

SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLES

“In English not in Maltese!”: The Bilingual Language Use of a Student Teacher Teaching English in Maltese Primary Schools

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Abstract: In this paper I present data pertaining to the bilingual language use of a student teacher during English lessons in Maltese primary school classes. The case study was undertaken as part of a larger study, however, for the purpose of this paper I will focus only on one student teacher and a selection of her experiences. The impetus for the study came about because I was interested in finding out how English and Maltese, as the official languages of Malta, were used by student teachers while teaching primary school pupils. Classroom observations during the professional practice placement were held to find out whether Maltese, as the L1, was drawn on during English lessons. I also held interviews with the participant to obtain feedback as to when and why the first language was used during the lessons. In the primary school classrooms observed, Maltese was drawn on mainly to ensure understanding and learning, for procedural issues, to address classroom management issues and to establish a friendly atmosphere during English lessons. Both languages were used to mediate learning and to negotiate meaning and understanding.

Bilingualism as a medium of instruction

Language use in classrooms by teachers and pupils has been an area of study that has been researched by many over the years. In bilingual or multilingual communities and countries the role of code-switching in language has been at the centre of this debate: ranging from being considered an ‘interference’ and ‘illegitimate language’ (Potowski, 2007) to being viewed as an ‘additional resource’ and ‘pedagogical tool’ (Arthur, 1996; Camilleri, 2001; Lin 1990; O’Neil and Velasco, 2007) to be drawn upon liberally in the classroom.

According to Garcia (2009, p 298), 'the negative associations with code-switching in the classroom have been increasingly questioned by scholars'. The acceptance of a balanced or bilingual approach to teaching the second language (L2) (Auerbach, 1993; Miles, 2004; Nation, 2003) through which the first language (L1) is being acknowledged, respected and valued as a resource (Atkinson, 2002; Camilleri, 1996; Nazary, 2008; Probyn, 2005; Schweers, 1990).

However, despite this shift in perspective, these L1 approaches do not uphold the use of the L1 indiscriminately when teaching the L2. Jacobson (1990) refers to cases where teachers code-switch between the first (L1) and second language (L2) in what appears to be a random manner in a conversation as 'flip-flopping'.

Garcia (2009) holds that:

Without any awareness about language use in education, teachers who are members of bilingual communities will use their two languages in classrooms in ways similar to those in which they use them in the community (p.296).

Some teachers do in fact use both their languages in one lesson to teach the same content concurrently. This involves moving between both languages frequently during the lesson with no thought or concern about why they are using language in such a manner (Jacobson, 1990; Potowski, 2007). Thus, teachers using languages without language awareness may hardly be aware of when or why a switch was made.

Atkinson (2002) and Nazary (2008) proposed that the L1, used judiciously by teachers and students, can be a vital source and tool for communication especially when the 'subject' being taught is the language itself.

Johnson (1994) holds that beliefs about language learning, teaching and use formed through prior life experiences are very hard to change despite teacher education. Therefore, Johnson argues that how teachers were taught will in turn influence the manner in which they teach. This is in line with Lortie's (1975) concept of 'lived experiences' or 'apprenticeship of observation'. Thus, a teacher taught certain subjects in English as L2 will probably teach the subject in the same way, and therefore, most probably in the same language/s of instruction as well. According to Johnson (1994) instructional decisions taken by pre-service teachers on a practicum were founded on ideas produced through their own experiences as L2 learners. Through work with pre-service teachers, Numrich (1996) also found that student teachers tend to use or avoid certain teaching strategies depending on their own positive or negative experiences as pupils. According to Almarza (1996), despite teacher education, some student teachers do not change their beliefs about teaching and learning. While acknowledging the above, Brownlee *et al.* (2001) agree with Nesper (1987) that very often these beliefs about learning held by

student teachers are not addressed during initial teacher education (ITE). Moreover, beliefs about language use seem closely tied to identity. Therefore, even when student teachers articulate agreement about language use, their behaviour may remain unaffected (Sendan and Roberts, 1998; Cabaroglu and Roberts, 2000). One way to change these beliefs and behaviours may be to encourage student teachers to reflect explicitly on these beliefs (Brownlee *et al.*, 2001; Lyons, 1990; Stanton, 1996).

