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Chinese Teachers' Attitudes Towards Translanguaging and Its Uses in Portuguese Foreign Language Classrooms

Abstract

Recent research has shown that L1 use can serve important cognitive, communicative, and social functions in communicative foreign and second language learning (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). In the context of Chinese universities, Meij and Zhao (2010) argue that there is widespread agreement among administrators that L1 should not be used in L2 classrooms and that both teachers and students should follow this norm. However, in their study, they found that translanguaging practice is perceived by teachers and students as a useful approach to achieve desired learning outcomes. Other studies (Cai & Cook, 2015; Littlewood & Fang, 2011) have shown that teachers use L1 in L2 class for specific functions: addressing personal needs, giving direction in class, managing class, and ensuring student understanding. The aim of this paper is to present a study of university teachers' attitudes towards and uses of translanguaging in Portuguese as foreign language classrooms. The participants were 31 Chinese teachers, all native speakers of Mandarin in mainland China. They answered a questionnaire to collect information related to the importance that teachers assign to different uses of translanguaging. Findings indicate that the majority of the teachers believe that the use of the students' L1 by the teacher or students could improve Portuguese learning in various ways, especially in the first levels.

Keywords: translanguaging, Portuguese, foreign language, Chinese teaching context

Monolingual instructional practices have long been criticized by many scholars who advocate the relevance of first language (L1) use in second language (L2) learning (Cook, 2001; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Macaro, 2001; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009, among others). The last decade has witnessed

¹ The author thanks the financial support of the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (UIDB / 00214/2020).

an increasing interest in the roles that the languages of the students' linguistic repertoire play in learning a new language, as nowadays many learners have multilingual competence and are integrated in a multilingual society. Thus, the mixed and original character of the linguistic knowledge of multilingual students cannot be understood as the mere sum of the partial knowledge of each language (Grosjean, 2001; Herdina & Jessner, 2000) but as a linguistic multicompetence (Cook, 1996). Multilingualism implies the construction of a linguistic awareness that enables learners, as they incorporate new languages into their repertoire, to seek similarities between the languages already acquired and the new ones and to develop strategies to deal with differences, thus facilitating their acquisition (González Piñeiro, Guillén Díaz, & Vez, 2010). As this knowledge is evident in bi/multilingual classrooms and should be considered in language learning, we have witnessed an increasing interest in the discursive practices of bi/multilingual speakers beyond the usual codeswitching of L1–L2. In this sense, researchers have developed the concept of *translanguaging* to refer to bilingual or multilingual oral interaction (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009) and to the use of different languages in written texts (Canagarajah, 2011) that require flexible instructional strategies in foreign language teaching (Wiley & Garcia, 2016).

Recognizing the importance of the use of all the linguistic repertoire of learners in the Portuguese foreign language classroom, we conducted a study to survey the perceptions of university Chinese teachers in Mainland China with regard to translanguaging. The focus is to specify and understand teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards the possible functions and reasons of translanguaging in the classroom context. Therefore, the teachers answered a questionnaire, whose results indicated that the participant teachers are in general aware of the uses of translanguaging in the classroom and believe in its importance.

Translanguaging in the Classroom

The term translanguaging in education is currently widely used in different parts of the world. This concept emerged in the 1980s with the works of Williams and Whittal, and afterwards, the term itself was coined as *trawsieithu* (in Welsh) by Williams (1994) to refer to pedagogical practices observed in Welsh schools, where English and Welsh were used for different purposes in the same lesson. Later, the term was translated into English, initially as 'translinguifying' and then as 'translanguaging' (Baker, 2001).

The concept was developed later by many researchers in the field, and it has assumed different perspectives and uses. From a linguistic point of

view, translanguaging is “the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages” (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015, p. 281). As García (2009) indicated, language classrooms in our century are moving from monolingualism towards translanguaging, encouraging the flexible use of learners’ languages rather than treating this linguistic knowledge separately, not considering it at all, or viewing it as a negative influence. Therefore, it is necessary to change the paradigm to a holistic view of language that involves a new vision of language, speakers, and repertoires (Cenoz, 2017). From a pedagogical perspective, translanguaging “is planned by the teacher inside the classroom and can refer to the use of different languages for input and output or to other planned strategies based on the use of students’ resources from the whole linguistic repertoire” (Cenoz, 2017, p. 194). Lewis, Jones, and Baker (2012, p. 644), referring to Williams’s (1996) consideration of translanguaging as a pedagogical theory, explained that

the process of translanguaging uses various cognitive processing skills in listening and reading, the assimilation and accommodation of information, choosing and selecting from the brain storage to communicate in speaking and writing. Thus, translanguaging requires a deeper understanding than just translating as it moves from finding parallel words to processing and relating meaning and understanding.

