

# **The Incorporation and Impact of Using Portuguese in EFL Classes – A Case Study of Grade 7 Students at 1008 School in Benguela - Angola**

**Thevenin Sabino Chipuca**

**Instituto Superior Politécnico Católico de Benguela- Navegantes**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The process of integration of L1 in English Language Teaching (EFL) class is judicious because it can be positive and having a good impact in learning of EFL; whereas, the wrong integration can destroy the oral production in the English class. Hence, the use of students' first language (L1) in English as a Foreign Language classroom remains a controversial issue among specialists. Some educators defend the only use of target language and others defend the incorporation of L1 so that it can facilitate the learning process in EFL. In this study we want to understand the impact of L1 on the teaching learning of EFL as to establish a cause-effect relationship between the L1 and EFL. The study is conceived on an assumption which is a well-known methodological problem that stipulates as follows: the difficulties faced by English language teachers in using students' L1 without destroying the oral production during EFL classes. The participants of this research are six grade-7 classes, 4 teachers teaching in these 6 classes, and the English Coordinator in Benguela Province. The study is mainly qualitative and three research instruments were used to help collect data, namely (questionnaire, observation and interview). The study concludes that it is important to use L1 at certain levels and specific moments during the lessons. However, teachers need not to stick to translation all the time. The study finishes with some recommendations for English teachers, as well as for the English Coordinator.

**Key-words:** Impact, L1, L2, incorporation, oral production and EFL.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Learning English in the Angolan context is a great challenge. The incorporation of students' first language has been associated with several educational benefits including improved understanding of complex concepts, reduced learner anxiety, increased classroom participation and enhanced reading comprehension. The learners face difficulties of various types. Some related to methodology, strategies, approaches and some others related to the material conditions used by the teachers. The present case study is carried out in context of a school located in Benguela city with two levels (primary and secondary levels).

In Angola, L1 is Portuguese and the issue of how or when make use of students' L1 in EFL classroom has been debated for many years among teachers and scholars. However, in recent years, focus has been shifting towards inclusion of L1 in EFL classroom. Many teachers find that the use of Portuguese provides more time to practice English because understanding is achieved much more rapidly. The key with teacher use of L1 is that it should be used for clarification purposes, after an attempt has been made to communicate ideas in L2 and students still appear to be confused. The idea is that L1 serves a "supportive and facilitating role in the classroom" research has shown that the occasional use of L1 by both students and teachers increases both comprehension and learning of L2. Teachers often use L1 in beginning and intermediate classes: to give instructions, to explain meanings of words, to explain complex ideas and to explain complex grammar points. However, it is important to point out that students who use L1 for communicative purposes in the classroom must also be expected to use L2 in the classroom to practice its use.

## Statement of the problem

Despite the growing recognition of multilingual issues, many English teachers remain uncertain about the appropriate role of Portuguese in EFL classrooms. Some educators advocate an English-only approach while others frequently rely on Portuguese to facilitate instruction consequently there is limited empirical evidence regarding the extent to which Portuguese contributes to or hinders English language learning among grade 7 learning in Angolan schools. Being so, we have the research problem which is about *the wrong incorporation of Portuguese impacting on the oral production in EFL class*.

## Research Questions

As far as EFL learning is concerned, it is generally known that EFL grade 7 students are considered as beginners in the Angolan educational system. The main problem, we attempt to solve in this research is about to know how the integration of L1 (Portuguese) impacts on the EFL classes: positively or negatively to the learning of EFL with grade 7 students. In order to carry out the study, two research questions were set up to help to find possible answers to solve the problem. In other words, our research problem comprises the two following research questions:

- Why are teachers using too much L1 in their classes?
- What can be done to help teachers use less Portuguese in their classes?

## Objectives of the study

### General objective

- To investigate the incorporation and impact of Portuguese (L1) in English language teaching among grade 7 students at BG 1008 school in Benguela.

### Specific objectives:

- To discuss some strategies used to incorporate Portuguese in the teaching of English as a EFL;
- To provide some methodological supports, as a way of integrate L1 to EFL class;
- To identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses in teaching EFL classes;
- To raise teachers' awareness for the need of oral production in order to change their attitude towards teaching.

## Significance of the study

The findings of the this study it is aimed to help the EFL- teachers in order to develop their way of teaching and also can help other English Language teachers' Coordinators to understand better the role of Portuguese in EFL classrooms.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study focuses on the impact of L1 Incorporation into EFL grade 7 lessons. This study comprises focus on L1 incorporation and its impact; to understand the work better it brings some terminologies related to the issue that its study. These expressions are: *language, L1, L2, incorporation, EFL etc*. Several studies have demonstrated that first-language support can enhance reading comprehension by enabling learners to access background knowledge and better understand complex texts Being so, the explanation of the five expressions

will help the reader to tackle the meaning conferred to every expression by the researcher so that the reader can understand the topic being discussed.

## Language

The term «language» can be seen in different perspectives: linguistic, sociological, biological, etc. Generally speaking, Hornby (2005: 862) defines language as *“the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular area or country”*. It is true that language is the means through which people communicate. It is an inseparable part of human society. Likewise, it promotes the development of human civilization.

### First language or L1

The term first language is used for the language that we acquire as children usually from our parents being part of personal, social and cultural identity. In other words, first language is the language that we learn to speak first as children, through social and cultural transmission. This term is often used synonymously with native language. First language (L1) is the first-acquired language by someone, and it occurs unconsciously by imitating people living with us. This process involves the influence of both the linguistic input to which children are exposed to social interaction with their parents and other caretakers and a natural aptitude for grammar that is unique to humans. (Richards and Schmidt 2010: 221).

