

Chapter 11

Native Language Inclination of Students and Teachers at a Public Secondary School: Native Language (Turkish) Usage in English Language Lessons

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INTRODUCTION

There are different opinions about the use of L1 (mother language) in the English language classrooms. Some are positively oriented towards L1 use in the classroom, while others argue for avoiding L1 in the language classes. In the process of teaching a foreign language, the role, necessity or obligation of the first language (L1) are issues for debate. Different kinds of methodologies and approaches have been referred to in order to inquire the role of the native language in second language teaching and learning. This research inquiry re-visits an ongoing controversy of the native language use in hopes to evaluate the changing position of L1 in English language class, and give more informed and conscious decisions about L1 (native language) use in the English language classroom. The study aims to get a closer understanding of this topic by consulting students and teachers in an English language class at a public secondary school. Views of secondary school students and English language instructors were sought and their views on mother tongue use have been evaluated. Several researchers such as (Spada and Lightbown, 1999; White and Ranta, 2002; Spada, Lightbown and White, 2005; Forman, 2012) have examined the use of native language as a methodological device to assist foreign language learning. They assert that L1 can have an indispensable role in foreign language learning but excessive use may cause some problems and thus, prevent learners from getting adequate exposure to the second language and consequently may decelerate the language learning process. This view cautions against

excessive use of the native language which can result in negative effects of L1 such as syntactic, phonetic, and morphological confusions due to the different structures of L1(first language/Turkish) and L2 (second language/English). If the foreign language is similar to the native language of the learner, then the use of L1 may have a positive effect through the use of cognates which resemble the learners' L1. This is a '*de facto*' explanation with contrastive approach that includes both the positive and negative effects of L1 when learning a foreign language. Researchers (Hammerly, 1991; Atkinson, 1987; Krashen, 1982, Nunan and Lamb, 1996; Stanley, 2002; Chambers, 1991; James and Bourke, 1996) contend that the use of L1 should not have any place in the foreign language learning experience (cited in Erdogan, 2015:18). The primary focus of the study is inquiring whether L1 supports the foreign language learning process and helps learners to acquire language more effectively or not. Views of learners and instructors will provide valuable insights. There are few studies which examine both learners' and teachers' views on the issue. Studying their views will help us learn more about the tendency to use L1 in English language classes and its consequences for learners and teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to better understand the practices of English language today, it is necessary to consider the historical positioning of English in the world. English has global importance today as a consequence of social, economic, and political changes and changing power dynamics globally. Today, English is the most common spoken and studied language, but several hundred years ago Latin was the dominant language in the western world (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 1). And English is predicted to be even more popular and commonly in the world of the future. Increasing globalization of the world made the significance of English even more prominent. It is a practical tendency to learn English due to increasing globalization as well as the impossibility of learning several languages at once for global communication. In the past centuries, English has been taught through mother tongue in the classroom. L1 (native/mother tongue) was the primary source of language instruction. The following section highlights three different approaches that dominated the English language teaching world in order to better position the discussion of L1 use in language pedagogy from different perspectives.

L1 (Turkish) Dominated Language Teaching Context

In the past Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was used heavily and oral performance was not encouraged. Speaking was not a necessary skill to excel then. English was taught through structural grammar study and translation from L2 (second language) to L1 (first language) and vice versa. The basic objective of learning a language was to gain written literacy, and literary sophistication (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011: 11). But this method had some deficiencies such as lack of real life language exposure and scarcity of communicational practice. Predominantly monolingual approach (Turkish) was utilized in language teaching. They would not be learning to speak the language so-to-speak. L1 supporters in language teaching argue that liberal L1 use can help save time, explain some important points more easily, clarify instructions during the activities, and maintain discipline efficiently. L1 use supporters claim that mother tongue can be used to support learners' learning process by creating appropriate *scaffolding* for learners. Vygotsky (1962) refers to any guidance and temporary assistance given to a learner is valuable in learning outcomes. Vygotsky also highlighted the importance of individualized scaffolding (personalized support) in learning in order to address individual learning needs and maximize learning potential. Scaffolding is a process that a teacher or a more-knowledgeable individual provides to the student until they become self-sufficient on their own in order to speed-up their learning process and increase their learning potential. However, people who have been receivers of grammar-only language instruction, have simply not had the chance to acquire much of the second language because of receiving inadequate foreign language input (Krashen 1982: 19). In the second half of the 20th century, this language learning trend slowly shifted towards the English-only movement due to the rapid development in industry and technology in Europe and in the US. Thus, a new tendency and need occurred; "communication" which required learners to put their speaking skills into practice and this created the ground for English-only era.

