

Using the target language in the foreign language classroom

English as a foreign language (EFL) at Dutch secondary schools

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Preface

Learning a foreign or second language is a process that is highly dependent of the context in which it occurs. Ask some people on the street, and they will tell you that the most efficient and effective way of learning a foreign language is by going to the country or area where this language is spoken and live there for a while. This way, language learners are bound to learn the language because it is all around, and there simply is no other way to communicate and reach their goals. In second language acquisition literature, this relation between context and learning has been confirmed. Studies have shown that in order for language learners to acquire foreign language skills, it is necessary to be surrounded by the target language, and to be in situations in which they need to use it.

Taking this into consideration, soon the question arises if school setting foreign language classes could ever meet this criterion. It may not be coincidental that people who learned French in secondary school, refer to the poor quality of their French by naming it ‘high school French’, or ‘school-Frans’ in Dutch. Learning a foreign language in a classroom setting often does not provide a large amount of target language speech to the learners, and when it does, it is often very unnatural, classroom language. Also, foreign language classes provide very restricted possibilities for target language communication, partly because communication is often established by using the mother tongue instead. According to many second language acquisition theorists, it would therefore be best that not the mother tongue, but the target language is adopted as language of instruction and communication in class. However, for the foreign language teaching practice this is not always easy to apply. Many (former) secondary school pupils tell that they hardly ever use the target language in class, except for maybe with that one teacher in school.

During the last decades, using the target language in the foreign language class has been widely discussed and promoted, not only within academic research, but also in educational publications and courses. As we will see later in this thesis, studies measuring the actual amount of target language use in class presented a somewhat disappointing teaching practice, in which the target language is not used as much as desired by SLA theorists. So even though many second language acquisition (SLA) theories point to the direction that speaking the target language in class is a very effective tool in teaching a foreign language, in many (monolingual) foreign language classes this does not seem to be the standard methodology. This master thesis aims to find out more about this apparent discrepancy between SLA theories and the educational practice in the Netherlands considering the use of the target language as language of instruction and communication (TL = CL) in the foreign language classroom. For reasons that will be explained later, the focus of this thesis will be on teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) at secondary schools in the Netherlands.

This thesis is structured as follows. First of all, in the introduction (chapter 1) a theoretical framework will set the stage for the principle of TL = CL, considering a) empirical studies on natural language learning, b) the influence of the language learning context, c) the benefits of TL = CL for the language learning mechanism and finally, d) the use of TL = CL in the Netherlands. Then, account will be given of practical research that was done amongst secondary school teachers of English throughout the Netherlands about the target language use in their classes. By means of a survey, teachers were asked to give indications of the extent to which the target language is used in their classes, and of the considerations behind their choices for or against the use of the target language in class. (Chapters 2 and 3) Finally,

these results are discussed in light of the theoretical background and the methodology that was chosen (Chapter 4). It turned out that the amount of target language that is used in a Dutch secondary school class is highly dependent of its context; both the level of education (VMBO, HAVO, VWO) and type of lesson element turned out to be influential.

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Furthermore, I would like to thank the 45 EFL teachers of Dutch secondary schools who filled out the questionnaire and gave me insight in the educational practice of today, regarding the use of English in class. I really enjoyed reading their elaborate comments. Finally, I would like to thank my friends Dorinde Winkelaar-van Loopik and Lisette Kamphof-Evink, who handed me ideas and review books for designing the educational research part of this thesis.

Everyone who attended secondary school in the Netherlands has come in touch with (modern) foreign language education, as I have myself. In university, I even chose one of the modern foreign languages, namely English, as a major. In the course of my study, I became increasingly interested in the way people acquire second languages after the age of 12, and how education should be designed so that it facilitates second language acquisition in the best possible way. Hopefully, I have been able to present my findings in an enthusiastic and informative way.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The use of the target language in class can be viewed from many different theoretical perspectives. First of all, TL = CL is often considered crucial to a language learning context that is as natural and effective as possible. (1.1) Furthermore, from second language acquisition theories it follows that TL = CL contains many benefits for the language learning mechanism, but also some dangers can be distinguished. (1.2) Finally, some small-scale studies that examined the use of TL = CL in Dutch modern foreign language teaching found that teachers apply this principle with differing frequencies. (1.3) From this theoretical background, research questions were phrased for practical research in Dutch secondary schools, considering the use of the target language in EFL class. (1.4)

1.1 The social context of foreign language learning

For secondary school pupils, learning (modern) foreign languages is part of the mandatory school curriculum, meaning that pupils' foreign language class results have consequences for their overall school success. Therefore, in many cases students do not have the desire to acquire the foreign language in itself, but are driven by the desire to pass the course, as is the case with many other school subjects (instrumental motivation). The context for second language acquisition (SLA) in secondary schools is therefore a very formal one, with the school being a rather unnatural language learning environment. In a more natural language learning environment, often less instrumental but more intrinsic motivation is present among the learners, which is the personal desire of the learner to learn. (Shekan, 1989) Motivation is partly determined by the context in which a language is learned. (Appel, 2008) In SLA research, the contexts in which second languages are acquired are found to be important to the course of the learning process, and should therefore not be overlooked.

Before some empirical studies will be reviewed considering these contexts and their effects on the language learning process, we will have a look at Ellis (2008), who roughly distinguishes two different settings in which second languages can be learned. These can be summarized in a table as follows (table 1):

	Natural setting	Educational setting
Learning style	Informal learning: 'Learning results from direct participation and observation without any articulation of the underlying principles or rules.'	Formal learning: 'take[s] place through conscious attention to rules and principles.'
Way of having contact with target language	Through contact with (native) speakers of the L2	Only in educational settings (language class, books)
Learning emphasis	Social significance of what is or should be learnt.	Mastery of the subject matter. The subject matter is treated as a decontextualized body of knowledge.

Examples of social contexts in which language learning takes place	At home, in the workplace, in business meetings, at international conferences, through the media, in exchange programs	At schools and universities, through adult education in for example the workplace or spare time, in computer-mediated environments, in exchange programs
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Table 1: Two different contexts for SLA as distinguished by Ellis (2009, p.288,289) The social context example of ‘exchange programs’ can be found in both columns, since a second language learner can participate in such a program with the conscious goal to improve or master the language spoken in the target country, but having arrived, the language learner is able to acquire the language in various natural settings.

As Table 1 shows, the different language learning settings consequently involve different learning styles, ways of having contact with the target language, learning emphases, and social contexts. Of course the different learning styles are not exclusive to the learning contexts to which they belong. In the natural setting, learners are able to make conscious choices in their learning process by focusing on particular aspects of the language, for example if they want to improve their vocabulary regarding kitchen supplies. And in the educational setting, the adapted learning style can depend greatly on the pedagogical approach. More traditional approaches focused mainly on understanding the grammatical system, whether more innovative pedagogical approaches actually encourage informal learning by attaching greater value to communication. Krashen, who has been very influential in the SLA field, phrased it this way:

“We teach language best when we use it for what it was designed for: communication.” (Krashen, 1981: 10)

One of the greatest differences between a natural setting and an educational setting such as can be found in Dutch secondary schools, is the need for language learners to actually make use of the target language. Whether the immigrant in a natural learning environment is bound to use the target language in order to survive, so to speak, in educational settings this necessity seems to be virtually absent. However, foreign language teachers are in the exclusive position to influence this, in order to make the language learning process of their pupils more ‘lifelike’. According to much prescriptive teaching literature, one important way of doing this is by adopting the target language as the language of instruction and the language of communication in class (TL = CL). This way, the learners will be surrounded by the target language in the classroom, just as an immigrant would be in a foreign country; on the one hand the target language will be heard much more, and on the other hand the target language becomes the a means to achieve personal goals, which can range from understanding exercises to being allowed to go to the restroom, for example. When the necessity of understanding and using the target language is increased, this can contribute to the student’s natural acquisition process, because many aspects of this more lifelike manner of being exposed to the target language can prompt language acquisition.

This is confirmed by few empirical studies on the effects of educational language learning contexts in which the target language is used for communication and/or instruction. Crucial here is the role of the teacher, who can decide how natural and communicative the

educational setting is. A study by Meng and Wang (2011), in which small-scale class observations were done, showed the enormous influence that teacher's language in EFL class has on their student's language acquisition. The teacher was found to be in the position to evoke learner's output and thereby developing their learner's communicative ability.

However, not only communicative ability is benefited by communication, but also learning grammatical target forms can be improved by classroom interaction and language output. A study by Wang and Castro (2010) showed that Chinese learners of English improved their passivization of English sentences as a direct benefit from classroom communication between a) students and students and b) students and teachers.

Furthermore, a longitudinal study by De Bot (2006) in TTO (bilingual education in the Netherlands, mostly Dutch and English) showed that the use of English as language of instruction in the first 4 years of secondary school had positive effects on their oral English skills and reading comprehension. Compared to a control group from regular secondary education, these TTO pupils scored higher for these language skills, and no negative effects were found on their mother tongue Dutch. Of course, many schools in the Netherlands are not bilingual schools, such as this control group. However, they do teach English, and are therefore in the opportunity to use English as language of instruction and communication for at least for these few hours a week that their pupils are in English class.

1.2 Using the target language in class and the language learning mechanism

Now of course the question is what conditions for language learning are distinguished by SLA theories that are fulfilled by using the target language for instruction and communication in the classroom. Why would it all be functional to the language learning mechanism to apply $TL = CL$? To answer this question, a distinction should be made between the users of the target language in class, namely the teacher and the learners. Both situations provide different learning opportunities for the language learner. Namely, a classroom situation in which the teacher uses the target language as language of instruction provides the learner of input and intake. This is one of the main reasons that is often used in advising teachers to apply $TL = CL$. (i.e. Westhoff, 2008; Davies, 1980; Ipek, 2009; Ellis, 2004) As will be clear from paragraph 1.2.1, exposure to the target language is an absolute prerequisite for people to learn a language. If this does not happen for a language learner in the language classroom, the question arises where else it would, considering the social context of language learning in secondary school, as described before.

A classroom situation in which the target language is used for communication between the teacher and the learner, and between the learners and their peers, gives the learner opportunities for interaction in the target language. Interaction contains some basic conditions that need to be met in order to reach (oral) proficiency in a foreign language: again there is input available (1.2.1), but there is also the opportunity to produce target language output (1.2.2), and to receive feedback by which TL use can be encouraged and further improved (1.2.3). The importance of communicative exchanges as such for developing the target language has been confirmed by much SLA research, i.e. Pica (1994), Long (1996), Willis (1996), Long and Robinson (1998), Ellis (2003) and Nunan (2004). All these aspects come together in the interaction hypothesis (1.2.4.). In particular cases, using the target language in the classroom can also have drawbacks. Using the mother tongue can be favored over the target language, for reasons of effectiveness and efficiency. This will be discussed in paragraph 1.2.5.

1.2.1 Receiving input and intake

One similarity between L1 and L2 learners is that they cannot acquire the target language unless they receive *input*; the language learner needs to be exposed to the target language extensively. (i.e. Ellis, 2004, 2008; Spolsky, 2008; Krashen, 1981; Scheffler, 2008; Ipek, 2009; Westhoff, 2008) Input can be defined as "language which a learner hears or receives and from which he or she can learn." (Richards et al., 1989, p. 143) This learning aspect is crucial, since learners do not automatically acquire everything they are exposed to; more is needed in order for the input to become *intake*, as will become clear later on. 'Receiving language', as Richard's definition phrases, can be established both auditory and visually, so both through hearing and reading. For the purpose of this thesis, however, spoken input is the main focus.

1.2.1.1 Quantity and quality of input

The Input Hypothesis that was proposed by Stephen Krashen (1981) has been very influential in SLA theories. The hypothesis states that natural input is essential to second language acquisition, just as it is for first language acquisition. In language acquisition research, this hypothesis has been confirmed for example by positive correlations that were found between the amount of input, in which both quantity and frequency are relevant, and (the speed of) language learning. (L1A: Ellis and Wells, 1980; L2A: Ellis, 2008)¹ Comparing the amount of exposure to the target language in L1A and L2A, it can be easily concluded that foreign language learners who are learning the target language in a classroom are much more constrained than L1 learners are. (Davies, 1980)

Nevertheless, not only the quantity, but also the quality of input is important. An important difference between L1A and L2A is that learners of L2 have already developed a certain understanding of the world, accompanied by the necessary linguistic skills. Second language input is therefore most effective when it is rich, extensive, elaborate and diverse. As regards content, input should also be attractive, since the more meaningful it is to the language learner, the more encouraging it is for language acquisition. (Westhoff, 2008) Language spoken by natives, even though this will not always be flawless, is often said to be the best input a language learner can get. (Saville-Troike, 2008) However, input should in any case be comprehensible to the language learner (Krashen, 1981), because otherwise it will literally go in at one ear and out at the other. (See paragraph 1.2.1.3)

For second language acquisition in a foreign language classroom, both these requirements cannot be fully met; not only are L2 learners exposed to the target language less than needed (smaller quantity), but the input they receive is also from a poorer quality, since a classroom context lacks diversity, and the teachers and peers are often non-native speakers of the target language. (Rothman, 2010) The quantity and quality of second language input would be much better, for example, in a situation in which the L2 learner is immersed in a living environment where L2 is the dominant language.

¹ Of course, it is assumed that children are assisted in their L1 development by some internal mechanism in the brain. This would give L1 learners a great advantage over learners of L2. However, for both learners of L1 and L2, it applies that the internal mechanism needs to be 'fed' by linguistic input in order to learn the language. (Spolsky, 1989, p.187) For second language acquisition, adults have the assistance of a general problem-solving mechanism to structure the received input. This cognitive mechanism develops during later childhood and is used for playing chess, for example. The question whether adults still have access to a special innate capacity for language learning, such as children do, has not yet been resolved. (Scheffler, 2008))

1.2.1.2 From input to intake

So *input*, in short, consists of ‘whatever sample of L2 learners are exposed to’ (Saville-Troike, 2008, p.189), whereas *intake* is ‘input which is attended to’ (p.190). Since foreign language learners do not automatically take in all L2 language samples they are exposed to, this second concept is of great importance. In the literature, two types of requirements are distinguished that need to be met for input to become useful to the learner. Firstly, useful input should be understandable to the learner and at the same time it should challenge them in their learning process (*comprehensible input*), Secondly, for the acquisition of a particular aspect of the input or a certain linguistic item the input should be noticeable to the learner (*Noticing Hypothesis*, par.1.2.1.4).

