Education Quarterly Reviews

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Examining Secondary School Teachers' Beliefs and Purposes about the Use of L1 in Foreign Language Classes

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Abstract

The present study reports on an investigation of secondary school teachers' purposes of the first language (L1) use in foreign language (L2) classes and reflects on teaching practices implemented in secondary schools in Turkey. The study also aims to explore the teachers' beliefs about the use of L1 in L2 teaching. The study utilized ethnography and employed classroom observations, field notes, and interviews. 19 secondary school teachers of English were included in the study. The findings of the study revealed that teachers' L1 use served the following functions: instructional functions, building up rapport, maintaining discipline, and intellectual functions. The findings also indicated that the reasons behind the teachers' L1 use in their classrooms were based on students' affective and cognitive needs.

Keywords: First Language (L1) Use, Foreign Language (L2) Teaching, Secondary Schools

1. Introduction

The issue of using the students' first language (L1) in second language teaching contexts is still a matter of debate. Although a number of well-known approaches strongly suggest exclusive use of the target language (L2), some scholars argue that there is no significant evidence for the requirement of TL-only teaching by re-examining this view (Atkinson, 1993; Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001). In addition, Macaro (2001) claims that using a foreign language (L2) exclusively does not necessarily mean an increase in the quantity of students' L2 production as the advocates of the L2-only approach have suggested. Du (2016) states that bilingual education programs have been supported rather than monolingual approaches in recent years because many empirical studies on teachers' and students' L1 use have revealed the positive effects of L1 in L2 contexts. Similarly, Blyth (1995) argues that classrooms should be admitted as multilingual communities instead of monolingual environments.

It is ineluctable that teachers who share the same L1 with their students may have to use L1 at some point in their teaching experience. Therefore, it is obvious that neglecting the use of L1 is beyond reality (Kohi & Suvarna Lakshmi, 2020). On the other hand, it is a known fact that discouraging or banning students' use of their own language has been a common belief since the late nineteenth century; and therefore, teachers need to be sure that their students use the language being taught during the classes (Hall & Cook, 2012). However, the growing literature shows that there are a great number of research studies that argue against the idea of monolingual teaching in foreign language classrooms. Moreover, as Harmer (2001) states, "there is little point in trying to stamp it (L1) out completely" (p. 132). Hence, recent studies have focused on the teachers' appropriate use of L1 in their pedagogy by questioning how much, when, and why L1 should be used in second language teaching contexts (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Çelik, 2008; Kırkgöz, 2017; Kohi & Suvarna Lakshmi, 2020; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Lo, 2015; Paker & Karaağaç, 2015; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Taşçı & Aksu Ataç, 2020; Yenice, 2018).

This study argues for using L1 as a facilitative tool in second language teaching. As a result of conducted studies in different contexts, a number of researchers (Kırkgöz, 2017, Taşçı & Aksu Ataç, 2020; Yenice, 2018) report that teachers of English frequently use the L1 (Turkish) in their classes in Turkey. In order to see the whole picture of the teachers' implementations, it is necessary to gain a better understanding of how teachers of English use their L1 in foreign language classrooms. Therefore, this study aims to observe and reflect on teaching practices implemented in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in secondary schools in Turkey.

1.1 Theoretical Rationales

The main rationale of advocates of target language-only teaching is that students could only be exposed to TL in the classroom, and therefore the highest rate of use of TL needs to be provided in language classrooms (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). Krashen (1982) contends that teachers need to provide comprehensible input in the target language if they want to teach effectively. Chaudron (1988) emphasizes the value of TL instruction by drawing attention to students' limited chance of natural and extensive engagement in TL environment. Obviously, teaching to students who do not share the same L1 is totally different from that of teaching context in which teachers and students share a common language; however, this fact cannot be asserted as an excuse by teachers (Chambers, 1991). Ellis (2005) describes language learning as a gradual and difficult process and points out the amount and the quality of L2 input by stating that "in general, the more exposure they receive, the more and the faster they will learn" (p.217). McDonald (1993) draws attention to student motivation and second language learning by stating that L1 may demotivate students because they make no effort to understand when the teacher uses L1 extensively (as cited in Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). Additionally, some methods (Direct Method and Audio-lingual Method) are very strict about using the TL in the classroom, which aims to teach students how to use TL communicatively. Although some other alternative methods are in favor of the use of L1 to some extent, in methodological discussions, there has been a strong emphasis on using the TL while teaching (Littlewood & Yu, 2011).