L2 (English-Only) Approach in Language Teaching (Monolingual Approach)

Popularization of communicational practice as a new goal of language teaching gave rise to new methodologies in language teaching. As Cook (2008) states in the twentieth century many teaching methods such as the

Direct Method, Task-Based Learning Method and Audio-Lingual Method came into existence and refrained from the mother tongue use in the classroom. This movement goes along with the “Monolingual Approach” where the target language is “the core” of the teaching process. L2 learning is linked closely to Krashen’s “comprehensible input theory” (1982). The advocates of this notion argue that learners of second language acquire L2 in the same way as they acquired their L1 (Cook, 2001: 408). Just like L1 learning, L2 learners learn the language naturally as a baby does without needing any translation for acquiring the language. The main principle is actually to discriminate L2 from L1 during the learning process. Thus, English-only framework argues that L2 learning should happen through second language instead of relying on L1 (Kahraman, 2009: 20).

Monolingual thinking advocated the notion that “the native speaker teacher is the ideal teacher”. Even though this assertion is instinctual and is without any proof, it still received a lot of acceptance in the teaching world. The shift to the English-only approach in language teaching also created a dichotomy of native language speaking teacher (NEST) and non-native English speaking teacher (Non-NEST). As a result, NEST teachers gained an unjust privilege over Non-NEST teachers in the US and all over the world. Thus, native speaker teachers were considered to be the best models in speaking, pronunciation and listening and thus seen as qualified to develop the pronunciation and other speaking elements of students (Benke & Medgyes, 2005). From another view, NESTs’ pronunciation and accent might be hard for learners to understand and there could emerge a linguistic and cultural gap between learners and native-speaker teachers because of having different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. With these in mind, there are prejudices against Non-NESTs for having poorer speaking skills and having less knowledge of Western culture in comparison to native English speaker teachers. It is necessary to remind the advantages non-native teachers bring to the teaching context such as being the best models for their students because they went through the language learning process first hand and know all the possible challenges their students may face. The wisdom that comes from this knowledge can be utilized to comfort learners, create deeper interactions and respond to instant needs of learners quicker when compared to the NESTs. Several studies indicate that students do care about the quality of teaching environment including well prepared lessons, exams, homework and grammatical teaching more than an ideal accent or advanced speaking

skills. Accordingly, student views indicate that they care about teachers' personality rather than teachers' nationality. All these details make valuable contributions to the discussion L1 use in the language classroom.

L1 & L2 Approach in Language Teaching (Bilingual Approach)

In reaction to the "English only" the mother tongue inclusion appeared in the language pedagogy discussions. This reactionary movement rejected the use of English-only in the language classroom and supported the assisting role of the L1 in the language classroom. They defended that non-native English teachers are most probably better language teachers because of going through similar steps of language learning as their students. Since there is not any tentative evidence to back up the notion that a native teacher is the optimal teacher (Phillipson, 1992: 185. And for the use of L1 Auerbach (1993) states that the inclusion of L1 in the classroom "has been theoretically justified, verified by research, and pedagogically accepted, while its exclusion is based on unexamined assumptions" (as cited in Brooks-Lewis, 2009: 217). Also, beginning the course with the L1 gives a sense of security to learners and allows expressing one's opinions which encourages taking part in the learning process without hesitation (Schweers, 1999: 7). Thus, in the context of the study, learning English can benefit from the planned inclusion of L1 in the classroom. According to Levine (2003) lesson content in terms of chosen activities and language materials determine whether L1 or L2 use would be most appropriate in one's class or if they should be both combined. Kim and Elder (2005) also state that the type of classroom activities impacts the language choice of the teacher. Discussion activities and theme-based communication are generally more likely to be engaged in L2 than L1 (Levine, 2003: 351). According to Cook (2001) different reasons can be given for utilizing L1 in an English class such as to "convey and check the meanings of words or sentence, explain grammar, organize tasks, maintain discipline, communicate with students individually and implement tests" (cited in Güneş, 2015; 13). Cook (2008) supports L1 use in the language classroom reminding that code-switching is a normal process of second language learning. MacDonald, C. (1993) points out that only when teachers count too much on L1, the target language is then obstructed. Thus, teachers need to be careful about the amount of L1 use and how frequently they employ L1 and opt for a harmonious L1 and L2 co-existence in their language classes for best outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This study poses to ask the attitudes of learners and teachers towards the use of L1 in language classroom, “Is L1 a necessity or an obligation?” is a question directed to students and teachers at a public secondary school. Since these two groups are main actors of language practice, their views are significant for this inquiry. Thus, 120 secondary school students at a public school answered the questionnaire designed by the researcher and 4 English teachers working at that school were interviewed. Combination of both of these data collection mediums allow comparing the responses of students and teachers by going beyond the numerical data for more in-depth understanding of the two groups in relation to each other. Findings of the study also can guide teachers in terms of selection of methods and approaches in their language classes to better their language practices. Also, the outcomes of the study can enlighten us to encourage their pupils to take part in the classroom activities more actively and willingly. The aim of this study is to answer the questions below:

1. Do secondary school English teachers view L1 as un/necessary in the process of teaching English in EFL classes?
2. According to the secondary school English teachers to what extent they prefer to use L1 in their classroom?
3. Where/when and why do the secondary school English teachers tend to use L1 during the lesson?
4. What are the opinions and attitudes of the secondary school learners towards the use of L1 in the classroom in English lessons?
5. How do learners feel (anxious or relaxed etc.) if and when they are exposed to L1?
6. Is there any correlation between “success in Turkish lesson and success in English lesson” for secondary school learners?

Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection Instruments

In order to discover the answers of the questions, this study employs two types of data collection instrument including qualitative and quantitative methods. Both research methods go beyond numbers and percentages and try to find answers to questions “why and how” a phenomenon occurs. Quantitative data is collected through a questionnaire

given to secondary school students. Qualitative research data is collected via an interview engaged with English teachers at the secondary school. Qualitative research supplies an opportunity for further interpretation and allows making inferences to reveal underlying thoughts of the participants (Punch, 2005: 242). Using both types of data collection instruments also increases the reliability of the research. Quantitative methods might not always be suitable in reflecting opinions deeply and might be limited in studying large data sets with numerical results. Qualitative research instruments such as interviews with face to face interaction enables researchers to understand participants' opinions directly and fully, but is very difficult to apply with large groups of participants. For these reasons, an interview is conducted with the teachers at their workplace at Havsa Atatürk Secondary School. The interview questions consisted of two parts. The first part of the interview contains demographic questions about the participating teachers. The second part of the survey consists of 10 open-ended questions where the participants are free to answer the questions as they interpret.

The other data collection instrument used for the study is a questionnaire where numerical information was gathered by using a Likert-scale, close-ended, open-ended multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire is prepared by the researcher himself instead of a nationally-accepted questionnaire because he as their teacher thought a customized questionnaire for this secondary school context better reflect their views and realities. This questionnaire was applied to 120 public secondary school students at 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades in the same school. The questionnaire originally was created in English but translated into Turkish in order to avoid any hesitation and misunderstanding for learners who have varying language proficiencies.

Participants

In order to investigate and find answers to the research questions proposed in this study, 120 learners from Havsa Atatürk Secondary School were chosen randomly and voluntarily with ages 10 to 14 years, from the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, and 30 learners from each grade level participated in the study. 15 of the student participants were male in each grade level and the other 15 were female. Proficiency levels of participants were A1 level for the 5th and 6th grades and A2 level for the 7 and 8th

grades. In this study the views of students were as important as the teachers, if not more. They represented a large scale of participation with 120 students. Also, their demands and preferences can help teachers to better serve their learners. Four teachers from the same school were selected voluntarily to answer the interview questions. There were only four teachers to participate, so if there had been more teachers teaching t this school, the researcher would definitely request their participation.

Table 1: Background Information about the Teachers Participating in the Interview

	Gender	Age	Department graduated from	Years of teaching experience
Teacher 1	Female	38	ELT (certification program)	13
Teacher 2	Male	32	ELT	8
Teacher 3	Female	36	ELT	15
Teacher 4	Female	31	ELT	4