1.2.1.3. Comprehensible input

Starting with the comprehensible input, the best type of input for a second language learner would be the input that is shaped *i+1*. (Krashen, 1981) The ‘*i*’ stands for *interlanguage*, which is the particular stadium of SLA in which the learner finds himself. The ‘+1’ means that the level of input should be slightly ahead of the interlanguage of the language learner. This way, the input is not only understandable, but the language learner is also challenged to grow in his language learning process, by taking comprehensible steps; neither too big, nor too small.

Even though this may sound reasonable, in foreign language class, teachers have to deal with a great diversity among their students, which complicates determining ‘the *i*’ and the size of ‘+1’. For the teacher, this will require a lot of experience with each particular group. There are many ways to make input as comprehensible as possible for pupils, and a few of them are summed up by Plante (2009). She advises teachers to:

- Add visual aids, such as translations of (parts of the input) on the blackboard, hand gestures, posters on the wall, hand-outs, etc;
- Limit the amount of new words to give the students time to ‘save’ the new information into their long-term memory;
- Adjust speech tempo (!). From her research this appeared to be a very hard but crucial aspect of comprehensible input in which teachers have to train themselves. This involves not only slowing down the speech tempo, but also adding pauses between sentences or sentence parts, especially when the particular input contains ‘new’ elements.

Finally, it would help the learner if the offered input is of interest to the learner, because this increases the learner’s motivation to understand what is said or written. (Westhoff, 2008)

1.2.1.4. Noticing hypothesis

In order for the learner to filter a particular linguistic item (vocabulary, grammar) from the context of the input, this target item needs to be noticed by the learner. Only then the brain can process it successfully, and the particular linguistic aspect can become intake. (Richards, 1990) Richards mentions the following conditions under which input is most likely to become intake (p.143):

- Expectations toward the input: the particular linguistic item that should be noticed has to be interpretable in light of the context, and it has to be salient, which means that it has to stand out from the given input. Instruction can shape these expectations;
- The frequency with which a certain linguistic item occurs in the input;

- The already available language proficiency which may be fundamental to the noticing of a non-acquired item, in combination with the processing ability of a learner, which is part of the language learning aptitude;
- The task demands: the focus of a particular act, whether this is in a formal or informal language learning process, can determine whether a particular item will be noticed by the language learner or not.

As these conditions show, a second language teacher can play an important role in the noticing process, by channelling the attention that needs to be paid to particular aspects of the input.

Fundamental to the Noticing Hypothesis is also that there should be a focus on the content of the input (indicated by the rather confusing term ‘focus on form’), before it can actually become intake. Comprehensible input will not enter the long-term memories of language learners unless they understood the language they were exposed to. The best way to achieve this is by making the input lifelike, functional and in accordance with the learner’s interests. (Westhoff, 2008)

As was mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, in the classroom, input is not only created by the teacher’s production, but also by that of the learner’s peers, even though it may not be native-like in the beginning. Therefore, it is important that the target language is not only made language of instruction, but also language of mutual communication. On top of that, mutual communication in the target language can provide language learners of new opportunities to produce themselves as well. The next paragraph (1.2.2) will go into this.

1.2.2 Producing output

For many people, it is one of the most uneasy parts of learning a foreign language: having to speak in this language that is not their mother tongue. It involves applying all these rules for grammar that have (or have not yet) been acquired, utilizing foreign vocabulary, producing new speech sounds, etc. Even though output is also produced by writing, speaking is the main focus of this thesis and will therefore receive the most attention in this section.

The role of output in language acquisition is a relatively new field within SLA research, since the function of output had been underestimated for a long time. Krashen (1981) states that *theoretically* speaking, output is not essential to second language acquisition, because comprehensible input is the only requisite for a learner to acquire a language.² He supported his claim by giving examples of people who were found to understand a language perfectly well, without having to speak it ever (i.e. an American Indian tribe, and a child having congenital dysarthria). Krashen also compared second language acquisition to first language acquisition, in which children usually go through a silent period, in which they don’t speak, but do acquire their first language.

In light of these examples and other similar SLA theories, output was merely the product of the internal language acquisition device; the result of what this system has learned, as a consequence of receiving enough comprehensible input. (Swain, 2005) Today, increasingly more SLA researchers are convinced that also the production of output is necessary to gain full competence in a foreign language. (Ellis, 2004) Output is now seen more as an element of the SLA process, instead of just the outcome of it. This is partly result of Swain’s Output

² Krashen makes use of a strict distinction between ‘acquisition’ and ‘learning’, with which ‘acquisition’ refers to an unconscious learning process, and ‘learning’ to a conscious learning process. In the ideal language class, according to Krashen, learners should acquire the language through acquisition, and not through learning.

Hypothesis (1995), which states that producing language can be part of the second language learning process under particular circumstances. Shekan (1998) summarized the following aspects of output that can be found in the literature that are facilitative of foreign language acquisition:

- Output can elicit feedback from others, with which the learners can improve their second language skills; (more on feedback in paragraph 2.3)
- Output forces syntactic processing, which means that the learner must pay attention to the grammar, and can test out hypotheses with it;
- Producing a fair amount of output facilitates applying the existing knowledge of the language in a more automatized manner;
- Producing output helps the learner to develop discourse skills;
- Producing a fair amount of output gives learners the opportunity to move away from ‘standard conversations’ and develop their own ‘personal voice’ into a conversation.

Another argument of Swain (1995) why output would be useful is that learners can recognize gaps in their knowledge, which would help them to be more attentive to yet unacquired knowledge. The hypothesis states that in a natural learning environment, language learners are motivated to fill the gaps in their knowledge as they come across them in everyday situations in which they are forced to communicate and provide for their needs. This argument, however, cannot be directly converted to a classroom situation in secondary schools, because the social context of language learning is totally different here. SLA in this context is often established by instrumental motivation, and is therefore highly dependant of success, not failure. (Shekan, 1989) In order for a lack of knowledge to become a learner’s motivation to learn, the learner should be intrinsically motivated as well. It can hardly be expected from all secondary school pupils to be intrinsically motivated like this, because their second language learning process is ‘only’ part of a mandatory school curriculum. Therefore, it is important that learners are extrinsically motivated by stressing their acquired abilities, for example by complimenting them on progressions in their SLA process. As paragraph 1.2.3 will show, this type of positive feedback has proven effective for SLA.

Another helpful aspect of learner’s output is that it can serve the teachers in determining the i+1 level of their pupils. Interestingly enough, Krashen (1981), advocate of the language learner’s silent period, presumes that caretaker’s speech (see par.1.2.4) is adapted to the speech samples that children produce, or in other words, the child’s output. In that case, children’s output is bound to be present. Likewise, teachers can adapt the provided input for their pupils to their own output. (Saville-Troike, 2008)

Finally, it is important to keep in mind the goals of second language education. In modern foreign language curricula, it is expected from learners that they develop both receptive and productive abilities. They should not only understand the foreign language passively, but should also be able to apply the language actively, through speaking and writing. This goal reveals itself for example in the oral exam that all pupils should pass near the end of their secondary school careers. Therefore, it cannot be the case that language learners are expected to stay silent until their understanding of the language is highly developed.

1.2.3. Receiving feedback

As was mentioned in the previous paragraph, output can elicit feedback from others, which language learners can use to improve their output in the future. As actual improvement may need several repetitions of comparable utterances and responses that contain feedback (Mackey, 2006), it is important that language learners regularly find themselves in situations where they can or need to produce output on which feedback is given. Situations as such can be excellently created in a foreign language classroom by using the target language for communication.

In the literature, feedback is often divided in positive and negative feedback. Positive feedback approves of correct foreign language use, while negative feedback corrects incorrect foreign language use. Both types of feedback have been found to be effective for second language acquisition. (Positive: Reigel, 2005; negative: Ellis, Loewen and Erlam, 2006) The study by Ellis et al. (2006) tested two types of feedback on the acquisition of the past tense - *ed*, and the group that received explicit, negative feedback turned out to have better results on this grammatical item. Furthermore, negative feedback is often split up in implicit and explicit corrective feedback. In case of implicit feedback, a mistake in language production is not explicitly called attention to. An example of this type of feedback is a recast; rephrasing the preceding statement by substituting the mistakes by correct utterances, (Mackey, 2006) as can be seen in the following example:

Speaker 1: *And in the kitchen (...) on shef*
Speaker 2: *On the shelf. I have it on the shelf* • recast
Speaker 1: *In the shelf, yes OK.*
(Mackey, 2003: 37)

When explicit feedback is given, however, conscious attention is paid to the fact that a mistake is made, and sometimes a clear metalinguistic comment makes that the focus shifts from meaning to form. Examples of explicit corrective feedback are:

- No, it's not *he goed*, but *he went*.
- You should use past tense. (metalinguistic level)

Both these types of negative feedback have proven to be effective. Advocates of a more natural second language learning process promote the use of the implicit version, as this would be more in line with natural speech. Research done by Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) showed however that for production training, explicit corrective feedback is the most effective in actually improving foreign language production in the long term.

1.2.4. Interaction hypothesis

In the beginning of this paragraph (1.2) it was already mentioned that input, output and feedback can be established through interaction. After having elaborated on all these separate aspects of interaction, it can be concluded that interaction in the target language offers ways of speech that are modified to the speakers in question: the quality of input can be adjusted to their level of language proficiency (Saville-Troike, p.106), expectations towards their output can be modified, and conversation partners can give each other feedback.

These modified ways of speech have been examined both in first and second language acquisition. In L1A research, many studies have been carried out to find out more

about the facilitative function of ‘motherese’. Motherese, or ‘caretaker speech’, is a modified way of language use addressed to a child, often containing a higher pitch to attract the attention of the child (on acoustic determinants of motherese: Fernald, 1987), simplified syntactic structures and a simplified lexicon, many questions to elicit speech production from the child, and shorter sentences in general. (Chrystal, 2003) Caretaker speech has not proven to be exclusively necessary for L1A, since there are also cultures, or speech communities, in which children are not being addressed at all, but still are able to acquire their first language. (Wardhaugh, 2010)

However, for second language acquisition, modified language use seems to enhance language proficiency a great deal. (Saville-Troike, p. 107) This way of speech is called foreigner talk, and contains somewhat different characteristics than caretaker speech does; adopting a slower speech tempo, more precise articulation, stress on key words and more retention of full forms, for example. Furthermore, a simplified vocabulary and simplified syntactic structures are also very useful here, just as for caretaker speech. (Saville-Troike, p. 106) The Interaction Hypothesis states that all these modifications to speech as present in foreigner talk, facilitates SLA because it makes the input comprehensible for the second language learner, and therefore more noticeable. (Long, 1996)

So, not only can interaction cause modified input, but it also provides the opportunity for positive and negative feedback (i.e. compliments and recasts) and modified output (i.e. responses to recasts). Finally, interaction gives room for other helpful learning strategies such as ‘negotiation of meaning’, in which the speakers clarify what is being said before, for example by asking for repetition, paraphrasing, or elaboration. (Mackey, 2003) This way, new elements of the target language can be acquired while interacting with others.

All of the theoretical insights in second language acquisition as presented in this paragraph are used as support for using the target language in class within literature on second language teaching. As paragraph 1.1 showed, the language learning context is highly important to the learning process, and therefore, serious attention needs to be paid to the way this context is set up. Therefore, even though in the previous paragraphs many benefits were found for using the target language in class, also the drawbacks need to be considered. Paragraph 1.4.5 will discuss some of these drawbacks, even though only few have been documented.

1.2.5 Drawbacks in using the target language in class

The literature is not very elaborate about the possible drawbacks of using the target language in class. However, a few important ones can be found. For example, Ineke van de Craats (2004) did research in the field of NT2 education (Dutch as a second language), in which immersion was for a long time regarded as the only way to acquire the language properly. In many cases, as the NT2 learners came from very different language backgrounds, using Dutch appears to be the only possibility. Van De Craats observed that the L1 language background could sometimes be a problematic influence on the language development of the NT2 learners (for example for the correct formation of the main clause). It turned that little help from the mother tongue could resolve or present this problematic influence, supposed the teacher was aware of this. People with a Turkish background, for example, made consistently different mistakes than people with a Moroccan background did, which could be traced back to the structure of their mother tongues. Van de Craats concluded that in some cases, it can be desirable to use the mother tongue of second language learners for

clarification of the L2 structure, and structural mistakes that are made in the L2 coming from L1 influence. Especially in the beginning of a learner's language acquisition process, the language barrier can be too high in order for L2 teachers to be understood in the target language only. The educational practice showed that the use of the mother tongue for this beginning stage of language development can be very effective. Van de Craats mentioned a project from an ROC school in Utrecht, called *Nieuwe Buren*, or 'New Neighbours', which made use of small groups containing people with similar mother tongues, headed by one tutor from the same language background who was more advanced in NT2. These tutors assisted the NT2 learners in their language development, in cooperation with the NT2 teachers, by focusing on the structural differences between Dutch and their mother tongues. This turned out to have successful effects on their Dutch language development. So using the mother tongue in class can be favored over the target language at the beginning of acquiring a second language. A study by de la Colina and del Pilar García Mayo (2009) confirmed the effectiveness of the L1 as a cognitive tool for L2 learning. For this study, 12 pairs of language learners with a low proficiency in the target language were observed in doing three different collaborative tasks. It turned out that the L1 was an effective cognitive tool in doing the tasks, bringing the subjects to a higher level than would be possible if only the L2 were allowed for communication.

For second language acquisition in monolingual class situations, however, the advantage of having one, fully acquired language in common, can at the same time be a disadvantage, since it is often harder to consequently use the target language. In 2008, the use of the English language was measured for the explanation of grammar in Dutch secondary school English lessons (Van Aalst, Lustig). From this survey, it turned out that teachers were less motivated to use the target language for this particular part of their lessons, mostly out of fear that they are not understood. Since the entire class, including the teacher, had Dutch in common as their mother tongue, switching to this common means of communication was easily done. For the same reason as multilingual L2 classes such as van de Craats described did well by using the mother tongue in grammar explanations, this is useful in monolingual SLA classes as well. Kalivoda (1990) explains that for highly detailed grammar explanations, especially in the beginning of learners' language acquisition processes, using the mother tongue is advised if possible. However, it is important not to lose the goal out of sight, meaning that it might in some cases be more effective to choose social interaction in the target over grammar explanation in the L1. Swan (2003) confirmed this by explaining that for a long time, the attention paid to grammar was so intense, that learners were actually learning grammar instead of a language. In the 1970's a countermovement was made by publishing course books that hardly contained any grammar at all. His idea, and that of many other SLA theorists, is that the best way of teaching a language is somewhere in the middle; depending on the particular goal that is stated, teachers can choose to favour grammar explanation over social interaction on a lower level, and the other way around. Kalivoda adds that in order to teach grammar on a more communicative level, it could also be made more demonstrative in class, by using more examples and visual aids. With the current technical means in class, this should be even easier.