Language Use in Maltese Primary Schools

In Maltese Primary school classrooms both Maltese and English, as the official languages of Malta, are drawn on as languages of instruction and as subjects in their own right. In State schools this entails Maltese being the language of instruction for Maltese, Religion and Social Studies, whilst English would be the language of instruction for Mathematics, English, and Science (Ministry for Education and National Culture, 1998; 1999). However, during the lessons themselves it is common for both languages to be used (Camilleri, 2001; Farrugia, 2003). Teachers who hail from a Maltese speaking background would use Maltese freely to explain and facilitate the process. Farrugia (2003) holds that since both the teachers and pupils in primary schools share the same L1 and L2 it is natural and common for them to code-switch during lessons. Teachers code-switch mainly to ensure pupils are understanding and following the lesson and frequently switch between using English for reading and writing and Maltese for speaking (Camilleri, 2000; Caruana, 2007; Farrugia, 2003).

A case study of a student teacher

I compiled this case study about Anne and her experiences during the first two years of her initial teacher training and professional practice placements in primary schools. The main research question I propose here is: When, why and how does this student teacher use language during English lessons in Primary school classes?

The qualitative nature of this study is intended to give depth to the research and is based on a 'constructivist-interpretative' research stance (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Silverman, 2005). The case study data were collected through a series of interviews, observations and questionnaires over a two-year period. Observation data were collected in natural settings, in this case, naturally occurring classroom situations in Maltese primary schools. Anne was part of a cohort of 49 Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students reading for a B.Ed (Hons) at the University of Malta. This article is only based on data collected through questionnaires, interviews and lesson observations of one student teacher, called Anne (not her real name).

Anne started her ITE when she was eighteen years old. In her own words, 'since I was a little girl... I always wanted to become a teacher' (A.Int.1.44). The following extract from the first interview with Anne uncovered a lot about her language profile and her feelings and beliefs about her own proficiency.

Well at home we use Maltese, and even when I was at church school X for primary and secondary we used Maltese most of the time. It was only during 6th form at a church 6th Form that I really used English. During the two years I was with a group for English 'A' Level... they were English-speaking so I spoke English more. I used to feel uncomfortable if the people I did Maths 'A' Level with heard me talking in English... But with the English group I learnt to speak better English. At the beginning of the course I got spelling mistakes in essays but by the end of it, after 2 years, I hardly got a mistake anymore.

(A.Int.1.6)

In the extract above Anne was aware of her language use and was anxious about sending the wrong message about her identity to a group of Maltese-speaking friends, while at the same time wanting to belong to the English-speaking group of new friends. Thus, she was struggling with her own identity as it shifted and changed through the language crossings that took place due to socialising with two groups with different language preferences (Rampton, 1995; 2001).

She attended Catholic church schools for all levels of her schooling. Anne's schooling was mostly through the medium of Maltese with English being learnt as her L2. Anne explained that when she was a pupil in primary school, pupils only wrote the sentences in English while all interaction and teaching was carried out in Maltese. Anne was clear in her stance against using the L1 during the L2 lessons as she felt that is was the reason she had lacked fluency and confidence in English.

We always used Maltese most even though I went to a church school... the teachers and students were mostly Maltese speakers. English was only to read sentences and things like that. I don't remember exactly what the lessons were like but we didn't use English to speak to each other.

