

Investigating the Role for a Language Coach in an English as a Second Language Literacy Class

Kelly Doucette

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Kelly Doucette

Abstract

Proficient in learners' first languages (L1), language coaches are believed to be instrumental in supporting adults in English as a second language (ESL) literacy contexts (CCLB, 2015). However, researchers have yet to explore the potential benefit of such a support in L2 classrooms. The goal of this study was twofold: (1) to explore the beliefs surrounding the role of a language coach in the L2 classroom and (2) to determine whether the assistance they provide is supportive of student interactions and L2 language use. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two L2 literacy teachers and one language coach at an ESL school in Ontario. In addition, two classroom observations of an L2 literacy class were performed: one with the presence of the language coach and one without. The interview and observational results suggest that having a language coach in the L2 classroom may be of positive support depending on how teachers perceive their role.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis was motivated by the fact that English as a second language (ESL) literacy has remained significantly under-researched despite an ever-increasing need for understanding on the topic (Folinsbee, 2007). Significant amounts of research have focused on L1 literacy development and ESL literacy development among children (Ball, 2006; Fitzgerald, 2006; Kottler, Kottler & Street, 2008); however, very little is known about adult literacy learners who are also learners of ESL (Tarone, Bigelow & Hansen, 2009). Furthermore, Borg (2015) asserts that, despite research on the beliefs of both ESL teachers and L1 literacy teachers, little to no research has been conducted surrounding the beliefs of adult ESL literacy teachers.

To support literacy efforts across Canada, the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) was established in 1998 as a non-profit organization, providing a standard for assessing language proficiency among adult newcomers to Canada. The CCLB has since released two government-funded documents related specifically to ESL literacy. The *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL For Literacy Learners* was the first national standardized document for adult ESL literacy learners in Canada. A follow-up to this initial document was released in 2015, titled *English as a Second Language for Adult Literacy Learners* (ESL for ALL). This publication outlines the unique skills of adult ESL learners and provides guidance to teachers as they support these learners in acquiring literacy skills in their second language (L2). Additionally, ESL for ALL asserts that ESL literacy learners may require additional supports in the classroom to assist them with their literacy needs (CCLB, 2015). Among these are three recommended supports for making students' learning more manageable. The first is to use the students' first language (L1) to assist with comprehension of key information and concepts encountered in the classroom as well as to allow learners to share their needs more effectively

(CCLB, 2015). The second recommendation is to have students work collaboratively with peers to bring together and draw on their combined knowledge and abilities in accomplishing classroom tasks (CCLB, 2015). Thirdly, the CLBs outline the role for a ‘language coach’ as another support to students in the classroom, stating that:

“Some programs have **‘language coaches’** who come into the class periodically to provide support in the learners’ first languages. The instructor explains the concepts, skills, strategies and instructions, then the language coach shares the information in learners’ first languages. Learners can also ask questions and state their needs through the ‘language coaches’”(CCLB, 2015, p. 10).

This description, however, only begins to touch on the role of a language coach (LC) in terms of what they actually do in the adult ESL literacy classroom. Details of how instructors can or should incorporate LCs and their skills into the classroom are not specified. What’s more, there is no mention of what impact their presence may have on adult ESL literacy learners or how teachers may perceive the role of the LC in the classroom. While similar roles have been explored in other teaching contexts such as the role of ‘paraeducators’ among Latino ESL elementary school children in California (Rueda, Monzó, & Higareda, 2004) and the role of ‘literacy coaches’ assisting L1 teachers of English in several elementary school contexts across the U.S. (Burkins, 2007), this role has yet to be explored in an ESL literacy context.

Additionally, the role for an LC calls to question the debate of first language (L1) use in ESL teaching contexts (Cook, 2001). Researchers such as Auerbach (1993, 2016) and Cook (2001) have argued that L1 use has been widely discouraged in L2 teaching contexts. This view continues to persist despite significant findings that supporting student’s using the L1 may actually be beneficial for L2 development (Hall & Cook, 2013; Wright, 2009). This appears to be especially apparent when L1 use is employed in specific and strategic ways (Hall & Cook, 2013; Littlewood & Yu, 2011).

About this Study

Drawing on teacher cognition research, including the work of Clark and Peterson (1984), Borg (2006, 2015), and Woods (1996), this study sought to investigate the beliefs of teachers surrounding the role for a language coach in an ESL literacy context. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three participants (two ESL literacy teachers and one LC) to determine their beliefs surrounding teaching ESL literacy, the use of students' first language (L1) in the classroom, the role of volunteers and the role of a language coach. In addition, classroom observations were conducted on two occasions to assess the types of interactions that took place and the apparent impact of the LC in the classroom.

This thesis is made up of five chapters. The literature review in Chapter 2 provides an overview of how literacy has been understood in recent years as well as the history of the ESL literacy education in Canada. Research outlining the unique challenges of ESL literacy learners is provided along with recommended strategies and supports. Following this, a review of teacher cognition research is presented. In Chapter 3, the study design and research methods employed are presented. In Chapter 4, the results of the study are presented in two parts: the semi-structured interviews with three participants and the observational data collected from classroom observations of an ESL literacy class that currently has an LC. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the results in light of relevant research. Finally, the limitations of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for further research are presented.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter begins by defining the concept of literacy and reviewing how views of literacy have changed over the years. This is followed with an overview of the history of ESL literacy in Canada. Then, current insights into ESL literacy learners, their strengths and challenges, and recommended strategies and supports are reviewed. Within the outlined supports, a review of research regarding first language (L1) use in ESL contexts is presented. Next, research on teacher cognition is reviewed as the framework for the study. Finally, the research questions that serve as a guide for the thesis are presented.

Defining Literacy

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provides perhaps the most widely-recognized definition of literacy:

“Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society.” (as cited in CCLB, 2015, p. 1).

This definition reflects the multiple ways in which individuals both achieve and make use of their literacy skills to obtain a variety of literacy-related goals. Despite this current perspective, there are several theorists that have focused on the different aspects of literacy and contributed to a better overall understanding of the concept. In general, there has been a shift away from defining literacy as a direct measure of the ability to read and write (Crandall, 1992) and instead towards a definition in terms of function, focusing on the ways in which adults can use their literacy skills to achieve their own specific goals (CCLB, 2015; Crandall, 1992; Scribner & Cole, 1981). From a sociocultural perspective, the literature has acknowledged the

role that culture and society play in the acquisition and use of literacy (Street, 1984). This view holds that literacy is deeply connected to the context that one is surrounded by and thus, cannot be separated from that context (Gee, 1992; Kazemek, 1988). Other standpoints have specifically focused on literacy as ideological, positing that it can serve to either empower or to silence learners (Auerbach, 1993; Freire, 1970). Theorists advocating for this (ideological) perspective hold that literacy is directly connected to the structures of power that make up a society (Auerbach, 1993; Freire, 1970) and that because of this, literacy is essential to “constructing one’s voice as part of a wider project of possibility and empowerment” (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 7). Emphasis is placed on educators being aware of their own biases in teaching, maintaining that teachers and students should be seen as both distributors and recipients of knowledge (Freire & Macedo, 1987). For the purpose of this study, literacy will be operationalized according to the UNESCO definition above. This is the same definition that the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs) cite in their document for literacy titled *English as a Second Language for Adult Literacy Learners (ESL for ALL)* (2015). This government-issued document serves as a guide for ESL literacy instructors, outlining the strategies and recommendations related to teaching ESL literacy learners in Canada.

Literacy Education in Canada – A Brief History

Prior to the mid 1980’s, there was little to no formal educational support for adults wishing to improve their literacy skills (Burnaby, 1992). There were however, some grass-roots community outreach efforts taking places in various areas across the country (Thomas, 2001). For example, some low-income areas of Quebec had established literacy efforts based on the theories and thinking of Paulo Friere (1970), an advocate of empowering societal change through literacy (Thomas, 2001). In 1978, several community outreach programs came to be established

in post-secondary institutions as a result of an increased awareness surrounding Canada's literacy needs (Thomas, 2001). In 1985, the government of Ontario increased its support of literacy programs for adult learners as well as literacy organizations and community-based research on adult literacy (Burnaby, 1992). The federal government soon afterwards established the National Literacy Secretariat in the Department of the Secretary of State for Canada. Their mandate was to encourage "the provinces and territories to undertake adult literacy action [as well as to] support the promotion of research on literacy programs" (p. 156). In 1985, Wagner published a groundbreaking article calling for research that would identify Canada's issues concerning literacy and ways to strategically address the concerns (Burnaby, 1992). Some of his questions were addressed soon after in 1987 when the Creative Research Group conducted a survey on adult literacy in Canada (Burnaby, 1992). Administered to over 2000 adults, this survey estimated that approximately 24% of the population was functionally literate and 8% were profoundly illiterate. In 1989, Statistics Canada undertook a subsequent larger survey, containing a sample of approximately 9500 adults. This survey arrived at a similar conclusion: Canada had a significant population with literacy difficulties (Burnaby, 1992). During the 1990's, there was a marked increase in literacy action in Canada as, for the first time, people began to reflect on actual literacy practices (Thomas, 2001). There was also increased funding for literacy efforts on behalf of the federal government (Thomas, 2001). Community colleges began to "take initiatives in adult basic education either to help potential students qualify for and succeed in regular college programs, or to run special adult basic education programs funded by governments" (Burnaby, 1992, p. 160). In order to develop effective materials for adult literacy, community college programs had to collaborate with the expertise of other community agencies (Burnaby, 1992). In 1992, ESL instruction in the form of LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to

Canada) was launched on behalf of the federal government, providing free language training in both French and English to eligible adult newcomers (CCLB, 2015). Within this program, the first document outlining assessment and practices designed specifically for ESL literacy learners, entitled the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL For Literacy Learners*, was released in 2000. This manual was later updated in 2015 to include more specific strategies and assessment practices for ESL literacy learners.

Despite the increased efforts, literacy has continued to be a concern in Canada in more recent years. Key informants for ESL literacy (Folinsbee, 2007; Tarone, Bigelow & Hansen, 2009) have argued out that current policies in place surrounding adults with literacy needs are not sufficient to meet to the increasing demand. Perhaps the greatest concern lies in the overall limited understanding of effective practices related to teaching ESL literacy learners. This includes a limited amount of resources designed to assist specific levels of ESL literacy (i.e. materials, textbooks) as well as a lack of professional development opportunities for ESL literacy instructors (Folinsbee, 2007). Concerns also exist regarding the fact that Canada continues to be one of the only developed countries that does not have a federal department of education, and there is no national policy in place concerning adult language training (Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 2012). ESL and literacy are currently dealt with in separate policy jurisdictions, with literacy being a federal concern and ESL education, a provincial concern (Folinsbee, 2007). As a result, literacy efforts may vary from region to region, causing inconsistency in what is offered (ibid).

More recently, with an ever-increasing number of refugees coming to Canada, there is a greater need to examine these specific concerns (ibid). In May 2007, the Canadian government made a commitment to the UN to settle 5,000 Bhutanese refugees of Nepali descent living in

refugee camps in Nepal since the early 1990's (IRCC, 2016). With additional numbers added in subsequent years, Canada has settled a total of 6,600 Bhutanese refugees in various communities across Canada (IRCC, 2016). Additionally, between November 2015 and January, 2017, Canada welcomed more than 40,000 Syrian refugees in response to the conflict and displacement in their home country. Research gathered so far has found that these refugees have significantly “lower literacy, official language proficiency and educational attainment than previous Syrian cohorts and other immigrants” (IRCC, 2016, p. 14) and that 68% of the adults have secondary school education or less (ibid). Thus, with Canada's continued commitment to resettle Syrian refugees in 2018, it can be anticipated that the number of refugees in need of literacy support will continue to increase.

ESL Literacy Learners

The Canadian Language Benchmarks for literacy (CCLB, 2015) defines ESL literacy learners as students who lack formal education in their first language which results in them having little or limited abilities to read and write in their L1. Subsequently, they face the complex task of acquiring literacy skills both in English and their first language simultaneously (CCLB, 2015). The CLB outline three ways of categorizing literacy learners depending on how much formal education they have received: pre-literate, non-literate, and semi-literate (CCLB, 2015). Pre-literate learners are those who have come from oral cultures where there is currently no written form of the language they speak and therefore, “they are not print-literate in any language” (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010, p. 2). Non-literate learners are those who cannot read and write in any language even though they grew up living in a print-based society. Semi-literate learners are those who have some understanding of the use and purpose of print but have limited ability to read and write themselves (CCLB, 2015; Haverson & Haynes, 1982). There are a

variety of reasons why learners may lack print-literacy and thus, be classified under one of these three categories. First, learners often come from a variety of difficult circumstances in their home countries that may have caused their education to be interrupted or that may have prevented them from going to school altogether. Bigelow and Schwarz (2010) describe the main reasons for lack of print-literacy as being “political circumstances, poverty and cultural expectations” (p. 2).

Political circumstances may include war, trauma, internal displacement, ethnic oppression and forced migration (Bigelow and Schwarz, 2010). Poverty is often a determinant of whether parents can afford for their children to go to school or whether they may need to work to provide for their families instead. Cultural expectations may include beliefs about who should go to school or the importance of education as a whole. It is also not uncommon for learners who have spent time in refugee camps to experience interruptions to their education due to the inability to access proper schooling during that time (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010). Finally, in the process of waiting for resettlement in a new nation, learners may be delayed in their schooling, causing them to be behind in their education once they arrive. What’s more, once resettled, those in need of literacy support are not necessarily able to access to it straight away. There are a number of obstacles that may prevent learners from gaining access to the support they need. Some challenges include the need to work or care for their children, the inaccessibility of classes due to distance, or limited finances to pay the cost of travel to and from classes (Schwarz, 2005). Even if students are able to attend classes, there may be inconsistencies in what is available (Folinsbee, 2007). Proper assessment of literacy learners continues to be a challenge, and it is not uncommon for ESL learners to end up in classes or levels that are not actually suitable to their needs (Folinsbee, 2007). Additionally, in some jurisdictions, there may not be literacy-specific services available to students, and they may instead be placed in mainstream ESL classes (CCLB, 2015).

Students in these classes, due to their literacy needs, often struggle to maintain the pace of their peers and may experience limited learning success (Lukes, 2011). Over time, literacy learners who are unable to keep up with their peers may become discouraged and eventually drop out altogether (Lukes, 2011).

Challenges Experienced by ESL Literacy Learners

There is also a number of challenges that ESL literacy learners face. These include both cognitive challenges (due to their lack of literacy skills) and classroom-related challenges (due to learners' limited exposure to formal learning environments). In terms of cognitive challenges, there is evidence to suggest that the brain of non-literate learners is wired very differently compared to those who are literate (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010). Studies involving research of literate and non-literate brains have shown that the process of learning to read requires both the left and right hemispheres of the brain. However, when it comes to language processing, students who lack print-literacy skills mostly only use the left side of their brain to do so (Castro-Caldas & Reis, 2003). ESL literacy learners have been shown to frequently struggle with phonological awareness – the recognition that words are made up of smaller units (i.e. phonemes) and being able to manipulate these units using oral language (Kolinsky, Morais & Cary, 1987). Tarone, Bigelow and Hansen (2009), in their research with Somali ESL literacy learners, found that learners who lacked print-literacy also had difficulty with oral language processing in English. Specifically, they found that “low-literate learners may not notice or process certain aspects of L2 oral input [such as error corrections and L2 questions] as well as learners with higher literacy skills” (p. 97). This makes language-processing tasks, including decoding written texts, particularly difficult for literacy learners (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010). Due to their lack of formal education, there is also a number of challenges that ESL literacy learners face in the classroom.

These learners are usually inexperienced when it comes to the expectations and routines of a classroom-learning environment (CCLB, 2015). They also generally lack an understanding of the skills and strategies that pertain to learning, such as organization and critical thinking. As a result, much of the literature supports explicit instruction of these skills for literacy learners (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; CCLB, 2015).

Strategies and Supports for ESL Literacy Learners

ESL literacy learners require specialized support in order to deal with the challenges of learning to read and write in a second language (CCLB, 2015). Those with a limited number of years spent in formal educational contexts require even more individualized support and guidance (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; CCLB, 2015). A number of specific strategies have been widely recognized as strategies for providing support to literacy student's unique needs. CCLB (2015) outlines several of these, including: (1) having a specialized classroom environment, (2) drawing on the background knowledge of learners, (3) adapting the curriculum to suit learners needs, (4) incorporating peer collaboration, and (5) offering first language (L1) support whenever possible. These are each described in more detail below.

Specialized Classroom Environment

Students who have spent time in a classroom setting may have had negative experiences such as "learning in an authoritarian setting" or "being singled out as a minority" (CCLB, 2015, p. 9). Additionally, they may lack self-confidence in their learning abilities and/or become overwhelmed easily with the requirements of a traditional classroom setting such as focusing for extended periods of time or completing homework independently outside of class (CCLB, 2015). For this reason, CCLB (2015) highly recommends that literacy learners be given access to a different kind of classroom - one that seeks to alleviate pressure and allow students to learn at

their own pace (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010). Variations from a traditional classroom may include allowing students to take unscheduled breaks and move about the classroom more frequently. It is also highly recommended that students be placed in classes that are separate from mainstream ESL classes. Because the pacing is slower and students may struggle with confidence in their abilities, an environment where students can receive explicit instruction on classroom learning strategies and learn at their own pace is most ideal (CCLB, 2015).

Drawing on Student's Background Knowledge

ESL literacy learners bring a host of prior knowledge and life experiences to the classroom (CCLB, 2015). For example, they often possess a range of practical skills and may be experts in a particular trade or craft. When accessed, these abilities and skills - often referred to as “funds of knowledge” (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) - can be used as an effective basis for literacy development. Therefore, teachers should seek to become aware of students’ strengths and background knowledge in order to enhance their learning and understanding in the classroom (Bigelow & Schwartz, 2010). This includes knowing “as much as possible about their students’ language, culture and cultural history, as well as their migrant, immigrant or refugee stories” (ibid, p. 17).

Adapting Curriculum and Scaffolding

According to CCLB (2015), it is very important that teachers build upon concepts slowly and continually revisit topics, using different strategies and methods to present concepts in different ways. Two approaches that may commonly be used include scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976) and “spiraling the learning” (CCLB, 2015, p. 11). Scaffolding involves the teacher temporarily “controlling those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner’s capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete

only those elements that are within his range of competence” (Wood et al., 1976, p. 90). The teacher does this by consciously moving from concepts that are more familiar and more concrete to concepts that are less known and more challenging (CCLB, 2015). Spiraling the learning is what the CCLB’s (2015) refer to as “returning to previously-learned material in new, more demanding contexts” (p. 11). These two strategies help students to build understanding at a more manageable pace and may be supportive of increased retention (CCLB, 2015).

Peer Collaboration

Another strategy that is presented by the CCLB is the importance of peer collaboration. They emphasize this strategy in order for students to “share their knowledge and skills to figure out task requirements” (CCLB, 2015, p. 9). This is thought to instill confidence in learners as well as help them to maintain “a sense of success and accomplishment” (ibid, p. 8). In organizing peer work, students with the same L1 may be placed together so that stronger learners can explain concepts and clarify instruction to learners who are struggling (CCLB, 2015). Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) posit that this may allow students to extend their learning and “work with the task at a higher cognitive level than might have been possible had they been working individually” (p. 768). Thus, this strategy could be seen as another form of scaffolding the learning for students (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976).

Offering First Language Support

The CCLB (2015) states that, when possible and appropriate, first language (L1) support should be made available in the classroom. They argue that, because students often have lower oral proficiency skills in English, L1 use may be necessary to help students communicate their needs as well as to ensure understanding of “key information, concepts, strategies and skills” (CCLB, 2015, p. 10). However, this suggestion poses two concerns that could potentially hinder

it from actually being applied in ESL literacy contexts: (1) it challenges the widespread assumption that L1 use could potentially hinder students from learning the target language (Auerbach, 1993; Phillipson, 1992) and, (2) there are no specific guidelines given to inform teachers on how to actually apply L1 support in practice with ESL literacy students. Both of these concerns will be addressed in turn.

