

# Target Language Use in EFL Classrooms: Turkish EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

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| ARTICLE INFO   | ABSTRACT   |
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| <p><b>Keywords:</b><br/>EFL teachers, foreign language use, maximizing L2 use, native language use</p> <p><b>DOI:</b><br/><a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v6i1.930">http://dx.doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v6i1.930</a></p> <p><b>How to cite:</b><br/>Korkmaz, Ş. Ç., (2021). Target Language Use in EFL Classrooms: Turkish EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices. <i>Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics</i>, 6(1), 155-171</p> | <p>Considering the teacher talk as the main input in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, this descriptive study aimed to elucidate the beliefs and practices of Turkish EFL teachers regarding their use of a foreign language, namely English (L2) in their classrooms by taking into account school types, experience, and travelling abroad as variables. Accordingly, 308 EFL teachers from different regions of Turkey were given a questionnaire with two parts, firstly beliefs and then practices, to clarify this prominent issue. The results indicated the high level of teacher awareness about the necessity for using L2 for several reasons but without dismissing the use of their native language, namely Turkish (L1). Conversely, the study highlighted the clashes between their espoused beliefs and practices. Furthermore, being more experienced teachers and working in primary or high schools were not reported as significant factors in teacher agency in making language choices to teach L2 whereas working in state or private schools and visiting English speaking countries revealed significant differences in the beliefs and practices of the teachers with regard to their use of L2 to teach L2. The results were discussed with suggestions to maximize L2 use in EFL classrooms.</p> |

## 1. Introduction

Among agencies revealing a successful outcome of foreign language (FL) education, current debates focus more on practicing teachers as active agents who are mediated through their personal experiences, objects of teaching, tools, rules, institutional arrangements, and community (Molla & Nolan, 2020; Yang, 2015). Moreover, there have been many approaches and methods, as EFL teacher agencies (Larsen-Freeman 2000; Richards & Rodgers 2014), that invite them to conceive of influencing factors without exception of teachers' language choices in creating more favorable EFL contexts. Accordingly, there appear three main views about teachers' language choices, target language or native language, in the literature: overwhelming use of L1 via translation as emphasized by the grammar/translation method;

appropriate use of L1 as seen in the Community Language Learning, Communicative Language Teaching, and many others; and ignoring the role of L1 use as suggested in the Direct method, Natural Approach and Audio-lingual Method (Larsen-Freeman 2000; Richards & Rodgers 2014). Thus, whether or not to use L1 in L2 teaching can be described as “the tide of the ocean” as mentioned by Almoayidi (2018; p. 375). This is why L2 use in EFL settings has been still a hot topic in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT).

The researcher conceptualizes teachers' beliefs in this study as teachers' espoused beliefs reflecting what they say they believe (Borg, 2018). Along these lines, the teachers' beliefs in the study are “the beliefs that play a role in the here-and-now- which concern the practical-evaluative dimension of agency (Biesta Priestley & Robinson, 2015, p. 637). Despite shaping practices, beliefs are not the only determinant of behavior (Borg, 2018). For instance, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey encouraged the use of L2 to teach L2 by asserting that “communication is carried out in English as much as possible” (MoNE, 2018, p.12). As it is understood, despite being encouraged by the MoNE to follow mostly L2 in their classes, Turkish EFL teachers are given the freedom to use also L1. However, some of the Turkish EFL teachers in the study by Çelik Korkmaz (2019) reported that they were obliged to use only L2 due to working at the private schools where L1 use is forbidden, which indicates that school types might have an impact on what teachers believe and do with regard to L2 use in their classrooms. Furthermore, the study by Yong et al. (2020) in the context of China indicated that experienced teachers used L1 more frequently than novice teachers.

Hence, further considerations need to be explored to delve into EFL teachers' cognition and practices on their language choices (Macaro, 2001), which is why the researcher included school types, being more experienced teachers, and being abroad as variables of this study. Since the aforementioned variables have not been directly addressed in the previous studies, the study aimed to shed light on the ongoing discussions about using L2 to teach L2, which revealed many controversial views in the literature.

## **1. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Suppressing L1 use to teach L2 (The Monolingual Approach)**

As L1 use is considered an impediment to the improvement of L2, the monolingual approach argues that the target language should be the medium of instruction. As many scholars have mentioned, “The Input Hypothesis” proposed by Krashen (1981) can be accepted as proof for considering L1 use as an obstacle to providing enough exposure to language use in EFL settings where time and language input are limited. Despite enhancing language production temporarily via involving the performer in conversation more as a short-term advantage, L1 use may not provide real progress in the second language and revealed disadvantages in the long term (Krashen, 1982). His hesitation about L1 is reflected as follows “the L1 rule may not be the same as an L2 rule... Even if the L1 rule is similar to an actual L2 rule or transitional form, it is not clear that these rules will help the acquirer progress.” (Krashen, p.28). Voicu (2012; p.213) summarised the reasons for justifying the Monolingual Approach under three points;

- The learning of an L2 should model the learning of an L1 (through maximising the exposure to L2).
- Successful learning involves the separation and distinction of L1 and L2.
- Students should be shown the importance of L2 through its continual use.

As suggested in the aforementioned points, teachers need to be careful about excessive recourse to L1 use. The longitudinal experimental action research study in Hong Kong context by Wong (2010) revealed that the class following only-English policy indicated a higher English proficiency level than the students in the classroom in which L1 is permitted. In a sense, teachers should do their level best to maximize their L2 use.