(A.Int.1.14)

It is clear that Anne, retrospectively at least, did not feel this was best practice. Consequently, as a result of the way she was taught English she feels that counter-intuitively she can actually read more fluently in her second language, than in Maltese. She believes that due to the approach to language teaching and learning in her school she was not confident with English oracy during her compulsory education. This may also be a result of an educational

system that relies heavily on examination oriented assessment procedures that place emphasis on the reading and writing aspects of language more than on the oral component. Thus, she would like to see more English used during English lessons and more attention given to a communicative approach to language teaching and learning, whereby pupils and teachers used language for a 'real' purpose and not only to read out of a text book (Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1996). This dichotomy of reading and writing in English whilst using Maltese to discuss and explain is not uncommon in local classrooms (Camilleri, 2001; Caruana, 2007; Farrugia, 2003).

The role of code-switching between Maltese and English and consistent use of the languages is explained below:

In classroom situations when teaching these subjects in English poses difficulties, code switching can be used as a means of communication. These situations apart, the National Minimum Curriculum advocates consistency in the use of language during the teaching-learning process.

(NMC, 1999, p 79)

Despite these recommendations, I have come across many situations where the English lessons were carried out mainly in Maltese in state schools and the reverse situation, that is, the use of English during Maltese lessons in independent schools.

Teaching and English: Anne's thoughts and beliefs

To teach in Maltese primary schools Anne knew that she needed to be proficient in all language skills in both Maltese and English. As regards to speaking in English, in the first interview Anne said that:

I would prefer to speak in Maltese to say what I want to say. Because it is a natural thing that when you hear someone speak for the first time you see if they have good English or not...even unconsciously but people do it so even when I speak in front of the class or something in English I'm bound to speak in English...I feel tense and I know they're hearing my English rather than what I'm saying.

(A.Int.1b.8)

Here Anne reveals her self-consciousness about using English during the interview with me, and also that she was afraid others would judge her English speaking skills and would not focus on the message she wanted to convey but on what she feared was not very fluent English instead.

Anne said that it 'made sense' to use the L2 to teach the target language 'because the more the students hear the language the more quickly they

would get used to it' (A.Q.1.21). Anne believed in using the L2 as a medium of instruction and agreed with the notion of immersion, of 'teaching English through English' as much as possible (Halliwell, 1992; Willis, 1981; Vale and Feunteun, 1995). Anne was conscious about her language use and stated that she preferred to use each language separately especially when in class.

I don't like to mix both languages at the same time... like sometimes when I am speaking or explaining something in class I say 'mela' (so) or 'issa' (now) when speaking English but I try not to...

(A.Int.1.20)

The principle of sticking to one language, when teaching, was important for Anne. However, the words she mentioned here, 'mela' (so) and 'issa' (now), are generally used as discourse markers to signal a change in activity or to move on to an explanation or as a floor-holder (Camilleri, 1995; 1996). This shows that Anne's first impulse was to speak in Maltese, her first language, and so to speak in Maltese would be the most natural choice for her to deal with classroom organisation and management issues and was also tied closely to her Maltese identity.

Anne's views about her own language proficiency before Professional Practice

Anne stated that she felt that she was lacking a certain level of fluency in speaking English as her L2 and felt more proficient and confident in reading and writing in English. Reflecting upon this she traces this back to her own schooling and language learning experiences. She asserted that when teaching English, teachers should 'help the students to become confident in speaking and writing the language' (A.Q.1.24). One can see how her own experiences of L2 language learning, or what Lortie (1975) refers to as 'apprenticeship of observation', are reflected in her beliefs about language teaching. Here instead of taking on board the methods she observed she is aiming at a different approach to counter the methods implemented when she was a pupil and that did not work for her. She wants 'her' prospective pupils to have better opportunities and more relevant language experiences and exchanges in order to become fluent users of English as their L2.

'I don't understand Maltese': Anne's first Professional Practice Placement

Anne was placed in a state school with a Year 4 class in the southern part of Malta for her first professional practice placement. During this practicum Anne said that she used English as the L2 consistently during English lessons. She also expected pupils to use English and reminded them if they forgot. This was the first of three lessons that I would observe Anne teaching over the two years of the research study.