- Wei (2016, p. 8) argues that the *trans-* prefix in ‘translanguaging’ highlights:
- the fluid practices that go beyond, that is, transcend, socially constructed language systems and structures to engage diverse multiple meaning-making systems and subjectivities;
 - the transformative capacity of the translanguaging process not only for language systems, but also for individuals’ cognition and social structures;
 - the transdisciplinary consequences of re-conceptualising language, language learning, and language use for linguistics, psychology, sociology, and education.

Translanguaging has been broadly accepted as an effective approach to bilingual and multilingual education (Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; among others). Cenoz and Gorter (2017a, p. 904), in line with Lewis et al. (2012), also distinguish another use of the concept, namely “spontaneous translanguaging [that] is considered the more universal form of translanguaging because it can take place inside and outside the classroom.”

Baker (2001, pp. 281–282) proposes four pedagogical advantages of translanguaging:

- It may promote a deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter. If learners have understood the subject matter in two languages, they have really understood it, which may not clearly happen in a monolingual situation.
- It may help the development of the weaker language, as it may prevent learners from undertaking the main part of their work in their stronger language while attempting less challenging tasks through the weaker language.
- It may facilitate home-school links and cooperation. If the learner is being educated in a language that is not understood by the parents, he can use the minority language to discuss the subject matter with them and be supported by them in his schoolwork.
- It may help the integration of fluent speakers with early learners. If L2 learners are integrated with fluent L1 speakers, and if sensitive and strategic use is made of both languages in class, L2 ability and subject content learning can be developed concurrently.

Cenoz and Gorter (2017b) claim that translanguaging can be used in different ways in language and in content classes. In this work, they present some contributions (concerning translanguaging in input and output, the use of the L1 as a resource in language and in CLIL/CBI classes, and translanguaging in writing) that demonstrate the positive effect of translanguaging involving different languages and educational contexts, showing that teachers and learners use translanguaging in the classroom to ensure understanding, and that learners adopt identical strategies for writing in different languages.

L1 and Target Language Uses in Chinese Foreign Language Classrooms

Studies of the teaching of English as a foreign language in China (e.g., Hu, 2002) have shown that the traditional approach has been a combination of the grammar-translation method and audiolingualism, as with other foreign languages. However, as this approach has failed to develop an adequate level of communicative competence in learners, since the late 1980s, an effort has been made to introduce communicative language teaching into China. Nevertheless, many teachers and learners have not really changed their traditional conception of language instruction and their practices have remained the same. Recently, a new teaching model for foreign languages is being implemented, namely a combination of lecture-based teaching and interactive teaching, to ensure the students' mastery of the target language (Jie & Keong, 2014).

The majority of studies on the uses of L1 in Chinese foreign languages classrooms concern codeswitching, not translanguaging (e.g., Cai & Cook, 2015;

Cheng, 2013; Meij & Zhao, 2010; Tian & Macaro, 2012; Xie, 2017). However, more recently, a few translanguaging studies have been conducted in this context (e.g., Wang, 2019a, 2019b; Wei, 2016).

In China, even though most foreign language teachers are at least bilingual, in the context of classroom formal education code-switching tends not to be allowed (Cheng, 2013). As this author states (2013, p. 1279), on the one hand, “most of the foreign language classes are language subject oriented, which makes the argument for using the L1 seem less secured”; on the other hand, national curricula hardly prescribe or suggest explicitly the classroom instructional language, more precisely, the relation between Chinese and the foreign language. For instance, in the Teaching Curriculum for English Majors (2000), just one line is devoted to the language of instruction, stating that for this purpose only English should be used.

Although there is no clear official guidance in this regard, codeswitching is a reality in foreign language classrooms, with its use varying according to several factors, as we will see from the studies presented below.