First, L1 use has typically been discouraged and, in fact, seen as a barrier to students reaching proficiency in the L2 (Auerbach, 1993; Phillipson, 1992). Cook (2001) argues that this assumption exists at least partly because traditional teaching techniques have either subtly or directly shunned the use of the L1. For example, the Audiolingual method directly imparts that the use of L1 should be avoided for optimal L2 learning (Brooks, 1964). More recent approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching have had little to say about L1 use in the classroom at all, except to suggest ways to minimize it (Cook, 2001). Thus, by default, the assumption that L1 use is to be avoided in L2 teaching is one that continues to exist in many ESL teaching contexts (Cook, 2001). Cook (2001) challenges this assumption, arguing that the L1 plays an integral role in L2 development.

“Learning an L2 is not just the adding of rooms to your house by building an extension at the back: it’s the rebuilding of all internal walls. Trying to put languages in separate compartments in the mind is doomed to failure since the compartments are connected in many ways.” (p. 407).

To describe the connection between students’ L1 and L2 knowledge, Cook (1999) coined the term *multicompetence* – “the total knowledge of a person who knows more than one language, including both L1 competence and the L2 interlanguage” (p. 190). Whereas, the term *interlanguage* only refers to “the knowledge of the L2 in the speaker’s mind”, *multicompetence* acknowledges both languages and their interconnectedness in learning (p. 190). Given this

perspective, Cook argues that making use of students' L1 may be supportive in two particular ways: (1) to present meaning and (2) to maintain communication during classroom activities. First, to help facilitate connections between the two languages, teachers should not hesitate to present meaning (i.e. an unfamiliar word or grammar structure) using students' L1. Secondly, he argues that students who share the same L1 should be permitted to converse in their L1 during tasks and activities involving peer collaboration as it may serve to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the L2. This challenges traditional assumptions that students must adhere to the target language for optimal learning (Cook, 2001). Cook argues that, within a multicompetence perspective, activities presented in class can never be disjointed from the knowledge students already have in their L1. Whether this knowledge will be recognized and made available to students (i.e. through allowing them to access this knowledge in their L1) will depend on teachers seeing the L1 as "a positive factor in the class rather than as a negative factor to be endured" (Cook, 1999, p. 202). In 2015, Cook re-visited some of the concerns he had brought forth several years earlier regarding the "monolingual bias against second language (L2) users" (p. 186). He found that, although a multicompetence perspective has since informed much of second language acquisition (SLA) research, applying methods involving L1 use in the classroom continues to be "something unusual, extra, or special" (Vaid & Meuter, 2016, p. 91). Overall, Cook (2015) asserts that a monolingual perspective still very much remains intact, evidenced by research methods and L2 teaching materials that continue to disregard multicompetence as a framework from which to draw upon (Cook, 2015; Vaid & Meuter, 2016).

The second concern related to L1 support is that the CLBs do not provide a guided strategy for how to actually go about implementing it in the classroom, or what this specifically entails. They briefly mention one form of support, stating that some literacy classes may have a

language coach who “comes into the class periodically to provide support in the learners’ first languages” (CCLB, 2015, p. 10). They describe this person as being, essentially, a *middle ground* between the teacher and the learners:

“The instructor explains the concepts, skills, strategies and instructions, then the language coach shares the information in learners’ first languages. Learners can also ask questions and state their needs through the ‘language coaches” (ibid, p. 10).

Further details of the role or strategies employed by a language coach (LC) are not offered by the CLBs. However, insights into what the role of an LC could entail may be drawn from a similar role – that being, the role of *paraeducators* (Rueda, Monzó, & Higareda, 2004) – reported in the literature. Paraeducators are teaching assistants who work alongside teachers in elementary school ESL contexts. They often come from the same culture, language background and communities as the students they teach and are present in the classroom to provide additional support in students’ first language. In Rueda et al.’s (2004) two-year longitudinal study, researchers examined the practices of 24 paraeducators and 8 former paraeducators working with Spanish-speaking students in two large urban schools in Southern California. They used semi-structured interviews to explore participants’ beliefs about teaching and the role of language and culture in learning; they also observed the paraeducators on several occasions in the classroom to document how they interacted with teachers and students during literacy instruction. Their findings suggested that paraeducators’ language, cultural and community-based knowledge helped to facilitate student comprehension during classroom activities (Rueda et al., 2004). This included using the L1 (Spanish) to scaffold instructions, mediating between teachers and the L1 community and occasionally helping students form connections in the L2 by drawing on their L1 cultural knowledge (Rueda et al., 2004). However, the study also highlighted ways in which

paraeducators' role could potentially be more impactful. They found that paraeducators were generally unaware of the role of language and culture in L2 learning (August & Hakuta, 1997; Garcia, 2000). Thus, they often missed opportunities to use their funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) to make learning more meaningful to students. Teachers also did not recognize the ways in which paraeducators' cultural knowledge could prove valuable for instruction, evidenced by the fact that paraeducators played a secondary role in the classroom and rarely collaborated with teachers to offer their insights (Rueda et al., 2004). Researchers concluded the study by highlighting the importance of professional development for teachers and paraeducators alike, specifically in regards to understanding the link between funds of knowledge and learning (Rueda et al., 2004). They also advocated for expanding the role of paraeducators, to view them as "member of an instructional team" so as to allow their "funds of knowledge to become important resources for students and teachers" (ibid, p. 84).

In addition to the role for paraeducators, one way that L1 use specifically has been examined with ESL learners whose first language is Spanish is through Primary Language Support (PLS), an initiative that began in the United States aimed at assisting elementary school students. PLS uses the students' L1 in the class in a variety of ways. These include: providing explanations of complex key concepts or terms used in class in the students' L1, reinforcing/re-teaching concepts in the L1 that students are struggling with in English, and labeling the classroom in both English and the students' L1 (Wright, 2009). It is argued that these techniques not only help students acquire the language more effectively, but also communicate to learners that their L1 is an esteemed resource for L2 learning (Wright, 2009). A frequent method used in the classroom involving PLS is called 'preview-review'. In this technique, someone who speaks the first language of the students has a brief discussion about a topic to be covered in the second

language. This serves to activate the student's prior knowledge of the topic in their L1. The topic is then presented in English, the student's L2. Finally, the teacher reviews the key ideas in the student's L1 and allows the student to ask any questions they may have about what was read (Wright, 2009). A study by Ulanoff and Pucci (1999) showed that students who received the preview-review strategy learned English vocabulary more effectively than students who were taught the vocabulary in English only. It is frequently the case however, that teachers do not actually speak the first language of their students. Wright (2009) presents ways that teachers can still incorporate the use of L1 to facilitate support. These include: allowing students to create and use bilingual picture dictionaries, writing in their L1 when possible, and having higher-level students help students who are struggling to understand particular concepts in the L2 via their L1. Furthermore, teachers may choose to make use of L1 support by working with a paraeducator or language coach.

Keeping in mind the limited description of a language coach provided by the CCLBs (2015), this study set out to offer insight into potential ways a language coach may be able to provide assistance in an ESL literacy context. In addition to understanding possible supports that an LC could offer in the ESL literacy classroom, it is important to determine how people working with the LC view his/her role and what responsibilities s/he is given. To do this, an investigation of teachers' beliefs was needed. To situate the discussion, it was imperative to explain the theoretical frameworks used to investigate beliefs in the L2 context. Thus, in what follows, a review of teacher cognition is presented.

Teacher Cognition Research

For decades, the field of teacher cognition has sought to understand the ways in which teachers' beliefs and thought processes play a role in language teaching. Early models of teacher

cognition did not focus on the role that teachers' cognitive processes play but instead focused on studying teachers' behaviours directly. As such, most research prior to the 1970's focused on describing these behaviours, identifying whether or not they were effective, and examining how behaviours brought about positive or negative learning outcomes in the classroom (Borg, 2015). It was with the development of the field of cognitive psychology that a new understanding of how mental processes have a significant effect on behaviour was brought to light. Teachers' thought processes and the role they play in shaping the classroom became more acknowledged and teaching began to be viewed not just as a form of behaviour but as "*thoughtful behaviour*" – informed by the cognitions of teachers who were fully involved decision makers, rather than "mechanical implementers" in the classroom (Borg, 2015, p. 8). In 1986, Clark and Peterson contributed a significant article that reviewed research on teacher cognition up to that point. Their review highlighted two developments that had taken place since the 1970's. First, the perception of teachers had shifted, from being seen as "rational decision makers" or problem-solvers, to that of reflective "sense-makers" in the classroom (Borg, 2015, p. 17). Furthermore, Clark and Peterson (1986) acknowledged the fact that research had moved away from an isolated interpretation of classroom settings to one that acknowledged the role of context in teachers' decision-making process. Research became less focused on simply identifying effective strategies for teaching and instead sought to look at every side of teaching in order to understand it "in all of its irreducible complexity and difficulty" (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 14). Along with their review, Clark and Peterson contributed a model of *teacher thought and action* that sought to bring together all of the research on teacher cognition up to that point.

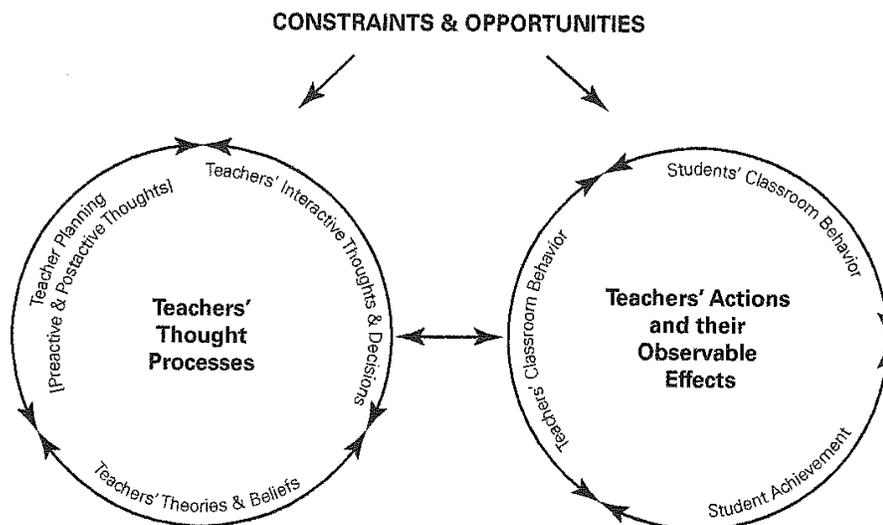


Figure 1. Clark and Peterson's (1984) model of teacher thought and action. Reprinted from *Teachers' thought processes: Occasional paper no. 72* (p. 8), by C. M. Clark & P. L. Peterson, May 1984, East Lansing, MI: The Institute for Research on Teaching. Copyright 1984 by C. M. Clark & P. L. Peterson.

Their model, depicted in Figure 1, acknowledged the cyclical nature of teachers' thought processes and actions as well as the bi-directional influence that both have on each other. In regards to teachers' thought processes, they organized their model to reflect three categories: teacher planning, teacher interactive thoughts and decisions, and teachers' theories and beliefs. The action portion of the model focused on teachers' classroom behaviour, student's classroom behaviour, and student achievement. The model also acknowledged the role that constraints and opportunities have on the relationship between teacher thought and action – constraints being the limitations placed on teachers by factors either inside of outside of the classroom (i.e. the curriculum, school or community), and opportunities being the flexibility given to teachers in the planning and decisions-making process (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Although Clark and Peterson's model recognized teachers' theories and beliefs as being one aspect of their thought processes

(see Figure 1), their review focused specifically on identifying teachers' beliefs about students and about teaching and learning (Borg, 2015). Up to this point, little research had attempted to actually define teacher beliefs, and specifically to identify how beliefs might differ from related concepts such as attitudes and knowledge (Borg, 2015).

Teacher Beliefs

In 1992, Parajes addressed this gap by contributing a significant review on teacher beliefs and providing a concrete definition of the term. Pajares (1992) defined beliefs as “an individual judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do” (p. 316). He pointed out that research on teacher beliefs had been limited, largely due to the fact that there were multiple definitions of the term and the fact that the concept had been too broadly defined. Parajes' review also contributed 16 “fundamental assumptions” on the nature of beliefs (p. 324). Some of these insights included statements such as: “Beliefs are formed at an early age and tend to self-perpetuate even against contradictions caused by reason, time, schooling or experience” and “Individuals' beliefs strongly affect their behaviour” (Parajes, 1992, p. 324). To this day, Parajes' contribution continues to be a guide for researchers investigating the nature of teacher beliefs (Borg, 2015). Woods (1996) further contributed to an understanding of teacher beliefs with his doctorate study on teachers' planning processes. Specifically, he argued that, although beliefs and knowledge make up separate definitions, there is influence and overlap in how they function. In fact, Woods and Çakir (2011) argued that these two should not be seen as distinct from one another but are “better seen on a continuum” (p. 384). Meijer, Verloop and Beijard (2001) offered a similar view that is summarized by Borg (2015): “aiming to separate knowledge, belief and related concepts is not a particularly fruitful exercise given that in the

mind of the teachers these constructs are not held or perceived distinctively” (p. 38). To help bring together this understanding of knowledge and beliefs as an “integrated network”, Woods (1996) coined the construct of BAK – Beliefs, Assumptions and Knowledge. He describes knowledge as statements that are widely accepted as facts and assumptions as ideas that are *temporarily* accepted as facts. Assumptions may not necessarily be true, but we believe them to be true, at least for that present moment (Woods, 1996). Beliefs are defined as “an acceptance of a proposition for which there is no conventional knowledge, one that is not demonstrable and for which there is accepted disagreement” (ibid, p. 195). Woods argued that teacher beliefs have a significant impact on how teachers interpret events that take place in the classroom and that this, in turn, influences how they make decisions regarding what they teach.

The Relationship between Beliefs and Practice

In recent years, there has been a greater understanding of all that teachers bring to the classroom: their background knowledge, prior learning experiences, their beliefs, and how each has a significant impact on the language-learning environment (Borg, 2015; Woods, 1996). The sum of teachers’ knowledge and beliefs inevitably shapes the decisions they make in the classroom and the subsequent learning outcomes for students (Borg, 2015; Woods, 1996). Upon examining the relationship between teacher cognition and classroom practice, Borg (2015) has noted several findings. First, that the relationship between what teachers believe and what they do in the class is bidirectional (ibid). That is, teachers are not only influenced by what they believe about teaching, but their experiences in the classroom also influence what they believe. Secondly, that the relationship between beliefs and practice is not always linear (ibid). In other words, teachers may hold a certain belief about teaching, but that doesn’t mean that they always put it into practice (ibid). Additionally, Woods (1996) poses that teachers may not always be

aware of their true beliefs – i.e., “Even when beliefs are overtly stated, they must be taken as hypotheses, because they may not correspond with what the author or speaker really believes, but rather with what they would like the audience to believe” (p. 72). In keeping with this perspective, Woods (1996) posits that teacher’s beliefs should always be taken as hypothesis and compared against their practice in the classroom. He refers to the discrepancies between what teachers say and what they actually do in the classroom as “hotspots” (ibid, p. 39) and argues that hotspots may give important clues about teachers’ underlying beliefs. Basturkmen (2012) reviewed the literature that examined the relationship between teacher beliefs and practice. Her review focused on three factors that could potentially explain differences between teachers’ stated beliefs and practice: “context/constraints, teacher experience and planned/incidental aspects of teaching” (p. 284). Contextual factors appeared to influence whether teachers’ beliefs were consistent with their practices; specifically, situational constraints placed on teachers by the teaching context often kept teachers from putting their beliefs into practice (Basturkmen, 2012). It was also reported that more experienced teachers were more consistent in putting their beliefs into practice compared to less experienced teachers. One of the possible reasons for this was that less experienced teachers could still be in the process of forming or becoming aware of their beliefs, hence the inconsistencies. It was also posited that more experienced teachers are likely to have “experimentally informed beliefs” (ibid, p. 288) and that these experiences correlate with more consistent practices over time. Finally, it was noted that beliefs were more often consistent with planned aspects of teaching as opposed to incidental occurrences in the classroom (Basturkmen, 2012). Overall, this review helped to identify possible reasons for inconsistencies in teachers’ beliefs and practices. To bring together the large body of research that has been done in regards to teacher cognition, Borg (2015) presents an over-arching framework of *language*

teacher cognition, depicted in Figure 2. His model acknowledges that, “teachers have cognitions about all aspects of their work and that these can be described using various psychological constructs” [i.e. beliefs, knowledge] that I collectively refer to as teacher cognition” (Borg, 2015, p. 333).

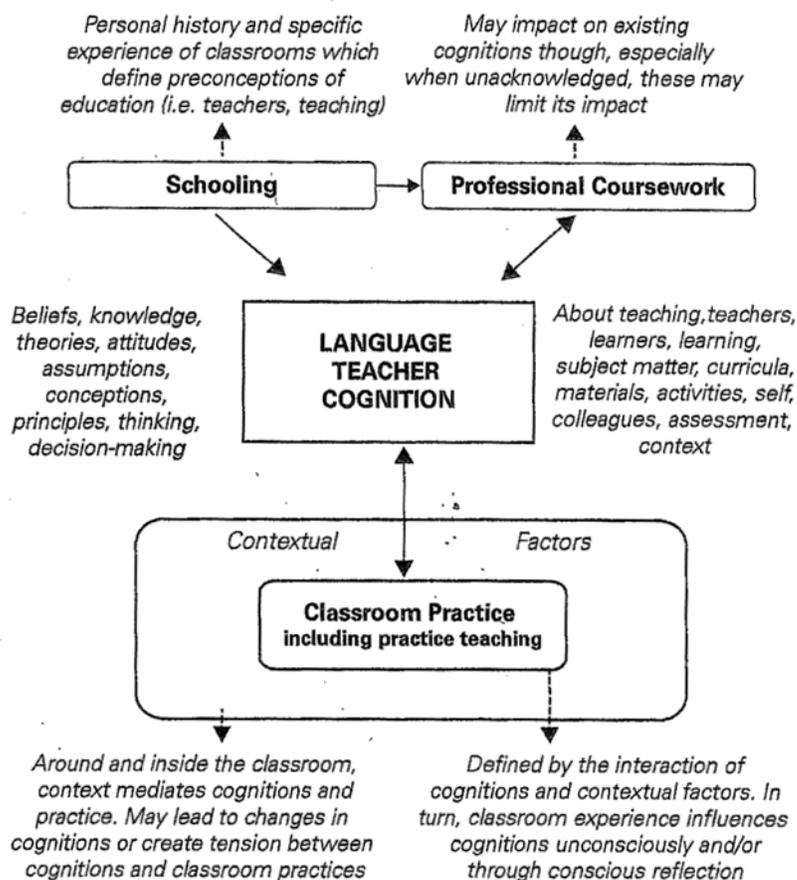


Figure 2. Borg’s (2015) model of language teacher cognition. Reprinted from *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice (2nd ed.)* (p. 333), by S. Borg, 2015, London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing. Copyright 2015 by S. Borg.

Borg's (2015) model situates language teacher cognition in relation to classroom practice as well schooling and professional coursework. Schooling includes any previous learning experiences, whether personal or in a classroom setting, that have led to "preconceptions about education" (p. 333). Professional coursework refers to the training the teachers have received specifically related to the field of education. Borg (2015) also acknowledges the way that teacher cognition influences and is influenced by classroom practice; that is, the decisions teachers make and what they do in the classroom. In the model, surrounding classroom practice is contextual factors – this acknowledges that the specific teaching environment (both inside and outside the classroom) will have an impact on the decisions teachers make. Contextual factors may cause changes to cognitions or they may cause tensions between a teacher's cognition and what actually takes place in the classroom (Borg, 2015). In other words, contextual factors are largely responsible for either allowing teachers to implement their cognitions or having to withhold them. This is consistent with Clark and Peterson's (1986) model acknowledging the role that constraints and opportunities have on teachers' thought processes.

