EFL INSTRUCTORS' PERSPECTIVES OF L1 USE IN L2 CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY AT BİNGÖL UNIVERSITY

Yahya GEYLANİ[1]

ABSTRACT

Language experts, educators, and scholars have long debated using first language (L1) in foreign/second language (L2) classrooms. During the heydays of the Direct Method, also called the Natural Method, which was sequenced by the Audio-lingual method, language scholars and educators strongly rejected L1 use in L2 classrooms. These two methods were an objection to the Grammar Translation Method that allows and facilitates L1 use in L2 classrooms. However, whether L1 use should be welcomed or refrained in L2 classrooms remains an open question. Ten English as a foreign language (EFL) instructors participated in the research. The required data was gathered using a questionnaire, and SPSS 20 was used for analysis. Three of the participants were interviewed in a semi-structured manner to gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives and to strengthen the quantitative data. This study was carried out to understand EFL instructors' perceptions of using L1 in L2 classrooms who teach both in preparatory classes and at the English language and literature department at Bingöl University, Türkiye. The analyses and interpretations of the data showed that L1 is mostly used for teaching L2 grammar and vocabulary. The study also showed that there are too many contributing factors of L1 use, such as building mutual intelligibility (comprehension), giving clear instructions, setting up a good rapport with students, reducing anxiety, integrating humour into L2 classes, and reprimanding and appraising students.
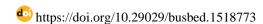
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YABANCI DİL ÖĞRETİM ELEMANLARININ YABANCI DİL SINIFLARINDA ANA DİL KULLANIMINA DAİR TUTUMLARI: BİNGÖL ÜNİVERSİTESİTESİNDE BİR ÖRNEK OLAY İNCELEMESİ

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ÖZ

Yabancı/ikinci dil sınıflarında ana dilin kullanımı, İngiliz Dili Öğretiminde dil eğitimcileri arasında uzun süredir sorgulanan bir konu olmuştur. Doğal Yöntem olarak da adlandırılan ve İşitsel–Dilsel Yöntemi takip eden Düzvarım Yönteminin altın çağında yabancı dil sınıfında ana dil kullanımı dil eğitimcileri tarafından şiddetle reddedilmiştir. Bu iki yöntem, yabancı dil sınıflarında ana dil kullanımına izin veren ve kolaylaştıran Dilbilgisi – Çeviri Yöntemine bir itiraz olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Yine de, yabancı dil sınıflarında ana dil kullanımının memnuniyetle karşılanıp karşılanmayacağı veya bundan kaçınılması gerektiği hala cevaplanması gereken bir soru olarak kalmaktadır. Bu çalışmaya İngilizce eğitim veren 10 yabancı dil öğretim elemanı katılmıştır. Gerekli veriler anket yoluyla toplanmış ve SPSS 20 istatistik programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Katılımcıların ana dil kullanımına karşı tutumlarını daha derinlemesine anlamak ve nicel verileri desteklemek amacıyla üç katılımcıyla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışma, Bingöl Üniversitesi'nde hem hazırlık sınıflarında hem de İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde ders veren yabancı dil öğretim elemanlarının sınıflarda ana dil kullanımına ilişkin tutumlarını anlamak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular ana dilin çoğunlukla İngilizce dil bilgisi ve kelime öğretimi için kullanıldığını göstermiştir. Çalışma aynı zamanda ana dil kullanımının; karşılıklı iletişim güçlüklerini ortadan kaldırma, açık ve anlaşılır talimatlar verme, öğrencilerle sağlıklı ilişkiler kurma, kaygıyı azaltma, mizahı derslere entegre etme, öğrencileri azarlama ve takdir etme gibi çok fazla katkı sağlayan rollere sahip olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ana dil, Yabancı Dil, Yabancı Dil Sınıflarında Ana Dil Kullanımı