Motivating teachers via pre-service and in-service teacher training programs through which English-only policy is usually emphasized by some education ministries as seen in the study by Hall & Cook (2014). Despite their consensus on the use of mainly English in the classroom, the teachers in that study did not report a sense of guilt when using L1 particularly to explain vocabulary and grammar when necessary to develop rapport and a pleasant classroom atmosphere. The teachers considered learners' low-level English proficiency as a factor to make their decisions on the choice of language but not their age and background knowledge.

However, following the principle of L2 acquisition by believing that learners might deprive of the exposure, Harbord (1992) criticized teachers' use of L1 to explain grammar, save time, give instructions, and build a good relationship with students except for its use for learners with a low level of L2 proficiency. He also added that non-native speaker teachers might be unable to follow L2-only policy due to their high-stress level unless they are specially trained on this issue. Similarly, in a Korean elementary school context, Kang (2013) reported that the teacher with high EFL proficiency level used English more often since s/he has got low anxiety in comparison to those with a low EFL proficiency. Furthermore, when compared to native – English teachers, bilingual teachers should deal with challenges to be employed and continue their employment in an English-only school because English-only classrooms with native English teachers see more value by parents and students (Yang & Yang, 2020).

Multiple stakeholders such as EFL educators, parents, students are in favor of English-only policy by believing that it is an alternative to traditional English education with decontextualized classroom activities (Yang & Yang, 2020). Although teachers and program administrators who follow English-only policy are likely to believe that speaking English 100% is the best way to learn the language, these policies which are often based on business interests rather than best pedagogical practice might have detrimental effect on learners' cognitive, communicative, social, and affective levels (Shvidko, 2017). The ethnographic study by Yang & Yang (2020) also indicated the complexity of the everyday practice of a language policy in a local context by virtue of intertwining identities and ideologies of multiple stakeholders. It is very prominent for both teachers and administrators, therefore, to reflect on their espoused beliefs and comply with the research findings regarding monolingual and bilingual approaches in different EFL contexts.

## **2.2 Supporting the judicious use of L1 in L2 teaching (The Bilingual Approach)**

Among advocates of the bilingual approach (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Macaro, 2009; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Sali, 2014; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009), Pan and Pan (2010) expressed the advantages of L1 use to teach L2 under three main categories such as for curriculum access referring to explaining the meaning of words and sentences besides explaining grammar and cultural issues; for classroom management discourse including organizing complex tasks, disciplining and praising students; and for interpersonal relations referring to developing positive rapport between students and teachers and telling jokes.

The judicious use of L1 in different EFL contexts has been reported as a useful scaffolding tool in several studies. For instance, in Chinese EFL contexts (Jing & Jing, 2018), the participating teachers used L1 for explaining complicated instructions, giving cultural knowledge, and for activating class atmosphere via humorous Chinese besides combining their L2 talks with non-verbal discourse such as eye-contact, facial expressions, and body movements. Furthermore, in the Iranian context, Persian was used for translation, elicitation of student contribution, instruction, and contrasting L1-L2 structures and meaning as well as conveying meaning, encouraging students, giving references, managing classrooms, and making a friendly atmosphere (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015). Besides, in Cameroon context, Enama (2016) reported the use of L1 to strengthen learners' cognitive abilities and meta-linguistic awareness, reduce their anxiety, and make them liable besides linguistic input and respond to test instructions better.

With regard to the Turkish context, Taşçı and Aksu Ataç (2020) reported that the EFL primary teachers used L1 for giving instruction, classroom management, checking understanding, translation of unknown words, eliciting, giving feedback, grammar instruction, drawing attention, and translation of sentences. Similarly, Sali (2014) revealed that L1 is mostly used by Turkish EFL secondary school teachers for academic purposes such as reviewing, eliciting, explaining aspects of English, talking about learning, translating words and sentences, and checking comprehension, then for managerial purposes such as giving instructions, monitoring, managing disciplines, and drawing attention, finally for social and cultural reasons such as establishing rapport, drawing upon shared cultural expressions, and praising. In addition, Şen (2010) indicated that the Turkish high school teachers used L1 mainly to focus on forms to ensure students' understanding.

After investigating L2 and L1 use in EFL contexts, Levine (2003, p. 355) offered three pedagogical tenets for maximizing L2 use: firstly, resolving not to deny the L1 a role (Optimal TL Use Tenet); secondly using the L1 simply to reduce anxiety or increase efficiency but keeping in mind that using the L1 avidly may engender anxiety to use L2 (the Market L1 Tenet); finally, collaborating with students to formalize L1 and L2 use both inside and outside of the classroom (the Collaborate Language Use Tenet).

