Plurilingualism in University English Classes: A Case Study from Timor-Leste

Roger Barnard
University of Waikato, New Zealand

Matt Robinson
Royal University of Bhutan, Bhutan

Norberto da Costa
Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e, Timor-Leste

João da Silva Sarmiento
Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e, Timor-Leste

Abstract

Codeswitching between languages in English language classrooms has been disparaged by textbook writers, methodologists and educational policymakers in many countries.

This paper reports an action research project which examined language use in English classes in Timor-Leste. The first aim was to identify the extent of codeswitching by audio-recording four lessons and the second to explore the teachers' attitudes in follow-up interviews.

Transcript examples of codeswitching show that while one teacher used only English throughout the lesson, the others used varying amounts of Tetum, Portuguese, and Bahasa Indonesia. Extracts from interviews will report the teachers' views.

The data suggests that plurilingualism rather than multilingualism is a more appropriate term for the use of different languages in the increasingly complex linguistic context in which English is taught in many Asian classrooms. The findings also support recent published arguments (e.g., Cook, 2010) for a more positive attitude towards plurilingual use in English language classrooms.

The paper begins with an explanation of the difference between multilingualism and plurilingualism (Canagarajah, 2009), and the implications this distinction has for plurilingual use in language classes. This is followed by a brief review of recent literature outlining reasons for rejecting a monolingual approach to foreign language teaching, and outlining arguments and evidence in favour of the use of language alternation in language classes where plurilingual usage is a common social and educational phenomenon. The linguistic context

and the aims and procedures of the present study are then explained before the presentation and discussion of examples of transcript data from audio-recordings of English language lessons. A quantitative analysis of the observational data of this study shows that in this particular context, the extent of plurilingual usage by English language instructors varies from zero to more than 50% of the lesson. Moreover, in some cases, elements of three or four languages were incorporated, even within one utterance. Some of the views of the teachers expressed in semi-structured interviews are provided to indicate the range of beliefs about the value of mono-or plurilinguistic practices held by teaching staff within one department. Evidence from these interviews suggests very strongly that the extent of plurilingualism depends on the beliefs of the teachers concerned, rather than on national language policies or decisions made by senior management. The paper concludes with recommendations for teachers to undertake action research projects to explore their own classrooms in order to develop a principled approach to language use.

Plurilingualism and English Language Teaching

Multilingualism may be seen as the distinct use of different languages within a speech community; an example of this is the diglossic situation found in Eastern Malaysia, where speakers often use an indigenous language such as Bidayuh in complementary distribution to the national language, Bahasa Melayu (Dealwis, 2007; Dealwis & David, 2009). Such multilingual competence may be regarded as additive or subtractive; in the latter case, one language dominates another to the linguistic and sociocultural detriment of the dominated language and its users. By contrast, *plurilinguistic competence* is perceived as where two or more languages are integrated into an individual's personal repertoire. Thus, "[i]n plurilingual communication, English may find accommodation in the repertoire of a South Asian, combining with his or her proficiency in one or more local language" (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 7) and each language influences the other's development. Canagarajah also distinguishes plurilingualism from codeswitching, arguing that the latter "assumes bilingual competence, displaying considerable rhetorical control by the speaker" (2009, p. 8), whereas plurilingualism can be practised without bilingual competence.