Anne sat on a low chair holding the big book, entitled 'The Wicked Witch', which she had made as part of her resources for the week that would focus around the theme of 'Magic'. The pupils were sitting on cushions eagerly waiting for her to start.

1.	T	One, two, kulhadd bilqieghda dritt , Christine, three. We are going to have an English reading lesson now. So quietly stand up and come and sit down here. Quietly. So... can everybody see this?	One, two, <i>sit up straight everybody</i> , Christine, three.
2.	P	No	
3.	T	Come here, wait... can everybody see this?	
4.	P	Yes.	
5.	T	So who is this? Who do you think is this person?	
6.	P	Magda	
7.	T	Put up your fingers	
8.	P	Saħħara.	<i>A witch</i>
9.	T	I don't understand Maltese. Raissa	
10.	P	Magda.	
11.	T	Magda... hmmm ... and who is Magda?	
12.	P	Is-saħħara...	<i>The witch</i>
13.	T	I don't understand Maltese.	
14.	Ps	The witch, witch...	

(A.Obs.1.1-14)

Here she was counting and inserting classroom management directives in between the numbers. In line 1 she used Maltese between counting from two to three to tell the pupils to sit up straight to see the book. Her use of English when saying the numbers may not be indicative of her conscious effort to use English but could indicate that she usually employs this strategy in other lessons too, even during a Maltese lesson. It is common for technical terms and numbers to be used in English even during other lessons in Maltese classrooms (Camilleri, 1995; Farrugia, 2003).

Once the pupils settled down she showed them the front cover and asked them who they could see. Anne elicited responses from the pupils. A pupil said 'Magda' and Anne asked 'Who is Magda?' Two pupils answered 'saħħara' (*witch*) in Maltese, which was the correct answer as was the answer of those who said 'Magda'. However, Anne wanted more, she wanted them

to say 'witch' in English. She tried to encourage them to use English and to say the word in English by telling them, 'I don't understand Maltese'. The way she says it indicates that she expects the pupils to understand and take this as a cue to switch to English and not literally that she suddenly does not understand Maltese. This was a strategy she used frequently when the pupils switched to Maltese. It seemed to work because in line 14 some pupils say 'the witch'.

In the next extract Anne code-switched to Maltese and used the discourse marker 'mela' to mark the transition from discussing the witch, to the title and story.

40	T	She has a black castle. So, do you want me to read you the story?
41	Ps	Yes.
42	T	Mela , what is the title of the book? Tell me Liliana
		<i>So</i> , what is the title of the book?
43	P	The ...wicked.... Witch
44	T	Very good. The wicked witch. Clap hands for Liliana. (Pupils applaud)
45	P	Miss what is wicked?
46	T	Wicked... is like cruel, evil. She doesn't like to be good. It's the opposite of good, in a way ok. Did you all understand?

(A.Obs.1.40-46)

In the above Anne praised the child for reading the title and invited the pupils to give her a round of applause. This time she did this in English unlike a previous round of applause during the same lesson that she invited in Maltese (A.Obs.1.20). The children clapped and this indicates that there was no real need to use Maltese on the previous occasion due to any possible lack of understanding on the pupils' part. So Anne may have felt the need to use Maltese to establish her rapport with the pupils or to encourage the pupils to participate during the introduction to the lesson. In line 46 Anne managed to explain 'wicked' without resorting to L1 translation or explanation. Here she gave a word that was similar in meaning (cruel) but also explained that it was the opposite of 'good'.

Anne read to the pupils about Magda the Witch who wanted to fill a pot with water to boil the children in. A pupil asked what 'boil' meant.

221	P	'Boil' xi tfisser?	<i>What does 'boil' mean?</i>
222	T	Boil? Ehm...when you put the water in the kettle and your mother wants to make some tea for example, and she pours the water in the kettle and then she lets it boil. It becomes very hot.	
223	P	And it has bubbles	
224	T	Yes and bubbles come up.	
225	P	And smoke..	
226	T	And steam...steam it is	
227	P	Ibaqbaq	<i>It boils</i>
228	T	Iva, ibaqbaq. Brava.	<i>Yes, it boils. Good girl.</i>
229	P	In Maltese.	

