Building linguistic confidence: A critical study of teachers' Target Language use in the MFL classroom and its implications for students' willingness to communicate

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1. Abstract

This investigation aims to delineate the ways in which the teacher's use of the target language (TL) influences the learner's willingness to communicate (WTC) in a foreign language. The nature and extent of the teacher's TL use is a highly contested issue within the field of language pedagogy, and is thus deserving of sustained enquiry. While numerous studies claim that increased exposure to the second language (L2) equates to greater progress in language acquisition (Chambers, 2013; Carroll, 1975; Boulima, 1999), others advocate the inclusion of the first language (L1) in effective teaching and learning (Macaro, 1997; Levine, 2003; Christie, 2013). Moving beyond the parameters of these projects, this study sets out to discover the effects of the teacher's TL on students' own L2 production.

Building on both TL and WTC literature, this small-scale project involved the design and implementation of three TL models with two Year 7 French classes. Students completed a questionnaire before and after a six-week intervention in which the teacher spoke only in the TL. Based on students' feedback and researcher reflections, the second cycle involved a 'home and away' model in which the teacher spoke more TL in certain lessons, allowing a distinct comparison for teacher and students alike. The final cycle placed a greater emphasis on the students' WTC TL use, with the implementation of four strategies designed to build students' linguistic confidence. Three other language teachers then trialled the final model with their Year 7 classes to provide richer and fuller data about its usefulness. Interviews with colleagues, journals kept by the students, video recordings and surveys were all employed

to examine the discernable parallels between the teacher's L2 use and the students' willingness to produce new language. Results indicated that students' WTC is far more dependent on the tasks they are given and the strategies deployed to increase their TL production, than on their teacher's use of the TL.

2. Introduction

2.1. The Target Language: A contested issue

The study of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) occupies a unique space within educational curricula given that 'the language is not only the subject studied but also the medium of instruction' (Chambless, 2012:142). In this vein, MFL teachers are faced with a perennial dilemma over the extent and nature of their own use of the foreign language (L2). Indeed, the use of the target language (TL) is among the most contested issues within L2 pedagogical discourse (Macaro, 1997). Its administration in the MFL classroom is viewed by many as the defining hallmark of language instruction (Boulima, 1999; Chambers, 2013), and yet perceived by others as a source of considerable *malaise* for students and teachers alike (Horwitz, 2001; Stables & Wikeley, 1999; Dickson, 1992). A disconnect therefore exists between theory and practice. In theory, students' maximal exposure to the TL echoes Gil et al.'s assertion that 'classrooms are supposed to mirror the real world' (2012:133) with the target language functioning as the sole medium of communication and the classroom a microcosm of the target culture. In practice, however, a confluence of factors, including concerns over mistranslation, misunderstanding, discipline issues and examination constraints, inhibit teachers from using the TL with consistency, let alone singularity. The expectations placed upon teachers over TL use are therefore all too often incongruous with the realities of the MFL classroom.

Taking Chaudron's premise that successful L2 learning 'will depend on the extent to which communication has been jointly constructed between the teacher and learners' (1988:10), greater attention should be afforded to student-

teacher interactions, particularly those in the target language. A delicate balance needs to be struck between facilitating students' L2 acquisition through exposure to the TL whilst simultaneously safeguarding against the common tendency for learners to react with 'suspicion, frustration, even anger' (Hawkins, 1981) to an unfamiliar second language. Although many condemn the 'presence of English as the convenient vehicle for message conveyance' (Kim & Elder, 2008:167), there is certainly a place for the first language (L1) within the MFL teaching framework. Choosing the appropriate language of communication for different learning contexts is thus crucial, given that second language acquisition occurs within 'a social context, involving action, reaction, collaborative interaction, intersubjectivity and mutually assisted performance' (Ellis, 2008:242). Dialogic exchanges between teachers and learners, as well as those within the learner-learner dyad, arguably define the success of L2 teaching. As such, the intention of the present study is to ascertain whether the teacher's use of TL builds students' linguistic confidence or whether it can in fact inhibit students' motivation to communicate in the L2. Coinciding with the advent of new GCSE specifications in 2016, this project aims to enrich the debate on how MFL teachers can best enable their students to not only 'express and develop thoughts and ideas spontaneously and fluently' (DfE, 2015:3) in a foreign language, but also have the adequate motivation to do so. The motivational concept in question is known as 'willingness to communicate' (WTC) and, in the context of L2 learners, is defined by Baghaei as a 'readiness to communicate in a second language when the opportunity arises' (2013:1088).

The present study comes under the aegis of 'interaction-based research' by dint of its focus on 'learners' conversational interactions with others…and the developmental benefits of such interactions' (Mackey & Gass, 2015:75). In what follows, I will conduct a review of existing literature in which I will elucidate on the historic, pedagogic and contextual factors influencing teachers' TL use. The primary issues under exploration are those of the quantity and quality of the teacher's L2 speech, followed by its impact on students' own use of the TL and their WTC. Drawing on the wealth of TL and WTC literature, I will then frame the research questions for the current study and outline the methodology of the action research undertaken. In turn, I will explore the limitations and ethical considerations of the project before analysing and evaluating my findings.

2.2. Rationale

The rationale for the current study was born out of both contextual and personal influences. Firstly, the school in which this research took place is a co-educational, Church of England state secondary school. It is important to note that the teaching and learning of MFL is held in high esteem at the school, as evidenced by the fact that the vast majority of students are expected to take a language at GCSE, despite it no longer being a statutory requirement to do so (QCA, 2004). As such, this research was not merely permitted but greatly encouraged both inside and outside the MFL department, given its potential implications to further enhance the profile of languages within the school. French, Spanish and German are taught in all three National Curriculum key stages, with an above-average number of students opting for languages at A-Level. The department's wide variety of trips and employment of language

assistants also demonstrates a genuine appreciation of both the target language and the target culture, offering fertile ground upon which this project could flourish.

One of the chief issues in our MFL department, which is reflected more broadly in MFL classrooms across the UK, is that ‘motivation for languages decreases from Year 7 onwards’ (Malpass, 2014:22). In this vein, as a department we are looking at ways of building students’ linguistic confidence and ‘willingness to communicate’ as they move into Year 8 and Year 9. By looking at WTC among Year 7 students, I hope to identify patterns and strategies that may safeguard against this decline in later years and thus increase students’ L2 motivation and reverse the concerning national trend of ‘no post-16 pupils, so no graduates, so no teachers’ (Swarbrick, 2002: 12).

While this research is valuable on a departmental and school level, it also serves to contribute to the wider TL debate within the literature. Although much of the body of TL literature explores the impact of the teachers’ TL on students’ understanding and progress, there appear to be few studies to date that investigate the effects of the TL on students’ motivation and WTC. To this end, the study in question would serve as a springboard for further research into the influence of the teacher’s use of the L2 on students’ own L2 speech. Such findings are essential if MFL practitioners are to reverse a propensity towards apathy and anxiety among students toward the study of foreign languages.

While this research is pertinent to the needs of the literature, my decision to pursue the stated lines of enquiry is equally motivated by the introduction of a new syllabus and examination at GCSE level in 2016 (AQA, 2015). The new specification emphasises the importance of spontaneous language, with the return of role-plays, translation tasks and spontaneous written responses to unknown stimuli. In addition, it will require students to ask questions in the foreign language (AQA, 2015:11), which is not required in the current specification. This example, coupled with the fact that questions and answers in the reading and listening papers will now be in the foreign language, exhibit the efforts to place interactional language at the heart of the new GCSE, and will raise afresh issues regarding the use of teacher TL in the MFL classroom. In anticipation of such future questions facing language teachers as a result of the new GCSE, the nature and quantity of TL, the factors prohibiting its use by teachers and the dynamics influencing students' WTC will all be explored in the literature review. If the ultimate goal of the MFL teacher is to cultivate students' ability to 'initiate and develop conversations and discussions' at GCSE level (DfE, 2015:5), as a concrete foundation for future language learning, then the development of teaching strategies – including the use of the TL – is a necessity.

Finally, there are personal reasons for undertaking this action research. The symbiosis of TL use and students' WTC is particularly pertinent to my teaching because I have found that my students are increasingly reluctant to communicate in the foreign language. Embarrassment and disinclination are frequently preventing students from 'having a go', and I am intrigued by whether

my own language use may contribute to students 'willingness to communicate' (WTC), or lack thereof. Although I agree with Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak's definition of WTC as 'dynamic' and in 'a state of flux' (2015:1), I am seeking to uncover how MFL teachers, through their own communication with students, can alleviate this apprehension and cultivate conditions in which speaking the L2 becomes a much more natural – and thus fruitful - experience for the student. Having worked in four different schools, I have been very surprised by the variety of approaches to, and opinions of, TL use and am therefore seeking to draw my own conclusions about the practice. While one school had a strict policy on TL use, which was embedded into each scheme of work, another suggested autonomous professional judgement on the part of each teacher and another still advised primarily using English as a means of building relationships with students. Given this diversity of opinion, I am convinced that my own personal study on the issue is necessary, so that I may use empirical research to strengthen my own standpoint and adapt my teaching practice accordingly.

2.3. Collaborative Research

There is no doubt that 'the need for collaboration and cooperation is of paramount importance for the success of your project' (Koshy, 2010:45). In this vein, collaboration with other MFL colleagues has been essential to the make-up of this project. Collaboration with teachers has therefore been threefold, taking the form of interviews, teacher participation and the dissemination of findings. Firstly, interviewing teachers before beginning any interventions gave a striking insight into the diversity of opinion on TL use among my colleagues and facilitated a process in which 'ideas will challenge ideas' (Pine, 2008:1795).

Secondly, a number of colleagues participated in the latter stages of the research, which enabled additional dimensions of critical perspective and a larger data collection pool. Thirdly, the results of my findings were shared and discussed at two departmental meetings with colleagues at two schools, leading to a constructive and fruitful exchange of ideas. The results and limitations of these different strands of collaboration will be critically examined in the discussion section of this study.

When discussing and observing other teachers' practice, it will be judicious to take heed of Field's advice that the teacher's ability to 'use the target language exclusively should not be seen as a means of measuring teacher competence' (Field, 2004). That is to say that I do not wish to advocate the premise, before embarking on the project, that the more TL used, the better the teaching, as this is clearly not the case. Rather, the purposes of collaboration in this project dovetail with Wallace's premise that collaborative research 'adds depth and coverage to findings, validates results and increases researchers' motivation' (1998:209-210). Ultimately, collaboration is so intrinsic to the fabric of this particular project because it seeks not only to refine my own teaching, but also to challenge and shape the practice of others.

3. Literature Review

The following review will explore the 'continuum of perspectives' (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009:2) within literature concerning the TL in the foreign language classroom. The literature referred to here generally spans three decades, and although certain references may appear dated, they reflect key

developments in L2 research on the use of the TL and WTC, as it has evolved from the early 1980s up to the present day. After defining the terms, what follows will trace the trends within existing research, navigating the advantages and pitfalls of target language exclusivity, in order to determine the extent to which the teacher's TL use is of practical utility to learners' own L2 production and confidence. The focus will then shift towards the factors affecting students' WTC, coupled with the existence of foreign language anxiety. The review of the literature will thus serve as a platform upon which a more tightly focused enquiry into the research questions will emerge. The questions that this review seeks to address are:

1. Why is the Target Language so important?
2. What factors affect teachers' Target Language use?
3. What impact does the Target Language have upon pupils' L2 production?
4. What factors determine pupils' use of the L2?

Before examining these questions, it is essential to define and make concrete distinctions between the terms under discussion. Cohen provides an acute differentiation between the terms *second language* (L2), that which is spoken within the local community but is not native to the learner, and the *foreign language* (FL), that which is not widely spoken within the learner's societal context (2014:8). The notion of *target language* (TL) (sometimes referred to as the L_T), meanwhile, is more of an umbrella term, referring to the 'language being learned, whether as a second or foreign language' (2014:8). As such,

despite their nuanced etymology, all three terms are generally used interchangeably within the literature and as such, both TL and L2 will be employed in the present study. Clément & Kruidenier's definition of the target language provides further gradation, as 'that of a minority whose representation in the community is such as to make the learning of that language important for public recognition' (1983:284). Such a definition, while apposite to the research of second language acquisition (SLA), is not applicable to our current context of UK secondary schools where indifference towards MFL is often 'exacerbated by wider societal attitudes which undervalue language learning' (CfBT Education Trust, 2013:80). Given the fragility of such a context, research is needed that uncovers ways of bolstering young learners' motivation for L2 acquisition, and more specifically enhances their willingness to communicate (WTC) in the second language.

3.1. Why is the Target Language so important?

First and foremost, the body of literature dealing with the efficacy and implementation of the TL is underpinned by the widely held consensus that 'as much attention should be paid to pupils' use of the TL as to the teachers'' (Dickson, 1992:18). Nevertheless, opinion remains polarised as to the quantity and form of the L2 that should be employed by the teacher in order to galvanise students' own linguistic production. While multiple studies present a positive correlation between the teacher's TL use and learners' progress (Chambers, 2013; Wolf, 1974; Carroll, 1975; Boulima, 1999), other research casts doubt upon the usefulness of TL exclusivity (Macaro, 1997; Levine, 2003; Christie, 2013).

