CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to present the review of literature relevant to the study. It is divided into the following topics.

2.1 Teacher Talk in English Classes

2.2 L1 Use in English Classroom Teaching

2.3 The Factors Influencing Teachers' Use of L1

2.1 Teacher Talk in English Classes

In a foreign language classroom, the language input from the teacher or teacher talks are important language sources to expose to the students. Cook (1989 cited in Dong-lin, 2008: 57) explained that "teacher talk refers to the amount of speech supplied by the teacher rather than students. Sometimes teacher talk can be called teachers' language, teachers' speech or teachers' utterances."

Teacher talk plays an important role in many aspects. First, teacher talk is used for the aim of classroom management; for example, in terms of disciplining, giving direction and instruction, and keeping tasks moving ahead. Second, it is the source for students to learn about and to acquire the target language through teachers' explanations or clarification of the target language. 'To explain' is part of a teacher's job to make things clear or easy to understand for students' learning (Watson Todd, 1997: 75). Through this part of the talk, teachers may introduce new language and objectives of a lesson, clarify content, treat students' errors; for example, in order to facilitate students' learning. The above aspects of the importance of teacher talk are supported by Nunan (1991: 189) saying that

> "Teacher talk is of crucial importance, not only for the organization of the classroom but also for the processes of acquisition. It is important for the organization and management of the classroom because it is through language that teachers either succeed or fail to implement their teaching plans. In terms of acquisition, teacher talk is important because it is

probably the major source of comprehensible target language input the learner is likely to receive."

This means that teacher talk is not only the tool that teachers use to convey knowledge to students, but also the most important means to manage the class. Furthermore, teacher talk plays an important role as a model of language use since the language that teachers normally use in class such as greeting, questioning, responding, etc. can be later used by students. In other words, students acquire the language from teacher talk. They gain examples of language from the teacher for their future use. The importance of the teacher's model seems to be crucial for the beginners who initially need some patterns from the teacher (Brown, 1994). After getting examples and acquiring language from the teacher, they will be able to produce and initiate the language themselves.

When talking about teacher talk, the issue of quantity and quality is of concern. There is a continuing debate about the amount of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) in an English language classroom. Cullen (1998: 179) and Harmer (2007: 38) say that 'Good' teacher talk meant 'little' teacher talk, since it was thought that excessive TTT deprived students of opportunities to practise speaking and it was the students who needed the practice, not the teacher. Therefore, in an English class, teachers should regulate their talks and provide students with more opportunities to increase their target language output (Dong-lin, 2008: 60). However, Nunan (1991: 190) suggests that the amount of TTT should be dependent upon the objectives of a lesson, rather than a concept of inverted ratio: the lesser, the better. Therefore, teacher talk should not be only judged by the amount of time, but also by how effectively it facilitates language learning and promotes communicative interaction in the classroom. Dong-lin (2008: 60) argues that teacher talk does greatly influence students' English learning. The appropriate use of teacher talk in an English classroom makes teaching more effective. Thus, Teacher Talking Quality (TTQ) should be considered (Harmer, 2007: 38). In some steps of the lesson, a lot of teacher talk or input might be required. For example, the teacher may need to spend much time in order to introduce new language points to students. In addition to introducing language, teacher talk can also be used to introduce the situation for students to perform tasks. On the other hand, at other steps only a small amount of teacher talk might be needed. Teachers might talk less while monitoring students doing

tasks or practicing language. Therefore, the objectives of each steps of the lesson should also be recognized in order to regulate TTT.

Teacher talk might appear in the form of either L2 or L1, especially where the teacher and the learners share the same mother tongue. Though the use of L2 advocates to a number of advantages, it does not mean that making use of the students' L1 (where possible) has to be abandoned. Hence, a mixture of L1 and L2 is commonly noticed in such situations (Cameron 2001: 199).

2.2 L1 Use in English Classroom Teaching

This section discusses the use of L1 in English classes, focusing on the patterns, the purposes, the advantages and the constraints of L1 use in English classes.

2.2.1 Patterns of L1 Use

Teachers' L1 use in an English class can be divided into 3 main patterns: code-mixing, code-switching, and translation. Teachers may use only one or a mixture of them in their talks.