(A.Obs.1.221-229)

Anne explained 'boil' in English drawing on a situation in the children's everyday life, that of making a cup of tea. She used the same word the pupil uses ('ibaqbaq') to validate the pupil's response and then praises her in Maltese. The pupil was pleased to have understood and to receive praise and smiles happily. However, the pupil showed that she was aware that she did not use English as she remarked in her response.

Seating difficulties in class

Before she started the story and at some points during the story Anne stopped and used a few phrases in Maltese to organise the children's seating arrangement. At other times during this lesson she drew the attention of pupils to sit properly, to move or to be quiet. Here I will only illustrate by giving one example, however, in total there were six such interventions in Maltese dealing with the seating arrangement during this lesson. The example below also happens to be one that depicts the longest switch to Maltese (20 words) by Anne in this lesson.

48	T	Good. When you don't understand something tell me ok. Ask me and I will explain. So, intom morru dik in-naħa ghax inkella ma tarawx. Morru wara Roxanne u ersqu ftit. Ersqu ftit inkella ma tarawx. Mela, everyone can see now?	<i>So, you go that side otherwise you won't be able to see. Go behind Roxanne and move a little. Move a little otherwise you won't be able to see. So, everyone can see now?</i>
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(A.Obs.1.48)

Here she was directing pupils as to where they should sit to be in a better position to see the book and to follow the story. Again, she used the discourse marker ‘mela’ to indicate a shift from classroom management directives to settling down to discuss the first page and its illustration and from addressing particular pupils to addressing the whole class. It was interesting that she started the Maltese switch after using the discourse marker ‘so’ in English and ended by using the discourse marker ‘mela’ in Maltese. It seemed that Anne could use a discourse marker in either language to serve the same purpose. The use of ‘so’ at the beginning followed on from her previous speech in English whilst her discourse marker ‘mela’ in Maltese marked the end of her intervention in Maltese.

It seemed that Anne felt more at ease addressing the classroom management issues that resulted due to the seating arrangement in Maltese because it came naturally to her and maybe because she felt it was more time-effective to carry out these functions in Maltese to continue the lesson without additional delay. Perhaps Maltese was used because these incidents also engage emotion somehow and are intense moments that could be, or lead to, possible crisis points in the lesson where the pupils could disengage. Despite these interruptions by the pupils, Anne managed to keep the situation in check and kept the pupils focused on the story. She switched back to English and continued from where she had left off without any apparent difficulty.

Below, Anne encouraged a child to try to express herself in English. Anne was asking for the meaning of ‘to take care of’. A pupil knew the meaning, translated it and replied twice in Maltese. Anne in line 153 told her to try to say it in English, however, she went on to say quite harshly ‘or don’t say anything’.

150	P	Tieħu ħsiebhom	<i>Look after them</i>
151	T	Jasmine	
152	P	Li tieħu ħsiebhom	<i>To look after them</i>
153	T	<u>Not in Maltese, try and say something in English ok...or else don't say anything...</u>	
154	P	Miss jien mhux qed nara...	<i>Miss I cannot see</i>
156	T	Mhux inti ġejt hawn...ġa għedtlek ersaq hemmhekk. Tell me Cressida...	<i>You came here...I already told you to move over there.</i>

(A.Obs.1.150-156)

Therefore, it seemed that Anne was trying to use English in the lesson at all costs, even of restricting correct responses because they were in Maltese. This I felt was a very harsh response and was not going to encourage the child to try a response in Maltese or even English. In this case, unlike in the previous

passage, Anne did not encourage the pupil by leading her or by giving hints, or even providing her with time to rethink her response in English. Instead, in her next utterance she sounded annoyed with the pupil who complained about not seeing the book. I think that here Anne, due to inexperience, may have been anxious to keep in check the situations that kept cropping up due to the pupils' seating arrangement. Many novice teachers are usually more concerned with 'giving' the lesson as planned rather than responding to the needs of the pupils as they arise during the lesson (Tochon and Munby, 1993; Twisleton, 2006).