1.3 Foreign language education in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, foreign language instruction in secondary schools is considered of great importance because of the country's international position, and the general quality of

education that is aimed for. In light of this high value that the Netherlands attach to foreign language instruction, an important question to ask is to what extent Dutch language education makes use of the advantages that are offered by using the target language in class. A few studies concerning this subject in the Netherlands have been mentioned indirectly so far; in this section they will be discussed in more detail. But first, the Dutch educational system regarding foreign language learning will be introduced briefly.

Usually by the age of ten, when they are still in primary school, children start becoming acquainted with their first foreign language, namely English (with a mandatory amount of 80 hours of English education). Then, by the age of 12, when children start secondary school, foreign language education begins to play a more prominent role; apart from English, at least one extra modern foreign language is added to their curriculum, depending on the educational level that the particular child is in.³ For VMBO pupils, usually German or French are added in the first two years, and at HAVO and VWO both German and French are included, or another foreign language as a substitute for one of those, such as Spanish, Russian, Italian, Arabic or Turkish. VWO students that are in the *gymnasium* study path also learn Latin and Greek. In the Dutch province of Friesland, Frisian is part of the language curriculum as well.

Lately, an increasing amount of primary schools can be found in which children start learning English earlier than at the aforementioned age of ten. A well-known example for this is the Early Bird-program, mostly executed at primary schools in and around the city of Rotterdam. In this program, children start learning English (but also sometimes German or French) at a much younger age than 10. Diagram 1 shows that schools with some kind of early foreign language education (vvto) are on the increase:

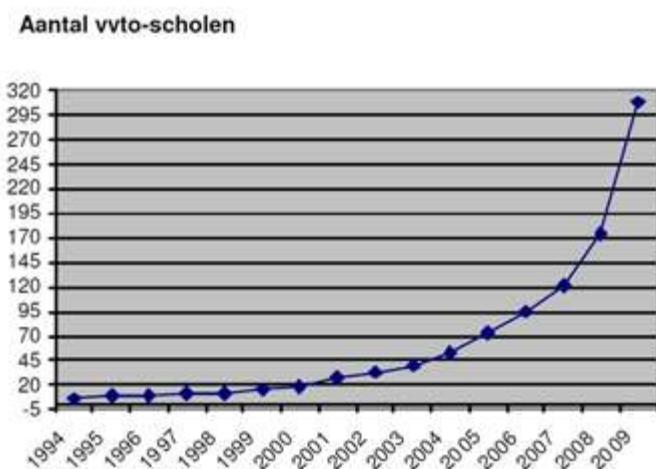


Diagram 1: Number of schools with early foreign language education, from 1994 to 2009. (Earliebirdie)

The Counsel of Education advised schools in 2008 to start early with teaching foreign languages, but this has not become an official requirement. For primary schools the only

³ In the Dutch school system, secondary schools generally offer three different educational levels for pupils to attend. The VWO (6 years) prepares for a research university (*universiteit*). The HAVO (5 years), prepares for a university of applied sciences (*hogeschool*). Both these types of universities are part of higher education. The VMBO (4 years) prepares for general and vocational education (*mbo*). Secondary school pupils attend one of these educational levels according to their ability. Part of the VWO-pupils attend *gymnasium*, (comparable to a British Grammar School, or an American College Preparatory High School), where they are introduced amongst other extras to the classical languages Latin and Greek.

obligation regarding foreign language teaching, established in 1885, is to start with English in the 7th grade (most children are 10 years old by then). ([Earlybirdie](#))

Furthermore, an increasing part of the primary and secondary school population is bilingual as more and more pupils are part of ethnic and linguistic minority groups. Apart from some regional initiatives and some secondary schools offering Arabic or Turkish as an optional language, these languages have barely become part of official (foreign) language education. An example of such a regional initiative is the Lukasschool in the city of Utrecht, in which the mother tongues Moroccan or Turkish were until recently used as an aid in primary education. This initiative was a result from OETS and OALT, education in minority languages at primary schools all over the Netherlands, starting in 1970 and 1995 respectively. This type of language education aimed at children from linguistic minority groups in the Netherlands, mostly Turkish and Moroccan, in order for them to reach higher levels in their L1 development, which would positively affect their L2 (Dutch) development. However, because of organizational and financial problems within this program, more teacher requirements and a changing political climate, this program was ended in 2002. Recently, also the initiative of the Lukasschool was discontinued for financial and political reasons.

1.3.1 European Language Policy

Dutch foreign language education policy cannot be seen separately from European directives. According to European Union policy, all EU citizens should be able to speak at least two foreign languages besides their own mother tongue. Reasons for this are on the one hand maintaining the cultural diversity within the European Union, and on the other hand equipping EU citizens in their ability to express themselves in more than one language. In order to reach this goal, the European citizens should start learning the desired two foreign languages on a relatively young age.

In light of this high value that the EU attaches to foreign language education, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) was developed, in order to serve as an international standard for comparing and determining language abilities across the national borders. Consequently, also in drafting the final qualifications for the foreign language curricula in Dutch secondary schools, the CEFR standards have been leading. ([Council of Europe](#)) Table 2 shows these final qualifications:

	VMBO			HAVO			VWO		
Language									
Listening	A2/B1	A2/B1	A2	B1	B1	B1	B2	B2	B2
Conversation	A2	A2	A2	B1	B1	B1	B2	B2	B1
Speaking	-	-	-	B1	B1	B1	B2	B2	B1
Writing	A2/B1	A2	A1/A2	B1	A2	A2	B2	B1	B1
Reading	B1	A2/B1	A2/B1	B1/B2	B1/B2	B1	B2/C1	B2	B1/B2

Table 2: Final qualifications for the foreign languages English, French and German as aimed for in secondary school. In short the levels are stated as follows: A1: high beginner, A2: elementary, B1: pre-intermediate, B2: intermediate, C1: upper-intermediate, C2: advanced/near native. ([ERK](#))

The table shows that for each modern foreign language and each educational level, different educational purposes have been phrased. For example, as was mentioned, the English language plays a large role in continued (higher) education. The VWO is preparing for a research university, and the majority of published research and study books that are used

there, have been published in English. The CEFR level to be acquired for reading English at VWO seems to show this anticipation, as this was the only niche requiring a C1 level. Another observation about the goals described above could be directly relevant for using the target language in class; namely, no specific CEFR-goal has been stated for speaking at VMBO. Apparently, it is not desired of pupils in the educational level of VMBO to be able to speak English extensively (however, for conversation they do need to reach A2 level). This could heavily affect the training that these pupils receive in using the target language.

1.3.2 The use of the target language in Dutch secondary schools

This brings us to the question whether studies have been conducted that show the use of the target language in Dutch secondary school classes. There have only been few. A study by Hermans (2003, dissertation) showed that foreign language classes hardly contain any target language interaction. This was even the case for TTO (schools for bilingual education in the Netherlands, mostly Dutch and English) (Edelenbos and De Jong, 2004). From class observations it became clear that most of the interaction occurred by means of teachers asking questions that only partly gave pupils the opportunity to respond with free production. Also, it was observed that pupils easily switched back to using Dutch in class, while at the same time, they thought it was peculiar that they were allowed to. Fortunately, these observations also showed that it is not entirely impossible to have natural target language interaction. Hermans et al. (2008) found that the beliefs and approaches of teachers highly influenced the way they used the target language in class. They performed a small-scale case study in which two different teachers were observed teaching, after which they were interviewed. The teacher in whose class hardly any TL interaction took place, turned out to view language learning as learning the rules of a language, and thought that learners cannot produce language if they do not know the rules. The teacher in whose class TL interaction did take place, on the other hand, thought that producing and making mistakes was part of the language learning process.

Furthermore, also briefly mentioned in the preface, a study by Aalst and Lustig (2008) showed that the amount of target language use in class is the lowest when teaching grammar. One out of five modern foreign language teachers that filled out their survey responded that even in the most ideal situation, it would remain inevitable for them to teach this lesson element in Dutch. However, most teachers said they wanted to use the target language more often. Reasons for them not to were the fear that they would not be understood, the use of course material that is in Dutch, idleness, and problems with keeping order in class.

Finally, a small-scale research done by Bennink et al. (2009) amongst pupils from HAVO 4, showed that they are aware of the importance of the use of the target language, even though most of them prefer using Dutch. This was probably caused by the fact that it is simply easier for them to use their mother tongue.

1.4 Research questions

From this theoretical introduction, it has become clear that the success of foreign language learning is partly dependent of the context in which it occurs. In an educational language learning environment, the learning process can be made more natural by using the target language for communication and instruction. The teacher plays a very important role in this, as initiator of learning processes within the classroom. However, little empirical study has been conducted to find the actual effects of TL = CL in a monolingual language learning

context such as Dutch secondary school pupils find themselves in. The ones that have, found positive learning effects.

Furthermore, the role of the teacher is found to be crucial in providing students of input, eliciting output, and giving feedback. In a classroom situation where interaction in the target language takes place, effective learning conditions are present. In some cases though, it may be more effective to use the mother tongue, for example for the explanation of grammar, especially in the beginning of the language learning process.

In the Netherlands, only few studies were conducted to measure the amount of TL = CL use in secondary school foreign language education. Those that were, were mostly case studies, or took for example only grammar instruction as a focus. To be able to get a more detailed picture of the target language use in secondary school classes as a whole, the following research question was phrased:

- ❖ Question 1: To what extent do FL teachers in Dutch secondary schools use the target language as language of instruction and communication in class?

The aforementioned study by Van Aalst and Lustig (2008) showed that the amount of target language use differs per lesson element: explaining grammar in the target language appeared to be problematic, more so than other lesson elements. Since using the target language may not be equally feasible for all instructional and communicational goals, it does not suffice to simply identify the number of foreign language classes in which the target language IS or IS NOT applied as language of instruction and communication. To be able to get a more detailed insight in the daily teaching practice in Dutch secondary schools, the quantity of applying the TL = CL method should be charted in more detail. Therefore, the following criterion was created:

- Criterion 1a) With which parts of the lessons is the target language used? (listening exercises, grammar, social talk at the beginning of class, etc.)

Furthermore, it followed from the literature concerning the language learning mechanism that different users provide different learning opportunities for language learners to benefit from. Therefore, this second criterion was established to specify the first research question even more:

- Criterion 1b) Who is using the target language? (teacher/learners)

Criterion 1a will give insight in the activities for which using TL = CL is considered feasible by the teachers. Criterion 1b will distinguish between using the target language for instruction or mutual communication in class.

The way teachers act in class is a consequence of their beliefs about their personal role, and the goals they have stated for their students to achieve. For example, when a teacher sees himself as a vehicle of information, and wants his students to learn the system of a language, he would leave little room for communication and developing speaking skills. (Vygotsky, 1978; Ongstad, 2004; Olsher, 1996) This was confirmed by the aforementioned study of Hermans et al. (2008), showing that teachers' ideas about language learning and their role within this process heavily determined the amount of target language communication in their classes. Therefore, it can also be expected that having background knowledge about the purpose of using the target language in class influences the extent to which it is actually used. This way of reasoning is typical for modern day educational research. Teachers' cognitions have become more and more important within education, instead of just focusing on teaching behaviour and skills. This resulted in an increasing

amount of educational research that aimed at the mutual relationship between those teachers' cognitions and their classroom actions. It also affected the way new teachers are trained; theoretical instruction and building of ideas is expected to influence the teaching methods of the teachers-to-be. (Richardson, 2003 and Gatbonton, 2008)

It follows that in order to be able to interpret the amount of target language use in this particular research, it is important to consider the motivations of the teachers behind the language that is used in class. Foreign language teachers may be led in their decisions by all kinds of possible external factors. For example, teachers might not use the target language for class communication, simply because they are ill-informed of SLA theories that support this, or because they have to cope with all sorts of practical restrictions. On the other hand, teachers might use the target language in class because they enjoy doing it, or because school policy urges them to. The teacher's motivations should therefore be categorized according to the following two questions:

- ❖ Question 2: What motivates FL teachers in Dutch secondary schools to use the target language as language of instruction and communication in class?
- ❖ Question 3: What holds back FL teachers in Dutch secondary schools to use the target language as language of instruction and communication in class? Or, in other words: What motivates FL teachers in Dutch secondary schools to use the mother tongue (Dutch) as language of instruction and communication in class?

From the SLA theories (paragraph 1.2) it follows that the main reasoning behind using the target language in class is the idea that it would contribute positively to the learner's language learning process. If it turned out that teachers do not think that using the target language in class will contribute positively to their pupils' language learning process, this would increase the chance that these teachers do not use TL = CL extensively. Therefore, also the following question is important for interpreting the amount of TL = CL use:

- ❖ Question 4: Do FL teachers in Dutch secondary schools think that using TL = CL contributes positively to their pupils' language learning process?

In order to answer these research questions, a small-scale practical research was carried out in the educational practice of teaching English as a foreign language in Dutch secondary schools. Chapter 2 elaborates on the way this research was conducted by going into the applied method. In chapters 3 and 4, the results are given and discussed.

Chapter 2

Methodology

In order to answer the research questions (paragraph 1.4) a small-scale practical research was done in the educational field of English instruction in Dutch secondary schools. By means of a questionnaire, teachers of English have been approached to define the situation in the class they have most experience with. This chapter is meant to account for the method that was applied to reach the goals set for this practical research.

To begin with, as mentioned in paragraph 1.1, teachers are central to the question which language is used in class, since they are the ones in charge of the class, and the people who are for a large part responsible for the learning processes of their students. That is why teachers were chosen to be the means for gathering data on what happens in the classroom.

Furthermore, foreign languages may differ in the accessibility of applying $TL = CL$. This means that because of differences in language status, overall familiarity, and educational purposes (CEFR, par.1.3) it may be harder to use the one language for communication in class than another. The accessibility of the English language for communication in class may be relatively great, since English is the world language, its use is widespread in Dutch daily life and it plays an important role in continued (higher) education; all of this much more than for example German or French. Since external factors like this could influence the results in ways which are not or hardly traceable, it is important to group the teachers according to the languages that they teach. In this case, the decision was made to look into just one modern foreign language that is taught in secondary school, namely English (EFL).

Finally, as the educational purposes differ per language, such as the CEFR illustrates (par.1.3), they also differ per educational level. From a VWO student, higher levels of foreign language acquisition are expected than from a HAVO and VMBO student. Therefore, it was decided for this practical research to distinguish between educational levels as well.