Because the predominant methodology of the twentieth century promotes L1 free teaching, "foreign language teachers build islands that are in constant danger of being flooded by the sea of the mother tongue" (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 24). Likewise, Cook (2001) points out that teachers misinterpret maximizing the TL, which results in avoiding the L1 in their classrooms. Hence, the notion of maximizing the TL in the classroom has been questioned and Turnbull and Arnett (2002) have addressed the question "how much exposure to TL input is optimal from a theoretical and pedagogical standpoint?" (p.205). In contrast to advocates of immersion, Blyth (1995) reported that teachers always endeavor to maximize the use of the TL in their classrooms; however, students claim that teachers' exclusive TL use results in an increase in their affective filter. In his theory, Butzkamm (2003) presents the mother tongue as "the master key to foreign languages, the tool which gives us the fastest, surest, most precise, and most complete means of accessing a foreign language" (p.31). Therefore, restricting L1 use leads teachers to overlook the fact that learners are cognitive individuals who connect newly-learned information with their existing knowledge, which results in higher success in foreign language learning

(De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009). Additionally, from a socio-cognitive perspective, L1 may provide a social and cognitive zone which extends students' collaborative interaction among them while they are dealing with the task (Anton & DiCamilla, 1999; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). In his study, although Levine (2003) found that instructors used the L2 immensely in their classes, he points out that rejecting the L1 use seems useless because it serves several functions in the L2 context. In addition, in order to keep students attentive, interested, and participative, teachers should be allowed to use L1 while they are teaching (Carless, 2007).

1.2 How much do teachers use L1 in an L2 context?

According to Ceo-DiFrancesco (2013), theory does not always work in parallel with research and practice; therefore, there is a discrepancy between theory, research and practice regarding the TL use in classrooms. Although many teachers feel under pressure because of strong declarations of researchers and the principles, a number of research studies from different teaching contexts indicate that teachers continue to use students' native language for various purposes and in different proportions. For example, one of the earliest studies conducted by Duff and Polio (1990) revealed that teachers had used the L1 90% at most. Lo (2015) examined twelve CLIL teachers' audio-recorded talk while they were teaching content subjects in order to find out their L1 and L2 use. The results indicated that the proportion of L1 use in different schools ranged from 20% to 96%. In Iran, Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015) calculated the amount of L1 use of twelve EFL teachers and found that their minimum amount of L1 use was 0.33% while the maximum amount was 11.37%. De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) examined the discourse of two instructors teaching German in Canada and the results showed that their L1 use ranged from 4.6% to 25.1% during their classes. In his case study, Macaro (2001) analyzed the quantity of L1 used by six student teachers in secondary schools in England. He found that the proportion of L1 use ranged from 0% to 15.2%. One of the recent studies carried out by Kohi and Suvarna Lakshmi (2020) indicated that almost 78% of the teachers from twelve different countries stated that they "sometimes" used their learners' L1 in their classes. Another study conducted by Taşçı and Aksu Ataç (2020) with three Turkish EFL teachers revealed that the proportion of their L1 use ranged from 21% to 30%. These studies suggest that teachers somehow integrate students' mother tongue into their teaching in various second language teaching contexts even though the latest language teaching approaches argue for monolingual L2 teaching. Furthermore, "these ranges occur regardless of learner age, learner proficiency, or learning context" (Lee & Macaro, 2013, p.888). Consequently, it is necessary to help teachers to find their routes and explore the facilities of using the L1 in L2 contexts by providing a framework that shows when they should refer to the L1 in their classrooms (Kırkgöz, 2017; Macaro, 2001). On the other hand, Turnbull (2018) claims that developing such a framework is not as easy as it seems; therefore, he suggests that teacher training courses should include more education into the use of the L1 and specifically focus on facilitating roles of the L1 in the L2 classroom.