- **Code-Mixing**

'Code-mixing' is intrasentential code alternation (Mckay, Bokhorst-Heng, 2008: 165). It is a mix of two languages within the same sentence. In other words, speakers incorporate small units (words or short phrases) from one language into the sentence of the other language (Setyaningsih, 2008). The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1985: 57) states the meaning of code-mixing as follows:

> *"Code-mixing is a mixing of two codes or languages, usually without a change of topic...Code-mixing can involve various levels of language, e.g. phonology, morphology, grammatical structures or lexical items."*

In classroom teaching, teachers may mix the languages by inserting words, for example, of one language into a sentence of the other one as in the example of code-mixing below in which English is embedded in a Thai sentence:

"วันนี้ครูจะ test คำศัพท์ ที่เราเรียนกันไปใน lesson ที่แล้ว"

(Today, I will test the vocabulary that we have learned from last lesson.)

In short, 'code-mixing' is the insertion of words or short phrases from one language into the sentence of the other language.

- **Code-Switching**

'Code-switching' is intersentential code alternation (Mckay, Bokhorst-Heng, 2008: 165). It is 'the alternative use of the L1 and L2 within a discourse' (Ellis, 1994: 28). It happens when a speaker and/or an interlocutor know more than one language. It occurs because the speaker finds it easier or more appropriate to communicate by switching than keeping the utterance totally in the same language (Macaro, 2005: 63).

Teachers may switch the two languages back and forth while speaking because of some specific purposes, for instance, to highlight important points, to be able to catch students' attention, etc. (Liu et al., 2004). Here is an example of code-switching between English and Thai in classroom teaching:

"Who didn't send me homework; raise your hand, please?

แล้วทำไมถึงไม่ได้ส่งการบ้าน" (Why didn't you send homework?)

In brief, 'code-switching' is the switching of two languages between sentences.

- **Translation**

Another pattern of L1 use is translation. 'Translation' means transferring the meaning of the source language into the target language. In translation, only the form is changed from one language to another but the meaning is held constant (Astika, 1993: 66). In

other words, when the speakers convey a message even in word, phrase, or sentence level in one language, they also repeat the same message in another language. Here is the example of translation from English to Thai:

"Look at the title. What is this chapter about? ดูที่ชื่อเรื่อง บทนี้เกี่ยวกับอะไร *"*

In conclusion, these 3 patterns of teachers' L1 use in classroom teaching—code-mixing, code-switching, and translation—can occur separately or together. Particularly, while a teacher is code-switching, code-mixing normally inevitably occurs (Setyaningsih, 2008). Or even all of them can occur together. For example, a teacher may combine code-mixing and translation while he/she is code-switching in the same sentence or discourse.

2.2.2 The Purposes of L1 Use

In classroom teaching, teachers may have different purposes to use L1 in their teaching. Teachers may use L1 for a particular purpose or many purposes at a time. The purposes for which they normally use L1 can be categorized into six sub-topics below.

2.2.2.1 To Highlight Important Points

Teachers sometimes use L1 to highlight some important points of the lesson for students (Liu et al., 2004: 622). The important points may include the key expressions needed for practicing speaking, the grammar points needed for test or exercise, or the objectives of the activities and lesson that students need to be aware of. It can occur at any stages of teaching which can either be after teachers' L2 explanation and re-emphasis in L1, or they can immediately use L1 when they think it is an important point, in order to make students notice that it is important and they have to pay more attention since it is the language that students understand. Moreover, teachers can make sure that students can get the important points by doing a revision before the next class starts or before the exam.

2.2.2.2 To Enhance Students' Understanding

Teachers can also use L1 to solve immediate understanding problems in the classroom. In an English class where students appear to have language deficiencies or have low level of English proficiency, teachers may use L1 to facilitate their L2 learning, especially when students appear to have difficulty in understanding L2 (Liu et al., 2004). To enhance understanding, teachers may use L1 for explaining and giving instructions, after that they can use L1 for checking students' understanding as well. For example, teachers can use L1 to explain the grammar points or vocabulary that students find difficult to understand to help them have better understanding or to avoid misunderstanding (Liu et al., 2004; Cole, 1998). Also, sometimes when teachers give instructions for activities, teachers may turn to L1 to make the instructions clearer so that the activity can be continued in the right track. After explaining or giving instructions, teachers can also use L1 to check students' understanding by eliciting or asking students some questions about what have been taught or learnt, and to know what they have to do before doing activities. During the monitoring stage, teachers can help students do activity, clarify any points, or treat their errors, so that they can have clearer understanding and do the activity correctly.