Summary and Research Questions

To sum up, the review of the research has shown that teachers ultimately have the power to make decisions in the classroom and that these decisions are very much guided by a variety of factors, including teachers' beliefs (Borg, 2015; Woods, 1996). These beliefs may encompass any and every aspect of the classroom as well as the teachers' views on the learning/teaching process as a whole. Since teachers' beliefs can affect their in-class behaviour and in turn, be affected by that behaviour and the teaching context, an examination of ESL literacy teachers' beliefs about the role for a language coach in the L2 literacy classroom was deemed necessary. This is because while CCLB (2015) presents the language coach as a resource for ESL literacy

learners, very few details are provided in regards to what these coaches actually do in the classroom and/or how teachers may seek to use their assistance. Therefore, using a framework of teacher cognition, this study sought to understand how the beliefs of two ESL literacy teachers and one language coach working in a literacy classroom help to frame an understanding of the role for a language coach in one ESL literacy context. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What beliefs do ESL literacy teachers hold surrounding the role of a language coach (LC) in the L2 literacy classroom?
2. Is having a language coach (LC) supportive of student interactions and L2 language use in the ESL literacy classroom? If so, how?

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology used in this study. The chapter begins by describing the research design of the study, followed by a description of the data collection site and the participants involved. The next two sections provide a description of the instruments used and the procedure of the study. In the final section of the chapter, a description of the data analysis is presented.

Research Design

This study was designed to investigate the role for a language coach in an ESL literacy classroom in Ontario, Canada. It was guided by the following two research questions:

1. What beliefs do ESL literacy teachers hold surrounding the role of a language coach (LC) in the L2 literacy classroom?
2. Is having a language coach (LC) supportive of student interactions and L2 language use in the ESL literacy classroom? If so, how?

There were two phases of data-collection. While in the first phase, semi-structured interviews were used, observations in real-time were conducted in phase two.

Context of Data Collection Site

Both phases of data collection were conducted at a not-for-profit language school in Eastern Ontario. This school offers Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC): a free language-training program funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Its goal is to provide newcomers with the basic language skills needed to successfully integrate into their community. In order to enroll, newcomers must meet the eligible criteria. That is, they must be over the age of 18, be permanent residents of Canada, and be able to provide proof of their status in Canada. Eligible students must then take a Canadian Language

Benchmarks Placement Test (CLB-PT) through their city's local Language Assessment Centre to determine their current English language ability. This placement test uses the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs), the national standard for assessing language proficiency among adult immigrants, to assess students on their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in English. Students receive a benchmark level from 1-8 for each of the four skills and are subsequently placed in the appropriate LINC level. For example, a student who receives an overall Level 2 Benchmark would be placed in a LINC Level 2 class.

Students who have had interrupted education or who appear to have literacy needs are assessed separately using the Canadian Language Benchmark Literacy Placement Tools (CLB-LPT). The two volumes of the LPT are based on the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL For Literacy Learners* and contain reading, writing and numeracy tasks to help evaluate students' literacy needs. Similar to the CLB-PT, students receive a level from 1-8, which is used to determine which ESL literacy level they are subsequently placed in. Students may also be deemed as Pre-literacy or Foundation level learners if their literacy skills do not meet Level 1 criteria. Although there is a more recent version of the CLBs for ESL literacy (that being the 2015 version), a Literacy Placement Test that is aligned to this version has not yet been created and so assessors rely on the 2000 version instead. However, those who assess literacy convert students' test results to coordinate with the CLB's new literacy designations outlined in the 2015 version. For example, a student may receive LPT results that place him or her at a Phase 2 Literacy level according to the 2000 CLB-LPT. This is the equivalent of what CCLB (2015) calls a "CLB 2L". The language school in this study offers three levels of Literacy: Foundation, Literacy 1 and Literacy 2/3 which are described in detail below.

Foundation Literacy (Foundation L): The Foundation literacy class assists students who have not met the requirements for CLB 1. These students often have little formal education in their first language, possess little or no ability to transfer previously acquired literacy skills and as such, require extensive support in the classroom (CCLB, 2015). At a Foundation literacy level, students are generally able to recognize letters of the alphabet, numbers 1-10, their own name and a few familiar phrases (ibid). They often possess little or no learning strategies and require support using visuals as well as oral and kinesthetic exposure to language prior to working with text (ibid).

Literacy 1 (CLB 1L): Literacy 1 consists of students who possess many of the abilities of a CLB Benchmark level 1 learner but who have limited learning strategies and lack the ability to transfer reading and writing concepts from their first to second language. At this level, students can generally recognize numbers and letters, numbers as well as basic words and simple phrases that they encounter in their every day life (CCLB, 2015).

Literacy 2/3 (CLB 2/3L): Literacy 2/3 assists students who meet the requirements of a CLB Benchmark level 2 or 3. At this level, students are beginning to understand simple phrases and sentences and may have some limited ability to decode unknown words. At this stage, they have often developed some classroom learning strategies but again, are missing necessary reading concepts from their first language to transfer over to their second language.

In addition to literacy instruction, this language school also offers LINC classes, ranging from levels 1-7. Students who are assessed at a LINC level 1 are literate in their first language (L1) but have very little proficiency in English. They may understand simple words, be able to greet someone and provide basic information about themselves and read and write some words (CCLB, 2012). On the other end of the CLB benchmarks, LINC 7 is considered to be a high-

intermediate level of proficiency. Students at this level are able to understand and engage in more complex topics, can provide opinions and insights into these topics and use more advanced vocabulary (CCLB, 2012).

Classes at the language school operate Monday to Friday and are offered either on a part-time or full-time basis, with part-time classes being offered from 5-8pm and full-time from 9am - 2:30pm. In addition to LINC classes, this organization also offers several other services to assist Canadian immigrants and refugees including settlement and integration services, multi-cultural counseling and career mentorship. Overall, the organization has been serving the community for over 30 years and is directly involved in assisting approximately 10,000 immigrants and refugees in the city each year. They maintain several partnerships with the surrounding community and have received recognition on many occasions for their many contributions and successful programming.

This school was chosen for the purpose of this study because, to the awareness of the researcher, it was only school that currently has a ‘language coach’ in an ESL literacy classroom in the given geographical area. As previously described, language coaches are volunteers who provide added support to students in the classroom by clarifying instructions and assisting students in their first language where necessary (CCLB, 2015). The CCLB (2015) publication *English as a Second Language for Adult Literacy Learners (ESL for ALL)* outlines the role for a ‘language coach’ as being a key support to students in the classroom, stating that:

“Some programs have ‘language coaches’ who come into the class periodically to provide support in the learners’ first languages. The instructor explains the concepts, skills, strategies and instructions, then the language coach shares the information in learners’ first languages. Learners can also ask questions and state their needs through the ‘language coaches.’” (p. 10).

This school was also chosen because it is one of the few schools in the region that offers three levels of literacy to students rather than one general pre-literacy class. As described in the above section, each of these levels vary in the supports and strategies needed to effectively assist students. The differentiation of levels at this language school allows for a more specific curriculum geared towards student's individual needs.

Participants

There were two groups of participants who took part in the study: teachers and students. The 'teachers' group included two literacy instructors and one language coach. The 'students' group consisted of eight Foundation Literacy learners in one literacy teacher's class. For the purpose of the study, the two literacy instructors will be referred to as Teacher A and Teacher B and the language coach will be referred to as the LC.

Teachers. Teacher A is a TESL certified ESL teacher and has been teaching ESL Literacy Level 2/3 at the current school for 3 years. Outside of the classroom, she has contributed as a curriculum developer in adult ESL health education. Her work has helped to provide educators with practical health-related curriculum aimed at combatting the rapid health decline that frequently occurs among newcomers in their first four years after arrival in Canada (Fuller-Thomson, Noack & George, 2011). Before teaching literacy, Teacher A taught LINC 1 for several years. These two levels vary significantly. Teacher A described her previous LINC 1 learners as being "absolute beginners": they were literate in their first language but lacked proficiency in English. Her current Literacy 2/3 learners, on the other hand, have some verbal skills in English but their reading and writing skills are quite deficient (Teacher A). Unlike most Foundation Literacy learners, some students in her class hold basic literacy skills in their first language which may serve to assist them in transferring their skills from their L1 to their L2

(Cummins, 2000). Her class consists of an equal proportion of Syrian and Nepali refugees. Most of the Nepali refugees have been present in Canada a number of years; however, the Syrian refugees have arrived more recently.

Teacher B is also TESL certified and has been teaching Foundation Literacy at the current school for over 10 years. Due to her extensive experience teaching in the field, she is considered to be an expert among her peers in understanding the needs and strategies for assisting low-level ESL literacy learners. As such, she frequently contributes to the teaching community by sharing her insights and experiences with other ESL literacy teachers and teachers-in-training in the local area around the school. Her current Foundation literacy class consists of an equal proportion of Syrian and Nepali refugee students. These learners have had lengthy interruptions to formal education and most of them have little to no literacy in their first language. Similar to Teacher A's class, the Syrian students are all relatively new to Canada whereas the Nepali students have been present in Canada for several years.

The LC is a volunteer who has been assisting in Teacher B's class for a year and a half. He is a Canadian born, Caucasian, native speaker of English. He speaks Nepali fluently as his L2. His spouse is from Nepal and he has travelled to Nepal on a few occasions. The LC has a considerable understanding of Nepali culture and is well known in the local Nepalese community of the students. He and his wife have had direct involvement in working with the Nepalese community by helping them overcome the challenges of resettlement in Canada. These challenges consist of but are not limited to learning the language, navigating health care and other services offered, finding meaningful employment and adjusting to the cultural differences of the country. Although the LC does not hold a TESL certificate and has not been formally trained as an ESL teacher, his volunteer experience and ability to teach have made him an asset

in Teacher B's classroom (Teacher B). At the time of the study, he volunteered in Teacher B's class once a week for the first half of the day from 9-12pm. He spent the afternoon from 12:45pm to 2:30pm in a CLB 1 class in the same school.

During his time in teacher B's class, the LC assists the teacher in the regular proceedings of the class by providing support to students as they engage in classroom tasks and activities. On a regular basis, he may answer students' questions, provide assistance with comprehension and work with students in small groups. Regardless of his ability to converse with the Nepali students in their first language, he rarely does so in class and is viewed by Teacher B as a support for all students, not only the Nepali-Bhutanese (Teacher B). The LC also assists the teacher in understanding the cultural background of the Nepali-Bhutanese students (Teacher B).

In the afternoons, the LC works with CLB 1 students in another teacher's classroom. During this time, this teacher often has the LC assist students one-on-one with reading in English. In recognizing the LC's ability to assist Nepali learners because of his ability to speak their language, she often has him work specifically with the Nepali students in her class. The LC will take students for 20 minutes at a time and have students read aloud. He will check for comprehension by asking students questions in either English or Nepali, giving an equivalent word in Nepali and conversing in Nepali when necessary to ensure students understand the material (LC).

Students. The second group consisted of Foundation Literacy students (taught by Teacher B), whose classroom interactions were observed by the researcher. This class was made up of eight students – four Syrian refugees who speak Arabic as their first language and four Nepali-Bhutanese refugees who speak Nepali as their first language. In general, these two nationalities make up the majority of students in the language school, including learners in

Teacher A's class. The Syrian refugees arrived in Canada in the last year and a half whereas most of the Nepali-Bhutanese refugees have been in Canada for at least three years. The Nepali-Bhutanese and the Syrians are quite different in terms of their needs as well as the strengths they bring to the classroom. In general, the Nepali students have had less formal education in their first language and therefore often have difficulty understanding the purpose and uses of literacy. They move at a slower pace when acquiring reading and writing skills but generally have good oral skills due to their length of time in Canada (Teacher A). Many of the Nepali students have become discouraged by their seemingly little progress despite being in Canada a number of years. The LC speculates that this has had an affect on their belief in their ability as learners and subsequent motivation in class (LC).

In general, the Syrian students come from a more educated background and as a result, tend to pick up on English literacy at a quicker rate. Many of them have a developed understanding of the purpose and use of literacy due to their prior schooling but lack oral skills in English (Teacher A). Their motivation tends to be higher because they have been in Canada for a shorter period of time and are eager to learn and progress (Teacher A).

The students attend class at this language school from 9a.m to 2:30p.m., Monday to Friday and these classes are on-going from September to June with a break during the summer months.

Instruments

There were two main instruments used in data collection; the first was semi-structured interviews and the second was observations conducted in an ESL literacy classroom. These will be described in detail below.

Semi-structured Interviews

To investigate the beliefs the teachers and LC held surrounding the role of the language coach, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Interview questions were derived from consulting CCLB (2015) as well as from consulting previous research involving qualitative interviews (Tarone, et al., 2009; Woods, 1996). Questions were designed to gather information about ESL literacy learners, the challenges teachers and students experience in the classroom, teaching strategies the teachers and LC use as well as to elicit the interviewees' beliefs surrounding the role of first language in the classroom and the role of the language coach. For example, questions prepared in advance included: *How is teaching ESL literacy different than teaching regular ESL classes?* and *What strategies do you use to communicate oral instructions to your students?* Additional questions were asked spontaneously during the interview as they arose such as *So what would you say makes a good volunteer?* and *So, you notice that the students don't always understand the instructions. Do you think the teachers notice that as much? Do they think that the students are grasping what they're saying?* A complete list of all questions asked in each interview can be found in Appendix A. The details of the procedure of each interview will be described in detail on page 38.

Observations

The researcher used an observation scheme adapted from the *Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme* (COLT) (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995) to record, in real-time, the interactions occurring between the participants (teacher-student, student-student, student-language coach, teacher-language coach) and to observe the types of supports used by the teacher and the LC. The scheme included 12 types of interactions: explaining instructions (in English and in Nepali), repeating instructions, writing on the board, initiating/providing help,

monitoring tasks, asking question, answering question (in English and in Nepali), giving positive feedback, correcting error, and checking comprehension. These were chosen in consulting sample Part A and Part B COLT schemes (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). In addition, the researcher included a spot for “other” to fill in any interactions that could occur outside of the main ones. A sample observation scheme can be seen in Appendix B.

On the day of the observations, the researcher sat at the side of the classroom where it was possible to view all the participants while minimizing any disturbance to the students or the regular class proceedings. The researcher applied a tally to the observation scheme each time an interaction occurred between two participants during the regular class proceedings. The researcher also wrote down notes of anything interesting that occurred outside of the scheme (i.e. a comment made by the teacher/LC or a specific situation that stood out to the researcher). Later, these notes were reviewed and incorporated into overall analysis of the observational data.

To further assist the researcher with the classroom observations, and with the participants’ consent, a small non-intrusive video-recording device was used to record the class from the back of the room. Following the observations in real-time, the researcher found it necessary to review each video recording carefully as it had been difficult to capture the many interactions occurring simply from the real-time observations.

A month following the observations, the researcher met with the LC one-on-one for 20 minutes to complete stimulated recall using the video-recording from the day the LC was present in the class. The purpose of the stimulated recall was to confirm what was happening during interactions between the participants from the perspective of the LC and to clarify any dialogue in Nepali that had occurred between the students and the LC. During this time, the LC was shown 5 portions from the video where the Teacher B was present with the LC in the class and 6

portions where Teacher B was absent from the class. These portions had been pre-determined by the researcher and ranged between 10-30 seconds in length. The clips were chosen in places where the researcher felt more clarification was needed to understand exactly what was happening in that moment as well as to see whether the observations made by the researcher matched the LC’s perspective. During the meeting, the LC was asked to clarify student-to-LC and student-to-student interactions. For example, in one clip, the researcher asked: “What was the student doing there? Was he helping her?” Other times, the LC was simply shown the clip and not prompted but was allowed to review the interaction and freely comment on anything he felt to share. During clips where Nepali was used in an interaction between the LC and a student, the LC provided the translation to the researcher in order to clarify what was being said.

Procedure

This section outlines the procedure of how each instrument was used to collect data for the purpose of the study. A timeline outlining the procedure of the study can be seen in Table 1. The dates in relation to each meeting that took place with the participants as well as the time that they occurred are documented in this table. Each meeting will be described in detail below.

Date	Meetings with Participants	Time
December 14 th 2016	Interview with Teacher A	2:45-3:30pm
December 15 th 2016	Classroom Observation Day 1 (LC present)	10-10:30am 11-11:30am
December 15 th 2016	Interview with LC	12-12:40pm
December 16 th 2016	Classroom Observation Day 2 (LC absent)	9-10:00am
December 22 nd 2016	Interview with Teacher B	2:45-3:45pm
January 19 th 2017	Stimulated Recall with LC	12-12:20pm

Table 1. Timeline of the current study

Semi-structured Interviews. Interviews were conducted one-on-one in person with the researcher and ranged between 40-60 minutes in length. To allow for further analysis, the interviews were also audio-recorded. The interviews with Teacher A and Teacher B were both conducted at the language school on a weekday afternoon between 2:45-3:45pm following the end of the school day. The interview with the LC took place during lunch hour on a day where he was volunteering at the language school. Interviews with each participant occurred on separate days and were arranged individually with the researcher depending on what best suited their schedule.

Prior to commencing each interview, participants were asked to read and sign a consent form approved by Carleton University Ethics Review Board (See Appendix C for Ethics Clearance). Participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussions. Participants each gave consent to be audio-recorded for the purpose of the study. The researcher used a list of questions prepared ahead of time and also asked questions spontaneously as they arose in the interview. A list of questions asked during the interviews is provided in Appendix A. Interviews were then transcribed for further analysis.

Observations. Observations were conducted in Teacher B's classroom over two consecutive days during the third week of December 2016. The dates chosen for the observations, December 15th (Day 1) and December 16th (Day 2), were decided upon in consulting Teacher B and the LC. The LC only volunteers in the class once a week so the researcher chose the day where the LC would be present and the following day where he would not be present. The researcher chose to observe one class where the LC was present and one

class where the LC was not present in order to identify differences in the interactions and types of supports used in each situation.

Each day, the researcher actively observed for 1 hour of classroom time. Table 2 outlines which participants were observed each day and for what length of time. As shown, during the first day of observations with the LC and the Teacher, there was a period of time during which Teacher B took half the class to an area outside the classroom, leaving the LC to work with the other half of the class. During this 20-minute period of class time, the researcher was able to directly observe the LC working with 4 students (SS). The details of each day are discussed further in the sections that follow.

Day of Observation	Participants Observed	Total Length of Observation
Dec. 15 (Day 1)	Teacher B + LC + SS	40 minutes
Dec. 15 (Day 1)	LC + SS	20 minutes
Dec. 16 (Day 2)	Teacher B + SS	1 hour

Table 2. Overview of observations: date, participants observed and length of time

Day 1. Each Thursday, the students spend the first part of the morning (from 9-9:45am) in the computer lab. As the aim of this study was to observe the LC interacting with the students during regular class time, the researcher chose to begin the observations at 10am, when the students had settled back into the classroom. The researcher observed the class from 10-10:30am, and from 10:45-11:15am. The students had a 15-minute break from 10:30-10:45 where the researcher paused the observations. During this time, students left the class and were free to do as they pleased until class resumed. Table 3 outlines the activities that took place during the first day of observations. Each will be explained further in the section that follows.

Time	Activity
9-9:45	Computer Lab
9:45-9:55	Transition to class
9:55-10:10	Teacher-led identifying Christmas words
10:10-10:30	LC-led reading and matching
10:30-10:45	BREAK
10:45-11:10	Christmas ornament making

Table 3. Activities during day 1 of observations

During the first 15 minutes of class, Teacher B led the students in an activity of identifying words and objects surrounding the theme of Christmas. Students were required to read a printed word and to identify and retrieve the object in the classroom. For example, a student was given the word *Santa Claus*. Once reading the word correctly, the student then stood up and brought back a small Santa Claus figurine from the other side of the class back to his desk.