Within the aforementioned theoretical framework, it is evident in different EFL contexts that L1 use, by means or other, has been an avoidable fact. In addition, Turkish EFL teachers' cognitive dissonance as to their language choices in their realms of L2 teaching was proved in the report by Council (2013). Despite being valuable, the studies in Turkish EFL contexts which included the sample size with only three primary EFL teachers (Taşçı & Aksu Ataç, 2020) and three secondary school teachers (Sali, 2014), and three high school teachers (Şen, 2010) are limited in terms of the generalizability of L1 use in Turkish EFL classrooms. Thus, the researcher, via reaching more EFL teachers from different teaching contexts, aimed at broadening our understanding of when they use L1 in their classrooms. In addition, Babanoğlu & Yardımcı (2017) revealed some differences between Turkish state and private school EFL teachers with regard to their perceptions about professional development in general in favor of private school teachers. Moreover, Tammenga-Helmantel, Mossing et al. (2020) who investigated the use of L2 by student teachers in their teaching practice during teacher education and one year after graduation suggested conducting a study with more experienced teachers to indicate whether being an experienced teacher would show any difference in teachers' use of L2 to teach L2. Furthermore, in the study by Bodur and Arıkan

(2017), university students believed that they could learn English successfully if only they could have an opportunity to go abroad. Thus, the researcher aimed to conduct this quantitative study to investigate Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about their use of L2 to teach L2 by taking into account the aforementioned variables by forming the following research questions (RQs):

RQ 1: What are the Turkish EFL teachers' espoused beliefs about L2 use to teach L2?

RQ2: What are the Turkish EFL teachers' practices about L2 use to teach L2?

RQ 3: Are there statistically significant differences between the Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding L2 use?

RQ4: Are there statistically significant differences between the Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding L2 use based on the variables such as school types, being more experienced, and being abroad?

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study is a descriptive method of research which refers to a type of research that aims at gathering information to reveal an accurate profile of situations, people, or events (Rahi, 2017). Accordingly, the study followed the quantitative research paradigm through a self-report data-collection instrument, namely a questionnaire which is very common to obtain data with regard to educational situations (Larini & Barthes, 2018). The researcher who aimed at reaching more EFL teachers from seven different regions of Turkey conducted an internet questionnaire due to the fact that every EFL teacher across Turkey with internet access could be included in the study easily

#### **3.1 Participants**

The participants were 308 EFL teachers (thereafter Ts) from different regions of Turkey. The other demographic information of the teachers are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Number of the teachers based on the variables

| School Types         | School Types | Experience              | Being Abroad |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Primary School (204) | Private (61) | 1-10 years (214)        | Yes (88)     |
| High School (104)    | State (247)  | More than 10 years (94) | No (219)     |
|                      |              |                         | Missing (1)  |

#### **3.2 Instruments**

After a comprehensive review of literature, 21 five-point Likert-type items ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) were created by the researcher via Google Docs. The questionnaire involves four parts: first part with two items aimed to indicate the participants' agreements on their volunteerism to take part in the study and their permission for using their answers as the data of the study; second part investigated the participants' demographic information; third part their beliefs about L2 use; and the last part their practices about L2 use.

For content validation of the instrument, it was given to five experts with Ph.D. in ELT who were asked to rate each item by taking three-level ratings (3-essential, 2-useful but not essential and 1-not necessary) to find out how well the questionnaire represents the domain being examined (Lawshe, 1975). Six items in both belief and practice parts which failed to meet the rated "essential" were eliminated from the questionnaire so that Content validity

index (CVI) for the instrument was found to be 0.94, which is considered the evidence of good content validity (Davis, 1992).

The factor analysis via principal component analysis and rotation method via varimax with Kaiser Normalization revealed three factors for the 15 items both for the belief and practice questionnaires: the first component (Q5, Q8, Q9, Q11, Q12) is labelled as maximum L2 use (macro-level teacher talk); the second component (Q1, Q6, Q7, Q10, Q13, Q14, Q15) as minimum L2 use (micro-level teacher talk); and the third component (Q2, Q3, Q4) as scaffolding techniques to minimize L1 use. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) values were calculated to be .83 for the belief questionnaire .88 for the practice questionnaire.

Based on the factor analysis of the belief questionnaire, it was found that eigenvalue was 2.1, variance rate was 14.02 %, and cumulative variance rate was 50.62 % for the first component 5.49, 36.60, and 36.60 for the second component; 1.4, 9.9, and 60.60 for the third component. The reliability is high in terms of internal consistency based on the alpha coefficient for each component respectively: .76; .86; and .85.

As a result of factor analysis for the practice questionnaire, it was found that eigenvalue was 1.4, variance rate was 9.6 %, and cumulative variance rate was 64.62 % for the first component; 6.3, 41.99, and 41.99 for the second; and 1.9, 12.95, and 54.95 for the third. The alpha coefficient score for each dimension is as follows respectively: .90, .89, and .76.

Concerning piloting, the researcher contacted her acquaintances, who were English Ts to complete the questionnaire. The Ts who became volunteers to complete the questionnaire shared them with their volunteer friends. Eventually, 30 English Ts completed the questionnaire in a week to be used in the piloting study. Based on the pilot study, the Alpha value for reliability was found to be .82 for the belief part and .92 for the practice part.

The Ts in the main study were chosen via a convenience sampling method. Accordingly, the questionnaires were administered to teachers online via Google documents by posting it in the English Teachers Facebook Groups in the spring term of 2016. Participation in the study was voluntary. The data collection was completed in a month.

### 3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and standard deviation through the SPSS software called "Statistical Package for Social Science" 13.0 to reveal the participants' beliefs and practices of their L2 use. The non-parametric Mann-Whitney U statistical test was used to reveal the differences between their beliefs and practices besides the effects of the dependent variables on their beliefs and practices due to the data that deviated from acceptable distribution patterns (MacFarland & Yates, 2016).

