

**Title:**

The helpfulness of Codeswitching in teaching Afrikaans as a First Additional Language

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**Corresponding author****Abstract**

This study aimed to establish the different perceptions that teachers of Afrikaans First Additional Language (FAL) hold towards the helpfulness of different teaching strategies and their effectiveness in the language learning process of Afrikaans FAL in a high school setting. Codeswitching (CS) has been proven to be a common strategy used by teachers in teaching languages to learners in bilingual and multilingual situations that can serve as a resource to help learners acquire proficiency in a second language (SL) (Setati 1998).

The study was conducted at a single-sex English-medium high school in Pretoria among the teachers of Afrikaans FAL. A mixed method approach was employed, using (i) a language background questionnaire, (ii) a Likert-type scale questionnaire and (iii) an open-ended interview schedule to collect data, which was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The theoretical framework used in this study was Social Constructivism, as conceived by Vygotsky (1968).

The study focused on the helpfulness of different teaching strategies in terms of teacher-learner interactions during instruction, as well as guided peer interactions and concluded that the teachers perceive the use of the monolingual approach in certain circumstances to be beneficial, while the use of CS is better in other circumstances.

**Keywords**

Teaching strategies, Teacher Perceptions, Second Language Acquisition, Afrikaans First Additional Language, Codeswitching

**Introduction**

The study of Codeswitching (CS) has been approached from varied theoretical perspectives and has already provided knowledge in terms of phonological, morphological, grammatical and societal fields on the phenomenon (Myers-Scotton

1979; Berthold, Mangubhai and Batorowicz 1993; Šabec 1995; Arnfast and Jorgensen 2003). Globally, CS has been proven to be used as a common strategy by teachers for teaching languages to learners in bilingual and multilingual situations. Past research already shows not only that inclusion is important, but also, how the incorporation of CS as a teaching strategy, can serve as a resource used by teachers to help learners acquire proficiency in a second language (SL) (Setati 1998).

Goodman and Tastanbek (2021) outline the increasing ambiguity and debate about the meaning and applicability of the terms 'CS' and a counterpart 'translanguaging' in language classrooms. While many scholars view the terms 'CS' and 'translanguaging' as synonymous (Lin 2013; Baker and Wright 2017) others differentiate between the two terms in terms of the psycholinguistic conceptualisation and application of language alternation in different contexts (Otheguy, García and Reid 2015, 2019). Goodman and Tastanbek (2021) summarises this differentiation between the terms by outlining that 'CS' refers to a focus on a separate (monoglossic) view of languaging practices, where learners have two separate linguistic systems. 'Translanguaging' in comparison refers to a holistic (heteroglossic) view, where learners have one integrated linguistic system. While CS is generally defined as the alternation between two languages in any context, it has also specifically been used by teachers to scaffold the teaching of additional languages. "Although this practice has not been generally legitimized in language-teaching scholarship, teachers engage in [CS] on a day-to-day basis" (García and Lin 2016:117). Creese and Blackledge (2010:105) specifically highlight that CS "is rarely institutionally endorsed or pedagogically underpinned." Goodman and Tastanbek (2021) also outline translanguaging as including more than meaning-making and identity formation through scaffolding. For the purpose of this study, the focus will fall on the use of CS as the perceived act of alternating between languages, specifically grammatically correct standard forms of two languages, in a context. This study focusses on the perceived helpfulness of CS with a focus on the perceptions of teachers and not specifically on the psycholinguistic conceptualisation of the language system in a learner's mind.

The rationale, firstly, for exploring CS as a teaching strategy in this study, focusses on the discrepancy in the educational sphere in South Africa between the various expectations, practices and aims, which are apparent amongst teachers and the curriculum as part of teaching language subjects, despite the previous global, theoretical and practical reporting already available on the effective use of CS in education (Mati 2004; Strauss 2016; Songxaba, Coetzer and Molepo 2017).

Secondly, only a few studies have looked at the use of CS as an aid in teaching and learning *Afrikaans*. These include those of Rose (2006), Rose and van Dulm (2006) and Stone (1995), who evaluated English-Afrikaans CS in Western Cape classrooms and CS in sociolinguistic codes of an Afrikaans-speaking community, respectively. Studies by Uys (2010) and Strauss (2016) respectively looked at CS at schools in the Northern Cape, while the latest study done by Songxaba et al. (2017) focusses on Xhosa-Afrikaans CS in the Eastern Cape. Kieswetter (1995) conducted research on CS in Johannesburg, but overall there seems to be a dearth of studies completed on the themes of the perception of the use of CS in the Afrikaans FAL formal educational contexts as well as a dearth in the geographical regions of Gauteng and specifically a focus on CS practices in Pretoria. Other studies that form part of the knowledge base on CS in Afrikaans contexts, include an analysis of Afrikaans-English CS from a

grammatical and socio-pragmatic use in children (Nel 2012; Nel and Huddlestone, 2012).

Thirdly, while teachers and learners use CS in real-life situations, such use does not necessarily occur in the case of the formal education context of a classroom. Songxaba et al. (2017) outline that the use of CS is technically “forbidden” and that educational policies maintain that only the Target Language (TL) should be used in the language classroom.

Fourthly, one feature which characterises the South African education setting, is that learners stem from different linguistic backgrounds and that these learners are often intermingled in a single classroom. One approach apparent in language teaching, is the purist approach, in which only the monolingual use of the TL is valued. Songxaba (2016) outlined that “Afrikaans classes are tense, and the learners speak in an artificial manner (compared to the spontaneous way in which they communicate with each other outside the class, where they freely mix the languages they understand)”. Mati (2004) and Mhlawuli (2002 in Songxaba et al. 2017) oppose the purist approach in second language (L2) teaching, as monolingual L2 teaching creates comprehension challenges to non-mother tongue speakers of the TL (MacCabe 2013; Songxaba 2016). The opposition to this approach is specifically important as it focusses on the abovementioned multilingual nature of South African classrooms. Furthermore, Cook (2001) outlines that the monolingual approach is favoured and relied upon amongst teachers, despite research outlining that the inclusion of the learner’s first language (L1) at strategic points in the teaching process, serves to reinforce the learning process and to create a more cohesive learning experience for the learners (Cook 2001; Macaro 2001; Arnfast and Jorgensen 2003; Butzkamm 2003).