Meij and Zhao (2010) found that teachers' language proficiency, students' language proficiency, and course types influence the frequency and length of classroom codeswitching practices that are considered useful approaches in the context of Chinese universities to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Littlewood and Fang (2011) found variations of mother tongue use in different mainland China and Hong Kong school contexts. This comparative study showed that the main functions of the learners' mother tongue include addressing personal needs, managing classroom discipline, and guaranteeing learner understanding. Nevertheless, their study indicates that foreign language use should be maximized to provide a conducive learning environment by exposing students to appropriate language input.

Cai and Cook (2015) present a list of pedagogical functions of learners' L1 (Chinese) in tertiary English language teaching, which includes explaining difficult language, giving direction in class, and managing the class and interactions between teachers and students. Both teachers and learners use both languages for specific purposes.

Another study conducted by Yan, Fung, Liu, and Huang (2016) in seven secondary schools and four universities in southern China showed that learners tended to use more foreign language in course content-related activities and less in discussions on administrative subjects such as assignments and exams.

Wang (2019b) carried out research in 27 countries on students' and teachers' attitudes and practices related to translanguaging in Chinese foreign language classrooms. She concluded that “translanguaging in foreign language classrooms has by and large contributed to giving voice to students for meaning

negotiation at different levels. This has all helped to acknowledging students' input and the importance of rapport among all classroom participants" (p. 145). Wang (p. 146) pointed to some relevant aspects that should be considered in language teacher education for the development of translanguaging theories and practices:

- Renew knowledge on language learning: the integration of translanguaging in foreign language teaching requires the reconstitution of teachers' knowledge of languages and their teaching.
- Facilitate structured translanguaging strategies: it is important to give explicit guidance to teachers; otherwise, their translanguaging pedagogy will continue to develop by trial and error. Only through teachable translanguaging strategies can language teachers meet the challenges posed by the ever-increasing diversity in multilingual foreign language classrooms.
- Develop a transformative teacher-student role: teachers leave the role that traditional teaching has given them and take on the role of facilitators who organize learning situations in collaboration with students. The new roles of teacher and student blend and identify by acquiring joint responsibility. In a multilingual classroom, teachers should create an environment that allows students to bring to the classroom the languages they know and see them as legitimate and valued as important inputs.

Wei (2016) conducted a study of "new Chinglish" from a translanguaging perspective. He argues that new Chinglish originated in a new translanguaging space in China that defies the traditional boundaries of languages. As Wei says, "It is a Post-Multilingualism phenomenon that transcends language and languages. It is Translanguaging at its best" (p. 20). In his perspective, post-multilingualism does not refer to the co-existence or co-use of multiple languages, but to the promotion of translanguaging practices while protecting the identity and integrity of individual languages, and to the expression of "one's cultural values and sociopolitical views through a language or multiple languages that are traditionally associated with the Other or Others" (p. 20).

The Study

Methodology

The aim of the present study is not to contend whether the L1 can be used or not in classroom, but to determine Chinese-university Portuguese teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards the possible functions, reasons, and rationales of translanguaging in the context of foreign language teaching.

The study considered the following research questions:

- (1) What attitudes do Chinese teachers have towards teachers' use of students' L1?
- (2) What attitudes do Chinese teachers have towards the students' use of their L1?
- (3) What do teachers think are the benefits and detriments of using students' L1 in the classroom?

Thirty-one Chinese teachers, all native speakers of Mandarin from mainland China universities, took part in this study. These subjects constitute a non-probabilistic convenience sampling. The participants completed an online survey (based on McMillan & Rivers, 2011, and on Nambisan, 2014) that allowed us to gather information concerning the importance that teachers place on several uses of translanguaging. We expected that the anonymity of an online survey would encourage teachers to answer honestly according to their beliefs. The survey included ten questions (nine closed-ended ones, some of them scored on a Likert scale, and one open-ended question). The open-ended question sought more personal and relevant answers about the benefits and harms of translanguaging. The teachers were also asked to indicate their mother tongue (since there are also Portuguese and Brazilian teachers teaching Portuguese as a foreign language in China) and how many years of teaching experience they had as a foreign language teacher. This research included the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods; as Gass and Mackey (2011) emphasise, when applied for data collection, questionnaires can provide both quantitative and qualitative knowledge.

