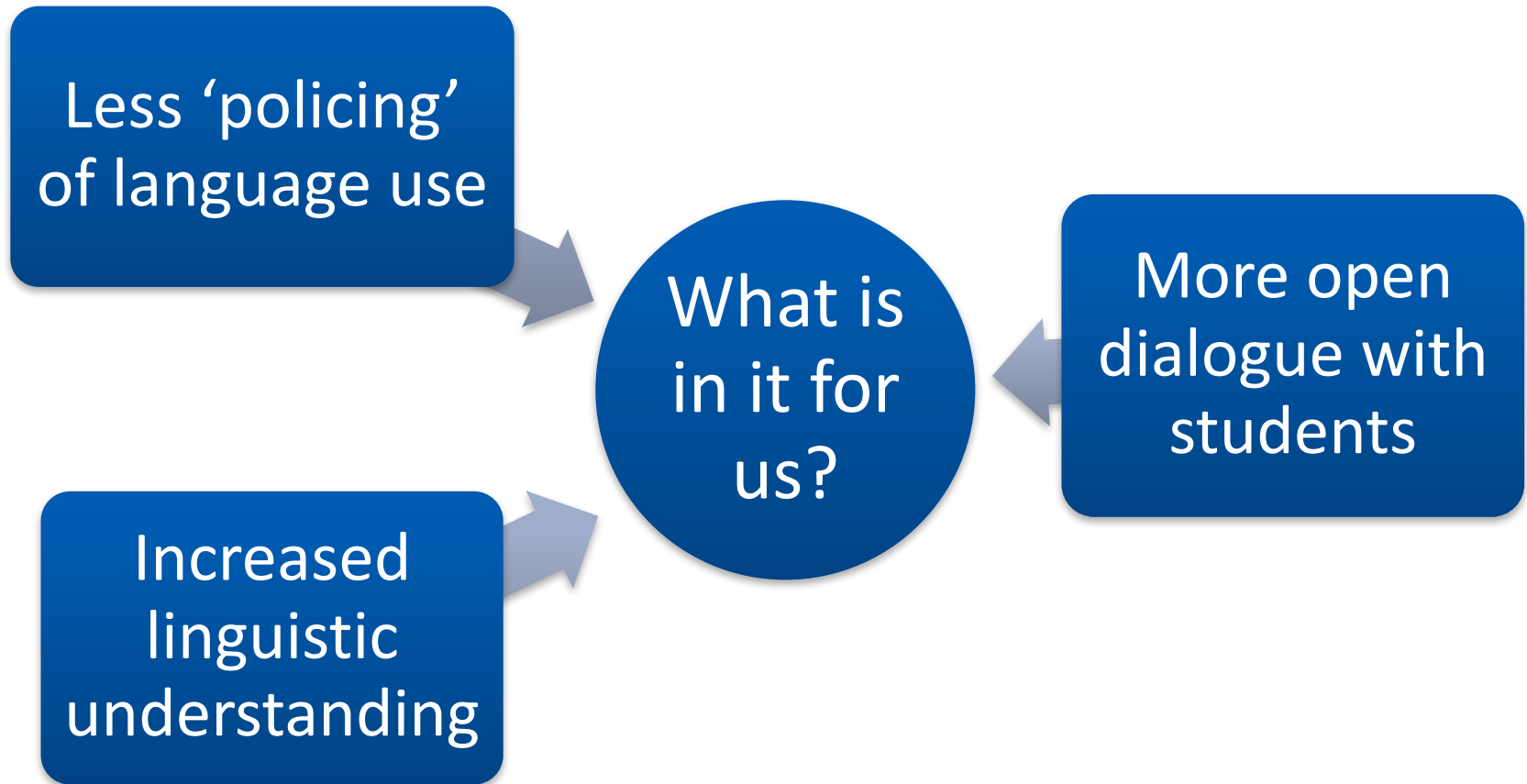
Understanding linguistic transfer

- Pronunciation comparison – multilingual groups

Sounds in ^{Bahasa} Indonesia that is difficult for foreigners	Sounds in English difficult to pronounce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is no /tʃ/ in B.I. ex: ba<u>ca</u> (read) No stress put in a word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i / i: - Long vs short sounds p / f ^{-fine} <u>pine</u> ʒ / θ the way to read & to write is different Grammar → Verb /tʃ/, <u>sh</u>, <u>ch</u> ^{end of the word} <u>Bush</u> æ / ʌ / ə


<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θ / θ tiæ n. - / v \. light sound. wu ; yu. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θ / θ ɔ: / r eg: all, or ə / æ
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Benefits for teachers



Final Considerations

- **The Change:**

- English only  English mostly
- Limited, deliberate and critical use of the first language in the classroom

- **The Challenge:**

- Increased flexibility and openness
 - Finding a balance
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Resources

- Adoniou, M 2015, 'Linguistic paranoia - why is Australia so afraid of languages?' *The Conversation*, viewed 27 June 2016, <https://theconversation.com/linguistic-paranoia-why-is-australia-so-afraid-of-languages-43236/>.
- Butzkam, W 2003, 'We only learn language once: The role of the mother tongue in FL classrooms: the death of dogma', *The Language Learning Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 29-39.
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- Cook, VJ 1992, 'Evidence for Multicompetence', *Language Learning*, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 557 – 591.
- Ellis, E 2007, 'Discourses of L1 and bilingual teaching in ESL', *TESOL in Context*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 5-10.
- Grasso, S 2012, 'L1, or no L1: that is the question.' How do we reconcile the ethical implications of this issue in the context of the adult ELICOS classroom?', *TESOL in Context*, Vol. 3, pp. 1-13.
- Swain, M & Lapkin, S 2005, 'The evolving sociopolitical context of immersion education in Canada: some implications for program development, *the International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 169-186.
- Storch, N & Wigglesworth, G 2003, 'Is there a role for L1 in the L2 classroom?', *TESOL in Context*, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 760-769.
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