In the next segment of the class, the teacher split the class into two groups to work on completing an activity they had started the day before. She took half the students (n=4) into another room, leaving the LC with the other half of the class (n=4). The students who remained in the class with the LC consisted of two Nepali students and two Syrian students. The researcher began using a new observation scheme during this time to separate the interactions and supports used when the teacher was present and when the teacher was absent. The LC worked with the four students until break time at 10:30. Following the 15-minute break from 10:30-10:45, the class came back together with Teacher B and the rest of the class to make Christmas ornaments using paper, scissors and glue.

Day 2: The following day, the observations took place at the start of class, from 9-10am. During this time, the researcher was able to observe the regular morning routine that the class does when they don't have computer lab. Additionally, the LC was not present during this time, which allowed to researcher to observe the students and the teacher without any additional aid in the classroom. Table 4 outlines the occurrences that took place during the second day of observations. Each will be explained further in the section that follows.

Time	Activity
9-9:07am	Morning Routine (Date and weather)
9:07-9:12am	Songs (Say Hello, Days of the week & month)
9:12-9:15am	Discussion about Christmas holidays
9:16-9:22am	Christmas words worksheet (reading part)
9:22-9:42am	Christmas words worksheet (writing part)
9:42-9:48am	Binder Organization/Transition
9:48-10am	Short story and Questions

Table 4. Activities during day 2 of observations

During the first part of the class, the teacher engaged the class in a familiar morning routine of writing the date and temperature on the board and discussing together as a group. Immediately following, the students listened to 3 songs through a CD player as a group. The first song was a welcome song called "Say Hello", the second song recited the days of the week and the third song recited the months of the year. Students followed along using their binders that had the words to the songs printed in them. After this, students opened up to calendars in their binders and Teacher B discussed the upcoming Christmas holidays with the students. This was to ensure that the students were aware which day was the last day of school and when classes would resume. Then the teacher asked students to take out a "Christmas Words" worksheet from

earlier in the week and had students read the words, one at a time. She then gave them a second handout where they had a picture and they were required to write the name that matched the picture underneath. After completing the second worksheet, the students spent time placing their Christmas worksheets into the appropriate section of their binders. The teacher described binder organization as a significant challenge for the students and one that requires careful attention and support. This can be attributed to the challenge of “learning how to learn” that literacy students face in a school environment (CCLB, 2015). In the last section of the observation, students read a short story about Christmas and Teacher B wrote the sentences on the board as they read. Time was spent on, not only reading the book with the students but discussing the layout and structure of the book and sentences within. For example, Teacher B drew the students’ attention to the title of the book and explained that the first page of a book tells us what information will be inside. She also asked students questions about word structure. For example, for the word “December” she asked: “Why capital D? Why not small D?...Because it’s the *name* of the month”. As they walked through each page of the book, she asked them questions about the story to check for comprehension.

Data Analysis

The data analysis took place in three phases: descriptive coding, process coding and member checking. Each phase will be discussed in the following sections.

Descriptive Coding: Descriptive coding was applied to each transcript of interview data as the first cycle coding. Wolcott (1994) describes descriptive coding as “the foundation for qualitative inquiry”, its main goal being to “assist the reader to see what you saw and to hear what you heard in general” (as cited in Saldaña, 2013, p. 88). Therefore, this approach was

employed to capture a general overview of the main topics emerging from the data. This initial coding led to a broad summary of the data's content, which led to second cycle coding.

Process Coding: In second cycle coding, Process Coding, also known as Action Coding was used. This coding applies action words (verbs ending in -ing) to the data, allowing the researcher to see exactly what is taking places when participants are discussing certain insights or actions in the interview (Saldaña, 2013). Process codes were recorded by hand and compiled from each interview transcript. Process codes were then grouped under common themes and comparisons were made between interviews.

Member Checking: Following coding, a member check was used to asses the accuracy of the data gathered from the interview. The member check, also known as member validation (Seale, 1999) is defined as a research phase during which “the provisional report is taken back to the site and subjected to the scrutiny of the person who provided the information” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 236). This allows the researcher to ensure that the data gathered matches what participants meant to convey. The researcher provided each participant with a copy of the transcript from the interview as well as a summary of the main topics identified from the interviews. Participants were given two weeks to look over the data and asked to comment on whether the documents accurately represented what they said, wanted to say or meant to say. Participants all agreed that the transcripts and topics were representative of their intended meaning, with two of the participants providing minor changes or additional information. These changes were incorporated into the transcripts and considered in the process of data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter will present the results of the two parts of this study: the interviews with the three participants and the observations of the ESL literacy class. The two research questions addressed in this study were:

1. What beliefs do ESL literacy teachers hold surrounding the role of a language coach in the literacy classroom?
2. Is having a language coach (LC) supportive of student interactions and L2 language use in the ESL literacy classroom? If so, how?

These two questions will be addressed sequentially in the presentation of the results. To address the first research question, the results of the interview data with the three participants will be presented, including a description of the two levels of coding used to analyze the interviews: descriptive and process coding. Then, to address the second research question, the results of the video-recorded observations and follow-up interviews with the LC will be presented.

Research Question 1: What beliefs do ESL literacy teachers hold surrounding the role of a language coach in the literacy classroom?

Descriptive Coding

To address the first research question, descriptive coding was used as an initial coding measure. This coding method was chosen in order to gain an overall sense of the data and to identify the commonalities and differences between each interview. Descriptive coding, also known as topic coding, “summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often as a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 88). The goal of this type of coding is to help the researcher identify what was seen and heard in general, rather than to identify the deeper

message portrayed in the data (Saldaña, 2013). Thus, the researcher assigned topic codes to the data by asking the question: *what is this portion of the interview about?* Doing so led to a “categorized inventory” of the data that could then be used as a basis for further analysis (Saldaña, 2013, p. 89). This summary of the data’s contents via descriptive coding is displayed in Table 5.

Teacher A	Teacher B	Language Coach
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching Literacy 2. Literacy Students 3. Additional Resources and Support 4. Use of L1 in the Classroom 5. Use of L1 outside the Classroom 6. Classroom Considerations 7. Ideal Strategies for Teaching Literacy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching Literacy 2. Literacy Students 3. View of the LC 4. Role of the LC in the Class 5. Role of the LC outside the Class 6. Students’ view of LC 7. Having other LCs in the Class 8. Ideal Strategies for Teaching Literacy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching Literacy 2. Literacy Students 3. Teacher and LC Collaboration 4. Use of L1 in the Classroom 5. Teacher’s view of LC 6. Students’ view of LC 7. Perceived Role in the Classroom 8. Perceived Role outside the Classroom 9. Tutoring one-on-one 10. Ideal Strategies for Teaching Literacy

Table 5. Summary of topics across interviews derived using descriptive coding

Topics identified varied across each interview. Table 5 shows that there were 7 main topics identified from the interview with Teacher A, 8 from the interview with Teacher B, and 10 from the interview with the LC. This variation is partly due the semi-structured nature of the interviews, which led to differences in what each participant shared, and partly due to the nature of each participant’s unique experience and teaching context. In reviewing the topics, it was noted that there were also several commonalities that occurred across each interview. Mainly, all

three participants discussed: Teaching literacy (Topic 1 for all three participants), Literacy learners (Topic 2 for all three participants), and Ideal strategies for teaching literacy (Topic 7 for Teacher A, Topic 8 for Teacher B and Topic 10 for the LC). To gain a better sense of what each participant had to say regarding each topic, the researcher created a summary of each participant's interview and re-organized all of the data's contents to fit under each topic. For example, for Teacher B, under the topic "Teaching Literacy", the researcher placed all of the statements she had shared in regards to this topic. This included statements such as "You [Teacher B] use a variety of visual aids to assist with delivering oral instructions to students" and "You [Teacher B] have to constantly remind yourself that your students think very different than how you think". The summaries sought to capture the full meaning of what was expressed as accurately as possible. Statements were stated in 2nd person because they were later sent to each participant for review (member check) to ensure that the researcher had accurately described what they had meant to say regarding each topic. These summaries were then sub-coded for common themes. A sub-code is "a second-order tag assigned after a primary code to detail or enrich the entry" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 61). Sub-coding is often used after "an initial yet general coding scheme" (i.e. descriptive coding) to further classify the primary code (Saldaña, 2013, p. 78). For example, the primary code in this case was "Teaching Literacy". The researcher then applied sub-codes to statements made by each participant including "Communication strategy" and "Communication challenge". These sub-codes were identified as common themes across each interview. The common themes for these three topics (teaching literacy, literacy learner and ideal strategies) are outlined below.

Teaching Literacy

There were two main themes that emerged across each interview under the topic of Teaching literacy: communication strategies and communication challenges.

Communication Strategies.

Both teachers expressed that teaching ESL literacy is very different than teaching literate learners, the biggest difference being that the pacing is much slower and requires constant revisiting and repetition. Both teachers emphasized the use of visual aids as essential in literacy teaching, especially when it comes to delivering oral instructions to the students. Types of visual aids include the use of realia, pictures, gestures, facial expressions and physical actions. Teacher A stated that she sometimes has students participate physically as they learn, a technique known as Total Physical Response (TPR) (Asher, 1969). For example, she has students use their fingers to draw in the air what they are required to do on paper.

“We are trying to practice listening to instructions...and today we were doing cross out, circle, check mark and with their hands, we all, you know, drew circles in the air and x’s in the air for cross out.” (Teacher A)

Teacher A also discussed the importance of scaffolding when introducing new concepts in class. Scaffolding is described as moving from concepts that are more familiar and more concrete to students, towards concepts that are less known and more challenging (CLB, 2015). She shared that she uses this technique by first introducing a new concept orally with the whole class, followed by doing an activity on the board as a group and then slowly progressing towards independent, written work (Teacher A). She stated that students struggle much more with written work than oral activities and for this reason, she uses oral instruction as the starting point for introducing new concepts. This is consistent with the CLBs that make mention of the fact that

literacy learners “may have stronger oral skills, which can be used to aid development of reading and writing” (CCLB, 2015, p. 8).

Communication Challenges.

It appeared through the interviews that both teachers experience difficulty and subsequently, frustration when it comes to communicating oral instructions to students, despite the many communication strategies they discussed. Teacher B expressed always having to remind herself that her students think very differently than the way that she thinks and that it can be frustrating at times when students do not understand the instructions she is trying to provide.

“...Sometimes at lunch time or break time, I’ll just go into the community room and just say “Oh my goodness like...what am I not doing right? How can I make this better?” And uh that’s mainly what it’s about; it’s being frustrated with myself for not being able to communicate a concept. You know, a higher-level kind of concept? That seemingly is simple, and it’s not coming across as I would’ve hoped it too.” (Teacher B).

Teacher A also expressed difficulty in communicating effectively with students but stated that there are ways around this challenge including drawing pictures, using picture dictionaries and, when necessary, looking things up on the computer (Teacher A). In acknowledging the challenges of communication between students and teachers, the LC shared his observation that, at the literacy level, “student’s don’t actually understand instructions. They may pick up on a word or two but that’s about it.” (LC). He stated that students often have trouble with comprehension because the sentences being used in the classroom are far beyond what students actually know (LC). The LC also hinted that communication challenges can also be attributed to a lack of cultural understanding between the teacher and the students (LC). Understanding the culture is an important way to help students form connections between what they already know and what they are learning (LC). He argued that it would be helpful if more of the curriculum

were tailored specifically to things students could relate to and that currently, much of the curriculum in place is far removed from what students know, making it difficult for them to grasp new concepts (LC).

Literacy Learners

There were three main themes that emerged across each interview in regards to literacy learners. These themes were: the cognitive functioning of literacy learners, organization and routine, and motivation. Each theme is discussed below.

The Cognitive functioning of Literacy Learners.

A repeated theme in the interviews when discussing literacy learners was the fact that the non-literate student's brain functions very differently than students who are literate. In general, ESL literacy learners lack the ability to progress quickly and have trouble retaining information (Teacher B). These students also have not developed the ability to compartmentalize, strategize and transfer information due to the lack of cognitive development when they were young (Teacher B). As a result, students progress very slowly, and take a considerably longer time progress from one level to another (Teacher B). Teacher A expressed that the students at her level (literacy 2/3) have had more access to formal education earlier on in life and so they possess more strategies for learning. Many of them have the verbal skills but the reading and writing skills are quite deficient (Teacher A). She emphasized the importance of students writing things down in order to form connections between their hand and their brain. Many students in her class have some ability to write in their L1 and show evidence of making connections between their first language and English by writing the equivalent word during activities in class (Teacher A). The students in Teacher B's class are more limited when it comes to using their L1 as a tool for learning English in comparison to the students in Teacher A's class, making it

difficult for them to form these kinds of connections (CCLB, 2015). The LC pointed out that many students at the literacy level also may have undiagnosed learning disabilities (which may affect their cognitive abilities) and would likely benefit more from another style of teaching rather than what is currently being offered to them (LC). From his view, the fact that students are being taught using a structure that is not ideal for many of them makes it even more difficult to see progress at the literacy level (LC).

Organization and Routine.

It was apparent in the interviews that, due to the unique needs of literacy learners, maintaining a familiar routine is key. This was emphasized by Teacher A.

“...If the routine is off, everything’s off. They need that stability. And if that stability’s gone, you’ve lost them for the whole day.” (Teacher A).

Teachers also discussed the need for students to develop “study skills” or strategies for learning at the literacy level. To help facilitate this, they have students use binders to organize their work.

“...all the papers or activities we do, they’ll just throw them in their desk. So now I have them putting things in the binder. Then it was all over the binder, upside down, inside out – it was everywhere. And it’s a step by step-by-step process and they’re getting it. It’s a slow, slow process but a lot of them are finally getting it.” (Teacher A)

This use of binders is part of Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA), a method for assessing learners not just in ESL literacy classes, but across all levels of the CLBs (CCLB, 2017). In this approach, students compile samples of their learning into binders which teachers then use for evaluating student’s overall progress in each of the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) (CCLB, 2017). Teacher A and B see this method of using binders as an equally effective way to help their students develop organizational skills.

Motivation.

Motivation is another theme that appeared frequently in the discussion of literacy students. The LC pointed out that motivation plays a significant role in whether students will learn. Students need to believe in what they're learning and see a reason to do it in order to advance (LC). Teacher A shared that motivation tends to decline the longer a student has been in Canada and enrolled in language classes. Teacher B pointed out that many of the Nepali students feel they have not made progress towards being successful even though they have been in Canada for a number of years. This has perhaps contributed to an overall sense of discouragement that students in the Nepali community feel (Teacher B).

Ideal Strategies for Teaching Literacy

Each participant had unique views regarding ideal strategies for teaching literacy. There were two main themes that emerged from this topic that are discussed below: the development of L1 literacy skills and making literacy practical for learners.

The Development of L1 Literacy Skills.

Teacher B expressed the belief that ideally, literacy students should be taught at least a basic understanding of literacy in their L1 so that they can then transfer these skills over to learning English. She acknowledged that learning English is particularly challenging for students at her level as they have so few literacy skills in their L1 and so have nothing to go on (Teacher B). Furthermore, it's not only challenging for students to learn the language itself but also to develop the skills needed to read and write in a language they have never learned in the first place. Teacher A expressed the opposite, stating that there is no point teaching students literacy in their L1 because it is time-consuming and they most likely won't use it (Teacher A).

Making Literacy Practical for Learners.

An ideal consideration that Teacher B discussed is having language programs that target a specific job skill at the literacy level. She shared that many students at the foundation level could benefit from this because they have an extremely difficult time moving towards higher levels of literacy. Both teachers agreed that literacy is more than just students learning to read and write. It's about helping them become independent and functional in society. The current ESL literacy curriculum is functionally bound but is not as practical as it could be (Teacher B). The LC agreed that the current structure of literacy teaching does not benefit every learner. Teacher B pointed out that many students at the literacy level reach a plateau where they no longer are making significant progress. She expressed that it may be worth considering other alternatives for these learners rather than the traditional ESL classroom. She gave examples of other ways that students could contribute to the community such as through gaining job-specific training in fields requiring minimal literacy skills (i.e. food services).

Summary of Descriptive Coding

This section has outlined three common topics that emerged from the descriptive coding: teaching literacy, literacy students, and ideal strategies for teaching. Within each topic, common themes across each interview emerged including: communication strategies and challenges, cognitive functioning of literacy students, organization and routine, motivation, the development of L1 literacy skills and making learning practical for students.

Descriptive coding also highlighted several differences in the topics that were discussed in each interview. Specifically, these topics were (1) the role of the LC, (2) the role of L1 and (3) additional resources and support. The last theme, additional resources and support, was later

refined further to the role of volunteers, as this more specifically articulated the topic of participant's discussion. These three topics will be discussed in the section that follows.

Process Coding

To investigate teacher beliefs surrounding each of these topics, the researcher chose to employ process coding as a second-cycle coding measure. Process coding, also known as “action coding”, uses gerunds (words ending in “-ing”) to imply action taking place in the data (Charmez, 2002 as cited in Saldaña, 2013). This method was chosen instead of sub-coding the data (as seen above) because it is considered to be helpful for data in search of “ongoing action/interaction/emotion taken in response to situations, or problems, often with the purpose of reaching a goal or handling a problem” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 96-97). For these topics (L1 use in the classroom, the role of the LC and the role of volunteers), the researcher wanted to investigate the deeper emotions and beliefs being portrayed by each of the participants in regards to these topics. Thus, process coding was chosen as an effective way to do so.

L1 Use in the Classroom

The first major theme that was revealed in the interview data was participant's beliefs about L1 use in the classroom. Table 6 highlights the main process codes that emerged from each interview.

Teacher A	Teacher B	Language Coach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allowing the use of L1 in the classroom • Needing to learn instructions in English • Hampering students learning of L2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting the use of L1 during class time • Not knowing what students are saying • Not wanting students to become too reliant on the L1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the L1 to clarify instructions and for conceptual explanation • Emphasizing the need for a specific structure and strategy for L1 use • Seeing great potential if used effectively in the classroom

Table 6. Top process codes regarding L1 use in the classroom across the participants

An overall look at the top codes that emerged quickly reveals that each participant holds very different beliefs regarding L1 use in the classroom. Teacher A emphasized *not allowing* students in her class to use their L1 and expressed strong beliefs that students need to be given instructions in English as part of learning the language. In her view, the use of L1 is not necessary and is actually detrimental in the classroom.

“I think it will hamper the student’s learning...they’ll learn but I think it’ll be a lot slower.” (Teacher A).

Her use of the word “hampering” shows that she is not just neutral to the use of first language but sees it as something that actually *takes away* from students progressing in the classroom. Despite being opposed to the use of L1 in the class, Teacher A shared that there are times where she uses student’s L1 to help build rapport and a sense of inclusion among her students. She gave an example of getting students to raise their arms and count to ten quickly; first in English and then in every other language represented in the class. She described this often causing a lot of laughter because of pronunciation. In essence, it appears that Teacher A is

comfortable using student's L1 only in a controlled way and when all students are equally able to participate.

Teacher B expressed mixed feelings about the use of the L1 in the classroom. It appears that she is experiencing uncertainty or conflict in her beliefs. On the one hand, she sees that there are definite benefits to having the LC volunteer in her classroom. On the other hand, she struggles with the idea of allowing first language in the classroom due to fear of losing control. For example, her use of the word "limiting" in regards to L1 use in the classroom (Table 6) shows her hesitation in allowing students to speak or use their first language. She expressed concerns such as "not knowing what students are saying" and "not wanting students to become too reliant on the L1" (Teacher B). It appears that both Teacher A and Teacher B have the same underlying belief that the use of the L1 in the class is either not necessary or should be limited in its use. The difference is that Teacher A expressed this belief more openly whereas Teacher B was more indirect in expressing this.