### Second language or L2

The term second language refers to a language that plays a major role in a particular country or region though it may not be the first language of many people who use it. For example, when immigrants learn English in the USA that is a case of second language learning. Furthermore, a second language is the one acquired after our mother tongue considered as first language, being the principal language spoken in our country to accomplish many important functions including the business of education and government. So, learning such language is necessary in order to be successful within that context. There are two main ways in which this can be done. Firstly, a language can be made the official language of a country, to be used as a medium of communication in the governmental domains such as the law courts, the media, and the educational system. Secondly, to get on in these societies, it is essential to master the official language as early in life as possible (Crystal 2003: 3).

### English as a foreign language (EFL)

Foreign language refers to the process of learning or studying a language outside its official environment; it is not the normal medium of communication and instruction in the community. That is taught at schools, often widely, but it does not play an essential role in students and teacher's national or social life. However, the reasons for someone learning a foreign language may be various i.e. aspiration for social or professional advancement, intention to visit the foreign language country, willingness to be able to communicate with foreign language-speaking tourists or friends, or to be part of foreign language community, an interpreter or a foreign language teacher. A foreign language is any language that is not officially recognized in a given country or state (Yule 2010: 188).

## Incorporation

The word «incorporation» comes from the verb, to incorporate that is to integrate or to include something in other. Le Robert (2016: 373) asserts that incorporation is the intimate inclusion of one thing in another. In short, incorporation as to do with integrating something in another which is sometimes larger than expected. As a matter of fact, we have come to the following assertions:

- In the teaching/learning process of a foreign language, when dealing with L1 incorporation, we integrate some L1 vocabulary or sentences into L2 for better learning whenever necessary.

- Usually, everybody learning L2 has already got some bases in L1, although the two languages might be different in terms of their structures.
- We believe that EFL teachers still need to integrate L1 in teaching of L2 for better comprehension.

### **Developing students' oral production skills**

According to Richards and Schmidt (2010: 413), the expression «oral production» is used to indicate the spoken form of particular language as opposed to written form.

In addition, Ur (2012: 220) stresses that, communicating orally and fluently in formal and informal interaction settings is the primary goal for many language learners. For that purpose, teachers should design class activities as to improve students' ability to promote oral fluency. Thus, teachers should promote adequate activities which are able to develop the students' language abilities in an integrated way. However, in most of the lessons time should be allocated to students' communicative activities and teachers' supervision in the classroom. To help students develop their speaking skills teachers should act as facilitators of the learning process where students are put in the centre of all teaching-learning process and not the teacher as traditionally was conceived.

### **Some methods for boosting up oral production**

In here, we are speaking about the teaching methods that can be used by EFL teachers to improve the students' capacity of oral language production. There are many methods used in ELT to boost up the oral production. At this stage, we are going to deal with communicative language teaching (CLT) because it is the approach recommended by the Angolan educational authorities, and task- based learning and teaching (TBLT).

### **Communicative language teaching (CLT)**

According to Patel and Jain (2008: 95) "communicative language teaching is based on the idea that the aim of learning a second language is to gain communicative competence". Scrivener (2005: 38) makes the point that "communicative language teaching approach is based on beliefs that learners learn best if they participate in meaningful communication". Nunan (2005: 56) argue that communicative language teaching is "an approach and a philosophical orientation that connects classroom-based language learning with the language that learners need in order to communicate outside of the classroom".

### **The roles of the teacher in task based learning teaching (TBLT)**

Teachers play distinct roles in TBLT. According to Willis (1996: 333) there are three important roles that teachers can play in TBLT:

- ✓ Teachers can act as mediators of the students' language development, contributing to the effectiveness of TBLT as a pedagogical approach to second language education;
- ✓ Teachers are seen as a key figure in the implementation of TBLT, and thus as change agents in the innovation of second language education;
- ✓ Teachers are viewed as researchers, and thus as active contributors to the development and further refinement of TBLT as a researched pedagogy.

### **Some advantages and disadvantages of using first language**

Since there is no consensus among scholars regarding whether or not to incorporate students' first language in English classes, integrating students' first language in EFL classes has its own advantages and disadvantages. The following lines justify better the idea presented in this paragraph.

In advance,

### Advantages

Diaf (2017: 35) points that there are several benefits from using L1 in EFL classes as follows:

- It reduces learners' anxiety and creates a more relaxing learning environment;
- It develops students' self-confidence so that they get the courage to participate in class;
- It acts as a means of bringing the learners' cultural background knowledge into the class.
- It facilitates checking understanding and giving instructions;
- It facilitates the task of explaining the meaning of abstract words and facilitates introducing the main differences in grammar and pronunciation between L1 and FL.
- Finally, it facilitates communication, teacher-student relationships, and the learning of FL;
- L1 techniques allow teachers to use richer and more authentic texts, which mean more comprehensible input and faster acquisition.

### Disadvantages

Demir (2012: 25) affirms that the use of first language in EFL classes also has a negative impact on the target language learning as it follows:

- It is not authentic and it concentrates attention in L1 instead of in the target language.
- It decreases motivation of synthetic, upper intermediate and advanced students.
- It is inappropriate for EFL learners.
- It is behaved to be outdated and non-communicative.
- There is a risk that little if any time is left for communication in target language.
- There is a danger to turn the educational process into teaching about grammar, not teaching grammar (its practical application).