The ‘Direct Method’, first espoused by Sauveur and later popularised by the European Berlitz Language Schools, represented the first step toward an exclusive target language approach. An attempt to offer an alternative to the grammar-translation method, prevalent in 19th Century language pedagogy, the term was first coined in 1901 in an official paper issued by the French Ministry of Education (Byram & Hu, 2013:200). In its embryonic stages, the principal tenets of the direct method included ‘never translate: demonstrate’, ‘never explain: act’ and ‘never speak too much: make students speak much’ (Titone, 1968:100-101). Latterly, the method has been based on the premise that language learning is most successful when ‘instructors present material directly in the target language’ (Bateman, 2008: 11) and the L2 is the ‘medium of instruction in all situations’ (Byram & Hu, 2013:200). Proponents of the direct method argue that students need to ‘associate meaning and the target language directly’ (Larsen-Freeman, 2000:29) and in so doing, ‘abandon the first language as the point of reference’ (Stern, 1983: 459).

Despite its advocacy of TL exclusivity, much criticism has been brought against the direct method, not least against its failure to ‘consider the practical realities of the classroom’ (Richards & Rodgers, 2014:13). Equally Stern disregards the method given that the conveyance of meaning can be problematic without translation, misunderstanding is more probable without recourse to the L1, and its application is less successful after the elementary stages of L2 learning (1983:460). Regardless of its flaws, the direct method served to lay the foundations for much of the ‘immersion’ and ‘communicative language teaching’ (CLT) techniques used today, and is considered by many as ‘the biggest force

for reform and progress and the dominant widespread method in the history of foreign language teaching' (Byram & Hu, 2013:200).

While the impact of the direct method has been extensive, many contemporary scholars reject complete TL exclusivity, maintaining instead the pedagogic value of the L1 in L2 learning (Meiring & Norman, 2002; Deller & Rinvolucri, 2002; Carless, 2007). Such thinking finds concrete expression in Macaro's categorisation of TL use. In a study analysing the code-switching patterns of student teachers, Macaro (2001) outlines three principal positions of TL use: virtual, maximal and optimal. With roots in the direct method and advocated by Chambers (1991) and Krashen & Terrell (1988), the virtual position calls for the exclusive use of the TL, without recourse to the mother tongue. The maximal position, espoused by MacDonald (1993), argues that 'perfect teaching and learning conditions do not exist and therefore teachers have to resort to the L1' (Macaro, 2001:535). Finally, the optimal position, advocated by Macaro himself, along with Cohen (2014) and Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain (2009), justifies the use of the L1 in certain circumstances, making a case for its pedagogical value within second language acquisition. Alternatively, Levine suggests a 'collaborative language use tenet' whereby students are given agency to negotiate between the TL and L1 (2003:355). Others again champion the use of 'code-switching', defined by Halmari as 'the mixing of two or more languages within the same conversational episode' (2004:115). As we will see in forthcoming sections of this review, many maintain that 'optimal code-switching practices will ultimately lead to enhanced language learning' (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009:183). Given the huge breadth of opinion on TL use, drawn from

both critical studies and anecdotal evidence, we must turn our attention to the pedagogical value of the TL, followed in subsequent sections by its counterpart, the L1.

The primary tenet of the immersion model, originating from Canada in the mid-1960s, was that ‘a second language is used as the medium of instruction in school’ (Long & Richards, 1997:xi). Swain & Johnson argue that immersion programmes, where students learn a host of subjects through the L2 rather than learning the L2 as a separate subject, lead to ‘greater L2 proficiency among students’ (1997:11). In this vein, Richards & Rodgers note how ‘throughout the history of language learning, attempts have been made to make second language learning more like first language learning’ (2014:11).

Greater TL exposure, it is argued then, leads to more natural L2 acquisition among students, but opinion remains divided as to whether input or output is more valuable for acquisition. Swain’s notion of ‘comprehensible output’, a prominent theory within the corpus of applied linguistics research, suggests that input of the TL is insufficient and instead, learners require ‘opportunities for contextualised, meaningful use, to test out hypotheses about the target language, and to move the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis of it’ (1985:252). Swain’s theory lies in antithesis to Krashen’s ‘comprehensible input hypothesis’, whereby ‘speaking is a result of acquisition and not its cause’ (Krashen, 1985:2). Krashen argues that L2 acquisition is far more effective when learners are able to make sense of the input they receive. He suggests language acquisition is reliant upon ‘meaningful

interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding' (1981:1).

A similar heuristic approach that integrates subject and language teaching is 'content-based language teaching' (CBLT), which is underpinned by the notion of 'turning classrooms into a more naturalistic environment where the target language can be picked up incidentally, not just deliberately' (Juan-Garau & Salazar-Noguera, 2014:1). Other proponents of CBLT, a bedfellow of the more European term 'content and language integrated learning' (CLIL), include Met (1998), Lyster & Ballinger (2011), Coyle et al. (2010) and Pérez-Vidal (2013). Indeed, Coyle advocates TL exclusivity for not only its linguistic, but its holistic epistemological benefits, suggesting it affords students opportunities 'not just for learning to use languages, but for using languages to learn' (2000:160). Despite the merits of such programmes, CLIL and immersion techniques have a less substantial impact on language pedagogy in the UK given that a need for bilingualism is considered far less pressing. Nevertheless, the success of the immersion model gives credence to the notion that TL exclusivity can enhance students' learning; indeed Genesee describes it as 'the most effective approach available to second language teaching in school settings' (1994:6).

In keeping with Krashen's ideas, Celce-Murcia et al. determine that 'learners acquire language primarily from the input they receive' (1996:16). If this is the case, the teacher's use of the TL is arguably the most evident opportunity for 'pupil exposure to rich comprehensible input' (Chambers, 2013:45). As Boulima

cogently argues, interaction with, and exposure to, the TL 'enables learners to analyze the TL structure, to make and test hypotheses about it and to negotiate meaning in order to make sense of classroom events' (1999:2). Chambers (2013), Kim & Elder (2008), and Meiring & Norman (2002) provide further evidence of the benefits of the teacher's TL use. Chambers highlights the linguistic benefits, arguing that 'exposure to the TL provides opportunities for consolidation of known vocabulary and the introduction of unknown vocabulary, for practice in pronunciation and intonation' (2013:45). In like manner, Meiring & Norman use their study on the proportion of TL use in the MFL classroom to advocate its communicative advantages (2002:34), while Kim & Elder posit that teachers' use of TL both provides significant comprehensible input and facilitates 'meaningful interaction during the instructional process' (2008:167).

More convincingly still, Meiring & Norman offer a range of guidelines for TL use that outline its pedagogic value for learners' L2 acquisition, suggesting that the teacher's TL use can 'promote confidence and facility with listening' as well as serve to 'improve learners' pronunciation, develop problem-solving skills and enable [them] to deal with the unpredictable' (2002:34). Furthermore, the authors highlight the motivational force of the teacher's TL use, as it demonstrates to learners that 'the foreign language is a genuine vehicle of communication, rather than merely a tool for intellectual activity' (2002:34). Without denigrating the role of the student, Thompson & Harrison's study, which monitored teachers' use of English and Spanish in the classroom through video recordings, demonstrates that language choice in the classroom is more conditional on the teacher than on pupils. The key limitation of their study,

however, was that teachers were only observed three times, reducing the accuracy and validity of their findings. Nevertheless, the authors make a compelling case that 'it is crucial that teachers not only set strict rules about the use of the native language but, more important, make every effort to maintain instruction exclusively in the target language' (2014:334). This claim raises engaging questions about the amount of TL teachers should use, and stands in juxtaposition with Macaro's warning that 'the lack of theoretical evidence for 100% L2 use… should encourage us not to take extreme positions in the debate' (1997:74).

3.2. What factors affect teachers' Target Language use?

Macaro's caution serves as one voice among many that argue that support for TL exclusivity in the MFL classroom is by no means ubiquitous. Indeed, myriad factors come to the fore to prevent the optimistic enterprise of 'maximal', or even 'optimal' target language use from becoming a concrete reality for MFL practitioners. A 2011 OFSTED report criticised 'teachers' lack of use of the target language to support their students' routine use of the language in lessons' (2011:5), a criticism that lies in stark tension with the fact that 'teachers saw the 'virtually all' designation of L2 use as being unobtainable with all but the most motivated classes' (Macaro, 1997:82). As we shall explore in turn, contextual, social and pedagogical factors shed light on teachers' possible reluctance to use the TL exclusively, or even optimally in the MFL classroom.

Firstly, the learning context – from both a localised and national perspective – has a profound effect on the quantity and type of TL employed by the teacher.

Bateman (2008) diagnoses a lack of time and Chambless the 'teacher's L2 oral proficiency' (2012:52) as symptomatic of MFL practitioners' choice of the L1. More broadly, Kim & Elder (2008) consider the status of the L2 within a community as a potential threat to the teacher's TL use in the classroom, while Chambers identifies examination and external pressures as prohibitory in the pursuit of spontaneous and natural TL use (2013:52). Christie echoes these sentiments, suggesting that 'high levels of accountability for examination results can lead teachers to promote a more rehearsed and planned language use' (2013:2).

Secondly, there are a number of social reasons that inhibit teachers and students alike from communicating in the L2. Despite being carried out almost 25 years ago, Dickson's study still carries much resonance in today's MFL classrooms. By surveying 508 MFL teachers across England and Wales, Dickson found that the majority of practitioners were unwilling to compromise 'what they regarded as educational principles - establishing a rapport with pupils and putting their interest and enjoyment first' (1992:24) for the sake of optimal TL use. In a similar vein, Stables & Wikeley note the problematic relational dynamic engendered by the TL: 'the normal power differential between teacher and pupil may be exacerbated when communication is limited to a language in which the pupil is a novice' (1999:30). Equally aware of the affinity between TL use and students' engagement, Macaro's study, which questioned twenty-one Italian teachers of English, found that 'the threat of pupil misbehaviour or lack of attention was an influencing factor in how much target language the teacher should use' (1995:53). Chambers (2013), Dickson (1992)

and Bateman (2008) all echo concerns about discipline in the target language, although such reservations are alleviated by Polio & Duff's suggestion that 'many classroom management instructions can be easily taught, are frequently used and, unlike complex grammatical explanations, can be understood from the context' (1994:322). Although strategies may exist to facilitate classroom management in the TL, there remains an 'underlying tension between authenticity and artificiality when both the teacher and pupils share the same native language' (Morgan & Neil, 2014:148).

Most apposite to the current study, however, are the pedagogical factors that warn against the overuse of the target language. While these ultimately culminate in the debate over L1 use in the FL classroom, which will be explored in a subsequent section, other such pitfalls of the TL take multiple forms. Like many others, Dickson cautions that an over-dependence on the teacher's TL use may well lead to 'greater passivity on the part of the pupils' (1992:26). Along similar lines, Polio & Duff assert that 'negotiation of meaning in the TL can result in unexpected and lengthy side sequences that consume precious class time' (1994:321). Both arguments tacitly imply that rigorous and robust planning for TL use is necessary in order to avoid distraction or a lapse of engagement among learners. Similarly, Christie warns of the dangers of a purely communicative approach, asserting that 'accuracy can also be sacrificed at times if the focus is purely on the efficient communication of a message' (2013:13). Other pedagogical limitations of a virtual or maximal approach to the TL include a potential 'trivialisation of the content' (Dickson, 1992:24) and the essential fact that 'pupil ability is an important factor in teacher TL use' (Macaro,

1995:54). Equally inimical to L2 learning, and crucial to our discussion of students' WTC, is the fact that 'greater TL use may be accompanied by greater anxiety about TL use for many learners' (Levine, 2003:346). This notion of communication anxiety, induced by the teacher's use of the TL, will be explored further both through a theoretical lens and through the findings of the current study.

Chief among opponents of TL exclusivity, however, are those who point to the 'growing evidence of the facilitative effect of L1/L2 relationships on L2 learning' (Harley, 1995). Those who support L1 use are quick to note that it should be employed as 'a helpful resource' (Morgan & Neil, 2014:147), which enhances student learning rather than a 'pervasive presence' (Kim & Elder, 2008:167). Indeed, MFL educational policy decrees that 'whenever English is used in the MFL classroom, there should be a clear justification for it which is evident to the pupils and which serves the planned purpose of the lesson' (DES, 2003).

Accordingly, Macaro highlights the importance of the L1 for 'building up relationships with individual pupils' (1995:52), while Gil et al. describe the L1 as 'a source of relief and support for both the teachers and the pupils' (2012:143), alleviating possible communication anxiety. Many studies also defend the complementarity between the L1 and L2 on pedagogical grounds (Vaezi & Mirzaei, 2007; McMillan & Turnbull, 2009; Stern, 1992). In their reconceptualisation of 'code-switching', Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain recommend a balance between the use of the L1 and L2 by suggesting that reference to the L1 may be expedient provided it is not overused (2009:5).

As well as outlining its efficacy as a point of comparison, Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain describe the L1 as a support to those with 'a low level of target-language proficiency dealing with challenging tasks and content' (2009:6), and as a 'scaffold for language development' (183). In like manner, judiciously allowing students to use the L1 as a means of translating TL utterances may evolve into 'a form of peer support for the learners' (Vaezi & Mirzaei, 2007). Code-switching between the teacher and learners may also serve to 'reinforce structural, conceptual and sociolinguistic differences between the native and target languages' (Vaezi & Mirzaei, 2007). Meanwhile Polio & Duff recognise the importance of the L1 for 'classroom administration vocabulary' (1994:317), such as assessment information.