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1. INTRODUCTION

The dilemma of using first language (hereafter referred to as L1) in second/foreign (hereafter referred to as L2) classrooms has always been disputed among English language educators. Medgyes (2001) discusses that using or avoiding the first language in the L2 classroom is one of the biggest problems of language teaching since there are language scholars/educators who advocate the use of the L1 and those who oppose it. While some scholars strongly support L1 usage in L2 teaching (Nation, 2003), others object to it (Atkinson, 1987). Schweers (1999) believes that L1 is imperative in facilitating L2 learning. He also elaborates that when L1 is instrumentally used to set up a good rapport with students, create a threat-free learning environment, encourage their L2 learning and make comprehension checks, it becomes a magical tool in L2 learning. Similarly, Harbord (1991) asserts that resentment and incomprehension are possible consequences of setting up English-only L2 classrooms. He adds that translation, which allows using L1 to some extent, is an inevitable part of L2 learning to negotiate meaning when necessary. Additionally, L1 is used by L2 learners to repair their insufficiency in L2; they use their mother tongue as a problem-solving mechanism in communication in L2 (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998). Another vital role of utilising L1 in an L2 classroom is that using L1 assists learners in not getting lost in understanding complex concepts taught in L2 (Schweers, 1999).

Contrarily, some scholars strongly oppose the utilisation of L1 in L2 learning and teaching. Especially the ones who are strongly in favour of communicative language teaching (Nunan, 1991). Howatt (1984), mentioning the monolingual principle that excludes learners' L1 with the goal of minimising any L1 interference in the L2 classroom, advocates exclusive use of L2 in L2 teaching and learning. Likewise, the rationale behind the restriction of L1 in L2 teaching is that L1 and L2 are learnt similarly; that is to say, human beings are exposed to a language, and then they imitate and learn; that is why exposure to a language is of paramount importance. From this sense of view, L1 is learnt through L1 and L2 is learnt through L2; hence, L2 learners should refrain depending on their other language (Cook, 2001).

Furthermore, some academics advocate using both L1 and L2 in the same classroom and advise using L1 judiciously in the L2 classroom. In Jacobson's New Concurred Method, it is proposed that language teachers can switch between languages when necessary (Jacobson, 1990). He also advocates that switching between languages is a natural L2 activity in the L2 classroom.

1.1. Review of Relevant Literature

Numerous studies were carried out to identify the benefits as well as the harms of using L1 in an L2 classroom. While some researchers have revealed its positive aspects, others have identified its negative aspects in the foreign/second language classroom. However, through the relevant literature, it is difficult to say that studies supporting the use of L1 in L2 classrooms outnumber those opposing it. What is clear is that the debate goes on. Before delving into related studies and their findings, it would be better to give some space to what scholars, experts and teachers say about L1 use in L2 classrooms.

From a behaviourist perspective, learning is theorised as forming a new set of habits as a consequence of environmental stimuli and responses to them; thus, L2 learning develops new kinds of habits. L1 is viewed as a barrier to learning L2 in behaviourism since prior L1 habits prevent the development of new L2 habits (Mitchell & Myles, 1998). Yet, Mitchell and Myles (1998) advocate that L2 learning is facilitated when the L1 system is linked to the L2 system within the learner's brain (ibid.). The behaviourist view also posits that bilingual education can be detrimental to a learner's intellectual growth (Channa, Gilhooly, Lynn, Manan, & Soomro, 2017). According to Chomky's Universal Grammar (UG) Theory, children inherently have a distinguished ability to uncover and learn the rules of any language. UG, thus, approaches L1 use as a helping factor rather than hindering L2 learning (Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

From a sociocultural perspective, Norton (2000) states that L2 learners and teachers are seen as individuals within their cultures; they are sociocultural individuals and have similar backgrounds. L2 research, in line with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, positively approaches the use of L1 (Channa et al., 2017). Lantolf and Thorne (2007) suggest that the influence of L1 meanings on L2 learning is still inescapable. They also concluded that since L1 assists learners in exchanging and sharing information in their settings, they have to rely on their L1 for the sake of reconciling their L2 learning.

Contrarily, some scholars advocate that the use of L1 should be completely refrained in L2 classrooms. Nunan (1991) opines that all interactions should occur through L2 in communicative language teaching. In a similar vein, Aurbach (1993) asserts that maximal exposure to L2 speeds up and simplifies L2 learning; for this reason, using L1 in an L2 classroom should be avoided. Moreover, it is also claimed that learners' exposure to L2 gets interrupted as a consequence of the utilisation of L1 in language classrooms (Cook, 2001).