1.3 Practical implementations: Integrating L1 into L2 context

The studies mentioned in the previous section indicate that the context may be determining factor in the proportion of the L1 use in foreign language classes. Additionally, Hall and Cook (2012) contend that there is a growing tendency for L1 use in foreign language classrooms due to the changes in academic and political circles. When these facts are taken into account, it would be valuable to provide an outline for teachers in order to enlighten them on L1 use. That is, where and when should it be employed appropriately? Schweers (1999) provides a list of appropriate uses of L1 in foreign language classrooms which was suggested by Atkinson (1987). The list includes suggestions for classroom use such as eliciting language, checking comprehension, giving complex instructions to basic levels, co-operating in groups, explaining classroom methodology at basic levels, using translation to highlight recently taught language items, checking for sense, testing, and developing circumlocution strategies. In her study, Auerbach (1993, p.9) presents another detailed list prepared by Piasecka (1988) in order to introduce possible circumstances for using the L1: negotiation of the syllabus and the lesson; record keeping; classroom management; scene-setting; language analysis; presentation of rules governing grammar, phonology, morphology, and spelling; discussion of cross-cultural issues; instructions or prompts; explanations of errors; and assessment of comprehension. Some other scholars (Cook, 2001; Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009) claim that teachers could use the L1 on purpose and in a systematic way. Cook (2001) prompts

teachers to use the L1 in order to convey and check the meaning of words or sentences, to explain grammar, to organize tests, to maintain discipline, to get contact with students and to implement tests. In their book, Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) provide a guide for teachers in order to present the ways of how they are able to apply the bilingual approach to their teaching practice. In this approach, they offer a new synthesis of theory and practice which provides detailed explanations about the major domains of foreign language teaching. Littlewood and Yu (2011) contend that teachers should use the L1 in a principled way and present a framework that consists of strategic and compensatory use of L1. They suggest that the L1 may service some purposes such as managing the classroom, explaining grammar, responding to a communication problem, and giving effective support to students. Harmer (2001) remarks on the low-level students and states that it is may help both teachers and students use the L1 while they are explaining something, discussing, or making an announcement.

2. Method

This study utilized ethnography as a research method which focuses on cultures or groups and their daily practices, perceptions, and notion (Denscombe, 2010). As a qualitative approach, ethnography deals with "the behavior, language, and interaction among members of a culture-sharing group" (Creswell, 2007, p.69). It is an in-depth study that takes place in naturalistic settings and concerns with people's actions analyzing their meaning, functions and results through observations and interviews (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Observations that allow researchers to discover how things exactly work in a context are valuable data collection tools to access teaching practices while interviews enable the researcher to understand "both how something is and how something should be" (Flick, 2009, p.222). In this study, an ethnographic approach was applied in order to explore and reflect on teaching practices implemented by Turkish teachers of English within a local context. The present study was guided by the following research questions:

1. For what purposes do the teachers of English use L1 in their classes?
2. Do the purposes of using L1 vary according to students' grades?
3. What are the opinions of teachers of English regarding the use of L1 in their classrooms?

2.1 Participants and Context

The present study was conducted in 18 public secondary schools in Adana, Turkey. The study was carried out for one semester in the academic years 2009/2010 and 2011/2012. The participants were 19 Turkish teachers of English whose teaching experience ranged from 9 to 24 years. Two of them were male while the rest of them were female. Table 1 contains information concerning their teaching experience, gender, class size, and learners' grade. The number of students in each class ranged from 11 to 43. The students' age ranged from 11 to 14 years old, and their mother tongue was Turkish.

Table 1: Teachers' Characteristics.