From the LC's perspective, a large part of why he is volunteering in the classroom is because he sees his ability to communicate in the L1 of the students, as a valuable tool for meeting their learning needs. He repeatedly expressed his support of using the L1 in the classroom but emphasized two specific ways that it should be used: 1) to clarify instructions and 2) for conceptual explanation. His rationale for this belief is apparent in the following:

"...My observation of volunteering here in the last year and a half or so, is that, at the literacy level, the students don't actually understand instruction. So the teachers are often speaking for themselves out of habit when it's very easy for me, it's very clear to me at least that, the types of sentences that are used in instruction are far above the level they know..." (LC).

He emphasized that in order to use the L1 effectively in the classroom, there must be a specific structure and strategy in place. This would include a mutual understanding among

students and teachers of when the first language is used and for what purpose. From the viewpoint of the LC, having a somewhat structured way of implementing the use of L1 would minimize students using their L1 as a crutch and also allow teachers to maintain healthy control of the class (LC). The LC believes that the use of L1 has great potential given that it is implemented in a structured and strategic way in the classroom.

The Role of the Language Coach

Participants each expressed different beliefs regarding the role of the LC in the class.

Table 7 outlines the top four process codes that emerged from the data.

Teacher A	Teacher B	Language Coach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to explain the cultural differences to teacher • Hindering students from becoming self-reliant • Needing to be equal towards everyone • Not needing language support at this level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping teacher to understand the cultural and language differences • Explaining little bits of language to the students • Boosting student’s confidence and motivation • Speaking to students on a personal level during breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping students who are struggling the most with the language • Not knowing when to use the L1 in the classroom to assist students • Boosting student’s confidence and motivation • Speaking to students on a personal level during breaks

Table 7. Top process codes concerning the role of the LC in the classroom

The code “helping” appeared in all three interviews suggesting that, overall the role of the LC involves helping in one way or another. In looking closer at each participant’s perspective, “helping” entails something very different depending on who is asked. For Teacher

A, she clearly expressed that the only benefit to having an LC from her perspective, is to help explain the *cultural differences* to her. During her interview, she shared an example of a situation in which one of her students experienced a death in the family. She expressed that having an LC in that case would have been helpful to know how to navigate the situation in light of the student's culture. Aside from assisting with cultural understanding in specific situations, she strongly opposed having an LC for any other purpose. It was noted that Teacher A's refusal to have an LC in her class appeared to be largely due to the fact that she equated L1 use in the classroom and the role of the LC as one and the same. Her firm beliefs against the use of L1 in the classroom make having an LC also out of the question. Teacher A's main concerns, as shown by the top three process codes were: 1) having an LC use students' L1 hinder them from becoming self-reliant, 2) it's not fair for some students to have a language support and other students not to, and 3) language support from an LC at this level of literacy (2/3) is simply not needed. Her first concern (i.e., students' overreliance on the LC) was emphasized several times. She believes that students will rely too much on the support of a coach and will not learn how to be self-reliant. To understand Teacher A's second concern, it is helpful to understand the current context of her classroom. Throughout her interview, she repeatedly emphasized the need to be equal towards everyone due to the tension between different language and cultural backgrounds in her class.

“I think it'd be more helpful in general to understand why things are the way they are but in a classroom...if you do that, you have to have one for every single language. Because...the conflict, the jealousy. Why do they have it, why not me? Why not me? It's rampant.” (Teacher A)

To avoid conflict, she believes that to have an LC for students from one language background, you need to have an LC for everyone. However, Teacher A also stated bluntly that, in her view, an LC is simply not needed at this level.

“...it’s hard in the classroom to keep control and...In classes when we need to check comprehension, we use picture dictionaries and there’s so many other ways. It’s the whole idea of translating everything. Translating, they don’t learn. They learn so much slower when they translate” (Teacher A).

Teacher A is concerned that translating will cause students not to absorb any information that they are learning. “Helping” to her really means translating and that is something she does not want in her classroom. She believes that students need to learn instructions in English and “struggle with the language” in order to retain information. Overall, Teacher A shared multiple concerns regarding the use of L1 and having an LC in her class, which can be summed up by Table 8. Of her 14 expressed concerns throughout her interview, each one was organized into one of four categories: (1) concerns related to learning, (2) context, (3) necessity, and (4) feasibility.

Type of Concern	Teacher A: Expressed Beliefs about L1 use in the Classroom
LEARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needing to learn by hearing the L2 • Needing to learn to read instructions in English • Needing to learn to be independent • Students learn faster when forced to speak English • Students won’t read instructions
CONTEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes conflict/jealousy in her classroom • Needing to be equal towards everyone • Students like not being able to speak their own language in class

NECESSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not needed/necessary for comprehension • Not seeing the value in L1 learning • There are other ways to check comprehension
FEASABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many languages in the classroom • Too difficult to get students to switch between languages • Uncertainty/confusion about how it would work

Table 8. Teacher A’s Expressed Concerns about L1 Use in the Classroom

Learning concerns were all based on her belief the L1 hampers students’ learning of the L2, which appeared as a top process code in Table 6. Context concerns highlight the fact that with her particular group of learners, she sees having an LC as causing conflict (i.e. jealousy, tension, arguments) in her classroom. Concerns related to necessity refers to the fact that Teacher A also expressed that she simply does not see the L1 as adding any value to the classroom and feasibility concerns are demonstrated by several occasions where she argued L1 use is not practical and will be “too difficult” to implement.

For Teacher B, “helping” can be broken down into specific roles: 1) helping the teacher and 2) helping the students. Figure 1 provides an organized view of her perspective based on the top codes that emerged.

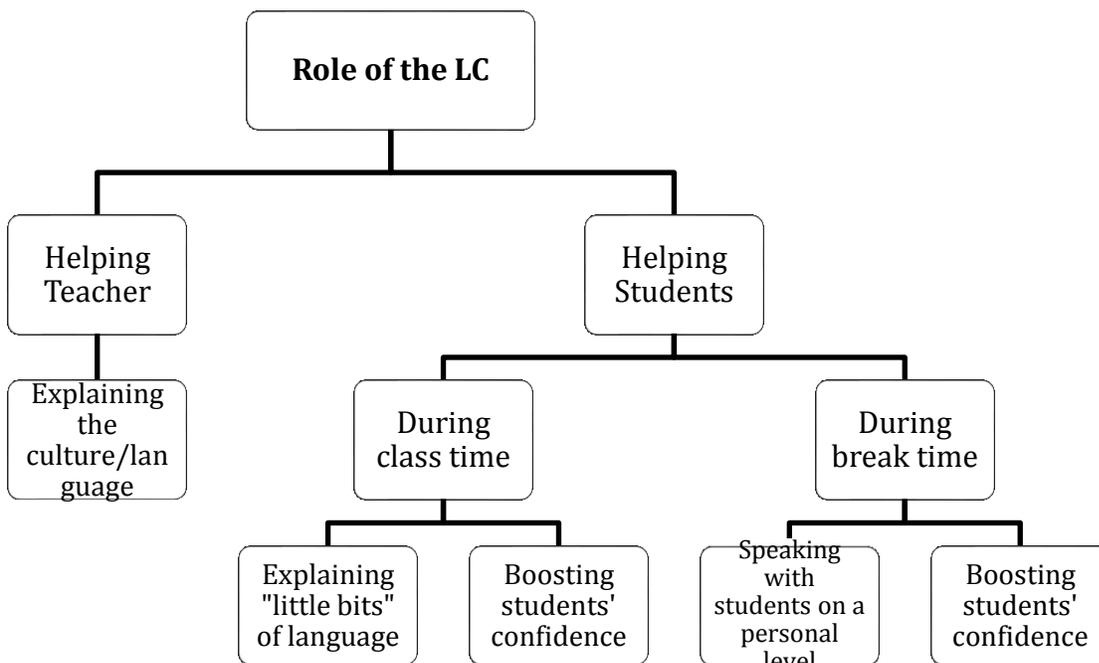


Figure 3. Role of the LC from viewpoint of Teacher B

Figure 3 shows that Teacher B recognizes the role of the LC as two-fold: (1) helping the teacher by explaining to her the language and the culture of the students and (2) helping the students, both during class time and during break time.

In terms of helping the teacher, Teacher B admitted that she “knows nothing about the language [Nepali]” (Teacher B) and that, in light of this, having an LC is beneficial in order for her to understand “why certain things aren’t being said in a certain way” (Teacher B). In terms of helping students, the role of the LC in the classroom appeared to lie primarily in his ability to explain “little bits of language” to the students (Teacher B).

“So, uh being able to explain little things to *me* and then, he can also try to figure out, when he’s talking with them about little, little parts or explain little, you know, bits of language as well.” (Teacher B).

In this excerpt, she uses the word “little” several times when explaining his role in the class. She seemed to suggest that his assistance in the classroom is minimal. It was also noted throughout the interview that Teacher B perceives the type of “helping” the LC provides differently depending on whether it is during class time or during break time. During break time, Teacher B emphasized the LC’s ability to connect with students on a *personal level*. She shared that during break time and lunch time, the LC often takes time to converse with the students in Nepali, answering questions they have about life in Canada and helping them navigate the many hurdles of being in a new environment. She sees this as beneficial to students and one of the main reasons she is in support of having an LC in her classroom. A final code that appeared frequently in the data for Teacher B was “boosting”. This code was used to express how the LC appeared to play a positive role in encouraging student motivation and confidence both in and outside the classroom (as shown in Figure 3). It was clear through Teacher B’s interview that the students in the class have great respect for the LC and work hard to make him proud. The following quote captures this well:

“So uh two weeks ago, he started volunteering with another teacher’s class and she said, it was like a shot in the arm to the Nepali students because they just felt like...you know, ‘here’s the LC. He’s here to help everybody. But he’s here because of us.’ Right? And so that, I think that was a big uh ego boost for them and she said it just really perked them up. She could see that having him there, they could really feel comfortable and show him what they know” (Teacher A).

For the LC, the primary role he sees himself filling is “helping students who are struggling the most with the language”. Interestingly, neither teacher recognized this as a core part of his role. It makes sense that, in light of this, the LC expressed confusion about what his

role is in the classroom due to the constraints placed on him by Teacher A. He described *not knowing* when to use the L1 in the classroom to assist students.

“...the potential is probably not being utilized nearly as much. This is my feeling as I do it, like cause I’m kind of just doing a patch work of uh here and there and kind of uhh walking on eggshells a bit of when I should speak and when not to” (LC).

However, like Teacher B, the LC also recognizes that a significant aspect of his role is 1) his ability to boost students’ confidence and motivation and 2) his ability to interact with students on a personal level (often in Nepali) during breaks. Both of these help to build an understanding of what the role of the LC is in this classroom context.

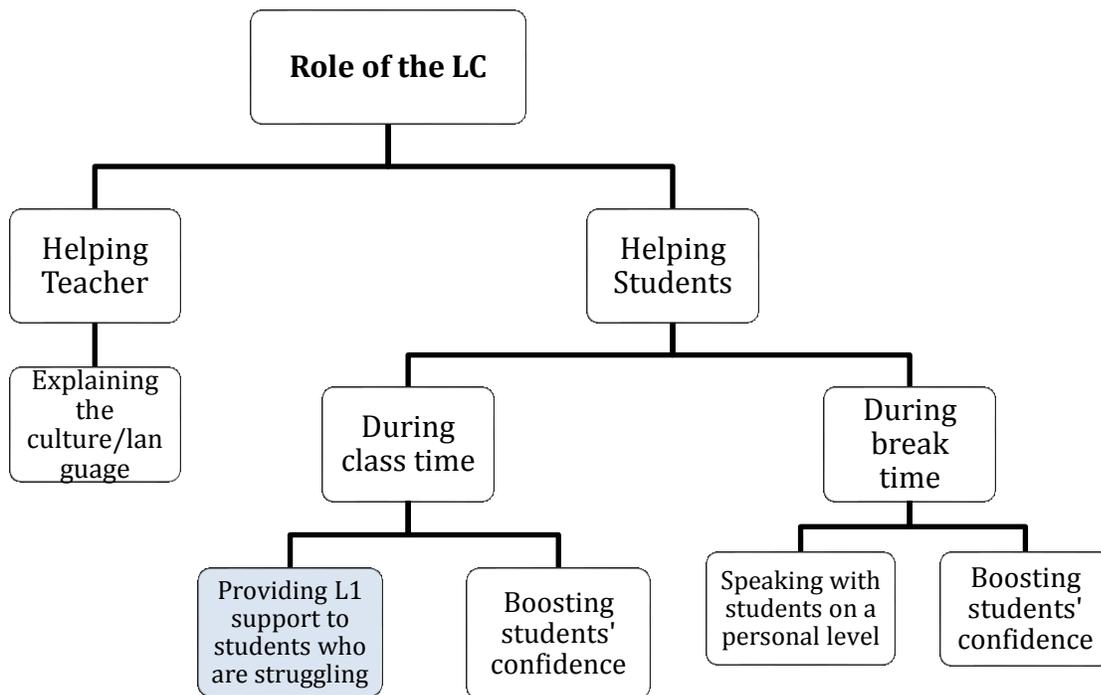


Figure 4. Role of the LC from viewpoint of the LC

Figure 4 provides an overview of how the LC sees his own role as evidenced by the top process codes. His view appears to be consistent with that of Teacher B with the exception of his belief that part of his role should be to assist students who are struggling the most with the language by using their L1 in strategic ways.

The Role of Volunteers

Finally, in all three interviews, participants expressed different views about the role of general volunteers in the classroom. In this study, volunteers are understood to be people who come into the classroom periodically to assist teachers and students with classroom activities (CCLB, 2015). They may or may not have prior experience and/or training in teaching ESL (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010). They are different than a language coach in that they do not speak the first language or come from the same cultural background as the students they are assisting. It was important to look at teacher's beliefs surrounding the role of regular volunteers to see whether differences exist between how they view the LC compared to other volunteers. Also, since the LC is taking on a role similar to a volunteer, it was important to distinguish what sets him apart from other volunteers that may enter the class. Finally, it was useful to evaluate what teachers look for in a regular volunteer and how their beliefs about volunteers influence who they allow into their classroom. Table 9 outlines the top process codes that appeared surrounding the role of volunteers.

Teacher A	Teacher B	Language Coach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being patient and compassionate • Not speaking their language • Being difficult to get a good volunteer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being patient • Doing things in a slow manner • Having mixed results • Needing to understand the literacy side of it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having more shared responsibility with the teacher • Keeping up-to-date with student’s progress • Speaking at least one of the student’s L1’s

Table 9. Top process codes of teachers’ beliefs surrounding the role of volunteers

As Table 9 indicates, both teachers acknowledged, “being patient and compassionate” as two important characteristics of a volunteer assisting at the literacy level. Teacher A emphasized having volunteers “not speaking the same language” as the students whereas Teacher B described having “mixed results” with volunteer who speak the same language as the students. She explained that just because volunteers speak the language, it doesn’t mean they understand the literacy side of things. She also stated that students might come to rely on the L1 too much, which “can be *not* a good thing” (Teacher B). Teacher B was hesitant towards having volunteers in her classroom that speak the same language as students but sees the LC as an exception because he is easily able to control his use of the L1.

“I think there’s no harm in that, but they have a really hard time not only speaking Nepali, the higher levels, with them. There’s, you know, the language, the default language and so where [the LC] doesn’t have that problem. He can really try his darnedest to just stick to the English and do it. Right? He can work with that and try and explain it different ways. So, and I don’t know what they’re telling, you know, when they speak in the language, I don’t know how, what they’re saying...” (Teacher B).

This statement suggests that part of the concern surrounding L1 use is not wanting to lose control of the classroom by having other languages being spoken besides English. Teachers

appreciate support from volunteers in the class but still see themselves as the ones maintaining control of the class and placing limits on what volunteers can and cannot do. Thus, as a volunteer, the LC is expected to maintain a secondary role to the teacher, which places limits on when and how is able to assist students.

On the other hand, the LC expressed making more effective use of volunteers who come into the classroom and spoke of “having more shared responsibility with the teacher” (Table 9) such as keeping up to date with student progress. From his perspective, volunteers are not currently maximizing their potential role. His perspective shows a view of volunteers collaborating more with the teacher, engaging in shared responsibility and essentially, being seen more as equals in the classroom. The LC also expressed a very opposite view of volunteers and the L1 use in the classroom. He believes that ideally, all volunteers should speak at least one of the L1s spoken by students in the class. This is supported by his view that L1 use is actually beneficial for assisting students at the ESL literacy level. The fact that teachers do not support this view shows that they do not believe L1 use is beneficial for assisting students.

Summary of Process Coding

The research question under investigation in this section was: (1) What beliefs do ESL literacy teachers hold surrounding the role of a language coach in the literacy classroom?

The results of the interview data revealed teachers’ beliefs surrounding three topics identified by descriptive coding: teaching literacy, literacy learners, and ideal strategies. In terms of teaching literacy, teachers expressed frustration about the challenges of communicating with learners despite having a range of strategies to combat these challenges. This suggests the possible need for an LC at the literacy level. In regards to literacy learners, teachers spoke of the needs and abilities of learners. These beliefs may influence how they think about teaching their students.

Finally, teachers expressed ideal strategies for teaching literacy. These strategies revealed the nature of teachers' beliefs about literacy. They held different beliefs about students' development of L1 literacy skills and making literacy practical for learners.

This was only a starting point for understanding teachers' beliefs regarding the role of the LC. To further investigate this, process coding was used in regards to three main topics from the interview data: L1 use in the class, the role of the LC, and the role of volunteers. The findings from the process coding reveal that both teachers see the LC as different than a regular volunteer. For Teacher A, this difference is negative and for Teacher B this difference is positive. The variation here lies in their belief about what the LC brings to the classroom and their apparent beliefs about the role of the L1 in the class. Teacher A refuses to allow L1 use in her class and also refuses the assistance of the LC because she sees him as a threat to her "English only" classroom. For Teacher B, she sees the LC as being different from regular volunteers as positive and recognizes the positive benefits of having him in the classroom (such as boosting student's confidence), but that does not necessarily include the fact that he can speak their L1.

Research Question 2: Is having a language coach (LC) supportive of student interactions and L2 language use in the ESL literacy classroom? If so, how?

Observational Data

The second research goal in this study was to determine whether or not the assistance provided by the LC is supportive of student interactions and language use in the literacy classroom. To answer this question, the researcher observed Teacher B's classroom over two consecutive days for a period of one hour each time. On the first day, the LC was present in the classroom and on the second day, the LC was not present. The researcher used an observation scheme adapted from Part A and B of COLT (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995) to identify the

interactions and language use that took place in the classroom. (See Appendix B for sample observation scheme).

Interactions in the Classroom

Observations of interactions on the day that the LC was present were grouped into four categories: (1) teacher-students, (2) student-student, (3) teacher-LC and (4) LC-students. These were chosen as they directly reflected how they were recorded in the adapted observation scheme from COLT (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995).

Teacher – Students

During the observation period (40 minutes on Day 1 and one hour on Day 2), most teacher-student interactions were teacher-initiated, occurring when Teacher B would ask a question, either to the whole class or to an individual, and then wait for a response. In total, there were 106 instances where the teacher was recorded asking a question either to the class or a particular student. These questions were mostly Wh-questions such as “What is the first letter?”, “Where is Santa Claus?” and “How do you say ‘p’?”, but also included a few yes/no questions, such as “Can you see the first letter?” Questions were mostly used as prompts to guide students through the task or activity they were working on in that moment. For example, the first activity from which the questions above were derived, had each student take turns reading a Christmas-related word and then retrieve the real-life object in the class and bring it back to their desk. The teacher called on students one at a time by following a circular rotation of the class. This meant that each student was called on an equal number of times and students could anticipate when their next turn would be.