The debate as to whether grammar should be taught in the L1 or L2 is among the most contested issues faced by researchers, with many favouring grammar instruction in the native language (Deller & Rinvolucri, 2002; Meiring & Norman, 2002; Sheen, 2006). The cogency of such argumentation is increasingly convincing. Nassaji & Fotos, for example, purport that 'mini lessons on the target grammar structures delivered in the L1 prior to L2 activities' (2011) clearly lead to greater linguistic confidence and aptitude in the L2. While Kalidova favours grammar presentation in the TL, he argues that it is the type of grammar instruction which determines the language employed; teaching that 'requires students to verbalise rules' (1990:267) is best done in the L1, while L2 use may be more appropriate for more explicit grammatical explanations, which are ideally 'followed by induction-inducing practice' (1990:267). Polio & Duff

provide some useful solutions for those who believe grammatical instruction should be in the L2, including teaching students key grammatical terms in the TL as a foundation to their learning or providing students with supplementary explanations of grammar rules in English, to be read outside of the L2 classroom (1994:322). Such questions about the legitimacy of teaching grammar in the L2 will be further consider in the discussion section of the present study.

Taking heed of Macaro's assertion that emphasis should be placed upon the 'learners' use of the target language, not teacher use of the target language' (Macaro, 2001:184), it is important to note that students' TL use is inextricably tied up with their teachers' own L2 production, or lack thereof. Indeed a recent OFSTED report remarked how 'opportunities for students to listen to and communicate in the target language were often limited by many teachers' unpreparedness to use it' (2011:6). Accordingly, certain studies provide practical solutions and implications for raising students' L2 production through teachers' TL use. Bateman recommends the 'use of concrete objects, pictures, gestures, examples, and comparisons' (2008: 27) whereas Dickson suggests increasing 'questioning behaviour', and 'pupil participation' (1992:8) as tools for building students' linguistic confidence in the L2. Like many others, Duff & Polio propose that teachers should enable students to ask for help in the TL by teaching set expressions (1994:323) while Macaro's study indicated that a move from teacher-centered to student-centered learning situations resulted in 'a release of tension [where] the problems associated with sustaining the L2 or recourse to L1 were much reduced' (1997:178). Despite research spanning a

quarter of a century, no definitive consensus has yet been established about the appropriate nature or quantity of target language use among teachers.

3.3. What impact does teachers' TL use have upon pupils' L2 production?

Despite disagreement among researchers about how much TL should be used in the MFL classroom, there is a widely held consensus that 'an on-going priority must be to establish the benefit of pupil use of target language and ways of maximising it' (Meiring & Norman, 2002:29). Although most agree that 'the over-arching pedagogical tool should… be learners' use of the TL, not teacher use of the TL' (Macaro, 2001:184), much of the literature paradoxically focuses on the teacher's use rather than that of the students. In a 2011 report, OFSTED criticised 'teachers' lack of use of the target language to support their students' routine use of the language in lessons' (2011:5), indicating that 'students had too few opportunities to use their languages to communicate in a realistic manner' (23). Given this 'direct and positive correlation between learner achievement and teacher use of the target language' (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009:3), I intend to narrow the parameters of this investigation to the impact of teachers' TL use on students' own willingness to communicate (WTC) in the foreign language.

While this literature review has so far explored the pedagogical advantages and drawbacks of the teacher's L2 production, it remains to be seen whether their TL use exerts a significant influence on the learner's motivation to speak. Based on the findings of a study in five Scottish secondary schools, Critchon judiciously argues that teachers' modelling of L2 production is an essential

catalyst in students' own linguistic enterprise: 'it is unlikely that [learners] would have felt like producing their own language if the teachers did not do so themselves in the class' (2009:32). This line of reasoning suggests that the teacher's TL use serves as a 'motivational boost' (Critchon, 2009:33), whereby the student gains confidence as they understand their teacher's communication in the foreign language and subsequently feel more able to formulate responses in the foreign language. Building this linguistic confidence is crucial if we accept Ellis' claim that motivation is 'the major force determining success in L2 learning' (2008:75). Nevertheless, consistency is paramount if the teacher's TL use is to become a viable modus operandi for motivating students. Indeed, Polio & Duff's study revealed great inconsistencies between teachers' TL use and their expectations of pupils; teachers 'urged students to speak in the L2, but then would not necessarily do so themselves' (1994:320). As such, learners will only be motivated to communicate in the foreign language if they can first experience their teacher doing so. Along with consistency, Christie's qualitative case study outlines the importance of 'spontaneous talk' on students' engagement with the L2, defining it as 'an invaluable part of developing the language, skills and motivation to communicate and interact in a foreign language' (2013:14). Many scholars thus claim – with good reason – that the teacher's language, attitude and style play a determining role in students' WTC (Cao, 2011; MacIntyre et al., 2011; Wen & Clement, 2003).

In spite of the aforementioned benefits of the teacher's L2 use on students' own utterances, certain studies suggest the detrimental, or even non-existent influence of teacher talk on students' motivation to use the L2. Dickson, for

example, warns of the 'potential of TL for impairing pupil-teacher relations' (1992:12), while Meiring & Norman deemphasise the role of the teacher, asserting that 'the real impetus will lie with the motivation of the pupils themselves to speak' (2002:31). Bateman considers certain student teachers' TL behaviours, which may have a pejorative effect on students' WTC, including the over-emphasis on teacher talk to the detriment of student practice, along with the 'immediate translation of target language statements into the L1' (2008:26). Although the teacher's TL use has a great impact, whether positive or negative, on the learner's L2 motivation, other important factors come into play that affect students' WTC. Such influences will form the basis of our final line of enquiry within the body of literature.

3.4. What factors determine pupils' use of the L2?

Given the paradox that 'there is clear evidence that pupil use of TL positively affects learning' (Meiring & Norman, 2002:34), and yet 'it is pupil initiated language that is most difficult to encourage' (Macaro, 1997:66), enquiries into factors affecting students' willingness to communicate in the L2 should be a high priority on the research agenda. The body of literature exploring WTC is situated in the wider field of L2 motivation, which came to the fore through Gardner & Lambert's study in Canada into 'Motivational variables in second language acquisition' in 1959. Gardener's seminal socio-educational model (1985) then coincided with McCroskey & Baer's paper in 1985, which introduced the construct of WTC in the L1. McCroskey later defined WTC as 'a personality-based predisposition with a major impact on human communication behaviour' (1990:19). The construct, however, was not explored as a significant

component of L2 learning until 1998, with MacIntyre et al.'s heuristic pyramid model of WTC in the L2, which outlines the factors determining learners' L2 WTC.

MacIntyre et al. define WTC as a 'readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2' (1998:547). Bringing further clarity to the term, MacIntyre later defines it as 'an underlying continuum representing the predisposition toward or away from communicating, given the choice' (2002:538). Teachers and researchers are so eager to investigate factors affecting WTC simply because, as Valadi et al.'s study of 70 intermediate language learners uncovers, 'the higher WTC a speaker has, the more likely s/he is to succeed in L2 acquisition' (2015:148). As such, the following section will explore the synthesis of contextual, social and personal dynamics that influence students' oscillating WTC.

Unsurprisingly, context is of utmost importance in determining a learner's WTC (MacIntyre et al., 2011:91), be it the learning environment, the prevalence or necessity of the L2, or the age of the learner. Many WTC researchers place a high value on the learning environment created by the teacher as a key determinant of students' WTC. James et al., for example, assert that a 'stimulating classroom environment [….] can have a marked impact on the motivation to speak' (1999:2). In like manner, in her analysis of four Japanese learners of English, Yoshida suggests that a 'friendly atmosphere in which learners do not feel too intimidated to speak the target language or make mistakes' is a pre-requisite of a high WTC (2013:948). An array of other

contextual factors can also impact upon pupils' desire to communicate, including: 'attitudes towards the task' (Cao, 2014:791), 'the degree of acquaintance between communicators' and 'the number of people present' (MacIntyre, 1998:546), along with 'the size of the group and increased homogeneity in terms of speaking ability' (Zarrinbadi et al., 2014:215). Equally vital to increasing students' WTC is the idea of pupils experiencing success: Munezane's study in a Japanese EFL setting demonstrates that 'small achievements in each class, which accumulated over time, created a virtuous circle, and led to higher learner confidence, which resulted in higher WTC' (2015:188). Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak's study of Polish university students noted the reverse trend, where learners' WTC significantly decreased when the conceptual or lexical challenge was too high (2015:8). Although the teacher may to a large extent regulate the level of challenge and the fabric of the learning environment, other contextual factors are beyond the instructor's control. If we subscribe to Vygotskian discourse which reasons that 'learner construction of knowledge is the product of social interaction, interpretation and understanding' (Vygotsky, 1962), then contextual factors dictating WTC will inevitably converge with social ones.

Learners' willingness to communicate is heavily conditioned by the social dynamics of the L2 interaction under scrutiny. Multiple studies explore the social conditions most apposite for increasing students' WTC. Such findings are of particular importance to the current study, given that secondary school learners, as adolescents, are likely to have a heightened sensitivity to their social surroundings. Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak's study stresses the need for

genuine dialogue among students rather than increasingly widespread 'intermittent monologues', rote-learned for the purposes of exam preparation (2015:8). Cooperative, collaborative and co-constructed learning approaches are thus deemed 'superior to traditional instruction in enhancing learners' intrinsic motivation' (Ning & Hornby, 2014:118). Yoshida's study dovetails with such thinking, by stating that group work 'is effective for increasing learners' desire to communicate with specific people (their classmates), which is one of the most important factors for WTC' (2013:948). Working in groups as opposed to speaking in front of a class is also likely to bolster students' WTC by affording students more responsibility and security (Kang, 2005:290). Nevertheless, the social dynamics of the MFL classroom can equally be inimical to students' WTC and linguistic production. MacIntyre, for example, cautions that 'the actions of the other person, both verbal and nonverbal, are critically important to the dynamics of WTC' (2011:93), while Littlewood & Yu posit that students are highly unlikely to instigate their own exchanges in the L2 without persuasion on the part of the teacher (2011:65). In his suggestion that 'a real or imagined fear of being isolated or rejected by peers' (1996:7) prevents students from communicating in the TL, Raffini uncovers the anathema of WTC in the L2: foreign language classroom anxiety.

Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope's seminal *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety* sheds much light on the causes of foreign language anxiety (FLA), which they describe as 'a major obstacle to overcome in learning to speak another language' (1986:125). Such anxiety, according to their study, derives from the learner's concern over understanding and being understood via a medium in

which their capacity is limited. One student, for example, claimed to hear only ‘a loud buzz whenever the teacher speaks the foreign language’ (126), which is most likely a common, anxiety-inducing experience for many learners. The questions language learning demands of students’ ‘self-concept’ and ‘self-expression’ lead to a higher level of anxiety than most other learning processes (128). The researchers therefore designed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) in order to assess the extent of FLA by evaluating three components of performance anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (128). According to the study, there are two options available to the teacher to help reduce FLA and increase WTC: ‘help them to cope with the existing anxiety-provoking situation’ or ‘make the learning context less stressful’ (131). Their study provides the impetus for serious consideration among researchers and teachers alike about the detrimental role FLA can play in learners’ experiences of language learning and in their WTC.

Building upon the foundations laid by Horvitz, Horwitz & Cope, recent research has investigated the synergies between foreign language anxiety and WTC. The most frequent interplay between the two suggests that learners’ WTC is principally dependent on how anxious and how competent learners’ feel about communicating in the foreign language (Baghaei, 2013:1088). While language anxiety is most often triggered by concerns over making mistakes (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Trang et al., 2012), it may also be compounded by ‘unpleasant prior experiences, intergroup tension, increased fear of assimilation, an increased number of people listening’ (MacIntyre et al.,

1998:549). As such, a potent mix of language anxiety, low self-perception and an avoidance of failure all culminate in a ‘reluctance to speak and lower frequency of L2 use’ (Baran-Łucarz, 2014:451). Studies concerned with alleviating language anxiety include Hewitt & Stephenson (2012); Gregerson, MacIntyre & Meza (2014) and Rassaei (2015).

Although the notion of corrective feedback lies well beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that not only teachers’ TL speech, but also their interruption of students’ speech can be inimical to students’ WTC. Zarrinabadi, for example, concludes that teachers should ‘use more delayed error correction whenever possible to create a less anxiety-inducing environment for students’ (2014: 294). Indeed, written in reference to corrective feedback, Mutton’s advice for MFL teachers to ensure that ‘anxiety facilitates rather than debilitates’ (2014:40) should certainly be applied in boosting young learners’ L2 WTC.

Despite the prevalence of foreign language anxiety and its perceived triggers, Levine’s study concludes that ‘students who reported higher TL use in their FL classes tended to report lower levels of anxiety about TL use’ (2003:355). Such findings would suggest then that the teacher’s use of the TL may under the right conditions, in conjunction with carefully designed tasks, exert a positive influence on students’ WTC. Levine’s findings also suggest a virtuous cycle of WTC, in which the more the student uses the TL, the more confident they become. Chief among the limitations of Levine’s study, however, is the fact that, like the present study, conclusions are drawn based on participants’ beliefs, rather than on actual classroom dialogue (2003:355). According to Adams,

pupils' use of the L2 is also contingent on the 'transference of power to give the learning agenda to the learner' (2007). Giving students the agency to negotiate meaning and discover new language for themselves through the medium of the teacher's TL use may be the necessary formula for L2 success.

In summary, both the TL and the WTC literature explored here reveal stark differences of opinion, yet the two fields of enquiry rarely interact. The TL literature is principally concerned with the amount of TL being used by the teacher and its implications for students' own L2 acquisition, rather than its influence on their motivation. While certain studies present the case for target language exclusivity, others advocate the use of the L1 to support students' L2 learning. Moving from the teacher to the student, the WTC literature focuses on reasons why learners' motivation to use the TL may be depleted and offers strategies to enhance their 'willingness to communicate'. The present study now seeks to integrate these two fields of research, by exploring the effects of the teacher's TL on students' WTC.