### **Problem statement**

Considering the four main points outlined above, namely (i) the discrepancy between theory and practice in the South African education context regarding the use of CS, (ii) the dearth of CS research in Afrikaans FAL education and in the geographical area, specifically Pretoria as well as (iii) the possible negative perceptions already outlined in other research with regards to CS as a teaching approach and strategy and (iv) the multicultural and multilingual backgrounds of learners intermingled in a single classroom, the researcher looked at what the perceptions are that teachers have towards the different teaching strategies namely (i) the Audiolingual method, (ii) the Community Language Learning model with a focus on Content- and Task-based instruction, and (iii) the Total Physical Response model. In the case of these teaching strategies, methods and models, the inclusion of CS as a teaching strategy, mainly forms part of the Community Language Learning model.

This study forms part of a larger study on the perceptions that teachers and learners of Afrikaans First Additional Language (FAL) hold towards the different teaching methods and their effectiveness in the language learning process of Afrikaans FAL in a high school setting with a specific focus on CS. For the purpose of this study a focus falls on one theme only, namely the perceptions of teachers on the helpfulness of different teaching strategies leading to the following main research question and sub questions:

*What are the perceptions of teachers on the helpfulness of different teaching strategies in additional language learning and why?*

The following secondary research questions are formulated to aid in answering the main research question:

1. How helpful do teachers find it if they speak only Afrikaans to their students?
2. How helpful do teachers find it if they require their learners to only speak Afrikaans in class?
3. Do the learners answer teachers in Afrikaans when they address them in Afrikaans?
4. Should learners be only allowed to reply in Afrikaans?
5. How helpful do teachers find it if the learners do group work/ have discussions in Afrikaans?
6. Of the following methods, namely, (i) the Audiolingual method, (ii) the Community Language Learning model with a focus on Content- and Task-based instruction and (iii) the Total Physical Response model, used by teachers in the Afrikaans classroom, which do teachers feel work the best for them?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study will approach the teaching of an L2 from a Vygotskian social-constructivist approach, focussing on the theory that language develops through social interaction (Vygotsky 1968). In particular, it refers to the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as outlined by Vygotsky (1968) (cf. Yang and Wilson 2006; Nel 2015; John 2018 and Suhendi, 2018 for more recent studies based on Vygotsky's original work).

The theory explains that teachers are facilitators of learning and that they should create optimal and nurturing environments, in which social interaction can take place, which subsequently will allow learners to acquire language in "a real-world" situation. Vygotsky (1968) explains that learning is a developmental process, and therefore he identified the ZPD as the area between that which students are able to do with structured input and guidance and that which they are able to do independently. This is known as "scaffolding". The term became prominent in the work of Bruner (1983 in Carstens 2016), who defined it as "a process of creating space for facilitating access to the learner, and then gradually removing support as the learner becomes skilled enough to manage the task independently." With a specific focus on the theme of helpfulness outlined in this article, the notion of the real-world situation is focussed on in terms of how it relates to the different teaching strategies and whether the perception of the use is effective, specifically with reference to teaching strategies, -methods or -models which include CS. This theme also links to the concept of scaffolding and the ZPD in terms of the possibilities of whether the different teaching methods are perceived to provide helpful structure to achieve such learning in an FAL classroom, specifically with the use of CS.

### **Literature review**

#### ***The monolingual approach***

In the history of SLA, the prevailing school of thought has been the monolingual approach (Butzkamm, 2003). The belief that the monolingual approach is superior to other approaches is still prevalent in many SL classrooms and SLA literature (Cook 2001). The monolingual approach can be subdivided into different methods, for

example the Grammar Translation Method and the Direct Method, also known as the Audiolingual Method (ALM). The Direct Method/ ALM uses the TL as means of instruction and avoids the use of the L1 (Liu and Shi 2007). The direct method was a first attempt to make the language learning situation one where the TL is used. Those in favour of the monolingual approach argue that learners need not understand everything that is said by the teacher. They also believe that including the L1 in the L2 acquisition process, undermines the learning process by not allowing enough exposure to the L2 or making learners too reliant on their L1 (Chambers 1991 in Macaro 2001). It is believed that by teaching only in the TL, it is most life-like for the learners or reflecting real-life situations more closely (cf. the section on the theoretical framework above), allowing them to experience uncertainty and to develop their own inbuilt language system (Macaro 2001).

Problems encountered with this method include misunderstandings due to the fact that only the TL was being used and also including the implementation of this method beyond the elementary stages of language learning (Liu and Shi 2007), meaning that it proved successful with beginner learners of a L2, but as learners progressed in their learning, this method was no longer sufficient to teach all the skills required when learning a new language. It is this critique that allows for the review of more bi/multilingual teaching approaches which includes elements of CS in the section below.

### ***Bi/Multilingual approaches***

Language educators are burdened with the responsibility of educating and coaching learners to achieve near-native status in an L2 (Setati 1998). However, it seems that the pressure to do so is even more evident in a setting like an Afrikaans FAL classroom in South Africa, where learners are using languages that do not share the same culture, nor have similar grammatical or phonological properties (Barkhuizen 1993 in Du Plessis and Louw 2008).

Beginner and intermediate level learners often find it almost impossible to understand phrases and vocabulary in the L2 or the TL (Cook 2001; Butzkamm 2003). Educators, on the other hand, try to make the lessons easier and simpler for the learners (Evans and Cleghorn 2014). This is difficult to achieve when following any of the methods supporting the monolingual approach, as talked about in the previous section. That is why many scholars advocate for the use of CS in the classroom to bridge the gap between the frustration that the learners feel because the course content of the L2 classroom is too advanced for them, and the frustration that educators feel because they are limited in what they can or are allowed to do in the classroom, in order to help the learners and facilitate meaningful learning (Cook 2001).

According to Hoffman (in Nel and Huddleston 2012) CS is defined as “the alternate use of two languages within the same utterance or during the same conversation”. Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012 in Carstens 2016) outline that CS is the planned and systematic use of two languages (alternately) by the teacher in one lesson. Cook (2001) says that CS “is a highly skilled activity”. Grosjean (1989 in Cook 2001) elaborates and adds that “CS not only fills a momentary linguistic need, it is also a very useful communication resource”. Wei and Martin (2009) argue that “CS is, perhaps, the most common, unremarkable and distinctive feature of bilingual behaviour”. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will use the definition as

defined by Hoffman, as this study will not only look at the perception of the occurrence of CS in the classroom as used by the teacher, but also between teachers and learners and learners amongst themselves in terms of the themes of teacher-learner interactions and guided peer interaction before looking at the perceptions of the helpfulness of different learning strategies. The first teaching method which includes CS is outlined below.