At times, students did not appear to understand the question that Teacher B was asking them. For example, at one point during the first activity she asked the class “Where does the

ornament go?” Students looked confused and there was little response. She altered the question slightly to “Where do we put the beautiful ornaments...on the chair?” to which one student exclaimed, “Chair!” The teacher continued to repeat the question while showing hand motions of placing ornaments on an imaginary tree. Finally, one student said, “Christmas tree!” to which the teacher responded “Yes, we put the ornaments on the Christmas tree to make it look beautiful.” Although most students remained quiet and only spoke when asked a question, one student in particular was eager to speak. When students did initiate interaction with Teacher B (11 recorded instances), they did so without raising their hands. Whenever students were successful in providing a correct response to a question or in even in completing a small portion of a task, they received praise from Teacher B. For example, comments to students included “Oh look at you getting that one!” and “Wow! I’m impressed! I’m very impressed.”

Teacher B also used a variety of supports to communicate with learners. This included the use of the blackboard, realia, hand signals, songs and pictures. For example, a hand motion moving upward from a lowered position naturally accompanied a request for a student to stand up. As well, all of the activities involved pictures or actual objects that could be pointed to when introducing new vocabulary. For example, when asking a student to put something on the bulletin board, Teacher B pointed to the board in order to direct the students’ attention to what she was asking. The use of these supports appeared to be effective in helping students to understand the teacher’s oral instructions. This is evidenced by the fact that students were able to follow through with the teacher’s directions without noticeable hesitation.

However, it also appeared evident that without additional supports, communication is not only challenging, but also often unsuccessful. For example, on the second day of observations when the LC was not present, a student was trying to explain to Teacher B that the windows in

her house were “not good” and that they had frost on them. The door also was letting heat out and it was making the house very cold. Teacher B tried to explain that it costs a lot more money to heat the house when the windows and doors are letting the heat out. However, without having any additional supports to explain this concept, it was evident that communicating was a challenge and it was difficult to tell how much students actually understood. The teacher eventually moved on to a new topic when it was apparent that there was no further way to help students understand what she was trying to express in that moment. The student did not appear to be phased at all by the fact that the teacher was unable to get this point across and readily accepted the change in topic. It was clear that the teacher cared about what the student had to say and was willing to listen as they expressed their concern.

Student – Student

Overall, there was very little student-to-student interaction that took place. This was likely due to the fact that, during the two days of observations (two hours total), students did not engage in any activities that required pair work or peer collaboration. Instead, the activities were individual and focused mostly on oral communication between the teacher and students. When students did interact with one another, it was often to provide assistance to another student who did not understand a question from the teacher or was struggling to complete a portion of the activity. Students usually assisted by giving their peer the answer rather than helping them find the correct answer. Interactions between students almost always took place with peers of the same language background and in their L1 rather than in English.

Student-Student Interactions	Teacher B and LC both present	Only LC present	Only Teacher B Present
Asking for Help	1		
Providing Help	10	4	3
Working Alone	4		
Working in pairs			3
Working in groups			
Asking a question			1
Answering a question			
Speaking Nepali	7		
Speaking Arabic	1		10
Speaking English	1		1

Table 10. Student-student Interactions.

Table 10 shows the interactions that took place among students when the LC and Teacher B were both present (40 minutes), when only the LC was present (20 minutes), and when only Teacher B was present (one hour). In terms of providing help, students were observed helping each other 10 times when both the LC and teacher were present, four times when only the LC was present, and three times when only the teacher was present. Overall, students appeared to provide help to one another regardless of who was present in the classroom, most often using their own L1 to do so.

Teacher – LC

During the observation period where the LC was present with Teacher B (40 minutes out of the total one hour observation), the teacher interacted with the LC a total of 8 times. On half of these occasions, it was to give him verbal directions such as: “We’re going to break up now into two groups to review this”. The other four times, was to ask him a question such as: “How

far did you get?" The LC, in turn, did not frequently initiate communication with Teacher B, except once to respond to her inquiries and again, on two occasions, to ask a question. In one other instance, the LC made a comment to the teacher about a cultural difference he had observed in an exchange between two students in the class. He shared with the teacher that, in Nepali, the word for "thank you" is seldom used and so he has observed that students often feel uncomfortable using this word in English in situations where it would be considered culturally appropriate to do so. Teacher B did not react to his comment so it is unclear whether this information was helpful for her. Ideally, these types of insights could help to strengthen Teacher B's understanding of her students and the possible reactions or behaviour they may display in various social interactions in the classroom. This interaction also shows how the LC's cultural knowledge helps to distinguish his role from that of a regular volunteer.

Based on these observations, the relationship between the LC and Teacher B is not one of collaboration. The interactions between the LC and Teacher B indicate that Teacher B is in control of the classroom and sees the LC as an extra resource to assist her when needed. This limits him to playing a background role in the class and only occasionally assisting students when the opportunity arises. Therefore, although the LC has the potential to be more actively involved in the classroom, especially given his knowledge of the language and culture of the learners, his role when the teacher is present in the class is that of a regular volunteer. It is only on rare occasions that the LC is able to use his additional cultural and language knowledge to assist the students or the teacher. However, he described knowing when to do so as "walking on eggshells" (LC) in that, he is often unsure when to speak and when not to. Part of this uncertainty is due to the fact that it has never been communicated, either between him and the students or him and the teacher, of what his purpose or strategy in using the language should be (LC).

Therefore, he described himself as “doing a patch work”, so to speak, by trying to assist students using his knowledge of the language while being very cautious not to over-step his role in the class (LC). He demonstrated high respect for the Teacher B’s authority by his careful attention to her expectations and ready response to any directions given to him in the class. He also recognized that he “doesn’t know the students like she does” given that he only volunteers once a week (LC). Thus, although he believes he could be doing more to assist students with a proper strategy in place (one where everyone is on the same page and the L1 is used in agreed-upon and strategic ways), he readily succumbs to his given role.

LC – Students

The LC’s interactions with students were largely influenced by whether Teacher B was also present in the classroom. When Teacher B was present (40 minutes out of the 1 hour observation), the LC played a minimal role, mostly sitting in the background and only occasionally interacting with students to provide assistance. As shown in the first column of Table 11, during Activity 1 where the teacher was present, the LC was recorded explaining instructions to a student only two times and providing help only once. There was little opportunity to help because Teacher B was leading the activity and initiated the majority of interaction with students.

LC-Student Interactions	Teacher Present - Activity 1 (15 min.)	Teacher Present - Activity 2 (25 min.)	Teacher Absent (20 min.)
Explaining Instructions: In English In Nepali	2	11	2 4
Initiating/Providing Help:	1		13
Monitoring Tasks:		2	1
Asking a Question: In English In Nepali	5	25	31 6
Answering a Question: In English In Nepali		2	1
Giving Positive Feedback		5	10
Correcting an Error	1		3
Checking Comprehension			5

Table 11. Comparison of LC-student interactions when Teacher B was present and absent.

Only during Activity 2 (approx. 25 minutes in length), when the class was making Christmas ornaments, did the LC assist more directly with the students. During this portion of the class, it appeared that the LC had more opportunity to interact with students because there was little formal teaching taking place. The atmosphere appeared to be relaxed as both Teacher B and the LC floated between students, helping them put together their ornaments. Throughout this activity, the LC was observed explaining instructions in English to students a total of 11 times. There were also 25 instances where he interacted with students by asking questions and five instances where he gave positive feedback when students were successful. Overall, there were

far more instances of interaction between the LC and students during the second part of the class compared to the first. This suggests that both the teacher and the classroom context may influence how much opportunity the LC is given to assist students.

However, the role of the LC very much shifted when the teacher temporarily left the LC with four students to complete a twenty-minute activity. During this time, the LC initiated far more interaction with students as he took on a more teacher-like role. As shown in Table 11, when the teacher was absent, he initiated helping students a total of 13 times and gave twice as much positive feedback to students (10 instances) compared to when the teacher had been present (5 instances). The LC also showed cultural sensitivity, attention to individual students' needs, and an evaluation of student comprehension throughout the activity. Each of these are described in detail below.

Cultural Sensitivity.

In general, there was a heightened cultural awareness and sensitivity when the LC was left alone with the students. For example, the LC referred to one of the Nepali ladies in the class as "Didi". He later explained that this is a cultural term meaning "big sister", and it was to show respect to someone who is older than him. He said that for the older ones, he had a hard time saying their names because it is "culturally awkward" (LC). CCLB (2015) states that this kind of sensitivity to student's culture could be helpful in allowing them to feel more comfortable in the classroom. It was this student's first day in this particular class (after being moved down from Literacy 2/3), however she appeared calm and relaxed throughout the observations and readily responded to the LC's prompts during the activity.

Attention to Student Needs.

Additionally, the LC showed sensitivity to learners needs, using Nepali to communicate when necessary. For example, during the observation period, one student explained to the LC that reading the words on the page in front of him was hurting his eyes because he didn't have his glasses. Being able to communicate his needs in Nepali were helpful for the LC to understand why he was struggling to complete his work – something the student would have struggled to communicate to the teacher on his own in English. The LC was able to speak to this learner in Nepali and reassure him that he could take a break and rest his eyes. This situation reiterates the specific need for L1 support at this level of literacy as stated by CCLB (2015).

Evaluation of Student Comprehension.

Finally, the LC also showed evidence of being able to inquire of students directly to see what they understood. For example, there was one Nepali student who had just joined Teacher B's class. This student had originally been placed in a higher-level class but it was deemed too advanced for her level. Thus, she had joined Teacher B's class. During the activity where the LC was working one-on-one with students, this student was able to match a picture to a word quite quickly and this surprised the LC. He clarified how she was able to find the answer so quickly by asking her in Nepali, "Are you able to read? How was it that your were able to match the music one?". The LC said that her response seemed to indicate that she had guessed the answer, but he thought it was also possible she had actually read a bit. Many times, teachers working with students at this level of proficiency have a hard time knowing whether students understand what they are being taught. Because the progress is so slow at the literacy level, the teachers are often left guessing what is actually working in the class and what is not. The fact that the LC has the

ability to inquire of students in their first language could potentially be helpful for gauging student comprehension and evaluating student progress.

Language Use in the Classroom

Language use in the classroom varied noticeably depending on who was present in the classroom. When the Teacher and LC were both present, “English only” was strictly enforced. When the LC was present without the teacher, he used both English and Nepali to interact with the students. When the LC was not present, “English only” was still the norm but it was not as strictly enforced. These differences are discussed in detail below.

Teacher and LC Present: “English Only”

During observations on both days, Teacher B maintained an “English only” policy in the class at all times. On the day that the LC was present, students attempted several times to use Nepali with the LC. When this happened, the teacher would interject and remind students to speak “English only”. In total, during the first day of observations, Teacher B reminded students 7 times to speak “English only” while the LC was present (40 minutes).

In general, the LC avoided using Nepali when the teacher was present. He later commented that although he and Teacher B never directly discussed it, he could tell that she did not want him speaking Nepali in the classroom (LC). He seemed uncertain of her exact reason for this but shared many possibilities including that she may not want to rely on it too much given that he is only there once a week and that there is no actual strategy in place of how it could be used in an effective way. At one point he also shared that it’s “hard to say to what degree she thinks it’s valuable as well” (LC).

There was only one occasion where the LC did speak Nepali when the teacher was present, and that was to assist a student who was not feeling well. He spoke to the student in

order to clarify what he was feeling. In this instance, Teacher B did not appear to mind. This may have been because she recognized it was a situation outside of the regular classroom activities.

LC only Present: the Use of Nepali in the Classroom

It became apparent that “English only” was something held in place by the teacher and not necessarily the LC when Teacher B temporarily left the classroom. During this part of the observation (approximately 20 minutes in length), the LC worked with 4 students in the classroom while Teacher B took the other half of the class to work in another room. Two of these students were Arabic speakers and two of the students were Nepali speakers. During this time, the LC used Nepali 15 times during interactions with the two Nepali students. The Arabic-speaking students were only assisted in English. These two students did not show any adverse reaction to the use of Nepali during this time and in fact, did not appear to notice that it was being used at all. Despite using Nepali with the two Nepali students, the LC spent an equal amount of time focusing on each student and L1 use did not appear to take away from the overall flow of the activity. The following table outlines the ways in which Nepali was used during this segment of the observation.

Use of Nepali	Number of Occurrences
1. Giving an instruction	4
2. Asking a question	6
3. Repeating a word	1
4. Refocusing attention	4

Table 12. Use of Nepali and Number of Occurrences where only LC was present with 4 students of Nepali (n=2) and Arabic (n=2) L1s

In total, the researcher recorded 15 instances where Nepali was used with the two Nepali L1 students. These instances were divided into four categories: (1) giving an instruction, (2) asking a question, (3) repeating a word and (4) refocusing attention. (1) Giving an instruction was when the LC specifically used Nepali to explain how to complete a portion of the activity or to give direction as to what they would be doing next (i.e. “Now we’re going to read”). In 2 out of the 4 instances, he first gave instructions in English and then repeated the instruction in Nepali. In the other 2 instances, he only used Nepali, focusing on the Nepali L1 students and giving them detailed instruction of what to do. (2) Asking a question was when the LC posed a question in Nepali and then waited for a response. Five out of the six times that this occurred, the LC first asked the question in English *before* repeating it in Nepali. For example, at one point the LC was helping the student to read the word “stocking”. The LC asked “How do we say that?” He immediately repeated this question in Nepali and then in English again. (3) Repeating a word occurred only once when the LC asked a question in English about a specific word and then repeated the word in English.

“What is the sound for ‘g’? G-Going...(Repeats the word ‘going’ in Nepali)” (LC).

The LC used Nepali to draw and refocus student’s attention on 4 occasions. Two times, it was to remind students to listen while it was another student’s turn to talk and the other two times, it was to remind one particular student to focus on his own worksheet rather than look at/copy his neighbor’s work. For example, on one of the occasions where he reminded a student to listen, he said “listening” and then in Nepali he said “Your turn’s over, listening”. This was said with a slightly teasing tone, reflecting the positive relationship the LC has with students.

Teacher Present: English only but Less Pressure

On the day that the LC was not present in the class, only English was used during class time. However, it was noted that even though students at times used their first language to speak to each other as they had when the LC had been present the day before, the teacher only reminded students once to speak “English only”. It appears that there was a heightened concern of other languages being used in the classroom when the LC was present compared to when he was absent. This finding suggests that Teacher B felt a stronger need to maintain control of the classroom when the LC was present.

Summary of Observational Data

The research question under investigation in this section was: (2) Is having an language coach (LC) supportive of student interactions and L2 language use in the ESL literacy classroom? If so, how?

The LC, for the most part, was observed playing a background role in the classroom, only assisting students in minimal ways when the teacher was present. This suggests that Teacher B views the LC similar to any other volunteer. She recognizes his ability to communicate with learners in Nepali but typically discourages L1 use during class time. Although it has never been directly discussed, there is a mutual understanding between the LC and Teacher B that Nepali is not to be used in class. There is evidenced trust and respect between the teacher and the LC, as the LC is often permitted to work with students on his own and therefore to take on a teacher-like role. Observations showed that, at these times, the LC used students’ L1 to interact with the Nepali-speaking students. The LC appeared to use Nepali for three main purposes: to explain instructions, to ensure comprehension, and to refocus students’ attention. Finally, the observational data suggests that, even with the use of added supports (i.e. realia, pictures),

communication using only English may be significantly challenging at times, due to the students' low English proficiency. Overall, it appears that the ability of the LC to interact with students is greatly dependent upon how the teacher sees his role and chooses to make use of his assistance in the classroom. In this context, there are limitations placed on the LC as to how and when he can help. Since the teacher is not supportive of L1 use in the classroom, the LC is unable to use Nepali to assist students. These constraints are likely not solely enforced by the teacher, but potentially originate outside the classroom (i.e. by the broader expectations of the school) and by the curriculum in place. These findings will now be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter discusses the results of the study in relation to existing research in the fields of ESL literacy and teacher cognition. Following this, the conclusion and limitations of the study as well as directions for future research are presented.

As previously described, the two main goals of this study were: (1) to investigate the beliefs surrounding the role of the language coach and (2) to determine whether the LC's presence in the classroom was supportive of student interactions and L2 language use and if so, in what ways. Data were collected by way of interviews with three participants and observations of the ESL literacy classroom. While the interview data were analyzed using descriptive coding, sub-coding, and process-coding (Saldaña, 2013), observational data were coded using an observation scheme adapted from Parts A and B of the COLT (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). Results showed that the two teachers and the LC each think about the role of the LC differently. Furthermore, the teachers' beliefs about the role of the LC appear to limit the LC's ability to use his cultural and language knowledge to interact with students during regular class time. Additionally, the LC's role appears to be limited by both the context and the constraints that teachers have placed on him. These results are discussed next, by addressing each research question separately.

Research Question 1: What beliefs do ESL literacy teachers hold surrounding the role of a language coach in the L2 literacy classroom?

CCLB (2015) defines an LC as someone who speaks the L1 of the students and who usually tends to be a volunteer. As the observed LC fits into both of these categories, it was hypothesized that evaluation of the teacher participants' beliefs surrounding the use of L1 in the classroom and the role of volunteers would lend itself to a better understanding of how they also see the role of the LC.

Beliefs about L1 Use in the Classroom

All three participants (i.e., Teacher A, Teacher B, and the LC) in this study expressed very different beliefs regarding L1 use. For example, Teacher A was very much opposed to any L1 use in the classroom whatsoever, arguing that it is detrimental for students' overall progress. She expressed four types of concerns about L1 use in the classroom - concerns related to (1) learning, (2) context, (3) necessity, and (4) feasibility. The first concern, *learning*, centered on her belief that students will learn more effectively by being exposed to as much L2 input as possible (i.e. hearing the L2 spoken and reading instructions in the L2). The second concern was one of *context* - that L1 use would cause conflict or jealousy among her specific group of students, which could lead to significant tension or even heightened arguments between learners. Her third concern was related to the *necessity* (or lack thereof) of L1 use, in that, she posed there are other ways for her to deal with conversation breakdowns (i.e. using picture dictionaries or looking things up on the computer). Finally, she expressed concerns related to *feasibility* – that there are too many languages in the classroom and it is simply not practical to incorporate all students' L1s. Teacher A voiced these concerns when asked about allowing an LC into her classroom showing that her view of L1 use goes hand-in-hand with her refusal to have an LC in her classroom. Teacher B's beliefs about L1 use in the class were not voiced directly but rather, her beliefs became apparent through observation of her teaching practice. She was quick to remind students to speak "English only" when she heard other languages being spoken in the classroom and also did not allow the LC to use Nepali (the L1 of half of the students in the class) during class time. During her interview, Teacher B expressed concern that students could become too reliant on the L1. However, unlike Teacher A, her beliefs about L1 use did not conflict with her willingness to have the LC in her classroom. This is because she sees *other*

benefits to having him present in the class besides his ability to help with language. These include the LC's ability to help explain cultural differences to her and to be a source of confidence and motivation for the students. In fact, it appears that she does not associate his ability to speak the language as beneficial during class time at all but readily acknowledges its usefulness during break time as a way for the LC to connect with students on a personal level. Overall, her beliefs appeared to be more complex and more difficult to define than those of Teacher A. This finding is consistent with other researchers who have attempted to clearly identify teachers' beliefs in regards to L1 use. Hall and Cook (2013), for example, in their survey of 2,785 English language teachers from 111 countries, found inconsistencies between teachers' reported beliefs about own-language (their term for L1) use in the classroom and actual own-language use. These were teachers working with learners of all ages, with just over half teaching a beginner to pre-intermediate level of English (Hall & Cook, 2013). They found that 61.4% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with *excluding* own-language and 73.5% reported only allowing own-language use at specific times in the lesson. However, teachers in the same survey also acknowledged seemingly significant amounts of own-language use in their classroom (Hall & Cook, 2013). It appears that teachers may not always be aware of their true beliefs, leading to inconsistencies. Woods (1996) calls the inconsistencies between what teachers say and what they do "hotspots" (p. 39). He argues that it is important to look for these inconsistencies because they often reveal the underlying beliefs that teachers have. Woods (1996) states:

"...discrepancy could occur when some unit of behaviour has become an unconscious routine and carried out as an unanalyzed chunk. In such a case, the individual may not be aware of a particular behaviour which has been internalized previously and reflects the characteristics of a prior state in the evolution of the teacher's BAK [beliefs, assumptions, knowledge]" (p. 253).