4. The Design of the Present Study

4.1. Research Questions

The first aim of the present study is to establish the impact of teachers' verbal communication with students in the foreign language. Moving from theory to praxis, the project's second aim is to determine the efficacy of a teacher's maximal approach to TL use with Year 7 students, and its bearing on learners' WTC, through a series of classroom based interventions. Thirdly, and most importantly, the project intends to distil some key implications for MFL teaching

in my school - and beyond - with regard to building students' linguistic confidence and competence, most notably increasing their willingness to communicate. Given the aforementioned aims of the present study, and the nature of the literature previously discussed, I have devised the three following research questions, which will give shape and purpose to my research and subsequent discussion.

1) What constitutes the appropriate amount of Target Language for MFL teachers to use?
2) Does the teacher's 'maximal' use of the Target Language increase Year 7 students' willingness to communicate?
3) What strategies can be put in place to improve students' willingness to communicate in the L2?

The first research question has, in part, been explored through a theoretical lens in the literature review, and will be further examined in my discussion of interviews with colleagues and students' initial questionnaire responses. Given the lack of scholarly consensus within the literature, I expect to find it most appropriate for MFL teachers to adopt an optimal position, rather than a maximal or virtual one. This anticipated outcome is in keeping with Bateman's proposal that 'the classroom should provide an environment in which both instructors and students use the target language much of the time' (2008: 11).

The second and third research questions consider the practical outworking of the first, and form the basis of the classroom intervention at the heart of this

project. In a bid to answer the second research question, this study will test the hypothesis that 'the more TL on the part of the teacher, the higher the WTC in the L2 on the part of Y7 students'. By drawing out the impact of the teacher's speech on students' WTC through the implementation of different TL models and the responses garnered in student questionnaires, I expect to uncover what Dörnyei describes as the 'mediating factors between having the competence to communicate and putting that competence into practice' (2005:208). As such, recognizing the 'host of learner variables' that affect WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998:558) and seeking practical strategies to further bolster students' linguistic confidence, as the third research question demands, will therefore be of upmost importance.

4.2. Research Methodology

In order to adequately address the research questions, this study employed a series of complementary, and primarily qualitative, investigative methods, including semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, the composition of research journals, and audio-visual recordings. A more qualitative approach was deemed necessary given that constructs such as language proficiency, exposure to input, and willingness to communicate are not easily measured. Having engaged with, and been challenged by, the dilemma of teacher and pupil TL use in my own practice, I adopted McAteer's 'Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect' action research model, as it is 'well suited to the dynamic and complex nature of the human interactions that occur in educational practices' (2013:31). This systematic approach lent itself to the aims of the study and its various facets form the nexus of my research methodology. It is important to note that

the ‘Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect’ process was by no means linear, but instead cyclical in nature, dependant on the results of the previous intervention. The following table outlines the various braids of the current study:

Step	Research Element	McAteer’s Model	Research Methods	Evidence
1	Gauge teacher-researcher’s TL use	Plan	IRIS Connect Video Recordings	Figure 3
2	Develop Research Instruments	Plan	Design Questionnaires and Interview questions	Appendices D and E
3	Create ‘maximal’ model for TL use	Plan	Draw on literature for model design	Appendix A
4	Gauge teachers’ perspectives	Act	Teacher Interviews	Appendix D Figure 2
5	Gauge students’ perspectives	Act	Student Questionnaires	Appendix E Figure 1
6	Implement ‘maximal’ model for TL use	Act		Appendix A
7	Observe effectiveness of ‘maximal’ model	Observe	Researcher diary	-
8	Design ‘home and away’ model for TL use	Reflect and Plan	Based on observations in researcher diary	Appendix B
9	Implement ‘home and away’ model for TL use	Act		Appendix B
10	Gauge students’ perceptions of ‘home and away’ model	Act	Student Questionnaires	Appendix F Figure 4
11	Create strategies to enhance students’ WTC	Reflect and Plan	Design ‘Target Language’ Model	Appendix C
12	Implement ‘Target Language’ Model	Act		Appendix C
13	Observe effectiveness of ‘maximal’ model	Observe	Researcher diary	-
14	Gauge students’ perceptions of ‘Target Language’ model	Act	Student survey	Appendix G Figure 5
15	Other MFL teachers trial ‘Target Language’ model	Observe	Observation of colleagues	-

16	Gauge teachers' perceptions of 'Target Language' model	Reflect	Semi-structured interviews with MFL teachers	Appendix H

(Figure 1) Research Outline

Plan

The 'plan' component comprised three major preliminary research steps; recording lessons, developing research instruments, and designing a 'Maximal Model of Target Language Use' (see appendix A). Firstly, Year 7 lessons were filmed over a two-week period and analysed to ascertain the ratio of L1/L2 that I use in my everyday practice. When analysing the recordings I calculated the percentage of teacher talk in the L1 and L2 by monitoring and recording the time spent in each language. This stage of the research served as an invaluable indication of how to adapt my TL use during the intervention and raised a number of intriguing questions not only about the quantity but the nature of the target language used.

The second part of the planning stage involved designing interview and questionnaire questions for participants. I composed seven questions for colleagues regarding their target language use, which were to be asked during semi-structured interviews (see appendix D). I then produced a questionnaire for students to be administered both pre- and post-intervention (see appendix E and F). The first questionnaire consisted of three questions on a six-point Likert scale (from 'strongly agree to strongly disagree', with an additional 'I don't know') followed by two open questions about the nature of the teachers' TL use.

Thirdly, and most crucially, the planning stage was concerned with the design of a maximal model (see appendix A) which determined in which circumstances the teacher (in this case, myself) would use the target language, when it would be appropriate to use the L1, and what support would be available for students, in light of the changes to their classroom environment. The model is based on Macaro's definition of the maximal position, that 'there is probably no pedagogical value in the learner use of L1 and almost certainly none in teacher use of L1' (1997:91). As such, L1 communication, according to the model design, was limited to classroom discipline and unforeseen emergency situations. In this vein, I planned to use very little L1, instead opting for techniques such as repetition, gestures, modelling and employment of cognates to ensure that students understood my use of the TL. Despite much of the literature advocating the importance of the L1, it was important for me as a relatively new teacher to test out the efficacy of a near-exclusive model.

Act

The 'act' stage of my action research was also threefold: interviewing teachers, questioning students and implementing the maximal model. Six teachers in my department were interviewed before the intervention began, in order to gain professional insights into when to use the TL, and how much to use. Drawing on a wealth of experience, the overarching aim of the interviews was to triangulate teacher observations with my own and those of the students.

Questionnaires were distributed to two Year 7 classes at the beginning of the first cycle and the end of the second so that the differences between pupils'

perceptions before and after the interventions could be adequately analysed. While they were not asked to put their names on the questionnaires for the sake of anonymity, each questionnaire was numbered and corresponded to a key with students' names. This enabled me to follow up questionnaire responses with a small number of student interviews, in keeping with Koshy's conclusion that 'information from interviews can supplement what has been gathered through surveys and observations' (2010:88). Students completed the questionnaire at the beginning of the class and were given an explanation about the nature of the intervention prior to its implementation.

The implementation of the maximal model took place over 6 weeks from the beginning of the Spring term. My rationale for starting the initial intervention in January was to enable a rapport to be built with the two classes, given my recent arrival to the school and the fact that the students themselves were new. It also facilitated the design of the model, as I had the time to get to know both classes, and enabled me to interview colleagues before starting the intervention. The content of the lessons navigated some of the major themes in Year 7 learning, including the topics of school, free time and local area, while the linguistic focus was on various foundational aspects of grammar and the development of the four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. More information about the content and focus of each lesson can be found in the schemes of work in appendix I.

Observe

The ‘observe’ element of the study was the natural corollary of the previous stage. Through implementing the maximal model and questioning, I was able to not only observe students’ attitudinal developments toward the TL, but record them in a research journal. Facilitating the documentation of questions, observations, insights and uncertainties, the journal functioned as ‘a reservoir of analytical memos’ (Scott & Morrison, 2007:64). It proved invaluable for the reflection stage, as I was able to discern clearly what had worked and what was less successful, and change my model accordingly. I used the journal after most lessons, although its use was occasionally limited by time constraints. The observations continued in my implementation of the ‘home and away’ model and the final ‘Target Language’ model, as well as when colleagues trialled the final model. These different facets will be considered in the discussion section of this thesis.

Reflect

In keeping with Altrichter et al.’s claim that ‘action researchers continuously examine the expected and unexpected consequences of their action’ (1993:208), the ‘reflect’ stage of the project provided ample opportunity to critically examine the results of the first intervention and make changes for the following two cycles. After employing the maximal model for six weeks and observing the students’ reactions to it, I decided to alter the second cycle of the research by adopting a ‘home and away day’ model (see appendix B). Of the three weekly lessons, two were ‘away’ days, conducted using the maximal model employed in the first cycle and were identified by students by a French

flag on the board. The third lesson of the week was conducted using more English and was known as a ‘home’ day, symbolised by a British flag on the board. Students were asked to keep a short journal in the back of their books in which they jotted down occasions in which they deemed the use of French to be appropriate/not appropriate, including reasons. Time was set aside at the end of each lesson to enable students to make their notes. Some students then asked if they could make notes during the lesson, rather than at the end, which was encouraged, as it was both more organic and a more precise reflection of their thinking. At the end of the second cycle students completed the second questionnaire, which featured 5 questions about their feelings towards the TL, their WTC, and the ‘home and away’ model. Following the completion of questionnaires, we then had a class discussion about the effects of the TL, which led to an abundance of ideas for the concluding stage of the study.

The final cycle of the study was the culmination of the student questionnaires, teacher interviews, class discussions and my own research journal. Having reflected on and critically analysed the data collected thus far, I designed a final ‘Target Language’ model (see appendix C) to be used with my two Year 7 classes. This final intervention, as a synthesis of my reflections and students’ feedback, focused on the students’ TL use rather than that of the teacher. As such, I introduced four routines into each lesson for seven weeks with the intention of increasing students’ TL use and, as a result, building their linguistic confidence. The four strategies were as follows:

1) *La question du jour* – serving as a plenary at the end of each lesson, students ask and answer a key question (which summarises the learning in the lesson) in the TL.
2) *Les cinq mots* – students practice the pronunciation of five words acquired during the lesson (selected and modelled by the teacher).
3) *Traducteur/traductrice*– a random name is selected each lesson to be the class translator, responsible for translating into and out of the TL.
4) *Mon petit dictionnaire* – students create a table of key expressions that they can refer to each lesson to encourage their spontaneous language production in the TL.

I then conducted a class survey in order to garner students' perspectives about the various tasks and the effects on their WTC. I asked students two simple questions: a) What was your preferred strategy? b) Why?. I explained that 'preferred' referred to the strategy which gave them the most confidence in speaking French and asked them to write down their answer and their reason in silence – so as not to be influenced by their peers – in the back of their books. I then took a survey of students' preferred choices (see appendix G), which was followed by a class discussion about the effectiveness – or lack thereof – of each strategy. The 'Target Language' model was then trialled by colleagues with their Year 7 students in order to further gauge its effectiveness on students' WTC. Finally, I interviewed my colleagues in semi-structured interviews (see appendix H), and collaborated with them to refine the model further.

4.3. Research instruments

I used a variety of research instruments to add further depth to my data collection. I opted for semi-structured interviews when garnering the perspectives of colleagues because it allowed for more detailed responses and granted flexibility ‘in how the questions are worded, in how they lead to follow-up questions and in the order in which they are asked' (McAteer, 2013:73). I equally opted for semi-structured interviews because ‘pre-formulated questions tend to take your attention away from the interviewee’ (Altrichter, 1993:101). I chose to record each interview, as well as make brief notes, to enable an accurate record of interviewees’ perspectives. As I had fewer participants (six teachers in comparison with fifty students in later stages of the research), these interviews afforded greater opportunities to explore certain areas, as the interview format gives more autonomy to the participants in a way that would not have been possible with questionnaires.

On the other hand, questionnaires were more effective with a large number of students, given the type of questions I hoped to ask and the information I hoped to gather. For example, I was able to ask both closed questions leading to quantitative data, in tandem with open questions resulting in rich qualitative data. Given that ‘the measurement of attitude poses more problems than does the measurement of behaviour’ (Brace, 2008:66), I opted for both types of questions in order to elicit a broad yet accurate range of responses. Unlike gathering data from a small number of colleagues, interviewing all the students would not have been practical. Instead, the results from the questionnaires provided an accurate distillation of students’ perspectives.

Equally crucial to my data collection was the research diary I kept throughout the action research project. This impressionistic yet subjective data provided a platform for my personal reflections on, and observations of each stage of the research. Taking heed of Cohen et al.'s advice, I ensured field notes were typed as soon as possible after lessons and observations (2000:300) because 'there is nothing to be gained merely by your presence as an observer' (301). That is to say, taking notes ensures a permanent and organised record of observations, which may be forgotten without the use of a reflective research diary. Edwards & Talbot give further credence to this argument, suggesting: 'a well-kept reflective diary can provide a major database for an action research study' (2014:67).