This is precisely the case in Timor-Leste, where Tetum and Portuguese are the official languages and English and Bahasa Indonesia are constitutionally designated as working languages. According to The Asia Foundation (2004, p. 86), 88 percent of East Timorese people speak Tetum, 49 percent speak Indonesian, and "Portuguese is spoken by only seven percent of the public, mostly older, educated, higher income and in Dili." The Asia Foundation also reports that only one percent of respondents in the foundation's third national survey in 2002 said that they could read English (2004, p. 87), although it may be inferred that the use of English might be greater among the more educated groups, and also that English may have become more widespread in the years since the survey was carried out. With regard to the medium of education, Hattori, Gomes, Ajo, and Belo (2005, p.10) claim that "the government dictates that the language of instruction should be Portuguese, but teachers are often of the younger generation that has little Portuguese proficiency, having been taught under the Indonesian occupation" and recent empirical research in primary classrooms bears this out. Quinn (2008, 2010) has shown that neither teachers nor learners can use Portuguese proficiently and that there are insufficient pedagogic materials in Tetum; thus both parties resort to co-constructing understanding plurilingually, blending all the available languages, including varieties of Tetum and other indigenous languages. In some of these languages, both teachers and students will be fully competent, but in others - notably Portuguese, as noted above - their grasp is tenuous. As will be presented below, similar patterns of plurilingual co-construction can also be found in university English-language classes in Timor-Leste.

While alternating between languages is a very common social phenomenon in multilingual countries, the use of students' first languages in English language classrooms has tended to be frowned on by textbook writers, methodologists, and educational policymakers in many countries. The exclusive use of the target language has dominated English language teaching methodology for over a century, since the rejection in theory (but usually not in practice) of Grammar-Translation, and its replacement, successively, by the Direct Method, Audiolingualism, and Communicative Language Teaching. Mainstream Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research over the past forty years has consistently conducted experiments using only the target language, assuming the rightness of monolingual teaching and discounting the value of the use of other languages. Only two empirical SLA studies which explore the value of translation in language learning have been internationally published: one by Källkvist (2004, 2008) and another by Laufer and Girsai (2008).

However, there has been a resurgence of publications arguing that codeswitching in English language instruction can be socially, pedagogically, and educationally valuable (e.g., Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2005; Macaro, 2005, 2009a; Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Vivian Cook (2001) has argued that "treating the L1 as a classroom resource opens up several ways to use it" both by the teacher to convey meaning and organise the class, and by the students to incorporate into collaborative learning and to develop their personal learning strategies. More recently, Guy Cook (2010, p. 201) has argued that claims for monolingual teaching are "quintessentially unscientific for a number of reasons." He makes the point that "translation can help and motivate students in a variety of pedagogical contexts . . . [and] is suited to different types of teachers, and different ages and stages of students" (2010, p. xvii). Almost twenty years ago, Widdowson (1994) argued that monolingual methods of teaching English have excessively privileged the status of teachers who are first language users of English, a matter which has given rise to organisations which have sought to redress the imbalance such as the Nonnative Speaker Movement (Braine, 2010). From a wider perspective, Phillipson (1992) pointed to the connection between linguistic imperialism and the hegemony of monolingual teaching of English. Since then, he has continued to argue that the overwhelming dominance of English has led the "deplorable neglect" (Phillipson, 2009, p. 207) of indigenous languages in academic discourse as well as a pandemic threat to academic freedom. Thus, there are convincing reasons for the use of codeswitching in foreign language classes, and these are especially cogent in the increasingly multilingual world of the twenty-first century.

The Present Study

As part of an internal academic development programme, a number of action research projects were started during 2009 at the Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e, one of which is the present ongoing study. The aims of the initial phase of the project, reported here, were to explore the extent to which different languages were being used in the English Department classes and the reasons the lecturers gave for their language use. The overall language policy of the institution has been that Portuguese should be used as the medium of instruction in all faculties except Medicine, where for historical reasons the classes have been taught in Spanish, and the English Department, whose main purpose is the initial training of English language teachers for the nation's secondary schools and for which English has been considered the appropriate medium of instruction. In fact, the institution was closed down for five months in 2009 so that all staff, including the English lecturers, could attend intensive courses in Portuguese.

The four classes which were observed were intact lessons towards the beginning of the sixth semester, i.e., at start of the third year of their four-year programme. There were approximately forty students in each class, and the lessons were taught by their regular teachers, who were also members of the project team.