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. The Teachers' Beliefs about L2 Use to Teach L2

Based on the mean results of the components in the questionnaire, it is evident that the majority of the Ts agreed on that teachers should use L2 for greetings, giving feedback, giving information to clarify the target subject, supportive talk such as "well-done, super", and giving instructions of the activities/exercises at students' level, which is why this component was named as the maximum use of L2 ( $X = 4.57$ ;  $SD = .44665$ )

Concerning scaffolding techniques to minimize L1 use ( $X = 4.31$ ;  $SD = .83674$ ), most of the Ts believed that teachers should use their L2 talk at students' levels and support their talk with visual materials and body language, gestures, and mimicry.

The participants were not in favor of having English-only interaction. That is, they believed that L1 use is welcomed more or less for particular purposes, such as providing encouraging talk to maximize student involvement, checking comprehension, managing the class, cracking a few jokes, and giving instructions for complex and new types of activities/exercises which were grouped under the last component, namely minimum L2 use ( $X = 3.63$ ;  $SD = .69081$ ).

#### **4.2. The Teachers' Practices about L2 Use to Teach L2**

Related to maximum use of L2 ( $X = 4.45$ ;  $SD = .46087$ ), in line with their beliefs, the Ts stated that they utilized L2 for greetings, giving feedback, giving information to clarify the target subject, supportive talk such as "well-done, super", and for giving instructions of the activities/exercises at students' level.

As with scaffolding techniques to minimize L1 use ( $X = 3.95$ ;  $SD = .79623$ ), most of the Ts informed that they were able to use their L2 talk at students' levels and supported their talk with visual materials and body language, gestures, and mimicry to minimize their L1 use.

The Ts reported minimum L2 use ( $X = 3.48$ ;  $SD = .71026$ ) for providing encouraging talk that increases students' involvement, checking comprehension of instructions, managing the class, cracking jokes, and giving instructions for complex and new types of activities/exercises.

#### **4.3. Differences between the Teacher' Beliefs and Practices about their L2 Use**

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test revealed significant differences between the Ts' beliefs and practices about every component as seen in table 2.

Table 2: The Mann-Whitney U test statistics ( $N = 308$ )

| Items  | Groups    | Mean Ranks | U        | Z      | p    |
|--|-----------|------------|----------|--------|------|
| Maximum L2 use                                       |           |            |          |        |      |
| 5. Giving instruction                                | Beliefs   | 334.45     | 39440.00 | -4.056 | .000 |
|  | Practices | 282.55     |          |        |      |
| 9. Giving information                                | Beliefs   | 323.99     | 42661.50 | -2.468 | .014 |
|  | Practices | 293.01     |          |        |      |
| 11. Giving feedback                                  | Beliefs   | 327.80     | 41486.50 | -2.997 | .003 |
|  | Practices | 289.20     |          |        |      |
| Minimum L2 use                                       |           |            |          |        |      |
| 1. Using only L2                                     | Beliefs   | 332.55     | 40026.00 | -3.762 | .000 |
|  | Practices | 284.45     |          |        |      |
| 6. Managing & disciplining classrooms                | Beliefs   | 330.70     | 40594.00 | -3.236 | .001 |
|  | Practices | 286.30     |          |        |      |
| 7. Checking students' understanding.                 | Beliefs   | 332.29     | 40106.00 | -3.508 | .000 |
|  | Practices | 284.71     |          |        |      |
| 10. Cracking Jokes                                   | Beliefs   | 329.12     | 41080.00 | -3.011 | .003 |
|  | Practices | 287.88     |          |        |      |
| Non-verbal scaffolding techniques to minimize L1 use |           |            |          |        |      |
| 2. Use of i+1 level talk                             | Beliefs   | 329.61     | 40929.00 | -3.120 | .002 |

|   |           |        |          |        |      |
|---|-----------|--------|----------|--------|------|
| 3. Using body language, gesture, and mimicry effectively. | Practices | 287.39 | 33154.50 | -6.944 | .000 |
|   | Beliefs   | 354.86 |          |        |      |
| 4. Supporting L2 use with visual materials.               | Practices | 262.14 | 30524.00 | -8.246 | .000 |
|   | Beliefs   | 363.40 |          |        |      |
|   | Practices | 253.60 |          |        |      |

At first, the Mann-Whitney U suggests that there is a significant difference between the Ts' beliefs and practices regarding maximum L2 use ( $U = 40962.000$ ,  $p = .003$ ), scaffolding techniques to minimize L1 use ( $U = 34020.500$ ,  $p = .000$ ), and minimum L2 use ( $U = 38531.500$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Based on the mean rank results, it can be concluded that the Ts could not use L2 for a variety of functions and apply scaffolding strategies to minimize their L1 use as much as they believed they should do.

#### 4.4. The effects of the variables on the beliefs and practices of EFL teachers about their L2 use in the classroom.

##### 4.4.1 Primary School versus High-School Teachers

The Mann-Whitney U test results revealed no significant differences in the Ts' practices based on working in primary or high schools.

Nonetheless, there appeared a slight difference between the beliefs of the Ts only about using scaffolding techniques ( $U = 9281.000$ ,  $p = .039$ ). To clarify, the primary school teachers ( $MR = 161$ ) believed more than the high school teachers ( $MR = 141.74$ ) that teachers' being able to use their body language would reduce their L1 use.