### ***Community Language Learning (CLL) (1950s)***

Initially, with this method, the learner would say something in the L1 and the teacher would then translate<sup>1</sup> it into the L2, where there is thus a constant alternation between languages. The learner, who made the utterance, as well as the other learners in the class, hear both the L1 and the L2 (from the learner and the teacher). Then, as the learners advance in their L2, they rely less and less on the L1 and/ or translations. This method views the L1 as the initiator of meaning and links the L2 to the L1 (Cook 2001). This method is aimed at improving learners' ability to communicate and not just to learn different aspects of a language such as syntax and morphology.

Carstens (2016) writes that recent versions of CLL include Content-based instruction and Task-based instruction (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 2011 in Carstens 2016). With Content-based instruction, language is learned within a certain context. The focus is not on the actual words, but the framework in which the words are used. With Task-based instruction, learners are given a task to execute, which would contain a degree of difficulty so that learners will have to draw on their linguistic knowledge in order to complete the task (Willis and Willis 1996).

Content-based instruction and task-based learning encourage teachers to focus on communication by using tasks and content (containing the use of language beyond the classroom or tasks that take place in the classroom) that require learners to have the necessary language competence to complete the tasks and understand the content (Brown 2014).

### ***The Total Physical Response (TPR) (1970s)***

Asher (1977) noticed that children learning their L1 would often give physical responses to commands, before giving verbal replies (Brown 2014). In order to emulate this way of language learning, the teacher would give simple commands to the class to enact, through which they will be exposed to the L2 and expand their vocabulary. In TPR activities, the teacher would ask the learners to perform actions or act out something and it could include using body parts, items of clothing, classroom objects or scenery outside. TPR is, however, only really effective at elementary level, and loses its effectiveness as learners become more proficient (Brown 2014). The TPR is a method that teachers can use to avoid the abovementioned problem between the monolingual approach and incorporation CS as a method or strategy.

## **Methodology and Research Design**

This study used questionnaires and interviews to gather data. This section will provide an overview of the research design, the data collection methods and instruments, followed by an outlined of how the data was analysed as well as providing a detailed

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<sup>1</sup> Sokolovsky (2010) defines translation as the process of providing the L2 word/ definition for the word or description used in the L1.

overview of the participants and ethical considerations involved during the collection, analysis and presentation of the data.

### ***Research Design***

This study adopted a mixed-method approach (both quantitative and qualitative data) in order to gather all relevant information pertaining to the perceptions held by teachers regarding the usefulness of different teaching methods in an Afrikaans FAL classroom. By using a mixed method approach, as well as methodological triangulation, which refers to the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Denzin 2007), more comprehensive evidence is gathered and a more comprehensive picture is formed, than what would have been possible by using quantitative or qualitative data on its own (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007). In this study, data triangulation occurred in terms of using both quantitative and qualitative data obtained from two sources, namely the opened-ended questionnaires and the semi-structured interview respectively, as well as the inclusion of language background questionnaires. Each of these data collection instruments will be outlined in the section below.

### ***Method of Data collection***

The data collection method occurred in two phases and cross-sectionally as a case study. Ethnographic research done by Myers-Scotton (1979) and Strauss (2016) has been used to inform the method used in this study. Ethnographic research, especially in the educational context, involves observing teaching and learning methods and how they affect classroom behaviour. The researcher combined non-participant observation methods with direct participant observation techniques in order to gather the most relevant and objective data. The non-participant observation occurred in the mixed method of data collection and analysis by means of the questionnaires sent to the teachers. The direct participant observation occurred in terms of the interview held.

### ***Data Collection Instruments***

Data was collected by using two instruments. The first instrument was an open-ended self-administered questionnaire which consisted of two sections. Firstly, a language background information section was included, after which the specific questions about the perceptions of teachers made up a section, subdivided by seven themes (cf. Rust 2023), of which one theme is discussed in this article. The second instrument was a semi-structured interview schedule, where the questions were based on an initial analysis of the questionnaire data and the original questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to all of the Afrikaans FAL teachers at the school and they were invited to take part in the interview.

The creation of the instrument involved a two-pronged process. Firstly, the content on which the questions were to be based on, needed to be evaluated. The questionnaires were created after the literature review for the study was completed. The creation of the question types thus involved the use of a structured, yet open-ended schedule with the use of Likert-type scales to determine the frequency of values which relate to the participant responses.

The following table provides an overview of the questions and themes outlined in the open-ended questionnaires and the subsequent analysis and discussion:

**Table 1:** Outline of the themes and subthemes and the corresponding questions used in this study

Themes and subthemes		Questions in teacher questionnaire
Perceptions on the helpfulness of different teaching strategies in Additional Language Learning.	Helpfulness in teaching Afrikaans FAL with different interactions	<p>1. How helpful do you find it if you speak only Afrikaans to your learners?</p> <p>2. How helpful do you find it if you require your learners to only speak Afrikaans in class?</p> <p>3. Do your learners answer you in Afrikaans when you address them in Afrikaans?</p> <p>4. Do you think learners should be forced to reply in Afrikaans?</p>
	Guided peer interaction	5. How helpful do you find it if the learners do group work/ have discussions in Afrikaans?
Teaching approaches, -methods and -strategies: Helpfulness in teaching Afrikaans FAL with different methods.		<p>6. Of these methods used by teachers in the Afrikaans classroom, which do feel work the best for you?</p> <p>a. Audiolingual method</p> <p>b. Total Physical Response</p> <p>c. Content based instruction</p> <p>d. Task based instruction</p>

**Data analysis**

The researcher made use of various types of Likert scales, due to the nature of the questions, allowing for interval data on the ordinal measurement scale. Because of the nature of the data collected, the researcher had to apply a method of inferential data analysis to draw conclusions regarding the research problem.

The data was analysed in the form of tables and various graphs, outlining / depicting the responses by the teachers. The analysis included frequency counts of the different Likert-type scale options per question. These frequency counts were then quantitatively summarised according to the percentage of occurrence in terms of the teacher-centred questionnaire responses as one cohort. Lastly, the quantitative analysis included the identification of a central tendency by outlining the highest percentage frequency of the response options available.