2.1 Goals of this study

The goals of this study follow from the research questions, as were phrased paragraph 1.4. They are repeated below:

- ❖ Question 1: To what extent do EFL teachers in Dutch secondary schools use the target language as language of instruction and communication in class?
- ❖ Question 2: What motivates EFL teachers in Dutch secondary schools to use the target language as language of instruction and communication in class?
- ❖ Question 3: What holds back EFL teachers in Dutch secondary schools to use the target language as language of instruction and communication in class? Or, in other words: What motivates EFL teachers in Dutch secondary schools to use the mother tongue (Dutch) as language of instruction and communication in class?
- ❖ Question 4: Do EFL teachers in Dutch secondary schools think that using $TL = CL$ contributes positively to their pupil's language learning process?

Question 1 results in a quantitative analysis of, in this case, questionnaire data. In the introduction, it was already mentioned that charting the use of the target language in class is much more complicated than just figuring out whether teachers DO or DO NOT use this. Lessons often consist of many different elements and teachers may find $TL = CL$ more

applicable for some elements than for other ones. Also, $TL = CL$ does not only include the language use of the teacher (language of instruction), but also that of the learners (language of communication). Especially in the beginning of their language learning process, it can be harder for learners to express themselves in the target language, because they do not have high proficiency in that language yet, and they may also not yet be acquainted with general foreign language skills such as compensation strategies. This may give rise to differences in TL use between teachers and learners. For this study, these complications should be taken into account by creating the opportunity for a detailed representation of the situation in class. Therefore, the amount of target language use in class will be charted per lesson element and user (teacher/learners).

Of course, the extent of target language use cannot be left without explanation. Therefore, it is highly important to consider the teachers' opinions of using $TL = CL$ in class, and their reasons why and why not to use it. As was discussed before, all of this may influence the actual target language use in EFL class. For this reason, questions 2 and 3 are aiming to collect motivations for or against the use of the target language so that more insight is gained in the teachers' decisions. Question 4 is directed to the value that teachers attach to the use of TL for the target language development of their pupils. As was explained in paragraph 1.4, it can be reasonably expected that the lower this value is, the less motivation it evokes for teachers to apply $TL = CL$. Furthermore, being aware of the value of using the target language in class may cohere with the knowledge of second language acquisition theories that support target language use. Since 'knowledge' in itself is hard to measure, measurable indicators for this will be considered, such as teacher's qualifications (grade one or grade two) and the ways in which they have become acquainted with the $TL = CL$ principle. Of course, the answers to the open questions will also give an impression of the extent to which the teachers' motivations are actually rooted in SLA theories.

2.2 How to reach the stated goals

As the goals have made clear, this study aims to describe the use of the target language in EFL classes at Dutch secondary schools. Therefore, the way this study is conducted should contain the possibility to reach many EFL teachers. To draw overall conclusions that represent all of the teachers' responses, results should be comparable. For this reason, the information that is gathered should be highly structured and measurable. The best method to go for then is a questionnaire. Since the quantity of using TL is expected to be influenced by the reasons and motivations behind it, the questionnaire should contain both quantitative and qualitative aspects. (Baarda and De Goede, 2007)

Comparable studies were often performed by means of case studies (i.e. Bawcom, 2002, and the aforementioned Hermans et al., 2008). Beneficial of case studies is that they are suitable for representing reality in much detail. However, they can hardly be compared with other studies and the extensive way of research it brings along, makes that they can only reach a small, often unrepresentative share of informants. The study by Van Aalst and Lustig (2008) on using the target language for grammar instruction used a questionnaire and therefore they were able to reach 100 teachers all over the Netherlands. However, in their questionnaire the teachers could only support their answers by choosing from fixed options in multiple choice questions. This may have caused reasons for or against the use of TL to be overlooked, or teachers may have been guided in their reasoning by choosing options that they might not have come up with themselves. This is crucial, especially when asking for theoretical background knowledge that supports their TL use actively.

2.2.1 Preparation of the survey

Before developing the survey, it was important to anticipate on the teachers' everyday reality in class. In order to do this, interviews were held with two FL teachers from different secondary schools. This way, information was gathered on common lesson elements and experiences with using the target language in class; both successes and drawbacks.

One important factor that turned out to count heavily in the decision whether or not to use the target language was the educational level of the class. The teachers that were interviewed mentioned that for them, it was much harder to apply TL = CL in VMBO classes than in HAVO or VWO classes. In paragraph 1.3.1. it was already explained that different educational goals are likely to cause these different approaches per educational level. For these reasons, the informants would have to fill out the survey from the perspective of only one educational level. To establish this, the informants were asked to give one class within the educational level they had the most experience with. This can be 3 VMBO, 4 HAVO or 2 VWO, for example. It was stressed that they had to fill out the rest of the survey from the perspective of this particular class.

2.2.2 Why the survey can provide answers to the research questions

In preparing this survey, the research questions served as a guide in determining what is asked to the informants.

The quantitative part of the study exists of mapping the amount of target language use in class; when and by who. In the survey, the teachers are asked to give an indication of this amount, by answering questions of the following type:

#A. Ik gebruik de doelstaal als voertaal tijdens *de lesopening*

Nooit 0 0 0 0 Altijd

#B. Mijn leerlingen gebruiken de doelstaal als voertaal tijdens *de lesopening*

Nooit 0 0 0 0 Altijd

#A I use the target language in class during the *beginning of class*

Never 0 0 0 0 Always

#B My pupils use the target language in class during the *beginning of class*

Never 0 0 0 0 Always

There were 7 questions of this type, each containing another lesson element. Each lesson element was accompanied by a brief explanation, like follows:

Onder 'lesopening' wordt het begin van de les verstaan, waarbij de leerlingen bijvoorbeeld worden begroet, de eerste instructies worden gegeven (pak je boek, e.d.), een kort gesprekje met de leerlingen wordt aangeknoopt, en/of een andere vorm van warming-up. ('Beginning of class' refers to the moment at the beginning of class, when for example pupils are welcomed, the first instructions are given (get your books, etc), small talk is made, and/or another type of warming-up.)

The lesson elements that came up were *lesopening*, *spreekvaardigheid*, *grammatica-uitleg*, *leesvaardigheid*, *huiswerkbespreking*, *kijk- en luistervaardigheid*, and *lesafsluiting* (beginning of class, speaking, grammar instruction, reading, reviewing homework, watching and listening, and finishing class). These lesson elements were deduced from the interviews with the teachers in preparation of this survey. The informants were told to leave open the scale if one of these lesson elements were not present in their lessons. Also, one extra question of

this type was added, in which teachers could add one lesson element which was not mentioned in the survey, but which was essential to their lessons. The scale that was used for indicating the amount of TL use was a five-point Likert-type scale, for which only the ends were labelled; ‘never’ on the one end, and ‘always’ on the other one.⁴ It was stressed in the introduction of this question section that there are no incorrect answers.

The more qualitative part of the survey was designed to explain the quantitative information gathered. Ideally, explanations were to be given for every lesson element separately. However, since this would provide an unreasonable workload for the informants, more general questions were phrased to gain insight in the reasons why teachers would choose to use the target language in class, and why not. These were the questions they had to answer:

- *Wat zijn uw voornaamste beweegredenen om te kiezen vóór het gebruik van de doelstaal als voertaal in de les? (What are your main reasons for choosing the use of the target language in your class?)*
- *Komt u obstakels tegen bij het gebruik van de doelstaal als voertaal in uw lessen? Zo ja, wat zijn de 3 meest voorkomende obstakels? (In using the target language in class, do you run into any obstacles? If yes, which three are most often present?)*
- *Wat zijn uw voornaamste beweegredenen om te kiezen voor het gebruik van het Nederlands als voertaal in de les? (What are your main reasons for choosing to use Dutch in your class?)*

There are several reasons why this information is gathered by means of open questions, even though this way of asking brings along disadvantages in measuring and comparing results (chapter 4). First, not much is documented yet about teachers’ opinions and motivations behind the use of the target language or mother tongue in class. Consequently, giving a series of particular options in a check boxes question for example, may cause many motivations and reasons that exist in reality to be overlooked in this survey. On the other hand, prepared options may influence the teachers’ answers, because they can guide their reasoning. The open questions give teachers the opportunity to freely document why they choose to do what they do. The preparatory interviews already gave an impression of the teachers’ opinions and motivations.

Finally, the informants had to give their opinion on the following statement, by means of a Likert-scale, for which only the ends were labelled; ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’:

- *Mijn leerlingen leren ervan als we de doelstaal in de klas gebruiken als voertaal. (My pupils learn from using the target language in class.)*

After filling out their extent of agreement, the informants were asked to explain why, because as was mentioned in paragraph 1.5, the teachers’ opinion of this learning effect may be influenced by their knowledge of SLA theories behind the use of the target language. Since the amount of knowledge is hard to measure itself, instead two measurable indicators of this possible knowledge about TL = CL were present in the survey. First, the informants were asked to fill out their grade qualification for teaching. Namely, a grade 1 qualification

⁴ They were Likert-type scales, as opposed to Likert scales, because something else than opinion was asked to fill out. A traditional Likert scale is captured within terms as ‘Totally agree’ versus ‘Totally disagree’, or something similar.

Only labelling the sides brings along that people are more likely to choose the sides, rather than staying in the safe middle. (Czaja and Blair, 2005, p.79,80)

can only be obtained in university, while a grade 2 qualification can be obtained at a university for applied sciences. Usually, in universities for applied sciences the focus is more on the teaching practice rather than the theory, and for academic universities this is the other way around. Teachers from academic universities are therefore more likely to have become acquainted with SLA theories that support the use of the target language in class than teachers from universities for applied sciences. Secondly, the informants had to fill out a check box question on how they got in touch with TL = CL, in which more than one answer could be checked. The options provided were:

- *Via onderwijs tijdens mijn studie*
(Through instruction during my teacher training)
- *Via collega's*
(Via colleagues)
- *Via publicaties zoals het tijdschrift 'Levende Talen'*
(Through publications such as the magazine 'Levende Talen')
- *Via andere didactische literatuur*
(Through other didactical literature)
- *Als leerling: mijn taaldocent(en) gebruikte(n) de doelstaal als voertaal in de les*
(As a pupil: my language teacher(s) used the target language in class)
- *Uit ervaring in mijn eigen lessen*
(Through experience in my own classes)
- *Het gebruik van de doelstaal als voertaal maakt deel uit van sectiebeleid*
(Using the target language in class is part of department policy)
- *Anders, namelijk: ... (other, namely: ...)*

It is expected that coherence will be found between these measurable indicators of SLA theory knowledge and the value that teachers attach to target language use for the EFL development of their pupils.

2.3 Procedure

The procedure was as follows. The subjects were recruited through a digital environment that teachers can subscribe to, namely *Digischool*. About 8000 teachers of English from all over the Netherlands are enrolled in this environment, and it is extensively used for exchanging experiences and materials. In recruiting the subjects through the *Digischool* e-mail list, they were asked to participate in a study about speaking abilities. It was phrased in this broad manner, to prevent that all subjects turned out to be highly in favor of this specific method, for example. Also, the subjects had to have over 2 years of teaching experience, and should not be part of bilingual education, since this type of education in itself is aimed at using English in class, also for other school subjects. After the teachers had replied that they wanted to fill out the survey and told which educational level they were the most experienced with, they were sent the form. They had about two weeks time to fill it out. The form was made in Google Forms, and could therefore be easily sent to the subjects through e-mail. The results were collected in Google Forms, and it was taken care of that teachers filled out the survey only once. The statistical analysis of the results is described in paragraph 3.5.

2.4 Subjects

Through the *Digischool* e-mail list, 45 teachers were recruited, of which 19 were the most experienced with the VWO level, 13 with HAVO and 13 with VMBO. For VWO, 15 out of 19

questionnaires were filled out from the perspective of the upper grades (4-6), and 4 from the lower grades (2 and 3, no first years). For HAVO, 10 out of 13 questionnaires were filled out from the perspective of the upper grades (4 and 5), and 3 from the lower grades (2 and 3, no first years). For VMBO 7 out of 13 questionnaires were filled out from the perspective of the upper grades (3 and 4), and 6 from the lower grades (1 and 2). So the majority of the questionnaires was filled out from the perspective of the upper grades (32 out of 45), which could mean that most of the teachers were most experienced with upper grade classes. It could also be the case that in general, more experience with the TL = CL principle is gained in the upper grades, since learning a foreign language is a cumulative process. Even though the intention was for teachers to choose the class they had the most experience with in general, they may have decided to choose the class they had the most experience with regarding TL = CL use.

In order to participate in this survey, the teachers had to have 2 or more years of teaching experience in secondary school. The mean teaching experience was 17.8 years (SD: 10.9), with a mean age of 46.0 (SD: 11.3). The longest teaching experience was 39 years, which corresponded with the oldest teacher: 61. The shortest teaching experience was 2 years, which occurred twice, one of which corresponded with the youngest teacher: 19 years old. 26 teachers (58%) had a grade one qualification, 15 a grade two (33%), and 3 were in teacher training (either from grade two to grade one, or at all) (7%).

Other teacher characteristics were:

- Sex: out of 45 teachers 10 were male, 35 were female.
- Employment: 11 teachers had full-time jobs, 15 had part-time jobs with over 20 hours a week, 17 had part-time jobs with less than 20 hours a week, and 2 were doing internships.

Furthermore, teachers were asked to report the ways in which they had come in touch with using the target language in class. This could be through instruction during teacher training, colleagues, publications such as the 'Levende Talen' magazine, other didactical literature, as a pupil (meaning their own teachers in secondary school used TL = CL), own experience, department policy. In table 3 below, it is given how many times these possibilities have been reported.

	Education	Colleagues	Publications (i.e. 'Levende Talen')	Didactical literature	Pupil	Own experience	Depart- ment policy
Number	32	17	17	21	6	31	18
%	71%	38%	38%	47%	13%	69%	40%

Table 3: Ways in which teachers have come into touch with the TL = CL principle. The percentages have been based on the total number of teachers (N = 45).

Seven out of ten teachers learned about using the target language in class during their teacher training, meaning that three out of ten did not. Since attention for this principle increased especially the last couple of decades, it could be expected that the teachers who did not learn about TL = CL in teacher training are older. Even though some negative correlation was found in a two-tailed linear correlation test ($r = -0.2066$), this was not significant ($p = 0.1747$). Also, no significant correlation was found between the type of

qualification (grade one, grade two, or other) and received instruction in teacher training ($r = 0.2119$, $p = 0.162818$) as was expected.⁵

Also, seven out of ten teachers learned about the principle of using $TL = CL$ by their own experience of using it in class. This might suggest that three out of ten teachers do not use the target language in class at all. The results (chapter 3) will show if this is indeed the case.