2.2.2.3 To Increase Students' Motivation

In addition to enhancing students' understanding, teachers may also benefit from using L1 to increase students' motivation; when students get more understanding, they may feel more successful in their learning. There might be some ways to increase students' motivation. Firstly, teachers can create positive classroom environment by using L1 to talk with them in order to make them feel comfortable and less stressful (Mattioli, 2004). Secondly, teachers may get students' involvement in the lesson by eliciting their idea, opinion or any information, in order to increase their motivation. Particularly, if teachers use L1 for elicitation, it may be easier to bring the students' background knowledge into the class (Prodromou, 2002 cited in Al-Hinai, 2006). As a result of increasing motivation, students may be willing to learn and give more participation and contribution to class activities (Mattioli, 2004).

2.2.2.4 To Manage Class and Maintain Discipline

Besides using L1 to solve learning problems, teachers may use L1 as an aid to classroom management (Littlewood and Yu, 2009: 10). It means that teachers use L1 to manage students' behavior, movement, and interaction during a lesson to enable teaching to take place most effectively (Richards, 1990 cited in Watson Todd, 1997). Classroom management may include explaining, setting homework, giving announcement, and disciplining (Watson Todd, 1997: 41). For instance, teachers may give an announcement for students to review the lesson, send their homework, or prepare any equipment for the next class in L1 since these issues are normally not related to the content of the lesson and might not affect students' learning. Commonly, the main objective of teachers' L1 used for classroom management is that it can call students' attention and get their immediate reaction. Therefore, it is useful for teachers to use L1 as a means of maintaining discipline because it is the language that they immediately understand. As found in the studies of Mee-ling (1996 (b)) and Liu et al. (2004), the use of L1 was found particularly effective in drawing students' attention and in keeping class discipline, especially when using L2 appears to have failed for this purpose. Moreover, it can signal to students a shift from normal teaching to disciplining, which makes students feel that it is a serious issue (Cook, 2001).

2.2.2.5 To Overcome Communication Difficulties

Teachers, who do not feel sufficiently confident and competent in using L2 for the full range of the lesson, may use L1 to compensate for their deficiencies (Cameron, 2001: 200). For example, when the teachers have difficulty expressing what they want to say in L2, explaining difficult grammar points or explaining the meaning of vocabulary, or are not confident to use L2, they may turn to L1 to help them overcome the problem (Liu et al., 2004).

2.2.2.6 To Save Time

Teachers can also use L1 to save time, to be quick, and make students understand in a short time. There might be many times that teachers have more than one purpose to use L1. For example, teachers may use L1 to avoid a lengthy L2 explanation of vocabulary

when the equivalent L1 meaning exists so that it would not take too much time to explain the meaning and it may help students have better understanding (Cook, 2005: 59; Willis, 1981: xiv). Moreover, when teachers have limited time to do activities, they might decide to save time by giving the instructions in L1 to allow more time for students to practice. Also, nearly the end of the class teachers might use L1 to assign homework, or give an announcement, for instance, in order to finish the class on time.

2.2.3 Advantages of L1 Use

From the aforementioned purposes, teachers can get many benefits from L1 use in their teaching which can be concluded into four main advantages as follows:

- First, it can help to enhance students' understanding and facilitate their language learning. Teachers can exploit the students' L1 to increase their understanding of L2. For example, to help students understand the concept of a noun, it is much simpler to translate the word "noun" than to describe it in L2 (Cole, 1998).

- Second, L1 can help teachers as a time-saving strategy whenever a lengthy L2 explanation affects students' comprehension, and then costs them too much time (Watson Todd, 1997: 25; Cook, 2001: 418). When teachers need to introduce new language points, for instance, which consumes much time for making students understand, teachers can make use of L1 explanation in order to save time or allow more time for other purposes.

- Next, L1 can be helpful for reducing learner's anxiety. In beginning and low level classes where students have less English competence and confidence, teachers can initially help students by starting the lesson with more use of L1 in order to provide a sense of security and make class less stressful for them. Then, teachers can gradually increase L2 so that students can be adjusted to L2 learning. Consequently, they are then willing to participate and have the courage to experiment with using and practicing L2 in classroom (Schweers, 2003: 35).

- Also, L1 can help teachers to foster a positive affective environment in the classroom and facilitate teacher-student rapport. In such cases where the teacher and students share the same L1, teachers gain advantages from using L1 by giving informal talk or chatting with them, for instance, to establish more casual relationship with students, especially in earlier lessons of the course (Mattioli, 2004: 23).