Findings and Discussion

First, we sought to determine the primary language of instruction in Portuguese Foreign Language classes. Most participants (70.97%, 22 teachers) selected the option 'Portuguese and Mandarin' as the two languages used equally in the classroom. Of the remaining teachers, five (16.13%) taught using Mandarin as the main language of instruction and four (12.90%) using Portuguese. In an English classroom context in China, Cheng (2013) obtained different results: 60% of the teachers claimed to use more than 80% English in class, and only 6.3% of the participants used less than 60% English. In this case, the foreign language is almost always the predominant language in the classroom.

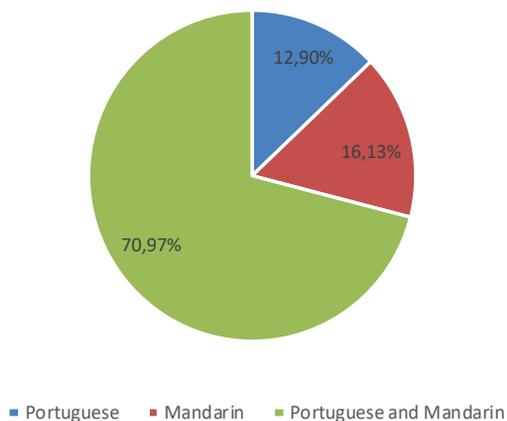


Figure 1. Main language of instruction in class.

Figure 1 shows that these teachers are aware of the benefits of using learners' L1 along with Portuguese, as it assists them in developing their communicative competence in the latter. These results accord with those obtained in other studies, such as Bernard (2013) and Liu (2011). The choices of the languages of instruction of these teachers reflect Cook's (1992) perspective when he argues that the L2 develops alongside and interacts with the learner L1 rather than developing separately from it.

When asked if they believe that use of students L1 in the classroom is important for learning Portuguese, 87.10% of the teachers in question said 'Yes' and 12.90% 'No,' as shown in Figure 2. This is in line with the answers to the first question. As Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) claim, L1 could be a useful tool for gaining control over the task and working at a higher cognitive level.

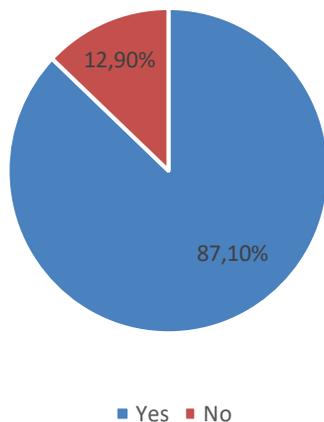


Figure 2. The importance of the use of students' L1 in the classroom for learning Portuguese.

Therefore, “[t]o insist that no use be made of the L1 in carrying out tasks that are both linguistically and cognitively complex is to deny the use of an important cognitive tool” (Swain & Lapkin, 2000, pp. 268–269).

The first question asked participants to indicate the frequency with which they observed or stimulated the use of the students' L1 in the classroom. The items of the questions appear in three groups of uses for data description and discussion. The first group comprises situations that are related to discussing content in class: “to discuss content or tasks in small groups’ and ‘to answer teachers’ questions” (Table 1).

Table 1

Uses of translanguaging: Teachers

	How often do you observe or stimulate the use of your students' L1 for the following purposes?				
	Never	Not often	Somewhat often	Often	Very often
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
To discuss content or tasks in small groups	3.23	22.58	38.71	25.81	9.68
To answer a teacher's question	12.90	29.03	45.16	3.23	9.68

The use of the students' L1 in events related to discussing content in class are encouraged or observed ‘somewhat often’ in the classrooms by the participants. Only a smaller percentage of teachers ‘never’ or ‘not often’ observe, or encourage the use of L1 in these situations. Other studies (e.g., Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003) support this use of translanguaging to discuss content or tasks in class. This means that L1 could be a useful tool for having control over tasks and contents.

The second group involves the participation of the students. The translanguaging uses included in this group are ‘to assist peers during tasks’ and ‘to enable participation by lower proficiency students.’

As shown in Table 2, teachers use translanguaging frequently to help students participate, since the majority of them answer the first item ‘Somewhat often’ (41.94%) and ‘Often’ (32.26%) and the second ‘Somewhat often’ (45.16%) and ‘Often’ (32.26%). Comparison of Tables 1 and 2 shows that these uses are roughly as common as those related to discussing content in class, and are in line with the results of McMillan and Rivers (2011).