Then, almost half of the teachers has read about $TL = CL$ in other didactical literature than publications such as the ‘Levende Talen’ magazine, which almost four out of ten teachers have. Also four out of ten teachers are faced with the fact that using $TL = CL$ is department policy. The results (chapter 3) will show whether there is any relation between department policy and actual usage. Again, almost four out of ten teachers have become acquainted with $TL = CL$ through colleagues. Only 13% of the teachers has come into touch with this principle through their own teachers in secondary school.

2.5 Statistical analysis

As chapter 3 will show, all of the quantitative results were statistically analysed. This was done by means of *Vassarstats*, a website for statistical computation.⁶ This website was also used in defining the subject details, as described in the previous paragraphs.

For comparing data sets regarding significant deviations, t-tests (two sets of data) and ANOVAs (three or more sets) were performed. Since all of the questionnaires were filled out by different teachers, the data sets were independent samples. All of the tests concerned standard weighted-means analyses, and were one-way ANOVAs.

For comparing data sets to see if there is any coherence between them, two-tailed linear correlation and regression tests were performed, with Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r). The correlation coefficients and p-values were rounded off to 4 decimals, if necessary.

⁵ If this positive correlation coefficient had been significant, it would suggest that universities of applied sciences would teach more about this principle than research universities, which would oppose the expectation that research universities pay more attention to this principle.

⁶ HTML: <http://faculty.vassar.edu/lowry/VassarStats.html>

Chapter 3

Results

In this chapter, the results of the questionnaires are presented. Paragraph 3.1 provides an overview of the extent to which EFL is used in class as language for instruction and communication, taking into account differences between educational levels and the users of English (pupils/teachers). Paragraph 3.2 goes into the motivations for teachers for using the target language in class. Paragraph 3.3 describes the obstacles teachers are faced with in using TL = CL. And finally, paragraph 3.4 presents the opinions of teachers regarding the effect of using the target language in class on the learning process of their pupils.

3.1 Extent to which EFL is used in class as language for instruction and communication

In defining the amount of target language use in class, the teachers filled out five-point Likert-type scales for which 1 was assigned ‘never’, and 5 ‘always’. There were separate scales for each lesson element, and within each lesson element a distinction was made between the role of the teacher and that of the learner.

The overall average of TL use in class was 3.2. However, TL use was charted for seven separate lesson elements, and a rest category for which teachers could fill out missing lesson elements. Out of 45 teachers, 17 did this. This rest category will not be analysed in detail, since statistically speaking, no valid conclusions can be drawn from it. However, a prominent lesson element that was missed should be mentioned, namely ‘literature’; two teachers for HAVO and seven for VWO mentioned this. Seven of these teachers always or often used English for this lesson element. Other missing lesson elements were taking exams, social talk and news reviews, and keeping order.

Figure 1 shows the amount of TL use for each lesson element. Since the rest category represents different lesson elements, and was not filled out by everyone, no further attention will be paid to this. For the overall overview here, however, it was included:

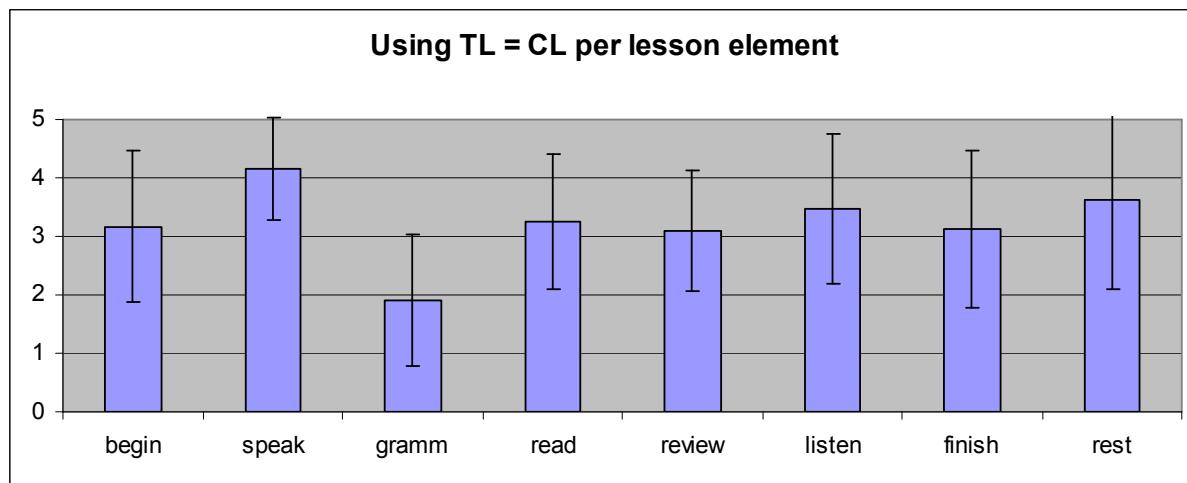


Figure 1: Use of English in class, distinguished according to the separate lesson elements. Number 1 corresponds with ‘never’ and 5 with ‘always’. The columns represent means, and the error bars represent + and – standard deviations.

Figure 1 shows that the only significant difference in TL use between the various categories is the one between grammar and speaking (one-way ANOVA, $p < 0.0001$). Grammar also has

the lowest target language use, with a mean of 1.9 and an SD of 1.13. Speaking is on the other edge, with a mean of 4.1 and an SD of 0.9. All other categories have means from 3.1 to 3.5 (leaving out the rest category), all with SDs of 1.3, except for reviewing homework, which has an SD of 1.0.

3.1.1 Distinguishing the users of $TL = CL$

Furthermore, a distinction was made between the users of the target language in class. After all, when teachers use the target language themselves, it does not necessarily have the consequence that learners do this as well. Figure 2 shows the total amount of TL use by teachers and learners:

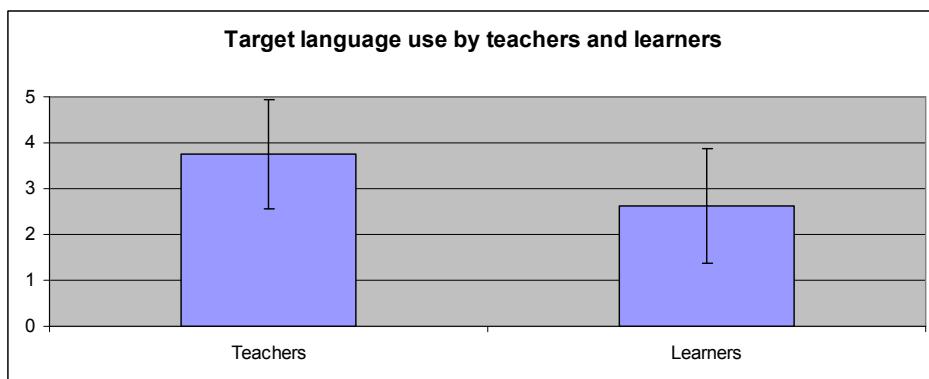


Figure 2: Use of English in class, distinguished according to the users; teachers versus learners.

An independent t-test showed that the English language is used in class significantly more by teachers than users. ($F[1, 661]$, $P < 0.0001$)

3.1.2 Involving the educational levels

The previous results are based on the survey overall, without distinguishing between educational levels. Since these were expected to influence the amount of target language use in class, the total amount of TL use for each level is summarized in figure 3:

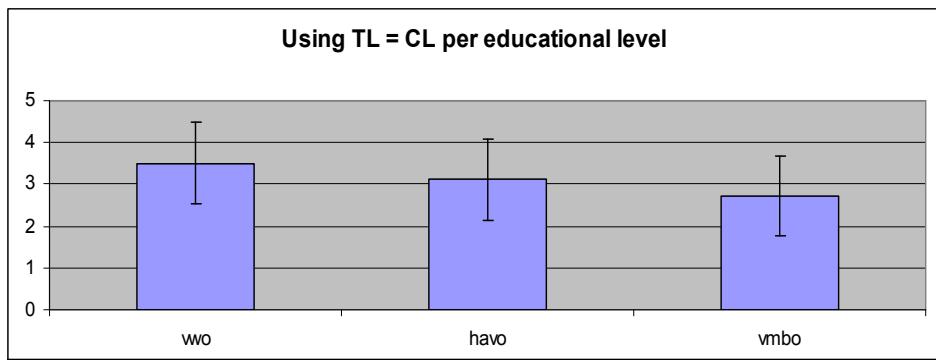


Figure 3: Total amount of TL use in the different educational levels. (VWO: mean 3.5 and SD 1.3; HAVO: mean 3.0 and SD 1.3; VMBO: 2.7 and SD 1.2)

To compare these groups, a one-way ANOVA was used, which showed an effect of the educational level on the amount of target language use ($F[2, 613]$, $P < 0.0001$); the highest educational level corresponded with the highest amount of TL use, and the lowest educational level with the lowest amount of TL use, as figure 3 shows. The difference

between VWO and HAVO was found to be significant ($P<0.01$), as well as the difference between VWO and VMBO ($P<0.01$), and the difference between HAVO and VMBO ($P<0.05$).

Within each group, also a t-test was performed on the different users of TL, namely teachers and learners, as figures 4a-c show:

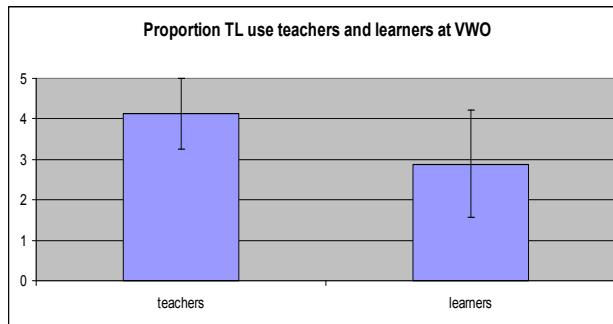


Figure 4a: TL use distinguished according to teachers and learners at VWO. (Teachers: mean 4.1 and SD 1.1; learners: mean 2.9 and SD 1.3)

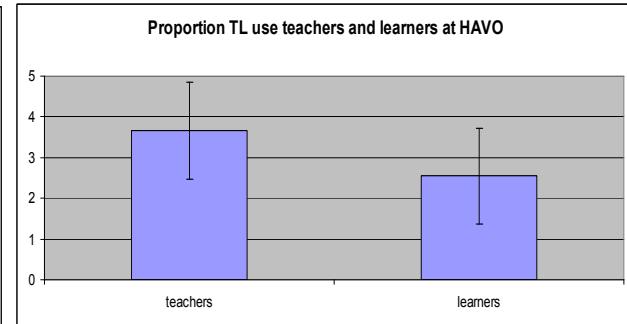


Figure 4b: TL use distinguished according to teachers and learners at HAVO. (Teachers: mean 3.6 and SD 1.2; learners: mean 2.5 and SD 1.2)

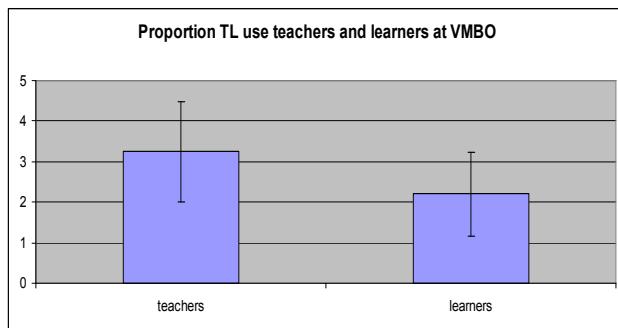


Figure 4c: TL use distinguished according to teachers and learners at VMBO. (Teachers: mean 3.2 and SD 1.2; learners: mean 2.2 and SD 1.0)

For each educational level, a significant difference was found between the use of TL by the teachers and the learners; for VWO ($F[1, 263] P<0.0001$), HAVO ($F[1, 180] P<0.0001$) and VMBO ($F[1, 181] P<0.0001$).

Furthermore, the teachers' target language use of the different educational levels was mutually compared (figure 5a, ($F[2,312] P<0.0001$)) and the learners as well (figure 5b, ($F[2,313] P=0.0004$)) in a one-way ANOVA:

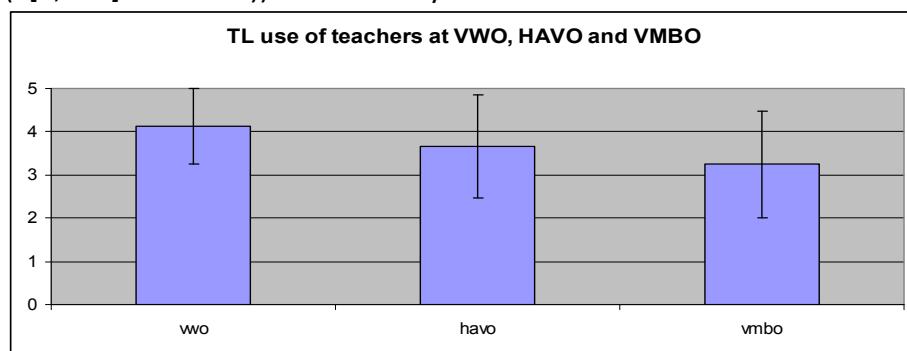
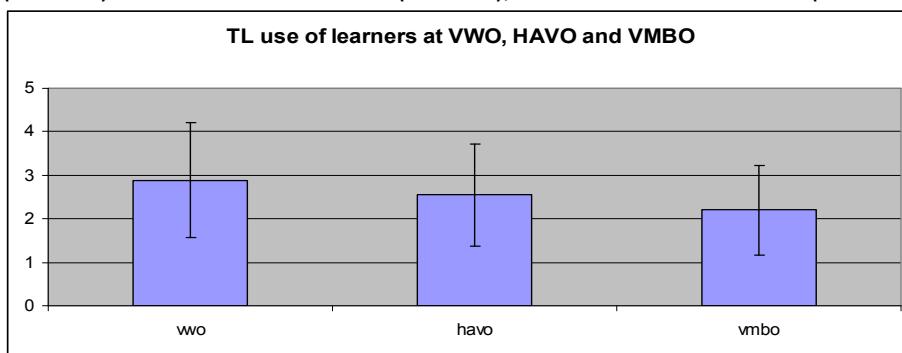


Figure 5a: TL use of teachers distinguished according to educational level. (VWO: mean 4.1 and SD 1.1 ; HAVO: mean 3.6 and SD 1.2; VMBO: mean 3.2 and SD 1.2)

For the TL use of teachers, significant differences were found between VWO and HAVO ($P<0.01$) and VWO and VMBO ($P<0.01$), and HAVO and VMBO ($P<0.05$).



*Figure 5b: TL use of teachers distinguished according to educational level.
(VWO: mean 2.8 and SD 1.3; HAVO: mean 2.5 and SD 1.2; VMBO: mean 2.2 and SD 1.0)*

For the TL use of learners, the only significant difference that was found, was between VWO and VMBO ($P<0.01$). The differences found between VWO and HAVO, and HAVO and VMBO were nonsignificant.