Data were collected in two ways: firstly, by observing four normal lessons taught in the course of a single week towards the beginning of the second semester by members of the research group, and secondly by semi-structured interviews with the observed teachers to elicit their reactions to the observational findings. The audio-recorded lessons were fully transcribed and the data have been quantitatively analysed to calculate the extent of talking time in different languages, and by classifying examples of plurilingual usage. It might be noted here that the project team had assumed that there would be a fairly consistent use of both Tetum and English across all four lessons, but were surprised by the disparity within the eventual findings.

The Observational Data

In Table 1 below, each of the four teachers has been identified by an initial, and it can be seen that the length of the intact classes they taught ranged from 40 to 80 minutes, with an average of just over one hour. Typical of language classes, a lot of talking went on in most of the lesson – a mean of 84%. There was an above-average proportion of silence in Teacher C's reading lesson and consequently proportionally less teacher talking time (TTT). In the other three classes, there was much more teacher-talk, and an overall average of 60%, which is very much in line with empirical research into classroom interaction elsewhere - indeed, according to Wragg (1999, p. 8), ever since a very early observational study (Stevens, 1912), which found that in 100 random observations of lessons, teachers talked for about 64% and pupils for 36% of the time.

Table 1

Tabulated Classroom Interaction Data

	A	B	C	D	Range	Mean
Class time	80' 0"	79' 21"	39' 50"	67' 30"	40 - 80 mins	60.7 mins
Silence	9.0%	7.0%	40.5%	10.0%	7 - 40.5%	16.0%
Total TTT	47.5%	91.0%	31.5%	69.0%	32 - 91%	60.0%
Total STT	43.5%	2.0%	28.0%	21.0%	2 - 44%	24.0%
TTT English	100.0%	36.0%	60.0%	71.5%	36 - 100%	67.0%
TTT Tetum	-	61.0%	29.0%	25.0%	0 - 61%	29.0%
TTT Bahasa Indonesia	-	2.5%	1.0%	3.0%	0 - 3%	1.6%
TT Portuguese	-	0.5%	4.0%	0.5%	0 - 4%	1.25%
TTT unintell	-	-	6.0%	-	6%	6.0%

What is interesting is the disparity among the teachers of their use of languages other than English. Teacher A used exclusively English, while all the others used varying proportions of Tetum, Bahasa Indonesia, and Portuguese. Teacher B used almost twice as much Tetum as English, and both Teachers C and D spoke Tetum at least 25% of the time. As can be seen, Bahasa Indonesia or Portuguese were used to some extent, and some of Teacher C's utterances were unintelligible. Before the teachers' views on their use of these languages are reported, we will present some of the examples of the ways in which they alternated between languages.

Codeswitching in the data from Teachers B, C, and D was frequently used for brief repetition of explanations or instructions either from English to Tetum, as in Extract A, or from Tetum to English, as in Extract B. The italicised words in parentheses are direct translations of the previous utterance in Tetum.

Extract A:

T: . . . ya translate ba Tetum (*translate into Tetum*) and find out the meaning. Which part of speech? ida be metan ne'e tensor translate ba Tetum depois ita boot sira (*those words in black colour please translate into Tetum and then you*) pronounce orally, arti ba Tetum ne'e saida (*what it means in Tetum*). (Teacher C: minutes 05'37" to 05'50")

Extract B:

T: Se la kumpriende karik husu pergunta. If you don't understand, ask question (Teacher C: minutes 07'48" to 07'50")

Another use was to explain grammatical points in more detail:

Extract C:

T: OK, we move on. "A friendly writer, a writer taught me a few words of Italian." OK. What type of sentence? You. What can you tell us?
S: Um. Past
T: Yep
S: Past. Simple past
T: Simple past. How do you know?
S: Because the
T: What is the key for a verb?
S: Oh
T: Yeah. Taught. What is simple present?
S: teach some
T: I teach someone. I taught someone. All right? So that's the key, OK? Ne'e mak imi tenki hatene, setiap kalimat, setiap sentence, imi atu halo definisaun nebe klaro, imi tenki hare mak nia vervo. Kumprende ga lae? Vervo importante, vervo imi tenki hatene. (*This is what you need to know that if you want to understand a clear definition of every sentence, you must look for the verbs. You understand or not? Verbs are very important and you must know the verbs.*) Regular verb, and . . . ?
Ss: Irregular verb
T: Regular tanba beraturan (*because it is in order*). . .
(Teacher C: minutes 16'12" to 17'17")

There were also appeals to students to help each other, and it may be argued that the use of Tetum in the following extract was intended to establish a sense of personal and social solidarity with, and among, the students.