Mee-ling (1996) conducted a study to determine when it was necessary to use L1 (in her case, Cantonese) in the L2 (English) classroom and how it was used in the L2 classroom. Four pre-service English teacher-trainees participated in her study. Data were collected through 2-month diaries, video recordings and interviews. According to the study, the primary purpose of using L1 in an L2 classroom was compensation. In other words, participants used Cantonese to build comprehension when communication broke down. Additionally, the study showed that L1 was utilised to discipline the classroom, keep students motivated, raise students' attention, translate, and sometimes save time in the L2 classroom.

In Iran, a study conducted by Karimian and Mohammadi (2015) included forty English teachers; twenty of them were from Iran, and the other twenty were from various countries. They found out that L1 should not be ignored but rather should be used carefully for some benefits in the L2 classroom. According to their findings, L1 in the L2 classroom is a beneficial tool for translation, enhancing the quality of interaction, offering a sense of security in the L2 classroom and saving time when necessary.

In a study conducted both with students and teachers to find out how, when and why L1 (Nepali) was used in L2 (English) classrooms, Sharma (2006) found out that L1 was frequently used in 45-minute reading classes for several reasons. From the most frequently to the least, L1 was utilised to clarify the meaning of vocabulary, give directions and instructions, clarify complicated ideas, and explain grammar rules. Additionally, he discovered that although both educators and learners welcomed the use of L1 in the L2 classroom, they were against the overuse of L1.

A relevant study, again from a sociocultural perspective, was conducted to discover whether making use of L1 served as a meditational instrument for cognitive functions in complicated tasks in L2 classrooms (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). They found out that students initially used L1 for task management and task clarification as social exchanges, and then they used L2 for the rest of the task in-group work. Similarly, from a socio-cognitive perspective, Antón and Dicamilla (1999) carried out a study with native English speakers learning Spanish to examine the cognitive functions of L1 in a group L2 writing task. They discovered that L1 was used for scaffolding, and it served both cognitive and social functions. They used L1 to build a social space that facilitated the finalisation of the task given. This helped them achieve intersubjectivity, resulting from having a common perspective on the task.

Congruent with Antón and Dicamilla's study, Campa and Nassaji (2009) studied German as L2 in a Canadian context. The teachers who took part in the study were bilingual and used English, which was the students' L1 in German classes. They discovered that using students' L1 played instrumental roles in L2 teaching. Teachers used L1 not only for learning or teaching purposes, such as translation and providing instructions for L2 activities, but also for providing an enjoyable learning milieu to increase students' motivation to engage more in L2.

Atkinson (1987) used L1 while teaching L2 on an experimental basis for different reasons. Upon ten-month teaching, he reported that the use of L1 could be instrumental for comprehension checks, setting up collaboration among students, giving instructions, eliciting language, exchanging ideas about classroom methodology, developing fruitful learning strategies and reinforcing L2 learning. But then again, he was warned about the dangers of overusing L1 in L2 classrooms. Atkinson claimed that excessive dependency on L1 usage had to be avoided in the L2 classroom for several reasons because learners might begin to think or feel that they could not understand L2 without the assistance of L1, and they would start to use L1 even when they could communicate content in L2.

Contrary to the above-examined studies, Mahmoudi and Amirkhiz's (2011) study revealed that the disproportionate domination of L1, which was Persian in L2 classrooms, had a dampening impact on learners. Upon being interviewed about their perception of L1 use in the L2 classroom, the learners expressed their discontent with the ill-timed L1 use and its dominance. Additionally, they stated that using L1 reduced the amount of exposure to L2, which they thought might be detrimental to their L2 learning process.

In the Turkish context, several studies were conducted on L1 use in L2 classrooms. Sali (2014) carried out research to find out how Turkish English teachers employ L1 (Turkish) in L2 (English) classrooms. She discovered that teachers used L1 for three major objectives: academic, managerial and social. L1 was used to exchange information about the content of the course (academic), to arrange classroom cooperation (managerial) and to have good relations with the students (social). Similarly, Kayaoğlu (2012) conducted a study at a Turkish university to find out what kind of stance English teachers take against L1 use in L2 classrooms. He found out that a large part of the participants had a welcoming approach to L1 use in the L2 classroom. He stated that teachers considered that the integration of L1 into L2 classrooms had facilitated L2 teaching, especially for vocabulary and grammar teaching and helped to establish a learning-friendly classroom for L2 students.