Finally, in the latter stages of the study, I opted for a class survey in order to gauge the efficacy of each element of the new model. According to Miller & Brewer, the researcher's use of surveys 'ensures the collection of relevant data on topics of interest and is a necessary stage in the process of sociological investigation' (2003:302). I chose to conduct a survey rather than a questionnaire or interview because I wanted to find out very specific information, namely, which strategy in the new model was most useful according to the students. The overriding advantages of this type of 'investigator-administered' survey are that 'the investigator can clarify questions for the respondents' and 'the investigator's presence encourages participants to respond' (Mitchell & Jolley, 2003:289). Students were then given time to consider their responses and write a short justification of their answer, which was personal to them and not collected in. Having given students the time to

reflect and write down an answer, we discussed their perspectives as a class, and I simultaneously took notes. This discussion led to rich data about students' preferences and opinions of the new model, but may have been more successful had it had been undertaken in smaller focus groups and recorded by the researcher. Although the major disadvantage was that not all opinions were vocalised, I found that most students wanted to contribute to the discussion, and that I gained an accurate picture of students' preferences because survey data 'is suitable for enumeration' (Miller & Brewer, 2003:302). This final research method was far more fluid than the others I had employed, but encouraged and facilitated authentic responses, as students were keen to engage analytically with the successes and failures of the model.

4.4. Participants

The study involved two sets of participants: students and teachers. The primary focus of this investigation was on two mixed-ability classes of Year 7 students learning French. In total, 32 girls and 27 boys were involved, leading to a partial gender balance. Students have one-hour French lessons three times a week and have had varying experiences of language learning in their primary school contexts. Given the delicate balance of informing participants of 'the key purpose of the research and its aims' (Ritchie et al., 2013:87) whilst preventing preconceptions to bias students' responses, I told participants that the study involved how the teacher's use of French affected students' willingness to speak French. Due to the size of the MFL department, I was fortunate enough to interview a broad cross section of language teachers, of varying ages, teaching experience and gender.

4.5. *Methodological Limitations*

The chief limitation of the study was the accuracy of measuring TL use. Although I used video recordings and systematically paused the recordings to calculate my TL use over five lessons, this method of data collection is neither completely accurate nor necessarily representative of all my lessons; knowing that I was being recorded, for example, may have inadvertently influenced my language choices. Equally, when asking teachers about their percentage of TL use, the figures they were proposing were rough estimates at best. Recording colleagues' lessons to monitor their TL use would have given a far more accurate picture of the TL landscape across the department.

In like manner, the very nature of language - whether L1 or L2 - is highly context-dependent and therefore TL use naturally oscillates from lesson to lesson according to the circumstances. This makes a consistent TL use, for example during the 'home' and 'away' days, more difficult to implement and therefore more problematic to measure; observing a colleague's TL use and analysing their language choices, rather than my own, may have been a more effective technique. Furthermore, having a 'neither agree nor disagree' choice on the Likert scale could have led to passivity among the students and fails to give useful information about students' WTC. The sample-size and time-scale were also limited, making any extrapolation of findings both difficult and ill-advised, while contextual factors also heavily impinged upon the effectiveness of the study. Equally, the research did not take into account any divergence of opinion between boys and girls, which would need to be considered in future research.

The final, and seemingly unavoidable, limitation of the study was researcher bias. Undertaking the dual role of teacher-researcher may have influenced both my own reflections and my students' responses, resulting in less objective conclusions. As Creswell confirms: 'researchers bring their own worldviews, paradigms, or sets of beliefs to the research project and these inform the conduct and writing of the qualitative study' (2007:15). A distinction between researcher and teacher may have led to more detailed analysis and less biased results.

4.6. Ethical Considerations

Permission was requested and granted by the Head Teacher of my school in order to uphold the ethical guidelines and procedures of both the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) and the British Educational Research Association (BERA). In addition, the purpose, nature and aims of the study were outlined to both students and teachers before any data were collected, in keeping with BERA's principle that 'all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged' (BERA, 2011:5).

At every stage of the research, participants were given the option to opt out of completing questionnaires by ticking the 'I do not wish to participate' box at the top of the page. This choice was provided to ensure that all participants are 'treated fairly, sensitively, with dignity, and within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice' (BERA, 2011: 5). Questionnaires were numbered, relating to a safely secured key of students' names, and only accessible to myself. This maintained students' confidentiality and enabled me to interview

certain students to follow up, clarify and further examine particular insights from the questionnaires. All responses were anonymised in the presentation of findings and discussion. Audio-video recordings were safely stored on a password-protected file and deleted on completion of the research.

5. Results and Discussion

The primary purpose of the following discussion is to address the three research questions by analysing the findings of the various facets of this project. Firstly, consideration will be given to the quantity of TL use by evaluating both the varied nature of my own L2 use in the classroom, diverse responses from interviews with colleagues, and students' initial perceptions. Secondly, the discussion will assess the validity of a 'maximal' approach to TL use and its effects on students' willingness to communicate through a critical analysis of the first and second cycles of this research, and students' questionnaire feedback. Thirdly, analysis will focus on the final intervention and evaluate potential strategies to increase students' L2 production in the classroom, and in so doing, raise their WTC. To render this discussion more academically robust and to set my findings in their wider context, reflections will be rooted in – and compared with - existing literature.

5.1. What constitutes the appropriate amount of Target Language for MFL teachers to use?

Teacher interviews Results

Benefits	Drawbacks
• Aids listening skills • Develops students' pronunciation • Gives students a taste of what it is like in a different country • Motivates students – can they emulate our speech? • Acquisition of new vocabulary • Students can 'recycle' language	• Difficult to manage a classroom in the TL • Can affect relationships with the class • Some students misunderstand instructions • Tiring for both students and teachers • Unnecessary/unhelpful in the current landscape of assessment

Highlighted phrases = mentioned by three or more colleagues

(Figure 2) Teachers' opinions of benefits and drawbacks on TL use

Six teachers within my department were interviewed, using seven questions about their own TL use and their perceptions of its effect on learners (see appendix D). A fascinating diversity of responses emerged from the interviews, leading me to question whether TL use among teachers really can be reduced to a single formula, or whether different approaches are more effective for different teachers. While the teachers had differing views on the amount or benefits of TL use, there was certainly a consensus among all those interviewed that target language use is a very fluid concept, varying according to the ability, age and motivation of the group of students.

The main themes that emerged during the interviews were: the age and ability of students, the relevance of the L1 in certain contexts and situations, and a desire for greater TL use. The first two questions of the interview focused on

how the teacher's TL use alters according to the age of the student. While the quantity and nature of the language used varied significantly between colleagues, there was a general trend that TL use was very high with Year 7 students (in some cases maximal), then it gradually declined throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, before increasing again in Key Stage 5. This trajectory is an interesting phenomenon, which every teacher interviewed alluded to in one form or another.

Particularly pertinent to the research questions of the current study were teachers' reasons for such high TL use among Year 7 students. These included inter alia greater levels of motivation, WTC and engagement, as well as 'routine' and 'conversational' language embedded into the content of the curriculum. While the majority of the teachers interviewed claimed to employ routine language regularly, one teacher was less convinced. Instead, he believed that real interactions were more important than instructional and routine language, seeking to facilitate what Tomlinson describes as 'meaningful encounters with the target language in authentic use' (1998:89). As such, he claimed not to use the TL for instructions, but rewarded pupils' spontaneous use of the TL and was willing to subvert from the curriculum, at times, for the sake of students' improvised L2 production.

In a similar vein, the teachers questioned unanimously described an ideal learning environment akin to the one outlined by Christie, 'where the target language is the natural means of communication for learners and teacher alike and where learners have the means at their disposal to effect such target

language communication, confidently and spontaneously' (2013:14). Yet despite their insights into its benefits, the average use of the TL at Key Stage 3 was around 45%, which falls far short of Macaro's advice to 'aim for 80% of lesson in TL' (2010). Interestingly, all seven teachers remarked that they used less TL with GCSE classes, a remarkable incongruity within MFL teaching given that Key Stage 4 learners will have a much wider vocabulary base and a far broader grammatical understanding than those in KS3.

Numerous reasons were given as to why the teachers interviewed were less inclined to use the TL with KS4 students. One teacher cited 'a barrier to the relationship with the class' as chief among his reasons for using little TL with a Year 11 class. As languages are compulsory to GCSE for the majority of students at the school, motivation and self-belief can be low among those who find learning a foreign language challenging. As such, most teachers interviewed commented that for lower-ability sets, the TL was more often than not an obstacle rather than an expedient resource. Furthermore, the nature of the GCSE course and the formal assessment of KS4 was another reason cited for an ebb in TL use. Even two decades ago it was noted that the assessment of GCSE, with many listening and reading questions in English, 'militates against the use of the target language in the 14-16 classroom' (Ofsted, 1993:8-9). This lies in contrast with the A-Level curriculum, where far more examination components are in the TL (Pachler, 2002:23). Indeed, teachers agreed that KS5 is a much more fruitful environment for the use of the TL, with most claiming to use it over 80%. High motivation among students and higher levels of competence were cited as the primary reasons for this trend.

The third question posed to teachers was concerned with the interrelationship between ability and target language use. One colleague purported to use ‘similar amounts but in different ways’. This tallied with other teachers who suggested the nature of the language changed more than the quantity when teaching lower-ability groups. For example, one teacher reported using more cognates with students who find language learning difficult, while another used more non-verbal cues in conjunction with the TL to elicit meaning. Others cited a ‘fear of misunderstanding’ and ‘discipline issues’ as reasons for using less TL with certain classes. In contrast, ‘providing a sense of challenge for the most able’ was regarded as an important use of the TL.

The fourth and fifth questions addressed opinions about the benefits and pitfalls of TL use. Teachers identified four primary categories of advantages: linguistic, communicative, pedagogical and motivational. The linguistic benefits of the teacher’s TL use included ‘recycling language’, ‘students picking up different structures’, the notion that ‘repetition leads to identification’, and, most obviously, the acquisition of new vocabulary. With regards to communicative competence, teachers highlighted ‘inflexion and tone of voice’, ‘familiarisation with hearing the language’, ‘fundamental listening skills’, and ‘pronunciation’ as critical. The pedagogical value included the idea that ‘learning the language becomes second nature if embedded into routine’, which was later expressed by another colleague as ‘an implicit way of learning’. A number of teachers also suggested that their use of the TL can be a primary catalyst for raising students’ L2 motivation, echoing Chambers’ conclusion that ‘using the TL can motivate learners to see its usefulness’ (2013:45). One interviewee claimed that not only

did students view his TL use as ‘a challenge to decipher the meaning’, but as an intriguing difference between all other subjects, which are delivered in English. In like manner, another teacher stated that ‘students can be impressed by my TL use, which may lead to greater respect’.

Multiple disadvantages of teachers’ TL use were also acknowledged, which can be classified thematically into social dynamics, logistics and assessment. Firstly, four teachers expressed the potential loss of rapport as a significant stumbling block of TL use, arguing that ‘relationships cannot be built as effectively’ in the L2, and ‘humour is more difficult’. One teacher spoke of ‘a fear of the unknown – particularly in Year 7’, which jeopardises students’ motivation. Equally inimical are logistical difficulties of the TL. One teacher mentioned the time element, reflecting ‘it is generally quicker in English’, while two others discussed clarity of instructions as an issue, remarking that the TL ‘can complicate instructions for students’. With regard to the validity of assessment in the TL, not only did certain teachers question whether checking progress is possible in the L2, they equally argued vehemently for the use of the L1 in explaining assessment tasks.

Another factor affecting the use of the TL in the classroom is, of course, the disposition of the teachers. Four out of the six teachers interviewed mentioned ‘tiredness’ and ‘stress’ as significant determinative factors to their use of the TL. Relationship with the class also played an important role as two teachers reported only using the TL when they felt comfortable with the class. One colleague interestingly reflected on the evolution of her TL use as her career

had progressed; ‘I used to speak about 90% in the target language but now it is around 50%, as I view other factors as more important for student progress’. Equally curious was the language the interviewees employed to describe their feelings toward the TL; repetition of words like ‘shame’, ‘excuse’ and ‘frustration’ dovetail with Morgan & Cain’s findings that ‘teachers often feel guilty about the lower-than-expected level of use’ (2000:104).

When asked about the appropriateness of the L1 in the MFL classroom, the key contexts included classroom management, translation tasks, grammatical explanations, clarifications of instructions, and assessment conversations. An advocacy of TL use for assessment purposes, particularly feedback, is presented by Jones & Wiliam: ‘where this language is interpreted in the target language, further opportunities for authentic target language use arise, making the language learning classroom multilingual in more ways than one’ (2008:4). Nevertheless, many of my colleagues stated that L1 feedback was more meaningful as it was more readily understood.

Finally, teachers were asked about the effects of their L2 use on their students’ WTC. Chief among teachers’ responses was the idea of modelling; summarised by one colleague who stated: ‘students would say, “if you’re not using it, then why should we?”’. Participants agreed that by demonstrating the TL themselves, their students were more likely to emulate their L2 production, viewing the subject as ‘in a very real and practical sense a means of communication’ (Swarbrick, 2002:178). Lundberg further develops this notion of the teacher’s TL use working in tandem with students’ WTC: ‘the more

children use the target language, the less embarrassment they seem to feel about it' (2007:28). Most of the teachers also alluded to the necessity of routine and familiarity with the TL. One teacher integrated these notions by suggesting that 'it requires a time investment, but after that it works like clockwork'.