The third group of uses refers to the treatment of subjects unrelated to class content, comprising ‘to explain problems not related to content’ and ‘to ask permission to do something.’

Table 2

Uses of translanguaging: Teachers

	How often do you observe or stimulate the use of your students' L1 for the following purposes?				
	Never	Not often	Somewhat often	Often	Very often
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
To assist peers during tasks	0.00	19.35	41.94	32.26	6.45
To enable participation by lower proficiency students	0.00	12.90	45.16	32.26	9.68

Table 3

Uses of translanguaging: Teachers

	How often do you observe or stimulate the use of your students' L1 for the following purposes?				
	Never	Not often	Somewhat often	Often	Very often
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
To explain problems not related to content	0.00	9.68	54.84	29.03	6.45
To ask permission to do something	3.23	22.58	58.06	12.90	3.23

Table 3 indicates that the use 'to ask permission' is more common than the use 'to explain problems not related to content,' but there is not a significant difference between them. For the first item, teachers answered 'Somewhat often' (54.84%), 'Often' (29.03%), and 'Very Often' (6.45%), and for the second item, 'Somewhat often' (58.06%), 'Often' (12.90%), and 'Very Often' (3.23%). The percentages of the answers 'Never' and 'Not often' are much lower for both items, especially the first. From the two last tables we see that these uses of translanguaging are observed and stimulated more often than those related to classroom content and involve student participation.

The next question asked how important they rated the possible use of translanguaging by students for certain purposes. The majority of teachers think (see Table 4) that the use of the students' L1 'to discuss content or tasks in small groups' is important (54.84%), but the second item in this group, 'to answer to teacher's question,' was generally considered not important (54.84%) by teachers.

These results reveal a disparity between teachers' beliefs and practices concerning translanguaging. In the first question, which asked participants the frequency with which they observed or stimulated this second use, the majority of the participants indicated frequencies of 'somewhat often'. Nevertheless,

although they observe or stimulate this use in their classrooms, they found it to be 'Not important.'

Table 4

Uses of translanguaging: Students

How important do you believe it is for students to use their L1 in the classroom within the following situations?			
	Not important	Important	Very important
	[%]	[%]	[%]
To discuss content or tasks in small groups	35.48	54.84	9.68
To answer to teacher's question	54.84	38.71	6.45

Table 5

Uses of translanguaging: Students

How important do you believe it is for students to use their L1 in the classroom within the following situations?			
	Not important	Important	Very important
	[%]	[%]	[%]
To assist peers during tasks	16.13	77.42	6.45
To translate for a lower-proficiency student	3.23	48.39	48.39
To enable participation by lower-proficiency students	3.23	54.84	41.94

The first item in the second group (see Table 5) is 'to assist peers during tasks'; this use of the students' L1 in the classroom was considered important by participants (77.42%). This is in line with the teachers' answers to the previous question regarding the frequency of use in the classroom. The second use of translanguaging in this group is the use of the students' L1 'to translate for lower proficiency students.' Almost all the teachers thought it important (48.39%) or very important (48.39%) in their classrooms. This is in line with the importance given to translation in the teaching and learning of Portuguese in China, where we still see teachers emphasize grammar, translation, vocabulary, and rote memorization (Cai & Cook, 2015; Hu, 2002). The next use of translanguaging in this second group is 'to enable participation by lower proficiency students,' which was considered 'important' (54.84%) and 'very important' (41.94%) by the teachers; only 3.23% of the participants

rated it ‘not important.’ The number of times teachers observed and stimulated this use in the classroom corresponds to the importance they give it (see Table 2).

Table 6

Uses of translanguaging: Students

How important do you believe it is for students to use their L1 in the classroom within the following situations?			
	Not important	Important	Very important
	[%]	[%]	[%]
To explain problems not related to content	29.03	77.42	6.45
To ask permission to do something	61.29	35.48	3.23

The first item of the third group of the second question (see Table 6), ‘to explain problems not related to content,’ was rated ‘important’ by a majority of participants (77.42%). However, the second use in this group, ‘to ask permission,’ was classified by the majority of the teachers as ‘not important’ (61.29%), which was the highest rate of ‘not important’ given by teachers to any use of translanguaging by students. The high number of ‘not important’ answers does not match the frequency of ‘somewhat often’ (58.06%) shown in Table 3 with which it is observed or stimulated in the classroom.