Grade	5th	6th	7th	8th
Participants	T1; T2; T3	T4; T5; T6; T7	T4; T7; T8; T9; T10; T11; T12; T13; T14	T12; T15; T16; T17; T18; T19
Teaching experience	20-21 years	14-24 years	13-21 years	9-17 years
Gender	Female: 3	Female: 4	Female: 8; Male: 1	Female: 5; Male:1
Class size	25-30	18-41	11-42	18-43

2.2 Data Collection

Since the current study was an ethnographic study utilizing a qualitative approach, the data mainly based on class observations, field notes, and interviews. Observations were conducted by the second author as a non-participant observer during the ongoing teaching processes of English implemented in the classroom. The researcher audio recorded the classes and took notes in order to record teachers' purposes of L1 (Turkish) use in foreign language classrooms. In addition, interviews were conducted with five volunteer teachers in order to investigate their opinions about the use of L1 in their classes.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data collected through observations and transcribed lessons were analyzed and instances of L1 use were identified. The utterances were categorized under various functions. In the beginning, 18 different purposes were determined by the researcher and if the data included a different purpose, it was added to the list. Since the initial analysis was only carried out by the corresponding author, some parts of the data were also analyzed by the second author in order to achieve inter-rater reliability. Then, the first author re-examined all the observation data for intra-rater reliability. Ultimately, 23 different categories were determined and ranked from 1 to 23. The total use for each purpose was counted and the data were entered in the columns on the Excel spreadsheet. In order to respond to the first research question focusing on determining the purposes of teachers' L1 use, teachers' utterances were identified and categorized under four major functions and examples were presented in English in Table 2.

The interviews were conducted in Turkish by the corresponding author and audio-recorded. They were transcribed and then the extracts from the transcribed data were translated into English by the second author. The accuracy of the transcripts and translations was checked back by the corresponding author. Then, the transcripts of the interviews were read thoroughly and coded in order to address certain themes and categories. All participants' names in the interviews were labeled with T1, T2, T3, etc. for ethical considerations. The results obtained from the interviews were presented with relevant excerpts from the data.

3. Results

3.1 For what purposes do the teachers of English use L1 in their classes?

Regarding the first research question, instances of L1 use were identified and the analysis of the utterances resulted in four major and 23 minor categories (Table 2). The findings indicated that the most common major function was instructional functions that consisted of 9 sub-categories: giving instruction, asking questions, giving an explanation, checking, coping with administrative issues, revising, introducing a new topic, clarifying a difficult concept, and starting/ending the lesson. The second most widely observed major function was building up rapport and it also involved 9 minor functions: giving feedback/praising, eliciting student contribution, reacting to students' questions, correcting errors, motivating, making jokes, giving advice, making personal comments, and greeting. Another observed function was maintaining discipline that was composed of three sub-functions (managing the classroom, warning, and reprimanding). Intellectual functions of L1 use which included two minor functions (translating and eliciting) was the least widely-observed main function in this study.

The results are presented in descending order and examples are provided for each function. Additionally, the four major functional categories and the most frequently observed minor functions with teachers' L1 utterances in the corpus are discussed in more detail subsequently.

Table 2: Frequency of Instances of L1 Use

Major and Minor Functions of L1 use	Example	No of Instances
Instructional Functions		**921**
Giving instruction	We will find the difference between the sports bicycle and tour bicycle.	222
Asking questions	So, where is Ankara?	201
Giving an explanation	We use the infinitive form the verb after 'can'	165
Checking	Did you understand what you would do?	144
Coping with administrative issues	Is there anyone who hasn't filled the project form yet?	69
Revising	So, we learned how to make negative sentences and ask questions in our previous lesson.	43
Introducing new topic	Now, listen to me. Today, we will cover 'can/ cannot.'	33
Clarifying a difficult concept	What is the environment? It is the natural world around us.	32
Starting/Ending the lesson	The bell is ringing. Have a nice weekend.	10
Building up Rapport		**553**
Giving feedback/Praising	That's right. Well done!	200
Eliciting student contribution	Büşra, you read it!	141
Reacting to Ss' questions	S: Which page, teacher? T: Sixteen	74
Correcting Errors	That's right but you must use have instead of has.	71
Motivating	Cansu, can't you remember which verbs we use? Here the an auxiliary verb is 'do' and the main verb is 'come.' Now answer the question again according to this information.	25
Making jokes	One of my students called the firefighter 'yangın adam.'	21
Giving Advice	If you want to have high grades, you need to study hard.	14
Making personal comments	This is a good method. You can apply it.	5
Greeting	Good morning!	3
Maintaining Discipline		**183**
Managing the classroom	Sit down! Be quiet!	80
Warning	Please, go to the toilet during break time. Don't ask me for permission during the exam.	57
Reprimanding	Ahmet, shut up!	46
Intellectual Functions		**166**
Translating Sentences	*Resimlere bakın ve soruları yanıtlayın.* [Look at the pictures and answer the questions.]	104
Eliciting the language	What is the meaning of occupation?	62