Extract D:

T: I'll give it to you – two copies - but please make your own group to help each other out. You may copy some items. I believe you, almost all of you, are working but any case some of you are not working or working but with low income, small salary, tiny salary, please help each other. *Importante ema aprende laos hanesan balu lalehan ho rai kedas balu as lalimar matenek lahalimar, balu rabat rai sei dollar hela ne'e labele. Istuda hamutuk ne'e iha nia dimesaun social tulun malu tanba se mak hatene hodi tulun malu, o agora matenek loron ruma o hetan. . . monu ba susar ruma nia bele tulun o. (The important thing is to learn and help each other not to become arrogant. Therefore studying together as group has a social dimension and it is a social act to help one other, not to compete against one another.)* You may laugh at it, you may ridicule it, but it, it, that's the reality I think. We need to work together, we need to talk to each other. So, for those who have, please - give. Because the more you get the more you get and the more you get the more you give. Komik ga lae, (Is it that funny?) ema Belanda nia provervo ne'e hanesan (the Dutch proverb says) the more you give the more you get. (Teacher B: minutes 12'10" to 13'47")

The above extracts exemplify the use of codeswitching between utterances. There were many more examples of plurilingual codemixing *within* utterances using combinations of all four available languages: Tetum (T), Bahasa Indonesia (I), and Portuguese (P), as well as English (E).

1. *Ida metan ne'e tenke (T) translate (E) ba Tetum (T).*
[Translate the bold words into Tetum.]
2. *Single (E) ida (T) means (E) ida katak (T) single (E) ida (T).*
["Single" means one, one single means "one."]
3. *Oinsá (T) how languages change over time (E), ne'e ita ko'alia (T). . .*
[How, how languages change over time, we'll talk about this . . .]
4. *Imi taka tiha sorin (T) hmm? Close the other side (E). Se lae imi bele (T) copy (E) de'it (T).*
[Cover up the other side, eh? Close the other side. Otherwise you could just copy the answers.]
5. *Okay (E), wainhira iha (T) kata (I) ne'ebé iha livru laran (T) always, usually sometimes (E) ida ne'e uza parte (T) simple present tense (E).*
[Okay, if you find words like "always," "usually" "sometimes" in a book, it's usually simple present.]

Sometimes any two of the four available languages were alternated within an utterance:

6. *You (E) ketua (I)!*
[It should be, you, chairman! (humorous)]
7. . . . *begitu (I) ita dehan (T). . .*
[once we say . . .]

8. *Em termo de (P) meaning (E), . . .*
[In terms of meaning, . . .]
9. . . . *setelah (I) ita haree ida-ne'e sa'ida maka ita (T) menarik kesimpulan (I) hosi ne'eba konkluziun si ne'ebá (T)*
[. . . after a closer look at this, we can draw the conclusion from there, the conclusion from there]

The following examples show how three languages were merged within an utterance:

10. *Haree (T) verbo (P) iha(T) kolom (I) nia laran ne'e mak imi muda (T).*
[Look at the verbs in the column and then change them.]
11. *Spoil (E) iha mos (T) arti (I) rua (T).*
[“Spoil” also has two meanings.]
12. *Irregular verb (E) selalu berbeda-beda (I). Hanesan (T) put put put. . . (E)*
[Irregular verbs are always different, for instance “put put put”. . .]
13. *Ida ne'ebé (T) imprestar (P) ne'e bolu (T) borrow (E).*
[The one who borrows is called borrow.]
14. *Submit (E) kedas (T) compriende (P), se la (T) finish (E)*
[Submit it immediately, understand? If not, you're finished]
15. *Not Europa. What is Europa? (E) Europa e Portuguese (P). Komprende ka lae? (T)*
[Not “Europa.” What is “Europa”? “Europa” is a Portuguese word. Do you understand?]