**Participants**

Eight teachers of Afrikaans FAL at the high school participated in the study, by completing the questionnaires and six of the eight teachers were present for the

interview. Of the eight teachers, six were female and two were male. All the teachers are Afrikaans Home Language speakers and have teaching experience ranging from two years to thirty-five years. Only three teachers studied teaching as a degree or diploma from the start of their tertiary studies. The other teachers obtained other degrees first, before subsequently completing their Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

The selection was done on the basis of voluntary participation and informed consent. All Afrikaans FAL teachers at the school (with a quintile classification of five and where the medium of instruction at the school for most subjects is English) received an information letter to inform them about the purpose of the study, the days and hours (after school) during which data would be collected and what their participation would entail. Teachers also received a background information questionnaire to complete.

### ***Ethical considerations***

Ethical clearance for the study was granted by the Research Ethics Committee (Humanities) of the University of Pretoria with the Protocol number 26229766 (HUM030/1121). Permission to conduct the study was obtained from Gauteng Department of Basic Education as well as the principal and relevant teachers at the school. All participating teachers signed a consent form. Confidentiality during data collection and reporting and anonymity in reporting were assured during all stages of the research process and all data collection and storage occurred according to the POPIA act.

### **Discussion**

This section will discuss three main points under one theme pertaining to the questionnaire and interview schedule, the main and subsequent research questions. The first main point includes the focus on one teaching strategy, the monolingual approach, which links with the choice of which and how many languages are used as the Language of Learning and Teaching in the classroom by the teachers and generally occurs as the opposite approach to that of CS. The second point includes the focus on the individual learner, followed by the focus on the learner in a social context. Lastly the perceptions of the teachers with regards to the different teaching strategies mentioned above, are discussed.

### ***Discussion of questions 1 and 2***

The survey questions, on which this discussion is based, include:

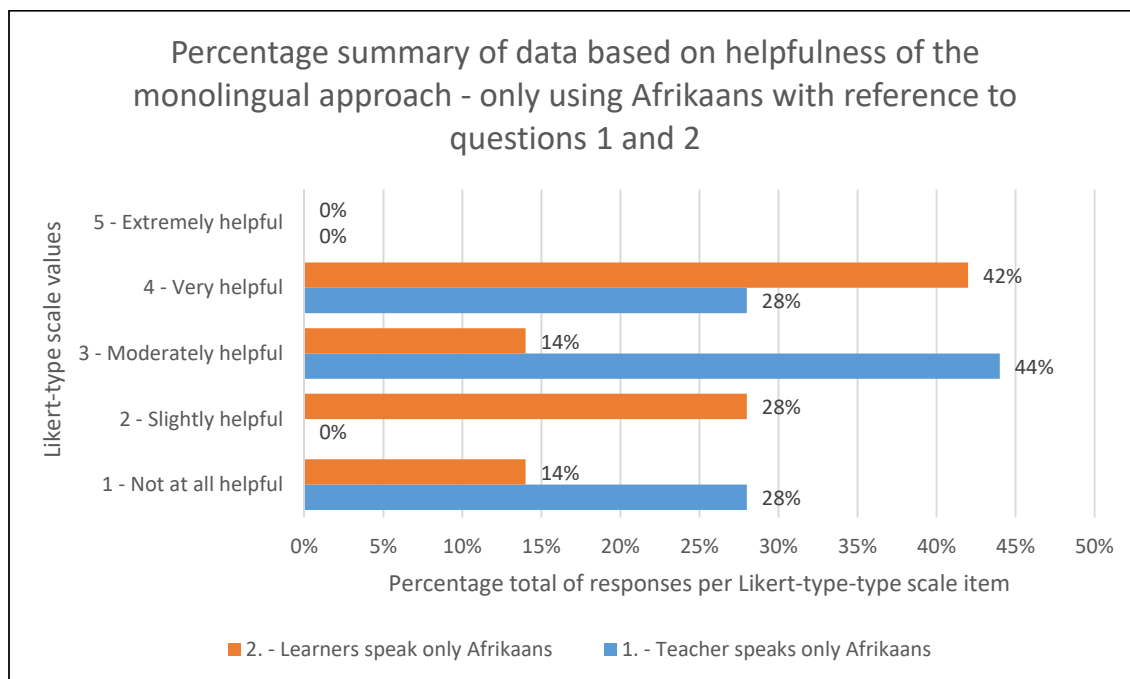
1. How helpful do you find it if you speak only Afrikaans to your students?
2. How helpful do you find it if you require your learners to only speak Afrikaans in class?

From the results provided in Table 1 and Figure 1, it is clear that the central tendency for questions 1 and 2 was for options three and four namely the choices “moderately helpful” and “very helpful”, respectively. The highest percentage occurred under option 3 (44%), where the teachers indicated that they find it “moderately helpful” if they only speak Afrikaans by using the monolingual approach in their classrooms. Furthermore, 42% of the teachers find it very helpful if they require the learners to only speak in Afrikaans. Thus, it was felt by the teachers that monolingual language teaching is beneficial to the students’ learning of Afrikaans FAL, as for both questions the largest percentages occurring as option responses, fell on the upper end of the Likert scale.

This view that the monolingual approach benefits the students' learning of Afrikaans FAL reflects the standpoints in Chambers' (2013) and Seligson's (1997 in Hanakova and Metruk 2017) texts that the exclusive use of the TL in the classroom exposes learners to rich, comprehensible input and that the use of the TL in the language classroom gives the learners essential listening practice and the opportunity to respond naturally to the TL.

**Table 2:** Percentage total of responses per Likert-type scale item for question 1 and 2 (helpfulness of the monolingual approach)

Questions	1 – Not at all	2 – Slightly	3 – Moderately	4 – Very helpful	5 – Extremely helpful
1. How helpful do you find it if you ONLY speak Afrikaans to your learners?	28%	0%	<u>44%</u>	28%	0%
2. How helpful do you find it if you require your learners to ONLY speak Afrikaans in class?	14%	28%	14%	<u>42%</u>	0%



**Figure 1:** Percentage summary of data based on helpfulness of the monolingual approach – only using Afrikaans with reference to questions 1 and 2

In the interview, the statistical data from the questionnaires were contradicted, however. The teachers all expressed the view that they use and encourage the use of as much Afrikaans as possible in their classroom, but admitted to using a lot of English on a daily basis, as can be seen from the extracts below. In Extract 1, the emphasis is placed on the idea that the use of English falls on a continuum from starting off with a high standard and more complex use of Afrikaans, after which the teacher moves to more “simpler Afrikaans” before the teacher moves on to speak in English and thus using CS as part of their teaching strategies.