With the third question, we sought to determine how often teachers use their students’ L1 in several classroom situations so as to obtain information concerning which classroom translanguaging practices teachers use most frequently.

As in the previous questions, we separated the items into three groups to facilitate analysis and comprehension. Following the three-dimensional framework proposed by Cook (2001) to analyse the role of the L1 in the classroom (teachers use L1 to convey meaning; teachers use L1 to organize the class; and students use L1 within the class) and the two types of translanguaging strategies proposed by García and Wei (2014)—“teacher-directed translanguaging” to give voice, clarity, and support, and to organize the classroom and ask questions; and “student-directed translanguaging” to participate, elaborate ideas, and ask questions—we applied the following division: student-oriented purposes, content-oriented purposes, and classroom-oriented purposes.

The first group, student-oriented purposes, comprises ‘to give feedback to students,’ ‘to praise to students,’ ‘to build bonds with students,’ and ‘to help low proficiency students.’ As shown in Table 7, a high frequency of uses of students’ L1 in the classroom is ‘to help low proficiency students,’ with 51.61% of teachers stating that they use it often and only 3.23% stating that they never

make this use of translanguaging. This is followed by the use 'to build bonds with students,' for which 35.48% of teachers use it often and 19.35% very often; less than 20% of responders state that they never or not often use students' L1 in this situation. Some teachers also used translanguaging 'to give feedback to students' 'somewhat often' (45.16%) and 'often' (35.48%), and 'to praise students' 'somewhat often' (48.39%) and 'often' (19.35%). These last results are in line with the results of previous studies (e.g., Qian, Tian, & Wang, 2009), demonstrating the importance of using students' L1 to praise students, as it develops positive attitudes in students and motivates them.

Table 7

Uses of translanguaging in different situations: Teachers

How often do you use students' L1 in the classroom for the following situations?					
	Never	Not often	Somewhat often	Often	Very often
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
To give feedback to students	3.23	6.45	45.16	35.48	9.68
To praise students	9.68	16.13	48.39	19.35	6.45
To build bonds with students	3.23	16.13	25.81	35.48	19.35
To help low-proficiency students	3.23	0.00	25.81	51.61	19.35

Table 8

Uses of translanguaging in different situations: Teachers

How often do you use students' L1 in the classroom for the following situations?					
	Never	Not often	Somewhat often	Often	Very often
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
To explain concepts	0.00	12.90	45.16	35.48	6.45
To describe vocabulary	3.23	12.90	54.84	25.81	3.23
To quickly clarify during class tasks	0.00	6.45	35.48	51.61	6.45

The second group (see Table 8), content-oriented purposes, includes the use of the students' L1 'to explain concepts,' 'to describe vocabulary,' and 'to quickly clarify during class tasks.' In this group, the use of translanguaging which is the most observed and stimulated is 'to quickly clarify during class tasks,' with 51.61% of the teachers indicating that they use L1 in this situation 'often.' Translanguaging was also used 'somewhat often' in order 'to explain concepts' (45.16%) and 'to describe vocabulary' (54.84%). These uses of translanguaging are clearly present in these teachers' classrooms since for each item

the percentages for ‘never’ and ‘not often’ are below 20%. As found in previous studies regarding these uses of translanguaging (e.g., McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Qian et al., 2009; Tian & Macaro, 2012; Yan et al., 2016), the majority of participants make use of translanguaging in these situations in their classrooms.

Table 9

Uses of translanguaging in different situations: Teachers

How often do you use students' L1 in the classroom for the following situations?					
	Never	Not often	Somewhat often	Often	Very often
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
To give directions	0.00	38.71	41.94	16.13	3.23
For classroom management	0.00	25.81	41.94	22.58	9.68

The third group, classroom-oriented purposes, includes ‘to give directions’ and ‘for classroom management.’ In this group, both practices are popular among the teachers in this study (see Table 9). Although more teachers use the students’ L1 ‘for classroom management’ than ‘to give directions,’ the majority of the participants engaged frequently in either use, as shown by a majority of frequent-use percentages (‘somewhat often,’ ‘often,’ and ‘very often’), confirming the results of earlier studies (e.g., McMillan & Rivers, 2011).