Pre-intervention Student Questionnaire Results

1. *In my lessons, I feel confident speaking French.*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
4% (2)	39% (22)	37% (21)	9% (5)	4% (2)	7% (4)

2. *I enjoy tasks where I have the opportunity to speak in French.*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
10% (6)	30% (17)	46% (26)	9%(5)	0 (0)	5% (3)

3. *I feel more confident speaking French when I have heard my teacher speak French.*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
14% (8)	47% (27)	23% (13)	9% (5)	0% (0)	7% (4)

4. *I prefer the class instructions to be given in English rather than French.*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
43% (25)	23% (13)	23% (13)	7% (4)	4% (2)	0% (0)

(Figure 3) Questionnaire results

Before any intervention took place, students were asked to outline their beliefs about the teacher's TL use and their own confidence to communicate in the L2. Firstly, students were asked to identify the extent to which they agreed with a number of statements about verbal communication in the L2 (see Figure 2). The majority of students (39%) agreed that they felt confident speaking French in lessons, demonstrating a fairly high level of WTC amongst both classes. Nevertheless, the fact that almost the same number of students (37%) answered the question 'neither agree nor disagree' casts doubt on this assumption and highlights the ambiguous nature of 'confidence' and 'WTC', which surely fluctuate according to circumstances. Further ambivalence emerged for the statement 'I enjoy tasks where I have the opportunity to speak in French'. Although 40% of students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, nearly half of participants (47%) answered 'neither agree nor disagree', showing that either the question may have been poorly worded or students' opinions on speaking French are uncertain. Accordingly, if I were to re-design the questionnaire, I would either omit the 'neither agree nor disagree' option in order to negate neutrality, or would ask the open question: 'do you generally enjoy tasks where you have opportunities to speak French?'. Even this may fall short of Bradburn et al.'s advice to 'make the question as specific as possible' (2004:36) and may be more useful if supported by examples of speaking tasks.

The next statement was, however, more precise and therefore the students' responses to it were clearer to assess. Indeed, students answered more consistently to the statement, 'I feel more confident speaking French when I

have heard my teacher speak French'. Only 5% of students disagreed with the statement, allowing us to draw the conclusion that the teacher's modelling of key vocabulary is essential in building students' linguistic confidence. Students also reached more of a consensus regarding the delivery of instructions; 66% agreed or strongly agreed that instructions should be in English. When asked to justify this response, students said they were often unsure of what to do when instructions were given in the L2. However, I am somewhat cynical about this claim given that students have learnt key instruction phrases such as 'tournez à la page…', 'lisez', 'écoutez', etc. My concern is that students are choosing the path of least resistance by suggesting that instructions should be in English. Instead, teaching them resilience in listening to and understanding French instructions may be more pedagogically beneficial. This is a prime example of how collecting data *from* students, with the aim of making changes *for* students, may be flawed as their own learning may not always be their top priority.

A real mix of responses emerged from the question 'Do you ever feel anxious when the teacher talks in French?'. Many answered sometimes, citing apprehension over possible punishment, fear of misunderstanding and not knowing how to respond to a question as the key reasons for experiencing foreign language anxiety, summarised by one student who said: 'I'm worried that I will miss key information'. Others reasoned that they often experienced anxiety when they didn't understand what was being said, and therefore were unable to express themselves, which corresponds with research undertaken on the 'impact that anxiety has on cognitive processing during language learning' (Cassady, 2010:98). On the other hand, many students said they felt confident

when the teacher used the TL, suggesting that ‘I can use words I know and cognates to work out what it means’. One student even noted a positive correlation between the teacher’s TL use and their WTC in their assertion that ‘I can talk better in French because my teacher is’. It is important to note, however, that this response was anomalous.

When questioned about the advantages of the teacher’s TL exclusivity, the acquisition of vocabulary, the modelling of pronunciation, and the development of listening comprehension were the principle themes. Some students concluded that ‘you will learn more French in the lesson’, while others described the challenge of being spoken to in a different language as advantageous for their learning. On the contrary, it was ‘understanding instructions’ that inevitably emerged as the greatest advantage of the teacher using English in foreign language lessons. One student mentioned efficiency, suggesting that ‘lessons will be quicker’ when instructions are delivered in the L1. Another alluded to WTC – albeit in the L1 – by suggesting that ‘you feel more comfortable asking questions’. This observation reflects the idea that communication in the L2 is out of the students’ comfort zone and therefore always likely to be greeted with a degree of resistance. Despite many mentioning the practical utility of the L1, no student acknowledged the L1 as a source of comparison in which ‘TL intake may be learned more readily if teachers use L1 judiciously to catalyse the intake process’ (Wu, 2016:4).

IRIS Video Recording Results

	Percentage of English teacher talk	Percentage of French teacher talk	Percentage of Teacher talk within 1 hour lesson time
Lesson 1	34% 10m40	66% 20m40	55% 31m20s
Lesson 2	44% 7m26	56% 9m06s	30% 16m32s
Lesson 3	61% 7m06	39% 4m31	20% 11m37s
Lesson 4	39% 6m34	61% 9m43	30% 16m17
Lesson 5	33% 7m55	66% 16m02	40% 23m57

(Figure 4) IRIS Connect Results

Using IRIS Connect, a video-based professional development platform for teachers, I recorded five lessons prior to the interventions in order to gauge my average amount of TL use and reflect on the appropriateness of the TL in different contexts (see figure 3). Several useful – and surprising - insights emerged from my analysis of these recordings. Firstly, I was surprised that in all but one of my lessons I used more French than English as the primary medium of classroom discourse. Lesson 3 was in fact an assessment lesson, which may explain the higher levels of English. I was, however, concerned to see how teacher talk consumed so much of each lesson, particularly as I agree with Wright's statement that students' should have 'the capacity to influence the direction and character of classroom discourse' (2005:111), most notably by being given opportunities to speak. Although beyond the parameters of this discussion, the amount of teacher talk (whether in the L1 or L2) could arguably

have a detrimental effect on students WTC in the L2 because it detracts from the time pupils have to communicate and put the language they are learning into practice.

Nearly all praise was given in the TL, whereas all discipline issues, although few and far between, were conducted in English. Instructions were generally delivered in French, although sometimes unhelpfully translated into English before students had the chance to elicit their meaning. Interesting, while I answered most of the students' questions in French and gave them time to translate when in front of the class, I noticed that most dialogues with individual students out of the class' sight took place in English; this appears somewhat counterintuitive given that students generally have a higher WTC on a one-to-one basis when compared to speaking publicly. I also observed frequent code-switching in my own language as I changed between French and English, often mid-sentence. The salient insight garnered from these recordings was just how complex it is to use the TL in a maximal way; such challenges, as we shall see, were faced as I began the three cycles of interventions.

5.2. Does the teacher's 'maximal' use of the Target Language increase Year 7 students' willingness to communicate?

Analysis of First intervention

The first lesson of the intervention was a sharp learning curve and a pertinent reminder of how much I inadvertently use the L1. Speaking entirely in the L2 was not only difficult from a teaching perspective, but exhausting for students,

many of whom really struggled to follow the progression of the lesson. That said, during the first lesson with each class it was clear that certain students thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of decoding instructions. This ties in with Cao & Philp's study, in the sense that there is no one-size-fits all solution to increasing students' WTC. Instead they found that 'preferences were not uniform among learners; some were more willing to communicate in teacher-fronted activities, others preferred small groups or pair work' (2006:489). In this vein, the teacher should seek compromise balance when creating the optimum learning conditions for *all* learners.

After the first two weeks of the six-week cycle it became clear through my observations in a research journal and from students' comments that the 'maximal' approach was having a negative effect on students' motivation as well as my own; lessons were becoming less enjoyable and explanations more onerous. My relationships with students were impacted, because our communication was limited and students were frustrated by their inability to understand instructions and information conveyed in the TL. As such, after the first two weeks I made a concerted effort to incorporate strategies to facilitate students' understanding. For example, the use of actions and gestures, and the slow repetition of instructions became more commonplace.

Taking a group of Year 12 students on a French exchange during this first intervention also gave me further time to reflect on how the maximal approach was working (or not working) by noting how the Year 12 students had progressed since Year 7, and how they were coping with full immersion. The

students who were getting the most out of the exchange were those who were also building in time to speak English, those who were trying to speak only in French were getting tired and frustrated. This observation could indeed be modelled in microcosm in the Year 7 classroom, where students need time for processing in the L1. This ties in with Wu's conclusion that 'dismissing L1 out of hand restricts the possibilities for language teaching' (2016:4).

On my return, I noted students' increasing reluctance to speak in the L2, when all teacher talk was in the TL. This may have been due to the fact that they had lost the habit of hearing French in my absence, or due to a fear that they were unable to participate adequately. Relatively new to the language, students did not have a broad enough vocabulary base to both understand and respond to what was being said. This is reflected in Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak's finding that 'the inability to find the necessary vocabulary on a moment-by-moment basis led to a loss of focus and growth of anxiety, which adversely affected willingness to speak' (2015:8). Based on the inefficacy of this first attempt to raise students' WTC, after the first six weeks I introduced the second model, entitled 'home and away', the success of which will now be examined.

Analysis of Second intervention

The 'home and away' model gave more structure to the second intervention and provided a useful source of comparison between maximal TL speech and greater use of the L1 for myself and students alike. I opted for 'home' and 'away' lessons, rather than segments of lessons, in order to provide a greater source of comparison for students. In my research journal, I observed several

times how students would be eager to ask whether it was a home or away day, and how many responded more positively to the ‘away’ day than I had expected. I planned grammatical content for the ‘home’ day, so that English explanations could be given, whereas more interactive tasks, such as communicative-based, reading comprehensions and paired decoding tasks, were designed for the ‘away’ day and instructions were pre-planned to prevent students from misunderstanding them. This was more successful because my language use and choice were more targeted towards the context of the learning, and students had a greater appreciation of the expectations.

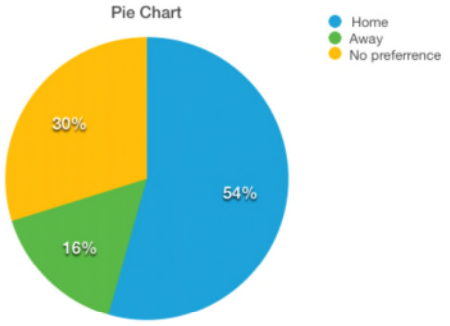
Stern recommends that ‘the use of L1 and target language should be seen as complementary, depending on the characteristics and stages of the language learning process’ (1992:285). Perhaps the ‘home and away’ model combined this reciprocal use of L1 and TL in a way that the first model failed to do. Nevertheless, I was still unsatisfied with the impact of the model on students’ WTC because there were too few opportunities for students to use the L2 themselves. Kang advocates the idea that ‘more interaction leads to more language development and learning’ (2005:278), a notion to which I can personally testify during the most fruitful moments of my teaching practice. Therefore, after gathering students’ perceptions through a second questionnaire and following Kang’s advice about the need for interaction, I designed the final ‘Target Language’ model, with students’ L2 production as the primary focus.

Post-intervention Student questionnaire

Students were questioned again after the second intervention, in order to assess the success of the 'home and away' model and to gather important feedback about how to proceed in the third cycle. The overarching consensus emerging from the questionnaire feedback and students' journals was that the teacher should use English for explaining new concepts or semantics, but that all consolidation of previous learning should be in the TL. Students generally stated that French was also more appropriate in the giving of instructions, provided there was an opportunity for students to translate. On the contrary, many students cited the importance of grammar explanations in English because, as one student noted, 'understanding conjugation is very difficult in French'. In this vein, many of the students' opinions concurred with the findings of previous studies about the value of the L1, particularly the views of Meiring & Norman, that 'raising language awareness and support in target language learning through comparison with the mother tongue are pedagogically sound reasons for recourse to the mother tongue' (2002:27).

Did you prefer 'home' or 'away' days?

DAY	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Home	31
Away	9
No preferrence	17



(Figure 5) Home and Away Day Preferences

There was, however, a far more mixed reaction to the ‘home and away’ concept (see figure 4); for example, one student’s comment that ‘they don’t make a difference’ was entirely antithetical to another’s remark that ‘it gives us a chance to be challenged’. Nearly all students noted that the ‘away’ days were far more cognitively demanding. While some students thrived on the challenge, others saw it as a reason to give up, describing the ‘home’ day as ‘a chance to have a break from all the French’. In this vein, much of the success of the teacher’s TL use is dependent on students’ attitudinal disposition; those who enjoy being challenged, and who generally have a high WTC, appreciate the ‘away’ days, while those who are less enthusiastic preferred the ‘home’ day of the week. This chimes with Chambers who notes: ‘pupils’ motivation to learn the TL and their attitude to it, the mind-set which they bring to the lesson are key influences’ (2013:45). One student gave a fascinating insight into how the compromise of two ‘away’ days and one home day may have benefitted different students: ‘people who struggle get the home day to understand more about the language and people who are confident get two days to progress’. Interestingly, the student seems to associate more teacher TL with greater progress for students. With hindsight, there was too little distinction between a ‘home’ and an ‘away’ day. The blurring of the lines led to difficulty in students differentiating between the two types of language use, which resulted in less insightful feedback. This methodological flaw could be rectified by sharpening the antithesis between the two types of day; for example I could have employed a virtual position on an ‘away’ day, and taken a far more minimal approach to the L2 on a ‘home’ day.