Procedure of the Study

This study was conducted in Havsa Atatürk Secondary School, and was completed with the aim of determining learners’ and teachers’ views regarding tendency, usage, and attitudes towards L1 in foreign language classes. All information was shared with the administration and all the necessary permissions were obtained from the authorities to apply the data collection instruments in the target school. After creating the questionnaire, before applying it to students, a pilot study had been applied for 100 students chosen randomly to supply the necessary requirements of the instrument (reliability and validity). After conducting the questionnaire, it was checked by the expert, 5 items were removed and 2 were changed to ensure reliability and validity of the instrument. Some necessary changes were made to the questionnaire by revising and re-writing some items in order to avoid any ambiguity. Results of the study were evaluated by studying 120 students’ questionnaire responses and interviews of 4 teachers. Necessary information was given prior to the application of the questionnaire. Students were told that there was no time limitation in answering the questionnaire. Also, they were told that there were no correct or wrong answers. They were also informed that the answers to the questionnaire would be evaluated only within the scope of this study and

the results would be kept confidential so that they would feel relaxed and free to answer the questions sincerely. It took about 15-20 minutes for the students to complete the survey. Questionnaires were delivered to the learners in the classroom by their teachers. All the classrooms were visited in case of any possible questions or problems likely to occur.

Data Analysis

The collected data was examined both qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative data was analyzed via Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 20). One-Way ANOVA was used for the items compared with 2 variables T-Test, and for more than 2 variables. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to understand the correlation between Turkish Lesson score and English Lesson score. The qualitative data was investigated through a coding method. Teachers’ interviews were coded as teacher1, teacher2, teacher3 and teacher4 in order to take note of the emerging themes and concepts. The analysis hoped to reveal the use of Turkish in the English classes and students’ attitudes towards mother tongue use as well as cognitive effects of L1 use. Also, students’ opinions on mother tongue use in the classroom are sought, as well as their opinions about how L1 affects their learnings socially, cognitively and psychologically. In order to learn the correlation between learners’ Turkish Lesson score and English Lesson score the expert employed Pearson Correlation Coefficient and the alpha score was $p=0.000 < \alpha=0.05$ which means there is a high correlation.

Analysis of the Learners’ Questionnaire

Table 2: Questionnaire Questions and Responses of Participants to the Questionnaire

	I strongly disagree	I disagree	I’m not sure	I agree	I strongly agree
1. I never use Turkish during speaking activities.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can understand clearly whenever our teacher explains grammar in Turkish.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I understand better when our teacher explains new vocabulary items in Turkish.	1	2	3	4	5

4. I understand and memorize better when the words are similar to Turkish.	1	2	3	4	5
5 I understand better when our teacher translates the reading passages/texts into Turkish.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I can understand easily when our teacher presents the classroom activities and instructions in English.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I can understand better when our teacher gives clues in L1.	1	2	3	4	5
8. When switching to a new topic I can understand better if our teacher explains in Turkish.	1	2	3	4	5
9. In group work activities during the lesson I speak Turkish with my classmates.	1	2	3	4	5
10. At any part of the lesson whenever I hear Turkish I pay more attention and feel the desire to participate.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I feel more comfortable when I have the opportunity to speak Turkish in the classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have difficulty in making sentences in English whenever I think of it in Turkish.	1	2	3	4	5

For the 1st statement, 34 students (28.4%) disagreed that they never use Turkish during speaking activities while 43 students (35.8%) agree and 43 students (35.8%) abstained. The 2nd statement of students indicates that 77.5% of them think that they can understand clearly whenever their teacher explains grammar points in Turkish; out of these responses 48.3% agreed strongly and 29.2% agreed that grammar points understood much more clearly if the teacher switched to the mother tongue. The next two

statements presented that of the students, 80.7% agreed with the idea that they understand better when they were taught vocabulary items in L1. 79.3% of students stated that they understand and memorize better when they came across similar words in Turkish; out of these responses 43.3% totally agreed and 36% agreed that use of L1 enabled them to learn new vocabulary easier than English instruction. The 5th question revealed that of participants, 73.3% agreed that they understand better when teachers translate the reading passages/texts into their mother tongue and out of these responses 37.5% totally agreed, and 35.8% agreed. 61.8% of participants stated that they can understand easier when teachers present the classroom activities and instructions in Turkish. For the 6th statement 27.5% of the participants totally agreed that they understand better when teachers present classroom activities and instruction in L1 and out of these responses, 34.3% of them agreed while 13.3% disagreed and 22.5% were not sure. The next information proved that of students 65.8% understand better when their teacher gives clues in L1; out of them 35% percent totally agreed and 30.8% of them that teacher should switch to Turkish and give clues in L1 to better understand the text. 71.7% of learners; 35% totally agreed and 36.7% of them agreed the idea in 8th statement that when they switch to a new topic, they can understand better if their teachers makes it clear in Turkish. 62.5% of students agreed with the ninth statement; Out of the responses 34.2% totally agreed and 28.3% of them agreed that in group work activities they tend to use Turkish with their classmates, while 22.5 % did not have the same idea. Out of these 22.5 % responses 16.7 disagreed and 5.8 strongly disagreed about using L1 during group work activities. For the 10th statement 59.2% of the students agreed that they pay more attention and feel desire to participate in the activities when they hear Turkish. Out of them 24.2% totally agreed and 35% agreed while 21.7% of the learners were not sure about this. For the 11th statement 32.5% totally agreed and 25.8% agreed that they feel more comfortable when they have the opportunity to speak Turkish in class totaling up to 58.3 % of the responses. For the 12th statement 61.8% agreed that they had difficulty in producing sentences in English whenever they think of it in L1. Of learners 27.5% totally agreed and 34.3% agreed while 22.5% of them were not sure.