3.1.1 Instructional functions

Instructional functions served different purposes such as explaining the instruction part of an activity or grammar rules, checking students' comprehension, asking questions about the activity, revising the previously learned knowledge, and so on. In this study, the findings revealed that teachers frequently used the L1 in order to give instruction with the aim of clarifying what the students were expected to do before completing an exercise or a task. The following excerpt was recorded while T3 was teaching the subject matter "ability (can/can't)" to 5th-grade students and it was presented in brackets to indicate that it was translated into English.

> T3: [*Please open page 39 and look at exercise 3. Let's try to guess what these people are saying by looking at the pictures.*]

Similarly, another teacher (T5) taught the subject matter "how much, how many" to the 6th graders and explained to her students what they were supposed to do:

> T5: [*Yes, children, match the pictures on the slide to the rules.*]

Another instance of L1 use was observed while T1 was teaching "how many" and "how much" questions with countable and uncountable nouns and she asked her 5th-grade students:

> T1: [*Can you give me examples of uncountable nouns?]*

The third most widely observed sub-function was giving explanations. In the following excerpt, T9 tried to make it clear and explain to his 7th-grade students how to form superlative sentences by giving examples.

> T9: [*Superlative means superiority. This is also a comparison. For example, when we say 'China is the most crowded country in the world,' we compare China with not only one country but all the countries*

in the world. If the adjective has one-syllable, we need to add '–est' for the superlative form. For example, hot-hotter-hottest.]

The current study also confirmed that the teachers frequently used L1 for checking students' comprehension by using tag questions. The following excerpt belongs to the 8th-grade teacher, T18, who revises articles and checks whether the students understand the explanation or not:

> T18: [*We are looking for answers to certain questions and we are referring to something plural, aren't we? Then, what should we do? We should use "the," shouldn't we? Do you all understand?]*

3.1.2 Building up Rapport

Building up rapport was the second largest main functional category. Teachers repeatedly used L1 for interpersonal purposes such as giving feedback or praising, eliciting student contribution, answering their questions, motivating them, making jokes, and so on. The findings of the study showed that giving feedback and praising are the two purposes commonly used together by teachers. In the following excerpt, L1 was used by the T16 after a 7th-grade student could write a correct present perfect sentence:

> T16: [*Yes, Nilay, that's true. Good!]*

In the following excerpt, similarly, T2 used L1 after her 5th-grade student answered the question correctly:

> T2: [*Well done Salih! Right. Very good.*]

The results showed that eliciting student contribution was the second most widely observed minor function. A 7th-grade teacher, T10, used L1 after her students read a dialogue related to finding and seeking for information. After they finished reading the dialogue, the teacher gave a command to her student:

> T10: [*Buket, answer the question according to the dialogue.*]

Another teacher, T4, looked for volunteer students, and then she decided on the students who would complete the task:

> T4: [*Who will write the questions on the board?]*
> Ss: [*Me, me!]*
> T4: [*Okay, then. Dilara and Esma, you write on the board. Dilara, you will write part A. And Esma, you will write part B.*]

3.1.3 Maintaining Discipline

The results of the study revealed that L1 was often used by the teachers in order to deal with discipline problems such as noisy students, distracting behaviors, talking and walking around the classroom. The following instance of L1 use was recorded while one of the 5th-grade teachers, T2, was trying to keep her noisy students quiet:

> T2: [*Buse and Ahmet! Why are you talking to each other? Be quiet, we will start our lesson.*]

Another instance of L1 use was recorded when another teacher used L1 in order to prevent her student from walking around the classroom:

> T1: [*How often do you stand up, Berkay! Sit down!*]

3.1.4 Intellectual Functions

Intellectual functions of L1 use were observed when teachers translated sentences and elicited the Turkish equivalent of an English word or the reverse. An 8th-grade teacher, T19, translated the instruction part into Turkish.