Again, in the Turkish context of L2 teaching, Yavuz (2012) carried out a study with experienced primary school English teachers in Balıkesir, Türkiye. He found out that participants advocated that L1 had to be minimised in

communicative language activities but could not be removed completely from the L2 classroom. Additionally, he revealed that participants used L1 to remove psychological barriers and create a learning-friendly atmosphere for L2 learners.

The last study to be reviewed here is Kafes's (2011) study, which was carried out at a Turkish public university. He investigated the reasons for L1 use in L2 speaking classes, which made his study different from the above-mentioned studies in which L1 use was generally for teaching grammar, translation, vocabulary and reading. Upon gathering and analysing data collected through tape recordings of five weeks, a total of fifty lesson hours, he concluded that EFL teachers used L1 (Turkish) for comprehension checks, giving instructions for L2 (English) tasks, classroom management and establishing good relations with the students.

Finally, apart from the abovementioned purposes of the use of L1, it can be utilised for various reasons, especially when there is a communication gap between teachers and students in an L2 classroom. L1 can be used for making jokes, integrating humour into the L2 classroom (Dietze& Dietze, 2007) and reprimanding and praising students in the L2 classroom (Copland & Neokleous, 2010).

1.2. The Problem

Even making use of or avoiding using L1 in L2 classrooms has been under an everlasting debate among ELT scholars and teachers for decades, but no consensus has been reached so far. In the relevant literature, one can come across both welcoming and opposing stances towards L1 use in L2 classrooms. However, a moderate utilisation of L1 is also supported and documented in the relevant literature.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the design and implementation of this study:

(1) What are the attitudes of the EFL instructors toward using Turkish in English classrooms? (2) Whether Turkish as the L1 is used in tertiary-level L2 classrooms at Bingöl University? If so, for what reasons as well as how frequently is it used?

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the study presents the research design, subjects, data collection instruments, and data analyses.

2.1. Research Design

The study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature and uses an interview and a questionnaire to gather data. The rationale behind using an interview plus a questionnaire is to get an in-depth understanding of the research problem (Hennink et al., 2020).

2.2. Subjects

The subjects who participated in the present study are 10 EFL instructors teaching in preparatory classes and at the English Language and Literature department at Bingöl University. The convenience sampling method was used in the study, and participants were selected based on their availability.

2.3. Questionnaire and Interview

The study used a 35-item questionnaire with a 5-point Likert type, which Kayaoğlu (2012) adapted and modified from studies by Tang (2002) and Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008). The coefficient alpha reliability of the questionnaire was calculated as .80. In addition to the questionnaire, a counterpart semi-structured interview consisting of 4 open-ended questions was conducted. All the subjects of the study responded to the questionnaire, and the interview was conducted with three of them on a voluntary basis. During the interview, the participants were asked four open-ended questions. The participants were given pseudonyms such as Sedat, Zeliha, and Yakup in order to maintain their privacy. Sedat had eight years of teaching experience in preparatory classes and at the English language and literature department. He taught speaking, listening, English poetry, and advanced translation. Zeliha had more than ten years of experience in teaching grammar and reading. The last participant, Yakup, was a novice instructor with one year of experience teaching English. He taught listening, reading and grammar.

2.4. Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using the social sciences statistical package SPSS 20. Upon analysis, the quantitative data were interpreted under four sub-categories: EFL instructors' perspectives on L1 use, EFL instructors' perspectives on students' L1 use, EFL instructors' uses of L1 in L2 classrooms and EFL instructors' objectives to use L1 (Kayaoğlu, 2012). The two types of data were then blended and interpreted to support each other for a thorough understanding of the problem.

3. FINDINGS

In this chapter of the study, analyses and interpretations of the questionnaire and interviews were reported. Tables generated upon analysis were interpreted under four sub-categories. Then, some extracts from the interviews were given space and interpreted.

3.1. Findings from the Questionnaire

Participants' responses to the questionnaire items were categorised into four sub-categories, as mentioned above. Items 1-2 are EFL instructors' perspectives on L1 use, items 3-8 are EFL instructors' perspectives on students' L1 use, items 9-23 are EFL instructors' uses of L1 in L2 classrooms and items 24-35 are EFL instructors' objectives to use L1. The four sub-categories were interpreted under separate tables.

Table 1.