This may be the case in Teacher B's frequent reminder to students to use "English only" in the class. It is possible that this reaction to hearing other languages being spoken is one that has become automatic over time based on her beliefs that students "could become too reliant on the L1", specifically when the LC is present (Teacher B). Even the LC admitted that students could potentially take advantage of his presence in the class by using his assistance more as a crutch than a benefit. For this reason, he stressed that he is "very conscious" about how and when he uses the language to assist students.

Beliefs about Volunteers

Both Teacher A and Teacher B expressed that they are very grateful to have the assistance of volunteers in their classroom, however, with Teacher A acknowledging that finding good volunteers is difficult. Both teachers stated that good volunteers are people who are patient and compassionate. They both also agreed that good volunteers must be people who have a good grasp of the English language and more importantly, that they are able to control and refrain from using other languages in the classroom. Teacher A specifically stated the importance of having volunteers with native-like English-speaking skills only, whereas Teacher B did not state this directly but implied that this would be ideal. The fact that both teachers did not support volunteers speaking any languages other than English suggests that they do not see L1 use in the class as a potentially supportive measure, but rather as a threat to their "English only" classroom. Hall and Cook (2013) put forth that "the extent to which own-language [i.e., L1] use occurs in a language classroom will in many ways depend on the teachers' and learners' perceptions of its legitimacy, value and appropriate classroom functions" (p. 294). In addition to the question of its legitimacy, teachers may also fear losing control of the class if volunteers are able to

communicate with learners in ways that they do not understand. Teacher B hinted at this when she said:

“He [i.e., the LC] can really try his darnedest to just stick to the English and do it. Right? He can work with that and try and explain it in different ways. So, and I don’t know what they’re telling, you know, when they speak in the language, I don’t know how, what they’re saying [...] but if there were somebody at a higher level who understood that [i.e., the need to “stick to English”] and was able to come in, I think that, it would, it wouldn’t hurt I don’t think” (Teacher B).

In comparing the LC to other volunteers, it was apparent that Teacher B’s concern was that they might not be able to adhere to her “English only” policy in the classroom if they were not completely comfortable in English. She specifically expressed concern about L1 use occurring in the form of translation, and the fact that she has little control over what volunteers say because she does not speak the language.

“I just get the feeling...when there’s translation and things like that going on in the class, I never know if they’re telling each other the right thing or not. Right? So I try and really watch for that because it can be...NOT a good thing if they’re, just giving mis-information to each other” (Teacher B).

Cummins (2007) asserts that translation in the L2 classroom as a ‘faux pas’ stems from the same assumptions that have guided much of English language teaching as a whole. Phillipson (1992) identified some of these core assumptions, including that “the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker” and that “if other languages are used much, standards of English will drop” (p. 185). There is, however, evidence to suggest that translation is not necessarily a measure that needs to be avoided in L2 teaching. Manyak (2004) argues that translation can actually promote English acquisition, specifically when students have very low levels of English proficiency, as it allows them to fully participate in class and form connections in the L2. This was illustrated in Manyak’s (2004) study of native Spanish-speaking elementary school students enrolled in

English immersion. Their grade 1/2 split class was observed twice a week over a 10-month period as they engaged in various literacy activities, some of which involved translating between their L1 (Spanish) and English. They found that translating both their own and their peers' oral and written work helped to facilitate biliteracy development. For example, many students who had only been able to write in Spanish at the beginning of the year, showed marked improvement by the end of the ten months, creating detailed bilingual texts in both Spanish and English (Manyak, 2004). This study challenges the traditional view that translation always leads to negative outcomes in L2 learning (Cummins, 2007) and instead highlights ways in which translation may be used strategically to assist students with developing literacy skills in two languages. The use of L1 as a resource in L2 learning was also demonstrated in Carroll and Sambolín Morales' (2016) study on translanguaging (the use of "multiple discursive practices" (García, 2009, p. 49)) among Puerto Rican ESL learners in a college-level class. Students in this study were permitted to use their L1 (Spanish) interchangeably with the target language (English) when producing written reflections and engaging in oral discussions with peers. The use of translanguaging in this context was shown to promote participation among the learners and to enrich the quality of what students produced in both languages (Carroll & Sambolín Morales, 2016). Additionally, L1 use acted as a scaffold for students, allowing them to move from familiar concepts in their L1 towards unknown concepts in English. For example, one student chose to express a complex idea in Spanish first, acknowledging that his peers would later help him to translate it to English (Carroll & Sambolín Morales, 2016). Thus, although teachers in the present study were wary of volunteers and LC in particular speaking to students in other languages besides English and showed concern regarding "translation" in the classroom,

research does not necessarily support the claim that these practices will have adverse effects on students.

Beliefs about the Role of the Language Coach

Interviews with the teachers and the LC revealed a complexity of beliefs surrounding the role for a language coach in ESL literacy contexts. In taking from the viewpoints of each participant as well as the observations performed in the classroom, the role of the LC is one that encompasses three main factors: the LC can be seen as (1) a cultural and community connection point, (2) a source of motivation and confidence, and (3) a provider of L1 support. These three aspects of the LC's role revealed in this study are discussed in relation to connecting research.

The LC as a Cultural and Community Connection Point

The LC in this study appeared to help mediate teachers' knowledge of the students' L1 community by explaining cultural differences. Both Teacher A and Teacher B acknowledged that this support is helpful for them. For example, during observations, the LC explained to Teacher B that students often feel uncomfortable using the word "thank you" in English due to the fact that this word is seldom used in their L1. This aspect of the LC's role is consistent with those of a study on the role of *paraeducators* in the United States (Rueda et al., 2004). Paraeducators are teaching assistants who work alongside teachers in ESL elementary school contexts. Similar to a language coach, paraeducators often come from the same culture, language background, and communities as the students they teach and are present in the classroom to provide additional support in the students' first language. In their study, Rueda et al. (2004) found that paraeducators helped to expand teachers' understanding of the community by bridging the gap between cultural differences among teachers and students. For example, researchers reported that one paraeducator helped a teacher to understand the thought process of Latino

parents regarding their children's behaviour and academic progress in school. This fostered cultural understanding on behalf of the teacher, giving her an increased ability to connect directly with the community herself.

The current study also suggested that the LC was able to support students by acting as a cultural mediator between their own Nepali community and that of Canadian culture. Teacher B and the LC both indicated that students have little opportunity to interact socially outside of their own L1 community because of their limited language proficiency. However, the students appear to recognize the LC as a direct access to Canadian culture and one that they actually *can* access because he speaks Nepali in addition to English. For this reason, students often have many questions to ask him about Canadian culture (Teacher B). However, this study revealed that the LC was only able to assist students in this way during break time rather than during class time because this was the time that the teacher saw fit to do so.

“...But it's not so much during, I mean it's not as much during the class time as break time or lunch time because they always have questions for him about why certain things are the way they are, either in [Name of the city], or in their community. So they have *life* questions, the Nepali students, to ask him about. And he takes that opportunity to speak with them on a personal level at break time and lunch time, sort of after” (Teacher B).

As the quote above illustrates, Teacher B did not recognize the potential for the LC to assist students with cultural understanding *during* actual lessons. Consequently, this limited the LC's role in the observed setting and forfeited opportunities to make class time more culturally relevant for learners. CCLB (2015) specifically indicates that allowing students to form connections between their own culture and that of L2 learning is important for literacy learners. Similarly, Rueda et al. (2004) argued that one of the main purposes of paraeducators is that “their use of culturally based interactional features can potentially serve to create instructional context

that are more familiar to students, mediating participation in the learning activities” (p. 83).

Thus, the data collected in this study suggests that the LC’s role is not currently realizing it’s fullest potential, as the LC was not given opportunity to assist students in making these culture connections during class time.

Research has emphasized the ways in which culture plays a significant role in L2 learning. For example, Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo’s (1992) ethnographic study of Malaitan children in a rural elementary school in the Solomon Islands found that the de-contextualization of classroom learning from culture had a detrimental effect on children’s language and social development. Specifically, it threatened their overall cultural identity because their formal schooling did not coincide with the traditions of their culture, creating a division between their two identities. This became problematic in the larger society as it served to reinforce the already existent divisions between the educated urban community and the uneducated rural community. Toohey (2000) highlighted the ways in which education can serve to either promote or devalue students’ cultural identity in her longitudinal study of minority children in a mainstream school environment. This study revealed the ways in which learners’ individual identities were subtly constrained and demoted by the classroom practices and social exchanges of teachers and peers. For example, teachers sought to ensure that minority children did not sit together in the classroom, which Toohey (2000) argues was a way of subtly ensuring conformity to the English majority. Additionally, Toohey (2000) argues that, during small group activities, minority language learners were given less opportunity to speak in relation to their more confident English-speaking peers. Norton and Toohey (2011) would describe these practices as “identity positions that silence students” (p. 430). They state:

“If language educators recognize that diverse classroom practices offer learners a range of positions from which to speak, listen, read, or write, it is important for educators to explore with students which identity positions offer the greatest opportunity for social engagement and interaction. And, of course, if there are identity positions that silence students, teachers need to investigate and address practices that marginalize students” (p. 430).

Research has supported that drawing on the cultural and background knowledge of learners is one way that teachers can seek to empower learners (CCLB, 2015). However, this did not appear to be the case during observations of Teacher B’s classroom. Observed lessons did not appear to be structured in a way that allowed the LC to use his cultural knowledge to assist learners, an assertion that is supported by Rueda et al.’s (2004) work. Researchers found that, because teachers made no effort to incorporate students’ culture or cultural concerns into their lessons, paraeducators could rarely contribute their cultural knowledge or make connections with students in regards to the lesson. Instead, these cultural connections happened outside of class, mostly during recess. Their study also found that paraeducators themselves were not fully aware of their potential to assist students with forming cultural connections and as such, they missed out on opportunities to do so (Rueda et al., 2004). These findings suggest that teachers may require training on how to make use of students’ culture and background knowledge as a strategy for L2 learning (as emphasized by CCLB, 2015). Additionally, LCs may benefit from receiving education on specific ways they may be able to assist students by using their cultural knowledge (Rueda et al., 2004).

The LC as a Source of Motivation and Confidence

Another aspect of the LC’s role is his ability to encourage students by being a source of motivation and confidence. Teacher B described the overall sense of discouragement and

frustration that the Nepali students have faced as a result of their lack of language success and role models to look up to.

“Because there’s a lot of...things happening in the community where he [i.e., the LC] feels that they are frustrated because...they’ve been here for a number of years and they don’t see anybody [from their L1 community] as really being successful” (Teacher B).

The fact that students have struggled for so long with the language and have made very little progress has caused many of them to slowly lose confidence in their ability to succeed. The LC shared that students often say to him in Nepali “our brains are broken, they don’t work” (LC). This self-criticism and discouragement is not uncommon to literacy learners. Lukes’ (2011) study of Spanish ESL literacy learners in the U.S. found that students expressed feeling ashamed and “useless” because of their inability to read and write in either Spanish or English. Some students reported keeping it a secret that they were attending Spanish literacy classes due to their feelings of embarrassment (Lukes, 2011). For these individuals, it was the support and encouragement from those who could relate to them most, including their peers and teacher, that helped them to overcome their feelings of shame and eventually gain confidence in the classroom (Lukes, 2011). In the same way, even though the LC is different from the Nepali students in many ways, he shared that it is their similarities and his ability to understand their struggle that make him a valuable support to them.

“...There’s differences but uh I think at the end of the day, they’re grateful to have people who can understand them uh a little better, you know? [...] I think they see me as someone um that has great potential to help them compared to others” (LC).

This sentiment from the LC signals that students feel more at ease and comfortable when

the LC is present which, literacy experts argue, is essential for literacy learners due to their unfamiliarity with classroom contexts (CCLB, 2015). They state that creating a positive classroom-learning environment for students serves as the foundation for all subsequent learning (ibid). This is consistent with studies on paraeducators as well. Rueda et al. (2004) suggest that paraeducators are beneficial in supporting students in the classroom particularly by helping to create a comfortable and culturally relevant learning environment for students, which, in turn, helps students to become engaged and motivated in classroom learning.

The fact that the LC is also involved in the Nepali community outside of the class has helped to foster the high level of trust and respect that the students have for him (Teacher B). This, in turn, gives him the ability to be a source of confidence and motivation in the classroom. Tarone, Bigelow and Hansen (2009) demonstrated the value of building meaningful relationships outside of the classroom in their study involving a community of Somali ESL literacy learners in the United States. They recognized that in order to gain the confidence and trust of the learners they wished to work with, they needed to show the sincerity of their interest by first getting to know and investing in the community. They volunteered in various ways while becoming familiar with the culture and listening to the stories of the learners. They later described this experience as one that became far more than just seeking to achieve their research goals but one that brought about a significant amount of insight into their own “personal and professional development” (p. 38). The students, in turn, opened up to the researchers and were willingly to fully participate.

Motivation vs. Investment.

Besides feeling discouraged due to their limited progress towards learning the language, there may be other reasons the Nepali students in this study seemingly lack motivation in the

literacy classroom. Norton and Toohey (2004) argue that, oftentimes, teachers assume that students are simply unmotivated when the truth is that they are not “invested” in the language practices of the classroom. This term “investment” is defined as “a construct that views learners as having complex and changing identities, which manifest differently in varied social situations” (Ollerhead, 2012, p. 66). It helps to explain how students interpret the language practices of a class in relation to their own expectations and how much or how little they choose to participate as a result. It is argued that a lack of investment tends to occur when the materials used in the classroom are not culturally accessible for students, making it difficult for learners to form connections with their existing identities and knowledge (Norton & Toohey, 2011). In some cases, students might actually outright resist the language practices of the classroom when they sense that the activities they are being asked to engage in do not accurately represent their identities as learners. Reeves (2009) argues that teachers’ beliefs and attitudes about language learning may serve to reinforce misconceptions that do not accurately represent students’ identities. Furthermore, in order to make sense of or justify why certain challenges or struggles exist in the classroom, teachers may actually attribute a certain identity to their learners for their own self-interest. To avoid this, Norton and Toohey (2011) suggest that teachers should be encouraged to “regard students’ identities as potential, and to experiment with activities that do not lock students in finalized identities” (p. 429). They advocate that teachers explore a wide range of classroom practices, particularly ones that promote interaction and social engagement, to truly engage learner identities. This ensures that students become “participators” of their own learning allowing them to reach their fullest potential (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

CCLB (2015) holds a very similar view, as evidenced by their description of approaches and support for literacy students. They advise teachers to “begin with the learners’ culture,

language and prior experience” (p. 14), stating that “if their life situations and experiences are used as a starting point for literacy development, learners will be motivated” (p. 10).

Furthermore, they emphasize that a successful literacy program is one that “provides a non-threatening classroom setting where learners feel comfortable, build on their strengths and develop literacy and language abilities through topics of study that are relevant to their lives” (p. 9). This repeated emphasis on choosing themes and topics that students can relate to highlights its perceived importance and yet, this practice is severely undermined in literacy classrooms as a whole, and there appears to be a gap in how it actually plays out in classroom learning (Norton & Toohey, 2004). For example, the LC expressed that topics being covered in the current literacy class are often ones that students have a hard time making connections to because they are so unfamiliar to their own culture and traditions (e.g. traditions surrounding Canadian holidays such as Christmas).

“I’d even like to see more of the curriculum...the content that is being used, tailored specific- I know we try to do everything that here and all that but we’re using a lot of words and a lot of things that have no reference to them and are kind of not relevant” (LC).

To address this issue, teachers should be encouraged to not only teach topics that are relevant to becoming adjusted to Canadian culture as articulated by the LINC curriculum, but also leave room for students to share their own experiences such as the differences and similarities between their own cultural celebrations and those of Canadian culture (CCLB, 2015; Norton & Toohey, 2011). As it stands now, it may be difficult for students to see the value in what they are learning as it is so far removed from their own background knowledge and experiences.

The LC as L1 Support

The potential impact of the LC as a language support was highlighted specifically during his observed time with four students where he temporarily took on the primary role as the teacher. During this time, the LC provided language support in three specific ways: (1) clarifying instructions (2) checking comprehension and (3) re-focusing students' attention onto the task at hand. These strategies are consistent with other research on L1 use in ESL contexts. For example, Littlewood and Yu (2011) asked 50 second-year university students from Hong Kong and China to recall the purpose their English teachers were most likely to use their L1 (Cantonese or Putonghua) in the classroom. Researchers found that the most common purposes students reported were to establish social relationships, to communicate complex meaning, to ensure understanding, and to maintain control over the classroom environment (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). They argue that each of these help to establish a positive learning environment and that the use of L1 may help to scaffold this more effectively. Similarly, ESL teachers in a study by Hall and Cook (2013) reported using the students' L1 most frequently to explain grammar, to develop rapport, to promote a positive classroom atmosphere, and to maintain discipline. The fact that there appears to be consistency between the types of L1 use employed in this study and other similar studies suggests that students' L1 can be used in specific and intentional ways to assist learners. For example, the LC appeared to intentionally use Nepali to ensure comprehension. He would first speak to a student in English and then repeat the utterance in Nepali directly after. This often occurred when a student appeared to be confused either by their lack of response or puzzled facial expression. Kim and Elder (2008) found that teachers reported a similar reaction of switching to student's L1 when students' reactions showed that they were confused. Similarly, Littlewood and Yu (2011) speak of using the L1 in planned and strategic

ways to achieve language-learning goals. One such example of this is presenting new utterances to students in a sandwich-like sequence: L2 - L1 - L2. They argue that presenting a comparison in both languages can “help understanding and increase confidence by creating links between the new and the familiar” (p. 71). A similar method that promotes the use of L1 as a medium of comprehension in L2 learning is referred to as preview-review (Wright, 2009). This technique involves someone first having a brief discussion in the student’s L1 about a topic to be covered in the second language, which serves to activate the student’s prior knowledge of the topic in their L1. The topic is then presented in English, the student’s L2. Finally, the teacher reviews the key ideas in their primary language and allows the student to ask any questions they may have about what was read (Wright, 2009).

Although Teacher B did not appear to support L1 use in her own classroom, she stated that it would be ideal for students to be taught “at least the basics” of literacy in their L1 before beginning L2 literacy in English. Consistent with Cummins (2000), she asserted that this could help students to form connections in their L1 and then transfer this knowledge to the development of their L2 literacy skills. Indeed, L1 literacy has repeatedly been shown to correlate positively with L2 learning. Collier (1989) found that students who had acquired L1 literacy took considerably less time to develop equivalent literacy skills in their L2. Cummins (2000) also provides evidence that L1 literacy is supportive of L2 literacy development. Researchers in Lukes’ (2011) study found that when students were able to improve their literacy skills in their L1 (Spanish), this significantly improved their English literacy as well, even without being enrolled in an ESL literacy class. For example, one student who had been taking the Spanish literacy class reported being able to read street signs in English for the first time. This, Lukes (2011) argued, was also a huge boost to the student’s self-esteem and motivation to

continue learning. Additionally, this same study found that literacy students who had been enrolled in an ESL literacy class before taking Spanish literacy, reported making no progress and being largely unsuccessful (Lukes, 2011). This suggests that there is, in fact, a missing piece for ESL literacy students struggling to learn to read and write in a second language – that being, first developing these skills in the language most familiar to them (i.e., their L1).