##### 4.4.2 More Experienced versus Less Experienced Teachers

The Mann-Whitney U test results revealed no significant differences between the Ts in their practices about their L2 use but in their beliefs regarding the minimum L2 use ( $U = 8454.500$ ,  $p = .021$ ). The less-experienced Ts ( $MR = 161.62$ ) seem to support only L2 use more than the more-experienced Ts ( $MR = 136.99$ ).

##### 4.4.3 State School versus Private School Teachers

The Mann-Whitney U test results revealed no significant difference between the beliefs of the State School teachers (thereafter SSTs) and the Private School teachers (thereafter PSTs) regarding the scaffolding techniques to minimize L1 use ( $U = 6567.500$ ,  $p = .107$ ) but related to maximum L2 use ( $U = 6273.50$ ,  $p = .041$ ), and minimum L2 use ( $U = 4774.500$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

Table 3: The Mann-Whitney U test results indicating the significant differences between the PSTs' ( $N = 61$ ) and SSTs' ( $N = 247$ ) beliefs about L2 use

| 5515 (N= 247) Beliefs about L2 Use      |          |            |          |        |      |
|---|----------|------------|----------|--------|------|
| Beliefs Items                           | Teachers | Mean Ranks | U        | Z      | p    |
| Maximum L2 use                          |          |            |          |        |      |
| 5. Giving instructions                  | State    | 149.27     | 6240.500 | -2.385 | .017 |
|   | Private  | 175.70     |          |        |      |
| 9. Giving information                   | State    | 149.31     | 6252.500 | -2.402 | .016 |
|   | Private  | 175.50     |          |        |      |
| Minimum L2 use                          |          |            |          |        |      |
| 1. Using only L2 throughout the lesson  | State    | 148.65     | 6087.500 | -2.532 | .011 |
|   | Private  | 178.20     |          |        |      |
| 6. Managing and disciplining classrooms | State    | 149.29     | 6247.500 | -2.171 | .030 |
|   | Private  | 175.58     |          |        |      |
| 7. Checking students' understanding     | State    | 145.45     | 5297.500 | -3.841 | .000 |



|  |         |        |          |        |      |
|--|---------|--------|----------|--------|------|
|  | Private | 191.16 |          |        |      |
| 10. Cracking Jokes                     | State   | 147.18 | 5725.000 | -3.032 | .002 |
|  | Private | 184.15 |          |        |      |
| 14. Explaining new types of activities | State   | 143.00 | 4692.000 | -4.876 | .000 |
|  | Private | 201.08 |          |        |      |
| 15. Giving complex instructions        | State   | 145.80 | 5383.500 | -3.783 | .000 |
|  | Private | 189.75 |          |        |      |

The Mann-Whitney U test results revealed significant differences between the Ts about maximum L2 use ( $U = 5707.500$ ,  $p = .003$ ), minimum L2 use ( $U = 4005.500$ ,  $p = .000$ ), and scaffolding techniques to minimize L1 use ( $U = 5779.500$ ,  $p = .004$ ). Except for providing functional language such as greetings and using supportive talk such as "well-done, super, etc.", there appeared significant differences between the groups as displayed in table 4.

Table 4: The Mann-Whitney U test results indicating the significant differences between the PSTs' ( $N=61$ ) and SSTs' ( $N=247$ ) practices about L2 use

| Practice Items                                | Teachers | Mean Ranks | U        | Z      | p    |
|---|----------|------------|----------|--------|------|
| Maximum L2 use                                |          |            |          |        |      |
| 5. Giving instructions                        | State    | 148.85     | 6139.00  | -2.500 | .012 |
|   | Private  | 177.36     |          |        |      |
| 9. Giving information                         | State    | 148.44     | 6037.50  | -2.705 | .007 |
|   | Private  | 179.02     |          |        |      |
| 11. Giving feedback                           | State    | 148.65     | 6088.50  | -2.549 | .011 |
|   | Private  | 178.19     |          |        |      |
| Minimum L2 use                                |          |            |          |        |      |
| 1. Using only L2 throughout the lesson        | State    | 140.64     | 4110.500 | -6.427 | .000 |
|   | Private  | 210.61     |          |        |      |
| 6. Managing and disciplining classrooms       | State    | 149.29     | 6247.500 | -2.171 | .030 |
|   | Private  | 175.58     |          |        |      |
| 7. Checking students' understanding           | State    | 144.85     | 5150.50  | -4.033 | .000 |
|   | Private  | 193.57     |          |        |      |
| 10. Cracking Jokes                            | State    | 144.00     | 4939.50  | -4.399 | .000 |
|   | Private  | 197.02     |          |        |      |
| 12. Encouraging students                      | State    | 148.29     | 5999.00  | -2.593 | .010 |
|   | Private  | 179.66     |          |        |      |
| 14. Explaining new types of activities        | State    | 138.02     | 3462.50  | -7.079 | .000 |
|   | Private  | 221.24     |          |        |      |
| 15. Giving complex instructions               | State    | 139.13     | 3738.00  | -6.729 | .000 |
|   | Private  | 216.72     |          |        |      |
| Scaffolding techniques to minimize L1 use     |          |            |          |        |      |
| 2. Use of $i+1$ level talk                    | State    | 146.26     | 5497     | -3.442 | .001 |
|   | Private  | 187.89     |          |        |      |
| 3. Using body language, gesture, and mimicry. | State    | 149.16     | 6214     | -2.238 | .025 |
|   | Private  | 176.13     |          |        |      |
| 4. Supporting L2 use with visual materials.   | State    | 149.27     | 6242     | -2.193 | .028 |
|   | Private  | 175.67     |          |        |      |

Perhaps the most striking finding in the particular case the researcher revealed here is conspicuous differences between the beliefs and practices of the Ts due to working in the private or public sector. It is obvious from the mean rank results that PSTs used L2 more

frequently than SSTs for almost every feature of teacher talk. Presumably, the PSTs factored in their institutional discourses to utilize their actions besides their individual beliefs.