EFL Instructors' Stance Towards The Use of L1 in L2 Classroom

Items	Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. I use Tur. in L2 class	1	10,0	2	20,0	5	50,0	2	20,0	0	0,0%
2. I don't use Tur. in L2 class	0	0,0	3	30,0	1	10,0	3	30,0	3	30,0

Table 1 illustrates the positive attitude of Bingöl University's EFL instructors toward the use of L1 (Turkish) in the L2 (English) classroom. There is no one who has never used Turkish in an English classroom. In the L2 classroom, only 20% of respondents use L1 rarely. Table 1, in general, shows that participants in the present study have a welcoming approach towards the use of L1 in the L2 classroom when it is a necessity.

Table 2.

EFL Instructors' Perspectives on The Students' Use of L1

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
3. Students learn Eng. grammar easier in Tur.	4	40	3	30			3	30		
4. Students should use only Eng.	1	10	2	20	1	10	4	40	2	20
5. Students should prefer books with Eng. explanation			4	40	3	30	2	20	1	20
6. Students should never use Tur.					2	20	5	50	3	30
7. Students should prefer books with Tur. explanation	2	20	1	10	2	20	5	50		
8. Students should speak Eng. in group works	6	60	4	40						

When Table 2 is examined, 70% of the instructors think that students learn grammar in L1 easier (item 3). Responses to items 4 and 6, which are parallel to each other show that instructors have a welcoming approach to students' L1 use. The responses to item 7 indicate that they believe students should not prefer books with Turkish explanations. Finally, concerning EFL instructors' attitudes on the students' use of Turkish, responses to item 8 (60% strongly agree, 40% agree) reveal that instructors think that students should not use L1 in group work activities.

Table 3.

EFL Instructors' L1 Use in L2 Classroom

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
9. I use Tur. explanation for foreign words.	2	20	4	40			4	40		
10. I use Eng. to explain unknown words.			7	70			2	20	1	10
11. I go over the topic in Tur.	2	20	4	40	1	10	3	30		

12. I use Tur. for instructions, tasks, exercises, etc.	3	30	1	10	1	10	4	40	1	10
13. I use Tur. to explain unknown words.	2	20	3	30	1	10	4	40		
14. Mother tongue is Tur., should use Tur.	2	20	1	10	1	10	5	50	1	10
15. I use Tur. to make Eng. learning easy.	2	20	6	60	1	10			1	10
16. I prefer to explain grammar rules in Eng.	3	30	1	10			4	40	2	20
17. Teacher should use Eng. only.	1	10			2	20	4	40	3	30
18. Using Tur. is more motivating than using Eng.	2	20			4	40	4	40		
19. Use of Tur. makes Eng. learning difficult.			1	10	1	10	4	40	4	40
20. Switching between Eng. and Tur. is confusing.	1	10			4	40	3	30	2	20
21. Use of Tur. is a waste of time.					1	10	5	50	4	40
22. Use of Tur. is a motivating factor.	2	20	2	20	4	40	2	20		
23. Use of Tur. facilitates Eng.learning better.	2	20	4	40	1	10	3	30		

As for EFL instructors' L1 use in L2 classes, Table 3 shows that even items 9, 10 and 13 contradict each other; yet responses given to them have similarities. According to responses given to the items, 60% of participants use L1 for explaining foreign words (item 9), 70% use L2 to explain unknown words (item 10) and 50% use L1 to explain unknown words. From this case, it is understood that instructors use L1 and L2 interchangeably for unknown or new words in the L2 classroom. This switch between L1 and L2 is also backed by the responses given to items 12 and 17; while 50% of the participants disagree with using Turkish for instructions, tasks, and exercises (item12); 70% of them disagree with the mere use of L2 (item 17). Moreover, they think switching between L1 and L2 is not confusing (item 20). One more striking point Table 3 revealed is that using L1 makes L2 learning easier. Responses given to items 15 (80%), 19 (80%) and 23 (60%) demonstrate that all the participants favour L1 usage to facilitate L2 learning. There is a discrepancy between items 3 (in Table 2) and 16 (in Table 3), which are related to teaching grammar. While 70% of the instructors think that students learn L2 grammar in L1 better, 60% of them prefer to use L2 in explaining L2 grammar rules. There are no noteworthy results when it comes to the use of L1 as a motivating factor (items 18 and 22). Finally, 90% of participants believe that using L1 in an L2 classroom is not a waste of time (item 21). This suggests that utilisation of L1 in an L2 classroom can be a useful time-saving instrument.