We believe that, when we moderately use L1, like Portuguese in our case, students understand the way the target language functions. We also believe that it is nonsense to use target language throughout the lesson when students poorly understand what is said. In this case, it is better to use code mixing or bilingual teaching method. Just like any teaching method, the bilingual method also has some disadvantages.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to understand better the magnitude and the complexity of the phenomena of the L1 incorporation and its impact in EFL class, this study will be based on a mixed methods research approach which will be explained in detail. Three research instruments (questionnaire, classroom observation and interview) were employed in order to confirm or disconfirm our hypotheses. The focus of this study is about the **impact of using Portuguese in EFL classes**. The research problem is about **the wrong incorporation of Portuguese impacting on the oral production in EFL class**, the target participants are: **grade-7 students, classes and teachers**, and **the English provincial coordinator**. The nature of the research imposes us to choose three research instruments, which are: **questionnaire, observation and interview** for data collection and analysis and interpretation.

Table 1: Distribution of teachers and students in classrooms

| Teachers                 | Teacher A |        | Teacher B |        | Teacher C | Teacher D |              |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Classrooms               | class1    | class2 | class3    | class4 | class5    | class6    | Total        |
| Population               | 42        | 41     | 44        | 39     | 42        | 43        | 251          |
| Participants<br>= Sample | 38        | 38     | 37        | 36     | 37        | 34        | 220<br>=100% |

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the present case study, we used three research tools: questionnaire, classroom observation chart and interview. The aforementioned tools provided us both (qualitative and quantitative) data and these three instruments will be analyzed and discussed in the research methodology.

- **Questionnaire:** it has two forms (questionnaire to the teachers and to the students). It is a research method that allows us to collect data which can be expressed statistically.
- **Observation:** it is a qualitative method which is about observing an EFL class. It is made possible by using an observation chart.
- **Interview:** It is a qualitative method which is about having a chat with person as to collect some necessary data on a well-known topic.

## Methods

In attempt to collect qualitative and quantitative data for being analyzed and discussed, we have decided to apply a questionnaire to 4 teachers, another questionnaire to 220 students (composing our sample), and classroom observation (observing 4 teachers teaching), and finally an interview to the coordinator of English in Benguela province. We are aware of the fact that questionnaire is generally applied to obtain quantitative data, whereas observation and interview are applied for getting qualitative data. We believe that by applying these methods we will obtain enough data as much pertinent as possible for sustaining the different research issues developed in the theoretical parts. After collecting and presenting the data we are going to display, firstly the outcomes from the questionnaire to teachers, secondly the results from questionnaire to students, thirdly the results from classroom observation and, finally the outcomes of the interview applied to the coordinator of English in Benguela. The last it will be about the analysis and discussion of the data obtained in the field.

## Results from the Teachers' Questionnaire

In this section, we are going to present the results gathered from the setting where the current study took place by using teacher-questionnaire.

### Question 1: How often do you incorporate L1 in your classes?

|           | Teacher-A | Teacher-B | Teacher-C | Teacher-D |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Never     | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Rarely    | 0         | v         | 0         | 0         |
| Sometimes | v         | 0         | v         | 0         |
| Often     | 0         | 0         | 0         | v         |
| Always    | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |

Table 2: Frequency of using L1

The above-table (table 3.2) shows that the 4 EFL teachers use L1 in their classes but with different frequencies. Two teachers (A and C) use it sometimes; teacher-D uses it frequently, whereas teacher-B rarely uses L1 in EFL classes. By all accounts, the question posed in the problematic remains up although teacher-B has some constraints to use Portuguese in the EFL classes, that is: Are these 4 teachers using L1 in the way to encourage oral production among the EFL students or discourage them to produce.

**Question 3: a) Do you use particular strategies to incorporate L1 in EFL class?**

| Options    | Teacher-A | Teacher-B | Teacher-C | Teacher-D | %  |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----|
| <b>Yes</b> | 0         | v         | 0         | 0         | 25 |
| <b>No</b>  | v         | 0         | v         | v         | 75 |

Table 3: Strategies for L1 incorporation

Teachers A, C and D do not have any strategies to use L1 in their EFL classes. This means that they use it randomly, at any moment. That is to say they can use L1 in a stage of the lesson when it is not necessary. This way of doing things is not correct because the students will never make any efforts to get the teacher's message when it is in English; they will always ask for translation. However, teacher-B says that he uses L1 in EFL classes by respecting some methodological strategies. As there is a question asking the teachers to give precision about these strategies, let us wait and see.

**Question 4: Find three language aspects in which the oral production is much used?**

| Options    | Teacher-A | Teacher-B | Teacher-C | Teacher-D | %   |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----|
| Listening  | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0   |
| Reading    | v         | 0         | v         | 0         | 50  |
| Speaking   | v         | v         | v         | v         | 100 |
| Writing    | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0   |
| Vocabulary | v         | v         | 0         | v         | 75  |
| Grammar    | 0         | v         | v         | v         | 75  |

Table 4: Linguistic aspect integrating oral production

This table shows that all the teachers assert that the oral production is most used in the speaking activities in their EFL classes. In the contrary, writing and listening activities have very little oral production. The outcomes of this question show that reading, vocabulary and grammar activities develop some oral production during the EFL classes. We advise EFL teachers to do their best to integrate a good dose of oral production in their lessons because the improvement of the speaking capacity depends on the students' ability to produce orally.