To summarize these quantitative results, it has become clear that the overall target language use in class is a little over average; for grammar instruction the use of TL was the least popular, and for speaking the most. Teachers use significantly more English in class than their pupils do, and this was the case within all educational levels. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the highest amount of target language use occurs in the highest educational level (VWO), and the lowest amount in the lowest educational level (VMBO). Breaking this down to the teachers and learners, it was found that this gradual pattern continues within the TL use of teachers, however not of the learners. For the learners, the only level-related difference in TL use was found between the highest and the lowest level (VWO and VMBO).

Another goal of this survey was to get more insight in the motivations and cognitions of teachers behind their target language use in class. Since the motivations were gathered by using open questions, for reasons already explained in chapter 2 (methodology), the results of these questions had to be scored according to personal interpretation. Therefore, it is technically possible that teachers' answers have been misrepresented. Furthermore, there always are some left-over motivations that do not match the broad categories the other answers fit in. For these reasons, no trustworthy statistical analyses could be performed. (Baarda and De Goede, 2007) Instead, percentages have been given that define the amount of teachers whose motivations have been represented.

3.2 Motivations for EFL teachers to use the target language in class

In this paragraph, the answers are represented that the teachers gave to the following question:

❖ What are your main reasons for choosing to use the target language in your class?

In describing these results, an indication is given of the extent to which teachers' motivations are rooted in SLA theories (par. 3.2.1) and other grounds (par. 3.2.2).

3.2.1 Motivations from theoretical grounds

62 out of 124 motivations for using the target language in class were motivations made directly from theoretical grounds. This is 50%. Table 4 gives a short summary:

	Effectivity	Natural	Input
Number	24	14	24
% teachers	53%	31%	53%

Table 4: Theoretical grounds supporting TL = CL use, described by the teachers. Percentages represent the amount of times this argument was used among all teachers. (N=45)

For 53% of the teachers effectivity was a motivation; the fact that language learners learn from using the target language as much as possible. Actively using English eventually results in a quicker learning process, and it makes learning easier: “*Hoe vaker leerlingen de doeltaal horen en gebruiken, hoe makkelijker het voor hun wordt om het te gebruiken en zelf te gebruiken waardoor ze minder moeite hebben wanneer ze in de vierde (examenjaar) getoets worden op lees, spreek en luistervaardigheid.*” Also efficiency is mentioned several times, considering the relatively short time that is spent in class: “*efficiënt gebruik maken van de lestijd om leerlingen aan het spreken te krijgen*” Teachers sometimes mentioned the term ‘immersion’ as an effective way of learning: “*Ik geloof dat “onderdompeling” een gunstig effect kan hebben op het leren van de taal. Als leerlingen nooit tijdens de les worden aangespoord om de doeltaal te gebruiken, zullen ze dat verder ook niet makkelijk doen.*” More on this will be discussed in paragraph 3.4.

Furthermore, for 42% of the teachers, giving input to their pupils is a motivation to use the target language in class: “*Om toch zoveel mogelijk voor taal ‘input’ te zorgen, ze te stimuleren de taal te gebruiken.*” Mainly, their own English language use was considered important here; not much was said about the target language use of peers where the interaction hypothesis speaks about. Input was said to effect the development vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation (11% of all teachers used this argument), formulating sentences and listening skills positively: “*Het is mijn idee dat de leerlingen de taal die ze moeten leren (in mijn geval Engels), ook zoveel mogelijk moeten horen. Ze horen dat hoe woorden uitgesproken dienen te worden en hoe zinnen geformuleerd worden.*” And: “*Door het horen van Engels breiden ze onbewust hun vocabulaire uit, maar nemen ze ook bepaalde grammatica structuren over.*” In order to make the input comprehensible, teachers sometimes ‘subtitled’ themselves by giving Dutch echoes to what they have just said in English: “*In de enkele onderbouw-klassen die ik heb gehad geef ik wel een Nederlandse echo, maar ik heb al gauw gemerkt dat je die na een paar weken/maanden achterwege kunt laten. In de 1e klas heb ik het in het begin omgekeerd: boodschap in het Nederlands, met daarna Engelse echo.*”

Finally, 31% of the teachers were motivated by imitating a natural learning environment: “*Het benadert het meest de manier waarop we ons onze moedertaal eigen maken.*” And: “*simuleren situaties uit de praktijk.*” One teacher explained this by comparing it to an English child learning the language: “*Ik houd mijn leerlingen altijd voor dat zelfs het domste Engelse kind prima Engels kan praten alleen omdat hij/zij de hele dag door Engels hoort. Het 3 x 50 minuten Engels is dan wel een héél klein beetje Engels, maar alle beetjes helpen.*” and another aimed at simulating the ‘foreign country experience’. In this context the word ‘subconscious’ or something similar was often used, and the function that

language has, namely: communication. As a consequence, also social talk in the target language has become important to many teachers in this group.

3.2.2 Motivations from other grounds

Other reasons for teachers to use the target language in class were less directly related to SLA theories. 50% of the total amount of reasons that were given with this question fall within this category. An overview of these reasons is given in table 5:

	Number	% teachers
Speaking skills	34	76%
Enthusiasm	7	16%
Preparation	7	16%
Practical	5	11%
Being an example	4	9%
Attention and focus	3	7%
Maintaining own speaking skills	2	4%

Table 5: Motivations for using TL = CL, indirectly or not related to SLA theories.

76% of the teachers use the target language in class for the development of speaking skills: “*bevorderen van vrij spreken (fouten maken mag)*” Often overcoming the fear of speaking a foreign language was mentioned by the teachers in this context (18% of the total): “*Leerlingen oefenen met spreekvaardigheid en overwinnen (hopelijk) hun schroom om te praten. oefenen, oefenen, oefenen.*” and: “*leerlingen leren een taal het best als ze er dagelijks mee geconfronteerd worden. (...) Daardoor raken ze hun angst voor praten kwijt en dat helpt ze weer bij hun examen.*” Also the development of compensating strategies came up: ‘*Ik laat hen ook zien/horen dat ik met 'compenserende strategieën' in staat ben om hetgeen ik wil zeggen duidelijk te maken. Ik stimuleer mijn leerlingen ook altijd om iets zo eenvoudig mogelijk te zeggen. "Keep it simple"*’ Several teachers aimed at using the language for communication, being the ultimate goal of foreign language acquisition and the opportunity to place the language in a meaningful context: “*door de doelstaal als voertaal te gebruiken kun je leerlingen over de drempel helpen de taal daadwerkelijk te gebruiken waar die voor bedoeld is: als communicatiemiddel in allerlei situaties. Je kunt je leerlingen zo leren hoe ze dmv de juiste woorden te kiezen hun doel te bereiken.*”

16% of the teachers mentioned personal enthusiasm about speaking the language in class, and/or enthusiasm from the side of their pupils. A frequently mentioned project in this respect is ‘Taaldorp’ ('Language Village'): “*Leerlingen waren ook super enthousiast na hun mondeling afgelopen jaar, afgenoomen in een Taaldorp. Ze gaven aan dat het alleen gebruiken van Engels spannend en leuk was. Ik hou het Taaldorp en dus zeker in en zou het vaker per jaar willen gebruiken, voor al mijn klassen en leerjaren.*”

Another 16% of the teachers mentioned preparing their pupils for the future; both final (oral) exams and continued (higher) education came up.

11% of the teachers has practical reasons for using TL = CL; this is a small variety of reasons, such as the fact that course books, reading texts and tests are in English; teachers are native speakers themselves (of course with the ability to speak Dutch as well). One

questionnaire was filled out from the perspective of a class where '*Engels versterkt*' ('deepening English') is taught, which aims at higher quality English.

The last three reasons were not mentioned very often (all by less than 10% of the teachers), namely: being an example for their pupils (9%), the experience that pupils paid more attention while using the target language, because their focus on what was being said increased (7%), and maintaining own speaking skills (4%).

3.3 Obstacles in using the target language in class and reasons to switch back to Dutch

In this paragraph, the answers to the other two open questions will be discussed:

- ❖ In using the target language in class, do you run into any obstacles? If yes, which three are the most present? (3.3.1)
- ❖ What are your main reasons for choosing to use Dutch in your class? (3.3.2)

Again, in reporting the answers that were given, the distinction is made between theoretical and other grounds.

3.3.1 Obstacles for EFL teachers in using the target language in class

Now an overview of the obstacles for EFL teachers to use the target language in class is given in table 6, below. Only one of these mentioned obstacles is directly related to second language teaching literature, namely the fear or experience that grammar instruction is less understood when explained in the TL (13% of all the answers; 14 out of 106). All of the other obstacles in using the target language are indirectly or not related to the theory (87%). Note that the category 'incomprehension' may be about both grammar explanation and other things that are said in the lesson.

	Number	% teachers
Grammar instruction	14	31%
Resistance pupils	23	51%
Resistance parents	4	9%
Level differences	11	24%
Incomprehension	18	40%
Pupils' fear of speaking	16	36%
Colleagues	9	20%
Own speaking skills	4	9%
Habituation	7	16%

Table 6: Obstacles in using the target language in class, of which only grammar instruction can be traced back to second language teaching literature.

51% of the teachers had to cope with resistance of their pupils, mainly by pupils ending participation as soon as English is made the language of communication in class: "*leerlingen vinden het vreemd/overdreven en werken niet echt mee*", and: "*De aandacht van de leerlingen verslapte, zodra ze de draad kwijt zijn.*" In some cases, this had serious consequences, for example when pupils start showing negative behaviour: "*Leerlingen zijn onzeker, denken dat ze het niet zullen begrijpen. Sommige leerlingen gaan dan reageren met negatief gedrag.*" And: "*leerlingen die steeds maar roepen dat ze het niet verstaan. Het bleek een gewoonte te zijn, omdat ik 1x in het Nederlands begon en toen riepen die 2 leerlingen het weer, waarop de klas in lachen uitbarstte.*" or said to fail a test because the class was taught

or the test was made in English: “*Bij proefwerken beroepen leerlingen er zich op dat ze niet begrepen wat de opdracht inhield; als concessie doe ik nu met grote tegenzin de opdrachten in de havo-proefwerken in het Nederlands.*” Several teachers found it very hard to continue using TL = CL if this was happening in their classes: “*Het is voor mij als docent heel lastig om Engels te blijven spreken als de klas (in het algemeen) stug in het Nederlands blijft antwoorden..*” Paragraph 3.3.1 will go into this more. An observation done by many teachers in this respect was that pupils switch back to Dutch as soon as they are not actively involved in the lesson. “*bij spreekvaardigheid spreken ze zodra je je omdraait toch weer snel Nederlands.*”

Related to this problem is the fact or fear that pupils do not understand what the teacher is saying: 40% of the teachers reported on this. “*leerlingen begrijpen niet wat ik zeg.*” Especially with grammatical theory this was an often-mentioned obstacle for speaking English (31%), as reported above: “*grammatica vinden 4HAVO leerlingen onbegrijpelijk in het Engels. Is al moeilijk genoeg in het nederlands uit te leggen....*”

Also, the pupil’s fear of speaking English was an obstacle for many teachers in consistently using TL = CL (36%). Teachers wrote they had to put much effort in encouraging these pupils to speak, and peer pressure sometimes makes this even harder: “*leerlingen durven niet, zijn bang uitgelachen te worden of zijn bang fouten te maken en dan zeggen ze liever niets.*” Apparently, it is not ‘cool’ to speak English in English class; often the word ‘stom’ (meaning silly, stupid and boring) was used in the teachers’ answers, quoting the opinion of their pupils: “*De leerlingen kennen nog maar heel weinig Engels en hebben daarom vaak moeite met Engels gedurende de hele les. De leerlingen willen eigenlijk ook geen Engels praten: "Dat is stom".*”

24% of the teachers said that level differences within one class hinders the use of TL = CL: “*Er zitten zoveel verschillende niveaus in de klas, van opstromers uit de BBL en KBL tot Havisten die zijn afgestroomd. Dat maakt het best lastig om een gulden middenweg te vinden in het gebruik van Engels.*” Many teachers in this group expressed the fear that weaker students could not get along with the rest if the target language is used in class: “*De zwakkere leerlingen haken toch soms af omdat het hen te veel inspanning kost mijn Engels te volgen.*” One teacher also mentioned different areas of English that are known; differences in the use of (social) media, for example, seems to cause level differences between pupils in one class: “*Er is een groot niveau-verschil tussen de leerlingen in één klas, vooral t.a.v. kennis en begrip van 'random' Engelse woorden. Dat komt m.i. vooral doordat een deel van de leerlingen veel van films en social media gebruik maakt en een ander deel nauwelijks. De kloof wordt zo steeds groter.*” Other level differences were caused, according to some teachers, by the fact that their pupils come from different elementary schools where different levels of English have been taught.

20% of the teachers wrote about the fact that their colleagues do not or hardly apply TL = CL, or at least not in a consistent manner, is an obstacle in their TL use in class: “*Ik vind het heel jammer dat mijn collega's dit niet doen.*” and “*Niet alle vakdocenten zien het nut ervan in en het kost dus tijd om het binnen een sectie een vast onderdeel van het lesprogramma te maken.*” In relation to this, 16% of the teachers mentions that it is important for pupils to take some time making it a habit to speak English in class. However, since not all teachers apply TL = CL consistently, this habit is hard to implement for many teachers in this group: “*Dat de leerlingen het niet zijn gewend dat een docent de doelstaal als voertaal gebruikt.*”

9% of the teachers feel that their own speaking abilities are falling short to reach the goal of consistently using English in class, especially after long days of teaching when they start becoming tired: “*aan het eind van de dag slaat bij mij ook de vermoeidheid toe om het Engels als voertaal te gebruiken.*” One teacher mentioned the incapability to use simple English for explaining material.

And finally, 9% of the teachers faces resistance of parents. Reasons for their complaining vary from having a son/daughter whose results are weak to the idea that in the Netherlands, only Dutch should be used for communication.

3.3.2 Reasons to actually switch back to Dutch

Table 7 below summarizes the teachers’ reasons to actually use Dutch instead of English as language of instruction and communication in class. Again, grammar is the only aspect that is supported by SLA theories, and forms 31% of all the answers given in this question (26 out of 83). The other 69% are answers that are not directly related to SLA theories.