Summary of Discussion regarding RQ 1

Teachers' beliefs surrounding the role of the LC appeared to be influenced by their beliefs about L1 use in the classroom and the role of volunteers. Teachers expressed not allowing L1 use, and especially discouraging volunteers from using "translation" in the classroom - a view that Carroll and Sambolín Morales' (2016) do not support. They argue that translation may actually help students to form deeper connections between their L1 and L2 literacy when used appropriately (ibid). Teacher B acknowledged two main aspects of the LC's role that set him apart from regular volunteers, including his ability to be a cultural and community connection point and a source of motivation and confidence for the Nepali-speaking students. In terms of being a cultural connection point, the LC helped to mediate the differences of Canadian culture and Nepali culture to both the teacher and the students. However, similar to Rueda et al.'s (2004) study, this mostly took place outside of class time given that little opportunity was given for the LC to use his cultural knowledge during class time. This is despite the CCLBs (2015) suggestion that teachers use students' cultural and background knowledge as a "starting point" for L2 learning (p. 9). Teacher B also recognized the LC as a source of motivation and confidence for students due to his personal relationship with them and involvement in the larger Nepali community. Tarone et al. (2009) supported this building of trust as beneficial for both teachers and students in their study with Somali literacy learners. The last aspect of his role, providing L1

support to students, was only revealed during observations while the teacher was absent from the classroom. This was largely due to the fact that Teacher B did not support L1 use in the classroom and thus, did not permit the LC to use it with the students.

Research Question 2: Is having a language coach (LC) supportive of student interactions and L2 language use in the ESL literacy classroom? If so, how?

Before discussing the findings for RQ2, it is important to note that due to the number of constraints placed on the LC in the context of the given learning environment, it was difficult to fully assess whether the support of the LC promoted student interactions and L2 language use in the classroom. This was because the LC's impact on the class was highly dependent on how much opportunity Teacher B gave him to interact with students. Borg (2006) asserts that teaching context plays an important role in influencing the decisions teachers make in the classroom. Some of Teacher B's limitations placed on the LC may be in part due to the context of the teaching environment and her own constraints as a teacher. For example, Teacher B hinted that her hesitation towards the use of the L1 in the classroom partly stems from constraints *outside of the classroom*. When asked whether there should be more volunteers in literacy classes like the LC, she answered that:

“...it depends on the person I think you know, it's uh...it's hard to tell. I've had people who speak the same language and it's not that great because they've...only speaking like, they're explaining everything in the language that they speak. And then the student becomes dependent on that and, you know, **the whole Center is supposed to be, you know, supposed to be in English**, so...” (Teacher B, emphasis added).

At one point, Teacher B shared that, similar to literacy research (e.g., Cummins, 2000), she believes that literacy learners should ideally be taught basic literacy in their own languages before learning English. However, her comment above highlights her awareness that the

underlying belief being imposed on her by the institution where she works is that “English only” should be the norm in the second language classroom. There is likely a sense of apprehension of what could happen if too much first language use was seen being used by her students or by the LC and how this could be interpreted by other teachers or people of higher authority in the school. Auerbach (2016) argues that this assumption is one that has been the dominant view and is rooted in a “deeply entrenched” ideology more than actual evidence that English-only is the most effective method for instruction (p. 1). Auerbach (1993, 2016) posits that there is more evidence to suggest that the opposite is true; that English only is actually counterproductive for L2 learners. However, as Woods (1996) points out, beliefs, once accepted, can be very resistant to change. Without even second-guessing the reasons why, teachers continue to think of first language use as something they should intentionally avoid (Cook, 2001). As a result, this ideology has continued to exist and be promoted in classroom practice even though there is little theoretical basis for it (Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001). In many ways, the fact that this ideology persists despite the significant research showing otherwise highlights the discrepancy between research and practice in this area.

Initiatives towards L1 use, however, are not to be confused with having no restraints in how it used in the classroom. Rather, teachers “should be selective, mindful and respectful in their approach to this issue” (Auerbach, 2016, p. 2). Indeed, Edstrom (2006) states that: “The appropriate quantity of L1 use by teachers cannot be defined universally, as a fixed percentage, because it is inseparably linked to the underlying function or purpose” (p. 289). She posits that teachers should start by evaluating their “moral obligations” to students as well as their objectives for learning (ibid). Thus, the evaluation of L1 use calls for a strategic look at ways it may be beneficial to particular groups of learners in specific ways and at specific times in L2

learning. Hence, to see the full potential of this new way of thinking about L1 use would require the support of policy makers and those involved in teacher training. Overall, it is possible that Teacher B's resistance to L1 use in her classroom would change if she perceived that it was acceptable at the higher level, and if she received direct support from the school to fully incorporate the LC (i.e. by having him use the L1 in agreed-upon strategic ways during classroom activities). A step towards this would be to establish the role of the LC more directly as one that is, in fact, beneficial for learners. This would then potentially promote support for teachers wishing to make full use of it.

The context of Teacher A's classroom also appeared to affect her beliefs surrounding L1 use in the classroom, the role for an LC, and her subsequent teaching practice. She expressed that in her current teaching context (Literacy 2/3), there is tension and division between the two main groups of students (Nepali L1 speakers and Arabic L1 speakers). This tension has manifested in the past by students from one language group talking or laughing behind the other group's back or refusing to work together. Teacher A already feels that she has to carefully manage L1 use among each group to avoid further division between the students. She expressed that if she were to have an LC, she would need one for both groups because it could cause further conflict between the students if one group had one (i.e. the Nepali students) and the other did not (i.e. the Syrian students). Manyak (2004) described similar tension between two groups of learners in his study on the literacy practices of L1 Spanish-speaking children in an English immersion class. In this context, the main teacher participant (Ms. Page) described an overall "climate of racism" that existed between the Latina/Latino and African American students in the school (p. 17). However, when learners from each of these groups were brought together into one grade 1/2 class, Ms. Page chose to make use of the students' linguistic resources and cultural identity as a

way to facilitate mutual understanding and acceptance between the groups. During literacy activities, she allowed the Spanish-speaking students in her class to use their L1 along with English. This was shown to “establish bilingualism as a highly esteemed ability” among the monolingual English speaking African Americans in the class (Manyak, 2004, p. 15).

Additionally, this practice appeared to foster mutual understanding and acceptance between the groups as students working collaboratively. One example was when a Latino boy had trouble finding the right word in English and an African American student offered support, which was gladly accepted by the Latino student. Manyak (2004) argues that these small incidences helped to “bridge the two different cultural worlds that exist at the school” (p. 17). Thus, the dynamics of one’s classroom are important to consider. However, even in face of diverse language backgrounds, there is opportunity to make use of students’ unique linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which may actually help to facilitate acceptance among different groups of learners (Manyak, 2004).

Summary of Discussion regarding RQ 2

Overall, observations of the classroom were organized according to the type of interactions that took place between. These interactions were categorized as: (1) teacher-students, (2) student-student, (3) teacher-LC and (4) LC-students. In terms of teacher-student interactions, the results showed that Teacher B used a variety of supports (i.e. realia, gestures, blackboard) to mediate communication between herself and the class, and that without these supports, communication was, at times, quite challenging. The low-language proficiency of the students combined with Teacher B having little understanding of students’ L1 and culture arguably contributed to this challenge (CCLB, 2015; Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Student-student interactions revealed the fact that there was little opportunity for students

to collaborate with their peers despite CCLB (2015) highlighting peer work as a key support for learners to assist with comprehension and successful completion of tasks. Additionally, when students did interact, they usually did so using their L1, which was generally discouraged by the teacher. This is in spite of research showing that L1 use between peers can actually help to foster deeper understanding of concepts learned in class (Carroll & Sambolín Morales, 2016).

LC-teacher interactions revealed that Teacher B generally did not provide any opportunities for the LC to make use of his cultural or L1 knowledge with students during class time and that there was little teacher-LC collaboration. This was also found to be the case in Rueda et al.'s (2004) study, which showed that paraeducators rarely took part in teachers' lesson planning prior to the beginning of class, meaning that there was little opportunity to affect positive inclusion of students' cultural knowledge.

Finally, in LC-student interactions, the LC rarely interacted with students using the L1 or cultural knowledge during class time due to the constraints placed on him by the teacher. Perceived constraints from outside of the classroom also appeared to influence Teacher B's beliefs regarding L1 use and subsequent use of the LC (Clark & Peterson, 1986). However, when Teacher B was absent from the class, the LC made use of his cultural knowledge by showing cultural sensitivity and attention to students' needs. CCLB (2015) asserts that these two strategies may be beneficial in allowing students to feel more at ease in the L2 learning environment. The LC was also able to check for student comprehension, using Nepali when needed. This method was consistent with other studies involving L1 in ESL learning contexts including the work of Hall and Cook (2013) and Littlewood and Yu (2011), suggesting that L1 use may be beneficial in promoting L2 learning when used in strategic ways.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards language learning do indeed have a significant influence on classroom practice (Borg, 2006; Woods, 1996). Specifically, in this study, teachers' beliefs about the role of L1 use and the role of volunteers in the L2 classroom had a significant effect on how they understood the role of the language coach. This study found that teachers appeared to undermine the role of the LC because of their beliefs about L1 use in the classroom and possibly, the external constraints placed on the teachers by the settings in which they work (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Teachers did not appear to see the potential of his cultural knowledge and language ability, and as such, his role succumbed to that of a regular volunteer. Apart from the limitations placed on the LC by the teachers in this study, the teachers recognized that the role for an LC (and what sets them apart from regular volunteers) is their ability to be a cultural and community connection point and a source of confidence and motivation in the classroom. Additionally, when circumstances allowed him to, the LC in this study was shown to support learners using their L1. The LC did so in three specific ways: to clarify instructions, to check for comprehension, and to re-focus students on the task at hand. These supports and clarifications may be necessary and helpful at this stage of literacy due to student's limited proficiency in the L2 (CCLB, 2015). The strategies used by the LC are also supportive of building personal connections with students and a comfortable and relaxed learning environment, both of which are viewed as vitally important for students at the literacy level (CCLB, 2015). Overall, this research has shown that there are significant benefits to having an LC in the classroom, but these are highly dependent on how teachers understand both the LC's role and the benefits they can bring as well as how much space the teachers are willing to give LCs in their classroom based on this understanding.

Limitations

There are several limitations that come into play in this study. First, the small sample size limits the ability to generalize the findings. It is possible that the views of the teachers and the LC in this study do not accurately represent the beliefs of other teachers and LCs in the field. It is also possible that the interpretations of the results may not be not accurately representative of the participants' beliefs. The researcher sought to avoid this through triangulation of the data. This involved using several coding scenarios as well as a members' check with each participant to ensure that their thoughts had been accurately interpreted from their perspective. Additionally, the short duration of the observations in this study limit the assumptions that can be made about the proceedings of this literacy class and the role that the LC has in it. Research of a more longitudinal nature would be needed to capture more precisely the LC's role and interactions in the classroom. Yet, this investigation has been effective in shedding light on what ESL literacy teachers think about the CCLB (2015) recommendations in regards to LCs and their potential role in the L2 classroom. Finally, because the researcher did not have access to the literacy students themselves, little can be said about their opinions and beliefs regarding the role of LC in their classroom and how they interpret the dynamics of their learning environment; yet, this kind of research is important and needs to be undertaken.

Implication for Further Research

This study has only begun to highlight the potential role for a language coach at the ESL literacy level. More research is needed to fully define the role of an LC and to examine it in different ESL literacy contexts. It is only by doing so that we can further distinguish this role from that of regular volunteers. By defining the role more clearly and emphasizing a specific strategy that comes with this role, a language coach could eventually be accorded a professional

role in literacy education rather than that of another volunteer. For example, certain elementary schools in the United States employ “literacy coaches”. These are trained professionals known for their “specific expertise and extensive experience in literacy instruction” who work alongside teachers in the classroom and also in various other contexts to promote excellence in literacy teaching and understanding (Burkins, 2007, p. 28). Given that level a more extensive understanding of strategies and methods for teaching is needed at the ESL literacy (Bigelow & Schwartz, 2010), having similar trained professionals with an added expertise in the language and culture of students could potentially help to alleviate some of this need. However, the fact remains that there is still much concern over the lack of professionalization for even literacy teachers themselves (Folinsbee, 2007). Many teachers of literacy have had limited literacy-related training themselves (as was the case for the teachers in this study) and report a lack of literacy-informed resources to help them (Teacher A). This calls for more research to investigate the strategies and approaches that are best suited specifically to this group of learners. Rather than a “toss to the wolves and hope for the best” approach to teaching (as stated by Teacher A), we must ensure that teachers are given the resources and support that they need to effectively make use of students “funds of knowledge” that they bring to L2 learning (Bigelow & Schwartz, 2010). One way this could potentially be supported is through mentoring or professional development opportunities specifically geared towards in-service ESL literacy teachers (Schaetzel, Peyton & Burt, 2007). Trained professionals and experts in literacy education could provide regular and on-going support for teachers to ensure that those entering the field are equipped with research-informed strategies to assist students developing their literacy skills.

Finally, to truly support the value of an LC, teachers must first recognize the value of first language support in general. Otherwise, the role for an LC becomes much like the role for a

regular volunteer, as evidenced by the reports in this study. More studies indicating the ways the L1 use may be supportive of ESL literacy development is needed in order to shift the “English only” perspective that tends to reign supreme in the beliefs of many teachers and ESL teaching environments even today (Auerbach, 1993, 2016). One way that teachers could become more aware of their own beliefs regarding the use of first language and perhaps evaluate the reasoning for these beliefs is through reflective practice (Farrell, 2011). This involves teachers engaging in observations of their own classroom teaching in order to identify and better understand their beliefs and the decisions they make as a result of those beliefs (Farrell, 2011). One such example would be that of Edstrom (2006) where she underwent an evaluation of her own teaching practices in regard to first language use in the classroom. She found that, through evaluating of her L1 use during a semester of teaching a university-level Spanish course, she was able to gain a better understanding of how and when she made use of students’ L1 in her teaching.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions with three Participants

** Spontaneous questions have been **bolded**; pre-planned questions asked remain un-bolded.

Teacher A:

1. How long have you been teaching ESL literacy?
2. Did you receive formal training to teach ESL literacy?
3. **Did you collaborate with other teachers (when you first started teaching)?**
4. **Do you use ESL for ALL on a regular basis now or do you use your own materials?**
5. **In general, do you find this manual (ESL for ALL) helpful for teaching ESL literacy?**
6. In your view, how is teaching ESL literacy different than teaching regular ESL classes?
7. What strategies do you use on a daily basis to help students who are struggling (i.e. with retention)?
8. When it comes to communicating oral instructions to your students, what kind of strategies do you use?
9. How do you ensure students understand the instructions you provide?
10. If you could have additional support in your classroom, what would help you as a teacher?
11. How often do you have volunteers come into your classroom?
12. What would you say makes a good volunteer?
13. In your class, are there any times when you involve the students' first languages at all?
14. **Do you find it important to keep it English so that you can maintain control of the classroom?**

15. Do you pair students (from different language groups) together when you're doing class work?

16. Do you think that, if we had the resources, it would be valuable to have some of the students' first language incorporated into literacy learning?

17. In your view, how could ESL literacy teaching be improved?

18. How do you develop resources for the computer lab?

19. Do you think it's valuable to have someone who understands the cultural background of the students and also speaks the language of the students in the classroom as a support?

Teacher B:

1. How long have you been teacher ESL literacy?
2. Did you receive any formal training to teach ESL literacy?
3. In your view, how is teaching ESL literacy different than teaching regular LINC classes?
4. From you perspective, what are some of the biggest challenges that ESL literacy students face?
5. What are some strategies that you use to communicate oral instructions to your students?
- 6. Do you ever get frustrated with it being difficult to communicate oral instructions?**
- 7. Does the LC in your class ever help students with understanding oral instructions?**
8. Do you see any difference between having the LC in your class who knows the background of some of the students and speaks Nepali versus your other volunteers? Do you see there being a benefit?

9. Do you see any difference in terms of students advancing in class? Between the students who are from Nepali and your other students, do you think having the LC is helping to push them forward at all?

10. Does the LC help the students with the cultural aspect of becoming adjusted to Canada?

11. How is the LC involved in the community of the students as well?

12. How do you work collaboratively with the LC in terms of your classroom? Do you tell him ahead of time what you're going to be doing that class?

13. Do you think that other literacy classes would benefit from having an LC who understands the culture and the language of the students?

14. Do you think the Syrian refugees notice (that they don't have an LC)? Do they feel any sense of like "Well why don't we have someone like the LC who's there for us?"

15. So if the LC was not there, language wise, the students are able to understand your oral instructions?

16. If there were other people in the Nepali community who have reached slightly higher levels of literacy, could we use them to help bring up the confidence of the lower levels?

17. If there were more people like the LC, do you think it would be beneficial to have teachers or volunteers who are from the same language background and culture of the students playing the same role that the current LC is playing?

18. If we had the resources, do you think it would be better to teach students literacy in their L1 first and then teach them English literacy?

Language Coach:

1. How do you decide when to use Nepali with students?

- 2. You said you notice that students don't always understand the instructions; do you think teachers notice this as much? Do they think the students are grasping what they're saying?**
- 3. One of the concerns people have with first language use is that students will rely on it as a crutch or that it's actually impeding their learning because they're not forced to think as much. What do you think about that?**
4. How do you think the students see you?
5. How do you think Teacher B perceives your role?
6. What made you first become interested in volunteering in this capacity?
7. Have you seen students progressing since you've been in the classroom?
8. Do you think students progress quicker with support from the first language?
9. If we had the resources available, do you think we should have more support like this in other literacy classrooms (Language coaches, L1 support)?

Appendix B: Sample Observation Scheme (Adapted from COLT)

Teacher Observation Scheme	Teacher	Teacher-Class	Teacher-Student	Teacher-Volunteer
Explaining Instructions: In English In Nepali				
Repeating Instructions				
Writing on the Board				
Initiating/ Providing help				
Monitoring tasks				
Asking Question				
Answering Question: In English In Nepali				
Giving Positive Feedback				
Correcting Error				
Checking Comprehension				
Other				

Volunteer Observation Scheme	Volunteer	Volunteer - Class	Volunteer - Student	Volunteer - Teacher
Explaining Instructions: In English In Nepali				
Repeating Instructions				
Writing on the Board				
Initiating/ Providing help				
Monitoring tasks				
Asking Question				
Answering Question: In English In Nepali				
Giving Positive Feedback				
Correcting Error				
Checking Comprehension				
Other				

Student Observation Scheme	Student	Student - Student	Student-Teacher	Student-Volunteer
Asking for help				
Providing help				
Working alone				
Working in pairs				
Working in groups (3 or more)				
Asking a question				
Answering a question				
Speaking L1 (Nepali)				
Speaking L2 (English)				
Other				

Appendix C: Ethics Clearance



Research Compliance Office
511 Tory | 1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
613-520-2600 Ext: 2517
ethics@carleton.ca

CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS CLEARANCE

The Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A (CUREB-A) has granted ethics clearance for the research project described below and research may now proceed.

CUREB-A is constituted and operates in compliance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS2).

Ethics Protocol Clearance ID: Project # 105646

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Eva Kartchava

Research Team:

Kelly Doucette (Student Research: Master's Student)

Project Title: Investigating the role for a language support liaison in an English as a Second Language literacy classroom [Kelly Doucette]

Funding Source (If applicable):

Effective: **November 25, 2016**

Expires: **November 30, 2017.**

Restrictions:

This certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Clearance is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modification to the approved research must be submitted to CUREB-A via a Change to Protocol Form. All changes must be cleared prior to the continuance of the research.
3. An Annual Status Report for the renewal of ethics clearance must be submitted and cleared by the renewal date listed above. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the closure of the file. If funding is associated, funds will be frozen.
4. A closure request must be sent to CUREB-A when the research is complete or terminated.
5. Should any participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to CUREB-A.

Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans 2nd edition* and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research* may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Please contact the Research Compliance Coordinators, at ethics@carleton.ca, if you have any questions or require a clearance certificate with a signature.

CLEARED BY:

Date: November 25, 2016

Andy Adler, PhD, Chair, CUREB-A

Shelley Brown, PhD, Vice-Chair, CUREB-A