**Question 5: Choose 3 activities you use in EFL classes to boost up the learners' oral production?**

| Options      | Teacher-A | Teacher-B | Teacher-C | Teacher-D |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Conversation | v         | 0         | 0         | v         |
| Games        | 0         | v         | v         | 0         |
| Discussion   | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Debates      | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Role-play    | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |

|                 |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|
| Reading         | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Singing         | 0 | v | 0 | v |
| Simulation      | v | 0 | v | 0 |
| Question-answer | v | v | v | v |

Table 5: Activities boosting up oral production

This table shows us that the 4 EFL teachers have chosen among 5 activities, which are conversation, games, singing, simulation and question-answer. Furthermore, especial reference should be made on the question-answer technique because it has been chosen by every teacher. As we know, the question-answer technique helps EFL teachers to boost up the students' oral production in the classroom.

#### Question 6: Choose two methods you apply usually when teaching English?

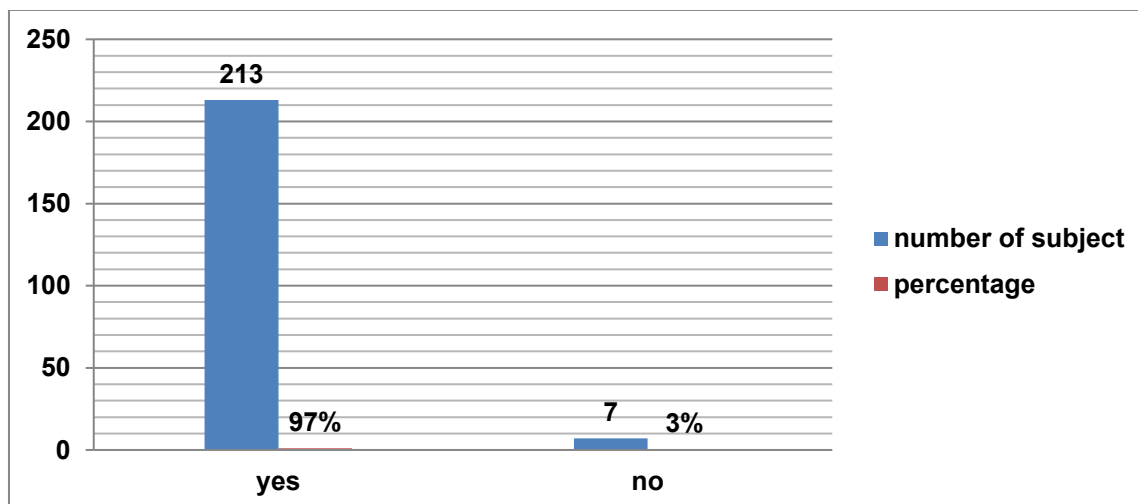
| Options             | Teacher-A | Teacher-B | Teacher-C | Teacher-D |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Audio-lingual       | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| CLT                 | v         | 0         | v         | 0         |
| TPR                 | 0         | v         | 0         | 0         |
| Direct method       | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Grammar-translation | v         | 0         | v         | v         |
| TBLT                | 0         | v         | 0         | v         |

Table 6: The most used methods

For our surprise, when we consider all the four teachers together, the grammar-translation method is the most used teaching method among the six methods presented. This fact justifies that the majority of teachers use repeatedly L1 because the grammar-translation method is based on teaching English grammar using L1. Teaching English with a large integration of L1 is the particularity of the grammar-translation when it is well used; but what about the oral production which should be the result of interaction occurring in the classroom?

#### Results from the Students' questionnaire

##### Do you like learning English?



Graph 1: Students who like to learn EFL

This question was posed to students with the idea of knowing if they like learning English language or not. We can clearly see that the large majority of the students that is 97% of all the 220 respondents are interested in learning English, while 3% of the respondents do not like learning it. Having the willing to learn English is good, but it is not enough to speak it. Because there is lack of material conditions to reach this final aim that is speaking English. For instance, the classes are large, they have more than 40 students. This does not permit the teacher to handle communicative activities properly.