In this instance Anne could have accepted her Maltese response as correct, and then could have helped the pupil translate her phrase into English. Anne could have praised the pupil because, after all, her answer was correct, she did know the meaning of 'to take care of' albeit in Maltese. Anne may not have realised yet, that at times the L1, may be used with the L2 as 'an additional resource' available to the bilingual in class, in order to teach effectively (Camilleri, 1996; Lin 1990; McCarthey and Moje, 2002; Merritt et al., 1992). This was a key moment for me since it showed very clearly what the consequence of sticking to one language only in the classroom could mean if taken as a policy to adhere to strictly.

'L1 ... sometimes': After the first Professional Practice Placement

In this lesson Anne used English throughout with only minor interventions in Maltese. Where this happened the interventions were mainly to deal with classroom management and directives related to the seating arrangement. This seating arrangement also resulted in her reprimanding a number of pupils in Maltese while directing them to sit quietly. Other situations where Anne used Maltese were to offer praise (inviting pupils to clap; saying '**brava/u**' which translates as 'good boy/girl').

She reminded the pupils to speak in English when they spoke, or were about to speak in Maltese by saying 'try it in English' or 'I don't understand Maltese'. The final excerpt I presented, where Anne told the child to respond in English 'or else not say anything' was the only time in the lesson where she came across as wanting to use English at all costs. Anne may have provided a better L2 learning situation if she had first praised the child and then encouraged her to arrive at the English version by offering her some support as she did with other pupils at various stages of the lesson.

Anne believes that teachers should not give up on using English but should try 'different alternatives before switch[ing] to Maltese when the students do not understand' (A.Q.2.13). After her first professional practice placement she had now modified her ideas about always using the target language during English lessons. Anne now held that *sometimes* it was appropriate to

use the L1 'to help weak students' as she argued that, 'sometimes the last resource would be to say some words in Maltese, in order to help them understand' (A.Q.2.10). Thus, she argued that she did not agree with using English throughout and at all costs, especially to the detriment of the pupils' learning, but instead conceded that sometimes some use of Maltese may actually help pupils understand better. This is also the position upheld by Camilleri (1995; 1996), Faltis (1990) and McCarthy and Moje (2002), as well as O'Neil and Velasco (2007) amongst others.

Anne said that she only used Maltese occasionally to maintain discipline and order in class, when children spoke to her in Maltese, when she happened to reply automatically or when she had to explain to children who did not understand a word or explanation in English. She added that sometimes she praised the pupils in Maltese by saying '**brava**' or '**bravu**' (good girl/boy) (A.Int.2.80), although she did use 'very good', or 'good' in English frequently as well. Anne also reported that she tends to use the L1 to tell pupils off when they misbehaved (A.Int.2.176). Thus, it seemed that Anne used Maltese when she was involved in classroom management issues and when her emotions seemed to be involved more.

Through Anne's perspective we also get a first glimpse into the pupils' attitudes towards the use of English as their L2 in class. Anne believed that the pupils were reluctant to use English because 'they are afraid, and they had to think about every word... and that they will make a mistake' (A.Int.2.82). According to Anne it was the pupils' apprehension about making mistakes that kept them from trying to express themselves in English. Anne also believed that some pupils were not comfortable using English and maybe their level of proficiency and competence was a hurdle, together with the fear of making mistakes. She said that she had to persist because:

...sometimes the words don't come, they don't really know how to say them in English... I have to keep on trying, to keep on pressing (A.Int.2.198).