Students' Attitudes towards the Use of English-Turkish in the Classroom

The students were asked 5 close-ended questions as true-false. To find whether there is a significant difference among the variables, the question was "Is there any significant relationship between the weekly English class hours the students take, years of learning English and the use of English in the classroom?" To find the answer, One-Way ANOVA was done and the data was measured as $p=0.227 > \alpha=0.05$ for the weekly English class hours and $p=0.611 > \alpha=0.05$ values for the years of learning English which means there is no significant difference.

Table 3: Students' Attitudes towards L2 in Terms of the Weekly English Class Hours and Years of Learning English

Weekly English Class Hours	N	Mean	Sig.
3-4	61	1.6426	.227
5-6	49	1.6000	
7 hours or more	10	1.5800	
Total	120	1.6200	
Years of Learning English			
1-2	3	1.6667	.611
3-4	72	1.6167	
5 years or more	45	1.6222	
Total	120	1.6200	

The next question was "Is there any relationship between age, grades and the use of English in the classroom?" The responses according to the measure of One-Way ANOVA was $p=0.004 < \alpha=0.05$ for age and $p=0.002 < \alpha=0.05$ for grades that means there is a significant difference. The mean score for the students aged 10 years old was $m=1.4667$, while it was $m=1.7267$ for 14 year-old students. This means the older students want to hear more English than the younger students because their proficiency levels are higher and they are more capable of participating in the English discourse while the younger students need more L1 in the classroom due to their lower language proficiencies. The mean score for the 5th grade was measured as $m=1.5267$, while for the 8th grade this was $m=1.7333$ that means the higher the grade is, the more students want to hear English.

Table 4: Students' Attitudes towards the Usage of English in the Classroom in Terms of Ages and Grades

Age	N	Mean	Sig.
10	3	1.4667	.004*
11	26	1.5154	
12	22	1.6182	
13	39	1.6103	
14	30	1.7267	
Total	120	1.6167	
Grade			
5	30	1.5267	.002*
6	30	1.6200	
7	30	1.5867	
8	30	1.7333	
Total	120	1.6167	

Classroom Applications of English–Turkish by Students-Teachers and Advantages & Disadvantages of L1

This section tries to find the views of students about their teachers, the use of L1 in some parts of the lesson, the percentage of L2 used in the classroom by students and teachers, and the correlation between English language scores and Turkish scores of learners. Thus, students were asked 9 close-ended questions with answers of multiple-choice. As the first question the participants were asked whether their teachers should be native or non-native speakers or not. 60.8% of them stated that they do not have a preference. Only 20% of students stated that a language teacher should be native and 19.20 % preferred a non-native speaking teacher. Majority of learners, regardless of their age and proficiency levels do not care about their teachers native or non-native status. The second question was “When do you need more L1 during the lesson?”. 48.30% of the students stated that they need L1 during vocabulary activities, 46.70% stated that they didn't need L1 in any activity while 5% stated that they need L1 during speaking activities. Students couldn't come to a common agreement on the idea about whether they need L1 or not in the class. The third question was “Does your teacher refer to L1 to maintain discipline in the classroom?” 98.4% of learners replied that their teachers use L1 for maintaining discipline. Specifically, 56.7% of participants expressed that sometimes and 41.7% of