Table 4.
The Purposes of Using L1

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
24. I use Tur. to explain new words.	1	10	5	50			4	40		
25. I use Tur. to explain sentence structures.	3	30	7	70						
26. I use Tur. to explain difficult concepts.	4	40	6	60						
27. I use Tur. to give general information on the course.	2	20	3	30			5	50		
28. I use Tur. to increase motivation.	2	20	2	20	2	20	3	30	1	10
29. I use Tur. to avoid waste of time.	1	10	1	10	3	30	4	40	1	10

30. I use Tur. to decrease anxiety.	2	20	6	60	2	20				
31. I use Tur. for grammar course.	2	20	6	60	1	10	1	10		
32. I use Tur. for reading course.	1	10	2	20	1	10	4	40	2	20
33. I use Tur. for writing course.	1	10	4	40	1	10	2	20	2	20
34. I use Tur. for listening course.	1	10	1	10			4	40	4	40
35. I use Tur. for speaking course.							3	30	7	70

Table 4 reveals the EFL instructors' purposes of L1 utilisation in L2 classrooms. Looking at items 25 and 26, it is crystal clear that using L1 for explaining L2 sentence structures and difficult concepts of L2 is favourable for all the participants since 90% strongly agree while solely 10% agree with item 25; 40% strongly agree, and 60% agree with item 26. The other reason for instructors' use of L1 is to reduce anxiety. Responses given to item 30 (20% strongly agree, 60% agree) show that instructors use L1 to set up an anxiety-free learning environment for students in the L2 classroom. Besides, a large number of EFL instructors use L1 in teaching L2 skills such as grammar (item 31), and half of them welcome L1 use in teaching L2 writing (item 33). In teaching L2 grammar, the use of L1 is opposed by only 10% of the participants. For teaching L2 writing, 10% of participants strongly agree, and 40% agree with L1 usage. However, they strongly oppose L1 use in speaking classes since 70% of them strongly disagree and 30% disagree with item 35. Likewise, responses given to item 34 indicate that L1 use should be avoided in teaching L2 listening skills. As for reading skills, it might be said that L1 use should be restricted, as 40% disagree and 20% strongly disagree with item 32.

3.2. Findings from the Interview

All the interview questions were parallel to the questionnaire with the aim of backing questionnaire results with qualitative data and categorised accordingly. Responses given to the questions were discussed under each question below.

3.2.1. EFL Instructors' Attitudes towards Using L1 in L2 Classrooms

The very first question was about whether they support using L1 in the L2 classroom. Upon being asked, Sedat expressed, "I am not against first language use in a foreign language classroom because we sometimes need it for clarification, better communication and for removing misunderstandings." The other three participants' responses were parallel to each other, stating, "L1 can be utilised when it is necessary." From their responses, it is understood that all three participants welcomed using L1 in L2 classrooms. They thought L1 was an indispensable and inherent part of L2 teaching and learning. They are all in favour of switching to L1 when there is a need for better communication.

3.2.2. EFL Instructors' Frequency of L1 Use in L2 Classrooms

The second question was, "Where, when and how frequently do you use L1 in the L2 classroom?". Sedat responded that he generally used L1 in reading and grammar courses but rarely in speaking courses, which is quite consistent with the result of the questionnaire (item 35). He reported that he used L1 for grammar and complex sentence structures, giving instructions for in-class activities, setting up a good rapport with students, having fun and reprimanding the students. Zeliha expressed that she sometimes used L1 in speaking and reading courses to give instructions and check for comprehension. Lastly, Yakup reported that he generally used L1 in all the classes he taught. He expressed;

"I generally use the shared L1 (Turkish) in the L2 classroom when there is no mutual understanding. When my students do not understand what we are doing in the classroom, they have desperate facial expressions. When I see that they do not understand, I switch to L1, yet we should refrain from excessive use of L1 since the students' exposure to L2 could be hindered."

He also added that he used L1 to give instructions, explain new English words' meanings, make jokes and humour, and reduce anxiety.