#### 4.4.4 Being Abroad versus Not-Being Abroad

As the final variable, the researcher aimed to investigate whether being abroad would make difference in the beliefs and practices of the Ts regarding L2 use in their classrooms. The Mann-Whitney U test results revealed significant differences between the Ts' beliefs ( $U=8262.000$ ,  $p=.050$ ) and practices ( $U=7632.500$   $p=.004$ ) about minimum L2 use depending on whether they had been to abroad ( $N=88$ ) or not ( $N=219$ ).

Table 5: The effects of abroad experience on the Ts' beliefs about L2 use

| Items                                  | Being Abroad | Mean Ranks       | U        | Z      | p    |
|--|--------------|------------------|----------|--------|------|
| <i>Beliefs about Minimum L2 use</i>    | No<br>Yes    | 147,73<br>169,61 | 8262,000 | -1,959 | ,050 |
| 1. Using only L2 throughout the lesson | No<br>Yes    | 148,18<br>168,48 | 8361,500 | -1,977 | 0.48 |
| 10. Cracking Jokes                     | No<br>Yes    | 147,14<br>171,06 | 8134,500 | -2,229 | 0.26 |
| 14. Explaining new types of activities | No<br>Yes    | 146,80<br>171,91 | 8059,500 | -2,397 | 0.17 |

As indicated in Table 5, the teachers who travelled to English speaking countries believed more than the Ts without abroad experiences that English-only policy should be followed throughout the lesson and L2 should be used to crack jokes and explain new types of activities. As for their practices, the Mann-Whitney U test results revealed significant differences ( $U=7632.500$   $p=.004$ ) between the Ts with abroad experiences ( $N=88$ ) and the Ts without abroad experiences ( $N=219$ ) regarding minimum L2 use as seen in table 6.

Table 6: The effects of abroad experience on the Ts' practices about L2 use

| Items                                  | Being Abroad | Mean Ranks       | U        | Z      | p    |
|--|--------------|------------------|----------|--------|------|
| <i>Practices about Minimum L2 use</i>  | No<br>Yes    | 144,85<br>176,77 | 7632,500 | -2,857 | ,004 |
| 1. Using only L2 throughout the lesson | No<br>Yes    | 146,90<br>171,66 | 8081,500 | -2,583 | ,010 |
| 10. Cracking Jokes                     | No<br>Yes    | 143,37<br>180,47 | 7307,000 | -3,500 | .000 |
| 7. Checking students' understanding    | No<br>Yes    | 147,23<br>170,85 | 8153,500 | -2,222 | 026  |
| 12. Encouraging students               | No<br>Yes    | 147,82<br>169,38 | 8282,500 | -2,026 | ,043 |
| 14. Explaining new types of activities | No<br>Yes    | 147,39<br>170,45 | 8188,500 | -2,230 | ,026 |

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 The Teachers' Beliefs about their L2 Use to Teach L2

The overall results demonstrate that the teachers have taken sides with those who follow the bilingual approach, which is in opposition to Krashen (1981), Harbord (1992), Macaro (2001), and Wong (2010). In that vein, the Ts in the study, in the same way as the Indonesian EFL teachers (Leoanak & Amalo, 2018), was not clear enough in their beliefs about teaching

English through L2-only policy. Accordingly, the Ts agreed on the judicious use of L1 for the features mentioned above, which confirms and supports the previous research (Alrabah et al., 2016; Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Cakrawati, 2019; Enama, 2016; Jing & Jing, 2018; Sali, 2014; Shabir, 2017; Taşçı & Aksu Ataç, 2020). It is evident in the study that the Ts agreed on the use of scaffolding techniques to minimise L1 use by signifying the importance of using body language, gestures, mimicry, and variety of visuals to support their L2, as also suggested by Duff & Polio (1990), and Jing & Jing (2018).

### **5.2 The Teachers' Practices about their L2 Use to Teach L2**

The data reveals that the Ts seem conscious about the importance of providing L2 exposure in EFL classrooms, and they are likely to use L2 as part of teacher talk (cf. Harbord (1992). However, some specific situations, such as maintaining class discipline by making their authority more visible to stop or discourage misbehaving students, require them to use L1 (see also Alrabah et al., 2016; Pan & Pan, 2010; Shabir, 2017; Voicu, 2012). This finding was also underlined in Kang (2013). The participants have also said that cracking a few jokes in Turkish was an effective tool to provide a home environment in the classroom by changing the atmosphere (Dar et al., 2014).

The reasons for teachers' attributing their L1 use cannot be explained directly by their personal beliefs but by more complex factors such as student, curriculum, and coursebook-based or some other reasons, as revealed in the study by Macaro (2001). However, it is still not possible to associate these factors with specific reasons for which L1 is preferred. Thus, further studies needed to find out more about the complex interaction between these factors.