As for students' own confidence in communicating in the L2, their views generally correlated with Cao & Philp's findings that WTC in the L2 classroom is most affected by 'group size, familiarity with interlocutor(s) and interlocutor participation' (2006:488). Students particularly agreed that they felt less willing to speak French when asked to do so in front of the class, which is consistent with de Saint Léger & Storch's study in which whole class discussion was viewed by participants as 'an activity where students publicly displayed their levels of skills and knowledge and thus they felt threatened by the process' (2009:277). In the present study, students' reasons for anxiety in whole-class discussions were twofold; firstly they were fearful of mispronunciation, which may lead to social embarrassment, and secondly they felt unconfident in being spontaneous in a foreign language. While the former could be mitigated, according to many students, by the teacher modelling the correct pronunciation, the latter was articulated by one student who reasoned: 'I feel far less confident when talking off the top of my head'. These fears are understandable as spontaneous languages poses a threat to students' level of control. Nevertheless, the benefits of training students to speak spontaneously are undeniable; it 'increases levels of learner agency, bolsters confidence to take risks, affords opportunities for creativity and permits a feeling of communicative success' (Christie, 2013:13). Given both the merits of nurturing students' ability to speak spontaneously and potential anxiety about speaking in front of the class, the obvious remedy would be to develop resources for improvised speech in partners and small groups. As such, I developed four strategies to increase students' WTC in the L2, which formed the final intervention of the study.

5.3. What strategies can be put in place to improve students' willingness to communicate in the L2?

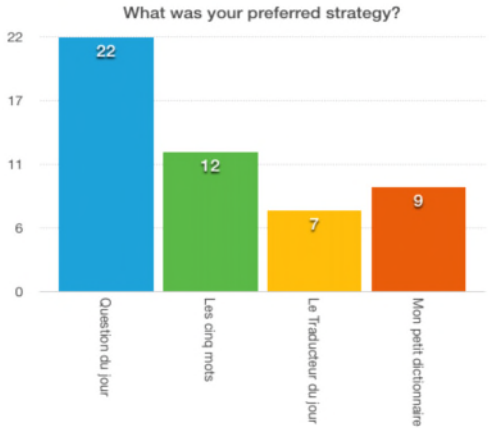
Analysis of Third Intervention

The implementation of the final 'Target Language' model (see appendix C) was certainly the most enjoyable cycle of the research, as it represented the convergence of students' feedback and my own ideas and reflections on TL use. The onus unequivocally shifted from the teacher's TL use to that of the students, resulting in an abundance of spontaneous L2 production, and arguably an increase in students' WTC. The four strategies that constitute the new model were employed in every lesson, giving students a sense of familiarity and dovetailing with Macaro's advocacy of 'classroom practice which is easily recognisable to the pupils and in which they feel comfortable' (1995:53). Despite their varying degrees of subtlety, each strategy became intrinsic to the routine of the class and students predicted and sought their arrival. I based the final model on an attempt to answer Dickson's pertinent question: 'what kinds of classroom activity and communication in the TL are most likely to help pupils learn and to practice what they learn? (1992:26).

Students' feedback on 'Target Language' Model

What was your preferred strategy?

STRATEGY	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Question du jour	22
Les cinq mots	12
Le Traducteur du jour	7
Mon petit dictionnaire	9



(Figure 6) Survey results

Out of the 50 students who were surveyed at the end of the final intervention, 44% claimed to find the 'question du jour' the most useful resource in increasing their confidence in speaking French. This strategy not only consolidated the learning of each lesson but offered students 'repeated opportunities to retrieve and restructure their knowledge of the target language' (Lyster et al., 2013:13). The rationale behind this plenary resource was threefold: it familiarises students with question words and linguistic structures in the L2 (which will be a requirement for the new GCSE in languages (AQA, 2015:11)), it encourages students to apply language in an authentic manner and, most significantly, it is accessible to all.

In their feedback, students mentioned the social constructivist aspect of the strategy, suggesting ‘you can help your partner if they get stuck’, and hinted at a raised WTC by referencing the format, ‘it’s only in front of your partner so isn’t embarrassing and you’re more likely to have a go’. They also understood that the activity was differentiated given that ‘everyone can do it’ and yet ‘you can extend your answers’. Higher ability students in the class particularly seized the opportunity to develop their answers by including connectives and negative constructions. Pedagogically, students also recognised the value of the task, stating that ‘it puts what we have just learnt into practice’. The main drawback, however, is highlighted by de Saint Léger & Storch, who found that ‘strong intergroup affiliation may deter students from using the L2’ (2009:280). Although the students I was observing were asking and answering the ‘question du jour’ in the L2, it would be difficult for the teacher to know with certainty that all students were participating in the activity due to the social dynamics of each pair.

Having asked and answered the question in pairs, students were then give the opportunity to showcase their answers to the rest of the class; this was arguably the most successful part of the plenary as it facilitated the student-to-student modelling and offered a chance for me to reward students who were willing to speak in front of the class, which in turn motivated others to contribute. This also helped to counter the aforementioned problem, because students knew they may need to have an answer to give to the whole class. To refine this resource, however, I would give students the option to change partners regularly, which may increase WTC and develop communicative skills. Equally,

the opportunity to analyse model answers more thoroughly as a class would provide students with a blueprint of how to expand their own responses in the future.

The second most useful resource, according to 24% of students, was 'Les cinq mots', designed with the dual purpose of reminding students of the key words acquired during the lesson and practicing specific phonetic structures. Students commented on how 'the words stick in your head more' and 'it helps with pronunciation' as justifications for their preference. Equipping students with the techniques and strategies to pronounce words correctly in the L2 is an essential building block towards reversing the trend of English as the *lingua franca* among MFL students. Indeed one student's observation that 'it gives us more confidence for next time we use the word' not only acknowledges that it bolsters students' WTC, but recognises the value of *using* the language acquired, in the most practical sense. Nevertheless, this resource could be improved by transforming it from a teacher-led 'call-and-response' exercise to a paired task, in which students decipher or predict the pronunciation with their partner. This would afford students the opportunity to embed the patterns of pronunciation into their daily experience of language learning.

Although only 14% of students believed that the 'traducteur du jour' resource was the most effective, the class conversation after the survey led to some positive feedback. Those students who preferred the strategy described it as 'funny and encouraging', perhaps owing to the novelty of the resource. One student believed it was the most successful tool because 'we can learn from

other people's mistakes'. Others suggested that it was 'not too tricky', as I ensured that instructions were simple and, when students were unsure, I repeated them with actions. From my perspective, the most useful aspect of this strategy was that I could differentiate instructions according to the ability of the student translator.

However, before the student survey, I was unconvinced by the effectiveness of this strategy. I made the erroneous assumption that many students disliked the idea of being a student translator due to the anxiety surrounding publically speaking in front of the class. Yet on asking students whether they would like to be chosen, the majority of students put their hands up. On reflection, this served as an important reminder that often I allow my preconceptions about students' motivation to stifle my decisions about their learning and consequently prevent them from taking risks. As such, I intend to continue using the student translator resource, although serious consideration will need to be given to the fact that asking one individual student to translate for the entire lesson arguably stands in disharmony with my aim of building *all* students' linguistic confidence in the L2. A possible solution to this issue would be to establish translation partnerships where one member of each pair is responsible for translating instructions to the other in a 30 second time slot; this would heavily rely on matching students with similar abilities.

Despite being less conspicuous than the other strategies, and more reliant on student agency, 18% of students selected 'Mon petit dictionnaire' as the most useful resource for increasing their L2 speech. Time was invested at the

beginning of this final research cycle into creating a personalised help sheet and students were given the licence to choose the design and vocabulary that they wished to incorporate, enabling student choice and creativity. Once completed, students stuck their help sheets in the front of their books and were periodically reminded to use them to facilitate their communication. Among those who preferred 'Mon petit dictionnaire', many commented that it was 'easily accessible' and liked that 'you can add to it whenever you want'. Others appreciated the individuality of the resource, 'we all have different ones', while one student commented on its pedagogical value: 'it's useful because it's the language we need all the time'.

Taking heed of Christie's study in which the teachers 'assiduously reward target language contributions' (2013:10), I used raffle tickets to reward students' spontaneous language and their unprompted use of their help sheet. This served to increase motivation among the whole class, and consequently maximised opportunities for further pupil-centred interaction. After hearing a pair of students conversing in French without any prompting, I stopped the class to make a point of how beneficial – and impressive – this kind of interaction was in language learning. Students independently adding to their glossary at home was equally encouraging, and paradigmatic of the resource's capacity to increase learners' WTC. In this vein, Dewey's counsel, offered a century ago, that 'Education is not an affair of 'telling' and being told, but an active and constructive process' (1916:46) certainly still holds true for students' cultivation of linguistic skills today. Accordingly, the intention of these four strategies rests not so much upon *what* students were saying or *how* they were saying it, but

upon their confidence to speak in the first place. In this sense, their active participation is the crucial first step in their journey to fluency.

5.4. The Process of Collaboration

Given that the communities involved in action research 'are especially beneficial where they include people with differing perspectives on the issues being addressed' (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 116), the collaboration with colleagues in my department was central to this project. MFL teachers were involved in each stage of the project, in line with McAteer's 'Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect' action research model. The 'plan' stage was enriched by colleagues interview answers, although could have been further strengthened had I sought advice on the design of the first and second models for TL. The 'act' stage of the current study involved my colleagues trialling the final TL model with their own students. These teachers were subsequently interviewed about their observations and reflections of the model, and offered suggestions for adaptations for future practice.

Interestingly, the final model was designed to increase the TL of students and in doing so, raise their WTC. Yet my colleagues reported that their own TL use increased as a result of using strategies like 'le traducteur' because they themselves had to use more L2 in order for students to translate. According to their responses in interviews, they found themselves more aware of the language they were using, given the types of tasks they were performing. This displays how beneficial – and surprising – collaboration can be. I was expecting my colleagues to say their students' L2 use had increased, rather than their

own. Equally useful is the dialogue that continues within the department about how to increase our students' WTC with our TL use. Nevertheless, to further improve the process of collaboration, it would be useful to design a TL model or identify strategies to increase students' WTC in partnership with colleagues, based on the findings from interviews and the trials taking place across the department.

Along with the practical involvement of colleagues, I then presented the findings of this project to the wider department as well as the school's Teaching and Learning group. My aim in presenting to the department, as well as disseminating findings, was to encourage my colleagues to trial aspects of the model and enhance it where they thought appropriate. The piloting of this model will continue into the next academic year and, depending on its success, may result in policy change within the department. The purpose of presenting my findings to the Teaching and Learning group, however, was not so much to provide detailed analysis of the interrelationship between TL and WTC, as most of the group were not language teachers. Instead, I hoped to display how action research can be easily undertaken in our classrooms, by explaining my methodology, and hopefully inspiring others to evaluate their own practice through action research.

5.5. Action Research Cycle Analysis

Given the numerous changes and developments in my thought processes, McAteer's 'Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect' process was particularly expedient in the refinement of each model, enabling me to take into consideration students'

feedback and my own reflections. The methodical consideration as to why the first model was less successful was critical, as were discussions with colleagues about the interventions. Given that the issue of teacher TL and student WTC affect my daily practice, it was useful to observe and reflect upon the practical outworkings of the theory garnered in the literature review. This is the very nature of action research. As Efron & Ravid describe: 'action research offers a new relationship among the areas of practice, theory, and research that blurs the boundaries between each of them' (2013:4). Nevertheless, the most challenging part of the project was taking on the dual role of researcher and teacher; it is difficult not to feel discouraged if and when action planned as a researcher does not function effectively in the classroom.

The notion of generalisability, defined by Robson as 'the extent to which the findings of the enquiry are more applicable outside the specifics of the situation studied' (2002:93), was also problematic when drawing conclusions about my data. Although the findings of this research will no doubt have significant implications for my own teaching, every learning context is different and many variables will affect the requirement and usefulness of the teachers' TL on students' WTC. If we adhere to Altrichter et al.'s belief that the success of action research 'lies in the will to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as the conditions under which teachers and students work in schools' (1993:4), then by sharing the findings of this research and the literature review with colleagues, our students' experiences of language learning may be enriched.

6. Conclusion

L'apprentissage doit être intensif sans toutefois être une noyade.

[*Learning must be intensive without making students feel they are drowning*.]

La Fondation d'éducation des provinces de l'Atlantique (1997:9)

The use of the target language by teachers and students alike - as the belief expressed above indicates - is not without risk, challenge and complexity. Striking a balance between providing exposure to the L2 and creating an environment where students feel they *can* achieve is arguably the most demanding task faced by the MFL teacher. This study aimed to discover whether the teacher's TL use is beneficial or detrimental to students' motivation to communicate in the L2. The evidence from the data collected suggests that students prefer the L2 to be used by teachers in the consolidation of previous learning and in the routine language of the classroom, but that the L2 should not be the sole language of communication. Furthermore although the teacher's TL use is significant, it is not always the determining factor for enhancing or detracting from students' WTC. Instead, I have found that creating tasks and routines in which students have ample opportunities to speak spontaneously in the L2 is most apposite to building their linguistic confidence.

6.1. Addressing the Research Questions

Although this project has shed some light on the answer to the first research question, there is no doubt that a wide range of variables affect the potential of the teacher's TL use; the ability and age of the class, the learning context, the motivation of students, and the social dynamics, to name but a few. Returning

to Macaro's categorisation (2001) of TL use, it appears from this research that the optimal position, rather than the maximal, is preferable for Year 7 learners, reflecting Wu's belief that the 'total exclusion of L1 use in L2 learning… is not effective for language learners' (2016:7). Employing the L1 as a comparative linguistic tool and a means of building a rapport with students enhanced the success of the final model.