participants expressed always their teachers refer to L1 for maintaining discipline, while 1.6% of participants stated never for their teachers' L1 use in maintaining discipline. The fourth question was "When does L1 provide an advantage for you?" 42.5% of the students stated that L1 is an advantage when they interact with their friends and when they wanted to make sure that they understood the instructions, while 28.3% of them stated that L1 is essential in interacting with their friends and 29.2% of them stated L1 is advantage in checking their understanding of instructions. The fifth question was "When does L1 provide a disadvantage for you?" 27.5% of the students stated that use of L1 is a disadvantage while producing English sentences, 19.2% of the respondents stated that it was a disadvantage while speaking English. 53.3% of them stated that L1 is disadvantageous both for producing sentences and speaking in English. So, despite participants encourage L1 use in the classroom, they interestingly think it is a disadvantage for their language development. Thus, thinking in Turkish is seen as hindrance in creating syntactically correct sentences, and cause wrong usages in L2 (due to the negative transfer from L1). The seventh question was "How much do you use L1 in the classroom?" with 16.7% of the participants stating about 0-29% of the time, 38.3% stating about 30-69% of the time and 45% of them stating they use L1 in the classroom about 70-100% of the time during the lesson. This means that learners use L1 most of the time in the lesson, yet they also express that this is not good for their development in English. The 8th graders want to hear more English than other learners as their answers indicate, however, they are the ones who will take the high school entrance exam in the near future. Thus, motivation to speak English at higher language proficiencies come to a halt with the reality of exam situation.

The next question was "How much do you think L1 should be used in the classroom by teachers and learners?" with 18.3% of the students circling the option for 0-29% of the time, 32.5% of them stating 70-100% of the time and 49.2% of them stating 30-69% of the time L1 should be used in the classroom during the lesson. Even though this table shows 49.20% and 32.50% of the participants wants to hear Turkish in the class most of the time, this survey presents that the higher the level of students the less likely they are to want L1 use. The last statement tried to find views of learners about the amount of English use in the classroom through asking "How much do you think English should be used in the classroom?" 52% of the

students stated that they think the amount of Turkish should be less than English, while 48% of them stated that the amount of Turkish should not be less than English. They are almost equally divided on this issue.

Teachers' Interview Questions and Responses

Four English language teachers participated in the study. These language teachers work at the same public school. There are four language teachers who work at this school, that's why the number of interviewees is limited to four. However, this part of the research focuses on qualitative aspects of teacher responses and that's why the number of language teachers is not a disadvantage. The following part includes the questions as well as the responses given to each question by the language teachers, as well as what these responses imply for the language teaching practice from the viewpoints of teachers.

1. Is L1 a necessity or obligation in teaching foreign language?

Two out of the four teachers believe that the usage of L1 in the classroom is an obligation because of the nation-wide centralized examination system is mandatory in order to enroll in a qualified high school, while the other two teachers think that using L1 in the classroom is extremely vital due to differences in the students' proficiency levels. All of the teachers agreed that L1 use in the classroom is essential. Their reasoning highlighted different realities of the secondary school context. One is the centralized exam which all secondary school students need to take and perform a high score in order to get into a good high school. Another reason is not having a homogeneous language proficiency with differing levels, which makes L2 instruction very challenging.

2. Does the use of L1 provide advantages or disadvantages for the teachers in teaching foreign language? Why?

Three of the participants think that L1 provides some advantages for teachers in some aspects such as making classroom instructions clear for the lower level students and contribute to student understanding in general. L1 use in the classroom also provides positive attitudes towards English and their teachers both in and outside of the classroom according to teachers. One teacher expressed that it is not easy for the students to learn another language without knowing their first language well. Therefore, L1 is used by this teacher to support students' L1 which would contribute to the target

language development. But of course, caution is necessary for overuse of L1 which might prevent the exposure of L2.

3. Does the use of L1 provide advantages or disadvantages for the learners in teaching a foreign language? Why?

All the participants advocate that L1 is advantageous in maintaining discipline in the classroom and making the instructions clear for lower grades and lower proficiency levels, establishing positive attitudes for English, their friends, the activities in and outside of the class. Also, L1 provides while teaching grammar and vocabulary. In the previous questions, teachers highlighted some disadvantages of L1 use for learners. Yet, in this question, they chose to hold a more positive outlook for L1 use for learners. This makes us realize an inconsistent /confused outlook of L1 use by the teachers.

4. In which cases do you need L1?

Two out of four of the participants expressed that L1 is beneficial especially in teaching grammar points. Also, code-switching is seen as necessary by them in L2 learning. One thinks that L1 is beneficial while teaching vocabulary items especially at the beginning of the units for lower levels groups for saving time. One teacher also stated that s/he uses L1 to clarify the instructions and maintain discipline more efficiently. Clearly, all teachers see L1 use as necessary especially for grammar instructions and vocabulary points in order to clarify, save time and maintain discipline. None of the teachers argued otherwise on this issue. Instead they highlighted why they use and should continue to use L1 in their classes.