The next question seeks to determine the importance that the teachers assign to each use of translanguaging. We will follow the organization of the uses of translanguaging used in the previous question to present and discuss the data.

The answers of the teachers to this question reveal that they consider their uses of translanguaging for student-oriented purposes generally to be ‘important’ or ‘very important’ (see Table 10).

Table 10

Uses of translanguaging: Teachers

How important is it for teachers to use their students' L1 in the following situations?			
	Not important	Important	Very important
	[%]	[%]	[%]
To give feedback to students	19.35	64.52	16.13
To praise students	45.16	35.48	19.35
To build bonds with students	25.81	48.39	25.81
To help low-proficiency students	6.45	48.39	45.16

We can infer that teachers see these as relevant uses of the students' L1 in the classroom. The use considered the most important is 'to help low proficiency students,' followed by 'to give feedback to students.' However, a high percentage of teachers consider the use 'to praise students' not important (45.16%). However, this does not correspond to their practice, since teachers indicated that they do it in their classes frequently (see Table 7). There is thus a mismatch here between practices and beliefs, which could be related to the pedagogical environment predominant in China. The affirmation of the communicative approach in foreign language teaching is unstable and the traditional approach is still dominant (Cheng, 2013; Hu, 2002); therefore, teachers are equivocal between the two approaches and their practices and beliefs do not always correspond.

As we can see in Table 11, the uses of translanguaging in the second group, content-oriented purposes, are considered important by the majority of participants. The use to which teachers attached most importance was 'to explain concepts,' followed by 'to quickly clarify during class activities' and 'to describe vocabulary.' These results are in line with the frequency with which teachers promote these uses in their classrooms. However, it is interesting to note that the use for 'describing vocabulary' is given no higher importance since the methodology of foreign language teaching in China remains focused on learning grammar and vocabulary, as "Chinese classrooms are more teacher-centred and form-focused" (Wang, 2019, p. 140). The results of this study show that methodological changes are underway in the teaching of Portuguese as a foreign language. The majority of Chinese teachers of Portuguese are very young, recent graduates or postgraduates. Even if they were taught at university following a traditional approach, many of them completed or are receiving their postgraduate education in Portugal and Brazil, where the conception and practice of language teaching is very different. We are witnessing changes in teaching practices and thus find some discrepancies between teachers' practices and beliefs. However, overall, for the reasons already given, there is consistency between the answers about the frequency of translanguaging uses and the importance that teachers assign to each of them.

Table 11

Uses of translanguaging: Teachers

	How important is it for teachers to use their students' L1 in the following situations?		
	Not important	Important	Very important
	[%]	[%]	[%]
To explain concepts	6.45	70.97	22.58
To describe vocabulary	25.81	61.29	12.90
To quickly clarify during class activities	12.90	67.74	19.35

The majority of the participants consider the use of translanguageing for classroom-oriented purposes important, which again is in line with the uses frequently practiced in their classrooms. As the results show (Table 12), both uses are equally important, as they have the same percentage when we add the results for ‘important’ and ‘very important.’ The number of ‘not important’ answers corresponds to the frequency of use indicated in Table 9.

Table 12

Uses of translanguageing: Teachers

How important is it for teachers to use their students' L1 in the following situations?			
	Not important	Important	Very important
	[%]	[%]	[%]
To give directions	35.48	51.61	12.90
For classroom management	35.48	54.84	9.68

In the last question of the survey, participants had the opportunity to express more openly what they think about the uses of translanguageing and to describe in which situations they consider the use of the student’s L1 as beneficial or detrimental. We present below some of the teachers’ answers, which are in line globally with the answers to the close-ended questions.

- T02: “Beneficial: in the first year, as they still do not learn much. Detrimental: for other years, if everything is in the mother tongue, they will not gain mastery of the logic of the Portuguese language.”
- T04: “In translation classes, it is very important to take advantage of the students’ mother tongue. When learning Portuguese as a language of communication, the influence of the mother tongue is usually negative.”
- T06: “At the elementary level it can be beneficial to use it, but at advanced levels it becomes detrimental.”
- T14: “The contrastive analysis between two languages, cultures, uses of words, is important. But the inclination to use L1 in class can be detrimental to learning.”
- T18: “Beneficial in the clarification of complicated contents, progress of students in the initial phase of learning, understanding of the differences between the L1 and the target language, improvement of translation capacity, effective organization of classes and others; and detrimental in developing oral comprehension and speaking.”