The answer to the second research question, regarding the effect of the TL on Year 7 students' WTC, is less clear. While certain students thrived on increased teacher TL use, many were discouraged by my maximal use of the TL and therefore experienced a downturn in motivation. As such, this study has gone some way in discrediting my original hypothesis that 'the more TL on the part of the teacher, the higher the WTC in the L2 on the part of Y7 students'. It was only in remembering that students rightly 'have the capacity to influence the direction and character of classroom discourse' (Wright, 2005:111), that I began to focus more on students' speech and less on my own. Creating a model that promotes the maximal use of the L2 among students will inevitably lead to greater motivation among students to listen and apply the teacher's use of the TL. That is to say, I believe that the maximal use of the TL by the teacher is only possible when students are using the L2 in a maximal manner. If I were to re-do this project, I would start by increasing opportunities for students to use the L2, then, once they had grown in confidence and developed their WTC, I would monitor the effects of the teacher's TL use on their speech.

Finally, a number of strategies have been identified that go some way towards answering the final research question. Although the first two cycles of interventions function more as a cautionary tale than a blueprint for effective TL use, the final model may provide practitioners with some initial ideas on how to promote L2 production among students and in so doing build linguistic confidence. The 'question du jour' was arguably the most pivotal resource because it involved all students, consolidated learning and provided the chance to speak to one person, rather than the whole class.

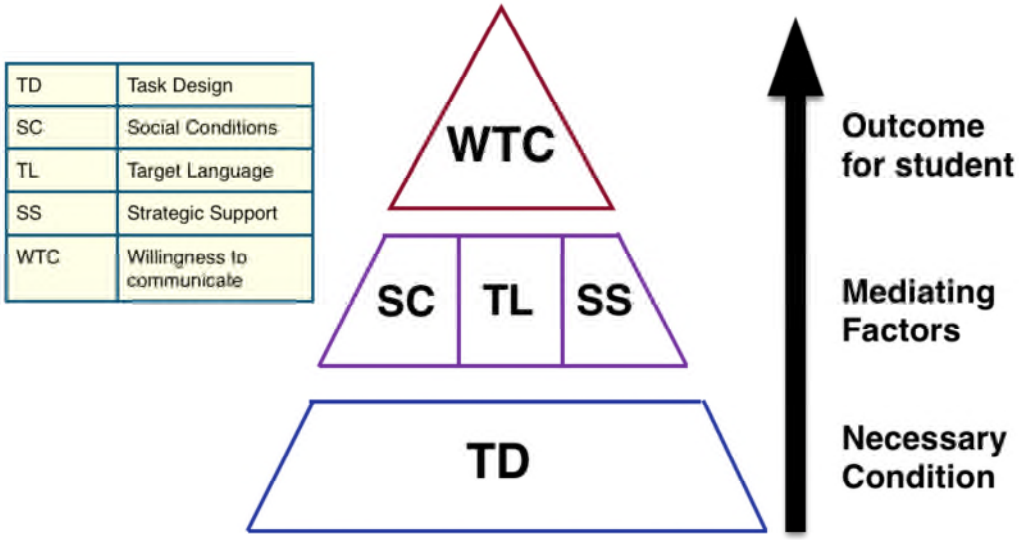
6.2. Implications for Future Practice and Research

The effectiveness of this project has relied upon an amalgam of various braids of research: the literature review, my own observations, the views of colleagues, and most importantly, the feedback from students. Accordingly, I have learnt to use, and apply, a variety of data collection methods to ensure that the broadest picture of the data is presented, leading to more robust conclusions.

In terms of my own TL use, I have learnt how vital adapting my language can be depending on the context of the learning; I now intend to deliver all consolidation tasks and routine instructions in the TL, as well as starting authentic conversations with students in the L2. I also believe that, as one of my colleagues suggested, a time investment is essential if the teacher's TL use is to have a positive effect on students' WTC. Nevertheless, I concede that grammar instruction and certain clarifications are necessary in the L1, and that the mother tongue can be a very useful resource for drawing linguistic

comparisons. More crucial still, I have learnt that my own willingness to communicate, that is, my enthusiasm in using the TL, has a profound effect on the WTC of my students, and their appreciation of the wider context of language learning. As MacIntyre et al. note: 'by engendering a *willingness* to communicate, language instruction may achieve its social and political goal of bringing cultures into contact and nations together' (1998:558).

In lieu of a full treatment of the links between the teacher's TL use and students' WTC, this project has exposed the great need for further research that examines 'how teachers' TL proficiency might play a role in student learning, specifically in the development of their speaking proficiency' (Chambless, 2012:158). Ultimately, although the teacher's TL use is significant, it is not the overriding factor in determining students' WTC, but rather one of many factors that converge to motivate or demotivate. More important to building students' linguistic confidence is in fact the nature and design of the tasks they are given. As such, the following diagram conceptualises the interrelationship between task design – which is a necessary and sufficient condition – and teacher TL use, social conditions and strategic support – which alone are insufficient variables, when aiming to increase students' WTC.



(*Figure 7) Factors affecting students' WTC in the L2*

Without the mediating factors (TL, social conditions and strategic support) the structure is weakened, given that task design is the only fundamentally necessary variable that can be employed by the teacher to increase WTC in the L2. The other teacher-influenced factors serve to enhance students' WTC. The major implication of this research for my own practice has therefore been the importance of task design on students' WTC, resonating with Baghaei's findings that 'the environment and the number of opportunities that exist to use the target language also account for WTC' (2013:1089).

Mutton & Woore's dialogic approach to task design, in which the teacher acknowledges how the nature of the task interacts with the learner's pre-existing knowledge, suggests a move towards tasks which help learners 'develop their L2 decoding proficiency' (2015:140). Such tasks would include those 'involving oral interaction with the teacher or other learners' and those 'requiring high levels of mediation by the teacher' (140). These suggestions chime with the findings of this study, because by optimizing opportunities for

students to use the L2 through ‘higher order, communicative tasks’ (146), MFL teachers will not only experience increasing spontaneity in their students’ L2 speech, but will observe an ever-growing willingness to communicate. If we allow the bolstering of such motivation and confidence to form the bedrock of our foreign language learning pedagogy, we will be far better placed to create classrooms in which authentic linguistic skills may be honed among learners, in preparation for their practical application in real-world interactions.

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8. Appendices

Appendix A

Maximal Model of Target Language use

The TL should be used by the teacher in the following circumstances:

- All greetings and general conversations
- All classroom instructions
- All explanations
- All games and activities
- All classroom administration (giving of homework, register etc.)

The L1 will be used by the teacher only in the following circumstances:

- Classroom discipline where the L2 may not be understood

- Unforeseen circumstances and emergency situations

Students will be supported in their understanding by the following techniques, employed by the teacher:

- Repetition
- Modelling
- Gestures
- Use of cognates where possible
- Use of student interpreters (e.g. Qu'est-ce que j'ai dit?, Qui peut traduire?)

Appendix B

Model Two – Home and Away Days

Out of every three lessons, two will be conducted using the maximal model employed above (see Appendix A). These will be known as ‘away’ days and will be symbolised by a French flag on the board. The third lesson of the week will be conducted using more English* and will known as ‘home’ days symbolised by a British flag on the board.

Students will be asked to keep a short journal in the back of their books in which they jot down any times when they think the TL use would be appropriate/not appropriate and why. Students will have time at the end of the lesson to make their notes, and at the end of stage 2 we will discuss their findings. There will be a short questionnaire so that those students with a lower WTC in English will also have the opportunity to express their views.

*The model employed on ‘home’ days will be as follows:

TL will be used for classroom routine phrases that students are used to (‘qu’est-ce que ça veut dire?’, quelle est la réponse?, register, key instruction phrases (écoutez, lisez, parlez etc.))

L1 will be used for grammatical explanations, anything beyond basic classroom instructions, questioning that requires an in-depth response, classroom management and assessment language.

Appendix C

Target Language Model

The following four strategies have been developed as a response to students' feedback and questionnaire answers. Each of the four strategies can be used to varying degrees by teachers in every lesson to build students' willingness to communicate in the foreign language. Bright colours and logos have been employed to make each strategy more distinctive. In conjunction with these strategies, the Teacher will use an 'optimal' amount of TL; employing the L2 for routine classroom discourse, consolidation of previous learning and most instructions, and the L1 for grammatical explanations, disciplinary issues and assessment tasks.



The 'Question of the day' is asked and answered by all students in pairs at the end of the lesson in the TL. The question always focuses on the lesson's learning objective.



Five new items of vocabulary from the lesson (with similar phonetics) are selected by the teacher. Once modelled, students practice their pronunciation.



One student is selected at the beginning of each lesson to be class translator. They are responsible for translating into and out of the L2.



Students create their own glossary of words and phrases that they use or hear frequently. It is personal to each student.

Appendix D

Teacher Interview Questions

1. How often do you use the Target Language in your classes with KS3 students? Can you give a rough percentage?

2. Do you change your use of the TL with KS4 and KS5 students?

3. Do you change your use of the target language according to the ability of the class?

4. In your opinion what are the benefits of using the TL?

5. What are the drawbacks of using the TL?

6. Are there particular times or contexts in which you feel it is more appropriate to use English?

7. What effect (negative or positive) do you think that the teachers' use of the TL has on students' willingness to speak in the second language?

Appendix E

Student Questionnaire 1 - Communicating in French

Please read the following statements and decide whether you are willing to participate in this study. You will remain anonymous throughout the process.

I give my permission for my answers to be used anonymously in the current study and understand that I will remain anonymous. ☐

I do not wish to participate in this study. ☐

Answer the following questions by ticking the box that best describes your opinion.

1. *In my lessons, I feel confident speaking French.*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know

2. *I enjoy tasks where I have the opportunity to speak in French.*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know

3. *I feel more confident speaking French when I have heard my teacher speak French.*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know

4. *I prefer the class instructions to be given in English rather than French.*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know

5. *Do you ever feel anxious when the teacher talks in French? Justify your answer.*

……
……

6. *What are the advantages of the teacher only speaking in French in lessons?*

……
……

7. *What are the advantages of the teacher speaking some English in French lessons?*

……
……

Thank you for participating!

Appendix F

Post-intervention Student Questionnaire

My Willingness to Communicate in French

Please read the following statements and decide whether you are willing to participate in this study. You will remain anonymous throughout the process.

I give my permission for my answers to be used anonymously in the current study and understand that I will remain anonymous. ☐

I do not wish to participate in this study. ☐

1. Did you prefer the home or away days?

Home ☐ Away ☐ No preference ☐

Justify your answer:
……
……

2. When is it more appropriate for the teacher to speak French?

……
……

3. When is it more appropriate for the teacher to speak English?

……
……

4. When do you feel most confident speaking French?

……
……

5. When do you feel least confident speaking French?

……
……

Thank you for participating!

Appendix G

Student Survey

Out of the four new ways of increasing our spoken French, which were the most useful:

- la question du jour

Why?

- les 5 mots

Why?

- traducteur du jour

Why?

- mon petit dictionnaire

Why?

Appendix H

Teacher Interviews on Target Language Model

1) Which was the most useful strategy in terms of students using the TL? Why?

2) Which strategy did students seem most enthused by?

3) Were there strategies that were less successful? If so, why?

4) Are there other strategies you use to enhance students' WTC, or their opportunities to use the TL?

Appendix I

Scheme of Work Outline for Interventions 1, 2 and 3

Intervention 1 – Full TL use

Lesson	Topic (School)	Linguistic/Communicative Focus
1	School subjects	Decoding texts Pronunciation
2	Opinions of school subjects	Opinion verbs Agreement of adjectives Speaking
3	Telling the time	Revision of numbers The use of 'il est…'
4	Consolidation of Telling the time	Listening skills Translation
5	French School System	Reading comprehension Critical thinking skills (making comparisons)
6	School facilities	Use of 'il y a' Pronunciation Extended writing
7	School uniform	Wider ranges of adjectives Decoding texts
8	Advantages/disadvantages of uniform	Expressing opinions Extended writing
9	Typical school day	Listening Telling the time and days of the week consolidation
10	Assessment on school topic	Assessment on reading, listening and writing

Intervention 2 – Home and Away days

Lesson	Topic (Free time)	Linguistic/Communicative Focus
1 - away	Sports	Pronunciation Decoding texts
2 - away	Opinions of sports	Opinion verbs Agreement of adjectives Speaking
3 - home	Playing sports	Conjugating regular ER verbs Jouer + au/à la/aux
4 - away	Further hobbies	Reading comprehension Adverbs of frequency

5 - away	How often?	Listening skills Translation
6 - home	Doing activities	Conjugation of faire Faire + du/de la/des
7 - away	What do I do in my free time?	Extending writing Speaking practice
8 - away	Arranging to go out	Asking questions Conjugation of vouloir Adverbs of frequency
9 - home	Free time verbs	Revision of ER verbs Conjugation of regular IR and RE verbs
10 - away	Assessment on free time topic	Assessment on reading and listening

Intervention 3 – TL Model

Lesson	**Topic (Local area)**	**Linguistic/Communicative Focus**
1	Places in town	Pronunciation Listening skills
2	Opinions of towns	Opinion verbs Agreement of adjectives Extended writing
3	Theme park	Prepositions Dictionary skills
4	My town	Conjugation of habiter Listening skills
5	Countries	Pronunication Decoding texts Translation
6	Going to various places	Conjugation of aller Aller + au/à la/aux
7	What can I do in my town?	Modal verbs Conjugation of pouvoir Infinitives practice
8	Negatives	Negative expressions with modal verbs Translation
9	Describing a town	Extended writing Expressing opinions
10	Preparation of speaking assessment	Deciphering and answering questions Speaking practice
11	Assessment on local area topic	Speaking assessment - one-to-one with teacher, students asked questions about where they live

3. I agree that my dissertation shall be available for consultation in accordance with paragraph 2 above.