5. Does the proficiency level of the classroom affect your rate of L1 use?

All of the participants agree that the level of the class affects the amount of L1 use with an exception of 8th grade class, since L1 is the main language of instruction for this group due to the centralized exam preparation. Thus, teachers save time and give information in a deductive way through L1 use. One teacher indicated that no matter what the level of the class is s/he speaks Turkish more than English. Other teachers stated that the usage of L1 increases in lower levels and decreases in higher level classrooms. Teachers said that they use L1 because it is a necessity. We see that teachers in general prefer to use L1 whether it is demanded by students or not.

6. To what extent do you think L1 should be used in the classroom in teaching foreign language? Why?

Though the percentage of L1 use is different for all teachers, all of the participants agree that the usage of L1 is inevitable and they state that it must be used judiciously and not more than the target language. The point that teachers highlight is that L1 use should not be more than the L2 use, because then it goes against the objective of a language classroom.

7. Do you refer to L1 in the classroom to maintain discipline?

Asserting various views, reasons and frequencies for the usage of L1 for discipline in the classroom, all of the participants agree that they benefit from L1 to maintain discipline, though one of the participants utilized it the least frequently among the 4 participants. L1 is expressed to be essential in classroom management and discipline.

8. In which language skill(s) do you need more L1 when teaching foreign language?

Three of the teachers participating to the study state that L1 is useful when teaching grammar and writing skills, two of them stated also that the use of L1 is helpful for teaching vocabulary items. Thus, all the participants use L1 during either grammar or vocabulary instruction. We can conclude that L1 is used in the teaching of language skills, and it is an important part of English language instruction.

9. Who do you think should teach foreign languages, native or non-native teachers? Why?

Three of the teachers think that native speakers should teach the classroom to create more positive attitudes about English for learners besides teaching the cultural points of L2 better. One stated native speakers can only be beneficial for students in Turkish education system if they start from the 2nd grade and keep teaching till the end of 8th grade. Contrary to these view, one teacher claimed that non-native speakers should teach the students as they need to clarify instructions and save time in teaching the predetermined curriculum and there might be a cultural gap between the students and teacher if the teacher is a native speaker (foreigner). These responses are contradictory because all teachers claimed that L1 use is necessary for English instruction, but they also expressed that the English teacher should be a native speaker instead of a Turkish teacher. So, these

two ideas negate each other.

10. Is the effect of L1 positive or negative for the students when learning a foreign language?

The participants put forward different views about the positive and negative effects of L1 when learning foreign language. Two of the four participants think L1 affects learning positively because of the cognates and some common grammar points. On the contrary, one believes that L1 has a negative effect on learning English because of the different syntactical system in English. One thinks that it has both positive and negative effects on learning English. But they highlight that the amount of Turkish use should be carefully planned, because these students need to have adequate English input to further their English skills. And one teacher expressed that L1 use should be kept to a moderate degree because outside of the class students are affected negatively because they do not have the opportunity of the target language exposure.

DISCUSSION

The modern world required language speakers who are proficient in oral performance. That's why since 1980s incrementally communicative based language teaching practices became more and more valued unlike GTM. In this reactionary movement, L1 instruction has been demonized in language classes. Thus, language teachers expressed that it would be a big sin to speak L1 in the classroom until the direct method was developed and a new debate started whether only English or English with some L1 would be a better choice for effective English language practices. This has become an ongoing debate until the role of L1 is re-evaluated in the teaching world. The latest research indicated that L1 use in language classrooms might not be a sin after all. It might even prove to be useful if used cautiously. Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002) stated that "to advocate for the judicious use of mother tongue is to swim with the resistible flow of common sense, but against the tide of 30 years of western, Direct Method orthodoxy" (cited in Kılavuz, 2014: 93). Instead of the argument for pro or against native language use in the language classroom, we should be discussing, how much L1 use is beneficial for our unique teaching contexts. .

The study provided both students and teachers ideas about L1 use in their English classes. Two of the English teacher participants believe that L1 is a necessity due to the proficiency levels of students while the other half

believe that it is actually an obligation due to the centralized examination system of Turkey. All of the participants in the study agree that L1 provides some advantages in terms of maintaining discipline in the classroom, making the instructions clear for the lower grades and proficiency levels, establishing positive attitudes towards the lesson, their friends, the activities in the class, and making it easy to express themselves.