3.2.3. Reasons for L1 Use in L2 Classrooms

The third question was "Why do you use L1 in the L2 classroom? And why do you think this might be more effective than using L2?" To this question, Sedat answered that teaching grammar and how to form L2 sentences

in L1 was far more effective than teaching them in L2 to the students, especially those with poor levels of English proficiency. He responded that to have good relations with the students, L1 had to be a part of classroom language, stating that:

"I speak Turkish to establish a good rapport with my students; for example, if I greet them in L2 when I enter the classroom, I feel that it is artificial; it is not like a real greeting. Besides, I sometimes need to make jokes to keep the class alive or reprimand them. Again, when I do it in English, it has no effect at all. That is why I have to use L1 to achieve some of my goals."

Zeliha acknowledged that she used L1 as a supporting tool while teaching grammar. She elaborated that students learned English grammar better in L1; when they were taught grammatical structures in L1, they had a clearer idea about the structures of L2. Lastly, Yakup reported that making use of L1 facilitated L2 learning and stated;

"Our students are generally beginners. When I do not support myself with L1, we have comprehension problems in the L2 classroom. When they do not understand what is being taught, they get lost and demotivated, and thus we sacrifice some time."

He also responded that he uses L1 when teaching new English words. He supported using L1, helped students to have a clear idea about the new words and was time-saving. The other reason for Yakup to use L1 was humour; he believed that there had to be a moderate amount of humour and fun in the L2 classroom. When done in L1, humour is not understood by the students and results in zero-sum. Lastly, he responded that he used L1 for reducing anxiety in the L2 classroom and stated,

"I generally work with students who have poor levels of English proficiency since they are preparatory class students. When they do not comprehend what we are doing in the class, they get anxious and lost. So, to remove or reduce anxiety and set up a learning-friendly environment, I make use of L1 in L2 classroom."

3.2.4. Students' L1 Use in L2 Classrooms

The final question of the interview focused on the students' use of L1. Participants were questioned about whether they permitted their students to use L1 in the L2 classroom. For this question, Sedat replied that he allowed the students to make use of L1 in reading and grammar classes, especially when they had questions and did not understand the instructions given by the teacher. He added that he did not let the students use L1 in speaking classes since he thinks that the classroom is a unique space to practice speaking skills. Similarly, Zeliha allowed her students to use L1 when they had difficulty expressing their messages in L2. Finally, Yakup also allowed his students to use L1 when there was a need for mutual understanding. He voiced:

"We sometimes have discussion activities in which students are required to produce L2. Students with poor English skills have a lot to say, but they stay reticent during the activities, I understand this-from their facial expressions. At the end of the activity, both to motivate and give them a chance to express their ideas, I allow them to use L1 as a less formal closing chat."

4. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Fully consistent with each other, the findings of the questionnaire and interview revealed that EFL instructors who participated in the study have a welcoming attitude regarding the use of L1 in L2 classrooms. The participants were completely in agreement that using L1 in L2 classrooms is essential when necessary, on the condition that L1 overuse should be avoided in L2 classrooms. This result is also similar to the studies of Sharma (2006) and Kayaoğlu (2012).

As for EFL instructors' L1 use in L2 classrooms, consistent with the studies of Sharma (2006), Kafes (2011) and Kayaoğlu (2012), the current study showed that L1 is frequently and primarily used for teaching L2 grammar and complex sentence structures. The study also asserted that L1 is usually used to teach new L2 vocabulary. The use of L1 is favourable since it is time-saving and helps learners to have a clear idea about the newly learned L2 vocabulary. Given that participants reported that using synonyms can be time-consuming and occasionally ineffective, it is possible that learners' limited English proficiency is a contributing factor in the use of L1 in L2 vocabulary instruction. Additionally, the present study indicated that L1 is used for checking comprehension, congruent with Atkinson (1987), Mee-ling (1996) and Schweers (1999). Harbord (1991) lays emphasis on comprehension since incomprehension might be a result of the only use of L2, which might result in zero-sum in the L2 classroom. One of the findings of the current study is that L1 use is used for instruction, which is similar to the findings of Atkinson (1987), Antón and Dicamilla (1999), and Campa and Nassaji (2009).

The final finding of this study concerning L1 use in L2 classrooms by EFL instructors is that L1 plays a facilitating role in L2 teaching and learning. The study revealed that participants believe in and use L1 to promote L2 learning and teaching. This is, again, in line with Schweers (1999), who claims that L1 has an imperative role in facilitating L2 learning.