Even in relatively short utterances, four languages are sometimes merged:

16. *Ita foin tuur (T) lima-belas menit (I) quinze minutos (P). Ha'u laos (T) karang-karang (I) de'it (T)!*
[We'll just sit down for 15 minutes. 15 minutes. I'm not just making it up!]
17. *Ne'e (T) noun (E) fatin (T) acontesemento (P), tkp (I – abbreviation for tempat kejadian peristiwa).*
[This is a noun, meaning crime scene. Abbr. The place where the event happened.]

And here, multiple codeswitching is humorously taken to an extreme:

18. *Hanesan ne'e, wainhira (T) analisa (P) didiak (T), masalahnya apa (I). La iha probleme (T), no problem (E), nao tem problema (P), hakuna matata (Swahili)!*
[Likewise, if we analyze this carefully, what looks like a problem is not a problem at all. No problem, no problem, no problem, don't worry about it!]

Tetum incorporates many loan words, and according to Teacher D, “Officially, Tetum Dili has about 60% of its vocabulary borrowed from Portuguese.” Whereas Tetum is an isolating language, in the data shown above, the following items can be fairly easily identified as Portuguese because they are inflected: *em termo de* in Extract 8, *verbo* in 10, *imprestar* in 13, *comprende* in 14, *quinze minutos* in 16, *acontesemento* in 17, and *analisa* and *problema* in 18.

However, there are less direct examples: for example, in Extract 15 (*Komprende ka lae?*), the Portuguese word has been incorporated into Tetum both graphologically and syntactically, as has *La iha probleme* in Extract 18. The same may be said about *ne’ebé iha livru laran* in Extract 5, and *hosi ne’ebá konkluzau hosi ne’ebá* in Extract 9 because both *livru* and *konkluzau* derive from Portuguese – although the latter may well have been borrowed from English. Whatever the origins of these words, they seem to have been incorporated into the teachers’ classroom language in order to facilitate interaction. As Canagarajah (2009, p. 17) points out, “Plurilingual communication works because competence does not rely solely on a form of knowledge, but rather, encompasses interaction strategies...In other words, participants have to engage with the social context, and responsively orchestrate the contextual cues for alignment.”

There is no evidence in the observational data that the three teachers’ plurilingual use caused any strained comprehension or miscomprehension among their students.

The Interview Data

In the follow-up interviews, the teachers expressed a variety of views about the languages they used in their classes. Teacher A, who used only English, argued that “Since it’s the English Department, English should be used as much as possible . . . We need to get students in the habit of using English.” He also added that “Students in this class are of a higher proficiency, since they are in the 6th semester and they will become English teachers, and lecturers must provide a model for students.” In contrast, Teacher B (who taught the same students in a different lesson) said that “If I speak Tetum, students may be more comfortable to speak or participate in lessons.” Also, despite the monolingual policy of the institution and department, he argued that

we need to avoid linguistic imperialism by promoting and developing Tetum, which is an index of our national identity. Currently, Tetum is Number Two to Portuguese educationally – but I believe Tetum should be taught and used in all domains, including the English Department. (Teacher B)

Teacher C explained that “we are multilingual people, and so are our students and I use code-switching for ease of understanding for students, for example contextual solutions to content.” Economy of use is also a factor in choosing which language to use; for example, he added, “to say the number 1999, English is easy to use [*nineteen ninety-nine*], but in Indonesian or Portuguese one has to say ‘one thousand, nine hundred...’ etc.” Teacher D echoed the first point above by saying “I feel it’s easy for students,” and said that he repeated words or phrases in other languages, for socialising, humour (it was he who included a Swahili phrase in Extract 18), or to keep the students’ attention.