## 2. Do you possess the textbook or another reference book used by the teacher?

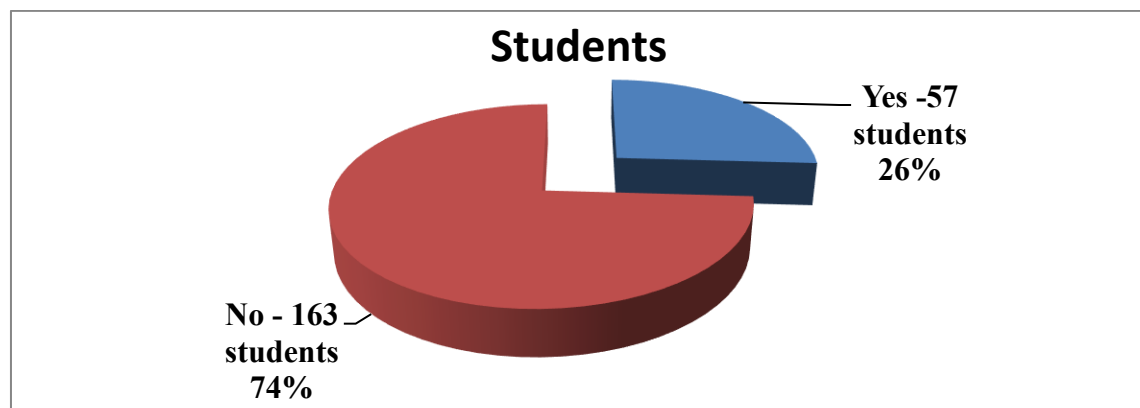
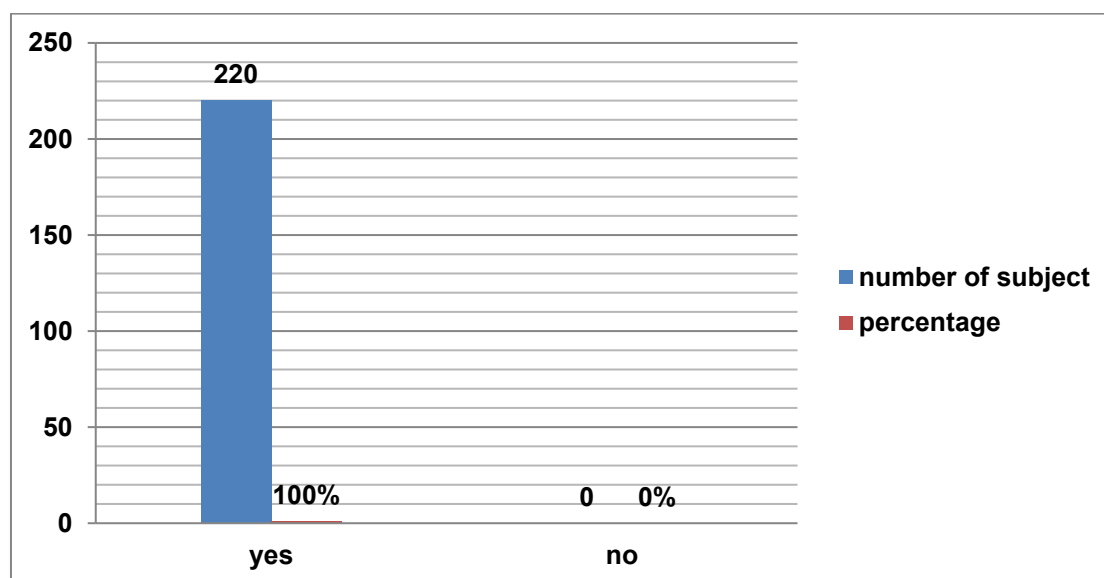


Diagram 1: The materials which facilitate students to learn English

According to the diagram above, 74% of students declare that they do not have the necessary materials (reference books, exercise-books) to learn English. Most of the students have manifested their willing to learn English but the willing is not the only element the students need to reach the final objective that is speaking English. They need other things as the reference books, exercise-books, CDs or online interactive exercises available because they need to practice it out of the school.

## Does your teacher use Portuguese in English class?

Yes.....220 students = 100%; No.....0 students = 0%



Graph 2: Use of Portuguese

This graph above shows that 100% of the students declare that their teachers use Portuguese in the EFL classes. But the way it is used or the purpose motivating its use differs from one teacher to another.

## Data from classroom observation

In the following figures, we would like to present some situations which are frequently remarkable in the English classes. There are many aspects observed during the six sessions of classroom observation we had in grade 7 classes. However, among all the situations observed, especial reference can be made to some situations which are thought to be relevant for this study. They are: the use of L1, speaking activities and techniques, and the use of the teaching methods

| Frequency in using L1 |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Classes               | Responses        |                  |                  |                  |
|                       | Never            | Rarely           | Sometimes        | Often            |
| teacher A             | //////////////// | //////////////// | //////////////// | 1                |
| teacher B             | //////////////// | 1                | //////////////// | //////////////// |
| teacher C             | //////////////// | //////////////// | //////////////// | 1                |
| teacher D             | //////////////// | //////////////// | //////////////// | 1                |

Table 7: Frequency in using L1

Regarding the frequency in which teachers use L1, we closely observed that teacher-B rarely uses L1, and the other three EFL teachers use L1 more times than teacher-B. According to outcomes presented in table n° 11, teacher-B integrates L1 in EFL class rarely that is to say when it necessary; he has well defined principles that allow him to incorporate L1. He has done this to avoid the negative influence of L1 in his lessons (destroying oral production, accustomed the students to L1 explanation etc). The following table (table-12) is concerned with the communicative activities used by the teachers in the classroom to boost up speaking. As a matter of fact, oral production is based on speaking activities in the EFL classes. Let us check if the frequency of the use of some speaking activities by the teachers.

| The use of speaking activities / techniques |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Communicative techniques                    | Responses        |                  |                  |                  |
|                                             | Never            | Rarely           | Sometimes        | Often            |
| Role play                                   | 1                | //////////////// | //////////////// | //////////////// |
| Drills                                      | //////////////// | 1                | //////////////// | //////////////// |
| Simulation                                  | //////////////// | 1                | //////////////// | //////////////// |
| Question -answer                            | //////////////// | //////////////// | //////////////// | 1                |
| Dialogue                                    | //////////////// | //////////////// | //////////////// | 1                |
| Games                                       | 1                | //////////////// | //////////////// | //////////////// |
| Conversation                                | //////////////// | //////////////// | //////////////// | 1                |