> T19: [*Today as I said before we will do the exercises in your workbook. Open your books please.*]

The findings of this research study showed that teachers frequently asked the questions "How do we say it in Turkish/English?" or "What is the meaning of this word?" to their students. The following instance of L1 use was observed while T14 was teaching to her 7th-grade students:

> T14: [*What is the meaning of 'different from'?*]

To sum up, four major functions emerged in the obtained data. The results indicated that teachers mostly used the L1 for instructional purposes, especially for giving instruction. L1 was also commonly used in order to build up rapport and giving feedback or praising was the most frequently observed minor function. Maintaining discipline was another main concern of teachers, 'managing the classroom' being the most widely observed sub-function. Teachers also used L1 for intellectual purposes in order to facilitate their teaching by translating sentences frequently.

3.2 Do the purposes of using L1 vary according to students' grades?

The data collected through observations indicated that teachers of English used L1 for a number of different purposes in different grades. The results revealed that fifth-grade teachers of English used L1 in order to give instructions, to give feedback or to praise, to ask questions, to manage the classroom and to elicit student contribution respectively. The results of the emerged data obtained from sixth-grade teachers revealed that their most common purposes of using L1 in their classes were: to give instruction, to give feedback or to praise, to ask questions, to elicit student contribution and to elicit the language. The results also showed that the first three purposes of the sixth-grade teachers' using L1 are similar to fifth-grade teachers'. As for seventh-grade teachers of English, the results indicated that they used L1 in order to ask a question, to give feedback or to praise, to check, to elicit student contribution and to give instruction. Although giving instruction was the most common purpose of fifth and sixth-grade teachers of English, it was in fifth place in the ranking list of the most common functions. The results also showed that the teachers teaching English to seventh-grade students used L1 to check students' comprehension while the fifth and sixth-grade teachers did not pursue such a goal. According to the data, eighth-grade teachers' most common purposes of using L1 in their classes were: to give instruction, to check, to ask questions, to give feedback or to praise, and to translate. The results indicated that eighth-grade teachers' used L1 in order to translate sentences into Turkish while it was not a widely-observed sub-function in previous grades.

The findings of the present study revealed that the use of L1 in four different grades served a number of different purposes. Although three of the identified purposes (giving instruction, asking a question and giving feedback or praising) were the same in each grade, several different minor functions were also observed in different grades. Additionally, teachers used L1 for some other common purposes such as reacting to students' questions, warning, dealing with administrative issues and correcting errors although they were not used as frequently as the presented purposes.

3.3 What are the opinions of teachers of English regarding the use of L1 in their classrooms?

In the interviews, teachers of English reported their opinions about using L1 in their classes. They gave some reasons for using L1. The T19 and T6 expressed an affective reason:

> T19: *"I generally use L1 because they are adolescents, so they can lose their attention easily. I use L1 in order to increase their participation. Besides, I also use L1 so that they can feel relief and motivated."*
>
> T6: *"When I use L1 it is easy for students to understand what they are going to do. And also I see that they feel comfortable in the classroom. They don't panic."*

Other teachers, T7, T13, and T18, emphasized the learner differences in their classes. They stated that it was necessary to use L1 in order to facilitate their students' understanding:

> T7: *"In this level, students cannot understand everything clearly in L2. We explain the subject matter and teach grammar and vocabulary. They have difficulty in understanding target language, so we use L1 in this situation."*
>
> T 13: *"My students' level of understanding is very low. They are so diverse that using L2 might be torture for them because some students do not understand even though I use L1. Therefore, I believe that it is necessary to use L1 while teaching them."*

> T18: "*I think that it is obligatory to use L1 for this level especially for my students. Because the background of my students is really miserable so it is significant to use L1 in the class in order to make students understand the topic clearly.*"