Sometimes students haven't eaten breakfast or lunch before class, it's hot, and the classroom is uncomfortable, etc. It's very important that teachers find ways to engage students if they want their teaching to be successful. Also, teachers often repeat words / phrases in a few languages to ensure students' understanding. (Teacher D)

Because he is a multilingual speaker himself, Teacher D explained that "code-mixing just comes out automatically because it's the way I think." Although Teacher B is competent in Portuguese, he used that language sparingly, explaining

I read Phillipson and Canagarajah (as well as Calvet) and I feel that it's good to use Tetum not to resist English but Portuguese, and to show that there is something wrong with our language policy and planning. I believe that it's not languages that kill each other but it's the policymakers and politicians who do the damage. (Teacher B)

Teacher C used Portuguese somewhat more frequently, and when asked why this might be, he said "I feel comfortable speaking Portuguese when I need to." When asked about the extent of his codeswitching, Teacher D replied, "This is a dilemma because should one borrow from Indonesian, English, or Portuguese? Also, *which* Tetum should be spoken? Officially, Tetum Dili has about 60% of its vocabulary borrowed from Portuguese."

This raises another point - that the national language, Tetum, has a number of varieties, and the one used in the capital city is in many ways distinctly different from those used in other areas of the country. As Teacher D said, while the Dili variety incorporated a large number of lexical items from Portuguese, this would not be true of varieties spoken in rural areas; those closer to the border with Indonesia are more heavily influenced by Bahasa. These varieties, of course, are the results of historical as well as geographical factors, and languages do not stand still. The growing number of English-speaking workers, military and police personnel, and aid agents in Timor-Leste will undoubtedly enhance the impact of the English language on the future development of Tetum. Thus, while many Timorese students are indeed users of different languages, their competence in any of the codes will be variable and unstable; for example, their spoken and aural competence in Portuguese is less than that of their teachers – as, of course, is their competence in English. The present cadre of teachers learnt English as a third or fourth (or fifth) language and were themselves educated in Bahasa Indonesia. Future generations of teachers will not have the same productive competence in that language, although it is likely that their reading skills in Bahasa will be maintained until the majority of school and university textbooks are produced in one or the other (or both) of the official languages. Which variety of Portuguese or Tetum will become standardised in the education system remains to be seen. Given this inevitably unstable linguistic situation, plurilingualism rather than multilingualism is likely to be an enduring feature of life, work, and education in Timor-Leste.

What emerges from these interviews is that all of the teachers had reasonable grounds for their respective positions. Teacher A not only strictly adhered to the department's language policy, but also explained that he considered the students in his class were sufficiently competent in the target language to follow exclusive English-medium instruction. In strong contrast to this pedagogical point, Teacher B (teaching many of the same students) adduced political reasons for using Tetum in his class, and did so to clearly express his sociopolitical views to the class. The other two teachers alternated between available languages on pragmatic, rather than

principled, grounds. They pointed out that plurilingualism was a normal communicative practice for them and their students, both inside and outside the classroom, and switching between languages simply made classroom interaction easier. To the extent that these teachers' explanations for their respective language use can be considered reasonable, the question arises as to whether it is necessary for teachers to strictly conform to any institutional language policy, whether monolingual or otherwise. Apart from the possibility of a threat to the academic liberty of university lecturers to teach in the way they consider best, it should be clear that the issue of effective teaching should be based not on the specific medium of instruction which is adopted, but on how teachers and learners use whichever language to enhance the quality of learning that occurs in and beyond the classroom.

Reflections and Implications

There are inevitably a number of limitations of a small-scale action research project such as this: only four classes and their teachers were observed (and the latter group interviewed) at a particular time in one institutional setting. Despite these limitations, some interesting data were systematically collected and the findings carefully analysed. Only one of the four teachers held to a strictly English-only practice in his classroom, while the others used four languages to a greater or lesser extent.