Regarding why L1 is used in the L2 classroom, the current study discovered that EFL instructors intend to use L1 in L2 instruction for multiple purposes. The study showed that there is a full consensus on the use of L1 for explaining subtle concepts, which is congruent with Schweers (1999) and sentence structures of L2. The deadlock in understanding difficult concepts and the sentence structure of L2 might be overcome by integrating a shared L1 into the L2 classroom. The other intention of using L1 revealed in the present study is to decrease anxiety in L2 classrooms, which is consistent with Karimian and Mohammadi (2015). EFL instructors use L1 in L2 classrooms to set up an anxiety-free learning environment, which is called a threat-free learning environment, according to Schweers' (1999) study, especially for L2 learners with a low level of L2 proficiency. Moreover, it was discovered that EFL instructors use L1 in writing classes more frequently than in reading classes, which is inconsistent with Sharma (2006). However, when it comes to speaking courses, it is revealed that none of the EFL instructors approve of the use of L1. While this finding is consistent with Yavuz's (2012) and Mahmoudi and Amirkhiz's (2011) studies, it is inconsistent with Kafes's (2011) study. This stance of the participants of the current study might stem from the idea of exposure to L2, which is regarded as an instrumental tool for improving the communication skills of L2 learners. Likewise, Nunan (1991) argues that L2 interaction should occur in L2 and Aurbach (1993) asserts that exposure to L2 stimulates and facilitates L2 learning. Additionally, the present study discovered that L1 could be used to integrate fun into L2 classes and reprimand the students. Similarly, Dietze and Dietze (2007) found that L1 might be used for humour in L2 classrooms, and Copland and Neokleous (2010) discovered that L1 could be used for reprimanding and praising students.

In reference to the use of L1 by students in the L2 classroom, this study found that EFL instructors are supportive of this practice and let their students use the common L1 when it is necessary. They think students could use L1 since it makes grammar learning and teaching easier and contributes to the relationship between student and teacher.

While there are polar opposite approaches to using L1 in L2 classrooms, they are somewhat complementary. L1 and L2 are closely connected to each other in the brain, so separating them is useless (Cook, 2001). If this is the case, it looks like similar debates will continue in ELT.

The results of the current study show that EFL instructors who took part in the study both use and allow their students to use L1 in L2 classrooms, and they also believe that L1 use has certain advantageous roles and functions in contexts of teaching and learning foreign/second languages. Using L1 might turn into a magical tool for teaching L2 vocabulary and grammar. The study also found that making use of L1 has too many roles, such as contributing to mutual intelligibility (comprehension), giving clearer instructions, setting up a good rapport with students, reducing anxiety, integrating humour into L2 classes, and reprimanding and appraising students.

Undoubtedly, the utilisation of L1 in L2 classrooms makes significant contributions to L2 instruction and learning. However, language teachers should be cautious about excessive dependence on L1 usage in the L2 classroom. Overuse of L1 can harm the process of teaching and learning L2 as Atkinson (1987) claims that too much dependency on L1 usage should be refrained in L2 classrooms since L2 learners could begin to think or feel that they could not understand L2 without the help of L1, and they would start to use L1 even when they could communicate their messages in L2. To set an example, in some contexts, the L2 classroom is generally the sole place in which L2 learners get exposed to L2 and are given a chance to produce L2. When this is the case, excessive use of L1 might result in missing this unique opportunity of getting exposed to and producing L2.

The present study is both consistent and inconsistent in some aspects with previously conducted studies on the L1 issue in L2 classrooms. However, the only thing this study investigated was how EFL instructors felt about using L1 in L2 classrooms and why they did so. Further studies on the issue might focus on the outcomes of using L1 in the L2 classroom based on empirical data and investigate it from students' perspectives to get a broader picture of the issue. Giving students the opportunity to speak on the subject can help us gain ideas about how we should look at L1 use in the L2 classroom. However, longitudinal studies might be carried out to find the effects of L1 usage on L2 learning outcomes in order to go beyond perceptions and attitudes regarding L1 usage. Nevertheless, the results of the present study could not be generalised since it surveyed and interviewed a quite limited population in its idiosyncratic context.

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