Table 8: Use of speaking activities and techniques

Concerning the use of communicative techniques and we have observed that teachers often used question-answer, conversations and dialogues and rarely used simulations and/or drills. They have never used games and role plays as part of their teaching activities. This should be because of “Face 2 Face: Starter”, the textbook used by the teachers of grade-7 classes in BG-1008 school. This book is dominated by question-answer, conversations and dialogues; and it uses rarely drills and simulations. The following table deals with the teaching methods. Let us check if the teachers give more privilege to the methods that sustain the oral production.

| Teaching methods    |            |            |            |            |            |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Methods             | Responses  |            |            |            |            |
|                     | Never      | Rarely     | Sometimes  | Often      | always     |
| Audio-lingual       | ////////// | 1          | ////////// | ////////// | ////////// |
| CLT                 | ////////// | 1          | ////////// | ////////// | ////////// |
| TPR                 | ////////// | 1          | ////////// | ////////// | ////////// |
| Direct method       | 1          | ////////// | ////////// | ////////// | ////////// |
| Grammar-translation | ////////// | ////////// | ////////// | 1          | ////////// |
| TBLT                | ////////// | 1          | ////////// | ////////// | ////////// |

Table 9: Frequency in using some methods

As we can notice in the present table, most of the teachers use grammar-translation, so L1 is more used in the classrooms because grammar-translation is based on teaching grammar of the target language by using L1. The management of the classroom is a part of the lesson that prepares the setting where the class activities will be occurring. The classroom management must be treated carefully otherwise the class objectives will not be achieved.

| Frequency in using L1 for class discipline |            |            |            |            |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Discipline                                 | Responses  |            |            |            |
|                                            | Never      | Rarely     | Sometimes  | Often      |
| teacher A                                  | ////////// | ////////// | 1          | ////////// |
| teacher B                                  | ////////// | 1          | ////////// | ////////// |
| teacher C                                  | ////////// | ////////// | 1          | ////////// |
| teacher D                                  | ////////// | ////////// | 1          | ////////// |

Table 10: Frequency in using L1 to manage the classroom

The table above shows that only teacher B rarely uses Portuguese for maintaining discipline in the classroom. Since this research paper is based on the impact of L1 in EFL classes oral production, we closely observed the most teaching methods used by the 4 EFL teachers. Unfortunately, most of them used the grammar-translation method which does not help boost up oral production.

### Data from the interview applied to the Provincial English Coordinator

Having interviewed the English Provincial Coordinator (pedagogical advisor of English) on the focus of our topic that is “the Incorporation and impact of L1 on EFL class production”, we noticed that he is not totally against the use of L1 in EFL classes; but he believes that some appropriate strategies should be found in order to fix up the use of L1 in EFL classes as not to refrain students’ oral production. Moreover, we have come to conclusions that:

- ✓ Most of EFL teachers exaggeratedly use students’ first language due their lack of knowledge about the effective strategies for using students’ first language, and the concept of using first language in EFL classes refers to the sense of enhancing students’ comprehension in the lessons and understanding the meanings of difficult vocabulary.

- ✓ The use of first language together with the target language at lower level classes can help students be confident by creating links between the culture of the new language and culture of their language. Using first language encourages interaction between teacher and students at a basic level and it allows learners to talk about learning; it also enhances the social atmosphere in the classroom.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

We have conceived the current section to purposefully analyse and discuss the results presented when carrying out the research. A deep analysis and discussion of the results will permit us to confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses.

### Analysis and discussion of the results from teachers' questionnaire

We have come up with the question one, to check the frequency in which teachers use Portuguese in English classes. From the results we can notice that most of the teachers often use Portuguese in their classes. We found arguments in the theoretical issues covering the use of L1 in English classes from different scholars who advise us not to exaggerate on the use of Portuguese. The use of L1 should not be exaggerated because the more students are exposed to the target language, the better they will learn it. In addition, students often use L1 when doing pair work to construct solutions to linguistic tasks and evaluate written language. Some scholars defend that the use of L1 allows students to work within their Zone of Proximal Development. A quick use of L1 would save time and help to correct students when they fail to give appropriate answers in the EFL classroom. Unfortunately, teachers overused Portuguese in the observed English classes and this blocks students from developing their language skills. Some of the most common of these reasons are: organizing students in the class, explaining new content to learners, translating abstract and unknown language items, giving instructions, providing examples to students, etc. we do believe and favour the idea that students' L1 must not be ignored; on the contrary it must have an active role to play in the class. We posed a question two, that has to do with the strategies to incorporate L1. The strategies that are mostly used by the teachers when using students' L1. In fact, Portuguese was used in the observed classrooms when teachers were grouping students, checking vocabulary and eliciting the language. Throughout the study, we approached some effective teaching strategies to be applied in the classroom using Portuguese appropriately. These strategies provide students' support in using first language and motivating them towards foreign language learning. Being so, Teachers should have appropriated strategies while using first language. L1 can facilitate communication between students and teachers when used appropriately and promptly. The goal of using student L1 in the EFL class should be to help foreign language students become more aware of their ways of learning, most effectively the ways in which they can enhance their own comprehension and production of the target language. It seems to us that teachers lack an effective approach when using Portuguese in the class. We posed the question three, to check the development of oral production in order to consider some important aspects such as fluency, accuracy pronunciation, vocabulary, interaction, confidence, and communicative competence. This provides a bridge from the familiar to the unfamiliar words and expressions, and to make the meanings of the target language words clear. Another great advantage of using students' L1 is the fact that it motivates and helps students cope with some problematic situations, explaining some grammatical patterns, explaining their ideas in writing composition or in oral work, and translating the reading passages. In addition, using L1 helps maintain classroom discipline, build rapport and reduce social distance among students and teacher. The results presented here come to prove that many teachers still lack appropriate effective teaching strategies when using the students' first language.