	Number	% teachers
Grammar	26	58%
Contact	9	20%
Understanding and freedom	24	53%
Automatism	3	7%
Resistance	4	9%
Practical	8	18%
Literature	4	9%
Exam	5	11%

Table 7: Motivations to use Dutch instead of English

58% of the teachers specifically mentioned that explaining the grammar in English is experienced as way too hard for their pupils: “*uitleg grammatica is 'not done' in het Engels, dan snappen ze er niets van.*” Several teachers stressed that this part of class is the only part for which they use Dutch: “*Grammaticauitleg altijd in het Nederlands: vanwege begrip. De rest kan allemaal in het Engels.*” One of the teachers motivated his/her decision by referring to research by Michael Swan who supported the use of the mother tongue for foreign language grammar explanations. Several teachers mentioned the fact that the grammatical terminology is already acquired in Dutch, and since their pupils often reason from that point of view, this can simplify grammar instruction: “*Bij grammatica vind ik het vaak onnodig om het Engels te gebruiken (ik gebruik wel de Engelse benamingen, maar de uitleg is Nederlands.). Leerlingen beredeneren die grammatica toch in het Nederlands en vanuit de Nederlandse grammatica.*”

53% of the teachers gave as a reason for using Dutch that this way, they hope to increase understanding and the amount of freedom in what they can say and do in class; for example word jokes or speed of explanation, but also when they become tired: “*Contact met de leerlingen (makkelijk praten) gaat toch het beste in hun eigen taal. Ook woordgrapjes gaan nu eenmaal makkelijker in het Nederlands.*” “*Uitleg gaat zoveel sneller. (...) Leerling kan veel sneller antwoorden, scheelt lastijd. Erg he?*”. Some teachers mentioned that in case of complicated material, they let their students repeat in Dutch what was said in English. All of this to make sure that the learners understand what they have said.

Building relationships with pupils was given as a motivation to use Dutch by 20% of the teachers. This did not only concern tutoring, but also social talks in general: “*Maw voor het contact met de leerlingen, het meelevens, het kunnen inspelen op evt. (emotionele) problemen e.d. (hoor je als docent als je regelmatig gesprekjes met je leerlingen aanknoopt) gaat toch het beste in het Nederlands. Als ik alleen Engels zou spreken, zou ik veel missen.*” Also mentioned in this respect is conflict management and keeping order. Teachers using this argument wanted to leave no room for doubt when warning pupils about their behaviour, and felt they are taken more seriously doing this in Dutch than in English: “*Ook bij bijv. disciplinaire maatregelen mag er over de boodschap geen twijfel bestaan.*”

18% of the teachers gave practical reasons for using Dutch, of which many were aimed at saving time. Also, course books already containing Dutch explanations and exercises formed such a practical reason. Using Dutch is considered easier than using English: “*makkelijk(er), duidelijk(er), snel(ler)*”.

11% of the teachers mentioned exams and final exams for English, in which many open questions require Dutch answers, so that pupils have more opportunity to nuance. In exam preparation, this was a reason for them to use Dutch in class: “*Bij het bespreken van Examens leesvaardigheid word je eigenlijk gedwongen om Nederlands te gebruiken, omdat het bij open vragen bijv. vooral gaat om de formulering in het Nederlands. Ook de verschillende nuances zijn vaak beter uit te leggen als het Nederlands erbij betrekt.*”

9% of the teachers uses Dutch in discussing literature, again to be able to provide nuances and give their pupils the opportunity to do the same.

Another 9% finds the overall resistance (by pupils, parents and school leaders) to be so strong, that they switched back to using more Dutch in class:

And finally, 7% of the teachers said that automatism stands in the way of using English, since Dutch is their mother tongue and this is what they are used to use.

3.4 Contribution of TL = CL to learning process of language learners, according to the teachers

By means of a Likert-scale, the teachers were asked if they agreed to the following statement: ‘My pupils learn from using the target language in class’. Figure 6 shows their answers:

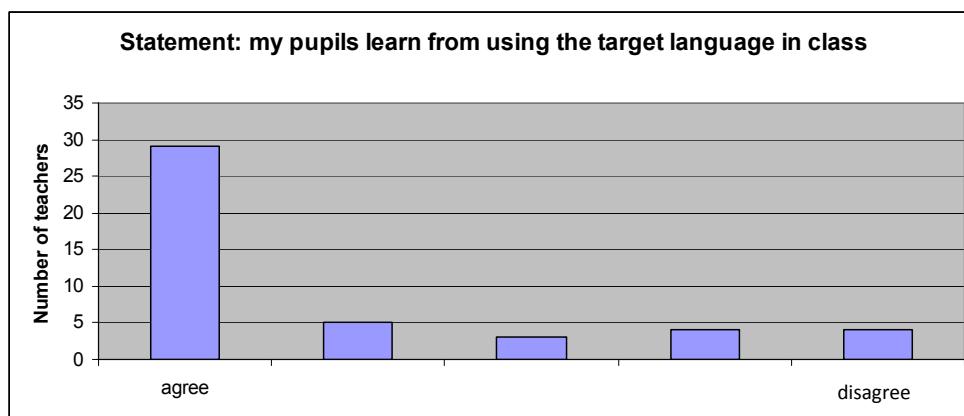


Figure 6: Responses to the statement: ‘My pupils learn from using the target language in class’, by using a Likert scale.

Figure 6 shows that 29 out of 46 teachers (this is 63%) fully agrees with this statement. 5 teachers agreed, but not so much (11%), 3 teachers were in between (7%), 4 almost

disagreed (9%), and another 4 didn't agree at all (9%). (Mean: 1.87 and SD: 1,38) Secondly, the teachers were asked to motivate their answer given to the statement. Again, their answers are broken down into theoretical arguments, so arguments that are rooted in SLA theories (par. 3.4.1), and other arguments (par. 3.4.2).

Paragraph 3.4.3 goes into the question whether correlation can be found between the way teachers think about TL = CL (does it contribute to the learners' language learning process?) and the amount of target language use in class.

In paragraph 3.4.4, the question is answered whether correlation can be found between the expected learning effect of TL = CL and the teachers' type of qualification and received instruction.

3.4.1 Theoretical arguments

In table 8, the theoretical arguments that the teachers gave are summarized, which form 34% of the total amount of arguments (22 out of 65) that were given here:

	Vocabulary and grammar	Input	Immersion
Number	11	7	4
% teachers	24%	16%	9%

Table 8: theoretical arguments for the teachers' responses to the statement whether their students learn from using the target language in class.

The largest group of teachers (24%) in this category mentioned expanding their learners' ability to apply their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar as one of the main learning effects from using TL = CL.: "*Hun woordenschat is groter en ze zijn gewend aan de Engelse taal.*" and "*Je kunt grammaticale structuren in een natuurlijke context aanbieden en vocabulaire uitbreiden.*" The word 'subconscious' or something similar was used quite often in describing this learning process: "*Zoals gezegd wordt hun vocabulaire onbewust uitgebreid en herkennen ze eerder of iets 'goed loopt' of niet.*" One teacher also mentioned improving pronunciation. A few teachers mentioned the natural context in which grammar can be applied if the target language is used in class, such as the one did in the first quotation of this paragraph.

7 teachers (16%) mentioned input in their motivation to the statement, also in combination with eliciting output; the more, the better. However, some teachers warned that the way this happens is crucial to whether pupils learn from it or not; teachers are in the position to support and challenge their students, but they can also increase their fear of speaking: "*Het spreekt voor zich, dat het omgeven zijn door de doelstaal, (dus meer input) ook meer output zal opleveren. Echter (...) is de manier waarop de docent ermee omgaat van cruciaal belang. Je kunt leerlingen uitnodigen, uitdagen, aanmoedigen etc. Maar je kunt ze ook voor de rest van hun leven faalangst voor het spreken van de Engelse taal meegeven.*"

9% of the teachers spoke about immersion, and referred to research that supported this idea or compared it to children learning a language.

3.4.2 Arguments from other grounds

In motivating their answers to the statement, many teachers gave arguments without directly referring to theoretical concepts (66% of the total amount of arguments that were given). These arguments can be found in table 9:

	Habituation and communication	Overcoming fear	Future
Number	30	10	3
% teachers	67%	22%	7%

Table 9: arguments from other grounds for the teachers' responses to the statement whether their students learn from using the target language in class.

The most often given argument is habituation and communication; 67% of the teachers said that one of the most important things their pupils gain from using the target language is to get used to communicating in English: “*Een taal leren is communiceren. Als wij alleen bandjes afspelen van de methodes leren de leerlingen nooit hoe het is om met een Engelse te communiceren. Ik verwacht dat zij ook in het Engels communiceren met mij.*” “*De leerlingen raken steeds meer gewend en beschouwen het als vanzelfsprekender.*” and “*de ervaring leert dat vanaf klas 1 de leerlingen goed kunnen communiceren in het Engels. Ze hebben geen schroom te taal te gebruiken en vinden het normaal deze te gebruiken in de les en in communicatie met mij.*” Some of those did not necessarily think that this caused a learning effect: “*Ik realiseer me dan ook nu wel dat het toch vooral bij mij ligt om het gebruik van het Engels te stimuleren en geduld te hebben met de beginsituatie. Toch vraag ik me meteen af hoe ik dan kan zien/toetsen of hun gebruik van de taal inderdaad erop vooruit is gegaan. Je blijft juf.*” Other teachers, on the other hand, reported the observation that their pupils’ vocabulary visibly increases by using the target language, as was mentioned with the theoretical arguments. Also the application of grammar was considered to go easier this way.

22% of the teachers mentioned overcoming fear as one of the most important reasons why learners learn from using TL = CL: This is sometimes mentioned in the same context as getting used to the English language as means of communication: “*Hoe lastig ze het ook kunnen vinden, bij volhouden gaat het snel vooruit met het gebruik van de vreemde taal. De angstdrempel is weg.*” And: “*het 'normaler' vinden dat je in een andere taal spreekt: soms overwinning voor leerlingen om dat te durven/kunnen.*”

Finally, 7% of the teachers anticipated on the future in answering this question, by mentioning universities, but also exams and school trips to England.

3.4.3 The opinion teachers have of TL = CL and the amount of TL use

In paragraph 1.4, the expectation was expressed that a high or low opinion of TL = CL would influence the overall amount of target language use in class. A two-tailed correlation test showed no significant correlation. ($r = -0.2264$, $P = 0.1358$). However, when looking only at the target language use of the teachers, some correlation was found ($r = -0.2967$, $P = 0.0475$), showing that the more learning effect was expected from using TL = CL, the more the target language was actually used by the teachers. Even though the correlation is not very strong, it is significant.

3.4.4 The opinion teachers have of TL = CL, their grade of qualification, and received instruction in teacher training

Even though paragraph 2.4 showed that there was no correlation between the type of qualification (first or second grade) and received instruction on TL = CL in teacher training, it may still be the case that these two aspects correlate (separately) with the teachers' opinion of using the target language in class. However, both correlations turned out to be nonsignificant, even though the one between opinion and qualification comes very close ($r = 0.2899, P = 0.0530$).⁷ (Instruction on TL = CL and teachers' opinion: $r = 0.1538, P = 0.3134$.)

⁷ If this correlation had been significant, it seems to show that the opinion of using the target language in class would be higher with teachers with a grade 2 qualification than grade 1, while the other way around was expected. Footnote 6 mentions something similar.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter, the results will be discussed and some conclusions are presented. Paragraph 4.1 will go into some theoretical issues that arose from the literary reviews, partly in combination with some theoretical arguments that teachers gave in the questionnaires for the use of TL = CL. Paragraph 4.2 will discuss the amount of target language use as was found by means of the questionnaire. Paragraph 4.3 will review the motivations and obstacles that teachers encounter in using the target language in class. In paragraph 4.4, some remarks are given on the application of the TL = CL principle that originate from the teachers' comments, in light of earlier discussed SLA theories. It will also briefly go into the role(s) of the EFL teacher that complicate the use of the target language. Finally, paragraph 4.5 will conclude this thesis as a whole. Each paragraph will end with a few recommendations for future research.

4.1 Theoretical framework concerning TL = CL

The use of the target language as language of communication and instruction in class provides many conditions for second language acquisition to take place, such as input, intake, output, interaction and feedback. However, for monolingual classroom settings as can be found in average secondary schools in the Netherlands, only few empirical studies were done to find the actual effects of this on pupils' language acquisition. Even though these studies showed positive learning effects, it has been too minor so far to be able to draw strong conclusions. (A literary study done by Hermans (2003, dissertation) confirms this.) Interesting in this respect was the comment of one teacher, who was wondering how it could be tested whether pupils actually improve their knowledge of a language by applying TL = CL, while several teachers that filled out the questionnaire for example, were convinced that by TL = CL, pupils expand their vocabulary and strengthen their grammatical knowledge. This is very likely to expect considering the reviewed literature on the language learning mechanism, but empirical studies have not confirmed whether this is actually the case in this particular language learning setting.

On the other hand, the focus of newer, more communicative approaches of language learning, such as the interaction hypothesis, is more on training specific linguistic skills. Adopting the target language as language of communication in class could very well provide the opportunity to develop speaking and listening skills, simply because it spends time on doing so. As paragraph 4.3 will show, many of the reasons that teachers gave motivations for using the target language that were not necessarily based on SLA theories, but more on the training of specific skills (i.e. speaking skills, and overcoming the fear of speaking a foreign language).

The recommendation for future research in this respect is therefore threefold. On the one hand, empirical studies need to look into the actual effects of using the target language in monolingual schools on the language acquisition process of the learners; do the learners benefit from TL = CL in developing their vocabulary, grammaticality, pronunciation, etc.? On the other hand, empirical studies need to focus on the development of language skills, such as speaking, listening and communicating, as a result from TL = CL. And finally, the question needs to be answered which goals teachers aim for when using TL = CL; is their focus mainly on developing language skills, or language acquisition, or both? Does their focus influence the way they apply this principle in class, and consequently, what their pupils learn from it?

4.2 The amount of target language use in class

In this small-scale study, the amount of target language use in the EFL class was measured by conducting a survey amongst 45 EFL teachers in secondary schools in the Netherlands. From this survey, the overall amount of target language use in class was found to be slightly over average, which means that English is used in class a little more than half the time, and Dutch the rest of the time. However, not much can be deduced from this, because this division originates from several factors. Therefore, the amount of target language use was distinguished according to the different lesson elements (4.2.1), the different users of the TL in class, namely the teachers and the learners (4.2.2), and the different levels of education that exist in Dutch secondary schools (4.2.3).

4.2.1. TL use per lesson element

For all of the lesson elements that were asked for in this study, the target language was at least used sometimes, with a mean that was slightly over average. However, the range of distribution was quite large, meaning that teachers highly vary in their application of TL = CL in class, most of them not opting for ‘always’ and ‘never’. There were two lesson element that really stood out; a) grammar, for the low amount of TL use and b) speaking, for the high amount of TL use.