It is clear from the above extract that the teachers realise that the Afrikaans-only strategy is problematic, because the intent is there to use as much Afrikaans as possible, but when it is clear that the message is lost on some or all of the learners, the teachers feel the need to use simpler Afrikaans and to speak slower. When this solution still does not suffice or address the problem (which is extrapolated from the interview to occur often), the only resort is to then to use CS and to switch to English to make sure that everyone in the class understands the content being taught.

It would appear, from the responses in the extract that the teachers view CS as almost a last resort, although not all of the teachers agreed, with many of them admitting that they speak English “a lot”, although it is difficult to pinpoint what their frame of reference is for “a lot”. If one considers Extract 2, the teachers also admitted to speaking English most of the time, especially when it came to time constraints and the teachers felt under pressure to complete the term or year’s work timeously. In Extract

<sup>2</sup> it becomes clear that one of the reasons why the teachers tend to employ CS is in order to aid with vocabulary acquisition.

Extract 1:

I: *And that's actually a completely different meaning than what we are working with here, because it's actually about, you'll see, I mix my language. If I can't think of a word, then I'll throw in another word. Part of CS, is what they call a "matrix language", so in this instance, Afrikaans and then you insert an English word. Or, when you teach, you use English and insert Afrikaans words. And it depends on your teaching style whether you teach in English and give them words in Afrikaans or teach only in Afrikaans and then give them some English words, if it is not totally purist. So that's another thing that I would like to know: when you're in the class, do you use English?*

T1: **Yes, a lot.**

T2: **Yes, I start in Afrikaans, I'll try Afrikaans first and you can quickly see, if you know your kids well enough, you can see when they have these glazed-over eyes.**

I: *Yes, like I have to put it in English now.*

T2: *Then you stop. Then I will go slower. I don't want to say you "dumb it down", but... You use **simpler Afrikaans** and you observe, ok, what happened there, what happened there and then, when there's still a group (and usually it's those guys who are in serious danger of failing), **then you quickly explain to them in English.***

**Figure 2:** Extract 1 from teacher interview

Despite T1's admittance that it has been communicated to her from the start of her teaching career, that teaching must take place in the TL, she also states that "there isn't a day that I don't speak English in class". Just as was the case earlier with "a lot", it is difficult to quantify the amount of English being used during her Afrikaans FAL lesson, but the fact that CS is made use of, is a certainty.

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<sup>2</sup> The following transcription key is used in the extracts: T1-T6: Speaker code for participants 1-6 (teachers); I = Speaker code for interviewer; [xxx] = Inaudible or indicates an unintelligible (part of an) utterance; [...s] = the omission of non-relevant utterances to the current discussion; [text] = a complete overlap of two speaker utterances and turns; [...] = incomplete utterance when occurring at the end of the utterance / indicates sentence fragment when occurring at the start of an utterance; . / ? / ! = the end of an utterance; ... = the position where the speaker pauses and/or reformulates and ( ) = used within in the text to add what could be seen as a possible transcription for an unintelligible phrase. *Italics* and **bold** are used within the text to highlight sections that the researchers wish to emphasise.

Extract 2:

I: *So, you absolutely have free rein to say “I want to bring in CS, I want to do this...”?*

T3: ***I would like to teach exclusively in English but I can’t.***

T4: *No, we are told (echoed by T5), we are told here that you **MUST** teach in Afrikaans.*

T1: *I’ve been hearing that since I started teaching. “**You must only speak Afrikaans in class**”. And I’m like “Hmmm”. **And there isn’t a day that I don’t speak English in class.** (everyone laughs)*

I: *Ok, but that is exactly what we want to know. That’s the point! (inaudible background talk)*

T4: ***How do you discuss Tina’s<sup>1</sup> depression? They don’t have the vocabulary!***

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**[Researcher note: The teachers feel that they are not able to use as much Afrikaans in class as they would like to, because the learners do not have the necessary vocabulary to be able to follow such a conversation or explanation and would thus not be able to keep up or it would simply be lost on them. Therefore, in order to convey the important and necessary information regarding the lesson, it is better to explain and discuss the work in English or at least alternate between Afrikaans and English, so that the learners will understand and be able to follow.]**

I: *No, so you must give them the vocabulary...*

T4: *And it’s a big thing that she gets depressed!*

I: *Yes, I mean, that’s something that kids have to deal with too.*

T4: *I mean, like, “neerdrukkend” really does not have the same meaning/ impact as depressive...*

T3: ***I agree you must speak a lot of Afrikaans...***

I: ***You must give them the vocabulary, but you must also make it understandable.***

T2: ***And when you have to explain, you go back and forth between Afrikaans and English...***

T1: ***And there has always been, I must say, there has always been pressure from authority figures... We have been told outright: “You must not speak English” and I mean, if someone walks past my classroom I get a mini heart attack (everyone laughs), like...***

I: *Oh, my goodness! Did they hear me?*

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<sup>1</sup> Tina is the main character in the book “Kruppel Engel” by Zenobia Kock. It is the Grade 11 prescribed book.

**Figure 3:** Extract 2 from teacher interview

When the interviewer asked if the teachers have “free reign” in their classrooms, it quickly became clear that they do not, or at least do not *feel* that they have the freedom to teach in the way that they would like or see fit. The feeling that the teachers have regarding the freedom that they have to teach as they please, links back to the section 4.1, where the ideology of the monolingual approach is discussed. The teachers from this school echo the sentiments from teachers in other educational contexts, as referred to by Butzkamm (2003), Timor (2012) and Cook (2001). Butzkamm writes that the L2 is seen as “good” and the L1 as “bad” and that the L1 should be avoided at all cost. He writes further that the mother tongue “is generally regarded as being an evasive manoeuvre which is to be used only in emergencies” and that “effective bilingual teaching techniques are...as good as unknown in schools”. Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009 in Timor 2012) further elaborate by saying that Mother Tongue-free language lessons were seen as a “badge of honour”; an ideology that persists today.