2.2.4 Constraints of L1 Use

Although there are many occasions that L1 can be useful, L2 should predominate in English classroom teaching, especially where the teacher is regarded as a provider of language input that students can receive, and the class may be the only time when students encounter L2. Moreover, L2 is the language students are learning and practicing, not their L1 (Harmer, 2007: 39). As it is known that every second in class is valuable, teachers should be aware that every second spent using L1 is a second not spent using L2 (Atkinson, 1993: 12). Brown (1994: 99) also claims that

> *"The rule of thumb here is usually to restrict classroom language to English unless some distinct advantage is gained by the use of students' native language, and then only for very brief stretches of time."*

Hence, L1 should be used appropriately and not be over-used in L2 classes; otherwise, the teacher is said to deprive the learners of valuable input in the L2 (Atkinson, 1993). Therefore, the following problems may ensue from the shortcomings of over-using L1 by.

- First, students may feel that they cannot understand the input of the target language until it is translated into their L1 (Atkinson, 1987: 246). Consequently, students may ignore or pay less attention to L2 explanation, and wait for teachers' translation.

- Second, they may fail to observe distinctions between languages since they may pay attention to only L1 without L2. This may also lead to problems about

translation if they do not understand the structure of the language (Atkinson, 1987: 246).

- Third, they might speak to the teacher and their peers in L1, even when they can use L2. Also, they may answer the teacher's question in L1 even if it is asked in L2. Then, they may see L1 as the accepted medium of communication in the classroom (Atkinson, 1987: 246; Watson Todd, 1997: 26).

- Lastly, they may fail to realize that during many activities in the classroom, it is crucial that they have to use L2. For example, when they do group or pair work, they may not realize that it is a chance for them to use L2. As a result, it may result in students being deprived of the benefits of using and practicing L2 (Atkinson, 1987: 246; Watson Todd, 1997: 26).

It is seen that L1 use has both benefits and constraints which teachers should be aware of. Certainly, language teachers should realize that L2 should be predominantly used. However, there might be some factors that influence the teachers' consideration and decision to use L1 in their teaching.

2.3 The Factors Influencing Teachers' Use of L1

The 3 main factors that mostly influence teachers' use of L1 include students, teachers themselves, and the lesson, which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.3.1 Student Factors

The most frequently mentioned factors which are related to students include their level of language proficiency, previous study experience, class size, and their classroom behavior (Littlewood and Yu, 2009; Franklin, 1990).
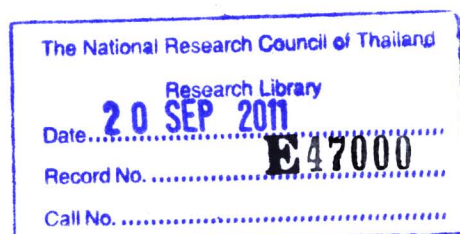
- **Level of Students' English Proficiency**

The level of the students can help teachers identify the appropriate amount of L1 use in teaching (Atkinson, 1993). It seems that the higher the level of students' L2, the less L1 is/and should be used. Teachers generally use more L1 to be beneficial for beginners and lower-level students because these students may find it more difficult to infer meanings and therefore get frustrated more easily if only L2 is used and they could not fully understand the lesson (Macaro, 2005: 68; Watson Todd, 1997).

- **The Students' Previous Experience**

The students' previous experience is another important factor for teachers to consider the use of L1 (Atkinson, 1993). If students have no experience learning in an L2 environment class, the teacher may need to gradually increase the amount of L2 so that students can be familiar with the use of L2 in class and be adjusted to L2 instruction gradually.

- **Students' Classroom Behavior**

According to Franklin's study (1990), students' classroom behavior accounts for about 95% of the reasons why teachers resort to L1 when teaching. When behavioral problems occur in class, teachers are likely to use more L1. For example, when the class is noisy, or the students are very naughty and not paying attention to the lesson, teachers may decide to use more L1 in order to control the class, especially when other strategies fail to deal with this issue. Also, in the case of organizing group work, especially in the classroom where its physical dimension is an obstacle to arranging, it can result in considerable noise and disruption which can lead to the problem of indiscipline. In such circumstances, teachers might have to use L1 to draw students' attention and solve the problem (Franklin, 1990: 22; Mee-ling, 1996 (b)).

- **Class Size**

The class size may be related to the problems of both students' discipline and their level (Franklin, 1990). In large classes, teachers might have more disciplinary problems and difficulty in controlling the class. Therefore, teachers may tend to use L1 to draw students' attention, since L1 is the language that students immediately understand. Moreover, the class size may become a more serious factor if it is concomitant with students' level. Since beginner students who have low language proficiency need more L1 from teachers, in the large class which contains many low level students, it might be seen that teachers use more L1 to facilitate their understanding.

2.3.2 Teacher Factors

There are many times that the factors influencing teachers' use of L1 are from the teachers themselves, including their confidence, language competence, teaching experience, and beliefs.