We posed question four to see how teachers work or set the activities in pair/ group work, role play, information gap activities such as debate, interview, presentations and so on. Moving on, we raised the question to check from the teachers the teaching methods most used in their daily teaching practice. The Grammar-translation method was the most dominant teaching method used by most of teachers, followed by the others. In the teaching field the list of teaching methods is endless, from non-communicative to communicative methods. The assessed literature observes that although the Grammar-translation method might be the mostly used one, a new teaching method that purposely employs L1 has appeared known as *the new concurrent method*. This method requires

teachers to balance the use of L1 and FL which facilitates language learning. A Bilingual Method is a frequent means used by highly communicative competent teachers. Another similar method which links L1 and FL is *the reciprocal language teaching* which aims at preparing proficient students and allowing them to switch easily from foreign language to first language and vice versa. Unfortunately, teachers are not familiar with these additional methods that emphasise and defend the correct use of students' first language in English classes.

From the data presented about we concluded and it is obvious that most of the teachers use Portuguese in English classes. As it is considered by scholars, using the students' first language simultaneously with English (bilingual method) is a controversial issue in field of English language teaching methodology. Some scholars believe that mixing two languages would not help learners to reach their language learning "fluency" goal. Methodologists, who support the direct method use, assume that learners acquire foreign language the same way as children acquire L1, and the interference of L1 should be removed. The Audio-lingual method users and supporters also reject and criticise the use of L1. They state that two different languages should not be mixed in a classroom. There are also other scholars who support the idea that teachers should moderately use the students' first language in the English classes. So, they need to be more flexible and use a combination of various approaches and methods to teach, taking into consideration the content, the aim of the lesson and the language level of learners.

### Analysis and discussion of the results from students' questionnaire

We began reflecting on the results from question one in students' questionnaire. By setting the first question is checking whether students are interested in learning the target language or not. Luckily, more than ninety-five per cent of all the respondents are interested in learning the target language. This means that the majority of the students are motivated to learn. It is well known that interest is one of the key elements of motivation. In here, no doubt is allowed because the interest is the key of every motivation. Motivation plays a significant role to get learners engaged and interested to learn the target language. Obviously, there are many ways for teachers to promote motivation in the foreign language classroom, like using properly the students' first language. Gaining students' motivation is a complex task but losing it is much easier. While it is significant to generate and initiate learners' motivation, it is equally important to maintain and protect it. Throughout our journey in the teaching experience, we have noticed that most of the learners come to the classroom generally not so motivated. They are not interested to learn because they regard useless learning the target language, English.

Let us reflect a little bit about the students' time exposure to learning English language. From the results obtained in the field we could notice that the vast majority of the learners began learning English in grade7. This means that most of them have been learning English from the first year of experience. Most students seem not to have little experience to language exposure; moreover, they are not able to use the target language for basic communication. This fact made us think that EFL teachers lack effective teaching techniques, particularly in using students' first language to enhance their learning. If students were asked to determine the most used language in their classes, their answers would be English; according to the data obtained we have to admit that the grammar-translation is the most used method; to make things worse, sometimes they mix Portuguese with English. This is indeed a problem that needs separate research.

Stepping on, we have brought to light to discuss the students' opinions about the practice of using Portuguese in English classes. The majority of the learners found it useful that teachers use Portuguese in English classes. What is more interesting is that using L1 appears to exhibit collaborative interaction, facilitate the use of talk and build efficient natural learning strategies. We have posed the basis of the topic that is to check subjects' feeling towards first language use in English classes. It may develop critical thinking and provide access in terms of researching. It may also help the students to access to information, technology.

We posed the question two to the students to check if the students have material and if this material are appropriated or not. The material mentioned can be (textbook, workbook, newspaper, dictionary, audio material, digital material, etc.)

We posed the question three in order to understand in which moment that students use L1. In our understand that, it should be used in right moment and in appropriate concept or complex issues such as making jokes, showing concern to the students, showing empathy, explaining difficult concepts or ideas, talking about administrative information as course policies, announcements, deadlines, etc. The data illustrated here pointed out that the vast majority of the respondents believe that first language use in English classes is very important in English language teaching and learning process.

### **Analysis and discussion of results from classroom observation**

We are going to reflect on the teacher's awareness towards the frequency of using Portuguese as students' L1, in English classes. We had a general view concerning teachers' success and failure in using Portuguese as students' L1 during English classes. In general, most of teachers overuse Portuguese in English classes and, in addition, when asked about when and how to use Portuguese, most of them say that they often use Portuguese throughout the lesson. By observing the way teachers plan and deliver the lessons we noticed that they are facing some problems, particularly in balancing students L1 and the target language knowledge. All in all, teachers face difficulties in finding appropriate strategies to use Portuguese in their lessons according to the principles of language teaching methodology. As far as anticipation of this problem is concerned, most of the teachers do not predict possible problems and solutions to overcome these problems which can appear during their teaching.