### **5.3 Differences between the Teachers' Beliefs and Practices about their L2 Use**

The analysis revealed a mismatch between the beliefs and practices of the Ts, which is in line with Alrabah et al. (2016), Cakrawati (2019), and Leoanak & Amalo (2018). This finding appears to indicate that teachers may not be aware of their beliefs. However, Borg (2018) argues that the consistency between teachers' beliefs and practices is a prerequisite for effective practice. For this reason, the study suggests teachers bring about a change into their EFL classrooms by being more aware of their espoused beliefs about the necessity for using L2 via becoming action researchers to explore the reasons for the discrepancies between their beliefs and practices.

As mentioned by Borg & Burns (2008), teachers' personal beliefs are likely to result from their experiences and teaching contexts, which is why the researcher considered several variables reflecting these issues in the study. As asserted by Turnbull (2001), it is not a simple matter to handle the issue from a limited perspective and calls for a wide perspective to shed light on some possible multiple interactive factors for these limited transfer of teachers' beliefs into their class practices.

### **5.4 The Effects of the Variables on the Beliefs and Practices of the Teachers about their L2 Use**

This section firstly discusses the findings related to the differences in the beliefs of primary school teachers and the high-school teachers with regard to their use of scaffolding strategies to minimize their L1 use. This variable revealed only one significant difference between the Ts, namely the use of body language, gesture, and mimicry to minimize L1 use in EFL classrooms. In line with the EFL teachers in the study by Gürsoy et al. (2013), the primary

school teachers of the study agreed more that using body language effectively would reduce L1 use in EFL classrooms.

With regard to being more experienced teachers, the study revealed only one significant difference in their beliefs which is about following monolingual approach. Similar to the more experienced Chinese teachers in the study by Yong et al. (2020), the more experienced Turkish EFL teachers believed less than novice teachers that EFL teachers should use only L2 throughout the lesson.

In terms of the school types (private or state), the participants do not appear to have developed counter beliefs about using L2 for providing functional language such as greetings, providing feedback, using supportive talk such as “well-done, super, etc.”, and encouraging students. However, as for their practices, in line with the PSTs in the study by Babanoğlu and Yardımcı (2017) who were more in favor of their professional development when compared to the SSTs, the PSTs in this study seem to have a higher tendency than SSTs to use L2 more in their classrooms. Notably, this study provides evidence that PSTs who are generally subjected to surveillance were likely to use L2 more frequently than SSTs as they were obliged to use the only L2 in their schools due to their institutional policies (Çelik Korkmaz, 2019; Dar et al., 2014; Hall & Cook, 2014). The fact that the PSTs tended to reveal more desire to use L2 could be attributed to their temporary positions in the private sector which force them to try their best to meet the demands from parents and bosses when compared to the SSTs who feel secure about their permanent position, which was also reported in Giannikas (2011). Thus, as suggested by Woll (2020), it is very essential for Ts, particularly SSTs whose lessons are mostly uninspected, to trigger reflections concerning the talk they used in the classroom to be able to deliver more effective L2 input and to minimize their L1 use.

Furthermore, the results revealed that the Ts with abroad experiences were more in favor of only-English policy and reported that they used L2 for cracking jokes, checking students’ understanding, encouraging students, and explaining new types of activities. To some extent, this result echoed the results of Crawford (2004) who reported that the Ts with experiences in the target language culture tended to be more willing and confident to use L2 to transfer their abroad experiences. To reiterate, being abroad experience enables EFL teachers to communicate in L2 more often.

## **6. Conclusion**

The study revealed that Turkish EFL teachers, based on their personal beliefs, were in favor of L2 use in their EFL classrooms for several reasons. However, the study suggests that teachers’ espoused beliefs are not the pivotal teachers’ agencies to make decisions about their language choices in the realms of their teaching environment but their particular experiences such as being in English speaking countries and their teaching contexts. To clarify, whether you are a primary or high school teacher and a less or more experienced teacher do not create statistically significant differences. On the other hand, whether you are a state or private school teacher and whether you have been to English speaking countries or not do create significant gaps in both teachers’ beliefs and practices about their L2 use throughout their EFL teaching.

The fact that being involved in a private school promotes avid L2 use should trigger every EFL teacher’s desire, particularly SSTs’, to monitor their talk as if they were subjected to

surveillance to be able to offer optimal L2 input. In this sense, SSTs need to be more mindful of minimizing their L1 use in EFL classrooms. Accordingly, finding out the obstacles EFL SSTs have to overcome could be a fruitful topic for a further study to promote changes in SSTs' beliefs and practices to be able to maximize their L2 use. Revealing that having been to English speaking countries had an effect on teachers' language choices in EFL teaching, teachers should explore all avenues to visit countries where the target language is spoken. They could work on a range of projects funded by the Erasmus or European Union.

Moreover, an effective EFL teacher aims not only to provide comprehensible input in L2 but also to create a learning environment where learners feel relaxed enough to lower their affective filter. For that purpose, the study specified principled and purposeful teaching situations in which L2 use can be minimized such as maintaining classroom management and discipline, cracking jokes, delivering instructions for a new type of activities/ exercises, and giving complex instruction. Furthermore, it is reasonable to suggest that teachers need to be aware of and can apply scaffolding techniques such as the use of body language, gesture, mimicry, and visuals besides adjusting their L2 use at students' levels to minimize their L1 use. Accordingly, in their teacher training courses, prospective EFL teachers should be given not only theoretical information about different functions of teacher talk, how teacher talk should be, advantages and disadvantages of following monolingual and bilingual approaches to increase their awareness of teacher talk but also opportunities for performing variety of tasks through which they could practice teacher talk in a way that they could utilize scaffolding techniques to minimize L1 use.