We do not feel that there is actually a problem in regard to the specific issue of plurilingual use in our classrooms. As Canagarajah says "plurilingual competence does not mean that students cannot produce 'standard' language for formal production when the context requires it" (2009, p. 20). Rather, teachers and students should call upon their various linguistic resources to negotiate meaning to achieve this aim - a point made strongly by both Vivian Cook (2001) and Guy Cook (2010). After all, second and foreign language classrooms, like any other, are intended to promote meaningful learning and the exclusive use of the target language may hinder the negotiation and co-construction of understanding. It seems to us that teachers should use their professional judgment about which language(s) to use, and for what purposes, in the classroom in order to bring about optimal learning conditions for their students. If the teachers' judgments and alternative views can be openly and collegially discussed – although not necessarily shared – they could and should inform language policies, at least at the local level. As was noted earlier, the official institutional policy has been that students in the English Department should use exclusively English both in the classroom and across the campus; this policy has now been somewhat relaxed.

Participating in the action research project opened our eyes to the nature of language use in our classrooms and of our colleagues, and the various reasons given for both monolingual and plurilingual usage. More importantly, perhaps, it gave us an opportunity in our busy professional lives to understand the extent of convergence and divergence of beliefs and practices among us. As in many other relatable contexts across Asia, most of the English lecturers in East Timor work part-time at the university and need to seek employment elsewhere in order to maintain a reasonable standard of living. This means that it is difficult to meet to collaboratively discuss professional issues to maintain an effective community of practice (Wenger, 1998) within which colleagues can share experiences, learn from each other, and co-construct practical solutions to professional issues. We feel that this action research project and others, which were going on at the same time, have enabled us to maintain momentum in our emerging community of practice so that we can continue to identify problematic areas within our working context and explore possible solutions.

One of the implications of empirically-based projects such as this is the need for teachers to become aware of their plurilinguistic practices – and those of their students – and to understand and explain the reasons for their choice of language(s) within and beyond their own classrooms. Engaging in such reflective practice (Farrell, 2004, 2007) and conducting modest and collaborative action research projects can empower the teachers involved (Burns, 1999, 2011). In this way, individuals may feel justified in either maintaining or revising their own classroom language practices – whether monolingual or plurilingual. Collectively, a group of teachers can decide their own standards based upon empirical investigation in their own classrooms and the growing body of evidence from case studies elsewhere (e.g., Barnard, *in press*; Turnbull & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009) as well as recent theoretical arguments by scholars such as Canagarajah (2009) and Macaro (2005, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). Thus armed, teachers can engage the institutional policymakers in constructive dialogue about the optimal balance between monolingual and plurilingual pedagogy within their specific contexts.

Author Note

Roger Barnard, Applied Linguistics, University of Waikato, New Zealand; Matt Robinson, Institute of Language and Culture Studies, Royal University of Bhutan, Bhutan; Norberto da Costa, English Department, Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa’e, Timor-Leste; and João da Silva Sarmiento, English Department, Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa’e, Timor-Leste.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Roger Barnard, PhD, Senior Lecturer, Applied Linguistics, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, 2430 Hamilton, New Zealand. Email: rbarnard@waikato.ac.nz