The way teachers manage the classes we have closely observed shows that most of the teachers were tough in taking decisions and they could not do it smoothly as to monitor and organize properly the learners. Lack of classroom discipline, and interaction during the lesson, can hamper teachers in achieving their teaching goals. We have closely observed that the interaction between teachers and learners was not as effective and productive as it should have been; thus, it was observed that the teachers' talking time was higher than students' talking time. The 4 teachers were not aware of individual and group needs Poor student's engagement in the lesson hardly leads to effective learning and teaching process. We carried out a direct classroom observation by assessing the ways teachers dealt with teaching methodology, particularly when comes time to use their students' first language (Portuguese) during English classes. .

### **Analysis and discussion of results from interview**

After having an interview with Provincial English Coordinator, we have noticed that our interlocutor was very much interested in the matter we presented to him. He gave satisfactory answers to the questions posed by us to him. His answers can be characterized as follows:

- EFL classes should be carried out in English, but Portuguese can be employed when it is necessary.
- EFL should use teaching methods which promotes interactions in the classroom
- The teachers must focus first of all at fluency, accuracy should be left behind for later on.
- Teacher should do his best to create sympathy in the students towards the English language.
- In EFL class teacher should not be used as a translator but as a facilitator
- Code-shifting may be used punctually

From the considerations given by Provincial English Coordinator, we can see that they sustain some strong point of view defended in the literature review in favour of the moderate use of L1 in EFL class. The Provincial English Coordinator is not against the use of L1 in EFL class but he defends that EFL must occupy a larger moment of the class time because of the Angolan context (English is rarely spoken outside the class). And the students must get accustomed to both English culture and English language if they want to speak the latter fluently and accurately.

## **Ethical considerations**

Researching in education concerns people's lives in the social world they live and therefore it inevitably involves ethical issues. Such issues are more important in qualitative than in quantitative research because, in qualitative research the researcher enters into the private life of the participants but there is a need to address ethical issues not only in qualitative but also in quantitative studies (Dornyei, 2007).

According to Flick (2007: 122) ethical considerations are becoming more relevant in the context of research. Most of the research has to be approved by institutional review boards. If we consider that qualitative research is almost always research with human beings, thus it needs to be approved by institutional Committees before the study takes place. Even in countries, like Angola, where research ethics have not been formally implemented, there is now a growing awareness of the need to protect research participants, and set up mutual conditions of respect, confidentiality and anonymity.

In order to fulfill the ethical considerations, and make this research more valuable, a letter requesting permission to conduct the research was addressed to the Staff School Direction. Because the permission from the Staff School did not mean that lecturers and students would promptly accept to participate in this study, individual consents and permission from both teachers and students were gathered. We promised and assured participants that their identities were going to be protected and that the recorded information was going to be kept safe and not used beyond the purposes of the study. Participants were encouraged to ask for any clarification they needed and after that explanation they were requested to formally sign a consent form.

## **CONCLUSION**

This case study discussed about the incorporation and impact of using Portuguese in EFL classes with grade 7 students mind and it focus on its context-dependent, sociocultural and pedagogical features. Teachers and learners mainly those aforementioned are participants in a situation where they are encouraged to use the target language in order to establish an immersion environment and improve learners' English proficiency. There may, however, arise pedagogical situations that do not support its use. This study examined segments of classroom discourse, and found that even if teachers intend to manage and teach the class through a target language, L1 is also adopted as a tool of class management and to set up situations where participants are able to access the target language for use. However, the question may arise "how or when to do it in a lesson? As briefly mentioned in the previous section, the present study infers that in order to make a choice of L1 or the target language, teachers will need to be able to control their interactional styles and the teaching-learning sequences, while keeping the goals of the teaching in mind.

EFL teachers need to attend seminars, workshops and conference; those are important issue as it is about teachers' auto-training. Teaching is undeniably a dynamic process, just like life itself, and it is not static. Every single day, new approaches to language teaching are being suggested by methodologists. We live in era of technology and teachers should be updated with new tools to language teaching. If teachers do not regularly take part in language teaching workshops, they are likely to be outdated.

The first language can play the role of an effective pedagogical tool in a language classroom apart from general translation in understanding meaning which is of great benefit in EFL classes. L1 can be a very useful tool. Lexical items can be taught using L1 in advance before the main task. L1 can have a significant role in explaining the meaning of grammatical structures.

First language is a valuable resource to make up students limitations in the process of foreign language learning. So, the trend in using first language as a learning means is to reach students' goals in comprehending, remembering as well as producing their foreign language whether their teachers discourage them or not.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

We are suggesting some idea to the EFL teachers and English Provincial Coordinator to improving their performance in EFL terms of using L1 without ruining the oral production.

### Recommendations for teachers

- Teachers should encourage students to speak as much as possible in target language and use L1 when it is really necessary.
- Teachers should promote oral production in English in the classroom by using interactions between teacher- students or students- students through some techniques, such as simulation, role play, question-answer, dialogue, conversation, pair work, group work, debate, etc.
- Teachers should know the goals of using L1 and its functions in EFL class. How it may affect or not the learning process.
- Teachers should use L1 in abstract content knowledge and do the code-switch to L1 for pedagogical purposes, it should be better if he/ she would reinforce the concepts in L2 if there is a need for that.

### Recommendations for the English provincial coordinator of English

In here, we are suggesting some ideas to the English Provincial Coordinator as to improving and facilitate the job of the EFL:

- The English coordination should care and run refreshments courses, workshops, seminars to discuss the impact of L1 incorporation aspects concerned with advantages and disadvantages of using students' mother tongue in the classroom;
- The English coordination should organize teaching practice sessions to show how L1 should be integrated throughout a specific situation of the lesson to answer students' need and save time;

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