Many teachers think that grammar can best be explained in Dutch to increase comprehension and to add to their pupils’ Dutch knowledge of analysing sentences. The few teachers that did use the target language for grammar explanation, and were convinced that it is not impossible to successfully give grammar instruction in English, were mostly teachers of higher grades and higher levels of education. This would suggest that explaining grammar in English to pupils that just start learning English or are not aiming for high levels of English can best be done in Dutch. A few studies that were discussed in the introduction acknowledge the usefulness of the mother tongue for this part of language learning, especially in lower stages of second language acquisition. At this point, it could be concluded that the teaching practice and the literature for the most part correspond with each other.

Obviously, the target language was used most during speaking exercises. Teachers said they see the highest value of using the target language in class in training their pupils’ speaking abilities and making them getting used to communication in English. However, if they really do so, it is surprising that the amount of target language use is not higher for some other lesson elements. Beginning of class, for example, was explained as a lesson element where the pupils are welcomed, some small talk is made, the first instructions are given, and a possible warming-up takes place. This provides many opportunities to train their pupils’ speaking abilities in a very spontaneous manner. The same goes for finishing class, and discussing homework (maybe except for homework that goes deeply into grammatical issues). Mainly using the target language for speaking exercises, makes that the pupils practice speaking English in very unnatural, artificial circumstances. Then, the use of the target language in class misses its goal, as it is meant to make the language learning environment more natural for learners. The minor use of English during listening and reading exercises, was often caused by the fact that the final exam expects elaborate answers in Dutch. Furthermore, many teachers said that it was more important for them that their pupils really understood what was being written or said, than training their pupils’ speaking abilities at this point. Nuances in the information would be more comprehensible in Dutch, just as this was for grammar explanation. Since no literature was found on this subject, no further conclusions can be drawn from this.

Future research should look into the reasons why some teachers think that grammar explanation in the target language is possible, while others do not. Is the level that pupils have reached in language acquisition really decisive, or are other factors of influence here? For example, do teaching techniques structurally differ, or is the difficulty caused by the fact that the course book explains everything in Dutch? Case-studies and classroom observations could probably shed some light on these issues. Furthermore, it would be helpful to look into the amount of 'spontaneous' target language use in class, as opposed to target language use that is evoked by speaking exercises from the book, for example. What can teachers do to increase this type of output?

4.2.2. TL use by teachers and learners

To a large degree, the teachers used the target language themselves (language of instruction), and to a lesser degree, the pupils used it as well (language of communication). This was the case in all educational levels (VWO, HAVO and VMBO). Of course, this difference is partly caused by the fact that teachers are in charge of the class and can decide for their own 'broadcasting time', so to speak. However, several teachers wrote that target language use in class was mainly functioning as input for the learners, causing them to speak English, and their pupils to speak Dutch. Making their pupils speak English as well was taking the class to the next level. The latter was of course partly caused by the fact that many teachers faced fear or unwillingness for speaking. However, if target language use is mainly viewed as providing input for pupils, this might increase this teacher-learner discrepancy. So far, it was confirmed by research that teachers cognitions highly influence their use of the target language in class, yes or no. However, as the introduction described, there are different benefits to gain from TL use in class, dependent of who uses it. So future research needs to go deeper into teachers cognitions behind their actual use of the target language in class and the ways that the TL is used in class. Does a relation exist between them?

Paragraph 4.3 will go into this a little more.

4.3.3 TL use in the different levels of education

The different levels of education influenced the overall amount of target language use significantly. This means that the amount of target language use was found to be the highest in VWO classes, lower in HAVO classes, and the lowest in VMBO classes. The target language use of just the teachers corresponded with this pattern, but that of the learners did not. There, only a difference between VWO and VMBO could be found meaning that the VWO learners of English use the target language more in class than VMBO pupils do, but no further differences were found. These results are not very surprising, given the different educational goals that are set for these levels. However, the fact that such differences can be distinguished, has consequences for future research regarding TL = CL use in Dutch secondary schools. This study has made clear that the educational levels play an important role in the question how much the target language is used. More quantitative study needs to be done to the reasons behind these differences. It can be reasonably expected that because of the lower language level that needs to be achieved in the lower levels, teachers find it harder to establish target language communication, since less means are available to establish this. It can also be that the pupils from lower levels are less motivated to use the target language in class than pupils from higher levels, but these conclusions can only be drawn with great caution, as they may just arise from stereotypical thinking.

Overall, it should be noted, that Hermans (2003) noticed that teachers do not always have a clear view on the actual target language use in their classes, as in many cases, they tend to over-estimate the TL use of their pupils. Therefore, the final recommendation for future research in this paragraph is that empirical study should be done to gain a clearer insight in the trustworthiness of such self-evaluations, and what this means for educational research of this type.

4.3 Motivations and obstacles in using the target language in class

As was described in the methodology, in educational literature, the focus has been increasingly more on the cognitions of teachers behind their actions in class. This was brought about in this thesis as well, by asking for teachers' motivations behind their choice for a language of instruction and communication (mother tongue or target language). (4.3.1) Also, the question was asked how much teachers think that pupils actually learn from using the target language use in class. (4.3.2)

4.3.1 Motivations and obstacles in using English for instruction and communication

Half of reasons for teachers to use the target language in class are directly rooted in second language acquisition theories. Teachers know that as a teacher, they are in the special position to give their pupils as much input as possible and to create a language learning environment that is as natural as possible. However, it seems that teachers are hardly aware of the important role of peers in this process. The interaction hypothesis states for example that next to the teachers' speech, the speech of peers can also be input for their pupils, even though it may not be perfect. What happens at least, is that learners can train their listening skills and develop a critical ear towards speech of others. Furthermore, they can give each other feedback, if necessary mediated by the teacher, and learn from each other. This way, several ways of language learning are intertwined; when one pupil produces output and trains speaking skills, the other receives input, trains listening skills and develops the ability to judge about correct language use (by which they can improve their own). Some teachers regretted that they are the only person from whom their pupils receive input, but from this point of view this is not entirely true. Of course, in order for this scenario to work it is required that a safe learning environment is created in class. This is a serious consideration, since many teachers described the fear that exists among their pupils to use English for communication, and the role that peer pressure plays in this. It takes effort for them to help the pupils across this barrier of actually speaking English. The other half of reasons for teachers to use TL = CL were less directly rooted in SLA literature. For example, teachers are aware that '*practice makes perfect*' in developing speaking skills, and want to use their lesson time as efficiently as possible in reaching this goal. Furthermore, several teachers are driven by enthusiasm, anticipation on their pupils' future, or practical reasons such as course books that are completely in English. Since the teachers' theoretical and practical reasons behind using TL = CL turned out to be equally distributed, no further conclusions could be drawn from them. As suggested in 4.2.2, future research should look into relationship between the type of reasons supporting TL = CL, and the type of communication it brings about.

Considering the obstacles, except for explaining grammar (par. 4.2.1), everything that hinders consistent target language use in class is practical by nature. While these barriers are not or only indirectly present in the literature, they are part of the everyday reality of teaching English at secondary school. Next to the aforementioned fear of speaking that

pupils can have, many teachers reported resistance of pupils and parents, lack of habituation, partly caused by the inconsistent use of English by colleagues, the presence of different levels in one class, (fear of) incomprehension, and finally the fear that their own speaking skills are falling short. Except for the last obstacle, all of these obstacles can be characterized as external factors influencing the classroom environment. This does not mean that these are fixed obstacles that cannot be changed, but they do, however, complicate the choices of teachers regarding their language choice. Reasons for teachers to actually switch back to Dutch agree with many of these obstacles, even though not every obstacle necessarily causes such a drastic switch, and not all reasons to use Dutch are meant as a substitution for English. Many teachers declared to use Dutch for explaining grammar, for increasing the understanding of their pupils and their own freedom in for example making jokes, for discussing literature in detail, and for building relationships with their pupils. This last reason also includes conflict management, since part of many teachers' jobs unfortunately entails keeping order. Furthermore, the switch to Dutch is sometimes made as a consequence of fierce resistance, as a consequence of automatism, and for practical reasons (books or exams in Dutch). More educational research needs to be performed to find out what can be done to solve these problems, as they may seriously hinder language acquisition and the development of second language skills.

4.3.2 Teachers' opinion of TL = CL's learning effect

Finally, teachers were asked if they thought that using the target language in class causes any learning effect with their pupils. The majority thought this was indeed the case, but a quarter of the teachers was not that convinced. However, no statistical correlations could be found between this and the actual use of the target language in class. This seems to contradict the idea that the teachers' cognitions regarding the effect of this method would influence the application of this method in practice. (Also, the measurable indicators of possible SLA knowledge, such as grade of qualification and having received specific education on TL = CL did not show any correlation with the amount of target language use.) There are two reasons that could explain this.

Firstly, the actual learning effect was the only cognition which was quantitatively measured. All the other cognitions and motivations were not, because no overall picture of teachers' ideas in this respect existed at the start of this research. My recommendation would be to quantitatively measure the cognitions and motivations that were found in this study among (E)FL secondary school teachers. It follows that this would also give the opportunity to compare this with the actual application of the TL in class. As mentioned twice before in this chapter, not only the presence or absence of applying TL = CL should be taken into consideration then, but also the type of TL communication that has come about. If a coherence turns out to be present, this would confirm the prevailing idea in educational research after all that the way teachers perform in class is determined by their cognitions.

Secondly, it was striking that only one-third of the reasoning behind a possible learning effect was rooted in SLA theories. This has two implications. First, it would suggest that teachers are not fully aware of the opportunities TL = CL provides for learning. The lack of correlation behind the extent to which learners are expected to learn from TL use in class, and the actual amount of TL use may originate from this. Second, in paragraph 4.1 the conclusion was drawn that only few empirical studies have shown that an actual relation exists between TL = CL and SLA theories. Then, the fact that only one-third of the reasoning behind this learning effect was rooted in SLA theories is actually a very good reflection of the

theoretical situation, which is that TL = CL seems to be beneficial for the language learning process, however only little evidence was found for this in empirical research. However, since this information was gathered by open questions, no strong conclusions could be drawn in these respects.

4.4 Some final remarks on ways of applying TL = CL principle and the role of the (E)FL teacher

It was interesting that for some teachers, using the target language was a means to increase their pupils' attention and focus, while for other teachers it caused pupils not to pay attention any more. Some teachers' comments regarding this matter can be viewed in light of the literature as discussed in the introduction:

- In order for input to become intake, the input should be i+1 (as opposed to i+2 or 3). However, as teachers also mentioned themselves, they have to deal with different levels in one class, which can complicate determining how much '+1' is. Some teachers also said to have trouble using 'simple English' in explanations. Several teachers came up with strategies to work around this, such as giving echoes in Dutch, letting the pupils summarize what they have said in Dutch, or using visual aids. Of course, in a cumulative learning process, as is the case with learning any foreign language, the lower grades would probably need this the most.
- In the early stages of SLA, pupils can certainly benefit from using the mother tongue in grammar explanation. Many teachers confirmed this from their daily experience. Other teachers were convinced that it is possible to explain grammar in the target language as much as possible. The literature mentioned that creating sharp boundaries between different lesson elements could help maintaining a target language standard, so the possible use of Dutch here would not interfere with other lesson elements in which it is easier to apply the target language. Furthermore, it is important to not lose sight of the goals: when it is a goal to make pupils communicatively competent in a foreign language, this may sometimes shift the attention away from (over)extensive grammar instruction.
- Presumably, also the motivation of pupils is of influence here, which can also be deduced from the learning context model by Ellis. Teachers came up with strategies to consciously create a natural learning environment, for example by imitating the foreign country experience, or comparing their pupils' language learning processes to that of English children acquiring the English language.

Finally, considering all these teachers' motivations from a bird's-view perspective, it needs to be concluded that secondary school teachers are much more than teachers alone. They have much wider range of tasks and responsibilities than just teaching English as a foreign language, and their position in a school context is much broader than just being part of a teacher – learner relation. The teachers' elaborate descriptions showed that they are also group managers, tutors, and colleagues (and people whose first language often is not the target language). Furthermore, they have to deal with expectations from pupils, parents, colleagues and school leaders. All of these external factors have found to influence their target language use in class. So except for just looking at the cognitions of the teachers, maybe also the cognitions of the parents, colleagues and school leaders need to be tuned in to this effective way of teaching a language. For only 40% of the teachers, using the target language in class is department policy. Of course, also the pupil's own cognitions about

learning could be involved. Teaching pedagogue Herbert Puchta explains in this video (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sisFOrESIpU&feature=player_embedded) how teachers can involve pupils in reasoning why it would be useful to use the target language in class.

4.5 Overall conclusion

This thesis confirms the idea that the principle of applying the target language as language of instruction and communication in class is highly dependent of the context in which this occurs, and this may not be disregarded in further educational research concerning this subject. The context of monolingual secondary school classes is a very specific one, bringing many complications to this field of study.

First of all, it was found that the educational level plays an important role in the extent to which $TL = CL$ is applied. This probably originates from different educational goals that have been set for each educational level, which causes different levels of language knowledge and language skills to be developed. Secondly, it was found that the type of lesson element also influences the amount of target language use, of which grammar instruction and speaking practice were the most distinct in their respectively low and high amount of TL use. Finally, the foreign language learning context in secondary schools is complicated by a large amount of other external factors that are often not directly under the teachers' control.

Furthermore, most of the teachers were convinced that the use of $TL = CL$ provides learning opportunities for their pupils, however, not all of them were convinced. Considering the fact that also little empirical study was done to show that learning the language benefits from $TL = CL$ in such a context, this is not at all groundless. However, most of the teachers did notice other benefits that come along with the use of the target language, namely an efficient way of training their pupils speaking skills, and a means to overcome the fear of speaking a foreign language. Since the focus in language learning today is more and more on developing skills for successful communication, this is a great advantage to be gained from $TL = CL$.

Finally, since the amount of target language use varied heavily among the different teachers, no strong conclusions can be made regarding 'much' or 'less' TL use in Dutch EFL classes. However, what it does show, is that there is (still) no uniformity among teachers regarding this method. Several teachers noticed this, saying that some of their colleagues were not as consistent with the use of $TL = CL$ as they were. This inconsistency of TL use in one school was regularly found to be an obstacle in their own application of this principle. By filling out this questionnaire, a few of the teachers were inspired to discuss the matter in the English department. One of them wrote: "*Daar komt dan ook meteen de gedachte bij dat we dit inderdaad als sectie moeten invoeren en ons allen daaraan moeten houden, wanneer we leerlingen vanaf het eerste moment dat ze bij ons op school zijn wennen aan het gebruik van de vreemde taal dan is misschien die drempel zo verdwenen, als die er dan überhaupt al is. Ik neem het direct mee naar de aanstaande sectiebijeenkomst.*"

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