However, she also explained that once they did speak in English she was 'amazed at the words they know' (A.Int.2. 156). Here one then needs to try to understand the situation. On the one hand Anne said that the pupils were not very capable speakers, but on the other hand once they were given the opportunity to use English in a supportive environment and through motivating activities, the pupils seemed able to draw on a bank of vocabulary that even surprised the student teacher. This outcome seemed to affirm her position of using the L2 during English lessons as much as possible. Anne firmly believed, that despite being a serious challenge, during the two weeks with the pupils she managed to use English as a medium of instruction and communication. She feels that the pupils have improved in their confidence and ability to use English.

Anne stated that during the Maltese and English lessons she tried to adhere to the target language depending on the lesson. However, Anne asserted that 'the maths lesson is the most bilingual lesson' (A.Int.2.172). During the Maths lesson the pupils were used to Maltese for interaction and explanations, while English was used when referring to the textbook or any written work. It was the usual procedure to code-switch freely during Mathematics in Anne's class, as in most other Maltese state primary schools (Baldacchino, 1996; Bonanno, 2007; Farrugia, 2003).

Try in English First': Anne's Second Professional Practice Placement

Anne was posted in another primary state school for her second professional practice placement. She asked the pupils to write sentences about spring, in groups of 4 to 5 pupils on mini-whiteboards. She reminded them to speak in English during the group work as we can see below.

-
17. T Good. So...today we are going to talk about SPRING ok. I will give you...go to the groups that you were this morning. I don't want to hear too much noise from the chairs ok. Quietly you can go as you were before...quietly.
- In the groups you have to speak in *English* as well. Ok? So, in the groups, in *English*, write down some points that come to mind when you think of Spring. Like for example, Ryan already told me one. Come up with as many points as you can, but don't write more than 10. Ok? You have 5 minutes.
-
18. P We write in sentences?
-
19. T No, no, just points. In *English!*
-

(A.Obs.2.17-19)

She reminded them to use English three times in this extract alone. Thus, we can see that since the English lesson had just started Anne was ensuring that they knew what was expected of them in the lesson. From the above we see that the pupil who did ask questions at that point in the lesson did so in English.

Anne asked prompting questions to elicit more ideas and put up some flashcards and pictures during the brainstorming session. The teacher allowed the children to use some Maltese during the brainstorming when they could not express themselves in English. However, she always tried to encourage them to use the L2 by saying, 'try in English first' (A.Obs.2.254).

243.	T	Summer is hotter than Spring, but Spring is hotter than Winter. In Spring it is hot but in Summer it is much hotter.
244.	P	Miss, can I tell you in Maltese?
245.	T	Try in English first.
246.	P	Hmm...

(A.Obs.2.243-246)

In the next extract she used translation again to help a student with the writing task (A.Obs.2.400). She translated but said that it may not be exactly what the child meant since she did not know the context. However, in this instance she first encouraged the pupil to try to use English (A.Obs.2.398).

395.	P	Miss what was...they sleep?	
396.	T	Hibernation. It is written there. Animals wake up from hibernation.	
397.	P	Miss...	
398.	T	Ah you wrote it already? ...Write it and I will check it. First try it out.	
399.	P	What is wasalna?	What is <i>we arrived?</i>
400.	T	We arrived...but what do you want to say?...no. now we are in Spring. Xi ħaġa hekk. Imma ma nafx xi trid tgħid.	<i>Something like that. But I don't know exactly what you want to say.</i>

(A.Obs.2.395-400)

Maltese to address a pupil feeling poorly

Anne used Maltese to address a pupil who did not seem to be feeling well. The use of Maltese may be the more natural language for both Anne and the pupil in such a situation. Anne was trying to see how unwell the pupil was feeling before referring her to the Head's office to send for her family.

Thus, her concern about the child's wellbeing and ensuring there were no misunderstandings was more important than sticking to English. This exchange in Maltese about this situation could be seen as an aside that was separate from the lesson. In fact, while talking to the child Anne used English to address other pupils (as in parts of lines 330 and 334).