The study has the following limitations which could be considered in further studies. Although the data were collected from the teachers all around Turkey, which was good in terms of the generalizability of the findings, the regions where teachers are working were not considered as one of the variables of the study. Thus, further studies need to consider the effects of socio-cultural factors on EFL teachers' language preferences. Furthermore, this study is limited to the Ts' self- reports which were assumed that they reported frankly and objectively about their practices. Hence, further research may consider triangulating the quantitative findings that emerged from this study via gathering data through classroom observations in different teaching contexts.

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## Appendix 1. The Instrument

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Dear EFL Teachers!</b>   |   |   |   |   |   |
| This questionnaire aims to investigate your beliefs and practices about L2 use in your classrooms. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The researcher requests your consent for participation in this study. Please put "X" under the correct options for you. I would be very happy if you could share your demographic information in addition to your beliefs and experiences regarding L2 use in your classrooms.<br>Thanks for your contribution!                             |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Part 1: Consent Items</b>  |   |   |   |   |   |
| Please tick the correct options for you!  |   |   |   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I agree to participate in this study. I am aware of the purpose of the study and I am participating voluntarily. Yes ( ) No ( )</li> <li>I grant permission for the data generated from this questionnaire to be used in the researcher's publication. Yes ( ) No ( )</li> </ul>   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Part 2: Demographic Information</b>  |   |   |   |   |   |
| Please tick the correct options for you!  |   |   |   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Regions:</b> Marmara ( ) Mediterranean ( ) Central Anatolia ( ) Eastern Anatolia ( ) Aegean ( ) Black Sea ( ) South East ( )</li> <li><b>School Context:</b> Primary ( ) Secondary ( ) High School ( )</li> <li><b>School Context:</b> State ( ) Private ( )</li> <li><b>Classroom Teaching Experience:</b> 1-10 years of experiences ( ) 10- ... Years of experiences ( )</li> <li><b>Visiting English Speaking Countries:</b> Yes ( ) No ( )</li> </ul> |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1) <i>Certainly Disagree</i> 2) <i>Disagree</i> 3) <i>Neutral</i> 4) <i>Agree</i> 5) <i>Certainly Agree</i>   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Part 3: Beliefs of Turkish EFL Teachers about L2 use in teaching English</b>   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |



|   |   |          |          |          |          |          |
|---|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1   | EFL teachers should use only L2 (English) throughout the lesson.                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
| 2   | EFL teachers should use L2 at students' level to minimize L1 use.                                     |          |          |          |          |          |
| 3   | EFL teachers should use their body language, gestures, and mimics effectively to reduce L1 use.       |          |          |          |          |          |
| 4   | EFL teachers should support their L2 use with visual materials to reduce L1 use.                      |          |          |          |          |          |
| 5   | An EFL teacher should give instructions in L2 at students' level.                                     |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6   | Classroom management and discipline should be handled in L2.  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 7   | Whether students understand what they are going to do should be checked in L2.                        |          |          |          |          |          |
| 8   | EFL teachers should use L2 to provide functional language such as greetings.                          |          |          |          |          |          |
| 9   | Giving information to clarify the target subject should be given in L2.                               |          |          |          |          |          |
| 10  | Jokes that might change classroom atmosphere positive should be cracked in L2.                        |          |          |          |          |          |
| 11  | Feedback to students' answers or activity outcomes should be given in L2.                             |          |          |          |          |          |
| 12  | Supportive talks such as "well-done, super" should be in L2.  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 13  | EFL teachers should use L2 to encourage their students to increase their involvement to the lesson.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 14  | Instructions of the new type of activities or exercises should be given in L2.                        |          |          |          |          |          |
| 15  | EFL teachers should use L2 no matter how complex the instructions of an activity are.                 |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>1) Certainly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neutral 4) Agree 5) Certainly Agree</b>   |   |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>Part 4: Practices of Turkish EFL Teachers about L2 use in teaching English</b> |   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| 1   | I use only L2 (English) throughout the lesson.  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 2   | Because I am able to use my English at my students' level I can minimize my L1 use.                   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 3   | Because I am able to use my body language, gesture, and mimicry effectively I can minimize my L1 use. |          |          |          |          |          |
| 4   | Because I support my L2 with visual materials I can minimize my L1 use.                               |          |          |          |          |          |
| 5   | I give instructions in L2 at my students' levels.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6   | I manage and discipline my classrooms by using L2.  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 7   | I check whether my students understand what they are going to do in L2.                               |          |          |          |          |          |
| 8   | I use L2 to provide functional language such as greetings.  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 9   | I give information to clarify the target subject in L2.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 10  | I use L2 when I crack a joke to change classroom atmosphere positive.                                 |          |          |          |          |          |
| 11  | I provide feedback to my students' answers or products in L2.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 12  | I use L2 when I use supportive language such as "well done" and "super".                              |          |          |          |          |          |
| 13  | I use L2 when I encourage my students to increase their involvement to the lesson.                    |          |          |          |          |          |
| 14  | I use L2 when I explain new type of activity.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 15  | I use L2 no matter how complex the instructions of an activity are.                                   |          |          |          |          |          |