In Extract 2, T3 states that she would “like to teach exclusively in English” but cannot. One has to ask what her motivation would be. She does not clarify it in the interview, but when her qualitative responses from the questionnaire are considered, reasons such as “*I do it to help*” and “*otherwise the learners that are very weak will be lost and won’t understand*” were given. From her responses, it can be concluded that she realises that the message would get across more easily when CS is employed. It could also be concluded that she does not see the need or value of exposing the learners to as much of the TL as possible, since she says that she would like to teach “exclusively” in English. Yet, she contradicts herself later on in the discussion when she says “I agree you must speak a lot of Afrikaans”. It could be due to the other teachers’ responses in the interview and that she felt pressurised to conform, or that she has changed her mind, having listened to the other teachers’ responses.

T2 seems to understand the concept of CS well when she says that “you go back and forth between Afrikaans and English”. Thus, whether the teachers realised it or not, would readily admit it or not, or knew the correct term for the concept of CS, they were using CS in their language classrooms to aid the learners in their understanding of the subject content, specifically due to the learners’ lack of vocabulary.

In Extract 3 below, concerns about the over-use of CS are discussed. The teachers feel that translation, as part of CS, hinders learners from becoming comfortable and independent in Afrikaans and they also feel that the beauty and uniqueness of the language is lost on the learners. However, they realise the necessity of having to use CS or English for the sake of understanding. If the basic need in the language classroom is comprehension, then that should be the focus of the teacher. If the learners first comprehend, one can move on to less translations and more exclusive use of Afrikaans; but if the learners are struggling to merely pass the subject because they do not possess the necessary vocabulary to be able to understand and follow a conversation or explanation in class, then that is the more pressing matter and the one that requires the attention of the teachers, which the teachers from this school are fully aware of.

Extract 3:

T4: *I can't think of anything now. I think we must just be very careful that we don't trample Afrikaans...*

I: Yes

T4: ***And coming from me, I mix my languages a lot and I swear a lot in class, but I don't over-use English. And we must prevent the kids from doing that. We must watch out for that.***

T3: ***But I don't think you can do that with CS.***

I: *No, there is a difference between me polluting the language because I'm just throwing words in there and it having a functional approach, used as a tool to help the learners. On that note, what's your opinion on the difference between code-mixing, translation and CS? Do you think it's the same thing or do you see it as three different things?*

T5: ***Three things. I think if you just translated every time, you wouldn't give the child the opportunity to become independent in Afrikaans. I think when you use a bit of CS, he begins to understand where Afrikaans words are used in context and expand his Afrikaans framework. If you just translated all the time, they would never get comfortable with Afrikaans.***

T2: ***You would also take away the beauty and uniqueness of the language and all the small nuances of the language. Masks really hindered that a lot.***

**Figure 4:** Extract 3 from teacher interview

In Extract 3, T4 also admits to using CS in her own daily life. This reflects the Afrikaans that is used in a real-life context and thus T4 acknowledges that this is the way that people talk (mixing Afrikaans and English), even if they are Mother Tongue or L1 speakers of Afrikaans. In the extract, T3 dissuades T4's fears that by using/ allowing CS in the language classroom, the language of Afrikaans will be "trampled" on. T3 acknowledges that the use of CS is limited in its function – it is merely a tool for understanding and will not replace the use of the TL. T5's comment shows that he also sees the usefulness of CS as a tool for helping the learners to understand, whilst still exposing them to a rich TL environment.

When considering the response to questions 1 and 2 as a whole, it can be concluded that the teachers see the value of the monolingual approach, however they also notice the flaws in the approach, specifically when the learners' lack of vocabulary in Afrikaans is taken into consideration. The teachers realise that CS is the bridge to teaching content and vocabulary effectively and efficiently, but they also recognise that CS must serve as a functional tool to aid understanding while the use of CS should not replace (nor does it replace) the TL and the use of the TL as much as possible.

### **Discussion of question 3**

The following part of the discussion focuses on question 3 and moves towards the teachers' perceptions of the learners' response to the monolingual approach.

The survey question, on which this discussion is based, includes:

3. Do your learners answer you in Afrikaans when you address them in Afrikaans?

In question 3, the majority of the teachers (71%) indicated the option "a moderate amount" for if their learners would answer them in Afrikaans, when they were addressed in Afrikaans. The two outliers on this scale, "never" and "a great deal" were not selected at all, but the remaining 28% was split between "rarely" and "occasionally". This indicates that although the central tendency pointed to the fourth option namely "moderately". The other two options tend towards the negative side of the scale, implying that the teachers know that the learners feel less comfortable answering questions in the L2. The 71% of "moderately" might also be due to the fact that it is expected of them to answer in Afrikaans only or that they are forced to do so and would perhaps not do so out of free will.

It would seem that a culture of trying to use the L2 (Afrikaans) as much as possible is present in most Afrikaans FAL classrooms in the school, despite the fact that the learners struggle to sometimes understand (as outlined in the previous section) and do not have an extensive Afrikaans vocabulary. This is a positive result, because it shows teachers are aware of the willingness on the learners' part to try to communicate in Afrikaans. It also reflects the openness on the teachers' part to create an inviting atmosphere and a scaffolded context, where learners feel comfortable to try and answer a question in Afrikaans, even though they might struggle.

**Table 3:** Percentage total of responses per Likert-type scale item for question 3 (learner response in the monolingual approach)

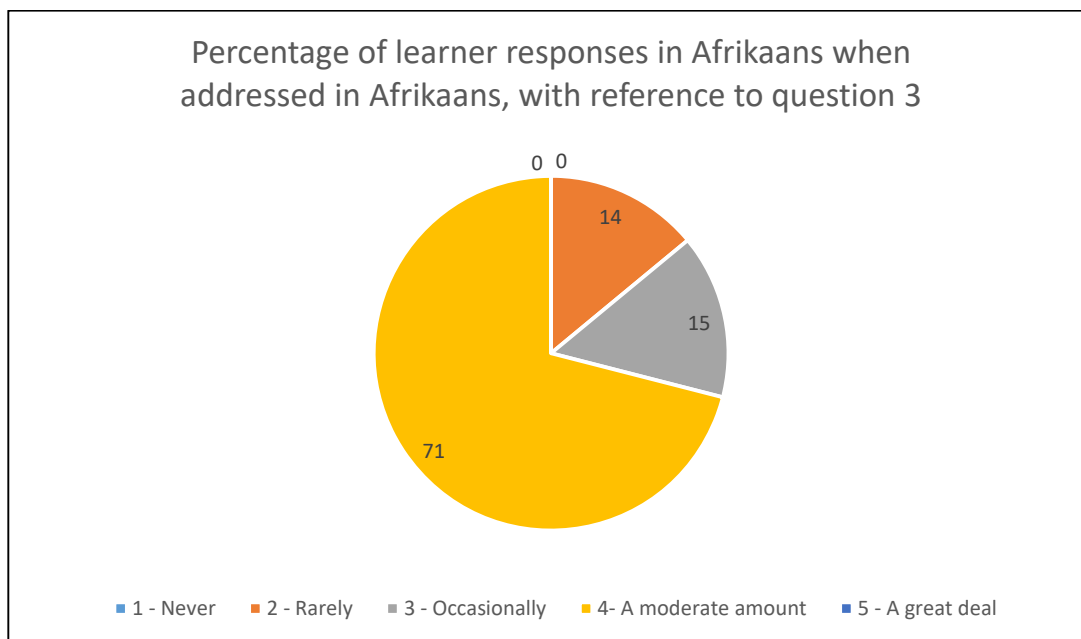
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Question 3: Do your learners answer you in Afrikaans when you address them in Afrikaans?