Three of the participating teachers stated that native speakers should teach English classes instead of a non-native teacher because this can create more positive attitudes for students, and cultural points of L2 can be taught better. One of the participating teachers also pointed out that native speakers can only be beneficial for students if native speaking teachers continue teaching throughout the school system starting from the 2nd grade and continue till the 8th grade. These teachers continue to further the argument that otherwise shorter term native teacher exposure will not be beneficial for the learners at all. This was a contradictory statement because it reveals the dilemma of the English teacher who tries to both prepare his/her students in the best way for the centralized exams and at the same time hope to create the best English speaker required of today's world. These two competing goals contradict each other. Contrary to this opinion, one of the teachers claimed that non-native speakers should teach the students because they need to clarify instructions and save time due to the curriculum and there might be a cultural gap between students and teachers if a native speaking English teacher teaches the class.

The survey conducted with students showed that learners can understand easier when they are taught some difficult grammar points in L1. Also, students state that they can understand better when they are taught vocabulary items in L1. They learn easily when similar vocabulary items are presented in Turkish and translation of passages/texts is beneficial for them, especially in reading activities. Clarifying instructions, responding to misunderstandings and presenting classroom activities through L1 also help students understand better from the viewpoints of teachers. They point to the fact that they pay more attention and feel a desire to participate in the activities whenever they hear L1 and feel more secure and comfortable when they have the opportunity to speak Turkish in the classroom. Students also agreed that L1 has positive effect on their comprehension, memorization of vocabulary items, understanding the important points of grammar. For the social effect of L1, the students state that they use L1 to interact with their classmates during classroom activities so they create

better relationships and maintain the conversation with others. For the psychological effect of L1, students state that they feel more comfortable and avoid anxiety when they use L1. Teachers should try to increase the use of L2 but at the same time they must use L1 when needed in order to make students feel more comfortable (Nazary, 2008: 145). The older students and the higher proficiency level students want to hear more English than younger students. Thus, the more proficient a student is in English, the more likely they are to demand English exposure and an increased L2 participation can be observed. So, grade level and overall proficiency of a classroom is a determining factor in the L1 and L2 preference by students. The study also showed that there is a positive correlation with students' Turkish marks and English marks. So, this reveals that Turkish inclusion in English Language classes is not disadvantageous if used properly and cautiously. Students in the study did not have a preference for native or non-native English teachers. The openness of learners for either group of teachers, native or non-native is a positive response, because it shows that learners are open for both teaching options in their learning context.

CONCLUSION

Views of teachers and students together have provided their realities, conceptions and expectations in day-to-day English language lessons. Their responses clearly have shown that one's mother tongue is not an enemy in the language classroom. L1 is not a sin to be avoided in the language class. Instead it is a helping-hand for language teaching practices if used properly by teachers. So, the argument to support or oppose L1 use in the language pedagogy needs to be reformulated in light of such studies as this one. It is valuable to listen to language learners and language teachers in terms of their needs and expectations, and hear what they need to voice-up in terms of their language preferences. In this study, they candidly expressed that they view the mother tongue as a resource contributing to their language teaching and learning efforts. We need further research in order to better understand teachers and students as two major actors of language teaching and learning. In the meantime, we can accept the necessity of L1 use in language classes, but also caution against misuse or over-use of the native language at the expense of the L2 practice. This leaves a great responsibility on the shoulders of teachers to balance the use of Turkish for their learners to best serve their L2 needs. Use of the native language (Turkish) in the classroom is a planned pedagogic tool which should be used only when

necessary through careful consideration. Being a good teacher means knowing one's learners individually as well as their learning needs. Thus, both languages should be utilized according to the teaching goals, learning needs and contextual realities of the specific teaching context. Before defending or avoiding L1 inclusion, we should consider educational realities and centralized exam system of Turkey and situate our teaching agenda in line with these realities. This study shared informed views about L1 use which highlighted L1 as a necessary tool to effectively and efficiently support language journey of learners. These views envisioned L1 as a cushioning device with appropriate scaffolding strategies in order to serve learners the best. Language argument in the language classroom will not come to an end, but more planned and careful inclusion of L1 will continue to inform the practices of teacher. In conclusion, language teachers should embrace their native language (L1) and incorporate their mother tongue to their language instruction judiciously and responsibly to perform the best English teaching and learning performance in their language classes.

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