References

- Antón, M., & DiCamilla, F. J. (1998). Socio-cognitive functions of L1 collaborative interaction in the L2 classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 54(3), 314-342. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.54.3.314>
- Asia Foundation. (2004). *Law and justice in East Timor: A survey of citizen awareness and attitudes regarding law and justice in East Timor*. Dili, Timor-Leste. Retrieved from http://asiafoundation.org/pdf/easttimor_lawsurvey.pdf
- Barnard, R. (Ed.). (in press). *Codeswitching in university English language classes: Case studies and perspectives from Asian contexts*. Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Braine, G. (2010). *Nonnative speaker English teachers: Research, pedagogy, and professional growth*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A. (2011). Action research in the field of second language teaching and learning. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (Vol. II, pp. 237-253). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Canagarajah, S. (2009). The plurilingual tradition and the English language in South Asia. *AILA Review*, 22(1), 5-22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/aila.22.02can>
- Cook, G. (2010). *Translation in language teaching*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Cook, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57(3), 402-423. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.57.3.402>
- Dealwis, C. (2007). A small tree below the rainforest canopies seeking for recognition: Bidayuh language in schools. In M. K. David (Ed.), *Language and human rights: Focus on Malaysia* (pp. 234-250). Serdang, Malaysia: UPM Press.
- Dealwis, C., & David, M. K. (2009). Shifting codes and footing in the reading classroom. *International Sociological Association RC25 Language and Society Newsletter*, 5. Retrieved from <http://www.crisaps.org/newsletter/summer2009/Dealwis%5B1%5D.pdf>
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2004). *Reflective practice in action: 80 reflection breaks for busy teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2007). *Reflective language teaching: From research to practice*. London, England: Continuum.
- Gumperz, J. J., & Cook-Gumperz, J. (2005). Making space for bilingual communicative practice. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 2(1), 1-23.
- Hattori, R., Gomes, M., Ajo, F. & Belo, N. (2005). The ethnolinguistic situation in East Timor. *East-West Center Working Papers*, 20. Retrieved from: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/IGSCwp020.pdf>
- Källkvist, M. (2004). The effect of translation exercises versus gap exercises on the learning of difficult L2 structures: Preliminary results of an empirical study. In K. Malmkjaer (Ed.), *Translation in undergraduate degree programmes* (pp. 163-184). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Källkvist, M. (2008). L1-L2 translation versus no translation: A longitudinal study of focus-on-forms within a meaning-focused curriculum. In L. Ortega & H. Byrnes (Eds.), *The longitudinal study of advanced L2 capacities*. London, England: Routledge.
- Laufer, B., & Girsai, N. (2008). Form-focused instruction in second language vocabulary learning: A case for contrastive analysis and translation. *Applied Linguistics*, 29(4), 694-716. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/amn018>
- Macaro, E. (2005). Codeswitching in the L2 classroom: A communication and learning strategy. In E. Llurda (Ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp. 63-84). New York, NY: Springer.

- Macaro, E. (2009a). Teacher use of codeswitching in the second language classroom. In M. Turnbull & J. Dailey O'Cain (Eds.), *First language use in second and foreign language learning* (pp. 35-49). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Macaro, E. (2009b) Teacher codeswitching in L2 classrooms: Exploring 'optimal use.' In T. Yoshida, H. Imai, Y. Nakata, A. Tajino, O. Takeuchi, & K. Tamai (Eds.), *Researching language teaching and learning: An integration of practice and theory*. Oxford, England: Peter Lang.
- Macaro, E. (Ed.). (2009c). *Continuum companion to second language acquisition*. London, England: Continuum.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, R. (2009). *Linguistic imperialism continued*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Quinn, M. (2008). Choosing languages for teaching in primary school classrooms. In J. Earnest, M. Beck, & L. Connell (Eds.), *Rebuilding education & health in a post-conflict transitional nation: Case studies from Timor-Leste* (pp. 23-38). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Quinn, M. (2010). Using talk in classrooms: Constructing meaning. In M. Leach, N. C. Mendes, A. B. da Silva, A de Costa Ximenes & B. Boughton (Eds.), *Hatene kona ba, compreender, understanding, mengerti Timor-Leste* (pp. 235-241). Proceedings of the 2nd Timor-Leste Studies Association Conference, Dili, Timor-Leste, July 2009.
- Stevens, R. (1912). The question as a measure of efficiency in instruction. *Teachers College, Columbia University Contributions to Education*, 48. New York: NY: Columbia University.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (2000). Task based second language learning: The uses of the first language. *Language Teaching Research*, 4, 251-274.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/136216880000400304>
- Turnbull, M., & Dailey-O'Cain, J. (Eds.). (2009). *First language use in second and foreign language learning*. Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1994). The ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(2), 377-389.
- Wragg, E. C. (1999). *An introduction to classroom observation* (2nd ed.). London, England: Routledge.