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1 – Never	2 – Rarely	3 – Occasionally	4 – A moderate amount	5 – A great deal
0%	14%	14%	<u>71%</u>	0%

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**Figure 5:** Percentage of learner responses in Afrikaans when addressed in Afrikaans

When the quantitative data for question 3 is compared to qualitative data in Extract 2, it is clear that the use of the monolingual approach is not only expected of the teachers, but also of the learners.

#### ***Discussion of questions 4 and 5***

Linked to the previous questions (1–3), where the helpfulness of the monolingual approach was discussed, it would seem as if the teachers do put a certain amount of pressure on the learners, or there certainly is an expectation that learners must try to speak as much Afrikaans as possible. In this section the focus falls firstly on the learner as an individual (question 4) and secondly as the learner working in a social environment (question 5).

The survey questions, on which this discussion is based, include:

4. Do you think learners should be forced to reply in Afrikaans?
5. How helpful do you find it if the learners do group work or have discussions in Afrikaans?

In section 4.1, it was looked at and considered whether the monolingual approach is a positive or negative approach, as it can put undue pressure on learners and take away their confidence to engage in classroom activities or discussions, because they do not feel comfortable using the L2. Questions 4 and 5 provide more insight into this area of inquiry. A summary of the statistical data is provided in the table and figure below.

**Table 4:** Percentage total of responses per Likert-type scale item for question 4 (the enforcement of the monolingual approach)

Question	1 – Strongly disagree	2 – Disagree	3 – Somewhat disagree	4 – Neither agree nor disagree	5 – Somewhat agree	6 – Agree	7 – Strongly agree
4. Do you think learners should be forced to reply in Afrikaans?	0%	14%	0%	28%	<b><u>42%</u></b>	14%	0%

The majority of the teachers (42%) selected option number five “somewhat agree”. In their qualitative responses in the questionnaires, the teachers listed reasons in favour of forcing learners to respond in the TL, such as “*otherwise they will never learn or expand their vocabulary*”, “*how else are they ever going to improve their Afrikaans?*” and “*it improves their vocabulary and confidence*”, as well as reasons against forcing the learners to respond in Afrikaans, such as “*you will have many that won’t participate*”, “*some learners will refuse to answer*” and “*participation in English is sometimes better than nothing*”.

In the extract below, one teacher’s response shows the unwillingness of many learners to engage in Afrikaans and therefore the 42% of “somewhat agree” from the teacher questionnaire show that the teachers feel that, to a certain extent, the learners must be gently compelled to use the TL, but that the teachers also recognise the fact that many learners do not feel comfortable doing so and will not reply in Afrikaans if they are forced to do so. Therefore, there should be space for these learners to employ CS on a continuum, so that they can still partake in classroom discussions until they feel comfortable enough to do it solely in the TL. Extract 4 outlines that teachers use CS to create context in a story to help the students with understanding.

Extract 4 also highlights the fact that T5 realises that the use of CS during a lesson makes the learner feel more comfortable and puts them at ease. T5 explains that the reading takes place in Afrikaans (thus there is exposure to the TL), but with the “security net” of the L1 when the learners want to ask questions and do not know how to formulate it in the L2. The learners have the confidence to ask in English if they do not feel comfortable to do so in Afrikaans yet, because they know the teacher is accommodating and allows CS in the classroom.

Extract 4:

- T5: *I think that's why it is so important to create context with a story. To start the conversation in English. (background agreement) Especially when it's a conversation. 'Cause then you see, kids who don't really understand, continue to read along because they know we are going to discuss it shortly. So, what starts to happen, is they start picking up on things in the story, they start realizing something is happening. They're not entirely sure what it is. So, you can see them sitting and waiting for me to take a break from the reading and then they'll ask, 'cause many of them also won't ask in Afrikaans, then they'll ask: "Sir, did this just happen?" Then I'll say: "Yes, you're right." Then he did start picking it up because he is starting to understand the context and he is not sleeping every time we read, because he realizes...*
- I: *...that he is going to pick up something and a little is better than nothing...*

**Figure 6:** Extract 4 from teacher interview

T5's example of his reply in extract seven was translated into English as part of the entire transcription due to the nature of this article and the fact that it is written in English, but he actually replied in Afrikaans to the learner's question, thus demonstrating one example of CS use in the classroom, whereby the learner communicates in the L1, the teacher replies in the L2 and will most likely even translate the reply if the learner still did not understand what was being said. However, T5 knows his learners' abilities and most likely knew that the learner understood the L2, but did not feel comfortable speaking/ asking questions in the L2.

Question 5 ties to the previous question, question 4. When learners engage in group work, it is a less pressurised environment to test out one's language skills (in front of maybe three or four of your classmates, instead of the whole class, in which smaller groups provide a more helpful environment), but as is clear from the teacher responses in the questionnaires, none of the teachers were in favour of group work. Reasons for the answers that were given in the Likert-type scale, were answers such as: "[...] tend to talk about unrelated topics", "[...] play around" as well as the fact that "not everyone is actively involved". The last reason includes that "learners tend to take the easy route if not watched". It would seem that despite the various proven beneficial aspects of group work, the teachers do not find it to be conducive to a learning atmosphere and would not encourage group work as a form of peer learning or scaffolded learning in their classrooms. The quantitative data associated with question 5 is outlined in the table below.