- **Teachers Confidence and Their Language Competence**

For some teachers, the lack of confidence in their own L2 proficiency is the major factor that makes them decide to make use of L1 in some cases (Littlewood and Yu, 2009). In other words, when teachers are not confident of their ability to convey the meaning in L2, it is likely that they will use L1 to overcome their own language deficiencies (Watson Todd, 1997: 26). Also, it can be said that the level of L2 competence of the teachers can affect their confidence of using L2 in their teaching. Therefore, it may also cause the teachers to use L1 in their language teaching.

- **Teaching Experience**

The teachers' teaching experience is also considered a factor of L1 use. The teaching experience can be increased through time, and the more experience, the higher the confidence. Therefore, if teachers have normally used L2 as a main medium of instruction, they would become more confident in using L2. Moreover, when teachers

have more teaching experience, they are able to make use of teaching methods and a wide repertoire of other teaching strategies (e.g. repetition, simplification, giving clues, using pictures) in order to avoid using a lot of L1 (Littlewood and Yu, 2009:11). In addition, teachers' learning experience might also affect how much L1 they use in their teaching. If teachers have been studying in classes taking place mainly in L1, they tend to use more L1 than teachers who have experienced studying in L2 classes.

- **Teachers' Beliefs**

Teachers' beliefs and perceptions about the role and functions of L1 and L2 use in language classroom also influence teachers' use of L1 (Watson Todd, 1997; Nunan, 1991). Some teachers, who believe that L1 can be used to facilitate learning, might use a lot of L1 in their classroom teaching. On the other hand, teachers who promote learning L2 through L2 and believe that L2 should be predominant tend to use less L1 in classes.

2.3.3 Lesson Factors

The factors related to the lesson include the stage of the lesson, types of activities, and time.

- **The Stage of the Lesson**

The proportion of teachers' L1 may depend on the stage of the lesson. Teachers may use more L1 in the early period of teaching, and then L2 use is gradually increased throughout the semester so students are adjusted and familiar with the teachers' teaching style and using L2 in class (Atkinson, 1993). Similarly, at the beginning of each lesson or in the first few minutes of the lesson where the aims seem to be to allow the students to settle down and tune in to the L2 lesson, teachers might use more L1 and gradually increase L2 while teaching (Watson Todd, 1997). Teachers seem to use more L1 again at the ending stage of a lesson. They may use L1 for reviewing the lesson, calling students for homework, and preparing students for the next lesson, for example.

- **Types of Classroom Activities**

The types of classroom activities and their purposes may define the use of L1. If the activities aim to increase students' understanding of the lesson, some teachers might turn to L1 in order to make students understand more. For example, in grammar practice activity, teachers may have to use L1 if it can help students to have better understanding. On the other hand, if the purpose is to let students practice the language, teachers may use less L1 but increase L2. For example, in communicative activities such as group discussion which require students to use and practice the language, teachers are likely to use more L2 in order to model the language and create an L2 environment in class. However, in some activities teachers may sometimes use L1 to make the activities flow and enjoyable (Cole, 1998).

- **Time Constraint**

According to Mee-ling's study (1996 (b)), teachers may turn to L1 because of time constraints. They used L1 when they could not finish what they planned; failure to finish would affect the next lesson. Sometimes teachers do not allocate enough time to the closure of a lesson, which puts them in a frantic rush (Watson Todd, 1997). As a result, they may turn to use more L1 for giving announcements and assigning homework at the end of the class.

Apart from the factors discussed earlier, there are some other factors that might influence L1 use in language classrooms. For example, L2 and L1 differences affect teachers' use of L1. It seems that the closer L2 is to L1, the more likely is L2 used. Since students might be able to exploit their L1 knowledge to increase understanding of L2 learning, it might save teachers' use of L1 to explain some new language points, for instance (Cole, 1998). Another is the department or school policy on L2 and L1 use. If teachers are encouraged to use only L2 as a main medium of instruction, L1 might be less used. The pressure of exams can also be a factor that influences teachers' use of L1 (Duff and Polio, 1990; Franklin, 1990). Before an exam period, teachers may try to make students understand the lesson as much as possible; thus, teachers may use a lot of L1 to ensure that they understand.

In conclusion, teachers' use of L1 might be influenced by a factor or the combination of many factors. Teachers may use L1 because of the students' level, their previous experience, behavior and class size. Furthermore, the teachers' confidence, language competence, teaching experience, and beliefs are factors. Although a teacher can be teaching the same group of students, the use of L1 can also vary from lesson to lesson depending on the stage, types of activities, and time.