During the interviews, the teachers explained for what purposes they used L1 mostly in their classes. According to the data obtained from observations, giving instruction was one of the most common functions. In the interviews, two of them also pointed out that they used L1 to give instruction correctly. For eliciting the language, T6, who taught to sixth graders, was the only teacher stating that she used L1 in order to explain the meanings of newly taught words and translate them. Of all interviewees, three of them stated that they used L1 for giving an explanation. In the interviews, one of the teachers claimed that the purpose of using L1 was to warn her students. Similarly, another teacher stated that she used L1 in order to maintain discipline in the classroom. One of the teachers, T13, pointed out that she switched to Turkish in order to teach grammar and give commands especially when she realized that the students did not understand. Nevertheless, to some extent, what the teachers claimed in the interviews was different from what they actually performed in the classrooms. Even though clarification was not one of the common functions frequently used by the teachers, three of the teachers claimed that they used L1 in order to clarify a difficult concept or meaning. Additionally, the data obtained from observations showed that giving feedback or praising, asking questions, checking comprehension, and translating English sentences into Turkish were the most common purposes; however, none of the teachers referred to these purposes during the interviews.

4. Discussion

This current study was conducted to provide insights into teaching practices implemented by Turkish teachers of English within a local context and their opinions about using L1 in their classrooms. All the teachers who participated in this study agreed that using the target language would be beneficial for their students. However, they admitted that it was inevitable to use L1 because it was a useful tool to overcome some problems such as learner differences, low level of language proficiency, and reluctance. The results revealed that the teachers' main concerns were to make their students participate in lessons, to motivate them, to provide a comfortable learning environment, and to achieve higher comprehension. The findings indicated that the teachers of English used L1 for four major functions that included different sub-functions: instructional functions, building up rapport, maintaining discipline, and intellectual functions. Similarly, in terms of functions and their frequency of use, Kohi and Suvarna Lakshmi (2020) and Yenice (2018) proposed the four major functions of L1 use respectively: language functional use, managerial functionality, affective functionality, and social functionality. Sali (2014) and Ong and Tajuddin (2020), in their research studies, reported that the most frequently used function was academic, managerial function the second, and social/ cultural the least frequent. Another study conducted by Lo (2015) presented three major categories observed in CLIL classrooms: social and affective functions, pedagogical functions: classroom management and content transmission. The results of this current study are also consistent with the findings of the previous studies conducted in different contexts which refer to L1 use of teachers of English for rapport building, making the topic/meaning clear and explaining difficult concepts (Paker & Karaagac, 2015); translation, activity instruction and elicitation of students' contribution (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015) and giving instruction, classroom management, explaining aspects, establishing rapport, and eliciting answers (Kırkgöz, 2017; Ma, 2019).

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that the use of L1 was a standard implementation for all teachers who participated in this study. That is, as Bozorgian and Fallahpour claim, "there was no reluctance for its use where it was necessary" (2015, p.78). It seems that the reasons behind switching into Turkish in EFL classrooms were based on students' affective and cognitive needs. Although the teachers of English find the idea of using L2 most of the time in their classes more effective, Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) suggest that using L1 could be beneficial for teachers even in an L2 setting. In addition, some researchers point out that it is a facilitative tool in terms of explaining complex grammar concepts, giving instructions for class activities, and classroom management (Sahabir, 2017); helping students better understand the content knowledge (Lo, 2015); conveying

meaning, managing the classroom, making a friendly environment, reducing students' anxiety, facilitating communication, elaborating on the course goals and clarification (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015); helping learners work with the task at a higher cognitive level and provide each other definitions of unknown words in a direct and successful way (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). As Çelik (2008) suggests, language teachers should welcome L1 in their teaching and keep in their mind that using L1 consciously will be valuable and encourage students' language learning in an L2 context. Given the facilities of L1 use, it can be suggested that language teachers need to have a better understanding with respect to the function of L1 in L2 settings and they also need to be able to identify when L1 can be a facilitative tool. Thus, they will be able to provide a rationale for their L1 use in their classes instead of feeling guilty about, or avoiding using it in their classes.

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