**Table 5:** Percentage total of responses per Likert-type scale item for question 5 (helpfulness of the monolingual approach during group work)

Question	1 – Not at all helpful	2 – Slightly helpful	3 – Moderately helpful	4 – Very helpful	5 – Extremely helpful
5. How helpful do you find it if the learners do group work/ have discussions in Afrikaans?	28%	28%	28%	14%	0%

As is clear from the data in the table above, the options selected by the teachers tend toward the negative side of the scale and none of the teachers found group work done in Afrikaans or discussions held in Afrikaans to be extremely helpful to the language learning process. There is no central tendency of one option which stands out in the quantitative data analysis, as the responses are distributed almost equally towards the negative end of the scale.

In conclusion, even though questions 4 and 5 were framed in such a way that they enquired about the teachers' perceptions toward the monolingual habitus, it is evident that the integration of CS seems to form part of their overall teaching perspective, where CS is being presented as a viable solution to the problems faced by the teachers and the learners when being taught in the TL only.

**Discussion of question 6**

The survey questions, on which this discussion is based, include:

6.1 Of these methods used by teachers in the Afrikaans classroom, which do feel work the best for you? Rate from 1 to 5.

- a. Audiolingual method
- b. Total Physical Response
- c. Content-based instruction
- d. Task-based instruction

6.2 And why?

According to the data provided in the table below, Content-based instruction is the preferred teaching strategy among the teachers, with 25% of the teachers choosing that option. The teachers were asked to rate these methods on a scale of 1 to 5, with "1" being their first choice and "5" being their last. Second to that was Total Physical Response and in third place was the Audiolingual Method.

**Table 6:** Summary of the different teaching methods presented to the teachers and their indication of their preferred teaching method

Participants	Audiolingual Method	Total Physical Response	Content-Based Instruction	Task-based instruction
T1	No answer	1	2	No answer
T2	4	5	2	1
T3	3	2	1	5
T4	1	2	4	5
T5	3	2	1	4
T6	No answer	No answer	No answer	No answer
T7	No answer	No answer	No answer	No answer
T8	No answer	No answer	No answer	No answer
Total	1 out of 8 teachers	1 out of 8 teachers	2 out of 8 teachers	1 out of 8 teachers
Total percentage	13%	13%	<u>25%</u>	13%

Content-based instruction (CBI) was the preferred method among the teachers – presented in the table as the option with the most “1s”. In the teacher interview, the reason why CBI was the preferred method, became clear. The structure of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document, requires the lesson to be taught in a way that is focussed on the content (including all aspects of language learning) and thus, the focus is not on speaking or interaction between learners or between the teacher and the learners.

In Extract 5 below, T5’s response corroborates the data from the questionnaires in table 6, when participant T5 says that the school’s focus is on Content-based instruction and he also provides a reason why. According to T5, the focus of the school (and by implication then, the teachers) is to ensure that the pupils pass the subject and thus, the focus is not on the facilitation of learning to the extent that learners are able to communicate fluently and confidently in Afrikaans by the time that they finish school. This could be seen as a major flaw in the education system, if the assumption is made that this is true for the majority of South African schools. One of the main goals of language learning should be the development of communicative competence and not just a focus on the matric pass rate. This sentiment is echoed by the teachers when the interviewer asked if there is a major problem with the system in which the teachers are required to function and the interviewer received a resounding response in the affirmative from the teachers.

Extract 5:

- I: ***Have you ever learned about the specific teaching strategies mentioned in the questionnaire, like the Audiolingual Method for instance? (“No” in background) CS, within a large framework of different teaching techniques, links to how a second Language is acquired. (She gives example of the Audiolingual Method and they admit that they do know the technique, but didn’t know what it was called) ...***
- T5: **I think the school’s focus is on content-based education. We focus on the pass rate and not on communication.**
- I ***It works best because it gets results. The system forces you to do that, but if you had a choice, you would do something else? (“Yes” in background)***
- T2: *The order of the syllabus in the CAPS document also doesn’t make sense! For instance, it wants us to teach “Direct and Indirect Speech”, but the kids haven’t even done conjunctions yet...*
- I: ***So a huge problem with the system in which you are expected to function? (“Yes” in background) Ok, that makes sense...Are there any of you who have negative feelings towards Afrikaans?***
- T3: *I do.*
- I: Do you think it comes across in your teaching?
- T3 Yes.

**Figure 7:** Extract 5 from teacher interview

The findings of all six questions are summarised in the table below.

**Table 7:** Summary of findings

Central tendency for teacher responses		
Question theme	Likert-type option on scale	Frequency %
Helpfulness of teachers only speaking Afrikaans	Moderately helpful	44
Helpfulness of learners only speaking Afrikaans	Very helpful	42
Responding when teachers speak Afrikaans	A moderate amount	71

Should learners be forced to reply in Afrikaans?	Somewhat agree	42
Helpfulness of doing group work in Afrikaans	1 – Not at all helpful 2 – Slightly helpful 3 – Moderately helpful	28 for each option
Of the methods used by teachers in the Afrikaans classroom, which do feel work the best for you?	Content based instruction	25

## Conclusion

According to the findings above, the perceptions that teachers have regarding the helpfulness of different teaching strategies in additional language learning, include firstly, that proficiency levels are not on the required level for high school learners and that these proficiency levels therefore influence the use of specific teaching strategies. Secondly, whilst teachers would like to teach using the L2 only, the perception exists amongst them that CS is more beneficial to the learners to aid understanding of the content and vocabulary taught in the class. Thirdly, the teachers prefer the bilingual approach, where the TL is used as far as possible, but where there is allowance for the use of CS by the teacher, especially when explaining something, if the learners do not yet possess the necessary vocabulary to ask or answer questions in the TL. Thus, the teachers do not use a singular strategy, but a combination of the monolingual approach in some instances and CS in others. While the teachers find CS is to be helpful in terms of teacher-learner interactions, while providing instruction, they find it less helpful in terms of guide peer interaction as the learners do not only speak English but other languages during group work. Aspects of keeping discipline in the class, thus also contribute to CS being less helpful in guided peer interaction. The favoured method of instruction amongst the teachers, was CBI. Outlining that teachers feel that learners learn best when working with L2 content and where the focus of the curriculum is on content. This view is however a possible reflection of the de jure pressures teachers might feel from the school and the Department of Basic Education and not necessarily due to the de facto effectiveness and efficiency that CS can add to FAL classrooms.

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