329 P	Ma niflahx.	I'm not feeling well
330 T	Trid tghidilhom jigu ghalik? Ma tiflahx tissaporti jigifieri? Mur ghidilhom forsi jaghmlulek xi haga ta. Come on you don't have to show me every sentence. You know how to do it. Come on.	<i>(Addressing 'sick' child)</i> Do you want to tell them (family) to come for you? Do you feel you can't stay on? Go to the office so they can help you. <i>(Addressing another pupil)</i>
331 P	Ghax suppost (inaudible) ... il-mummy.	Because (inaudible) ... my mummy should...
332 T	Inti ara jaghmlulekx xi haga mill-First Aid alright?	Go and see if they can give you something from the First Aid alright?
333 P	(inaudible)	
334 T	Hazin jekk tirremetti. Why do you like it?	It's not good if you throw-up. <i>(addresses another pupil)</i>

(A.Obs.3.329-334)

Anne explained that she used the L2 as much as possible and that the pupils 'coped really well...they started to tell each other to speak in English' (A.Int.3.112). She said that initially it was not easy to use English with the pupils since 'At first children didn't really understand the explanation in English' and because using the L2 throughout the lesson 'was something new to them'. However, Anne believed that the pupils collaborated and tried their best to use the L2 (A.I.3.140). She was eager to point out that they addressed her in the L2 and if they forget she reminded them to 'speak in English' (A.Int.3.116).

Anne acknowledged that it was not easy for the pupils to adapt to the use of the L2 as a medium of instruction because, 'the word comes more easily in Maltese' (A.Int.3.116). She explained that at one point she had to code-switch more due to the presence of a new girl in class. However, she held that when she reprimanded them she would most likely switch to Maltese (A.Q.3.21).

Conclusion

Through this case study of Anne and her language use I had the privilege to delve for a while into her life as a student teacher as she experienced the beginning of her journey to becoming a teacher. She allowed me to share some of her experiences through lesson observations, questionnaires and interviews as she explored and negotiated her thoughts, beliefs and actions related to teaching English as the L2. I zoomed-in on three of her lessons with

primary school pupils at specific points during the two years of her 4-year Initial Teacher Education programme.

In her first lesson she used English to teach English while code-switching to Maltese to deal with classroom organisation and management issues that resulted mainly due to the seating arrangement during the 'The Wicked Witch' reading and story-telling lesson. She reminded the pupils to use the L2 in English if they commented or asked a question in Maltese. She praised and encouraged the pupils through the use of English as well. In order to use the L2 she employed effective strategies and resources to make best use of language, such as, visual aids, rephrasing, paraphrasing, and gestures (Halliwell, 1992; Vale and Feunteun, 1995). Anne also used easier words or simple explanations when children asked for meanings of words. In the second and third lessons that were held during her second practice placement Anne continued to use English, and when pupils did not understand she continued to use easier words or offered simple explanations supported by pictures that she seemed able to do effectively. She still made a conscious effort not to rely on translation or code-switching when the pupils experienced difficulties in comprehension. However, there was a change in her beliefs after her first practicum in that she now holds that *sometimes* it is appropriate to use the L1 in order to help 'weak students' (A.Q.2.10).

In the second professional practice placement Anne seemed to achieve a level of flexibility in the use of the L1 that showed that she had learnt to appreciate it as an additional resource to draw on in the teaching of English instead of something to be avoided at all cost (Arthur, 1996; Camilleri, 1995; 2001; Edwards, 2004; Garcia, 2009; Milroy and Muysken, 1995; O'Neil & Velasco, 2007). Despite her initial beliefs about using the L2 exclusively throughout her English lessons, there was a remarkable shift in Anne's approach and use of language by the end of her second year professional practice placement. This shift in her beliefs about language teaching seems to give her the flexibility to allow her to cater more effectively and efficiently for pupils with diverse levels of proficiency and confidence in using English as their L2.

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