As we can see, there is a tendency to think that the uses of translanguageing at advanced levels are detrimental, unlike its use at elementary levels. This is the opposite of what Cook (2001) argues, that initially L1 use is to be

avoided in order to maximize the learners' exposure to the target language, but later different teaching methods can be adopted to more effectively make use of L1.

Another point apparent in the answers relates to the quantity of L1 used in the classroom; teachers believe that excessive use could be detrimental to learning Portuguese. These results are somewhat in consonance with Littlewood and Fang's (2011) proposal to maximize target language use to provide an appropriate learning environment in which students are exposed to rich and suitable language input.

Another interesting issue regarding these answers is to note that teachers believe that the use of translanguaging is fruitful in translations tasks but detrimental in communicative tasks. This suggests that teachers may not be fully aware of the concept of translanguaging or its contexts of use. As Deng (2011) argues, the Chinese learning culture can make teachers' awareness of the multilingual reality inside a communicative classroom difficult. However, as translanguaging is a recent concept in language learning and there is a lack of explicit taxonomic structures within translanguaging pedagogies, this makes it difficult to apprehend and presents a challenge to teachers seeking to implement these strategies (Canagarajah, 2011).

Conclusions

Overall, the teachers' answers to the questionnaire showed that their practices include all uses of translanguaging in the classroom and that most of them consider these uses to be important or even very important. The findings indicate further that only a few teachers rated some of these uses as not important.

The results also demonstrate that most of the participants consider the use of students' L1 for the different purposes indicated in the questionnaire important. While almost all teachers considered the majority of the uses of translanguaging involving the students' L1 in the classroom important, some of them considered some uses less important, such as the use of students' L1 'to respond to the teacher's question' and 'to ask permission to do something.'

Concerning the benefits and detriments of using the students' L1 in the classroom, teachers answered the close-ended questions fairly coherently. They indicated accessing content in Portuguese that students already know in their L1 as a benefit of the uses of translanguaging by using this language to discuss content and tasks. Using L1 also helps some students, particularly

lower proficiency students, to keep up in class, which ultimately helps them to acquire the L2. Other benefits adduced by teachers included improved ability to present clarification. The use of the L1 for this purpose increases students' comprehension of the content being taught in class or the development of a task.

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Das Phänomen des Translingualismus im Portugiesisch-als-Fremdsprache-Unterricht aus der Sicht der chinesischen Lehrenden

Zusammenfassung

Die neuesten Studien zeigen, dass der Gebrauch der Erstsprache eine wichtige kognitive, kommunikative und soziale Rolle im Zweit- und Fremdsprachenunterricht spielt (Turnbull & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009). Meij und Zhao (2010) weisen jedoch darauf hin, dass ein ungeschriebenes Gesetz für sowohl Lehrende als auch Studierende an chinesischen Universitäten gilt, das die Notwendigkeit der Beseitigung der Erstsprache im Fremdsprachenunterricht betrifft. Die Ergebnisse ihrer Studie zeigen allerdings, dass der Gebrauch der Erstsprache sowohl von akademischen Lehrenden als auch von Studierenden als begründet und hilfreich angesehen wird. Andere Studien (Cai & Cook, 2015; Littlewood & Fang, 2011) bestätigen die verschiedenen Rollen der Erstsprache als Kommunikationsmittel im Klassenzimmer, um Inhalte zu verstehen, den Lernprozess zu steuern und an die Studierenden individuell heranzugehen. Die vorliegende Studie zeigt die Herangehensweise von 31 chinesischen Lehrenden an das Phänomen des Translingualismus und dessen Funktion im Portugiesisch-als-Fremdsprache-Unterricht. Die Ergebnisse des Fragebogens beweisen eindeutig, dass die Verwendung der Erstsprache den Lernprozess beim Erlernen des Portugiesischen, insbesondere in den Anfangsstadien, unterstützt.

Schlüsselwörter: Translingualismus, Portugiesisch als Fremdsprache, chinesische Lehrende, chinesischer Kontext